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## Helen Lloyd 1899 - 1977 obituaries

### Miss H. M. B. Lloyd

1977

OVER 100 mourners filled Albury Parish Church at the funeral service for Miss Helen Mary Beatrice Lloyd, of Weston Lodge, Albury, who died suddenly on August 24th.

Miss Lloyd was born in 1899. Her barrister father's family came from Wales and Birmingham and her mother was the eldest daughter of Sir Reginald Bray of Shere. The family went to East Horsley in about 1912 and moved to Weston Lodge in 1920.

Miss Lloyd served on Albury Parish Council and the parochial church council. She was concerned with the care of Albury Old Church and was a founder member of Albury Local History Society, a member of the Women's Institute, the Friendship Club, and

an honorary member of Albury Produce Association.

After leaving school she worked at Effingham railway factory for a time. She was a Guider with Stoke-next-Guildford Guides, then Captain of 1st Albury Guides for a number of years. She gave voluntary service to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and travelled to London twice weekly to work for the conservation of Windmills.

Towards the end of 1938 she joined the Women's Voluntary Service and, working with Mrs. Mollie Liddell at Guildford Rural Council Offices, was in charge of the W.V.S. and Children's evacuation throughout the Second World War.

Miss Lloyd was an embroi-

deress and painter. During one of her many travels abroad she motored with a woman friend from the Cape to Cairo, a great feat in those days. She subsequently published a book, entitled *March Hare* on the life of a woman met on the journey.

A keen fisherman, she practised this sport in Scotland and Norway; had visited the Galapagos Islands, the Seychelles, Mexico and other lands and recently visited friends of her brother Jack Lloyd in Australia.

The service was taken by the rector, the Rev. Stewart Orme, with Mrs. Anthea Morton at the organ. It was followed by interment in Albury Churchyard. The lesson was read by Mr. J. Prentis.

Miss Helen Mary Beatrice Lloyd died on 22nd August aged 78 years. She was admired with affection by all who knew her. As a lifelong Sunday worshipper at the Parish Church and for her care for the sick and elderly she will be deeply missed. Church and parish will never be quite the same without her. Dr. Burton has kindly written the following tribute:

Helen Lloyd was a woman of rare quality. With her passing Albury has lost a tower of strength, a sheet anchor and, not least, a friend. No social gathering was complete if she was not present. She had the enviable gifts of dominating without being obtrusive, of engendering enthusiasm without persuasion, of being warmly friendly yet retaining a degree of non-chalance. It is hard to avoid being fulsome in recalling what she meant to the parish as a whole, yet this is the last thing she would have desired for she had an innate modesty unspoilt by shyness or reserve, and yet she was reserved, so that not until she was no longer with us did it emerge how much she had accomplished in her lifetime as a pioneer, traveller, author and much more besides. One of her most valuable assets was her incomparable knowledge of the history past and present of the village and parish of Albury. Within her slender frame was housed indomitable courage. Her fitting epitaph could be: The Indomitable Helen.





**THE** extraordinary atmosphere of war-time London is movingly captured in the recently discovered reminiscences of an Albury woman, who died in 1977 after a lifetime of service to the community.

Helen Lloyd, who lived at Western Lodge, Albury, was an unlikely maiden aunt — fashion conscious, sporty, globe-trotting and in the social whirl. But she is best remembered for her public service.

In 1938, she set up the WVS in Guildford with Mollie Liddell, and she served on Albury Parish Council from 1946-70.

As a WVS volunteer, Miss Lloyd

(pictured left) spent the war years organising the London civilian evacuation, helping soldiers on transit through the district and finally, homing returned prisoners of war.

Her experiences were documented in detailed diaries and this short story. She was moving in literary circles before the war, and was a member of the Pen Club, having helped co-author the autobiography of South African pioneer, Elsa Smithers in 1933.

This is an abridged version of her story, based on her experience of taking home a former POW.

"THE shrill ringing of the telephone bell broke rudely into the family conversation at the supper table: 'Will you cancel all engagements for the weekend? We have been asked to send cars to London to help get returning prisoners of war to their homes.'

It was Sunday afternoon when final instructions were received to go to Euston immediately, where trains would be arriving.

Once there, the problem was parking, as vehicles had been assembled in great numbers to cope with the transport. There was a long wait and the rain was relentless, and owing to the bomb-shattered roof, the station was

as wet as outside.

A cheer broke the long dull silence as the first train finally pulled in. It was full to overflowing, row after row of soldiers' heads were silhouetted against the lighted windows.

As the train stopped, the carriages seemed to explode, doors burst open, kit bags were hurled through windows and men and luggage poured out in a cascade.

With all their excitement there was a curious calm. Reunions took place with dignified restraint and there was complete absence of hysteria and noise.

At last the official passengers arrived at the car:

A prisoner of war and his airman brother. Thank heavens they were going on a known route as the nightmare of having to grope her way in the dark through unfamiliar parts of London had haunted her.

Once in the car the prisoner began to tell his tale of how he and his fellows had been beaten by the camp commandant after the Japanese had surrendered.

'The Americans were marvellous when they arrived, and having shot the camp commandant they could not do enough for us,' he said.

'We went from the camp to a hospital ship, then by destroyer, air, flying over

the devastated Hiroshima, on to the Philippines and from there by ship.

"I met some WVS ladies while in the Philippines who came to give us news of home. It was the one thing we wanted. While in the camp we had been told the Germans had invaded England, killing all the women and children. We had no news for two years.'

Suddenly the car reached the right road and a beam of light shone out from a house. 'Meg said whatever time you came home you would find the front door open,' he said.

The prisoner got out and walked in, where a small boy was standing in the hall. The silence concerned her, but carrying in his kit bag, there in the hall, motionless, stood the man and his wife in each other's arms.

Putting down the luggage as quietly as possible, she tiptoed out of the house. It was not only the rain that blurred her vision on the drive home."