
WRVS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER



No. 56 Spring 2002

Letter from the Chairman

82 Bootham, YORK YO30 7DS

Dear Member,

Since our last Newsletter Christmas has passed and as we are into a New Year I would like to wish you all a very belated Happy and Healthy 2002.

WRVS are concerned about the amount of Action magazines that are being returned by Association members with notes saying, we no longer work for WRVS. May I remind you that all members of the Association now get their own individual copy of Action sent to their home address.

As I'm sure you know anyone can join the Association providing they have been a member of WRVS for 5 years whatever their age, male or female, whether they are still working or not. It is my aim during my term of office to increase the membership of the WRVS Association and I hope that with your help and the help of the WRVS Chairman Tina Tietjen, Vice Chairman Alice Cleland, Managers and members of the Vice Chairman's Committee this can be achieved.

We do hope you will be able to join us in Bath for our Reunion and AGM in July either as a day delegate or a resident. Hopefully we will have a speaker from the Museum of Costume before the AGM and a coach tour later.

I look forward to meeting many of you during this coming year and hope you all have a good summer.

My very best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Pat Copping

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News from the Divisions

NORTH EAST DIVISION - Headquarters Darlington

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

Newcastle's leader Mrs Doyle reports that they met in September to hear a very interesting speaker, Stephen Whaley, talk about "Operation Christmas Child" of which he is in charge. He explained how they collected and delivered shoe boxes of gifts for children from war-torn countries and told members where they would go and what to put into them. He asked not to send clothes in general, but hats, scarves, gloves, toys etc. were good, but no action men, guns or anything to do with war, nor anything written in English, or anything needing batteries etc. He gave out leaflets and labels stating "boy", or "girl" and the age group. All members thoroughly enjoyed filling a box and putting in as much as it would hold and this group intends to help with this scheme next year. (I wonder if this is a scheme other groups would like to help with? If so I could send them a leaflet with all the instructions. Just send me a S.A.E.Ed.) They all enjoyed a lunch at the New Kent Hotel and 21 members attended the annual Carol Service and Buffet Lunch at the Brunswick Methodist Church at which all the groups participate. This year they were pleased to welcome Christine Dobson, WRVS Volunteering Manager for the Area.

The Whitley Bay/ North Shields branch keep in touch with one member who moved to Devon and still writes to tell them that she receives her Newsletter which keeps her in touch. Fifteen members attended the Carol Service, including two members who had recently had bad falls, who made a huge effort to go. This occasion seems to begin "Christmas" for these members each December.

In the scattered area of Northumberland Mrs Sealey keeps in touch with members in the county. Those who live in or near Ponteland meet each month for coffee and a chat.

After the summer break, the Sunderland group visited Sunderland Old Parish Church where Mr Moon gave an interesting talk on the history of the church and then a conducted tour of the building. It is no longer in general use but holds occasional services including a Trafalgar Day Service and several members had attended this and enjoyed the pageantry. In October, one of their own members, Mrs Hetherington gave an informative talk on life as a nurse with Miss Bates as Matron. It told them how much things had changed in nursing since those days. Their Christmas lunch (in November) was a buffet by "Serve-U-Well" at which they welcomed Mrs McCormack and Mrs Hurst and everyone enjoyed the fellowship.



A smaller meeting in December celebrated with a sherry and mince pie get-together. Three members, among several others who attended, acted as standard bearer party at the annual Carol Service. Six members, still active in WRVS, helped at an Emergency Exercise at Sunderland Docks where they proved they were still capable and effective in an emergency. (See photograph.).



*Sunderland Association Members.
Emergency exercise, Sunderland Dock*

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

Mrs Thompson on a lengthy visit to her family 'down under', had asked all the group leaders in her Area to send their reports direct to the editor, which they have dutifully, done. Mrs Thompson would welcome comments on the Area lunch in Darlington and on the venue, the order of meal, the talk and the food. She returns in March.

Just before Mrs Thompson's departure the sad news came that Mrs Joan Grant had died. Joan had been a Committee member of the Association, giving up that position because of her husband's illness. She had done stalwart work for the Harrogate hospitals, and had been group leader for Harrogate for several years. Her husband, who predeceased her by two years had been a strong support to her in all her work. Mrs Pantin has sent the Harrogate report, and she repeats how sad they all were to say goodbye to Joan, who had been ill for some time, but she says that many will remember her wonderful contribution

She reports that the Harrogate group meet regularly for coffee on Friday mornings and have a chat together. Numbers vary with the weather but they enjoy their get-togethers and sometimes have a speaker. A Bring and Buy stall keeps them in funds, organised by Ada. Cathryn Hamlin has left Harrogate after 30 years and is now living in Brompton-on-Swale and they try to arrange for her to be brought occasionally. They were pleased to see her at their excellent Christmas lunch which 16 members attended. Mrs Hamlin has been an Association member since its inception. One of the delights of this group is a visit to the musical performances at matinees at the Royal Hall and they feel they are lucky to live in an area with so many super theatres and societies to enjoy.

The East Yorkshire report from Mrs Priestley tells us that their monthly lunches have been well attended.

The Christmas lunch was much enjoyed at "The Lawns", Cottingham. The Christmas quiz was "Who said What ?" and was won by Barbara Hall of Beverley., and an additional quiz consisted of photographs of various WRVS members and events for people to recognise. This also brought back happy memories and was won by Pat Dawson of Wilberfoss.

They are sad to report the death on Boxing Day of a stalwart of the Pocklington Centre, Herbert Bennett who was instrumental in getting the office there into shape when they moved into Burnby Hall. He also helped with the Handicraft Exhibition and the competitions held there and also worked on Meals on Wheels and on transport for children's holidays. In fact wherever help was needed Herbert could be relied on to help. Their sympathy goes out to his sister, Hilda Barker, a member of Pocklington Association.

The death has also occurred of Marjorie Potter, not a member of the Association but who will be remembered by many as Local Org. for Beverley, Deputy County Org., Old People's Org. for N. Humberside and then Deputy Area Org. for NE3 until reorganisation. She will be sadly missed by her very many friends.

The Selby group numbers have declined since August. They still meet at the British Rail Club, but have had a cold buffet on two occasions as the caterers found it too expensive to employ two waitresses to serve a hot meal. The December luncheon was cancelled altogether through lack of numbers. Mrs Altass says that it is most disappointing . Members have given illness and other problems as their reasons for not attending the meetings. Four Selby members attended the Area meeting at Darlington and they all thoroughly enjoyed the meal and the whole meeting which they thought excellent. They were late arriving as the driver, (not a WRVS driver), took wrong turns and not until they managed to get the map from him and direct him themselves did they get to the right place. Their Xmas/New Year luncheon was most enjoyable (as your editor from York can confirm. Ed). Slides shown by Jonathan Stockwell, the son in law of their treasurer Mr Kay, showed lovely views of various beauty spots, travels and flower studies, all accompanied by well-chosen music. They kindly invited York members to this meal and welcomed them and their Chairman, Mrs Marjory Brown, as their guest. Each member, guests included, received a generous Christmas gift and Mrs Brown thanked them warmly for inviting them. Sadly one of their oldest members, Mrs Edith Denham, died suddenly a few days before this event. Mrs Altass thanks all those who help her, especially Mr Kay and Mrs Bell.

Hartlepool branch, started in January 1986, have met monthly since that time. Miss Stamp writes that they continue to enjoy speakers, outings and special lunches and this year a New Year lunch. She keeps in touch with members, especially those with family problems or illness. Sadly they have lost some members but they continue to keep their numbers up with new members.

Last July they had an interesting Open Day, with talks on Italy, and a visit to War Graves. One member's husband reminisced about his boyhood in Hartlepool. In August a happy bus load travelled to the Lake District, with a meal at Penrith. In September they enjoyed a slide talk on the speaker's experiences in Norway with its wonderful scenery and in October they celebrated a member's Diamond Wedding with cake and a free raffle and gave her a lovely plant and card. The speaker on this occasion was a lady who had visited Tanganyika with her husband who on their return to Hartlepool set up the Kilmatinde Trust to which the Hartlepool members donated £40. (Miss Stamp does not say what work the Trust supports. Perhaps she would tell us in the next report ? Ed.) .Sixteen members supported the Area Luncheon which was most enjoyable. In November they spent a happy morning answering a quiz set by a member's husband. Miss Stamp says that an important part of their meetings is the first half hour when they enjoy "a cuppa" and this gives them a chance to meet and talk to friends.

Six members from York attended the Area lunch and reunion at Darlington and enjoyed the day. They send thanks to the Darlington members who organised the event and to the Catering Department at Darlington F. E. College for providing such an excellent meal. They welcomed another new member at their Christmas lunch, held again this year at Bootham Park Hospital in the magnificent recreation hall. The food was really good and accompanied by wine and party crackers.

Members were sad to learn of the death, after a long illness, of Mrs Renee Cornforth who worked for the York Books on Wheels service, served tea at Association meetings and was always an active WRVS worker.

Mrs Winter has sent the report from Scarborough branch in Mrs Thompson's absence in Australia. She has sent some photographs of the special party for 90 year olds held last summer at her home and we print one here. They have had the usual coffee mornings, run by committee members and the most spiteful of weather was no deterrent. "Enjoyment" is the password for these gatherings. They held a very well attended and successful Christmas lunch at the Palm Court.



The Scarborough over 90's Party shows Lady Whitaker about to cut the cake and Mr Winter (2nd left)

They are sad to record the deaths of three members, Mrs May Whitehead, Mrs Olive Nightingale and Mrs Watson, who had reached her 100th year. All will be sadly missed by their friends.

Mrs Evans reports from Darlington that trips out had to be curtailed due to "Foot and Mouth" and they hope for better luck this year. One place they were able to visit was the Bowes Museum where they saw an exhibition of Royal Hats. They first saw a video about the designer and his workshop, then a display of the hats, worn by the Queen, and Princess Margaret. This was followed by a good tea in the new cafeteria at the museum. They held several coffee mornings at Squires Court and raised money for St Teresa's, their chosen charity. This group hosted the Area Lunch in October at the Technical College where the chef and his staff produced a beautiful meal. As it was half term holiday there was plenty of parking space. The pupil-waiters who were excellent, were all volunteers who had been promised a day off later in the term! As no tips were allowed they gave a donation to the Social Club and the Catering Officer said she would print their letter of thanks in their House Magazine. After coffee and a Bring and Buy stall to visit, they had a talk by the Manageress of St Teresa's Hospice. The speaker, a big jolly girl, spoke of their work with incurable patients with great humour, but with great sympathy. She was presented with the splendid flower arrangement from the table, made by a member. Members from this branch later were treated to a tea and mince pie to thank them for their work in arranging this very successful lunch meeting. A do-it-yourself Christmas tea at Squires Court with a lucky dip present for everyone was followed by a lunch and coffee morning in the New Year.

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

Mrs Pitts writes that the Calderdale group were entertained in Halifax Town Hall in September by Mr John Wallis, telling them the history of the music hall, which had its origins in the singing groups in public houses and then evolved into such establishments as the Leeds City Varieties.

Three Calderdale "Emergency Squad" members were called out during a fire emergency in Halifax. They were stood down after three hours duty in a church kitchen. Remembrance Day was observed by members in Halifax, with laying of a wreath at the War Memorial by Mrs Dorothy Bunce. One very happy occasion was the presentation of a Long Service Medal by the Mayor of Halifax, to Mrs Betty Wall, a member of the club lunch team. Their Christmas Luncheon at Millans Hotel was to be held at the end of January.

Wakefield branch meets every other month at the Citadel, with lunch at Wakefield Catering College in the alternate months. These lunches continue to be very popular with members.

Mrs Zeigler organised a Bring and Buy sale at her home which was a great success. She allocated the profits to five charities, £30 to the WRVS Benevolent Trust and £10 each to the Wakefield Blind Society, the Yorkshire Cancer Fund, the NSPCC, and The Riding for the Disabled.

Negotiations are proceeding for the formation of a Dewsbury group , especially for those members, past and present involved in projects at the Dewsbury Hospital. The hospital authorities have promised a room free of charge and the new poster (see page 19) has been put to good use. Mrs Pitt promises some good news for the next issue.

Leics, Lincs and Notts. - *Div. Rep. Mrs J. Newman*

Another busy six months for this area, ending with the usual end of year celebrations of lunches, and mince pie and coffee meetings . Mrs Newman says she was able to attend many of these, although her waistline suffered.

The Leicester branch continues to enjoy a regular programme of coffee mornings and days out. Their pre Christmas shopping trip was to Milton Keynes and was a successful day, judging by the number of carrier bags on the return journey. This successful day of retail therapy was followed by the winter lunch, always a popular event, and a pleasant gathering of 60 members. Mrs Newman attended the Christmas coffee morning when they all enjoyed the mince pies and the chat. At this meeting, Mrs Newman was able to give them details of the proposed 2002 Regional get-together. They had an interesting talk by Mr Greg Davidson who had organised the pilot scheme in Leicester for "Connections ", the work with children being done by Leicester WRVS. (Could Mrs Newman explain this last item for us ? Ed.) .

Congratulations were offered to Mrs Margaret Ward, awarded her Long Service Medal in November, presented by the Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire.

From Lincoln, Mrs Birkhead reports that her small group still meets for lunch every few months and they enjoy the opportunity to exchange news with one another.

In N.E. Lincs a tea was held in September at the Abbeyfield Home which was well attended . Fifty members enjoyed their Christmas Lunch at the Humber Hotel and Mrs Blanchard reports that the hotel really 'did them proud' with excellent food and attractive decor and tables. They all hope it will be repeated next Christmas.

In October members met for a "Faith Tea", everyone bringing a small contribution, which usually means a well-filled table . This Home, Harwood Court is a place where some members work and the tea here was much enjoyed, giving them all a chance to meet together. They hope that at the end of January Mrs Maureen Tarrpey, Volunteering Communications Officer, will come to meet these hard-working ladies.

At Bassetlaw a visit arranged to the main Wilkinson distribution centre was cancelled at the last minute and they were not able to arrange another venue in so short a time. They hope to make the visit at another time. In October they had a talk and demonstration of London Fashion House embroidery given by Jenny Smith . This was held at Queen's Court, Retford and 15 attended. They saw how beading embroidery was worked on dresses and processes of other types of embroidery. The speaker also told them of her experiences of working at the London Fashion House.

This talk was followed by a delightful tea. Early in December about 20 members enjoyed sherry and mince pies at the home of Mr and Mrs M Smith.

The Broxtove group held well-attended coffee mornings in October and November and especially in January when shortbread and sherry were served to welcome in the New Year. In September a lunch was held at "the nurseryman" as a change of venue and the December lunch was held at the Trent Lock Golf Club in very pleasant surroundings. The WRVS Chairman visited the Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham in the summer and presented Val Haig with her second Clasp, marking 39 years service. Val still works regularly at the hospital. Eunice Peel was also presented with her 15 year Medal. This group congratulates both of these long-serving members.

They are sad to record that Mrs Eileen Parkes, who had been a WRVS member for over 40 years, has died suddenly. She was a regular attender at their meetings and will be sadly missed.

Gedling's annual coffee morning/Bring and Buy was held, as usual, with great pleasure, at the home of their Deputy Chairman, but this time it was at her new home and she had hardly settled in. They padded about in stocking feet on her beautiful pale turquoise carpet and later showed their thanks to her and her husband with a gift of woodland bulbs for a corner of their new garden. At one meeting when the speaker did not arrive they entertained themselves with a funny story about growing old (Is there anything funny about it. ?Ed.)and an hilarious experience that had happened at Guide Camp. (Sorry, the writer does not say what was hilarious about it ! Ed). Another member gave them a potted history of her 53 years service in WRVS and this same versatile member played the piano and they sang some hymns. It turned out to be a very happy meeting after all. At their Christmas lunch for 38 members, this same piano-playing member Nancy Lee was presented with a Clasp to her Long Service Medal. Mrs Maureen Tarpey, Volunteering and Communications Officer made the presentation and she and Mrs Newman were welcomed to the meeting. They had a splendid Buffet provided by the committee to end the meeting. They called this "a little lite bite", but the Chairman persistently referred to it as "Tit- Bits" They have welcomed a few new members.

Mansfield members are so busy, still hard at work for WRVS that they have difficulty in finding times for meetings when all members can attend. An AGM was held in the autumn at the home of their Chairman Mrs Ball and a New Year lunch was planned for late January.

Due to a change of management and increased costs, Newark had to find a new venue for their September lunch, a pity as the old one had been convenient and the food delicious. The December lunch was held again in a local hostelry and 13 of them sat down to a very good lunch with a distribution of gifts to follow.

At Rushcliffe the autumn started with a coffee and chat morning followed in October with slides and a commentary on "Romantic Romania".

The pictures were taken before the days of the Communist regime ended, so that some of it was not so "romantic" but very interesting showing how they had lived a very simple life. In November they had another "chat" morning and in December 29 members enjoyed a huge Christmas lunch at County Hall, with excellent food, a good choice of dishes and very good value too. They were fortunate that their New Year meeting came one week after the snow fall so they were all able to enjoy meeting up again. They still meet at two different venues and on various days of the week to give everyone, including the working members, a chance to attend. At their next planning meeting they intend to arrange something special for the Queen's Jubilee. (I wonder if other groups are planning anything. ? Do tell us for the next issue. Ed.)

NORTH WEST DIVISION - Headquarters Manchester

Cumbria and Lancashire - Div. Rep. Mrs M. McCambridge BEM

No report has been received. Perhaps there is some member who could help Mrs McCambridge by sending in a report for us, if they know of any members or any activity in their area ? We would love to hear.

Merseyside and Cheshire - Appointment pending

A most welcome report from the St Helens group from Mrs Pat Mooney who says their branch is small, with fewer than 20 members, but they attend the monthly meetings regularly. They have a wide range of speakers and outings, and during the past 12 months have had a talk by a local police woman who gave them useful tips on "Keeping safe for the elderly". (I wonder if they could pass these on to us for our next issue ? Ed.) Another talk was by a librarian and another entertained them with poems and jokes, in the Lancashire dialect. One memorable afternoon was spent being entertained by "a farmer's wife" who arrived looking as if she had just stepped out of the milking shed. While describing her life on the farm she stripped off her numerous thick jumpers and transformed herself, with beautiful clothes, in which she could have attended a Royal Garden Party, complete with huge picture hat. They have also enjoyed a quiz, a visit for tea in a member's beautiful garden and a trip to a garden centre and to a local restaurant for their Christmas lunch. Each New Year is celebrated with a lucky dip meeting in which everyone gives and receives a gift costing no more than £1.50. An amazing variety of gifts are produced. (A small branch maybe but it sounds a very busy, happy one! Ed)

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

The Bury group enjoyed another fantastic day organised by the "Lancashire Welcome Days Out" on a pleasant (dry) October day with a good lunch at the Old Stables at

Townley Halland some early Christmas shopping at Barden Mill. After lunch they had an interesting 25 mile drive with a local guide and the day finished with a visit to Whalley Abbey. Despite cold weather in January 25 members got to Park Farm for an excellent lunch and enjoyed the chance to chat together. They were pleased to welcome three new members at this meeting.

Sale group began the autumn with a session of holiday reminiscences. Over tea and biscuits they all had a good chat. In October they held a Bring and Buy to boost funds, the stalls were excellent and they had an enjoyable afternoon. Mrs Hale of WRVS spoke at their November meeting, and with slides gave an excellent talk on New Zealand. It was so good they have booked her again for next year. To celebrate Christmas 20 members had lunch at the Cresta Hotel in Altrincham, where they had a private room, hats, crackers and a lovely meal in good company. Mrs Matthews and Joan Allmark were their guests and everyone enjoyed the occasion. Rosemary Cooper who sent in their report wishes everyone a very happy New Year.

Despite its small membership, Romiley group enjoys its monthly meetings. In September they discussed holidays, both the good and the bad side, and members described places of interest they had visited, making a successful "holiday afternoon". In October a member's niece told them about Lyme Hall, a most enlightening talk. In November they had great fun with a Quiz, (a very hard one) devised by their leader Betty, and won by Dorothy. Instead of the usual Christmas party they hired a mini-coach and on a beautiful day, had a lovely lunch at the Country Café, Pott Shrigley Unfortunately this good weather did not last and their January meeting and AGM had to be cancelled due to snow .

Staffs.Shropshire, Derbyshire - Appointment Pending

(No report of any activity in this Division. If any member there knows of any perhaps they would let us know. Ed.)

SOUTH EAST DIVISION - Headquarters 99 White Lion St. NI 9GF

Cambs and Northants - Div. Rep. Mrs Titcomb

Mrs Charnley reports that the Cambridge timetable continues with monthly coffee mornings, interspersed with the occasional coach trip. Last year saw visits to a garden centre and the Flower Festival held at the fantastic church of Walpole St Peter where the altar is built over a sheep drove and so is separated from the altar rail by nine steps. A priest explained the manoeuvres involved in transferring the Eucharist from the altar to the congregation! The end of year lunch at the Riverside Restaurant again proved very popular, with good parking and a lift, and excellent food and service.

At the regular luncheons given by the Northants Group at beautiful Rushden Hall in times past. Barbara Evelyn, was a stalwart worker behind the scenes.

Also, she worked in many areas of voluntary work and we are sad to report that she has died after years of ill health. They extend their sympathy to her family.

Mrs Adams reports with sadness the death of Mrs Olga White who worked in Bedford before coming to live with her daughter in Peterborough. An Association member since 1994 she was always interested in the functions there. Mrs Callaway represented the Association at the funeral.

Also we are sad to report the death of Mrs Marjorie Avens who celebrated her 100th birthday a short while ago. Mrs Avens suffered a stroke just before Christmas and did not really recover. She will be missed by her friends.

In the autumn, they had a talk on "Safety in the Home" when arrangements were made for members without smoke alarms to have them fitted free of charge by the Fire Service. (Is this a good idea for other groups ? Ed.). In November they attended the presentation ceremony when two members received Long Service bars and one a Long Service medal, while a fourth member received a Certificate. Seven members met in December to enjoy a Christmas lunch. In January, Age Concern advised them on several ways to keep warm, and on security when out of doors, and they were given long life electric light bulbs to help them use less electricity.

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

In Bedfordshire the talk "Christmas is coming", was a demonstration by Gussie Deamer, one of their own members, on Christmas. and even a suggestion of an alternative to a Christmas tree,. Gussie's husband John laid on some Christmas music and members supplied mince-pies. All members were then ready for the Christmas Buffet Lunch. Sixty members attended and it has become a regular and popular feature of the yearly programme.

Mrs Callaway writes that she is sorry to report no news from Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

Norfolk and Suffolk - Div. Rep. Mrs S Scholey

No report received

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

For many years Southend have collected groceries for Lulworth Court a home for the disabled. As this has now closed it was decided to have a Bring and Buy in aid of the Queen Elizabeth Foundation in September, and despite the low turnout a cheque for £40.00 was sent to the charity.

In October a very interesting speaker told members about his complete change of career. He trained as a maker of theatrical clothes for London theatres having learnt to make hats both modern and historical at the School of Technology in Southend. he then went on to

work for a Couturier in London and had many amusing tales to relate. Finally he gave up his well paid job and went to work with physically handicapped children in one of the London Boroughs. He is now in charge of a section and feels that this really is his calling.

Hertford branch had an interesting speaker at their January meeting. Mr.Croake spoke on his life in the theatre, including the Palladium, first as a call boy and then as Stage Manager at the Finsbury Park Empire. He had met many famous names including The Crazy Gang, Glen Miller, Joe Loss and Gracie Fields. He then went to the TV Studios in Elstree where he was in charge of sets for television for about 25 years. It was a fascinating talk enjoyed by all and the meeting ended with mulled wine and mince pies. Tributes have been pouring in for Mrs. Betty Sewell MBE a former County organiser for Hertfordshire, who celebrated her 90th birthday earlier in the year. A special party was held at Haileybury College in her honour in September arranged by the people of the village where she lives. This incredible lady continues her voluntary work including teaching music to the children of Great Amwell School. Mrs.Gwen Rowley, County Rep. for Hertfordshire took part in the tributes. Hertfordshire report the death of two members, Mrs.Jean Isham and Mrs. Diane Evans. Mrs Evans joined WRVS in the 1960's and worked in St Albans office for 20 years becoming joint District Organiser in 1974 a post she held until her retirement. Both these members will be sadly missed.

Berks - Appointment Pending - County Rep. Mrs Morag Gordon

No report has been received

Surrey, E.& W. Kent, E.& W. Sussex - Div. Rep. Mrs J. Rosling

Mrs Manton telephoned us, but too late for the last issue, to tell us in May of the sad death of Mrs Berkely-Barton who was County Organiser for Chichester from 1946 to 1976.

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

No report received

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

In October we had a very good London AGM and Re-Union. Thirty five members from London Area attended despite rail strikes and general transport difficulties. Ten members from London N.E. including three men struggled to get there. We had a "bring and buy" sale and excellent food and were pleased that Dame Barbara Shenfield was able to attend and we also welcome Solly Gross, husband of Doris who was former editor of the Newsletter. Solly has become a member of the Association.

Mrs Taylor recently met a lady whose mother frequently recalled seeing Queen Mary (of the stately bearing and distinctive toque hat) during her visits to the WVS HQ in Tothill St.

Mrs Taylor writes; "anyone who knew Rebecca Campbell, a long serving City of London member will be sad to learn that she died in St Joseph's hospice Hackney in late December. This quietly spoken and gentle Scotswoman served during the war as a Royal Navy nurse. She had worked in the Tea Bar and the information desk at St Bartholomew's hospital for many years and was a loyal supporter of the Association attending the Re-Union each year. After undergoing an operation for breast cancer she revisited Barts in order to counsel younger patients showing them her prosthesis to enable them to cope. Despite her illness she was cheerful and good company and it was appropriate that she should end her days in the Hospice towards which her hard work at Barts had contributed. When in her mid-eighties she and I attended "over 50" exercises at the YMCA and the City of London "Computer for the Terrified" class where we grasped some of the mysteries of the computer and received our Certificates from the Lord Mayor. She was a good pal!"

London SE - Div. Rep Mrs D Stevens

No report received

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

No report received

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

Mrs Adams reports a very successful annual meeting and lunch with 67 members at the Half Moon, Petersfield with plenty of free parking and delicious food. In October they again held their reunion in the lovely village of Hawford in that beautiful part of Hampshire. Unfortunately the weather was damp, so their hopes for a short woodland walk were spoilt. They have found that a midday meeting with a 'Bring your Own' lunch with raffle and a talk is very successful and means they can all get home before the traffic gets busy. This time their speaker was Mrs Bowen, who after her retirement went to China to teach English to Medical Students. She has formed strong links with some of these students and they come to stay with her in England.

Mrs Adams reports the sad death of their oldest member, 100 years old, who had knitted twenty, five foot scarves for the recent appeal. She will be sadly missed by her friends.

SOUTH WEST DIVISION - Headquarters Exeter

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

After much searching, the Cheltenham group have found a new venue for their Luncheon, at the New Hall, Christ Church Cheltenham and it was held this autumn in November. The speaker was once again Mrs Iris Lewis who spoke about their Golden Wedding. She and her husband decided to do something memorable as a commemoration. They decided to build a school in Zambia in Africa. They approached the Chief of the district and he gave his permission. They had a donation from the Rotary Club and were able to collect £2000 themselves towards the project. All arrangements were made, the school was built and when it was in use the Lewis's returned to Africa with their family. The Chief said he would be pleased to welcome them to his Palace - a mud hut. The school is now complete, with a water supply and two lecturers and the children can all speak English, can read and write and eventually they hope to have a village farm. Mr and Mrs Lewis get regular details of the school's progress. (What a memorable Golden Wedding gift.Ed.)

They are all sad to report the death of Mrs Shakespeare of Stow-on-the-Wold, who will be sadly missed by her friends.

We were sad to receive a letter from Mrs Perkins telling us of the death in September of Major T.H. Perkins, who was well known to many members. After a distinguished army career Major Perkins joined WRVS in Old Park Lane, London in 1976 as Chief Administrative Officer, first under Baroness Pike until her retirement in 1981 and then under Dame Barbara Shenfield until 1988 when he retired from WRVS. He was awarded the OBE in 1989, after 12 years service. All members who knew him will want to send their sincere condolences to Nancy Perkins, his widow, who is, as was her husband, an Association member in Gloucestershire.

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

Mrs Ellis-Martin reports that regular coffee mornings are held on the first Friday of each month for all WRVS members at her home at Glenkeller, Launceston Cornwall. All are welcome. On Friday 31st May 2002 she will be holding a Garden Party to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. Everybody is most welcome. Contact Mrs Ellis-Martin for details

If members are at the Royal Cornwall Show in June, Mrs Ellis-Martin asks them to drop into the WRVS Mother and Baby Tent where they will receive a warm welcome and a cup of tea. She asks that members will make themselves known to her. Please let her know of any coffee mornings that members are holding. She can be contacted on

This is a most welcome report as we have not heard from this Devonshire Division since Mrs Parrish reported in Spring 1996. They have been cut off from us for so long. We hope they make contact and enjoy their functions.

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

Mrs Wortley of the Erdington/Sutton Coldfield Branch writes to report the death of Mrs Doreen Hunston of Sutton Coldfield, who will be missed by her friends. This well-loved member died in September after a short illness. As well as supporting her parish church where she ran luncheon clubs, she drove for Meals on Wheels and with her lovely personality was a very special person. Mrs Longdon, who lived in Litchfield Road, Sutton Coldfield, has moved to Flat 5 Chestnut Place, Thurnham Lane, Bearsted, Kent and it would be good if any Kent member who lives near could look her up in her new home.

Mrs Wortley sends a report which includes the previous six months' activities. She says they had their usual outings and a well-attended lunch in January at Westfield Court Hotel. In April they visited the Denby pottery and had demonstrations showing them the various stages of production. Then they all made clay frogs, (some more successfully than others!) and had an excellent lunch and found the gift shops and garden centre well worth a visit. In September they went by coach to Bewdley, transferred to the Severn Valley Railway and had an hour-long journey to Bridgenorth, which took them through some of the beautiful country of the Worcester/Shropshire borders.

Wilts - County Rep. Mrs M Darby

An apology from the editor as some of this report should have gone in the last autumn issue. Jaquie Roe reports that the new group at Swindon, established in autumn 2000, over a year ago, is flourishing with great enthusiasm and they have had two very successful Christmas lunches. Also they have enjoyed coffee mornings which were well attended. A strawberry tea in June had to be abandoned due to the foot and mouth restrictions. They say "we hope to continue our success this year" (and we hope so too as it is always such good news when a new branch is formed. Well done to all who have made this so successful! Ed). Other events in Wiltshire have included an afternoon tea, hosted by Denise Smyter, in July, when they had to retreat indoors as the weather was not kind. They all enjoyed the Coffee and Mince Pies with Sheila Warren in November. Mrs Darby writes that all their events have been much appreciated.

Dorset - Appointment Pending

WALES Headquarters Cardiff

WALES - Headquarters Cardiff

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

The North Wales group in Llandudno have sadly decided to relinquish their

membership of the Association. They continue to meet monthly and give generous donations to local charities. We wish them well.

Mrs Gibbons hopes to have a report from Colwyn for the next Newsletter and also that Mrs Eirwen Edward's group in Rhyl will send a report.

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

Mrs Gibbons asks that any member wishing to join a group might contact her

A get-together of the South Wales members was held in June at the King George Memorial Hall in Port Talbot with local members providing a much appreciated "high tea". Guests on this occasion were Mrs Alice Cleland, WRVS Vice-Chairman, Mrs Marion Jones, VCC for South Wales, and Mrs Liz Cole, Volunteering Manager for South Wales and South Midlands. Mrs Cleland spoke about the changes in WRVS and answered some very direct questions which smoothed some ruffled feathers. Liz Cole gave a brief outline of her work and offered her assistance at any time. The speaker at the meeting was John Williams, one of the Queen's bodyguards, Yeoman of the Guard. He spoke of the history and duties of the Yeomen and showed photographs and figurines to illustrate the talk. No drooping eyelids and much laughter! Numbers attending were disappointing but this is a difficult area. Some members had to travel 60 miles each way and older members do not want to travel so far. To help the numbers the audience was a mixture of Association and WRVS non-members, and they hope that the membership might increase in future. The afternoon was a great success and members are keen to have a repeat this year. (We hope that Mrs Gibbons' problems in this area can be overcome. It seems she is making great headway in a very difficult and scattered area and we wish her every success. Ed.)

The Dyfed group meet only twice a year but the area is rural and the roads bad. They met in Pembroke in the summer and hope the Christmas lunch of last year can be repeated. However, their report ends early in the year before this has been held so we hope it was a success.

Carmarthen members had a Spring Lunch this year rather than a Christmas one. Abergavenny continues to have the "Ladies who Lunch" on a regular basis. As some members continue to work on projects they are kept up to date with what is happening in the Service. The Newport members are getting older (aren't we all) and as most have given up driving they find it difficult to meet. However, they intend to do something special for the Queen's Jubilee

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Guernsey - Assoc. Rep. Miss E. Robilliard

No report received

Jersey - Assoc. Rep. Mrs D. Jennings

Mrs Jennings writes that members joined WRVS for their Christmas lunch at the Windmill Inn, a delightful place built round an old mill, complete with sails.

Mrs Jennings encloses a copy of the report sent to the Evening Post for their 'Clubs and Associations' feature. They are awaiting publication. It outlines the history of WRVS Association on the island and how it was started by Mrs Ruth Morton-Fisher in 1967 with six members. Last year, to celebrate the Association in Jersey they invited the National Chairman, Mrs Diane Price to join them. Mrs Price flew to Jersey where she was given home hospitality and shown the points of interest on the island as it was her first visit. She was shown, the WRVS Headquarters, the Fisherman's Chapel, the Central Market, the Tapestry gallery (a wonderful piece of work which I remember well. Ed), the Orchid Foundation and also the Nutcracker Ballet at the Opera House. Mrs Price also attended their celebratory lunch at the Pomme D'Or Carvery with their newly appointed Bailiwick Organiser Mrs Brenda O'Brien and later visited two housebound members. She gave them an update on the Association and was presented with two pottery coasters depicting the Jersey Ormer. This visit did much, Mrs Jennings says, to make their members feel a part of the Association

SCOTLAND - Chairman, Mrs Audrey Wilkinson

Mrs Wilkinson reports for the autumn issue.

Note from the editor.

Could the editor make a request to all groups that it is best if reports come to her just before August 31st for the autumn issue and January 31st for the spring issue.

THE WRVS BENEVOLENT TRUST

Mrs Boot, Chairman of the Trust, sends a short report on the work of the Trust over the past six months. They agreed over 25 grants to WRVS members which have included funding a much needed holiday, help with overdue repairs to a house, buying a wheel chair and giving help after a mugging. Such help is only made possible by the donations and legacies they receive and Mrs Boot sends thanks to all who have contributed over the past six months by donations and legacies. Last year the Trust actually spent out more than its income, and this shows that their campaign to make members more aware of the work of the Trust is being very successful.. Mrs Boot does hope that any WRVS member in need of help will contact the Honorary Secretary, Mrs J Firminger OBE at



Letter from the Editor

Dear Member,

Once more, the crocuses and snowdrops out in the garden are telling me it is time to make up the spring edition.

I have had quite a lot of items from members this time, which I welcome, as it gives us more variety. Many thanks to you all. Do check that the piece you are sending, has not been printed in an earlier edition. Also, if your contribution is not in this issue do be patient and look in the next one, as some have had to be held over for another time.

Since the job of posting off the Newsletters was taken over by the York office, we have collected together a happy band of York and E.Yorks members who come each time and thoroughly enjoy the job. You can imagine the chatter as coffee and biscuits are served, the envelopes are stamped, labelled, filled and sealed and tied into a

I hope I will see some of you at the Bath weekend in July. It is a lovely city and I am hoping to see something of it and the South West while I am in that area.

Finally, would you do something for me? Could I appeal to any members who live in one of those Divisions from which, at present we get no report, or who now, since retirement, or since their work was discontinued, meet no other members, to write to me telling me where you worked, and for how many years. Also, if you know of other members in the same position do get them to write too. I am afraid that in spite of all the efforts made in some areas during the WRVS changes, to avoid members losing contact with each other, sadly this has sometimes happened. After years of loyal work this is a great pity, which we would like to put right. We would like to know that any member who feels this way could once more be linked up with us all and feel a part of the Service for which we have all worked so hard.

So please do write. For those hundreds of others who do belong to happy, companionable Association groups, I hope we all have a happy summer and enjoy our outings and our meetings.

With best wishes,

Ness Venables

This is a reproduction of the Association A4 size poster (it is in colour) which any member of the WRVS or the Association can obtain from the York Office. Just send a stamped addressed A4 envelope. Put the poster up in any vantage point where WRVS members will see it.

DON'T LOSE TOUCH



**When one door
closes
another
opens**



COME AND JOIN US AT

THE WRVS ASSOCIATION

contact your local representative at:-

WRVS Association, 82 Bootham, York, YO30 7DF
Telephone 01904 634500

www.wrvs.org.uk

WOMEN'S ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE IS A REGISTERED CHARITY



**WOMEN'S ROYAL
VOLUNTARY SERVICE**

We were all shaken by the tragedy in America on Sept 11th 2001 and our thoughts go out to all those families, from all parts of the world whose lives were shattered on that day (Ed)

What a Difference a Day Makes: Thoughts from America.

On Monday we thought we were secure

On Tuesday we knew better

On Monday we can't remember where we were at 8.45 am

On Tuesday we will never forget where we were at 8.45am

On Monday our heroes were our athletes

On Tuesday we relearned who our heroes were.

On Monday we worried about money

On Tuesday we gave money away to people we had never met.

On Monday we argued with our children about tidying their rooms.

On Tuesday we could not get home fast enough to hug them.

On Monday we were annoyed to be kept waiting 6 minutes

On Tuesday we didn't care about waiting 6 hours to give blood for the dying.

On Monday we were men or women, all very different

On Tuesday we were one

On Monday there were families

On Tuesday there were orphans

On the 10th people went to work as usual

On the 11th they died.

Joan Sadler, York

READERS' LETTERS

Dear Editor,

Re-reading your Newsletter No 54 today, the item "A Dunkirk Memory" struck a chord exactly echoing my brother's account of his return to England on the last ship, "The Countess of Chichester". Aged 21 he marched his men through Dunkirk. He told me he gave them a tot of rum so they would hold their heads high as they waited a long time on the beach for the little boats to take them to the big ships further out. "When we got back to England", he said, "we thought we would be abused as a defeated army. We felt very low, but, the WVS were waiting for us with tea and treated us like heroes"

I remember we all cried when the telegram, posted by WVS, came to say he was safe and even the postman who brought the telegram burst into tears of sympathy. Such emotion. I sometimes quoted his remarks when I gave talks about WRVS to explain that we did more than just Meals on Wheels, and Clothing, etc.

Mrs Marguerite Crill. Cheshire.

How WRVS training is valuable

My husband fell down the steps the other day. He cut his head, broke his wrist, cracked his ribs and hurt his shoulder. I kept a cool head, mopped up the blood and took him to hospital in the car. Doing this at 86 I feel that it was working on WRVS projects for so many years was what gave me the confidence...

Mrs Payze Collins MBE Leigh on Sea.

A Lucky Dog.

Giving out Meals we called at one house where the man opening the door was surprised to see us. "Oh, I am sorry. I forgot to tell you, I won't be needing the meals any more as the dog died yesterday". I couldn't decide whether we should condemn him for using a meal for the dog which another pensioner would have welcomed, or if he should be commended for caring enough for his doggie companion that he would pay for a meal for him each day.

Mrs Brotherton. Cardiff asks "What do you think ?".

The Undercoat

Let us put on record the work of the back room boys and girls - they have been described as "the undercoat". Any painter will tell you that the final gloss is very impressive when there has been a good undercoat.

Miss Cramp. Nottingham

Out of the mouths.....

Teaching our young son to count I asked him how many fingers he had. He held up his fingers and replied "All of them"

Mrs Falconer. Newcastle upon Tyne.

How you know when you are getting old

Everything hurts. What doesn't hurt doesn't work.
The gleam in your eye is the sun shining on your bifocals.
You feel like the "morning after", but you haven't been anywhere.
Your children begin to look middle aged.
A dripping tap causes an uncontrollable urge.
You have all the answers but no one asks you the question.
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 sit in a rocking chair and you can't make it go.
Your back goes out more than you do.
You put your bra on back to front and it fits better.
Your house is too big and your medicine cupboard is not big enough.
Your birthday cake collapses from the weight of the candles.

Mrs Pitts. Huddersfield

However...

You don't stop doing things because you are old
You grow old because you stop doing things.

Eve Dawson Tyne and Wear

A voice from the past

Mrs Flinn of Moreton in Marsh, ex D/O for Yeovil, sends a long letter she has received from a Vietnamese refugee who came to this country, to Yeovil, as a child, over 20 years ago and who grew up, went to University and is now in the British Police. A photograph, which unfortunately will not reproduce, shows the refugee children celebrating Chinese New Year in Yeovil. The letter recalls Mrs Flinn's kindness in helping them celebrate the New Year with gifts and food and mentions how each child has fared in life in this country. It is a warm letter showing how this group of refugees succeeded and the WVS's role towards their happiness in this country.

Vital Statistics

The 50-50-90 rule: Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right there is a 90% probability that you will get it wrong.
Latest survey shows that 3 out of 4 people make up 75% of the world's population and that 50% of people are below average height.

Drink and driving

A few years ago my husband and I were staying in the Dales and decided to explore a small dale. We stopped to admire the view. Then, alas, the car refused to start again.

My husband set off to walk further on to look for a house with a telephone. While he was away there was a thunderstorm and I felt concerned as he had gone for a long time.

Eventually he returned, quite dry, having found a farm and rung the RAC.

As by then we were hungry we decided to share a pie bought earlier and a can of Heineken lager. Getting rather impatient we tried the car again and it started. This just shows that Heineken reaches the parts that other beers cannot!

Mrs Joan Altass. Selby

and more about cars...

It is said that if you line up all the cars in the world end to end, someone will be stupid enough to try and overtake them.

and more about husbands and wives... *(largely politically incorrect)*

"Man is but dust and he needs a woman to settle him."

"A little incompatibility in marriage is the spice of life provided that the man has the income and the wife is patable".

"Before he is married, a man says that he will be master in his own house – or know the reason why. After he is married he knows the reason why!"

"First you sink into his arms: then you have your arms in his sink"

The Association is seeking a Deputy Editor

Note from the Editor

You will all know that in the WRVS we always make sure that the work continues easily if someone drops out. This means that we always make sure we have a Deputy for every job. At present we have no Deputy Editor for this Newsletter and we are looking for someone willing to learn how the job is done at present. A knowledge of computers is a great help but not essential. If you know of any member who would like to be considered for the job do let the York Office know. It's a lovely job and of course, unpaid!

In the meantime.....

Those of you who contribute to the Newsletter and have access to computers and use email will help enormously if you can send your contribution by email.

If you do not use a computer it is a great help if you can type your piece which can then be scanned and put in directly. But for those, like most of us, still in the "steam age", pen and pencil is still very much welcomed

A collection of coincidences?

- Lincoln was elected to congress in 1846, Kennedy was elected to Congress in 1946.
- Lincoln was elected President in 1809, Kennedy was elected President in 1960.
- Both their wives lost children while living in the White House.
- Both Presidents were shot on a Friday.
- Both were shot in the head.
- Both were shot in the presence of their wives.
- The Secretary of each President warned them not to go to the theatre and Dallas respectively.
- Lincoln's secretary was named Kennedy and Kennedy's secretary was named Lincoln.
- Both Presidents were assassinated by Southerners.
- Both were succeeded by Southerners
- Both successors were named Johnson
- Andrew Johnson, who succeeded Lincoln was born in 1808, Lyndon Johnson who succeeded Kennedy was born in 1908.
- John Wilkes Booth who assassinated Lincoln was born in 1839, Lee Harvey Oswald who assassinated Kennedy was born in 1939.
- Both assassins were known by three names
- Booth ran from the theatre and was captured in a warehouse, Oswald ran from a warehouse and was captured in a theatre.
- Both Booth and Oswald were assassinated before trial.

Statistical coincidence or Conspiracy theory?

T Mc Neil London NE

Notices

Bath Reunion and AGM

We do hope that you can come to the Bath Reunion and AGM to be held at the University of Bath on 4th to 6th July. Why not add these dates to your summer holiday? We look forward to seeing you there.

Subscriptions 2002

Just a reminder! If you haven't yet paid this year's subscription it is now due. So please do send it as soon as you can.

Cheques should be made payable to the WRVS Association.
