

VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

RI  
VO  
SE



ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SER

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

WVS/WRVS ASSOCIATION

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE  
Newsletter No.11

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SER

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SER

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

November 1979

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICENEWSLETTER NO.11ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

This Newsletter is the 11th published since the inauguration in 1975 of the WVS/WRVS Association and now we would like to know what you would like to see in the Newsletter, which we can produce only twice a year. In addition to the reports of meetings and other news, more participation from the members themselves will be welcome. Why not let us know what you are doing and what you are thinking, not only connected with WRVS but also any other interests. What about starting Letters to the Editor?

Later in this Newsletter, you will see some reminiscences; would you yourself have anything unusual which you think would be worth telling to others - or can you persuade another member to tell us something which we would not otherwise know? Any ideas or suggestions should be sent direct to the Editor, WVS/WRVS Association Newsletter at WRVS Headquarters.

Every time the Newsletter is circulated, we get some returned 'unknown'; this means that members are not always sending us changes of address and you are reminded that the Area Representative and Headquarters need to know any alterations for our records.

The splendid work done by WRVS during the bad winter of 1978/79 figured in the April Newsletter and mention was made of the help given to the Vietnamese refugees, who first came to this country in October last year; we thought you might like to hear what WRVS has been doing nationwide since then for these unfortunate people.

On a happier note, we have included stories of

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICEROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

some of the projects undertaken by WRVS in connection with the International Year of the Child.

We are including the promised transcript of the address given at the May Annual General Meeting this year by Mrs. Barbara Shenfield, one of our Vice-Chairmen.

### VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

Since Kensington Barracks was taken over in October last year as a Reception Centre for the 346 'boat people' from MV Wellpart, WRVS has been helping there - and as the families have moved out to be settled throughout the U.K., others have moved in. London WRVS are also assisting in several London Boroughs, which are housing families, and we are told that 14 GLC Boroughs have offered over 100 units of accommodation.

Other Reception Centres had to be set up and again WRVS is helping in these - including Hounslow (London), and then the first one out of London at Sopley (Hampshire and Dorset) followed by Morton Hall, Swinderby (Lincs.); Nelson Hall, Eccleshall (Staffs.); Myton Hamlets, (Warwickshire); Eastcote Grange, Solihull; Thornley Island (West Sussex); a Methodist Youth Camp, Mundesley, (North Norfolk); Hothfield Hospital, Ashford (Kent) and Colinton, Edinburgh. Others are in operation or in the pipe line as more refugees come to this country.

The responsibility for receiving and helping to resettle the Vietnamese has been shared among three main voluntary bodies: the British Council for Aid to Refugees, Ockenden Venture and the Save the Children Fund, so that the WRVS in the field works to one of these three. Our help, as one would expect, is mainly concerned with clothing at every stage but in some Reception Centres WRVS manages a canteen/shop, where there are no similar facilities near the Centre. Members prepare beds, often providing the bedding and other equipment, including toys,

and in some places they have helped with the cooking until permanent arrangements could be made.

Once the families move to their permanent accommodation, WRVS again do all they can to help - in some cases meeting newcomers on their arrival, cooking a first meal and always helping to make them feel as much at home as possible. Of course, language continues to be a main problem and here again WRVS often assists, especially with the womenfolk. It is impossible to give a full picture but we have selected a few reports from those which have been sent in.

Sopley Camp (Hants./Dorset), Reception Centre -  
Extracts from daily reports in June

Due to the closeness of the camp to the County Boundary, this was a Hants./Dorset effort with some help, too, from Wiltshire. The staff worked very hard in a dingy building, last used by the Household Cavalry. A team of members and husbands were at work on the Saturday before the camp opened - to clean the store, put up notices and arrange an office and staff area.

The camp was opened on 12th June when the first party arrived. The TV crews and photographers came to interview the refugees, causing a considerable hold up but all the refugees were clothed by early evening. Toys were naturally in great demand. On the 13th, after taking part in a Radio Solent interview, WRVS prepared for the second "batch" of refugees, who arrived about mid-day. One of the very sad stories was of a pair of children arriving without any parents, who being able to pay for two passages only, sent the children on their own.

The third intake arrived on the next day, when boys from a boarding school in Bransgore were a very great help and enjoyed themselves enormously. Their reluctance to return to school was very real in spite of their having spent the afternoon coping with all the

shoes. When a teacher with three senior pupils from the local junior school arrived with toys and clothing, the sight of about 200 pairs of shoes laid out in neat rows really impressed them - everything from "flip-flops" to two charming pairs of silver shoes complete with buckles.

Clothing days were very hectic, working with the Field Workers and Interpreters and also the following days when 'extras' were distributed or changes made. 14,000 garments altogether were issued and a great many more processed. The very long coats which no one wanted were eagerly requested - by the men, who were proudly strutting about in their new acquisitions.

As soon as money was paid to the refugees the Canteen/Shop was opened. The WRVS members enjoyed their trading and explaining the money values. One WRVS husband made a chart showing the breakdown of the coins.

Two scooters were the "prizes" of one day and footballs were always popular. After the first few days about four sacks of good salvage clothing were placed in a nearby building. The women had a great time rooting among it for small treasures. This gave them something to do and received great approval from the student party who were looking after the groups.

A report issued on 28th June states that by then 540 people had settled into the camp and Phase Two, i.e. re-orientation and adjustment to a new life was about to begin.

The Narrative Report for the Kingswood District of Bristol tells of the work involved in settling in four families and those for Lakeland (Cumbria) and Redditch (Hereford and Worcester) on the one family each had received.

#### Kingswood

A leaflet appeal was made by the Council of Churches

for furniture, bedding, household goods etc. and for clothing to be taken to the WRVS. Each of the four houses was to be allocated to a different church organisation to prepare and furnish; WRVS undertook to "do" one. Six members were kept busy "turning a house into a home".

### Lakeland

One interesting and slightly different job has been fitting out with clothing a Vietnamese family who have come to live at an Ockenden Venture house in Ambleside. This entailed a great deal of sorting of the mass of clothing and then a hilarious day trying to catch and then clothe four lively children who at the beginning possessed just two English words, 'yes' and 'no' and, at the end, had learnt one more, 'nice'. Apparently, they still have no conception of the meaning and use of underclothes but perhaps our cold weather will educate them.

Redditch were told of a family of nine who were moving in the next day! They were Ma Thank, his wife and seven children, housed by our local Council and then handed over to us. Eighteen blankets, sheets, pillows, eiderdowns, pots and pans, crockery, curtains, warm clothing, shoes (mostly sandals) were all supplied to a very grateful family. It was fortunate that Ma Thank had work to come to here. Five more families are expected in the near future, but this is work that members find great interest in doing with that nice feeling of being of real use. Floods in the winter, the Boat People in summer, well it's all in the year's work.

### Vietnamese in Edinburgh

Save the Children appealed for clothing and WRVS were asked to process it and set up a clothing store in the Convent of the Good Shepherd, Colinton, Edinburgh. Forty one refugees arrived on 26th September

direct from Hong Kong.

September 27th was clothing day - warm coats had to be issued first so that the refugees could sit outside and listen to the Pipe Band Display by the Irish T.A. There was no Interpreter and no one to explain and ensure that the families came in one by one and this made it difficult to see who belonged to whom in the crush. WRVS rose to the occasion and everyone was eventually satisfactorily clothed.

#### INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

With 1979 being designated the International Year of the Child, WRVS members all over the country were asked to make special efforts to foster welfare work being undertaken for children. The Chairman "of the Year", the Hon. Lady Soames, spoke at the July meeting of the WRVS Advisory Council held at the Home Office, and inspired all those present with her encouraging words.

Headquarters has made two film strips, one on general work with children, which it is hoped to show at the AGM next year, and the second, a training aid, for WRVS members starting play groups and children's holidays.

The following information taken mainly from Narrative Reports, illustrates the variety of the activities undertaken by WRVS nationwide. Members from both Headquarters and London Region were very much involved in the distribution of food at a two-day party for approximately 80,000 children held in Hyde Park on 30th and 31st May; the occasion was graced by the attendance of Her Majesty the Queen, who spoke to some of the WRVS on duty.

Projects in Scotland included running, in conjunction with the Scottish Society for Mentally Handicapped Children, camps for such young people for one week over the period 30th June to 4th August. Four Regions were involved in these and in addition, Lothian Region organised

a camp for Single Parent Families and another for Deaf Children and Children of Deaf Parents, both at a holiday camp in Fife. WRVS help was mainly concerned with catering, housekeeping and entertaining. Scotland also had its "Children's Spectacular" in Aberdeen, where WRVS members with twenty girls who had qualified for the Silver Level Duke of Edinburgh Award, served snacks to approximately one thousand five hundred participants.

In recognition of the International Year of the Child, the Welsh Office planned to double its expenditure on holiday projects for children to the tune of £50,000 and among the schemes approved was a WRVS holiday for under-privileged children.

Space does not allow for mention of all the imaginative and worthwhile schemes but perhaps the following may serve to illustrate their value and variety.

Sunderland Metropolitan District arranged for two very severely handicapped children from the Barbara Priestman Special School to go on a day's "very special" outing to London. The children travelled to London by plane and were met by the Red Cross who provided transport for a sight-seeing tour. After a wonderful and exciting day the children returned to Newcastle and were met by WRVS members. This day's outing was made possible because of the sponsored walk undertaken by the Secretary of the District Office and her friends.

The Heanor (Derbyshire) WRVS chartered a horse drawn boat to take fourteen handicapped children on the Cromford Canal; refreshments were served on the boat and a picnic tea for the party, which included ten WRVS, two parents and the boatmen, was provided on shore.

Wolverhampton arranged a splendid holiday for twelve disadvantaged teenage boys; this too, was on a boat



provided by the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth.

Ealing London Borough and Hampshire together organised a visit by disabled London children to the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Activities Centre for the Disabled on the Hamble, a beautiful and highly recommended Centre.

Barrow (Cumbria) as their contribution to the IYC, are planning to use some of the profits made by the N. Lonsdale Hospital Canteen to buy - for use in either school or community clinics - portable weighing scales, ten sets of stereoscopic vision testing kits and sound level meters, items geared to detect early defects of sight and deafness in very young children.

Surrey has made a success of its pioneering efforts to set up pre-school libraries for the many children who, before starting school, are complete strangers to books. This is being done with the enthusiastic co-operation of the County and local Public Libraries and Health Visitors, who welcome them in their Welfare Clinics. Mobile toy libraries are increasingly popular with the families of handicapped children who cannot get out. The WRVS in Bristol reports that some of the toys are made by prisoners and those on probation. Work for physically handicapped children carried out by Sefton Metropolitan District was extended by setting up a play group during the school holidays for seventy children, aged 3 to 17, with every degree of physical handicap. This was held in an old convent garden and lunch, supplied by a nearby WRVS Lunch Club, was served.

The accrued profits of £1,000 from a Children's Hospital in Nottingham were put towards the purchase of a mini-bus for the use of mentally handicapped children and £200, representing the profits from the Ranby Prison Canteen, went towards general projects linked with the IYC.

Many of the WRVS special efforts for the IYC were made possible by generous gifts, of which the following are examples:-

At the well publicised request of Leeds Met. District for donations to sponsor a holiday for a child £505 was received from local firms, the Leeds Federation of Townswomen's Guilds raised £130 from a Coffee Morning and Collingham Darby & Joan Club £100 from a Bring and Buy Sale.

### REPORTS FROM ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES

#### London Region

The London Region Association had its Annual Reunion at the Regional Office on 11th October. Fifty eight members attended and enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch, served by the Regional Emergency Services Organiser and her helpers.

The guests were Mrs. Doris Moss, formerly London Regional Organiser and at present Editor of the Association Newsletter; Mrs. Bentley Beaumont, previously a member of the HQ Foreign and Commonwealth Department and author of "Greensleeves", who spoke about the early days of the international work of WVS and how it developed and, Mrs. Anne Leacock, one time Head of the WVS/WRVS in Portugal, who gave an interesting account of work in that country. Jean Sanderson

#### Northern Region - Northumbria Area

A meeting of members, organised by Mrs. Frew, the Members Welfare Organiser for North Tyneside, took place in April in the Metropolitan District Office. It is hoped that this will be the beginning of an active WVS/WRVS Association in North Tyneside.

from Area Information Sheet

#### East Midland Region - Northern and Southern Areas

News of a joint reunion held in April by both Areas

reached us too late for the previous Newsletter; a lunch, attended by forty three members, was held in a village bordering Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. After a business meeting, a Branch Manager of the Trustees Department at one of the "big four" banks, addressed the gathering on the subject of "Making a Will" - considered to be good Forward Planning!

Later a reunion of Derbyshire members took place in Bolsover Castle, at which there were many guests, including the Lord Lieutenant of the County. A Medal and Clasp presentation was made by Lady Anne Montague, the first County Organiser for Derbyshire. Sheila Lowe

Then in September, twenty five of the thirty one members in the Southern Area had a teatime get-together in the District Office, when plans were made for future reunions. This included a repetition of the lunchtime meeting with the Northern Area and, as so many of the members had enjoyed the National AGM, a determination to bring a coach load to the 1980 meeting. Helena Cooper

#### Eastern Region - Southern Area

This Area reports a "happy day spent in perfect summer weather" at Ware by the Hertfordshire members of the Association.

Essex, Bedfordshire and Southend members are hoping to get their members together, possibly in their own areas, in the spring of 1980.

Betty Sewell

#### South Eastern Region

A very successful "get together" was held in Hastings in April this year. We are lucky to have so many Association members in that town who make the rest of us very welcome and produce a marvellous lunch. Our Guest Speaker was the Area Organiser,

Mrs. Ward, who brought us up to date with WRVS activities and tried to make us understand what "Area" means.

We have no future plans for meeting together. What is needed is a good team of members (past and present) to produce lunch and a suitable meeting place. Your Area Representative will do all the rest! Please help so that we can meet again in the spring of 1980.

Joanna Barnard

South Western Region - Eastern Area

About half of the thirty five members in Avon attended a Reunion, held on a "perfect summer day" in the garden of the Regional Representative and enjoyed a delicious fork lunch. After a report of the National General Meeting, one of the members, who had been a Samaritan and is now a member of the Board of Visitors for Horfield Prison, Bristol, reminisced on her interesting work, which "revealed a way of life of which many of those present were unaware".

Gloucester's AGM held in June at the home of the County Representative was well attended by fifty two from a membership of sixty five. Before lunch, also taken in the garden, Dame Frances Clode gave a vivid report of the National AGM, and Mrs. Morris, the County Organiser explained the various changes taking place in WRVS. The Guest Speaker was the County Civil Defence Officer, who is Polish and a good friend of WRVS. He spoke on his experiences when escaping from a prisoner of war camp in Germany, and of a return visit made three years ago retracing the escape route. Members were enthralled with his talk.

The Wiltshire Group's Annual Luncheon, held in Warminster on 20th October, was attended by Mrs. Tuckett and Mrs. Barker from the Area Office. A witty, factual and interesting talk was given by Mrs. Janet Weir, Area Organiser for the Southern Area of Southern Region, on the work done by Hampshire and

Dorset WRVS for the "Boat People" in the Reception Centre at Sopley.

Successful and much appreciated coffee parties had been held during the year at District level, so giving a chance to those members who were unable to attend the luncheon, to meet. K.M.Barker

#### West Midland Region - Southern Area

The members of the Hereford and Worcester Association had a most enjoyable gathering in July in the house and garden of Mrs. Mytton, with an attendance of nineteen members and five non-members, three of whom have since joined. Dame Frances Clode, Lady Higgs, County Organiser for Hereford and Worcester, Miss Mary Gray, ex Regional Administrator for the West Midlands and Miss Cicely Aymer, ex Organiser for the County of London, now living in the Area attended the meeting.

The Metropolitan District Organiser for Birmingham stated in her Annual Report that the WVS/WRVS Association formed in the Anniversary Year is flourishing in the capable hands of Mrs. E. Kenrick, her predecessor and added how much she had enjoyed meeting old friends in the informal atmosphere of the reunions, outings etc. which were so well attended.

#### WALES

Rhuddlan reports on two meetings, the first held at the home of the Clwyd County Personnel Organiser when the County Hospital Organiser gave an interesting talk on WVS/WRVS "occasions", supported by photographs taken through the years and followed by news of the work being done by WRVS at the newly built District Hospital at Bodelwyddan. Members of the Association were delighted to have been invited to take part in the celebrations of the 21st Anniversary

of the opening of the WRVS Centre in Rhyl, a most successful evening".

Wrexham Maelor held successful meetings in July and October. At the first, twenty nine members enjoyed a show of colour slides of a fascinating journey through Brazil, kindly given by a neighbour of the WRVS District Organiser. At the second meeting, a Local Councillor and ex-Mayor, gave a graphic picture of his year of office, which showed how he, also a voluntary worker, found himself in the same kinds of unexpected situations as WRVS members experience.

Kathleen Mowat

#### SCOTLAND

Scottish Headquarters held two Open Days at which the Scottish Branch WVS/WRVS Association mounted a stand displaying posters about the Association, Her Majesty the Queen's visit, the Scottish Roll of Honour and Association application forms. The book "Stella Reading - Some Recollections by her Friends" was on sale.

At a recent committee meeting, it was decided that Get Well cards or something similar should be sent by the Association to any members who were in hospital or seriously ill.

#### RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS AND REPORTS

Early days in Bedfordshire by the Hon. Pearl Lawson Johnston, one time County Organiser for Bedfordshire. My earliest recollections of 'panic stations' was early 1940 when the first food parcels from various countries arrived for distribution and, I think from Australia, a consignment of currants and raisins etc. came in to coincide with thaw after the worst frost for many years; the result was a flood, and I can still see the dried fruit floating about in the passages!

The clothing sent by the American Red Cross was divided up in the main hall of Shire Hall and each Centre's ration was taken round weekly in the little WVS van.

We ran a good service in 'vegetables to mine-sweepers' - the vegetables being collected from market garden areas and taken to east coast ports to be loaded on to the ships. It was their only taste of fresh food sometimes for weeks on end.

Mending socks for the Army too was a big scheme; these arrived in sacks-full and had to be first washed then darned!

When the Pie Scheme started, materials were very scarce and in the brave attempt to 'get off the mark' and provide the many applicants (agricultural workers), the Organiser - a man employed by the County Council - made the first lots from anything he could get his hands on and several were mostly potato, which disintegrated before they could be got to the recipients!

We ran two mobile trailer Canteens from County Office, and one highlight shortly after Dunkirk was being routed by the Police over the County boundary finishing up in Tring Park where we supplied large numbers of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. On the reverse side, we were visiting various Searchlight Units etc. in the Biggleswade area and sent out a recce party to enquire of the Vicar of, I think, Everton, where to go - meanwhile we discovered a small unit of troops who were very pleased to see us - only to discover that the Vicar ran his own Canteen and our recce party had agreed not to trespass! We didn't return there!

At various times we were asked to collect the oddest things. One was used cotton reels, which the

Army wanted for attaching the wires to field tele-  
phones. When sending a consignment once, we had one  
of those enormous cotton reels, so we sent that wrap-  
ped up with a tiny one and back came the reply  
'Mother and baby are doing very well'!! Another 'odd'  
collection was conkers - for the life of me I can't  
remember what for, but I do recollect a new Centre  
Organiser at Leagrave, who had said she could not even  
speak in public, waxing eloquent about the homely  
subject of conkers and their wartime use - she never  
looked back!

### Emergency Services

WRVS were recently called in to help on two  
occasions which hit the headlines:

#### Test Valley District, Hampshire reported -

It was indeed tragic that the Test Valley's major  
involvement was that a large emergency should come  
about through the untimely death of Earl Mountbatten.  
Twenty one members from Andover joined the team from  
Romsey, and a team from Wallop to assist the Police  
at Crossfield Hall, Romney. Normally our teams would  
have worked in four shifts, but due to security  
restrictions on movement, we had to cover the entire  
session from 0900 hrs. to 1800 hrs. Our teams  
prepared and served morning coffee and tea during the  
briefing sessions, prepared two hundred and thirty  
cold lunches and cooked one hundred and sixty sweets  
which were served in two sessions, one hundred and  
sixty three main meals at 1145 hrs. and one hundred  
and forty six at 1300 hrs. Meals were supplemented  
by the Police feeding vehicle, which provided 'hot'  
meals. Since the day was warm, the Police preferred  
our cold meals so we had to provide an extra twenty  
eight salads by reducing the quantity of some already  
prepared. This over, we set to work to prepare sand-  
wiches and tea for the afternoon break.



WRVS West Wales reported:

On 15th August the Police telephoned the Emergency Service Organiser and asked for assistance for the crews of the eight yachts competing in the Fastnet Race who were in difficulty due to the exceptionally heavy gales. The Social Services had opened and staffed a Day Centre in Milford Haven and WRVS were asked to provide dry clothing, towels and blankets for the forty two crew members who were suffering from exposure and shock.

Urban Aid

Most members will know that the Government makes special grants to aid Inner Cities and highly urbanised areas. In spite of the inevitable form filling Wolverhampton WRVS decided to "have a go" and asked for financial assistance (i) for travelling expenses for Books-on-Wheels, (ii) a holiday scheme for teenagers and (iii) a general duties car. Imagine their delight when a cheque came almost immediately, via the Social Services who had supported the application, for the travelling expenses, because of "the value of the visits". The holiday scheme was withdrawn, as so many other organisations had made similar applications but some time later they were told that a car would be forthcoming. It is always worth trying!

Publicity

Some interesting ways of recruiting have been reported:

The Co-operative Society in Chesterfield not only placed one of their main shop windows at the disposal of WRVS but dressed it most attractively. The glamorous model wearing our new uniform was a most admired centre-piece and a display counter in the store, manned for a week by WRVS, depicted many aspects of our work. Thirty new volunteers were recruited and much clothing and wool donated.

Church Support The Secretary of a local Church Magazine asked the City Organiser for Derby if he could help WRVS in any way. A full page story of the work of WRVS followed and this resulted in a number of enquiries and some volunteers.

A thought to remember - almost all churches run their own magazines.

#### Local Authority

(a) The Public Relations Officer spent a day in Crawley (West Sussex) seeing, from a driver's seat, all aspects of 'Wheels on Meals'. The article he then wrote for the Civic News, which is distributed to every house, had such a good response that WRVS was able to divide up most of the rounds and leave room for expansion.

(b) One Surrey District persuaded its District Council to send out appeals for drivers with the rate demands - 'history' so far does not relate the results.

#### Shop Windows Again

Harrogate District had had a good window display in Knaresborough Library, and in the same week the local Flower Club had an arrangement in each window in the Square, every display being in WRVS colours, with a spray of rosemary and a WRVS scarf.

#### Friends in Need

Horsham's "Visitors" have grown to one hundred and eighty and still the need to meet all the requests from the DHSS and Doctors etc. for a "Friendly Visitor", "Good Companion" or "Good Neighbour" is not met.

Their involvement with the Bereavement Committee

has extended, as the Registrar of Deaths gives WRVS a copy of the register, and where there are elderly who have died and who were not already known to us, then WRVS members leave an Arun Magazine and visiting card at their address, enabling anyone who may need a Friend or advice to get in touch with them, but at the same time not intruding on their private grief.

### Home from Hospital

Gloucester WRVS, which their Area Newsletter states has always been among the leaders in caring for people after hospital treatment, was recently honoured when the County Organiser, Mrs. Evelyn Morris, was invited to attend a conference of "Continuing Care" at Exeter University. She was the only representative of a voluntary organisation among ninety delegates from State and Local Authorities. Mrs. Morris later reported that it was evident that the main speakers were concerned with After-Care, the demands for which are likely to grow enormously in the future. With Gloucestershire's own Home from Hospital scheme in operation, she was able to contribute practical advice and made the point that the voluntary services are not being used enough in this way.

Two members from the Merseyside Red Cross gave details of their imaginative and growing "Home from Hospital" scheme at the October meeting of the WRVS Advisory Council.

### Meals on Wheels and Lunch Clubs

Workington WRVS members on the Meals Service have started another little, but popular, side-line. Finding that many of the meals' recipients were having to cancel their magazines and periodicals due to increased costs, the WRVS members have arranged a "Magazine on Wheels" Service which they run alongside the meals.

## Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The visit of three of the Area Organisers from the North and Midlands to Buckingham Palace earlier this year, was vividly described in the Area Information Sheets. The occasion was the presentation of Golden Awards to eight hundred young people by HRH Prince Philip. The delightful afternoon, giving an opportunity for young people and visitors alike to see priceless treasures in the State Rooms, was 'made' for our members when Mrs. Gordon-Spencer, now a Trustee of the Scheme and one of our Vice-Chairmen, presented them to His Royal Highness, who showed a keen interest in the involvement of WRVS in the Scheme.

### Busy Hands - Clothing

Probably the busiest and oldest fingers in Edinburgh belong to Miss Edith Lane, a crippled but sprightly ninety year old, who has presented WRVS with her 2,000th square. She styles herself "Old Busy Edie" and sends us batches of fifty, usually accompanied by a letter. The D.O. arranged for a local Press interview and photograph which delighted her. But the story does not end there. The photograph caused an unexpected flow of wool to the household and long lost friends to write. It also made one of them send the photograph with a letter to the Queen at Windsor Castle. The big thrill was a reply from a Lady-in-Waiting saying how touched the Queen was to receive the letter and that she knew how valued Miss Lane's wonderful contribution to WRVS must be.

### FOOTNOTES

#### A Unique Occasion

We think that the Presentation of the B.E.M. to Mrs. E. Hughes Evans was truly unusual.

The ceremony took place in the South Glamorgan County Council Headquarters. Her grandson, as the

Chairman of the County Council, was the host that day. The husband of her son's widow, an M.P. was there too, together with three other grandchildren and a grandson. One daughter had travelled from Brussels and one granddaughter from Slimbridge where she looks after the swans. The Clothing Organiser with whom Mrs. Evans has worked is a man, so how unusual can you get?

### A Busman's Holiday

Life is never dull in the Luton District Office, even if it means flooding the cellar or selecting a cook from a long list of applicants including all-in-wrestlers, hairdressers etc. The District Organiser decided to get away from it all and went to Spain for a holiday. After one week all but three of the hotel staff walked out; five relief managers were flown in and started to look after five hundred guests. Some of the British (including our D.O.) decided to give a hand and soon discovered they could serve and clear away for five hundred in one hour. Good emergency experience! On the first day, as she wheeled a trolley, one of the holiday-makers said, "Do you belong to WVS?" She wondered if it really showed that much!

### Shows - 1979 and 1949

1979 The creche at the Lincolnshire Show was a huge success. On one wet day the children had to be entertained inside the tent. One small boy insisted on tidying up the toys immediately anyone started to play with them. This brought forward the remark, 'I can't help feeling he'll make someone a very irritating husband'.

1949 Found in an attic recently was a programme of the Llandello Heavy Horse Show which listed among the attractions "Side Shows by the WVS". In fact it was an exhibition of knitted garments made by the WVS Knitting Team for the Services which included socks, mittens, Balaclava helmets, gloves etc., a stand showing specimens of herbs, seeds etc. being collected

by the WVS for medicinal purposes and the process of drying, sorting, packing and despatching them and another section listing Salvage most urgently needed, and the proper way to sort it out into different categories.

Quick thinking on a meal's round in Scotland

A meals-on-wheels driver realised that his engine was on fire; what should he do - there was no fire extinguisher available. He put out the fire with the soup and since that time fire extinguishers are carried in every van.

Submitted by an Area Representative

A WVS stood at the Golden Gate, her head was bent low. She meekly asked the man at the Gate which way she had to go. "What have you done" St. Peter said "to seek admission here?" "I served out clothing down below for many and many a year". St. Peter opened wide the Gate and gently pressed the bell. "Please go right in and choose your harp you've had your share of hell".

OBITUARIES

Mrs. Jean Sich

Members of the Association will be sad to hear of the death in June of Jean Sich, an active member of the WVS/WRVS Association Committee.

Jean joined Kensington WVS in 1958, later becoming Organiser for several London Centres, before coming to Headquarters in 1967. During the period when she was Head of the Personnel Department, she ran a most successful Evening Centre, from which men and women, who worked during the day helped in the evenings and at week-ends many WRVS activities all

over London. In 1970 she set up a new department to train WRVS members to give nationwide talks on Drug Abuse to parents of primary school age children and in 1975 she became the London Borough Organiser for Kensington and Chelsea.

She showed great courage and faith during a long period of illness, when she carried on with her WRVS work both locally and at Headquarters with a determination that was an inspiration to all.

Mrs. Dorothy Coombe

Another member who was well known to WRVS all over the country, Mrs. Dorothy Coombe, died earlier this year. She joined WVS in 1951 when her work included looking at houses which might be suitable for conversion into WVS Residential Clubs for the Elderly. Subsequently she played a large part in planning the building of the five King George VI Memorial Clubs, which still exist as living memorials to her skill, hard work and imagination. In addition to other activities in her own locality, she was President of the Cobham Branch of the British Legion (Women's Section) and a Trustee of the Whiteley Village.

We are sorry to learn during the last six months of the deaths of the following members -

Miss Olive Cable	Leigh-on-Sea
Mrs. B.M.Clark	Bexley
Mrs. D.I. Clarke	Bexhill-on-Sea
Mrs. Maud E.Foster	Rye
Mrs. J.L.Keefe	Bournemouth
Mrs. E.C.King	Stranraer
Mrs. A.Rees	Macclesfield
Mrs. C.C.Sayle	Wrexham
Mrs. M.Shorrocks	Nottingham
Miss L.M.Turner	Devizes

BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST:-

O.B.E.

Miss Joan HARDY

Lately  
Regional Administrator  
North-Western Region

M.B.E.

Mrs. Dorothy STOKES

Deputy County Organiser  
South Humberside  
North-Eastern Region

Mrs. Freda WELLS

North Wales

B.E.M.

Mrs. Marjorie CURTOIS

District Organiser  
Ashby-de-la-Zouch  
East Midland Region

Miss Kathleen ECCLES

Member Bath District  
South-Western Region

Mrs. Dorothy HAMPSHIRE

Leader, Old Folks Club  
Holmfirth,  
North-Eastern Region

Mrs. Sheila McCORMACK

District Organiser  
Tynedale, Northern Region

Mrs. Megan ROBERTS

District Organiser  
Anglesey, Wales

B.E.M.

Mrs. Bridget WILLIAMS

Hospital Organiser  
Tunbridge Wells District  
South-Eastern Region

Mrs. Betty WHENN

District Organiser  
Basildon, Eastern Region

Mrs. E.L.HANN

District Organiser  
Carshalton, London Region

(For Services to the Community)



ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES

LONDON REGION

Mrs. J. Sanderson,

NORTH EASTERN REGION

N. Yorks and  
Humberside and  
South and West  
Yorks Areas

Mrs. M. Jones, M.B.E.,

EAST MIDLAND REGION

Northern Area

Mrs. S.M. Lowe,

Southern Area

Mrs. H. Cooper, M.B.E.,

EASTERN REGION

Northern Area

Mrs. Piers Currie,

Southern Area

Mrs. E. Sewell, M.B.E.,

SOUTH EASTERN AREA

Miss Joanna Barnard, O.B.E.,

SOUTH WESTERN REGION

Mrs. K. Barker,

WALES

Mrs. K. Mowat, M.B.E.,

SCOTLAND

Mrs. V. Crabbie, C.B.E.,

Where there is no Association Representative at present, correspondence should be sent to the relevant Area Organiser.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 1980

Next year's Annual General Meeting and Reunion  
will take place in London on Wednesday, May 21st at  
Holy Trinity Church Hall, Brompton Road, SW3

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS

and

EVERY GOOD WISH FOR 1980