



WVS/WRVS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter No 41
Autumn 1994

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"In the war, WVS played a great part and our members distinguished themselves by their reliability, understanding and efficiency. Many today are unable to continue with the work, but others have examined the need of the times and decided it is necessary to continue the work.

And so my wish is that those things glimpsed in the past may give us courage to keep faith with the future"

Lady Reading to Members. 1946

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WVS/WRVS ASSOCIATION

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Dame Barbara Shenfield DBE

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Mrs E.D. Claydon

Hon. Secretary

Mrs M.D.S. Maisey BEM

Hon. Treasurer

Mrs M Davies

Hon. Editor

Mrs N. Venables

Members will be sad to learn of the death of Dame Frances Clode, Vice-President of the Association. At a Thanksgiving Service in Pershore Abbey on the 20th September the address was given by Wing Commander Margaret Green who, after recording her considerable work for WRVS, ended by saying "Those of us who have been privileged to know Frances have lasting memories of her sincerity, her generosity, her understanding and her selflessness."

Cover picture of Cyclamen Persicum by Mrs M.A. Kershaw. Cheltenham.

1994 HONOURS LISTS

New Year Honours.

CBE - Mrs Elaine Ross. Scotland Council Member. Divisional Director
Scotland.

MBE - Mrs Margaret Alexander. D. O. Eastwood. Strathclyde.

Miss Dyllys Helmore. Dist. Food Organiser. Taunton Deane.

Miss Winnie Horton. Ladywood Darby and Joan Club. Birmingham.

Mrs Kathleen Jones. M.O.W. Denbigh. Clwyd.

Mrs Mary King. L.O. Selsey. Sussex.

Mr Ronald Knight. Grants Secretary. Head Office.

Mrs Doreen Monkman. D. and J. Club. Burton Pidsea.

Mrs Rosalind Steele. Golden Year Club. Langley West Midlands.

Mrs Margaret Sumnall. County Food Org. Staffs.

Mrs Doris Townley. Tea Bar. Lancaster Prison.

Birthday Honours.

OBE - Mrs Janice Venables. Lately County Organiser. Oxfordshire.

MBE - Mrs Maud Clark. Luncheon Club and Hospital work. Gateshead.

Mrs Alice Haxby. Medical Aids Organiser. Filey. Yorks.

Mrs Jean LeMaitre. Lately Bailiwick Organiser. Guernsey.

Mrs Helen McGregor. D.O. Lochaber.

Mrs Christa Pope. D.O. South Hereford.

Mrs Joan Reader. E.S.O. Sheffield.

Mrs Vera Saunders. Darby and Joan Club Org. Niton. I.O.W.

Mrs Dorothy Symes. M.O.W. Lymington. Hants.

Mrs Joyce White. D.O. Gosport.

Mrs Audrey Wilshaw. M.O.W. Flushing. Falmouth. Cornwall.

Services to the Community

OBE - Lady Mary Davidson. Work with Christian Aid Edinburgh.

(WRVS Books on Wheels)

MBE - Mrs Hilda Bloor. Work with Lower Withington Wl.

(WRVS Congleton Cheshire).

Mrs Doreen Brown. Comm. Member. Grange Day Welfare Centre.

Newcastle on Tyne (WRVS Welfare of Elderly. Newburn. N-on-T)

Mrs Agnes Dufton. Prison Visitor. Grendon. Bucks.

(WRVS Canteen Org. Grendon Prison.)

Rev Charles Shaw. Services to the Community. Oldham. (Meals on Wheels)

Address by the Chief Executive of WRVS, Mr Gerry Burton, to members assembled for the AGM, held at Holy Trinity, Brompton, on Thursday June 9th.

Mr Burton thanked the Chairman for her welcome. He said that this was the best attended AGM he had ever been to.

He informed members that WRVS had been a Charity since the 1960's but this had been an amicable and easy-going arrangement. However, in 1992, the rules and regulations of the Charity Commissioners had been stiffened by the Charities Act of Banking and WRVS had had to change its procedures to fit these new rules. One problem was that the WRVS had 5,000 accounts throughout the country and it was now imperative that these were brought together into one Central Banking scheme. For the first time ever, therefore, we now know how much money is held by WRVS, approximately £12 million, although this does not all belong to WRVS.

By Central Banking, and every account now being a deposit account, we are able to get the highest interest rates. This benefits each branch as the interest is now shared between all WRVS Divisions.

He praised the Midland Bank for their help in setting up this scheme and recommended that all branches now bank at Midland Bank. The Association can join this scheme, if he is given information about our accounts, the only limitation being that very small accounts could not be accepted. Each branch will have its own cheque book. Answering questions, Mr Burton said £25 would be too small a sum to start an account, no accounts could be in a member's name, and accounts should be audited as in the past. He offered the help of the WRVS Accounts Department should branches need help.

Mrs Claydon thanked Mr Burton warmly for coming to the meeting and explaining the new arrangements to members.



Chairman's letter

Dear Member,

The prospect of long dark evenings, nights and mornings appeals less and less as I get older. Once again there is the struggle to get the car and garage locked and the key in the front door, without dropping parcels, before the security light goes out. I am so very grateful that I can remember the days when I arrived home to see welcoming lights streaming through the windows, the sight of glowing fires and all I had to do was push open the door - no keys, no screening curtains, no burglar alarms. And this summer we have been remembering D. Day and Arnhem!



Some Members from all over the country who were eligible and physically able took part in a Commemorative Parade in Southampton in May. The parade of Veterans sitting or standing behind their dipped Standards, was reviewed by H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh. Hampshire WRVS cosseted and cared for our participants, providing accommodation in Winchester, a coach to take them to Southampton, light-weight chairs for them to carry to the parade, a genuine 1944 Mobile-Canteen, with 1944 cups, a small camping tent in which to eat a delicious sandwich lunch and then, to complete a memorable day, tea and home-made cakes back in Winchester County Office. A number of "old soldiers", seeing the mobile canteen and the "Ladies in Green", came to chat and share memories of 50 years ago.

A number of Members let us know how successful they considered the AGM in London in June. This, I know, was due to our Speakers who, in turn, inspired, interested and amused their receptive audience.

In response to considerable pressure, we have been working hard in an effort to organise a residential AGM for 1995. Not an easy task when everything is so expensive. We hope that what we are proposing at Leicester University will produce a really comfortable two-night package in an extremely attractive "campus", together with a convenient location for our very large contingent of Members in that area to attend for the day's Re-union and AGM.

Once again, keep well, keep warm and have a very happy Christmas.

Elizabeth Hayden

News from the Divisions

NORTH EAST DIVISION

Northumberland, Tyne & Wear.

Div.Rep. Mrs S.McCormack BEM
In the Northumbria Newsletter, Mrs McCormack praises group leaders, especially Mrs Frew, who has retired, a founder-member of the Association.



She welcomes Mrs Dawson, taking over in her place.

Sunderland group report a busy year. Mrs Sawyer, aged 79, gained an "A" level in Art and is now tackling another course in textiles. Mrs Clark celebrated her 100th birthday. In February, Mrs Lister presented £250 to St Benedict's Hospice from her group.

Membership in Newcastle and Gateshead branches has increased, writes Mrs Vine.

Ponteland group's trip to Harry Ramsden's, for fish and chips, had to be postponed due to snow and ice but they enjoyed it later. With no WRVS Organiser in this District, Association members met WRVS members at a meeting organised by the WRVS County Organiser. More meetings are planned. Mrs Hughes regrets that Mrs Rotstein has had to resign as Association County Rep. through ill-health but Mrs Hurst has agreed to take over.

North Shields/Whitley Bay are successful fund- raisers, North Shields sent £50 to St Oswald's Hospice, £50 to WRVS Association and Whitley Bay, £165 to the Hospice and £185 to Conrad Court. Further fund-raising for M.S. is planned. They celebrated the 90th birthday of Mrs Kennedy, and the official opening of the New WRVS Metropolitan Office in North Shields.

Durham, Cleveland, N. Yorks. Div. Rep. Mrs R. Thompson OBE

Mrs Thompson reports on the WRVS N.E. Divisional Conference, Easingwold, attended by the WRVS Chairman, Chief Executive and Divisional, County and District staff, Social Services and a national food manufacturer.

Hartlepool record monthly meetings of approx. 20 members, usually including two 90 year olds. Those already widowed find they can help several who have recently lost husbands. This is valuable help. One meeting consisted of keep-fit exercises conducted by the local Leisure and Amenities Department which they all enjoyed. (One wonders if they ached next day? Ed.)

Middlesborough, enjoyed a day's outing to Dalmain House. Mrs Bregazzi

records a hilarious talk by a food manufacturer We congratulate a speaker who can be hilarious on such a topic! They enjoyed a Christmas lunch at Kirby College Sadly, two members have died.

Darlington members have attended the funeral of ex-Transport Organiser, Mr Harry Rea who was well-loved by all. Mrs Evans says her group had a successful lunch in April and an outing to Ripley Castle in July.

Harrogate's membership has increased to twenty-six, perhaps due to the fact that they now meet in the centre of Harrogate. They have held monthly meetings this year.

Selby's reports often seem to mention eating!; monthly lunches at British Rail; another at District Office, some members laying tables, while others bought the fish and chips! ("Most enjoyable", says Mrs Altass), a 90th birthday lunch party for Miss Macleay, and an afternoon tea/annual meeting, planned for August.

They sadly report the death of Mrs Boyes who had run the Barlby Darby and Joan Club for many years

Scarborough this year host the Annual lunch in September. They have had coffee morning meetings at Mrs Mackenzie's house.

York's Chairman for 1993/4, Mrs Dumville, personally visited every member who had not managed to get to meetings. her visits being much appreciated. In April they had lunch at York F.E. College and in May visited Shibden Hall Halifax, before enjoying a Fish and Chips tea.

South and West Yorks Div. Rep. Mrs L. Ziegler MBE

Mrs Zeigler reports noisy meetings each month in the Salvation Army Citadel. They had had a Technical College lunch to which members from Leeds, Brighouse, Huddersfield and Wakefield came. Ten members, obviously ice-skating enthusiasts, enjoyed a visit to see Torville and Dean at Sheffield. and 40 Wakefield members enjoyed Mrs Ziegler's 80th birthday party with a buffet meal at her home. She later had a surprise lunch at the Swallow Hotel where she was presented with the gift..of a plaque which, on the back had a message, thanking her for all the happy hours she had given members of the Association. This group has tried before to see the lavender fields in bloom and they almost missed it again this year, but one field remained uncut. and it was worth all their efforts, it was so beautiful. They have given donations to the Red Cross, Samaritans, the Blind, the Salvation Army and not least to the WRVS Benevolent Fund.

Humber-side.

Div.Rep. Mrs A.M.Wilson

No report received

NORTH WEST DIVISION

Cumbria, Lancashire. Div Rep Mrs M McCambridge BEM

No report received

North and South Greater Manchester. Div Rep Mrs E Collier

The Sale group have 26 members meeting regularly. Mrs Collier reports a quiet session in April when members had a written quiz (One way of stopping the chatter! Ed) In May Romiley, Altrincham and Bury joined them for another quiz and a buffet meal.

Two members from Trafford District attended the 50th Anniversary commemorations and at the June meeting, Mrs Collier described the event, and another member, Mrs Chase gave her wartime recollections. At this meeting, Mrs Collier also reported on the national AGM and the changes taking place.

At the July meeting they had yet another quiz. (They must be the best informed group in the country Ed.) For the November meeting they have planned a face-to-face meeting with a P.R. speaker from Nyrex to explain why, when none of them wants cable TV, they are having to have all the pavements dug up.

The Bury group have three new members. They too make use of the local Catering College for lunch and in March visited Emmerdale Farm country and Harrogate for a meal.

Altrincham group continue to meet together each month.

Merseyside, Cheshire. Div Rep Mrs P Linton MBE

Fifty-six members attended the Wirral branch AGM. The group visited Bolton Guide Dog Training Centre only to find no dogs there; they were all in quarantine with a virus, but they say they enjoyed the ride! They then visited Smithills Coaching House restaurant for a meal with its fine antiques and atmosphere of a by-gone age. Mrs Lamb says everyone agreed it was a marvellous day out.

Staffordshire, Shropshire, Derbyshire. (Appointment Pending)

CENTRAL DIVISION Now disbanded

Lincs, Notts, Leics. Div Rep Mrs D Martin (Now in NE Division)

The Association Chairman, Mrs Claydon, Mrs Bromige, Notts County Organiser and Mrs Moulden, Central Divisional Office, attended a Three Counties Luncheon with 126 members, plus nine Derbyshire members from N.W. Division. Mrs Claydon gave a comprehensive address on the new look WRVS and two Long Service Medals were presented.

In Lincolnshire they make up in enthusiasm what they lack in numbers. They meet for lunches, but are an ageing group with no younger members coming along. They met at two annual Area meetings, at Ilkeston and Cleethorpes, their

previous Area.

Mrs Haigh records the death of "two very valuable members", Mrs Mary Baines and Mrs May Alton. Mrs Haigh says numbers in the Broxtowe branch are increasing and activities are well supported. They have enjoyed a trip to Buxton, with lunch at High Peak College in June and have a full programme planned for autumn.

West Midlands. Div. Rep. Mrs J. Smith BEM (Now in SW Div)

No report received

Cambridgeshire, Northants. Div. Rep. Mrs B. Titcomb. (Now in SE Div)

Mrs Titcomb says the branches continue to hold meetings with interesting speakers, on eg., ceramic painting and the Macmillan Nurses Trust. Huntingdon outings have included a visit to the owl sanctuary at Ramsey.

Cambridge branch visited a craft fair in Clacton and they plan a Grand Birthday Tea Party, (their capital letters!), with guests, the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, for all members in their 80's. Peterborough have "brought and bought" and visited Bay Tree Nurseries.

But this Division's important function was in March when the Chairman, Mrs Claydon, came for tea and to speak to members. Huntingdon planned the occasion and guests included neighbouring County Organisers and Mrs Callaway, Representative from the neighbouring Division.

Warwickshire. Div. Rep. Mrs J. Rose (Now in SW Div)

Mrs Rose tells of the progress of a new group in Nuneaton, organised by Mrs Figgett, and of several coffee mornings at member's houses and luncheon meetings during spring and summer.

Kenilworth branch suffered a sad loss by the sudden death of Mrs Mabel Harris, who had in the Spring organised a very successful visit to the Fire Officer's College in Moreton in Marsh. She will be sadly missed.

This group meets each month at a local hotel, for coffee.

Norfolk, Suffolk. Div. Rep. (Mrs M. Moss MBE retired 26/7/94). Now Mrs S. Scholey. (Now in SE Div)

Mrs Moss reports the sad death of 91 year old Mrs Cullingford, BEM, Clothing Organiser for Norwich until she was 70, who attended last year's AGM at Norwich. She was proud to recall how she had been recruited by Lady Reading herself.

Mrs Jackman reports that in the May annual luncheon at Gorleston, attended by 70 members, Mrs Venables was invited to speak about her work as Editor of the Association Newsletter and appealed for contributions from members. Mrs Moss hopes that as a result, many more contributions will come in.

In June seven members attended the AGM in London. In July they enjoyed

Mrs Gilderson's beach party at Cromer and in August went on a Norwich river cruise and lunch. But they have not forgotten the sick and lonely members and have kept them in touch.

SOUTH EAST DIVISION

Oxfordshire, Bucks, Berkshire. Div. Rep. Mrs M. Gordon (Now retired)

Bedfordshire, Essex, Herts. Div. Rep. Mrs J. Callaway

In the last edition, your editor got reports from Castle Point and Bedfordshire mixed up. She will try to do better on this occasion !. Apologies.

Mid-Bedfordshire WRVS asked Bedfordshire group to send a representative to speak about the Association, at a meeting on WRVS projects. Mrs Callaway gave the talk and rounded it off with the generous donation of £50 for the Family Holidays project, a marvellous effort, to help provide holidays, from this fairly small group of grandparents of WRVS.

But it has not been all hard work and fund-raising, for they have enjoyed a Treasure Hunt meeting, finished off by toasting the Association in Buck's Fizz. Mrs Dorothy Ward, (WRVS Council member and ex-Area Organiser), proposing the toast, asked everyone to encourage WRVS Members to join the Association. Mrs Callaway says that two ways that have proved fruitful for them have been "dog-walking acquaintances" and "conversation at a funeral tea-party"! She asks how others recruit new members. Suggestions please to the Editor.

Hertfordshire heard a talk by Miss Parry entitled "Never lose Touch" at the WRVS meeting "Look to the Future".

Castle Point had a special raffle of a large "Humorous knitted Doll" made by a member. Tickets were £1.50 each and it was won by the grandmother of a 13 year old girl. They do not say how much the raffle made but we are sure it brought much pleasure. This group plan a Golden Wedding Buffet and three Birthday Parties in the autumn.

Greater London Div. Rep. Mrs A.Christophersen

London S.E. Div. Rep. Mrs G. Block MBE

Twelve members from this group attended the Association AGM and luncheon in London.

London S.W. Div. Rep. Mrs J. Sanderson

No report received

London N.E./City. Mrs W Taylor DL

No report received

London N.W. Mrs D Stevens

This group, on one outing, were mesmerised by machines which read and sorted letters faster than the human eye can read, when they visited Mount Pleasant Post Office. They saw how important the Post Code is on letters, those without it being held back for separate sorting. Post Office officials said they did not want junk mail stopped, as it is a good money-earner for them.

Mrs Stevens writes of the death, after a long, distressing illness, of Mrs Mary Julian, ex-Borough Organiser for Harrow, who, with great courage, during her illness made fit friends feel ashamed to grumble. During her illness she wrote a history of the local church. She also recorded her illness from the beginning. She will be remembered with admiration.

Three members attended the Drumhead Service at the S.E. Area D Day Service, in the presence of the Duke of Edinburgh. Winchester WRVS are praised for their welcome and care during the "not-to-be-forgotten" day.

Surrey, E. and W. Kent, E. Sussex, W. Sussex. Div. Rep. Mrs G. Bright

Surrey groups Epsom and Ewell met for supper and with Guildford and Woking joined the County lunch at Dorking in July.. Woking had a Thames boat trip and enjoyed a visit to their new theatre. Their oldest member is 95.

E. Sussex have had frequent meetings.

W. Kent raised £45 for charity, playing bridge.

E. Kent's meetings have been well supported

Hampshire, Isle of Wight. (Appointment Pending) No report received.

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

Hereford & Worcester, Gloucester. Div. Rep. Mrs J. Connop

A very successful luncheon, prepared by WRVS Tewkesbury, was held at Tewkesbury Masonic Hall, to which Mrs Venables was welcomed and invited to speak about the Newsletter, and what was needed for the next edition. She appealed especially for budding (or retiring) artists to send in drawings for the front cover (the result of which appeal we have on this issue.. with many thanks) and also Mrs Claydon's appeal for D Day memories. After lunch a previous Mayor of Cheltenham, Cllr. Wilson spoke about his "Mayoral Year" which included a visit to Russia

Cheltenham members visited China in imagination, helped by a member's slides and a talk.

Thirty-two Gloucester members enjoyed a flower arranging demonstration and tea in August

Hereford and Worcester, like York, hold their autumn meeting in October, too late for this issue.

Somerset, Devon, Cornwall. Temp. Div. Rep. Miss M Scott

No report received

Avon, Wiltshire, Dorset. (Appointment pending)

The Spring re-union of the Dorset branch was held in April at Allendale Centre, Wimborne. Thirty-one members and guests enjoyed the meeting and tea together and the Bring and buy raised £57.70. In September they held their AGM at the home of Sir Michael and Lady Hanham, by their kind invitation. They had a talk entitled "The effects of Parkinson's Disease" by Mr Dennis Tomlin. Thirty-five Members attended and the raffle raised £30.

WALES

Clwyd, Gwynedd, Powys. Div. Rep. Mrs E. Edwards BEM

No report received

Dyfed, West, Mid & South Glamorgan, Gwent. Div. Rep. Mrs D. Travis BEM

Four D Day WRVS veterans attended D Day services. Mrs Honnigan attended the service at Netley and her branch wishes to thank Winchester for their kindness to her. Mrs Steer MBE, Mrs Doheerty BEM and Mrs Thomson attended services locally

Newport group held monthly meetings in the District Office, have had meals out, visited the local sewage works, a new Police Station and enjoyed a garden party.

Guemsey. Assoc. Rep. Miss E. Robilliard

No report received

Jersey. Assoc. Rep. Mrs D. Jennings

Some members attended the AGM and helped at an Open Day at WRVS Centre. Mrs Jennings says they have simply been enjoying three months of glorious summer weather and entertaining friends and relations.

Note The disbanding of Central Division and the reallocation of branches to other Divisions, occurred as this edition was going to print. On this occasion therefore, branches are shown in their original places

For Holidays 1995

Could we have suggestions from each branch for an excellent place to stay in their area (name, address telephone number)? It could be a B&B or hotel or guest house which members have found gives outstanding value, comfort and good food.

A suggestion from several members

Letter from the Editor

Dear fellow members.



Thank you to everyone who answered our Chairman's call for memories of D Day which you supported so well. I cannot print them all, but I am putting as many excerpts as I can into this issue. Some members seemed to get memories of VE Day celebrations mixed up with D Day, mentioning dancing in the streets and lights everywhere, and so these I have kept for a later date.

This good idea from the Chairman, produced a much better result than did my suggested competition, for which I again got few entries. I will leave out competitions for a while as they do not seem productive! Boots' Gift tokens have been sent to the two winners. Thanks to the few who sent in contributions.

I was pleased to be able to accept invitations to lunch at Newcastle, Gorleston and Tewkesbury and my appeals on these occasions for contributions to the Newsletter are slowly bearing fruit as more contributions are coming in. The lovely drawing on the cover of this issue, of the cyclamen, was sent by Mrs Kershaw of Cheltenham, and the amusing picture on page 19 is by Mrs Peta Rogers, well known to many members for her work. I expect many of you will remember with amusement, as I do, her drawing for a WRVS poster some years ago, of the Meals on Wheels lady on a mono-cycle. Having sent it in, Mrs Rogers found she had made a mistake in the picture. She immediately sent me a corrected one - but I am putting in the first one. Can you spot her "deliberate mistake"?

With over 4,000 members reading this Newsletter, there must be much more talent undiscovered, so please do send in drawings, stories, jokes or poems to entertain other readers.; (short please, I have had several which are too long). We never know what we can do until we try.

I look forward to hearing from you all,

Ness Venables

SOME EXTRACTS FROM MANY MEMORIES OF D DAY



"I have myself seen these events and played no small part in them" Virgil, Aeneid.

"...Passing Harwell aerodrome I saw the build-up of gliders which played such a major part... it was obvious something was about to happen... but we would have to wait another year to hear Churchill's memorable words, "Our dear Channel Islands are to be freed today" .." Mrs Margot Blampied. Guernsey.

"...my husband was stationed on Romney Marshes. His office wall was papered with Noel Coward's manuscripts. It was a hot spot. Noel Coward was recuperating in America. That night I was not serving baked beans to soldiers.." Mrs Nellie Bailey.

"... when the pipe came over the tannoy system that the allies had invaded France, I was working in the cockpit of a Barracuda Aircraft and ... my thoughts went to our relations in Jersey... but it would be almost another year before they were free.." Mrs Doreen Jennings. Jersey

" at last the long-awaited time had come, for me serving in the WAAF and my colleagues.. relief, plus a fear of what the future held.." Mrs Betty Hutchings. Southend.

".. a great build up of army vehicles in all the roads and a great number of ships in the Thames beyond Southen Pier.." Mrs Walters. Leigh-on-Sea.

"...we had just bought a house and a relative nearby said there was someone in it. We discovered it was the army... all empty houses in the area were lived in by the army.." Mrs Rose Griffin. Southend.

"..I was a radio operator, on sick leave from the WAAF after Measles and Jaundice, .. my radio station was at Portland and I was sad.. on hearing the news ..as I would have been in the thick of it. My friend was in General Paton's "phantom army" waiting to go to France and could not travel away from H.Q. So on June 5th (my birthday) I went over to see him ...and we married on June 20th while he was still waiting to get to France. We have just celebrated our golden wedding.." Mrs Gwenda Long. Guernsey.

" I was in the Women's Land Army in Devon. On June 6th, after early morning milking, feeding and cleaning, I spent the time until afternoon milking, picking up large stones prior to ploughing. All was so peaceful and we had no idea of the activities taking place a few miles away down the coast " Mrs Amy Hale. York

"On June 5th, my husband, working at the Air Ministry, came home and said he had arranged to take me and Giles, aged three, my mother and his mother (from S. Norwood), to an hotel near Guildford. I asked no questions. We covered the piano with eiderdowns, pushed furniture into the middle of rooms, packed what we could carry and left early next morning. Two days later our house was badly damaged and the neighbour opposite killed. The doodle bombs had started." Mrs Gladys Block MBE London S.E.



"...I was 20 years old...it was just another war-time day. I took the underground ... and walked to WVS H.Q. in Tothill Street. Tonight was the big night. WVS was opening a new Services Club in Cadogan Place, sponsored by American Forces. I arrived to make spam sandwiches and urns of coffee, the doors opened at 6-30pm ... but ... no troops turned up. We were asked to go into the street and find anyone to come in and finish the food ... it could not be wasted. We did manage to get some ARP chaps and old soldiers then we cleaned up and went home. It wasn't until later we heard what an important day it had been. On that day too, from our street, I lost one schoolfriend and another had both arms blown off" We were all just 20 years old " Mrs Stella Lewis. London S.E.



Miss Deeming, nursing for BSA, was sent by her doctor for two weeks complete rest to relatives in Bournemouth. It was in "the restricted area", no letters, telephone calls etc. and was arranged specially with the Chairman of BSA. She found the whole town one huge military camp; tanks and vehicles parked on one side of every road. On D Day everyone awoke to find all the vehicles gone and it had all been accomplished "without a sound" From Miss Deeming's sister, sent in by Mrs Rose Warwickshire. Miss Deeming died last year.

"I was in the WAAF at H.Q. Coastal Command. The bell in our billet woke us at 7-0am. We opened our black-out curtains. The sight of the planes returning from the continent was a sight I will never forget. And of course the noise. We were all handed a message from General Eisenhower and at lunch time, listened to the radio." Mrs Jean Connop Cheltenham

"I had an aunt whose house overlooked the bay in Torquay and she said the townsfolk were totally surprised at the silence in which the operation was made". Mrs Josephine Rose. Stratford on Avon.

"I was stationed at the R. Engineers Training Centre, Hants. prior to being transferred that week to 21 Army groups. I have very sad memories as casualty lists came in from Caen and many of the guards and warrant officers with whom I worked then suffered great losses and I knew many of the men personally." Mrs Nancy Wilson. S. Humberside.

"D Day for me was misery. A very senior WAAF officer with a ferocious reputation visited our camp for a routine inspection. I was detailed to attend her. Nothing was right. she criticised everything. even the station commander. In the evening we put on a hygiene film about sex .. it was quite unacceptable... much worse to my horror a WAAF was found to have head lice. The day ended with her deciding to go for a walk along the cliffs and as we walked, a sudden manic urge came over me to push her over. I often wonder if she ever realised how close she came to a sticky end!" Dr Mary Prior S. Humberside.



"I was a staff sergeant in ATS. The girls had spent many months waterproofing the engines of vehicles which that day were in use .. and were taking a well-earned rest. They were excited at the news, but I felt sad at the thought of the loss of life. Mrs Zita Grice. S. Humberside.

"I was deep under Dover Castle.. in an ops. room with ATS Signals desperately trying to plot the shells coming over. I hope to attend the celebrations of the last shell to fall on Dover 50 years ago..I will proudly wear my medal. " Mrs Mary Bagness Tewkesbury.

" I looked out of my window, (in Nottingham) and saw hundreds of planes flying over". Mrs Nancy Hare. Ivybridge. Devon.

".. the things that looked like upturned tables in the harbour disappeared. They turned out to be parts of the Mulberry Harbour". Mrs Elaine White. Devon.

"In Italy, as a Q.A. convalescing after illness, on the Adriatic coast, all patients and staff had a service to pray for the safety of those involved" Mrs Atherton. Devon.

D DAY 1994 for one Association Member.

Early in May, 1994, I was asked if I was in WVS in 1944?, could I march three miles?, stand for an exhausting day?, wear a 1944 uniform ? I said I could and began to practise marching! On the day before the D Day commemoration I was entertained for the night in Winchester, by my hostess, Gill Henrehan.

After breakfast at 6-30 next morning we were taken to Hampshire WRVS County Office and fitted out with 1944 uniform. After coffee there, we boarded a coach with other Members for Netley Country Park beside Southampton Water, where we joined hundreds of British Legion, Women's Land Army, St John, Red Cross and N.A.A.F.I. and were all marshalled to assembly points. We could see Britannia and other ships moored off the coast. We did not have to march, but were kindly taken to our inspection point by young people carrying folding chairs. Sitting on these, we were given programmes showing the order of service and watched the Duke of Edinburgh's red helicopter flying by. The WVS Banner was held by a young WRVS Member who followed the British Legion flag drill perfectly.

The Drumhead service was very moving. First we heard the actual voice of John Snagge who was there in person, and then his recorded voice of fifty years ago. The service was conducted by Bishop Mann, Chaplain to the Forces and the singing of "Oh God Our Help in Ages Past" by 5,000 people was something I will never forget.

Then the fly past of Swordfish, Dakotas, Hurricanes Tornados, and Canadian Hornets, was followed by an inspection by the Duke in a Land Rover. He called us "girls", but the W.I. next to us were called "Ladies"! Then there was the deafening salute of 21 guns, a shattering sound. After the bands marched away we were escorted, plus our chairs, to our WRVS tent where a lovely buffet lunch awaited us. Then there was the opportunity to go round and talk to people. A young fellow demonstrating camouflage nets had no idea how they had been made, so we showed him ! Then we were asked to talk to the Press and saw glimpses of ourselves on TV that evening. Tea and cakes were served in the WRVS van before we boarded our coach to return to the WRVS Office, for more tea and cakes. From Mrs Marjorie Stevenson, of Windermere, who says, "I have hardly come down to earth yet".

The Editor's Competition - Result.

Memories of WVS/WRVS work

From Miss Greatorex. Cranbrook Kent.



During the war I was a WVS billeting officer. One family, of Mum, three children and a baby arrived in the office. We already had so many evacuees, I could not get them all in the same house, so decided to put the eldest boy and his brother in a neighbouring house. But the eldest boy rounded on me. "You can't do that Miss". "But you are a big boy now, I am sure you can manage with your brother", I answered.

The boy gave me a pitying look. "Oh, it ain't that Miss. Mum can't manage the baby and I must be with her. See ... he needs changing now". He was obviously right!"

From Mrs Coles. Sale. Cheshire.

I had to wash up for a year before I was allowed out on Meals as an attendant and navigator! One lady we visited on the round had everything tied up with string; first the sideboard, then the handbag, finally the purse. There were so many knots to undo and meanwhile I had to stand waiting patiently for the money!.

Also commended -

From Mrs White. Finchley. London.

The WVS uniform was easily recognised. The day after we became "Royal" I was on my way to the Finchley Office when a stranger stopped me. She said "Congratulations on becoming royal. Do I have to curtsy to you now ?"

From Mrs Davenport. Northants.

I was at a large country house in Oswestry, giving a "One-in Five talk. The owner had invited all the village and placed a table for me, covered with a lovely lace tablecloth. As I got more and more questions from the audience I got more and more nervous - then something moved on the table... it was a mouse, caught in the lace cloth !. Everyone tried to catch it, but it got away, leaving the audience roaring with laughter and giving me confidence to carry on.

From Mrs Bagness. Gloucester.

I was asked to visit a recently widowed, infirm, elderly gentleman. The first visit went well, but on the second visit he had evidently found the use of his legs as he proceeded to chase me round the table demanding a 'kiss and cuddle'. I was saved by a neighbour coming in at that moment. Subsequent visits were made in the evening with my husband!.

I was asked to speak about WRVS at a local infant school. The children were most attentive. Later I received a letter. It is written in pencil in big childish writing.

DEAR MRS BAGNLISS. THANK YOU FOR TELLING US WHERE YOU WORK AND WHAT YOU DO AND I AM GOING TO BE WHAT YOU ARE WHEN I GROW UP AND WILL HELP PEOPLE.

LOTS OF LOVE
KATIE AGED 5'

Thrift

I had written to Aunt Maud,
Who was on a trip abroad,
When I heard she'd died of cramp
Just too late to save the stamp.

Harry Graham

TEA SERVED BY
WRVS



— "Over there, in their uniform - well in GREEN anyway"!

Drawn By Mrs Peta Rogers. London

Its a hard life ! but this was the boss's answer to a request for a day off.

Before you ask me for a day off, just consider the following...

There are 365 days in the year.

You sleep 8 hours per day, or 122 days which, subtracted from 365, leaves 243 days.

You have 8 hours each day when you don't work for me, leaving 121 days.

There are 52 Sundays, and 52 half days on Saturdays, which leaves 43 days.

You get an hour off for lunch, making 16 days in a year, leaving 27 days.

You get 21 days leave and 5 Bank Holidays, which leaves only one day.

So please do not ask for that one day off !

From Mrs Rawson, Lytham St. Annes. Lancs. and Mrs Coulton. Beverley, Humberside.

Recipe.

An Easy Sticky Gingerbread



6 oz plain flour
2 rounded teasp. Baking Powder
2 to 3 rounded teasp. ground
ginger, (according to taste)
1/2 teasp. mixed spice
pinch salt

2 oz butter or margarine
1 rounded tabs. black treacle
1 rounded tabs. golden syrup
1 rounded teasp. bicarb soda
7 fluid oz. milk
2 eggs, size 3, beaten

Optional extras. 1-2 oz stem or cryst. ginger chopped
or 2 oz sultanas, or 1-2 oz mixed peel.

Sieve together the dry ingredients. Lightly cream butter, sugar, treacle and syrup. Dissolve bicarb in the milk. Beat eggs. Beat all together to make a smooth batter. Put into greased, lined 8" square tin and bake 40-50 minutes at 160C. Cool. Store in a tin about two days to become sticky.

**All contributions for the Spring Newsletter should be sent on or before
February 28th 1995**

to: Mrs N. Venables, Hon. Editor,

Editor's Poetry Corner.

I hope this will be a regular spot. If you have a favourite, (short) poem, do send it for others to enjoy. This is one of mine (Ed)

When you are old and grey and full of sleep
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep.

How many loved your moments of glad grace
And loved your beauty with love false or true;
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bar,
Murmur a little sadly, how love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead,
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

Kipling.



Advance Notice

The 1995 AGM will be a residential meeting, to be held at Leicester University on July 17/18 1995.