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WVS/WRVS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER No. 19

November 1983

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Area Representatives are ex officio members of Committee

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AREA REPRESENTATIVES - Ex officio members of the Committee

LONDON

Area Co-ordinator Mrs J. Sanderson,  
North Area Mrs M. Downing BEM,  
Central Area Westminster & City  
Mrs Theo Robertson,  
Hackney, Newham & Tower Hamlets  
Mrs Millington,  
South East Area Mrs. E. G. Block MBE,  
North East Area Miss Doris Wright,  
South West Area Mrs M. Forsdick,  
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 P. James MBE,  
Area 4 Mrs L. Zeigler MBE,

Midlands

Area 1 Mrs O. Wright MBE,  
Area 2 Mrs A. Tyler,  
Area 3 Mrs E. Kenrick,

Home Counties

Anglia

Area 3 Mrs E. Claydon,

South East

Area 1 Miss M. T. Cooke MBE,

Channel Islands

Jersey Mrs Morton Fisher,

South West

Area 1 Mrs K. Barker BEM,

Wales

Mrs K. Mowat MBE,

Scotland

Chairman - Mrs G. MacDonald,  
Scottish Section

November 1983

Dear Members,

It is with much pleasure that I greet you through the medium of our Newsletter and I am most happy to have the privilege of serving as your Chairman. I look forward to meeting all the Area Representatives at our Committee meetings and I hope you will keep them informed of any local gatherings or any suggestions to further our Association.

Thanks to the dedication and wisdom of our founder Chairman, Kathleen Halpin, her Officers and Committee, we are now well established with a simple Constitution but the future expansion of our Association is very much in your hands. I believe we have much to offer those who have enjoyed working together for the common good and I am concerned that the constant use of the word "retirement" should not suggest a dispirited outlook!

Why not adopt the new University phrase "entering the Third Age" with a sense of excitement and looking forward even to further achievements! Many members are still extremely agile in mind and body and it has been suggested we should have more stimulating meetings. You could follow Daley Thompson's "Feel good and look good" exercises or join a local aerobics group - neither age nor infirmity are a bar so they say! If you have any bright ideas do let me know or better still discuss it with your Area Representative who can then pass it on. Do not forget that your local WRVS might welcome your help especially during holidays.

Our Annual General Meeting in Birmingham was a most successful and happy gathering of old and new friends. In true tradition we were met at the station - rail and bus - transported to Trefoil House to be warmly welcomed by the Area Organiser Mrs Scoffham, the Area Representative Mrs Kendrick and members from Birmingham and District. The buffet lunch was anything but "emergency feeding" and we all appreciated the hard work of the various teams. So many thanks to you all.

Our gracious President Mrs Barbara Shenfield in her role as National Chairman of WRVS made us feel a very necessary part of the Service and you will find reports of the various speeches elsewhere. It is important that we keep up to date with WRVS trends and I have encouraging news of co-operation in Areas.

The WRVS magazine is full of interesting articles, ideas and amusing drawings and brings us in touch countrywide.

By the time this Newsletter reaches you, Christmas preparations will be well in hand and we will be thinking of friends far and near. From my home in Yorkshire to your home, I send you my very best wishes for a joyful, peaceful time. The poem "Desiderata" written in 1927 by Max Ehrmann has a message for us all - do read it with care.

Life is still fun if we make it so.

HELENA FOSTER, Chairman

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING on 16th June 1983

Members not at the meeting will be especially interested to know of the election of Mrs Helena Foster OBE as Chairman of the Association. She has been the Association's Representative for the North East Division, Area 4, since last December when she retired as Area Organiser after holding this appointment for many years. Full biographical notes on Mrs Foster's long and devoted service to WRVS as well as her other interests were circulated with the last Newsletter.

A resolution that Miss Kathleen Halpin, who had been the Association Chairman for ten years, be elected a Vice-President was formally proposed and seconded. Mrs. Cecille Stampa, Chairman Wales, then paid a well-deserved tribute to Miss Halpin, in which she spoke of the great affection and admiration as well as respect in which Miss Halpin was and is held by members all over the country.

Miss Stampa recalled that having joined WVS early in 1939, Miss Halpin planned the WVS participation in the Government's Evacuation plans for the transfer of children and certain other categories of people at risk, from the cities to less vulnerable areas. From the outbreak of war she was in charge of the London Region and then from 1945 to 1973 held the demanding appointment of Chief Regional Administrator. During this period she came to know not only the WVS and WRVS Organisers but also very many other members throughout the country concerned with all sides of WRVS work. This unequalled knowledge of the Service had greatly helped when the WVS/WRVS Association was formed in 1973. As its first Chairman, Miss Halpin had not only been responsible for its planning and organisation but had carried out much of the day-to-day routine so that "from a very small beginning it had become a living, thriving Association in the life of our great Service".

Miss Halpin was duly elected as a Vice-President and this Vote of Thanks from Mrs Stampa was received with a standing ovation from all those present.

Chairman Helena has referred to our Annual General Meeting in Birmingham - a rewarding outcome of several months of co-operation. We would like to add our grateful thanks to all the local members who worked so hard to make it a success.

In this Newsletter we are able to include only precis of the excellent talks given by our two speakers in the afternoon session and the opening remarks of our President, the Chairman of WRVS, together with reports during the business meeting by the Area Representatives and Mrs Grace Macdonald, Chairman of the Scottish Section of the Association. Added to these are, of course, any news sent in since the AGM.

Mrs Barbara Shenfield chaired both sessions and introduced the visiting speakers in a short address under the title "WRVS Year - 1982/83". She spoke of the development of WRVS from a Regional into an Area pattern, and the ways in which the organisation was being brought up to date and businesslike. WRVS was currently concerned with two of the major pressures of today, namely unemployment among the young and the increasing social need for "extra care" for the older and frailer members of the community, both of which would be elaborated later.

Mrs Shenfield then referred to the need for more residential Clubs and the extension of those already in existence, which was sometimes made possible by "joint funding" schemes of Health and Social Services Departments. There was



also the possibility of extending Lunch Clubs, which could be done by using existing facilities such as pub lunches, meals kitchens and industrial kitchens. Shopping services were being considerably extended and there were countless ways by which WRVS with imagination and ingenuity could help and foster new ways of meeting these needs.

She then introduced the speakers:

#### Youth and WRVS

Mrs Evelyn Morris, County Organiser for Gloucestershire WRVS, spoke of the involvement of WRVS with two schemes concerned with young people. The first is with YOUTH FORCE with which she has been personally concerned since her WRVS Area Organiser told her that this "organisation" was anxious to rent part of a WRVS office in the Forest of Dean area. Following various meetings, the Youth Force Co-ordinator, surprised at the variety of work WRVS undertook, and looking, too, for outlets for those joining the scheme, became interested in the suggestions Mrs Morris made for activities in which young people could help, such as recycling clothing, learning to do simple repairs and basic cooking.

WRVS Headquarters agreed that two rooms in the Gloucester County Office could be used and once various hurdles, like the Health Environment Officer and the Fire Officer being satisfied that the premises were suitable, were overcome, and most importantly that the Youth Supervisors would be entirely responsible for the students and the premises, the scheme came into operation in July 1981 with 12 students and 2 supervisors. Sewing and Cookery Groups were soon at work and the scheme has prospered ever since.

The highlight for the students, both boys and girls, was when they prepared and served a buffet lunch for the visit of the WRVS Chairman to the County; the work of the Sewing Group was on show - well made, attractive children's clothing and many knitted garments. Now the cooks think nothing of providing scones, sausage rolls, cakes, sponges for various Lunch and Old People's Clubs. It is hoped that one day they will be cooking the whole meal.

All the students have coffee together in the morning, when personal problems are often brought to light and discussed. Mrs Morris told the members of some of the difficulties of coping with the young people, drawn as they are from many different backgrounds and with variation of temperaments, abilities and willingness to work. Some who join the group are punk rockers with their "outrageous hair styles" and colours, some are lonely and unhappy and others are just bored. Regular attendance is insisted on by the supervisors to whom she paid a generous tribute for their patience and skill in drawing up interesting curricula which help to motivate the students who need and are given continued encouragement. WRVS members soon learn not to judge by appearances and Mrs Morris gave examples of how apparently difficult and unco-operative youngsters were won over.

Gloucestershire members are also involved in the COUNTRYSIDE PROGRAMME YOUTH TRAINING SCHEME, which is sponsored by the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders. These young people, of both sexes, are responsible for cooking meals in WRVS Lunch Clubs under, of course, experienced supervisors. Some have been through the Courts for minor offences and others are considered to be "at risk". The Clubs are run by two WRVS members who set very high standards which they insist are maintained. Other groups have helped with general repairs - painting, decorating, carpentry, in WRVS offices.

Mrs Morris summed up by saying that through the Task Force and other schemes she felt that WRVS have played an important part in helping young people at a difficult period in their lives when so little employment is often available.

#### Piper in the Yeovil District - The WRVS Guardian Scheme

Mrs Ann Courage BEM, lately County Organiser for Somerset, previously the Centre Organiser for Uckfield, gave a talk on "Piper in the Yeovil District and the important part played by the local WRVS under the name of the Guardian Service".

"Piper" is an emergency communications system for the elderly and disabled whereby the people "connected" have only to pull a cord in their homes to be in immediate contact with their Warden or the Piper Contact Centre in Yeovil and thence to someone who can go to their assistance.

The scheme was started in 1981 in the 55 sheltered dwellings in Yeovil, only two of which had two-way alarm systems. The Chairman of the Housing Committee and the Housing Officer calculated that all these buildings could be linked, in cases of an emergency, by the installation of a computer provided that they had the back-up of caring, compassionate and reliable volunteers, since there were not nearly enough relations and friends available. The volunteers, called Guardians, were to be ordinary members of the public who would undertake to make themselves generally available between 8 am and 8 pm. These volunteers are not, of course, committed to be always on call but by recruiting at least three per elderly or disabled person, it has been found that one is always available in the event of an emergency.

The Association members who were present at the AGM were not surprised that firstly the Council came to the WRVS for help and then that the Yeovil WRVS accepted the challenge. It is interesting to note that Mrs Courage and the District Organiser are both second generation WRVS; it was they and a member of the County Staff, seconded for three months, who bore most of the brunt of setting up the project.

Mrs Courage explained that when an emergency call is made, it goes to the Warden, but if she is out, then direct to the Control Centre who alerts the nearest WRVS Guardian and so on. A pleasing "spin-off" from the scheme is that many Guardians establish a relationship with elderly people living alone and visit regularly.

After the sheltered dwellings were served, the scheme was extended to all Council properties without wardens, and this year "Piper Solo" is being organised for all elderly and disabled people who wish for it.

Mrs Courage concluded her fascinating address by suggesting that "our Founder Chairman who was always ahead of herself and everybody else, would be pleased that WRVS had helped to achieve a happy marriage between sophisticated electronic technology and the ideals and traditions of WRVS".

#### Votes of Thanks

Mrs Kenrick then proposed a warm vote of appreciation and thanks to the President and other Speakers and

Mrs Helena Foster an omnibus vote of thanks to all the Organisers, Stewards and Drivers, with very special reference to the Emergency Service teams under their ESOs who had provided such an excellent meal. Thanks to their combined efforts and a wonderful venue, it had been a very happy and successful day.

## NEWS FROM AREAS

LONDON. Mrs J Sanderson, the Area Co-ordinator gave a short report on London's annual meeting in WRVS Headquarters, when Miss Halpin spoke about the new pattern of administration to be organised on the lines of the rest of the country, i.e. into Areas, of which there would be six. Lady Norman, the first Vice Chairman of WVS had given an interesting talk which had included mention of her work for the Mentally Handicapped (MIND).

South East Area. Mrs G. Block, the Area Representative, reported increased membership and a growing desire for regular Area "get-togethers". She had been especially interested in an application to join the Association from someone who had been a member of WVS Portugal working with Mrs Leacock. It turned out that Mrs Block had been asked to look after Mrs Leacock (now a member of the Association) when, as Head of the WVS in Portugal, she had attended a WRVS Conference and then to escort her across London to her boat train!

The Area had its second meeting this year in September when three of the members spoke - Mrs de Boulay on her work in Portugal, Mrs Rylatt gave a historical survey of Southwark from the days of King Canute and Mrs Higgins, with two friends, who had served together with WRVS Overseas, on their work in Germany, the Far and Middle East; this last talk was supplemented with photographs. A provisional date, 16th May 1984, was made for the next meeting to be held (probably) in Southwark, to include seeing some of the places Mrs Rylatt had mentioned.

North Area. There are now 36 members in this Area, and all are looking forward to the Annual Reunion of London members to be held at the end of October. Mrs M. Downing, the Area Representative was glad to be invited to attend a meeting of Borough Organisers held in July.

Central Area. We welcome two new appointments, Mrs. Theo Robertson, Area Representative, Westminster and the City, and Mrs Millington, Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets. We look forward to reports in 1984.

NORTH WEST DIVISION. Area 2, Greater Manchester. Following the reunion held in December 1982, Mrs Head, the Area Representative, was invited to speak at an Area meeting of Metropolitan Organisers and since then she has been in touch with them all. This resulted in a request to give details of the Association to a group of older members at a coffee morning held by the Area Organiser. She had also attended an afternoon event at Rochdale to celebrate the award of the BEM to Mrs Kathleen Armstrong, the Metropolitan Organiser for Rochdale. Mrs Head had another opportunity to talk about the Association as a number of older members were present. Altrincham has a group which meets every two months, inviting various speakers. Mrs M. Hall gave a talk on Lady Jane Grey, an ancestor of the Earl of Stamford, whose home is quite close at Dunham, now under the auspices of the National Trust. Another speaker was Mrs J. Stead, who was Hospital Organiser of Salford, talking about her experiences in the WVS/WRVS.

Area 4, Cheshire, Merseyside. In a written report at the AGM, Mrs Mary Preston stated that a successful and happy Reunion had been held this year in Northwich with over a 50% attendance and that plans were already in hand for a 1984 meeting in Liverpool, following this Area's aim of meeting each year in a different town.

The Area Organiser, Mrs P.M. Linton, has written an informative memorandum to all Local Organisers in the Area, giving full details about the Association and inviting eligible members to apply direct to Mrs Preston.



NORTH EAST DIVISION. Area 1, Northumbria. From the second "Northumbria Newsletter" we learn that the Association continues to grow in interest, numbers and groups. Space does not allow us to repeat all the news but the Area Representative, Mrs Smurthwaite, who is still Editor (but hoping for someone else to take this over) has included reports from Northumberland, Alnwick, Wansbeck, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Sunderland and North Tyneside. In the last named the two Organisers conclude by saying "that the work involved is nothing when compared to the reward of seeing so many old friends really looking forward to and enjoying our events". (The Editor adds - does not this encourage other Association members to organise a local group where there is not one already.)

Our energetic Mrs Smurthwaite sent a later report of their summer outing - a visit to Raby Castle, enjoyed by 60 members and friends, in spite of heavy rain. Their Christmas activities are all planned.

The leader of the Newcastle group reported in a Metropolitan District Narrative, "Our numbers have increased during the last few months; Life Members who had not attended our monthly meetings have now been notified of our local organisation".

A Narrative Report from Sunderland gave the extra news that a special meeting of the Association had been held to celebrate the 90th birthday of their oldest member. "A beautiful lunch was provided and members of the WRVS staff who attended were very pleased to have been invited to such a happy occasion."

Area 4, South and West Yorkshire. At the AGM, Mrs Helena Foster, reporting as Area Representative, said how glad she was to be able to say, "Area 4 is back" and that members were looking forward to regular meetings in the future when they could renew old acquaintances. From her Area she brought a recommendation that members should be invited to join the Association as early as possible after they had retired or given up appointments. She said that Association membership should follow "as a natural sequence and be known to all members - including the men!" She knew that many working on the ground were unaware that the Association existed! Mrs Foster, writing in September, adds, "Having an arm in plaster is not the best way to prepare for a social gathering but there was no need to worry - it was obvious the fairies had been and everything was ready, thanks to Area Staff. We had a most enjoyable get-together in September and made final arrangements for our Christmas lunch at the Queen's Hotel in December when we hope to have a 'full house'. By then, our New Area Representative, Mrs. Lil Ziegler, will have taken over the reins and she is already thinking of ways and means to attract new members. Mrs Ziegler is retiring as Metropolitan Organiser for Wakefield and we are grateful to her for so readily accepting another job. It was nice to have one of our Deputy Area Organisers, Mrs Moreen Bentham, with us for lunch and we were able to hear some Area news".

MIDLANDS DIVISION. Area 1, West Midlands Counties. In the unavoidable absence of Mrs O. Wright at the AGM, her report was read. Membership remained steady in both Hereford/Worcester and Warwickshire, with regular meetings being held. A number of setbacks had prevented development in the other two Counties but "nothing daunted, efforts are being renewed".

Hereford and Worcestershire. This County broke new ground at its September meeting by joining the residents of Woodgate, the WRVS Residential Club in Malvern. Dame Frances Clode reported on the AGM in Birmingham, Lady Higgs, the Area Organiser, gave an up-to-date picture and future trends of WRVS and Miss Phyllis Castle, remembered with affection as running Hans Place, spoke of her work in the Far East with the Gurka families.



Area 2, East Midlands Counties. Rushcliffe District, Nottinghamshire.

Mrs A. Tyler, the Area Representative, reported on a very successful buffet lunch held in the Civic Centre, West Bridgford; over 70 members (past and present) had attended with the Mayoress, a WRVS member, as their guest of honour. Since then 40 Association members had enjoyed a coffee morning when plans had been made for another "get-together" to be held in a different part of the District and then a luncheon at the Rushcliffe Civic Centre. News of these events were also given in the District Organiser's Narrative Report.

Derbyshire. We have also received a report on the Annual Meeting of the Derbyshire Association held at Repton School, organised by Mrs Hilton, the Derbyshire County Organiser and under the Chairmanship of Mrs Colchester-Wemyss, past County Organiser. Among the many guests were the Lord Lieutenant, Colonel Peter Hilton, and the High Sheriff, Mr Sitwell, who later presented WRVS medals and clasps. After lunch, the Senior Master, Mr Hawkins, gave a short talk on the history of the school, then senior girls and boys took parties round.

A number of "Over 80's" were present. This Derbyshire scheme had been inaugurated when WRVS was asked by the Chairman WRVS to produce a project to commemorate the Queen Mother's 80th birthday. So every year "Over 80's" are invited to this meeting, to be entertained and meet their old friends.

Area 3, West Midlands Counties. Mrs E. Kenrick, once again back at the helm, and having been responsible for the overall organisation of the Association's AGM, reported that of the seven Metropolitan Districts in this Area only Birmingham and Solihull have regular meetings and that Wolverhampton continue to run their own branch. Birmingham have a full programme with their usual pattern of coffee mornings when news is exchanged and plans made to include lunches and visits to places of interest.

SOUTH EAST DIVISION. Area 1, South East. Miss J. Barnard reported that all was well in her Area - growing and developing satisfactorily. There were already two flourishing and well-organised groups in Surrey - Farnham and Woking - with a third such group contemplated. In East Sussex the three large seaside towns on Hastings, Eastbourne and Brighton each had an Association member responsible for organising meetings and they steadily recruit new members by coffee mornings, outings and similar "jollifications". She hoped that with active County Representatives recruited in each County, it would be possible to hold an Annual Area Meeting. She added that she had much appreciated the great help and encouragement given by the Area Organiser and through her from the County Organiser, who had a vital place at all Association main gatherings; they played a large part in the development of the Association and also kept the members up to date about current WRVS work.

Miss M. T. Cooke, the newly-appointed Area Representative, has now sent a report, firstly of the farewell party given for Miss Barnard, the retiring Representative, in the Area Office on the 19th September. Over 40 representatives of the Association from the four Counties in the Area attended and a presentation was made to Miss Barnard in recognition of all she had done since the formation of the Association.

Then follows news of Woking District who, on a wet Monday in the Spring, held a Bring and Buy/Coffee Morning, which brought in £25 towards their stamp fund! A Garden Party was held in Send, in the early afternoon "to avoid the rush hours". Plans are in hand for a Theatre Party in Farnham to see "Educating Rita". We noted that as far back as May a speaker, Miss Heather Kerswell, Assistant Planning Officer for the Borough, had been booked for their October Lunch. Waverley had a buffet lunch in August, when a moving and informative talk on a visit to Eye Camp in India was given. Epsom District has its first Association meeting and Eastbourne has appointed a Local Representative.

Area 2, South East. Hampshire. We read from the Annual Report for 1982 "Hampshire Highlights" that 28 members of the Association met in the home of the Hon. Secretary in Petersfield, where they were brought up to date with WRVS news by the Area Organiser. A new Vice Chairman of the County Group, Mrs Albrow, had quickly enrolled 12 members to form a new branch in Fareham. Another group had been established in Cowplain. They were planning for a lunch party to be held in Winchester and a garden party.

Dorset. Mrs. Grebby is now Hon. Secretary of the Association Dorset Group and is building up a good membership. The many friends of Mrs Rosie Richardson will be sorry to hear that she has recently had a fall but after a short stay in hospital is now back at home. As County Organiser for many years she worked strenuously for WVS, particularly in the Civil Defence field and latterly to keep the older members of the Service together.

CHANNEL ISLANDS. Jersey. It was good to hear again from Mrs. Morton-Fisher who reported that their group - only 3 years old this year - continues to grow slowly, now having nine permanent members and two prospective. Their monthly meetings are held in the WRVS Office in the winter and in private houses in the summer or take the form of an outdoor activity. At a recent picnic at Sorel Point, one of the headlands on the north coast, they especially enjoyed having a guest WRVS member from Dorset who told the Jersey members about the work being done in her county. They finished the season with an excellent evening meal. Three members man the WRVS office one morning a week and busy themselves with the used stamps that are brought in. (We in the mainland send our island friends good wishes and hope some of them may one day manage a visit to an Annual Association meeting).

SOUTH WEST DIVISION. Area 1, South West. This Area continues to be another live and busy one; Mrs K. M. Barker stated at the AGM that very successful reunions and social "get-togethers" had been held throughout the year in all three Counties.

Sadly, Mrs Dorothy Tebbs has had to resign as County Representative for Wiltshire, having increased membership from 7 to 70 during her term of office.

Since the AGM we have received a report on Gloucestershire's Annual Reunion held in Charlton Kings. As usual, the meeting was well supported by the County's Association President, Dame Frances Clode, who spoke of the AGM held earlier in the month, the Area Representative, Mr K. M. Barker, Mrs M Garland the Area Organiser, Mrs E. Morris the County Organiser and Mrs D. Moss the Editor of the Newsletter. Membership in the County had steadily increased; there were over 70 acceptances out of 111 and so far the first time a hall had to be hired for the meeting. After an excellent lunch the Guest Speaker, formerly Matron and then Senior Nursing Officer of the Cheltenham General Hospital talked on "Hospitals - Yesterday and Today". Mrs Littlewood, the enthusiastic County Representative, is to be congratulated on the development in the County and, as she herself says, she is fortunate in having the active support of the County Organiser and staff.

Area 2, South West. Another County Newsletter has been started, this time in Somerset. The first issue which came out earlier this year, reported a happy meeting at the home of Mrs Courage, then the County Organiser and 35 members enjoyed a further meeting, when WVS films were shown - apparently the old ones caused much fun. Then on a hot summer day a successful gathering was held at Coker Court, the delightful home of Mr and Mrs Brett-Stephens. Much pleasure was given to all members, who were free to wander round all the rooms and, of course, able to enjoy meeting again and chatting to many old friends. Due to her husband's illness, Mrs M. Wigfield has had to resign as Secretary for this County Group; she has worked very hard and will be greatly missed. An interesting fact was given in the Newsletter regarding Mrs Edith Coppard, who lives in New Zealand,



having worked in Chard for many years in the Meals on Wheels service. She is now President of the Red Cross in Tarradale, where they delivered 4828 meals in one year. Mrs Coppard enjoys the WRVS news from "the Old Country" and watches out eagerly for our HQ Newsletter. (Editor: Thank you, Mrs Coppard, for your encouragement).

Mrs Wigfield concluded their first Newsletter by quoting words from Lady Reading in 1952, "Be glad, because being glad helps other people. There is nothing more infectious than a smile, and a smile helps much more than any amount of National Health medicine".

WALES. Mrs K. Mowat's report at the AGM showed that the recruitment of new members had just made up for inevitable losses and that the interest of existing groups had not waned, due not a little to the enthusiasm of the County Representatives. Everyone was glad that a number of members from 4 Counties who had not been able to get to London for a National Reunion managed to travel to Birmingham, where they enjoyed meeting many others. Mid-Glamorgan has a new County Representative, Mrs. L. B. Smart BEM. Dyfed members are so enthusiastic that their previously two monthly gatherings are now held monthly. The presentation of her BEM to Mrs. V. Griffiths (an elected member of the Association Committee) is arranged for 15th November in Aberystwyth. Wrexham Maelor and South Glamorgan members continue to meet regular, the latter "at the Chatterery"!!

SCOTTISH SECTION. Mrs. Grace Macdonald, Chairman, Scottish Section, brought to the AGM greetings from the Scottish Section and then reported on their AGM, attended by 77 of their (then) 235 members. Scotland move around for their annual gatherings among three towns with main-line stations, Edinburgh, Dundee and Glasgow, where this year's meeting was held. They were privileged to have Mrs Shenfield as their speaker.

Scotland now has Regional coverage in all but one of their Regions and encourage local meetings; cities and large towns are more active than county areas, understandable in Scotland where distance and transport are so difficult.

Mrs Macdonald went on to say, "It is interesting to see how various groups entertain themselves; the erudite in the capital, Edinburgh, forming a bridge club and a cosmopolitan group in Aberdeen, the oil city, who have found speakers on a wide variety of subjects - from lace-making to living in a desert, but most groups meet just for a coffee and a chat. Some members from Dumbarton really got lost on a mystery coach tour and eventually had to fall back on their old map reading training to get them home".

In concluding her report Mrs Macdonald's hope is that as all Association occasions are reported in the Scottish Newsletter "one group's good ideas will encourage another to try them". May this serve to stimulate all of us who are responsible in any way for the development of our Association.

A later report from Mrs Macdonald states that all the Scottish Regions are covered; they now tend to make their programmes more "to suit geography, by crossing existing WRVS boundaries and so helping to overcome transport problems."

#### WRVS MAGAZINE

The second issue of this lively journal has been published and we look forward to the Winter edition. Our Vice-President, Dame Frances Clode, contributed some "personal and light-hearted reminiscences" in the Spring copy.

(How did the Editor manage to secure a number of letters in both issues - while the Editor of this Newsletter gets none?).

Orders for the three 1984 magazines should be sent as soon as possible to the WRVS Magazine Department, WRVS Headquarters, accompanied by a cheque or postal order for £1.95 (includes postage) made payable to the WRVS Magazine.



OBITUARY - Miss Mary Elizabeth GRAY, CBE.

Members of the Association will be sorry to hear of the death on August 18th, in a nursing home in Malvern, of Mary Gray. Mary joined WVS in 1938 and was Regional Administrator for the old Region 4 (Cambridge) for six years. In 1944 Lady Reading sent her to advise General Sir Oliver Leese on how WVS could help in the forward areas. She subsequently organised WVS in Burma, Malaya, Japan, Hong Kong, and received the first Gurkha Families on their arrival in Singapore. In 1946 she was awarded the CBE.

After returning to England in 1948 Mary was appointed Regional Administrator for Region 9 (Birmingham), a post which she held until 1971. In 1954 while she was still Administrator, she was appointed one of the three Special Commissioners to run Civil Defence in Coventry. CD in the City had been taken over by the Home Office after the Council had decided to discontinue running the Service. The two other Commissioners were Air Vice-Marshal Sir Geoffrey Bromet, former Governor of the Isle of Man and General J. B. Dalison, Food Officer for London & SE & E Regions. Mary, characteristically, refused to accept the salary offered for this appointment.

She was County Commissioner for the Gloucestershire Girl Guides from 1949 to 1961.

When she sold her house Paxford, Gloucestershire, she bought Woodgate in Malvern, a property which she gave to the WRVS Trust, who converted the building into flats for elderly people, leaving one larger flat in which Mary lived for some years. Here the ample ground surrounding the house enabled her to continue her hobby breeding dogs which had become so much a part of her life in Gloucestershire.

Mary was a great personality and beloved by a host of friends and members of WVS/WRVS, many of whom attended her funeral service in Malvern Priory.

A tribute from a member of the Association follows:

"It is true to say that every day with Mary Gray was a challenge. As the saying goes, the impossible was possible, miracles took a little longer.

Like our Founder Chairman, she placed great faith in her colleagues, which in turn invariably achieved the desired results. Most Service chiefs knew, when she asked to see them, that she wanted some assistance for the benefit of their men, and she seldom came away empty-handed. It was the same with County Councils - her natural charm overcame many a difficult situation.

While working in Hong Kong in 1945 I first realised her great love for children. After waiting until mid-day for RAF Transport Command to tell me if Mary was expected at Kai Tak Airfield from Singapore, and being assured otherwise, I continued with my plan to take two sea-going boatloads of Chinese orphans for their very first trip around the Harbour. When we disembarked, there was Mary patiently waiting to join the 51 children and their Chinese nuns and a number of sailors, soldiers and airmen for tea at the Peninsular Hotel which was the Military HQ.

Likewise, when she returned to this country, she thoroughly enjoyed her long term as Guide Commissioner for Gloucestershire, one of the highlights being the birth of the Good Quads who were eventually enrolled!

Living with and travelling with Mary for so many years was a unique experience and I saw her bring a new dimension into the lives of thousands of men, women and children.

It was heart-warming to be with so many of Mary's colleagues and friends in Great Malvern Abbey on 31st August, when nostalgia and the Vicar's understanding words made it such a fitting occasion."

M. C.

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

Mrs D. V. Bottrill	Essex
Miss C. Burch BEM	Sussex
Mrs I Chorlton	Kent, ex-Headquarters
Miss E. R. Day MBE	ex-Wales Headquarters
Miss M. Doyly	ex-London Headquarters
Mrs. M. Dunkerley	Sussex
Miss H. Fitzhugh	London
Mrs. R. Hardy	Tyne and Wear
Mrs O. M. Millings	Essex
Mrs E. L. Myers	Dorset
Mrs. A. Robson	Northumbria
Mrs D. J. Wright	Wales

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS, June 1983

Congratulations are extended to the following:

(a) DBE

Lady Holland-Martin who is the Chairman NSPCC becomes Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire. Lady Holland-Martin was awarded the OBE in 1947 for her work for the then WVS. She was a Vice-Chairman of WRVS for several years, retiring in 1981 but remaining a member of WRVS.

(b) For WRVS Service to the Community

OBE

Lady Rachel Mary Higgs

Area Organiser, West Midland Counties

MBE

Mrs Christine Ellis

Area Organiser, London South East Area

Mrs Helen Doris Bessie Platt-Higgins

Deputy Area Organiser, Home Counties/  
Anglia

Mrs Jean Sophia Sutherland Weir

Regional Organiser, Highland North,  
Scotland

BEM

Mrs Kathleen Armstrong

Metropolitan Organiser, Rochdale

Miss Kathleen Mary Batey

Personal Assistant to Co-ordinator,  
WRVS Premises

Mrs Ena Brown

Meals on Wheels Organiser, Cornwall

Mrs Jean Castle

Metropolitan Organiser, Calderdale

Mrs Eirwen Holland Edwards

County Organiser, Clwyd, Wales

Mrs Annie Panter

Clothing Store Helper, Stoke-on-Trent

## DESIDERATA

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly, and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive him to be, and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. STRIVE TO BE HAPPY.

Found in Old Saint Paul's Church, Baltimore. Dated 1692

(According to Mary Kenny, it was the Rector of Old Saint Paul's who reprinted the poem in the late 1950s and it is the Church which dates back to 1692 - not the poem!)





VEST PATTERN for SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND

1 pair No.9 needles.

2 ozs. (3-ply or 4-ply) pastel shade wool or rainbow mixture.

METHOD Cast on 60 stitches

Knit two plain, two purl until vest measures about 6 inches, or longer if you wish.

Next row: Cast off 4 stitches, rib to end of row.

Next row: Cast off 4 stitches, rib to end - thus completing arm hole.

On the 52 stitches, work  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in rib.

Next row, rib 16, cast off 20, rib 16.

Knit 16 rows on first 16 stitches. Break off wool and knit 16 rows on the last 16 stitches.

Next row, knit 16 stitches, cast on 20, knit in rib to end of row, and complete to match front, remembering to cast on for arm hole and so get 60 stitches.

Work in rib until same length as front, and cast off.

Pick up 42 stitches round arm hole and knit 8 rows for sleeves. (Alternatively knit a piece on 42 stitches separately for eight rows and slip stitch on the vest arm hole).

Repeat for second arm hole.

Join up sides. Crochet round neck to thread cord or ribbon draw-string.

Draw-string: Crochet 20 inches of single chain - cast off. Thread and draw slightly, tying in a bow.

N.B. Please do not use all-white wool

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