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Spring 2006

No 64

WRVS Association NEWSLETTER

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

Dear Member

After such an auspicious year in 2005, I wonder what excitement 2006 will bring!

We had a very happy and successful reunion and AGM in Scarborough, last September; meeting up with many good friends

I visited a branch in the East of England in December and was entertained to a convivial Christmas Lunch

Plans are in hand for this years Reunion / AGM, which will be held in the South West; possibly Bristol – Watch this space!

My regards to you all for good health in the coming months

Best Wishes

Sheila Scholey

Random jottings from the Editor

Dear Members

If you can remember back to the dark weeks after Christmas, when even here in the south the days were short, and if the weather was overcast then they seemed even shorter; when we all wondered if the ground would ever dry out and it was impossible to imagine having to complain that it was just too hot; then like me, you will wonder how our first newsletter for 2006 has come round so quickly. The contributions start coming in at the beginning of January and I try really hard to get them typed up and entered into my 'draft' document as quickly as possible, because I know that at the deadline at the end of the month the last few all come in together and there is a rush to get them all dealt with.



You may have noticed that in the last newsletter, because we had so many memories from members attending the WWII commemorations, there were none of the usual 'no reports' from those Div Reps who had not sent anything in, nor were the areas with no Div Rep in place even mentioned. There was just no room for anything negative, which made a wonderful change. But I have put them all back in now, so in some areas we again have 'no report' or 'no Div Rep'. But I am pleased to say that we have a couple of new names for you. Welcome to Sadie Baker who has taken on the counties of Cumbria and Lancashire and to Sylvia Hatchell who has taken over from Mary Jones for Merseyside and Cheshire. These two have in fact swapped roles, as Mary has become a member of the VCC, a responsibility that Sylvia had until recently. (VCC? See page 18)

When I first joined the Association, and heard about the office in Bootham with its team of staff, the Chairman, the President, the Vice Presidents and the Div Reps, I thought it all sounded very impressive and quite imposing. So can I just assure you, that like you and me, they are all volunteers. Therefore just for once, a little praise for all those people and special thanks to the team of ladies in York who twice a year spend several days stuffing thousands of newsletters into envelopes to send out to you all.

Very Best Wishes

Paulene

Paulene Lambert

CHANNEL ISLANDS

JERSEY

Ass. Rep. Mrs Doreen Jennings

The group on the island met up for a pre Christmas lunch but have nothing else to report. *However, I do have to apologise to Doreen and the three ladies that I mentioned by name in the last issue. As a group they prefer that no names be recorded unless it is someone joining or leaving, or a member having taken part in a WRVS Association event. Consider my wrist well and truly slapped!*

GUERNSEY

Ass. Rep. Mrs Margaret Chilcott (formerly Brockway)

We send greetings from Guernsey to all Association members

The year 2005 was rather a sad year for our section. Enid Robilliard, who was my predecessor died in April. She gave so much to the WRVS, the list is endless; and she was the Representative for over twelve years with so much commitment and enthusiasm. She is sadly missed, as are Gwen Rouget and Olive Martel, all staunch members of the WRVS for many years - Olive in her hundredth year.

It was decided that it was not appropriate to have our usual lunch in April, but we commenced the lunches in November - twenty of us, and our guest, Janet Sherwell, the WRVS Bailiwick Organiser, gathered at the La Trelade Hotel, and had a very enjoyable meal, after which we had a raffle. Most of us had not met for a year, so there was a lot of chatter. It was good to meet and catch up on all the news. We plan to hold our next lunch in April.

We would always be pleased to meet any members who come to Guernsey. If anyone would like to contact me we can make appropriate arrangements - I look forward to seeing you.

Congratulations to Margaret and Paul on their marriage in November!

Stress Buster

Recently I read an article that said the typical symptoms of stress are eating too much, impulse buying, and driving too fast.

Are they kidding? That is my idea of a perfect day!

NORTH EAST DIVISION

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

Mrs M Doyle has reported that the Newcastle Club continues to meet monthly with some interesting speakers. Mrs McCormack was pleased to join them for their Christmas lunch in the New Kent Hotel.

Mrs Sarah Hardy reports that when the Sunderland club met in September, there was plenty of chatter because the group had not met in August. Peace was restored for Mr R Hardy to give an interesting slide show of a holiday in Canada. In October, Mr Kevin Thornhill entertained with a beautiful display of wedding dresses and a history of the gowns. Mrs Mavis Thornhill modelled some of the dresses, but unfortunately the show had to be curtailed as time ran out. We had an early Christmas Luncheon in November and once again 'Serve-u-Well' provided the savouries. Everyone enjoyed the meal, especially the gateaux and wine. Five members did a version of Cinderella as entertainment, which caused a great deal of laughter and was a good beginning to the morning. Due to the bad weather the December meeting had to be cancelled so we enjoyed our coffee, sherry and chocolate biscuits at the AGM in January.

Sadly two members have died since the last newsletter, Mrs Vera Hindhaugh and Mrs Mildred Henderson will be sadly missed. We have fortunately welcomed two new members to our fellowship, Mrs S Anderson and Mrs M Randle and hope they will enjoy being with us.

Mrs M Dawson reports that the North Shields and Whitley Bay Club met in September for coffee at the home of Mrs Reed. Our thanks again to our hostess for a very enjoyable get together. December saw eleven members attending the Willow Club Carol Service and joining the Gentlemen and their wives for coffee afterwards. Fourteen members attended our annual lunch in January when we met at the Grand Hotel in Tynemouth, a change of venue that we all enjoyed. Our next 'get together' will be at the home of Mrs Charles on Tuesday 28th March.

Sheila McCormack adds that this group have decided to continue to meet occasionally for coffee and a chat but regretfully no longer under the auspices of the WRVS Association. Mrs Dawson has been a wonderful, hardworking leader of the club for 33 years and feels she must retire. Unfortunately there is no one else able to undertake the responsibility. I was delighted to join the members for their lunch at Tynemouth and offer thanks to Mrs Dawson for all her committed work throughout this long period.

DURHAM, CLEVELAND, NORTH YORKSHIRE & HULL

Div Rep. Mrs Rene Thompson. OBE

The five groups in this division are still managing to meet regularly and I have been happy to attend meetings at four of them - and hope to make it to Harrogate before long. Miss Hyatt resigned as County Organiser and Mrs Rowntree has taken her place.

Mrs Isobel Paterson from Darlington writes that although there are 24 members some feel that due to age and mobility problems they ought to call it a day - though remembering with pride the sterling work they did for WRVS. Other members have had to go into sheltered accommodation, so that the active members are now down to about 10. However, the post-Christmas lunch is booked for January 31st and there has been a good response.

Mrs Stamp reports that the Hartlepool group, which started in 1986, has met monthly for all these years, and still enjoy their get-togethers. They have had a very interesting talk on the Guide movement working abroad during the war and another on the life of Robbie Burns. They listened to a member's experience of being evacuated as a child during the war and had another member talking of a touring holiday in Australia with her family in a caravette. They have also enjoyed outings to Danby Lodge, Blakely Ridge - the Lion Hotel and Helmsley. Their average attendance is 20 - although more were able to attend the New Year's lunch, which Rene Thompson was also able to go to.

Mrs Sheila Pantin writes that Harrogate is still managing to meet for coffee and a chat on Friday mornings when she usually has a poster or invitation to a local show; now in the theatre or the Conference Hall, although work has at long last started on the Royal Hall which was always their favourite venue. She also says that she was sorry not to be able to take members to the AGM in Scarborough but was incapacitated by a leg operation. They are lucky to have a lot going on in Harrogate, and their twice a year lunches at a local hotel are very popular. Sadly they have lost three members, Ruby Hamilton, Kay Thompson who were both 99 years old and Ann Hall who was in her late 80's. Not everyone can get to everything - some are housebound, but Lady Hilda Laycock, who celebrated her 98th birthday in January 22nd, still supports all the group's activities.

Mrs Winter says that Scarborough continues to enjoy their well attended coffee mornings, half-day outings and Christmas lunch. Mrs Mollie Morris, who celebrated her 100th birthday in December, enjoyed a very full and happy time with visitors and fellow residents. Many have been grateful to Mollie for her bright spirit, sense of humour and helpful manner during her long WRVS service. New members continue to join the branch, which is now up to 68! The January meeting was the AGM and Ros Rowntree chaired the meeting in the absence of Barbara Gardiner.

Unfortunately Irene Winter has had to resign as secretary owing to difficulty with her eyesight. Sadly Mrs Nellie Dixon and Mrs Dorothy Robinson have died and the branch is very sad that Lady Gwen Whittaker, their Chairman for many years, has had to resign owing to ill health and her move into sheltered accommodation. She has been a stalwart WWS \ WRVS member and a great friend to Scarborough and she will be greatly missed.

York reports that a group of members attended the AGM in Scarborough in September. In October, at their AGM, Mrs Wilkes resigned as Chairman. Although a successor had been sought for many months without success, it was obvious that a good number of members did not wish to see the group close. Miss Hyatt agreed to become acting Chairman and Mrs Joan Thornton agreed to be her assistant. Fifteen members were present and there were 11 apologies; some of these will possibly have been members who did not wish to see the demise of the group. The Christmas lunch took place at Bootham Hospital and was attended by 28 members. The membership is officially 43 but some are frail and others are virtually housebound as there is no convenient transport. We keep in touch where possible, which is much appreciated

EAST YORKSHIRE TO HUMBER
Div Rep. Mrs Robina Priestley

It is with regret that I have to report the death on January 10th of a well known member of the Association - Bill James - husband of Peggy James. Bill became a member of WRVS in Beverley when he retired from work. He worked vigorously for the Meals on Wheels Service in Beverley using his computer skills to good effect. When he and Peggy joined the Association his computer knowledge was put to good use and he was a great support to Peggy during her period as Chairman of the Association. He will be greatly missed by Peggy, his family, and his many colleagues and friends.

The last Association event that Bill attended was our Christmas Lunch at The Lawns, Cottingham. We all enjoyed an excellent meal and although our numbers are decreasing, those who were able to attend had a lovely time.

I would like to thank the Association members from Wales who responded to a request for one East Riding member who last summer moved to Wales. A few weeks later, after I had sent her name and new address via Head Office, we had a phone call from the lady in question saying that she had had a visit from two ladies from the Association who arranged to take her to one of their Coffee Mornings where she met their local members. She was delighted and said how it had helped to make her feel "at home". A short time later we were able to reciprocate this when a lady moved into a Residential Home in the East Riding from Lincolnshire. Barbara Gillard was able to make contact with her and had a long chat.

What a wonderful contribution to making life a little happier for our members who need to move to be nearer their families!

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

June says that she attended the Scarborough AGM as a day delegate. It was a good meeting covering many subjects and she was able to give the good wishes of the members in her area to Tina Tietjen who was completing her term of office as Chairman of the WRVS and President of the Association

The Calderdale group continue to meet at Halifax Town Hall alternate months. We have the use of one of the official rooms, which are very comfortable and much appreciated. In September the members enjoyed coffee and biscuits whilst having a good talk about past events and present. Our next meeting was in November, which was very rewarding as we had for a speaker Mrs Caroline Naylor, Vice Chairman of the WRVS who told us of future commitments of the Service e.g. helping to keep the elderly in their own homes if they wish and the need for fundraising. The Association members found it very helpful to understand the situation in the WRVS now and we all enjoyed her visit very much. Instead of a meeting in January, we had our Christmas lunch but for a complete change went to a restaurant called Plaza Fish and Chips! It was well supported and very much enjoyed.

I am sorry to report the death in October of Mrs Jacqueline Wynne-Jones OBE. She joined the WRVS in 1989 and became Emergency Training Instructor and later Area Organiser for South and West Yorkshire where she administered the organisation of 4000 volunteers. She also took a keen interest in the Girl Guide Association in Shoreditch, London and Zanzibar. She was for a period Chairman of the CAB and on her retirement from WRVS became a voluntary archivist for the First World War Trust at Leeds University.

LEICESTERSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Div. Rep. Vacant

Due to her ongoing illness Mrs Joan Newman is no longer Div Rep for the area and whilst we send her our very best wishes, we also thank Joan for her input over the years and are now looking for a suitable replacement

Sheila Kent writes from Leicester as several of their members attended the exhibition 'Life on the Home Front' at a museum in the town and they were able to answer questions about the WVS in wartime. Also members of their emergency team served refreshments, including cake made from a wartime recipe.

They continue to hold regular coffee mornings and at the last one heard that they had been invited as a group to visit one of the newly refurbished museums for a tour and refreshments – undoubtedly as a result of the link formed at the exhibition

Elizabeth Ball reports that Mansfield have 2 lunch dates per year - January and June, and a coffee morning for their AGM in November. Two of our members have died this year - Daphne Williams in the summer and Edith Johnson in December 2005. Edith joined WVS, as it was then, in 1951 and had held many appointments finishing as Mansfield District Organiser. She was awarded the BEM in 1979

Sheila Court writes from Rushcliffe. After a break in August our first meeting in September was just a catch up with chat coffee morning, we all enjoy these, as so much will have happened during the holiday period.

The October meeting was a talk with photographs of a trip to Borneo by a family who live in Plumtree, a village just outside Nottingham. Mr. and Mrs. Wright belong to the local history society and were intrigued by a grave in the village churchyard, which was of the illegitimate son of the ruler of Sarawak. On the way back from a visit to Australia they went to Borneo to try to find out the story behind this grave and came back having had a wonderful experience, living in a long house and finding the origins of this young man and why his grave was in Nottinghamshire.

November was another chat and coffee morning. December brought us to our Christmas Lunch held as usual at County Hall so handy for everyone to get to and a very good meal too. We were able to subsidise the cost of the meal but unfortunately our numbers are falling and only 24 members were able to attend, although we have 37 on our list. The last meeting for this half year in January was another catch up with friends and chat over the happenings of the Christmas and New Year period.

People talk much quieter now, have you noticed dear?
And print in books is smaller, and nothing like as clear.
But no one likes a moaner, so when I 'm shopping next
I'll buy a loader radio, and get some stronger specs.

I do not mind this ageing; it's a fuller simpler life,
I do not want to be young again, with its struggle and its strife.
Now I can pick and choose a bit, observe, take time and rest
Give and help along the way, I'm fine, and really blessed

Thanks to Sarah Hardy of Sunderland for a humorous and optimistic look at not being quite so young any more

YOU HAVE HELPED US, NOW LET US HELP YOU

*As a Trustee of the **WRVS BENEVOLENT TRUST**, I am astonished how often I hear that WRVS volunteers 'know nothing about it' and 'have not ever heard of it'.*

The Trust is 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, but should have been members for five years or more and are usually on a limited income

All applications for help should be sent in the first place to the Honorary Secretary at and of course, all applications are treated in the strictest confidence.

Food Scares – Where are we now?

EGGS Edwina Curry famously suggested that most eggs sold were contaminated with salmonella bacteria

AND NOW? The egg industry has made great efforts to try to eradicate salmonella, but the Food Standards Agency (FSA) still warns that eating raw eggs may cause salmonella food poisoning. Vulnerable groups, such as pregnant women, small children and the elderly should avoid raw or lightly cooked eggs and dishes containing them. Look for eggs with the Lion Mark, which come from flocks vaccinated against salmonella

CLINGFILM CHEMICALS Scientists discovered that when high fat foods, such as cheese, were wrapped in cling film, chemicals could migrate into the food.

AND NOW? The FSA says that while it's safe to use, only Clingfilm suitable for use with high-fat products should be used to wrap food such as cheese and raw meats. (This is sometimes known as Food Film) When reheating or cooking food in the microwave, make sure the Clingfilm doesn't touch the food.

NORTH WEST DIVISION

CUMBRIA AND LANCASHIRE

Welcome to new Div. Rep. Mrs Sadie Baker

MERSEYSIDE AND CHESHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Mary Jones

Our groups are all meeting regularly, though some are reporting problems with falling numbers due to ill health and age. On the other hand we are hoping to start a new group in Liverpool this year. Good to be invited to so many meetings unfortunately I am not able to attend as many as I would like. In January 2006 I will be taking on a new role as VCC Member for Merseyside and Wirral so I am resigning as Div Rep but I will be staying on as a local member.

Chester - 14 members attended a Christmas lunch at Upton Golf Club – a really good day. We continue to meet regularly for lunches at local pubs but many members are now finding it difficult to get round so numbers are dropping. Some of our more active members join with the War Widows for outings.

Wallasey (including Bebington) - A large active group who meet for a monthly lunch at the Old Wallaseans, the March meeting will be a hotpot lunch. 24 members went to Stapeley Gardens for a Christmas lunch in November, but it was a bit disappointing, as we felt rushed. 20 members met in December for a Christmas lunch at our usual venue. We held a sales table and draw and raised £200 for local charities - Clare House and St Johns Hospice.

Crosby - Linda McEvoy reports that the last 6 months have passed very quickly leaving memories of very successful meetings. A visit to a local museum left all members recalling schooldays - satchels, hats and boaters, slates? As familiar items no longer on our supermarket shelves were viewed we all recalled helping mum with the daily shopping. As my mother accompanied us on this trip she gave an additional insight to past days for me. After all the laughter and reminiscences we moved on to the village church which has a history dating back hundreds of years, and our guide gave us a wonderful insight into the treasures of our own "back yard". We adjourned to the village tearooms for afternoon tea in the garden. In September I was fortunate enough to visit Scarborough for the WRVS Association AGM and Reunion. This was a very enjoyable weekend – the weather was perfect and the Chairman of WRVS joined us. It is wonderful to meet members from all parts of the UK and to catch up on all that has happened since we last met. Those of you who have never attended the AGM do consider joining us in 2006. In October members of the Hearing Dogs for the Deaf Association visited us.

The help that these dogs give to their owners is remarkable. We ended the year with our usual gathering at a local hostelry - crackers and party hats were the order of the day, good food, good company and shared memories made for a perfect day.

Nantwich - 2005 was a good year for us with approximately 20 members attending lunches and coffee mornings. 2 new members joined us in 2005 but we do have difficulty in attracting new members, as there are now no active WRVS projects in Nantwich.

St Helens - Our members attended a Christmas lunch at Houghwood Golf Club to which we invited our Div Rep and the Vice Chairman's Committee member for Merseyside and Wirral Mrs Sylvia Hatchell. It was a great meal and everyone had a good time - so much so that the stewards' dog would have liked to join us. Numbers at meetings are falling and with increased costs for the meeting room we have decided not to have speakers any more, and to meet monthly at a local restaurant for lunch. We have tried to recruit new members through ads in the local paper and notices in the local hospital but with no success.

Wilmslow - We have a lot of poorly members at present so numbers attending meetings are variable. We alternate coffee mornings in member's homes with pub lunches. The February coffee morning will be at Mary Durston's home. Christmas lunch at the Oakwood was our usual get together with lots of talk and laughter.

NORTH AND SOUTH MANCHESTER

Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Matthews BEM

For their October outing the Bury Group decided to return to the Bellsfield Hotel, which is set in six acres of beautiful gardens overlooking Lake Windermere. It was a nice, dry, mild day and fifty members and friends were able to see the superb Lake District scenery in all its autumn glory. After a very good lunch some ladies enjoyed a pleasant sail on the lake, whilst others strolled to nearby shops - a very successful expedition for some judging by the variety of carrier bags taken on to the coach later! Many of us enjoyed afternoon tea relaxing in the elegant surroundings of the hotel before leaving for home. After the hectic Christmas period we all looked forward to our January re-union - a superb lunch at the Red Hall Hotel in Bury, always a popular venue with our group.

A number of our Prestwich members meet monthly for coffee and a chat at the home of Mrs Audrey Wood, and we would like to take this opportunity of sincerely thanking Audrey for her kind hospitality and hard work.

We are sorry to report the recent deaths of two founder Bury members, Mrs Joan Atkinson and Miss Isobella Walton, both delightful ladies who gave loyal and conscientious service to WRVS for many years before joining the Association - they will be sadly missed.

Mrs Rosemary Cooper, leader of the Sale Group, is not well at the moment and regrets that she is not able to send in a report. However, Jean Matthews, Div Rep reports that despite this problem, Rosemary organised the usual Christmas lunch for her members at the Cresta Hotel in Altrincham to which Mrs Joan Allmark (ex Trafford Met Organiser) and herself were invited. A first class meal and a very jovial atmosphere gave everyone a wonderful start to the festive season. We all send Rosemary our sincere thanks and very best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Staffordshire. Shropshire, Derbyshire - Div. Rep. Vacant

DERBYSHIRE - County Rep

Members were able to meet for the first time for several months, having had difficulty in finding a new venue. However, we all got together at a local inn and enjoyed a chat over lunch. A permanent meeting place has still not been found, but hopefully this will be resolved in due time.

We are pleased to welcome Mrs Helen McCarthy a member from London and hope that she will be happy living in Ilkeston.

Food Scares - Where are we now?

MERCURY IN FOOD - High levels of mercury in tuna, marlin, shark and swordfish,

AND NOW? High levels of mercury can harm unborn babies and young children. The FSA says that women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, and children under 16, should not eat shark, marlin or swordfish. They also shouldn't eat more than two tuna steaks (weighing about 140g cooked or 170g raw), or four medium size cans of tuna a week.

FARMED SALMON - A report warned of high levels of dioxins (toxic chemicals) in farmed salmon.

AND NOW? The FSA say there's no reason to be concerned. Levels of dioxins in salmon are well within safety guidelines set by the World Health Organisation. The FSA says the health benefits to be gained from eating oil-rich fish such as salmon far outweigh any doubts about its safety, but recommends that girls and women who may become pregnant should eat no more than two portions of oil-rich fish per week. This also applies to women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

SOUTH EAST DIVISION

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Barbara Titcomb

Mrs Charnley writes that twenty two members of the Cambridge group met for lunch in November and it is hoped that more frequent meetings will be held as their normal meeting place has been refurbished and will be available soon. This group has a large membership and they are all advised of planned events but this costs a large sum each year in printing and postage though many of them are too elderly and/or infirm and are unable to attend and contribute to ongoing costs thus making finances difficult

In Peterborough there are only six members regularly attending so they have scaled down some of their meetings. However they did enjoy an excellent Christmas meal at Peterborough Regional College in December

Mrs Carter reports that in Rushden, twenty members met at the Golf Club in Raunds for an excellent lunch on 3rd December and were treated to a free raffle. It is heartening to have news of these members

OXFORDSHIRE, BEDFORDSHIRE AND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Callaway

Report from Barbara Statham, standing in for Jean Callaway

We are delighted to report that Jean is now progressing well after her operation in August. In October she was still unable to be with us all for a very enjoyable Monday afternoon talk, illustrated with gorgeous slides on "A Peruvian Panorama". We were taken on a trip starting on the Pacific Coast of Peru, then over the freezing Andes, and after feeling the effects of altitude sickness, we were taken down into the tropical rainforest of the Amazon. We then had time for tea, biscuits and a chat.

In December we were all together again for our Annual Christmas Lunch and Jean was well enough to be with us and drew the Christmas raffle. We had a beautiful buffet for 60 members and some guests (hoping the WRVS ones will join us!), all prepared and served by our committee (and some husbands!). Luscious puddings were provided by members.

We send best wishes to Eileen Pither who recently moved from Bedfordshire to Pickering in North Yorkshire to be near her family, and we welcome Eric Caves, recently retired from WRVS after 17 years working "behind the scenes" in Bedford Hospital ENT Department.

New members would be most welcome and we send our best wishes to everyone for 2006.

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK

Div. Rep. Mrs Mary Taylor

The North Norfolk group is becoming more and more active. They held a Bring & Buy Coffee Morning at the beautiful farm of Mrs Tann during September. A second one was hosted by Mr & Mrs K Moss at their home. A wonderful way of meeting members and having time to chat. Both very successful events. The Christmas Luncheon was at the Victoria Court Hotel, Cromer. We had a thoroughly enjoyable meal, great conversation, and very pleasant surroundings. We also received a Christmas table candle to take home with us.

Although Sudbury are a very small group, they always enjoy their meetings at the Angel Hotel, Lavenham. If ever in Suffolk, the village is worth a visit, as it is most enchanting, with a wonderful church and many historic buildings.

In August the Great Yarmouth group visited Felbrigg Hall. A 17th century house, which owes much of its splendour to William Windham who remodelled the interior to house his art treasures. There are also beautiful grounds, a working dovecote, large vegetable plot, herb border and old varieties of espaliered fruit trees. A walk through the park takes you to the church and lake. If you would like to see more, a film has been made called 'A Cock and Bull Story', released January 2006, during the filming of which every room of the house is used, although some of the 18th century furniture was removed for safety. September our adventure was to Highway Nurseries, Norwich, which has been completely revamped. This gave us all a chance to buy Christmas presents and decorations. In November we held our Christmas luncheon for 64 members. For the first time Cromer Theatre had a Christmas Spectacular. 55 members set off by coach on a 'cool' January morning. We had a wonderful time, thoroughly enjoyed the show and had many a laugh. Wish I could remember the jokes! We had our first luncheon of the year in February, when 53 members enjoyed an excellent meal.

We have heard from her daughter that Mrs Pauline Taylor who worked with the WRVS in Newmarket, Suffolk for a number of years passed away just before Christmas. Our thoughts are with her family and those who remember her especially Marie Percival who resides in the Isle of Wight and Melba Ritchie in Bourne, Lincolnshire as they all worked so closely together.

ESSEX AND HERTFORDSHIRE - Div. Rep. Vacant

HERTFORDSHIRE - County Rep. - No report

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

Mrs Joan Rosling,

Surrey

Guildford members visited Squires Nurseries once again in September. Many members bought plants before we all enjoyed a delicious tea. In December we went along to Guildford College for lunch, cooked and served by the students. This year we chose from the menu, which meant there were three choices of main course or the traditional turkey lunch and also a choice of puddings as well as Christmas pudding. It was most enjoyable and as ever well attended.

Waverley held another lunch for members in October. The lunch was once again all home-cooked and absolutely delicious. After lunch we were entertained to a video show depicting Waverley Meals on Wheels Service, still provided by Waverley WRVS, and scenes of Farnham and surrounding area.

Woking news from Shirley Mason. On 28th September in glorious sunshine Woking branch enjoyed a coach trip to Grayshott Potteries, near Hindhead. We were able to watch the potters at their wheels and browse around the well-stocked gift shop before having an excellent lunch. On 29th November we almost filled the restaurant at our local Cricketers Inn in Horsell and had a lovely gossip over our meal. We are sad to report the loss of Eileen Dixon who died on New Year's Eve. Eileen was a Committee member for some years and had just celebrated her 90th birthday. Our next planned get-togethers are for a Valentine's Day lunch and a theatre outing.

Kent

Our editor, Paulene Lambert, and I went to Tonbridge to attend West Kent's County lunch in October. Julia Cooper had organised this event in a local pub and a good time was had by all. Julia had told me that there was a Farmer's Market being held next door to the pub so I followed the signs to this market only to find that someone had turned the signs round the wrong way so we got hopelessly lost. With the help of a man pushing his shopping home in a trolley we eventually found the venue but missed the market.

Sussex

We are all very sad to report the death of Jean Haywood, a former County Organiser for East Sussex. Jean died in November after a long fight against cancer. She was a good friend and I shall miss her greatly.

LONDON N.E. - No report
Div. Rep. Mrs Wynn Taylor OBE DL

LONDON N.W. - No report
Div. Rep. Mrs Dorothy Stevens

LONDON S.E. - No report
Div. Rep. Mrs G Cleverly

LONDON S.W. - Div. Rep. Vacant

HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT
Div Rep Mrs Beryl Adams

From Shirley Shambrook, secretary of the NEW, YES NEW, Isle of Wight club. A meeting was held at the beginning of the year after an initial request was made by Lindy Wood to regain lost volunteers as most of the projects on the Island had been closed down (unfortunately many of these were vibrant in money making). It has taken almost a year to regain confidence in those who had been stalwart volunteers for many years. Anyway, we have eventually found 15 volunteers who have signed up for the WRVS Association for retired members on the Island. To date, we have shared an excellent meal at the Ponda Rosa Restaurant in Ryde. An outing to the Ventnor Botanical Gardens with an informal meal and a tour of the gardens. An evening at the Apollo Theatre, Newport (where we were joined by some of the members' partners). Here we enjoyed a very professional performance of 'A Delicate Balance'. Our November outing included a Medal Presentation for two of our members, Mrs. Patricia Chaplin-Orman and Mrs. Patricia Kendall, both receiving medals for 20 years service, when we all enjoyed a ploughman's lunch, followed by mince pies and coffee. In December some members enjoyed an excellent guided tour of Osborne House, decorated for Christmas and with many Christmas gifts that had been presented to Queen Victoria on display. We have many plans for 2006 and hope to increase our membership. We send good wishes to all our colleagues in Hampshire.

BERKSHIRE - Div. Rep. Vacant

BERKSHIRE - County Rep. - No report
Mrs Morag Gordon,

Food Scares - Where are we now?

RAW CHICKEN - Around 50 per cent of raw chicken contains campylobacter, the most common cause of food poisoning.

AND NOW? The FSA has been working with the poultry industry to improve hygiene standards. However, poultry should still be treated as a high-risk food, so cook it properly and wash your hands and utensils thoroughly after preparing it.

ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS - Reports suggested that the sweetener aspartame could cause headaches, epilepsy and brain tumours.

AND NOW? No health risks are associated with aspartame. The acceptable daily intake for this sweetener - the amount a person may eat and drink every day over a lifetime without harming their health - is 40mg per kilogram of body weight. To exceed this amount, an adult has to drink 20 cans of diet cola daily. The amount for children is smaller, so it makes sense to discourage them from drinking diet soft drinks.

A man is a person who, if a woman says, 'Never mind, I'll do it myself,' lets her.

A woman is a person who, if she says to a man, 'Never mind, I'll do it myself,' and he lets her, gets mad

A man is a person who, if a woman says to him, 'Never mind, I'll do it myself,' and he lets her and she gets mad, says, 'Now what are you mad about?'

A woman is a person who if she says to a man, 'Never mind, I'll do it myself,' and he lets her and she gets mad, and he says, 'Now what are you mad about?' says 'If you do not know, I'm not going to tell you'

Algebra

More than a thousand years ago signs were introduced by a Moroccan genius whose work was the first to be called algebra

According to the director of the Museum of Morocco, the figures 0 – 9, which we know today as Arabic numerals, were shaped so that each contained the appropriate number of angles. Figure 1 contains a single angle, 2 has two angles and so on. The zero or nought (or 'oh' as it is so commonly and incorrectly called these days) has no angles.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN'S COMMITTEE

Have you heard of VCC's but never quite known who or what they are? Well, Caroline Naylor has sent in the following information

We should start this piece with the news that Ruth Markland is the new Chairman of WRVS from 1st February 2006.

There are two Vice Chairmen who are also trustees of the board of the WRVS. Valerie Everitt, for the South of England and Wales and Caroline Naylor, for the North of England and Scotland. Both of these senior posts are voluntary.

Caroline and Valerie manage the Vice Chairman's Committee (VCC), which was formed in 1999 and consists of up to twenty volunteers from all parts of the country, who can serve on the committee for two terms each of three years.

Their role is to represent the Vice Chairman at both internal and external events, attend volunteer get-togethers and thank you parties and present medals and long service awards. They aim to help communication around the organisation and also signpost volunteers to appropriate managers if problems occur.

Because of their unique governance role they have direct access to the highest levels of the organisation and one third of the WRVS Board of Trustees is made up of volunteers drawn from the VCC

VCC's are encouraged to become members of the WRVS Association and to promote it whenever possible.

Providing there is a VCC member reasonably close to where your local meetings are held, they would be happy to come along to meet you all and give you an update on WRVS news.

To find out your nearest VCC member, please either contact your Div. Rep. or ring Head Office on 01 235 442 903 and ask for Lisa Curley.

A Very Good Question

Three people check into a hotel. They pay £30 to the receptionist and go to their room. The receptionist suddenly remembers that the room rate is £25 and gives £5 to the porter to return to the people. On the way to the room the porter reasons that £5 would be difficult to share among three people so he pockets £2 and gives £1 to each person. So if each person paid £10 and got back £1 they paid £9 each totalling £27. The porter has £2 so where is the missing £1?

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

HEREFORD, WORCESTERSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE - No report

Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Connop

SOMERSET AND AVON

Div. Rep. Mrs Sheila Scholey

Greetings to you all and I trust that you did not succumb to the flu virus as I did!

We hope to see some of you at this year's reunion and AGM, which will be held in the SW Region. Possibly as a Day Delegate.

Do please contact me with any queries, stories or any items you would like to share with other members.

WEST MIDLANDS

Div. Rep. Mrs J. M. Smith BEM

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

Our group has now dwindled to nine members due to ill health and Anno Domini; and the fact that there are no WRVS offices in Birmingham to recruit new people. As we have visited most National Trust and other places of interest in the Midlands we have decided to meet every two months for a coffee morning in members' houses or to go out to lunch. This year our lunches have been at the Birmingham College of Food where we get an excellent meal served in a leisurely fashion so we have plenty of time to chat and enjoy each other's company. We have a mini bus to take and collect us so no hassle with the driving.

We sadly have to record the death in December of Joan Beard at the age of 92. She joined the staff of the regional office in Molesey more than 50 years ago, and with the membership number of 014 was one of the founder members of the Association. She was a very much admired member of our group and will be sadly missed

If you tell someone that there are four hundred billion stars, they will believe you, but if you tell them a door has wet paint, they have to touch it.

DEVON AND CORNWALL - DORSET AND WILTSHIRE
Div. Rep. Mrs Alice Cleland CBE

In Wiltshire there are two groups, one for Swindon town and one for the rest of the County, with a total membership of 97. In November there was a coffee morning at the home of Denise Smyter for the ten regular county members and a Christmas Lunch at Moose Hall in Swindon for the local group. Marjorie Darby, the County rep., has decided the time has come to hand over the administration to Alice Cleland and we would all like to thank her for her hard work over the years in keeping us together. We continue our annual programme of 3 or 4 events for each group, which are always well attended. Jacquie Roe reports good attendance by the town group to the Spring Coffee Morning, June Tea and the December Lunch. She is also pleased to welcome two new members, Mrs Gill Rees and Mrs Sharon Rub, both of whom are working for the Home Library Service. Mrs Rub and her husband are from the USA and while he is employed in Swindon we are very pleased that she has chosen to join us

Dorset has 36 members, mostly living in the Poole area. No news of any events.

Far flung Cornwall had only 8 members till recently when Mrs Monica Jones of Mawgan joined. We welcome her and hope others will follow.

In Devon there is a membership of 61 with a flourishing group at Torrridge who are always represented at the AGM even if it means a long journey like last year to Scarborough. This group arranges events throughout the year but we hear no news of the rest.

Are you considering 'De-Cluttering'? Remember that junk is something you've kept for years and throw away three weeks before you need it.

Food Scares - Where are we now?

MAD-COW DISEASE - Eating meat from cattle infected with Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) could cause Creutzfeldt -Jakob Disease (CJD). It takes four to six years for infected cattle to show signs of the disease, so it could pass into the food chain without detection.

AND NOW? Controls, which apply throughout Europe, reduce the risk of people eating infected products. Non-EU beef must have been produced to an EU standard. The BSE epidemic is in decline and the number of new cases has fallen to its lowest point since 1988.

WALES - No report

Div. Rep. Mrs Mary Gibbons. OBE

WRVS SOUTH WEST JACKPOT CLUB

This Jackpot Club has been in existence since 1999, originally only for members in Dorset, Wiltshire, Somerset and Avon, (hence the name). But as it is now the only WRVS Jackpot Club in England, we are going to invite members to join regardless of where they live.

The annual membership subscription is £12, payable by cheque or standing order, and there is a monthly prize draw. With their permission, we will print the winners' names in this newsletter.

Half of your subscription goes into the prize fund and the amount of the prize draw is determined by the size of this. Currently, with 200 members, we give two £50 prizes each month, but with more members, this will go up!

The other half of your subscription goes into a managed fund to provide small 'Thank You's' to WRVS volunteers – recent examples include a contribution towards a Christmas party, sympathy flowers, and a retirement tea.

If you would like to join, please write for further details to Alice Cleland, WRVS Jackpot Club,

Breath

Remember that in the years to come you won't remember all the times you took a simple breath, you'll remember only the times in which you remained breathless. Live for those moments without searching for them, because life is full of surprises that we can find only when we are not looking for them

Not only food but also **PESTICIDES**, as newspapers regularly carry stories about the potential risks of pesticide residues.

Scientists and doctors seem vague on this one. A recent report said the risk to people's health is likely to be small, but also said the evidence is limited, with the possibility of future problems. Fruit and vegetables are a major source; to minimise your exposure buy organic produce.

SCOTLAND

Although our friends north of the border have their own Association, it is always nice to hear what they have been up to.

Chairman - Hilda Clow

Here we are into another year and on behalf of the members of the Scottish Association I extend good wishes to all for a happy and successful 2006.

January is a strange month, after the build-up to Christmas & New Year, things become settled again and I think many of our activities depend on the weather. Despite dire warnings of a severe winter we in Scotland seem to have got off relatively lightly and to my knowledge our activities and meetings have not been curtailed at all. I guess we have fared a lot better than many of you further south. However, it is still January and we are not quite into spring yet but we are now enjoying the lengthening days.

Our first Committee Meeting of the year will be held in Perth at the beginning of February, when we catch up with the news and views of the Branches throughout the country. Our main topic of discussion will be the AGM to be held on April 13th in Perth.

Last September a Civic Reception was held in Edinburgh in recognition of the work of W.V.S. during World War 2, along with other emergency service bodies. Photographs and old uniforms stirred many memories. We were privileged to have among the guests a lady who joined the service at its conception and is still an active member!

I note from your Newsletters that you have difficulty in recruiting new members to the Association, as do we. With the closure of local offices it is difficult to make contact with new volunteers to inform them of the Association. Our membership is fairly static at present, but none of us is becoming any younger!

Have a good spring & summer. If any member comes north of the border & would like to get in touch, please do not hesitate to do so.

Dare I put this one here?

In Scotland a new game was invented. It was entitled Gentlemen Only Ladies Forbidden and thus the word GOLF entered the language.

WRVS Association - AGM venues and record of Chairman

1974 – 1982

All AGMs were in London and the First Chairman was Miss Kathleen Mary Halpin

1983	Birmingham	Mrs Helena Foster was announced as next Chairman
1984	Pudsey	
1985	London	
1986	Bristol	Mrs Ava Christophersen announced as next Chairman
1987	Newcastle	
1988	London	
1989	Chester	Mrs Peggy James announced as next Chairman
1990	York	
1991	London	
1992	Cardiff	Mrs Elizabeth D Claydon announced as next Chairman
1993	Norwich	
1994	London	
1995	Leicester	Mrs Sheila McCormack BEM announced as next Chairman
1996	Ambleside	
1997	London	
1998	Milton Hill	Mrs Diana Price announced as next Chairman
1999	Durham	
2000	London	
2001	Birmingham	Mrs Pat Copping announced as next Chairman
2002	Bath	
2003	Chester	
2004	Northampton	Mrs Sheila Scholey announced as next Chairman
2005	Scarborough	
2006	North Somerset	

Mother Eve's Pudding (a variation on Eve's Pudding)

If you want a good pudding, to teach you I'm willing
Take two pen'orth of eggs (when twelve for a shilling).
And then the same fruit that Eve had once chosen
Well-pared and well chopped, at least half a dozen.
Six ounces of bread (let your maid eat the crust)
The crumbs must be grated as small as the dust.
Six ounces of currents from the stones you must sort
Lest they break out your teeth and spoil all your sport.
Six ounces of sugar won't make it too sweet
Some salt and some nutmeg will make it complete.
Three hours let it boil without hurry or flutter
And then serve it up with sugar and butter.

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01 904 634 500

(all three of the above are contact details for admin and circulation issues)

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Ruth Markland
Chairman WRVS

Vice-Presidents

Mrs Ava Christophersen
Mrs Elizabeth Claydon
Mrs Pat Copping
The Hon. Dame Mary Corsar DBE
Mrs Peggy James MBE
Mrs Sheila McCormack BEM
Mrs Diane Price
Lady Toulson CBE

Chairman

Mrs Sheila Scholey

Hon. Secretary

Mrs Jean Pickard

Hon. Treasurer

Mrs Maureen Hudson

Hon. Editor

Paulene Lambert

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

or I can be contacted at

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