



WVS/WRVS ASSOCIATION



*Newsletter No 40
Spring 1994*

WVS/WRVS ASSOCIATION

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Chairman's letter.

Dear Member,



I am sure that every year I notice when the days begin to lengthen, this year I seem to welcome the timid signs more than usual. I fear that many have suffered, some considerably, from the floods and gales of the past months. Our village has been saved from serious flooding by vast tankers pumping day and night. I have to say that never before have I seen my pathetic wallflowers "treading water" !

We celebrated the 90th birthday of our Founder Chairman, Miss Kathleen Halpin, CBE, with a buffet lunch prior to the Committee meeting in November. The Chairman of WRVS and the Chief Executive and nearly all the Association Divisional Representatives were present.

But celebrations play only a small part and the daily work continues. Many of the loyal Headquarters staff have been ill during the winter months but others have filled the gaps.

With the support of both the WRVS Chairman and the Chief Executive I continue to strive for a satisfactory outcome to the legal position of the Association within the framework of WRVS.

I look forward to reading all about the interesting activities organised by the Branches and Groups and also to seeing many members at our AGM in London in June. Our Speaker in the morning will be one of our members.

I wish you all a happy, warm, dry summer - there should be no hose-pipe ban this year.

Elizabeth Hayden

News from the Divisions

Readers might be interested to know how many members there are in each County. The total number of members as at October 1st 1993 was 4565. The numbers in brackets below (), indicate the membership per County at that time. It is not intended, of course, to be in any way competitive since some Counties have much greater populations than others. However, it may spur us all to aim to recruit more members in the future.



NORTH EAST DIVISION

Northumberland (31) -Tyne & Wear (126) Div.Rep. Mrs S.McCormack BEM

Groups in both counties have met monthly. A carol service and buffet lunch was held in December at which a warm welcome was given to the Lady Mayoress of Newcastle, Mrs Duff, Divisional Director, WRVS County Organiser and the Association Hon. Editor. (The editor can vouch for the success of this very happy occasion).

Durham (40) Cleveland (74) N. Yorks (188) Div. Rep. Mrs R. Thompson OBE

The 8th Annual lunch was held, for the first time, in Middlesborough, kindly arranged by Mrs K Bragazzi and her helpers.. This group was offered the facilities of the School of Nursing at South Cleveland Hospital for the occasion, where the Chairman of the South Tees Acute Hospitals Trust, formerly Meals on Wheels Organiser for Gt Ayton, Yorks., thanked members for their work for the hospitals. They were delighted also to welcome Mrs Claydon, our Chairman.

In the autumn issue the editor regrets that she got this group and the Darlington group mixed up. Sincere apologies to Mrs Bragazzi..

Mrs Thompson writes that the weather in the north east has been "truly awful", but Christmas lunches and regular meetings have gone ahead in most groups. While in Australia recently she was delighted to hear from Mrs Jenny MacLennan, a WRVS member, to tell her about Miss Kathleen Halpin's 90th birthday celebrations in London in November and bring her up to date with WRVS changes.

The Darlington group have sent a long interesting report. In June they visited Whitworth Hall, home of Bobby Shaftoe, where they saw the large herd of deer. The hall has only been open to the public for 2 years and they thoroughly enjoyed their visit. They bought home-brewed beer and wine made in the cellars of the Hall. Twelve members attended the Divisional A.G.M. and helped by meeting the

Chairman at Darlington station. Her train was late and they rushed her to the meeting, just in the nick of time ! WRVS Divisional Office have offered them a committee room for twice yearly meetings and at the first meeting there, they arrived to find the urns of coffee made and the cups and saucers ready laid out. Such kindness should not go unrecorded. Mrs Evans says "There are advantages to being in the Association". A Christmas lunch was held in the banqueting hall of the Technical College which was much enjoyed. They record, sadly, the deaths of Mrs Pat Hea, and Mrs Rachel Chaytor, both original Food Flying Squad volunteers who gave long service to WRVS.

In York several members attended the funeral of Mrs Sevasti Hebblethwaite, a loyal and dependable member since 1968, who died very suddenly, but peacefully, on her birthday. The editor did a Meals round with her for several years and she, and many York members, will miss her very much.

South (41) and West Yorks (62) Div. Rep. Mrs L. Ziegler MBE

No report received.

Humber side (120) Div. Rep. Mrs A.M. Wilson

The two halves of the county, north and south of the Humber Bridge have had luncheons. Pocklington take over a pub dining room for their monthly meetings and find it an excellent informal arrangement. Mrs Wilson was invited by the County Organiser to lunch at the County Office and to their Christmas lunch.

At a presentation at Headquarters on October 15th, Mrs Eileen Spence was presented with her General Service Medal for Northern Ireland, by the Rev. James Harkness, Chaplain to the Forces. Mrs Toulson, Mr Burton and Mr Mellor were present at the ceremony.

Mrs Wilson says that new members come in slowly, but as District Organisers are now taking more interest in the Association they hope to get some "younger" retired members soon.

NORTH WEST DIVISION

Cumbria (20) Lancashire (45) Div. Rep. Mrs M. McCambridge BEM

Catering Colleges seem to be popular for meals as they are good value. Lancashire group enjoy their meals together. They had one at Filde Catering College in January and a Christmas meal at the Scholars Restaurant, in Blackburn. Mrs McCambridge says their next meeting is in Blackpool in March. (I wonder if they will go on the new Big-Dipper ? Ed.)

North and South Greater Manchester (87) Mrs E. Collier

In Sale, they have good support from the WRVS Organiser, Mrs Brocklebank which is good to hear. She attends as many of their meetings as she can. The group has met monthly, except during last August, but members missed the get-together and ask if next August they can have a meeting. In October Mrs Tedham reported the sudden death of Mrs Edith Green Wood and after attending her funeral they gave a donation to her favourite charity.

There was a good idea for November's meeting. Six members each brought along an item of memorabilia and talked about it for five minutes. Mrs Grimshaw has retired as leader of this group, to become the "speaker-finder" and Mrs Tedham has taken over. In December they had a D.I.Y. Christmas buffet. This group braved the elements to turn out in good numbers for January and February meetings and are to be congratulated in the way they support their group. Both Bury and Altrincham groups continue to meet regularly and went out together for Christmas lunches.

Merseyside (136) Cheshire (136) Derbyshire (44) Mrs Pat Linton MBE

The Wirral branch, which meets each month for a pub lunch, also enjoyed an outing to the "Dancing Waters" at the Stapely Water Gardens on a beautiful summers day. Their AGM was held at Hume Hall, Port Sunlight. Mrs E.D. Claydon was in the Chair and Mrs Mary Preston, one-time Div. Rep. for West Region was given a gift on her retirement. Forty members attended the Christmas lunch. The very able and helpful treasurer to this branch, Mrs Dorothy Whittingham, while attending the Association Committee Meeting at Headquarters last November, unfortunately fell while leaving the Ladies Room at the end of the meeting and fractured her hip. She spent three weeks in King's College Hospital, visited very kindly by London WRVS members and she is now home and making excellent progress.

A report from the Chester branch assures the editor that in Chester, no member is forgotten and the membership is thriving. They have had a very full programme of afternoon teas, a Christmas lunch, theatre visits, trips to places of interest and "lively discussions". We are not told what was discussed; it would be interesting to know what branches talk about when they meet! Mrs Fallon says that the success of the branch is entirely due to the unstinting work of Mrs H.M. Jones and her helpers.

Staffordshire (34) Shropshire (12) (Appointment Pending)

No report received

CENTRAL DIVISION

Lincs (60) Notts (396) Leics (105) Div.Rep Mrs D. Martin

The Leicester branch (Mrs W. Andrews) really remembers its Members. Each one receives a card on her birthday and flowers are sent to Members in hospital. Coffee mornings are held each month and other trips regularly enjoyed. The pre Christmas lunch has proved so popular that a Spring lunch is being arranged. Membership of this branch continues to expand and a gift of money is given regularly to the Leicestershire WRVS Children's Holiday Scheme.

Mrs Martin writes that in all three counties Christmas get-togethers were enjoyed and that now, although a few pounds heavier, the New Year Association business is in full swing with coffee mornings, outings and visiting housebound members. A "three Counties lunch" is being held in April.

For the Rushcliffe Branch, Mrs Loach writes with the sad news of the deaths of Joyce Hall, Irene McQuire, Nora Moore and Joan Parc who all gave unstinted service to WRVS. Another member, Miss Lovett reached her 90th birthday and enjoyed a birthday party with the committee. But soon after this happy occasion Miss Lovett fell and broke her hip and is now an invalid. She is well known for being fiercely independent and we wish her a speedy recovery. The fit members of this branch have continued their monthly coffee mornings and have a lunch and an outing planned for the summer.

West Midlands (107) Div. Rep. Mrs J. Smith BEM

No report received.

Cambridgeshire (134) Northants (65) Div.Rep. Mrs B. Titcomb.

It is good to know that the Shrewsbury WRVS Office is kindly posting the WRVS News to Mrs Davenport, BEM (now living in Wellingborough). Mrs Davenport is a one-time County Organiser for Shropshire who was not getting any news of WRVS and felt cut-off. "Thank you" Shrewsbury!

Huntingdon (Mrs Watson), enjoyed a talk on Norfolk and in November held a buffet lunch shared by guests from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough groups.

Mrs Charnley's group in Cambridge visited the new Manor House Museum at Bury St Edmunds in September and had a Christmas lunch, described as "a wonderful spread". In February they had a talk on tapestry weaving, from Mrs Tebbit.

Peterborough group had a visit from their Crime Prevention Officer in September and in November the WRVS came to their aid when they were without their usual meeting place. Looking towards the future ! they had a talk on "The Third Age".

Warwickshire (79)

Div. Rep. Mrs J. Rose

No report received.

Norfolk (178) Suffolk (61)

Mrs M. Moss MBE

Mrs Moss writes that they all enjoyed hosting the Norwich AGM. She says it just proves that many of us are still active enough to direct traffic, arrange flowers and arrange a good lunch. She also asks if we have all seen "George" in the Colman's TV advertisements.

The report gives several suggestions put forward by Branch leaders at a recent meeting. They have suggested "pairing" towns and villages where numbers are small. Also having the occasional meeting at a members' home where members are few or they are disabled for any reason. Other suggestions were shared transport and "Bring and Share" lunches.

Ipswich have had monthly lunches at the YWCA.

Great Yarmouth had a coffee morning at the Pier Hotel where the 1994 programme was planned. This group has found that coffee mornings are more popular than lunches or more formal meetings, with older members. There was a real "buckets and spades" occasion in North Norfolk when they had a larger than usual number of members at their annual Beach Picnic and Cromer Pier Show. (We wonder how big a sandcastle they made and if they decorated it with shells or flags? Ed.). Tea and coffee were served from the Branch Leader's beach hut and the event was so popular that some Suffolk members have asked if they can join in in 1994. Other members had a mystery tour to Wroxham and the Broads and a cream tea.

From Suffolk Mrs Laverton has sent us a copy of a new WRVS Newsletter issued by Babergh District WRVS which shows how the WRVS there are coming to the aid of the Association. It is a most interesting and enterprising newsletter. The Babergh District Organiser has found room in it for an article on the local group of the Association, its aims and its welcome to new members. Perhaps other District Organisers would be interested to mention the Association in any Newsletters they issue. Apparently all the costs have been covered by advertising and the advertisements are interesting in themselves. They include a house cleaning service, a curtain exchange service, a holiday tours firm, a country pub for meals etc.

SOUTH EAST DIVISION**Oxfordshire (27) Bucks (7) Berkshire (28)** Div. Rep. Mrs M. Gordon

No report received.

Bedfordshire ((39) Essex (154) Herts (32) Div. Rep. Mrs J. Callaway

A letter from Castle Point reports some successful meetings and what they refer to as a "special" Christmas party. This sounded very special, for it went from sherry, fruit cup, Turkey, Ham, Sausages and jacket potatoes to a cake made by a

husband and wife team, followed by coffee and mints. The "special" point was that this was all a D.I.Y. affair and gifts costing £1 each were "swapped". Their guest of honour was Mrs Pat Copping, who says in a letter that although the attendance was small, "enthusiasm was their key word".

In November, they went to see "The Invisible Man" but members were "visible" and this was well supported. This group are helping with Market Research.

Hertfordshire members had a tea party at Mrs Sewell's home at which WRVS Representatives brought them news of WRVS activities in the County.

They heard from Mrs Eleanor McLeod in Sydney, Australia, who lay in bed with an injured back during the terrifying bush fires as neighbours prepared to drive her to safety. Fortunately the conflagration was halted just five miles away.

Greater London Div. Rep. Mrs A. Christophersen

No report received.

London S.E. (42) Div. Rep. Mrs G. Block MBE

No report received.

London S.W. (13) Div. Rep. Mrs J. Sanderson

No report received.

London N.E./City (42). Mrs W Taylor DL

No report received.

London N.W. (91) Mrs D. Stevens

No report received.

Surrey (193) E. and W. Kent (99) E. Sussex (199) W. Sussex (105) Mrs G. Bright
In Hove, nearly all members attended a Christmas lunch. The proceeds of the raffle have gone to Oaklands, the WRVS Residential Club in Hove.

West Kent; a Charity Bridge Drive is arranged for April. They hope to bring a 'few notes' towards a new piano for Mt Ephraim House, a WRVS residential home.

Surrey; Mrs Toulson, WRVS Chairman kindly lent Guildford her 16C barn for a Tea Party. During the afternoon she dropped in for tea and met the members.

East Sussex. Meetings are held at Eastbourne District Office every month, with quizzes and competitions, money raised going towards 'Vital Ambulance Equipment'. Coach trips here are arranged for the mornings as the Company are able to give cheaper rates between school bus schedules. Miss Alston, County Representative, has been invited to speak about the Association at WRVS meetings.

West Sussex. In spite of floods, small groups have met.

Hampshire (101) Isle of Wight (19) (Appointment Pending)

No report received

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

Hereford & Worcester (75) Gloucester (155) Div Rep. Mrs J Connop

Mrs Mercer reports that in September 21 members attended a tea party in the Over Sixties' Club in Worcester, where they were able to meet friends. This clubroom looks out onto the Cathedral grounds in the centre of Worcester. It was Mrs Connop's first chance to meet this group, following their transfer from the West Midlands to the South West Division and she was able to get to know the members and bring them news of the Association. Mrs Gould, who cooks for the club served an excellent high tea which they all enjoyed.

A meeting was held in October for Cheltenham members. The speaker was Mr Stuart Hobbs, manager of a "Care and Repair" firm in Cheltenham which will offer free advice to Senior Citizens on any property they may have needing repair. He showed several "before and after" slides showing the work carried out.

Mrs Connop also writes that it was pleasing to welcome several special guests to a luncheon for 81 members, on Nov. 25th in Cheltenham, especially Dame Frances Clode DBE, Association President for Gloucestershire, Miss Castle who served with WVS/WRVS overseas with responsibility for Gurkha families and also Miss Mercer, County Rep. for Malvern and Mrs Robertson-Smith. The speaker at this luncheon was Mr M. Sims, Curator of the Police Museum in Winchcombe who "gave a most interesting and gruesome talk" ! on his life as a policeman. He brought several exhibits from the museum for them to see. (Thumbscrews ? Blood-stained clothing ? Mrs Connop doesn't say. Ed.) Mr Sims had opened several similar museums overseas and is shortly to open one in Holland. This lunch was prepared by the members.

Somerset (60) Devon (91) Cornwall (40) Div Rep. Miss M Scott

In October, Mrs Jean Bent gave a most informative talk on the WRVS changes. Mrs Scott says that they are recovering from a very wet winter with flooding, and fallen trees making travel impossible. She is sad to report the death of Mrs Ann Courage, County Organiser for Somerset. Also a kind friend to members in Devon, Mrs Vivien Brenan, one time County Hospitals Organiser. Many members in Devon attended her funeral.

Avon (88) Wiltshire (72) Dorset (99) (Appointment pending)

No report received.

WALES

Clwyd (98) Gwynedd (11) Powys (6) Div Rep Mrs E Edwards BEM

Forty-five members of the Clwyd branch attended a meeting at Colwyn Bay, Mrs Guest greeting the retiring Mayor, Mrs Ena Wynne. Each member was asked to say what jobs they were still doing, or had done and why they had joined WVS/WRVS. This was an interesting exercise since they found that some members had done duty in other parts of the country. Most had joined through encouragement from another member or a neighbour.

Mrs Wells showed members her MBE medal and Mrs Platt recited two monologues about "Old Age". Mrs Edwards spoke about the Association. Cards were signed, one for Miss Halpin's birthday and one for Mrs Brotherton. She also received a small gift of M and S vouchers as a way of saying thanks for all the work she had undertaken as Representative for Wales. A vote of thanks was given by Mrs Margaret Rogers to all who had contributed.

A report from Mrs Edwards which came just too late for our last issue tells of a spring coach trip she enjoyed, with 23 members from Colwyn, when they went to Rhuddlan with delightful views of this famous castle. They had a super lunch and then returned to Colwyn Bay where the superb views of sea and mountains made them all appreciate their lovely country. Mrs Edwards and the Colwyn group at that time reported that they were keen to host a bigger Welsh meeting later.

The Wrexham group met in November for a bar lunch and welcomed Mrs Brenda Williams who took over as leader from Mrs Latham at the Christmas lunch held in December. Everyone thanked Mrs Latham for her work and devotion to duty and a presentation was made to her. Thanks and a gift were also given to Mrs Olwen Edwards who had helped Mrs Latham with secretarial duties for many years.

Several Wrexham members attended the funeral of Mrs Sybil Williams who had been District Organiser for several years.

Ruthin and Colwyn members have lunches arranged for the New Year.

Rhyl members "ate, sang and danced with gusto" at the WRVS Club's Christmas dinner at Craig Fechan.

Dyfed (39) West, Mid & South Glamorgan (52) Gwent (49) Div. Rep. Mrs D. Travis BEM

Perhaps the report from the new Abergavenny group, formed only two years ago gives us all encouragement if we are trying to set up new groups, and certainly shows the true spirit of the Association. Mrs Stinchcombe writes that their membership of ten are all dedicated members who have worked hard in the past and now have pleasure in keeping in touch and sharing news. They meet quarterly in each other's homes for coffee but now occasionally treat themselves to lunch together, those with transport taking those without. They hope for day trips this summer.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Guernsey (29)

Assoc. Rep. Mrs E. Robilliard

Mrs Florence Wilson has written, remembering the post-war years when many islanders who had suffered under 5 years of German Occupation needed help. She tells of the great need for WVS help in those days, which she found when she returned to the island after the war. Badly needed clothing was sent from Headquarters and this consignment included lovely soft blankets made up, at Headquarters, from knitted squares, which were the result of a competition in "Woman" magazine. She says she still uses one, daily, to keep her knees warm !.

Jersey (15)

Assoc. Rep. Mrs D. Jennings

A report from Jersey came just too late for the Autumn Newsletter, but it was good to hear from them. We are putting their News here, even if it is a little out-of-date. Mrs Jennings took over from Mrs Dora Corner in March '93 and writes that she was pleased to entertain members to lunch at her home in June on a lovely summer's day. In July a farewell party was held for Mrs Corner, who was returning to England to live. This event was organised by Mrs Ruth Fisher, Founder of the WRVS in Jersey. A glass dish, engraved with the WRVS badge and that of the Bailiwick of Jersey was presented and all members wished Mrs Corner God-Speed.

This group had two other proud moments during the year. Mrs Peggy Morden MBE was awarded a third bar to her Long Service Medal, and an account of her 55 year's service was reported in the Jersey Evening Post. (Mrs Morden has sent an anecdote on "Keeping warm in Korea" which we have put separately, below.) Also Mrs Kathleen Broughton, who still runs the WRVS car service on the island, gained her degree with the Open University. Congratulations to her!

A later report tells of a pre-Christmas lunch at which a new Life Member, Mrs Pauline Taylor, was welcomed. Even in Jersey, which many of us imagine an idyllic isle where the sun always shines, we learn from Mrs Jennings that this winter they have battled against very wet, cold weather, and Asian Flu, but in spite of all, several of them have helped the WRVS to move premises, due to re-development.

SCOTLAND (521)

Chairman Mrs R. Nicolson

For her yearly report to our Newsletter, Mrs Nicolson has sent a copy of the Scottish Newsletter, an annual production, duplicated on their new machine, It cost them £560 pounds of hard earned fund-raising to get it.

Highland had an outing to Dornoch with a delicious lunch. The editor of the Northern Times was the speaker and brought the work of the WRVS into his speech. After a walk in the hotel grounds and a group photograph, they heard a report of the Scottish Association AGM held in Dundee. Their October meeting was marred by

rain, gales and floods and there was some intrepid driving at Dores by a Foyers member. This bad weather reduced the attendance but was enjoyed by those who got through.

Aberdeen too has had bad weather but the group "continue to thrive in spite of it", with talks on the Amazon, the Aberdeen theatre, WRVS changes and a visit to Arbuthnot and the memorial centre dedicated to the memory of Lewis Grassie Gibbon.

Your editor is always delighted by Scottish expressions. We hear that this group had "a dander up Donside in August" and a talk on "Oor Ain Tongue". They also have some active knitters who have been knitting blankets, capes, jumpers and vests.

It is a sad story from Moray where members are getting fewer. In June ten members enjoyed an afternoon at Fyvie Castle but their March meeting ended as soon as it began as they had to evacuate the building because of smoke billowing from it. However, with September came a feeling of optimism with a good attendance. They say "if we have no rain on Thursday afternoons, the branch will survive !" Mrs Nicolson adds a word of advice to them, saying "Really, ... to set the place on fire is really going too far to light up your meetings!"

Central had a mystery tour in pouring rain in May which lived up to its name, as they lost their way, arriving late for their lunch at Falkland Palace.

Headquarters and Lothian have had average attendances of 30 for meetings but an outing to Scone Palace had to be cancelled through lack of support. Two members proved what a small world we live in. On a coach trip from Scotland to Athens they met a Mrs Munro, one-time Local Organiser for Rutherglen, who now lives in Vancouver.

Scottish frugality, (or common sense?) shows in the solution they propose for outings where they cannot get a coach full enough to make an outing economically viable. They are planning an outing to Edinburgh zoo by bus, using their bus passes!

Strathclyde had an autumn meeting where each member described what they had done during the summer. One had gone to Canada, two to America and one, Mrs Main had broken her leg en route to Australia, half an hour before boarding the plane. She describes the chaos that ensued, the staff trying to find her unaccompanied luggage already in the aircraft which had to be retrieved, and her eventually resuming her journey several days later with her leg in plaster, taking up three aircraft seats to keep the leg raised.

Tayside and Dundee group visited the Observatory at Baglay Hill.

The Scottish AGM will be in Aberdeen on 14th April 1994.

OVERSEAS (13)

See inside back cover.

Letter from the Editor



Dear Member,

Reading our Chairman's letter, I realise how lucky we, in our village, have been I am so sorry for those who have been flooded or had heavy snowfalls. We have only a dusting of snow and no floods. Although the Derwent does flood regularly, this village is on higher ground. I hope, for all who have suffered a worse winter, that spring will bring you better weather. Our snowdrops, crocuses, irises are all out as I write this in February and they reassure us that spring is not far off.

Many of you will, with me, have been sad to hear of the sudden death of Mr Mel Calman, The Times Cartoonist who allowed us to print his cartoon without charge in our last issue. Writing in the Times, his friends say he was well known for his kindness; he certainly was to us. I think we would all like to send our sympathy to his widow.

It is now only two days from the deadline I gave in the autumn issue, for reports from the Divisions to come in, to give me time to get the copy to Headquarters. So far, I have had very few. I hope, anxiously, for a bumper post-bag in the next few days.

So far, Mrs Wilkinson from Nottingham has supplied all the cover drawings for these Newsletters as she has kindly done for this issue. We are very grateful to her. But, as with all WRVS jobs, I do not feel the work should be left to just one person. We **must** have other members good at drawing who could help and I know Mrs Wilkinson would welcome help. So, if you can draw, do send me your ideas. They should be ink drawings with spring, autumn, or the WRVS as themes. It would be so good to have funny ones too. I remember ones done in the past for WRVS by Molly Blake. So please do try! Mrs Wilkinson would love some help, although she never complains.

Finally, I am getting **very few** contributions from you all. Do ask yourselves these questions,

- "Do I enjoy the Newsletter? (Why not write saying yes or no, and why?)
- "Does it have the kind of things I want?
- "Do I want a Newsletter at all?

Do write and let me know. I will put your comments in the next issue... if I get any!

Best wishes for the spring and summer.

Ness Venables

Letters to the Editor

Pity the Poor Volunteer

From Mrs Doris Hawks. Woodbridge. Suffolk. aged 88.

In 1952, dressed in long green overcoats and berets, a group of WVS members had attended a day's lecture and lunch at Durham County Office. On the way home, gazing into a shop window at a lady's dress shop we overheard a discussion and realised it was about ourselves. "Poor old things" said the passer-by. "They must be from a home and have been given those old coats to keep them warm...." Little did the passer-by know that we had bought our WVS greatcoats, second hand for £1 each and were very proud to wear them!



The Blitz

From Mrs Joan Tees. Solihull.

"I was interested in the account of the Bootle Blitz. (Spring '93). On that night, after the All Clear we walked to the shore to see a wonderful calm sea bathed in moonlight from a full moon, then turning to see the docks and large liners silhouetted against a huge wall of flames. ..We had no public transport and no telephones. I was expecting my first child and the nursing home I was to go to had been bombed and evacuated. Fortunately they were able to reopen it before I went in later that week. My mother, who lived on the other side of Liverpool, sent my brother on his bicycle to see if we were still alive. I joined WVS in 1952 thankful that the only action we had was Civil Defence exercises."



From Mrs Barbara Flynn BEM. of Sherborne. Dorset.

"In May 1941, I worked at the Regional HQ of the Commission for Civil Defence in Manchester and after the second night of the Liverpool bombing we went over to Liverpool to set up an Emergency Headquarters. I remember the dire destruction of the City and Docks, We were billeted at Police HQ and I remember being blown out of my bed by the blast of a bomb and spending the rest of the night in conference in the War Room. Later I did a little work with WVS as a secretary to a Home Guard Battalion, before joining the ATS in 1942.

Meals on Wheels in America.

Mrs Poole, of Woolverstone, writes "I thought the WRVS might be interested to know of the knock-on effect of a trip that Carmen Reeve made on the Shotley Peninsular, all those years ago"



From a cutting from the St Mark's Church Magazine, Wake County, North Carolina.

"When did Meals on Wheels begin in North Carolina? Was it that day, in England, when Carmen Reeve first did Meals on Wheels with her sister-in-law,..(Fay Poole)..? Was it when Carmen realised there were a couple of people at Hilyer Memorial Christian Church who shared her opinion that Meals on Wheels was an idea whose time had come? Was it the day in 1974 when Carmen became the first Director of Meals on Wheels ?

Today Meals on Wheels provides 227,000 hot meals annually to more than 1,000 elderly Wake County citizens".

Keeping warm in Korea in 1950

Mrs Morden from Jersey sends two anecdotes from 1950.



She describes arriving at her office at WVS Headquarters in Tothill Street to find her desk piled high with generous cheques, all made out to the Middlesex Regiment. She immediately phoned the Barracks and told the Colonel that she thought she was "going mad". She needed an explanation. He laughed. Apparently an appeal had gone out on the Radio for donations to help supply urgently needed comforts for soldiers who had arrived in the cold of Korea, from the heat of Hong Kong and had no warm clothing. The response had been enormous. Mrs Morden's husband and his partner immediately went out to buy boots, jackets, battle dresses, pants, vests etc. and wool for the WVS knitters to supply gloves, scarves, pull-overs and balaclavas which were all immediately sent out for the troops.

She also reports from Colonel Man, DSO, OBE who wrote in 1950 to tell his wife how he was keeping warm. He was wearing boots and extra socks, thick vest and thick shirt, long woollen pants, battle dress and two pair of trousers, two pullovers, a waistcoat, a short coat and two scarves, a pair of mittens and two pairs of gloves. He added, "the wind from Siberia, the snow covered mountains, the very low temperatures were daunting. We were so grateful for the comforts sent via WVS from the people of Middlesex.

Designer wear for Arabs

From Mrs Moss, Norfolk.

The Regional Office in Leeds appealed from time to time, for special articles of clothing which were needed. This was usually for layettes etc. On one occasion they were asked to provide clothes for "Destitute Arabs". The Managing Directors of local factories were quick to respond and the Leeds Clothing Store was soon full of large boxes of new goods. Inside they found elastic sided boots, flat hats and braces. Imagine the recipients, on their camels, clad in elastic sided boots, flat hats, braces - and nothing else!

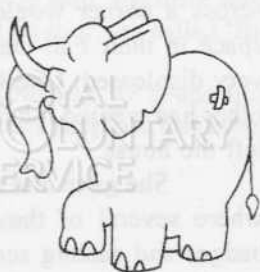


Memories

Memories of Lady Reading

From Mrs Grace Evans, Darlington

Mrs Evans, attributes some of her cake making ability over the years to Lady Reading. She had made the iced cake for a visit by Lady Reading, for the opening of a WRVS Lunch Club. Somehow Lady Reading found out she had made it and as she cut it, looking straight at Mrs Evans, she said "And God bless the hands that made it". Mrs Evans says she had never had a mishap since.



A backing problem

Miss Joyce Barker writes from Sussex....

She joined WVS in 1939 and among other jobs drove the Mobile Canteen, a trailer drawn by a large car. She says she managed going forward, but could never back it! She recalls driving over fields to gunsights, serving tea and buns to hundreds of soldiers, sausage rolls to the Home Guard and tea and sandwiches at night to Special Constables in Air Raids. When bombs fell they fed the men clearing the debris. Miss Barker still works for a trolley shop and Books on Wheels.

Trials and Tribulations

Mrs Theo Robertson writes from London...

Her main job was to give One-In Five- Talks. On one occasion she got into serious trouble when she returned to Headquarters. When telling her audience at a big Tate and Lyle factory how to prepare their "Fall-Out Room", which included filling sand bags, one of her audience remarked that they had no sand available. Thinking she had a very bright idea, she told them that they had tons of sugar and could use that. She says that when she told this to Headquarters they came down on her "like a ton of bricks". She had failed to remember that sugar is one of the most inflammable substances that there is. At one meeting at the home of two argumentative spinster sisters she caused more trouble by suggesting that their upright piano, drawn across a corner would be an excellent thing to use to make some private space in their Fall-Out Room. At this one sister was triumphant, the other very displeased. One had wanted to get rid of this piano for many years, the other had wanted it kept. Mrs Robertson said they were still arguing when she left the house.

She gave one talk at the College of Fashion in Oxford Street, London where several of the student audience came in wearing "Ban the Bomb" badges and casting scornful looks at her. However she got them on her side by asking if they had seen a recent TV programme on the One-in Five talks. It depicted two flat-mates cooking the meal, waiting for their third flatmate to arrive. When this girl arrived late she apologised by saying she had been listening to an interesting talk "given by some old trout from the WVS". Mrs Robertson told them that she was "that old Trout"! This brought the house down and the students were immediately on her side.

Don't forget.....

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The 1994 Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held at
HOLY TRINITY, BROMPTON, LONDON.**

Thursday 9th June 1994

Recipe



Liverpool Scouse.

When my Yorkshire neighbour puts her head round the door of my kitchen and I am making this she breathes in deeply and says "what a lovely smell". She enjoys it, just as I used to enjoy it when I came home from school and it was "Scouse" for dinner.

There are almost as many variations of Scouse as there are Liverpudlians. They say it came from an old seafaring recipe when dried meat and ships biscuit used to be boiled up to make a hot stew. This is the version my mother used to make, usually for Monday or Tuesday dinner when we had had a roast leg of lamb on Sunday and there was very little meat left. When times were hard, and there was no leg of lamb to use up, or only the bone with no meat left on it, it was called "Blind Scouse".

Once, when we were on a camping holiday in Norway we found frozen blocks of "Lapskaus" in the deep freeze cabinet of a grocer's shop and that evening the same heavenly smell pervaded our tent!

One bone from the Sunday Roast. (preferably leg of lamb)

The meat from the bone. (if any, cut up small)

2 Large onions. (sliced)

2 Large carrots (sliced)

1 or 2 tomatoes. (sliced)

Enough potatoes to feed the family. (sliced)

Left-over gravy if you have it. If you have no meat, a beef stock cube will help.

Vegetable stock or water.

Pepper. Salt.

Cut any meat from the bone. If you have a kitchen saw, cut the bone into two pieces. Otherwise use a large saucepan. Put in the bone, add the chopped onion, sliced carrot, the thickly sliced potatoes, (about 1/4 to 1/2 inches thick), and the tomato cut up roughly. Add the gravy which you have kept, covered, in the fridge or freezer and enough water to barely cover the ingredients. Add salt and plenty of pepper. Put on a tight lid, bring to the boil and boil gently for about 2 hours. When it is ready the potatoes should have partly disintegrated and the mixture should not be too runny. Boiling for a while without the lid will thicken it slightly. Some people cook the mixture until it resembles thick porridge, but I like it with pieces of potato still remaining. Remove the bone, check for seasoning, especially pepper, and serve.

Could we have more regional dishes please?

From a "Liverpudlian"

A Poem - for all who Care for the Elderly.

What do you see, nurses, what do you see,
What are you thinking when you look at me ?
A crabbit old woman, not very wise,
Uncertain of habits with far-away eyes, Who dribbles her
food, and makes no reply
When you say in a loud voice, "I do wish you'd try"...
Is that what you are thinking, is that what you see ?
Then open your eyes, you're not looking at me...
I'm a small child of ten with a father and mother,
Brothers and sisters who love one another.
A young girl of sixteen with wings at her feet,
Dreaming that soon now a lover she'll meet...
At twenty-five now I have young of my own,
Who need me to build a secure happy home...
At forty my young now soon will be gone
But my man stays beside me to see I don't mourn...
Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead;
I look to the future, I shudder with dread...
I'm an old woman now and nature is cruel,
Tis her jest to make old age look like a fool...
But inside this old carcass a young girl still dwells,
And now and again my battered heart swells,
I remember the jobs, I remember the pain,
And I'm loving and living life over again...
So open your eyes nurses, open and see,
Not a crabbit old woman, look closer - see *me*.



The WRVS

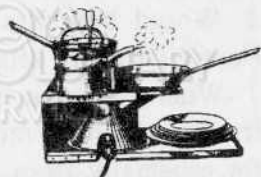
There's a splendid League of ladies who each day the whole year thro'
Are always on the lookout to see what they can do,
To try to ease the burden of anyone in need
No matter what their colour, their politics or creed.
They've got a plain green uniform for everyone to note,
But mostly just a tiny badge to wear on dress or coat, This badge is never issued till
service has been done,
That's why it's worn so proudly for each has to be won. So when I see this token as
I travel up and down, Perhaps in quiet country lanes or busy street in town,
I always pause and murmur a Thank You and God Bless
For another worthy member of the WRVS.

From Mrs Moss. Norfolk

Kitchen Prayer

*Sent in by Mrs Peggy James of Beverley.
From an American friend,*

Lord of pots and pans and things,
Since I've not time to be
A saint, by doing lovely things,
Or watching late on Thee,
Or dreaming in the dawn light,
Or storming Heaven's gates,
Make me a Saint by getting meals
And washing up the plates.



Although I must have Martha's hands
I have a Mary mind,
And when I black the boots and shoes
Thy sandals, Lord, I find.
I think of how they trod the earth,
What time I scrub the floor;
Accept this meditation, Lord'
I haven't time for more.

Comment on Obituaries !

A member has suggested that Obituaries are of more interest to members than are the Honours lists since the ordinary member knows more people likely to die than anyone likely to receive a medal. !

Result of the Quiz

Mrs Moss reports that only one member, Mrs Gladys Block sent in answers to the quiz. This was a sad, and very poor response. We wonder if perhaps members are not interested in testing their general knowledge. For those who tried it but failed to send in their answers, the correct answers were...

1. Morning Cloud.
2. Robert Browning
3. Lion and Unicorn.
4. Salisbury.
5. Perfume in Pot Pourri.
6. Adlai Stevenson.
7. Crocus.
8. Man.
9. 35 years.
10. Government Chief Whip.
11. Arrows.
12. 41.
13. January 1923.
14. Dame Frances Clode.



Some suggestions from members for future Newsletters.

- 1 Would any newly enrolled members write to tell us what they are hoping to find by joining the Association?
- 2 Would branches like their Anniversaries to be recorded Eg A Happy Birthday section when a branch reaches 10 years?
- 3 Where are you now? Enquiries from members to find one-time friends who have moved to another part of the country This was asked for especially from members who served overseas, to find retired ex-colleagues.
4. Biggest grumble from one Branch. Long lists of Obituaries of people of whom they have never heard

Enter the Editor's Competition and win a prize.

A mystery prize will be sent to the two members sending in the best articles entitled "A Memory of WVS/WRVS " The piece should be not more than 200 words long. The winner's names and entries will be printed in the next issue and their prizes will be sent to them during August. The editor's decision will be final.



All entries should reach the editor by July 31st.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE AUTUMN NEWSLETTER SHOULD REACH THE EDITOR BY AUGUST 31ST.....AT THE LATEST!

Address. Mrs N. Venables.

Overseas Members



Members have asked about Association Members living in Northern Ireland and abroad. Here is a list. We hope to hear from some of them sometime, for the Newsletter.

Mrs R.V. Griffiths. Northern Ireland.

Mrs N.K. MacDiarmid "

Mrs E. McAvoy "

Mrs A.O. Diamond "

Mrs J. Balme Canada

Mrs K. Holmes "

Mrs M. M. Banks. Spain

Miss P. Blackburn "

Mrs M.S. Cumberledge France

Mrs C. Havelock-Poole OBE "

Mrs E. F. Rogers "

Mrs J. Knott Australia

Mrs J. MacLennan "

Mrs M. A. Fegan "

Mrs V. Moullin USA
