



WRVS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter No 47
Autumn 1997

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Cover illustration by Mrs Wilkinson, Nottingham

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From the Chairman, WRVS Association

Dear Member,

Since the last Newsletter, several changes have taken place at Association Head Office, due in the first instance to the sad death of Mrs Daphne Maisey in April. We all miss her experience and advice and I am very grateful to Mrs Dorothy Stevens who has undertaken the responsibility of Hon. Secretary. She is ably assisted by Mrs Ava Christophersen.

We moved to our new office in Stockwell at the end of March and after the initial upheaval and re-adjustment to a smaller room, we are settled there. Greensleeves Trust, who have taken over from the WRVS Trustees Ltd, the responsibility for residential care homes for the elderly, together with flats and housing for those in need, own the premises in Stockwell where our new office is situated. We moved there at the end of March and, after the initial upheaval and re-adjustment to a smaller room, we have settled in well. The Benevolent Trust (see page 23) also have an office in the same building and we value the contacts with these two Trusts

It was a great pleasure to see so many members at our A.G.M. in July and I think everyone enjoyed meeting in the Great Hall of St Bartholomew's Hospital.

I do hope you have had a pleasant summer, whether at home or away on holiday and for those who are unable to travel far, I trust you are able to keep in touch with Association members locally or through the Newsletter.

With best wishes for your future meetings and events,

Sheila McCormack

News from the Divisions

From 1st February to 31st August 1997.

NORTH EAST DIVISION *Headquarters Newcastle*



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

Mrs Doyle says they have been knitting "Teddies for Tragedies", small teddy bears, each with a drawstring bag, sent to refugee children who own nothing at all and often have never "played" with toys. Twelve have been finished. In February they had a talk by Mrs Williamson, their treasurer, on her holiday in Sri Lanka; in March a fund-raising Bring and Buy and in April visited the beautiful market town of Hexham for lunch. Also that month, their annual Area Tea. Mrs Doyle was away through illness for three months but her place was ably filled by Mrs Williams who also organised the outing to Paxton House in July. We are pleased to hear that Mrs Doyle is now back with the club. She says "thank goodness".

In the Spring Newsletter the editor omitted to include the notice from Sunderland of the death of Mrs Hope who is sadly missed by her friends. Mrs Lisle writes that the group have given £150 to the St Benedict's Hospice, money from their monthly sales table, and Collecting Box.

They have had close links with WRVS, ten members attending their tea party in Newcastle, a happy event where the Area Manager spoke about WRVS news. They have also had talks on Crime Prevention, the St John Ambulance Service, Age Concern, the work of an Ambulance Officer and a Security Officer.

(After the 1966 autumn Newsletter, members asked how this group had organised their do-it-yourself lunches with Mark's and Spencers food store. Apparently one simply picks up a "Party Food Planner" leaflet about November time, from the store and it explains everything. (Other groups may be interested. Ed.) Mrs Parker, B.E.M. has just joined the group after 47 years service with WRVS. This group have also been knitting Teddies, and enjoying lunch at a local pub.

Editor's note - In a previous issue they mentioned Reflexology and we asked what it was. They write, "It is a treatment said to work on specific points on the foot which if pressure is applied, blockages in energy pathways are released bringing the whole body into harmony. Allergies, swollen feet and insomnia are treated in this way". That is the claim. What do members think ?

Ponteland group had well-attended meetings in March, May and July, when they celebrated one couple's Golden Wedding. Mrs Coard gave an interesting report on the A.G.M.

North Shields/Whitley Bay group attended the WRVS Annual Tea and the area carol service and have welcomed Mrs Keady to their group. The annual coffee morning raised £584.27 for St Oswald's Hospice (Congratulations. Some coffee morning Ed.!).

Following the closure of the WRVS office they maintain contact with members through the Norfolk Court Coffee mornings.

Durham, Cleveland, N. Yorks.

Div. Rep. Mrs R. Thompson OBE

All branches, Hartlepool, Middlesborough, Darlington, Harrogate, Scarborough and York have continued to meet as usual and continue to flourish. Hartlepool took on the hard work of the 1996 area luncheon. Mrs Stamp adds that no one was more upset than her members, or more appreciative of the kind letters received, concerning the speaker and the venue. Middlesborough are grateful that Miss Gostick has agreed to continue as their Group Leader.

Mrs Evans reports that Darlington, have given generously, through their coffee morning funds, to St Teresa's Hospice.

Harrogate are grateful to Barbara Wilkinson who stepped in when Joan Grant was indisposed.

Mrs Longley says that York are most grateful to the Soc. of Friends, who have generously given them use of a beautiful room, (and fully equipped kitchen), without charge, for two years, following the fire at the Homestead, their usual venue.

Humberside.

Div.Rep. Mrs D. Price

Mrs Price says that the Newsletter gives her the chance to say "hello" to anyone in her area whom she has not managed to see since the last issue, although during the year she has had news of members, through the hard working "contact people" who help her. The Divisional lunch held at South Cave in April was well attended and the talk on "Tea Drinking" which mapped out the history of tea was most interesting.

North Humberside have four new members, but are sad to report the deaths of Mrs Florence of Holderness and Mr Plant, a wonderful supporter of WRVS over 20 years.

Mrs Price thoroughly enjoyed the lunch, the talk by the Hospital Archivist and the address by Lady Toulson at the national AGM held in the Great Hall at Bart's Hospital in London. Mrs Zeta Grice, Rep. for South Humberside says she received a beautiful, fresh bouquet of carnations, following her recent hip operation and these were sent through the "Charity Flower" scheme, where 15% of the cost is returned to WRVS. They were much appreciated. Mrs Grice's daughter held a summer tea party at her home.

South and West Yorks

Div. Rep. Mrs L. Ziegler MBE

On St Valentine's Day, 18 members went by coach to the "Last of the Summer Wine" country. A glorious spring day and very enjoyable.

Lincs, Notts, Leics.

Div. Rep. Mrs J. Newman

The secretary of Rushcliffe branch, Mrs Court, has written to tell us of the sad death in August of Miss Lovett. A valued County staff member, she was the driving force behind the formation of all Nottinghamshire branches, and had been branch secretary of Rushcliffe since 1982. She is remembered with affection for her forthright attitude and persistence, qualities for which she will be greatly missed.

Mrs Newman reports from this branch of the sad retirement through ill health of their Chairman for 15 years, Mrs Hill. Happily she still hopes to attend some general meetings but will be missed on the committee. Other officers elected at the April AGM were Mrs Loach, Chairman, Mrs Court, Secretary and Mrs Humm remaining as treasurer.

In April 80 members met for a "three Counties luncheon", though sadly Lincs. members were unable to attend due to transport problems. The Assoc. Chairman, Mrs McCormack, and N.E. Div. Director, WRVS, Mrs Duff, attended the delicious meal and spoke of the Service and the future, including plans for the WRVS Diamond Jubilee. This lunch was much enjoyed by everyone.

Mrs Newman also records the 100th birthday of Mrs Jeffrey, and enjoyed her party, attended by the Mayor of Rushcliffe and the Sheriff of Nottingham. It is reported that the champagne flowed like water !

Much is planned for the future, including a talk on Deafness and the Aids available. Two members attended the National AGM and found it most interesting.

Ashfield are now meeting regularly, sometimes with lunch at a local restaurant. They enjoy meeting together and sharpening their pencils and their wits with quizzes, before being revived with a cup of tea.

Bassetlaw members enjoy food too! Their AGM in March was preceded by a buffet lunch, in May they ate at a local hostelry and in June had tea at Haughton Park Farm, especially enjoying the delicious home made ice-cream. This group have several new members but, sadly have lost one, who has died.

Broxtowe too have been saddened by the unexpected death of their treasurer, Mrs Hudson. She was active right up to her death with lunch clubs and blood transfusion sessions and will be greatly missed..

This group have monthly meetings, either with coffee or lunch and one special lunch at High Peak College, Buxton in June, much enjoyed. They had their AGM in May.

Gedling group seem keen to learn and keep busy. In February they heard about "Bess of Hardwick", in March visited Southwell Minster for a conducted tour, and in April visited Daybrook for a talk on Bobbin Lace. In May they held their AGM before a buffet lunch, in July visited Hazelford Ferry, in July had afternoon tea together and in August took a river cruise. (Well done Gedling, for such an active programme. Ed.)

Mansfield on the other hand are keen to enjoy good health. They had a talk on Vitamins. February found them enjoying "Keep Fit" and "Line Dancing" sessions. But they do also enjoy their food and visited Tuxford Court in June for lunch and had an outing to Lea Gardens, (where I am sure they had tea, but they do not say so !. Ed.)

Lincolnshire is still struggling. They have lost several members through illness, but in spite of this, due to the enthusiasm of their local leader, they still look forward to their bi-monthly lunches.

NORTH WEST DIVISION *Headquarters Manchester*

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

Greater Manchester. Div. Rep. Mrs E. Collier

Romiley speakers' topics have included, "Wild Life in Greece", "Poetry from Styal Prison" and "Music from the Shows", in March they had a Bring and Buy and in May enjoyed afternoon tea at the Moorcock Inn at Waddington after a tour of the beautiful Ribble Valley. In August too they enjoyed a Cream Tea.

The Bury group send really good news, as they have "new members joining all the time". In March they enjoyed a lunch of home-made meat and potato pie made by Mrs Matthews, (One of my favourite dishes, wish I had been there ! I wonder if this is why they have so many new members ? Ed.). They also had a very successful outing to Windermere and enjoyed a meal at the Belsfield Hotel overlooking the Lake. Some went shopping, some cruised round the lake, some just enjoyed the beautiful gardens. Sadly they have lost two valued members, Mrs Birks and Mrs Sharp.

Sale group reports another active programme. In January two members gave a talk on "Bygone Years" which made the others realise that some of the junk they had thrown could be a collector's item ! In February another member held a quiz on the Royal Family, on which they scored highly, remembering dates and marriages. In March they celebrated their 10th birthday with a birthday cake and a quiz on "Old Sale". A retired G.P. gave a talk on the work of an Indian Mission in April and they gave a donation for the work he described. May found the group having tea at Sale Water Park and in June, following a sale of

plants from member's gardens, they had a talk for "Mental Health Awareness Week" by a one-time patient of Moorside Unit in Trafford, on the work of the Unit. In July, Mrs Tedham, the group leader showed them a display of traveller's samples of old, decorative buttons and Mrs Collier reported on the A.G.M. at Bart's Hospital.

Mrs Hirst writes that the Metro Rochdale group has met each month with an average attendance of 15 members. They hold two slightly more serious business meetings in the year, the rest being informal social events which have included a pub lunch followed by an hour of "light hearted memories". Some members are still asked to help, serving teas at Rochdale Welfare for the Elderly at such special events as the Easter Bonnet competition, the Strawberry Tea and the Bowls Tournament. These members say "it is wonderful to be asked to help. There is still plenty of life left in older team-mates!"

Merseyside, Cheshire Div.Rep (Appt pending)

Staffs. Shropshire, Derbyshire. County Rep. **Shropshire, Mrs A. Moseley.**

County Rep. **Staffs, Mrs D. Tweedie**

A member has written, recording the life of her mother Mrs Stanley MBE, County Borough Organiser for Burton from 1939 who died early this year. Under her leadership WVS membership in Burton rose to 1,200 in one year.

SOUTH EAST DIVISION *Headquarters 99 White Lion St. London N1 9PF*

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

February is the time Huntingdon group plans its programme for the year ahead. They have had varied talks, one on an old, wooden Huntingdon church converted into the present beautiful building, another by a Police Constable who gave an enlightening description of his life in the police. At another meeting Mrs Titcomb told of her long service in WVS/WRVS. In June they had a strawberry tea and have had two outings, one to Rutland Water, the other to Wisbech Rose Fair and the beautiful church there which they recommend to us all.

Mrs Titcomb adds what I think we all feel, that what they have most enjoyed has been just meeting together, which is the important aspect of the Association.

In Peterborough their bi-monthly meetings have been well attended, as also was the July evening dinner. In April, one member, Mrs Wright was presented with a Leisure Achievements Award by the Mayor of Peterborough for having brought credit to the City by her years of service in Operatic, Drama and WRVS activities.

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

Suffolk branches are ably organised by Mrs Mytton-Mills but in Norfolk they still seek volunteers to run the North Norfolk and Norwich branches. Mrs Scholey appeals for volunteers to come forward as she is concerned, should housebound members there need a visit during the winter months. (Do offer if you can ! Ed.)

Once more they all enjoyed the picnic lunch in front of Mrs Gilderson's beach hut on Cromer beach, followed by the Pier show. This was organised again by Mrs Herbage and Mrs Gilderson.

The most successful branch, Great Yarmouth have had a very full programme, including two lunches, a coach trip to Bury St Edmunds and the Abbey Gardens and tea at Lavenham.

Mrs Cowan received the prestigious R.N.L.I. Gold Badge, presented in May by H.R.H. Prince Michael of Kent.

Mrs Watling writes to say that the day that changed her life was when she, a Swiss girl, married a wonderful Englishman and made her home in Norfolk.

Essex and Herts. Div. Rep. Mrs Copping

Hertfordshire's annual reunion has taken place in July for several years, at Mrs Sewell's home, Gt. Anwell, near Ware. Mrs Gaunt, Food Manager for Hertfordshire and Mrs Ford, Family Services manager were guests this year and told members of the latest developments in WRVS. They stressed the need to raise funds, because within the next decade WRVS will have to be entirely self-financing. This need for fund-raising, Mrs Gaunt added, would also mean that WRVS would become better known to the public. Her talk stimulated them all to help, before they got down to the serious business of enjoying their strawberries and cream. At this meeting members were invited to come to Area Office in the autumn to see the work in progress.

The Castle Point group, in February, tried out a new Fish Restaurant in Benfleet, which was excellent. In June they became patriotic and "Red White and Blue" and celebrated with a lovely decorated iced cake. Sadly their President was unable to attend as she was unwell, but in true WRVS spirit sent in her contribution to the meal, with the invaluable help of her husband. A visit was planned to a member's beautiful garden at Shoeburyness, (although they do not say when ! Ed.). Transport here too is a problem, thankfully overcome so far by kind members who have cars.

The Bedfordshire group tried out a restaurant attached to a P.Y.O. strawberry farm. Those who could not bend to pick were helped by the more agile, one of whom was the oldest member. They have found difficulty in filling the coach for trips and wonder if other groups have this difficulty when coaches are

so expensive. (Do let us know, Ed.). Their Annual Garden Party was held on a wet day but the hostess invited all 50 members into her home, carrying their teas when the rain came down. It was attended by Toni Lombardi, WRVS Area Manager and Louise Williams, M.O.W Area Manager. Mr Lombardi told them of the Compass Report, held at Area Office for any member to read. The toast was drunk in Buck's Fizz.

Congratulations were sent to one Buckinghamshire member, Mrs McRoberts who has celebrated her golden wedding.

Mrs Goulding, reports that in Oxfordshire they are having difficulty keeping in touch with members since their County Office closed.

Beds, Bucks and Oxon. Div. Rep. Mrs Callaway.

Hampshire, Isle of Wight. Div. Rep. Mrs B. Adams.

A warm welcome to Mrs Adams as the new Div. Rep for this area. In Hampshire fifty members met for lunch in Fareham and enjoyed a most interesting talk on "A Young Bride's Travels in China under the Communists" by Mrs Houston. Her description of having a baby under those strange conditions was terrifying. In early May, 60 members met at the beautiful home in Beaulieu, of the WRVS County Organiser, Mrs Webb. The garden slopes down to the water's edge where some wandered after tea among the azaleas and rhododendrons and some saw the recent alterations to the house. They welcomed several new members to this meeting.

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

Mrs Bright says that a common difficulty among members is the problem of getting to meetings. Nevertheless, the Guildford leader, Mrs Crellin managed to find drivers to take 25 members to Cunford Apple Farm, where they had a very happy day.

Miss Alston organised a coach trip from Eastbourne to Hawkhurst which was well supported.

Woking had a successful lunch at the venue to be used in September for a Counties lunch when they will welcome our Chairman, Mrs McCormack.

Greater London Div. Rep. Mrs A.. Christophersen

The Annual London Ass. Reunion was held at St Stephen's Church Hall, Westminster, in April, attended by 48 members from all parts of London. Mrs McCormack spent the day with them and brought them up-to-date with WRVS changes. The successful Bring and Buy and Raffle produced funds for special birthday cards, flowers for the sick and postage for WRVS Action to some members. A splendid London Emergency team prepared an excellent buffet lunch.

London N.E./City. Div. Rep. Mrs W Taylor OBE DL

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

In August 14 members gathered together for a buffet lunch held in Mrs Stevens' garden at which £40 was raised for the local hospice.

London S.E. Div. Rep. Mrs G. Block M.B.E.

Twelve members met for lunch at the Tudor Barn, Eltham followed by a guided tour of Eltham Palace and Courthall House. They then enjoyed tea at the home of Mrs Cleverly, a member living close by. £25 from this group has been sent to the Eltham Children's Home.

London S.W. (Appointment Pending)

Sadly still no representative.

SOUTH WEST DIVISION *Headquarters Exeter*

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

In July Gloucestershire members, plus a few from Hereford/Worcester enjoyed a talk on "The Rain Forests" by Mr Trapnell at a lunch at Tewkesbury Masonic Hall. They saw beautiful slides of the birds that inhabit these forests and learned of the danger that the forests may be cut down. Members listened hilariously to Mr Trapnell's descriptions of his attempts to get into his hammock, to sleep. The excellent lunch was provided by Tewkesbury members.

Cheltenham group held their spring meeting in April attended by 25 members, when they listened with interest to WRVS and Ass. news reported by Mrs Connop. They then enjoyed a fascinating talk on Mrs Pulleyn's childhood in China and subsequent internment in Japanese hands during the war. This talk was followed by tea and cakes. (Could I make a plea for Mrs Pulleyn to write some of her memories for the Newsletter. ? We would all love to read them. Do write ! Ed.)

Avon, Wiltshire, Dorset.Div.Rep Mrs B.Williams

An Age Concern representative spoke at Dorset Ass. spring reunion in April at the Allendale Centre, Wimborne when they heard of the many interests of Age Concern. Mrs Dunton says Bring and Buy and raffle stalls brought "satisfactory" results !

Their AGM was held at the Wimborne home of Lady Hanham, with a demonstration of lace-making by Mrs Colclough. The raffle here raised £30.

Somerset, Devon, Cornwall. (Appointment pending)

WALES Headquarters Cardiff

Div. Rep. Mrs E. Edwards BEM

Mrs Edwards writes that fifty members met for their annual get-together in Wrexham, (but she does not say when !) These members are so lucky, because the coach drive to Wrexham for members from Colwyn, Rhyl and Ruthin through the Nant-y-Garth is so delightful. Before an excellent tea they had entertainment by a Colwyn member, Mrs Roberts and all joined in the singing. They then had a video presentation of "Care and Repair" introduced by Mrs Roberts. This is a service which enables elderly and disabled people to stay in their own homes, by helping with improvements and repairs. It was a very happy, successful day, enjoyed by all.

Mrs Bocking reports that the Conwy group celebrated its second birthday in May when officers and committee were re-elected. One member, Mrs Periera, told about life in India and showed some beautiful saris.

Since the closure of the local office, members feel Ass. meetings provide an opportunity to meet. In March they had a potted history of ASDA from a public relations officer, describing how the firm had risen to prosperity. Each member received a box of biscuits. They also enjoyed a July outing to Shrewsbury in beautiful sunshine.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Guernsey.

Assoc. Rep. Miss E. Robilliard

The Newsletter is a useful link for Guernsey members. Mrs Spivey of Guildford writes that her brother, Ken Drew, was at Taunton School in the 1920's and his best friend was a Le Cheminant from Guernsey whose namesake has written in earlier Newsletters. (Is it the same family? Ed)

Jersey.

Assoc. Rep. Mrs D. Jennings

At their local WRVS AGM in May there was a report of the activities of the Ass. Also an appreciation of the work in WVS/WRVS of Mrs Ruth Morton-Fisher, who died in February. She was first Bailiwick Organiser of WVS and founder of the Ass. in Jersey and a much loved and gracious lady. The group had lunch together in April and Mrs Jennings makes us envious of sunny Jersey when she describes an al fresco lunch in a member's garden in St Clement in July.

SCOTLAND

We are pleased to have news from the Scotland mostly of their activities in 1966 although the report sadly had to be cut down, as Scottish groups have so much to report!

They held the AGM in April in Glasgow, the speaker, from Guide Dogs for the Deaf, demonstrating ways these dogs can help.

Aberdeen, with a number of new members, has had a varied programme, at one meeting travelling to Antarctica via exceptional slides of icebergs and glaciers. At other meetings they enjoyed china painting, music and make-up demonstrations when, says Mrs Blair, two members were quite transformed ! In June they visited a museum near Aberdeen and had tea amongst an astonishing collection of hens, ducks, geese, pheasants and strange rabbits. Christmas lunch was held at the Royal Infirmary with the Area Manager as guest speaker.

In September, Central, in a new venue in Stirling had a most instructive talk on Bees by a serving member, accompanied by humorous drawings. (I wonder if she would do a drawing for our Newsletter ? Ed.) At their Christmas tea they enjoyed home-brewed songs and readings.

Elgin had a fashion show of "Weekenders Wardrobe" by members, a talk on the Voluntary Service Organisation, and the Biblical Garden in Elgin. Christmas lunch was cooked and served by students at Moray College after which they "travelled to Japan" with slides showing the beauty, friendliness and hospitality of that country.

Scottish members must all be keen to be beauties, for Perth and Kinross members visited the Bodybank Beauty Parlour, where one member had a massage - but (says Mrs Blair) the rest had coffee ! Conservation and Wild life, the Gardens of Perthshire, a visit to Safeway showing what goes on behind the scenes were all interesting, especially after visiting ASDA cold stores when they were given coffee to warm them up.

Ayr members, on the other hand have been much more down to earth, having talks on life-saving and the making of gifts. A talk on the new WRVS was lightened by sherry and biscuits ! In May they visited Largs Viking Centre. and saw, with envy, the new WRVS office where, they report, members now even have a tap which gives hot water ! (An unheard of luxury for many ? Ed.)

Highland has 20 new members. (Congratulations. Ed). In March they had a coffee mning in Dingwall WRVS Office and in May, lunch in Dornoch. At Christmas Mrs Blair was guest at the Christmas lunch for Fife members at Kirkaldy. Lothian too have new WRVS premises where Ass. members have been invited to hold their meetings. Strathclyde have made ceramic jewellery and pottery, and had a Christmas party and a Christmas lunch. Dundee have learned about WRVS changes from their Area Manager and also had an informative tour at Ardblair Castle on a cold October day. In November they learned about making and painting porcelain dolls. This speaker got some orders for Christmas presents. They celebrated Christmas with lunch at the Balinard Hotel.

We have had a plea from Mrs Reggie Howe, a long-serving overseas worker who asks for overseas news in the Newsletter to keep members in touch with former colleagues. So if you know someone who now lives abroad, do persuade them to write. !

NEWS FROM NEW SOUTH WALES.

We have had a welcome letter from Mrs MacLennan who wishes to be remembered to anyone who knew her. She says they have managed to form a "loosely knit group" in Australia, who keep in touch by correspondence because of the vast distances. But she is sure there must be others who might like to join by letter and keep in touch. If anyone has friends out there, please do send them a Newsletter and put them in touch with Mrs MacLennan at P.O. Box 171, Bowral, N.S.W. (Perhaps they could even start their own Newsletter! Ed.)



Obituaries

Flora Kean

Flora Kean, who died on July 29th will be remembered by many. Joining WVS at the outbreak of war, she worked in Hull. After the war, moving to London, she took up WRVS duties again and was Organiser for Kensington and Chelsea Meals on Wheels Service. Later she organised the rota for Wormwood Scrubs Prison Canteen, earning her Long Service Medal.

In infancy her father was lost on the Titanic. Always an indomitable, independent and strong character, she was asked on the telephone, near the end of her life, when in great pain, if she was still managing to get dressed. Her reply was, "Of course, my family do not slop around in dressing gowns" ! Her funeral at West London Synagogue was attended by several WRVS friends who say their lives are enriched by having known her.

Sent by Diana Paul and others.

Isola Wren

It is with great regret we report the death on Saturday 4th October, of Mrs Isola Wren. We send her family our deepest sympathy.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Members,

I am now busy preparing this Newsletter for proof-reading, printing and dispatch to London. Then the London team will address 4,000+ envelopes, fill them, (this is what they call "the stuffing party"!) and post them to you. It takes several weeks to get it all done but on this occasion you have all helped enormously by answering my appeal and sending so many contributions for which I am grateful. Do keep them coming.

I am sorry for those I have to leave out. I inevitably have to make a selection. Sometimes they are too long for our small pages; sometimes too similar to another and I can only choose one, which is a pity.

As this appeal has been so successful I feel I can now make another! Can I ask all our artistic members if they could do a pen drawing for future Newsletters. The size does not matter as my clever husband can make them bigger or smaller to fit the space. Pen drawings are best to reproduce. For the front cover we usually keep to the themes of Spring and Autumn. But if anyone can do "funnies", those too can be used inside. If no one offers, we will have a blank front cover for the spring 1988 issue, as I cannot draw, so do help!


I have had lots of letters from members and I do enjoy getting them. They are a great encouragement. I am only sorry that because of postage costs I cannot reply but if you would like a reply and send me a stamp, I will do my best to write. Finding the money to produce the Newsletter is a continual battle for our Chairman and Committee; printing and postage costs are so high, but we only need to read your letters to know that our efforts are appreciated. So do keep the "funnies" and the more serious items coming.

The competition, asking what advice you would give your daughter who is thinking of joining WRVS, which I set in the Spring Newsletter, was entered by several of you. The winning entry can be seen inside the back cover. What interested me about them, something I am sure Lady Toulson would be pleased to know, was that every single one who entered, in spite of the great changes in today's service, all persuaded, encouraged, even pressed the younger women to go ahead and reap the rewards of helping others. I am sure it is an encouraging message for the present "powers that be".

Well, my page is now full and I must stop chatting to you all. Do write, and send me more contributions.

Best wishes for the winter months and keep well and warm.

Ness Venables



WRVS MEMORIES

During the evacuation I placed a little boy from the East End of London with an American family in our village. Later, seeing the host I asked if the small boy had started talking American yet? "Not a bit of it", came the reply, "My own son fell down and came running to me saying "Look at me blinkin' 'and Dad"!!

From Mrs Phipps Cheltenham.



Collecting clothing for the clothing store one day I called at a house. A gentleman answered the door having, seemingly, just stepped out of the bath, clad only in a small towel which he clutched behind his back to hide "his modesty" He told me that the sacks of clothing were upstairs, and asked me to follow him. But as he turned and walked up the stairs his "modesty" was revealed to me, quite unknown to him ! He had lovely rosy cheeks, but I am sure I had too !.

From Mrs Falconer Newcastle upon Tyne

HANS PLACE

Do other older members remember Hans Place?. It was handed over to WRVS for a training centre in the 70's until the lease ran out. I remember the "dumb waiter" by which the food was hauled up from the basement kitchen. Also the early morning awakening by the horses hooves as the Household Cavalry passed in the light of dawn. Between sessions we would go off to Harrod's Food Hall.

From Mrs Forbes. MBE Swansea.

One of my memories is in a class receiving instruction from Lady Reading at Tothill Street. I wonder if there are any members who were there ? WRVS has meant so much to me.

From Mrs Gosling. Bristol.

One afternoon a week was magic. It got me out of the house, I met other members and felt I was filling a need. Now a member of the Association and still enjoying it.

From Mrs Spivey. Guildford

It is lovely to hear that the Newsletter has helped lost friends, to re-unite. Wartime friends Betty Flowers and Joan Altass drifted apart over the years. At the recent London AGM Betty happened to meet two Yorkshire members. Showing them Joan's photograph she asked if they knew her. They did. On returning home they passed on to Joan, Betty's new address in Norfolk. The friendship was

joyfully resumed and happy holiday visits and letters between the friends were the result.

From Joan Altass. Chairman. Selby Branch.

Mrs Gentry of Suffolk writes that we mention Mrs Berridge of Maldon. She knew Mrs Berridge in Chelmsford. (I could supply Mrs Gentry's address should Mrs Berridge wish to write to her. Ed.)

"I found the Newsletter most interesting. I don't know what the cost is of WRVS Action but it strikes me as cheap publicity and do we really need it?"

Name and address supplied.

Garage man to uniformed WRVS member, as she filled her car with petrol and dressed in her uniform for the first time... "Oh, good morning. I didn't recognise you. Its the first time I've seen you with your clothes on".

From Mrs Webster.

Weeding out rubbish in Tothill Street, which we christened "Operation Destruction". we found all manner of rubbish, amongst it a lifesize portrait of Lady Reading which had been slashed from top to bottom. Horrified, we reported it to Lady Reading only to be told that Lord Reading had slashed it himself, saying he preferred living with the original.!"

From Mrs Register. Ipswich

The Value of Calibre. From a letter of tribute from a "listener" to an Association member who is a Calibre "reader on to tape".

I became partially sighted aged 36 and reading had always been my great love, so talking books are vital to me. I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed listening to your reading. I felt lost when the book finished, just like I used to feel - wanting to drag it out. Thank you and I hope to discover more of your readings....

From a letter sent to Mrs Webster. Moseley. Birmingham

Beryl Burkitt's wartime memory in the last Newsletter sent my husband scurrying in the bookshelves, emerging triumphant with a booklet, recording the work of WVS in St Albans which he had written when a Cambridge Undergraduate in 1947. His mother, May Clarke had been Centre Organiser in St Albans at the time of Beryl's evacuation and the event is recorded in the booklet. She was presented with the Freedom of the City of St Albans in 1954. Mr Clarke says he was probably away at school at the time of the evacuation.

From David Clarke. Witney. Oxford.

A MEMORY OF THE OCCUPATION

I am in my nineties. I lived in Jersey throughout the First World War and remember one day sitting with my sister on our gate, on a hill overlooking St Helier, three miles away. A little plane came over and landed near the harbour and soon all the hooters and sirens started up, the church bells rang and we knew the war had ended. I remember too that there was great rivalry between Jersey and Guernsey Schools. I wonder if that still exists ?

From Mrs Phipps. Cheltenham



POEMS YOU ENJOY

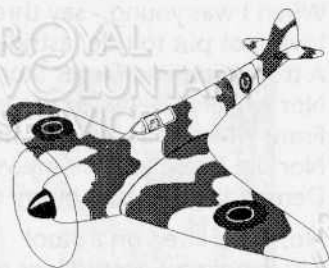
When the Maker was resting from labour,
As He gazed on the world from above,
He saw many poor lonely humans
With no one to care for and love.
And the Lord in his infinite mercy,
With compassion both tender and wise,
Made a furry, four-legged creature
With a tail and a pair of brown eyes.
And a heart filled with loyal devotion
From the moment his short life began,
And the Maker smiled down from his Heaven
On the dog He created for man.

From Mrs Peet. St Helens.



HIGH FLIGHT

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
 And danced the skies on laughter silvered
 wings; Sunward, I've climbed and joined the
 tumbling mirth And done a hundred things you
 have not dreamed of. Wheeled and soared and
 swung high in the sunlit silence. Hovering
 there, I've chased the shouting wind along
 And flung my eager craft through footless halls
 of air... Up, up the long delirious burning blue
 I've topped the wind-swept height with easy grace,
 Where never lark, or even eagle flew -
 And while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
 The high untrespassed sanctity of space
 Put out my hand and touched the face of God.



From Mrs Lamb. Wallasey, who says " this is my favourite poem, by John Magee, a young Canadian pilot officer, who was killed in 1941, aged 19 years, colliding with another aircraft, while at R.A.F. Cranwell".

D.I.Y.

Do it yourself. Do it yourself.
 You really must try harder.
 Believe it or not, we do what we can
 With wheelchair, commode or the old bed pan.
 But when one side has gone on strike
 Refusing to do the things you would like
 Its not that easy, believe you me.
 Try it and see.
 Put one side of your body out of joint
 And then perhaps you'll see my point.
 Well, what's the verdict
 Do you agree
 Or not with me ?

From Mrs Regester. Winesham. Nr Ipswich, who says that following a stroke and having to go into a nursing home, she keeps sane (almost, she says) by writing verses such as this. (Keep on writing them for us !, Ed.)

CONSUMER COMPLAINT

When I was young,- say three or four
I was not put to ride, astride
A trolley round a Super Store.
Nor wheeled between the loaded shelves
From which the shoppers helped themselves.
Nor did I dare to raise my voice
Demanding goodies of my choice.

No. I was lifted on a stool
My dangling gaitered legs to cool
Bidden sit quietly- "Not a word.
Nice children should be seen, not heard "
Hatted and veiled and also seated
My mother was with deference treated.
Our Grocer, (apron, bow-tie, wax moustache)
Was all attention to her pleasure
Gave his opinion on the weather,
Touched civilly on this and that
While pouring sugar on the flat
Thick squares of paper - fold and twist,
Tuck in the corners- who could wish
A neater package ? Then to hold
The thing he made a loop of string.
(No smart machine to snip and snap
No sealing tape or plastic wrap).
From creamy kegs, this clever chap
Sliced off two pounds of butter. Slapped
And shaped it with a wooden pat.
Intricate scrolls of red and gold
Patterned tall canisters and told
What brands of tea were stored within.

Biscuits from an enormous tin
Were weighed out, loose, in paper bags -
(Oh, how frustrated, now, I drag
At layers of cellophane that snag
My finger nails !)
Straw boatered butcher in his shop
Of hanging carcasses, would slice the chop
That took one's fancy.. Oh for hours
One could compare the Now and Then.
Murdered by customer protection men
Those gracious days won't come again.

By Marjorie Smith. Sent by Mrs Dale. Dorset.

TO MAKE YOU SMILE



— "IT FELL OFF MY HEAD GEORGE" —

Cartoon by Penny O'Brien. London

The old man visited his doctor.

"Well" ? enquired the doctor.

"No". replied the old man.

"What's the trouble" ?asked the doctor.

"I've got a bad cough", said the old man.

"A cough" ? said the doctor. "How old are you" ?

"Ninety six", came the reply.

"Well go home and be glad you still can", said the doctor.

From Mrs Burlingham. York.



The Headmaster's favourite hymn was "O Jesus I have promised" and in the verse, "My hope to follow duly" the youngest children thought it referred to someone called Julie and asked who she was ?

A little boy wandered into church and watched a lady sweeping and dusting. Soon he went out, and the lady he had watched, went outside to see that he was safe in the traffic. She found his mother scolding him, asking him where he had been. "I've been in there" he said. "God wasn't there, but his wife was there doing the cleaning".

From Mrs Hardcastle. York.



THE TALKING LOO

Travelling, I stopped in the West Country for a "Comfort break". My husband hurried off to find a toilet and reported back that they were new and very clean. Hauling open the heavy door which opened outwards, I entered a clinically clean metal box. As I shot the bolt, the system suddenly flushed. Startled, I approached the loo. Suddenly a voice appeared from nowhere telling me about "security", about the length of time I was to be in there, and that I would be told when to leave!. Convinced there was a hidden camera watching my every movement, but desperate, I relieved myself. I looked for a lever, push-button or foot pedal with no success but suddenly the thing flushed by itself, making me jump. Seeking to wash my hands I found soap but with soapy hands could find no water to rinse or hot air to dry. At this point I fled with sticky, soapy hands. When I returned to my husband he was most amused. It had all happened to him, but he thought he would let me find out for myself!

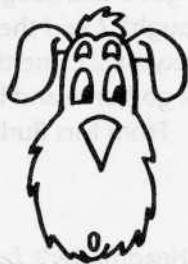
From Mrs Bagness. Gloucester.

My Dog's Affliction!

[NOT TO BE READ BY THE SQUEMISH!]

My dog suffers from wind and everyone around him suffers too. This always manifests itself in public places. But I have found a solution. By striking a match near him, the obnoxious gas is burned away.! The only draw backs are the strange looks you get. Why, they wonder, is that woman striking matches near her dog ??

From Embarrassed. Merseyside.



THE CURE

A couple had reached their golden wedding, but although they were keen church workers and did much for the community they never seemed to get on very well with each other; they were always arguing. Their children, after much discussion, clubbed together to buy them, as a Golden Wedding gift, an appointment with a top London psychiatrist, hoping that he could help them towards a happier life for their remaining years.

After his examination and questioning of the wife, the psychiatrist said, "I am going to do something I have never done in this consulting room before". Saying this, he took the man's wife in his arms and gave her a long passionate kiss.

There, he said to the husband, "that's what she needs, three times a week".

"Fine", said the husband, "I'll bring her in on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays then".

From Lewis Creed. York

FLYING IN THE EARLY DAYS.

Reading recently of an aircraft that had to turn back as its door was not shut properly reminded me of a trip to Guernsey in the 1950's from a small aeroplane club in the little village of Sywell. The small plane had no air-conditioning and the day was very hot. I began to suffer from lack of air and the stewardess ushered me to the back of the plane. I fully expected her to give me oxygen, but she said, "Put your nose against the door jamb, and you will get some air, the door does not fit very well!". That was how I finished the flight. It was true. There was quite a draught through the door!

Mrs Willmott. Rushden. Northants



The little girl was leaving the infants and moving up to the juniors. She had liked her teacher very much and on the last day went to say goodbye to her and added, "I'm sorry you're not good enough to teach next year when I'm older".

From Mrs Burlingham. York

WRVS Benevolent Trust.

Are you worrying about money ? - how you can cope with the festive season this year ? - final bills as well as presents ?

- Is your nearest and dearest ill and do you really need a break, but money is desperately short - Do you live alone and are nervous that you might fall and no one will find you, as you cannot afford a helpline. ?

These are just three very simple ways that the Benevolent Trust could help past or present members of the service.

If you want to find out more for yourself or for another member, write to the WRVS Benevolent Trust, (at the same address as the Association in Clapham Road) or ask your local Association co-ordinator. If for some reason we cannot help you financially, we may be able to help with other relevant information. Try us. It is entirely confidential.

Mary S. Gibbons.

Chairman

WRVS Benevolent Trust.

NEW YEAR HONOURS 1997**MBE**

Mrs V.M. Coxon. Sutton Coldfield. W. Midlands

Mrs M.A. Donaldson. Llanelli. Dyfed

Mrs P.M. Hart. Alderney. Channel Islands

Services to the Community.

Mrs E.E. Redman Malmesbury. Wilts.

Mrs A.M. Sankaran. Oldham. Greater Manchester.

BIRTHDAY HONOURS 1997**O.B.E.**

Mrs M. Jones Monmouth, Gwent. For services to WRVS Wales.

Mrs Wyn Taylor For services to the Community, London

M.B.E.

Mrs M. Chilcott. Swansea.

Mrs M. Perrens. Eastbourne. East Sussex.

Mrs J. Stanford. Birmingham. West Midlands.

Mrs A. Dobson. Midlothian. For services to Midlothian and the Community

The Annual General Meeting. London 1997.

This year the AGM was held in the magnificent Great Hall of St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, a memorable venue, offered to WRVS for this meeting in recognition of the work done by WRVS for the hospital over many years. The business meeting was held in the afternoon, (see accompanying minutes), but we assembled in the morning for morning coffee and speeches.

We entered up a grand staircase, the walls one huge mural by Hogarth, who lived nearby and offered the work free to the hospital. It depicts the work of the hospital, huge colourful figures, based, it is said upon patients he met in the hospital. We then entered the splendid hall, once used for hospital management meetings

The guests were Mrs Mayers, S.E. Director for WRVS and Mr Andrew Griffin, Hospital Archivist. After coffee, Mrs Mayers spoke of the challenges facing WRVS today and work of the 5 London Areas having approx. 5,000 members each and of the pressures placed on Managers who now have big targets to reach. In addition to a large children's holiday scheme, a 9,000 Books delivery, 7 days a week Meals service and the new Contact Centres to help broken families, she told how the Bart's Emergency Team was fully functional within 30 minutes when an I.R.A. Bomb exploded in the hospital neighbourhood.

Mr Griffin gave a splendidly full account of the long life of the hospital, one of the oldest in the world, run entirely on voluntary contributions since its foundation in 1123. He told how a man of humble birth, Greybeard, had fallen ill when on a pilgrimage and vowed on his recovery to establish this hospital attached to an original Priory, parts of which still exist. This religious connection is still evident in the term "sister", still used for nurses.

Until the 14th Century cures simply depended on prayer and folklore but gradually medical care was introduced and an emphasis placed on good food, goat's milk and sweet wine; herbal and other treatments were used, one using an infusion of boiled puppies ! but still no surgery. Church attendance was compulsory for both staff and patients. Early surgery was crude and barbaric but in 1747 the first Professor of Surgery, Potts (of Pott's fracture fame) was appointed. In the 1820's the first case notes and records were kept and disinfectant was first used. Previously it had been thought that sepsis aided healing. In 1877 the School of Nursing was founded although State Registration was not introduced until 1919. Harvey, in 1831 established Bart's reputation while Abernethy who died in that year had founded the Medical School, incorporating it with the Univ. of London.

With Henry VI's dissolution of the monasteries in 1539 the hospital fell into decline until, before his death in 1547, he had a change of heart, re-established and endowed the hospital. A Board of Governors was set up which decided pay, charges to patients etc., and this continued until 1946 when the National Health Act swept away this Constitution. Kathleen Halpin CBE, one of our Vice-Presidents, served on this Board for many years.

Today the hospital's future is in the balance, awaiting the Government's decision on hospital closures. But St Bartholomew's is a Scheduled Monument so perhaps the wonderful murals and Great Hall, at least, are safe from demolition. It was a memorable meeting. A vote of thanks on our behalf was given by

Mrs Jean Callaway. Div Rep Oxon/Beds/Bucks.

A date for your diary

Make a date to come to next year's residential AGM, to be held at the new WRVS Headquarters in Oxfordshire on July 3rd and 4th 1998.

Do Come!.

Result of Editor's Competition

We had twelve entries, (slightly better than last time) and all persuading their daughters to join WRVS. A Boots token has been sent to the winner.

" So you want a "little job" now that you've time on your hands; hands that our founder asked us to use in so many ways for the community, in organised voluntary service.

Be brave; go to your local WRVS office and see what's on offer. If you wish you can say that I have been a member for years. You will be given ideas of jobs that will suit the time you can give; you might like hospital or prison work as a change from your usual interests.

With your practical mind you should take the training offered to equip you to join the Emergency Team; the varied reasons for call out will amaze you. Just one thing. If you have a commitment, don't pull out for some flimsy excuse, someone is relying on you.

At the end of the day your reward is in yourself and not in a pay packet.

*So go on **DO IT***

The winner.....Gay Bright Maidstone.

For the next Newsletter

Could we have some practical hints, either to save money. or to make life easier.

Please send your ideas to the Editor by **Jan 31st 1998**

STOP PRESS !

Subscriptions

Costs of printing and posting the Newsletter twice a year, together with other expenses, have risen considerably. Therefore it is with regret that members at the Committee meeting held on 14th October came to the following decisions:

- (a)** The Annual Subscription should be raised to £5.00 from January 1998
- (b)** Life membership will not be available to new members after 31st March 1998.

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