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WORLD AT YOUR ELBOW

Los Angeles discovers a baby mermaid - one-year-old Sherry Lynn Whitford dives into the swimming pool like a seal and swims confidently under water. The secret of her success is her ability to hold her breath happily for long periods. Try holding your breath while Sherry stays under water. Ready. Take a deep breath everyone and now - hold it.

Hold it.

Don't breathe.

Hold it.

Sherry is safe and sound. How about you?

This is easier. Take your choice from among these faces. Which is that of Miss Paris, nineteen forty eight? Alright, ignore the faces, concentrate on the....er...the problems facing the Miss France Selection Committee. From eighteen competitors they must choose a lady to represent Paris in the All France Beauty contest.

The austerity which marks the times favours the judges. With a half coupon value of material shared between all the contestants, there is little in the way to prevent arrival at a "fair" decision, or should we say...Brunette decision. Here she is - Miss Paris!!!! Talking of austerity - the drought of oysters may soon be broken.

For the first time since 1926, a French fishing fleet sails from the Brittany port of Cancale to catch oysters. 150 trawlers and smacks go out to revive an ancient Breton industry. Usually found between tidal levels along the coasts of all continents, the oysters along the European coast-line are of the flat type. Often regarded by less fortunate mortals as the staple diet of the rich, the slippery little customers (eaten raw when removed from their shells) are regarded by many as the world's greatest delicacy. To the Breton fishermen, their record haul means renewed prosperity for their home port.

Happy in the knowledge that oysters will sell at six shillings for half a dozen, the people of Cancale welcome their men back home - thankful that their efforts have been so richly rewarded. Offering thanks too are the people of Birmingham. Carrying samples of their trades, 700 people (representatives of thirty Midland firms) go to