



The Swan Lady of Salisbury

She writes about them and embroiders them on tapestry. **Mrs. Dorothy Bowes**, who lives in St. Ann Street, in an authority on swans.

I chatted with her in the Gift Shop in New Street where she helps her husband, Stephen Bowes,, in an artistic setting of lampshades, pottery, glass, jewellery and other colourful objects on sale to the discriminating buyer.

When I asked her how her interest in swans began, Mrs. Bowes told e that as a child she was frightened of the swans on the Mill Dam at her home in Shipley, Yorkshire. But whether this first impression of strong beaks thrust aggressively forward trigger of her passion for the bird or not, gradually swans began to creep into her poetry.

Then came the day when Mrs. Bowes noticed an article in the 'Observer' concerning a famous collection of 2,000 swans. She wrote off to the author, **Miss Diana Gillon**, at once and consequently these two women became friends.

"Swans are extremely faithful," Mrs. Bowes said, going on to tell me about the time when she befriended a bird suffering from a damaged wing. "I'm sure that bird recognised my footsteps each time I visited it," she insisted.

Friends and relations have been trained to humour her great interest in 'swan lore' and her collection includes souvenirs, news items and photographs from many countries, besides those taken by herself. There are also her sketches and paintings of this regal bird.

Searching for swans has become a motive for travel for Mrs. Bowes, and besides the obvious targets, such as Abbotsbury and Slimbridge, she made a special trip to Chartwell to see **Sir Winston Churchill's** black swans and to photograph the 200 swans that have established themselves on the estuary at Mistley, Essex. Here she discovered an unusual swan fountain which led her into many more interesting paths of research.

So far, swan has not been on the menu for her Christmas dinner, but in spite of the statement in the book of Deuteronomy where the bible lists swan amongst the birds forbidden by human consumption, it has been known to grace the table of some modern banquets.

Mrs. Bowes refers to her mass of cuttings to prove that swans have considerable news value, and one day she hopes to write a book about them.

The countries she has visited include France, Italy, and many parts of Scandinavia. Soon she will travel to Bruges, where she hopes to find swans on the waterways.

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