



NEWSLETTER

No 58 Spring 2003

Letter from the Chairman
82 Bootham York YO30 7DS

Dear Member

By the time you read this, hopefully spring will be with us and we can forget the cold wet winter.

As I'm sure you know 2003 is the 30th Anniversary of the Association, and with this in mind we are holding a special Reunion and short AGM at the Hoole Hall Hotel, Chester from Friday 26th to Sunday 28th September 2003, details are included with this Newsletter. I do hope you will be able to join us for this celebration.

It is with regret that I have to report Ness Venables has had to retire as editor of the Newsletter due to ill health. Ness and her husband Peter have worked very hard during the last eleven years making the Newsletter what it is today, we thank them for all their hard work and dedication, and will miss them.

As the old saying goes "when one door closes another door opens" therefore I am delighted to welcome Paulene Lambert as our new editor, please will you give her your support as you did with Ness, by sending reports and any other contributions you think may be of interest, direct to her in time for publication.

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

My very best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Pat Lopping

From the Editor

Dear Members

Many years ago, when I first learned to drive, I read in the local paper that volunteers were needed to deliver meals on wheels. By the time I got back from my first round I had become the Emergency Services Organiser for Guildford.



During 2001, my ex District Organiser, Pat Hiscock, invited me to attend an Association Lunch. You know the sort of thing 'come along and meet some faces that you will remember'. I left that lunch as the County Representative for Surrey.

Then Joan Rosling, my Divisional Representative, asked if I would like to go to the Association AGM in Bath. I came home as your new Editor. Hopefully this says as much about WRVS as it does about me.

For my inaugural edition, I have to thank those who have already sent good wishes, Christmas cards and generous support. I look forward to your contributions over the coming years and promise to do my best to fill the shoes left by Ness Venables and Peter her very able assistant.

In this edition I have added the addresses of the Divisional Representatives. You may be getting a copy of this magazine but not be in touch with anyone from the Association. If you are, please make contact with someone who lives nearby.

It is an exciting time to be involved, as this year is the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Association. Some of you may be amongst the first to join; perhaps you will have some memories to share with us. I am really looking forward to making lots of new WRVS friends and meeting you at our National get together in Chester in September. I do hope you have it in your diaries already.

Best wishes to you all.

Paulene

Paulene Lambert

NORTH EAST DIVISION

Northumberland, Tyne & Wear

Div.Rep. Mrs S. McCormack BEM

Mrs Doyle writes that the group repeated and increased their efforts for the 'Shoe Box Appeal' this year after another visit from Stephen Whaley, who is in charge of Operation Christmas Child in Newcastle. He showed them pictures of children opening the shoeboxes that had been packed last year. The expressions of delight on the faces of the children was very moving.

In November, Mrs Elsie Joel told them about her adventure on the Tall Ships. Not for her a visit to the Quayside to admire them! She worked her passage across to Norway at 50 yrs old and was high up the mast when a roar from the deck brought her down to safety!

As numbers attending the Annual Carol Service had fallen badly it was decided to try a cup of tea and chat afterwards instead of the usual buffet lunch, but alas it was not a successful idea. Twenty members enjoyed a Christmas lunch, which was held as usual at the New Kent Hotel. This year they were pleased that Mrs McCormack was able to join them.

Mrs Hardy of the Sunderland Group reports that having ended their first session of the year with an outing to Alnwick, they did not meet again until September.

The Rev D Aldridge gave a very interesting talk on Elvis Presley, which was accompanied by taped music (some of which had never been published). Derek was secretary of the Welsh Presley fan club (before his ordination) and had access to a lot of music.

In October, Mrs R Hardy gave a slide show entitled 'A Tour Round Britain'. It was good to be reminded of past holidays.

With Christmas fast approaching they had their usual buffet lunch in November and a Sherry and Mince Pie party in December to end off the years meetings. Both events were well attended and enjoyed by all.

Several members attended the Carol Service in Newcastle with Mrs Pat Hutchinson reading one of the lessons.

Sadly Mrs V Hindhaugh has resigned as Treasurer due to ill health. They are grateful to her for the many years of service she has given, wish her well and look forward to seeing her at the meetings.

Sunderland had a real emergency situation in October when an unexploded bomb was discovered in the Hendon area. Of the 23 people on duty, or on stand-by, 12 were association members. They were on duty from 9.30pm on Sunday to midnight on Tuesday in a school with very little equipment – an emergency in more ways than one. Congratulations to Mrs P Duffy, Mrs D Whitwell and Mrs B Wilson who have received their 15 year Long Service Medals. They are all still working in WRVS Projects.

Mrs Dawson reports that members of the Whitley Bay and North Shields Group met together at the home of Mrs Charles – a very pleasant occasion and the next one is arranged at the home of Mrs Reed in March. The Carol service was well attended and enjoyed with three of the members, Mrs Jackman, Mrs Reed and Mrs Carr in the Colour Party. Mrs Walker read one of the lessons.

In January a party of ten members visited the new Children's Hospice, which is to open shortly and 15 members enjoyed lunch at a new local hotel

The group welcomed two new members, Mrs Perett and Mrs English. Sadly they report the death of Miss Jessie Brown who worked for a number of years in the MOW kitchens. The death is also reported of Mrs Phyllis Hepple who was in charge of the Whitley Bay clothing department for many years. They will miss Mrs Hurst who has unfortunately had to retire due to ill health.

Mrs Sealey from Northumberland reports that members living in and near Ponteland continue to meet monthly for coffee and chat. Many still work in WRVS projects – though in this large county it has been difficult to keep in touch. They are sad to have to report the death of Mr Jim Barclay who was involved with Emergency Services both locally and in the Area Office in Newcastle.

Durham, Cleveland, North & East Yorkshire, Hull

Div Rep. Mrs R. Thompson. OBE

This year's annual luncheon for the Region was hosted by Harrogate who chose the College in Hornsbeam Park as the venue, on the strength of the excellent luncheon in Darlington College last year. We were not disappointed! The meal, and service, was excellent and our 'Bring and Buy' table was well situated beside the registration area. We all thoroughly enjoyed an outstanding talk by Sheila Pantin whose energy left us breathless!

Sheila writes that as usual the Harrogate members enjoyed their summer outing to Harlow Carr Gardens and that they do appreciate their luck in having such a lovely spot in their locality. They continue to meet on the first Friday of each month at St Paul's church for coffee and a chat, but unfortunately the closure of the Royal Hall put paid to their trip to the Brighouse and Rastrick Band concert.

However twenty members enjoyed a super Christmas lunch including some who had been unable to attend for some time. Sheila reports that two new members have joined which is very gratifying.

The monthly luncheons have continued at the Selby bowling club where things have gone fairly smoothly despite changes in the catering staff. Four members went to the Harrogate luncheon for which the Selby Voluntary Car Group provided the transport. Best Wishes are sent to Mrs Whitehead, who only joined the club after moving to Yorkshire in 2002, and who was rushed to hospital in December following a stroke. In true WRVS fashion her new friends visited, sent cards and flowers and have continued to support her since. Mrs Altass says that Ness Venables will be the guest speaker at the lunch being held in January and gives thanks as ever to Mr Kay, Mrs Knowles, Mrs Lock and Mrs Bell.

York welcomed 22 members to the Friends Meeting House in October when Mrs Rosemary Stubbs spoke of her work as a local magistrate. Mrs Millie Wilks took over as Chairman and warmly thanked Marjorie Brown for her dedicated service over the past two years. Twenty members joined the Selby club for their Christmas lunch. Everyone is so pleased to see Ness Venables looking so much better now that she has a pacemaker fitted.

Mrs Stamp reports that Hartlepool meets monthly in the library with good attendances. They have enjoyed Poetry Recitals, slide shows, a quiz and a visit from a local United Reform Minister who acted out a Panto! Their visits include the Keilder Dam and Riverdale Hall.

Grace Evans writes that the Darlington group went for tea at a new Garden Centre in early October and found it full of Christmas goods. They also saw 'Fiddler on the Roof' which was put on by a local Operatic Society and had their Christmas Party at Squires Court. Members each brought a contribution of food and something for the raffle. Grace says that it is now difficult to find places that members can easily reach.

Robina Priestly from the East Yorkshire and Hull group says three of their members have now moved into Residential Care, we hope they have settle into their new homes. Another Christmas lunch was reported, this time at Cottingham where a delicious meal was enjoyed by members, husbands and friends. The 'Nick Name Quiz had seven winners with 23/ 24 answers correct. Are members getting cleverer? After a great deal of thought it has been decided not to hold a full County lunch this year but to continue the very successful arrangement of holding monthly local lunches in Hull / Beverley and Pocklington / Wilberfoss, ending the year with a Christmas lunch in both places. Anyone wishing to attend both venues will be very welcome, but we hope that this means that more members will be able to attend at least one.

Members in Scarborough seem to be very happy with the regular coffee mornings and prefer their odd trips out to be kept local if possible. Consequently, most meetings have been held at members' homes. On one of these occasions we were delighted to have an exhibition of a variety of needlework skills by Hazel Hopkinson. At another such morning Patricia Labistour spoke about smuggling along the local coastline and produced various items of contraband from hidden pockets in her clever costume. Christmas lunch was held in the Palm Court Hotel and members were happy to have Mrs Thompson, Miss Hyatt and Lady Whittaker with them after their difficult journey

Rene Thompson writes to express her sincere thanks to all the group leaders who sent their reports in early so that she in turn could send the news to the editor before she flew off to see her family Australia. She regrets not being able to get to all the Christmas festivities and hopes to be able to make more visits after her return at Easter

South and West Yorkshire
Div. Rep. Mrs June Pitts BEM

At the Calderdale Group's September meeting, we enjoyed getting together again after the holiday break, and we discussed the feedback from the Bath AGM. In November, the speaker was John Podger, an Australian, who has returned to spend two or three years in the UK. His theme was "Making History Come Alive". He is the son of emigrants from the UK, and he described his schooldays in Australia, and in particular his study of, and fascination with, English history and his own ancestry. His visit to the UK many years later brought to life in a most vivid manner the family and political history learnt as a boy. Remembrance Day was again observed by the laying of a wreath by four members at Halifax cenotaph. The last day of 2002 brought a very exciting announcement. Our group secretary, Mrs Gillian Highley was awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours List. This is in recognition of more than 30 years voluntary service. Gillian has worked tirelessly for meals on wheels and luncheon clubs, as well as serving on a number of local community groups. All the members join in hearty congratulations.

From Wakefield Group Mrs Lil Ziegler MBE is sad to record the death of life member Mrs Bower, at the grand age of 95. Following the disbandment, by local Social Services, of WRVS involvement with meals on wheels in Wakefield, the group gave a tea-party for twelve members who had given many years service to that project. The Mayor was unable to attend, but sent good wishes. Sadly, none of those members has so far taken up the invitation to join the Association.

Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire

Div. Rep. Mrs Joan Newman

It has again been my privilege to go round the three counties and meet the members - I just wish that I had more hours in the day so that I could spend more time with each District. On the whole we seem to be maintaining members fairly well, it is hoped that this trend will continue. Best wishes for the New Year to all the members.

The half-year started well with a reunion luncheon at the Gateway Hotel, Nuthall at which all districts in the area were represented. Mrs Ann Tribble our local member of the Vice Chairman Committee (VCC) joined us to present two long service awards of clasps to Mrs Helen Alderman of Newark and Mrs Ann Lee of Ashfield. Congratulations to these ladies. After the lunch Mrs Tribble told us about the duties of a member of the VCC which was of great interest to all present. The luncheon proved to be such a success that it was decided by the majority present that another lunch be held in September 2003 to celebrate the 30th Anniversary, the venue to be the same - most convenient for all concerned.

The last six months has followed its usual pattern with coffee mornings and a day trip for the Leicester members. In November we enjoyed a visit to Nottingham with shopping in the morning, followed by a matinee performance of 'Evita' at the Theatre Royal. Some members were able to attend the Association Re-union Luncheon, which was arranged by Area Representative Mrs Joan Newman in September and held in Nuttall, Nottinghamshire. Our usual pre-Christmas Lunch took place on November 13th and we were pleased to welcome Joan to that event. 55 members were able to attend this popular gathering, several now in their 90's. Membership remains steady.

Mrs Birkhead from Lincolnshire reports that it is difficult to gain new members, as there is no way of contacting serving members to encourage them to join when eligible. Six ladies joined together to enjoy a lunch meeting on the 21st November and hope to hold more in 2003. In N.E. Lincolnshire, a well-attended meet up was held on November 21st at the Royal Humber Hotel in Grimsby where we were served an excellent Christmas luncheon and everyone received a gift to add to the enjoyment. This was the only meet up in this half year.

Nottinghamshire has seven districts. The Secretary of Ashfield reports with regret that she has been unable to arrange any meetings during this half-year due to lack of support. However Mrs Ann Lee, Chairman, attended the Area Luncheon and was presented with her clasp - 27 years service and many congratulations.

In August the Bassetlaw group visited Brodsworth Hall and managed afternoon tea. The house was really impressive, bringing back many memories. After visiting the hall there was time to wander round the extensive gardens. It was disappointing that only a few people attended the Jubilee Lunch in Nottingham. The meal was most enjoyable; it was also an opportunity to meet again, friends from other areas we hadn't seen since last year. For the October meeting a speaker talked about cats, ending the talk with very interesting slides. The meeting came to a close with afternoon tea. The outstanding visit of the year was a tour of Wilkinson's Distribution Centre in Worksop. The visit lasted about two hours. We were greeted with coffee and biscuits and a short history of the firm. The Distribution Centre covered several acres of land - hence being warned to wear comfortable shoes. The staff were most helpful, answering numerous questions. It was a visit to remember. About twelve people met for coffee at the Dukeries Garden Centre, Welbeck. After coffee there was a chance to visit the Gift Shop and Santa's Grotto getting ideas from the gardening department for our gardens for next year.

Broxtowe's monthly meetings are well attended, mostly coffee mornings with raffles to raise funds, although for variety a luncheon meeting is held periodically at a local venue and much enjoyed. The Christmas lunch was held again at the Trent Vale Golf Club and appreciated - thanks being given to the Treasurer who did the arranging. The New Year will start with coffee, sherry and shortbread for refreshments at the January meeting. Committee meetings are held at the home of the Chairman. Coffee is served before the detail of the meeting, then a discussion on news from WRVS HQ and the district Representatives before formulating the next month's programme. Lunch with wine is then served to conclude the session - enjoyed by all present and thanks to the Chairman.

A cruise along the River Trent happened on a perfect day for the Gedling group - sunny but not too hot. This river trip is on 'The Nottingham Crusader' and is given by the St. John Water Wing. We had a 'faith tea' and drinks were made in the galley. It was so much enjoyed that we hope to repeat it next year. Our Coffee & Bring & Buy morning was well attended at the home of one of our members. The stall was well stocked, we had several prizes for the raffle and there was much chatter and laughter, with a very pleasing result of over £90. Having had a Speaker at our October Meeting we are now more informed about Age Concern Carers. We very much enjoyed an early excellent Christmas Lunch. Such an occasion once again brings forth much chatter and laughter. Eight of us enjoyed the Division Gathering at The Gateway for an excellent lunch and the opportunity of meeting with members from other counties.

Mansfield had their AGM on 23rd October at Tuxford Court. Mrs Tribble (VCC) came to present Mary Tyers with her Long Service Medal. Mrs Tribble gave a short talk about changes in WRVS. We decided to have our Christmas lunch in January as previously .

Luncheon meetings of the Newark group were held in September and December - the latter one particularly being well attended and ending with the customary gift distribution. It has been decided to try a new venue for the lunches next year, as the current venue has been rather disappointing. Newark was well represented at the Divisional luncheon - supporting their chairman Mrs Helen Alderman as she received her award for 27 years hard works - congratulations.

As usual, Rushcliffe have had a number of Coffee mornings at their two venues. The October one was particularly eventful, the Landlord of the local pub that we use had walked out the night before leaving the premises empty and us standing on the doorstep at 10.15 am wondering what was happening. We had just made up our minds to decamp to my house when the under-manager arrived, coffee and biscuits were promptly served and the young man saved the day. A number of us supported Joan at our Area lunch at the Gateway Hotel In Nottingham; it's lovely to meet up with old friends from the days when districts had organisers, local offices and County meetings. Ah, the Good Old Days! We learned quite a lot at our November meeting when Anne Tribble, a VCC member for this area told us about the latest happenings at WRVS HQ. Including the closure of more offices, new people at the top (will some of us who are still working ever get to see them?) etc etc. Anne went back with a number of comments from us, the main one being less jargon and more words that are understandable. Christmas lunch at Nottinghamshire County Hall was very good again; this has been our preferred venue for a number of years. Lovely surroundings, the dining room over looking the River Trent and great value for money. Only 29 members were able to attend this year, our numbers are shrinking, new members rarely coming to join us. The new year will start with a talk from a local lady volunteer from the RNLI, which we are all looking forward to, so here's to a fulfilling 2003.

Joyce White won the competition that was in the last edition. Congratulations, a book token from Ness is on it way. For the rest of us the answers were:

1	A Notorious City	Publicity	11	A Happy City	Felicity
2	A Cheeky City	Audacity	12	An Unfit City	Incapacity
3	A Gangsters City	Complicity	13	A Humorous City	Jocosity
4	A Savage City	Ferocity	14	A Slippery City	Lubricity
5	A Lecherous City	Salacity	15	A Cosmopolitan City	Multiplicity
6	A Truthful City	Veracity	16	An Obscure City	Opacity
7	A Small City	Paucity	17	An Artless City	Simplicity
8	A Genuine City	Authenticity	18	A Sticky City	Tenacity
9	A Full City	Capacity	19	A Greedy City	Voracity
10	A Stretchy City	Elasticity	20	An Inflated City	Pneumaticity

The doorbell rang while I was busy dyeing some Curtains, so I asked my young daughter to answer the door even though she was crying because she had been told off for being naughty. Seconds later the insurance man ran into the kitchen saying 'Are you all right? Your daughter was weeping and told me you were dying'. His face was as red as my curtains when he saw what I was doing.



Contributed by Mrs Dawson, Tyne and Wear

I am hereby officially tendering my resignation as an adult. I have decided I would like to accept the responsibilities of an 8 year-old again. I want to sail sticks across a fresh mud puddle. I want to think Smarties are better than money because you can eat them. I want to return to a time when life was simple; When all you knew were colours, times tables, and nursery rhymes, but that didn't bother you, because you didn't know what you didn't know and you didn't care. All you knew was to be happy because you were blissfully unaware of all the things that should make you worried or upset. And if you want to discuss this further, you'll have to catch me first, cause..... "Tag! You're it!"

WRVS Benevolent Trust

The Trust is in place to help members who are in need of financial help.

In the past, they have helped with such things as personal alarm systems, funeral costs, house repairs and convalescent holidays. In each case, they are needs that could otherwise not be afforded.

Members may apply directly or be recommended by WRVS Association Representatives, project leaders or Divisional representatives.

If you, or someone you know, are in financial need, please contact us. Your Trust is here to help you. Every application is treated in the strictest confidence.

Please write to The Honorary Secretary,
WRVS Benevolent Trust, Post Office Box 148, Wallasey, Wirrel, CH45 8YR

NORTH WEST DIVISION

Cumbria and Lancashire - No report
Div. Rep Mrs M. McCambridge

Merseyside and Cheshire - Div. Rep. Vacant

Merseyside County Rep
Mrs D. Whittingham,

We are quite a thriving organization and our news starts with a visit by HRH The Princess Royal. *(We were sent a photograph but sadly it was not suitable for reproduction in black and white).* It showed one of our long-standing members, Margaret Stevens, presenting a bouquet to Princess Anne when she visited Wallasey in September to unveil a plaque for the new facilities at the Mariners Park. Margaret was chosen as she was the longest serving resident of the facility for retired seamen and their families

We meet for lunch on the first Tuesday of every month and have at least three outings during the year with our friends from Bebington. We had our Christmas lunch in January at a restaurant in Thurston, when we held a raffle and sales table for unwanted gifts. As a result of this activity we are able to donate £100 each year to St Johns Hospice in Wirral.

We have visited a Nursery and Craft Centre in Frodsham, followed with a Hot Pot Supper – much enjoyed by all. Just before Christmas we had dinner at the Stapeley Water Gardens in Nantwich. This was a very popular choice as we were situated in the Palm House, so were not affected by the weather.

We always send birthday cards to our members, and in buying these cards we also help a charity called CLAP. We in turn collect all our old cards and pass them on to the charity for them to use good pictures attached to a suitably worded leaflet. These are very effective and always much admired by the recipients

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

In October the Bury group had another superb “Lancashire Day Out”. We stopped for coffee at Bashall Barn in the Ribble Valley and heard about Bashall Town (9 residents) and the Bames family, together with a short talk and demonstration of candle making.

After lunch at the Moorcock Inn, we enjoyed a guided tour of beautiful Bowland seeing villages and hamlets where almost every building has a story to tell. A final stop in Clitheroe for afternoon tea and a browse round the shops completed the tour. The meeting in January was held at the Red Hall Restaurant, Bury, a new venue, which proved to be very popular, and everyone enjoyed an excellent meal. We are delighted to welcome to our group two new members, Mrs Fitton and Mrs Prime.

Romiley members entertained themselves in September chatting over tea and biscuits and discussing their holidays. Some very good, some not so good, but pleased to report nothing disastrous happened! Unfortunately the speaker in October had to cancel at the last minute and our oldest member Miss Minnie Smith, who is 96 years young, was prevailed upon to give a talk on her long working life. It was fascinating and interesting but sad in parts. She was for many years in charge of an Approved School for Girls - you can just imagine the stories she had to tell. In November Miss Walton gave us a clear insight into banking, which was very good. For our December meeting we enjoyed an excellent Christmas lunch at the Country Cafe in -Bollington.

Sale members also report that their season began with holiday reminiscences and a quiz - it was all good fun and a very pleasant afternoon was enjoyed. In October Mrs Gallimore spoke to us about organising the Sale Festival, an annual event she has been involved with for more than forty years. This was very interesting and on another occasion she has promised to come and tell us about receiving her medal from the Queen. Mrs Ledger from Hale WRVS came in November to speak, with slides, of her holiday in Iceland. Her photographs were marvellous and her story made us feel as though we were there. Our Christmas lunch was held at the Cresta Court Hotel, Altrincham, where we had an excellent lunch and enjoyed the company of Jean Matthews, Greater Manchester Divisional Representative, and other friends who were able to join us. Best wishes to everyone for 2003.

Staffordshire, Shropshire, Derbyshire - Div Rep Vacant

Derbyshire County Rep

Doreen Martin,

Derbyshire members met at Dronfield for a Christmas Luncheon, which was much enjoyed by all. Several new members were recruited, and we are hopeful that more will join soon.

South Staffordshire County Rep - No report

Mrs D.Tweedie,

In answer to a request to speak about the importance of the WRVS Association, Jill Walden-Jones gave a most entertaining talk based on her story.

The Association Rides To The Rescue

I moved to Farnham in Surrey last April, after 27 years of happily living in Wales, where we had moved on my late husband's retirement in 1975. Now on my own I wanted to be nearer to two of my sons, and to old friends and relations in the Home Counties where I had been brought up. I knew no one in Farnham but was determined to join things and get to know people. I sent out masses of "change of address" letters including one to the Association in York so that I would get the Newsletter at my new address. As a result they obviously told the Association members here as I received a letter of welcome, before I moved, from Joan Rosling the Area Rep, who I knew of old, and that made me feel a bit less apprehensive. When I arrived, I was still unpacking, when Puck Duvall, an Association member who lives five minutes from me, rode up to my doorstep on her buggy and introduced herself and invited me to coffee to meet some other Association members and friends. From that day I have never looked back. Through Puck I have met such kind and friendly people, both WRVS and others, and have joined things through them and now feel well settled here. I have enjoyed going to the Surrey Association lunch and another informal get-together through Joan Rosling, met old friends and made new ones. I can truly say that the Association has made all the difference to me in the last eight months and I would like to say thank you in particular to Puck, Betty Ashford, Vi Ommanney and Joan Rosling for the welcome they have given me. The moral of this is clear. If you move to a new part of the country, make sure you tell the WRVS Association and they will do their best to help you settle in.

Joan Sadler sent the following joke, but it might just be a suggestion!

A man in Sydney phoned his son in Brisbane the day before Christmas Eve and said 'I hate to ruin your day but I have to tell you that your mother and I are divorcing. Forty-five years of misery is enough'. 'Dad, what are you talking about?', the son screams. 'We cannot stand the sight of one another anymore' the father says, 'so you had better call your sister in Melbourne and tell her'. Frantic, the son calls his sister, who explodes on the phone 'I'll take care of this! She calls Sydney immediately. 'You are not getting divorced! Do not do a single thing until I get there. I will call my brother back and we will both be there tomorrow'. The man hangs up his phone and turns to his wife. 'It's okay, they are coming for Christmas and paying their own way'.

SOUTH EAST DIVISION

Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire

Div. Rep. Mrs Barbara Titcomb

The Huntingdon members have not been meeting for luncheons since last August but Mrs Ackerley, telephone _____ will be pleased to re-start them on the third Tuesday in the month if members wishing to be included will contact her. Mrs Enid Watson who ran the group so splendidly for very many years has been in hospital on two occasions and we all hope she will have better health this year.

The active members of the Peterborough group number just nine, but our two monthly meetings are much enjoyed and from different speakers we have heard about our city's CCTV system, also Pensions information for this year from April and a special focus from April 2005. (Obviously an update required later). In November we enjoyed a Christmas tea and in November we went to Peterborough Regional College for a Christmas meal.

Following the changes instituted by WRVS, two of our members finished their weekly duty at the Magistrates' Court in December and on 20th were entertained to a buffet lunch by the Magistrates, Solicitors and Office staff when we received their thanks, a beautiful bouquet of flowers each and an envelope containing a Marks and Spencer gift token for £10. It was a sad day though as this service had been running for nearly twenty-five years. Those who attend the court now have only three drinks machines to use provided they have the correct change. Three of us have transferred to Senior Stop where a fourth Association member has helped for several years and as we are all between the ages of 77 - 80 we are not covered by WRVS for personal insurance.

I have no contact with anyone in Northamptonshire but if any Association member living there would care to telephone me - Barbara Titcomb _____ I should be delighted to collect their news and include it with Cambridgeshire reports for publication in our Association Newsletters.

Evelyn Charnley of the Cambridge Group reports the concerns of our group, many of whom are now confined to their homes and unable to come to meetings. They have read in "Action" that the future of WRVS lies in looking after the elderly: helping them home from hospital, regular visits for the isolated and lonely etc. So far, we have been unable to trace any such activity in and around Cambridge. Is our area unique? Perhaps members in other parts of the country will write to the Editor with details of their experiences of the new WRVS.

Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire

Div. Rep. Mrs Joan Callaway

In October Catherine Jacobs, Bedfordshire's last County Organiser, threw her house open for a Coffee Morning, which was very well supported. These occasions are popular with all members, but are especially easy for some of the older ones to attend. In December, 65 attended the Christmas Lunch. Sadly, some members were not well enough to join their old colleagues and the group sent them table decorations and signed cards. They also signed a 100th Birthday card for Ken Clark on Boxing Day. Many Congratulations.

Earlier, there had been a talk by Mrs Taylor, a helper in a WRVS Over-Sixties Club, about her cycling tour in India, sponsored to raise money for lepers and undertaken after her retirement from teaching aged 60. She explained she had become ashamed of her treatment of lepers when she was a child growing up in India - patronising at best and often downright scornful and so she had worked to raise money for their treatment. Twenty pounds will pay for a complete cure and she stunned her audience with a picture of a decrepit looking sufferer followed by that of a handsome young man. This was the same man after treatment. After making us laugh at the stories of her training (which included courageous cycling on the AI) and the various culture shocks she experienced in Indian loos etc., she brought a more emotive note to her talk by saying 'At last I was able to embrace a leper'. There was no charge for the talk but a bowl was handed round and eighty-five pounds was given - enough to cure 4 lepers and start on the next.

With sadness I have to report the death of Mrs Rose Hallasey, aged 104 from the Buckinghamshire group. Margaret McRoberts visited Rose regularly and took me to see her when she reached her 100th birthday. The picture Margaret took that day of Rose holding WRVS Action appeared in that paper with our query 'Is this your oldest reader?' At 100 Rose decided to give up her committee work but she continued to live independently and take a lively interest in all around her up to her final illness.

I hope to have news of some meetings in Oxfordshire during the summer of 2003. Best wishes for their New Year efforts.

Finally, at the end of the Golden Jubilee year I should like to say how pleased I was to be asked by the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire to represent the WRVS Association at the County's Service of Thanksgiving for the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Norfolk and Suffolk

Div. Rep. Mrs Mary Taylor

Cromer held a Christmas lunch in December, which was very successful and well attended. They had support from members of Great Yarmouth who joined with them to add to the party.

Great Yarmouth, which is a very active branch, held their first luncheon of 2003 at the Royal Assembly Rooms. It also was very well attended with 57 members enjoying a very good meal. This was one of the first functions that I was able to attend in my new role as Div Rep, and they enjoyed reciprocal support with Members from Cromer joining in.

At a luncheon that the Sudbury branch held they made a collection for East Anglia's Children's Hospices. £30 was raised which was gratefully received. The branch also held an informal get-together in January

Jan Gilderson reports that Norfolk started their year with a Spring Luncheon at Wayford Bridge, Stalham, we then visited Cromer Pier in June for a splendid rendition of 'Hello Dolly'. Amidst sunshine and showers, we held a successful Bring and Buy afternoon tea at Bodham followed by an outing to Langham Glass in September, which provided an excellent opportunity for pre-Christmas shopping. We finished the season with a very pleasant lunch at the Cliftonville Hotel at Cromer, with over 32 members attending.

The programme for 2003 has yet to be finalised, but will include a visit to the theatre for 'Fiddler on the Roof', along with our traditional Spring and Christmas luncheons, but we hope the highlight of the year will be a Birthday Party in September to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the formation of the Association.

Essex and Hertfordshire - Div. Rep Vacant

A last Divisional report from Pat Copping - As some of you know I have moved from my home in Essex to live in North Yorkshire to be nearer the family and, as you can appreciate it was a big wrench having lived there for over 40 years. I have made so many friends in WRVS and would like to thank them for their friendship and support over the years, I will miss you all.

Mrs. Tytherleigh reports they have had some very interesting speakers this year ending with Mr Deutch a refugee giving a superb talk on Vienna. His knowledge on this beautiful city kept members enthralled and asking for more, therefore he has agreed to return in 2003 to talk about his life as a child in Austria.

Southend is a small but active group, meeting once a month in a church hall. The rent has been increased and they are finding it very difficult to raise enough money to pay this, despite having a Bring and Buy each month. Mrs. Tytherleigh is delighted to report a fairy godfather came along (the son of a member) and paid a years rent, thus enabling them to carry on meeting each month. Members would like to thank this gentleman for his generous donation.

Hertfordshire County Rep
Mrs Gwen Rowley,

The Hertford Group combined with WRVS members enjoyed a Christmas lunch in December. Judith Buss was invited and presented Medals to four members. In January we met at the Area Office for mulled wine and mince pies, this was a lovely chatty afternoon when older members were able to hear all that was going on in WRVS and Judith again presented a Medal to a member who helps with Meals on Wheels and is also an Association member.

We have had real blizzard conditions here today with snow covering everything, quite unusual for here.

Surrey, East & West Kent, East & West Sussex

Mrs Joan Rosling,

Our Editor, Paulene Lambert, who is also Surrey County Rep., arranged a lunch at Sutton Green Golf Club in October. We had a good attendance and Paulene really made the occasion special with a raffle and rather nice pens, which we all found beside our places at the table. After lunch Jill Walden-Jones, a past National Vice-Chairman, gave a very interesting and amusing talk on the Association. Jill has recently come to live in the County and is already a much-valued member of the Association both in Farnham and Surrey.

Guildford members enjoyed a delicious Christmas lunch at Guildford College at the end of November. The students provided an excellent three-course lunch and the roast parsnips went down particularly well!

Also in November, Woking members had lunch when they visited Wyevale Garden Centre at New Haw, and many took the opportunity to do some Christmas shopping.

The Staff at Epsom Library contacted Jean Brown the organiser for Books on Wheels in the area and offered to host a coffee morning for the drivers and helpers on the rounds.

Norah Alston of the East Sussex group tells me that Eastbourne members keep in touch every month by meeting in the WRVS building.

On 7th October they had a very enjoyable outing to Devils Dyke with lunch at the Inn at the Top. They met for their Christmas lunch at the Lansdowne Hotel on 3rd December.

I would like to wish Paulene Lambert every success as our Newsletter Editor, particularly for this edition - her first for the Association. Many thanks and all good wishes for a long and happy retirement are sent to Ness and Peter from this part of S.E. Div.

County Rep for West Kent, Kath Dyer, decided to retire and she will be greatly missed. My thanks and gratitude goes to Kath for all she has done. To date no one has come forward to take her place but support will be given to W. Kent and I am sure outings and get-togethers will continue as before.

London N.E. - No report

Div. Rep: Mrs W. Taylor OBE DL

London N.W.

Div. Rep. Mrs Dorothy Stevens

We continue to have our monthly Coffee Mornings but with fewer members owing to age and deaths. We also held our Summer Buffet but were beaten by the weather and enjoyed our Christmas lunch in the New Year.

In October 2002 the four London areas held a very successful joint re-union. Once again we were missing some of our old members from the groups owing to age and travel problems. We were delighted to have our Chairman with us. As London projects seem to be conspicuous by their absence it is almost impossible to get new members and it feels like we are fighting a losing battle.

London S.E.

Div. Rep Mrs G Cleverly

Following the death of Mrs. Gladys Block, who had been the divisional representative for many years, I officially took over in 1999. Due to my husband's ill health and subsequent death in March 2002, I was unable, initially, to give much time to the Association. In spite of this we have kept together and in 2000 I managed to enrol 16 new members and have had another two join since.

In November 2002 we held an early Christmas Luncheon in Eltham. Twenty-nine of the thirty members managed to attend the three-course meal preceded by a seasonal glass of wine. I was delighted to welcome our Vice President, Mrs. Ava Christophersen and also the London North West representative, Mrs. Dorothy Stevens, who arranges our meetings at Napier Hall. Mrs. Nadine Reeve, Emergency Leader, gave a short talk on what the teams have been doing over the year. A very busy one it turned out, as the WRVS were present at both the funeral of the Queen Mother and the celebration of the Queens Jubilee.

On 6 January 2003 the annual paying members met for coffee at my house to pay their subscriptions and those who were unable to attend sent the payment via friends.

We hope in the summer to arrange a visit to the newly refurbished Homiman Museum, though the lunch parties appear to be very popular.

London S.W. - No report

Div. Rep: Mrs A. Christophersen

Hampshire and Isle of Wight

Div Rep Mrs Beryl Adams

Hampshire held an autumn re-union again in Shawford Village Hall. This is a lovely hall with modern facilities and plenty of space for car parking. We all know how to get there but I missed a turning and so had a pleasant mystery tour

It was a lunchtime meeting so we all took our own picnics although hot drinks were provided. After we had enjoyed meeting up with each other and chatting to old friends, we had a most enjoyable and illuminating talk by Joy Crutcher, one of the guides from the 'Mary Rose' Exhibition in Portsmouth. Dressed in period costume she told us all about the salvage of the flagship of Henry VIII the 'Mary Rose', how it had all happened and about it's care and preservation. She then passed around various artefacts, which we could all hold and marvel at – how privileged we all felt! Although many of us had probably been to the 'Mary Rose' exhibition, we all felt this was special. Nova Mathisen passed away in October 2002 aged 96. She was DO in Gosport and the first Chairman of Hampshire Ass

Berkshire - Div. Rep. Vacant

Berkshire County Rep: - No report

Is it true that bills travel through the mail at twice the speed of cheques?

If you send a photograph for inclusion in the magazine and you want it back, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire

Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Connop

The Everyman Theatre in Cheltenham was the subject of the talk given by Derek Aldridge at the November Luncheon held in the Christ Church Hall, Cheltenham for the Gloucestershire members. In 1891 Lily Langtry performed at the Theatre. The Theatre then had 1350 seats and now has 670 seats. In 1955 it was sold to the Cheltenham Council. 1959 saw the doors closed and it was first planned to use it as a supermarket or a showroom. 40 people formed the "Everyman Theatre" Association and in late 1959 the Theatre re-opened. By the end of 1970 the building was in need of renovation and it was closed for 2 years. By the 1980s there was a mixture of Touring and In House performances. In 2002 new seats and air conditioning were fitted and 2003 will see more alterations for everyone's comfort. Forthcoming attractions include The Russian Ice Skaters, returning for a 5th visit to the Theatre in February and the 2003 the pantomime will be "Aladdin". Over one hundred schools saw the pantomime Dick Whittington this season. Work is provided for 60 people in the Theatre. Workshops are arranged for 4-7 year olds and 11-15 year olds. The Theatre supports literacy and numeracy in schools, as well as U3A. A W.I. Market is held every Thursday morning. The members enjoyed the talk very much. They also had a lovely lunch prepared by the Cheltenham members.

We are sorry to announce the death of the following members. Mrs. Alice Godden who for many years was the Emergency Services Organiser in Cheltenham and Mrs P Oliver who worked in Clothing, Mrs B Day in a Hospital Canteen, Mrs D Berrisford who made lovely Bread Rolls for our Association Luncheons and Mrs N Owen from Cold Pool Lane Luncheon Club. They will all be sadly missed by their friends. Our next Luncheon will be held on the 17th June 2003 in the Tewkesbury Masonic Hall.

Devon and Cornwall - Div Rep Vacant

Somerset and Avon

Div. Rep. Mrs Sheila Scholey

First, may I thank the S. W. members for the many wonderful letters welcoming me to the Somerset and Gloucestershire Area.

I have received an invitation to visit and meet members of the Kingswood Group in Bristol from Mrs. Margaret Dawson. This I shall be delighted to do in early February. I hope to arrange a lunch for the Somerset members in early spring; especially with their help and advice on a suitable venue. Do let me know if you have any ideas for future 'get togethers'. Wishing all who have not been A1 this winter a full return to fitness, as the spring weather greets us.

West Midlands - No report
Div. Rep. Mrs J.M. Smith BEM

Group Organiser: Endington \ Sutton Coldfield Group, West Midlands
Joan Wortley,

As well as our annual luncheon in January, we had several Coffee Mornings in members' homes. In May, we visited Connington Water, Derbyshire. Later, in September we toured the Cotswold's and had a very pleasant day – stopping off at Moreton-on-the-Marsh, then Bourton-on-the-Water for lunch and finally Stow-in-the-Wold. Unfortunately our numbers are decreasing. We lost two more members this year, Mrs Mary King and Mrs Margaret Clarke. As there are no longer WRVS offices in Endington or Sutton Coldfield we are not able to recruit new members, but the dozen of us left are keen to continue and enjoy out meetings

Dorset - Div Rep Vacant

Wiltshire County Rep
Mrs Marjorie Darby,

As our county is spread over a large area we have divided it into two groups. Jackie Roe helps me by looking after the Swindon area, and I have the remaining towns and villages.

We started the year in March with a lunch in Melksham. Twenty-five members attended including some of the "originals" from Swindon who always come along. In August we were lucky with the weather and 22 enjoyed tea in Denise Smyter's garden in Holt. We were so sorry this year to be without Denise's husband and Nancy Pollard who had both sadly passed away.

November was the month for Coffee and Christmas cake and 23 of us enjoyed a chatty morning with Sheila Warren in Trowbridge. We welcomed the usual carload from Swindon but missed Pat Purser who had died earlier in the year. The year 2002 ended on another sad note with the loss of Kathy Low who had been our Association Rep before handing over to me.

Jacque writes that the Swindon Group has had another successful year with a number of new members. We had several coffee mornings and at last found a venue for a Strawberry Tea in July, which was well attended, and much appreciated. Our Annual Lunch in December was also successful and, as before, our cooks were applauded for our excellent three-course lunch at a reasonable price. Swindon has a new Hospital, the Great Western, which opened in December. It has a WRVS shop where some of our Association members are helping and they are also involved with the Escort Service.

Wales - No report

Div. Rep. Mrs Mary Gibbons. OBE

Channel Islands

Jersey

Ass. Rep. Mrs Doreen Jennings

It is always a pleasure to be able to say 'Hello' to new members to the branch, so at a lunch date in November we were able to welcome Mrs Marguerite Crill who had come to Jersey having had a long association with WRVS in Cheshire

This years saw the 93rd birthday of our most senior member – both in age and service to WVS / WRVS – Mrs Peggie Morden MBE. Now living in a residential home, two of our members paid her a visit on her special day

After a rather wet and stormy winter we are looking forward to the Spring and would love to meet up with anyone coming to the Island on a visit, just let us know in advance

Guernsey - No report

Ass. Rep. Mrs Margaret Brockway

Scotland - No report

Chairman Mrs Audrey Wilkinson

War Time Volunteers

We have received a letter from David J. Knowles, telling us about his new book 'With Resolve - With Valour - Volunteers Of World War II', that was launched at the Imperial War Museum during 2002. It is all about volunteers working in World War II, and includes many stories from the W.V.S.

It is written in the same way as his previous book 'Escape From Catastrophe - 1940 Dunkirk', which told stories of the army and others in France and Belgium during 1940, and was started after support for the idea came from WRVS and Red Cross members

The new book is a hard back, has many photographs, and includes special memories of that time from W.V.S, Land Girls, Auxiliaries, A.R.P's., Home guard, roof watchers and many more. There are reports also of volunteers being awarded George Medals for their bravery. The author in each case actually visited people in their homes (where possible) and recorded their own stories. Each one is an atmospheric account, with a start, middle and end. It has been widely reviewed including WRVS 'Action.'

The price is £14.95 - but to all volunteers, such as WRVS etc. the price is £10 + £1.50 p&p – David adds that if you would like the book signed with any of your own special words, he would be very pleased to do this. Also if you have any group orders of more than six books, these will be sent free of charge by our courier. Please contact David at Knowles Publishing, 18 Castle Avenue, Rochester, Kent, ME1 2D

An English professor wrote the words, "Woman without her man is nothing," on the blackboard and directed the students to punctuate it correctly.

The men wrote: "Woman, without her man, is nothing."

The women wrote: "Woman. Without her, man is nothing."

The reason why women over fifty do not have babies is because they would put them down and forget where they left them.



WRVS ASSOCIATION

82 Bootham, York, YO30 7DF
01 904 634 500

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Chairman. WRVS

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NB

All contributions for the next Newsletter should be with me by 31st August 2003. Please post to
or for those of you who are able (or who have children, grandchildren or even great grandchildren who are able), I can be contacted at