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WVS/WRVS ASSOCIATION

17 Old Park Lane, London W1Y 4AJ - Tel: 01-499 6040

NEWSLETTER No.15

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LONDON

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Area 1

Mrs. A. Spibey,

Area 4

Mrs. M. J. Preston,

NORTH EAST DIVISION

Area 1

Mrs. C. V. Smurthwaite,

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Area 3

Mrs. D. Stokes, MBE,

MIDLANDS DIVISION

Area 1

Mrs. O. Wright, MBE,

Area 2

Mrs. A. Tyler, Highfield,

Mrs. H.M. Cooper, MBE,

Area 3

Mrs. E. Kenrick,

HOME COUNTIES/ANGLIA DIVISION

Area 3

Mrs. Piers Currie,

SOUTH EAST DIVISION

Area 1

Miss J. Barnard, OBE,

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

Area 1

Mrs. K. Barker, BEM,

Area 2

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WALES

Mrs. K. Mowat, MBE,

SCOTLAND

Mrs. V. Crabbie, CBE,

ROYAL
WOMEN'S ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Address by the Baroness Pike, former Chairman WRVS

at the Annual General Meeting of the WVS/WRVS Association on 3rd June 1981

"WRVS AS I SEE IT"

The Chairman, in welcoming Lady Pike said she wanted to take the opportunity of thanking her for the help and support she had given the Association as President.

Lady Reading had created the pattern and design of WRVS - a pattern which had remained the same ever since, changing only its priorities and activities with the rapid changes in the background of society. Succeeding Chairmen had the unenviable task of making changes to adapt WRVS to new methods and new needs. Dame Frances Clode had to see the Service reorganised to fit in with the changes in Local Government and the Health Service and the introduction of an upper age limit for WRVS members holding senior appointments.

Lady Pike had taken over as Chairman at a time when financial restrictions were being imposed and she had to streamline the Service to give it a forward-look, which necessitated some drastic changes in order to show that WRVS was able to attract younger members and was also ready to adjust its methods to meet ever-changing needs. It was a great task, which she had achieved in a comparatively short time, and she had handed over to her successor a service well equipped to meet the gaps in the future.

Lady Pike began by apologising for the date of the meeting clashing with the date of the Consultative Council: also for having to leave by 2 p.m. to attend a meeting of the Civil Service Pay Review Board. She had been very anxious to attend the Association Meeting for the whole day, as she had been unlucky on several occasions in her duties as President of the Association.

Lady Pike said that some people had been suspicious of her as she came from a political background and it would have been especially difficult had she not known Lady Reading so well; she knew her thinking and even disagreed with her at times. She spoke of her gratitude to Dame Mary Smieton for the administration she had set up in 1938 and to Dame Frances Clode for the wisdom and strength with which she had inaugurated the age limits on positions of responsibility in preparation for the necessary streamlining.

Lady Pike said she had needed some Vice-Chairmen with outside interests and links and she now welcomed the appointment of Barbara Shenfield as WRVS Chairman, as she had had 5 years' experience with WRVS as a Vice-Chairman. Her very high calibre, understanding and foresight, and the fact that she had great experience and contacts in many directions, equipped her well for her new appointment. Her style of chairmanship might be different from hers but the ethics of chairmanship would remain the same.

Lady Pike went on to say that it was fortuitous that WRVS had been founded in 1939 with no committee procedures, hierarchy, lobbying or formal constitution. Its basis of "no fund raising" meant that all its energies could be devoted to work for the community. It was a unique organisation which had been able to adapt its structure to meet ever-changing needs.

Lady Pike felt that in order to encourage younger teams to undertake the active operational side of some of our work, 65 was a suitable age for retirement for people holding jobs carrying certain responsibility. She said our Grant-in-aid was published annually in Parliamentary Estimates. We should be proud of the fact that there was general recognition of what we do and that we are economical and cost effective. It was a tribute to our

members as it was the members in the field at the end of the day who gained or lost the respect of the general public.

1891 2007 Together with the grants from Local Authorities for work undertaken on their behalf, we were, as a Service, responsible for millions of public money. She regarded WRVS as an extended family. As society moved on so must WRVS move forward. There were more unmarried mothers to be helped and more single-parent families, and often WRVS had to act as daughter, daughter-in-law, friend and counsellor. There was a great advantage in our nationwide coverage, and she mentioned a call from Scotland about a relative in St. Ives, which had been dealt with most expeditiously. Lady Pike said that when she had taken over, the emphasis was changing and Local Government was being reorganised. Directors of Social Services were anxious to do Meals on Wheels at local level and we were fighting to be allowed to keep in touch with the people. Now more emphasis was being put on work with young people and family support. Some people thought we had dropped the "Good Neighbour" schemes but this work was now covered by more comprehensive term "Family Support".

The changing nature of our priorities had meant that responsibility for leadership had to be as close to the ground as possible. This was the reason for changing from Regions to Areas. In the same way, Headquarters' functions had to be streamlined. People were needed at Headquarters who had good experience from outside as well as in WRVS work in other parts of the country. There were fewer spinsters and the ideal people did not always live in London.

Lady Pike said there were two main problems at the present time. The young and unemployed presented a challenge and it was a privilege to work with others such as Endeavour Training, the Youth Opportunities, Manpower Services Commission, and to see how we could bring in more young people, work which would need strong imagination and initiative. The second challenge arose from the question of civil unrest, vandalism, etc., due to the pressures within society today and it would therefore be necessary at all times to have a strong emergency section, without any thought of nuclear war implications. WRVS must always be prepared to back up schemes and national projects without any political bias. This meant ensuring that there were emergency teams, trained and in good heart all over the country, ready to assist the police and the statutory authorities generally.

Lady Pike told the meeting that after her resignation had been announced and a new Chairman of WRVS had been appointed, she was asked by the Prime Minister to accept the Chairmanship of the Broadcasting Complaints Commission. The Broadcasting Complaints Commission was set up under the Broadcasting Act 1980 and came into being on 1st June 1981. It is a statutory body charged with the responsibility of adjudicating on complaints from the public on all broadcasting matters whether television or radio.

VOTE OF THANKS TO LADY PIKE

Mrs. Doreen Harris proposed a Vote of Thanks to Lady Pike and she presented her with a small token from the Committee for her garden.

November 1981

WRVS Headquarters,
17 Old Park Lane,
London W1Y 4AJ.

Once again we present our Association Newsletter in a different form - more attractive, we hope, than the spring issue - but regrettably not so handy and perhaps not as easy to read as the "magazine" type version. It is, however, the best that inflated prices and shortage of the necessary man power (or should it be "woman" power?) can manage.

We are most grateful to the Chairman of WRVS, Mrs. Barbara Shenfield, the President of our Association, for allowing us the use of the facilities of Headquarters and also the various people who have helped to produce this Newsletter.

As 1981 is the Year for Disabled People, included are a few reports on some of the ways WRVS up and down the country has responded to the call for renewed efforts to help and particularly to integrate into society those who are handicapped. A full account of the many and varied schemes would have filled many magazines and it is hoped that Association members will make an opportunity to see the WRVS Annual Report for 1981 which will be published early next year. Mention is also made of two projects with which WRVS is helping and which to some of us will seem "new" - namely Computer Aided Shopping (help for disabled people) and Endeavour Training which is an extension, including "adventure" projects, to holiday schemes.

Of course, people still need more help than official bodies and friends/relatives can provide and WRVS continues to seek to find new ways of giving this.

We are including shortened versions of reports that some Area Representatives have submitted plus a few accounts of County events, but we know that much more is being done than is reported. We would welcome more reports, letters to the Editor (so far only one received!) and other material which may be of general interest to our readers.

We were delighted to have our new President with us at our Committee meeting on October 14th; not only did Mrs. Barbara Shenfield encourage us by her presence and support, but she helped us in our discussion regarding the new Constitution.

Since the last Newsletter we have held our Annual General Meeting which many of you attended and of which there is a short report later in this Newsletter. You will have noticed that we promised to draft a more formal Constitution for the Association before the next AGM. This is being done and will be circulated with the Agenda and other papers for the AGM to be held in London on Wednesday, June 2nd, 1982. We hope that some County and other groups will be able to arrange coach parties to come to London for the day. This would enable as many members as possible to attend the meeting and take part in the election of Chairman and Committee members. Will you all be thinking of suitable nominations for Chairman and Committee as we will be asking for these nominations to be sent in a least five weeks before the date of the AGM.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PEOPLE

The work WRVS does for and with disabled is as rewarding as ever: reports show that not only does the day-by-day work continue but special efforts made to coincide with the "Year" have been so successful that it is hoped to repeat these next year and beyond. Examples are the Wheel Chair Dance held in the North West, a group of disabled people from Chester going on holiday in North Wales and the mammoth task of feeding disabled children and their helpers at the Disabled Games held in Gateshead.

There is room only to feature three special items:

The Sponsored Run with a Difference - Project Wheelabout '81.

Neil Slatter, aged 22, from Petersfield, Hampshire, lost the use of his legs and one arm after a motorcycle crash four years ago. Nothing daunted, he planned to raise £100,000 towards the cost of 100 electric wheelchairs similar to the one he uses and which was the means of achieving a sponsored run of over 1,000 miles. His chair, which he calls his "new legs" moves at about 4 miles an hour and enabled Neil to travel up to 36 miles each day, climbing high kerbs and over rough ground.

Civic heads, clubs, voluntary bodies and members of the public assisted in many ways such as overnight hospitality for his support team, which included his father. WRVS were proud to have been asked to provide refreshments en route: in his letter thanking WRVS for their help, Neil writes that not only were the meals appetising and varied but no meal was duplicated in the 54-day journey! Nottingham WRVS was especially pleased to be able to give him a birthday party.

Going into Wales and as far north as Scotland, this brave young man secured enough money to buy 90 wheelchairs and he is sure that, with more sponsorship promised, he will be able to provide another 40. What an achievement!

Apart from this splendid well-deserved financial support, Neil is trying to make society aware of the problems and needs of the handicapped in terms of mobility, education, employment and housing; he is especially anxious to strengthen relations between the disabled and able-bodied - one of the main aims of "The Year". He "warned" WRVS he has other projects in the pipeline and looks forward to teaming up with us again!

"Patterning" - special exercises for people with brain damage.

WRVS in the Dinefwr District of Dyfed, Wales, is providing a large rota of members and "friends" to carry out special exercises, known as "patterning", for a 16-year old adopted girl who had sustained brain damage as a child.

"Patterning" was discovered in America where, after such exercises, some severely disabled children had become mobile. Now there is a British Institute of Patterning with its Headquarters in Bristol. The number of helpers needed seemed at first staggering but that has been overcome and there is now a rota of 30-40 helpers a week, who work in 2-hourly shifts seven days a week. They report that the biggest reward to date is a noticeable change in voice in that they can tell when the girl is happy or not, and that she really enjoys riding-for-the-disabled now that she can move her legs sufficiently to sit astride a horse. Naturally, WRVS was given, before undertaking this, the full approval of local doctors.

Outdoor Pursuits

Our own particular project in Cumbria has been to use some of our hospital profits to sponsor individual disabled young people for a short course at the Calvert Trust Pursuits Centre and we are delighted to include here an extract from a letter sent by one young man to the local Barrow Organiser:

'We can honestly say that we had the time of our lives. We went sailing, drove a pony and trap, went swimming and we both managed to mount a horse. The atmosphere was great and the instructors were always encouraging.

We hope to return to the Calvert Trust Centre in the not too distant future to brush up on pony and trap driving'.

COMPUTER AIDED SHOPPING

A new idea to aid elderly, disabled and others who find it difficult to "shop around" and especially to carry their shopping home has been tried out in the Gateshead area of Newcastle upon Tyne. It was inaugurated after a study made by the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and commissioned by one of the supermarkets.

The scheme had been approved by the Gateshead Council, who asked for the help of WRVS in two capacities, to man a computer for 2 hours each morning with a young person from the Youth Opportunities programme, which was involved in the scheme from the beginning and to provide a driver for a delivery van, accompanied by someone who would deliver the parcels.

The computer, operated every weekday, 9.30 - 11 a.m., is based in a local library near a heavily populated area. It accepts the orders, registers the details of the shoppers' purchases, prints a detailed receipt and the cash is paid. The orders are taken to the store and deliveries are made to people's homes later in the day. No extra charge is made.

The service was so much appreciated that Social Services decided to extend it to the housebound and here WRVS was able to give special help. It is of particular interest that the scheme runs closely with the Social Service Department's emergency phone service, which is in contact with approximately 700 people who are unable to leave their homes.

The extension of the scheme, which has interested other authorities, will of course depend largely on the availability of finance!

ENDEAVOUR TRAINING

Another fairly new development is run in close co-operation with Endeavour Training, an organisation formed in the 1950's within the Youth Service. They state, "the key to every success, small, large, personal or national is 'endeavour'". This is of special interest to WRVS which is extending its work for and by young people.

Endeavour Training presents to young people an exciting and challenging programme of practical activity and their members work for the community in a host of ways.

Several County Organisers attended introductory residential courses at Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, to experience Endeavour methods of working with young people. It is unlikely that County Organisers ever envisaged their duties would include abseiling, canoeing, archery, etc!, but they all joined in with typical WRVS enthusiasm and sense of humour.

Recently volunteers from Endeavour Training have been especially welcomed in the camp holidays which WRVS run all over the country for the older children, who are often happier in camps rather than with private hostesses.

Children were introduced to overnight camping under canvas and other Endeavour activities - for many of them this was an opportunity to experience a whole new world.

Endeavour personnel bring to these camps a discipline and enthusiasm which combines very well indeed with WRVS expertise in feeding and caring for children in an exciting holiday situation - we hope this is the beginning of a long and happy partnership.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1981

The Annual General Meeting of the Association was held on Wednesday, 5th June when about 220 members from all over the country were present.

Although Lady Pike had resigned as Chairman of WRVS and so was not in a position to take the Chair as President of the Association, she was on the agenda as main speaker for the afternoon session. Owing to having an unexpected important official engagement in the afternoon, her talk was transferred to the morning session. The text of her address is enclosed.

At the beginning of the meeting Miss Halpin, who was in the Chair, took the opportunity of thanking Headquarters for the facilities they had given to the Association, and to Lady Pike, who as President, had always given help and support to the Association.

Referring to the Minutes of the previous year, Miss Halpin reminded members that she had suggested then that the Association should have a more formal constitution and a time limit for Chairman and Committee members. Since then there had been a new appointment of Chairman for WRVS and her views would need to be ascertained before discussing changes in the present Constitution.

Later in the day, during general discussion, these points were agreed and it was left that after consultation with the new President a draft constitution would be prepared for submission to the members at the next AGM.

Among other points raised, was the venue for future Annual General Meetings, some members thinking it should not always be in London, whereas others raised difficulties that changing venues might present. This, too, was referred for further discussion.

Reports were given by 8 Area Representatives present and Miss Halpin read an account of the Scottish AGM. These showed the variety of meetings and other activities carried out by the Areas; South West had the highest number of members and increasingly Counties were appointing County Representatives.

The Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Wren, having reported that the membership was coming up to the 1,700 mark, thanked those who had sent Banker's Orders, as this saved postage in sending out reminders. She particularly stressed the need for the Secretary to be informed of any changes in membership, such as marriage, death, change of address, etc.

The Hon. Treasurer, Miss Cooper, presented the accounts for the year ended 31st March 1981.

The Chairman took the opportunity of thanking the Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer and the Hon. Auditor, Miss Cubitt, for all their work during the previous year.

Miss Halpin referred to the fact that according to our constitution, the new Chairman of WRVS, Mrs. Barbara Shenfield, should be appointed President of the Association and this was proposed, seconded and passed unanimously.

With regard to election of Chairman and Committee, it was proposed from the Chair:

"THAT the present Chairman and Committee remain in office pending possible changes in the constitution of the Association"

which was agreed.

Before the meeting closed, Lady Charles spoke on the origin and work of the WRVS Benevolent Trust and indicated the kind of new needs which were arising and might be met by help from this Trust.

Dame Frances Clode proposed a Vote of Thanks to the Chairman.

REPORTS FROM AREAS

London

The Annual Meeting of the London members of the Association was held by kind permission of the Chairman at Headquarters on October 22nd. After lunch, members were delighted to have the opportunity of hearing a few words from the new Chairman of WRVS, who popped in between other meetings.

Miss K. Halpin, the Association Chairman, told the members of the reorganisation of the WRVS in London. From the 1st November, the Region would be divided into five Areas corresponding to the Emergency Services sections, each with an Area Organiser. As far as the Association is concerned, for the time being the areas will be working as one unit with Jean Sanderson as their Representative.

Miss Halpin went on to talk about what WRVS was doing today, stressing that the traditions of the past which all of them had helped to build were being maintained, and enabling WRVS to adapt its organisation in order to meet the ever-changing needs of the time.

North West Division - Area 1, Cumbria and Lancashire

We are pleased to report that Mrs. A. Spibey, formerly County Organiser for Lancashire, has been appointed Area Representative. We look forward to "news" for our next issue.

North West Division - Area 4, Cheshire and Merseyside

We received, just before going to press, a letter from Mrs. Mary Preston, the Area Representative, saying that she had been confined to hospital in the summer following an operation on her foot. However, she added that she was now "getting back to normal locomotion", so we hope she will soon be able to resume her work with the Association.

North East Division - Area 3, Humberside and Lincolnshire

A welcome to the new Area Representative, Mrs. D. Stokes, MBE, formerly Joint Deputy County Organiser for Humberside South, who we hope will be sending us a report later on.

Midlands Division - Area 1, West Midlands Counties

Another welcome appointment as Area Representative is Mrs. Olive Wright, MBE, who has held several appointments in the former Midland Region. She was present at the annual meeting of the Hereford & Worcestershire Association members held at the home of the Misses Pollard on the afternoon of the 22nd July. 25 of the 43 members gave a warm welcome to Dame Frances Clode, Vice President of the Association and the Area Organiser, Lady Higgs.

During the discussion which followed Dame Frances' report on the AGM of the Association held in London on 3rd June, there was enthusiastic agreement with the suggestion that the AGM should be held in different places each year to encourage members distant from London to attend. It was felt that Malvern would make an ideal centre. Lady Higgs' talk on "WRVS Today" was much enjoyed.

Midlands Division - Area 2, East Midland Counties

A Narrative Report from EREWASH stated that a number of members attended the annual Derbyshire gathering held in Ashbourne.

Midlands Division - Area 3, West Midland Metropolitan County

Our sympathy goes to the Area Representative, Mrs. E. Kenrick on the tragic loss of both her husband and daughter in an accident in which she, too, was badly injured. After making a good recovery, she slipped and fractured her leg!

However, Mrs. Kenrick wrote from hospital to say that the activities in Birmingham continue, including a coffee morning being held in November to plan next year's programme. Solihull has a flourishing group which meets for buffet luncheons and Wolverhampton also has a busy programme.

Home Counties/Anglia Division - Area 1, Home Counties

Mrs. E. Sewell who has had to retire as Area Representative has agreed to continue as County Representative for Hertfordshire. Mrs. E. Connor will represent Cambridgeshire and we look forward to receiving a report in the new year.

Home Counties/Anglia Division - Area 3, East Anglia

Details of the WVS/WRVS Association were given in the 1981 Newsletter issued by Norfolk WRVS - a good way it would seem to bring information of the Association to potential members, who were invited to meet Mrs. Piers Currie, the Area Representative at the County Office.

South East Division - Area 1, South East Surrey

A Meeting held on 21st September in Woking, organised by Mrs. Webb, the District Organiser, was attended by about 30 people, some Association members and other "friends". Miss Halpin, Chairman of the Association and Mrs. Downham, the County Organiser were present; Mrs. Webb took the chair. As a result of Miss Halpin's talk and the discussion which followed, it is thought that a group will be formed based on Woking and possibly one in the Waverley District for Farnham and district members. Mrs. Webb set up a provisional committee and agreed that the general method of working within the county would be discussed with Mrs. Speirs, the newly-appointed representative for the County, who was not able to attend the meeting. Members wishing to join up with the Woking Group should get in touch with Mrs. Speirs, County WRVS Office, Guildford, or with Mrs. Webb, District Organiser, Woking.

Kent & East Sussex

A Meeting is planned for Saturday, April 24th, 1982, with a buffet lunch at the WRVS Club, Hyde Road, Eastbourne. Members interested are asked to telephone or write to the Area Representative, Miss Joanna Barnard, Glebe House, Goudhurst, Kent.

South East Division - Area 2, South East

West Sussex

Mrs. B. Skelt, the County Representative for West Sussex reports that 25 members enjoyed a "get together" in the garden of Mrs. Berkeley-Barton's home in Horsham on a beautiful day in August. After lunch, members were given a most interesting talk on "WRVS Today" by Mrs. Janet Wier, the Area Organiser. Members decided to meet twice annually in future, in May and October - offers of hospitality have already been received.

Hampshire

Members had a happy garden meeting in July in glorious weather; Miss H. Gammon, the County Representative, states that members plan to attend a Carol Concert in Winchester Cathedral at Christmas and have been invited to have tea at the County Office afterwards.

Channel Islands

Jersey

Mrs. Morton-Fisher writes that their members meet monthly, weather permitting, at St. Helier where WRVS has an office in the centre of the town.

SOUTH WEST DIVISION - Area 1, South West

Mrs. K. M. Barker, having energetically looked after both Areas 1 and 2 in the South West, is now confining herself to Area 1 and reports on the following:

Avon

At a reunion held in the County Office on 23rd September, members were delighted to meet the Association Chairman, Miss K. Halpin, and thoroughly enjoyed her talk, including reminiscences of the WVS/WRVS years, when Lady Reading was our National Chairman. Two useful suggestions were made during the general discussion, that a few spare Annual and County Reports be brought to meetings to distribute to non-active members and that a combined meeting of all three Counties in the Area might be held in 1982.

Gloucestershire

A summer re-union held in the home of Mrs. M. Littlewood, the County Representative, was attended by 49 members who were very glad of the opportunity of meeting Dame Frances Clode, the Association Vice President, Mrs. Mary Garland, the Area Organiser and the Association Chairman, Miss K. Halpin, who addressed the meeting. After a buffet lunch in the garden, a fascinating talk on the work of women police officers was given with touches of much appreciated humour by Woman Superintendent Chandler of the Gloucestershire Constabulary.

SOUTH WEST DIVISION - Area 2, South West

The new Representative for the Area is Mrs. M.E. Coyle, who we welcome as we shall the reports she will no doubt be sending to us next year.

Somerset

The spring meeting was held in the village hall of Fivehead in May when 31 members enjoyed an informative talk given by Mr. Trent Thomas on his "Everest Trek to Base Camp" - a collection of excellent slides made the journey come alive.

In September Mr. and Mrs. Brett Stephens invited members to their lovely Tudor home, Coker Court. 25 members, including for the first time two men, were able to wander around the beautiful rooms in the west wing. Mrs. Mary Wigfield, the County Representative, who sent in both reports added that they were fascinated by the work of their host who had made not only much of the attractive furniture but also many musical instruments.

WALES

Mrs. K. Mowat, another energetic and enthusiastic Representative, reports on three activities held during the summer.

Denbigh

An informal meeting "over tea at the Denbigh WRVS Office" was held by kind permission of the County Organiser to explore possible membership of the Association. So many people were on holiday that it was decided to have another meeting later in the year before taking further action.

Wrexham Maelor

Successful "get togethers" continue to be held, one at Cefn y Bedd Community Centre where the guest speaker, Mrs. Marjorie Forbes, ex County Hospital Organiser, talked of new work being carried out, especially at the new hospital in Bodelyyddan. Those attending were much encouraged by the presence of a number of members who had held senior appointments, including the past County Borough Organiser for Chester. The second meeting, held

at Wrexham, included a talk, illustrated by slides, on 18th century porcelain. The next gathering is planned for 26th March at Cefn Mawr.

Dyfed

Enjoyable Luncheon Meetings are organised every second month. The Christmas Lunch to be held in a hotel, is planned for December 14th 1981.

Aberystwyth

It was good to read in a local newspaper, the "Cambrian News", that the "newly-formed WVS/WRVS Association held its first annual dinner in the Bay Hotel, attended by 25 members. The toast was proposed by Mrs. Vera Griffiths, who until her retirement had been County Organiser for many years and still keeps an active interest in WRVS! (Editorial note - more local publicity like this may well attract new members).

SCOTLAND

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Theological College, Edinburgh, on Thursday, 9th April. The members representing all Regions (with the exception of Highland North, Highland South and Dumbries & Galloway) were present. The Chairman of Scotland as President of the WVS/WRVS Association, Scotland, took the chair; Lady Pike, the ex Chairman WRVS, was the Guest Speaker.

After the business, an excellent lunch was enjoyed while members chatted with old friends. In the afternoon Lady Pike gave a most entertaining and inspiring address.

Miss S. Heaney CB, has now retired as Association President, Scotland, and the new President is the Hon. Mrs. M. D. Corsar, the recently appointed Chairman, Scotland.

The 1982 AGM will be held next April in Dundee.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I thought you might be interested to hear of seven ex WVS members who first met in 1941 when working at the Gordon Services Club in Vauxhall Bridge Road - a canteen near Victoria Station - a very busy area.

The group included Muriel Cowell, Mabs Emmerson (nee Student), Joyce Browne (nee Reardon), also Alice, Betty and Katie (surnames not known), all now married. We have met since those early days on three occasions, when interesting stories, some about early days and other more recent times, have been exchanged.

Mrs. Emmerson and I left to join the WAAF and have continued to remain friends. We would be so pleased to hear from other "Gordon Girls".

(Signed) Z. Bunt (Miss),

"BY APPOINTMENT"

Our founder Chairman, Lady Reading, used to refer to WVS as "the wardrobe of the nation". Now WRVS has been featured as, "By appointment, outfitters to the Boat People". In case this needs any explanation, the Portsmouth News went on to say, "that's a label WRVS carries with pride after clothing all the 2,000 Vietnamese refugees passing through the Thorney Island reception centre".

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

Congratulations are extended to the following:

- DBE The Right Honourable Baroness Pike of Melton.
- MBE Mrs. Betty F. Wilson - Area Organiser, Cumbria and Lancashire.
Mrs. Jean M. Gould - City Organiser, City of Hull.
- BEM Mrs. Elizabeth M. S. Metcalfe ' WRVS Member, Ipswich.
Mrs. Eileen E. Holroyd - Deputy County Organiser, Durham.
Mrs. Margaret J. Tennant - Local Organiser, Cottingham, North Humbers
North Humberside.
Mrs. Betty E. Lumley, JP. - District Organiser, North
East Derbyshire.
Mrs. Florence M. Webber - Clothing Organiser, Southend-on-Sea.
Miss Evelyn P.L. Savill - Assistant to South East Area Organiser
and also for services to the community.
- MBE Mrs. Ursula Mary Davies, JP. - WRVS County Organiser, Staffordshire.
Mrs. Marie Louise Goodman - WRVS County Emergency Services
Organiser, Derbyshire.

A PATRON SAINT?

A Norfolk newsletter reports that our new Chairman, Mrs. Barbara Shenfield, remarked that "Good King Wenceslas could be the WRVS patron saint - he did not leave it to others when he saw need, but took the fuel and meals himself through the snow, and he cheered on the fainthearted page".

WHAT IS WRVS? SUGGESTIONS FROM DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY CHILDREN

"I think it is a sort of army but just for women".

"I think it is a service that women volunteer (sic) to do a job for the sick and old people, which had been used in the war and is now used maybe in old folks homes".

"I think that they would help in a crisis".

READY FOR EMERGENCY 1

The South Shropshire District Narrative Report reports that "the husband of one of our members on receiving a package from the postman thought it looked suspicious. He dropped it into a barrel of water, soaked it thoroughly, retrieved it with a pair of old-fashioned fire tongs, and then threw it behind a brick wall in the garden to wait for an explosion. When nothing happened he decided it was safe to open it. Much to the amazement and amusement of our member and her husband, the package contained a WRVS membership card and badge!

READY FOR EMERGENCY 2

Wirral Metropolitan District concluded its annual report with a story which they say "made our week - not cribbed from Readers' Digest 'Humour in Uniform'".

"Each tenant's flatlet is equipped with a fire blanket. On Boxing Day one elderly lady's small electric cooker went on fire, but she and the other tenants behaved beautifully, called the Fire Service, and little damage was done. When asked if she had not thought to use the fire blanket she replied, "Oh yes - I put it round my shoulders while I waited for the brigade to come".

OBITUARIES

Lady Anne Montague, OBE

Lady Anne Montague, who died at her home in Bampton, Oxfordshire in May 1981, had held a number of appointments in WVS and WRVS although she had not been an active member since 1970. She was County Organiser for Derbyshire and later for Herefordshire, working altogether in four different Regions, including London where she was Regional Administrator in the 1960s. From 1944-54 she was a member of the HQ Staff, serving in the Services Welfare (then the Overseas) Department of which she was the Departmental Head.

Miss S. Thursfield, OBE

Miss Thursfield died suddenly on 15th September. She joined WVS in 1938 as a Village Representative in Northamptonshire and later held two appointments as Regional Organiser, firstly in the South East Region and then in the North Midlands where she was later appointed Administrator. She was transferred to Headquarters in 1954 and brought to the Regional Department a unique knowledge of WRVS and gift of organisation which enabled her to give outstanding service to the whole country during the following six years. After retiring to her home at Ditchling, Sylvia worked in the Sussex County Office until she moved to the WRVS Housing Association Club at Barrowby, Lincolnshire.

Miss E. Popper

Miss Popper came to WRVS in January 1959 after working, amongst other things, as Personal Assistant to the Austrian Ambassador in London. Initially she worked in the then Public Relations Department. In November 1959 she transferred to the Old People's Welfare Department and thereafter and until she left in November 1980, worked closely with WRVS Residential Clubs. Edith Popper had a fund of information on numerous topics and possessed a gentle wit. Those who came into contact with her always found her to be most helpful.

- Mrs. E. M. Alsop - West Sussex
- Mrs. A. W. Baugh - Hampshire
- Mrs. P.G. Brooks - B.E.M. County Organiser, Met. Kent & London Region
- Mrs. M. Davies - Solihull
- Mrs. M. L. Davidson-Brown - Hastings
- Miss Mary Holdsworth, MBE - ARA Midlands Region and North Yorkshire
- Mrs. G.L. Howarth - Derbyshire
- Miss M. Keating - Gloucestershire
- Mrs. E. Moore Ede, MBE, JP - Worcestershire
- Mrs. F. K. Slane - Hastings
- Mrs. C. Taylor - Worthing
- Miss E. Thomas - ex-Headquarters Regional Department
- Mrs. K. Turner - London

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1982

The Annual General Meeting and Reunion will be held at Holy Trinity Church Hall, Brompton Road, London, SW7 on Wednesday, June 2nd.

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS

AND
EVERY GOOD WISH FOR HEALTH AND HAPPINESS IN 1982