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WVS/WRVS ASSOCIATION

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ASSOCIATION NEWS

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No.24 | May 1986

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WVS/WRVS ASSOCIATION

17 Old Park Lane, London W1Y 4AJ

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Mrs Viola Price

Area Representatives are ex officio members of Committee

See back page

**PLEASE:** Area Reports for November issue  
to Editor not later than end of  
August - many thanks.

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# reminder

The 1986 AGM & Re-union

will be held at

THE NEWMAN HALL

Grange Court Road

Westbury-on-Trym

Bristol

on

Tuesday 3rd June 1986

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YOUR CHAIRMAN WRITES ... ..

Dear Member,

Many of you will already know that our President, Mrs Barbara Shenfield, was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the New Year Honours. We were all thrilled to hear this good news, following the tribute to WRVS by Her Majesty the Queen in her Christmas broadcast. If you have not seen a copy of the WRVS News (February issue), do try and borrow a copy as it is full of interest about our Service.

#### WRVS Benevolent Trust

I am glad to know that members are responding to my suggestion and using their talents to contribute to the Trust. Hopefully I shall hear more about the individual efforts which have taken much time and energy and I look forward to seeing many of you at our Annual General Meeting in Bristol.

Only this week I was reminded of the talents given so freely by two very distinguished members who died just recently:

Lady Margaret Charles OBE joined WVS in February 1939 and acted as Lady Reading's special Assistant in Finance and Legal matters. Her work for Displaced Persons in Germany and Austria was outstanding and she shared our Founder's love of gardening and creating beautiful tapestries. Lady Charles was Chairman of the Benevolent Trust for many years.

Mrs Muriel Carroll-Mark OBE was perhaps a more familiar face to members and her high standards and knowledge throughout 45 years of devoted service made its impact countrywide. Those who represented WRVS at the Cenotaph will remember her hospitality and I treasure the small tapestry cushions which Muriel made to sell in the Refugee Shop at Headquarters.

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In this issue Services Welfare takes pride of place and this is certainly an area of work where members used their

talents and initiative to the full. Even today, ex-Service men remember our Clubs and the many small acts of kindness shown to those far from home.

Members are still knitting and sewing for Save the Children, Poland, and other special Emergency Care units. The need for small blankets and unisex jerseys is as great as ever so please continue the good work.

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As this is my last letter to you as your Chairman, I want you to know how much pleasure your letters have given me. My circle of friends has grown and I have renewed many long-lost contacts.

I have always thought of the Association as a working partnership with those at the helm and those in the field and I am especially grateful to our President, our Headquarters Team, our Editor and all Committee members for their support and affection.

It is not doing what you like that matters but liking what you do - HAPPY DAYS TO YOU ALL.

Chairman

Since writing this letter I have learned with much sadness of the death of Miss Joanna Barnard OBE. Her humour and sound advice during our days together as Regional Administrators was invaluable and she will be greatly missed by all her friends, particularly in the South East.

## OUR RETIRING CHAIRMAN

by  
**Peggy James**



A breeze of change drifted over the Association in 1983 when the first Annual General Meeting was held away from London, our Founder Chairman, Kathleen Halpin, who had been greatly involved in the formation of the Association and in the preparation of its Constitution, resigned after 10 years in office and our new Chairman, elected at this meeting, lived nearly 200 miles from the capital!

Those who doubted that this would work underestimated Helena Foster who was used to pioneering and could rise to the challenge leaving no qualms that the standards set by her predecessor and colleagues would be maintained.

My first contact with Helena was over 20 years ago when I was Convoy Organiser of the East Riding Food Flying Squad and our team put on a Training Exercise which was to be attended by

our Regional Administrator who was shortly to retire. We had decided to trim things up as a bit of a farewell - so - two bottles of sherry went into the Soyer of soup; the "casserole" in the No.4 field cooker got some extra garnish and parsley and the apple crumble (also in the No.4) got cream instead of custard! At the time we were unaware that our Regional Administrator "Designate" would be accompanying her, so when they both arrived it seemed more necessary to show how efficient we thought we were! Little did we know that our new R.A. - Helena Foster - was highly experienced in Civil Defence and a fully-qualified Home Office Instructor! (She has never told us how many marks she gave us!)

Since that time I have worked with Helena as a County Organiser in her Region; then next door to her as an Area Organiser and for the past 3 years in this Association.

She has always taken great pride in doing things properly, making sure that she has a thorough knowledge of her subject coupled with clear communication - setting herself the very high standard which she encourages in others.

This Association will remember Helena not only for these qualities but because she has encouraged and stimulated the interest of those of us who live north of Potters Bar and west of Chiswick Flyover. Attendances at the meetings in Birmingham and Pudsey by members who could never travel to London have proved there is life outside the Metropolis.

Her projects for The Save the Children and Poland, and latterly for the WRVS Benevolent Trust, have given us an assurance that we are not just "has beens" but that we can still carry on the WRVS tradition of helping others.

Her leadership has been an inspiration and her friendship very much appreciated by us all.

Helena! You asked me once to give you an appropriate phrase in Welsh when you were invited to address a Members' meeting in Wales. Here is another which my Welsh ancestors help us to say to you:

Da Tawn Cariod! Diolch yn Fawr!

(Editor's translation for the uninitiated: "Well Done Dear! Thanks a lot!") With apologies to Scotland - sorry we cannot rise to the Gaelic!

EDITORIAL

Congratulations to Dame Barbara! How proud we are that our President has been honoured in this way. We rejoice with her and wish her every success and happiness in the future.

Nearly 200 years ago David Everett wrote for a school's declamation:

"Large streams from little fountains flow,  
Tall oaks from little acorns grow."

I quote it here because it so aptly reflects what is happening within the WVS/WRVS Association as it increases its momentum and strength. 70 new members have been welcomed this year bringing the total to well over 3,000. Scotland has nearly 400 members and Mrs Brotherton is working near-miracles in Wales, the success of which has encouraged her to hold the first Welsh AGM and Reunion in Newtown in April.

Thanks to Jose Duke for her saga on Services Welfare Overseas, which, together with the stories of personal experiences during the 2nd World War and afterwards, helps to provide a picture of a most important aspect of WVS/WRVS work which is featured in this issue. My thanks, too, to Peggy James for her appreciation of "Our Retiring Chairman", and, of course, to my friend and colleague, Molly Blake, who very generously and cleverly responded to my urgent appeal by producing such delightful sketches for this, my last edition as Editor. [continued on page 6]

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STOP PRESS

London SE Area: Mrs Black's coffee party on 25th March was most enjoyable though small in numbers due to violent storms that day. She and her Area colleagues are very proud of their 94-year old member, Mrs Mable Pulham BEM, who still works 2 days a week at both the Dulwich and the Maudsley hospitals. She joined Camberwell in 1939 and has worked in Southwark ever since. What a wonderful record.

Jersey, Channel Islands: Mrs Bathurst writes that 11 members now meet and have had a very active and pleasant year knitting, manning the Port-a-Cabin and enjoying lunch, tea and Christmas parties together.

NE Area 3: On 17th March the sun shone and members thronged to Petty James's home for a highly-successful and enjoyable coffee morning and talent sale. Combined with the proceeds of a raffle for beautiful cushions made by Mrs Peggie Turner, Mrs James was able to hand a cheque for £300 to Mrs Foster (for her Benevolent Fund appeal) at the Area AGM and Re-union on 9th April. Our Chairman was delighted.

The actual printing and production of "The News" could not have been in better hands. How fortunate I have been in having the support and kindly co-operation of the Print Room staff at Headquarters - my eternal gratitude to Major Chase, to Mr White and to Mr Lucas without whose indulgence I could not have survived! And what a pleasure it has been to work in harness with our retiring Chairman - I shall miss our little meetings at Bawtry. I shall miss, too, the very many kind, generous messages and letters for appreciation I have received nationwide; they have been a great source of encouragement to me. Thank you all very much. I know you will continue to support my successor in the same way. My wishes to her (or him) and to you all.

Viola Price  
Hon. Editor





## MISS JOSE DUKE MBE

We are, indeed, most grateful to Miss Duke for her very interesting "history" of WRVS Services Welfare Overseas and for the time and thought she has given to the production of a story about which so many of us know so little. Miss Duke joined WVS about 30 years ago and proudly wears her long-service medal and clasp which she received after 27 of those years.

She was awarded her MBE on the recommendation of the Ministry of Defence in 1975, having completed 20 years overseas service, for administration in the Far East and at Headquarters with the M.O.D. for Services Welfare Worldwide, which, at that time, still included a wide variety of overseas postings.

In 1977 Miss Duke had the rare honour of representing WRVS at the Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall on the 12th November.

She tells me that of all the medals with which she has been presented, perhaps her favourite "gong" is the Army Campaign Peninsular clasp for the Malay/Borneo "confrontation" of 1963/66. WRVS were entitled to receive these campaign medals when serving in the areas concerned, thus many Services Welfare Members have received them for Cyprus or Kenya or Malaya and/or Aden; others for Korea and a few for the United Nations Medal for service with the UN troops in Cyprus. She modestly says that she is not unique but that she was always pleased to receive one! Some members managed to get two or even three bars/clasps to their medal. By moving from Cyprus to Aden at the right time, or coming from Malaya to Kenya, depending upon where the action happened to be - and Services Welfare was generally to be found there or thereabouts!

She was Administrator for the Far East from 1964-1967 when she became Assistant Administrator and Training Officer at Headquarters until her appointment to the responsible position of WRVS Services Welfare Administrator, which duties she performed with great success and efficiency from 1972 to 1980 - who better, then, to tell us about WRVS Services Welfare Overseas?

### WRVS SERVICES WELFARE OVERSEAS

by

Jose Duke

It is not unusual when asked what I used to do, for people to say, "Oh, I didn't know WRVS ever worked overseas". It's a bit sad if it happens to be a fellow WRVS member who expresses the same surprise! We all know WVS started in 1938. What is less well known is that WVS Services Welfare members first went

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overseas on full-time contracts at the beginning of 1944, and that this work continued for 42 years.

Maybe it is because during this year, 1986, the fact that WRVS Services Welfare work with Gurkha families in Hong Kong and Brunei is to cease, with the result that the only overseas posting left will be the one in Belize, that I have been encouraged to write something for the Association News.

Like most WVS work it began by meeting a need. In 1940, after Dunkirk, local WVS began serving tea on railway stations to Servicemen. This quickly developed into running canteens on or near the station, to Town Clubs, where the men could relax, to Mobile Canteens, and Libraries visiting Army Camps, Searchlight Units, Gunsites and Airfields. It was on the strength of this association that in 1943 the Director of Army Welfare invited WVS to co-operate with NAAFI (Navy, Army and Airforce Institute) by providing teams of full-time members to undertake the Welfare and Social Activities in large Leave Centres overseas. So, in February 1944, the first party of eight WVS left for Algiers and Italy.

In the same year, as an associate member of the Council of Voluntary War Workers (CVWW), WVS was brought into the planning picture for the invasion of Europe and by September were working in the leave centre at the Hotel Ambassador in Paris. Parties followed in November to work in Belgium and by February 1945 the first WVS Mobile Canteens were in operation behind the advancing armies. At the end of that year there were 180 WVS Services Welfare members in North West Europe, many of them in Germany. A WVS/WRVS presence in BAOR was maintained until the end of 1977 with members attached to nearly all the major units including those of the Canadian Land Forces (which served in Europe between 1951 and 1971). The number of members varied, the work varied, and was extended to include Service Families.

In 1945 WVS were asked to go to the Far East, first to Burma, then Singapore, Malaya, Japan and Hong Kong. Mary Gray was the first WVS Administrator in the Far East at this time, later on she will be remembered as a noteworthy and long-serving Regional Administrator at home.

During the 50s, 60s and early 70s, WVS/WRVS worked for the Army and Air Force in unit canteens, junior ranks clubs, leave centres and town clubs under NAAFI auspices in many countries, including Korea, Cyprus, Aden, North Africa, Kenya,

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Borneo, Iraq, Bahrein, Gan Island, Shargah, and Christmas Island. In fact, wherever there was an Armed Services presence.

An entirely different branch of the work was begun in January 1948 when the British Brigade of Gurkhas was formed in Malaya accompanied by a number of Gurkha wives and families, none of whom had ever left Nepal or India before. In order to help these families sanction was given by the War Office for the employment of nine WVS members (later extended to fifteen) to undertake social welfare with the families and to develop a welfare type organisation covering hygiene, inoculation records, documentation and the liaison between the British Army doctor and the Gurkha midwives and the families besides organising sewing classes, play groups and a variety of social activities and shopping outings. Over the years WRVS served with the Brigade in Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong, Brunei and Nepal (with the Depot).

This was a job much beloved by those who undertook the work. Many members stayed with the Brigade for long periods, ranging from 10 to 20 and in exceptional cases to about 30 years! One ex-Gurkha WRVS many people will remember was Phyllis Castle, the Warden of the Hans Place Conference House.

Over the years countless numbers of Services Welfare members have come and gone, many going on to other things, others into other WVS work - Peggy Conway for years Head of Prisons Department, Nora Boning, one-time Head of Old Peoples Department, and I will get into trouble for not naming them all and many others. Not unnaturally many overseas Members came home to work in the Army Apprentice Colleges and Junior Leaders Regiments added to the Services Welfare commitment in 1954. This work continues, as does that for the limited number of Regular Army Units in the UK sanctioned in 1971, both financed by M.O.D. as is that final, isolated overseas posting in Belize. This is a 6 to 9 month posting only - fairly basic conditions, poor climate, twice weekly helicopter flights into the jungle to deliver reading material and shopping to the soldiers, and collect flower orders for those left at home, besides running a Club at the base in Air Port Camp. How many old Services Welfare members are experiencing a pang of nostalgia? Even envy? And, Yes. I'm happy to say she DID meet the Queen during her visit last year.

## THE EDITOR'S MAILBAG .

### Memories of a Member of the WVS in the British Raj in India during World War II. By Mrs Eva Bowen KIH.

I was fortunate enough to have lived in India during the last three decades of the British Raj. My father had been posted to India in the Military Engineering Services and the family joined him there in 1912. It was in Central India where I met and married my husband and raised my family until the departure of the British in 1948.

I was a member of the WVS (India) in Rawalpindi from 1940 until 1948. Initially we joined in with the Red Cross and St. Johns by helping to make medical dressings and clothes for hospitals until the formal formation of the WVS in 1940. We were located in a scrap depot and our start up was with the help of the Camel Corps Regiment. We collected bottles, pots, pans and anything else that could be recycled to help the war effort. The scrap business grew rapidly and soon became too large an enterprise for the ladies to handle - it was therefore taken over by the Army. No sooner had we handed over the scrap depot when I was asked to organise and run a canteen on the platform of Rawalpindi railway station. This canteen was set up to provide free refreshments for British and Indian troops, together with some Americans, who were in transit in troop trains (often to and from Burma). The canteen was set up under the aegis of Army Welfare and having been opened by General Noyes was named the "Noyes Canteen". The canteen also received a generous monthly sum of money from Mr Dalip Singh who had donated many thousands of rupees towards the war effort. Mrs Cuthbert-King, the wife of the Commissioner, was our local President and I was assisted by sixteen WVS ladies who worked tirelessly in shifts so that all departures and arrivals of troop trains were catered for.

As soon as the Noyes Canteen was functioning efficiently and to full capacity I was asked to take on the additional task of Lady Superintendent of the Rawalpindi Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and WAC (I) Club for Corporals and below. The SAW Club, as it was known, was run on a non-profit making basis with the help of a dedicated group of about forty WVS ladies who worked one shift each per week. We also had the help of two soldiers who were on loan to us (being medically unfit for active service). One was allocated to looking after the dining room and kitchen and the other to handling the bar. My husband, who was on the staff of the Chief Engineer Northern Army Headquarters, undertook the duties of Club Secretary in his spare time.

The SAW Club was indeed a tremendous success. The Club provided cheap and wholesome meals in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, so many miles from home. Dances were run every Thursday evening and my husband used to go out with two lorries to collect the ladies who had volunteered to attend the dances. He would then safely take home these ladies, which incidentally included Elspeth Gray, her sister Ronda and my daughter Evelyn. From time to time we also made arrangements for ENSA parties at the club and these were always popular.

At the end of the war our numbers naturally began to fall and I was asked to take on the Officers Leave Hostel as well. I ran this hostel for a further seven months or so until the point in time when I had to close it, the SAW Club and the Noyes Canteen. I was awarded, in the New Year's Honours List after the war, with the Kaiser I. Hind (K.I.H.) for services in the war effort with the WVS (India). There were many others in the WVS (I) who were also rewarded and many others who richly deserved similar recognition but did not receive it.

After the war India was granted its independence and was partitioned into Pakistan and India. Prior to independence political upheavals had occurred and there had been much anti-British feeling and this, coupled with sectarian disorder, created a situation where the country was beginning to tear itself apart before it had even secured its independence. The result was riot and the mass migration of Hindus to India and Moslems from India to Pakistan. The refugee problem became acute, made the worse by the injuries and savage wounding and killings which arose from the sectarian clashes. Inevitably Army Welfare came under pressure and once again the ladies of the WVS, the Red Cross and St. Johns were drafted in to help. I became involved in a large tented refugee camp, which had one Indian lady doctor, one ex-Army nursing sister and a number of lady volunteers. After a few weeks we were able to move into an ex-Army hutted camp at Hasanabdul which did at least provide the basic water and sanitation needs. It was at this camp that I was congratulated personally by Lady Mountbatten on the award of the K.I.H. Lady Mountbatten was the President of the WVS, the Red Cross and St. Johns and this enabled us all to work and pull together with the vast refugee task which faced us all.

With the final advent of Independence in 1948 we all had to hand over our responsibilities and so ended the British Raj in India. My husband and I then returned to the U.K. In 1949 my husband was invited back to Pakistan to take up an appointment of Chief Engineer (Air) to the Pakistan Airforce. This appointment lasted for five years and with my knowledge of the language and previous experience during the war it wasn't long before I became involved in the welfare of Pakistan Airforce families. I also helped the World Health Organisation with their TB immunisation in Pakistan.

I am now 78 years of age, am a member of the WRVS, Fleet, and continue, as I have done for the past twenty years, to befriend and visit an elderly and hospitalised lady. I also work in the local Oxfam shop on Saturdays. I have to say that it has been an interesting, varied and very rewarding life and I hope that my brief article will in some way encourage the younger members of the WRVS to realise that their work is really worthwhile.

From Hilda M. Jowett,  
Worthing, Sussex

I have pleasure in enclosing my subscription for 1986 and thank you for the copy of the Association News which I found most interesting. Was especially interested in the news about the West Sussex Association. I have been a member since it was first started, not been informed about local meetings. I joined Worthing Centre 20 odd years ago, visiting, Books on Wheels, Meals on Wheels and reception desk. Now, because of my age I'm only visiting two blind ladies.

I lived in Egremont, Cheshire, during the war, joined WVS in 1940, had a Centre at the Baptist Church Hall, was Secretary of a street National Savings group and helped with whatever needed doing. Met Lady Reading many times - she was very kind and helpful and usually came to see us after a very bad night (bombs). A Mrs Grant was our Organiser then. I had to leave WVS soon after the war due to domestic difficulties but after I retired from paid work in Worthing I joined WVS and have enjoyed my 20 odd years with them, made nice friends who have helped me to make a new life and I hope I have done a little good in this troubled world of ours.

I am sorry I am not able to attend the AGM - too far for me to travel.

P.S. Please excuse poor writing - I am losing my sight but still have a lot to be thankful for.

(Such tremendous courage, determined to help others in spite of her very real problems. I understand the local Assoc-

[continued next column]

tion is now keeping in touch with Mrs Jowett. EDITOR

From Folkestone, Dodo Butler writes to say that she was interested to read about the Services Welfare Reunion as she was also in Hong Kong at that time (30 years ago) and in recent years. I'm sure Dodo will be most interested in Jose Duke's "history" of Services Welfare in this issue in which she played such an impressive role. EDITOR

Miss Mary Dyott was one of eight hand-picked WVS members who formed the very first contingent sent to Italy in the early part of 1943 under a scheme arranged by Lady Reading at the request of the Chairman of NAAFI. The American soldiers were being well cared for by the American Red Cross but the British Army had nothing.

Unfortunately, Miss Dyott's story reached me too late for inclusion in the May 1986 edition, in fact we were over-subscribed. Every attempt will be made to incorporate this saga in a later issue but I would like to mention it here, though briefly, to complement the other contributions on WVS/WRVS service abroad during and after World War II.

After a traumatic week in London during the height of the blitz, these heroic ladies travelled to Liverpool to board the S.S. Ormond which sailed as part of a convoy of 25 ships guarded by destroyers, a flotilla and aircraft carrier which landed them safely in Algiers where they were injected against typhus, etc. Two members of the team remained in Algiers whilst others were sent to Naples, to Bari, where they were visited by Miss Mary Cray on Lady Reading's instructions. Some then went to Egypt and to Forli in Italy where Mussolini was born, to Vienna and to the Far East. Miss Dyott ends by saying that the whole world owes a deep debt of gratitude to our Founder Chairman, Lady Reading. So I'm sure all our members will look forward to reading her story in full at a later date - it is full of incidents.

EDITOR



## From Helen Hunter, Kearsley, Bolton

I have just received my first copy of our magazine. As you are surely aware we have just joined a new branch in Bolton and we were very pleased to meet together again. I am very proud to wear my mother's WVS badge as well as my own WRVS one.

I had two toddlers during the war when mother was helping the WVS Branch at Farnworth with evacuees, blitzes in Manchester and Liverpool, knitting, etc. I used to go to sell stamps etc., and give wool out for knitting but couldn't do more then.

When I retired I started at once to Bolton & District General Hospital in the geriatric and psychiatric wards and shop. I can honestly say that I enjoyed every minute of it and was very upset when the doctor said, "no more".

Six WRVS ladies used to do a full day every Thursday and we manned the shop five days a week as well. We made some really good friends with both staff and patients and I still go up to see them when I can. I am so glad that a Branch has been started up at Bolton and looking forward to our next meeting.

Hope you have been able to read this as I have arthritis and the pen just goes where it wants and to think that I was School Secretary for 17 years. Ah, well!

(Well done, Helen. Helping each other is what the WVS/WRVS Association is all about. Good luck to you all at Bolton.

EDITOR

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## WORLD WAR II. From Mrs Peggy Otter

I only realised the seriousness of the situation when a friend in Cambridge asked me to join her in assembling civilian gas masks at a local school. This was at the time of the Munich crisis. We had to attach the small canisters to the rubber face masks and finished just as it was getting light. After this we signed on at Police Headquarters to join A.R.P. and later made our base at Cherryhinton School where we learnt some First Aid and drove a laundry van fitted with 2 stretchers. Sometimes we drove in the dark, wearing gas masks, which was not easy. Nothing really happened but when there was an alert we had to bicycle to the depot in the dark, so kept a jersey and siren suit handy always. It is surprising how much one can see when there are no lights. We had become WVS by then. We were drilled and marched up and down the Guildhall by an ex-soldier!

When my husband, who was in the RNVR, went to Dover, I helped in the Comforts Depot run by Lady Ramsay, wife of the Admiral. This was not WVS work. During Dunkirk evacuation a great many of the wounded were too ill to travel further. The local WVS sent me to take names and addresses of the men at the hospital but it was not easy to get the details and I ended up helping the very few nurses on night duty.

We were still in Dover during the "Battle of Britain" and later during some of the shelling but after my daughter was born I returned to Cambridge and occasionally helped in WVS canteens. The Poles were so polite and pleasant in the Jesus Lane canteen. We had to remember to fill mugs with milk to go sour when we went off duty as the soldiers liked this. At the railway station canteen we were really busy when trains came in and we cooked eggs and bacon for the early trains, as we slept at the station during the three or four quiet hours. The "ladies" who came down from London often missed the last train so we made them help us in the morning rush.

THIS IS NOT WVS but at the beginning of the war my mother suddenly had 11 boys aged 10 sent to her as there were rooms over the stables in Newmarket. The cook declared she could not cope and left so I went home to lend a hand. It was not a very satisfactory arrangement as there was no one to supervise the boys (who were very good) but after a few weeks they were all sent to a school nearby.

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## NEW YEAR HONOURS LIST 1986

The names of the following WRVS Members appear in the New Year Honours List 1986:

### DAME COMMANDER OF THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Mrs Barbara Shenfield, Chairman, WRVS.

### OBE

Mrs Constance Ward JP, National Meals on Wheels Organiser

### MBE

Mrs Joan Grant,  
County Organiser, North Yorkshire

NE 2

### BEM

Mrs Adeline Brautigam,  
London Borough Organiser, Hounslow

London NW

Mrs Nora Landon, Hon. Secretary, King George VI  
Memorial Club, Stoke-on-Trent

MID 1

Mrs Patricia Powter,  
Hospital Car Service Organiser

SW 1

Mrs Doris Travis,  
District Organiser, Newport, Gwent

Wales

Mrs Patricia Wilding,  
Transport Organiser, Shropshire

MID 1

Mrs Joan Wollerton,  
Hospitals Organiser, Lincolnshire

NE 3

### MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

May we please remind all those who pay their subscriptions annually that these were due in January. If you have not already sent yours, PLEASE do so as soon as possible. Thank you.

Margaret Binks, Hon. Treasurer



OBITUARY

It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of the following members:

Mrs B. Watkins	Cheshire
Mrs D. Reynolds	Cheshire
Mrs K. Mabey	Solihull
Miss W.L. Tallentire	N. Humberside
Mrs Louie Binns	W. Yorks
Miss Greta Hayre	Nottingham
Miss J.E. Tate	London
Mrs Olive Green	Gloucester
Mrs Mary Peachment	Manchester
Mrs E.M. Georgeson	Cheshire
Mrs D.K. Jarrett	London
Mrs M.J. Readdie	Surrey
Mrs D. Williams	Dyfed
Mrs E. Hillington	Dyfed
Mrs G. Trott	Dyfed
Miss Gwen Davies	Glamorgan
Mrs Martha Stake	Salford
Mrs E. Chappell	Manchester
Mrs D.M. Cutts	Warwickshire
Mrs V.G. Everitt	Southend-on-Sea
Mrs C.V.A. Hewitt	Rushden, Northants
Mrs N.E. Webb	SE 1, Surrey
Miss M.L. Steele	London NW
Miss W.J. Newman	S.E.1, E.Sussex
Mrs C.D. Workman	Warwickshire
Mr H.B. Shepherd	NW 4, Merseyside
Mrs E. Page	SE 2, W.Sussex
Mrs Elaine B. Andersen	SE 2, W.Sussex
Miss M.D. Owen	HC3, Essex
Mrs M.A. Taylor	HC3, Essex
Mrs B.B. Brockbank	MD 3, Solihull
Mrs T.C. Higgins	NW4, Merseyside
Miss M.A. Bone	SE1, E.Sussex
Mrs D.M. Brennan	SE1, E.Sussex
Mrs E.M. Trant	London
Mr N. Carroll-Marx OBE	London
Lady M. Charles OBE	London N.
Miss J. Barnard OBE	SE 1, Kent
Mrs B.S. Cromwell	HC2, Berkshire
Miss M. Schilling	London NW.

## REPORTS FROM AREAS

### LONDON

#### ANNUAL REUNION - Report from Mrs Mary Julian and Mrs Doris Moss

On Friday, 15th November, our Annual Reunion Meeting was held in the very comfortable and well-appointed hall of the Welsh Church near the Barbican. 96 members from the five London Areas, some members who now live outside London and, an innovation this year, we invited Area and Borough Organisers and we also welcomed our first male member.

Informality was the order of the day starting with a welcome cup of coffee and a Bring and Buy sale run by Ava Christopherson and Ivy Millington.

Mary Julian opened the meeting and we were then welcomed to The City by the City of London Organiser, Mrs Wyn Taylor, who gave an amusing account of the feeding of the participants in the Lord Mayor's Show held the previous Saturday in pouring rain and how she was now left with a flat full of wet tabards to dry.

Before lunch messages from members unable to attend were read, including a warm letter from our Chairman, Helena Foster, and then the Area Representatives each gave a short report including news of members who were ill or who had moved away. Marjorie Dowling told us about a newsletter circulated in her Area and Gladys Block brought an excellent display of snapshots taken at their summer meeting held in Bickley, Kent.

Since our last meeting we have suffered some slight boundary changes, losing the Borough of Hillington which has now gone outside Greater London and Westminster which is now included in the London North Area. Mrs Robertson who used to represent Westminster was thanked for all her work in the Borough; also Doris Wright on retiring as the Representative for London NE, and we were pleased to see five members from Hillington attending.

To illustrate the definition of Areas which for us "oldies" who were used to serving in London as a complete Region find very confusing, a large map was on display with the new Areas clearly marked.

A delicious and beautifully-presented lunch was prepared and served by the NE London Area Organiser, Mrs Eve Sheppard, and her hardworking small team of helpers. Due to the spaciousness and layout of the hall we were all able to sit comfortably round tables and the chatter was deafening.

After lunch we came to the highlight of our meeting - a talk by Kathleen Halpin who was the first Administrator for London before becoming the Chief Administrator for the whole country and later the Founder Chairman of the WVS/WRVS Association. We listened enthralled at Kathleen Halpin's reminiscences, interspersed with many interesting and often amusing illustrations of her early days when she first started work through to her involvement with the WVS as early as 1938, when she attended the inaugural meeting of the WVS Advisory Council representing the Women's Gas Council, and a month later was invited to attend the weekly meetings of the WVS Organisers of the London Centres as an observer, representing the Girl Guides Association.

This was a difficult act to follow so the fun quiz on WVS/WRVS to be presented by Mona Forsdick has been held over for another time.

Cups of tea and home-made mince pies were served and members then departed, replete from a delicious lunch, hoarse from so much chatter, inspired by Kathleen's fascinating talk and we felt everyone had really enjoyed being reunited with former colleagues and even the weather was kind.

## The Scottish Newsletter tells all - here it is:

Welcome to the many new members of our Association. In Scotland our membership grows steadily and has passed the 350 mark. We hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter.

After a wet and dismal summer, members in Scotland are now settling into their programme of events leading up to and beyond Christmas. We wish all our readers a very happy time. Let us hope that the winter ahead will not be too severe and look forward to the warmth and sunshine we trust will come in 1986.

### REGION REPORTS

**CENTRAL REGION** continues to hold regular meetings at three-monthly intervals, the venue alternating between Falkirk and Stirling. The annual lunch was held on 16th October in the Age Concern Hall, Larbert, when the speaker was Mrs Hamp-Hamilton who spoke of the Women of Scotland Annual Lunch. Membership continues to grow and their next meeting will take place on 22nd January 1986 in Falkirk at 2 pm.

**FIFE REGION.** A group of nineteen members from Fife visited Glamis Castle during the summer and renewed acquaintance with Mrs Hood our speaker at this year's AGM.

**GRAMPIAN REGION** now has fifty-one members and their programme since Spring has included a talk on the Gordon Highlanders by Major Martineau, a bus tour round the "new" parts of Aberdeen, a poetry reading, a mannequin parade and a Concert Party. A Christmas lunch is arranged for early December. On Sunday, 27th October, during National Members Week (October 28th to November 2nd) several Association members arranged special flowers on behalf of WRVS in Beechgrove Church, Aberdeen.

**LOTHIAN & SCOTTISH HQ** held a Bridge contest on 2nd October between Edinburgh and Strathclyde with Mrs Kennedy as the hostess, and a very enjoyable event it proved to be. A return match will be held in the Spring. In Edinburgh, Mrs Ida Jarron has organised two coffee mornings for the membership, one with a floral art demonstration and another with a make-up demonstration by Lancome following refreshments of coffee and biscuits. They are now looking forward to their Sherry Party in December. Dog lovers may be interested to know that Mrs Jarron has been very successful with her Kerry Blue dog at several shows this year and recently gained qualification for Crufts. Good luck for the Show in early 1986.

In **STRATHCLYDE** monthly lunch-time get-togethers continue to take place in a Glasgow Casino. A group recently enjoyed lunch followed by a visit to the cinema where they saw the highly-acclaimed film "Passage to India". A visit is planned to the theatre during the Christmas and New Year period. Members in Hamilton have been on a visit to a woollen mill in Kilmarnock where they purchased wool and lace at advantageous prices. On another occasion they visited Hamilton Museum. After several enjoyable outings during the summer months, Dumbarton members are looking forward to their Christmas celebration lunch in December.

**OBITUARY:** Since our last Newsletter in May we have been notified of the death in June of Mrs Lovie of Nairn in Highland South Region.

### VISITS BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman attended the Association's National Committee Meeting in London on 16th October. This was an interesting and useful meeting illustrating the many varied activities of our fellow-members throughout the country. Mrs Helena Foster appealed to our members to make use of their personal skills to raise funds for the WRVS Benevolent Trust in 1986 as she felt that within our membership we have a great wealth of talent which could help to augment the funds of this worthwhile cause. The object of the Trust is to assist past and present members countrywide who may be in need of help.

The Chairman was invited by the Regional Organiser, Mrs Bomphray, to attend Church Street School, Glasgow, on 30th October when Strathclyde Region held an Open Day as part of their National Members Week activities. This was a very well-attended event, amply rewarding the Region Specialists and Staff for the hard work involved in such an affair. Many old friends met together and the opportunity was not lost as Mrs Cantlay, Strathclyde's representative on our Association Committee had charge of a publicity table for the Association and signed up nine new members on the spot with a further thirty-seven membership forms handed out to interested people. A very worthwhile effort indeed.

In Central Region, on a perfect Autumn day, the Soyer Boiler Competition for the Swinney Trophy was held at Stirling. As the Chairman has been very much involved with Emergency Services she eagerly accepted Mrs Kirsty Smith's invitation to be present and joined the five teams from Central Region and their supporting members at the outdoor site in Cambusbarron. Everyone had a lot of fun, even if some were a bit "kippered" in the process! Congratulations to the winning team from Stirling who received the Trophy from Mrs Swinney before a welcome lunch of soup and sandwiches was served by members of Emergency teams. One new life member for the Association resulted from this visit and several people expressed an interest in joining.

#### KNITTERS

A very big thank you is extended to all who knit those many coloured vests, etc. Whenever they are taken into the Edinburgh Save the Children Shop they are received with open arms, obviously the need is still there, so please continue the good work and pass on the thanks to those who may not read this Newsletter.

#### CAN YOU HELP?

Has anyone got any ideas for a handout leaflet and/or a poster publicising the Association? If you (or yours) have, please let us know as we feel something of the kind would be advantageous in recruiting new members.

#### AGM 1986

The Annual General Meeting will take place in Glasgow next year. The date is Thursday, 8th May and we hope to return to the Partick Burgh Hall which is convenient to rail and bus systems and has parking space available! Further details will be circulated next year, but make a note of the date - 8th May - NOW.

#### UPDATE

Christmas Festivities - the Chairman, Mrs Hart, attended the following events during the Christmas period:

Association Christmas lunch in Aberdeen on 10th December when 50 members enjoyed a delicious lunch and happy reunion in the Prince Regent Hotel.

The "Yuletide Morning" at Scottish WRVS Headquarters, Edinburgh, on 12th December when Association members from Scottish Headquarters and Lothian Region got the holiday off to a good start.

An evening meal followed by a visit to the pantomime "Sinbad at the King's Theatre, Glasgow. This proved to be a great success for the group of Strathclyde members.

P.S. 17 new members were enrolled as the result of various activities during WRVS Members' Week.

#### WALES

#### Mrs Lorna Brotherton, Area Representative for Wales reports:

Here we are in 1986 and the news from Wales is encouraging and cheerful. Mrs Vera Griffiths in Dyfed has written to tell us of a happy Christmas dinner held in Aberswyth on December 2nd when 20 members enjoyed excellent food and lots of laughter and chat. They kindly invited me but unfortunately I had a previous engagement so couldn't be with them this time.

In South Glamorgan, Miss Derryhouse has made excellent progress with her new hip and is busy keeping in touch with members of the group. Mrs Owen Davies is unfortunately still not well enough to do very much but her interest is as keen as ever.

A meeting had been arranged for which Miss Tallamy had offered her house, but she too was taken ill quite suddenly and the meeting was cancelled. It is hoped that the group will now be able to meet in February so we're all keeping our fingers crossed as we're happy to hear that Miss Tallamy is making good progress.

The Wrexham group in Clwyd where Mrs Latham is keeping our members in touch had a most enjoyable Mystery Outing on October 2nd last. 30 members had lunch at the Upper Crust Restaurant on the Horse Shoe Pass, Llangollen, after which they spent a couple of hours in Llangollen itself. Everyone enjoyed themselves so much they are asking for a similar trip "soon please".

In another part of Clwyd - Colwyn Bay - it has been wonderful to hear from members who have recently resigned from appointments - but still work as hard as ever - that they hope to form a new group there in the New Year, which, of course, is now! We send them our very best wishes and look forward to more definite news by the time our next Report is due.

In Mid Glamorgan too, Mrs Lyn Smart, BEM, is busy keeping in touch with recently retired members of WRVS so hopefully there will soon be an active group doing all sorts of interesting things. Mrs Smart has unfortunately been ill recently, but although she writes that she will need to cut down on "jobs", she sounds very cheerful and is getting stronger each day so to her too, we send our sincere good wishes.

Gwynedd in North West Wales is a county in which distances are great and centres scattered, so there is difficulty in arranging meetings, but efforts are being made to form groups and I have no doubt that these efforts will meet with success in the not too distant future.

NOW - last but by no means least - we are holding our first ever Re-union of Association members throughout Wales in Newtown, Powys, on April 24th, 1986. Newtown is quite a central location so we look forward to seeing past friends and colleagues from North, Mid and South Wales.

We're delighted that Mrs Helena Foster, OBE, our Association Chairman, has accepted our invitation to join us for lunch and to meet members from Wales, so are hoping that everyone will really enjoy themselves and remember this, our first effort, with pleasure.

## NORTH WEST DIVISION

### Area 1 - Cumbria and Lancashire

We were very pleased to hear from Mrs Mitchell that six members and nine potential members met for tea and a chat in Blackburn WRVS office on Monday, 13th January 1986. Future plans were discussed and a visit for tea at a member's home was arranged for March; and Mrs Lorraine of St. Annes has invited us to her home for lunch in June. It is hoped to arrange theatre visits and sightseeing trips also.

We were also very pleased to receive this report from Mrs Betty Wilson of Cumbria: "Report" sounds too grand for the little I have to tell you. I just hope that we grow! We had an Area meeting in Lancaster in November - present were County Organiser, Cumbria, Mrs Whitson; Deputy County Organiser, Lancashire, Mrs Picles; WVS/WRVS Lancashire County Representative, Mrs Mitchell; Miss Stevenson, WVS/WRVS Cumbria Representative and myself. This was a very useful start, the County Organisers being willing to publicise our efforts for the Association at their County and District meetings by inviting their County WVS /WRVS Representatives to meetings. Miss Stevenson was invited to Cumbria District and Local Organisers' Meeting in December to speak about the Association. This meeting was followed by an informal lunch, giving opportunities for Miss Stevenson to meet people.

### AREA 2 - Greater Manchester, Mrs M. Head

Mrs Head sends congratulations to Dame Barbara and reports: Trafford (Altrincham) hold regular meetings and in November held a Bring & Buy sale. The hall was booked over Christmas, so the Annual party was held in January. Entertainment was provided by two singers and two pianists, Leader Mrs Warburton.

Bury and Ramsbottom have regular meetings, lunches in the summer and a speaker with slides of old Bury in November at the WRVS Met. Office - Leader Mrs Joan Graham.

Bolton have started a new group and their first meeting was held in September - Mrs Lillian Rawlinson is the Leader. A raffle was held to cover the cost of the hall. The next meeting will be held on the 19th February at the home of the Met. Organiser, Mrs Pat Fox. It will take the form of a buffet lunch.

Salford have been going well under the leadership of Mrs J. Stead BEM. Some talks should have been mentioned in the last Newsletter. Miss Chorley who has just received her medal, spoke of the trees and landscapes as a retired member of the Parks Department; Mrs Prestwich - California; Mrs Hills - the country scenes in Brittany; Miss Roylance - Lancashire dialect and Mrs Burrows recently on the part-ownership of a racehorse. (See Editor's Mailbag for interesting letter from a very courageous member of the recently-formed Bolton group - Editor).

## AREA 4 - Cheshire and Merseyside - Mrs M. Preston.

The number of members has grown quite considerably recently and another new group has been formed at District level bringing the number to five. Members meet regularly for coffee and a chat and they all enjoyed pre-Christmas lunches at various hotels. They are now arranging their summer programmes and for one group this includes a strawberry tea at a member's house.

Macclesfield - Mrs B. Purdon: The week before our September coffee morning we heard of the sudden death of a much-loved friend and devoted member for over 30 years, Elsie Georgeson. Many of her friends from the County, District and the Association attended her funeral to pay tribute to a dedicated member of WRVS. She will be greatly missed, not only by everyone in Macclesfield, but by all those with whom she came into contact in the many interests in which she was involved.

Our membership has now grown to 45 and continues to rise. We keep in close touch and from our limited funds manage to send small gifts to those we hear are not well.

Conington: We have a very active group in this District under the able leadership of Mrs Edna Sutton. Members meet regularly in each other's houses for coffee mornings and outings are regularly arranged. We were sorry to learn recently that Mrs Sutton (now in her eighties) had been in hospital for a spell, but are delighted to be able to report that she is now home again, apparently as good as new, and already making plans for future meetings of the group.

## NORTH EAST DIVISION

### Area 1 - Northumbria - Mrs C. Smurthwaite MBE.

Four representatives from Northumbria were able to attend the AGM in London in June, even though we commenced our journey at 5.15 am from Newcastle. Our thanks to all our colleagues in London who prepared an excellent lunch and made us all so welcome. We certainly have a very healthy Association growing stronger each year. We are responding to the Association's Chairman, Mrs Helena Foster's "talent" project towards the WRVS Benevolent Fund. Proceeds please to our Hon. Treasurer, Mrs Knott, marked "Chairman's Effort" and the total will be sent to the Chairman before the next AGM. I'm sure that we can make this venture as successful as our Ethiopia Appeal to which we have, so far, sent a total of £400 for the Tigrat Hospital. We wish success, too, to Mrs Knott with her lovely "Mouse House" entry to the Competition for Blind Babies. All entries will, at the end, be sold in aid of the appeal.

### Northumberland County (Mrs J. Eastwood)

Aslington branch led by Mrs Pratt still meet monthly and to celebrate our birthday anniversary we had a meal out. Our visit to Wallington Hall was a day to remember - meeting other Association members is always a pleasure - and we returned via Rothbury. A talk by an official of the Citizens' Advice Bureau enabled us to pass on useful and interesting information to our Derby and Joan club members. Mrs Pratt rose at 4 am to attend the AGM in London, but she says she would not have missed it for anything in spite of such an early start! Our coffee/jewellery evening was most enjoyable and our Derby & Joan club members were invited. Our Annual Outing, this year to Windermere, was blessed with one of the few sunny Saturdays we had during the summer. Some younger WRVS members and friends came along, too.

Portland branch led by Mrs Frise exceeded all expectations in their knitting contributions to the Save The Children Fund. Association members were invited to the WRVS Annual lunch and really enjoyed the hospitality and meeting old friends.

Alnwick - Mrs Kohler. Several members enjoyed meeting friends at Wallington Hall.

North Tyneside - Mrs Frew and Mrs Welleans. How pleasant it is to report continued growth which means increased attendance at our Friday morning Coffee Pots and more potential customers for our Bring & Buy, Jam and Toy stall. The proceeds for one month went to the Ethiopian Appeal. To compensate for the mixed weather after our Easter event, we are arranging theatre visits and we are very grateful to our Whitley Bay Branch for their active co-operation. Mrs Frew enjoyed the AGM in London and a trip on the river to Ryton is planned. Mrs Frew and Mrs Welleans thank everyone who assists them to enjoy the pleasure of successful events.

Whitley Bay - Mrs Dawson. Our monthly "Coffee Pot" continues to be popular and our members enjoyed the outing to Wallington Hall as well as two visits to the theatre. More are arranged. The editor of a local newspaper organised a "Fun Run" in aid of the Laser Appeal and asked

## Whitley Bay (continued)

WRVS to run a tea bar. This was manned by our members. It was decided to give a cheque for £20 to the Laser Appeal, this being money collected from our "Home Bake"-stall at our "Coffee Pot". Our membership remains the same.

Sunderland - Mrs Ainsley. On four occasions our members met for coffee at the Action in Retirement Centre in Bishopwearmouth Church. We have had lunch in Whitburn Village and joined our friends from the Area for our Annual Summer Outing to Wallington Hall which we all enjoyed. Mr and Mrs R.F. Heron invited us for coffee and to hear the report of the AGM in London, then to tour their beautiful garden. A collection enabled us to make a donation to the African Appeal. Everyone brought a contribution towards the buffet lunch held at our home. It was a lovely day and I was sorry that so few members took advantage of this happy get-together. We continue to knit vests and blankets and three of our members helped to run a successful coffee morning in aid of the Sunderland Samaritans. We were pleased to welcome Joan Owen as a new member of our local Association and look forward to hearing about her travels on her return from India.

Newcastle - Mrs Yarrington. We continued to meet for our monthly functions when we dressed dolls for the children's Christmas parcels. A coffee morning for Ethiopia raised £70 and another for the Hospice which hopes to open this year. Several of us enjoyed the Annual Outing to Wallington Hall. The Metropolitan Organiser asked us to serve refreshments at a social gathering held in the Civic Centre and we were pleased to show we had not forgotten how to serve coffee, etc., when about 200 of our members met, and we enjoyed ourselves as well. We have had pub lunches and tours of the countryside. Working with a committee is helping to keep in touch with members and I cannot thank the Met. Organiser and office staff enough for the various ways they help and seem pleased to see us all.

## NORTH EAST Area 2 - Mrs B.M. Burkitt - Cleveland, Durham and North Yorkshire.

This is my first report from NE 2. It is therefore most appropriate that my tale is one of beginnings. In each of our counties a first step has been taken to start new groups. In North Yorkshire where there are already groups in York and Harrogate, Mrs Joan Altos in Selby had a meeting in October which resulted in a lot of interest from those attending and a new group is to be formed. In Cleveland, Mrs Edith Stamp in Hartlepool wrote to all retired members in the District, as well as getting some publicity in the local newspaper. A very lively meeting was held in January and all who came were enthusiastic and have decided to join us and start monthly meetings. Durham completes the counties and, again in January, a few retired members met in Darlington and are going to get a group started after Easter, after they have contacted other retired members. I feel that we have started the ball rolling in Durham and Cleveland; and Miss Lesley Hyatt is continuing her good work as County Representative in North Yorkshire. We look forward in NE 2 to a much increased membership and activity in the future.

One of our Association members, Mrs Joan Grant (3955) of 11 Daleside Drive, Harrogate, North Yorkshire has been made an MBE in the New Years Honours. All who know her are absolutely delighted.

## EDITH HAS ANSWER TO THAT AGE-OLD PROBLEM

What do you do when you've been active all your life, but alas, Mother Nature in her wisdom has slowed you down? Edith Stamp has the answer. The tireless WRVS worker is about to launch an Association for the very people who have given their best years to the Organisation. "There are a number of groups nationwide and it would be very nice to create a group locally, with the main objective to renew contacts with other retired members", explains Edith. "The main objective would be to continue friendships formed during their more active years of association and, hopefully, prove to be not only a social gathering, but a welfare, caring group for people who in earlier years have responded to the call to help others in need". Retired WRVS members can pop along to a meeting at the Guide House, Hartlepool, next Wednesday between 10.30 and 12 noon. If you want more details then ring Hartlepool 75487 for a chat with Edith, or you can also contact the WRVS office at 19 Murry Street and speak to the District Organiser, Jill Bennett on Hartlepool 72545.

(A nice little boost for our Association - an extract from the Hartlepool Mail, sent in by Mrs Burkitt, NE 2 Representative. EDITOR)

## NORTH EAST - AREA 3 - Mrs P. James MBE - Hull City, Lincolnshire, North and South Humberside.

We regret to report the death of Mrs Irene Parry of Sutton-on-Sea, Lincolnshire

Lincolnshire groups have continued their local meetings which are usually held in members' homes and many have been attended by Mrs Doris Cook, the County Representative. In South Humberside there have been no organised meetings but their visiting service continues, particularly to the housebound. Mrs Dorothy Stokes, the County Representative, hopes however to get some of the more active ladies together in the Spring if transport can be arranged. In September nearly 50 Hull and North Humberside members thoroughly enjoyed afternoon tea in the Mayor's Parlour, Guildhall, Beverley, as guests of the Mayor of the East Yorkshire Borough of Beverley, Councillor Mrs Evelyn Standing, who is also an active member of our Association. A conducted tour of the Guildhall and Council Chamber, which doubles as a Magistrates' Court, included a most interesting exhibition of the Town's Charters and priceless silver which dates back well over 1,000 years. The history of these collections was given by the recently retired Mayor's Secretary who has been responsible for the research which he almost made his life's work.

North Humberside members continued their monthly meetings - were entertained by the Cottingham Group in October when Mr Albert Allison (husband of our County Representative, Mrs Peggy Allison) showed slides of their son's holiday in Bali - this was particularly appreciated in view of our very poor summer! In November they met at Bridlington for lunch and once again in December were joined by Hull members at a Beverley hotel for another super Christmas lunch organised by Peggy Allison. Knitting, sewing and collections of saleable articles are still energetically carried on in North Humberside in support of the Beverley Doctors' Polish Appeal and it has now become impossible to keep a record of the number of items handed over. Plans are in hand for an Area AGM to be held on April 7th at the Bishop Burton College of Agriculture near Beverley.

## LINCOLNSHIRE - Mrs Doris Cook BEM.

We are pleased to report that our County, as regards membership of the Association, is still increasing. This is due to the personal publicity of the members themselves or satisfied customers. It is very rewarding to see the friendships - happiness - and keeping in touch with old friends and colleagues, giving them a renewed interest in life - "The best thing that ever happened", said a 75-year old! The usual tea, coffee, birthday get-togethers, bar lunches, etc., have taken place, not forgetting the knitting and crochet parties. The Market Rasen group meets regularly under the leadership of Mrs Marjorie Beckett and they have been busy knitting cot blankets most of the winter. Last Friday, 28th February, which was the coldest day I remember, with gale-force east winds in Skegness, 26 of us met for a bar lunch. The weather could not have been worse but once inside the hotel the warmth and welcome given to us made up for it all. We were delighted to have Mrs Peggy James, Area Representative, and Vi Price with us and we were all amazed by the liveliness and stamina of the group. Must be the sea air! The highlight of the afternoon was yet to come! We paid a visit to the home of May Andrews, our 94-year old. What a welcome and what a woman! (Her poem was published in the November 1985 issue). It was the most interesting half-hour we had had in years and if I thought Skegness would do the same for me, I would go tomorrow! But it's those east winds! Mrs Bourne's group at Sutton-on-Sea meet regularly and we join them when weather permits. It is a real pleasure to visit them as it is elsewhere in the County.

## NORTH EAST - AREA 4 - Mrs L. Ziegler MBE - South and West Yorkshire Metropolitan Counties. Report of 1985 events.

May 23rd we had a lunch at 1 Broomhall Avenue. 24 members came although the weather was not very good but we had a very enjoyable meeting. July 18th the members decided to arrange a trip to Nostle Priory. 18 members said they would like to go but as the day approached only 11 were able to go. It was a lovely sunny day and the tour of the Priory was most interesting. On the way home we stopped at the house of one of our members for afternoon tea in her garden. July 28th was our Sunday lunch this year in aid of the Benevolent Fund. Although the weather was terrible and in spite of chopping the end of my finger off, we still managed to make a profit of £150. At a meeting in Area Office on the 1st October Mrs Wynne-Jones asked if the Association would help the local WRVS during WRVS Week and we decided to do the floral decorations for the church service. To do this we arranged a Ploughman's Lunch to pay for the flowers. The service was very well attended by members of the Association. December 9th was the day of our Christmas lunch at the Queens Hotel, Leeds. 13 members attended and it was most enjoyable. And so ended 1985. We look forward to a happy 1986.



GOOD SAMARITAN EDNA IS DEAD - WRVS Stalwart who won BEM

This was the headline in the local newspaper when Mrs Edna Bullock BEM died in hospital in December, aged 83, from complications following a broken ankle. Edna was a dedicated member of WRVS for 46 years - what a record! In 1972 she was awarded the BEM for her services to WRVS; In 1946 she formed the first old people's luncheon club at Firth Park - just one of her very many achievements, being Emergency Services Organiser and Instructor for WRVS from 1946 to 1977. I doubt whether her record of active service can be matched today. She remained, as she had always been - bright and always willing to help out. She was a very good Civil Defence Instructor and wonderfully loyal to the Service she loved. She will be sadly missed.

MIDLANDS DIVISION - Area 1

Mrs W. Pengilly - West Midlands Counties

During Members' Week I was invited to talk about the Association to approximately 420 Shropshire members at their County Rally. As a result of this we are now hoping to form groups at District level in the County. It was interesting to meet several members who had been in WVS from 1938 and were still working. One lady of 79 years had worked with the Forces in Italy, Vienna and Egypt and had many stories to tell. In Shropshire we now have a new County Representative who is hoping to arrange meetings in the Spring.

Herefordshire has also formed a new group based on the Hereford Office where about 20 members met in October for tea and discussion about future plans. We were delighted to have Dame Frances Clode with us at this meeting.

AREA 2 - Mrs A. Tyler - East Midlands Counties

In 1985 we completed the formation of WVS/WRVS Associations in every District within the County of Nottinghamshire. May I use "The News" to extend my thanks to everyone who has worked so hard and happily to bring this about. Our final project is the City of Nottingham and I am delighted to report that a former colleague of mine from my days as County Organiser has agreed to give us her help in the formation of the last WVS/WRVS Committee. Mrs Hilda Smith has just retired from the position of City Organiser for Nottingham and we are more than fortunate to recruit her help. We did, however, lose a great helper in Area Office - Diane Brammer. Diane was a tower of strength to us all and her helpfulness was given with such happiness it inspired everyone who came in contact with her. Thank you for all you did, Diane.

LEICESTERSHIRE -

Mrs Helena Cooper - Meet for coffee mornings but are rather concerned about the distribution of the WRVS News and wonder whether it would be possible for it to be posted in the same envelope as the Association News as they would like to be sure that every member receives a copy. Outings are arranged and one of them was to Windsor.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE - Miss M. Lovett - Bassetlaw Branch

A meeting was held at the home of Mrs J. Moore of Spital Farm, Blyth, on Thursday, 17th October 1985 when members were entertained by a demonstration on "The Decorations make the Cake" by Mrs E. Banks.

BROXTOWE BRANCH

A Cheese and Wine Party was held at Eastwood Age Concern Hall to raise funds for the Branch on 6th December. Mrs Dorothy Smith, the Chairman of the Branch was awarded the Evening Post's Citizen of the Month for December for outstanding service to the community. The members were the guests of the Lord Mayor, Councillor David Tongue and the Lady Mayoress when they visited the Council House on Thursday, January 16th 1986.

ASHFIELD BRANCH

A Christmas Dinner at the Mansfield Technical College was enjoyed by members. The Dinner was prepared and served by the students of the Catering Department. A meeting was held in Kirkby-in-Ashfield in November when Mrs Butler gave a talk on Horoscopes.

## AREA 2 - East Midlands Counties (continued)

### GEDLING BRANCH

An AGM was held at the People's Centre, Arnold, in December. The Christmas Lunch was held at Puchinello's, Forman Street, Nottingham. A Coffee Morning was held at the home of the Chairman, Mrs E. Flowerdew to raise Branch funds.

### RUSHCLIFFE BRANCH

A Coffee morning was held at the Willow Tree, West Bridgford on Thursday, 5th September, when the speaker was Mr David Jackson, the landlord of The Bell Inn, the oldest inn in Nottingham, and we heard an entertaining account of its history. Members were invited to make a date for a conducted tour of the caverns of the inn and this is to be followed by a lunch. A further Coffee Morning was held at the Willow Tree on Thursday, 14th November 1985. This was a social occasion with a raffle to raise Branch funds. On Wednesday, 6th December members enjoyed a delightful Christmas luncheon at the Clarendon College Catering Department.

### MANSFIELD BRANCH

The Mansfield WVS/WRVS Association held a social occasion on Monday, 13th January when a lunch attended by some 25 members took place at 7 North Park by the kindness of Mrs E. Ball, the Mansfield Books on Wheels Organiser. The event was organised by the Mansfield Association Secretary, the Rev. W. Porter.

We regret to inform you of the deaths of two loyal members, Mrs Kathleen Hales of West Bridgford who was the Treasurer of the Darby and Joan Club and Miss Ruth Derry who was a helper at her local Lunch Club. Both were active members to the end.

### NEWARK - Mrs J.R. Burgin, Chairman

A very successful coffee morning was held at the WRVS Office in November when about 18 members attended our first and very successful luncheon at Kirroge's Newark on Tuesday, 18th February when 29 of our members had an excellent meal. We were delighted to have as our guest the Mayoress, Councillor Mrs Dobson and our Local Organiser, Mrs P. Mumby was also present as were some of our long-serving members. We are hoping to draw up a programme, which, when complete will be sent to all our members asking them to support us at the various functions. We hope these will include talks from the Fire Service and Police as well as a coach trip, etc.

UP-DATE - gleaned from a Narrative Report. On Tuesday, 25th June, a meeting was held at the Sutton office to start a branch in Ashfield and Mrs Knighton of Selston agreed to be Secretary. She has now more than 20 paid-up members and various outings have been taking place which have been enjoyed by all the members.

### HOME COUNTIES/ANGLIA DIVISION - AREA 1

#### Northamptonshire - Mrs A. Perkins MBE

We would like to report a busy and interesting year with coffee mornings and three luncheons - Spring, Autumn and Christmas. We were delighted to welcome our Chairman, Mrs H. Foster OBE, to our Autumn lunch and in response to her appeal for the Chairman's Benevolent Trust we are very pleased that at our Christmas luncheon members arrived with gifts they had made for the stall. As a consequence we were able to send £40 to this appeal. At our Christmas luncheon we were very pleased to welcome Lady Hesketh. We have had 12 new members enrolled during 1985 making a total of 42 at present as we were very sorry to lose one of our founder members. We hope that some of our members will be able to attend the Annual General Meeting on the 3rd June 1986.

#### HERTFORDSHIRE (Gleaned from a Narrative Report)

In the summer holiday period staff problems always exercise us. No sooner does one put down the phone on one re-arrangement of rotas than it rings again with another. But we have found that members who have retired from regular duty are sometimes happy to put on a tabard now and again to fill in and enjoy meeting again friends they may have made in Tea Bars and other schemes. They are invited, too, to any parties or "get-togethers" that we have, and we all benefit from talking to them and learning from their experience. It is for this reason that it seems a pity that the WVS/WRVS Association feel it is wise to

## Home Counties/Anglia Division (continued)

exclude the active members. So much useful discussion could take place between the past and present Organisers to the benefit of both, as it would surely interest the retired members to hear of current trends.

### AREA 3 - East Anglia (Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk)

Mrs E.D. Claydon

September 1985 report, unfortunately received after the November 1985 issue had gone to press.

New membership is now a "trickle". I have found that, in some parts of the Counties, potential do not want to join or form Branches and attend Branch functions because they do not want to feel old and attend functions for "geriatrics". I have attended one Branch function where the age differential ranged from 40s to the 90-plus. They stick to the rules. Everybody has worked with WRVS for a minimum of 5 years, nobody holds an HQ appointment. Most of them are still working. They have a quarterly lunch/meeting in a small hotel. They "take over" the hotel bar before lunch! They bring friends who become members. The lunch is super and the noise/atmosphere fantastic. This same Branch organised a trip to a "Stately Home" in the summer, 52 members and their husbands went. Can't we do more to encourage this "Wide span" age group membership?

### January 1986 Report - ESSEX

Our Southend Branch has held meetings which included an "Out of the Hat" afternoon - members picking a subject out of a hat and having to speak on it for 5 minutes! The mind "boggles" but I am told it was hilarious. As was another meeting when members related their "unforgettable moments" - something that would always live with them. They have also had a speaker from a Home for disabled persons and, in typical sympathy, collected a huge box of groceries for the Home for Christmas. An antique dealer spoke to them and valued some of the members' most precious possessions.

In Maldon, the Association members and the District WRVS members joined together for a Christmas luncheon. The older Association members were very happy to talk to the younger, active WRVS members.

Colchester held a Christmas luncheon which 18 members attended and in January 20 members visited the local pantomime and got "stage recognition". This Branch reports on being involved in checking-up on elderly members needing support and visiting.

### NORFOLK

Great Yarmouth, having had an "outing" to Sandringham in the summer, recently held their quarterly luncheon/meeting which was attended by 52 members. They had a Sales Table of produce to raise money for the Benevolent Trust and have presented the Trust with a cheque for £62 raised by the produce stall, a sponsored walk by two members and a granny doing the jobs her five grandchildren didn't want to do during the Christmas holidays and charging them 5p - 10p a job! What a sign of the times - but money for the Trust. The highlight of the luncheon was the presentation of WVS Long Service Medals to five Association members by the Area Organiser. Members were interested to see the display of a WVS Medal, on a maroon velvet cushion flanked by sprigs of rosemary and ivy with a "history" of the Medal beautifully printed on a standing board behind the cushion.

### SOUTH EAST DIVISION - Area 1 - Miss M.T. Cooke MBE

#### East and West Kent, Surrey and East Sussex

A Buffet Lunch was held in a member's house in Canterbury in October and enjoyed by all those present.

#### WEST KENT

Members attended a Buffet Lunch in Sevenoaks in December and were pleased to welcome Mrs Anne Barnes, County Organiser, who gave an interesting talk on the up to date work of WRVS.

#### SURREY

##### Woking

The Annual Luncheon was held in October and much enjoyed. This Branch produced simple accounts at their AGM - a good example to all!

## SOUTH EAST DIVISION - Area 1 (continued)

### GUILDFORD

Held a Coffee Morning and Bring and Buy in a member's home in Bramley in the Autumn.

### EAST SUSSEX

This County is having a membership drive and hope to start two new branches.

### BRIGHTON

Regular meetings continue and are much enjoyed.

### EASTBOURNE

Held a successful Christmas Lunch. Mrs Pearson who has organised this branch very ably is retiring and will be succeeded by Mrs Hanchett.

### HOVE

A member reports: On the 12th December 1985 the Hove Branch held a very enjoyable Christmas tea for their members in the local Parish Church Hall. 40 members attended and were all pleased to meet up again with old friends. There was an interesting talk by one of our members who went to China prior to the present day "easier" travel restrictions and had several amusing incidents to relate. She thoroughly enjoyed the experience and would, finance allowing, love to go again and recommended the country as friendly and beautiful. We had to cancel our proposed trip to Hever Castle in August - it was not realised that so many members would be unable to come as grandchildren descended on them for the holidays. Maybe it was just as well as it turned out to be one of the wettest summer days - among many! Our next trip will be to Chartwell, probably at the end of April (when winter rates still apply!) so this is something for us all to look forward to. Many thanks to Mrs Hooper and Mrs Park for all their work in organising such a happy afternoon.

## SOUTH EAST DIVISION - Area 2

### HAMPSHIRE - Mrs M. Albrow

I am sad and sorry to have to report the recent death of two of your members. Miss G.M. Greenfield of Winchester died in October 1985 having come into Hampshire from Woking, Surrey, less than a year ago. Mrs E. Dunster another of our Hampshire members who has given over 40 years service to WVS/WRVS.

The Hampshire Branch held a very enjoyable pre-Christmas lunch in the New Forest when the guest speaker was Mrs Claire Bassett who spoke of her experiences in the USA on a Churchill Fellowship. We were pleased to welcome Mrs Joan Kirby, Joint County Organiser and Mrs Monica Gomm, SE 2 Area Organiser; also Mrs E.M. Adie, a member of the WVS/WRVS Association Committee. We were all very sorry that our other Joint County Organiser, Mrs Doreen Simpkins was unable to be present owing to a car accident in which both she and her husband were badly injured. 28 members attended and preliminary arrangements were made for the next Reunion to take place at Peter Symonds College, Winchester, at the end of February and the AGM at the end of May at our Annual Garden Party.

### WEST SUSSEX - Miss Daphne Yardley

In June, Mrs Marjorie BEM, retired as County Representative for the Association and I (Miss Daphne Yardley) have taken over this responsibility. Chichester District keep a very kindly eye on their members and hold occasional Coffee Mornings. For the past two years the Annual Luncheon for the County has been held there. Arun District has by far the largest membership. They aim to hold social events in different parts of the District on a regular basis. Since the last Association News they have held a Harvest Luncheon at Bognor and a pre-Christmas get-together at Rusting. Both occasions were well-attended. Sick members receive a "get well" card and visits where possible and all members receive a Christmas card. A representative from the Association attended the Luncheon held for serving members of WRVS during National Members Week. The selected member thoroughly enjoyed herself, felt it was an honour to be chosen and loved being with the WRVS members.

SOUTH WEST DIVISION - Mrs K. Barker BEM - Avon,  
Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol City.

AREA 1.

A Question of Life? Or Death?

During the past many months a quantity of knitted goods, vests, tops, Afghans, also little cotton frocks, have been despatched from Avon County for delivery to Ethiopia. Old People's Clubs, Luncheon Clubs and many members have been busily employed in Knitting Parties, and black plastic bags containing these goods are frequently delivered. On one occasion a huge parcel was opened and found to contain a quantity of objects which could only be described as "jumble" - quite unsuitable for our purpose. It was hastily repacked and carried downstairs to the Clothing Department where it was thought it could earn a few coppers from the "Rag and Bone" man. On the way a young man in khaki was seen standing at the front door, obviously from the Artillery Barracks opposite. "Could we help?", we asked. Very sheepishly he replied, "Had we any rags to spare". With delight we handed over the bag of rubbish. When we asked, "Why did he want rags?" he replied: "We want to clean our guns!".

GLOUCESTERSHIRE - Mrs J. Sell

From a membership of 140 exactly half of our members replied that they would be coming to our Autumn get-together. Coffee was served at 11 am, general chatter until 12 o'clock when Mrs Morris, County Organiser, gave a short talk about the re-dedication service in Tewkesbury Abbey for the members who had been able to attend. A ploughman's lunch and mince pie and cream, plus a glass of wine was enjoyed and served by Cheltenham E.S. team. During our short meeting for announcements and news it was stated that the Gloucester Association had made and sent to the Save the Children Fund 1,177 vests, 795 jerseys, 554 cotton frocks, 217 blankets and that we still wanted items to send. We had a most interesting demonstration and talk on the art of basket making by Mrs Wynter. After lots of goodbyes and promises to meet again in June we left for home by 3 pm. The new Newsheet was handed out to members.

Abbey Service. Many letters and phone calls were received from members of the Association saying how very much they had enjoyed the Service and that they put on their uniforms again and felt so proud and it made them feel a "somebody".

WRVS Members' Week at the Gloucester Guild Hall - the Association were invited to have a stall which was of interest to most people and some new members were enrolled.

HQ Meeting June 3rd. We hope to hire a bus so that many members can attend.

SOUTH WEST DIVISION - AREA 2

Miss M. Scott - Cornwall, N & S Devon, Plymouth City, Somerset

Since this time last year a few "moves" have taken place:

CORNWALL

Now showing interest and although slow, we now have two new life members, both living in Newquay. This will, I hope, encourage others to join the Association.

PLYMOUTH

This city showing interest and trying hard to recruit new members.

DEVON

Two small "get-togethers" have taken place, one in South Devon hosted by Mrs P. Hamilton, much chat and laughter, in September. Then in December, Exeter had a Coffee and Mince Pie Morning - again much chat. We are hoping for a County Meeting in the Spring.

SOMERSET

Now settled down under the new leadership of Mrs Barbara Flinn who has taken on the care of the Association in this County, has several group meetings arranged for the Spring.

All County Organisers and District Organisers have up-to-date lists of Association Members in their own local areas thus helping to keep contact.

AREA REPRESENTATIVES (Continued)

MIDLANDS

Area 1 Mrs W. Pengilly,

Area 2 Mrs A. Tyler,

Area 3

HOME COUNTIES/ANGLIA

Area 3 Mrs E. Claydon,

SOUTH EAST

Area 1 Miss M.T. Cooke MBE,

SOUTH WEST

Area 1 Mrs K. Barker,

Area 2 Miss M. Scott,

WALES

Mrs L.M. Brotherton,

SCOTLAND

Chairman - Scottish Section

Mrs A.P. Hart,

## AREA REPRESENTATIVES

(Ex-officio members of the Committee)

### LONDON

North Area Mrs M. Downing BEM,

South East Area Mr E.G. Block MBE,

North East Area Mrs L. Millington,

South West Area Mrs M. Forsdick MBE,

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 B. Burkett,

Area 3 Mrs P. James MBE,

Area 4 Mrs L. Ziegler MBE,

RECKON NOT YEARS

Reckon not years  
But love outpoured; true service done,  
Vision, Endeavour, Victories won,  
Good seed well sown, great tasks begun,  
God's Blessing with each setting sun.

Reckon not years  
But light of love in children's eyes,  
Home's sacred joys and ministries;  
All gracious, fair and beautiful things,  
The gladness of a heart that sings;  
Count common days with mercies crowned,  
Life's desert ways made "hallowed ground",  
Count shining honour, high ideals,  
And duty's challenging appeals;  
Great moments when the soul is stirred  
By some uplifting, brave, true word;  
Count days enriched by hallowed pain,  
And tears which cleanse the soul from stain;  
Count goodness, freedom, friendship, song,  
And life through faith in God made strong;  
Reckon not years.

Kendred Smith