

---

## WRVS ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER



No. 54 Spring 2001

---

Letter from the Chairman

82 Bootham, YORK YO30 7DS

Dear Friends

It is nearly three years since I was asked to take over from Sheila McCormack. The time has passed very quickly and enjoyably. The move of our Head Office to York occupied a lot of my time during the first year. We have now settled in. The office staff are most efficient and a great help. The new IT equipment, with its database, is proving very useful. We can now answer the queries that come to the office with great speed! Not only that, but I am glad to say that "Action" will now be sent direct to your home address. Thank you for supplying your post codes so promptly.

A few items of Divisional news. There will soon be a new Association Division covering Wiltshire, and I hope to have a similar arrangement in Dorset before too long. Gay Bright has retired from the Division of Surrey, East and West Kent and Sussex. Mrs Rosling will now look after this Division, and we wish her well.

This is my last letter to you as Association Chairman. Of course I will keep in touch, as the York Office is only a few miles up the road. I should like to thank all those who have helped me in both York and, at the beginning, in 151 Clapham Road. I wish them and the Association well in the aims for which it was founded.

Finally, I hope to see many of you at this year's AGM in Birmingham With best wishes to you all,

Yours sincerely,

*David A. Pugh*

---

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

---

### NORTH EAST DIVISION - Headquarters Darlington

Northumberland, Tyne & Wear - Div. Rep. Mrs S. McCormack BEM

Mrs McCormack writes that members continue to enjoy their annual get-togethers at their summer lunch and the December Carol Service. Group leaders meet in Newcastle every three months to exchange news and report on the welfare of their members.

Mrs Hardy reports from Sunderland that they began the new session with a talk on healthy eating by the Sainsbury Home Economist, Mr Kenyon and this talk ended with a sampling session ! Thirty two ladies had a Christmas meal at the Barnes Hotel and she says it was fortunate that there were few other diners there as the noise they made was horrendous. The year ended with the usual sherry and mince pie party with everyone receiving a gift from the bran tub. They thoroughly enjoyed the carol service and buffet luncheon and most of them then went looking round the shops.

They are sad to report the deaths of Mrs Owen and Mrs Parkhouse. Both worked for many years for WRVS and were loyal supporters of their Association group until they became housebound.

Mrs Dawson reports from Whitley Bay / North Shields that they welcomed two new members, Mrs Keady and Mrs Barker. They sent £208 to St Oswald's Hospice which was the proceeds of a coffee morning in November. They were pleased with this amount as the weather that morning was one of the poorest of the year. A representative from the Hospice gave them an update on the progress of the Children's Hospice. Thanks go to all their team who attended to refreshments at the carol service.

From Newcastle Mrs Doyle reports that they are still enjoying their group but would love to have more members but she adds "it isn't easy since the infrastructure has been destroyed in the name of progress" ! (See Oxford below Ed.)

In September Col. Johnson came with a suitcase full of the toys of his youth and they all renewed their memories of childhood and tried their hands at whipping tops again! Mrs Flint continued the readings from her mother's journal. A feat of memory this, as she only comes once a year. In November they held a quiz and Bring and Buy and in December they all brought food and had a party.

They too have dwindling numbers and sadly several ladies in poor health who cannot get to meetings, but they try to keep in touch. An ex-member joined them for a Christmas lunch at a Newcastle hotel. Numbers were down for the carol service, but this was due to the poor train service and heavy colds. They say they will try to do better next year !



---

The Northumberland group meet in Ponteland and would welcome any Northumberland member. For dates they should ring 0166/822422. At the carol service, which they all enjoyed, they were proud to provide the Colour Party and they fully appreciated the amusing Church of England and Church of Scotland prayer regarding porridge and cornflakes. (See later in Newsletter).

**Durham, Cleveland, N. Yorks, E. Yorks and Hull - Div Rep. Mrs R. Thompson OBE**

East Yorks have sadly lost one of their outstanding and hardest-working members by the death, aged 97 years of Mrs Simmonds of Cottingham, near Hull. Mrs Simmond's first WVS jobs were to make fishing nets and do mending for men in gun batteries. She ran a canteen and organised ENSA shows and did National Savings collecting. When Hull was bombed in 1940 she arranged for housewives in Hull to come out to Cottingham to spend the night there to escape the bombing. While her family were in their shelter, complete strangers came out, in bus loads and were taken in by the Cottingham housewives. She left tea-making things out for them and she said that in the morning everything was always left neat and tidy and nothing was ever stolen. Later she organised 6 shelters in the outskirts to Hull for bombed-out families. Her great success came when, having run a lunch club in an unsatisfactory church hall for many years, she decided that the area needed a purpose built "home" and she set about raising money to have one built. With local authority help and a gift of land and other backing she got a centre built and it was opened by the Princess Royal in 1955 and used by the WRVS Darby and Joan Club for many years. She gave up WRVS work aged 82, having received the BEM and two bars to her Long Service medal. She was a remarkable member. Mrs Priestley says they send their sympathy to her sister who is also an Association member.

On a happy note Mrs Priestley reports the Diamond Weddings of two couples, Mr and Mrs James and Mr and Mrs Rimer to whom they send their very best wishes. The group had a Christmas lunch at the Needler Hall,

This group organised the Divisional lunch and AGM at Beverley Racecourse with a splendid turn out from all branches, a delightful lunch and a heartwarming talk by the local writer of a weekly column in the local paper, Mr Teale. He had encountered WVS at Dunkirk and made them feel very proud to be members of such an organisation. Mrs Priestley also reports that autumn lunches took place at Wilberfoss and Flamborough and their Christmas lunch was held at Needler Hall while their usual venue was being decorated.

They have sadly lost Mrs Duck, famed for her lovely needlework and Miss Foxon who for many years worked at County office. They will both be missed. Mrs Taylor has moved to Edinburgh but they hope to keep in touch with her. (I wonder if she would like to be put in touch with Lady Macintosh who runs the Association in Scotland. Just let us know. Ed)

York group have a new two-year Chairman in Mrs Brown with a small band helping her. This is her second stint as Chairman and they thank her for volunteering as no one else would come forward. The group had an excellent talk, with slides on the Lady Ann Clifford's Way followed by tea and a Bring and Buy as usual. They held their Christmas lunch for the first time at Bootham Park Hospital and 45 members attended in this beautiful building, and enjoyed an excellent lunch. In January several members enjoyed visiting Selby group for a New Year lunch at Selby's invitation.

From Harrogate Mrs Pantin reports regular monthly coffee mornings but finds it hard to plan different trips. They do however regularly attend a matinee at the Royal Hall and see many good shows. They book early and get good Dress Circle seats. The Christmas lunch was held at the College Catering School where Mrs Thompson too enjoyed a lovely meal. Several members have had accidents or illnesses but are fighting on in true WRVS spirit.

Sadly they have lost Mrs Taylor who founded the group and also Mrs Nash. Both will be missed. One Hartlepool member has moved to a Harrogate nursing home where Lady Laycock visits her and brings her to meetings.

Darlington had a lovely August trip to Preston Park and museum where Mrs Thompson too enjoyed ice cream in the grounds and afternoon tea. Mrs Evans lives in Squire's Court where they have a pleasant lounge which they can hire for a small fee and they hold coffee mornings there. They missed a talk by the Senior Food Services Manager who had to cancel. They hope to have him again in January. In October they made a worthwhile trip to the Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle to see the display of quilting, one lady still quilting aged 93. They had a Christmas tea at Squire's Court and have welcomed one new member.

Hartlepool are keen to seek out different venues for their coffee mornings in spite of bad weather. One member spoke of two visits to India, one when she was young and the other many years later., and her talk was very enlightening. Another speaker told of his experiences at Dunkirk. They all enjoyed an outing to Pateley Bridge where the meal was in beautiful surroundings. They had special pleasure in making a presentation to Mr and Mrs Smith on their Diamond Wedding and enjoyed the cake and wine, showing their gratitude to Mr Smith who had always been a wonderful support to the group. They have sadly lost two members who have died in the last six months..

Scarborough's Christmas lunch was well-attended where Mrs Thompson joined them. They continue with their coffee mornings in each other's houses with an average of 18 attending and the "At Home Sandwich Lunch" is always popular. They plan to hold a celebration tea party for those members who are on or near their 90th birthday.

Sadly Mrs Hutton and Mrs Walker have died, both great characters who will be much missed.

---

Mrs Thompson spoke to Hartlepool group in September on the history of the Association and when she threw the meeting open to questions, members learned a lot! (Although they do not say what they learned, Ed.) In October they shared a bus to the Beverley lunch and in November had a talk by a Church Army Captain about his work for the homeless. From this they gained a different view of homeless people. In December they heard a talk by the Community Development Officer and in January, to start the New Year, had a festive meal at Middlesborough Catering College.

#### **South and West Yorks - Div. Rep. Mrs June Pitts BEM**

The Halifax group have settled nicely into their new venue, the Halifax Town Hall. They have decided to rename the group "Calderdale" as they think this name more accurately represents the area where members live.. (So, welcome to Calderdale branch. Ed). It was decided, since the Halifax office was no longer available, members would order a wreath themselves for Remembrance Day from the British Legion and the cost of this was generously borne by a member, Mr Norman Tatham. Several members attended the service at the war memorial where the wreath was laid.

Mrs Highley and three members attended a call-out to a mill fire in Halifax, providing refreshments for householders until the fire was brought under control. Help was also given during the recent distressing floods in the area.

At their January meeting they had a most entertaining talk with slides from Mr Highley, about his visit to India. It included a visit to the Taj Mahal, the beauty of which he said contrasted sharply with the drabness of the surrounding countryside and the life-style of the local population.

At the end of January several members had lunch together at Calderdale College where the students provided a varied, tasty and well presented lunch from these potentially good chefs..

Wakefield group have enjoyed its usual meetings under the leadership of Mrs Zeigler. Mrs Pitts says they do not have speakers as they have so much to say to each other! She joined them for their very successful Christmas lunch, where Mrs Zeigler was presented with a basket of flowers in appreciation of her year's leadership.

#### **Leic. Lincs and Notts. - Div. Rep. Mrs J. Newman**

From Lincolnshire we are sad to report the death, aged 93 years of one of their outstanding members and the first ever editor of this Newsletter Mrs Vi Price who died in December. She had been a keen supported of the Association since its inception. Compared to today when the Newsletter is prepared by computer and printed by professional printers, Vi prepared it on an old Cyclostyle machine on foolscap sheets and used to "persuade" a man in the WVS H.Q. print room to print it for her.

Mrs Birkhead, says she was an enthusiastic committee member in the Lincoln group and enjoyed their lunch get-togethers and they will all miss her welsh humour. She became active in WRVS from 1963 when she retired from business and worked tirelessly in hospital work, in helping families of prisoners, and in the Association. The preacher at her funeral, a close personal friend, telling how "she had the ability to take control of any situation and carry out any task to perfection with everything organised to the last full stop" says he wonders whether the courts of heaven were prepared for this ! Vi drove her car until the age of 90. We send our sincere sympathy to her daughter Zeta and her family.

Mrs Newman writes that to celebrate the Millennium they held a lunch at a new venue, the Gateway Hotel, Nuthall, a popular choice with plenty of parking space, at which members from all three counties looked forward to meeting the Chairman, Mrs Price on her first visit to the area. They also welcomed the Core Volunteering Manager, Mrs Tarpey who said she came to learn about the Association so that she could tell WRVS members about it when she visited their groups to give talks. She found she was among some familiar faces from her days of working at the Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham. Sadly, fate was against them as the petrol strike occurred and the Lincolnshire members had to send their apologies as they did not have fuel for such long journeys. Also it was a very wet morning making driving very difficult, but after a lovely lunch with excellent service by a friendly staff, 75 members returned home in better weather under clearing skies.

Mrs Newman has managed to visit all groups, except Lincoln, during the autumn. Unfortunately, she is on duty on the day Lincoln meet. They have all had Christmas luncheons, sherry mornings and mince pie meetings. Unfortunately Mrs Newman had to miss the Leicester Christmas meeting because of the rail crisis. In October she was happy to join the Yorkshire, Co. Durham and Cleveland members at their luncheon at Beverley Race Course where they "rolled in the aisles" during the talk by Mr Teale, a local comic. (See E Yorks report. Ed.) Afterwards they all enjoyed an excellent lunch.

They are sad to report that several members have died and will be much missed. Mrs Tomlin MBE died whilst on holiday, in October. She had been Hospital Organiser at the City Hospital in Nottingham for many years where WRVS had a shop, tea bar, information and escort services. Also Mrs Etheridge died sadly in November after a long illness. She had worked at the old General Hospital in Nottingham where she set up a shop. She later ran the outpatients tea bar until the hospital closed. Another member, Miss Hughes died unexpectedly in December. She had served as secretary to the Area Organiser where she was much liked, and after joining the Association, was later secretary for the Association group at Rushcliffe providing sterling service.

Leicester meetings have continued regularly and they were lucky with their summertime visit to Stratford on Avon where some members enjoyed a river trip. Then they all went on to Leamington for tea. A trip to Lincoln had to be cancelled at the last minute, due to the floods but some members did manage to get to the Area lunch in spite of the fuel shortage.

---

Their popular pre-Christmas lunch was as successful as ever with 69 members present and in mid-December they rounded off the Millennium year with mince pies and coffee.

Some Lincoln members have a problem getting to meetings and a round trip of 86 miles is sometimes incurred by a driver giving a lift to others. This makes things difficult but some have met for the occasional lunch. Sadly their numbers have been depleted by the death of one of their oldest members.

A winter luncheon was held in November by N.E. Lincs group attended by 44 members at a hotel at Stallingborough, near Grimsby and much enjoyed, especially the "luck-dip" distribution of gifts they had brought.

Ashfield group met every three months or so alternating a lunch at a pub, with a tea to which members contribute. This is held in a member's home.

In Bassetlaw a sherry and mince pie meeting was held at Mrs Smith's home, much enjoyed although numbers were down a little as some members were doing regular duties. One founder member, Mrs Buffrey, is having to retire from active participation, due to failing health but they hope she will continue to enjoy the meetings without the stress of organising them. She has done this organising for a long while with much enthusiasm and interest..

Broxtowe members have held two coffee mornings with raffles to boost the funds and they had an excellent lunch, well attended and much enjoyed. A mince pie meeting in January made an excellent start to the year. At the QMC "thank you" reception for the WRVS Mrs Pakes was presented with her 39 years service Clasp. One sad event was the enforced closure of the Chilwell area Darby and Joan Club because on the retirement of Mrs Rushton, aged 90, no one wished to continue the running of it.

A number of members attended a meeting on the future of the WRVS and, found it of great interest and were pleased at the opportunity to ask questions. At this meeting they met two WRVS members who knew nothing about the Association and now hope to become members.

Gedling group visited a Wild Flower Farm but were disappointed that it was not as colourful as they had imagined it would be, but they had a super village tea afterwards.

At their summer meeting at a garden centre they had a "Lite-Bite", followed by a musical quiz. The group have also had a coffee morning with Bring and Buy and a really super Christmas lunch. In the autumn they visited the Notts. Hospice, Fernleigh, where the visit included a slide show and talk. Some members did not go on this visit, fearing it would be too upsetting but the slide show and the tour round the beautiful house and its facilities were of great interest and the patients doing occupational therapy looked much like the nurses working with them. The house and gardens were beautiful and we admired the lovely panelling and the old, ornate radiators, still working after so many years.

Mansfield group held a successful coffee morning at the home of their Chairman, Mrs Ball but as they are all active WRVS members they find it difficult to meet together very often. They held a lunch meeting, however in January.

In the last Newsletter the editor said she hoped that Newark's new venue would be satisfactory as they had had to move. They now report that they have held two lunches there and that the venue is fine, but their numbers are, sadly, declining .

Rushcliffe, on the other hand use two venues alternately, to please all members. (This sounds a good idea where transport is difficult. Ed) At the September meeting members were asked to bring along a favourite thing to talk about or perform. They had a poetry reading which included a reading from The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam and they were shown a carved wooden cup made by a grandfather, showing exquisite workmanship. Others things brought included a poster, with very thoughtful words, and a picture of great sentimental value. The meeting was a fascinating insight into what makes individuals tick. In October they had "a chatting day". Then in November they had a very moving and uplifting talk about a local Children's Hospice. They say that if there is only one charity to support, this must be it as the effort that goes into the fund raising is fantastic and the help given to the children is wonderful.. The Hospice gets no NHS support at all. They hope to visit it in the summer on their "Open Day" to see the facilities described in the talk.

December is their Christmas lunch time and 32 members went to their favourite venue, County Hall. In January the speaker told them about the local family and their stately home, which now houses a Sue Ryder Home. (They do not say which. Ed.)

## **NORTH WEST DIVISION - *Headquarters Manchester***

**Cumbria, Lancashire. NW5 - Div. Rep. Mrs M. McCambridge BEM**

Apologies from the editor for not getting Miss Stevenson's title correct. We will get it right in future ! Sadly, no report from them.

**Merseyside and Cheshire - *Appointment pending***

**North and South Manchester - Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Matthews BEM**

Bury members had a great day out in October with "Lancashire Welcome Days". A Red Rose guide joined us at Towneley Park where they had an interesting demonstration entitled "Well that takes the Biscuit" followed by lunch at the Higher Trapp Country House Hotel. In the afternoon the guide told them moving stories of the Witches of Pendle as they toured Old Pendle. A visit to the Heritage Centre completed an excellent day. This company," Lancs Welcome Days", arrange tours in other parts of the country and are highly recommended. Following last year's lunch at Park Farm 30 members returned there in January and enjoyed a first class meal and pleasant get-together.



---

They are very sorry to report the death of Mrs Calrow, a founder-member whose 90th birthday was reported in our Autumn issue. Readers may remember her stories of the wartime evacuation of children in a previous issue. She had an outstanding record in WVS and WRVS and will be sadly missed by all her friends.

#### **Staffs.Shropshire, Derbyshire - Appointment Pending**

No reports from these three counties. Could any Association or WRVS member in these areas write to the editor to say if any of their groups have met at all as we would love to hear from them if they have.

#### **SOUTH EAST DIVISION - Headquarters 99 White Lion St. N1 9GF**

##### **Cambs and Northants - Div. Rep. Mrs Titcomb**

Mrs Titcomb writes of her sadness that now only two Cambridgeshire groups remain. The one at Peterborough has enjoyed a talk about Sangam, the Guide Association Centre for young people and visitors. Mrs Adam spoke to them about her activities in WRVS working on Mrs Cleland's Vice Chairman's Committee. In December this group had a Christmas lunch together and their meeting in January took the form of a humorous poem and two picture board quizzes.

Mrs Titcomb is sad to report the death of a founder member, Mrs Frisby. Poor Mrs Titcomb sent her report under duress, as she had to write it with a fractured thumb, sustained just a week before Christmas!

The Cambridge report tells of their meetings enlivened by slide shows of old Cambridge, the Norwegian Coast, Chicago and Oregon, USA. Their lunches held at the Regional College have proved very popular as the food is good and there is easy parking, a lift for less able members and a BAR!

The closing date for the "longest scarf" found this group still casting on, too late to send their efforts. Nevertheless, they continued to knit and at their November lunch were able to hand over seven very colourful blankets to the manager of Jimmy's Night Shelter, in Cambridge. The local press gave them plenty of publicity and now two more blankets have been completed making a total length of 180 feet. Two blankets were stitched together by their oldest member, who is still knitting !

The Huntingdon group's attendances have gradually dwindled as the year has gone on and members decided on a change of programme. They now meet each month for a meal, with no speakers.

Mrs Watson, their 89 year old group leader has decided, after doing the job for thirty years, to retire this year and Mrs Ackerley has kindly agreed to take over. Mrs Watson has put in many years of sterling service and we all wish her well in her well-earned retirement.

**Oxon. Beds and Bucks - Div. Rep. Mrs J. Callaway**

Bedfordshire members had planned a visit to a Butterfly Farm a few miles from Bedford just when the petrol crisis occurred, but no driver failed to pick up their passengers and carry them off for an interesting afternoon. They had a talk by a member, Mrs Vesey, who has made a study of nursery rhymes and she delighted her audience with such entertainment. (It sounds as if they all went back to their childhood. !Ed) The C.V.O. for the area, Mrs Adams, joined over 70 members and guests for their Christmas party. She spoke to many members, hearing from some "old hands" and gave a short talk on her duties in today's WRVS. Mrs Callaway also told the funny story of Lady Reading's directions on uniform. She is reported to have instructed them that even when they were collecting their Meals on Wheels from a local fish and chip shop they should always wear their hats and gloves!

We have a worrying report concerning Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire groups where Mrs McRoberts says that the main chance of getting members was lost when resentment occurred in WRVS hospital projects. In Oxford too Mrs Goulding regrets that changes have upset members so much that no one will come forward to help keep the Association groups going. This is a great pity. (See above also, Mrs Doyle's comments) The Association of course is in no way to blame for these changes but their members are the ones to suffer by the closure of their groups. I wonder what we could do to help. Our branches can only function if retiring active WRVS members join in, and many Association members who would really enjoy meeting together in their retirement have lost both their groups and their local offices. Mrs Cleland, Vice-Chairman of WRVS knows of these grievances and is working hard to overcome them. She knows how much is owed to Association members for the work they have done and says they are arranging local meetings to replace local offices where members could meet. She has asked us to say that she will be at the Birmingham Conference in April and if anyone upset by the changes could get to that meeting she would be very pleased indeed to meet them. As these counties are fairly near to Birmingham, I wonder if they could possibly come, perhaps as day members on Friday April 20th to meet Mrs Cleland and other Association members to talk together. (If you can come, just ring Association H.Q. on Tues. Wed. or Thurs for details . You will get a warm welcome. Ed )

**Norfolk and Suffolk - Div. Rep. Mrs S Scholey**

Mrs Scholey organised a Norfolk lunch at a restaurant close to the Area Office, sadly now closed, supported by members from Norfolk, North Norfolk, and Suffolk. The help and friendship of the Area staff will be much missed.



Mrs Gilderson and Mrs Scholey  
looking very happy!

The North Norfolk branch held a convivial Christmas lunch at a hotel in Cromer in December and are looking forward to a spring luncheon at Wayland Bridge.

The Great Yarmouth branch have had several lunches together and these events are always well supported.

Mrs Scholey gives grateful thanks to Mrs Jackman who announced her retirement after many years service as Branch Representative. for her dedicated devotion to the Great Yarmouth branch members over the past years and welcomes her successor, Mrs Mary Taylor whom she wishes well in her new role..

In Mrs Taylor's first report she writes that 65 members enjoyed lunch at Gorleston, always a popular event and venue as the service there is excellent. At this event one member, Mrs Johnson celebrated her 90th birthday. At a November coffee morning meeting they discussed their programme for 2001. Eleven members joined Norfolk area for their lunch, so keeping in touch with other members in the area.

Mrs Scholey expresses their condolences to the families of several members who have recently died. They are all much missed. She looks forward to meeting members at the Birmingham Conference in April.

#### **Essex, Herts. and Berks. - Div. Rep. Mrs P Copping**

Mrs Copping is pleased to report that the new branch for Hertfordshire is going from strength to strength and 26 members enjoyed a Christmas lunch at Ware College. (This is good news.) In January a local historian gave them a slide show and an amusing commentary on Old Hatfield.

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

Mrs Bright sends more good news. She says that Epsom and Ewell branch is growing and active. They all join in with other Surrey activities. They held a well attended AGM with a speaker.

Kent had a successful tea party out in the country area of that beautiful county, but sadly Mrs Bright missed it as her car broke down on the way. She praises the mobile phone!

A letter from Mrs Stirling reports that Woking branch is very active and has now been going for almost 30 years. ( I wonder which branch was the first to start? Ed.) Under the guidance of Mrs Wheeler and Mrs Payne they have a full programme with an annual garden party, a formal lunch at a local golf club, a theatre and a coach outing. She praises a lunch she enjoyed which only cost £3 with watercress soup, quiche and salad and as much wine as they could drink!.

Mrs Bradley-Feany also writes from Woking. She says that now local offices are closed they get no details of the long-service medals received with the actual years served. and she asks "how do members qualify"? She thinks it would be interesting to learn details of qualifications etc. and regrets that this information is not included in Action magazine. (This is information local offices used to give out at local medal ceremonies. We will pass this on to Action but are sorry that we do not get this information ourselves. Ed).

Eastbourne visited a local vineyard, Mrs Bright says she hopes they sampled the products! They held their usual Christmas lunch at an hotel on the promenade. Surrey members worry that they are not getting the younger, newly-retired active WRVS joining them. With the closure of local offices, people retiring from active Service could continue to meet others with whom they worked and they would feel they still "belong" to the main service..

They have sadly lost several members who have died recently and Mrs Bright especially mentions Mrs Cork and Mrs Chapman..

Sadly Mrs Bright is retiring as Divisional Rep. for this area but she has cleverly found a willing and capable successor in Mrs Rosling who hopes to attend the Birmingham meeting. (We will all look out for her and try to give her a very warm welcome. Ed ) Mrs Bright has done sterling service in the South East for the Association and she will be well missed by all her members and the Committee. We send her our thanks for all she has done for the Association.

**London S.W. - Div. Rep. Mrs A. Christophersen**

**London N.E. - Div. Rep. Mrs W. Taylor OBE DL**

It is sad that in this one issue of the Newsletter the editor should have to announce the death of its first and its second editors. Members will have already read (above), of the death of Mrs Price, its first editor from Lincoln. From the London area we have also heard, sadly, that Mrs Gross has died, aged 81 years. Mrs Gross joined WVS in 1955 and worked on hospital work on and off, between following her husband on his of postings abroad and back, until 1973 when they returned to U.K. for good. She was then appointed D. O. for Haringey and in 1979, became Area Organiser for North London. Her work there included responsibility for storage and maintenance of WRVS relief stocks. In 1985 she retired from Area responsibilities but continued to audit hospital accounts and administer the hospital profits and gifts to the hospitals concerned. In 1986 she joined the Association, editing the Newsletter until she retired through ill health in 1992. She had served the WVS/WRVS and the Association devotedly and many older members will remember her. Mrs Gross's records were destroyed in the Enfield office fire and no others could be found so we are deeply indebted to her husband, Mr Gross, for this record of her work. We send him our sincere sympathy.

**London N.W.** - *Div. Rep. Mrs D Steven*

**London S.E.** - *Div. Rep. Mrs G Cleverly*

We are sorry to report that we have had no other news from the London Divisions. I wonder if they could find someone willing to be a secretary who would write to us with news from London. We would like to hear from them.

**Hampshire, Isle of Wight** - *Div. Rep. Mrs Beryl Adams*

Mrs Adams kindly enquires, in her report about the floods in York and whether the office was flooded. I am pleased to say that it was not, although the editor knows from experience how damp the cellars can be there and how close to the river they are.

Mrs Adams says she wonders how many members know what a "Bajun Wedding" is? When members received invitations to the autumn meeting they were puzzled as this was to be the subject of the speaker, Mrs Roberts, one of their members.... It turned out to be a very interesting talk. The bride was Mrs Robert's daughter and the speaker came dressed in her wedding outfit and brought along her daughter's dress and lots of photographs. They heard lots about the island of Barbados which made them all long to go there. (Unfortunately Mrs Adams does not tell us how a Bajun wedding differs from our own customs!!) The talk was followed by a raffle and lunch which they all brought and was held in a lovely Parish Hall, recently refurbished with lottery money in the village of Shawford. Unfortunately their hopes of a country walk in this lovely village were dashed owing to rain and, Mrs Adams says, it has hardly stopped there since !.

**SOUTH WEST DIVISION** - *Headquarters Exeter*

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

At one Cheltenham meeting Mrs Caveen kindly stood in for a speaker, unable to come, and she gave a talk on the Chernobyl Children's Project. This brings children to England for four weeks, staying two weeks with one family and two with another. They come for fresh air and good food and are accompanied by an interpreter. The Organisers hold fund-raising projects to cover the costs of bringing them to England and entertaining them. When Mrs Caveen visited Chernobyl she found an 18 year old boy with no legs, living in an Old People's Home. The Project decided to buy a house and make it suitable for four 18 year olds to live together, each with his own bedroom. Members were so touched that it was decided to make a collection and they donated £76 to Mrs Caveen for this work. Once again members prepared lunch which was much enjoyed.

They are sad to record the death of Mrs Woolner, a valued member who will be much missed. However, they are happy to report that during the year they enrolled seven new members and welcomed three others who have been transferred from other districts.

At a meeting held in the Shire Hall, Gloucester a talk was given by Miss Owen and Dr Owen on Alaska which they had visited earlier in the year. They discovered that Alaska is six times the size of Wales with a population of 600,000, with Mt. McKinley, at 29000 ft. the highest mountain.. Once occupied by Eskimos and Indians, in the mid 18 century the Russians arrived, staying near the coast, not venturing inland. In 1865 Alaska was sold to America for 17 million dollars. In 1930 900 Americans were sent to farm there and in 1957 oil was discovered. Panning for gold is a local occupation and the speakers had panned and showed members a small piece they had found. The country has three months complete darkness and three months continuous light. It was a very interesting talk, accompanied by slides.

There is a small group of members in Redditch who meet for coffee twice a year and enjoy chatting together.

#### **Somerset, Devon, Cornwall - Div. Rep. Mrs J. Ellis-Martin**

We have no report from Mrs Ellis-Martin and we wonder how she got on with the questions to members in our last issue We do hope she got some replies and that they were helpful. Perhaps we will hear in time for our next issue.

#### **West Midlands - Div. Rep. Mrs J.M. Smith BEM**

Mrs Wortley reports that the Erdington and Sutton Coldfield branch is doing well.. Sadly two members have not been able to go on outings due to age, but others have supported well.

In May they went to Stapely Water gardens and admired the display of fountains. In September they visited the Wedgewood Story, and with the aid of an audio tape and earphones, were able to follow the history of Wedgewood and the various stages of pottery making today. One member had a tape in Japanese, but, Mrs Wortley says, she didn't seem to mind !! In January they had their annual lunch at La Reserve, Sutton Park. (Sounds very posh. Ed).

Mrs Smith regrets that she can find no one to take up Mrs Oswald's place to run the Solihull group, or to run the Coventry one. She thinks this is because the offices are closed and as many Association members used to drop into their local office, the link is broken. (This sad story is again repeated here, See Mrs Cleland's concern in the Oxford report. Ed)

---

## Wilts, Dorset - Div. Rep. Mrs B Williams

The editor has received a first Newsletter written and produced for the Dorset WRVS which they propose to produce twice yearly. It makes interesting reading They are looking for a name for it, so if any Association members can suggest one, send it to the WRVS at 865 Ringwood Road, Dorset BH11 8LL. I wonder if this is the first of others in other WRVS areas.

Mrs Darby reports that in June 30 the Wiltshire group held a wonderful garden party and a Millennium Buffet Lunch in lovely weather. In November they had a pre-Christmas Coffee morning and 22 members attended and generously supported the Bring and Buy and Raffle. Later in November they had a super Buffet Lunch in Swindon to spread the word about the Association to their colleagues in WRVS. This was so successful that they are busy now signing up new members. (I wonder if groups with dwindling numbers could do something similar with their WRVS colleagues? Ed.) On December 22 members attended a Christmas coffee morning with mince pies, a raffle and Bring and Buy.

They sadly report the death of two of their members, Mrs Tebbs, County Organiser in Wiltshire in the '70's who set up the Association in the county and Mrs Lunt who had served as county secretary.

Mrs Braithewaite sends a description of the work of the Emergency Teams when Bradford on Avon was flooded. A woollen mill converted into flats for the elderly had to be evacuated. One lady had the foresight to put a bottle of whisky in her overnight bag ! and the cooks gave them a meal of sausage and mash, with bacon butties for breakfast. (I should think the elderly residents were hoping for more flooding! Ed) A week later all the people who had taken part were invited back by the elderly as a "thank you".

## WALES - Headquarters Cardiff

### North Wales - Div. Rep. Mrs E. Edwards BEM

Many Conwy members are still active on WRVS duties on canteen and shopping trolley work and Meals on Wheels. Mrs Bocking says that many are disillusioned at the numerous changes affecting WRVS but still continue to give loyal service (Good for them ! Ed). These members had a speaker from the Citizen's Advice Bureau and in October one member, who had served throughout the war recounted her experiences of wartime WVS. This was so successful it led to members asking for more "memories". In this way members get to know each other better. In November they crossed the Menai Bridge to Anglesey to a popular garden centre where some members did their Christmas shopping. A member of the staff there gave them a demonstration on Christmas table decorations. In December they had a tea party with "valuable"! prizes for the winners of the quiz. They have already planned a Spring programme.

---

**South Wales - Div. Rep. Mrs Mary Gibbons. OBE**

No report from Mrs Gibbons. She is probably still getting to know her members and their activities. We hope for something for the next issue.

**CHANNEL ISLANDS**

**Guernsey - Assoc. Rep. Miss E. Robilliard**

No report from Guernsey. We hope we will get one next time.

**Jersey - Assoc. Rep. Mrs D. Jennings**

We do not think of the island of Jersey as having leaden skies and heavy rain, but Mrs Jennings says she writes in lovely weather at last after the very bad weather they have had. But she adds that at least they did not have floods and they have all been thinking of the folk in the flooded areas. They did not, this year have their own Christmas celebration as many members were away or entertaining family, but three of them joined WRVS for their get-together lunch.

**SCOTLAND - Chairman Lady Macintosh**

Report from Scotland in the autumn issue.

---

We had many responses to our competition concerning "The best things about growing old". Members evidently see the bright side of old age. There are several poems, sorry too long to print. Many have repeated the following

Your happy memories  
You have more experience  
You can do the things you want to do  
You have time to read,  
Time to watch the birds in the garden  
Time to do the daily crossword  
Time to visit a friend  
Time to enjoy ones grandchildren ...and pack them off home at bedtime.  
You get lots of concessions  
You get offered a seat on the tube. (I have not always found this works ! Ed)

These are all excellent but ....

The winner is ....

"The looks of amazement on young people's faces when they find I am a good skier!."

Sent by Mrs Adams. Hampshire . A small prize will be sent to her.





4 March 2001

Dear Members,

As I write there is more flooding in York and my Thursday afternoon job at a Blind Club there had to be cancelled again because the roads are closed again and the residents in the block where we meet are again preparing to be moved out. I have had many letters and phone calls from members asking kindly about the flooding. Thank you all for your kind enquiries. I live in a small village by the Derwent but it is mercifully on higher ground and we escape. Others have had a terrible time.

Many of you have asked about the "longest scarf" and you will have seen in Action that although it was eventually 12 miles long, it was 10 miles short of the target. Nevertheless it was, as the magazine says, "an awesome challenge". Well done to all who knitted

The time for booking for the Birmingham Conference has been extended to March 31st. If you find you can possibly come, if you ring the Association office there will still be time to book. These conferences are most enjoyable. Many people who cannot manage to come for the weekend just come for the Saturday. We would love to see you there.

I have had many contributions of poems etc. from members, but some good ones are just too long to use. Our pages are quite small and the number of pages is controlled by the cost of printing and posting so do send your items, but keep them short and they have more chance of being included. As a child, I was short in height and when I complained my mother used to say "the best things come in small packages". When it comes to writings she may be right. So keep them brief!

I was personally sad to hear of the death of Mrs Gross, who edited this Newsletter before I took over. I only met her for the one morning when she handed everything over to me, but looking back on her past numbers I know she did a very good job as editor.

I look forward to seeing many of you at Birmingham. Do please make yourselves known to me so that I can say "hello".

With Best Wishes,

*Ness Venables*

A long, horizontal, slightly wavy line drawn in black ink, serving as a signature line.

### ***China Tea.***

A car was lodged in a ditch opposite a picturesque cottage. Two elderly ladies waved us to stop. The girl driver was unhurt but could not get out as both doors were stuck in the dyke sides. Soon the fire-engine arrived, the car was dragged out, the girl released, shaken but unhurt and the elderly ladies asked us to come into the cottage for a cup of tea.

One elderly lady asked the girl whether she would have China or Indian tea. The girl answered "China please". Then I was asked. I am afraid my education as to where tea comes from was sadly lacking so I followed the girl's lead and asked for China. Rob and the firemen with similar ignorance followed my lead. The ladies seemed delighted and rushed round with tea pots. I was given a tiny fragile cup, filled with a thin green liquid. The faces of the other men showed that they were more than a little surprised. Seeing neither sugar nor milk we drank it down as if it was our normal tipple. It tasted foul!

In that crowded room full of uncomfortable, sweating men the ladies circulated with small cakes and refilled the cups with the horrible green stuff. It must have been a most exciting day for them, for as they passed I overheard one say to the other "I never realised how knowledgeable these men are about tea". How little did she know!

This is a very shortened sample from a book written by an ambulance man, telling of the funny things that happen during an ordinary day's work. It is called "Call an Ambulance" by Alan Crosskill and can be bought for £8 (including P.and P.) from Woodfield Publishing, Babsham Lane, Bognor Regis, West Sussex. PO1 5EL or phone 01243 821234 or of course through your library.

*He who laughs last thinks slowest.*

---

### ***The Dunkirk evacuation- A memory***

After being driven into the sea, we floundered in the dark up to our necks in water. Just when all hope had gone we were picked up by a destroyer and landed at Dover. Waiting for us there was a Regimental Sergeant Major who gave us a verbal lashing about turning our backs on the enemy and running away like cowards. This was followed by 20 minutes of drill parade. We were then marched briskly to Dover Railway Station.

There, dishing out tea and grub, which we had not seen for 10 days or more, were some angels of mercy, the WVS. Those ladies lifted our spirits, brought smiles to our faces and made us feel as though someone cared. We were very grateful. More joy was to come. We travelled that day by train to Porthcawl in North Wales stopping at several stations on the way, and at each station there were the WVS with more tea and delicious food and post cards on which we hastily scribbled our home address. On those cards was written "Home Safe and Sound" and the ladies posted them for us. On October 11th at Beverley Race Course I was able to thank the WRVS. I still love them. Sent by Mrs James. Beverley. Part of a piece from the Beverley Advertiser of 1/11/00 by Mr Ernie Teal, a regular columnist for that paper and a local comedian who was invited to speak at the N.E. Area Annual Lunch at Beverley last October. He had everyone in fits of laughter, but this memory shows his more serious side and his gratitude.

---

*Things children say.*

My young granddaughter was trying to describe the smell of her new shampoo.  
“Its very difficult to say really as I only had a glimpse of the smell”

From Mrs Adams Hampshire.

---

*Bath Time Blues*

Life is a frenzy fraught with tears  
Your birth's grim aftermath;  
Small wonder then as you grow old  
You suffer in the bath.

In youth, a world of liquid joy  
Wherein to bathe and soak,  
But once long years are faced with tears  
A bath's no kind of joke.

For there great handicaps abound  
Immersion is but one  
With one foot in, the other out  
Your trials have begun.

Despairing swing and desperate sway  
Bring tottering legs together,  
Marooned in pungent steam you stand  
As fragile as a feather.

Descent of your more lowly parts  
Precipitates much pain  
But with a slide and awesome glide  
Recumbancy you gain.

In course of which a tidal wave  
Engulfs you head to toe;  
Then from your head and ears and eyes  
The soapy waters flow.

Content you lie in watery bliss,  
To drop asleep maybe,  
And something of the joy returns  
You knew when a baby.

You wake to find your world stone cold.  
The need to wash occurs;  
Goose-pimpled limbs float into sight  
Each wrinkled foot besters.

But now alas where is the soap?  
An age it takes to find,  
And you are lying on the sponge  
Immovable behind.

And once equipped, so soon revealed  
A score of places lie  
Far, far beyond your ancient reach,  
The sponge there to apply.

Each foot lies many miles away  
Too far you quickly find  
And all is inaccessible  
Which lurks in realms behind.

And when in part the task is done,  
There still remains the doubt  
With all your many aches and pains  
With all your swelling joints and veins  
With stubborn back, arthritic knees  
And arms which lack the strength of  
fleas just how, unless for help you shout  
Will you succeed in getting out ?

Written by Ted Harben  
Sent by Mrs James,  
Beverley

*Light travels faster than sound.  
This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.*

---

***How to know when you're getting old.***

Everything hurts, what doesn't hurt doesn't work.  
You feel like the morning after, but you haven't been anywhere.  
Your children begin to look middle aged.  
You join a health club but don't go  
A dripping tap causes an uncontrollable urge.  
You have all the answers, but nobody asks you the questions  
You look forward to a dull evening. You need glasses to find your glasses.  
You turn out the light for economy instead of romance  
You are in a rocking chair but can't make it rock  
Your knees buckle but your belt won't. Your back goes out more than you do.  
Your house is too big, your medicine box not big enough.  
You sink your teeth into a steak and they stay there.  
Your birthday cake collapses under the weight of all the candles.

Sent by Mrs Dawson. Tyne and Wear.

---

***A few actual statements from insurance forms when car drivers are asked to summarize the details of their accident.***

"I collided with a stationary truck coming the other way"  
"I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law and headed over the embankment."  
"The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him"  
"I was sure the guy would not make it to the other side of the road when I hit him"

From Miss Sadler. York.

---

*Honk if you love peace and quiet.*

---

It is a good thing to be rich and it is a good thing to be strong but it is a better thing to be beloved of many friends. ***Euripedes.***

Sent by Miss Sadler. York

**Pickled.**

The horse and mule live thirty years and nothing know of wine and beers.  
The goats and sheep at twenty die with never a taste of scotch or rye.  
The cow drinks water by the ton and at eighteen is mostly done.  
The dog at sixteen cashes in without the aid of rum or gin.  
The cat in milk and water soaks and then in twelve short years it croaks.  
The sober, modest, bone-dry hen lays eggs for nogs and dies at ten.  
The animals are strictly dry, they sinless live and quickly die,  
While sinful, ginful, rum-soaked men survive for three score years and ten.  
And some of us, (though mighty few), stay pickled till we're ninety-two!

From Mrs Dawson. Tyne and Wear.

---

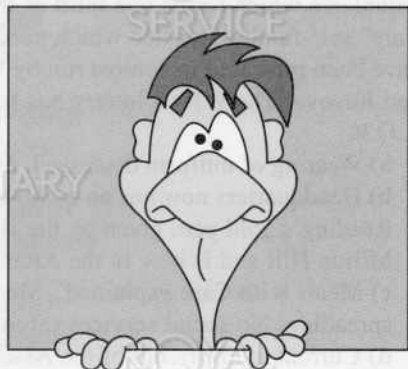
***The Second World War Experience Centre. Leeds***

We have been asked by this Centre to say that if any WRVS members have any wartime written experiences, memorabilia, wartime anecdotes or experiences, uniforms or promotional material, it would be gratefully received. They could arrange for collection of any items from any part of the country. Members should contact the Centre at 6-8 York Place, Leeds, West Yorks LS1 2DS or telephone 0113/2450475. Do mention the Newsletter when making your enquiries.

For those who are "with it" on the computer or who have grandchildren who are the website is [www.war-experience.org](http://www.war-experience.org)

---

*Everyone has a photographic memory,  
some don't have film.*



*Notes taken from the Minutes of the AGM. held at Napier Hall, London on 24/10/00.*

1. Mrs Price welcomed three new Div. Reps., Mrs Gibbons for Wales, Mrs Ellis-Martin for Devon and Cornwall and Mrs Cleverly for S.E. London.
2. She also welcomed the WRVS Chairman Mrs Tina Tietjen and invited her to speak at this point in the meeting as she had to leave early.  
Mrs Tietjen said WRVS were making headway towards financial self-sufficiency. but the financial gap still had to be closed by raising more money and reducing costs. They also needed to make their work better known to the public. Lately this had included helping the elderly this Christmas, helping those flooded out and helping with the Hatfield Train Crash.
3. Apologies for absence and Minutes of last AGM were duly signed,
4. The Secretary Mrs Pickard reported that they had now been in York one year and had six volunteer members of staff. Work on the database of members was almost complete. They have had 147 new members but sadly, 82 bereavements. She was grateful to the Div. Reps. for all their work. We now had 24 Div. Reps. now working very hard throughout the country.
5. The Treasurer, Mrs Hudson reported modest surplus, £413, compared to deficit of £1706 the previous year.. Subscriptions had increased by £700.
6. The Auditor reported that receipts must be sent when claiming expenses. He also suggested new members should pay bankers orders into the HSBC account.
7. The Editor reported "stuffing" would be done on Nov. 7th, 8th and 9th. 4000 Newsletters were being printed. Div. Reps reminded of the two dates for contributions, Jan. 31st and Aug. 31st. She appealed for more copy from members.
8. The Chairman thanked Mrs Stevens for her organisation and running of the very good Milton Hill Millennium meeting, which everyone had enjoyed. AGM next year would be a weekend meeting from April 19th to 21st, at Birmingham University with en suite rooms for all. She hoped members would support it.
9. A 100th birthday card had been sent to the Queen Mother. They had received a personally signed portrait with her thanks which now hangs in the York office. Mrs Price explained about the Vice-Chairman's Committee, the eyes and ears of the volunteers which forms one third of the Board. A new service was the "Meals with Care" self-funding service which needs no Social services referral. 4,600 refugees have been relocated in centres run by WRVS.. We still have welfare officers in Bosnia and Kosovo. The WRVS lottery has been a success.
10. A.O.B.
  - a) Wearing of uniform discussed. Members felt it should be worn at official events.
  - b) Headquarters now has an archivist. Archives should be send to Milton Hill. Lady Reading's gold pen, given by the Halpin family to Mrs Stevens had been sent to Milton Hill and is now in the Archives.
  - c) Meals with Care explained. Meals were £2,50 to £3, not yet countrywide but spreading. No social services referral needed. Self financing.
  - d) Current membership of the Association is 3,750

- e) Chairman had not been asked to any WRVS committee meetings, Mrs Cleland was dealing with this problem but the magazine Action had put something in about the Association this year. It was explained however, that anything sent to Action would be edited by them.
- f) "The longest scarf" outcome was explained.
- g) Question concerning Remembrance Wreaths, previously arranged by local offices, Mrs Cleland will report back.
- h) "Action" now being sent to members directly.

Copies of the full Minutes will be available at the Birmingham AGM in April Anyone not attending but wanting a copy sent should apply to the Association Office in York.

---

## **WRVS Association**

82 Bootham ,York, YO30 7DS

Tel: 01904 634500

### ***President***

Mrs Tina Tietjen  
Chairman, WRVS

### ***Vice-Presidents***

Mrs A Christophersen  
Mrs E.D. Claydon  
The Hon. Dame Mary Corsar DBE.  
Mrs P James MBE  
Mrs Sheila McCormack BEM  
Baroness Pike of Melton DBE  
Dame Barbara Shenfield DBE  
Lady Toulson CBE

### ***Chairman***

Mrs Diane A. Price

### ***Hon. Secretary***

Mrs Jean Pickard

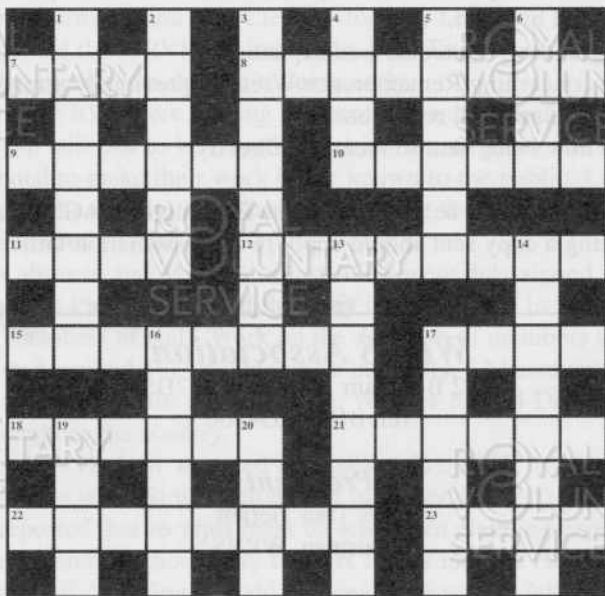
### ***Hon. Treasurer***

Mrs Maureen Hudson

### ***Hon. Editor***

Mrs Ness Venables

*Prize Crossword*



**Across**

7. Yearning tree (4)
8. Said to be stained again (8)
9. Writer's sterilising fluid? (6)
10. Army poet? It's a cover-up (6)
11. The rise of British driver (4)
12. Sending out Oriental expedition (8)
15. Asset causes acidity between soldiers and Church (8)
17. Hard place for Pop (4)
18. Archbishops addressed as three beauties (6)
21. Posture supporting Oeuvre? Quite the reverse! (6)
22. I splash photo possibly and WRVS will make it run (8,4)
23. See 22 across

**Down**

1. Small car on road to Home Counties. Make it even smaller! (8)
2. Fast on one Litre and find pulse (6)
3. Rude order support patriarch, who becomes majestic (8)
4. Order it or leave it out! (4)
5. Researches into soft clothing (6)
6. Scrambled food causes fright (4)
13. Cold money, but sweet all the same (3,5)
14. Coo! I scan for this event (8)
16. Live in it and keep busy (6)
17. Sit again and sleep (6)
19. Vegetable can be square (4)
20. Bar bill less a pound will satisfy (4)

Crossword composed by Edgar Price, York.

Solutions to be sent to the Hon Editor, with your address on the letter.  
A small prize will be awarded to the first correct solution opened