



Women and the Home

Radio is the slender wire that brings the world and its affairs into the tiny kitchens and living rooms which hitherto had isolated so many housekeepers in the performance of their duties
—Margaret Bondfield

MY DIARY — By "Kath"

WOMEN AND THEIR DIARIES

Twenty-nine readers accepted our invitation to improve on Betty's Diary—some of them mothers, one a grandmother, several of them business girls, and one a girl still at school. Four of the mothers had twins, a suspiciously high proportion for New Zealand; three called their husbands hubbies; and others used labels for their children that they thought would sound clever in print. In other words, too many wrote their diaries for other people rather than for themselves. Those that we have selected for publication are not necessarily the best literary efforts. The literary level was in fact lower than we expected, but the interest level was much higher. Of the twenty-six offered to us, we shall print these six: "Kath" (Auckland), "Woolgatherer" (Green Island), "Doris" (Wellington), "Wendy" (Gillespie's Beach), "Ednamay" (Catlins River), "Ordinary Woman" (Kawakawa).

These Should Interest You

Talks prepared by the A.C.E. Home Science Tutorial Section. University of Otago:

- "What! No Car?" Monday, July 29, 1YA 3.30 p.m., 2YA 3 p.m., 3YA 2.30 p.m.
- "How to Save Fuel." Wednesday, July 31, 4YA 3.15 p.m.
- "Use of Left-Overs." Thursday, August 1, 1YA 3.30 p.m., 3YA 2.30 p.m.; Friday, August 2, 2YA 3 p.m.
- "Profitable Handicrafts and Pastimes for Winter Evenings." Friday, August 2, 4YA 3.15 p.m.
- "First Aid Questions and Answers": Representative of St. John Ambulance. Tuesday, July 30, 2YA 11.30 a.m.

From The ZB Stations

- 1ZB: at 8.45 p.m. on Monday, July 29. "Pageant of Empire"
- 2ZB: at 5 p.m. on Sunday, July 28, "Storytime with Bryan O'Brien"
- 3ZB: at 2.30 Mondays to Fridays, "Home Service Session" (Jill)
- 4ZB: at 3.45 p.m. Saturday, August 3, "Wide Range Melodies"
- 2ZA: at 9.0 p.m. Sunday, July 28, "Victor Silvester Entertains"

- "Fashions": Ethel Early. Tuesday, July 30, 3YA 11.15 a.m.
- "Talks by a Biologist: Insects, Birds and Mammals": Althea Solomons, B.Sc. Thursday, August 1, 1YA 11 a.m.
- "Speaking Personally (2) Marriage": Phyllis Anchor. Thursday, August 1, 2YA 10.45 a.m.
- Talk under the Auspices of the Christchurch Branch of the National Council of Women. Thursday, August 1, 3YA 11.15 a.m.
- "Mary Makes a Career (1) The Last Year at School": Saturday, August 3, 1YA 11 a.m.
- "Mary Makes a Career: Furnishing a Home": Saturday, August 3, 2YA 10.45 a.m.

MONDAY:

On Monday, Hig always groans extra loud when the alarm goes—all alarms and no excursions! And rain too. "I'll get rained off to-day," Hig said, "Sure as eggs." Who'd be a wage-slave, I think resentfully, every morning as I take the icy plunge at 5.45. A faint consolation to see lights across the way and know that others are in the same box. The chaos is appalling, and calls out for what mother calls elbow-grease.

Look at it! Len's brilliant attempts at rigging a wireless, an eruption of belts and screws: muddy boots, a heavy sprinkle of cake crumbs. How did they find my chocolate cake? The only place left for hiding treasures is on my person. Yes, the house is a ruin; it's raining. Wet Mondays are the devil.

TUESDAY:

Our butcher is good fun, not that he knows it. If the shop is fairly empty we have a word, mostly about the war. Mr. Hutt thrives on rumours and interprets each new event in the light of the Scriptures. "It's a worrying time," he said this morning, "it's the time of the Second Coming. Mark my words." I did. I told Hig at tea. Hig chuckled. "Poor old Hutt doesn't know who's coming or who's going." I'd like to be as certain as my butcher.

WEDNESDAY:

I got out of bed on the right foot and went like smoke from the word Go. I simply glissaded through the ironing and even had time to make a big batch of cheese scones, a good way of getting rid of that piece of stale cheese. After lunch I was hugging the sun and darn-ing socks like an old contented cow. Then in rushes Dod, a nasty rent in his pants. "Mend them mum," he says. "They are all I've got, 'cept me best." "Say please," I say tartly. Of all the jobs. Talk about Atlas with all the world on his back.

THURSDAY:

Lovely and sunny again. I rushed round and left a lunch for the youngsters. Thursday is a grand day, really; you can breathe. In a gay recklessness I

didn't even walk to the 4d section, but took a 5d instead. Dash it, I'd earned it, and might even drop in for a cup of Continental Coffee. In New Zealand we smother coffee with boiled milk. But this is the real thing. I had a wild hunt for many things, including lunch-papers. I tried nearly every place in town and actually landed one roll. Staggering at last to my tram (not drunk, but laden), I collapsed on the seat and started counting my parcels (including a huge cauliflower, wrapped in newspaper). Everything except my precious lunch paper!

FRIDAY:

Gave the rooms a bit of a flourish. Tidiness is my motto, but Hig says I'm too kind to the cobwebs. Oh well, spiders must live. In the afternoon my nose was deep in a book when I walked Agatha, cock-a-hoop as usual. She flung her fur down anywhere and started about her boy friend (she's not so young either). "A new one?" I queried. "Why not?" said Agatha. "Wilfred called in

yesterday and said 'Where shall we go?' And I said 'Let's go to Maybank; it's so lovely and quiet; I want to commune with the birds—to be one with the universe — YOU know, the cosmos.'" "I don't know much about the cosmos," I say, refilling her cup, "I only know my suburb." Agatha is very much in tune with the infinite.

SATURDAY:

Always a day of rush, the youngsters getting in the way, and to-day it was Hig as well. He was putting a new faucet on the scullery tap, so I couldn't do my usual cooking. I sent Ray out to buy a sponge and we all liked the change. Good news. If it's fine to-morrow we're being taken to the Clevedon farm. Here's luck.

SUNDAY:

Hooray, no rain. A biting wind, though. At about 10.30 Jean called with the car and Christie in it; Ray would be able to amuse him. What beautiful rolling country Clevedon is; the Sussex Downs must be something like that. What a glorious log fire they had, and I couldn't stop eating the home-made wholemeal bread; I was worse than Ray! We went out to see the old sow with her new litter of nine. Ray and Christie squealed with delight and certainly the piglets, especially the two tan ones with spots, looked as if they'd been cut out of wood. "Aren't they comical?" I said, and Jean capped it by saying, "They're very Walt Disney." She's always pat like that; I can only think of things afterwards.

"STUPID HEAD"

Written for "The Listener" by WANDA HALL

"YER father's Italian, you've gotcha mother's boots on," sang the boys. The little girl walked on stiffly, looking straight ahead, pretending not to see them. Round the corner she relaxed, stopped to do up a shoelace, and kicked a stone as she went on. Now there was only the other lot to pass and perhaps they wouldn't notice her to-day.

Her knees went wobbly as she reached the little group and saw them all staring at her, then prickles ran down her back as she passed them and could no longer see. Suddenly there was a giggle behind her and a triumphant voice saying, "She's treading on it." She paused, and for a second lost her dignified bearing as she looked down at her feet to see beneath them a chalked swastika; then, not too slowly, not too fast, she walked on, her heart bumping with

anger. Down the road their voices pursued her: "Coward Italian, run-a-way Italian."

When she could no longer hear them, she began to think of the day at school, of the story they had had and the kettle holder she was making for a surprise for her mother, and of Sums. Her face got red and she banged the garden gate shut, rushed up the path and into the house. "Mummy! Where are you? I want you." She flung herself on to her mother's lap and burst into tears.

"Why, what's the matter with my schoolgirl?"

"Well Mummy, it's all right and we had a lovely story, only I can't do my sums, they go so fast and then they all call me Stupid Head." The tears threatened to break out again at the memory. "I'm not a Stupid Head, am I Mummy?"