

HOMES FOR NEW ZEALANDERS

"I GAVE my five hundredth broadcast from 2ZB last Thursday," said Anne Stewart. "I never imagined for one minute that the session would last as long as it has. I thought that the interest of listeners would begin to fade after perhaps two years. Instead of that I've been going on for three and a half years now and I find that more and more people are listening to the broadcasts and sending me their home decorating problems."

"How did you feel when you first took on the session?" I asked.

"I was really rather nervous," confessed Anne Stewart. She looked so perfectly poised that I couldn't imagine her ever feeling nervous. "You see I had never talked over the air before. The only thing that gave me any confidence was the fact that I knew my subject, but I was sure that my voice would sound very curious. Sure enough, after the broadcast my sister remarked that I didn't sound my 's's' properly. For my next session I put on a completely different voice, but after hearing both the recordings I decided that they both sounded equally bad. So I went back to my natural voice and I've been using it ever since."

Work That Satisfies

"What did you do before you started the Home Decorating Service from the CBS?"

Women Do Men's Work

WOMEN are increasingly taking over men's work in the streets of London. The latest are women crossing-sweepers. The smartest—in their pale grey uniforms and peaked caps—are the bus conductresses. My only complaint about them is that they can't shout loud enough at the fare stages. As I always go to sleep in buses, nowadays I usually have to pay two fares, one to get me there, and another to bring me back to the spot where I ought to have got off.

But the girls have inherited the Cockney sense of humour. I saw an elderly woman offer six farthings to one of them for a penny-halfpenny fare the other day. To my surprise, the girl accepted the coins without comment, but when she came to the next passenger, a small boy, she said, 'What have you got? Ginger-beer bottles?'

Afterwards the same girl told me that she was frightened to go to the shelter near her home during air raids because "there are mice down there."

—Macdonald Hastings in "London Calling"

Says

ANNE STEWART



Expert on Interior Decoration for the ZB's

"I was working with a furnishing firm. It was my job to visit the homes of clients and advise them about furnishings and colour schemes. It was very interesting work, especially as very often I was able to see the whole job right through. Not only would I plan the furniture beforehand, but I was able to supervise the actual carrying out of my suggestions, so that when everything was finished I could look round and think 'That was my work.' It was a satisfying feeling. Now, however, it's even better, because I have so much more scope, and I'm able to contact so many more people."

"At the age of five did you say firmly 'I want to be a home decorator?'"

"I don't remember. I probably wanted to own a lolly-shop or be an engine driver. But I was rather interested in houses. There used to be an Australian magazine called *The Triad* which had wonderful pictures of furniture and house interiors. Like most other small girls I used to cut them out and paste them in a scrap-book. I don't know whether this indicated an early aptitude for the work I later took up. But at any rate I still have the scrapbooks and as *The Triad* seemed to specialise in period furniture I find that now they're very useful to me for reference."

The Necessary Qualifications

"Then you wouldn't necessarily advise any mother whose small daughter cuts out pictures of furniture to have her trained as an interior decorator?"

"Not necessarily. As a matter of fact I get a great many letters from mothers who want to find out what qualifications are necessary. In the first place you must be able to draw, and not merely to copy accurately, but create. You need tact and understanding, because you will be called upon to go into people's homes, and it's often a very difficult task to find the right meeting

ground between your ideas and theirs. You see, taste is a purely personal matter, and if you have had training and experience there's the danger that you may feel you have a right to dictate on the subject. That's completely wrong, because what is right for one person may not be right for another. A home should express the people living in it."

"Our Own Architecture"

"But don't you think that one can get inspiration for houses and furniture by seeing what has been done overseas?"

"Yes, but the trouble is that people try to copy overseas designs as they are. What is a good type of house for America is not necessarily a good type for New Zealand. We need to evolve an architecture of our own to suit the peculiarities of our own country."

"I think New Zealand houses should be completely functional. For all practical purposes there is in New Zealand no such thing as a domestic servant. The housewife has to be chief cook and bottle-washer in the morning and metamorphose herself into the perfect hostess by the afternoon. Therefore, the typical New Zealand home should have as much furniture as possible built in. And now, of course, when there are so many working wives, it is even more important that the house or flat should be as easy to run as possible. At present, I consider that in most New Zealand homes the kitchen is the most attractive room in the house, simply because it is the most functional. There is no waste space. There is no unnecessary article of furniture. You may still find a palmstand in the dining room or a what-not in the hall, but you no longer find a ball-fringed table-cloth in the kitchen."

"Period Furniture Out of Place"

"Then your ideal home will be strictly practical? You don't want a mock Tudor grange?"

"No. I think period architecture, or more particularly period furniture, is out of place in New Zealand. Chippendale or Sheraton was used in the first place in large houses where there were plenty of servants to keep all the finicky bits dusted, and to-day the same applies. A Queen Anne chair would get its corners knocked off when you did the vacuum cleaning. A Queen Anne furniture-maker couldn't have been expected to think of that."

Her Future Home

"Have you any ideas about your own future home?"

"Yes. In fact I have the whole thing already planned, and it's the dream of my life to build it. It's going to be somewhere on a hill overlooking the sea. There will be, first of all, a large living room with windows everywhere, commanding every inch of the view. At present I think that the windows are the worst features in most New Zealand houses. They're usually built far too high up, so that you can't see out unless you stand up. Windows should never begin more than two feet from the floor,

Stockings From

Seaweed?

"*SILK stockings made from seaweed sounds a good conjuring trick,*" said F. L. Stevens in a *Home Service* talk on glass silk, from the BBC recently. "And, of course, it isn't a trick at all; it's the kind of discovery that comes from careful and steady work in the laboratory. When you realise that, every year, 400,000 tons of seaweed are picked up from the Hebrides alone, well, you can see here's a supply of good raw material on our doorsteps; very useful when one of our big problems is to save as much shipping space as possible. At a demonstration of this new textile, a piece of it was soaked in petrol and set alight. The petrol burned away leaving the fabric quite unharmed."

I'm going to be very particular about this. One wing of the house will be occupied by the bedrooms and bathroom. There is a dining room leading through to the kitchen. Between the two are cupboards, opening on both sides, and the kitchen is planned so that a minimum number of steps will be necessary. The kitchen contains another of my little dreams—an adequate meat-safe. Most meat-safes are far too small, but my meat-safe will be superb. It will go from floor to ceiling, and there will be room in it for storing vegetables (which need just as much keeping cool as meat), and plenty of space at the top for preserves. It will be a perfect example, I hope, of a functional home."



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