



WVS/WRVS ASSOCIATION

ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE 17 Old Park Lane, London W1Y 4AJ

Tel: 01-499 6040

President

Mrs Barbara Shenfield - Chairman WRVS

Vice-Presidents: Dame Frances Clode DBE  
Miss K. Halpin CBE  
The Baroness Pike of Melton DBE

Chairman

Mrs Helena Foster OBE

Honorary Secretary

Mrs Isola Wren

Honorary Treasurer

Miss Margaret Binks

Members of Committee 1985/6

Mrs E.M. Adie  
Miss K. Batey BEM  
Mrs A. Christopherson  
Mrs J. Grebby  
Mrs R.V. Griffiths BEM

Mrs M.F. Oswald  
Mrs V. Price  
Mrs J. Sanderson  
Mrs E. Speirs

Honorary Editor

Mrs Viola Price

Area Representatives are ex officio members of Committee

See back page

CONTENTS

Page	
2 & 3	Your Chairman Writes
4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10	Editorial
11, 12, 13, 14 & 15	The Story of the WVS/WRVS Association
16	Birthday Honours
17	Reminiscences
18	Editor's Mailbag
19	Obituary
20	Aid to Poland Annual Subscriptions
21	Services Welfare Reunion
22 to 44	Reports from Areas
45	Area Representatives
Back Cover	A Prayer for those Growing Old

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*  
\* A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY \*  
\* \*  
\* THE 1986 AGM & RE-UNION \*  
\* WILL BE HELD AT BRISTOL ON \*  
\* 3rd JUNE 1986 \*  
\* \*\*\*\*\*

PLEASE - Area Reports for May issue to Editor not  
later than end of January 1986 - many thanks.

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE  
YOUR CHAIRMAN WRITES ... ..

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

Dear Member,

As I write, the glory of autumn colours is apparent everywhere, reminding us that winter and the festive season is not far away. It is a very lovely time when friends from far and near are remembered and goodwill and generosity are uppermost in our hearts.

Your continuing aid to Save the Children and other disaster appeals shows your concern for those who daily battle for survival.

#### Special Project

I would like to make a particular effort this year to augment the funds of the WRVS Benevolent Trust.

Throughout our membership we have a wealth of talent - artistic, creative, skilled in so many fields by profession or hobby. I would like you individually or collectively to use your talents by marketing them. If each member would raise even £1, we could hand a worthwhile cheque to our President at our next Meeting.

Group efforts can be fun, too, and not nearly so tiring as a sponsored run!

Yours Area Representative will have more details.

#### Reunions

For all of us who attended the Annual General Meeting in London, I express ourmost sincere appreciation to the London Areas who welcomed and dined us so graciously. It was a most happy day.

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

I was so pleased to attend a luncheon for Northamptonshire members held in the delightful grounds of Rushden Hall Park. In just over two years they have trebled their membership, knitted vests, collected baby clothes and bought their own cutlery and glasses!

Our President hopes that Association members will support "Members' Week" but please do not stop there. The Service needs a continuous flow of helpers to carry out vital community work.

Greetings and good wishes to you for 1986.

*Arthur Isales*  
Chairman

"The Chairman's job is not to exercise power but to bring all the threads together so that you can start knitting".

Lady Warnock

EDITORIAL

How time flies! We are already looking forward to Christmas, but here in Lincolnshire, at least, we are still waiting for the summer that never was. Hopefully, many of you will have been a little more fortunate and enjoyed the luxury of a day or two of sunshine - our turn next year, perhaps.

The weather has not, however, prevented us from getting together in our own little corners of the country and it is obvious from the Area reports that new and stimulating ideas are being introduced into branch activities, whilst the ever-popular coffee morning continues to be an ideal means of keeping in touch and of having a chat without too much work or preparation for anyone.

It is evident, too, that more and more WRVS Organisers at all levels are actively supporting the Association by making accommodation available for meetings at which many of them willingly accept an invitation to bring our members up to date with WRVS projects. We are grateful for their co-operation in providing us with names of retiring WRVS personnel and our Chairman is particularly anxious that none of our former colleagues is forgotten, especially if they have become inactive, ill or lonely. As Association members we exist to help each other and to avoid such cases as the 81-year old member in Merseyside whose daughter, in her mother's absence, opened the reminder that her Association subscription was due. The daughter wrote to HQ that no-one now cared or made contact of any kind with her mother but she enclosed the amount due and asked that any further reminders be sent to her.

Another case of an 88-year old member who lives near Bristol, formerly of Swansea where she worked with WVS all through the war, was very hurt that now that she was a widow, old and unwell and lonely, nobody came near her.

In both these cases the Area Representatives concerned took immediate action and our aim is to ensure that somehow or other we get to know of such cases - make it our business to notice if we haven't seen or heard of any of our members or

friends for some time, and to find out why. Where there is need it can be alleviated by help from the WRVS Benevolent Trust for which Mrs Foster is making a special appeal utilizing the many and varied skills of individual members, as Mrs Smurthwaite has done so successfully in Northumbria.

We are most grateful to Miss Halpin for providing us with such a comprehensive history of the conception, birth and progress of the WVS/WRVS Association and thank her for the time and thought she has given to its detailed and interesting presentation.

For our May edition we look forward to receiving an article from Miss Jose Duke MBE, who, for a number of years, was responsible for the organisation of Services Welfare wherever our armed forces were stationed. She was based at Headquarters after a considerable period of service overseas.

Meantime, our membership continues to increase and now stands at 3,120. We have twenty gentlemen in our midst and wouldn't it be super if they wrote telling us how they view the Association, particularly from a male, minority aspect. They probably have ideas they would like to introduce and we would like to know what they are. (Gentlemen, please write to me! Editor)

Our Reunion and AGM in London in June was a huge success with an attendance of well over 200, the highest figure so far. We were delighted to have our President, Mrs Barbara Shenfield, take the chair for the morning session and she opened the meeting by saying how pleased she was to be with us - thanking every member of the Association who contributed so generously to her appeal on behalf of the Ockenden Venture Aid for Poland campaign.

After splendid reports from Mrs Isola Wren and Miss Margaret Binks, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer respectively, our Association Chairman, Mrs Helena Foster OBE, spoke of the encouraging progress being made throughout the country which she was sure was the result of teamwork to a great extent. Another contributory factor, she felt, was perhaps the concentration on building up from small, local groups where transport would not be a problem - she

was thinking particularly of the difficulties of having to contend with the Welsh mountains, the Scottish Highlands, rural England and even travelling from one end of London to another. The Area Representatives, with the invaluable support of the County, District and Local Representatives, were giving time, thought, energy and, above all, patience in developing the Association at all levels. These efforts were reinforced by WRVS Organisers and by Headquarters where our members type, bundle, stuff envelopes and perform so many of the tedious tasks which are essential to the smooth running of the Association. She thanked our President for having our interests so much at heart, lending her support wherever it was needed. Mrs Foster stressed the value of the written word - thanking the Hon. Editor for the production of "The News" and in congratulating Mrs Smurthwaite on the excellent Northumbria Newsletter urged other Areas to follow suit.

Our concern for the old, the ill and the lonely was evident in the ever-increasing number of home visits which are being undertaken on a regular basis, helping with the shopping, collecting prescriptions or just sitting for a little chat over a cup of tea. Whilst charity rightly begins at home, Mrs Foster was pleased that our practical sympathy and compassion extended far beyond the confines of our own Association whose members have made such generous contributions of many kinds to the Save the Children Fund, to Poland, to Bangladesh, Biafra, etc., and always readily respond to any such appeal. We are glad to help - it is the way we have been brought up!

It is fitting that we should participate in the V.E. Day Commemorative Service and we were pleased that our Association was represented by two of our wartime stalwarts, Kathleen Halpin and Kathleen Turner.

In closing, Mrs Foster quoted Lady Reading from page 2 of our Roll of Honour:

"May you be able to understand to the full, all that you are,  
All that you have been, all the splendid strength  
that is yours;  
Use it for the good of your home, of the community,  
of the country and of the world".



VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Following the election of Chairman and members of the Central Executive Committee, the Resolution was discussed at some length and the result of the vote was that the status quo should remain. There were no Area reports, as such, but Mrs Preston, North West Area 4, spoke of the importance of the welfare of members, the very elderly who were a link with the past, and told of how Mrs Brown, one of our members had been helped by the Benevolent Fund. Mrs Barker, South West Area 1, reported on the very substantial support given by the Association in her Area to three local businessmen who had formed themselves into a registered charity and sponsored a scheme for Emergency Care of Children in Ethiopia where medical supplies as well as clothing were urgently needed to support a team of French doctors working there. Mrs Kathleen Turner spoke of her "special day" - V.E. Day - and how, 40 years on, she was chosen to represent the WVS/WRVS Association at the Commemorative Service.

A delicious lunch, with wine, was prepared and beautifully served by the Hounslow Emergency Services team. Our grateful thanks to Mrs Brautigan and all the ladies who ensured that our lunch was a very real pleasure.

Mrs Helena Foster, Chairman of the WVS/WRVS Association, chaired the afternoon session which commenced with a very charming little ceremony when we rejoiced with Mrs Tingey on the occasion of her 90th birthday. She was congratulated and presented with a pretty bouquet of flowers by Mrs Shenfield who also very kindly pinned her Long Service Medal on your Editor.

Mrs Foster then introduced our first speaker, Mrs Barbara Shenfield, Chairman of WRVS and President of the WVS/WRVS Association. She said how glad she was to be with us and to meet old members and have the opportunity of talking about some of the recent developments in WRVS work. Most of these were not wholly new - they were almost all developments that had occurred over well-established WRVS work. Our experience, reaching right back to the evacuation of children during the War and subsequent placement of children in hostess holidays has led us to develop more, not

only of these but all family holidays where children could stay with their own parents. We had purchased a number of chalets and will be possibly purchasing more in the future, places usually near activities and seaside resorts, and these are proving a very popular and effective kind of family break on holiday and a real contribution to easing the difficulties of over-burdened families. Similarly, our long-standing work with children and young families was being carried forward with a second Family Centre for latch-key children which we are developing in Ipswich.

In these developments, as in others such as our Domiciliary Care services, we are not only providing much-needed services but we are having an impact on the general development of social policy in showing not only what can be done but how cheaply it can be done, and that it is people rather than large sums of money that are wanted. Children in the Family Centre do not want expensive toys and elaborate facilities. They want to sit on someone's knee and listen to a story. Our Organisers only get a £50 float to run their Domiciliary Care support and many of them will do a year's work without using very much of it. At a time when Governments and Local Authorities are trying to contain expenditure on Social Services without creating hardship, we are demonstrating ways in which needs can be met with relatively little public expenditure. To do these things requires, of course, a large and lively membership.

Mrs Shenfield reminded the Association that we have a special National Members Week in October of this year. This is not simply a recruiting drive. We are, of course, losing some members via age and retirement but we are recruiting new ones, especially men, and our membership figure this year was up on last year's figure. Unfortunately we cannot take on more work, particularly the kind that involves very careful personal service, unless we have enough people to share the work, so we hope that our Members Week will in fact help in attracting new members. But it is also for our existing members and to persuade as many helpers as possible to become members. We are anxious that we do not develop a style of organisation in which many members go from their homes to the project,

the hospital or the club, and home again, rarely visiting a WRVS office and out of touch with the rest of the organisation, not knowing about the rest of its work and not having a sense of belonging, being part of a total movement. In Members Week we are going to emphasise the central value of the individual member. We want them to feel an appreciated and valued part of the Service. Well-informed about what it is doing, they will, in turn, make for our best recruiting sergeants.

Our President said she was sorry that we were not able to continue the Magazine for financial reasons, but it will be replaced with a free distribution of a News Sheet of the newspaper kind and she has been discussing with the Chairman of the Committee of the Association how we can make sure that this News Sheet gets to Association members.

Mrs Shenfield congratulated the Association on a splendid year of activity and especially on the wonderful effort we had made for the Save the Children Fund and for the Polish appeal, and gave us her best wishes for our activities in the future.

Mrs Foster thanked Mrs Shenfield and the loud and sustained applause left her in no doubt as to the delight of her audience.

Our next speaker was Mr Rex J. Cannon MC., Honorary Publicity Officer for The Samaritans, and in introducing him Mrs Foster said how delighted we were that he had been able to accept our invitation to speak to us and to tell us about "rescue" work carried out by The Samaritans under the title, "Someone to Talk To".


Mr Cannon, in turn, said how delighted he was to be invited into such charming company and to share such a superb lunch. He felt very much at home with us as he had been surrounded by WVS and WRVS for most of his life. First - his mother who was District Organiser for Marshland, and then his wife, Kay, who accompanied him. She had been through meals-on-wheels, to Centre Organiser, to Civil Defence, to Surrey County Organiser and then a spell at Headquarters. This experience made him realise how much our two organisations

complemented each other. "Someone to Talk To" sounds simple, but when there is no one to talk to there often comes a call for help from someone in distress. The Samaritans' Founder, Mr. Chad Varah, discovered 32 years ago that people in despair wanted to talk through their depression with a sympathetic listener. He started, by himself, with one telephone, at St. Stephen's, Walbrook, and unfortunately, the cries for help have increased year by year - the statistics speak for themselves.



In Britain around 84 people kill themselves each week and suicide attempts run at 200,000 per year which means that every 5 minutes someone tries to end their life. Yes, the need is there - we had 328,000 new callers last year (one family in 40) and listened to and befriended 2 million callers. We accept everyone and never tell them what we do. We give space and time and an on-going befriending. Above all, we give complete and utter confidentiality - this is one of the reasons why those 2 million people felt able to call us. We help in a crisis and listen even to an anonymous caller. So you can see what an important role we all play - a life is so precious. There is so much we can do together!

A vote of thanks to Mrs Shenfield, Mr Cannon and Mrs Foster was charmingly proposed and seconded by Mrs Peggy James and Mrs Kaye Barker respectively after which the meeting was closed and everyone left for home having partaken of the ever-welcome cup of tea - a happy day.


Editor



In wishing you all a Very Happy Christmas and Good Health in the New Year, I cannot do better than to quote Lady Reading's message to WVS Members in December 1947 [substituting 1986 for 1948].

"May happiness, deep and real, be yours this Christmastide, happiness born of sympathy and understanding, of sorrows shared and difficulties overcome, and may 1986 bring you courage, vision and faith with which to undertake the future, and help the world to win through to peace".



THE STORY OF THE WVS/WRVS ASSOCIATION1973 to 1985Written for "The News" by Miss Kathleen Halpin CBE,  
Founder Chairman

The initial meeting of the Association was held in March 1973 when Joan Bertram, Bobby Tyrwhitt, Doreen Harris and Joan Haines worked together as a team to create an organisation whose main object was to maintain contact between old and new members of the Service. Lady Reading, Founder Chairman of WVS (WRVS after 1966) had died in May 1971; everyone was stunned and many wondered what would happen to the great organisation she had founded in 1938. Fortunately, her Vice-Chairman, Mrs Clode (afterwards Dame Frances) agreed to take over the Chairmanship of WRVS with Dame Susan Walker as her Vice-Chairman until 1974 when Baroness Pike was appointed Chairman.

During this period it became more and more clear that whilst maintaining the traditions of the past, there would have to be many changes in the organisation and administration of WRVS, some of which older members might regret or even not understand. It was hoped that members who had given loyal service to WVS and WRVS over the years, but who were giving up active work or taking less responsibility through age or other reasons, would join together for the purpose of uniting with those still working actively. They believed this could be done through a nationwide scheme having a central office in WRVS Headquarters with local groups meeting together, not only to remember the past but to keep in touch with old friends and with those who were carrying on the ideals of our Founder against the background of an ever-changing society with varying needs.

The first Annual Meeting was held on January 9th 1974 at Hans Place with the Chairman of WRVS, Dame Frances Clode, in the chair, when it was agreed that the Chairman of the day should be the President of the Association. Kathleen Halpin was elected Chairman, a position she held until the

tenth annual meeting in June 1983 when a Constitution had been adopted decreeing that a Chairman should not hold office for more than three consecutive years. At the 1974 meeting Doreen Harris was appointed Hon. Secretary and Margaret Hamilton, Hon. Treasurer. These Officers plus representatives from the three regions where branches had been formed, made up the Committee. One hundred members out of a membership of 400 attended this meeting and met Baroness Pike, their new President.

At that time the subscription was fixed at £1 of which 50p went to the WRVS Magazine which was distributed to all members of the Association. Later members, feeling that there was not enough news of the Association in the WRVS Magazine, asked for an independent newsletter. It was agreed to produce and distribute this to members at least twice a year; the first issue was published in January 1975. During 1978 Jeana Tate was appointed Membership Secretary and Joan Haines succeeded Margaret Hamilton as Hon. Treasurer.

As the membership rapidly increased in Scotland, consideration was given to the formation of an independent Group of Scottish members. The first meeting of the Scottish Section was finally held on July 12th 1979, with Veronica Crabbie (past-Chairman of WRVS Scotland) as its first Chairman.

On becoming President of the Association, Lady Pike had agreed that regional machinery could be used for the work of the Association. In November 1981 the Association was discussed at a meeting of the WRVS Consultative Council and Area Organisers were asked to do what they could to support the Association locally. At the same time it was stressed that the Association was intended primarily for retired members.

During the first formative years it had been agreed that the time was not ripe for a formal constitution which might be restrictive until experience had shown what was the best machinery by which to further the original aims and objects.

However, at the 7th Annual Meeting in June 1980, the Chairman, Kathleen Halpin, in her report to the members said, "she thought members ought, during the coming year, to give consideration as to whether they wanted to develop a more rigid constitution than the present one, which was really nothing more than guide lines for administration". She thought that the future should envisage more organisation at County level and that might mean certain constitutional changes being made.

However, during 1981 discussion showed that the Association was progressing along the original lines of direction but had included an important element of welfare work for individuals through local contacts and by means of the WRVS Benevolent Trust, to which the Association had already made a donation from their funds.

Over the years the old WVS and the newer WRVS members had melded together with an understanding both of past achievements and of the changing needs of the day and age which required different methods even to a change of uniform. After much thought and deliberation a Constitution was drawn up and agreed at the AGM on June 2nd 1982. This Constitution followed the principles of which the Association had been working since the beginning but clarified the eligibility for membership in the following paragraph:

### MEMBERSHIP

"The Association is primarily intended for WVS/WRVS Members who have served for a minimum period of five years and are no longer active in the Service. Also eligible are members who have relinquished a post of responsibility and others who may wish to continue working in a less demanding capacity".

In 1984 a small amendment was made to the Constitution stating that nominations for the election of Chairman and members of the Committee should be made in writing to each the office of the Association not later than April 1st. This alteration from "three weeks before the Annual General Meeting", as originally agreed; enables the members to be informed of the nominations which have been made at the

same time as the notice calling the AGM and ensures plenty of time for consideration by those attending the meeting. It has not been thought practicable to have a postal vote.

Originally subscriptions were renewed annually in the month of joining but during 1982 it was decided that in future subscriptions would be due on January 1st each year. This was not to affect life members or members who pay by banker's order; all other members should send their subscription to the Association by January 1st each year. New members joining after July 1st would get an extra six months' membership as their subscription would not expire until the end of the following year.

In the beginning active members of WRVS were not discouraged from joining the Association as they helped to form a bridge between the old and the new regime, but as the Association grew this was no longer necessary as it was hoped that all retiring members would be informed that they could join an Association to keep them in touch with old friends and provide information on current activities of WRVS. Active members who joined before 1982 were, of course, not affected by the passing of the Constitution whereby new members holding Headquarters' appointments were not eligible for membership although those with less responsibility, perhaps holding a local appointment could, if they wished, join the Association.

Area Organisers had been made Hon. Members and they and their staff at all levels are invited to meetings of the Association to talk about WRVS and members of the Association are welcomed at meetings and rallies in their Area.

Groups are now being formed at County, City and local level and "Notes for the Guidance of Association Representatives" were expanded at a Working Party held in October 1982 in order to assist representatives at all levels. These notes show the minimum financial help which is available, where necessary, from the Headquarters Office for extension and general work. There is also a leaflet



available entitled "An Invitation to Join" giving information about the Association which can be given to potential members. The Application for Membership form redrafted from time to time gives details of the applicant's work with WVS/WRVS which is used to clarify eligibility for membership.

The Newsletter under the editorship of Doris Moss until June 1984 has continued to be published twice a year in May and November. The new Editor is Viola Price and this is the third issue of what is now known as "Association News".

At the Annual General Meeting in June 1983 there were three nominations for Chairman. Helena Foster was elected and she is now finishing her third year.

The first AGM and Re-union outside London was held in Birmingham in 1983 and the next is Pudsey, Leeds in 1984. In 1985 a return was made to London and it would seem a reasonable plan to have every third year in the capital. The London Areas join together for a yearly re-union in the autumn.

When Doreen Harris retired and left London in 1979, Isola Wren who had been a member of the Headquarters Publicity & Public Relations Department under Elsa Dunbar became Hon. Secretary. On the death of Joan Haines early in 1980 Frieda Cooper (an ex-member of WRVS Headquarters Premises Department) was appointed Hon. Treasurer to be followed in 1983 by Margaret Binks recently retired from the Home Office (a member of WVS Headquarters staff from 1939 to 1958). We should like to find understudies for all Head Office staff from members who have retired from active work but would be willing to continue to give service to WRVS in this way. We are very grateful to two members, Muriel Cowell and Maud Jones, who help the office with typing and to others who come at the drop of the hat to stuff the envelopes with Newsletters and AGM notices. As the membership grows the work of the office increases, but much of it can be done on a very part-time basis. One section has recently been taken over by Eveline Speirs, ex-County Organiser, Surrey, and there are several jobs which could be done by someone one day a week, so relieving our overworked Secretary. Incidentally, our Treasurer is moving to Yorkshire very shortly - good new for them but not for us and we will badly need a replacement!

## BIRTHDAY HONOURS 1985

We extend our sincere congratulations to the following:

### MBE

Mrs Evelyn V. Morris  
County Organiser, Gloucestershire SW 1

### BEM

Mrs Doreen Benson  
Meals on Wheels Organiser, Bacup NW 1

Mrs Dorothy Bibby  
Premises Organiser, Essex HC/A3

Mrs Mary R. Chapman  
OPW Organiser, Cornwall SW 2

Mrs Margaret Davies  
District Organiser, Swansea Wales

Mrs Margaret J. Oakes  
WRVS Member, Trafford NW 2

Mrs Beatrice M. Slater  
WRVS Member, Matlock Mid. 2

"The worth of a State, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it."

John Stuart Mill

# Reminiscences of the Past

by May Andrews

Quietly by my fire I sit  
With comfort and warmth around,  
My friends call in and visit me  
Peace and contentment I've found.

In books there is romance to read  
A western excitement gives  
From my wireless nice soft music  
In old age helps me to live.

My home help keeps me nice and clean,  
My house is comfy too  
Where I invite my friends to tea  
When they are passing through.

They call in for my washing  
A friendly word to say  
They even do my shopping  
When going by my way .

Now I've reached my ninetieth year  
My travelling days seem done.  
It's marvellous how the years have flown,  
How quickly the time has gone.

I've called on friends with Meals on Wheels,  
Delivered clothing by the score  
Miles on my bike I've travelled round  
Visiting the sick and the poor.

WRVS I'm Founder Member  
Forty-two years going strong  
During floods I've cleaned out cottages  
Helping the aged along

I've knitted comforts for soldiers  
While fighting on land and sea  
During the war they gave their lives  
For folks like you and me

I've sung in Oratorios in my dear church choir,  
Forty-four years was in full song  
Singing "Elijah" and "The Messiah".

Our conductor was Muriel Hackett,  
A stalwart and our guide.  
You couldn't sing your music wrong  
If she was by your side.

She kept us all together,  
We met on Friday night,  
Then when we gave our concert  
The applause gave her delight.

Oh! What lovely times we had  
Praise the Lord and glory be  
Dressed up in our evening gowns  
For all the folks to see.

We gave the Christmas Story,  
With the pensioners full of glee,  
There was Mary and Baby Jesus,  
And Joseph - that was me!

With Bessie swinging her baton  
Gracefully and strong  
To keep us in time with the music  
That we didn't sing the corals wrong.

I was Vice Chair of the Friendship Club,  
All aged over sixty-three,  
I did the entertainment,  
They provided the tea.

Mrs Horton was our Chairman  
Doing a good job of work  
Transacting all the business  
Keeping us all alert

We elected Mrs Bullen  
A capable lady was she  
She kindly stepped in my place  
Attending meetings instead of me

There was Civil Defence - what a period!  
Of bombs dropping here and there.  
They made me a Welfare Officer  
Having people in my care.

Yes, I've given long and faithful service,  
Have received medals and Poppy Brooch, too,  
Wonderful times we've had together  
Meeting friends old and new.

Good health and strength, God's given me  
And He has guided me through  
To carry on with His good work  
He planned for me to do.

Now I sit in my little home  
With comfort, contentment and peace  
And thank God for all His blessings  
Till my wonderful life shall cease.

These "Reminiscences of the Past" (abridged) were written by Mrs May Andrews in 1981 after her 90th birthday. A WVS/WRVS Association member at Skegness, she is "not forgotten" and in sending her our best wishes and appreciation of all she has done to help others, we also say "thank you" to those who are now caring for her.

EDITOR

VOLUNTARY SERVICE  
EDITOR'S MAILBAG

Dear Editor,

I very much enjoyed the May issue of the Association News and shall look forward to future issues.

Having just recovered from an illness I would like to take this opportunity of saying how much I appreciate the concern and care shown to me by my WRVS friends.

I came to Wolverhampton from Birmingham about 5 years ago and immediately, Mrs Bishop, Wolverhampton Met. Organiser, contacted me and gave me a little job to do at the Met. Office and made me feel that life was not finished in spite of age. During my illness WRVS friends from the Met. Office and also from Area Office in Birmingham (where I worked for many years) kept in constant touch with me verbally and visiting. Knowing how busy members are I realise this was extra work but to see their cheerful, smiling faces I am sure helped my recovery.

Lady Reading always stressed how important it was not to forget elderly, retired members and listening to her years ago I did not realise at the time how much this caring would mean to me personally. I shall always remember with pleasure my happy days with WRVS - and to quote from the Association News GOOD ADVICE ,

"Never regret growing old. Many don't have the privilege". My best wishes,  
Nellie Thirlwall, 1

oooooOooooo

Dear Miss Binks,

I have much pleasure in enclosing my subscription for 1985 and thank you for the copy of the Association News which I found most interesting. I was so sorry I was not able to be at the AGM at Pudsey as I found the 1983 meeting at Birmingham most interesting and hope to be able to attend the Reunion in London on 4th June.

(Continued next column)

(Continued from previous column)

I joined the WRVS in 1939 when we were living at Richmond (Surrey). I was then a "Blake-Thomas" having not married until later. However, at the time of Dunkirk I was approached by the YMCA and asked to help at Waterloo Station and Gattis in the Strand. The reason being, I believe, because I had been brought up in Algeria and spoke French and Arabic. When the BNAF opened I was amongst the first to be sent to Algiers, then Sicily and Italy. Returning late in 1945 when I was leader of the YMCA Club and Canteen (the old ABC outside Victoria Station).

In 1947 we came to Porthcawl, at the time the Steel Works was forming. I then rejoined, as it were, the WRVS and in 1970-1982 took over the work of running the six caravans at Trecco Bay where families came for holidays from South Wales and also from the Birmingham district. Wonderfully interesting and worthwhile work. In 1972-1980 I was Local Organiser.

I still work with the WRVS here doing duty at the Magistrate's Court, Hensol Hospital and collecting clothes. Only last year I gave up driving and delivery Meals on Wheels.

Why I have written all this I don't know unless it was because I was sad to read of the death of Gwyn Owen - I met her at HQ on one of my visits and if I remember rightly she took me to lunch at the delightful luncheon room you had at Headquarters - maybe you still have it.

Mrs Stampa asked me to form a group of WVS/WRVS Members in Mid-Glamorgan. She arranged that I should meet Mrs R. Mowat. I am in touch with her regularly but I am finding it very difficult to get any response to my suggestions from the Mid-Glamorgan members. I have a list of Mid-Glamorgan members but fail to find out whether they are still members. May I trouble you to let me have a list of those in Mid-Glamorgan who pay their subscription and I will again try to get them interested.

This read a bit like "This is my life!" I hope you will forgive me.

Kindest regards, Very sincerely,  
Lyn B. Smart,

## OBITUARY

We are indeed sorry to learn that the following members have died since the 'publication' of the May 1985 "News".

Mrs R. Richardson MBE	Dorset
Mrs D. Forster	Tyne & Wear
Miss B. Chantler	Lancashire
Mrs J. Bridge	Lancashire
Miss J. Anderson	Lancashire
Mrs M. Lee	Leicester
Mrs E.M. Addison	Leicester
Mrs N.M. Mallinson	Surrey
Mrs F. Lipman	Humberside
Mrs M.A. Carter	Northumbria
Mrs M.B. Gooding	Hampshire
Miss E.R. Snow	Hampshire
Mrs M. Vanstone	Dyfed
Mrs B.R. Jarvis	Wrexham
Mrs E. Page	Kent
Mrs E. Hanford	London N.W.
Mrs R.J. Moran	Birmingham
Mrs C.C. Utting	Suffolk
Mrs L.M. Callaby	Sussex
Miss E. Williams	Dyfed
Mrs W.M. Gibson	Hull
Mrs M. Hall	Greater Manchester
Miss I.M. Dougall	Nottingham
Miss M.E. Robins	Surrey
Miss D.O. Turpin MBE	Clwyd
Miss W. Tallentire BEM	Bridlington

The past, at least, is secure. David Webster

## AID TO POLAND

The WVS/WRVS Association responded magnificently to the appeal of our President, Mrs Barbara Shenfield, for support for the special effort being made by WRVS to provide Aid to Poland. This was acknowledged against by Miss H. Bissenieks of the Ockenden Venture and who is also a member of WRVS at Woking, at a Clothing Organisers' Workshop in July.

She thanked everyone for their generosity in sending the lovely clothes for Poland and described her visits there, the unbelievable poverty, hardship and poor living conditions. Most food is rationed; clothes and many ordinary, everyday commodities are unobtainable or, if available, are expensive and of poor quality. There are few medicines and medical aids, no antibiotics or disinfectants.

The Polish people are a devout nation and their strength is largely kept up through the Church. Nuns and members of the clergy are responsible for distributing the clothing. At such time every item is taken - even the string the parcels are tied up with. The mothers who received babies' layettes were amazed and fascinated by the workmanship and help from people they will never know. Miss Bissenieks expressed their gratitude.

Mrs Velta King announced that the total number of items contributed by WRVS and the WVS/WRVS Association jointly was 41,713 plus soft toys, wedding and confirmation dresses and haberdashery. She, too, thanked everyone who collected and packed their generous donations. The scheme has now closed.

### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS 1986

To avoid the expense of sending reminders, Miss Margaret Binks, our hard-working Hon. Treasurer asks - "PLEASE let me have your subscriptions by January 1986 at the latest."

If you are a new member, having joined after July 1985, your subscription is not due until January 1987.

We are grateful to Miss D.C. Heffer of Hastings for this report of the

### SERVICES WELFARE REUNION

An ex-WVS Services Welfare member who is teaching in Jamaica for over 15 years came to Britain for a holiday last year. Whilst she was staying with another ex-Services Welfare member in London, several of us were invited to lunch. The last time we had been together was 30 years ago in Hong Kong and Kowloon working in town clubs, the Union Jack Club, on Hong Kong, and the Chatham Road Club in Kowloon besides making regular visits to Army Units in the area.

We are now all living very different lives and very different from each other, so, although we had forgotten lots of things, one thing led to another and soon we were re-living many interesting experiences. How grateful the troops were for the use of the amenities we provided, particularly the Restaurant, the Bar and the games, and for the dances we organised and to which we invited the hospital nurses!

It was a job we all remembered with pleasure, of lots of quite hard work, lots of laughs, some dramas, but certainly very few dull moments. It was the time of National Service, the soldiers came from all walks of life and many of them were very young. Something interesting was happening all the time, added to which we were living in Hong Kong! A rather different Hong Kong from that of today, so much building and land reclamation has gone on that the Chatham Road Club has disappeared under a massive hotel, I think, and the site of the Union Jack Club under an elevated roadway. There are still vestiges of the old place to be found - it is as cosmopolitan as ever and there are still beautiful things to buy but a great deal more expensive than they were 30 years ago.

We look forward to reading more about Services Welfare which Miss Jose Duke MBE has kindly promised to write for the May 1986 edition.

Editor

REPORTS FROM AREASLONDONSOUTH EAST AREA

Mrs E.G.J. Block MBE reports: Thursday, July 25th promised to be a good sunny day for the planned visit of the S.E. London Area members of the above to Bickley. The Association members who live in "White's Meadow", "Southwood Close" and the "Robert Whyte Residential Club" had fallen in with the Club's Chairman, Mrs Moss's idea, that we should foregather for our Summer Meeting there. Mrs Anne Dougherty (Southwood Close) offered, that with willing "local" hands, she could organise lunch and the Residential Club offered us tea. Two quite splendid meals were eaten, lunch in the delightful garden and tea in the Club's gracious dining room.

We were a party of about 24. 16 Association members, plus a few helpers and guests. Miss Enid Cubitt and Mrs Dilys Gloin (whose days in WVS go back to Lady Reading's time) gave us a short run-down of how and why WVS became involved in property and how the Bickley complex had in many ways achieved the results aimed at by the founder. During the afternoon we were taken in twos and threes to visit Residents at the Club or folk living in their own one or two-bedroomed flats spaced round an enchanting garden with many old trees and a large fish pond. It was a real eye-opener to many of us who had not been there before to see all the clever arrangements for making various types of community living very agreeable.

I was able over tea to give members messages from those unfortunately not able to come and give forward dates for the London Meeting on November 15th (near the Barbican) and a proposed date for 1986 - April 8th for a visit to Woolwich with a trip to view the Thames Flood Barrier.

SCOTLAND

We are very pleased to hear from Mrs Agnes Hart and to welcome her as Scotland's new Association Chairman. At the same time we thank Mrs Grace Macdonald for her most successful term of office and wish her every happiness with us and with all her other ventures.



The Scottish Section News Letter is full of interest and reports on their Annual General Meeting held in April when the outgoing Chairman, Mrs G. Macdonald, was presented with an inscribed silver quach and cheque and the Scottish Association President thanked her for all she had done for the Association during her three years in office and, at the same time, welcomed their new Chairman, Mrs Agnes Hart, of Strathclyde Region. The growing strength of the Association in Scotland is indicated by the activities in the various Regions.

Grampian Region has 40 members and meets on the last Tuesday of each month in Aberdeen. The programme includes speakers on a wide range of subjects, a summer outing, poetry reading and an October Concert Party. At the Open Day in WRVS office premises the Association was allocated publicity space and members undertook 2-hourly duties on 12/13 March.

Strathclyde Region: A get-together was held in Glasgow and many friends who had gathered for a chat and a cup of coffee were delighted to meet the Chairman, Mrs Macdonald, back on her old territory once again.

The Dumbarton group have been busy with arranged walks, a visit to Culcreuch Castle and a sail on Loch Katrine. They now have 22 members but plenty of room for more.

Lothian and SHQ: Two coffee mornings have been held at Scottish Headquarters this year, attended by 31 and 42 members respectively - an outing to Delmeny House in June and a coffee morning and beauty demonstration for the Mature Woman in October.

WVS/WRVS Bridge Club continues to flourish and in March the members played for a quach which was won by D. Barbara Henderson who was Food Organiser, Lothian Region. It is hoped that the Strathclyde versus Edinburgh match will become an Annual Event.

Central Region: It is satisfying that membership is growing.

Dumfries & Galloway Region. Mrs Elizabeth Eden has relinquished her place on the committee and Mrs Jane Hannay has taken her place.

WALES

Mrs Kit Mowat writes her thoughts on retiring from being Wales Representative: "For about three years I had suggested that a younger member than I would like to take on the job as Wales Representative on the Executive Committee of the WVS/WRVS Association. Mrs Stampa, then Chairman for Wales, sympathised and did her best to replace me. No luck. Came our new Chairman for Wales, Mrs Jill Walden-Jones, and I repeated my wish to retire. She very charmingly said that she could see no reason for that and hoped that I would continue as Wales Representative. However, when I told her that I was in my 80th year she quite agreed that the long drives necessary to cover Wales were not a good idea and, bless her, she found Lorna Brotherton to take on the job.

Are there any members of our Association who remember 'Mrs Mop' in the Services Canteen on Carlisle station 1943/4? That was my nickname at that time, taken from the radio show 'Can I do you now, sir', or was it ITMA? because I always turned up for duty with a mop cloth and a bottle of Domestos, previously having served in the canteen on Bradbury Lines Camp in Hereford where the Commanding Officer constantly made surprise inspections to make sure that we were aware of the need to keep everything properly disinfected. I have memories of all-night duties there and the tired servicemen passing through - and trying to make soya sausages and dried egg look appetising! And the triumph I felt when one young soldier who had sat with his head in his hands all the time I was preparing his meal, looked up when I said, 'Grub's up' and said, 'Gosh, whose birthday is it?' I said, 'Sorry, it's just the usual'. His reply was: 'Well, you 'aven't 'alf made it look better'. Anyone else got memories of Carlisle?

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to Miss D. Olive Turpin for her courageous and forthright work in our Service and who died in June of this year. She was a very individual character which is an attribute that is fast disappearing in this world of 'look-alike' and official categories. But what a joy it was in the early years of WVS service to meet up with and work with those 'characters' whose main object

in life was to serve others. Miss Turpin was, for many years County Organiser for Denbigh and trained many WVS members in ARP work."

In wishing Kit a very long and happy retirement, free from paperwork and writing (particularly writing which was not her favourite pastime) we are very pleased to welcome Mrs Lorna Brotherton from whom the following reports have already been received:

Dyfed: June 25th 1985 was a really lovely, sunny day sandwiched between cold, stormy ones here in Wales. That was the day cleverly chosen by Mrs Doris Jones in Pembrokeshire to launch a meeting of WVS/WRVS members to form a group - or who knows - maybe groups, in that part of Dyfed? At the same time, Mrs Vera Griffiths had arranged the summer outing of the very active group in Aberystwyth to share a working lunch at a small hotel in Haverfordwest (to which I had been kindly invited) so that we could discuss ways and means, having the encouragement and experience of the existing groups. You can imagine the chatter! After a pleasant couple of hours the meeting broke up with a distinct air of determination that something will be done as soon as the holiday period is over.

South East Glamorgan: As we all know, Cardiff is the capital of Wales - but for the purpose of the WVS/WRVS Association, it is just part of South East Glamorgan. There has been a group in S.E. Glamorgan since the Association was formed in 1973, who have held regular coffee mornings and arranged many social events for the members. This group has been sadly hit by illness of late, but the members still keep in touch and, of course, intend to continue as a group. A newly-formed group, which will be known as the Cathedral Road Group, is therefore no pioneer in the County, but we hope that the two groups will complement each other and join in many activities together.

The Chairman for Wales, Mrs Jill Walden-Jones has kindly offered the new group the use of a room (with facilities for coffee making!) on the first Friday morning in each

South East Glamorgan (continued)

month, and although the first meeting in August was attended by a few members only, if enthusiasm is anything to go by, we can anticipate keen interest and much activity in the future, and hopefully, many more members.

Wrexham Maelor continues to flourish and we hope that Miss Dwerryhouse is now feeling the benefit of her hip operation and feeling much better

NORTH WEST DIVISION AREA 4. Cheshire & Merseyside  
(SEE PAGE 31)

Mrs M. Preston: Our membership is growing quite rapidly and the July increase was due, in the main, to the launching of a new group in Wirral. Potential members met for lunch at a Kirkenhead Restaurant when the Area Representative outlined the objectives of the Association and answered questions afterwards. In the Wirral Group we now have our first male member so we hope other men will be encouraged to join as we are sure their support would be much appreciated. In April we held our Area reunion at a Chester hostelry and this was followed by two meetings in August at the Area Representative's home. We were pleased that several members who were unable to be with us in Chester were able to be at the summer meetings. The Macclesfield Group held their summer meeting at a member's home and a delicious meal of fresh salmon and salad followed by strawberries and cream was served. The Alsager Group had a successful day out at York but, unfortunately, a further outing to Brockholes had to be cancelled. All three Groups meet regularly for coffee and a chat which is very popular with all our members.

NORTH EAST DIVISION AREA 1. Northumberland,  
Tyne/Wear Metropolitan County.

Mrs Smurthwaite: Since the last "News" we had had the "Summer Season" when thoughts and activities are on holidays and outings (weather permitting) and we have had as constant companions in the North - macs and umbrellas, in spite of which we have had outings and get-togethers in the local area of Northumbria and our annual outing for us all was to Wallington Hall in Northumberland when members far and wide enjoyed a very happy day together

North East Division Area 1 (continued)

(100 plus) viewing the house and beautiful gardens and grounds.

Our sewing group has continued each fortnight throughout the summer and we are in sight of our next £100 to send to Tigray making a total of £400 for Africa.

We had four members attend the AGM and in spite of a very long day's travelling all said how much they had enjoyed being with everyone and seeing old friends and hearing of the activities of other Areas. Next on the programme is the Carol Service in St. Nicholas Cathedral on 1st December, the highlight of the winter Area effort, and we extend an invitation to all who are able to come.

We are sending a toy to the Effort for the Blind Babies and Young Children made by one of our sewing group and have made a contribution to the enquiry re Telephone Charges, etc., for the Elderly and Handicapped.

Now that the holidays are over we are beginning our busy period, checking our membership lists and planning our future programmes - so much to do but aren't we lucky to be able to do it?

Groups in Northumbria - Newcastle, Sunderland, North Tyneside (North Shields, Tynemouth, Whitley Bay, Ashington, Alnwick (members in Ponteland, Hexham, Morpeth) total - 170.

POEM by Chris Smurthwaite

(Re-printed by kind permission of the poet)

Out of the dust a thousand feet  
Come hearts and souls with hope  
That somewhere, soon, a resting place be found,  
With food to give a child before  
Its young life's gone.  
You winged birds of heaven above,  
In answer to their cry  
Please keep my loved ones safe  
Lest they on wings of angels die.  
Oh vast Humanity, despite your pain,  
You'll never know the sorrow borne  
By child and loved ones now no more. (Continued)

Poem by Chris Smurthwaite (continued)

Their need was small, a cup of grain  
 The ever-flowing gift of love  
 Your sorrow at their pain.  
 Let conscience stir the human heart  
 To vindicate its shame.  
 Seeds must grow and water flow,  
 The dust no longer blow,  
 That winged birds from heaven may see  
 A land of hope for all mankind,  
 Where peace and plenty flow.

NORTH EAST DIVISION AREA 2, Cleveland and  
Yorkshire

Mrs Beryl Burkett: We are very pleased to welcome Mrs Burkett as Area Representative and look forward to hearing from her when she has had an opportunity of putting her ideas into practice. Meantime, the new York District Branch held a luncheon at the home of Mrs Agnes Venables at which the Group was launched with a very encouraging response. Miss Hyatt, County Representative, was asked to explain the function of the Association and she was supported by Mrs Peggy James, Area Representative, of North East Division Area 3. 33 new members subsequently enrolled, there already being a small number of individuals who joined earlier through Headquarters but who will not come into the local branch. It is hoped to arrange another get-together in the Autumn. It is also hoped that new branches will be started in Selby and Scarborough.

NORTH EAST DIVISION AREA 3, North & South Humberside  
and Lincolnshire

Mrs P. James MBE: A very brief mention was made under "Stop Press" in the May "News" of the very successful Area AGM held at Limber in April, promising a full report in November. It was a most enjoyable meeting - the first in the Area - and the village hall in its very pretty, rural

North East Division Area 3 (continued)

setting alongside what is really a small lake, was an idea venue. 69 members gathered from North and South of the Humber and were welcomed in the car park by a Glandford District member in uniform. North Humberside and City of Hull members crossed the now famous Humber Bridge in a coach and the South Humberside and Lincolnshire members arrived by car. They were soon joined by our Chairman, Mrs Helena Foster OBE, who had driven from Brighouse in 2¼ hours and four guests - the County Organisers from North and South Humberside, Mrs Barbara Gillard and Mrs Nancy Wilson - and Mrs Skinner, Deputy Area Organiser and her Husband, Jim, who is a member of the Area staff responsible for Publicity and Transport (they were deputising for Mrs Susan Glover, Area Organiser, who was attending a course at Easingwold. Our one regret was that our Association "News" Editor, Vi Price, who now lives in our Area, was unable to be with us owing to illness. We all wished her well. Refreshments for the day were in the hands of a team of WRVS members from Glanford District, South Humberside, and they gave us 5-star treatment - we could not have done better at the Savoy. They certainly surpassed themselves with quiches and innumerable salads followed by the most delicious sweets!

The meeting opened with a short welcome from the Area Representative, followed by reports from the four County Representatives on the activities of their groups after which a short script from Vi Price was read in her best Welsh accent by the Area Representative who is a compatriot!

Our Chairman, Mrs Foster then addressed the members, many of whom were well-known to her as she was our Regional Administrator for many years. During the afternoon Mr. and Mrs Skinner gave a most interesting resume, with slides, of the work of WRVS in the computer age. After some discussion a vote of thanks was proposed by a member who will shortly be installed as Mayor of East Yorkshire Borough of Beverley for 1985/86. A raffle raised £28 which brings us right up to date as this money was used

to buy nappies for Poland, part of a special effort being made particularly in North Humberside in support of two Beverley doctors, a husband and wife team, who themselves take and deliver supplies to Poland twice a year. It is this very personal involvement that fires the enthusiasm of our members who have contributed dozens of vests, jerseys, cot sheets, blankets, nighties, etc., as well as collecting items of jewellery, books, gifts, etc., for sale by the doctors' committee who use the proceeds for the purchase of medical supplies so urgently needed in Poland where it is not possible to obtain or purchase even an aspirin even on the black market! There is, however, plenty of skilled medical help available. These two Beverley doctors personally deliver medical equipment, drugs, clothing and bedding to five children's hospitals in Poland. Several D & J Clubs have also helped with knitting in considerable quantities.

North Humberside and City of Hull members are greatly looking forward to their next meeting when they will be guests of the Mayor of Beverley, Councillor Mrs Evelyn Standing, a member of the Association, who has invited them to afternoon tea in the Mayor's Parlour at the Guildhall.

Lincolnshire. Mrs Doris Cook, County Representative reported that interest in the Association was slowly increasing in the County, particularly in the coastal districts. On a warm, sunny day - yes, a warm sunny day - a car-load of us set out for Sutton-on-Sea to the home of Mrs I. Bourne, our Organiser there. Members from Skegness and around had been invited to meet the Sutton-on-Sea members and we were all given a very warm welcome and delicious homemade goodies with our coffee and everyone received a raffle prize - free! There was obvious happiness, radiating friendliness and goodwill and a wide range of subjects was discussed. What was most encouraging was to receive messages of best wishes from those members unable to attend because of travel problems or being housebound, including one 95-year old whom Vi Price and I hope to visit soon. This worked in reverse, too, as we were told that mobile members make a practice of calling regularly on housebound members who love to hear



all about the meetings and who attended, etc

An equally successful coffee morning was held in Skegness in July at the home of Mrs Newstead

Three members from Sutton-on-Sea attended and thoroughly enjoyed the AGM and Reunion in London in June and I was invited to tell them all what a happy and successful occasion it was, so much so that plans were to be made for more members to attend next year.

A very courageous lady, Mrs Severn, also held a most enjoyable coffee morning at her home at Anderby, near Skegness but, unfortunately, I was unable to attend.

#### NORTH WEST DIVISION AREA 2 - Mrs M. Head (SEE PAGE 26)

Altrincham meet every two months, increasing membership. A Bring & Buy in March followed two 80th birthday celebrations. May - entertainment by Mrs Bellingham and her monologues. July - beautiful garden tea party at repeat invitation of Mrs Mary Preston. September - Mrs M. Oakes was presented with her BEM by Sir William Downward, Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, for 27 years of dedicated service to the WRVS in Altrincham. The ceremony was held at the Pownall Road Day Care Centre and was attended by the Area Organiser, Mrs M. Striggs, Trafford Organiser Mrs Camplejohn, Local Organiser Mrs Joan Allmark and many of Mrs Oakes' colleagues and friends. A buffet was provided and enjoyed by all including the Mayor and Mayoress with other dignitaries. Mrs H. Warburton (Leader).

Bury's Leader, Mrs Joan Graham, held her successful events again this year. A luncheon party at her home. Also a coffee morning and a further event recently providing a strawberry tea. The membership has increased and she has recruited several from Ramsbottom. Their next meeting will be held at the WRVS Office in November.

The Met. Organiser of Bolton, Mrs M.P. Cox invited me over earlier this year and she has been successful in finding a leader for the WRVS Association. One of her most capable members, Mrs Lillian Rawlinson, has held her first meeting on the 24th September. She hired a hall at the cost of £6 and 22 members attended. Already 9 have decided to join. A raffle was held at the meeting and tea and cakes provided free. At the end of the day they were 60p in hand. At the next meeting members will be asked to pay for their tea and cakes which should swell the funds.

Last week I have managed to find a good opening for the Stockport Office. Mrs R. Murfitt the Met. Organiser has invited me to the Stockport Town Hall on the 31st October where National Members Week is to be held. She has always been co-operative but it is difficult to find a leader for the WRVS Association. We think that if we can put a few things on display it might encourage those about to retire to start a group in Stockport.

MIDLANDS DIVISION AREA 1. West Midlands Counties.

Mrs W. Pengilly:

On July 24 members and several visitors were entertained to tea at the home of one of our Worcester members. We were hoping that members would wander through the lovely gardens and perhaps take tea outside but, believe it or not, it was too hot to stay in the sun too long (seems difficult to remember that we had any hot days now, doesn't it?). However, we had an interesting talk from our retiring Area Organiser who brought us up to date by telling us of the work done throughout the Area. We are hoping to start up another Group in Herefordshire and have arranged a meeting and tea party at the District Office in Hereford in October.

MIDLANDS DIVISION AREA 2. East Midlands Counties.

Mrs A. Taylor reported that very good progress continued to be made in building up the membership in all the counties in her Division and paid glowing tribute to Miss Lovatt (Nottinghamshire), Mrs Stokes (Derbyshire), Mrs Johnson and Rev. Porter (Mansfield District), Mrs Cooper (Leicestershire) and to the many others whose enthusiasm and energy are helping to put Midlands Area 2 on the map as far as the WVS/WRVS Association is concerned.

Nottinghamshire County: Miss Lovatt is justifiably proud of the activities of the branches in her County and reported:

Rushcliffe: A coffee morning was held at the Willow Tree, West Bridgford on Thursday, 9th May when the guest speaker was Mrs Rita Waite, the newly appointed WRVS Area Organiser for Midlands 2. A further coffee morning was held at the same venue on Friday, 5th July and this was a purely social occasion for friends to meet and chat.

Ashfield: This is a newly opened Branch of the Association and the initial meeting was held at Kirkby-in-Ashfield Church Hall on Wednesday, 8th May. Mrs Rita Waite presented Long Service medals. On 18th July the Ashfield Association Secretary, Mrs W. Knighton gave a delightful strawberry tea to members at her home, Lea Farm, Selston. Proceeds were given to branch funds.

**Mansfield:** The remaining District in Notts. County, Mansfield, had its initial meeting of the Association on Wednesday, 19th June at Matteset Court. The Chairman is Mrs Edith Johnson and the Secretary the Rev. W. Porter.

**Gedling:** A social morning was held at the Four Bells, Woodborough, on Monday, 22nd July when refreshments were available. On 25th April a coffee morning was held at the home of Miss Florence Prior at the Woodthorpe when a raffle and Bring and Buy stall brought in funds for the branch.

**Broxtowe:** A coffee morning was held on the 22nd April at the Age Concern Hall, Eastwood, when Mrs Rita Waite, Area Organiser for Midlands 2 spoke of her work with children in the Manchester Area.

**Newark:** (Picked up from a Narrative Report - belatedly)

**Mrs Mumby** reported that a coffee morning and meeting was held in the office to launch the Newark branch of the WVS/WRVS Association when Mrs Tyler and Miss Lovatt explained "How to run things". About 30 people attended and were interested in joining. A Committee was formed with Mrs Joan Burgin as Chairman, Mrs Helen Alderman as Treasurer and Mrs Edna Blackwell as Secretary. The first social function was a coffee morning with a Bring and Buy stall in order to raise a small float for administration purposes. 35 members have now joined the Association and it looks like being very successful.

**Leicestershire:** Mrs Cooper reported that at their coffee morning before Christmas it was decided that their summer outing should be to Warwick Castle. So, on May 23rd, a bus-load of them set out for what turned out to be a most pleasant and enjoyable afternoon. The weather was kind, not too hot and not too cold, but no rain! One of the members had taken a grandson to the castle the previous week so was able to lead and tell them the best places to see in the time we were there. As the castle now belongs to Madame Tussauds, one of the exhibitions was of particular interest - an Edwardian Weekend Party - with models of well-known people as guests - a really fascinating exhibition. Later they had tea in a local cafe which had opened up especially for them and who gave them an

Leicestershire (continued)

excellent meal. They will be having a coffee morning again near Christmas and will decide on their activities for 1986 then. In the meantime new members seem very hard to find even though every co-operation comes from the City Office with names and addresses of retired members. It may be that there are many activities in a city which attract ex WRVS who may feel they have done their bit and wish to take up something new.

Derbyshire: Mrs Stokes, reporting on the Derbyshire Annual Reunion says: Our day was such a success that I felt I must share it with you all through our magazine. 94 members came to the Buxton Pavilion where they enjoyed a lovely three-course lunch which was not only delicious but piping hot. Our guests included the Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire, Colonel Peter Hilton (a very great friend of ours for many years), the Mayor of the High Peak, Mrs Langham and our new County Organiser, Mrs Doreen Martin. One of our members, Mrs Bailey, has for many years presented her lovely crochet blankets to be given to a needy person of our choice. This year was different and a delighted Mrs Hilton was very touched to be presented with it. I'm sure nothing could have pleased her more than this tribute to the many years she gave as our County Organiser, a post from which she retired in January. After lunch we were entertained by the Buxton W.I. headed by Mrs Bunty Wyn-Jones. There was a novel keep-fit display all done with their backs to the audience, wearing their clothes in reverse and masks - the result was hilarious. They then gave us some excellent folk singing where everyone not only did, but wanted to join in. We were honoured, indeed, to have this professional performance without any charge at all. The weather being perfect we all had approximately one hour to enjoy the gardens before having a cup of tea which just added that final touch to a perfect day. My very grateful thanks to all who helped to make this possible.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* A teacher asked her class: "What is a granary?" One small boy put up his hand \*  
\* and said: "Please Miss, is it a sort of Old People's Home?" \*  
\* \*\*\*\*\*

VOLUNTARY SERVICE  
HOME COUNTIES/ANGLIA DIVISION

MIDLANDS DIVISION AREA 3. West Midlands Metropolitan County

Mrs E. Kenrick writes: Since my report in the May Association News I am still the Organiser as, so far, it has been difficult to find anyone to replace me. However, our activities follow the same programme - perhaps this is a mistake? The lunch at the College of Food and Domestic Science was as successful as ever, the weather having been kind and 14 of us enjoyed it. The School of Music Opera, however, was not popular - difficulty of venue for one thing and only six of us were able to go. This was followed by a coffee morning in March when our usual faithful members came and we decided a garden coffee morning in August would end our activities for the year. We would like some new members. The Solihull group feels the same about new members. For the rest, they meet regularly for very successful lunches.

HOME COUNTIES/ANGLIA DIVISION.

AREA 1 HOME COUNTIES. Hertfordshire County

Mrs Betty Sewell MBE: Once a year the Association members of Hertfordshire meet for lunch. The membership has increased in the past year. The 1984 gathering was pleased to welcome the former Regional Administrator and Organiser and two past County Organisers. The present County Organiser keeps us in touch with with what is happening in the County now. Retiring members are encouraged to join the Association. May I end on a personal note and say how much I enjoy the "Association News".

AREA 2 HOME COUNTIES. Berkshire.

Mrs S. Cromwell: A recent meeting was attended by only 8 members as a plague of "flu" and associated bugs prevented several from coming along. Those who did had a cheery little gossip and told of happenings to their families and friends. Several suggestions were made as to the next meeting's activities and it was agreed that we should visit the Savill Gardens at Windsor and have tea in their very pleasant pavillion.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE

HOME COUNTIES/ANGLIA DIVISION AREA 3

R  
V  
S

Essex - Maldon

Mrs Olive Berridge writes: I am sorry not to attend the AGM. We have been quite busy in Maldon with about 30 members and have had a coffee morning and two buffet lunches. Recently I was wheeling geriatric patients from the wards to a sun shelter for the WRVS. In one dreary ward of elderly old ladies, all dozing away, one sat up brightly as we went in and said, "Please, I'd love to go out". So we found her a coat and hat and she sang all the way to the sun shelter, "Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye!". She did not know we were WRVS members and over a cup of tea reminisced over her life during and after the war in Barking where she was Centre Organiser for WVS. She talked about Lady Reading and going to Tothill Street as it is were yesterday. She was an indomitable character making light of having a leg amputated and being moved to a hospital away from her friends. By her brightness she was doing more good in that ward than she realised. I have promised to take her to our next coffee morning. I think her name is Mrs Hoy.

Southend-on-Sea. A Narrative Report says: We now have 39 members and are self-supporting. The new meeting place is Friends Meeting House, Dundonald Drive, on the last Monday of each month from 2.00 to 3.30 pm. Cost, including tea and raffle, 25p. It is a very informal meeting with some speakers and lots of chats and discussions. Money has been raised from Bring and Buy and a coach trip was arranged to visit our WRVS Home in Hastings where we met Mrs Dorothy Morrison-Jack. We all wanted to put our names down, but alas, we were only allowed to stay for tea and biscuits. Eight members went to the AGM of our Association at Holy Trinity Church Hall, London. It was very interesting and we had a good lunch with wine. 158 vests, cotton clothes, blankets, jumpers, etc., were made for The Save the Children Fund.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* Would you like to swap holiday visits with another Association member? If so, \*  
\* the Editor will publish when and where you would like to go and what you can \*  
\* offer in return. (Suggestion from Mrs Stampa) \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

SOUTH EAST DIVISION AREA 1. East and West Kent,  
Surrey and East Sussex.

EAST SUSSEX. Miss M.T. Cooke MBE

Brighton: Mrs Willey organised a Reunion on May 2nd and invited Miss Halpin. 40 members from Association branches in Brighton, Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings attended and were delighted to see Miss Halpin again and to hear her talk about changes in WRVS through the years and how members must be encouraged to accept these changes. A delicious tea was provided ending a happy afternoon and many reminiscences. During the summer members go on monthly coach outings. As there are not enough members to fill a coach, they decide where they want to go and the bus company advertises the outing and fills the coach.

Hove: 42 members had a most enjoyable outing to Southsea in April to visit the D-Day Exhibition. The building housing the exhibition is modern but quite pleasing. The tapestry is breathtaking and warrants a second visit. They also saw a short film of the run-up to the invasion and the actual landings which brought back many memories.

Eastbourne: Eastbourne held two coffee mornings and a Bring and Buy sale and the money was donated to the St. Wilfred's Hospice. They had an enjoyable country outing with a cream tea at a farm. Association members attended a buffet lunch to meet Mrs B. Shenfield, WRVS Chairman, and much appreciated that she spoke to them all.

Hastings: A coffee morning, tea and scrabble afternoon and a ploughman's lunch have been held in members' homes. Some members had coffee at the Isabel Blackman Club in July to meet the WRVS Chairman, Mrs B. Shenfield, who was visiting East Sussex.

Rother held a sherry party in Bexhill attended by members from Rother and Hastings Districts.

SOUTH EAST DIVISION AREA 1 (continued)SURREY

Guildford held a tea party in April in the Guildford Day Centre, a complex which houses the WRVS office and Meals on Wheels kitchen. Members were delighted to see the Day Centre and appreciated how well the Old People's Welfare Committee and WRVS worked together. In July, 21 members enjoyed luncheon in the group Chairman's garden. A beautiful day and a delicious meal.

Waverley held a lunch party in May. They had invited Mrs Jenny MacLennan from Publicity Department, Headquarters and ex-Deputy County Organiser, Surrey, to speak. As this coincided with her departure for Australia, the County Organiser and members of the County staff joined with Association members to bid her farewell. We are pleased to report that Mrs Betty Ashford, the District Organiser who helps the Association so much, is making good progress following a second hip operation.

Woking had an outing to Waddesden Manor in June and enjoyed the beauties of the place in spite of teeming rain. A garden party was held in August and there are plans to visit Loseley House in September. The Annual Luncheon will be held in October.

EAST KENT

Members attended a lunch party at the home of Mrs Hart in May. Mrs June Russell, Area Organiser, spoke about the WRVS Rally in October and present trends in the service. A farewell tea party for Mrs Adams, who is leaving the area, took place in July.

WEST KENT

Several members attended the AGM in June. They all enjoyed the chats, good food and a chance to renew friendships, particularly with colleagues from Wembley and old North Middlesex County Office. A reunion is planned for December.



SOUTH EAST DIVISION AREA 2. Dorset, Hampshire,  
West Sussex and Isle of Wight.

Hampshire: Mrs M. Albrow, Hon. Secretary of the Hampshire reports: In May, 45 Hampshire members held a most-enjoyable reunion in the delightful Shawford garden of our Deputy County Organiser, Mrs C. Webb, where even the swimming pool had a charm of its own on that warm, sunny afternoon. We were pleased to welcome our Area Organiser, Mrs M. Gomm, and our joint County Organisers, Mrs D. Simpkins and Mrs J. Kirby. The speaker was Mrs Brenda Machin who spoke of the various effects of Western civilization on the lives of women in many Eastern countries which she had visited. The next reunion will be in September and will take the form of a 2½ hour cruise along the Basingstoke canal which has been restored recently by conservationists and flows through some of the most picturesque Hampshire countryside. Our membership has now increased to 82 due to the arrival of five members from other areas moving into Hampshire and we welcome them. In June some Fareham members spent a holiday in Llandrindod Wells and located the WRVS office. We decided to pay a courtesy call to convey greetings from Hampshire and, surprisingly, had located the Powys County office. We were warmly welcomed by the Assistant County Secretary and first to catch our eye was a pile of knitted vests and blankets being packed for the Third World. Over a cup of coffee we were shown photographs of children's holidays, meals-on-wheels, riding for the disabled, emergency exercises, luncheon clubs and many similar activities which go on up and down the country. Everything was so familiar - it could have been our own county office - but that's what WRVS is all about! Thank you Powys for your hospitality. We hear movement is afoot to launch the Association in the Isle of Wight. This is indeed good news and we wish them luck. We look forward possibly to having a joint meeting with our friends across the Solent sometime in the future.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE

SOUTH EAST DIVISION AREA 2 (continued) *Plus*

West Sussex has no active Organiser for the Association at the moment but we are grateful to Mrs Yardley, District Organiser, Arun, for her brief note in which she says: In West Sussex it has become an annual event to have a luncheon in the county during the summer months. This year we were fortunate to enjoy the hospitality of Mr and Mrs Eric Lucas in their home and garden near Chichester. Mrs Lucas provided an excellent meal and, more important, a friendly relaxed atmosphere. 33 members from various parts of the county attended. We were all pleased to welcome Mrs Wren from HQ who gave an informal talk on her memories of WVS/WRVS and told us about the recent Association AGM held in London the previous week. Two members from Arun District attended this AGM and would encourage other members of the Association to do so if at all possible. Mrs Wren was very pleased to have been invited to enjoy the companionship of such friendly and interesting members and to sit in Mr & Mrs Lucas's very pretty gardens.

Dorset: Mrs J.A. Grebby MBE, Hon. Secretary writes: First of all we all like the new format of the Association News and thank you for giving so much time and thought to the full presentation. Am enclosing a copy of a letter sent to Mrs Rosalie Richardson MBE, the late Chairman of the Dorset Branch and retired County Organiser. She asked me to have the letter duplicated and give each member of the Branch a copy. This request was just before she died and I hope to have this done before our AGM in September. As this is VE and VJ Year you may think it suitable to print in the Association News. I have copied it exactly as it was written, the phrasing and the spelling are not mine! Mrs Richardson was very much involved in activities during the war in Wimborne, The Red Cross, Women's Land Army and WVS and was well-known throughout the County (the old Dorset).

The membership is growing slowly here and a garden party was held on the 4th July at the home of a member in

Dorchester. Am hoping to form a local group in Bournemouth/Christchurch during the summer.

We are pleased to reproduce the "Happy Sailor's" letter exactly as it was received. Editor

Addressed to the Supervisor of the Church House Canteen, Wimborne.

In the Bay of Biscay  
Sept.30th 1945

H.H.S. Durrant A.B.  
P/J x 522019  
Mess 2.  
H.M.S. Scarysfoot.  
C/o G.P.O. London.

Dear Madam,

A few lines from a satisfied sailor. I expect few of you know me although I know nearly all of you.

Well this is why I write. I wish to thank you one and all for the way you have treated us during the war years. Every kind of service personnel was made welcome by you all. There was always a pleasant smile waiting for us, sometimes a bar of chocolate or cigs as a little luxury. We welcomed them all.

I was at the Canteen on Xmas leave last year I saw the efforts that was put up by your volunteers to entertain us. Our friends from over the Ocean were there. Yes the Yanks. Im sure they enjoyed themself. I know what a little bit of friendly company is like when you are in a Loving Country. Well Ladies and Gentlemen of the Church Canteen, Wimborne, may I thank you for the services rendered. I will never be able to say thank you enough.

One of you Ladies said to me once, as you looked at my campaign ribbons You must have seen a lot of action. I say to you what job I've done is not so great as what you have done for us personnel at the Canteen. Its you one and all should have a medal to show that you did not shirk in our time of need.

I myself am heading for the East Indies Fleet. At Ceylon and the things I here about the place, well I wish you could move the Canteen out there. They say the base is a flag pole with a hut at the foot of it.

Well Ladies I would like to say thank you again for service rendered to All the Services.

Excuse writing Bay of Biscuit Rough

I remain Yours sincerely

H.H.S. Durrant signed.

A HAPPY SAILOR

SOUTH WEST DIVISION AREA 1. South West Avon County, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol City.

Mrs K. Barker BEM: Mrs Barker sent us the following story:

It was "Mothering Sunday" and as there were a number of children present in Church, the Padre addressed his sermon to the young of the Parish beginning by reminding everyone that the Church was just as much a "Mother" as was each and everybody's mother. To help explain this he proceeded to instal a cothes line on which he began to peg various articles, beginning with a sponge. This, he explained, was to remind us that we came to Church to be washed. A small boy, about 4 years of age, sprang to his feet: "My mother washes me at home". A slight pause, then, going to the next object, a packet of cornflakes, whereupon the small boy again interrupted, declaring loudly that he had "rice crispies". There were many more similar interruptions causing a real sense of hilarity amongst the congregation and a sotto voce comment from the Church Warden that "perhaps the young man could take over?".

Mrs Barker's other interesting contribution is:

GOLF AROUND THE WORLD. British India.

It was when the Regiment was stationed in Multan that I took up golf. Playing in the "Old Country" in the years to come I often had a quiet chuckle recalling contests played on the Indian golf courses. No need for heavy, hobnailed footwear or innumerable sweaters and the multi-coloured umbrella used to protect oneself and one's clubs from heavy rain was used instead to keep off the sun - except, of course, during the monsoon. One did not carry

it oneself, there was a "Chokra" (small boy) to carry out this duty. In fact, every foursome playing was literally a small army tramping round the course. Each member had a caddy, plus the "umbrella man" and an "argi wallah". The latter was another youngster whose job it was to mark down the ball where it pitched - no need to watch for oneself. This was particularly useful on the sandy wastes of the Multan course (Multan being in the middle of the Sind Desert) especially as the argi wallah would not only mark down the spot with a small flag, but often, before walking on would surreptitiously "tee" it up with his bare toes. So helpful when the player was not very proficient!

There was an additional advantage in having an "argi wallah" on the Calcutta courses where "talaos" (small lakes) abounded. Here it was best to employ a boy who could both swim and dive and so retrieve the ball - very necessary for me as I so frequently finished up in the "drink"!

When, during the '30s, the "Terror" was at its height, it became necessary to add another body to the cavalcade, i.e. an armed guard for each player. I well remember the visit paid to Dacca by the then Governor of Bengal, Sir John Anderson.

Sir John was a Scot and passionately fond of golf. So he took more than one opportunity to play on the excellent Dacca Course. To him it was a necessary relaxation - to the Authorities - an utter headache. The entire area had to be cordoned off by the Security Forces, both Army and Police. To the ordinary member indulging in a quiet game, it was, to say the least, rather disturbing, particularly so when a fully-armed soldier with fixed bayonet suddenly emerged from behind a bush. Or a couple of policemen would be observed skulking in a bunker.

The peace and green-ness of the English countryside was revelation after these experiences.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* A man from the local Asylum went into Lloyds Bank and said: "God said you \*  
 \* are to give me one thousand pounds". Without raising his head the cashier \*  
 \* replied: "Sorry Sir, God banks with Barclays!". (Borrowed from Northumbria \*  
 \* Newsletter). \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

SOUTH WEST DIVISION AREA 1 (continued)Gloucestershire

Mrs Sell, County Representative writes: We were delighted to have among our guests Dame Frances Clode, Mrs Garland, Area Organiser; Mrs Barker, Association Area Representative; Mrs Morris, County Organiser and Mrs Littlewood who first started the Association in Gloucestershire at our meeting on 19th June. 61 members met in Gloucester from around the County at 11.00 am for coffee, giving time for everyone to reminisce before we were entertained from 12.00 to 12.45 pm by Mrs Hanman who portrayed many characters and involved the audience in her chatter having us all in fits of laughter. Lunch was served at 1.00 pm - we were so pleased that Youth Force agreed to send four young people and a supervisor to serve coffee, prepare and serve a salad lunch and gateau sweet and to wash up. Youth Force had not done anything like this before and thought it would be good training for their young people. They did it beautifully. A raffle was drawn at 2.00 pm followed by a meeting to give members information after which Mrs Barker, our Area Representative, said a few words, followed by Mrs Morris, Gloucestershire County Organiser (who was awarded the MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours this year - we are delighted by this) who gave up to date news of WRVS work in the County. It was agreed that a happy day was had by all. Gloucestershire WRVS are having a service at Tewkesbury Abbey at 3.00 pm on 27th October 1985.

\*\*\*\*\*

STOP PRESSMiss Jeana Tate MBE

Members will be sorry to hear of the death of Jeana Tate, who was for some years Membership Secretary of the WVS/WRVS Association. Jeana joined WVS in Newton Abbot in 1951 after serving in the WRNS during the war. After moving to London, Jeana worked at Headquarters, first in the Civil Defence Department and then with Elsa Dunbar in the Commonwealth & Foreign (later Public Relations) Department and in Archives.

AREA REPRESENTATIVES

[Ex-officio members of the Committee]

LONDON

North Area Mrs M. Downing BEM,

Central Area Westminster & City  
Mrs Theo Robertson,

Hackney  
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

Area 2 Mrs M. Head,

Area 4 Mrs P. Preston,

North East

Area 1 Mrs C.V. Smurthwaite MBE,

Area 2 Mrs Beryl Burkett,

Area 3 Mrs P. James MBE,

Area 4 Mrs L. Zeigler MBE,

A PRAYER FOR THOSE GROWING OLD

Lord, Thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older, and will soon be old.

Keep me from getting talkative, and particularly from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every occasion.

Release me from the craving to try to straighten out everybody's affairs.

Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful, but not bossy.

With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all!

But Thou knowest Lord, that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind from the endless recital of details.

Give me wings to get to the point.

Seal my lips on my own aches and pains; they are increasing and my love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally it is possible that I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet.

I do not want to be a saint - some of them are hard to live with - but a sour old man or woman is one of the works of the devil.

\*\*\*\*\*

