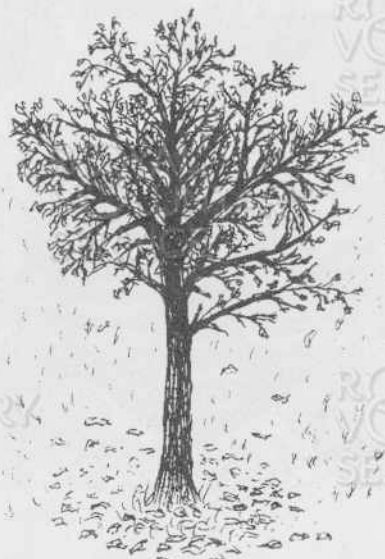




WRVS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter No 45
Autumn 1996



A framed picture, showing this badge of the Ambleside Lakes Parish Council, in full colour was presented to Mrs Sheila McCormack at the 1996 Ambleside AGM by the Chairman of the Council, Cllr Elizabeth Braithwaite at the Civic Reception given to welcome members to Ambleside

From the Chairman. WRVS Association

Dear Member

It was a great pleasure to meet many of those who were able to attend the A.G.M. at Ambleside in July. The lovely surroundings and glorious weather were an added bonus. Shortly afterwards I was delighted to send a letter of congratulation, on behalf of all WRVS Association members, to our President, Lady Toulson, on the Award of a Knighthood to her husband, Lord Justice Toulson.

As I write this, WRVS Head Office are hoping to move to Oxfordshire by the end of the year but the Association Office will remain, with the WRVS Trust, in London. However at the moment, we are not sure where our new address will be, or when we will be moving. I expect by the next Committee meeting in October we will be able to give Divisional Representatives more details.

Meanwhile, I hope you enjoy your Autumn and Winter meetings and for those members who are unable to participate - whether through ill-health or lack of transport - I trust this Newsletter will help to keep you in touch with your colleagues.

My good wishes to you all

Sheila Mc Cormack

A Note for Your Diary

The 1997 AGM will be held in The Great Hall, St Bartholemew's Hospital, London on Tuesday 15th July 1997. This AGM will be Non-Residential. Do make a note of the date, we hope you can come. More details in the Spring Newsletter.

News from the Divisions

NORTH EAST DIVISION

Headquarters Newcastle

Northumberland, Tyne & Wear.

Dep. Div. Rep. Mrs M. Doyle.

No report received

Durham, Cleveland, N. Yorks.

Div. Rep. Mrs R. Thompson OBE

All branches have continued to meet regularly and to enjoy their outings and meetings.

Sadly we have lost some members since the last Newsletter was published and they are very much missed by us all. On a happier note we have several new members and we hope they will be with us for many years.

One particular cause for joy is that the Middlesbrough group now has a new leader, Miss Pat Gostick, who has, with Kit Bregazzi's help and support, and despite a set back in her own health, kept the monthly meetings going happily since Kit had to relinquish her leadership in March.

A goodly number of members were able to get to the Ambleside AGM in July and all thoroughly enjoyed it. We now look forward to a good turn-out for our Annual Luncheon in October at the Hartlepool Historic Quay.

Humberside.

Div. Rep. Mrs D. Price

Our numbers are growing slowly and we enjoy the company of new members at our local meetings and wish them a happy time with the Association.

The Annual Lunch in April was held at a comfortable hotel just outside Grimsby. The Association Chairman joined us, breaking her journey from London to Northumberland and we appreciated these extra miles added to her journey.

Mr Ron Wardle gave an interesting talk on the history of a Yorkshire village over the past 2000 years. After lunch there was time to talk and exchange news and some members visited the garden centre in the hotel grounds.

Mrs Price was able to attend the Ambleside AGM with Mrs Wilson and they enjoyed the drive over and the few days in the Lake District. The weather was fine and they joined in everything !

We now all look forward to the Christmas lunch at Hull University and hope to see all members on that occasion.

South and West Yorks.

Div. Rep. Mrs L. Ziegler MBE

No report received

Lincs, Notts, Leics.

Div. Rep. Mrs J. Newman

Mrs Newman has been busy visiting seven groups in Notts. and Leics. Several members attended the Ambleside AGM and enjoyed it immensely. Membership has remained constant in spite of some members moving from the district or becoming too infirm to continue.

Newark group have met quarterly for a home-cooked lunch.

About half of Rushcliffe's membership enjoy the monthly coffee mornings at "The Willow Tree", the local pub, who let them have a private room free. In June 43 members met for lunch together at Clarendon College and 53 had already booked, (at the time of writing), for their annual outing, a trip to Willersley Castle in Derbyshire in September, a wonderful place with lovely grounds. They plan a Festive Lunch at "The Willow Tree" in December. But for those members not able to meet, their secretary, Mrs Loach, says get-well cards are sent and visits made by members living nearby.

Ashfield group have found a new treasurer to replace their previous member who has sadly died.

Bassetlaw meet quarterly for coffee mornings and lunches, varying times and days to enable as many members as possible to participate.

Sadly Lincolnshire report the closure of the Skegness group. It is hoped that by joining with Caistor and Market Raisin, they can resume in the autumn.

Leicestershire's autumn programme will include a visit to Buckingham Palace, an outing to the Cotswolds in September, coffee mornings in October and December and an early Christmas shopping trip in November.

Mansfield group met in June for an excellent annual dinner at the West Notts. College, prepared by the catering students.

Gedling branch report two very unusual items in their programme. For one, they had a four legged female visitor, "Ruth", a guide dog for the **deaf** who showed members just how useful such a dog is for someone without hearing. For the other, they visited the executive suite of Notts. Forest Football ground and learned of the security arrangements made for EURO 96. But they were very disappointed that they were not offered a game of football with the team! Mrs Cramp says they have a good programme planned for autumn.

Broxtowe group congratulated members Mr and Mrs Lawler on their diamond wedding and also in March enjoyed a home-prepared buffet lunch. In June they visited Clumber Park's "The Duke's Study" restaurant and the 12th Century Cistercian monastery Rufford Abbey, but "amid relentless rain" which seemed to dissuade the ghost, - a little old lady in black - from coming out to meet them which was a disappointment. But their cheerfulness was not dimmed, even when their return journey was delayed by football traffic. In July they had a coffee morning in Mr and Mrs Beidas's lovely garden and have a ploughman's lunch and a Christmas lunch planned.

NORTH WEST DIVISION

Headquarters Manchester

Cumbria, Lancashire.

Div. Rep. Mrs M. McCambridge BEM

No report received

Greater Manchester.

Div. Rep. Mrs E. Collier

Bury found the Methodist Church Hall a good central venue for a March lunch of homemade Potato Pie cooked by Mrs Matthews, with an entertainment of monologues and songs from Mr and Mrs Pollitt. They went aboard ship for their summer outing on the Leeds/Liverpool Canal and had tea on board. Several members attended the Ambleside AGM and were impressed with the whole meeting.

Romiley group have been to Brimstage Craft Village and Cheshire Oaks and have also enjoyed a Rag Doll demonstration, a Bring and Buy sale and talks on local history and travel

Sale group celebrated its 9th birthday in March. In April they had a slide talk on The Holy Land and in May enjoyed an outing to Sale Water Park, eating a cream tea while watching the bird life. Mrs Grimshaw hastens to say that the games afternoon in June did not include football!, but board games. They were relieved that The Bee Man in July did not bring bees, only honey. Mr Charlton explained that he took up beekeeping as a cure for arthritis which has been successful. (The snag seems to me to be that you have to be stung first !! Ed.) Mrs Grimshaw and Mrs Collier attended the Ambleside AGM and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Merseyside, Cheshire.

Div. Rep Mrs P Linton MBE

No report received

Staffs. Shropshire, Derbyshire.

(Appointment Pending)

Mrs Mosely, the Rep. for Shrewsbury has sent a beautifully presented brochure printed, by WRVS Head Office, of the history of WVS/WRVS in Shropshire from May 1939 and the first meeting of Area Organisers, to the present day. There is a photograph of this meeting, (all members wearing full uniform and hats!). It records how membership grew from 150 in the first three weeks to 8,000 by the end of 1939, and many details and photographs follow, telling of the work done. It is an excellent story which I am sure all Counties could repeat, of their own work. (Your editor has perhaps one small niggle. In the acknowledgements at the end it reads that the work of the 56 years "owes its

substance to the dedicated actions of the County Organisers past and present who have shaped the Service, aided by those in authority in Statutory and Voluntary Organisations..." I am sure this is true but .. perhaps they could have added here .. "and to the dedicated and loyal work of WRVS Members and Helpers who have made this story possible throughout these years"! But nevertheless, well done Shropshire ! Ed.)

SOUTH EAST DIVISION

Headquarters

99 White Lion St, London N1 9PF

Cambridgeshire, Northants.

Div.Rep. Mrs B. Titcomb.

Mrs Charnley reports good news and bad news from Cambridge group.

The good news is that they have welcomed several new members and regularly have a good attendance at their monthly meetings. Also, thanks to two memorial donations to the group, from the families of two former members, Mrs Starling and Mrs Fowler, their generosity has meant that they have had ample funds to subsidise more outings this year. These have included a visit to Hatfield House in May, to the spectacular Dersingham Flower Show, (a precursor of the Queen Mother's Sandringham Flower Show held the following week), and for a riverside lunch at Ely. Such coach trips would not have been possible without these donations and the group are most grateful. Cambridge have also joined their neighbouring group Huntingdon for their annual lunch. The bad news has been the sadness with which they have to report the death of Miss Scott-Carmichael. In addition to her work for WRVS at all levels of the service, she was the founder of the Association's Cambridge group and is largely responsible for their present active membership.

At Christmas, this group are planning a Grand Christmas Buffet Lunch.

It is with great regret also that Mrs Titcomb has to report that the Northants Rushden group closed at the end of March. Mrs Shanks, their Chairman, felt unable to continue and no one else felt able to take on the responsibility. The money remaining in their funds was donated to their local Meals on Wheels Service. Mrs Shanks was also the County Rep. and Mrs Titcomb would like to thank her and her dedicated committee for the work for their branch over the past years.

(This is a very sad story and it shows us all how vital it is for Association members to take some part, however small, in the running of their group and not leave it all to one person, for if that person finds she can no longer continue, many members feel it is too huge a job and are unwilling to offer take their place. When this state of affairs happened in the York group, we tried out the new system of having a Chairman for just one year. We have found that, so long as members know that it is not a permanent commitment, they are willing to "give it a try". Everyone who has taken this on in York since we made this successful change have said how much they enjoyed their year and several have said "it did me good. I never thought I was capable". But they were ! Ed.)

Daventry South Northants continue to meet under their leader, Mrs Parr.

Peterborough branch have welcomed three new members. Two members, Mrs Tilla Rowe, (Peterborough Clothing Store) and Mrs Marie Weaver, (Dersingham and Norfolk D/O and Matley Over Sixties Club), received Long Service Medals in July.

Members have heard talks by the Governor of Littlehey Prison and on the work of the Robert Horrell Day Centre by a MacMillan nurse. Both were well received and donations given.

In July members enjoyed lunch together at a local restaurant.

Several members still help at the Information Kiosks at the East of England Show, staff the "Lost Children's Tent" at Truckfest and the creche at the BMF Rally, both held at the East of England Showground.

The Huntingdon group's year started disappointingly. What promised to be very well attended meetings in January and February had to be cancelled due to severe weather. However the March meeting, with its talk on "A visit to China" and their April talk on "The History of Papworth Hospital" by the Hospital Administrator, were much enjoyed. In May a coach load visited Anglesey Abbey and indulged in a cream tea. In June they had a "Do it Yourself Strawberry Tea" with excellent local Somersham strawberries. In July, this group also attended Dersingham Flower Festival with an excel-

lent lunch and a visit to see the flower arrangements in the church, and also the craft fair. The August meeting included an enlightening talk by a manager from Tesco Superstore.

Norfolk, Suffolk.

Div. Rep. Mrs S. Scholey.

Norfolk group had an April outing to Ickworth House. On the way back the coach developed fan-belt trouble and the driver disappointingly declined their willing offers of tights I, preferring to drive along slowly until another coach arrived. In May Norwich members joined them for a lunch for 55 members. Then in July they had their usual visit to Cromer Pier Show, but couldn't have their usual paddle because it rained. Mrs Jackman says that there is never any shortage of volunteers to visit their household members who live in their very scattered area.

Beds. Essex and Herts.

Div. Rep. Mrs J. Callaway

In both Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire all meetings are for all members in the county.

This summer, all Hertfordshire members were again invited to Betty Sewell's lovely River Cottage. On this occasion they said goodbye to their former County Organiser and were able to get to know the new Area Manager for Hertfordshire and Essex.

Bedfordshire members also met the Area Manager for North Chilterns, Tony Lombardi, at their annual Garden Party. Do and Godfrey Vesey not only loaned their house and garden, but were enthusiastic hosts, entertaining members with games and extra drinks, such as Poor Man's Sangria. Dorothy Ward, Association member and member of WRVS Council, joined the party and helped answer questions about the latest WRVS developments. There was Bucks Fizz for two toasts, "the Association" and "the WRVS". This group had an informal lunch at The Angel in Toddington, a very pretty Mid. Beds. village and in August twenty-six members enjoyed a very successful outing to Buckingham Palace. The Committee are now planning their autumn and winter programme but sadly they have to find new premises for meetings as WRVS, so hospitable to them in the past, are moving to smaller premises which have no meeting room or kitchen.

Oxon, Bucks, Berks.

(Appointment Pending)

No report received

Hampshire, Isle of Wight.

(Appointment Pending)

No report received

Surrey, E.& W. Kent, E.& W. Sussex.

Div. Rep. Mrs G. Bright

Mrs Bright reports that all Surrey groups were represented at their A.G.M. held at Woking Golf Club in August where Mrs Evans welcomed the 41 members who attended. After a delicious tea they were addressed by the Area Manager, Downside Division who explained the reason for the closure of the smaller WRVS offices and expressed the hope that this would not lead to Association members losing touch with each other, or with serving members. Mrs Bright spoke about the Association A.G.M. in Ambleside, "the best she had attended". Miss Alston from Sussex reported on Eastbourne's Spring Blossoms coach trip and of her lunch with the Hailsham group, a small group who hope to meet for lunch occasionally and have been invited to join with Eastbourne events. Mrs Cooper had arranged for W.Kent members to meet in the WRVS County Office in Maidstone. but this had to be changed at the last minute as the County staff were moving to new Divisional Offices in Tonbridge, However Mrs Cooper went ahead valiantly with a wonderful meal at her own house.

Greater London.

Div. Rep. Mrs A.Christophersen

No report received

London N.E./City.

Div. Rep. Mrs W Taylor DL

No report received

London S.E.

Div. Rep. Mrs G. Block MBE

Mrs Block was awarded the Long Service Clasp in September. She received a letter of congratulation from Lady Toulson, and attended a tea party at which several old friends and WRVS official guests were present. She says with help from others she still organises the WRVS O.A.P. Club at Southwark.

Ten members, with Mrs Block, enjoyed a visit to Dulwich Art Gallery in September to see Dutch Flower Paintings from the 16th and 17th Century, with a "garden" pub lunch in Dulwich village afterwards.

London N.W.

No report received

Div. Rep. Mrs D Stevens

London S.W.

No report received

Div. Rep. Mrs J. Sanderson

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

Headquarters Exeter

Hereford, Worcester, Gloucester.

Div. Rep. Mrs J. Connop

Cheltenham was the venue for 65 members to meet for a ploughman's lunch, prepared and served by Cheltenham members, on 30th November when they welcomed Miss D. Mercer, WRVS County Rep. and several members from Hereford and Worcester.

The Cheltenham group also held a meeting in March on a bitterly cold day. Twenty-two valiant members who attended heard an interesting talk on the work of the NSPCC, by Miss Peacey of the Gloucester Child-Line Office, hearing how harrowing this work can be at times. They also had an up-date of Association news by Mrs Connop before tea and cakes were served.

In Gloucester, 25 members met for afternoon tea. A talk by a member from Samaritans, an excellent speaker, stimulated a great number of questions.

In June, 71 members, including three new members who were warmly welcomed, enjoyed lunch at the Golden Valley Hotel, Cheltenham. Their guests included His Worship the Mayor of Cheltenham, Cllr Mrs Thornton and Mr Boreham OBE. who gave a talk with slides, on "The Kambia Hospital". Members found it astonishing that despite their having no running water at this hospital, everywhere was kept so clean, serving as it does, a district of 200,000 people, only one doctor serving the hospital and the district's 30 health centres. A donation was given for this work.

Avon, Wiltshire, Dorset.

No report received

Div. Rep. Mrs B. Williams

Somerset, Devon, Cornwall.

Div. Rep. Mrs M. Parrish

Mrs Parrish has just taken on the task of Div. Rep. for this Division and was welcomed warmly as guest speaker at the Torridge District's AGM, where she gave a report of WRVS and Association news which interested everyone. The meeting was held at the home of Major and Mrs Lomas, (a member). Their Hon. Secretary, Mrs McQueen says that although AGM's are not favourite meetings for this group, two things helped to make this a most enjoyable occasion; Mrs Dunn, their Chairman ran the meeting so superbly that she quickly and efficiently got through the business of the occasion; and the venue was so beautiful, for while they had tea, they looked out on the sun shining on beautiful lawns, trees in new springtime leaf, carpets of bluebells and grassland with calves and sheep and lambs. It was all, says Mrs McQueen, so very peaceful, members just pleased to get together, to talk and reminisce, with no worries or responsibilities.

The WRVS closure of the South Hams office has been a boost to us as 13 new members have signed up. Hopefully more will join as people realise how pleasant it can be to meet up with old associates for some lunch or a sandwich in one of the local taverns in Kingsbridge. The contact for anyone interested is Micki Sercombe.

WALES

Headquarters Cardiff Div. Rep. Mrs E. Edwards BEM

Mrs Edwards is now looking after the whole of the Association's work in the Principality and we wish her well.

The Ruthin group met at a member's house in February. The year's activities were planned to include a visit to Erddig Hall (well worth it for those who have never seen it. Ed.) and in August a trip to Bala.

Mrs Edwards attended the Colwyn Group's meeting, enjoyed their super tea and heard their plans for the year, to include a speaker and coach trips. She also plans to attend the AGM of the Llandudno group.

Rhyl group are to go on a trip to Southport, and Anglesey and on a Mystery tour.

In March, Newport group held a lunch with Director of the Welsh Division WRVS, Carol Hodson, as guest of honour whom they find most supportive and helpful, offering advice on keeping records and speaking at meetings.

Mrs Bocking, Chairman of the new Conwy group, formed in Spring 1995, writes with some concern that her members have not been receiving their Newsletters, nor have their reports been printed. We hope this dreadful omission will be put right for this and future issues. Our sincere apologies. Obviously something has gone astray, but the matter is being looked into. Mrs Bocking has however, fortunately sent an up-dated report which we are so pleased to record here.

She explains that the group was formed in Spring 1995, for a "twelve month trial period", as knowledge about the Association was new to the area. However, their enthusiastic secretary, Mrs Grace Hornby and her committee, ensured that an interesting programme was drawn up, with the result that at their first AGM in Spring 1996 all members voted to continue their subscriptions, which were paid willingly, she says! Two members organise a sales table and tea ladies serve tea and biscuits while all have a friendly chat. Meetings are bi-monthly. One member kept them enthralled with experiences of her visit to the Royal Chelsea Hospital, where her daughter was a nurse, while another, a physiotherapist gave valuable advice about exercising away their aches and pains. A "Canine Friend" and his master told about "The Search and Rescue Dogs Association" with a video of their work. A local Policewoman, spoke about her work with abused children and others have shown egg-painting and flower arranging. This varied programme of meetings is not all. Last December the group had a visit to Port Sunlight Village and to the very fine Lady Lever Art Gallery. This was followed by a shopping expedition to the Cheshire Oaks Designer Village Shopping Outlet, which completed their full day out.

All our members throughout the country will be so pleased to learn that Conwy members now have their own group, and look forward to their autumn and winter meetings in the knowledge that they are providing fellowship and friendship both to retired WRVS and to those who are still active. (We wish them continued success. Ed.) Llandudno group have planned an interesting programme for the autumn, with competitions in September, "Whatever Happened to Molly Malone"? in November plus a Christmas shopping trip on Nov. 22nd (do tell us what did happen to her, Ed.)

Mrs Edwards wished us to print a note to inform North Wales members of the forthcoming Reunion in September, but sadly this Newsletter will not be distributed by that date. We hope that their reunion went well and was enjoyed by many Welsh members.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Guernsey.

No report received

Assoc. Rep. Miss E. Robilliard

Jersey.

No report received

Assoc. Rep. Mrs D. Jennings

SCOTLAND

We are delighted to get news of Scottish activities from Mrs Ailsa Blair. Their AGM was held in the recently flooded, but refurbished, Leith Assembly Rooms, in March.

Mrs Annie Boyd, WRVS Director of Scottish Division and Mrs Sheila MacCormack, our Association Chairman for England and Wales, were guests.

A new committee was voted in and the secretary's report told of 572 Scottish members, an increase of 49 on last year. The treasurer warned that their expenditure was more than their income and the Scottish subscription would need to be raised. This was put to the meeting and agreed.

Mrs Boyd told the meeting about changes in WRVS in Scotland and the need they felt to keep offices and work as local as possible while having to close some offices and open others. However she was pleased to be able to report that WRVS in Scotland was continuing to run well, Area staff smoothing over troubles as they arose. One great success to report, was that they had not lost a single project, in spite of all the changes. (We, south of the Border, must say "Well done, Scotland" Ed.)

Mrs McCormack then told of her work in England and Wales, involving as it does, a lot of travelling to meet groups, and of our recent problems with printing, following the closure of the WRVS Print Room in London.

After an excellent lunch, the meeting was told about "Tartans" by Mr Alistair MacIntosh ... how early tartans were district ones, their colours dependent on local vegetable dyes. A lady's evening plaid was shown, worn by a model and this rounded off a happy meeting.

Scottish groups have been active. Central had their AGM in March, a coach trip to Pitlochry in June which was a great success, while Strathclyde visited Aberfoyle, The Trossachs and Loch Vennacher.

Lothian group had a summer outing to Rosslyn Chapel and a "pub" lunch and Dundee held their own Antiques Road Show with the help of a local auctioneer, (a good idea perhaps for other groups? Ed.).

A speaker from Marks and Spencers told them how many pairs of pants are sold by them in one year - (but sadly Mrs Blair does not tell us!). Perhaps we in England and Wales should all have a guess and then find the answer from M and S. (So here is a promise.. **If enough readers send me in their guesses, I promise I will find the answer, with a small prize for the winner. Guesses all in to me please by January 1st 1997.** Ed.)

HONOURS

New Year Honours. January 1996.

OBE

Mary Gibbons.

Chairman of Benevolent Trust since 1994, Vice Chairman WRVS Wales 1984
Chairman, Wales 1989-94

MBE

Elma Bomphray.

Patricia Henderson-Begg

Wendy Kidd.

Jean Pinder.

Margaret Webb-Bowen.

Service to the Community

Dick Coard. Work with SSAFA.

Scottish Div. P.R. Manager

Chairman WRVS Residential Home, Sharnbrook House.

County Organiser, Dyfed.

Project Organiser, Dewsbury and Dist. Hospital, W. Yorks.

Princess Margaret Rose Hospital Project. Edinburgh.

General Assistance in WRVS N.E. Div. Office.3

Birthday Honours. June 1996.

MBE

Mrs Jean Johnson.

Mrs Kathleen Marnoch

Mrs Catherine Ollis.

Mrs Joan Pierce.

Service to the Community

OBE

Miss Dora Bryan.

MBE

Mrs Joan Simpson

Miss Peggy Suffield

Clothing Organiser and Saturday Club Leader. Worcester.

D.O. Kincardine and Deeside.

Lunch Club Organiser and M.O.W., Ross on Wye, Hereford and Worcester.

District Emergency Services Organiser. Wokingham. Berks.

For services to drama. (WRVS- Means on Wheels Brighton).

Services to the Community in Upton St Leonards, Gloucester. (WRVS M.O.W.)

Services to the Community in Wythall, Birmingham. (WRVS M.O.W. Darby and Joan and Baby Clinics)

THE AMBLESIDE REUNION AND A.G.M. JULY 1996

It was a lovely sunny afternoon on Monday, 15th July, when members gathered at the Charlotte Mason College, Ambleside, overlooking Lake Windermere. We were allocated our rooms in the various residential houses surrounding the College and then returned to the main building for an appetizing evening meal. This was followed by a concert by the Lakeland Singers - a local choir with a very high standard of musical ability and the programme was varied and beautifully performed. There was then a Civic Reception, hosted by Cllr. Mrs Elizabeth Braithwaite, Chairman of the Lakes Parish Council. who welcomed everyone warmly and told us some of the history of the college and also her own experiences, working as a WVS Instructor in the Food Flying Squad. Members then mingled for drinks and a chat.

Next day was again fine and warm and members attending for the day joined us for coffee. We then assembled in the comfortable lecture theatre where the Chairman, Mrs Sheila McCormack welcomed everyone and introduced our Association President, Mrs Elizabeth Toulson. She also introduced Mrs Lennie Holmes, WRVS Divisional Director, North West and Mrs Ailsa Blair, Scottish Association Chairman. Mrs Holmes said how pleased she was that the A.G.M. was being held in her part of the country and explained some of the re-structuring taking place in the North West. Mrs Ailsa Blair said how happy she was to be invited to meet members south of the border. She told us how Scottish membership lists had been put on a data base which initially had taken some time to do, but was now of great benefit and very labour saving when amendments had to be made.

The main morning speaker, Mr Ron Sands, Director of Tourism for Lancaster, spoke with great knowledge and enthusiasm about the Lake District. He described the geology of the landscape and how, in earlier days it had been a forbidding and fearful region. However, since Wordsworth's day, poets, painters and writers had discovered the delights of its lakes, fells and mountains. He read extracts from Wordsworth and some of his fellow poets. Mr Sands said that nowadays the Lake District had become so popular, that the problem was coping with the increasing numbers of visitors, without destroying the scenery. His talk was illustrated with wonderful slides showing many of the beauty spots at different seasons.

The speakers were thanked warmly by Mrs Diane Price, Humberside Div. Rep.

After an enjoyable buffet lunch, the A.G.M. took place and Mrs Sheila McCormack was re-elected as Chairman of the Association for a further year.

The reunion ended with some members visiting Holehird Gardens, near Windermere, belonging to the Lakeland Horticultural Society and after the evening meal others went for a cruise on Lake Windermere.

Reminder - we all get forgetful as we get older.
Don't forget your 1997 subscription.

Are you already a Life Member?

If not, do give it a thought.. The Association would benefit and you would not need reminding each year!

As from 1997 Life Membership will be £25

Dear Members

As I reported at the Ambleside AGM, many of you have been responsive to my requests for your memories. My thanks to everyone. I have enjoyed reading them all. Sadly some are too long to include but they all make fascinating reading, especially those of childhood, which I asked you for last time. I am repeating this request for the next Newsletter, as I am sure many more of you have incidents in your childhood which would sadden, amaze or amuse us all. Do send them in and let us all share your memories.

I have heard from several members who are housebound and write to say that "News from the Divisions" in the Newsletter is now their only contact with groups they once knew, as they have moved to be nearer to relatives. They love to read, for example, that their old group still meets for lunch at the "Dog and Duck", which they remember well. So we are especially grateful to the group leaders and Div. Reps, who send in News. Their efforts do not go unappreciated. There are of course, always some who have not sent in a report - and this is such a pity for their readers, but most do and as I edit their pieces, I think of all these groups all over Britain, enjoying their coffees, lunches, cream teas and the like. We do seem, as an organisation, to do an awful lot of eating and drinking !

I am sorry that I often have to leave out, or shorten the items you send. This is because we have to keep the number of pages in the Newsletter below the weight of 2nd class post and there are often other enclosures to add. I think for this issue I could have filled the Newsletter twice more with contributions which I always feel sad to leave out. But nevertheless, do keep them coming and one day we may be able to have more pages !

Thank you for all your letters. Do keep writing,

Neer Venables

FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER - TO ALL MEMBERS..... Don't forget .

Please send "*A Memory of my Childhood*", Also, your guess for the competition mentioned on P 8 "*guessing how many pairs of ladies pants are sold annually in the UK. by Marks & Spencers*".

- both to the Editor, at the above address, **by January 31 1997.**

REMINISCENCES OF CHILDHOOD

*"We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we were young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now".*

From .."To a Butterfly". By William Wordsworth.

These lines were quoted at the Association AGM in Ambleside in July. by Mr Ron Sands, Director of Tourism for Lancaster, who was guest speaker.

Here are some memories of those "summer days when we were young"

As my first Open day as a parent approaches.

I was a scrubbed and quiet pupil. Several mothers entered the classroom, threading their way between desks to their offspring, all comfortably dressed, homely bodies. Then my mother entered, slim, attractive, dressed in her very best, wearing a jaunty white hat at a fetching angle. The girl at the next desk asked "Who's that?" and I had to answer, "My mother", as shame burned my cheeks. Loyalty forgotten I said loudly "Mum, why did you wear that hat"? I shall never forget her hurt look and that Open Day was spoilt for both of us. I resolved for my first Open Day as a parent to ask my daughter what she suggested. To my astonishment she replied "Your new frock of course, and those new lantern earrings". As this frock was a bright flamboyant cotton I was amazed, but went dressed as she suggested, feeling when I got there, in those surroundings, like something on the Christmas Tree. Amazingly, I seemed to pass the test. (Have children, or Open days, changed I wonder ? Ed.)

From Peggy Williams. Poole. Dorset.

An Indian Childhood before the 1st World War.

I remember our journey to school when I was 6 years old. Wagons, called Dumleys, came to take us each day to the army school, each drawn by two bullocks, resplendent in navy blue serge covers on their backs, ours with the badge of the Royal Engineers emblazoned in gold, the badge of the Sappers on the other. Each driver wore the regimental sash over his coat. On his hat, or Pugree, he had a pleated cockade in regimental colours. Other Dumleys had the badges of other regiments on saddle-cloths and hats. A cloth awning over the top of each, shielded us from the sun.

From Mrs Eva Bown of Crookham, Hants, now 90 years old and in a residential home. Sent by her daughter Mrs E. Robinson. Morpeth.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE

In the haymaking season I used to help the men rake the grass into long rows to dry in the hot sun. After it was loaded onto the cart I would walk behind it to the rickyard. On the return journey I was always allowed to sit astride the big old cart-horse. At midday there was a break for lunch when the men sat in the shade and ate their food, bread and cheese wrapped in a red handkerchief, washed down with a mug of ale poured from an old tin can. Then a clay pipe of tobacco and back to work.

A memory recalled before she died, by Mrs Florence Wood, BEM, who died last year aged 94. She represented WVS in the Victory Parade on June 8th 1946.

ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE

I was born in India in 1926 and went to an English Army school in one of the hill stations, Sanawar. For one week each year we Girl Guides were allowed to walk 6 miles to a beautiful valley in the Himalayas, where, during a wonderful week of freedom we were encouraged to swim in the cool mountain streams, sliding down the smooth rocks into larger pools. We could go where we wished so long as we were home for tea. At night we slept soundly in spite of the prickly mattresses filled with pine needles.

At the end of October was the festival of Diwali when a "Box Wallah" came to sell us the special sweetmeats of the festival, a puffed rice called Khir which we mixed with white sugary stuff called Patasas. At night during that festival we could see the twinkling lights on the surrounding mountain side.

But the important time was November when we made our "Home Day Calendars" and crossed off each day until the middle of December when our parents would come to take us home for the two and a half months of the Christmas Holidays.

From Mrs Robinson. Morpeth. Northumberland.

I remember the Visitor's Day at my boarding school when my father was not popular with me. He was away and therefore my mother, having no transport, was unable to come to see me. Months later I learned why he could not come. He was manning one of the "little boats" at Dunkirk. Of course I was very proud when I learned the truth in spite of the fact that in losing our boat in the evacuation, he had also lost our swimming costumes and new ones needed clothing coupons!!

From Mrs E.C. Howe. Bedford

ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE

In wartime Guernsey I remember the "Bean Jar", a strong earthenware container. Into it went a little meat, say a pig's trotter, if we could get it, any vegetables we had, and beans. Many times it had vegetables and beans only. When it was full it was taken to the local bakery where, after burning gorse to cook the bread, the jars from all our neighbours were cooked in the oven and collected next day. My old pram, transport for our daily collection of firewood, was used to transport the heavy jar. "Armed" with a toy machine gun at the front, my playmate, Paddy, bringing up

the rear, a toy pistol in each hand, I pushed our "armed vehicle" up the hill to the bakery. The baker inserted the jars, each with its brown paper label, into the dark cavern of the oven. Then it was a fast retreat downhill, Paddy firing his pistols and sparks flying from my iron tipped shoes.

On a summer's day during the last summer of occupation, playing in the field near our home, a German orderly, enjoying his time off, was lying in the long grass, as they often did, watching our "make believe". On this occasion he called me over. Asking my name and age (I was 12) he drew from his pocket a faded photograph of a little family group .. a good-looking woman, a baby in her arms, a boy of my age and a younger girl at her side. I smiled. "Where do they live"? I asked. "Cologne" was the answer. I was then in a dilemma which I had to hide. I was not supposed to know of that city's great devastation. Radios were not permitted, but brave people did listen to their home-made sets and I had heard the awful news. My mother was English and to her all Germans were "the enemy". But my father, Guernsey-born, had told me that most Germans were just ordinary people like us and not all Nazis. That night I told my father, but not my mother, what had happened that day. He said "We must pray that he will find them safe when the war is over". So that night, I added that soldier's family to my prayers. I feel that it was on that day that I left childhood behind and grew up. Nowadays, I pass that field daily and always give a brief thought for the family in the photograph.

From Mrs Cheminant. Guernsey

Swimming in the river Great Ouse at Eynesbury in my childhood, mud squelching between our toes and a little way off, weeds waiting to catch and drown us. But I still remember with pride the day that I was judged a strong enough swimmer to swim to the romantic, opposite bank... Bedfordshire. The water drained the fields around but was considered clean enough, as it was above the place where a brook brought in the raw sewage from the night-soil carts. (Does anyone remember those?) How different our swimming was then to today's purified swimming pools.

From Jean Callaway. Bedford.

It was 84 years ago, in a peaceful garden in Grantham, when the great scientist, Ernest Rutherford came on Sundays to have tea with us. I sat on his knee and he talked to me about the garden, about my baby brother sleeping beside us and about the laboratory where he was working that summer vacation, with my father. He said to me "Now, Marjorie, you know that your Daddy is a teacher and a finder of things". I said that I did. He said "There are not enough ladies who become finders and do research. When you grow to be a big girl promise me you will learn how to be a "lady finder". I remember nodding my head and saying "I promise". But I did keep that promise and before he died, knew in a very small way I had done what he asked. I have no memory as deep as this. It must have made a very deep impression on me.

This memory of a great scientist from Mrs Marjorie Stevenson, of Windermere, is, she says, so clear, that she can go back to that garden and see it all again. It was brought back recently on holiday in New Zealand when she went to Christchurch University to see "Rutherford's Den", where a waxwork figure, so like the man she remembers, stood there in a "Mock up" of his laboratory.

One of my earliest memories of childhood was being covered in broken glass in an Edinburgh tramcar while being taken to school in 1926 in a tram driven by a student, which was stoned by a crowd during the General Strike.

Whether this incident caused my father to buy his first car I don't know. It was a 1926 Morris tourer with isinglass screens, so draughty that my sister and I had caps with ear flaps, a fur rug and foot muffs to keep us warm.

From Mrs Rene Thompson OBE, Richmond. N. Yorks.



I remember Easter journeys. We were six children, plus often a schoolfriend, aunt or uncle and my parents all packed into the family car, driving from the Wirral to North Wales, to our cottage where we spent all our holidays. We six had saved our pocket money to buy everyone Easter Eggs, very small eggs compared to those we see today and with no fancy wrappings or boxes. These eggs posed two problems. First they had to be a secret from the others. Secondly they had to be kept safe. This was where my long, black woollen school stockings were invaluable, and borrowed for the occasion by my four brothers. We each slid our eggs right down to the foot of our stocking, which then lay on our laps, hidden from view of the others and safe in their woolly wrapping. The difficulty arose, however, when one child frequently had to sit on another's lap for the hour-long journey, when the car was too full, (which it always was, no seat belts in those days!) and on these occasions the child on top had to be entrusted with the precious package belonging to the child below. Murder ensued if we accidentally broke one of their eggs!

From "Liverpoollian"

FUNNIES

During the installation of new lighting in a certain cathedral, one of the electricians in the roof left the door of the lift open, preventing anyone below from summoning the lift. Visitors were stunned to see the Clerk of Works standing in the middle of the cathedral yelling heavenwards "Peter ! Close the Gates"!

From Peggy James. Beverley

This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs Brown to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.

Mrs Johnson will sing "Put me in my little bed", accompanied by the rector.

From a Japanese information booklet about using the hotel air conditioner.

Coolers and Heates; If you just want condition of warm in your room, please control yourself.

In a tailor's shop in Rhodes.

Order your summer suit. Because is big rush we will execute customers in strict rotation.

From Miss Joan Sadler, York.

The Funny side of the Job



"SHE SAYS IT'S THE CUTBACKS"

From Penny O'Brien. Weald

MEMORIES OF WRVS

Waiting for a bus in the same queue one day, a very inebriated gentleman, seeing my WRVS badge shouted out loudly "WRVS, Women's Royal Voluntary Service". Everyone turned to look at me and I felt famous for an instant. He then asked me for 20p. and a pair of braces!! I gave him the 20p and said I would give him the braces when I next saw him. Once more he shouted "The WRVS always keep their promise" and went onto his bus quite satisfied.

From Mrs J Deeks, Lowestoft,

We sent about 100 children on holiday each year. One day three hulking great teenage brothers arrived and handed me a belligerent epistle from their mother. In it she warned us that they had been breast-fed to the age of five, were only allowed homeopathic remedies and that if we had their tonsils or adenoids removed during their stay, she would sue us!! I felt like replying that our only aim for the holiday was that they would be freed from their parental "appendages"!!.

From Mrs Mathieson Newquay. Cornwall.

From the canteen window all human life can be seen. Relatives are seated at tables awaiting the arrival of their menfolk. When the first man appears a small boy races forward and flings his arms round his father's neck. Only the visitors, not the prisoners are allowed to queue at our counter. We serve tea, coffee, cold drinks, sweets and biscuits, with penny sweets for children, such as Great Snakes and Wormy Wrigglers. The visitors too are interesting, from Peers of the Realm to the humblest new-born baby. One older lady is friendly, and we discuss her garden and the lunch-time swim she enjoys, but we never mention the son she has come to see. "I never thought I would find myself here", she once said.

We were taken on a tour of the prison and saw the chapel, a vast, gaunt building, used continuously for worship since 1894. Paintings round the walls, the work of inmates, are painted on mail-bag canvas. The organ began life in the Forum Cinema, Ealing, and the grand piano was a gift from Ivor Novello. The altar frontal, it is said, was the work of Queen Mary. At one concert, as the glorious voice of Katherine Wynn Rogers soared to the rafters singing "We'll gather lilacs in the Spring again... when you come home once more", you could have heard a pin drop.

One officer, wondering why we continue to attend, said that after a time **they** tend to grow cynical. Perhaps we are more immune from our vantage point behind the Kit-Kat bars. In his Report on Prisons, Judge Tumin commended the work of the WRVS, approving the semblance of cheerful normality provided both for inmates and their visitors in the prison canteens throughout the country.

From Mrs Diana Paul. London.

A soldier remembers

I first encountered WVS during my second trip to India during the last war when three of us were put on a train to Bangalore and Hyderabad, each given a sandbag of rations for the journey which, of course ran out along the line. There were the WVS, and we were given rations for the remainder of the journey. My next encounter was the marvellous welcome they gave us as we landed from Dunkirk. With my wife, Joan, I am now a WRVS member

From Mr W.B. Vincent Whitely Bay, Tyne and Wear

In Clothing we had one regular client who only came for one thing, a woolly hat, and if we could not supply one he became very aggressive. One cold dismal day he arrived, and we knew we had no woolly hats in stock. As usual, he became very rude and troublesome, but the day was saved by Gertrude, my Swedish friend who suddenly appeared with one. "Where did you find it" ?, I asked when he had gone, knowing we had none. "Its the tea cosy,!" she replied. Our only worry was that when his ears popped through the holes he would return, but "No" we heard no more !

From Mrs Mary Craven Poole, Dorset.

Mrs Maillard who started WVS in Penarth in 1939 was so keen that she gave up her front room to be used as an office. On a tree in the front garden, she pinned a notice, "Women Wanted". But one morning the poster was missing, discovered later, displayed on the gate of a very demure bachelor, the Scout Master up the road. In a recently published book on "Penarth Past", this story was told and the editor received a telephone call. It was from a man, admitting that he was that schoolboy culprit. The story has a happy ending, for the Scout master married some years later and his wife became a WRVS member on the M.O.W. Service.

From Miss Faller. MBE. Penarth. (A member since 1942)



Squirrel by Mrs Wilkinson Nottingham

THE 1946 VICTORY PARADE

This poem refers to the drilling of 149 WVS members, by a sergeant major of the Irish Guards in preparation for the Victory Parade in London in 1946. Mrs Florence Wood represented the City of Oxford at this Parade. It was sent, with other memories, by her son, Mr Lionel Wood, from the archives collected by his late mother who died aged 94 in 1995. It is recorded that after the parade the officer escorting the women said to them, "I was proud of you".

If I ask you most politely, and with masterly restraint
To stand stiffly to attention and endeavour not to faint,
While I'm giving you instruction, not to giggle, talk or wink,
If I ask you oh so nicely, could you do it do you think ?

If I ask you very gently, with no vestige of a frown,
Just to swing your arms most naturally, not to flap them up and down,
And I'd really be most grateful if you'd try and keep in line
And not give an imitation of the ruddy Serpentine.

Would you kindly throw your shoulders back ? And please don't think me rude
If I say I have to wonder what you'd look like in the nude.
But you'd better make an effort, girls, no matter how you're made,
For you're meant to be rehearsing for the Victory Parade.

Now I'm sick of being nice to you, I think I've had enough;
You may be of the gentle sex, but I believe you're tough.
So turn about and wheel about and dress it by the right,
I'll see you have an ache or two when you go home tonight.

So left and right and left and right, and keep a steady line,
And keep your tummies in, my girls - come on, you're doing fine.
Why, if the King were standing now upon his royal stand,
'E wouldn't 'arf be proud of you, the Mothers of his land.

Mrs Wood joined WVS in 1941. Her many WVS jobs, among much other voluntary work for Oxford, included County Borough Secretary, Organiser of Oxford Children's Clothing Exchange, Organiser of National Savings for Oxfordshire, Served on Regional Committee, One in Five Instructor at Headquarters. She was awarded the BEM in 1977.

SOME EASY STEPS TO MAKE A DELINQUENT

Are we, as Grandparents sometimes the guilty ones ?

In infancy give him everything he wants, when he demands it. Then he will grow up to think the world owes him a living.

Laugh at him when he is naughty. He will then feel cute.

Do not give him any spiritual or social training until he is 21 when he can decide for himself.

Praise him in his presence to neighbours and friends.

Avoid using the word "wrong". It may give him a guilt complex.

Pick up everything after him; his clothes, books, shoes, toys. He will then have experience of offloading his burdens onto others.

Let him read whatever he wishes when young. Have no concern for what goes into his mind.

Quarrel frequently in his presence. This will give him a pattern for his own parenthood.

Give him all the money he wants. Learning to save for what he wants is such a tiresome lesson.

Satisfy his every craving. Giving in to him is so much easier for you.

Always take his side against neighbours, teachers or police. They are all prejudiced against him.

When he eventually gets into trouble say "I never could do anything with him".

Original idea derived from "The Probation Officer". 1989.

Note, that in these days of "Political correctness" we should add that when we say "he" we also mean "she", or are grls immune from being little so and sos? (Ed)

THINGS WE DID NOT HAVE BEFORE THE WAR

There has been a lively response to the lists you sent. But items have been criticised by many readers, as in... "We DID have baked beans, car parks, traffic lights, Cat's Eyes, Driving Tests, soap flakes etc". (If I may join in the discussion ... I wonder ... I have never taken a driving test although I have driven since about 1939 and in college before the war we made our own soap flakes by grating hard soap on a thing like a cheese grater ! Perhaps it depended upon where you lived. Ed). Here are some additions you have suggested.

Aertex Shirts
Automatic doors.
Battery wristwatches
Caravan parks
Centrally heated homes
Cheese slices
Colour photographs
Dulux Emulsion
Electric Drills
Electric toasters
Metric money and measurements.
Plastic buckets, washing up bowls, etc., etc.
Rubber household gloves
Sliced bread
Service Areas on Motorways
Tupperware
T Shirts

WRVS and its Association (Ed)

and many more.

Man had not walked on the moon
"A big mac" was an outsize overcoat
"Crumpet" we ate for tea
"Fast Food" we ate in Lent.
We had a curtained cubicle to ourselves at the hairdressers.

The only "pasta" was macaroni in most homes.
Time-sharing was not a holiday home.
"A chip" was a piece of wood, or fried potato.
"Hardware" meant "Nuts and bolts".
"Software" was not a word we used.
"Made in Japan" signified junk.
"A stud" was for fastening your shirt-collar.
"Going all the way" meant staying on the bus to the terminus.
Cigarettes were socially acceptable.
"Grass" was mown, not smoked.
"Coke" we kept in the coalhouse.
"A joint" was meat for Sunday dinner.
"Pot" was something you cooked in.
"Rock music" might have been Grandma's lullaby.
"Eldorado" was an ice-cream.
A "gay" person was the life and soul of the party.
Shops had chairs to sit in while you waited to be served.
Rice was for puddings
A meaningful relationship meant getting on with aunts etc.
We married before co-habiting.- how strange
"Sheltered accommodation" probably meant a bus shelter

Readers suggestions of things we no longer have which we did have before the war.

Bile Beans
Blanco
Camp Coffee
Carter's Little Liver Pills
Dabs and Suckers
Donkey Stone.
Drene
Fennings Fever Cure
Gas Irons
Gob Stoppers
Grey Powders
Liquorice Root

Mazawattee tea
Monkey Brand
Monkey nuts
Nurse Harvey's Mixture
Omo
Oxydol
Peggy Sticks
Possers
Rinso
Valour Perfection Stoves
Walpamur
Zebo black lead



WRVS ASSOCIATION

WRVS Head Office
234-244 Stockwell Road
London SW9 9SP
Telephone 0171 416 0146

President

Lady Toulson
Chairman, WRVS

Vice-Presidents

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Reminder to all Divisional Representatives and Group Leaders

Do send reports of all the activities of your groups, between August 1996 to January 1997 to the Editor (address on p 10) by **January 31st 1997.**

We do like to hear from you.

Cartoon by Penny O'Brien