

May 1983

WVS/WRVS ASSOCIATION

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

President

Mrs. Barbara Shenfield

Vice-Presidents: The Baroness Pike of Melton, DBE.
Dame Frances Clode, DBE.

Chairman

Miss Kathleen Halpin, CBE.

Honorary Secretary

Mrs. Isola Wren

Honorary Treasurer

Miss Margaret Binks

Editor of Newsletter

Mrs. Doris Moss, OBE.

Members of Committee 1982/83

Mrs. E.M. Adie (Co-opted)

Mrs. M. Julian

Miss E. Cubitt, MBE.

Mrs. D. Moss, OBE.

Miss J. Duke, MBE.

Mrs. M.F. Oswald

Mrs. D. Gloin

Mrs. V. Price

Mrs. R.V. Griffiths

Mrs. E. Speirs (Co-opted)

Area Representatives are ex-officio members of Committee.

NEWSLETTER No. 18

This is my last message to you as Chairman of the Association for, as you know, it is now laid down in our Constitution that a Chairman, although elected annually, may not hold office for more than three consecutive years and I have served in this capacity for ten. As requested in the November Newsletter, nominations for Chairman and for the Committee had to reach us by April 1st. The list of the nominations are being sent with this Newsletter; voting will take place at the Annual General Meeting on June 16th.

The first ten years of any organisation are important; they give time for a true assessment of its value both to its membership and to society as a whole and whether it is built on a sound foundation constitutionally. To me, they have been a very exciting ten years as we have watched the gradual growth of the Association from its initial 26 members to something over 2,000 with Area Representatives in nearly all the Areas and an increasing number of County Groups. We have recently issued "Notes for Guidance of Area and County Representatives" to help them in the expansion of their activities. Our President, Mrs. Shenfield, is asking Area Organisers to regard the Association as a continuing step in a WRVS members' service, when she gives up a more active role. I know this will be the aim in all county development and I hope that this idea of continuity of service will be a great strength to WRVS. We may not be able to give operational service but we can give encouragement and backing

to our local WRVS activities and we all, everyone of us, are in touch with friends, nieces and nephews and their relatives, who might be potential members of the Service. Let us try to keep ourselves and them informed on what WRVS is doing and what it could do, not only in an emergency but in the day-to-day work of giving support to the social services.

Subscriptions - We are grateful to those members who followed the instructions in the last Newsletter and sent in their subscriptions before and during January. Many are still coming in, but if there are any members who have not forwarded their subscriptions, normally due in the first half of the year, we will be glad to have them as soon as possible.

Annual General Meeting - With this Newsletter are full details of the arrangements for this year's Annual General Meeting in Birmingham. We have a delightful hall, Birmingham members are doing all they can to make it a happy day and we hope that there will be a record attendance. I realise that many who may have come regularly to our AGMs in London may not be able to get to Birmingham, but do remember that many members living in and around the Midlands and elsewhere in the country have never been able to get to London meetings. By having this annual gathering in different parts of the country we will gradually give an opportunity to different geographical sections of our membership to attend an AGM. I hope that those who can reach Birmingham will be planning ways and means of being with us on June 16th through car sharing, hiring of coaches or use of their rail cards.

The members living in the London Area have been holding an annual gathering in October for the last few years and it is hoped that it may be possible for members within easy reach of London to be invited to the London Meeting when it is held later in the year. Members from Areas outside London who are interested should write to the Hon. Secretary of the Association at Headquarters who will send them details as soon as a date has been fixed.

K.M. HALPIN, Chairman

ASSOCIATION TREASURER

Miss Margaret Binks, a member of WRVS Headquarters' staff from 1939 to 1958 and lately retired from the Civil Service, has been appointed as Treasurer of the Association following the retirement of Miss Freda Cooper to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for all she has done for us over the past four years.

WRVS AT ST. JAMES'S PALACE, LONDON - 11th November 1982

The WVS/WRVS Association was afforded the privilege of nominating one of its members to attend a WRVS Meeting and Reception held in St. James's Palace on Thursday, 11th November, when the highlight was the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother.

Approximately 300 WRVS members from England, Scotland and Wales assembled early in the afternoon in the Picture Gallery, where they were addressed by our Chairman, Mrs. Barbara Shenfield and The Rt. Hon. William Whitelaw, CH., MP., the Home Secretary, who was accompanied by Mr. Tim Raison, MP., Minister of State at the Home Office.

Space does not allow for a full report but it was good to hear from Mrs. Shenfield that 1982, which she had suggested should be designated "WRVS Year" has been successful in achieving its two-fold purpose, namely - to inform more people of the WRVS services they might wish to use for themselves or to help others, and also to interest more men and women in becoming members.

She said that at times like the present when it was all too easy for people to become discouraged, voluntary services provided an opportunity for every citizen, through friendship, neighbourliness and concern for others, to participate in the process of improving the quality of life in the community, especially as it affects the vulnerable and the disabled.

During his address, the Home Secretary stated that, although he did not undervalue the original and prime role of WRVS in providing a service for emergencies, he considered the wide-ranging nature of our Service should be better known. In commenting on the help WRVS had given to people displaced from their homes in the Falkland Islands, he said this had extended as far afield as the Isle of Mull, Lincoln, Southampton and Portsmouth. Everywhere WRVS members had met the urgent and longer-term needs, as they had also done for the families of men away in the Task Force.

He mentioned how so many services had grown naturally out of existing ones and cited examples of social transport, family support and the welfare of offenders and their families.

After a short adjournment, members were conducted by stewards, resplendent in orange tabards, into three other reception rooms, the Throne Room, Entree Room and Queen Anne Room. The Queen Mother, looking as charming and elegant as ever, in a most attractive turquoise velvet outfit and wearing her WRVS badge, moved among the assembled guests, talking not only to those who had the honour of being presented to her (including our Association representative) but to very many others who had travelled from all over the U.K. After taking tea with our Chairman and six selected members, Her Majesty left us; we made our several ways home - everyone agreeing that it had been a most memorable day for all present.

WRVS MAGAZINE

The first edition of a new WRVS magazine has now been published and was distributed in mid-March as a free issue as widely as possible.

It is planned that in addition to news of WRVS, profiles on some aspects of the work, people and places, events in the areas, stories from the past, articles of general interest, etc., etc., there will be a number of advertisements as well as space for "small ads".

There will be three issues a year - Summer, Autumn and Spring - at the cost of £1.95 including postage.

It is hoped that some Association members will have seen or be able to have "a sight of" this new venture: copies have been sent to the Association Area and County Representatives but whether you have seen a copy or not but would like to order the next three issues, send a cheque or postal order to:

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

Anyone wishing to submit a "small ad" should send copy to the same address -

Cost: £3 for 10 words, 10p for each extra word.
Bordered £1.50 extra (No Box Numbers).

WRVS HOME DEFENCE COMMITMENT

Members may be interested in the following paragraph which has been circulated to WRVS throughout the country:

"WRVS has throughout its existence always undertaken to train and provide members ready to work in any kind of emergency, personal, local or national. As a part of this commitment members are trained in such methods of Home Defence as the Government, in the light of advice currently available to them, believe could be useful in the event of hostilities, conventional or nuclear. This readiness to serve the community in an emergency is the normal role of the WRVS".

LONG SERVICE CERTIFICATE

There is now available in WRVS a Long Service Certificate for either members who have completed the required 40 duties a year for at least 10 years (but will not be able to work for 15 years to gain the Long Service Medal) or for members who have completed at least 15 years service with a minimum of 20 duties a year.

THE WRVS BENEVOLENT TRUST

As suggested at the last AGM the WVS/WRVS Association Committee sent a cheque for £250 to the WRVS Benevolent Trust in recognition of all the help given us by WRVS Headquarters. On the 24th November there was held a Bring & Buy Sale in aid of the Trust. The Conference room at Headquarters looked more like the opening day of a Harrods' Sale, so packed was it with bargains and a host of shoppers, among whom we were pleased to see a number of Association members. Thanks to the generosity of both donors and purchasers, the splendid sum of £750 was raised. The sale of the Tea Towels (all sold out before Christmas) and numerous donations has greatly helped the Trust to meet likely requests in 1983.

WRVS LAWN TENNIS TOURNAMENT

The annual Tournament will take place on the hard courts at Wimbledon, by kind permission of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, on Tuesday and Wednesday, 6th and 7th September 1983. Anyone interested in having further details should write to the Editor of the Association's Newsletter, c/o Headquarters. Visitors are welcome.

NEWS FROM AREAS

LONDON South East. Mrs. G. Block has so far found only 27 members in her area but she has been in touch with them all and the six Borough Organisers asking for their co-operation in recruiting new members from those "retired" with whom they are in contact. Their first "Get Together" since the reorganisation in London was held in Bromley in April - a "Bring your own Lunch" occasion.

North East. We welcome the appointment of Miss Doris Wright as Representative for this Area of London.

North West. Mrs. Mary Julian, who had been an elected member of the Association Committee, has now been appointed the Area Representative for the North West of London. She reports that their membership is now 79 and that a number attended a North West Area Day at Brent Town Hall. 250 WRVS members in all, drawn from the seven London Boroughs, gathered to meet the Chairman and each other. The Chairman's inspiring address was followed by a "fun" session - a comical fashion parade organised by the clothing stores, illustrating the varied and unusual garments given to WRVS - from the briefest beachwear to glamorous evening dresses, including cowboy outfits and ethnic fashions and finishing with the traditional bridal party - even the bride's mum was there, weeping tears under her huge picture hat.

NORTH WEST DIVISION - Area 1, Cumbria and Lancashire. Mrs. A. Spibey held a meeting of members in her own home; she says that the Association in this large Area is moving very slowly in spite of the excellent co-operation she receives from the Area and County Organisers. Once again she was invited to an Area meeting held in Lancaster and is to visit County meetings to enlist the help of the District Organisers.

Area 2, Greater Manchester. Mrs. M. Head has, since becoming the Area Representative, contacted all 23 members. A reunion held at a Day Centre in Altrincham in December was attended by both Area and the Trafford Organisers. It is hoped that the 2 or 3 Area Newsletters a year sent to all members will help to recruit.

Area 4, Cheshire and Merseyside. Mrs. Mary Preston gives the news that the number of Association members continues to grow and has now reached 69. Having held their Annual Area Reunion in Chester and Southport in 1981 and 1982, this year's meeting was in Northwich in April.

NORTH EAST DIVISION - Area 1, Northumbria. In spite of being "in the throes of moving after 45 years" Mrs. C.V. Smurthwaite reports: "We are doing our best to develop the Association in this widespread area along the right lines so that it will achieve our aim of a close integration of all our members. We are fortunate in having an efficient Secretary and Treasurer at Area and the membership is growing steadily.

A Bring and Buy held in November was supported by over 100 people - a rewarding result for our first effort. An Area Christmas Lunch was followed by a demonstration of making chocolates and an interesting film of the History of WVS/WRVS. The excellent buffet meal was all home-cooked by members.

Each local area has its own celebrations and is proving how much these groups are needed by our older members.

At our first 1983 Area meeting of Local Representatives we discussed future plans which we hope will include a visit to a place of interest not too far away!

The second 'Northumbria Newsletter' will be in print as soon as possible."

To supplement the above reference to Local areas, we read in a Narrative Report from Wansbeck District that "WVS/WRVS" is flourishing and we have had interesting meetings under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Mary Pratt. These included an account with slides by the Rev. Bunker on an Indian wedding and a talk by Mr. and Mrs. Hetherington on Fauberge eggs, illustrated by a marvellous display.

The same report refers to a proposed new group in Newbiggin.

Area 3, North and South Humberside and Lincolnshire. Mrs. Dorothy Stokes is aiming to find Association Representatives for the Counties, when she hopes she will have a progress report to make.

Area 4, South and West Yorkshire. We are delighted to welcome Mrs. Helena Foster (Lately Area Organiser) as our Area Representative for this part of the North East and congratulate her on having sent some "news". She hopes that with the support of the new Area Organiser, Mrs. Jacqueline Wynne-Jones, she will be able to resuscitate and increase membership. Their nine closely-linked Metropolitan Districts, comprising some 3½ million people, are always busy but still find time to look after their retired members. A Reunion was held in April to discuss future activities. The Editor looks forward to receiving an account in due course.

MIDLANDS DIVISION, Area 1, West Midlands Counties - Warwickshire.

Mrs. K. Fensom, the County Representative for Warwickshire, reports on a pre-Christmas "Get Together" and Lunch held in late November. Mrs. Rose, the County Organiser, spoke about current work and Mrs. Olive Wright, the Area Representative, gave the members details of an Association Work Party she had attended at WRVS Headquarters.

Area 3, West Midlands Metropolitan County. Mrs. E. Kenrick thanks Mrs. Wortley for "looking after the Area" in her absence, following a hip operation, and for organising the winter activities, which included a Coffee Morning held in November and a Lunch at the College of Food and Domestic Arts, attended by 25 members. Plans for the Summer were discussed at a coffee morning in February, the first event being a School of Music performance of Carmen.

Solihull has held two meetings in the last six months, the first in the WRVS Office and another - attended by 28 members in a member's house when several more joined. Future plans are to hold three or four lunch meetings a year with occasional speakers.

HOME COUNTIES

ANGLIA DIVISION, Area 1, Home Counties. In the absence of an appointed Area Representative, Mrs. E. Woods, the Area Organiser, very kindly sent the following:

Hertfordshire continues to have an annual garden meeting 'hopefully when the sun shines'

Northamptonshire. A new branch is being formed and has recruited its first 9 members. The County Organiser is doing all she can to help.

Cambridgeshire members have met five times in the last year - twice in Huntingdon, firstly for a Bring and Buy to raise funds for postage, etc., and in the autumn, a Wine and Cheese Party followed by a film show of the Fen Country. They had a pleasant summer afternoon garden party and a visit to Wimpole Hall which had belonged to Rudyard Kipling's daughter; it had been a military hospital during the war and is now restored to its old beauty and charm.

Area 3, East Anglia. We welcome the first report from Mrs. Hazel Carmalt-Jones, the recently appointed Area Representative. "20 members attended a Lunch Party in Norwich when future plans were discussed. The new Norfolk Representative, Mrs. M. Whyte,

addressed the meeting and Mrs. Carmalt-Jones in her talk stressed the need for visiting and helping, where necessary, the old and inform members, reminding those present of the WRVS Benevolent Trust. A Three Counties "Do" is being held this summer in Ipswich and before that, the three County Organisers are meeting the three County Representatives". (Is this the first Area to have each of the three Counties covered by an Area Representative? Anyway, well done, East Anglia! Editor)

SOUTH EAST DIVISION, Area South East, Surrey, Woking. Mrs. E. Spiers our County Representative, and a member of our Committee, gave us a copy of the invitation and agenda sent to the 32 members of the Woking Group for their 2nd Annual General Meeting, which was held in February this year in the Nurses' Social Centre, Woking. From this we see that the Group is being run on "business lines" with an elected Committee and sub-Committee, covering various aspects of their activities. The result has been an interesting and full programme; in addition to those reported in our 1982 Newsletters, a well-attended Luncheon was held in the autumn.

It was most encouraging also to read in a Woking Narrative Report last year that "The WVS/WRVS Association is proving successful and the District Organiser feels that she now has something to offer retiring members so that they will still feel a part of WRVS. The Association should be a great help in the welfare of older members".

WALES - From Mrs. K. Mowat, Representative for Wales.

South and Mid Glamorgan. 26 members went to Wales Headquarters in November to attend the presentation of a framed photograph of Miss Sylvia Vachell, a much-loved and respected former Administrator for Wales. Mrs. Cecille Stampa, Chairman Wales, welcomed all present including Mrs. Franklyn Williams, a past Administrator, and other former staff members.

Mid Glamorgan has a new leader, Mrs. L.B. Smart- their inaugural meeting was held in March.

Wrexham Maelor had a "special" tea party in February in the District Office; members hope to organise transport for the Association's AGM Reunion in June.

SCOTLAND - FROM SCOTLAND'S INFORMATION SHEET JANUARY 1983.

Headquarters and Lothian Regions - 45 members attended a coffee morning held at Scottish Headquarters in October 1982. The Hon. Mrs. Corsar, Chairman Scotland, gave a short talk which included an account of her visit to Highland North where she met members from Sutherland and Caithness.

Fife and Tayside's Annual Re-union, also in October, was attended by 38 people, plus 3 members from Grampian Region. Coffee, chat and news - all enlivened by reports on new work and old photographs.

FROM MRS. G. MACDONALD, CHAIRMAN SCOTTISH SECTION. Membership is growing steadily and now stands at 228 - with Association "contacts" in six of the ten Regions, to act as liaison with the Scottish Committee and with a view to spreading their net wider in the future; it is the far north and south which are not yet represented. Winter months restrict activities but Grampian meet regularly, usually with "speakers" from among themselves. Dundee had one exploratory coffee morning, when a date was fixed for the next one.

The highlight of the Scottish Section was the AGM held in April with a visit from Mrs. Barbara Shenfield. (Report on this in the next Newsletter, we hope).

Mrs. MacDonald concluded her report with a tribute to Mrs. Veronica Crabbie, the recent past Chairman of the Scottish Section, who, after 6 years' hard work with the Open University has gained a BA degree. (We add our congratulations - - we hear that Mrs. Crabbie is pressing on towards a higher degree!)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor still hopes to receive some letters of general interest and comment to publish. In the meantime, just to show that someone reads them, here is an extract from a letter from Mrs. Hilda Carter following the publication of our second - and last letter:

"During the war years I was in WVS and for part of the time I worked in the Gordon Services Club in Vauxhall Bridge Road. Later I was at HQ and often wondered if I would meet someone who had worked there but never did. Then in the Association 1981 Newsletter there was a letter from Mrs. Zena Burt asking any former "Gordon Girls" to write to her, which I did. It transpired that she had left to join the WAAF before I had joined but she had been in touch with 3 or 4 members I believe I would have known, so I did find a "Gordon Girl". (From the Editor - any request for a "Where are You Now?" section in the Newsletter?)

OBITUARIES

We are sorry to learn since the publication of our last Newsletter of the deaths of the following members:

Mrs. D. Bramwell	-	London
Mrs. M. Carnwath	-	Northwich
Mrs. P.E. Coppard	-	West Sussex
Miss A. Jennings	-	Birmingham
Mrs. E.M.M. MacKay	-	Rep., N. East Area 2
Mrs. W. Peters, MBE	-	Worcestershire
Mrs. H. Planterose	-	Dorset and London
Mrs. A.E. Willison	-	London

NEW YEAR HONOURS, 1983

Congratulations are extended to the following:

MBE: Lady Gwendoline Enid Whittaker - District Organiser, Scarborough

BEM: Mrs. Esther Coxon - Local Organiser, Gateshead

Mrs. Marjorie C. Culley - Member, Bristol

Mrs. Vera Griffiths - District Staff, Ceredigion, Wales

Miss Mabel M.P. Haugh, JP - Local Organiser, Elland, W. Yorks.

Mrs. Marjory E. Manton - Joint District Organiser, Horsham, Sussex

Mrs. Olive Mason - Member, Wilmslow, Cheshire

Mrs. Alice Southworth - Clothing Organiser, Darwen, Lancs.

For Services to the community

MBE: Mrs. Kathleen M.L. Davis - Meals on Wheels, Wolvey, Hinckley, Leics.

Major A.H. Pendleton - Meals on Wheels, Blackpool and Fylde area.

SNIPPETS

A TRIBUTE - AND RECRUITMENT AID

Mrs. B. Skelt the County Representative for West Sussex told us of a very long-serving member in that county who was given a first year's membership in recognition of her service.

Perhaps the gesture could be followed by others - WRVS certainly has many such loyal members.

SERVICES WELFARE

We are often asked if we still have WRVS members serving with the Forces. The answer is that there are six with Gurkha families in Hong Kong, one in Brunei and one with the Men's Unit in Belize; 23 are in the United Kingdom, one with the Men's Unit and the rest with the Boys' Units.

ASSISTANCE TO THE POLICE

Everyone may not be aware that in many places the Police ask WRVS to give talks on the work of our Service to young Police Officers or those on a promotion course.

Mrs. K.M. Barker, our Area Representative for the South West, often gives these, pointing out that the U.K. is covered by a network of lines of communications and how these can be of great value to the police in personal emergency situations. The District Organiser gives details of the local services, including, of course, our Crisis Support Scheme.

WRITTEN TRIBUTES - reported by Wales

Social Transport

"Dear WRVS, I feel I must write to thank you for the wonderful service 'country cars' gives in this area. I am 80 years old, a widow, living in a country cottage with one bus per week on Fridays; your wonderful service enables me to be taken to visit my only daughter in Dinas Powis, near Cardiff. What a great help your delightful ladies and gentlemen are to such as myself and other retired people around us. Sincere thanks for your splendid service".

From a Holiday Hostess

"In this day and age we all take things so much for granted and unless something comes along to give us a jolt, we plod on unaware that things are different elsewhere. The sight of chocolate biscuits proved a real treat to our visitors whereas to our own they were the norm and nothing special. The children were thrilled by picking peas and beans from the garden, helping with the baking and going shopping - everyday things we all do and think nothing about".

AREA REPORTS (continued)

LONDON North. Mrs. M. Downing in reporting that there are now 31 members in this Area said she had circulated copies of the Area autumn newsletter compiled by the Area Organiser to all of them. Several letters of thanks underlined that Association members appreciate being kept in touch with day-by-day activities. (P.S. Editor of this Newsletter was also pleased to receive a copy).

AREA REPRESENTATIVES - Ex-Officio members of the Committee

LONDON Area Co-ordinator - Mrs. J. Sanderson,

North Area Mrs. M. Downing, BEM,

South East Area Mrs. E.G. Block, MBE,

North East Area Miss Doris Wright,

South West Area

North West Area Mrs. M. Julian,

DIVISIONS

North West

Area 1. Mrs. A. Spibey,

Area 2. Mrs. M. Head,

Area 4. Mrs. M. Preston,

North East

Area 1. Mrs. C.V. Smurthwaite, MBE,

Area 3. Mrs. D. Stokes, MBE,

Area 4. Mrs. H. Foster, OBE,

Midlands

Area 1. Mrs. O. Wright, MBE,

Area 2. Mrs. A. Tyler,

Area 3. Mrs. E. Kenrick,

Home Counties/
Anglia

Area 3. Mrs. H. Carmalt-Jones, OBE,

South East

Area 1. Miss J. Barnard, OBE,

Channel Islands

Jersey Mrs. Morton Fisher,

South West

Area 1. Mrs. K. Barker BEM,

Wales - Mrs. K. Mowat MBE,

Scotland

Chairman - Scottish Section - Mrs. G. MacDonald,

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND REUNION
will be held at
GIRL GUIDE HALL, BLUCHER STREET, BIRMINGHAM

Thursday, 16th June 1983

Invitation giving full details enclosed