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ROYAL REFLECTIONS

by JACK NAVARRE

The year was 1945 and I was a mere Wireless Operator in the R.A.F. stationed at Tetbury. It was my day off, so with a colleague we decided to try to hitch a lift somewhere - anywhere. A little way down the road was a cross roads, one way to Bath and the other to Stroud. After waiting at this spot for quite some time, muttering under our breath as no- one had stopped for the two prize specimens when, out of the blue came two police motorcycle outriders, followed closely by a magnificent luxurious Daimler which also passed by. We gave it the usual mutters when suddenly it slowed to a stop. "My goodness" (or words to that effect) "I hope they didn't hear us!" A military type officer, weighed down with gold epaulettes stepped out and beckoned us over, "Where are you going, boys?" he said. "Where are you going?" was our reply. "Stroud" was the answer: "Well, that's where we're going!" we said. "Jump in then, we'll give you a lift". He opened the rear door and there, sitting resplendent in an armchair type seat, in all her regal glory along with the obligatory toque hat was Queen Mary, with her Lady in Waiting, Lady Amphi II.

After they had picked us off the floor and my mouth closed, we were ushered in. We sat facing Queen Mary who chatted to us during the journey. She asked if we liked the forces and if we were happy, etc. On arrival in Stroud they dropped us off and wished us a good day and after giving a cross between a salute and a bow we went on our way.

We wandered around town, went to the British Restaurant and then to the pictures, after which we decided it was time to head back to camp. Back on the main road we managed to hitch a lift part of the way in a U.S. lorry. Ye t again we were longing for a lift standing at the roadside, two of England's Saviours, when suddenly up loomed our two friendly outriders followed by the Daimler. Out jumps our friend the Aide who opens the rear door automatically for us to get in (can you imagine this happening these days!?) "Oh, it's you two!" exclaimed my "friend", Queen Mary. "Where have you been?" and we proceeded to relate our day's expedition. "Where have you been Ma'am?" asked the intrepid two. "We have been to a garden party in Stroud". Unfortunately, by this time we were back at our cross roads and the car stopped. "Perhaps you would like this bouquet to brighten up the barracks?" said Queen Mary. Lady Amphthill gave us both commemorative medals and we jumped out, giving the best royal salute we could muster, and stood at the side of the road like two schmerels waving with our bouquet.

On arrival at the camp we came to the Guard Room first and offered the girls the bouquet. "Where did you get this from?" they asked, and we replied "Who do you think - Queen Mary!!"