



WRVS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter No 44
Spring 1996

WRVS ASSOCIATION

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Cover Picture by Mrs E.M. Robinson. Morpeth.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Member,

I hope this Newsletter will reach you without undue delay, as our problems with printing the Autumn edition seem to have been solved. The cost of each Newsletter has risen but I am sure you will agree it is good value and helps us keep in touch with each other, particularly those members who are unable to attend meetings.

We have an enthusiastic and capable Hon. Editor in Ness Venables, who is looking for contributions, so please continue to send her any items you think may be of interest. Just as our Newsletter is a means of communication between members, I hope we can maintain and increase communication with our WRVS colleagues. This year I intend to explore ways in which this can be done more effectively, within the re-structured WRVS channels of administration.

I hope you have many happy meetings and events during the Spring and Summer months and I look forward to meeting some of you at the Annual General Meeting in July.

Best Wishes

Sheela Mc Cormack

Note: We are giving the names and addresses of all the Divisional Representatives in this issue, so that members will know who represents them in their area on the Association Committee (Ed)

ASSOCIATION DIVISIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

North East Division

Mrs M. Doyle (deputy)
(Northumberland/Tyne & Wear)



Mrs R. Thompson OBE
(Durham/Cleveland/N. Yorks)

Mrs D. Price
(Humberside)

Mrs L. Ziegler MBE
(South & West Yorks)

Mrs J. Newman
(Lincs/ Notts/ Leics)

North West Division

Mrs M. McCambridge BEM
(Cumbria/Lancs)

Mrs E. Collier
(Greater Manchester)

Mrs P. Linton MBE
(Merseyside/Cheshire)

Vacant
(Staffs/Shrops/Derbys)

South East Division

Mrs B. Titcomb
(Cambs/Northants)

Mrs S. Scholey
(Norfolk/Suffolk)

Mrs J. Callaway
(Beds/Essex/Herts)

Mrs G. Bright
(Surrey/Kent/Sussex)

Vacant
(Hants/Isle of Wight)

Mrs A.Christophersen
(Greater London)

Mrs D.Stevens
(London North West)

Mrs J. Sanderson
(London South West)

Vacant
(Oxon/Bucks/Beds)

Mrs W. Taylor DL
(London NorthEast/City)

Mrs G Block MBE
(London South East)

South West Division

Mrs J. Connop
(Hereford & Worcester/ Glos)

Mrs M. Parrish
(Somerset/Devon/Cornwall)

Mrs J.Smith BEM
(West Midlands)

Vacant
(Avon/Wilts/Dorset)

Welsh Division

Mrs E.Edwards BEM

Reminder

Have you forgotten to pay your 1996 subscription?

If so, do send it now to

Hon Treasurer

WRVS Association

Head Office

234-244 Stockwell Road London SW9 9SP

£4 Annually, £20 Life Member

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Dear Members,

Sorry from me too, for the long wait you all had for your Newsletter last Autumn, due, as they say "to circumstances beyond our control". The printing is now being done by a small family firm in East Yorkshire, (yes, we are no longer Humberside, here!). They are pleasant to work with and get on very well with my husband who deals with the "computer" part, (types of discs, "Clip Art", "Fonts" etc) of this Newsletter. That part is all beyond me, I simply edit what you send me and type it all in, (using two fingers !).

Many of you have written to say how much you enjoy reading the Newsletter. Thank you for all your letters; sadly it is too expensive to reply to you all. Do, however, continue to write and I will do what I can to answer, sending me suggestions of the things you would like to see and contributions of things you would like me to print. Our Chairman has said, in her letter, that she considers the Newsletter a valuable way of us keeping in touch with each other, and so it is. But to make it successful, each one of us must send contributions so that we can keep it interesting and personal.

In the last issue I asked for your reminiscences on "A Funny thing Happened when on WRVS Duty" and I include some that I have received, but I have not had a huge response. Do send in more of these. I love the one about the policeman and the knickers !

This issue is, I am afraid smaller than the last one. The cost of postage has always to be born in mind. Because of this, "News from Divisions" and this page are printed in smaller type.

I would like your comments on this smaller print; if you are mostly happy with it, it means I can get in many more contributions, but I am concerned that we should all be able to read the print easily.

A member has suggested that for the autumn issue she would like to read, "**reminiscences of childhood**". I don't know about your own childhood, but mine was very different from a child's today and I think this would be very interesting. So please could I have your memories pouring through the letter box! Remember, no longer than about 250 words.

Please send all contributions for the next issue to the address above by August 31st. In future, as I explained to the Div. Reps, recently, I am afraid I will have to keep firmly to the cut-off date I give you each time as contributions coming in late are making the editing job very difficult. So write early to avoid disappointment.

Every good wish for your 1996 events,

Ness Venables

News from the divisions

NORTH EAST DIVISION

Northumberland, Tyne & Wear. Div.Rep. Mrs M. Doyle



The **Newcastle** branch is thriving and has six new members. They all went to visit Mrs Vine in her new house in Melrose, enjoyed an excellent lunch and had a good chat.

The annual carol service was again held in Brunswick chapel and well attended by over 100 members, 77 of whom stayed afterwards for the buffet lunch, served by the WRVS County team of ladies to whom they send warm thanks.

The Christmas lunch, held at Harperly Hall was much enjoyed, but Christmas also brought the closing of the Newcastle Met. Office, making this group homeless. However, they have found an ideal new "home" in Brunswick chapel.

At the New Year meeting they enjoyed a talk by Mrs Robson on her recent visit to S. Africa and are now looking forward to the April outing to the Sunderland Glass Trail.

They have knitted 52 tops for Ruanda and have already, after a very short time of collecting, sponsored a sighted and braille children's book. This book helps parents to help their children. As each page is turned it has the braille page on the right and the normal page on the left. (This sounds a very worthwhile donation Ed.)

Mrs Dawson reports that **North Shields and Whitley Bay** had afternoon tea together and the annual carol service which 24 members attended. At both these events they enjoyed meeting with friends whom they had not seen throughout the year.

The plan to have one big annual coffee morning instead of two as previously, was a great success, held in Whitley Bay for St Oswald's Hospice and at various stalls; they made £500, a great success. In addition, bringing the total to £662, the Hospice stall made a further £149. They plan a similar event next November.

The WRVS invited Association members to their annual "tea afternoon" where they were able to meet people they had worked with over the years.

It is with great sadness they have learned that North Shields WRVS Meals on Wheels service is to close in March, being taken over by Social Services. Hopefully those Association members, still working on the service will find the Association helps them keep in touch. (This is surely where the Association proves its value. We are glad they have a thriving branch to help them. Ed.)

The Norfolk Court coffee mornings continue, although numbers are depleting.

This group is sad to report the death of Mrs Dorothy Tate, for many years a helper both at the Good Companions Club and on Meals on Wheels.

The **Ponteland** group, led by Mrs Sealey, held meetings in November, January and February and helped at Jesmond Cheshire Home fund raising Fair in December as well as attending the carol service and lunch.

Mrs Lister is pleased to report that they have four new members. The branch raised £250 at a Bring and Buy table in aid of the Hospice and with this and a collecting box at their meetings, £323 was handed over to the Hospice Fund Organiser. An excellent result.

They have had several interesting talks; on fashion jewellery; by a chiropodist on "foot health", and one on Christmas flower arrangements, given by two members.

For their Christmas lunch, they bought food from Marks and Spencers and enjoyed a "super" buffet luncheon which was great fun. (Other branches might be interested to know that M. and S. were very good, having everything they had ordered ready for collection at 9-0am on the morning of the lunch. This might be a splendid idea for other clubs, where members want a celebration, but with little effort! Ed)

They also had a successful "Sherry and Christmas Cake" party in the New Year where each member brought a friend. Their future programme is to include talks on Macmillan Nurses, Crime Prevention and Reflexology. (Perhaps in a future report, when they have found out, they will tell us more ignorant ones, exactly what Reflexology is ! Ed.)

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

Mrs Thompson has sent in her report, it seems, by the kindness of a neighbour who owns a four-wheel-drive vehicle, as at the time of writing she says she is snowbound for the third time this year. She was just hoping someone would call ! (Evidently they did, as I got it in good time! Ed.)

The annual Area Lunch was held at the Millstones Restaurant, Harrogate, an excellent venue chosen and arranged by the **Harrogate** branch. Three members of WRVS Divisional staff represented Mrs Margaret Duff, Divisional Director, who was not able to be present. Mrs Sheila Pantin, a Harrogate member, gave a fascinating talk about her work with Gurkha families while serving with WRVS Services Welfare. An excellent lunch was followed by the Annual Meeting and Mrs Thompson stressed the difficulties of the cost of transport in such a large area to attend the meeting. In spite of this problem, she did feel it important to give members the opportunity to "get-together" with other groups and for this reason is determined to struggle on in arranging such meetings. In 1996 she hopes to hold the meeting in Hartlepool to give those in the north of the area a chance to attend more cheaply.

The **Darlington** branch reports that in addition to coffee mornings and lunches they enjoyed a splendid trip and lunch at Hartlepool's Historic Quay. Only on their return from this trip did they find that one member, too poorly to join them, had died during the afternoon. Donations from their Bring and Buy sales to Oxfam and St Teresa's Hospice, their adopted charities, were much appreciated. This group reported to Mrs Thompson how much they had enjoyed the Annual Lunch, "especially the talk about the Gurkhas". Darlington members also had a Christmas tea-party at Divisional Office, Mrs Evans again making one of her wonderful cakes, half of which was left for Divisional Office staff to finish. (No wonder Divisional staff are so welcoming for this group to use their office ! (Ed)). A Christmas lunch at The Cricketer's Inn in January and a later coffee morning were also arranged.

Hartlepool have enjoyed some interesting speakers at their monthly meetings. One, on Durham Cathedral, was followed by a guided tour which was much enjoyed. They have also visited Bolton Abbey and had a boat trip in the Lake District.

In January they celebrated their tenth anniversary with a splendid lunch at which each member was presented with a lace-edged handkerchief mounted on a card and inscribed with thanks and good wishes.

Scarborough have had a good year. They have met in member's own homes, but also enjoyed a visit to Heslington, York to see George Smith's outstanding Manor House and gardens and a film of his International Flower Displays. Bad weather prevented Miss Hyatt, County Rep. and Mrs Thompson from attending their excellent Christmas lunch. In December members celebrated Mrs Mollie Morris's 90th Birthday, a lively and enthusiastic member.

The **York** branch sent the largest delegation they have ever managed, to the Leicester AGM, most travelling by rail. In spite of some confusion on the return journey, (British Rail confusion, not ours Ed. !) they all voted the meeting a great success.

All members were sad to learn of the deaths of Mrs Phyllis Allinson and Mrs Joanna Browne. Mrs Browne was a poet and one of her poems had already been selected for this issue, before her very sudden death.

In October they enjoyed a talk by the Chaplain to the York Hospitals Trust, a talk full of humour, thoughtful and thought-provoking.

Stop Press ! York members felt very pleased and honoured to welcome Mrs Sheila McCormack, our new Association Chairman, to their March meeting and to hear her talk about her hopes for the Association but also the problems of her new job.

Selby members have met regularly.

Middlesborough group is facing uncertainty as no replacement has yet been found for Mrs Bregazzi who has had to give up her leadership owing to ill-health, after many years of faithful service.

Humberside. Div.Rep. Mrs D. Price

Humberside members were sad to say "goodbye to Mrs Nancy Wilson at the end of 1995. She has been a "tower of strength" for the Association in Humberside over the past five years and was always willing to come over the bridge to visit groups on the other side of the Humber. The group have given a warm welcome, in her place, to Mrs Diane Price.

Both North and South Humberside enjoyed their Christmas celebrations, and continue to meet for their "pub lunches" every three months.

Mrs Price says she is very sorry to report the deaths of six members, Mrs Coulbeck, Mrs Larkins, Mrs Pearson, Mrs Tarbottom, Mrs Wood and Mrs Schroeder.

Members are looking forward to their Annual Lunch in April to be held in Grimsby.

Lincs, Notts, Leics. Div. Rep. Mrs J. Newman.

Mrs Newman has also had a wonderfully warm welcome as the new Div. Rep. in these counties. She is trying to visit all groups as soon as possible. She writes that it is encouraging to note a steady influx of new members, counter-balancing the loss of those who move away, become too infirm to attend meetings, or sadly, die.

In spite of the distances between groups in these counties, meetings were held at Skegness, Caistor and Lincoln and Skegness's Christmas lunch went ahead and was greatly enjoyed in spite of deep snow !

Leicester has a large membership who meet for coffee most months in addition to several outings to Oxford, Liverpool, Hunstanton, Sandringham and Buckingham Palace. They were all sad to lose their secretary, Win Andrew, who died just after Christmas and who will be sadly missed.

Bassetlaw group meet regularly and had a sherry party in December and a buffet lunch preceding their AGM on March 6th.

Broxtowe have met monthly for lunch and enjoyed an excellent Christmas lunch and profitable raffle to help their expenses.

Mansfield group meets regularly for lunch at West Notts College. Rushcliffe held a Christmas lunch. Mrs Cramp reports that members of **Gedling** Branch held monthly meetings at various venues. These have included afternoon tea at Patchings Farm Centre,

lunch at Bleasby, a very pretty local village. Christmas lunch at the Moat House Hotel and coffee and mince pies at a neighbouring club. But other meetings have been held at a local pub, "The Old Spot" which has connections with highwaymen.

One speaker, the manager of the local Asda superstore told of the 12,000 tins of beans, 80,000 lbs of bananas, 150,000 pints of milk bought by 34,000 customers each week ! Twenty nine members came away with a "goody bag" each containing 15 items. (Surely a good idea for other groups? Ed.)

At the AGM, held at the home of the Social Secretary, a new Chairman and Committee were elected. One winter meeting to Nottingham Forest Football Club had to be cancelled due to a very heavy fall of snow. (I conclude that the snow was too deep for the ladies to shoot accurately at goal. What a pity ! Ed.)

NORTH WEST DIVISION

Cumbria, Lancashire. Div. Rep. Mrs M McCambridge BEM

Greater Manchester. Div. Rep. Mrs E. Collier

In **Romiley**, eighteen members enjoyed a Christmas lunch together and in January a WRVS member who had attended the Armistice service in London came to tell them about it.

In March they are to be entertained by the Meller Handbell Ringers, they have a trip planned for May to the Brinestones Craft Village and in June are to learn about making and collecting Rag Dolls.

In **Bury**, their summer outing, a very happy occasion, was to Lytham, to visit Mrs Wilkinson, a member who had recently moved to her new home there, and who had given valued service to the group. In August they were represented at the commemoration in London by Mrs Matthews.

Mrs Collier is happy to report that the Bury group has several new members and a new secretary, Mrs Waller, and all met in October at Smithhills Coaching House for a very enjoyable lunch.

The really good news about the Bury group is that they start the New Year with their membership increased by almost one third and are planning another lunch for March.

Sale group met just to reminisce about holidays in September. In October they had a talk about the experiences of one member, who had been injured in the 1942 air raid on York and had spent a year in various hospitals.

A Bring and Buy to raise funds for their Christmas Party, was held in a WRVS lunch club. Most popular entertainments of this group are quizzes and games.

Merseyside, Cheshire. Div. Rep. Mrs P. Linton MBE

Mrs Linton reports that all groups have had a busy year. One new group formed in **St Helens**, Merseyside, is run by a small committee to spread the load, and meets once a month, but the division have sadly lost one group through lack of new members.

The Wallasey Civic Society has bestowed the title "Citizen of the Year" on WRVS member Mrs Dorothy Whittingham, deputy to Mrs Pat Linton, for dedicating her life to people in her community. As well as driving for the Meals on Wheels in Wallasey for over 20 years, Mrs Wittingham has served as Meals on Wheels Organiser, done many voluntary jobs for her community and is Secretary of the Wallasey WRVS Association group.

Unfortunately a Press photograph of her receiving the shield from the Mayor, would not reproduce for this Newsletter.

Mrs Spreag of Knowsley completed 50 years service, mostly at Whiston Hospital and this was celebrated with a party.

Mrs McKeand, BEM, received her 2nd Long Service Clasp from the Lord Mayor of Liverpool.

They are sad to report the tragic death of Mrs Stella Shepherd, who was killed by a "hit and run" driver on her way home from a meeting. Mrs Shepherd had worked hard for the group and will be greatly missed.

They have 111 Life Members, 116 annual members but, Mrs Linton says, they could do with many more.

The AGM was held in the prestigious surroundings of the magnificent Liverpool Anglican Cathedral where Mrs Linton and Mrs Sheila McCormack were welcome guests. Mrs McCormack explained the WRVS changes after which they all enjoyed an excellent lunch in the Cathedral.

Wallasey are sad to report the death at 92 years, of Mrs Violet Bird who, for 40 years Organised Clothing for Wallasey and is sadly missed by her many friends.

SOUTH EAST DIVISION

Norfolk, Suffolk. Div. Rep. Mrs S. Scholey.

Mrs Jackman reports that the **Great Yarmouth** group enjoyed an interesting talk by a Customs and Excise Office who told them of their efforts to prevent the illegal drugs traffic through the port and allowed the members to handle the (closely sealed !) packets of many types of drugs. A donation was made to help Spina Bifida patients.

They are a sturdy, undaunted lot on the east coast... for they report that 66 members braved Siberian winds, straight off the sea, for a lunch at the Pier Hotel and that their number included one member with a broken nose and another with a broken wrist. They were pleased to welcome members from other districts to this lunch.

The AGM was held in October and a full programme was announced for 1996, including a visit to Bury St Edmunds on market day, to Ickworth House, a railway journey to Holt, a visit to a Pier Show, a visit to Sandringham, and next October to Beccles (with Fish and Chips !)

Most Suffolk branches too are busy and thriving, Mrs Scholey reports, under the watchful eye of Mrs Mytton-Mills, though sadly one branch, with very aged members has had to close. They do, however, still keep in touch with everyone and ask all members to keep a watchful eye on anyone who is not well.

Cambridgeshire, Northants. Div.Rep. Mrs B. Titcomb.

A long report from Mrs Titcomb tells of much activity. The **Huntingdon** group, under Mrs Watson's guidance, had a repeat mystery tour in July, finishing again at Soham for an excellent tea, a repeat visit by special request. In August they enjoyed a fascinating talk by Miss Birkhead on "The Wonderful Kingdom of Plants" and in September enjoyed an autumn-tinted coach trip to Ashton, a pretty village of thatched roofed houses. This village has not only has a wonderful display of butterflies, but an Annual Conker Festival. (They do not say which member won, or whether she had soaked her conker in vinegar, as my young sons used to do ! Ed). This visit included tea at the Chequered Skipper Inn.

In October Mrs Sheard gave a talk and film show on a visit to Peru which was enjoyed by everyone.

In November the annual lunch was held at Queen Elizabeth School, Godmanchester. This was the first time they had not prepared the meal themselves and was a great treat, enabling them to leave the hard work to someone else. Peterborough District Organiser and Secretary were special lunch guests. Long Service Clasps were presented to Mrs Gardner, (1st Clasp), Mrs Watson, (2nd Clasp) Mrs Greenfield (3rd Clasp).

This group have a visit to Warwick Castle planned for the summer.

Mrs Titcomb reports that In **Peterborough** they had a talk by Mrs Middle who spoke about "The Ghosts of Stanground Church. In November they entertained Peterborough County and District Organisers and heard about WRVS changes. But in December this group enjoyed a three course meal and free glass of wine at one third off the normal price.. they say they are very much looking forward to next Christmas ! In January they heard a talk about the Macmillan nurses and Day Centre and have had an invitation to visit the Centre.

Mrs Parr's group in **Daventry and South Northants** have met several times for lunch and Mrs Titcomb is happy to report that Mrs Parr's health is improving.

The **Rushden** group had a very successful Christmas meal. They have several members who are not well but Mrs Shanks reports that one member, Mrs Evelyn is making good progress.

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

Mrs Copping reports from **Southend-on-Sea** that they have had a busy summer with interesting events in the town and interesting speakers at their meetings. One great interest was the visit of the SS Sedov, the largest windjammer still in service, which moored there for all to see and also the excitement of three world famous yacht races which started from Southend. Moreover, the town won the Chelsea Flower Show Gold Medal and the Anglia in Bloom Trophy.

Their speakers have included the Marketing Director for Southen Council who spoke about their plans to attract visitors. Their pier, the longest in the world, which was sadly damaged by fire, is being rebuilt. The pier trains are now running again. Many improvements to the Pier Head are planned and the Kursaal will be restored to its former glory by 1997.

In November 30 members enjoyed a meal cooked by the trainee chefs at the South East Essex College, where they were most impressed by the excellent meal.

London N.W. Div. Rep. Mrs D Stevens

Seventeen members went to the Drury Lane Theatre, not to see "Miss Saigon", but to see what happens behind the scenes. A talk on the history of the theatre, the reason the theatre has two Royal entrances (this is intriguing as they do not say what the reason is ! Ed.) was followed by a tour back stage to see props, costumes and scenery and a chance to see the Royal Box and the beautiful ante-room decorated in 24 carat gold leaf with its magnificent Waterford Crystal chandelier. The afternoon was completed by a very enjoyable tea in the Grand Saloon. (Is this an idea for other groups, to see more of their local theatres ? Ed.)

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

Mrs Bright reports great activity and interest from several branches; **Woking** Branch flourishes, busy and with well attended outings and theatre visits; **Epsom and Ewell** numbers are growing and meet other branches and WRVS County staff; **Guildford** too are a supportive group.

Surrey members met for tea at Effingham in the autumn while **Eastbourne** members visited a trout farm and enjoyed a (fishless!) cream tea. **Hove** too has a growing membership and raised £120 for Cancer, at a coffee morning.

As in North Shields/Whitley Bay (see p.5), the Association in **Whitstable** is proving invaluable here too, now that the Whitstable WRVS office is closed, enabling members to keep in touch with each other.

Due to snow, **West Kent** have still not had their Christmas Dinner, poor souls! They hope to have it in May, (if the weather improves by then ! Ed.)

Mrs Bright is sad to report the deaths of several older members in her Division.

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

West Midlands. Div. Rep. Mrs J. Smith BEM

Mrs Rose reports from **Warwickshire**, that she has very little to report! other than that her group continues to enjoy their meetings. **Nuneaton and Kenilworth** have met regularly. **Nuneaton** have a coffee morning each month in each other's homes and several pub-lunch outings. They also celebrated Irene Smith's 80th birthday and had a garden party lunch.

Kenilworth, now led by Doreen Shaw meet for coffee each month at the De Montford Hotel and had an enjoyable Christmas lunch there with Nuneaton members there too. The reminiscences are all of the WRVS work they once did. (Could they send me some of these please ? Ed.)

Mrs Rose adds that one reason Warwickshire members enjoy getting the Newsletter is that they feel it reflects the service they once knew and loved and that they do not get the same pleasure from "WRVS To-day", which, of course is not aimed to interest their age-group. She adds that the Newsletter is "eminently readable" ! which is a good "pat on the back" to all those who contribute, for it is their words they read and enjoy. (I do hope this will encourage more of you to write ! Ed.)

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

The Annual Reunion was held in September at the Over Sixties All Day Club in **Worcester**. A light lunch was served to 34 members and Mrs Winnie Harwood's 90th birthday was celebrated with a beautiful cake and a lovely bouquet of autumn flowers. After lunch, the newly appointed County Organiser, Miss Helen Jeffries, spoke on the way forward for WRVS and this was followed by much discussion of "WRVS, then and now". Three new members were welcomed at this lunch, which was enjoyed by everyone.

One sad note, only disclosed after the meeting, so as not to sadden the birthday celebrations, was the sudden death of Miss Clarry, one of the branch's oldest members.

Avon, Wiltshire, Dorset. (Appointment pending)

(Sorry, Mrs Dunton's report just missed the deadline for the autumn Newsletter so we are printing it here Ed.). The **Dorset** group held their 1995 AGM in September at the home of Lady Hanman in Wimborne. Forty two guests and members enjoyed a sociable afternoon and the raffle raised £34.

They held their Spring re-union at the Allandale Centre, Wimbourne where 28 members and guests enjoyed a talk by a one-time Queen's bodyguard, who related his experiences. Their raffle raised £28.

WELSH DIVISION Div. Rep. Mrs E. Edwards BEM

Mrs Edwards now looks after the whole of Wales since sadly Mrs Travis has had to retire

JERSEY Assoc. Rep. Mrs D. Jennings

Mrs Jennings recalls 1995 as the year of great Liberation Celebrations but also of gorgeous weather in May, July and August. The group have met for afternoon tea twice, once at the home of the Founder of WRVS in Jersey, Mrs Ruth Fisher who celebrated her Diamond Wedding in 1995 and also at the home of Mrs Freda Rossiter which has a most magnificent view across to France. Almost every member attended the Jersey AGM in July. Seven members met at the Jersey Museum in November for a pre-Christmas lunch where they were permitted to see the "Occupation Tapestry" which had been unveiled by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales during his official visit on May 9th. The tapestry took seven years to make, and the twelve panels depict twelve aspects of the five year occupation. Each of the island's twelve Parishes raised a team of embroidresses to stitch one panel and among these were three Association members, one in St Helier, one in Trinity and one in St Clement. Another Association member served on the Design Sub-Committee. A permanent home for the tapestry has been established in the harbour area. (I am sure that many of our members lucky enough to visit Jersey will be keen to see this. Ed). Another item of interest, a book entitled "Island Trilogy" was published last year which has a contribution by one of our members, Mrs Alwyn Deslandes.

Mrs Jennings says that in spite of having all that sunshine, many people have contracted 'flu and throat infections over the winter but they hope to meet after Easter when the winter weather has departed.

Something Funny Happened when on WRVS Duty

While on duty in the hospital shop a vicar purchased a bar of nut chocolate. He soon returned to say he had lost his false teeth, possibly among the shrubs or on the floor of the Out-Patients. We searched but could find no trace and enquiries with the cleaner revealed nothing. The whole thing remained a mystery and we were left feeling thankful that the vicar had only a funeral to conduct that afternoon and not a wedding!

Mrs Payze-Collins MBE Southend-on-Sea.

In 1990 I received the BEM and proudly gave a slightly confused elderly aunt the news, but I had to correct her several times from calling my award the OBE or MBE. Eventually she said, "Now what did they give you dear - was it a BMW"?



During my years as Meals on Wheels Organiser I received an early morning call from a driver to say she could not deliver meals that day as she "had a little love in bed". I was about to say "Good for you"!, when she explained that the "little love" had measles.

A colleague showed a prospective driver to my office. "This is Mr Goldilocks" she said. I saw her face trying to control her mirth as she realised her mistake, for his name was Mr Marigold

During the war an intruder got through a small window in our house, stealing mother's jewellery, father's gold studs, my sister's money box and made quite a mess. While the police investigated all the rooms my mother dashed to the larder to conceal, hastily, a ham and other black market goods she had acquired from the local farm. She thought she might soon be at the police station, sharing a cell with the burglar.



Four contributions from Peggy Williams BEM. Poole

Training in London to serve Overseas for WRVS in 1963 I was sent to a Centre to do Meals on Wheels, Clothing etc. A policeman brought in an elderly man, who had been charged with indecent exposure, to be re clothed. The regular ladies measured him and collected the necessary items of underwear, trousers, etc., and the policemen said he would like him to change before returning to the police station. The old chap turned to me and said he did not want to change until he had had a bath "You see, I'm lousy - what can you do about that?". It was then I noticed that all the regulars had disappeared leaving me in charge ! I went into the back room to get some suitable spray where I found them all in hysterics. Having thoroughly sprayed the gentleman inside and out! I persuaded him to change in the toilet and he went away very pleased with life.

Mrs Regi Howe Bedford.



We were asked to 'man' an Oxfam shop for a short period in the 1960's. Following an appeal for "Spectacles for Africa" spectacles poured in thick and fast. An elderly man was looking through the gramophone records for old Gilbert and Sullivan 78's and finding what he wanted, went to the counter to pay. He was back in a second saying "I can't find my glasses. I'm sure I left them on the counter". An over-zealous worker had obviously tidied up and put them in the sack with all the other spectacles. The man remembered that the case was a putty colour, as were most of those in the bag, but he also remembered that he had put his shopping list in the case that morning. The three of us sat searching through the mass of glasses and after what seemed an age the case was found and the old man went on his way, possibly vowing next time to visit Save the Children and not Oxfam !

Vera Hornshaw York.

A slightly confused Meals on Wheels recipient was found one cold morning, wandering in the garden, by the helper delivering her meal. She had evidently shut her door behind her and could not get in. When questioned, she knew she had a spare key somewhere, but could not remember where she kept it. The helper persuaded her to go next door, eat her meal while it was hot, and keep warm, promising to come back with a policeman who could climb into the upstairs window, which she noticed was open. However when, at the local police station the fatherly sergeant heard the story, he simply smiled and said "Madam, this story is familiar to us, don't worry, WE know where Mrs X keeps her spare key .. its tied to the elastic of her knickers" !.



Lesley Hyatt OBE Coxwold. N.Yorks.

We were asked to provide a creche at Gatcombe Park Horse Trials. The first day went well. We looked after a few children and two dear old gentlemen who ambled along to our tent. The second day we arrived to find that overnight torrential rain had washed mud from the higher car park field into our tent and others. The coconut matting flooring was bobbing about in 2 inches of muddy water.



There was nothing for it but to take off our shoes and tights and paddle in, to retrieve what we could. Whilst up to our ankles in this mire, who should come by but Captain Mark Phillips, who laughed with us, thanked us for our efforts and promised to send a drier as soon as one was available. Happy Days!

Mary Bagness. (No address given)

Having attended a WRVS meeting, I was walking back to my car, wearing my uniform, complete with hat, when a man dashed past me, struggled to get his car door open, looked at me, had another look, relaxed and said, "Blimey love, I thought you were a Traffic Warden". The story has a happy ending. After that encounter he joined WRVS

Penny O'Brien The Weald P.R.O.

One gentleman who receives meals lives in a large sitting room on the top floor of a large Georgian house, up three flights of very steep stairs. A "man of learning" he is surrounded by bookcases, and heaps of newspapers cover every spare inch of the floor, with just an avenue between bed and armchair. On one side of the chair is a small table on which to place his meal. On one occasion the nurse was attending to him while he was still in bed. She and her equipment filled the approach avenue, so I had to use the piles of paper as stepping stones to the table. Suddenly one of the heaps became unstable and, adopting a surfing procedure, and holding tightly to his meal, I finally arrived, still standing, at the table. Meanwhile the nurse, fearing my arrival in the fireplace, jumped forward to help and kicked over the bucket. The next visit seemed quite dull by comparison.



Kaye le Cheminant. Guernsey

POEMS

PERSEVERANCE.

The bride, white of hair, stoops over her cane,
Her footsteps, uncertain, need guiding.
While down the church aisle, with a wan toothless smile
The groom in a wheelchair comes riding.
And who is this elderly couple, thus wed ?
You'll find when you've closely explored it,
That here is that rare, most conservative pair
Who waited 'till they could afford it.

Anon

THE PRAYER OF THE TREE

You who pass by and would raise your hand
against me,
Hearken ere you harm me.

I am the heat of your hearth on the cold winter
night,
The friendly shade screening you from summer
sun.

And my fruits are refreshing draughts quenching
your thirst
As you journey on.

I am the beam that holds your house, the board of your table,
The bed on which you lie, the timber that builds your boat.

I am the handle of your hoe, the door of your homestead,
The wood of your cradle, the shell of your last resting place.

I am the gift of God and the friend of man.

You who pass by, listen to my prayer. HARM ME NOT.

Joan Sadler. York



GLORY OF THE TREES

The glory of the trees down Lezayre Road
Shines brightest in the autumn, when the load
Of summer's heavy green, now growing old
Has turned to russet red and flaming gold.

The winter gales lash down upon the trees
And in wild grasp their dying foliage seize.
The twisted trunks shine out in fitful sun,
The fallen leaves like crimson rivers run.

But yet they stand undaunted, for they know
That in the spring the rising sap will flow,
Green buds will fill, the sunshine and the rain
Will deck them out in glory one again.

Mrs Grace Isherwood. I.O.M.

Mrs Isherwood lived in Lezayre Road, Ramsey, I.O. Man. and sadly died aged 92, in Nov. 1995. This poem was read at her funeral. Mrs Isherwood will be remembered by East Riding members, where she was Deputy County Organiser before retiring to the Isle of Man.



WINTER MEETING

Emerging, hesitantly through the swing doors,
White hair straying from untidy bun,
Strain puckering a frail face
She dragged her years and her shopping bag, painfully,
Old age fearing to tread new-laid ice.
I took her arm, she protesting, "You too are laden".
Haltingly, like two snails in boots we executed our careful, precise amble to
the bus stop.
From the safe haven of No. 13 she turned a grateful watery eye
Upon me and beamed, "God Bless You".
Three words of biblical simplicity hovered above my head
Like a benediction, bringing a warmth, an inner glow
Dispersing the bleakness of a January day.



Mrs Joanna Browne. York

(This poem, is from her anthology "Autumn Leaves", published in 1994. Joanna died, suddenly in Nov.1995).

MAGIC ROUNDABOUT (to be sung to the tune of "In and Out the Windows")

In and out the roadways
In and out the pathways,
In and out the doorways
As we have done before.

"Hope you enjoy your dinner,
Most say its a winner".
No-one seems any thinner
Each time we go through the door.

Back at base, "All O.K."?
"Mr Joe Bloggs couldn't pay -
He'll pay double next day".
"He's told us that before !"

Kaye le Cheminant. Guernsey



THE YOUNG AT HEART

Age is a quality of mind.
If you have left your dreams behind
If hope is cold
If you no longer plan ahead
If your ambitious fires are dead
THEN YOU ARE OLD.

But if of life you make the best,
And in your life you still have zest,
If love you hold,
No matter how the years go by
No matter how the birthdays fly,
YOU ARE NOT OLD.

Sender unknown.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

A friend of mine had the surname Holmes and her brother was called Foster.

My youngest daughter taught a boy called Justin Case, who went on to become an insurance salesman.

Rene Thompson OBE Newsham. N. Yorks.

For some years, in our Geriatric Group of Hospitals, (for which I was Admissions Officer), we had a lady patient named Ida Down.

Kaye le Cheminant Guernsey

HANDY HINT.... To all who use a walking stick for support ?

Is your stick continually clattering to the ground after you have propped it against your chair ?

When getting your money out at the check-out do you find that holding your stick is a nuisance ?

If so, you might be interested in my solution. Tie a piece of black elastic or tape, a piece about 15 or 18 inches long round your stick about 6" below the hook. Sew or knot the two ends together to form a loop big enough for your hand to go through. A drop of super glue on the stick will stop it from slipping. Now you can loop it over the back of a chair, or onto your wrist when needed. If it is a straight stick, the loop also comes in useful to hang the stick up when it is not needed.

Mrs E.M.Robinson Morpeth



FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

REMINISCENCES OF CHILDHOOD

Funny, sad, regretful, horrifying

Do send them by August 31st

to the Editor

WHAT A COINCIDENCE

In the '50's my two WVS duties were carried out at a shop in Wanstead, and in the Citizen's Advice Bureau. The C.A.B problems were, of course the more testing but we had legal and other help and soon got to know who to get on to, to solve a problem.

One morning a lady came in, asking if we could translate a Greek message, addressed to her daughter, who was away at the time, but who thought the message might be important.

I phoned the Greek Embassy, feeling sure they would help, explaining who we were, and our dilemma. The voice that first answered was a bit of a surprise, saying "ang on, I'll fetch 'im". However the next voice was cultured and to my surprise, **very** English. As I explained my request I detected a hint of amusement. How, he asked, was I going to get the message over to him on the phone? I said I would do my best and proceeded with what must have been a very inaccurate version of the words in the letter. Throughout, the gentleman remained quite undaunted and somehow managed to make out of it a quite reasonable message which I understood. I thanked him warmly, giving the thanks of the WVS also. But, in a puzzled tone, he asked, "Why and how had I got on to him to help"? I answered that I had simply got the number of the Greek Embassy from the phone book and got through to him. Then a great chuckle came from the other end as he said "with respect, my dear, you **thought** you got the Greek Embassy. I suggest you mis-dialled. This is just a very small architect's office and I just happen to speak some Greek ! I can understand what has happened. **Our** number starts with **HAY**, being in Haymarket and I see that the Greek Embassy is the same number starts but with **MAY**, being in Mayfair. I am afraid you must had mis-dialled".

That night I lay in bed hearing his pleasant voice and his attractive laugh and I dreamt that a knight in shining armour was coming to carry me off ... to Greece, of course !

Irene Winter. Scarborough



Hope you can come to the AGM in Ambleside.

Tuesday July 16th 1996

(I look forward to meeting you there, Ed.

How did those of us born before the 2nd World War survive when we were young ?

We managed without... ..

Air-conditioners	Hair Spray	Sun-Tan Lotion
A Levels	Heinz Beans	Supermarkets
Aids	House-husbands	Tape decks
Aluminium foil	Hovercrafts	Tape recorders
Anoraks	Instant coffee	Tea bags
Anti-biotics	Israel	Television
Artificial hearts	Immunisation	The N. H. S.
Au pairs	Kidney transplants	The Open University
Baby-gro's	Laser beams	The Pill
Ball-point pens	Launderettes	Television
Barbecues	Lego	Tights
Beefburgers	Lychees	"Think Tanks"
Broiler Chickens	MacDonald's	Trainers
Calculators	Metal milk tops	Traffic Lights
Canned beer	Men wearing earrings	Traffic wardens
Canned Pet food.	Milk in cartons	Tranquilisers
Car Parks	Mini skirts	Tumble driers
Carry cots	Mixer taps	University Grants
Car's Eyes	Mobile phones	Videos
Cat Flaps	Monopoly	Washing-up liquid
Cling film	Motor Caravans	Wheel clamps
Coca Cola	Motorways	Wimpey Bars
Combine Harvesters	Mountain Bikes	Wind Farms
Comprehensive schools	National Health	Woks
Computers	Non-Stick Pans	Word processors
Computer dating	North Sea Oil	Xerox machines
Contact lenses	Package Holidays	Yellow Lines on Roads
Credit cards	Paper Handkerchiefs	Yellow Pages
CSE's	Plastic bags	Yoghurt
Day Centres	Penicillin	Zimmer frames
Detergents	Pizzas	
Digital Watches	Polio shotsPerhaps readers can add more ?.....
Dishwashers	Premium Bonds	
Disposable nappies	Pub Meals	...or comment on whether this list is correct.
Drip-dry clothes	Quango's	
Driving Tests	Radar	
Duvets	Radio. (It was called Wireless)	
Electric blankets	Radio Telescopes	
Electric Kettles	Seat Belts	
Electric typewriters	Second Class Rail Travel (Only 3rd and 1st !)	Did you eat Heinz Beanz before the war?
Father's Day	Shopping precincts	
Fish fingers	Shopping-trolleys	
'Flu jabs	Smoke-Free Zones	
FM radio	Soap Flakes	
Food Processors	Split atoms	
Formica	Split-level cookers	
Frisbees	Sponge Floor Mops	
Frozen foods	Stainless steel sinks	
Garden Centres	Staplers	
"Gays"	Stir-Frying	
Group homes		

ROYAL
VOLUNTARY
SERVICE