

List of Christmas Presents, CR4356/1/769

We all know the struggle of getting meaningful Christmas gifts for our loved ones, so December's Document of the Month is this list of Christmas gift ideas from the "Doreen Wright of Leek Wootton" collection. A transcript is provided below:

Christmas

*Pa: every body is contributing
to get him a super over-
coat*

*Ma: I'm ordering honey – other
wise can't think.*

Me: Photograph

Nick: Good money box

Bill: something wheeled

Mary: Something girlish

Rosamund: ?

Ida: ?

Felix: ? 15th + Christmas



Christmas - CR4356/1/769

Pa. Every body is contributing
to get him a super over-
coat.

Ma. s'm ordering money - other
we can't think.

Me. Photograph
Rich. Good money too.

Bill. something wheeled

Mary. Something gilded

Rosalind ?

Dada. ?

Felix^{jr.} 15th + Christmas

List of Christmas presents, Warwickshire County Record Office, CR4356/1/769

Dating from c.1939, it lists members of Doreen's family (including herself), and what she intends to purchase for each of them. As we can see, Doreen had ideas for some of her family members, such as her "Pa" (who we believe was her father-in-law Arthur Fitzherbert Wright), who was to receive a "super overcoat", which everyone was contributing to. Some family members, like Bill

and Mary, both have slightly more vague suggestions of “something wheeled” and “something girlish” respectively. Nick, Bill and Mary are the children of Doreen and Gilbert. However, poor Rosamund and Ida have question marks next to their names, so they must have been a bit trickier to buy for¹! Felix also has the 15th next to his name and after some genealogical research, we know that his birth was registered in the December quarter of 1935², which means Doreen had a birthday present to purchase for him as well!

Doreen Wright

Doreen Wright lived what appears to have been a fascinating life. She was a talented artist (some of her work has featured previously as Document of the Month) and swimmer. She competed in the first British Empire Games in 1930 with her sister Joyce³. Much more about Doreen’s life can be found in the book called *Doreen’s Diary: She Could Not Have Loved More*.

She is perhaps best known for her wartime diary, which is deposited here at the Record Office as part of the same collection as this document. The diary was started by Doreen after the news that her RAF pilot husband, Gilbert Francis Moncreiff Wright, was missing in action in 1940. It describes her life during the war whilst she was living with her parents-in-law at Wootton Court. It was intended by Doreen as a means for her to keep her husband updated on everything he had missed upon his return from active service. However tragically, this was not to be. According to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, he is buried in Berneville Communal Cemetery in France⁴.

The diary was discovered amongst her effects by her family after she died in 2003, and transcribed and published in 2012 as part of a project called *Doreen’s Diary: The Life of an Indomitable Woman in Warwickshire During*

¹ List of Christmas Presents, Warwickshire County Record Office, CR4356/1/769.

² Information gathered from <https://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/search.pl> (accessed 10/10/2024).

³ Leek Wootton History Group, *Doreen’s Diary: She Could Not Have Loved More*, 2012, pages 2-5.

⁴ Information gathered from <https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/2278780/gilbert-francis-moncreiff-wright/> (accessed 16/10/2024).

*World War II*⁵. A few copies of the publication produced as part of this project are available for purchase from the Record Office shop.

⁵ More information about the project can be found on the website here:
<https://www.leekwoottonandguyscliffe.org.uk/index.php/community-links/clubs-societies/history-group/projects/doreens-diary/> (accessed 14/09/2024)