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Autumn 2005

No 63

WRVS Association NEWSLETTER

Letter from the Chairman
82 Bootham, York, YO30 7DF

Dear Member

What wonderful weather we have been having in the South West. But how the gardens could do with some rain!

It has been a very busy summer, especially during July; when the celebrations for the veterans of World War II took place in London as well as the unveiling of the memorial to 'Women in World War II'.

Several of our members, who were amongst the original WVS volunteers, together with a family member or friend, represented the WRVS ASSOCIATION at these gatherings. They were very proud, and quite rightly so and well deserved to be present on these occasions

I look forward to meeting many of you in September at the AGM in Scarborough

My best wishes for health and happiness in the coming months

Yours sincerely,

Sheila Scholey

Random jottings from the Editor

Dear Members

In the old days, when we had a district office, I got used to wearing several hats for each of the different roles that I fulfilled and for each of the volunteering jobs that I used to do. After some time the hats were discarded as the need for paid work took over. When my circumstances changed again I was able to return to volunteering and since going back to working in a tea bar, the hats have started arriving again. Most of you will obviously know me as the editor, whilst some will realise that the address shown for the Benevolent Trust is also mine as I have the honour to be one of the Trustees as well as the Honorary Secretary of that Charity.



But I do still also work as a WRVS volunteer at the St Luke's Pantry in our local hospital. Supposedly as a 'reserve' but increasingly sometimes once or twice a week because we are having great difficulty in finding new volunteers to take on the couple of hours once a fortnight that we ask. I am also a 'reserve' at another tea bar in the town, which used to be run by the WRVS but is now in support of our local hospice. The same applies there – so where are the new volunteers?

Much as the WRVS Association is worried that they are not getting new members, the circulation for the newsletter has dropped since I took over, from 3251 to 2793 (which I am assured is nothing to do with me!), we are not getting new people at the bottom end of the chain either.

So whilst we are always asking you to find new members to take along to the meetings of the Association, may I make this plea that you also spread the word amongst your younger family and friends that we need them as much as ever, to become volunteers. Then perhaps, I at least, could have a day off some time!

Best wishes to you all

Paulene

Paulene Lambert

SCOTLAND

Chairman - Hilda Clow

How quickly the year is passing & already members are turning their thoughts to the resumption of meetings after the summer break.

This year our AGM was held in the Banqueting Hall of Hamilton Council Chambers, South Lanarkshire. 82 members were given a very warm welcome by the Provost of Hamilton Mr Mushtak Ahmad who has a profound knowledge of the work of WRVS both past & present & expressed his thanks to the members for "making the world a better place." The Chairman in her address gave a general up-date on the Association over the last year. The membership remains fairly constant, at just over 400 in eleven branches. Some are now meeting just for coffee & a chat rather than having speakers and renting specific accommodation.

Following the Treasurer's Report, the subject of finance was discussed under Any Other Competent Business. In view of rising costs the Treasurer felt the Association must look to the future & although the financial situation is sound at present, things are likely to alter within the next few years. Following a lively debate, the motion to raise the Annual Subscription from £4 to £5, and to ask Life Members to contribute £2 towards postage etc., was carried by a majority.

Mrs Margaret Provan, Chairman of Hamilton Branch introduced the Reverend Arthur Barrie, our first speaker, who gave an amusing account of his early days in the area, as a schoolboy, youth, man & finally incumbent of Cadzow Parish Church. This was followed by an excellent lunch, lots of conversation & catching up with old friends.

The Afternoon Session opened with Mrs Isobel Murray, Secretary of the Hamilton Branch, introducing the Reverend Jim Marshall in his capacity as a member of the Vine Trust. He described the setting & development of the Amazon-Hope Project, the conversion of a ferryboat to carry medicines & bring help & hope to people in the more remote areas of the Amazon. Following a vote of thanks by Mrs Jilly Fraser-Malcolm, the meeting closed with the announcement of the date of the next AGM, which is Thursday, 16th April 2006 in Perth. A final cup of tea was enjoyed while good-byes were said & members went their separate ways.

Currently in Scotland we have 11 active Branches but it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit new members since the WRVS, as we knew it, has changed so much. Many areas no longer have a focal point and therefore people lose contact. However times move on and so must we.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

JERSEY

Ass. Rep. Mrs Doreen Jennings

'Summer suns are glowing over land and sea' so we sang at school years ago and this year the sun has certainly been over our island starting with the sixty year celebration from German occupation on May 9th when the islands were able to welcome H.M. The Queen and Prince Phillip to share their joy. One of our members attended the reception at Government House

This year individual members have hosted tea afternoon and lunches and these have proved very successful

Angela Holdsworth has left Jersey to live in the Lake District and Jean Petre is making a good recovery from a hip operation. Another has a plan to start bee keeping and most of the rest of us are still active in other spheres.

Kathleen Broughton is still running the WRVS car service, now in its 28th year, though volunteers, as in many other services, are becoming more difficult to find.

Now we look forward to autumn and Christmas 'get together' meetings and to enjoying the rest of 2005.

The WRVS Benevolent Trust

The Trust has a pool of money, intended for use by you, the WRVS volunteer

If you find yourself in unexpected financial difficulties, or know of someone in that situation, you can make an application for a grant. We rarely give ongoing payments, but regularly make single one off grants. Recent examples include replacing a washing machine, buying replacement windows, installing a downstairs lavatory and the purchase of a wheelchair.

Applicants can be retired or still volunteering, and are usually on a limited income and of course, all applications are treated in the strictest confidence.

All applications for help should be sent in the first place to the Honorary Secretary at

NORTH EAST DIVISION

NORTHUMBERLAND, TYNE & WEAR
Div.Rep. Mrs S. McCormack BEM

The four groups in this Division continue to meet regularly and I was pleased to attend till it was with regret that we had to cancel the annual gathering at the Old Assembly Rooms in Newcastle due to the decrease in members able to attend. However, all the groups meet regularly in their own areas and enjoy various programmes of activities.

Mrs Sealey reports that Northumberland members hold a monthly coffee morning in Ponteland

Mrs M Doyle reports that although small, the Newcastle club is flourishing. We have had talks on 'The Wooden Dollies of North Shields' (Ancient Figureheads), 'Dogs for the Deaf' and 'George Stephenson'. The dogs for the deaf are amazing, alerting their owners to the phone, the door, alarms etc. In April our visit to the theatre was to see "Jesus Christ Superstar" at the Newcastle Theatre Royal. This was our local opera groups production and was very good indeed- particularly the staging which is complicated. The crucifixion scene was very moving. July saw us on the road in the rain! However our first stop was at a garden centre for a look round and coffee, our next stop was for lunch. I crossed my fingers and was delighted to find that the rain had stopped just in time for our visit to Alnwick Gardens. We had visited the Gardens when they were first opened several years ago and we found that it was incredibly changed. They have added a huge tree house and although the top level was not attempted, the Rope Walk was! We have already booked our Christmas Lunch and are looking forward to more meetings.

Mrs M.E.Dawson writes from North Shields / Whitley Bay. Our last meeting together was at the home of Mrs Helen Jackman in March. A very pleasant morning spent viewing a magnificent Dolls House that Mrs Jackman was furnishing with the most delightful items. Our grateful thanks. Our next meeting will be in September at the home of Mrs Dorothy Reed, followed by the Carol Service in December at St Johns Church with the Willow Club. Sadly one of our members died in May, Mrs Eileen Frew who was a Member of North Shields office for many years and a strong supporter of the Association. She will be greatly missed by all.

Sarah Hardy writes that the Sunderland branch has had another successful session. January began with the AGM, which was very well attended, but the February meeting had to be cancelled because of bad weather. Coffee mornings were held in March and

July the second being in place of an outing so we celebrated by having lovely gateaux with our coffee. Our speakers for the other months included Mrs Metcalf who spoke on homeopathy treatments, especially for older people; Mrs Frances Somers told us of her five holidays in China, with her son and daughter in law; she showed us lots of photographs and postcards, giving vivid descriptions of the places visited and Miss Enid Jones who showed us slides of her holiday in America with very appropriate music to accompany them.

Sadly, since Christmas three of our members have died. Mrs Margaret Todds, Mrs Joan Naisby and Mrs May Hastie, all will be greatly missed. May had for many years been in charge of the 'Sales Table' and made marmalade for sale

In July we manned refreshment and cake stalls at the National Gardens Open Day at the homes of Mr Heron and Mrs Sue Winfield. It was a lovely sunny but windy day and we raised the marvellous amount of £200 for St Benedict's Hospice

DURHAM, CLEVELAND, NORTH YORKSHIRE & HULL
Div Rep. Mrs Rene Thompson. OBE

Mrs Irene Winter of Scarborough says that it is pleasing to report the continued enrolment of new members. Mesdames P Antliff, N Brett, P Claxton, A Coleman, M Porter, B Smith and Mary White being those who have recently joined us. Mr A Prentis has been transferred to us from Chelmsford. One of our members, Mrs Mary Hirst, has moved to Brentwood, Essex, and is hoping to join the local group of the Association there. We wish her well in her new home.

The ever-popular coffee mornings continue, at which we have also enjoyed interesting and entertaining speakers. A summer outing and tea at Wold Newton cottage was held in July and our members enjoyed this. A "getting to know you" coffee morning went well when our new members were able to meet many of us. This was much enjoyed by all, but perhaps our high spot was the '90s' high tea party at the Cober Hill Hotel. Such a happy occasion - iced cake, speeches and a spray of white roses were presented to our 'ever young' members -Miss Lesley Hyatt OBE, Mrs Mary Dresser, Mrs Betty Brown and Mrs Betty Saville. We missed Mrs Ena Brown who unfortunately had to attend a prior engagement.. Hopefully we shall have news in our next report of Molly Morris, who will be celebrating her 100th birthday on 1st December 2005.

The Chairman of the York group, Millie Wilks, says that the decision to discontinue the annual outing proved to be the right one when instead 25 members gathered for lunch at the Holgate Hill Hotel on 24th May. Mrs Rene Thompson and Miss Lesley Hyatt, our Divisional and Area Representatives were our guests and an excellent lunch and

good companionship were enjoyed. In March we were pleased to welcome Mr Ken Humphries, a well-known singer and conductor of choirs in the area to our meeting. We enjoyed a very interesting and entertaining account of Victorian Music Hall, interspersed with recorded music and solos by the speaker.. We are sorry to report the death of Mrs Mildred Patterson, a very faithful member until recent years, which she spent in a nursing home. We give thanks for her life and service to WRVS over many years

Edith Stamp reports from Hartlepool that they have two new members who used to help on MoW (*but has not told me who they are!*) As a group they have managed to meet each month. Speakers have talked about the Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship and the Endeavour Agency whose aim is to make life easier for those getting older that may wish to stay in their own homes or those with disabilities. Charles Smith organised another quiz and they enjoyed an outing for lunch at the Golden Fleece, Thirsk followed by a visit to a Craft Fair at Newly Hall.

Harrogate news comes from Sheila Pantin, who says that the group are evermore active these days with two new members this year (*again no names!!*). They have lunches, trips to the theatre, and shared in a coach outing to Beverley. Sadly their oldest member Kathleen Thompson died aged 99yrs. A truly Christian lady and a keen WVS/WRVS member who joined in 1946. We will miss her.

Isobel Paterson writes from Darlington. Their branch has 24 members, but some have written to say that they wish to call it a day whilst remembering with great pride the years they have given and the enjoyment they have had from WRVS. They try to meet three times a year but transport has become a problem. Few members have cars and their favourite country pub is now inconvenient due to the timing of the bus service. It has been suggested that they meet in the town centre and hope to have a luncheon in the autumn.

EAST YORKSHIRE TO HUMBER
Div Rep. Mrs Robina Priestley

It has been a fairly quiet summer with members away on holiday or visiting families. We have however managed reasonable attendance at the monthly lunches. There have been no new members this year so far, but unfortunately one member, Jean Maybury, had a nasty car accident and is still in hospital. She has been in all our thoughts and prayers and hope that she will make a full recovery and soon be joining us for lunch again. Peggy James and Joan Brown have both been in hospital for operations and are home again making a steady recovery, although Joan still has a further operation to face. We wish them both well and continued improvement. Our

Christmas Lunch is booked and I hope as many members as possible will try to come and enjoy a delicious meal with good friends in a happy and friendly atmosphere. Check that you have Dec. 7th in your diaries now

SOUTH AND WEST YORKSHIRE
Div. Rep. Mrs June Pitts BEM

The Calderdale group met in March at the Halifax Town Hall to discuss forthcoming events. The next meeting was in May when Mr Alfred Beavers, a 90-year-old recipient of 'Maundy Money', told us of his day in Wakefield Cathedral when he received his souvenirs from Her Majesty. He explained that every year on the day before Good Friday, the Maundy Money is given to deserving senior citizens by the Sovereign and that the term, which has religious origins, means to give love. At the meeting in July, our speaker was Rev Canon Frank Carless who spoke on 'Life at the Vicarage'. Also in July members Kathleen Robinson and Dorothy and Ron Bunce, had an emergency call out at 0030 to a fire on the Elland Industrial Estate, when they were asked to provide refreshments for the emergency services. They were lucky to find the manager was on duty at the local ASDA and he opened up and provided food. Also in July the group gave a tea party at Kings Cross Church for 60 OAPs. The Mayor and Mayoress were in attendance and everyone enjoyed an entertainer singing songs from the 60's, and a good time was had by all

June was invited to a WRVS Social Evening in Huddersfield when the Vice Chairman, Caroline Naylor, presented medals to four volunteers. It was just like old times when June was able to provide two of the citations.

The members of Wakefield group have ceased to meet as there are so few members left. Well done to Margaret Taylor who has kept it going for so long.

LEICESTERSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Div. Rep. Mrs Joan Newman

Sheila Court reports that two of the members of the club, who are good friends and WRVS colleagues of Joan Newman, visit her occasionally in the nursing home. Both Heather and Elizabeth think that it is very doubtful that she will be able to return home, which is all very sad.

Rushcliffe have had meetings January to July, the first two were just coffee and chat mornings, we rarely book speakers or go anywhere during this time because of the weather, and in fact the February meeting was blighted by snow, although a few hardy

souls turned out. The March meeting was a slide show given by a regular contributor; Robert Clark, who showed slides and talked about a wonderful trip along the river Douro, which he called "Port Wine and Tabuleros". This was the tale of the river with a fantastic festival at the end, remembering the time that Lisbon people donated food to a famine stricken area on the river. All the streets were decorated with wonderful strings of paper flowers and tableaux, the festival is only held every two years as the decorations take so long to make from one time to the next. At the end of March our eldest member died at the age of 93, Marjorie Attaway had been a staunch member of the MOW team in West Bridgford and a great teller of tales with photographs to illustrate. Her handbag was her photograph album! April was AGM time again, 20 of our members attended, no change to the members on the committee. May and July were just coffee and chat mornings, but in June we went to a local restaurant, the West End, for a lunch time "Feast for a Fiver". 24 members enjoyed this excellent meal; but we all wonder how this restaurant can do it for the price. A lovely selection of three or four meat dishes, a vegetarian dish and selection of puddings all freshly cooked. I can see you all dashing to West Bridgford, Nottingham for one of these Feasts! This meal was subsidized from funds that are raised at each meeting from a raffle and we will be doing the same for our Christmas meal, one-way of giving the money back to the members. Another good half year, no meeting in August, some of us will be busy with grandchildren, others just enjoying the good weather that we have been having.

Sheila Kent of Leicester says that they continue to meet in the town centre for coffee mornings about once a month as retired members enjoy getting together for a chat with some members who are still active. We have a small bring and buy and / or raffle to pay for the coffee etc. Sometimes a member will recite a poem or saying. We also have one or two lunches during the year at the local catering college, which prove very popular, as the food is always excellent.

Marian Birkhead writes that she does not want the Lincolnshire group to be forgotten despite being very small. They will be resuming their lunches in September after a break for the summer, as they do enjoy these meetings and hearing about our WRVS friends and talking of the happy times of years gone by.

A quote from Terry Wogan - Exercise is a modern myth created by rich people who want to live forever. I do not want to live forever – I ask you, what creature is the world lives the longest? It is the giant tortoise. And how long does a cheetah live? A couple of years. I rest my case

If a word were misspelled in the dictionary, how would we ever know?

NORTH WEST DIVISION

NORTH AND SOUTH MANCHESTER
Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Matthews BEM

Bury Group held their AGM as usual in March enjoying a meat and potato pie lunch, followed by a most amusing and entertaining afternoon listening to Canon Noel Proctor MBE speaking about his experiences as Prison Chaplain at Wandsworth, Eastchurch, Dartmoor and finally at Strangeways in Manchester during the horrendous riot in 1990. Noel's book 'The Cross Behind Bars' is well worth reading. We had our summer outing on a very hot day in July, starting with coffee at the Windmill in Thornton where everyone was surprised and fascinated by the appearance of "Queen Victoria" telling her life story. After lunch at the Royal Hotel in Cleveleys, we had time for shopping or relaxing on the prom, before taking the coach for a tour of the Lancashire countryside listening to interesting tales from our guide - a truly splendid day.

We were very pleased to welcome this year new members Miss Jess Fletcher, Mrs Barbara Holloway, Mrs Jean Proctor, and Miss Joyce Roebuck.

The Sale Group have had two resignations this year but there are still a dozen or more of us and we intend to carry on. In January we had a Bring and Buy Sale and Raffle which was well attended and we managed to raise some funds for our depleting bank balance. In February we had a most informative talk with slides - 'A Tale of Two Rivers', the Danube and the Rhine, a lovely holiday someone had taken. We went to the AGM in March where we met old friends and had a good time chatting. In April we had to find new premises for our meetings as the rent was going up on our usual room. Park House on Northenden Road seemed to be suitable and so we have booked there until the end of the year. We had our first meeting at the new premises in May with a delightful flower-arranging display and all went well. Our next meeting in July was a Strawberry Tea. Ella brought along all her memorabilia of early days in the WRVS and this provided many tales throughout the afternoon. Our next meeting will be in September.

On Thursday 8th July we were eagerly looking forward to travelling up to London at the weekend for the WWII Commemoration when we heard the tragic news of the tube and bus bombings. 24 hours later we were assured it was possible to travel as planned. On the train from Manchester we met others wearing their WWII Badges and there was an atmosphere of friendly wartime comradeship, which continued wherever we went during the weekend. On Saturday afternoon we went along to Whitehall to see the new monument to Women and we were

pleased to see pictures of Lady Reading and wartime WVS members being shown on a large screen. We then went along to see the Living Museum in St James's Park - there was so much of interest to see but we were truly disappointed by not being able to find any mention of the wartime work of WVS or the Home Guard.

Sunday proved to be a memorable day - we arrived at Horse Guards Parade soon after 1pm and joined the queue of people going through the security checks. Sooner than expected we were directed to our allocated seats. The arrival of the Victoria Cross and George Cross Holders, the superb readings by Robert Hardy and Simon Callow, the excellent music played by the service bands, the March on and off of the Standards, everyone singing "Jerusalem" and the guest appearance of Dame Vera Lynn for "We'll meet again" were all unforgettable, but for me the reading of the Kohima Epitaph by Viscount Slim was the most emotional part of the day. It was wonderful to see such a huge crowd of people following the Royal Procession down the Mall. Everyone applauded the impressive Vintage Aircraft Flypast, dropping the poppies - a most appropriate end to the Commemoration.
Jean Matthews

DERBYSHIRE - County Rep
Doreen Martin,

Derbyshire members will be meeting again in September after a short break whilst trying to find a new meeting place. The hotel where the group has met for very many years is no longer able to provide a room though members are welcome to drop in for coffee as before. Betty Hills has done a super job in keeping the group together during the past months despite being far from well herself. Hopefully she will soon be fully recovered and things will be back to normal for everyone.

According to the Alaska Department of Fish and game, while both male and female reindeer grow antlers in the summer each year, male reindeer drop their antlers at the beginning of winter, usually late November to December. Female reindeer retain their antlers till after they give birth in the spring. Therefore, according to every historical rendition depicting Santa's reindeer, every single one of them, from Rudolph to Blitzen had to be a girl. We should have known. Only women would be able to drag a man in a red velvet suit all around the world in one night, and not get lost.

Any man who thinks he is more intelligent than his wife is married to a really smart woman

SOUTH EAST DIVISION

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Div. Rep. Mrs Barbara Titcomb

Mrs Charnley of Cambridge reports that sixteen members and friends met for lunch at the Riverside Restaurant of the Cambridge Regional College. Unfortunately, since then illness and bereavement among members and their families have prevented the arrangement of formal gatherings although individuals have met together for informal coffee and tea. We hope to resume in the Autumn. (Mrs Charnley is making good progress following her second hip replacement.)

Unfortunately, due to illness of Peterborough Association members we have been unable to make use of the WRVS run premises in Peterborough and our May and July meetings have had to be cancelled. With only one of our members younger than eighty we did not try to run an outing this summer.

It was with great pleasure that I heard from Brenda giving me news of the Rushden group in Northamptonshire when twenty people met for coffee in June and again on 3rd August to celebrate Mrs Carter's eightieth birthday. On this happy occasion, they had afternoon tea and strawberries and presented Mrs Carter with a pot plant and a birthday cake.

OXFORDSHIRE, BEDFORDSHIRE AND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Callaway

Deputy Div Rep Barbara Statham, has taken over the reins as Jean is recovering from an operation, and has sent in this report which was written by Jean before she went into hospital (*there's devotion for you*). I am sure we all wish her well

Bedfordshire welcomes new members Mrs Isabelle Cole of Luton and Doug Rees of Flitwick, who as one of our 5 helpful husbands is now a paid up member. But records the passing of Mrs Cadwallader (Caddy) a lifetime helper who died at South Wing Hospital aged nearly 100

2005 Activities began with the March AGM that, as always, was well attended and the atmosphere supportive. Officers and Committee members were willing to stand for another year and after a very good lunch members departed, looking forward to more friendly meetings.

The first of these was a talk by Mrs Pru Gardener in April on "Life below Stairs" - the experiences of working as a caterer for private functions -sometimes in the client's own home. For those who like a spot of anarchy I give the story of the wedding reception where the two fathers began a fight, which escalated and sent the buffet table (lovingly set up to display the splendid selection of food) flying! Sounds like Romeo and Juliet slapstick. Memorable advice was "in your next life come back as a butler".

-In July there were two events. John Deamer (another helpful husband), organised a trip to Oakham and Rutland Water. Members were free in the morning to wander through the town and visit the historic buildings, or, as at least one couple did, enjoy coffee outside a pleasant restaurant and then dodge the showers to reach the hotel where lunch was organised/and enjoy a drink in the bar. Sadly this was July 7th, and members gradually heard the dreadful news of the London bombings. A forty-minute boat trip on beautiful Rutland Water helped to give a more peaceful end to the day. At the end of the month came the Annual Garden Party hosted by Do Vesey. It was a sunny, relaxed afternoon chatting, drinking homemade sangria, and enjoying a generous tea while listening to "Gentle Jazz" played on two clarinets. Thank you to Do and Godfrey.

The 60th Anniversary Celebration of the end of the 1939 -1945 war on July 10th in London, saw one of our members, Mrs Pam Darlington (who joined WVS in 1938) together with her husband in Horse Guards Parade, where they represented Bedfordshire Association. Pam is still a volunteer in the WRVS Shop at South Wing Hospital, Bedford. Here is Pam's report on her wonderful and memorable day.

COMMEMORATION WORLD WAR II 1945-2005

After two anxious days of waiting in case of cancellation, my husband and I travelled on Saturday 9 July by taxi to London enabling us to make a plan for the next day. Sunday dawned with a lovely sky and the promise of heat. We walked down the Mall in our finery - hats and medals. After a thorough security search we had the great fortune to be seated at ground level back row and to the left of the stage. A large screen was near by and a wide space behind us.

We found three other members of the WRVS: one was from Cromer, the other two from the Norfolk coastal area. We sat for nearly two hours before the arrival of the Queen. Although the temperature climbed to 30 degrees conversation flowed and spirits were high. It was amazing how fit and well the majority of the audience looked, considering we were all of a "certain age". The atmosphere was terrific and everyone enjoyed the show and the singing.

The parade of the Veterans was very moving, and the words of Winston Churchill held great significance after the events of the previous Thursday.

With the aid of the many good tempered and necessary Police, after many hours on duty and always vigilant, over all the events of Saturday and Sunday, we made our way back to St James' feeling proud and honoured to have represented all the many friends and members of the WRVS with whom I have shared my life.

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK
Div. Rep. Mrs Mary Taylor

The Sunshine Club, Ormesby, have the good fortune to have a long serving committee dedicated to ensure the life of villagers has activities to keep them united. Recently Moira Fuller, Jean Dyble, and Bessie Broughton, received their 15 year certificates for their dedication to the club. The members meet fortnightly and enjoy bingo, bridge and other activities. They also have a lovely Christmas carol service, overseen by the local vicar. I had the honour and pleasure of presenting the awards to these very deserving ladies.

Members of the WRVS Association, Sudbury branch, Mrs Florence Macey and Miss Kay Tolond went to the Palace for the WWII commemoration celebrations. The following is their report on the day received from Miss Kay Tolond.

After a bad start it was a very enjoyable day. I drove down to Woodford and we had arranged for a taxi from there - he arrived at the time arranged drove up to London but what a journey he could not get anywhere near the Palace all the roads were blocked off because of the problems the previous week, he dropped us off about a mile away and was it hot in London!! We arrived at the Palace security was lax- did not open our bags, just looked at passports etc. It all changed when we got into the gates so much help on hand and the RED CARPET was down, we walked through the Palace to the other side on to a blue carpet which took us into the biggest Marquee I have ever seen gold chandeliers and fans on the top. We were taken to our table and it was lovely, beautiful linen, cutlery and flowers. We sat next to a Mrs Jean Henderson and her daughter from Sheffield, WRVS, she said there were only 2 tickets (pairs) for the Abbey and the Lunch -we were lucky! Water, wine and champagne were flowing, we had a lovely meal and coffee, saw the Queen & Duke, Princes Andrew, Edward and Sophie and Prince & Princess Michael also other well-known people.

Other news:-

North Norfolk held a Spring luncheon, April, at The Wayford Bridge Hotel, wonderfully organised as always. We each received a beautiful flower brooch, which was waiting for us as we sat to eat.

Sudbury had their luncheon July, regrettably, I was unable to attend, but understand that although they are a small branch they do enjoy their meetings.

Gt. Yarmouth branch has been as busy as ever. Their 1st luncheon of the year was January. Their Annual Dinner was celebrated in March, when 46 members gathered. We had a lovely meal, followed by dancing until our legs ached. We certainly enjoy ourselves!

April we visited Ipswich. I personally managed to get lost and spent most of the day trying to find a beautiful (I am told) building, Christchurch Mansions. The Mansion is set in beautiful parkland and depicts how the mansion looked in years gone by from Tudor chambers to Victorian Parlour. The Art Gallery has pictures by Suffolk artist Gainsborough Constable and others.

June and we set off on another adventure. This time to Oxburgh Hall, near Kings Lynn, Built in 1482, at the height of the War of the Roses, Sir Edmund Bedingfield built his mortified manor house with a spectacular Tudor gatehouse and most impressive moat. Five centuries later and the Bedingfield family are still in residence. The house is now in the care of The National Trust

July saw us heading for Cromer for our annual visit to The Cromer Pier Show. It was brilliant. Laughed until our sides ached. What an excellent tonic on a cold, wet windy day.

Kathleen Paull writes that although small in numbers, the North Norfolk Section is still very busy. We had a very pleasant Spring Luncheon at one of our favourite restaurants, Wayford Bridge and continued with our annual visit to Cromer Pier show to enjoy a robust rendition of Camelot -thankfully before the theatre ceiling decided to let the rain in!

Sadly, because of personal reasons, we were unable to hold the planned Harvest Luncheon, but WRVS members, through our local Church, invited several members of Yarmouth WRVS to attend the Stalham Art Exhibition, followed by lunch held in the Church Rooms.

We were delighted when two of our members, Jan Gilderson (our local Representative), and Jane Bowden, (a long serving member), were invited to the 60th Anniversary Celebrations in London. It proved to be an outstanding day, reviving many memories of that most traumatic and challenging time.

Another memory from July 10th, this time by Kathleen Paull who made the visit to London along with Jane Bowden and her daughter Liz Jackson and Jan Gilderson

What a wonderful day! The excitement when the invitation from Her Majesty arrived - the nerves when deciding what to wear, and now, here we were, 9.00 on that special Sunday morning, at Norwich station, waiting for the departure of the train which would take us, and many others down to London to join the celebrations to mark the ending of World War II, sixty years ago, followed a few months later by victory in the Far East.

But of course, the sad reminder that conflict is never far away came with the news of the London bombings just a few days earlier, and our happiness was tempered with sadness at the loss of life, but determined that these too would be remembered on this day.

Early morning coffee at Liverpool Street Station, followed by a roller coaster taxi ride through the heart of the city, and there we were, out into the amazing atmosphere of Trafalgar Square. Flags and banners fluttered in the breeze, complimenting the gentle tinkling of medals proudly displayed. Through the security gate, and down into Horse guards Parade, where smiling policemen (and women) suggested we shelter under the canopy of trees until it was time to enter the parade ground.

Watching the veterans assemble with their many flags awaiting the order to march, and finally, in brilliant sunshine, it was time to enter the Parade Ground, where we were ushered to our seats by members of the armed forces (they really are getting younger these days!!) We were provided with a Goodie Bag containing not only a Commemoration Booklet and programme of events, but bottled water for the heat and a plastic mac in case of rain. Large screens had been erected, and we watched as the procession bringing members of the Royal Family drove down the Mall, followed by the holders of the Victoria and George Crosses. Then, at precisely 2.30pm, the Queen accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, entered the Parade Ground, and the celebrations commenced.

The speech given by Neville Chamberlain announcing that war had been declared sent a cold chill through the gathered crowd, only to be inspired by Robert Hardy's rendition of Winston Churchill's famous speech. And then the show began, and what memories it revived. Rolling bandages, knitting sweaters for sailors, sleeping in something just a little stronger than a tin can in a hole in the garden (but we were very glad to have their protection). Driving a refreshment canteen around Glasgow docks for the benefit of the troops and dockers working there, manning soup kitchens, helping with evacuees, standing in the back garden watching London burn on that dreadful night. Distributing clothing and furniture to the victims of bombing raids on our cities.

Without television, the only movie films we had were those of Pathé showing at the local cinemas, and we watched in tears as the Navy evacuated British forces from France, and cheered again at the success of the Desert Rats, and wept at the cruel treatment of our troops in the Far East. During those dark days, music was a great comfort. Jerusalem, Land of Hope and Glory, Run Rabbit and We'll Meet Again were amongst the favourites, and we look back in gratitude at those who went into danger zones to entertain our troops. So many memories of those dark

days, and yet there was always hope, and a willingness to help each other.

Another poignant moment was the fly past of the Missing Man Formation, and we remembered again how much we owed to those young men. But one of the abiding memories of that day was the sight of a small elderly lady standing proudly on the platform talking to her people. No heavily armed guards, no black suited men glaring round at the stage, just the Queen having a private chat with her subjects.

It was an amazing day. We didn't know quite what to expect, especially after the sad events of the previous week, but it was a wonderful, moving experience, and yes, we came home feeling proud - to have re-lived the history which our generation created.

We are now looking forward to our next Coffee morning, and following the success of last year, we hope once again to enjoy a splendid Christmas Lunch at Virginia Court, Cromer.

SURREY, EAST & WEST KENT, EAST & WEST SUSSEX.

Mrs Joan Rosling,

In Surrey Guildford held their annual members' lunch and AGM in early April. We had a good number this year, which included four members from Woking. We are lucky to be able to hold this event in a large modern hall with excellent kitchen facilities with joy of joys a dishwasher!

Waverley organised a lunch, also in April. It was a beautiful spring day with the blossom and early spring flowers at their best. The lunch, all home cooked, was delicious and everyone enjoyed seeing each other and catching up with all the news.

Shirley Mason reports that Woking began the season with their AGM on 16th March and had a very successful Bring and Buy and Coffee morning. On 27th April several members went to a matinee performance of Sleeping Beauty on Ice, which was very enjoyable. Unfortunately the Garden Party had to be postponed this year due to bad weather. Two members celebrate their 90th birthdays this year, Eileen Dixon in August and Joan Hilton in September. Daphne Payne who organises Woking's outings and events has had to have a lot of cataract surgery recently and things have not gone as well as expected so we wish her well.

In West Kent Julia Cooper will be holding a lunch in early October. She hopes it will be well attended and I will report on it in the Spring 2006 Newsletter.

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Ann Clay, formerly Ann Beale from West Sussex. Ann was well known in WRVS and was County Organiser in the early 1980s. Many will remember her and our deepest sympathy goes to her husband John and the family.

HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT

Div Rep Mrs Beryl Adams

Not much to report. In February we held our annual dinner and AGM. This is always very enjoyable especially coming some time after Christmas and the New Year. We meet at our usual pub, the Half Moon near Petersfield where 52 of our members gathered. We have grown very fond of this pub where the food and hospitality is excellent. The atmosphere is very relaxed; we have plenty of time for our meeting and chatting with old friends and finishing up with our usual raffle.

We are in the process of setting up a new group on the Isle of Wight, so we hope they will be able to join us in future meetings and making new friends. More about this next time

Mrs.B.Tytherleigh MBE writes 'It is with great sadness I wish to report that the branch at Southend on Sea, Essex has closed after 20 years due to the age and frailty of its members, there are now only 3 members who are able to travel, these will meet at my home from time to time for a cup of tea or coffee. I would like to send my kindest regards to all the other branches'

Mrs Wynn Taylor OBE DL, the Div Rep for LONDON N.E., was invited to attend the unveiling of the *MEMORIAL TO THE WOMEN OF WORLD WAR II* on July 9th

On Saturday 9th July 2005 I was privileged together with Dorothy Stevens, Doreen Edwards and my husband Freddie to represent the WRVS Association at the unveiling of the Memorial to the Women of World War II, at the request of our Chairman. The invitation came from Baroness Boothroyd (former Speaker of the House of Commons) and the Trustees of the Memorial to the Women of World War II Charity. We represented all those Members of the Association who in any way had served our Country during the Second World War. Some had served in the then W.V.S., others in the three Services, as Land Army girls, Nurses and in other capacities. I was in a Reserved Occupation) namely as a Cashier in Barclays Bank "keeping the wheels of Finance turning! We represented all these with pride.

The appeal to bring about the raising of the Monument was launched eight years ago by Major (Retd) David Robertson, President of the Ack Ack Reunion within the Royal Artillery Association. They raised an enormous sum, which was augmented by an award from the English National Heritage Memorial Fund. The Memorial is situated halfway between the Cenotaph and Trafalgar Square in Whitehall. Security was strict, no one other than those invited guests were allowed beyond the barriers. Our handbags were searched and Freddie had to turn out his pockets and we went through a metal detection barrier. We were then individually put in the care of a young Service member. We were allotted a young fresh-faced Navy chap in training at HMS Sultan in Portsmouth who conducted us to our seats very near the Memorial.

What can one say about the Memorial? It is a very modern sculpture, a huge square bronze black edifice with a relief on all four sides in an elevated position. There is a dedication to the Women of World War II below. The sculpture which needed to be explained, indicated the time when the Women, emerging into peacetime, hung up their various uniforms and clothing.

Prior to the unveiling we were invited to join the Central Band of the Royal Air Force in singing popular songs on the wartime era, which we did with gusto. During this time the VIP s had arrived and were seated on a dais opposite the Memorial. Dame Vera Lynn and Jimmy Saville and other well-known faces were amongst the guests. When we sang "White Cliffs of Dover" a recording of Dame Vera was played. Baroness Boothroyd was there of course as it was she who had worked so hard to bring about the erection of the Monument.

Upon the arrival of her Majesty the Queen we sang the National Anthem and Jerusalem and we had a short Service conducted by the Bishop of London. The Baroness gave an inspiring speech praising the work of Women in the War and alluded to the service in the ATS of Her Majesty the Queen then Princess Elizabeth. Above the dais on an enormous screen were shown enlarged short flashes of the work carried out by women in wartime, loudly cheered by the members of the services. This included WVS members carrying out their duties, so we were not forgotten.

The Baroness invited Her Majesty the Queen to unveil the- Memorial, which she then did. Strangely, after Her Majesty had walked round the Memorial and looked at the sculpture, nothing further was said. I was inclined to call for (three cheers for her Majesty but refrained. We then made our way into the Pillared Hall of the Ministry of Defence nearby, where we were seated in groups round a table on which were trays of good food. Dorothy had saved us two seats. We were able to talk to the other participants.

More food and drinks arrived to which we did justice. During this Her Majesty the Queen had arrived in the Hall and we all crowded round, marshalled by the Equerries and Security. One of the military chaps moved aside just as she reached the end of the line and invited me to fill the gap. I then had the privilege of speaking to Her Majesty who asked me how I was involved. I was then able to tell her that I represented the Women's Royal Voluntary Service Association Members. As Patron of the WRVS she obviously knew about the Association and that its members had not only perhaps served in the wartime WVS but had been involved in many other occupations which helped the country towards Victory. Naturally I was unable to tell her all this but I did mention I had been a Bank Cashier. As always she was very gracious and interested and I was pleased that I had been able to tell her personally that Members of the Association had had a representation at this memorable Memorial occasion.

So it was a pleasure and a privilege to represent you all who had served our Country during the War Years in whatever capacity.

How many dogs does it take to change a light bulb?

Golden Retriever: The sun is shining, the day is young, we've got our whole lives ahead of us, and you're inside worrying about a stupid burned out bulb?

Border Collie: Just one. And then I'll replace any wiring that's not up to code.

Dachshund: You know I can't reach that stupid lamp!

Rottweiler: Make me.

Boxer: Who cares? I can still play with my squeaky toys in the dark.

Labrador: Oh, me, me!!!! Pleeeeeeeeeeeze let me change the light bulb!

Can I? Can I? Huh? Huh? Huh? Can I? Pleeeeeeeeeeeze, please, please!

German Shepherd: I'll change it as soon as I've led these people from the dark, check to make sure I haven't missed any, and make just one more perimeter patrol to see that no one has tried to take advantage of the situation.

Jack Russell: I'll just pop it in while I'm bouncing off the walls and furniture.

Old English Sheep Dog: Light bulb? I'm sorry, but I don't see a light bulb!

Cocker Spaniel: Why change it? I can still pee on the carpet in the dark.

Greyhound: It isn't moving. Who cares?

Australian Shepherd: First, I'll put all the light bulbs in a little circle...

Poodle: I'll just blow in the Border Collie's ear and he'll do it. By the time he finishes rewiring the house, my nails will be dry.

How many cats does it take to change a light bulb?

Cats do not change light bulbs. People change light bulbs. So, the real question is 'How long will it be before I can expect some light, some dinner, and a massage'. All of which proves, once again, that while dogs have masters, cats have staff!

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

SOMERSET AND AVON

Div. Rep. Mrs Sheila Scholey

The members in the South West still meet on a regular basis and I endeavour to keep in touch. Do let me know if I can help in any way or have you an item of interest suitable for printing in the newsletter.

DEVON AND CORNWALL - DORSET AND WILTSHIRE

Mrs Alice Cleland CBE

Mrs Marjorie Darby, the County Rep for Wiltshire writes, our members seem quite happy to continue with our usual programme of three events each year. Mobility is becoming more of a problem, but those with cars are very good in giving lifts where possible. 28 of us sampled the lunch menu at a local pub again in March. We pre-ordered our food choices and bought drinks at the bar – luckily the landlord was used to catering for groups of chatty women! Tea, at the new home of Denise Smyter was in early August. Fifteen members came along to visit Denise, the weather was kind to us and the company and Cream Tea were great. We will have a final coffee morning in November to complete 2005

The Swindon report comes from Jacquie Roe. We continue to thrive, having settled down to a routine of coffee in the Spring, a Strawberry Tea in the Summer and a Christmas lunch in December. This seems to suit most of our members, but we are hoping to include one or two informal lunches between these three meetings for those members who wish to meet more often. Our membership was increased last year when Sheila Warren joined us and this year we have welcomed Miranda Pearce, Doreen Baker and Margaret Ozanne

Mrs Margaret Dunn, Secretary of the Torridge group writes, our group did not have its Annual New Year Lunch and by June, Chairman Mrs Lomas felt we needed a special 'Get Together', and invited us to her home for a Strawberry Tea. This event was preceded by a short AGM to keep us up to date in a businesslike manner. We were saddened to report the deaths over the last year of two more members so our total now stands at seventeen. How we wish we could find those WRVS Members that we know are 'out there' in the Community and introduce them to the Association. After this we had a happy social time and wonderful tea, far more than just strawberries, raspberries AND Devonshire cream. There was a lot of talking as several members had not met for a while! We hope to meet in November for a coffee morning & Bring and Buy at the home of the Chairman.

WALES

Div. Rep. Mrs Mary Gibbons. OBE

In the last Newsletter I mentioned that the Welsh Assembly were asking for names of WVS members who joined, in Wales, during the war, but I had not been able to help them. Following this Miss Winifred Faller, from Penarth, phoned to say she had been a member during the war and her name was sent to the organisers of the 'Welsh Celebration' in Cardiff. On the big day she was driven, by a friend who accompanied her during the celebrations, to Cardiff Castle. A golf Buggy was the form of transport for her between the car park and the field where sitting in the blazing sun for the service was something of a trial. The highlight of the day was being spoken to by the Prince of Wales. He attended the Service with the Duchess of Cornwall, before he was 'airlifted' to other celebrations. The 'Special Lunch', to which our members had been invited, turned out to be not so special as by the time they sat down most of the food had been consumed. Miss Faller thought the organisation did not come up WRVS standards of old!

In Colwyn Bay the Local Organiser for WRVS, Shirley Bellis, had applied for a portion of the WRVS Wales Grant from the Lottery Fund and was lucky in her application. A parade had been organised, by the town, for veterans and others, which ended at the cenotaph, where a short service was held. A local hall was then used for a lunch, organised by Shirley Bellis and the present WRVS Members, followed by an entertainment. About 100 townspeople were there. Mrs. Olwyn Crump, an elderly WVS member of 93 who joined WVS in England, wore her old WVS uniform as she was pushed in the parade. The Association members had a wonderful day, as Miss Boden was delighted to tell me, and her praise of Mrs. Bellis made me realise that although 'The Service' might have changed, the caring nature of its members certainly has not.

Eight members of the Dyfed Group enjoyed a very interesting visit, despite the pouring rain, to the National Botanic Garden of Wales. One of the members is an official guide to the gardens so was able to take them round and explain things. I was very sorry not to have joined them for this very interesting trip and I do recommend the Garden to anyone who might find themselves in the Carmarthenshire area. Barbara Richardson joined the group for possibly the last time as she is moving to a Residential Home near one of her daughters.

The Bluebell is the venue once again for members from Abergavenny. This group always seem to find rather nice pubs to meet in. Once again I missed out as the pouring rain and high winds made a journey of about 100 miles seem unfeasible. They are a great group and I do enjoy getting together with them. I am sure Doris Travis and her dwindling group still meet when ever they can. Doris is registered as blind and has moved to be with her daughter in Caerleon.

Can we help someone you know?

Do you know an older person who is struggling to make ends meet?
We may be able to help.

Founded in 1863, The Royal United Kingdom Beneficent Association, **IndependentAge**, is a charity which champions independence for older people. Our main aim is to enable older people on low incomes to live independent lives with dignity and peace of mind. We do this through the provision of a small annual income and special grants alongside the friendship and practical support of a volunteer visitor.

If you would like more information about how **IndependentAge** can help, please telephone our Applicants Officer on 020 7605 4222. (all enquiries are handled with discretion and in the strictest confidence). www.independentage.org.uk

IndependentAge

Supporting older people at home

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Beneficent Association

Charity Registration Number 210729



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All contributions for the next Newsletter should be with me by 31st January 2006.

or I can be contacted at

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