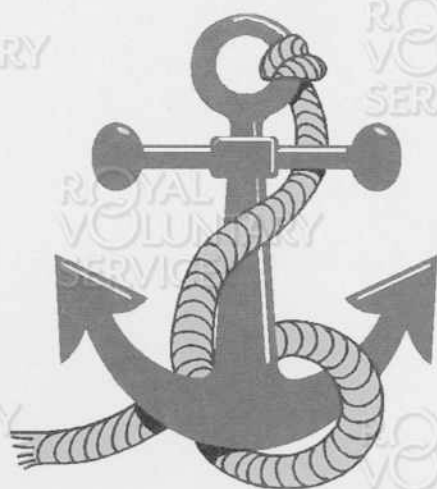




WRVS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter No 43
Autumn 1995



It was a bright May morning. I cycled to a nearby vantage point and saw what I had prayed and longed for through all the long years of German occupation... two ships of the Royal Navy at anchor in the harbour. I rushed home to tell my parents, "We're free... the Navy's here".

from: Miss Robilliard, Guernsey

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
Mrs E.D. Claydon
The Hon. Dame Mary Corsar DBE.
Mrs H Foster OBE
Miss K Halpin CBE
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Mrs M.D.S. Maisey BEM Mrs M Davies

Hon. Editor

Mrs N. Venables

Dear Member,

Due to the closure of the Print Room at Head Office, this Newsletter has been delayed, while we negotiated with commercial printers for the most favourable rates.

We regret any inconvenience caused and trust you will enjoy reading the interesting contributions.

Sheela M' Cormack

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Member,

As your new Chairman I feel I should introduce myself by giving you a little information about my background. I have been Divisional Representative for Northumberland/Tyne and Wear for the past five years and prior to that, Area Organiser for Northumbria. I hope I will be able to meet many of you personally in future months and the residential Annual General Meeting at Leicester was one such occasion. It was held in beautiful surroundings and we were made most welcome by all the University staff. It was very evident that those who attended do enjoy a residential meeting and the opportunity to meet friends and colleagues from further afield. We are therefore hoping to arrange another residential Annual General Meeting for 1996, probably in the North West, in Ambleside, Cumbria on July 15th/16th. Further details will be included with this Newsletter.

I was privileged to attend the V.J. Service of Remembrance and Commitment on Saturday, 19th August at Buckingham Palace. It was a most moving and memorable occasion and one which will remain with me for a very long time. The heat was extremely intense, but a variety of sun hats and a plentiful supply of cold water, courtesy of WRVS, helped us to survive !! It has been a wonderful hot sunny summer and one which we will remember when the days are shorter and colder, as they will be when this Newsletter is published.

Finally I would like to say how much I appreciate the honour of being your Chairman and that together we may continue, as a part of WRVS, to further the objects of the Association in the future.

Sheela M^o Connors

News from the Divisions

NORTH EAST DIVISION *Headquarters Newcastle*

Northumberland, Tyne & Wear.

Div.Rep. Mrs S.McCormack BEM

Newcastle and Gateshead branch have had to say goodbye to Mrs Vine who has moved to Melrose and to Mrs Yarrington. Both were thanked warmly for their work. Mrs Doyle has nobly stepped in and will run the club. (Welcome and best wishes to Mrs Doyle. Ed.) This group had, by July, knitted 17 tops for the Rwanda appeal.



Ponteland group have viewed the WRVS recruiting video. Many members here still do WRVS work. They meet regularly in the summer months, but less often in winter.

Sunderland group, keen to raise money for their hospice, have tried a "collecting box" into which members put their own contributions for their coffee. By February this had collected £67. (We wonder how this compares to members paying a stated price. Perhaps they will let us know as it could be a good idea for others. Ed.).

On a cold day, this group visited Hartlepool Quay, but they say that, even on a cold day, it was well worth a visit.

North Shields, Whitley Bay group are good money-spinners. They gave a donation of £112 to St Oswald's Hospice, and a coffee morning made £250 for M.S. in April. This success, they say, is due to the excellent, no "scrumptious"!, baking of Mrs Maureen Scott. They have welcomed two new members, Mrs Simmett and Mrs Hurst.

(Mrs McCormack's idea of having quarterly meetings for group leaders sounds a good one. Could it be useful for other Divisions? Ed.)

Sadly, this group record the deaths of Mrs Marjorie Palmer and Chris Ayre.

Durham, Cleveland, N. Yorks.

Div. Rep. Mrs R. Thompson OBE

Hartlepool has a new venue for meetings, easily accessible by bus and car in the town centre.

Mrs Thompson sadly reports the death of some founder members, but they are much heartened by welcoming five new ones.

Middlesborough have had monthly meetings and speakers who demand no fees, but often give a contribution ! They enjoyed a Christmas lunch together.

They have lost two members through ill-health.

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 Dalby Forest home of one member, in Thornton le Dale.

Humberside. Div.Rep. Mrs A.M.Wilson

In April 22 members from South Humberside attended the annual meeting at Bishop Burton College where they all (65), had an excellent lunch and meeting. A talk on railways was followed by Mrs Margaret Duff, WRVS Divisional Director North East explaining her WRVS work. On this beautiful day, a walk in the grounds was much enjoyed after lunch, (by your editor too who was a lucky guest!).

In July they once again had their annual strawberry tea at the home of their longest serving member, Mrs J.J. Dixon.

Mrs Wilson and Mrs Grice have crossed the bridge to join other members at a coffee party at the home of Mrs Peggy James, and twice for a pub lunch with members from North Humberside.

Pocklington group have met regularly for lunch, "always lively and enjoyable occasions".

Mrs Wilson writes that Mrs Joyce Ware has retired as Representative north of the Humber and Mrs Robina Priestley has taken her place. She thanks Mrs Ware for all her hard work and welcomes Robina who "has a vast knowledge of the area and its members". We wish Robina well. (She and I were, at one time, District Organiser neighbours. Ed.)

Mrs Wilson records the death of Mrs Todd of Beverley, Mrs J. Wood of Cottingham, and Mrs Masterton, who will all be sadly missed by their friends.

South and West Yorks.

Div. Rep. Mrs L. Ziegler MBE

No report.

Lincs, Notts, Leics.

Div.Rep Mrs Joan Newman.

Mrs Martin sends a report from Bassettlaw, where 38 members enjoyed lunch at High Peak College, Buxton, stopping at Bakewell on the way home to stroll by the river and buy Bakewell Pies.

Mrs Martin also records the help given at the Leicester AGM by Leicester WRVS and Association members; help with registration, escorting and producing flowers for Mrs Booton at the WRVS flower shop at Leicester Royal Infirmary who did the beautiful arrangements. (They were much enjoyed Ed.)

Mrs Buffrey reports from Worksop that in March the AGM was preceded by a delicious lunch. In April they enjoyed a successful coffee morning and in June raised a large sum for the Macmillan Nurses fund. The amount, given in their report is, I am afraid, unclear, as it has been altered. It is either £35, or could it be £350 ? If so a staggering amount. They look ahead to another outing, to Lotherton Hall, near Leeds and to a sherry and mince pie morning near Christmas.

Gedling branch members have been busy. They have taken morning coffee

with the Mayor and Mayoress in the Mayor's Parlour at the Civic Centre after which they made a resolution to grumble less about civic expenditure !. A tour of Tesco's was informative, the manager unperturbed at so many searching questions. Member's own homes provided venues for two meetings with lunch prepared by members. At one of these they enjoyed a talk by Mrs Cole from the Associated Tourist Board. They have also visited Harewood House, visiting the bird house, beautiful gardens and the house itself. They are very fortunate to have several members living in pretty villages and enjoy these for morning coffee meetings.

Mrs Cramp ends her Gedling branch report with the tragic news of the death on Mothering Sunday, in a car crash, of Mary Godfrey. We send our sympathy to her family.

NORTH WEST DIVISION *Headquarters Manchester*

Cumbria, Lancashire.

Div. Rep. Mrs M. McCambridge BEM

Mrs McCambridge and all Lancashire members are sorry to say "goodbye" to Mrs Connie Mitchell who is resigning. Mrs McCambridge says she has "held together a number of members for many years", many enjoying the interesting outings and lunches arranged by her. She will be sorely missed.

Four members from Lancs. and three from Cumbria attended the Leicester AGM and enjoyed it very much. It inspired them to meet to see how they could have better communication with members in this scattered area.

They welcome very warmly Mrs Iris Whittaker, the new Rep. for Lancashire and hope with her help to have regular meetings. For members feeling isolated in this area Mrs Whittaker's _____ and that of Mrs Cox in Cumbria is _____ and they urge members to please contact them.

Merseyside, Cheshire.

Div. Rep Mrs P Linton MBE

The Wirral branch can now enjoy a Yorkshire delicacy because Harry Ramsden's famous fish and chips are now served to Liverpoolians too. (We in Yorkshire have been able to enjoy them for many years ! However your editor would still prefer Scouse, (a Liverpool dish). It is good if we swap our favourite dishes occasionally. Ed.) After their fish and chips the branch went on to Marten Mere Bird Sanctuary, and despite wet weather, they thoroughly enjoyed their day

North and South Greater Manchester.

Div. Rep. Mrs E. Collier

Romiley now has 15 members. They have had an outing to Bridgemere Garden Centre and are planning an intriguing "cake and apron" sale, (dressed in aprons, or selling the cakes wrapped in them ? Ed.) They have a Christmas meal together also planned.

Staffordshire, Shropshire, Derbyshire. (Appointment Pending)

No report.

SOUTH EAST DIVISION *Headquarters, 99 White Lion St, London N1 9PF.*

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

The Cambridge group had a talk on "A Receptionist Remembers" and unusual trips, to Thursford Organ Centre, and Caithness Glass at Felixstowe.

Huntingdon group report a busy programme. In March one member, Mrs Middle, a one-time theatre producer, spoke "with gusto and exuberance... really delightful", about London productions she had worked on. In April, accompanied by their guests, Mrs Dent, D/O for Peterborough and Mrs Dykes, District Secretary, they visited Notcutt's Garden Centre, Peterborough. In May they had a talk by a prison Governor. In June they enjoyed a strawberry and cream tea and in July, a coach tour.

Several members attended the V.J. Service at Ely Cathedral.

They have suffered three sad losses. Mrs Joan Cavell, Mrs Nancy Williams and Mrs V Skinner will be sadly missed.

A Peterborough member, Mrs Hendriks told her group about her Dutch childhood and showed some beautiful caps which Dutch ladies wear. Another member spoke about "Living in Married Quarters" including having to line up, standing to attention, outside the house while the Officer's inspection took place.

Mrs Titcomb writes that she and Mrs Sillick were privileged to go to the "Tribute and Promise" Service in London on V.J. Day where they remembered the suffering of East Anglian troops in the Far East 50 years before.

Norfolk, Suffolk. Div. Rep. Mrs S. Scholey.

Mrs Moss reports that all Norfolk branches are now inviting ALL members of other branches to every function. This gives members many outings and is proving very popular. (Is this an idea for some other Counties ? Ed.)

They were pleased to have Mrs Claydon at their County Meeting and lunch in delightful surroundings, overlooking the river Bure. One member runs a bird sanctuary and they had a wonderful morning watching the antics of injured owls, gulls, pigeons, rabbits and donkeys, now recuperating at the sanctuary. Brenda Shaw, who had served with WVS in Germany swapped reminiscences with two other members who had all met husbands while on WVS Service.

Mrs Jackman reports a full programme for Gt. Yarmouth members with good attendances. In February 54 had lunch at Gorleston, in March 28 joined Norwich Branch for lunch at Dunston Hall. In April Mrs Elizabeth Claydon met 22 members at the County AGM and in May 60 members had lunch together. Nineteen members

went on a cruise on Oulton Broad and reported "the wind bitterly cold". After the heat of August it is hard to realise how cold it was in June.

Two members attended the national AGM at Leicester. In July, 29 travelled to Cromer to see the summer show on the pier and in August 12 members went to see the glories of Buckingham Palace" and reported "it is not easy to conceive anything more splendid". However, Mrs Jackman reports, "the caring side is not neglected".

Oxon, Bucks, Berks.

Appointment Pending

No report.

Greater Londo. Div. Rep. Mrs A.Christophersen

43 past and present London members met for their Annual Reunion on 5th April, 1995, held, thanks to the generosity of Terri McNeil in the London Metropolitan Office at St Chad's St.

We are also extremely grateful to Loraine Mycock and her team for once again supplying the splendid lunch which was mich appreciated.

Our Association Chairman, Elizabeth Claydon, gave a most informative talk on the recent changes in the WRVS Association, and answered many of the questions which were asked

A successful Raffle raised £52.50 and a Bring and Buy £50.90, the proceeds of which were shared out between the four areas concerned, for welfare purposes - Birthday and Christmas Cards, flowers for those in hospital and the ever increasing cost of postage and telephone calls

Bedfordshire, Essex, Herts.

Div. Rep. Mrs J. Callaway

Mrs Barbara Statham writes that the Bedford group numbers have increased to 56. They have met together several times. The highlight was a wonderful garden party held in a member's beautiful garden on a glorious day. They had games with prizes, a raffle and celebrated with Buck's Fizz. Mrs Statham says as a "new girl" to the Association, it was wonderful to see so many friends enjoying themselves. (I am sure the Buck's Fizz helped ! Perhaps we should all try it ? Ed.)

Essex Rep, Mrs Pat Copping says "it is with great sadness that I report the death of Mrs May Stone, of Brentwood, a loyal and respected member for 37 years". She records that Mrs Stone was in Civil Defence Nursing Reserve, and later M.O.W. driver, Transport Officer, Old People's Visitor and finally D/O for Brentwood.

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

Members from the three counties met in May for lunch at Moatlands Golf Club with Mrs E. Claydon and Mrs C Mayers as their guests. Mrs Claydon gave an interesting account of the Committee work at H.Q. during her busy, sometimes difficult three years' Chairmanship. Mrs Mayers spoke of the changes in the Service and they

soothed member's worries by answering questions. Members also saw the new WRVS video.

Kent members heard with great sadness of the death, aged 91 of Miss Norah Hayne, "the epitome of WRVS" who had supervised the purchase of Ephraim House as a WVS Residential Home. She will be remembered with gratitude.

Hampshire, Isle of Wight. (Appointment Pending)

No report.

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

Headquarters Exeter

West Midlands.

Div. Rep Mrs J. Smith BEM

No report.

Warwickshire.

Div. Rep. Mrs J. Rose

No report.

Hereford, Worcester, Gloucester.

Div. Rep. Mrs J. Connop

Thirty-five members met for their annual reunion in Great Malvern, at the Woodgate Residential Home, by the kind invitation of the Chairman of the home, who is also an Assoc. member. They had a tour of the building and all decided that when the time came, that was where they would choose to be.

A donation was made to Dame Frances Clode's favourite charity after several members attended her funeral. She had been a much-loved Association President for Gloucester.

Eighty-two Gloucester members heard about "the life of a naval surgeon" and welcomed several guests from Hereford for luncheon.

Cheltenham members' interest in "country matters", (the literal meaning, we assume, not the meaning we read of in Shakespeare ! Ed.) gave them much pleasure as they enjoyed a talk on "The Life of a Herdsman". They also enjoyed slides by members who had returned from visits to Australia.

(This report came too late for inclusion in the Spring issue).

Mrs Connop reports, (in good time she says, this time !) that 82 members had lunch in Tewkesbury Masonic Hall at which they were pleased to welcome Lady Martin DBE and Miss Mercer, County Rep. for Hereford/Worcester. At this meeting they heard about "The Flying Doctor Service in Australia".

They are sad to report the loss of four members, Mrs W.H. Peplow, Miss O. Young, Miss D.A.Kendall Pearson and Miss N. Wells who are all sadly missed by their friends.

Somerset, Devon, Cornwall. Div. Rep. Miss M Scott

No Report.

Avon, Wiltshire, Dorset. (Appointment pending)

The annual spring meeting was held at Wimborne in April and 30 members and guests attended. Mrs Elizabeth Claydon was a welcome guest. This branch raised £44.50 with a raffle and bring and buy, a wonderful result.

The editor has had a request from Mrs Eileen Leach of Portsmouth for any member who knows the address of the charity shop in Alicante, which she wishes to contact. Can any member help? (Send information to me Ed.).

Mrs Dunton records their sadness at the death of Mrs Joyce Grebby, Ass. Secretary for Dorset for many years. Among her many activities the War Widows Ass. was very important to her. Mrs Grebby is sadly missed for her caring concern for every Dorset member.

WALES *Headquarters Cardiff*

Clywd, Gwynedd, Powys. Div. Rep. Mrs E. Edwards BEM

Forty members from Clywd held their annual get-together in Ruthin Castle in August. They enjoyed an "old-fashioned" afternoon tea of cucumber, egg, ham and chicken sandwiches, hot scones with jam and cream followed by cream cakes! (My mouth waters as I type it !Ed.) After that ! they enjoyed a stroll through the Italian gardens, among the peacocks and had a tour of the castle. "An excellent reunion".

Dyfed, W. Mid. & S. Glam. Gwent. Div. Rep. Mrs D. Travis BEM

Mrs Travis calls Gwent members "girls", in her report. (They will be pleased. We could all do with that ! Ed.). "The girls" have enjoyed their monthly meetings; a planning meeting in January, with subs collected, a knitting design demonstration in February, a quiz in March, lunch in April, 20 free tickets from the Mayor to the Historic Muster in May, a train trip on the Brecon Steam train in June and a coffee morning in July, (with a break for rest in August Ed!). In September they visited the Working Horse Centre, heard a talk on Lifeboats in October and in November or December they plan a Christmas lunch. A busy lot, these "girls".

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Guernsey.

Assoc. Rep. Miss E. Robilliard

Jersey.

Assoc. Rep. Mrs D. Jennings

THE LEICESTER REUNION AND AGM. JULY 1995.

Arriving in Leicester, on the afternoon of July 17th, after a warm welcome, we found our spacious bedrooms in Beaumont Hall, a residence of Leicester University, set among the beautiful trees and grounds of Leicester Botanical Gardens where we enjoyed many walks. The flower arrangements, the work of Leicester WRVS, were beautiful. Next day was warm but wet and after a large breakfast, we joined members attending for the day, at nearby Gilbert Murray Hall, a beautiful, spacious and bright hall, for the day's meeting. After coffee, and greeting old friends, our Chairman, Mrs Elizabeth Claydon

opened the meeting saying how sorry she was that Mrs Margaret Duff, WRVS Director, N.E. Division, who was to have been the first speaker, was unable to attend. Mrs Claydon then introduced the main speaker, Mrs Linda Love, Public Relations Executive for East Midlands Airport. Mrs Love traced the airport's early days as an R.A.F. Charter airport, once Council owned, which now had 4,500 staff and received no subsidies at all. She explained the routes on daily service, the anti-phobia service for nervous passengers, the £2.2 million freight apron with its new cargo terminal. Also the further improvements costing £10 million which were just starting. She spoke of the 7 dogs employed on anti-drug and anti-weapon and explosive security and the many safety and first-aid procedures.

Mrs Peggy James gave a very warm vote of thanks. We then returned to Beaumont Hall for a most appetizing lunch served with wine, and we returned to Gilbert Murray Hall for the Annual General Meeting. At the close of the meeting we said goodbye to Mrs Claydon as retiring Chairman and welcomed Mrs Sheila McCormack and wished her well.

There then followed the amusing presentation of a large silver cardboard "medal", inscribed with the following words...

"A medal presented to the Chairman of the WRVS Association, Elizabeth Claydon. 18/7/95".



On presenting the medal, Mrs Taylor read out her following tribute...

*Elizabeth reached the Celestial realm
(She'd attained a hundred or more,
Some at the Association helm)
And she came to St Peter's door.
He scratched his beard and he jangled his keys
But would not let her in
Although she was, (as all Members are
Totally free from sin).
"What did you do on earth", he said,
"To enter this Institution" ?
"Ensured us a Legal Integral Part
In the newly formed Constitution.
'Twas as much a Battle as Agincourt
Though you may not think so, old fellah,
A campaign the Association bravely fought
To get under the Service Umbrella".
"Come in", said St Peter, "you did well,
I'm glad to hear your story.
Come in. If it wasn't exactly **HELL**
It was certainly **PURGATORY**".
So in years to come when we're all up **THERE**,
When saints are canonised,
The "Blessed Elizabeth, good and fair"
Will no doubt be recognised.
But we won't wait till then, whilst we're all down **HERE**
To show our appreciation,
To Elizabeth Claydon we'll raise a cheer
For she's saved the **ASSOCIATION**.*



Brief extracts from a long, (I am afraid too long. Ed.) tribute to WRVS from Mrs Jenny Davenport, not a WRVS member, who brought her mother, Mrs Daphne Davenport to the Leicester Conference.

“What an amazing bunch you are. You are fantastic. Care, service, loyalty, responsibility, youthfulness, experience, cheerfulness and idealism ran round the hall. You are remarkable, unbelievable, the enduring essence of the human spirit, born to survive. It gives faith to those who struggle on beneath you.”

Good luck and best wishes.



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

10 October 1995

Dear Member,

Many, who attended the Leicester A.G.M. have written to say how much it was enjoyed. We were all sad to say goodbye to Mrs Claydon as our Chairman. She had a hard, but very successful three years, coping with the changes as they affected the Association. We now welcome Mrs Sheila McCormack and wish her a very happy and successful three years.

I have had several letters saying how much you enjoyed the last issue, especially the memories of peace finally coming in Europe. Thank you to all those who sent me copy. I am so pleased to get so many more contributions. Do please keep it up. They say in old age we remember less of the recent past (I certainly do!) and much more of distant memories. Moreover, there is a theory that it is good for us to reminisce about the old days.

For the next issue I would particularly like funny anecdotes about things that happened to you while on WRVS duty, for they have happened to us all, (like one of my own I describe on p 24). Perhaps we could have a page of the funniest !

For this issue, I have more reports of the celebrations in London for both V.E and V.J. Day and I hope you enjoy reading them. One problem I have is that some contributions are far too long to include. I reduce those I can, but it does really spoil them, especially for those who sent them in. A good general rule is that they should be no longer than about 200 to 300 words. Poems should fit easily onto an A5 sheet when typed and very often very short comments, stories or poems are the ones with most impact. Anyway thank you for all your contributions. Just keep them coming and send them to me at the above address, (not to London - they only have to be forwarded). Please let me have anything for the Spring issue by the end of February 1996.

Ness Jewales
ROYAL
VOLUNTARY
SERVICE

V.J. Day. Saturday, 19th August 1995.

From Mrs E Claydon, our 1995 Association Chairman

When it was suggested that I accept the invitation I didn't want to have anything to do with it. I hate very large crowds and was unenthusiastic and apprehensive.

It was one of the most wonderful and memorable days of my life.

The morning was glorious, the train from Andover on time. An old gentleman asked me if I was attending the Parade. Had I been one of those who had welcomed him and his exhausted comrades back from Dunkirk? I had. He was going to join his mates to sit in one of the stands. I did not tell him where I was going.

Much too early I strolled round Green Park, Lancaster House and the area around the Palace. It seemed one mass of enormous stands with a vast T.V. screen at the Palace Gates.

My instructions were to enter Lancaster House by "Milkmaid's Passage". After handing my invitation to the policemen I was treated like a valuable piece of glass and passed gently towards the entrance to Lancaster House and into the care of a delightful, white-haired smiling person in the Ladies Cloakroom.

Then on to receive our "luncheon lists" with our names engraved on the front, which gave the lay-out of the tables and those who were to host and sit at each.

Lancaster House is breathtaking. The high rooms, vast with high gilded ceilings, marble pillars, enormous mirrors, soaring galleries and a fantastic sweeping staircase. One of the ushers told me that people frequently fall down the stairs because they cannot take their eyes off it all.

Outside on the large tree-studded lawn we were served champagne, orange juice and canapes. I was among less than 20 women out of the 100 guests.

Then the Queen and Prince Philip arrived, the Queen only about 6 ft from me. Lunch was announced and we all went up the fantastic staircase to the Long Gallery to find our tables and places. I was the only woman at the Duke of Edinburgh's table and the other guests included a Lt. General, Mr John Ward, MP for Poole, one of the PM's Private Secretaries, and Mr Lishbrook representing the Star and Garter Clubs. The wine flowed, the delicious food was perfectly chosen for such a hot day. As the only woman I was served first and was glad that there was nothing difficult to tackle! The Defence Chief of Staff proposed "the Queen" and the Secretary of State for Defence proposed "Other Sovereigns and Heads of State here represented".



After lunch, stewards led us out onto the Mall for our walk to Buckingham Palace with the crowds 10 deep on the pavements and solid in the enormous stands. We were conducted to numbered seats in the Royal Box, a very large red-carpeted platform in front of the Palace gates with comfortable cushioned chairs. The Royal Family came out. Suddenly a Lancaster Bomber skimmed the trees as it roared down the Mall shedding a cloud of scarlet poppy petals onto the crowds lining the Mall who had stood for many hours in the boiling sun. In the Royal Box, Service personnel were supplying us with as many paper cups of water as they could manage.

Once the clergy and Royal family left, we were conducted once more down the Mall to a small stand next to the Royal Saluting Box. The Royal Family arrived, the Queen and Prince Philip standing in an open jeep, to take the salute of V.C.'s, holders of the George Medal and Burma Star and representatives from every Service and Civilian Organisation. Some were in wheelchairs, but all had their heads held high. It was incredibly moving.

The parade ended with "Tribute and Promise", "an initiative by over 100 welfare and voluntary organisations who have united in an unique alliance in this commemorative year. This seeks to highlight the needs of the war generation, both military and civilian. The promise is a re-affirmation of that commitment and to be proclaimed at services throughout the country". There was a WRVS contingent in this section.

What an incredible day of memories, pride and a VERY tight throat.

More memories of the 1995 Celebrations

It was a major highlight of my three years as Association Chairman to receive the Prime Minister and Her Majesty's Government's invitation to "A Service of Thanksgiving, Reconciliation and Hope" to be held in St Paul's Cathedral on Sunday May 7th.

Once at St Pauls, after pottering round for a little time, we took our seats, joining Kathleen Halpin, Baroness Pike and Dame Barbara Shenfield. For me, it was pure magic, the ushers and wandsmen wearing every imaginable medal and decoration, the perfect smoothness of the entire organisation.

Our seats were wonderful. Only 12 rows from the pulpit. We saw the arrival of the Cabinet, the foreign guests and then the Royal Family. A beautifully produced "Order of Service" is a wonderful memento.



After the Service the organisation was not so good. The coaches, meant to take us to our lunch location did not appear. (Why did they not get WRVS to organise this for them ? !) After waiting an hour, we took a taxi to the Durbar Court of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, a vast, sunken court-yard. Very hungry after our early start we fought for whatever food we could reach and found seats overlooking the Court. It was a very special day.

From Mrs Elizabeth Claydon. Ass. Chairman. Hants.

A taxi took us to Wellington Barracks where we were given our security passes and at 11-30 were escorted through a side entrance into Buckingham Palace forecourt. As we walked through, the crowd cheered and asked us for cups of tea!

Twelve Association members, mostly in uniform, joined 2,000 veterans from all the Services. Outside the railings the crowds were cheering as the military band marched in and Dame Vera Lynn, Sir Harry Secombe and Cliff Richard were escorted onto the stage and in turn, sang all the old wartime songs. Through the railings was a sea of waving Union Jacks. Then the Queen in red, the Queen Mother in yellow and Princess Margaret in green came onto the balcony and joined in the singing. The highspot was the fly-past, up the Mall in single file. First a Spitfire, then a Lancaster, a Dakota and a Tornado, and finally the Red Arrows trailing red, white and blue vapour.

Then there were the fireworks, shooting thousands of tiny parachutes into the sky which fell onto the crowd, who snatched them as they fell.

From Mrs P.M. Linton. Chester.

I felt so grateful to receive a ticket for the Tribute and Promise Service on August 19th. It was a memorable day. The Association member next to me managed, against all odds to persuade those sitting in front of us to refrain from jumping up and down so that we could watch on the large screen placed just outside the Palace to see the Queen and her family arrive and the very moving service

I shall never forget the feeling of sadness during the reading of the Kohima Epitaph and the two minutes silence, everyone of us conscious of the great sacrifice. The service was followed by the Lancaster Bomber dropping a million poppies amongst us.

The parade was so well organised . Our grateful thanks go to those members of the armed forces, especially a young Gurkha who



took care of us, continually supplying us with cold drinks and always addressing us as Ma'am. It was a great tribute, commemoration and celebration.

Name not supplied.

The fiftieth anniversary of V.E. Day was enjoyed by many in Guernsey and it was also the anniversary of our liberation from German occupation. There were celebrations in each of the ten Parishes of the island as each organised their own celebrations.

We were honoured with the presence of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales and by about 70 ex-service men who had been part of our liberating force. Many members were present at the church service attended by 1,500 people and in the afternoon watched the cavalcade and aerobatics display of the Red Arrows from excellent seats which had been organised for us by WRVS.

It was a never-to-be-forgotten, **very** special day

From Miss E. Robilliard. Guernsey.

A number of the Bedford Association attended Bedford's V.J. celebration and remembrance day. It was very hot. Not all the 24 seats allocated to us were occupied but for those who took part, it was a moving ceremony. It was attended by our Lord Lieutenant and many veterans. We watched the WRVS banner for Bedfordshire carried with pride beside those of the Burma Star, the British Legion and others.

From Mrs Barbara Statham BEM. Bedford.

It was a great privilege to be granted a Veteran's pass on that momentous day. Feeling very honoured we passed through the crowds into the stand in the forecourt of Buckingham Palace, our uniforms forming a "green blob", hoping that Her Majesty would recognise us. We joined in the singing with the enormous crowd outside the Palace which stretched as far as the eye could see, down the Mall.

The Queen Mother's presence moved us the most, as we remembered her on that same balcony 50 years before. It was undoubtedly **her** day. What a lovely and memorable experience it was, the amazing fly-past, the spectacular Red Arrows and the bands playing as we left the Palace to mingle with the good-natured crowds outside.

From Sheila Wakelin. Maldon. Essex



More Memories of 1945

Great apprehension, but after the first shock as German troops appeared, with the list of orders by which we had to live, we settled down, making the best of a bad job. Our whole way of life changed. The imposed curfew meant that "a party" had to be left early, to get home before it started, or more usually, planning all-night parties. I went to one every Saturday night, held on a neighbouring farm, dashing home after coming off duty at 8-30pm, changing and cycling furiously to get past the barrier in the lane, put there one hour before curfew. Then we danced all night to the music of two accordions and lit by a car battery and light bulb, because of the electricity rationing.

One winter night, coming home from the cinema, surrounded by Germans clattering noisily in jackboots, when, pushing my bicycle, my improvised "cycle lamp", a night-light in a jam jar!, dangling from the handlebars crashed to the ground. Around me, countless Germans flicked on cigarette lighters to see if this was some new weapon. Terrified, I just kept on walking, leaving the valuable night-light in the gutter!

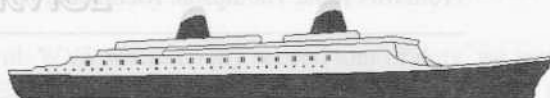


My brother had an illicit radio with a voltage needing an adaptor dangling from the back of the set, which would get red hot and had to sit on a ash tray to prevent it burning the table. We used to pass on the news from this radio but never told anyone how we knew. One day when, listening in the back kitchen, we ignored a ring at the front door bell, and heard footsteps coming towards the kitchen door. Double quick, the radio was unplugged, the aerial wound in and the hot adaptor hidden. But only a family friend appeared at the window and we all looking terribly guilty. After the war we explained our odd behaviour that day to this friend.

Cycling to go on duty at the hospital one evening two drunken Germans grabbed our bikes and made us get off. A male nurse and a porter came to our aid, knocked the soldiers down and grabbed their forage caps, then called the Feldgendarmarie to come and collect the men. At 8 o'clock next morning a Gestapo man appeared to interview everyone concerned and it led to a nerve-racking courtroom appearance, conducted in German. Fortunately for all of us, the soldiers were found guilty.

From Miss E Robbilliard. Guernsey.

I had lost my R.A.F. husband in 1942 and was having a hard time settling down. A friend hearing of my plight from my parents, sent me the application forms to join WVS/Overseas and on Dec. 9th 1945 I sailed from Liverpool into another world and another life. The last year of my contract was spent in Hong Kong and I decided instead of returning via the Mediterranean, to go home via the Eastern route. I got as far as Montreal and have lived in Canada ever since. One day in 1956 in the Overseas Club in Toronto a member recently arrived from England came over to me, hearing I had been in Singapore and said he too had been in Singapore, but as a prisoner of war, and had spent a year on the infamous railway. A year later we were married ! Eleven years ago we were back in Singapore and Thailand and walked part of the railway Arthur helped to build and through the rubble of the house where I had lived for 5 months in Ridout Road, next to WVS/HQ. I have had 38 wonderful years with a wonderful husband, so you see, joining WVS/Overseas was the best thing I could ever have done.



Mrs K.M, Holmes. West Vancouver. Canada.

It was a hot day and my friend and I had enjoyed a picnic at Fermain Bay. Suddenly three German planes roared low overhead with a terrific noise, machine gunning the harbour. We scrambled up the cliff path, hailed the first car in sight asking the driver to take us to the emergency hospital. We spent a very busy night nursing the casualties.

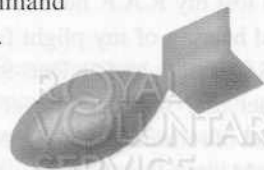
The war brought many hardships but some amusements, like the day a nurse, bathing a patient, getting no lather from the piece of soap, found she had picked up a piece of cheese instead !.

Some mornings, coming back on duty at 6-30am from our billets, a British plane would fly over dropping leaflets and we would pick them up, hide them before the Germans got them and then let others have them. This news from England was wonderfully encouraging.

From Mrs Daphne Mauger. St. Peter Port.

My memories of V.J. Day were of recovering from cooking for two weeks at a pea-picking camp for 100 girls from my old school. I was totally exhausted !

From Mrs B. Statham BEM. Bedford



After the first A Bomb, we in S.E.Asia Command waited with bated breath to see what would happen. Three days later, when the second bomb hit Nagasaki, all troop movements were halted and our spirits soared, with rumours of a Japanese surrender. I tried to telephone my husband, 1,000 miles away, waiting to invade Malaya, but without success. Then my wonderful Muslim bearer appeared grinning from ear to ear saying "Master coming"! So we were together for V.J. Day and made it the biggest whoopee party of all time. Many months later we were able to come home together

From Mrs Rene Thompson. Richmond. N. Yorks.

On V.E. Day I was in the old WVS headquarters in Tothill Street, with 25 others, completing my training for Services Welfare Overseas. In the afternoon, (but not before !) we were allowed to go down to Parliament Square to see Winston Churchill. Three days later I sailed from Liverpool in a troopship for Naples. The journey took 10 days! and the ship was still blacked out until we got to Gibraltar when it was lifted amongst great rejoicing. There began some of the happiest days of my life.

From Mrs Rosemary Amies. Lechlade.

The day before V.E. Day I was being interviewed at WVS H.Q. Tothill St for WVS Service Overseas. By the end of 1945 I sailed for the Far East, beginning 15 very happy years with WVS.

En route for Singapore the heavily guarded train stopped at a station where British troops were parading. As they came past our carriage I said "Good Evening" and they exclaimed "Blimey - they're English" !

At Christmas 1946, stationed with R.A.F. in Japan, trying to make our cold draughty building as festive as possible, I have an unforgettable memory of 4 burly Flight-Sergeants solemnly sitting round a table, pasting strips of coloured paper to make paper chains!

Later an important inspection was due. The boys needed new stripes and badges sewn on. We sewed for days. Running out of black cotton, we ran white cotton through a saucer of ink and prayed it wouldn't rain on the day of the inspection !

I feel privileged to have been part of Lady Reading's "Spinach and Beet" Army.

From Paddy Goss. Northants.

I was in the W.A.A.F. It was 1942. On our local railway station the "ladies in green" manned a refreshment bar serving delicious cakes and sandwiches absolutely free which greatly bolstered my morale when returning to camp on Sunday evenings. Then later in life, a war-widow with one daughter, I remembered these ladies and offered my services to WVS. I hope I have passed on to others the goodwill I experienced so many years ago.

From Mrs Connie McNeish.Hull

Reading the Association Newsletter No. 42 I was interested in Mrs Robinson's account of running the cafe on Rawalpindi station as I had spent 5 years service at Rawalpindi before the war.

I had my first contact with WVS when, on my second tour of duty, we were sent to India from the Middle East. Three of us were put on a train from Karachi to Bangalore and Hyderabad. For this journey we were given a sandbag of rations which only lasted a short time. Fortunately, somewhere along the line we were given rations by the WVS for the remainder of the journey.

I also remember the marvellous welcome given to us by WVS, on our arrival from Dunkirk before returning again to India.

From Mr W.B. Vincent. Ex-WRVS.

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**

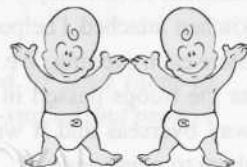
V.J. Day was my sixteenth birthday and five friends and I decided to go to Hyde Park to join in the festivities. We took my birthday cake with us and were cutting it when one of the boys swallowed a safety pin! We rushed him to a Red Cross Unit where they gave him a cotton wool sandwich to eat. ! After that we all joined in the singing! and watched the Royal Family on the balcony". Calmness under fire!

Obviously a future WRVS Member!

From Mrs Pam Lane. (I think that's the name. Ed). Member of the WRVS OAP Social Club, Southwell.

You asked what I did on V.J. Day.... I produced twin sons!

Johan Buffrey. Worksop.



I was working for WVS Overseas, in Athens. I was off duty and having just washed my hair I was drying it, sitting on the flat roof of our house. What news to come at such a time. I had to remain there until my hair dried!

From Mrs Pat Mytton Worcester

I joined WVS in Crosby, near Liverpool, cycling 3 miles to and from WVS each day. Becoming pregnant I asked my doctor how long I should continue cycling. Her reply was "Until you can't get behind the handlebars !" I took her advice.

Mrs Nan Chisnall. St Helens.

A reminiscence of VJ Day

I spent the evening of VJ Day outside Buckingham Palace with 6 WAAF friends cheering the King and Queen and the two Princesses who came out on the balcony. Later we returned to camp in the train driver's cab as the train was full to overflowing with everyone leaving after the celebrations. Bonfires were burning in the gardens as we passed. Soon we would say goodbye to our WAAF friends with whom we had worked, eaten and slept for so many years, but I am pleased that four of us are still in contact with each other.

From Mrs Pat Mytton Cheltenham.

I enrolled in 1940 in Dunstable where WVS were very active. I was asked to run a day nursery, open from 7-30am until 6-0pm. The children had all their meals at the nursery and it was a very busy atmosphere in a large church hall. We could use the garden and we had rabbits and a large sandpit for the children to play in. (Enclosed were photographs and press reports describing this successful day nursery. Ed)

We also opened two forces canteens in two empty shops with a large kitchen attached. I helped with the cooking there each evening. We were always busy as the troops passed in convoys on their way overseas and it was somewhere for them to eat and talk.



At the end of the war we had an inspection by the Duke of Gloucester, thanking us for all our work. We felt very proud. I am glad I joined for all the friendships and pleasure it has given me.

From Mrs Rosa Prior. Southend on Sea.

...and from the Channel Islands

I saw the first of the liberating forces come ashore, 22 men led by a Guernseyman. In their smart khaki uniforms, looking so healthy, they were in sharp contrast to the drab grey-green of the Germans, who were pale, thin and virtually starving.

Thanks to all who sent in their memories...

.....and for the next newsletter.....

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON MY WAY TO.....

Would Members please send me their funny experiences while on WRVS work. **SHORT PLEASE** (This is one of mine. Ed as an example)

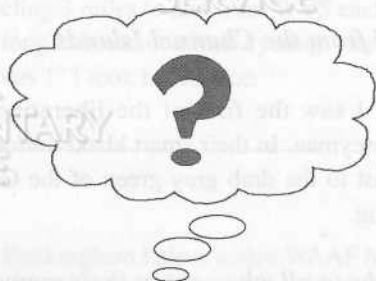
Giving out Meals on Wheels I called on one old chap new to our round. Entering his living room I had to step over an 8ft long, stout wooden fence post, one end of which was burning and smouldering in the very neglected pile of ashes which served as his grate, the other end propped on a low stool at the other side of the room. Each time I needed a spoon, plate etc., he, or I, had to step over this "log" to get to the kitchen. I suggested to him that I could get the Scouts to saw his wood for him. He would not hear of it. "He always did it this way". And he did, as I found out throughout that winter !

Reminder to Members and Groups

Subscriptions are due in January and members are asked to send them to London as early as possible as the Association Office is short-staffed and prompt payment will greatly ease their load.

OH GOD I MISS MY MIND.

Just a line to say I'm living
That I'm not amongst the dead
Though I'm getting more forgetful
And mixed up in my head.
I've got used to my arthritis
To my dentures I'm resigned
I can manage my bi-focals
But Oh God! I miss my mind.



Sometimes I can't remember
When I'm standing by the stairs
If I should go up for something
Or else come down from there.
Before the fridge so often,
My mind is filled with doubt;
Now did I put some food away
Or come to take it out ?

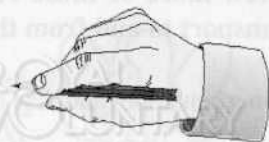
And sometimes when its nighttime
With my hairnet on my head,
I'm not sure if I'm retiring
Or getting out of bed.

At last I'm at the post box
And my face has gone so red;
Instead of posting this to you
I've opened it instead.

From Mrs Ziegler. Wakefield.

What's in a name.

Years ago when working in a Bank a woman gave me her surname as "Bottom". Imagine my fascination when she gave her first name as "Rosie" !



A yachting friend of mine had a friend called "Rhoda Shaw"!

A police officer admitted he had served with a young constable called "Robin Banks".

A chemist assistant's name label on her overall gave her name as "M. Balmer".

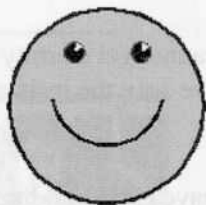
Three men working at the local Crematorium were named "Messrs Burns, Gason and Ashley".

This idea from Mrs Win Taylor. Contributions please for the next issue, but Mrs Taylor insists, no fictitious ones .. (like local criminals called "Ray Ling, the Chinese Fence" or the local policeman who lived at "Letsby Avenue"!)

Signs of Our Times

In a Tokyo Hotel.

It is forbidden to steal towels please. If you are not a person to do such a thing is please not to read notis.



In a Belgrade hotel lift.

To move the cabin, push button for wishing floor. If the cabin should enter more persons, each one should press a number wishing floor. Driving is then going alphabetically, by national order.

In a Paris hotel.

Please leave your values at the front desk.

In a Yugoslavian hotel.

The flattening of underwear, with pleasure, is the job of the chambermaid.

In a Japanese Hotel.

You are invited to take advantage of the chambermaid.

From Joan Sadler, York.

A few more of those replies to a letter asking why patients required transport to and from the chiropody clinic.

I am a pensioner and also an old person.

I can't breathe and haven't done so for many years.

I haven't had my feet done for months but they are no better when I have been.

I cannot drive a car because I haven't got one.

When your man brings me back will you ask him to drop me at the White Swan.



And genuine extracts from letters received by the Social Security Office in Edinburgh.

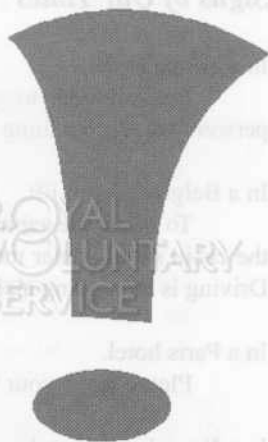
I cannot get eternity benefit in spite of the fact that I have seen the insistence officer.

I have eight children. What can I do about it ?

I have nothing coming into the house but two sons on the dole.

I am visited by the clergy. Will you write to the pensions minister for me as I don't know what church he is in charge of.

In accordance with your instructions I gave birth to twins in the enclosed envelope.



Three wishes for an O.A.P.

My first wish I need hardly mention,
Is another £5 on my old age pension.
Something to help me hold up my head,
To stay in the black instead of the red.
To keep clothes on my back and shoes on my feet
And a wee bit for an occasional treat.

My second wish is not for wealth
Just an improvement in the National Health
Shortening of lists for O.A.P.'s
Needing new hips and plastic knees.
Plenty of help and T.L.C., hearing aids and spectacles free.

My third is fantasy, can't come true
But then I enjoy the odd dream, don't you?
A sunny walled garden, a rustic gate,
Me dressed 'to the nines' awaiting my fate.
He stands in the shade of a lilac tree,...handsome TOM CRUISE, .and he fancies me !!

From Vera Hornshaw, York



Recipe

Baked Pears.

- 8-10 pears
- 3 tbsp orange juice
- 100 grams sugar (about 3-4 oz)
- 2 cloves
- 50 grams raisins (about 2 oz.)
- 200 ml. Oloroso sherry. (a good 1/4 pint)
- 50 gms almonds

Peel pears, halve and remove cores. Place in buttered oven dish with orange juice, sugar, raisins and sherry and bake 30 minutes in a medium oven until soft. (I think the dish should be covered. Ed.) Blanch almonds, halve and toast in a little butter. Sprinkle over the pears and serve hot or cold with cream or ice cream.

From Mrs Margaret Banks. Alicante. Spain.



Honours 1995

NEW YEARS HONOURS

OBE Jean Firminger Director, Human Resources (Head Office)

MBE Marjorie Albrow WRVS Member since 1944. President & Founder Member, Fareham Townswomen's Guild.
Mabel Bonner Organiser & Treasurer, WRVS Hospital Project at Lister Hospital, Stevenage, Hertfordshire.
Irene Crawley Local Organiser, Pembroke Dock.
Jessie Davies Founder, Highgate WRVS Centre, Bredbury Cheshire.
Francisca Gostling Lately C.O. East Kent.
Judith Haffenden C.O. North Yorkshire.
Catherine Leah MoW Driver, Bath.
Angela McGregor Local Organiser, Bridge of Allen.
Barabara McLean MoW, Paisley.

For Services to the Community

MBE Elsie Sparks (for services to the community in Sandford Devon)
WRVS work in Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital.
Ronald Jackson (for services to the community in Filey, N. Yorks)
WRVS work driving for the disabled, Books on Wheels etc.

BIRTHDAY HONOURS

MBE Kathleen Hall MoW Organiser, Crosby.
Hilary Jones MoW Organiser, Rhos, Wrexham.
Muriel Redfern Frecheville Darby and Joan Club, Sheffield.
Mae Ritchie DO, Kyle and Carrick, Ayr, Scotland.
Margaret White WRVS organiser, Weston Day Centre, Bath.
Mary Williams Borough Organiser, Kensington, Chelsea
Hammersmith & Fulham, London.

For Services to the Community

MBE Mary Stutley WRVS organiser, Lister Hospital Shop, Stevenage