

WRVS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER



No 51 Autumn 1999

Letter from the Chairman

Dear Friends,

27th August 1999

This letter has come round very quickly after the last one. It's very hard to think we are approaching another Autumn.

I hope those who were able to travel North to the Reunion and AGM in Durham enjoyed the visit. Miss Lilian Groves (Friends of Durham Cathedral) gave a super illustrated talk on the Cathedral. Some took advantage of a trip to see inside the Cathedral, a magnificent powerful building set on a peninsular site in the river Wear

The WRVS is going through a period of change. Restructuring is going on at the present time and I understand will be complete by March 2000. Mrs Tina Tietjen, the new Chairman of the WRVS, gave a most interesting resume of the present situation, and what she sees as the way forward to a more integrated service throughout the country.

The Association will be in its new home when you read this letter, and we too will have a period of change, from box files to a computer based office. Yes, we will keep the box files for some time to come!!

Dorothy and Ava gave a splendid Farewell Lunch at the London Office in August. I was able to thank Greensleeves for their kindness to our office staff and especially to thank the London Association office for their most efficient administration over many years.

I hope you will all have been able to enjoy the warm if rather wet Summer. If your travels bring you near York do call in and see us at the new office. We will put the kettle on! The office address, telephone number, and opening hours are given in this issue.

Good wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely,

News from the Divisions

NORTH EAST DIVISION Headquarters Newcastle

Northumberland, Tyne & Wear.



Div. Rep Mrs S MacCormack BEM

A lunch held in Newcastle in June for all groups was well attended and they welcomed the Assoc. Chairman, Mrs Diane Price on this happy occasion.

Mrs Doyle reports that the Newcastle group is thriving. They were pleased to welcome Mrs Taylor who joined them from Durham. They have enjoyed a wide variety of talks on such differing subjects as "Genealogy", "Cragside Gardens", "Coaching in the North East" and "Humour in Religion". In July they saw glass being made at the Sunderland Glass Centre, a very "high tech." building which has won an award for design and is part exhibition and part working demonstration. In July they went to the Allendale Centre and visited a pottery and a lead mine and had lunch at Thortergill, with its lovely waterfall walk. Several ladies are knitting the five foot lengths for the WRVS Millenium scarf. (Altogether a lively lot ! Ed.)

Another cheery report from Sunderland. Mrs Hardy reports a good year with eleven new members. They collected £100 for St Benedict's Hospice. Receiving the cheque, Mrs Oliver told members how much the refurbishment of the Day Centre and gardens had meant to the patients. The WRVS Area Manager gave a talk on her job and quoted the mileage she had covered in one year. Everyone decided that they were glad to be retired ! Another interesting speaker spoke of her childhood in the '30's and how different it was to a childhood today. Another spoke about RUKBA, a group who help the elderly keep their independence. One morning was spent, amidst a great deal of laughter, looking through a WRVS album of the '60's, '70's and '80's photographs. In July they had a leisurely lunch together at Sunderland Catering College.

After four members had attended the Durham A.G.M. for the first time and (unexpectedly) enjoyed it, it made them wonder if the title "A.G.M." for this meeting sounds dull and puts people off. (Ideas please for an alternative name. We would love to attract more members to this enjoyable meeting each year. Ed.)

Mrs Dawson reports on a new venture for North Shields/Whitley Bay which has started well. They meet for a quarterly coffee morning in the local Anchor Housing premises and enjoy the cakes made by members. Several residents also join in. They have five new members but have sadly lost a long-serving member, Mrs Mary Stewart in whose memory a donation was sent to the British Heart Foundation.

Northumberland is a large county with members very widespread but Mrs Sealey writes that they try to keep in touch. The Ponteland group hold a

monthly coffee morning and meeting and anyone wanting to join this group should contact Mrs Sealey. Sadly they report the death of a great contributor to WRVS, Mr Bob Stewart, for many years in charge of Premises. He and his late wife were active WRVS members. Some members have read and discussed the WRVS memo "Countdown to the Future" and while they agree that change is necessary they say "they found it sad reading and were hardly able to recognise the WRVS that they had enjoyed being a part of for so long". (We would welcome other views on this, but do remember that with criticisms there have to be suggestions for alternatives. Perhaps these members, and others, would write in for the next issue, suggesting their ideas. Ed)

Durham, Cleveland, N. Yorks, E. Yorks, Hull.

Div. Rep. Mrs R. Thompson OBE

First apologies from the Editor for omitting the E. Yorks report from the last issue. The only reason she has to offer, with great regret, was perhaps the chaotic state of her desk at that time! She has now tidied it! The report that was omitted welcomed Mrs Price as Chairman and Mrs Thompson as Div. Rep., now taking E. Yorks under her wing, although they are sad to be separated from their friends south of the Humber. They reported two deaths, Mrs Standing and Mrs Gillis, both long-serving WRVS members, remembered with affection.

For their Christmas lunch at Hull University, where the staff had really made a great effort and the meal was first class, it was announced that Social Services had made a special presentation to Mrs Taylor for 43 years service with Meals on Wheels and that WRVS had also created a special certificate to mark the occasion. At the same time they also found that Mrs Herbert had spent a similar number of years working in the Hull Office. Well done to both. Mrs Priestley says these two ladies certainly deserved these congratulations and it is lovely to have them at their meetings.

Members have been knitting Teddies for the children in devastated countries and 20 sets of premature baby clothes have been knitted for the Special Care Unit at York District Hospital.

Regular lunches were held throughout the County and they have kept contact with housebound members.

Mrs Thompson's report starts by saying that she is delighted that she was able to get to know many E. Yorks and Hull members before spring turned into summer. She very much enjoyed luncheons at Willerby and Wilberfoss. At the latter, Mrs Priestley announced that she was sending off contributions to the "longest scarf in the world" very soon. They will sadly miss four members, Mrs Eldon from Hull, Mrs Featherby from Pocklington, Mrs Fish from Cottingham and Mrs Marcus, ex County Clothing. Organiser.

They are happy to welcome two new members at Driffield and Hull.

Selby have continued their monthly lunch meetings and Mrs Thompson joined them on a lovely day in June. Mrs Altass is sad to report the death of Mrs

Roberts who died suddenly in August. One member, Mrs Buckle has returned to her home county, Shropshire. (I am sure Shropshire members will contact her there. Ed). They have a new member in Mrs Scott, previously a Local Organiser. They have set up a "flower fund" to pay for cards and flowers when members are ill, as they are always concerned about them, Mrs Altass writes that in her own recent illness she has been so appreciative of members' support and help, (including she says, that of Mr Altass, who wrote the Selby report for his wife as she is having difficulty writing.)

Scarborough group reported another happy year of meeting together. In addition to coffee mornings and lunches they held an autumn sandwich lunch in a member's home and at this function, a rep. from Area brought along cards and gifts from the WRVS catalogue. The annual outing to Ormesby Hall had to be cancelled. Half day trips for outings are much preferred to whole day ones. (Other groups have found this too. Ed)

Harrogate group averages sixteen members at monthly meetings and have had two slide shows, one on China, one on Rome. The outing took the form of a canal trip from Skipton on the Leeds, Liverpool Canal and they enjoyed a wonderful afternoon. They have welcomed a member from Norfolk. Several members were sorry to miss the Durham AGM. Their trip had be cancelled at the last minute, due to illness.

Darlington had a successful luncheon in the spring, at Blackwell Grange, once the home of Lady Havelock, the first Organiser for Darlington. They have also had a successful outing to Wensleydale.

Hartlepool got several safety tips during a talk by the local Fire Brigade. Names and addresses were taken of anyone wishing to have smoke alarms fitted. and the men came and fitted these free of charge! (Perhaps other groups might take advantage of this service if it is available in their area. Ed). They had a speaker from the Nuclear Power Station and Miss Lesley Hyatt spoke on another occasion of the work of the National Sailors Nautical Welfare. Each year, at one of their meetings, they have a quiz by a member's husband. A visit to Sunderland Glassworks was voted a great success. A large contingent came to the Durham AGM and they thoroughly enjoyed the day. They missed Mrs Stamp this year at this event due to her recent hip replacement operation and she wishes to thank and praise all who came to her aid and help keep the branch afloat and cheer her up. Soon she hopes to be back to normal.

These members are again knitting Teddies for the "Shoe Box Appeal".

Middlesborough continue their regular meetings and are busy making arrangements to host the annual Area lunch in their local hospital.

The speaker at the York spring meeting was a very lively York City Librarian who made members aware that libraries had many other services besides lending books and encouraged members not to be afraid of the new technology.

In February Mrs Rosa Smith opened her city centre home for a refreshment

day and though there was snow on the streets it was warm and welcoming indoors.

A very pleasant afternoon in April was spent at the home of the President of the York group, Mrs Venables, with afternoon tea and a chance to sit out in the garden on a perfect afternoon. Members thanked them both for these pleasant occasions and for the great boost to the funds.

Thirty members and friends enjoyed an afternoon coach outing to Brockworth Hall, near Doncaster in June and eleven members attended the national AGM in Durham in July. Several members have knitted scarves for the "longest scarf on the world". This group awaits with interest, the opening of the Association H.Q. Office at 82 Bootham, York.

South and West Yorks Div. Rep. Mrs J. Pitts BEM

Wakefield Group meet regularly. A discussion earlier in the year considered a summer outing to Paris on Eurostar. On checking the "small print" they found that a 4am start with midnight return was involved. Interest rapidly evaporated! Instead we had a very successful visit to Llandudno, with excellent weather and a good lunch. A meeting has been arranged at Halifax which we hope will result in the inauguration of a new Association group. (We do hope so Ed.).

Lincs, Notts, Leics. Div.Rep. Mrs J. Newman

Leicester is another branch welcoming new members to their regular coffee mornings. A lunch in February was well attended by 66 members and they have also enjoyed outings to Leeds, Hatton Country Park, Stratford upon Avon, and Denby Pottery. En route to the latter they had coffee at East Midlands Airport and spent a delightful few hours at Carsington Reservoir. They say they were pleased to see the piece in "Action" summer edition, about the Association, and express the hope that this can be repeated.

Broxtowe group's 37 members have met for monthly coffee mornings, much enjoyed judging by the noise they make! Mrs Wilson organised the outing to Sherwood Forest Arts and Crafts Centre in June with coffee and lunch arranged for them. Mercifully after non-stop deluges on the last two previous outings, the weather for this was fine and it was a "thoroughly enjoyable day".

Miss Cramp reports from Gedling Branch really enjoyable meetings. One talk went back in time; called "Whispers in the Wings" it took them back to their younger days with such songs as "Oh Mr Porter", "Down at the Old Bull and Bush", and "Goodbye" sung by singers like Marie Lloyd, Vesta Tilley and Lily Langtry. A talk on Pub Signs was informative and hilarious. Who would believe it cost the equivalent of £210 to sleep in Charles 1st's bed at Saracen's Head with no more than five to the bed! The name Cross Keys, they discovered, denotes that the brewery was on church land and how ale was sold by the yard. They also learned that hops were not used for beer making until 1399. This was spell-

binding history, not like the old 1066 and 1215 that they had learned at school. They had an enthralling talk by the Notts Wildlife Trust and at the AGM discussed a probable project for the Millenium. (They do not say what decision was made. I hope we will hear. Ed). They visited a mill shop in Derbyshire but report that no one came away with any bargains. In the summer they visited Nottingham Castle. (An active group. Ed).

Rushcliffe had a demonstration of wood turning and saw samples of the wood-turner's skill. They had lunch at the County Hall, (This sounds very grand, but was "very good value for money and excellent food".) At the local pub where they still hold their meetings completely free, they had fish and chips. Sadly this group have lost another long-serving member, Miss Joan Bignall who worked for WRVS until her death at almost 80.

Mrs Newman reports that all three counties have enjoyed their usual round of meetings since January. Three members from NE Lincs and two from Rushcliffe joined her at the Durham AGM meeting and they enjoyed meeting old friends and hearing from the new WRVS Chairman how the service is to move forward. In NE Lincs they enjoyed a strawberry tea in June and a meeting at the Water Gardens at Tetney later. Lincs members are few in number but nevertheless enjoy meeting every other month to keep in touch.

In Notts, Ashfield group have had an uncertain future, but at a meeting in May, officers were elected and they planned to meet quarterly for lunch or tea at different venues to make it easier for travelling. A tea was enjoyed in August and further dates are planned. (We wish this struggling group well. It sounds promising. Ed)

Bassetlaw has had several new members this year which is good news. Mrs Newman attended their March AGM and "faith" luncheon. (My inverted commas, as I do not know what this is. Perhaps they will explain ! Ed.). In May they enjoyed a lunch at Worksop, in June visited a craft centre and Newstead Abbey and in July had a strawberry tea, hosted by a member and her husband in Sutton-cum-Lound. Mrs Newman says that the decision to meet in different parts encourages members to attend meetings and has been a good idea.

In Mansfield members are so busy with their WRVS duties that they have difficulty finding a day for meetings when everyone can come ! At one lunch in May they invited active WRVS members to join them and the Area Manager also enjoyed meeting Association members. (This is an excellent idea. I wonder if other groups can do this Ed).?

A report from Newark branch tells of lunches being well attended in both March and June.

NORTH WEST DIVISION*Headquarters Manchester**Cumbria, Lancashire.**Div. Rep. Mrs M. McCambridge BEM**Greater Manchester.**Div. Rep. Mrs J. Matthews*

A "Daffodil Tea" (Could they explain ? Ed.) and bring and buy was held in March by the Romiley group and they have met each month for talks and outings. In May they travelled to Lancaster and had a trip and lunch on a canal barge and enjoyed seeing the wild life. In July they had a strawberry and cream tea. They are sorry that Mrs Hulse, a founder member of the group has left the area to be near her family. They will miss her.

At the AGM for the Bury group. they enjoyed a potato pie cooked by Mrs Matthews. (Wish I had been there, I love potato pie ! Ed). They then had a talk by a member of the Bury Care Society and were shown a film about the Isle of Man and another on "Lancashire in days gone by". Their summer outing was to Windermere with lunch at the Belsfield Hotel overlooking the lake. They say this was a return visit and they have never found a better place. They spent a pleasant day, either shopping, going on the lake or just relaxing in the hotel grounds. For those who cannot manage a coach trip they continue to have lunches for them. (This is a lovely idea. Ed)

Sadly Mrs Marion Haworth, a founder member of Ramsbottom WVS and of the Bury Association group has died after a short illness. She was well known and much respected locally for her charitable work and she attended the Silver Jubilee Meeting at Milton Hill last year.

About twenty members of Sale group continue to meet at the United Reform Church each month and have a Bring and Buy twice a year.

The group were sad to lose Mrs Morwood since their last report.

At the February meeting they collected subs. and then played Bingo and had a quiz. In March they held an informal AGM and celebrated their 12th birthday. Mr McDarmott gave an illustrated talk on the role of the Trafford Community Health Council and answered many questions after the talk. Everyone was pleased to welcome back Mrs Tedham, who had been severely ill and had missed the previous meeting.

In May Mrs Collier introduced and welcomed her successor as their Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Matthew, (and we too welcome her and wish her well in her job ! Ed). At this meeting they had a talk by Mrs Ledger of Hale WRVS who spoke about her fascinating visit to China.

In June they had a lovely outing to Sale Water Park eating a delicious cream tea in the restaurant overlooking the lake.

In July the talk was on Homeopathy given by a nurse who had trained as a Homeopathic nurse. She answered many questions. Mrs Grimshaw reported

that she herself had used their alternative medicines for many years and found them helpful. They learned that the Queen, the Queen Mother, even their horses had been treated in this way !

Sixteen members from Sale attended the AGM of Sale WRVS and the meeting was told about the Association and their activities. (This kind of contact is excellent for the Association ! Perhaps this kind of invitation could be extended by WRVS to Assoc. members elsewhere ? Ed.). Five members have contributed knitted scarves for the "Longest Scarf" project and they all hope that it gets into the Guinness Book of Records.

Merseyside, Cheshire (Appointment Pending)

Staffs. Shropshire, Derbyshire. (Appointment Pending)

SOUTH EAST DIVISION Headquarters 99 White Lion St London N1 9GF

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

In the last issue of the Newsletter, your Editor asked, in ignorance "what was Diamond 25"?, mentioned in the Peterborough report. Mrs Titcomb explains.... "Teams of 6 people aged between 18 and 35, would be set up to raise funds and start some much needed project. They would have 6 months to set up the project and would give what time they had available. It was hoped that by considering their free time, they would attract young people to the service. Volunteers would receive a "Volunteer's Achievement Certificate" and a reference for future employment. This project did not get off the ground.

Some Peterborough members (perhaps others ? Ed) feel badly that after giving their own services to WRVS for years without remuneration they have been sent two (some have had four) books of raffle tickets to sell. They have objected to this and say "they have to accept the changes, but they do not have to like them ! (We would be glad to hear what others think and what alternatives they would offer?" Ed).

Peterborough group continue their bi-monthly meetings and thoroughly enjoyed one talk about the French Prisoner of War camp in the Napoleonic Wars at Norman Cross. Two members helped at the "Race for Life" event, giving water, medals and goodie-bags to contestants. Meetings are held at a City Council project called "Senior Stop" where pensioners can drop in for comfort and refreshments. Run by WRVS it supplies "welcomers" so that people are assured of a cordial welcome. Two full and two half day trips were well supported by members. To mark "Volunteer Action Week" in June, tea was provided to 50 WRVS and Assoc. members from Peterborough and 3 from Huntingdon when they

were entertained by a group of retired songsters. Also, members were able to talk to Miss Bella Emberg, who was appearing at the theatre that week. One member sent a report to Milton Hill about the evacuation of children from London to Peterborough in the war. (Could we see a copy ? See my letter Ed.)

Norfolk, Suffolk.

Div. Rep. Mrs S. Scholey.

These groups are now in a quiet spell with Assoc. meetings but they have all enjoyed their gardens in the balmy weather in recent weeks, writes Mrs Scholey. Since the spring, the Gt Yarmouth branch has held two lunches which as usual proved very popular. In July they had the annual beach picnic at Cromer followed by a visit to the "Show on the Pier" which was great fun. Mrs Scholey ends her report by hoping that the year "2,000", which is approaching fast, will be a wonderful year for all members.

Beds. Bucks and Oxon.

Div. Rep. Mrs J. Callaway

Mrs Callaway suggests that for our next issue we might ask for "experiences with the evacuation of children at the outbreak of war". This is a good idea. Do please send them in, either from evacuees or from those who helped evacuate. (The funnier or the more tragic the better! Ed)

In Beds forty members attended lunch and the AGM in March, and afternoon teas with fewer members were held in May and June. In July Mr and Mrs Vesey threw open their house and garden for members to enjoy, with good food, supplied by caterers and wines served by husbands who also did the washing up. (Well done the men !Ed.) To complete the occasion a group of musicians played for them, in the garden !. Mrs Callaway asks if other groups find that tea is a more attractive proposition than lunch ? What do others find ?

In Bucks, they visited Mrs Rose Hallasey, the 131st member to join WVS, who was 101 in January. They presented her with long service certificates for WVS/WRVS and Association long service. There was much talk of early WVS days and Mrs Hallasey told them of one funny incident. On one Meals round she regularly took meals to a couple who lived in very cramped conditions. Sadly the husband died and Rose arrived with the wife's meal and words of sympathy. But waiting for her in the tiny room was the large open coffin in which lay the old gentleman, "waiting to say goodbye to the Meals lady". "I

knew you'd want to say goodbye to him so I wouldn't let them nail him down 'til you'd been", said the widow. Mrs Callaway says it is an example of and a tribute to the relationship that Meals on Wheels deliverers built up with those they served. She says that the conversation with this grand old lady showed a picture of a group of warm and dedicated women, which she is proud to have



joined. (Many of us would agree. Ed) (Perhaps someone could write down Mrs Hallasey's experiences of the children's evacuation and let us have them for the next issue ? please Ed)

Oxon reports, sadly that there has been no response at all to the offer made by the Publicity Officer at Area Office, offering space in WRVS Area Newsletters, offering help in organising Assoc. events.

Essex and Herts.

Div. Rep. Mrs P. Copping

From Essex Mrs Tytherleigh reports that Southend have had three excellent, although grim speakers. A prison warder came from Bulwod Hall, a Women's High Security Prison and told of the offenders, guilty of drugs, drink, mugging theft and many other charges. They found it all very sad. Southend Director of Housing explained the difficulties in housing families with long waiting lists and insufficient housing available. Thirdly, the Director of the Children's Society talking about the dire need and difficulties in helping get children off the streets when war ended and cope with the unbelievable poverty that existed. It was a very very sad talk.

Southend ladies are busy knitting garments and toys for the new Children's Hospice.

Mrs Rowley reports that the new branch in Hertford continues to meet each month, for lunch, with car owners offering lifts and numbers are increasing. In July the annual meeting and garden party for Hertfordshire was held in Mrs Sewell's garden and twenty members enjoyed a lovely afternoon. Mrs Pope, WRVS Area Manager gave a talk about the future of WRVS and the restructuring that was necessary.

Oxon, Bucks, Berks.

Appointment Pending

Hampshire, Isle of Wight.

Div. Rep. Mrs Beryl Adams



Members spent a very pleasant afternoon, in lovely weather, at the home in Beaulieu of Mrs Webb. They were each asked to bring a plate of "tea goodies" and they had a wonderful selection. Mrs Adams sent a photograph of one member, Miss Marjorie Avens in her 98th year and she was pictured surrounded by the 20 five foot scarves she has knitted for the WRVS appeal. Two Fleet members were presented with pictures by the Chairman of the District Council for their outstanding Voluntary Service in the District.

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

Mrs Bright writes that the Counties in her Division continue to hold meet-

ings but by the very nature of the Association, many older members are unable to undertake the travelling involved. However Guildford had a very good attendance at their AGM to which Woking members were invited. The same group had a trip on the river Wey, which included tea.

East Sussex groups organise coach trips to local beauty spots which are well supported.

In Kent a meeting at a member's house had to be cancelled through lack of support. West Sussex is still without a Rep. The WRVS Office Manager helps out with contacts here.

Mrs Bright says they all wish the Association well in their new office in York and they will miss having them in the Home Counties.

Mrs Coles, a committee member of the Guildford branch has sent in their report, and, sadly, tells us of two deaths from the branch. Mrs Spivey was a most reliable and helpful member, who rarely missed a meeting and Mrs Rawsom who until two years ago was the branch treasurer had remained a committee member and had worked loyally both in WRVS and as an Association member.

At the AGM, 38 members enjoyed a lunch prepared by the committee and the raffle and bring and buy raised £48. This group have joined Woking for some meetings. They also had a boat trip on the river Wey, including a cream tea, but what they like best is to just meet together and talk over a cup of tea or a simple meal. This is especially true for members who now find difficulty in walking.

London N.E./City.

Mrs W. Taylor DL London S.E.

At the AGM and Reunion of London members there were two "walking wounded". Mrs Stevens had sustained an injury to her pelvis and Mrs Taylor had had a hip replacement. They both agreed that it only hurt when they laughed (which must hurt a lot !) See page 22 for a further contribution from Mrs Taylor. Ed) It was a most enjoyable meeting.

London N.W.

Mrs D Stevens

Regular coffee mornings were held throughout London and in spite of age and disabilities they enjoyed a happy and successful reunion, though with slightly fewer members present.

London S.E.

(appointment pending)

Mrs Block has retired as Div.Rep. here after looking after her patch so successfully for many years. We wish her a happy retirement.

London S.W.

Div. Rep. Mrs A.Christophersen

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

Headquarters Exeter

Hereford, Worcester, Gloucester.

Div. Rep. Mrs J. Connop

First, apologies from the editor to these groups. It was Mrs Brookes, not Mrs Pollard, who sent in the piece about Australia in the spring issue, and Mr Ward, not his wife, who gave the talk at the Hereford and Worcester lunch. Just say the editor had a bad day that day! Apologies.

At the annual lunch at Tewkesbury Mrs Tweedy spoke about her work as a Magistrate. She gave out a questionnaire and when they had filled in the answers, she spoke about each in detail. They learned that Magistrates were first used in the country in 1361 and women were appointed in 1920. There are 30,000 in England and Wales, appointed by the Lord Chancellor (except in the Duchy of Lancaster). 97% of criminal cases are dealt with in Magistrates Courts and each Magistrate sits 26 times per year. At this meeting they were pleased to welcome Mrs Peggy James and her husband (who travelled from Yorkshire specially) and also Lady Holland Martin, Miss Doris Mercer, and three members from Hereford and Worcester and they all enjoyed the delicious salad lunch prepared by four Tewkesbury members.

Mrs Norman writes from Cheltenham that at the spring meeting Mrs Connop brought members up-to-date with WRVS news and they appreciated being kept in touch with the latest information. Mrs Whiteman, a retired ESO gave a most interesting talk on her visit to Thailand and many remembered her work with affection.

There have been no meetings in either Gloucester or Hereford and Worcester.

Avon, Wiltshire, Dorset.*(Appointment pending)*

We are delighted to hear from Kingswood group, (formerly Avon). Only 18 strong, they meet on a bi-monthly basis for coffee and a chat about the service "as it used to be". They began the year as usual with a lunch. In July they had a delicious Cream tea at Swineford, near Bath, in the open air, overlooking the river and weir, a beautiful location.

They are sad to report the death of Mrs Barker MBE who had been a member "for more years than anyone can remember", involved in Emergency work and with prisoner's families.

The Wiltshire group met for their annual reunion lunch in March. It was "flowers all the way", for after a glass of sherry, Area Manager Mrs Cleland presented Mrs Barbara Williams with her Clasp and a lovely basket of flowers, arranged by a member., Then, Mrs Cleland herself was congratulated on her appointment as Vice-Chairman, WRVS, and she too received a basket of flowers. Lunch followed with wine and coffee and the usual chatter took place. They have made plans for a summer garden party, thanks to the help of some faithful helpers.

Somerset, Devon, Cornwall.

(Appointment Pending)

WALES

Headquarters Cardiff

Div. Rep. Mrs E. Edwards BEM

Mrs Bocking writes from Conwy that their meetings form an important part of WRVS life now that the District Office is closed. At one meeting the Llandudno group heard about a member's nursing training at St Bartholemew's Hospital in London and another member told about her three visits to America. In April they made Easter Bonnets, which brought out hidden talents and at another meeting, they heard about "Hearing Dogs for the Deaf". They presented £150 to the hospice at the AGM, profit from their raffles, for the purchase of a bed-table and in July they enjoyed a summer lunch.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Guernsey.

Assoc. Rep. Miss E. Robilliard

The small number of Guernsey members have met twice for a get-together, a meal, a chat and a raffle. The raffle raises enough to buy a small gift to take to housebound members, but even so, over the years they have a surplus and at the last meeting members voted to donate £100 to the Guernsey Cheshire Home. One beautiful summer evening the WRVS held a "Vin D'Honneur" as part of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations. It was an occasion for meeting old acquaintances, browsing through old photographs and Press cuttings and enjoying the wonderful camaraderie that is WRVS.

Jersey.

Assoc. Rep. Mrs D. Jennings

Mrs Jennings writes that if any members visit Jersey on holiday and would like to contact her, she would love to help in any way she can. Her Tel. No., is (On a visit I made last Christmas to the island Mrs Jennings was very helpful in finding me an hotel open at that time, many were closed. We had a lovely holiday. Ed). The Jersey group meet on Thursdays, and at a lunch at Mrs Jenning's home in February heard about Mrs Broughton's visit to London to receive her MBE. She showed her citation and medal, comparing experiences with Jersey's other MBE holder, Mrs Morden. At another lunch at Mrs Broughton's sister's home it was dull and windy, unlike other days this summer, and they moved their buffet indoors. Mrs Jennings read them a letter from an Ass. member in St Helens who while on holiday in Jersey had seen the Occupation Tapestry and was very moved by it. (I agree. Ed) Three Association members were "stitchers" on that huge and impressive work, from different Parishes in Jersey.

SCOTLAND

Scotland have a new Chairman, Mrs Blair having retired. We hope to hear from the new Chairman, Lady Macintosh in time for our autumn issue.

PLEASE NOTE

From October 1st 1999,
the address
of the new office is

WRVS Association,
82 Bootham,
York
YO30 7DS
Tel. 01904/634500



The new Association office has moved from London to this address in York which has been owned by the WRVS for many years and also houses the York District office. It is just outside the City walls and not far from High Petergate shown in the print above, and the Bootham bar.

DON'T FORGET

Your subscriptions (£5) are due on 1st Jan 2000 and should be sent to the Treasurer at the above address.

REPORT OF WRVS 26th ASSOCIATION REUNION AND MEETING.

AT DURHAM UNIVERSITY. 22ND JULY 1999

The Association Chairman, Mrs Diane Price, welcomed everyone and announced apologies from Lady Macintosh, (Scottish Chairman), Mrs Foster, Mrs Scholey and Mrs Connop.

Mrs Tina Teitjen, new WRVS Chairman and our new President gave the address. Calling herself "the new kid on the block" she asked to be called Tina. She announced great WRVS changes, especially in finance. The Home Office grant, reducing from £5 million to £1 million meant that WRVS must now stand on its own feet.

There will be concentration on volunteering, especially for "Care-based" services, looking after people in their own homes. Growing numbers of single parents also need help and to do these jobs WRVS must be financially self-sufficient. At present, she added "we are not living within our income and to seek sponsorship we must show signed audited accounts. Therefore our "financial house" must be put in order. Our work is not well known and we must improve this, eg., that last year we delivered 15 million Meals and assisted at 130 emergencies."

WRVS needs a new "brand-image" to recruit younger volunteers and approach local authorities and other agencies for funding. They need to increase the number of local authorities for whom WRVS is their "right-arm" in **Emergency Services** and train teams for such work. Modernising visitor's centres and canteens in **Hospitals** is taking place and more NHS clients and more volunteers are needed. **Food Services** costs, not fully covered by local authorities must be met.

"Meals with Care" is a new project. People order frozen meals from a catalogue to be delivered once per fortnight. People needing micro-wave ovens, freezers and steamers are assisted.

"Campaign 120" seeks to enrol everyone in the country to give 120 minutes to volunteering, the volunteer being placed higher up the focus of the organisation

Tina announced that major reorganisation, to be completed by March 2,000 is being undertaken. Divisions will be replaced by a revised structure.

Mrs Price thanked Mrs Teitjen, and the AGM followed.

Secretary's Report

Mrs Stevens reported falling membership, down 50 in the year. She asked everyone to send change of addresses. Leaving her post with the move to York, Mrs Stevens thanked everyone for their help and wished the York team good luck.

Treasurer's Report (Read for Mrs Davies, who was unable to attend)

Many members' (262) had failed to inform banks of the subs. increase from £4 to £5. Names would be deleted if this was not done this year. Mrs Davies thanked the Div. Reps for their invaluable help. The statement was accepted.

Editor's Report.

Members were encouraged to record early memories, on tape if writing was difficult. Perhaps active members could record memories from those no longer mobile as the very elderly have experienced many changes which should be recorded. Expenditure on the cost of the Newsletter must be cut, and ways of doing this are being discussed. Mrs Venables thanked the London staff for their support. She was asked to convey the Association's. thanks to her husband for his computing work in preparing the disc for the printers.

Chairman's review.

Mrs Price expressed the sadness of all members over the death in January of Miss Kathleen Halpin, CBE, the inspiration behind the Association 26 years ago. A gold pen was left to Kathleen in Lady Reading's will. On Kathleen's death the person named in Kathleen's will had sadly pre-deceased her and the Halpin family asked Dorothy Stevens to accept it. Dorothy thought it better to place the pen with Lady Reading's memorabilia in the show case at Milton Hall House and it can be seen there. The office move from Stockwell to York was underway and the new office would open on October 1st. Mrs Pickard, involved with WRVS for many years, would be working in the new office and Mrs Price welcomed her. Mrs Price said they were very sad to say farewell to Mrs Stevens, Mrs Christophersen, Mrs Davies, Mrs Claydon, Mrs Wilson, and Mrs Hoare. She thanked them all for their support and kindness. At the new office all records would be put on a database and members should bear with them in the initial stages of the change-over.

Any Other Business

A reunion meeting for all members will be held at Milton Hill from 9th to 11th June 2,000. All are welcome. This is a precis of the full Minutes kindly taken by Mrs Weeks at the AGM., a complete version has gone to every Divisional Representative

Did you work in Croydon ?

We are asked if anyone who worked in Croydon in the early days contact the office as a book is being written on the work there. A book on Kathleen Halpin is available in the office for anyone wishing to read it.

Members who knew the late Clemency Greatorex will be interested to know that a Service of Thanksgiving was held in her memory at Goudhurst on April 9th. During the service Mrs Gay Bright read the following prayer, written by Clemency.

Teach us to listen Lord, to one another with enjoyment

And especially

To the diffident, with encouragement;

To the sad, with understanding;

To the happy, joyfully;

To the aggressive, calmly,

To the gossip, - never.

And above all Lord

Teach us to listen to you with our hearts.

Mrs Scholey's Quiz.

Correct answers were, 1. Barabbas. 2 Barley. 3. Benjamin. 4. Babel (or Babylon). 5. A Basket. 6. Bethany. 7. Beards. 8. Bethlehem. 9. Birds. 10. Boaz

First correct answer received was from Mrs Darcy from Selby. Second was Mrs Cotter from Guildford and third, Mrs Handley from Beeston Notts. Well done those. We had 12 replies.

A Quick and Easy Recipe

1 carton Yoghourt. (Any flavour)

3 cartons sugar

3 eggs

4 cartons S.R. Flour

Mix all ingredients together. Put into 2, 1 lb tins (lined). Bake 350 or gas 4 or 180 for 1 hour.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Member,

I have been busy lately having discussions and getting further estimates from printing firms to see if we can produce the Newsletter at less cost, for like us all these days, the Association has to keep a tight hand on its budget and watch expenses. You will have noticed that this Autumn issue is without its green cover. We are sorry about this, but it is cheaper to produce it this way. However, of all the estimates from various firms, I was pleased that our local, friendly firm in Pocklington, near where I live, quoted the lowest price, as they did years ago when we first chose them. I think the owner looks kindly upon us as he once told me that he remembered as a schoolboy having to wait for his lunch, while his mother finished her WRVS Meals round.!

I do wish more members could attend the AGM/Reunion each year. This year, again, it was a very happy event and we had the added bonus of meeting our very friendly new WRVS Chairman, Tina.

Sadly we got no response to the plea for help from Mr Brian Richards of New Zealand, asking if anyone knew the whereabouts of Gloria Prichard, last seen in Japan 40 years ago.

I have had a letter from Mrs Maclennan of

Australia, who would be pleased for any member visiting Australia to contact her. Her phone number is She gets the Newsletter regularly and says that her eleven years with WRVS in England taught her a lot and gave her many treasured friends. It was lovely to hear from her.

I am delighted, of course that the headquarters office has moved to York as I can now pop in, and even lend a hand if needed. It was "my" office for many years while I was District Organiser for York and it holds many happy memories.

Please keep your contributions coming, please could you write your name and group on each piece of paper you send me as sometimes they get separated.

Well, I wish you all a busy winter of Association activities and hope you keep well and warm in the colder weather.

Ness Venables



Can any member help ?

The editor has had a letter from a Mr Aldridge of Norway wanting photographs or other memorabilia connected with Japan. He writes, I would like to appeal for help to your readers who may have been stationed in or near Kure, Japan about 1945 to 1956, when they provided much appreciated home comforts to members of the British Armed Forces. The Official Historian is seeking contributions that anyone can send. Everything will be copied in Japan and returned direct to the owner. Over 225 ex-service men have so far contributed and they have had their property returned within about 15 weeks. He says he fully realises that our members might wish to discuss his research with him and if they care to phone any evening or weekend his number is



How I became a WRVS member.

Visiting my father in 1938, out for a walk one day with my young terrier on his lead, we went to see what the lady outside the post office was doing. She was, she said, "a WVS Rep", and was recruiting for WVS. My dog then bit her dog, so she said I had better join, as an apology!, so then and there I signed an E form and I became a member. In January 1939 in Cheadle, we did Rest Centre training and as we were not allowed to use the kitchen I built a Girl Guide camping stove on some spare land and taught the team how to use it. From Mrs Stevenson, Cumbria who is over 90.



Tempus Fugit (with apologies to William Blake)

And did those feet in ancient times,
Dance until midnight and beyond ?
And was my figure small and slight
With waist as slender as a wand
And did a young man flatter me
And praise my beauty to the skies ?
And did he really look with love
Into these ever-dimming eyes?

Bring me my pair of auto-heels
Bring me my corn-pads and perchance
With aid from trusty bunion shields
I may once more enjoy a dance.

But what of wrinkles, sagging lines
What of the flab I have to fight ?
Stiff be my sinews, straight my spine,
I'll shine on "Grab a granny Night".

No Name supplied.

Ode to a Pill

Little pill here in my hand I wonder how you understand
Just what to do or where to go to stop the ache that hurts
me so.

Within your covering lies relief, you work alone in unbelief,
You sink in regions there below as down my throat you
quickly go!

But what, I wonder, little pill, is how you know where I am
ill ?

And just how do you really know exactly where you have to go?

I've got a headache, that is true, my broken ribs are aching too

So how can anything so small end my aches in no time at all ?

I'm counting on you mighty strong to get in there where you belong.

Don't let me down and please don't shirk to do your undercover work;

So down my throat be on your way and end my aching for today.

Don't take a wrong turn is my plea - I can't take more till after three !.

From Mrs Stamp. Hartlepool



RECIPE

Paradise Slices

4 oz short crust pastry

4 oz margarine

4 oz sugar

1 egg beaten

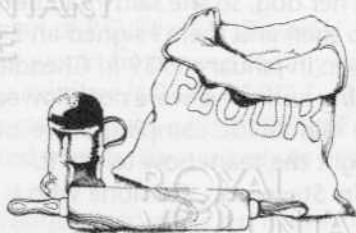
3 oz self-raising flour

a little vanilla or almond essence

1 tabs coconut (optional)

3 oz mixed dried fruit. (cherries, sultanas, currants etc.)

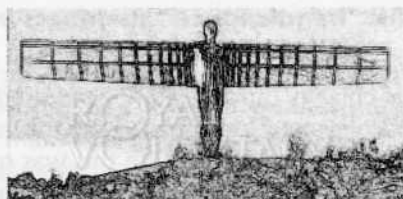
Jam.



Line a Swiss roll tin with pastry. Spread over a good helping of jam. For the topping, beat margarine and sugar, add egg and flour, then fruit and coconut. Spread over pastry and bake in a moderate oven, Gas 4 or 350 for 30 minutes, When cold cut into slices.

This recipe is from the book "Rescue a Recipe", published by WRVS Meals Department with the sponsorship of Hotlock Food Conveyors

The Giant Angel



There's a geet big rusty angel
 On a hill in Gateshead Toon,
 It stands there doing nowt
 Just blottin oot the moon.
 There are some who think its bootiful
 And some who disagree
 But the pigeons and the seagulls
 knaa exactly wat te dee.
 The Geordie population
 Have been shaken to the core,
 We've had Roman walls and
 Lambton worms
 But nowt like this before.
 Noo angels are God's messengers
 Aa've always understood
 They sit on clouds and play their harps
 And tell us to be good.
 They say heaven's full of angels
 Superior to man
 But if this is what they look like
 Aa divin't want te gaan !
 From Mrs Dawson. Tyne and Wear.

Several members have written to say how much they enjoyed rereading John Donne's "No Man is an Island". Miss Cramp, Notts. has sent this Girl Guide's camp fire song she used to sing during her long life as a Guider.

"No man is an island,
 No man walks alone.
 Each man's joy is joy for me,
 Each man's grief's my own.
 We need one another and I will defend
 Each man as my brother,
 Each man as my friend."

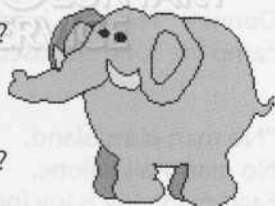
All "handicapped" members will appreciate this !

Following a hip replacement, there were two things I learned. First, the age of chivalry is not dead. Once I used a stick I noticed handsome young men only too keen to help me across the road, "whether I wanted to cross, or not"! I found at my time of life this was most welcome and after the op. when I staggered about on two sticks and finally on one it continued. I am thinking of keeping to one stick when I am fully recovered. Secondly I discovered that a "picker-upper" is essential. For the first time I realised that everything descends to the floor. Sponges, items of clothing have a life of their own and shoot off surfaces in all directions. This is when the "picker-upper" comes into its own. This metal stick, about 2 feet long has a pistol grip handle and at the other end resembles an open-mouthed dragon which can be closed by the grip-handle. This is capable of retrieving tablets of slippery soap and pieces of crackly toast with equal dexterity. Licked postage stamps are a little more difficult, but with a little scraping action they may be brought to hand quite easily, (if a little hairy). Bananas and grapes come back a little scathed, but coconuts and melons are not possible. Not until I dropped the entire sewing box did I realise it also had a thin magnetic strip so that metallic items came up easily, while cotton reels were more difficult. I am becoming more experienced with jars and tins which have to be manoeuvred into a certain position and my antics resemble a game of la-crosse. There is no difficulty with letters, although I do get an occasional mangled bill. I am thinking of recommending to the Lord Chancellor an immediate award of the CBE, (Creative Benefactor to the Elderly" to the inventor.

From Mrs Wyn Taylor. London.

How many procrastinators does it take to change a light bulb ?
Just one - but would it be all right if he did it next week ?

How many elephants does it take to change a light bulb?
None. Elephants are too heavy for light work.



How many Magicians does it take to change a light-bulb?
It depends on what you want to change it into.

How many shop assistants does it take to change a light bulb?
Only one, but I'm afraid he will only change it if you have the receipt for the old one.

To Test You

This test is given by Microsoft to test its prospective employees

"The Longleys have a concert that starts in 17 minutes. To get there they must cross a bridge carrying a torch as it is dark. A maximum of two people can cross at any time and any party who crosses must have the torch with them. Each person (4 in all) walks at a different speed. and they must always walk at the speed of the slower man. Martin takes 1 minute, Chris takes 2 minutes, Andrew takes 5 minutes and Derek takes 10 minutes.

Example.

If Martin and Derek walk cross first, 10 minutes will have elapsed when they get to the other side. If Derek returns with the torch a total of 20 minutes will have passed and they have failed. There is no trick, it is a simple movement of resources. ps, no piggy backs allowed.

Time to solve

Under 1 minute Genius.

1 to3 minutes brilliant

3-5 minutes above average.

Over 5 minutes Educationally Sub-Normal!!!

From Mrs Longley York



As an ex-infant teacher I enjoy helping 7 year olds at the local school with their reading and I always stress that they must ask the meaning of anything they do not understand. One day a small child asked me "Will there be cows in Heaven"? I asked, "Why" and the child replied, "Because in Sunday School my teacher said there would be holy goats there "

From Mrs Mott. York



Rain for all hikers.

It rained and rained and rained and rained,
The average fall was well maintained.
And when the tracks were simply bogs
It started raining cats and dogs.
After a drought of half an hour
We had a most refreshing shower.
And then the most curious thing of all
A gentle rain began to fall.
Next day was also fairly dry
Save for the deluge from the sky
Which wetted the party to the skin
And after that, the rain set in !

Anon. From Mrs Hildred York.



A Simple little competition.. First member with correct answer received will have name printed in next issue

What well known saying do these letters represent.

ETBAETRMAMHWAW.



Wanted from all members. Mrs Callaway, Div. Rep for Beds has suggested, that, having heard the Radio 4 series on "the evacuation" many members will have had first hand experience of this, either as children sent out of the towns, or as WVS helpers, and they might like to get their experiences into print for us all to read. So please write down your memories, or send them on audio tape if you find writing difficult, and we will all enjoy the memories together. All contributions to the editor by January 31st 2,000, for our millennium edition.