



WRVS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter No 42
Spring 1995



8th June, 1946

TO-DAY, AS WE CELEBRATE VICTORY, I send this personal message to you and all other boys and girls at school. For you have shared in the hardships and dangers of a total war and you have shared no less in the triumph of the Allied Nations.

I know you will always feel proud to belong to a country which was capable of such supreme effort; proud, too, of parents and elder brothers and sisters who by their courage, endurance and enterprise brought victory. May these qualities be yours as you grow up and join in the common effort to establish among the nations of the world unity and peace.

George R.I.

From Kesgrave School, Near Ipswich. The message from King George VI to all school children on VE day. (From Mrs Charnley, Cambridge)

WRVS ASSOCIATION

WRVS Head Office
234-244 Stockwell Road
London SW9 9SP
Telephone 0171 416 0146

President

Mrs Elizabeth Toulson
Chairman, WRVS

Vice-Presidents

Mrs A Christophersen
The Hon. Dame Mary Corsar DBE.
Mrs H Foster OBE
Miss K Halpin CBE
Mrs P James MBE
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Mrs M.D.S. Maisey BEM

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Mrs M Davies

Hon. Editor

Mrs N. Venables

Annual subscriptions for 1995 were due on January 1st 1995

Bankers Orders: Members paying by Standing Order will know the month for which they have authorised their payment, if there is any change in payment, please see that the previous Standing Order is cancelled.

Cheques should be made payable to the **WRVS ASSOCIATION**

When giving notifications of any change of address please include the **POSTAL CODE**

On May 8th, 2,000 veterans will be welcomed at Buckingham Palace and the Association hopes to have a contingent of 45 at this celebration. Other plans for the celebration of V.E. and V.J. Day 1995 in London on August 19th will include a March Past of Veterans at Buckingham Palace London WRVS will be manning two display tents in Hyde Park, arranged by S.E. Division for May 6th, 7th and 8th.

Cover picture by Mrs Wilkinson. Nottingham

**From the President, Mrs Elizabeth
Toulson**



The Service has been moving forward very rapidly in response to the many important and demanding changes, particularly those imposed on us by the Charities Acts of 1992. We are keen to embrace change as an opportunity to strengthen further this wonderful Service as the premier provider of care to the local communities in which we all work so eagerly.

Amidst the challenges we face, it has been an important part of our achievements to resolve the status of the WRVS Association as a legal and integral part of this wonderful Service. Your Chairman, Elizabeth Claydon, has been stoic in her determination to produce the correct solution.

The Service values the work of our senior members so much. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to write: without all your devotion, commitment and loyalty, the Service of which we are so proud, would not be thriving to-day. As your delighted President, I salute all you do and have done and relish the prospect of our years ahead, working together to produce the highest quality of care for those in need.

I send my thanks and good wishes to you all, and look forward to your AGM and our meeting together in
July

Elizabeth Toulson

Letter from the Chairman

Dear Member,

This is the last letter I will write to you as your Chairman and so it makes it very special for me to be able to tell you, at long last, that as from the first of April 1995, our Association was reborn as "The WRVS Association"; a legal and integral part of WRVS; the only National "club" affiliated to WRVS. Maintaining our individuality; answerable to the WRVS Chairman and Council directly; protected by WRVS Charitable status.

It is planned that a copy of our new "Rules" will accompany this Newsletter and so you will read that "Life" Members of the WVS/WRVS Association are automatically "Life" Members of the "WRVS Association". I am glad and relieved that the invested capital of the Association, hither-to the responsibility of the Association Chairman, will be administered by WRVS. In my opinion, the administration of these monies was an unfair responsibility of the Chairman of the day. In the majority of instances it would not benefit either the Association or the WRVS, for the monies administered by Counties/Branches/Groups to be changed to WRVS Central Banking. Where there could be an advantage to an account every consideration will be given at Divisional level. As all money held in the name of the Association is for the benefit of the Members, we must ensure that it earns the best possible return.

I believe, in fact, that our Members will know little change, from what was laid down in our previous "Constitution" to our present "Rules". This is mainly due to the help and understanding of the Solicitors, the WRVS Chairman and the Chief Executive.

The high-lights of my term of office have, of course, been my many visits all over the country and the chance to meet and talk to a great many Members. These, often brief, conversations have proved to me that the really successful Groups/Branches are those where the planning and preparation for the most varied activities, as well as for the maximum care and contact with some Members, is shared, in rotation, amongst many of the Members, giving them an ever changing interest and continued commitment. The membership of these far-sighted groups never seems to lessen and they gave me real hope for the growth of the Association into a natural extension, (on retirement or semi-retirement), from the work with WRVS; a means of "slowing down", gradually, happily and companionably.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the AGM in the beautiful "campus" of Leicester University. Perhaps by then we will be able to shed our wellies.

My very best wishes,

Elizabeth Haydon



Letter from the Editor

Dear Members,

Another Spring issue, although as I write this it is snowing. However, here we have had a very mild winter with lots of lovely sunshine. I think we have been luckier than some of you.



First I must apologise for my two bad mistakes in the autumn Newsletter. One member rang to tell me I had left 2 oz sugar out of the list of ingredients for the gingerbread! Apologies to anyone who tried to make it. Another member pointed out another error. First I had put in a favourite poem by Kipling, then as it was too long, I had substituted the one by Yeats, but at the last minute failed to change the author. Sorry and well done to all who spotted them. Perhaps a deliberate mistake each time, with a prize might keep you all on your toes! I hope to do better in 1995 but do continue to point out my mistakes.

I want to thank everyone who has sent in their memories of VE Day. There was a good response. Do please keep it up. I hope you all enjoy the ones I have been able to print in this issue. I found them most moving.

Some Div Reps. say that they have not much news or don't think that it is interesting enough for the Newsletter. Could they perhaps find hidden talent among their members and send in their short stories, jokes, poems etc.

For the next issue we will be thinking of VJ Day, so could you please send me memories of that day, especially those of you who were in the forces at that time or who had loved ones still fighting after VE Day. Please send them direct to me, or through your Div Rep, if you wish, but not to Headquarters as they only have to post them on.

I look forward to seeing some of you at Leicester and I hope that you all enjoy a healthy, busy and interesting summer.

Ness Venables

News from the Divisions

NORTH EAST DIVISION *Headquarters Newcastle*

Northumberland, Tyne & Wear.

Div.Rep. Mrs S.McCormack BEM

Mrs McCormack reports that all five groups in the northern area are very active. Group leaders have regular three monthly meetings to discuss problems over lunch.

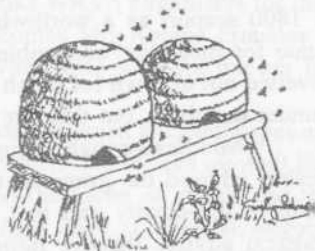
They have held two big meetings since September. One an afternoon tea at The Old Assembly Rooms, Newcastle with a National Trust speaker outlining the Northumbrian work of the Trust. At this tea party, they were delighted to welcome Mrs Elizabeth Claydon, Mrs Rene Thompson, and Mrs Margaret Duff, (WRVS N.E. Director), as their guests. Then in December, 80 members attended the Annual Newcastle Carol Service and buffet lunch. They welcomed Mrs Duff at this service, who read one of the lessons and also the County and Metropolitan Organiser. This support and interest from WRVS Division and County level is much appreciated. Whitley Bay group raised £235 for St Oswald's Hospice, at a very successful coffee morning in November, thanks partly to an excellent baker among them whose wares are always in great demand!

Sunderland group too have been fund raising. They raised £200 for St Benedict's Hospice, Sunderland. They are also knitting vests for Rwanda, following the "Good Morning" BBC appeal.

Mrs McCormack adds that it was a great pleasure for her to attend the Annual Lunch of the southern groups of this Division in Scarborough where she says the welcome was warm, like the weather that day.

Durham, Cleveland, N. Yorks. Div. Rep. Mrs R. Thompson OBE

Members will be sad to hear of the death of the Countess of Feversham who gave a lifetime of service as County Organiser for North Riding and North Yorkshire and as Vice-Chairman of WRVS. All who served with her came to appreciate her fine judgement and wonderful memory for relevant detail. She will be remembered with pleasure by us all.



The highlight of the year the Annual Lunch, at Scarborough this year, was held in glorious sunshine in the Spa. A galaxy of visitors were there to enjoy the event. Mrs Elizabeth Claydon, Mrs Sheila McCormack, Mrs Nancy Wilson, Mrs Peggy James, Mrs Margaret Duff and several of her staff. An enthusiastic talk on the new Stephen Joseph theatre shortly to be opened, was given by the publicity officer. Mrs Claydon spoke about WRVS changes and Mrs Duff about the badges and identity cards soon to be issued.

Mrs Stamp recommended Hartlepool's Historic Quay, reconstructed to resemble an 1800 seaport as a worthwhile outing. (Groups please note) Hartlepool has a new venue for meetings, accessible by bus and car in the town centre. At Christmas they travelled out of town for lunch together. Mrs Thompson sadly reports the death of some founder members, but they are much heartened by welcoming five new ones.

Middlesborough group "heard" a talk on "Hearing Dogs for the Deaf". This speaker advised the group that she would be pleased to talk to any other Association group in the county and that they have other branches throughout the country. Mrs Bragazzi advises that for information groups should contact "Hearing Dogs for the Deaf", London Road, Lewknor, Oxon OX9 5RY. Their telephone number is 01844 353898. Middlesborough have had monthly meetings and speakers who demand no fees, but often give a contribution! They enjoyed a Christmas lunch together. Divisional Office kindly offered a room for a coffee morning in October at which they raised £15 for Oxfam. The College of Technology proved the usual excellent venue for their Christmas lunch. They have lost two members through ill-health but even if they have resigned, Mrs Evans continues to visit them.

Your editor was sorry to learn from a Scarborough member, of the death of Miss Peggy Ferguson BEM of Scarborough. Peggy died so soon after I had had the privilege of having morning coffee with her, after an introduction by Lady Whitaker. We had talked together for about two hours about her interesting WVS career. Twelve members attended her funeral. One hundred and seventeen Scarborough members attended the N.E. Division annual lunch in the Spa, Scarborough where they heard a talk by the publicity officer of the Stephen Joseph Theatre in the Round. Mrs Claydon, Mrs Thompson OBE, Miss Hyatt OBE and Mrs Margaret Duff were guests of honour and Mrs Claydon spoke about the WRVS changes. Scarborough have had coffee get-togethers in members' houses and an outing to Bonville Miniature Village, near Bridlington. In July they had a lovely trip to the forest home of one member, in Thornton le Dale and all enjoyed a Christmas lunch together at the Mount Hotel.

York's October meeting heard an interesting talk on a personal collection of antiques and how they were acquired. They have a March meeting planned and a summer visit to the Wensleydale Creamery at Hawes, which was threatened with closure, but now

thankfully flourishing.

Harrogate and Selby have met their members regularly.

Humberside.

Div.Rep. Mrs A.M.Wilson

Mrs Wilson says that their membership is now 154, with four new members. She refers to the difficulty of getting WRVS TODAY to all her Association members. (I wonder if other groups have this difficulty ? Ed.) She thanks WRVS Organisers for their support of the Association in Humberside. She also welcomes Mrs Robina Priestley as County Organiser and praises the work of Mrs Joyce Ware, who has sent me her last report before retiring.

Mrs Ware reports that 25 members enjoyed the annual lunch at Cleethorpes and have a 1995 lunch planned at Bishop Burton College (to which I have been invited! Ed). The highspot seems to have been the summer meeting at the home of Peggy and Bill James, with a delightful tea at this very popular venue. They have an unusual, ongoing raffle, to be drawn at Christmas, to guess how many hours it took a member, Mrs Duck, to make a magnificent tatted table centre. Fish and chips were again enjoyed, by 26 members, at Flamborough. The Pocklington group have had a quarterly pub lunch and have been to Sledmere House to see the exhibition of quilts and listen to their beautiful organ.

North Humberside now has a membership of 101, with seven new members, but they are sad to record the deaths of Mrs Helena Smith and Miss Beryl Bilton, both very hard workers for WRVS who will be sadly missed.



From South Humberside, Mrs Grice reports "a very pleasant year". They had 32 members at their AGM; a strawberry tea in July and lunch for 40 members in November. Several of their members "crossed the bridge", (quite an experience in itself, Ed), to have Christmas lunch with those on the north bank of the Humber. She sadly records the deaths of Mrs Dorothy Markham and Mrs Joyce Kirby who are remembered with gratitude.

South and West Yorks

Div. Rep. Mrs L. Ziegler MBE

Lincs, Notts, Leics.

Div.Rep Mrs D Martin

Mrs Martin hopes they will have one member at St Pauls for the service on V.E. Day and we look forward to a report from her and/or others on that event.

Mrs Martin has sent a press photograph of the surprise 90th birthday party for Leicester's longest serving member Mrs Mary Booton, a member for 54 years. The article says "she enjoys Latin and Ballroom Dancing in her spare time"!

Mrs Cramp, their new "branch recorder", writes from the Gedling Branch that although they have been running for 10 years, this is their first report. (Thanks for writing, Mrs Cramp. It's good to hear from you! Ed.) To celebrate their 10th birthday they had an Anniversary Service at All Hallows, Gedling, attended by the Mayor and 100 members. Lessons were read by Mrs Martin and Mrs Tomlin MBE and they all had tea after the service.

In December 44 members met for Christmas lunch. Other meetings have averaged 36 members. Their summer programme included teas in member's gardens, an outing to the RAF Dog Handling Training Centre and one to the Severn Trent Water Authority. Mrs Cramp says "water has tasted like nectar ever since". In January, Mrs Martin brought them up-to-date with WRVS and Association changes.

Broxtowe branch have had good attendances at their events, coffee mornings, home-made ploughman's lunch, and Christmas lunch. They started the New Year with a "shortbread and sherry" morning. (This sounds very restorative after all the Christmas chores! Ed.)

One sad note recorded by Mrs Haigh, is the death of Mrs Joan Sutcliffe who will be missed by them all for the support she gave them.

NORTH WEST DIVISION *Headquarters Manchester*

Cumbria, Lancashire. Div. Rep. Mrs M. McCambridge BEM

Merseyside, Cheshire Div. Rep Mrs P Linton MBE

Ten groups here are active, with regular events, including theatre visits and bus tours to Heritage Centres and beauty spots. The Annual meeting was held in Chester and 75 members attended. The WRVS Divisional Director spoke about the changes in WRVS, which interests them all.

They have 230 members and say, (mysteriously!) that they are expecting an increase in membership in the near future.

Mrs Linton says how pleased they are that Mrs Dorothy Wittingham has been appointed Deputy Div. Rep. for their Division.

The Wallasey group were joined by Mrs Linton for their enjoyable Christmas lunch. Mrs Lamb records the loss in December of Mrs Cora Parry, MBE, an excellent Organiser for Wallasey for seventeen years and a much loved friend.

Sale records a full programme since September when they visited a wartime museum of war memorabilia which brought back many memories. There was even a model wearing old WVS uniform. In October they made £46 at a Bring and Buy which helps towards their £7 rent for each meeting.

There were mixed feelings at a talk by Nyrex Communications. Not many members were keen at their digging up pavements to put in their cables. In December the local Housing Dept. arranged that two of their members could cook a lunch in one of their Luncheon Clubs premises and everyone there was very cooperative. It was a very festive occasion. (Perhaps this is an idea for other groups, but of course you need kind and super cooks, like their members, Mrs Tedham and Mrs Meadowcroft! Ed.).

In January they had a talk on Australia by a member, Mrs Pat Broeklebank, and in February one on "the care of the feet" by the chiropodist from Trafford General Hospital who showed some nasty pictures of neglected feet. (A good idea for other groups ?Ed)

North and South Greater Manchester. Div. Rep. Mrs E. Collier

Bury group visited Heriot country on a wet day, but say "it did not spoil the enjoyment". In November they lunched at "The Last Drop Inn" but do not say if they had the last drop ! In March they look forward to lunching with Mrs Jean Matthews at her home. She is soon to retire as Metropolitan District Organiser and has always been most encouraging in their efforts.

Mrs Collier welcomes the new Romiley group. We do too. It is always good to hear of a new group. Mrs Joan Hulse, their leader has already organised a Bring and Buy and their future programme. We wish them well.

Staffordshire, Shropshire, Derbyshire. (Appointment Pending)

SOUTH EAST DIVISION *Headquarters St Chads St. WC1*

Cambridgeshire, Northants. Div.Rep. Mrs B. Titcomb.

Following the Christmas lunch in Cambridge each member received a delightful dried flower arrangement. Huntingdon also met for a lovely Christmas meal and Peterborough celebrated with afternoon tea and heard about WRVS changes. In January their speaker failed to arrive but two members valiantly "filled the bill" and spoke about some of their husbands' experiences while in the forces. They have a lunch planned in the unusual venue of a "courthouse" where



Police memorabilia are displayed.

Rushden group have two new members and enjoyed a pub lunch at Denford which they hope to repeat.

Norfolk, Suffolk

Div. Rep. Mrs S. Scholey

Mrs Scholey starts her report, thanking Mrs Moss for all the help she has given her. The Norfolk group had an informative talk about the Community Alarm System at their September coffee morning and 56 members attended lunch at Gorleston in January.

Mrs Moss sends a report from North Norfolk rejoicing that after 4 years of disappointing attendances at carefully planned lunches, the branch eventually succeeded and at the Christmas lunch, 68 members attended. Congratulations! She does not say to what she attributes her eventual success, but long may it continue. This group has been joined by an ex-overseas WRVS member who with her husband now runs a bird sanctuary and museum. Mrs Moss says, "guess where we are going for our next outing" !

A March lunch is planned in Norwich, and a cruise on Oulton Broad sounds pleasant. Some members hope to go to Buckingham Palace in July and we look forward to their account if they go.

In December Mrs Gilderson arranged a lunch in Mundesley, a most successful and happy occasion. She especially mentions that they had gentlemen present !

Suffolk members are kept in touch by Julia Mytton-Mills.

Mrs Jackman says she hopes that four members will be attending the Leicester meeting.

Oxon, Bucks, Berks.

Appointment Pending

Greater London

Div. Rep. Mrs A.Christophersen

London S.E.

Div. Rep. Mrs G. Block MBE

Mrs Block writes of a very successful visit, by 21 members, in September, to the Constable Exhibition of the artist's sketches at the Dulwich Picture Gallery and to hear an interesting lecture, followed by lunch in the Garden Tent in glorious weather in the lovely gallery gardens. (Sounds like a wonderful visit. Ed.)

London S.W.

Div. Rep. Mrs J. Sanderson

London N.E./City.

Mrs W Taylor DL

London N.W.

Mrs D Stevens

Bedfordshire, Essex, Herts.

Div Rep. Mrs J Callaway

Mrs Tytherleigh, Branch Organiser for Southend reports a varied programme of talks, including speakers from the Citizens Advice Bureau, Royal Mail, the Local Hospital and Safeway Supermarket. The representative from the Royal Mail gave all members an engraved Biro and Key Ring. Another wonderful speaker was from Safeways, who gave members an insight into what has to be done before a store opens. Each Section Manager orders Meat, Fish, Frozen Food, Cheeses etc whilst Bread, Rolls and Cakes are baked on the premises. The highlight was when the Manager produced two platters of cheeses, nuts and exotic fruits for members to enjoy! This spring's speakers include Southend's Lady Mayor, the Marketing Director of Southend Council and two members of the WRVS County Office talking about changes in the WRVS.

It has been a sad time in Maldon with the deaths of five well known and much loved members, Mrs Lily Eaves, Miss Mona Clarke, Mrs Eunice Hill, Mrs Violet Boosey and Mrs Rene Wenlock. The longest serving, Mrs Wenlock, joined WVS in 1939 and was still driving for the Day Centre until 1987. We will miss all these members, they will be a great loss, not only to WRVS but to the community in which they worked so effortfully over many many years.

Surrey, E.& W. Kent, E.& W. Sussex. Div. Rep. Mrs G. Bright

Guildford Branch held a post-Christmas get-together for coffee and home-made and cakes, which Mrs Coles says, "brightened a dull January day".

Mrs Brown tells of a cheese and wine party for Epsom and Ewell members at Epsom Town Hall (no less!) where, with the Mayor in attendance, Mrs Toulson presented long service medals. In January they were to meet for "Fish and Chips".

West Kent were able to use the Tunbridge Wells WRVS office just before it closed for their Christmas Get-together. An Area event is planned, with Mrs Claydon as their guest, at the Tonbridge Golf Club in May.

Hampshire, Isle of Wight.

(Appointment Pending)

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

Headquarters Exeter

West Midlands.

Div Rep Mrs J. Smith BEM

In the autumn, Birmingham group's visit to Westonbirt arboretum was washed

out by torrential rain, so they repaired to the Cheltenham shops (What a wise move Ed.) They are a busy group. In January they had lunch at "The College of Food". They have had coffee mornings and visits to Chatsworth and the Royal Worcester Factory.

Solihull have met at members' houses and still keep contact with older members and with WRVS on presentation days.

Coventry members are mostly still active in WRVS but find time to meet each month and have some outings together.

Sandwell always meet at their leader's home where they enjoy coffee and talks by local speakers.

Warwickshire. Div Rep Mrs J. Rose

Hereford, Worcester, Gloucester. Div Rep Mrs J. Connop

Somerset, Devon, Cornwall Div Rep Miss M. Scott

Avon, Wiltshire, Dorset. (Appointment pending)

Both Avon and Kingswood Districts had buffet lunches in November for 22 and 18 of their members. Mrs Matthews is sad to report the death recently of Mrs Mary Garland, OBE, a former Area Organiser.

WALES *Headquarters Cardiff*

Clwyd, Gwynedd, Powys. Div Rep Mrs F. Edwards BEM

Ruthin group have had lunch at Ruthin Castle which sounds very grand. They also have outings planned.

Colwyn group too are active and have excellent attendance (I wonder if "activity" and "good attendance" go together. What do members think? Ed.)

Rhyl members shame us all by meeting for Keep Fit each week. They apparently have great fun with new routines. The group started for members who found it difficult to move about following a stroke but soon others were joining. (A good idea for us all? Ed.)

In Wrexham, Mrs Edwards says that Mrs Williams is working very hard to increase the membership. They had a lunch together at their AGM in October, with Mrs Claydon and Mrs Gibbon as special guests giving their reports on WRVS changes and activities. Mrs Edwards also welcomed Mrs Brotherton's predecessor, Mrs Mowatt.



Among other song and dance routines! the Rhyl "keep-fitters" put on a display which everyone enjoyed

Mrs Edwards also reports the death of Mr Frank Quimby "one of our most popular members. She says that he and his wife Kath cooked the meals daily for both Meals on Wheels and the Luncheon Club. He will be sadly missed.

Dyfed, West, Mid, South Glamorgan, Gwent. Div. Rep. Mrs D. Travis BEM

ATTENTION WALES

It is hoped to hold a **PRINCIPALITY MEETING** in 1996. Details later.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Guemsey. Assoc. Rep. Miss E. Robilliard

Miss Robilliard writes that in such a small island, of only 24 sq. miles, she finds it difficult to attract members to any meetings other than pub lunches, which, however they do enjoy immensely. They have a lunch planned in April.

Jersey. Assoc. Rep. Mrs D. Jennings

Mrs Jennings reports a successful year finishing with a coffee morning and a pre-Christmas lunch. They helped one member celebrate her 90th birthday, two members calling with good wishes and a basket of fruit. Several members joined in the celebrations at WRVS Centre to welcome the new WRVS President for Jersey, Mrs Anne Bailhache.

One Association member still runs the WRVS Car Service on the island and another helps with clothing records.

Brittle Bones - a warning to us all. Our bones reach their peak density at 25 years. They then start to deteriorate, becoming worse at the menopause. One in two women and one in eight men have brittle bones to some degree. The bones can be helped considerably by hormone treatment, but we can help ourselves by having 1 pt milk per day, plenty of tinned fish, green vegetables and daily fresh air and exercise. Take precautions now and don't wait for the first break!

From a talk by a sister from the Brittle Bone Clinic, Gwent. Sent by Mrs Travis. S. Wales.

SOME MEMBERS MEMORIES OF V.E. DAY.

Woke early - the Marines were smiling - must be good news. Four other Wrens and I made our way to the Fleet Mail Office and the familiar mountain of mail bags. At 10.30. the Chief Petty Officer came to tell us it was all over. From then on drinks flowed and the next day's hangover was something I would rather forget

Molly Robinson York



Travelling by overnight train to Edinburgh I remember the spectacle of bonfires lighting up the night sky. exciting after years of blackout.

Dora Penzer. York

My father took us to Trafalgar Square along with thousands of others. The whole of London seemed to be there. climbing lamp-posts. singing. dancing. the service men kissing all the women. The pub in Northumberland Avenue was packed. so many people that they ran out of glasses. We walked up the Mall to join the crowd calling the Royal Family and Churchill out onto the balcony and we just cheered and cheered. On the way home we saw street parties, pianos in the streets. everyone so happy.

Mrs Stella Lewis. London.

We had a flat in Kensington with a high roof garden. From there in the darkness we could just see Big Ben. Sitting there in the darkness. having drinks, we saw the first light come on on Big Ben. It was then we realised the war was really over, a truly marvellous feeling.

Mrs Ann Dougherty. Bromley.

Suddenly. as I washed the nappies, the radio became silent. then a special announcement "The war with Germany has ended" I offered a prayer of thanks and went next door to tell my 96 year old mother-in-law the good news. My thoughts went back to memories of the rocket crashing on to the shopping and housing area in Plumstead. killing many that I knew personally. You will understand how I felt when that announcement came over the radio.

Mrs Dorothy Powell. MBE.

I was in Filey, on a little holiday with my daughter. my husband away in the forces. I remember "dancing in the streets" and a lovely fine day

Mrs Sanderson London

My friend used to come and stay the night once a week. Having washed our hair, put in the rollers, daubed on the night cream we were enjoying a mug of cocoa when a neighbour knocked on the door with the news. We had been too busy to put on the wireless. Within minutes the house was packed and hoards of bottles opened. At 4-0am there was a daunting array of dirty glasses and plates, it didn't matter, peace had come at last.

Mrs Nancy Simms, Nantwich



We were living in Leicestershire and decided to have a party for the children. There had to be a cake as the centre piece. With persuasion the hens supplied the eggs, but fat was scarce so we went down to the chemist and bought bottles of liquid paraffin, an excellent substitute for fat! For icing, we pounded ordinary sugar with the rolling pin and the children made flags for decoration. Alas next day my little daughter came down with mumps and all the children took it. I was not very popular, but we had had an excellent celebration.



Ruth Fisher, Jersey.

In Sept. 1937 I left Jersey for University College Southampton to take a degree. My course completed in June 1940, I could not return to Jersey. I was 20 years old, had only £2 in cash and a few clothes. I took a teaching job in Shropshire and on V E Day, was sitting on the floor in the headmistress's study listening to Churchill. "Our dear Channel Islands will be free today" 50 years later it still reduces me to tears. I was at last able to return home in August '45

Mrs Pauline Taylor (Pauline Dart in '45)

In the Children's Ward, Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, the patients were all "chirpy cockney sparrows", children evacuated from London with a variety of ills. They were a very happy little crowd nevertheless, the ward specially decorated, party meals, funny hats, balloons, games. A special Service of Thanksgiving was held in the hospital chapel, with as many as possible, young and old, patients and staff all attending.

Margaret Scott, Exeter

ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE

We had made our way from the Normandy beaches. I was in Hamburg, the suburbs for 5 miles round completely devastated. On the day before V E Day, our men were given the job of sweeping the square of rubbish and debris, ready for the parade next day. Naturally the Tommies thought the Germans should have been given that job ! People peered at us from their basements beneath the rubble with no signs of emotion. In the City Centre people showed no animosity towards us, possibly influenced by the chocolate and cigarettes we had in abundance. The fact that we had devastated their city did not seem to rankle. V E day gave us hope that soon we should get home leave. I looked forward to seeing Peggy and 2 year old Elizabeth after an absence of over a year. That came about on June 9th.

Bill James. Beverley.

Throughout the war I lived in Cardiff. On V E Day I set off with my 2 year old daughter for our customary walk to Roath Park Lake where I met other young Mums with push chairs, toddlers on reins and bread for feeding the ducks (even though it was rationed!). But that day there was a difference. We were all in high spirits looking forward to husbands and fathers coming home after long absences; all except one, whose husband had been killed in Africa; we became subdued until she assured us she was happy for the rest of us. I shall never forget the day. It was my 26th birthday and I had received the best present I could ever have.

Peggy James. Beverley.



ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE

In April '45 I was a young infant teacher with a reception class of 50 children, my fiancee fighting abroad in Africa for 2 1/2 years. On April 4th I received a telegram "Due home 18th, 28 days leave, arrange wedding !" A mad scramble ensued, special licence, reception, school leave arranged. Our week's honeymoon followed in the Cotswolds in borrowed car, petrol coupons supplied by local undertaker - "no one queries my petrol coupons love!"- The honeymoon was slightly marred by husband turning bright yellow with jaundice! Then the joy of V E Day knowing that, after three spells in hospital with bullet wounds, Alan would not be going back to Italy to fight. One year later I greeted him home again with a three month old daughter, so in April this year we hope to celebrate one year apart and 49 happy years together.

Jean Mott. York.

On V E Day I walked from the outskirts of Glasgow to George Square where there was a tremendous crowd, all dancing and singing. I have never been kissed by so many unknown service men in my life. It certainly was a day to remember.

Jan Gilderson. Norfolk

I was an A I S sergeant. It was barrack night for all A I S girls in the Army Service Corps who were not on duty. They had to remain in their accommodation, a hotel on the sea front in Towyn, North Wales. At 8-30 in pouring rain a great din was created on the promenade, tin trays banged, mouth organs, singing and dancing. We rushed onto the balconies, to be told that victory in Europe had been announced. The men were calling to us to join them. I telephoned my superior officer and was told "No" we could not go out. After another half-hour, when the demands to go out became more insistent, I phoned again. This time the officer relented and I joined the man I was to marry a year later. We went to the officer's mess for a drink. Never before had Sergeants entered the Officer's Mess, but they did on V E night 1945.



Zita Grice S. Humberside

I remember waiting for Mr Churchill to announce the news on the wireless. Flags were put up everywhere, guns went off and people were cheering and singing. Next day I went with friends to Whitehall, then on to the Palace to join the throng. I remember the King and Queen coming out onto the balcony and the crowds shouting for them again and again. When I got home I found that my mother had taken down all the blackout and burnt it. It all seems a long time ago. I think we were far more patriotic then than people would be today.

E Matthews Wallington Surrey

I worked in a government office in Durban, S Africa. At roughly 3-0 o'clock a civil servant went round announcing the end of hostilities in Europe. There followed a certain amount of conversation, but soon we were back with our noses to the grindstone. Looking out of my window into the street below, life was going on as usual, not different to any other afternoon. In the evening a crowd of women, the men all "up North", fighting in Italy, gathered at the City Hall which was all lit up as usual. Durban never having had black-out. There were speeches, cheering, a bit of singing and then a lighted sign was switched on above the main door which read "God Save the King" followed by a lot of cheering and the National Anthem.

Dora Courtel Surrey



I was helping to run the family business in Croydon, my husband having been invalided out of the RAF. I remember the profound thankfulness, after the blitz and the doodle-bugs, for we were unharmed, only the house and business premises damaged and my husband was safely home from a long tour in West Africa.

Daphne Maisey Wallington, Surrey.

It was an ordinary busy day in the Ministry of Labour. We heard the news and the National Anthem on the wireless. Then we went back to work, for we were extremely busy with demobilisation, just as we had been with mobilisation for the previous 4 years.

Mary Smetton | Wickenham

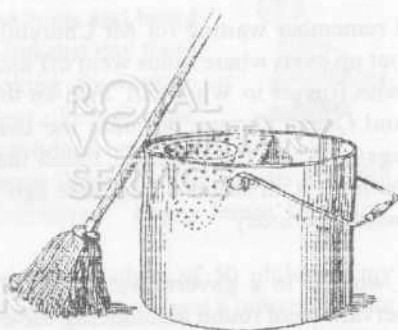
Oh, where were you on VE Day?
Oh tell me, tell me please,
I'll tell you, for on VE Day
I was literally on my knees.

In October of the previous year
A doodle-bug wrecked the flat
I went off to stay with relatives
Saying "Ah well, that is that"

But in May back to the flat I came
To salvage, sweep and sew
(And by that time I'd been and got
A one-year-old in tow).

Kind friends helped me with the
carpet
Which we spread out in the street
To get rid of the rubble
And try to make it neat.

So - there I was on hands and knees
A-puffing and a-blowing
And that is when and where I was
When VE Day got going!



Mrs Merrin | Morden, Surrey

I was still serving and for us the war was not over; all V E Day meant to us was that we would get more troops and more ammo !

Rene Thompson, Richmond.

I was a Q.A.N.S S/R in charge of a small sick quarters in a Naval Shore Establishment in a castle on the shores of Loch Lomond. The night before I was awakened by the Duty Officer and told to report to the ward room. There the Captain announced that he had just received a signal from the Admiralty bearing the good news. However, in the excitement he had forgotten to put his teeth in and he had some difficulty delivering his speech, much to our amusement !. We celebrated well into the night. Next day we had an improvised party, made decorations by dyeing cotton wool balls red, white and blue and stringing them across the walls with flags. We had a pet lamb that had broken its leg, given to us by the local farmer as a mascot, and we washed his woolly coat, polished his hooves and tied a big ribbon round his neck. In spite of the leg in plaster it trotted about, joining in the fun. Later, the leg healed and the camp abandoned, the lamb was returned to the farmer's children who loved and cared for it.

Rebecca Campbell. London.

I was sharing rented accommodation in a small Bedfordshire village with my mother. Having left London with shell shock, my husband in Burma since 1943, and with a two year old child, all I remember is an immense feeling of relief. But I was not reunited with my husband until 1946 when I joined him in Delhi.

Faith Packard. London.

On May 7th Jersey people were made aware that V E Day would be the following day, though the Germans had not stopped their war preparations and were still in occupation. So we were unsure. Next day a message was circulated from the Bailiff appealing for calm and dignity and for church services to be held as in Britain. Loud speakers were put up and by 3-0pm thousands had gathered to hear Churchill's statement "Our dear Channel Islands are to be freed today". Then the Bailiff hoisted the Union flag and the National Anthem was sung. Many people wept unashamedly.

H.M. the King's speech was at 9-0pm. Flags were unfurled all over the island and church bells sang for joy. Cameras clicked and wirelesses, cars, motorbikes all appeared as from nowhere, having been hidden during the occupation. There was no more curfew or blackout.

It is recorded that the discipline of the Germans was excellent and on May 9th, Liberation Day, on board HMS Beagle, the German O.C. signed the surrender of his forces. There followed a month of rejoicing, rounded off by the visit of the King and Queen.

Mrs D Jennings. Jersey.



Doris Watson and I, both young bank cashiers, decided to join the cheering crowds outside Buckingham Palace. We were enjoying it all, the colourful throng, the Royal appearance, the songs, when we were jostled into the path of a pair of handsome Wing Commanders in full uniform. "Come and meet the wives" they said. Disappointed ! but still with the prospect of more celebrations for the evening we agreed. They led us to a nearby mews near Eaton Square where we found two glamorous females standing on the doorstep of the mews cottage. We had a great welcome and were carried off to an adjacent hostelry, "The Nags Head" where there were numerous toasts, and much laughter and dancing. We returned home by the late night bus in an euphoric state.

The "dashing young men" were never seen again. Neither was the Nags Head, despite much searching over the years. I knew the Eaton Square area well. Where was it ? Perhaps on this anniversary it will suddenly re-appear, complete with those gallant pilots, forever young. I hope so. I shall be watching.



Win Taylor London

Some memories from Cambridge Members.

Some took their children to parties. Another left maternity hospital on that day with her first born. Two Members had been drafted to work in the same factory, though they did not know each other and having to work that day they demanded double pay in lieu of a public holiday, plus a bottle of beer! One member, with a group of WAAF Officers, returned to their billet with a Belisha Beacon as a trophy and ended the evening sitting on the edge of the bath, with their Squadron Leader, soaking their tired feet. One member recalls the joy of going upstairs to bed instead of curling up in a corner of the Morrison shelter in the dining room. Another remembers being taken by her parents to London to see the Royal Family appear on the balcony, and then to join in the "Conga" in St James's Park. She asks if any other members did that?

But for many Cambridgeshire folk their memories of V E Day were largely eclipsed by the long wait for V J Day, for the Cambridgeshires had been captured in Singapore.

Mrs Charnley Cambridge

My outstanding memory was of returning by train to Salisbury after showing off my new daughter to the grandparents in Hereford. A goods train passed on the other line and in huge white painted letters was the message "The War is over, its Peace".

Mrs Gay Bright Maidstone

Where are you now?

I lived in North Shields, Northumberland and in November 1988 my husband and I came to Australia to be near our daughter, her husband and three young grandchildren. We were here one month when my husband had a heart attack and died. I was in a strange country not really knowing where I was.

I knew I had to get out. We lived in the bush, quite isolated. I got a car and managed to drive to Castlemaine, the nearest town 10 miles away. Fortunately Australians drive on the left hand side of the road! I went to church, was invited to join the Senior Citizens, learned to play Carpet Bowls and join in the trips to see the surrounding countryside. I now help at the local library and really enjoy the work. I do get homesick, but I realise I am lucky in having my family close. One day I met Jenny McLennan, which was so nice. From my granny flat windows I can watch kangaroos and gaudy parrots and snakes. It is the spiders I do not like and what I miss is an English wet day and, after 27 years in WVS/WRVS, I do miss the service. Jean Knott - Victoria, Australia



There is no equivalent to WRVS in Spain. Spanish families look after their own old folk, but there is a HELP organisation to which people can apply if in trouble. My husband and I both work for a charity shop and library. The funds are given to charities such as Cancer Research. At present we are helping to improve conditions in a school for mentally handicapped, by providing a therapy unit to improve their mobility. I do enjoy the Newsletter.

Margaret Banks, Alicante, Spain.

I have moved to New Zealand for a 3-4 year stay. We had a hectic time leaving home, finding a house here and transport. We intend to return to U.K. and I mean to return to my WRVS duties once more, so don't strike me off the books just yet.

Mrs R Templeton, Dorking, Surrey.

My dear husband died in New Zealand, seven years after we had retired there. It is a most beautiful country but my home town called when I was left alone and I was so pleased to rejoin my many WRVS colleagues back home in Essex.

Kathleen Payze Collins, Essex

In a letter from Brittany Mrs Johnson says she has forgotten to tell the Association of her change of address. She would like to contact other Association members living in France. She says it would be interesting to know their views on living in France. She and her husband enjoy the slow pace of life and the friends they have made there. Her address now is given in holiday addresses. (See below)



Jean M. Johnson of Solihull. Now in Finistere. Brittany.

Mrs Daphne Davenport would like to hear from any past Shrewsbury County Staff who remember her. She used to live in Shrewsbury and now lives at Flat 15 Palmer Court, Hatton Avenue, Wellingborough, Northants.

Extracts from Members' letters

Mrs Lawson-Johnston writes

Re the autumn Newsletter (1944), and Kathleen Halpin's 90th birthday, I first met her when she took over as Chief Administrator from Mrs Huxley and I had recently taken over Region 4 from Mary Gray. Remembering Mrs Mordern (p14), reminded me that I met Colonel Man in 1947 when he opened a Unit Canteen at Paderborn BAOR while he was C.O. there. Mention of a mobile canteen (p15) makes me recall a lively evening when we were suddenly asked to take our Bedfordshire canteen over the border into Herts, (with a police escort), as a unit of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders had alighted in Tring Park for an overnight stop. We received a hearty welcome. She asks if any other Member remembers this.

Memories of WVS/WRVS India.

My mother ran the café at the SAW Club (Soldiers, Airmen and Women's Aux. Corps, India) and the WRVS tea Bar on Rawalpindi Station. I joined WVS when I was 16 years old, acting as a runner from the cook to the customers, taking them favourite food like bacon and eggs, egg and chips which they would have had in Blighty.

We wore white buttoned dresses and green berets with the WVS brooch the shape of India with the words "India I Serve". My mother had a rota to meet the trains bringing men coming to convalescent homes or on leave. Indian soldiers queued on one side of the stall, English and American soldiers on the other side.

My mother received the KAISIA - I - HIND Medal in 1946, the Queen Mother's Award, as the last Empress of India, for Service to India.

Evelyn Robinson. Morpeth. Northumberland.

Holiday accommodation

Note from the Editor: I suggested that addresses for holiday accommodation could be put in the Newsletter. Here are two I have received, one with a story attached. They are not our recommendations, but entirely at member's own discretion.



My father was in the British Army in World War 2. Being a classical musician he sought a house where he might practise his playing. At one house on the Austrian/Italian border he found not only the piano, but the lady whom he would eventually marry. When this lady, (my mother) came to Britain at the end of the war, she came alone, by train and was directed, by WVS, to her new home where, my father still being away in the army, she met her mother-in-law for the first time, on her own. This lady, to keep her mind off her son's plight when he was on the danger list in hospital in Alexandria, had worked tirelessly for WVS. She died when I was quite small, so I knew nothing of her involvement in WVS. Years later, in my 30's, I had to give up a career to recover from illness. Then my neighbour told me about WRVS. I joined and there I met the most wonderful people who helped me recuperate and rebuild my confidence. I learned to drive different vehicles, did office work and eventually just about everything. (Does that sound familiar?) One day, my father told me how proud he was that I had chosen to follow in his mother's footsteps.

Nine years ago he died and through the skills and caring I had learned in WRVS I was able to comfort my mother and - yes - you've guessed - she too became a member of WRVS. After 8 years as Local Organiser for Monmouth, circumstances meant that I had to return to a remunerative job. Now I enjoy my two small businesses so much; one, working for an international clinic for brain damaged children; the other, my B and B. I work from home, assist my husband with his business, yet still can have some involvement in WRVS.

The B and B accommodation is available only to exclusive groups, (strictly non-smokers), cleanliness is of the utmost importance. We are particularly suited to historians, artists, classical musicians and of course WRVS! Details on request to Mrs Angela Hoyle.

also

Self-catering Accommodation Mrs J.M. Johnson "Sous le Vent",

(See "where are you now")

Things that have amused you

Some replies received from patients in response to a circular asking them why they required transport to and from the chiropody clinic.



I am under the doctor and cannot breathe

I can't use my legs or my wife's

I cannot wait for the bus as it might rain.

I live 5 miles from the clinic and the postman says I should have it.

I cannot walk up a hill unless it is down and the hill to your clinic is up.

I cannot walk far because my husband is bedridden.

I must have transport. We have a car but my husband is 76.

I cannot walk long distances because I have a hip.

I must have transport because I have funny feet.

My mother is 96 and must have a car as she has long finger nails.

I want transport because bus drivers do funny things and make me feel sick.

I hope you will send your driver man as my husband is quite useless.

I can come any time, but not mornings as I don't feel so good.

I can't come on Monday or Wednesday as my home help comes and not on Friday as the baker calls for his money. I can't come Tuesday as my sister visits.

Genuine Extracts from letters received by the Ministry of Social Security.

The man I live with won't work as he wants to know if my husband is dead. Will you search the records office for him and let me know.

I am enclosing my marriage certificate with 3 children one of which is a mistake as you will see when you look into it. My youngest son is born two years old. Why am I not getting my allowance?

Milk is needed for my baby. Father is unable to supply it.

My son has been unable to attend school. He has had diarrhoea through a hole in his shoe.

I enclose certificate with 6 children, one of them is a twin and died. You ask if he is christened. Yes he was baptised on half a sheet of paper by a chaplain of the Salvation Army.

Please send me a form for cheap milk for having babies at reduced rates.

I want money badly as quick as you can send it. I have been in bed with the doctor for a week and he doesn't seem to be doing me any good. If things don't improve I will have to get another doctor.

Please send me a form for cheap milk. I have a baby two months old and didn't know anything about it until a neighbour told me.

Recipes

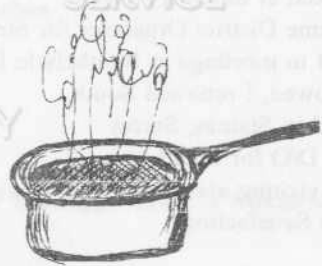
Curried Rhubarb Chutney

(for those who cannot tolerate the smell of boiling vinegar. It keeps well)

- 2 lbs rhubarb chopped
- 1 lb onions
- 8 oz sultanas
- 1 lb light brown sugar
- 2 dessertspoons curry powder
- 1 teasp salt
- 1/4 pint vinegar

Cook rhubarb, onions and sugar stirring often until soft. Add rest of ingredients, except vinegar, cook slowly for 20 minutes. Stand overnight. Add vinegar mix and bottle.

Sender Peggy James, Beverley, who says her husband will not tolerate her boiling vinegar even on an electric hotplate taken into the garden on a long lead.



A Quick and Easy Cheesecake, using no eggs.

- 8 oz (200 g) Philadelphia cheese
- 1 small tin Evaporated milk (chilled)
- 3/4 cup Caster sugar
- 1 lemon (rind and juice)
- 1 lemon jelly dissolved in 1/2 cup hot water
- 8 oz digestive biscuits
- 4 oz margarine, melted

Crush biscuits, mix with melted margarine and line base of flan tin. Leave short time in fridge.

Melt jelly in hot water. Add rind and juice of lemon. Whisk milk until thick and creamy. Beat in cheese and sugar. Mix all ingredients together and spread over biscuit base. Leave to set in fridge. The cheesecake can be frozen.

Sender Peggy James Beverley

Contributions from members

WRVS SERVICE

I began in Sussex
 Moved to Scotland
 Worked at Stobhill Hospital.
 Became District Organiser for Strathkelvin.
 Went to meetings at Strathelyde H.Q.
 Widowed, I returned South.
 Lived in Staines, Surrey.
 Was D/O for Spelthorne.
 Still visiting and collecting books etc., I continue to receive many Smiles and get great Satisfaction

Margaret Lebrecht. Staines. Surrey.

Places for members to visit

Brownsea Island is one of a number of islands crowding the harbour at Poole in Dorset. Here the first experimental Scout Camp directed by Baden Powell was located, where 20 boys from all walks of life, from Eton to the East End, pitched their tents in 1907 and began the world wide idea of scouting.

Until the end of the Second World War, the island played its part in defence. It became a property of the National Trust in 1961 and now offers peace, tranquility and sanctuary to many species of bird, Sika Deer, Red Squirrel, a thriving colony of tame peacocks who do their best to share visitors' picnic baskets.

The New Forest, is a 122 sq. miles area of outstanding natural beauty and home to ponies and donkeys. There are stretches of forest, heathland, small lakes and numerous villages. One of these is Lyndhurst where there is the only butchers shop allowed to sell the forest venison, as some of the deer are killed each year to prevent over-breeding.

Joanna Browne. York

Out of the mouths of babes.....

A Granny

A granny is a lady who has no children of her own, so she likes other people's children. Grannies have nothing to do except be there. If they take you for a walk they slow down past pretty leaves and caterpillars and never say "hurry up". Usually they are fat, but not too fat to tie your laces. They wear glasses and sometimes they take their teeth out. They can answer questions like why cats hate dogs and why God isn't married. Everyone should try to have a granny, especially if you don't have a TV Grannies are the only grown-ups who always have time.

Sent some time ago by Mrs Brown Norfolk

An Epitaph for a Tired Woman.

Here lies a poor woman who always was tired
 She lived in a house where no help was hired
 Her last words on earth were "Dear friend I am going
 Where washing ain't done, nor sweeping, nor sewing
 But everything there is exact to my wishes
 For where there's no meals there's no washing of dishes
 I'll be where loud anthems will always be ringing
 But, having no voice I'll be clear of the singing.
 Don't mourn for me now.
 Don't mourn for me ever.
 I'm going to do nothing for ever and ever."

Mrs Peggy Raworth Winchester.

Tell them now

If with pleasure you are viewing
 Any work someone is doing,
 Tell them now
 Don't withhold your approbation.
 Till the parson makes oration
 And they lie with snowy lilies
 On their brow
 For no matter how you shout it,
 They won't really know about it,
 They won't know how many tear drops
 You have shed
 If you think some praise is due them,
 Now's the time to give it to them
 For they cannot read their tombstone when they're dead.

No name supplied

A warning to all who snore

Late last night I killed my wife Stretched her on the parquet flooring
 I was loath to take her life, but I had to stop her snoring.

Anon

A hungry dog

Because a special service in Beverley Minster would be attended by a number of very important guests, a complete security check was necessary

After police with sniffer dogs had made a thorough search a dog was missing. He was tracked down to the vestry where he was discovered eating the Communion Bread which had been prepared for the service

Peggy James Beverley

Inspiration

Live each day to the fullest, get the most from each hour, each day and each age of your life.

Then look forward with confidence and back without regrets.

Be yourself, but be your best self.

Dare to be different and to follow your own star. Don't be afraid to be happy.

Believe that those you love, love you.

Forget what you have done for your friends and neighbours and remember what they had done for you.

Disregard what the world owes you, and concentrate on what you owe the world.

When you are faced with a decision, make the decision as wisely as possible - then forget it. The moment of absolute certainty never arrives.

And above all remember that God helps those who help themselves.

Act as if everything depends on you and pray as if everything depended on God.

Verses by S.H. Payer.

Sent by Kathleen Payze Collins. Essex

A Ghost Story.

For the past 5 years I have been busy tracing my family tree of the Woodcock family. So far I have got to 1685 when they came over to Kent with the Huguenots. Two years ago I visited Sandwich and sought information in churches, churchyards and Council Office records. As we walked back to the car I stopped suddenly in front of a lovely cottage, "Rose Cottage" and I felt someone, or something was pulling me in. I couldn't resist, I went up to the front door, knocked and waited, but no one came. Several months later, this incident quite forgotten, a letter from a cousin in Australia enclosed a newspaper cutting, dated Feb 12th., 1896, which she had found among her mother's papers. It read, "On Feb. 7th, at Rose Cottage, Sandich, England, after a short illness, Maria Woodcock, youngest daughter of the late John Woodcock Esq." Had I, that day, disturbed Maria's ghost?



Daphne Davenport Northants.

Poetry Corner

*Ah fill the cup, what boots it to repeat
How time is slipping underneath our feet
Unborn tomorrow and dead yesterday
Why fret about them if today be sweet?*

From, Edward Fitzgerald. The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám.

Sent by Hazel Edwards. Cambridge