

*"Christopher Robin saying his prayers"*



*The Regional Editor spends*

## A Day at the SR Orphanage

It was a bleak January day when I called at the Orphanage to see how life goes on under everyday conditions. My old friend the Secretary-Superintendent received me, and I explained to Mr Evershed that, frequent as my visits had been in the past, I had never been there on an ordinary "working day".

Most of the 158 children were at school, and the living rooms and dormitories were in possession of the cleaners. When it is remembered that this fine building in Oriental Road, Woking, contains 160 rooms, it will be realised that housework is no small item.

There is no atmosphere of the institution at the Southern Railway Servants' Orphanage. The children are formed into units resembling family groups, each in charge of a warden, and as far as possible the boys and girls, in their spare time, please themselves what they do.

In the various living rooms I saw books neatly stacked on shelves, a wide variety of games, and toys ranging from rocking-horses to model railways.

There are eight pianos in the Home, and the youngsters with a leaning towards music are encouraged to develop it. The value of pets, too, is recognised, and the children's collection comprises cats, goldfish, budgerigars and tortoises.

The youngsters attend schools in the district, making their own friendships and generally acting like children who reside with their own families. They can if they wish join the Scouts, Guides, and similar organisations. All of which makes for very congenial living, and it is true to say that the Home is one great big happy family.

### "Luv'ly grub!"

The dining hall (seating accommodation for 180) was being prepared for the mid-day meal. So I wandered into the kitchen and watched the three cooks at work. The menu that day consisted of roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, two vegetables, and a sweet, so you can imagine the quantities required to feed all these healthy children.

While on the subject of quantities, Mr Evershed gave me the following figures of some of the purchases in 1957:

	Orphanage £	Old Peoples' Homes £
Bread and flour	737	231
Groceries	3043	2248
Meat and fish	1689	942

*Mr T. Wells, a member of the Orphanage staff (right), and the Regional Editor in the nursery.*

*"Mixed juniors" listen to a bedtime story.*







*Rehearsing a song.  
Matron is at the piano.*



*"I have a bad cold." A little patient  
in the Orphanage hospital.*

	£	£
Potatoes, plus gifts	280	126
Vegetables	205	127
Fruit	222	49
Milk	1288	570
Tea and cocoa	308	170
School meals	623	—
Footwear	672	—
Clothing	742	—
Rates	1218	263
Coal	1748	563
Gas	414	166
Water	332	64
Electricity	551	181
Laundry	1478	733

These figures by no means represent all that is purchased by the Board of Management. But they do

*Getting ready for tea.  
A scene in the kitchen.*



give a good idea of the requirements of a place like this.

The Orphanage has its own hospital, opened in 1930, containing 24 beds and up-to-date medical equipment. The idea is of course to isolate youngsters when they are ill, and all non-surgical cases are dealt with there. Fortunately there were only two patients at the time of my visit.

### **Sports and pastimes**

No garden looks particularly attractive in January, and when I was there the gardener and his assistants were clearing up and making things generally tidy. The grounds and playing fields cover an area of nine acres, and contain good football and netball pitches. They looked a bit forlorn (being a week-day), but on Saturdays the place is alive with an eager throng. In

*(continued on page 74)*

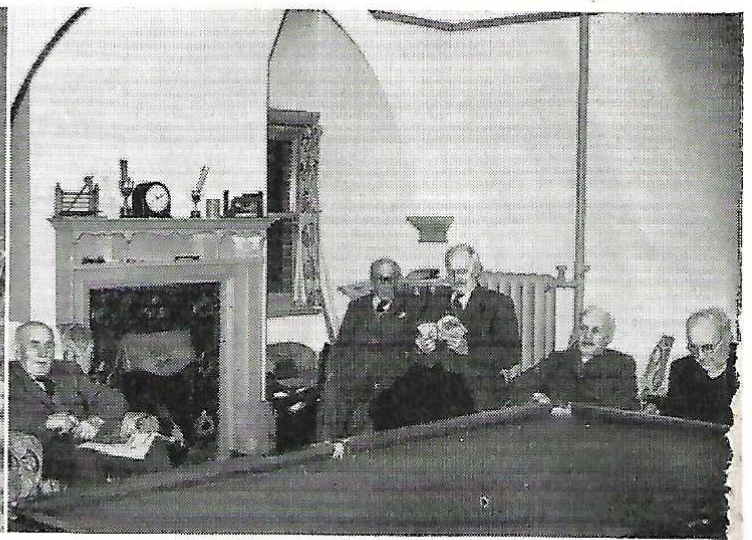
*The Orphanage cobbler repairs about  
sixty pairs of shoes each week.*







*Afternoon repose in the Old People's Home.*



*[All photos. by SR staff] photographer*

summer cricket and tennis have many devotees, and some fine fixtures are played in these grounds.

Indoor exercise is provided in a well-equipped gymnasium, which reminded me of my own schooldays.

### **Babies, too**

In a house across the road is a Babies' Home. Here infants from birth to five years are taken in and cared for. There were sixteen of these tiny tots in residence when I called, and although unable to express their feelings coherently, I am sure, had it been possible, they would have been full of gratitude for the loving care bestowed on them in this spotlessly clean establishment.

### **Old Folk's Homes**

I could not be in Woking without visiting the Old Folk's Homes at "Missenden House" and "Wynberg",

both situated near the Orphanage. The former was opened in 1947 and accommodates fourteen old people, the latter being brought into use in 1950 (accommodation for thirty-six residents).

Here Southern railwaymen and their wives can spend the evening of their days in rest and comfort, and judging by the happy smiles that greeted me in both houses, the residents are enjoying the amenities of their delightful surroundings. Unfortunately, unlike the Orphanage, there is a waiting list.

Miss G. Groom, the Matron, who generally supervises the welfare of both children and old people, has a large-sized job and, like Mr A. G. Evershed, the Secretary-Superintendent, she is full of praise for the assistance given by her full and part-time helpers. To make a success of this sort of thing you have to be heart and soul in your work; and I think that can be said for the staff of the S R Orphanage.

*Ambulance quiz. Dorking 'A' team faces the panel.*



*The winners, Exmouth Junction No.1, with the Welfare Officer and officials.*

