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Spring
Autumn 2007

No 66

WRVS Association NEWSLETTER

Letter from the Chairman
Priory Street Centre, 15 Priory Street, York YO1 6ET

Dear Member

As I prepare my letter on this grey day in early January, it is wonderful to see signs of Spring already emerging. Some of my daffodils are out already, as are cyclamen and primroses, with a few roses left over from last year

I hope that you have kept fit and warm during the past months and had many interesting functions at which to meet old friends and colleagues

Last September, we had a very enjoyable Reunion and AGM in North Somerset. You should have heard the 'chit-chat'! During the meeting the former Editor of the Newsletter, Mrs. Ness Venables was offered the position of a Vice President of the Association. She was unfortunately unable to be with us at the meeting, but I am pleased to report, she has since been delighted to accept.

In 2007 we will meet in the North West Region, when I look forward to meeting a goodly number of you

Some of you will have attended Carol Services, as I did, reminding us of why we celebrate Christmas. Did any of you attend the WRVS Carol Concert at the Guards Chapel in Horse Guards, London? A wonderful occasion!

Sincere Greetings to you all

Sheila Scholey

Random jottings from the Editor

Dear Members

I do hope that you all managed to watch the ITV drama that was put out in the autumn, and I bet I do not even have to tell you what I am talking about. Victoria Wood wrote and starred in 'Housewife, 49'; a play based on the diaries of WVS member Nella Last. Well I am embarrassed to say that I missed it, and though hundreds of people have bombarded the television station with requests for a repeat there are no plans thus far (probably because the DVD will be out in February). But it is possible to buy the book, 'Nella Last's War: The Second World War Diaries of Housewife, 49' at £8.99



I guess that we all watch more television during the winter months, and perhaps as we get older, even do some of the day time shows. There was a time a short while ago when my social life was spent in pubs; The Rovers Return, The Queen Vic, The Woolpack and the Scarlet Bar. There was even one week when I found myself in a wine bar in Letherbridge. Well at least it gave me something to talk about when I met up with real people, and don't tell me that you don't know at least one of them yourselves! But if we don't talk about the soaps, or the weather, what else do the British talk about? What other topics of conversation are on the lips of people when they meet? Is it all doom and gloom or can you chat in a light hearted way? Do you, like me, even confess to being a Grumpy Old Woman (or man)? Luckily, thanks again to the TV, we can recognise it for what it is and have a laugh about it

I am finishing my jottings and the editing this time in agony. No not just a moan this time, real agony as there is an abscess in my tooth. What a curse these molar things are. From teething as a toddler, gaping gaps as milk teeth fall out (usually at the time you are asked to be a bridesmaid); braces for a teenager; the eruption of wisdom teeth, followed by fillings as decay sets in; then bits falling off (which I was told was because I used to break cotton whilst sewing instead of using scissors). And now this! Argghh Adding insult to this injury is the fact that there is not an NHS dentist in sight

Best wishes to you all

Paulene

Paulene Lambert

NORTH WEST DIVISION

CUMBRIA AND LANCASHIRE

We are very sad to announce that the Div Rep, MRS SADIE BAKER passed away at the beginning of December.



Sadie joined WRVS in 1982, whilst she was still working as a teacher, and for 24 years was a dedicated and loyal member. She was D.O. for the Ribble Valley in Lancashire and was also involved in both Emergency Services and 'Food'. She was one of the original VCC members; was on the committee for the WRVS tennis tournament as well as volunteering for the Wimbledon fortnight; dealt with the National distribution of Poppy Wreaths and was involved in the organisation of the WRVS representation at the Cenotaph in Whitehall. This she also attended, as well as the Service of Remembrance in the Gardens of Westminster Abbey. She had just agreed to take on the role of Div Rep for the two counties, but sadly did not have the opportunity to send in her first report.

Sylvia Hatchell

MERSEYSIDE AND CHESHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Sylvia Hatchell

Anthea Stewart writes from Crosby. The number of members able to attend meetings has fallen due to illness and age, but the more fortunate members have had a gathering every two months to enjoy a good chat in good company. Most are still active within WRVS and always find plenty to discuss about their activities. One meeting was held in sunshine in a member's garden (*Whose? Do tell us names of members who have been so generous with their hospitality. Ed*) another at a local village tearoom where we were forced indoors because of rain but still enjoyed our scones with jam and cream – naughty but very nice! At another meeting we all took photographs of ourselves when young, which were then laid out on a table and we had to match photo to member, great fun. Nobody could guess that the young child with long fair curls and a fringe, wearing a dress and short white ankle sock was really one of our male members at the age of four.

(I can understand why there is no name on this one! Ed). We all enjoyed our Christmas Get Together lunch at a local hostelry, where the management know to reserve tables for us well away from customers who have gone there for a quiet meal

The report of St Helens group is from Rita Scott. Our group has dwindled down to just eight ladies, two of whom are long term sick and five no longer wish to be Association members. We now meet for lunch as an independent group on alternate months and we chat about the 'Good Old Days of WRVS'. Two of us are life members so we keep up with news about the Association and WRVS. Although this seems a sad report, our lunches are good and we celebrated Christmas at the Adelphi. We will keep together as long as possible and support one another when any need arises

Rita remembers having to visit the Manchester Office many years ago, and missing the junction of the M6 on the return journey. When she was late back her husband admitted concern that she had been abducted. "No chance, not in a WRVS van that the driver has to double de clutch". How many of us remember those cars!

She also tells us of embarrassment for both her and her passenger, the new Chief Inspector of Police in St Helens, when they had to phone the Traffic Department as they were lost!

Wirral This group continues to meet on the first Wednesday of each month, when we enjoy each other's company at lunch. It has been difficult to arrange outings due to falling numbers and we have lost two members of very long standing, Connie Searle and Eunice Common; they will be sadly missed. At Christmas we had a super celebration at the local Masonic Club and several of us joined with the Wirral Meals on Wheels project at their annual dinner and enjoyed a great evening. From Dorothy Whittingham

MANCHESTER

Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Matthews BEM

The Bury Group gathered in glorious sunshine in the centre of Bury at lunchtime on 12th October. Our coach driver had decided to avoid as much motorway as possible on our journey to St Annes-on-Sea and the result was a delightful ride through the Lancashire countryside, much enjoyed by everyone present. An afternoon spent finding 'end of season' bargains in The Square, or strolling along the promenade whetted everyone's appetite for the super Grilled Fleetwood Plaice etc served to us at the Lindum Hotel. At 7pm we boarded our coach for a nostalgic tour of the Blackpool Illuminations before returning home.

In January twenty-five members enjoyed meeting together and having an excellent lunch at the Red Hall Restaurant in Ramsbottom - we are lucky to have a good bus service running past this hotel making it a popular venue for members travelling from all parts of Bury metro.

A sincere thank-you is due again to Mrs Audrey Wood for continuing another year offering her home and kind hospitality once a month to members in the south of Bury.

It is pleasing to hear that the Sale members are continuing to meet together monthly for coffee and a chat in each other's homes. In December Rosemary Cooper kindly organised their usual Christmas lunch at the Cresta Court Hotel in Altrincham. As always it was a most enjoyable occasion and Joan Allmark (ex Trafford Met. Organiser) and I would like to say thank you for the excellent hospitality given to us that day.

STAFFORDSHIRE, SHROPSHIRE, DERBYSHIRE - Div. Rep. Vacant

Doreen Martin has told us that she has resigned as County Rep for Derbyshire.

HOW TO SURVIVE A HEART ATTACK WHEN YOU ARE ALONE

Since many people are alone when they suffer a heart attack, this article seemed to be in order. Let's say that you start experiencing severe pain in your chest that starts to radiate out into your arm and up into your jaw.

Without help, the person whose heart stops beating properly and who begins to feel faint, has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness. However, you can help yourself by coughing repeatedly and very vigorously. A deep breath should be taken before each cough. The cough must be deep and prolonged, as when producing sputum from deep inside the chest. And a cough must be repeated about every 2 seconds, without let up, until help arrives, or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again. Deep breaths get oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep the blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it regain normal rhythm. In this way, heart attack victims can get to a phone to call help. Tell as many other people as possible about this, it could save their lives!

From Health Cares, Rochester General Hospital via Chapter 240s newsletter

Whose idea was it to put an "S" in the word "lisp"?

SOUTH EAST DIVISION

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Barbara Titcomb

In Northampton, I am happy to report that Mrs Carter arranged a Christmas meal for the Rushden Group at the Golf Club at Raunds and she will be keeping in touch with them during 2007

With the closure of Huntingdon Branch two or three years ago, followed by Cambridge in May of last year, I now very sadly report that the Peterborough branch closed at the end of last year. This has been particularly sad for me because I started our group in the summer of 1989; but with our few remaining members being 80+ and only three managing to make the last two coffee mornings, our remaining funds were used to offset the cost of the Christmas meal. A sad time, but one that we all enjoyed

OXFORDSHIRE, BEDFORDSHIRE AND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Callaway

The Bedfordshire report starts by welcoming new member Mrs Vicki Randle

At the end of August Beryl and Doug Rees opened their house and garden in Flitwick for a coffee morning. All members enjoy these visits and the opportunity to walk round Doug's much loved garden. It is also a pleasant change to meet in a town other than Bedford.

In October a local authoress (Mrs Porter) gave a talk on her life and on writing as therapy. Prominent in the information sent before her talk was the fact that she has been married three times. Ann Robinson asked the question uppermost in the minds of many in the audience and was assured that the speaker's present relationship was a happy one.

The 2006 programme ended as usual as a Christmas Buffet. Members often bring a guest with them and it is a well attended function that starts the Christmas Festivities on just the right note.

From Buckinghamshire, Margaret McRoberts writes:- May (Turner) and Joyce (Webb) were delighted with the kind words in the Newsletter, both said it was the first time they had seen their names in print. It really "made their day". Thank you, Editor.

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK

Div. Rep. Mrs Mary Taylor

The Editor offers APOLOGIES for the loss of last paragraph in the last newsletter, but lays the blame at the door of the printers, who have yet to comment on the mistake!!! The complete last para is reprinted here

Then in July we made our annual visit to Cromer Summer Spectacular, as funny and entertaining as ever, and a tribute to 'Abba' as finale to the second half. In August we all met for our final outing of the summer (excluding all the rainy days). This time we headed for Houghton Hall, North Norfolk. A beautiful old house built by Sir Robert Walpole, Britain's first Prime Minister, during the 1720's. There is the most fantastic staircase all made of imported Mahogany and self supported (no pillars or uprights). The entire artistic interior was by William Kent. The house also has a Unique Model Soldier Collection, the largest and most comprehensive in the world consisting of 20,000 models arranged in various battle forms from "Battle of Waterloo" to "Western Desert". *There are 350 acres of parkland, home of a large herd of exotic white fallow deer that you can get quite close to. There are also five acres of walled gardens divided into 'garden rooms'. We were so lucky to be also blessed with a day of sunshine.*

Mary says that she has no news to add to the previous Newsletter entry

ESSEX AND HERTFORDSHIRE - Div. Rep. Vacant

HERTFORDSHIRE - County Rep.

Mrs. Kathleen Collins MBE has let us know of the passing on January 15th of Phylis Wood, a loyal member who worked in the Southend Hospital Shop until she was 82 years old. She had just celebrated her one hundredth birthday at a party given by her family and was still active in December

Ann Parry of Hertfordshire has sent me a little book of quotations, amusing stories and one-liners that she has collected over the years. I am sure they will be a source of 'fillers' for some time to come. Thank you Ann. The one I start with always had me wondering if the reference was the month or the flower. Ann however records the second line, so there is no doubt. Ed.

Ne'er cast a clout, till May be out. Button to chin, till June be in

SURREY, KENT, EAST & SUSSEX.

Mrs Joan Rosling,

The news from Woking comes from Shirley Mason who says that having lost so many members this year it was felt that we should meet to discuss the future of the club. After an enjoyable lunch and considerable discussion it was decided that it would be the last formal meeting of the branch. To end on a happier note it was agreed that having made so many friendships over the years, those who are able would keep in touch and meet for an occasional lunch or coffee morning. Our thanks go to Joan Rosling, our Div Rep, for all her hard work and travelling on our behalf, and to members of the committee for keeping it running so long

In September Guildford members enjoyed a visit to Clandon Park Garden Centre, where we had a delicious tea in the newly refurbished restaurant. The scones and cakes were all homemade and we were made to feel very welcome. So much so that we may well go there for our AGM and lunch in April (instead of the committee members doing it all!). At the end of November members went once again to the local College for an early Christmas lunch. I was unable to attend and understand that although the food was up to the usual high standard the service was not, which was down to several students not turning up on the day! Needless to say there were long waits between courses, which upset several people. We have always enjoyed the event and venue and hope it will not happen again

It is with great sadness that Guildford has to report the death of Pat Hiscock after a short illness. She was a former District Organiser in the town, County OPW Officer and County Publicity Officer. She was also a member of the Association Committee for many years. She was loved in both Guildford and Surrey and a dear friend to many including our editor Paulene and myself

In October, Julia Cooper once again organised a county lunch for West Kent, in the same venue as last year, a very nice pub with excellent food. After getting lost last year we found our way easily and actually got there far too early having allowed for any problems there might be on the M25, which for once was totally clear!

Finally, I have been approached by Kirsty Henshell of WRVS to ask if I can find anyone, preferable in Sussex, but at least in my Division, who worked for WVS during the war, or who joined just after the war. WRVS are hoping to have an oral history of WVS from 1939-45 so if you know anyone who fits the bill, and is willing, Kirsty would like to visit and record their reminiscences. Bit of a tall order I am sure, but you never know!

Doesn't "expecting the unexpected" make the unexpected expected?

LONDON S.W. - Div. Rep. Vacant

We have a report from Ass member Joan Young B.E.M., who on behalf of WRVS runs a Derby and Joan club in Merton (*which I have now learned is made up of Wimbledon, Morden and Mitcham!*). In March 2006 the club celebrated its 60th Birthday and WRVS Chief Executive Mark Lever, WRVS Vice Chairman Valerie Everitt, the Mayor of Merton and all 34 members and five WRVS volunteers sat down to a celebratory lunch at a local restaurant. All those attending were presented with an inscribed pen and pencil set.

The club made the newspapers again when one of their members, Edie Moore, celebrated her 100th birthday with a party laid on by the WRVS.

LONDON N.E. AND CITY - 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

HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT
Div Rep Mrs Beryl Adams

The Hampshire group met together at the end of October in a community hall in Purbrook, near Havant. This time we met at 1.15pm each taking a packed lunch, a raffle prize and something for the Sales table. While we ate our lunch we had time to chat. Our speaker for the afternoon was Alison Owen from Hampshire Trading standards talking on Door Step Crime. This was most interesting and useful introducing us to the various ways we could be 'taken in' by callers and what to do, always putting the chain on the door before opening and checking identity. In conjunction with this she gave us all a booklet on general consumer and safety advice, leaflets with phone numbers of utility companies and how we could tell Trading Standards if we knew of a reliable tradesman. Finally we were given a printed notice to put in our windows saying we do not buy goods or services at the door. The meeting ended with the raffle and a cup of tea

Isle of Wight started the second half of the year with a visit to the Alpaca farm at Brighstone. We hadn't realised what delightful animals these were and we had a most enjoyable afternoon that included a demonstration of spinning, and a really good cream tea. We hope to return. Unfortunately health problems intervened for the next few months and we are unable to get going again until November with a visit to the Apollo Theatre - a very accomplished performance of The Death of a Salesman. For December the committee provided a pre Christmas lunch at a local church hall, it was attended by all members and was a great success. A few members enjoyed a trip on the Mince Pie Special on our Island Steam Railway and more hope to participate on a summer trip. We have started the New Year with a lunch at The Ponda Rosa restaurant and hope we can now progress to a full programme. Happy New Year wishes to all. Shirley Shambrook

BERKSHIRE - Div. Rep. Vacant

BERKSHIRE - County Rep.
Mrs Morag Gordon,

STRANGERS IN A BOX

Come look with me inside this drawer, in this box I've often seen
At the pictures, black and white, proud faces, still serene
I wish I knew the people, these strangers in the box
Their names and all their memories are lost among my socks

I wonder what their lives were like, how did they spend their days
What about their special times, I'll never know their ways
If only someone had taken time, to tell who, where and when
These faces of my heritage, would come to life again

Could this sorrow become the fate of the pictures we take today
The faces and the memories, of ancestors, passed away
Make time to save your pictures, seize opportunity when it knocks
Or someday you and yours could be, the strangers in the box

This is so true, People in fuzzy black and white photos that I knew intimately as a child, are now just unknown faces as nothing was pencilled on the back of them and my parents are no longer here to remind me who they were. Ed

If it's true that we are here to help others, what are the others doing here?

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

GLOUCESTERSHIRE, HEREFORDSHIRE, WORCESTERSHIRE - Div. Rep. Vacant

Jean Connop tells us that at the Cheltenham meeting in October, which was held at Hatherley Hall, the Rev Felicity Bayne spoke about a journey that she made with her husband in 2005. They completed the final 200 miles of the pilgrimage route to the Cathedral de Compastela in Northern Spain commencing from Leon staying in 'refuges' (hostels) each night. They would rise at 6am, walk for two hours, stop for breakfast; walk until 2pm then stop to avoid the heat. It took them two weeks. When the pilgrimage was completed they attended a service in the Cathedral where interestingly there is a foot solid silver incense burner that requires eight men to swing it! They hope to undertake the whole pilgrimage some time in the future. The members enjoyed tea and cakes prepared and served by Miss Irene Owen and Dr Gwen Owen

SOMERSET AND AVON

Div. Rep. Mrs Sheila Scholey

A remarkable lady - Mrs. Audrey Chubb who retired last year age 89 years, having given 68 years to the Service. On returning home from her honeymoon in 1938, Audrey was asked to join the newly formed WVS to help with war evacuees in the Clevedon area of Somerset. Audrey continued to work with the Service and in 1951 joined the team helping at the Frenchay hospital, Bristol. Whilst continuing to work at the hospital she also helped to establish a 'Meals on Wheels' service in her local area. During her 55-year association with the hospital, Audrey and other volunteers raised thousands of pounds for the hospital through the WRVS shop. Audrey urges others to become volunteers and says, "Volunteering is a wonderful experience, you make so many friends."

WEST MIDLANDS - Div. Rep. Vacant

Group Organiser: *Endington | Sutton Coldfield Group, West Midlands*
Joan Wortley,

Why do people call their own language their mother tongue?
Because their fathers seldom get the chance to use it

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

No news from Dorset or Cornwall. Members from Devon and Wiltshire attended the AGM at Bristol in September. The Wiltshire County group had an enjoyable coffee morning in November at the home of Denise Smyter and the Swindon group held their Christmas Lunch on 8th December



If the earth were only a few feet in diameter, floating a few feet above a field somewhere, people would come from everywhere to marvel at it. People would walk round it, wondering at its big pools of water, its little pools and the water flowing between the pools. People would marvel at the bumps on it and the holes in it and they would marvel at the very thin layer of gas surrounding it and at the water suspended in the gas. The people would marvel at all the creatures in the water and at the creatures walking round the surface of the ball. The people would declare it as sacred because it is the only one and they would protect it so that it would not be hurt. The ball would be the greatest wonder known and the people would come to pray to it, to be healed, to gain knowledge, to know beauty and to wonder how it could be. People would love it and defend it with their lives because they would somehow know that their lives, their own roundness could be nothing without it. If only the world were only a few feet in diameter.

An older gentleman was on the operating table Awaiting surgery and he insisted that his son, a renowned surgeon, perform the operation. As he was about to get the anaesthesia He asked to speak to his son. "Yes, Dad, what is it?" "Don't be nervous, son; Do your best and just remember, if it doesn't go well, If something happens to me. Your mother is going to come and live with you and your wife...."

WALES

Div. Rep. Mrs Mary Gibbons. OBE

Since writing the last article for the newsletter I have had a most enjoyable time visiting two of the groups and joining them on their 'meals out' and outings.

The Abergavenny group are 'the ladies who lunch' and I joined them when they had their autumn get-together at the Raglan Arms just outside Raglan at a village called Llandenny. There were only six of us as some members were ill but it was good to get together and just chat about what was happening in WRVS these days as some of us are still actively involved. You could tell that they approved of the venue because they have arranged to return in January. Earlier in the summer they went for Afternoon Tea to the Gliffaes Hotel on the banks of the River Usk just outside Crickhowell. It seems that this was almost as good as going to the Ritz in London, so if any members of the Association are holidaying in Wales and going through this area, these are two places the local members would thoroughly recommend.

The Dyfed members had a most enjoyable outing to St. Davids, Pembrokeshire in the autumn organised by Anthea Evens and Mary Morris. The weather could have been better, a great deal better, but we gathered for lunch in a very nice restaurant in the Cathedral prior to a conducted tour of the Cathedral itself. This was most interesting and many facts were learnt – the roof was made of oak, the nearest supply of this was the Forest of Dean (England), so the builders brought it from Ireland instead!! Despite the guide being slightly anti English it was a very good tour. We then had an afternoon tea on the way back to Haverfordwest. Despite the weather, we enjoyed meeting and exchanging news and views. More of the Dyfed group were there in Carmarthen for the Christmas lunch. The members always have a small raffle and this pays the expenses of the group leader and saves her being out of pocket each year. The outing in 2007 is going to be Aberglasney – a house and gardens which has been restored and featured on Television a while ago. This is also a place very worthwhile visiting if anyone is in the area, being almost next door to the National Botanical Garden of Wales.

The Colwyn Bay Group still meet on a regular basis for coffee and Miss Bowden, who organises activities, is hoping that they may be able to get together for lunch at the local Cricket Club at Rhos on Sea when the weather improves. The bus service along this part of the North Wales Coast is very good, and with senior citizens having free bus passes this helps the members to get out and about. Members from the East Riding who knew Mrs. Taylor will be delighted to know that she joins the local members for all their activities and seems to have settled into North Wales very well.

SCOTLAND

Chairman - Hilda Clow

January is blowing on, we have had so much rain and high winds since Christmas, we are all getting a bit fed up with the weather, however nothing can be done about it so we make the best of it. Some of our branches have already had a meeting this year, which cheered us up as we exchanged news of Christmas and New Year Activities.

Our committee meeting will be held in Perth at the beginning of February when final plans will be made for the Reunion and AGM which this year is being hosted by the Fife branch on 19th April in Glenrothes. From what I gather from their members everything seems to be very much in hand. There will be a change of Office bearers, Val, Isobel and myself having served our three years, so this should be my last contribution to your Newsletter. I must admit that the three years have flown past and I have really enjoyed my time as Chairman, Scotland

Our membership remains fairly constant. Sadly some members have died which is inevitable in an Association such as ours, but new people have joined to take their places. Quite a number of our branches now meet for coffee or lunch only three or four times a year rather than monthly. The feeling was that to invite a speaker along when the turnout was unpredictable was unfair and could be embarrassing, but the primary object is to keep in touch with each other and this is what we are doing.

We hope that you enjoy your spring and summer and as ever, if anyone is north of the border and would like to make contact, please do – a warm welcome awaits

PS. After my little moan about the weather at the beginning of my report have just spent the morning on the golf course under a clear blue sky, wonderful visibility and relatively warm sunshine. It is amazing the lift this gives to the spirits

Adam and Eve had an ideal marriage.

He didn't have to hear about all the men she could have married and she didn't have to hear about how well his mother cooked

The arm that is raised as a volunteer, is far less painful than the one that is twisted up the back

Teacher: Today in our English lesson we are going to talk about the tenses.

So, if I say 'I am beautiful' which tense is it?

Student: Obviously it is the past tense

CHANNEL ISLANDS

JERSEY

Ass. Rep. Mrs Jill O'Byrne

A lovely summers day saw the members hosting a garden party for the Silver Anniversary of the Association in Jersey. We invited the Guernsey Rep and her husband and active members of the WRVS in Jersey. Acquaintances were renewed and it was interesting to learn of their present day activities. Mrs Jennings hosted Mr & Mrs Chilcott, transporting them and visiting the Jersey Occupation Tapestry en route. It was a most enjoyable occasion, held in a lovely garden with distant sea views and Mrs Crill was thanked for the use of her home where a cold lunch was enjoyed in the shade of an old apple tree and under some garden umbrellas.

A tea party was held to thank Mrs Jennings on her retirement, for all her work after fourteen years as our rep. She was presented with an engraved crystal bowl

Our next meeting was our Christmas lunch, which once again all of our members were able to attend. The restaurant was rather noisy and we adjourned to the bar lounge to, by now empty, to enjoy our desserts and coffee in front of an open fire

GUERNSEY

Ass. Rep. Mrs Margaret Chilcott

We continue with our lunches in April and November; although we were fewer in number at the last one, partly because we clashed with another function on the Island, one of the drawbacks of setting a date six months in advance.

In June, my husband and I were invited by Doreen Jennings, for the 25th Anniversary Celebrations of their group. The day couldn't have been nicer, a pleasant sail over to Jersey where Doreen and her daughter met us at the harbour and took us to see the Millennium Tapestry, depicting the occupation of Jersey during the war. Doreen herself had worked on one of the panels. Then we went on to the home of one of their members where we enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch in her garden. We were made so welcome; a lovely day to remember. Doreen has now retired as Jersey Rep but we will keep in touch.

Also in June I invited our members for tea in my garden when we had the chance to meet up again and were fortunate in having lovely weather. Our next lunch will be on 2nd April when I hope as many members as possible will be able to come

Letter to the Editor from Barbara Flinn BEM, Gloucester

During the past few days the WRVS Association Newsletter has arrived and I must compliment you on doing your best to make it interesting. But I do feel now that you have a very difficult job. Most of us are so very old and the members that we worked with are no longer about and of course we didn't know members in other parts of the country ever. I am only glad that in some regions, people who worked together can still meet.

I go back to hearing Lady Reading speak once in Bristol when I was at the beginning of WRVS in Newton Abbot and I worked on the County Staff of Wiltshire and Dorset after that organising luncheon clubs and OPW that was new in the 1970's. Now I am attending a local lunch club and enjoying the meal and a day out. My colleagues in Yeovil District where I was D.O. for a long time until retirement are no longer there except one, and I have had to move to Gloucestershire now, where I have no WRVS contacts.

I think it would be good to have some news of WRVS today; it hardly exists as far as I can tell, but it was a welcome surprise to find a Tea Bar run by the WRVS when I was in hospital recently.

Do you think the time is coming to forgo the Newsletter?

ARE YOU IN NEED OF FINANCIAL HELP?

The Benevolent Trust is a source of money, 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.

YOU HAVE HELPED US, NOW LET US HELP YOU

WRVS SOUTH WEST JACKPOT CLUB

This Jackpot Club has been in existence since 1999, originally for members in Dorset, Wiltshire, Somerset and Avon (hence the name). We now 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.

Half of your subscription goes into the prize fund and the amount of the prize draw is determined by the size of this. Currently we give two £50 prizes each month. The other half of your subscription goes into a managed fund to provide small 'Thank Yous' to WRVS volunteers - so we might give a contribution towards a Club party, send get well flowers, or pay for a retirement tea. This applies to Association groups too.

So if you would like to join, or your Group would like a contribution towards a specific expense, please write for further details to Alice Cleland, WRVS Jackpot Club,

AGING

Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it

Its that time between using the $1/4$'s to make you older, then to make you older still ($5\frac{1}{4} - 8\frac{3}{4}$)

The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for

When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to youth, think of Algebra

You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks

Ah, being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable

Old age is when former class mates are so grey and wrinkled and bald, they don't recognize you

If you don't learn to laugh at trouble, you won't have anything to laugh at when you are old

First you forget names, then you forget faces, then you forget to pull up your zip, but It's worse when you forget to pull it down.

NORTH EAST DIVISION

NORTHUMBERLAND, TYNE & WEAR

Div. Rep. Mrs Sheila McCormack BEM NB change of address

The Group Leaders for Newcastle, Sunderland and Northumberland felt that they didn't have anything particularly to report; other than the fact that they meet monthly, usually with a speaker. As their Div Rep was going on holiday, none of them wanted to write to me personally (*Boo Hoo*). *Hope you enjoyed your time in Australia Sheila*

CLEVELAND, DARLINGTON, DURHAM, NORTH YORKSHIRE



We are very sad to announce that MRS RENE THOMPSON OBE passed away on Thursday 18th January. The press announcement said, 'She lived life to the full and gave so much to so many'. Our deepest sympathy goes out to Rene's son and three daughters at this very sad time. Rene was awarded her OBE for services to WRVS and the Community - she joined the WRVS Association in December 1977 and for many years has been the

Divisional Representative for Cleveland, Darlington, Durham and North Yorkshire, a task which she carried out diligently never sparing any effort. We shall miss her presence at Association meetings; she always spoke sound sense and had a wealth of knowledge that commanded respect. It was always a pleasure to be in the company of this highly intelligent, flamboyant and very kind person called Rene.

Before I give my report I would like to introduce myself as Edith Stamp. I joined the WVS in 1964 and served Hartlepool as DO for many years. In 1986 Rene Thompson asked if I would try and start an Association. The rest as they say is history and so here is the report for that area.

Hartlepool group are still meeting monthly throughout the year and we enjoy good speakers, happy outings and enjoyable luncheons. One of our recent meetings had a speaker from the Great North Air Ambulance, a very deserving charity. On a different note we had a speaker talking about his Guardian Angel.

In September we went to Ripon Market, had lunch at The Unicorn and then on to Harrogate for the afternoon. At the time of writing we are looking forward to our New Year Lunch at a local hotel, at which we plan to have a quiz trying to recognise photos of members in their earlier years

Sheila Pantin writes from Harrogate where members wish a Happy and Peaceful New Year to everyone in the Association. The group still meet regularly for coffee, plans and much chat. We enjoy trips to the theatre and concerts; especially matinees in the Sun Pavilion in the Valley Gardens recently refurbished and then opened by H.M. The Queen. We are so fortunate to live in this beautiful town. Of our members, Lady Hilda Laycock is now in a nursing home where she is comfortable and well looked after. A specially adapted taxi brings her in her wheelchair to social functions and she still plays a mean game of bridge! Sadly we lost a very dear member Mrs Joan Sutton in September and miss her a lot at our meetings

The Darlington branch report comes from Isobel Paterson. When I became the group leader we had twenty-four members and our plans were to have a summer outing and two lunches per year, in March and December. Due to old age, lack of transport and the passing of several members, we have now dropped to just twelve. Therefore, I approached a family restaurant in the centre of the town and they now provide a reasonably priced meal, which we chose from the menu on arrival. Those living on their own often choose to have 'Roast of the Day'. We are able to eat at leisure and have a prolonged chat over coffee. Many members then take the opportunity to shop in the town before travelling back to their homes

Hazel Hopkinson writes from Scarborough. We have welcomed new members Mrs M Baker and Mrs A Sadler. In September we tried a venue for our meeting but the group was very much smaller than usual. In October Carol Foster, who had arranged flowers at Hovingham Hall and Castle Howard, gave an extremely interesting talk and demonstration on 'Flowers from the Garden' to twenty members, some of whom were able to take home arrangements. In November we had a coffee morning at the Irton Garden Centre. The chance to admire and buy Christmas goods seemed to put the 32 members in a festive mood. In January, 22 of us braved the weather for coffee and homemade cakes at the AGM. Mrs Barbara Gardiner, a founder member of Scalby MoW, retired as Chairman after twelve years. Ros Rowntree, District Rep gave thanks to Barbara for her tireless work and then gave a warm welcome to Christine Hepworth as the new Branch Chairman

The report from York is from their chairman Millie Wilks. We were sorry that neither our president Mrs Ness Venables nor Miss Lesley Hyatt, acting chairman, were able to be with us for the AGM in October due to ill health. Greetings were sent to them. Two new members have joined us, Miss Beryl Inman and Mrs Maureen Hudson, Association Treasurer.

That made five new members in 2006, which is very encouraging. As Miss Hyatt had completed her year as acting chairman, Mrs Wilkes offered her services, which was approved by the meeting. The talk was by Mrs Jean Dale who had visited China and the Yangtze Gorge. She brought a large collection of artefacts collected on her travels that we were able to examine. We had enjoyed the Afternoon Tea in June at the Blakeney Hotel so much that we went there again for our Christmas lunch and were not disappointed. A good time was had by all the twenty-one members present.

The 'stuffing' of Newsletters into envelopes seems to take less and less time; it is now being completed in just one day. Is this because there are fewer recipients or because York members have become more efficient? Perhaps a combination of both and a lot of help from office staff!

EAST YORKSHIRE TO HUMBER AND HULL

Div Rep. Mrs Robina Priestley

This has been a half year with no new members and happily no deaths to report, although we do seem to have had one member who has moved away without leaving any message as to where she has gone. I always feel sad when this occurs, as we have not had the opportunity to say goodbye and wish them well. Monthly lunches have been well attended and I for one look forward to seeing everyone and catching up with the news. The Christmas event was as enjoyable as usual and the quiz, this year with a floral theme, was won by Mrs Jean Creaser of Wilberfoss. That is all our news this time but we would like to wish everyone the best of health and happiness in 2007.

SOUTH AND WEST YORKSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs June Pitts BEM

Gillian Highley MBE, volunteered to write, as June is not well, so good wishes go to her from the members of the group. The Calderdale group met as usual in September in our very spectacular Town Hall when all members agreed that the July 'Farewell to King Cross' Party had been very successful. Many of our members were sorry to see the closure of the Luncheon and Afternoon clubs that had been running successfully at King Cross for 30 years. The church has now closed and WRVS is very grateful to them for all the support and kindness received over the past years. Fortunately many members can attend other Luncheon clubs in the area. Sadly none run by WRVS, but as most WRVS members are over 70 years we felt unable to start again. However we have started a Drop In Coffee Morning once a month under the auspices of WRVS Association and are pleased to see old friends again.

Next month we are providing soup and sandwiches as a change. Following the closure of the Luncheon club we have acquired a new member and hope that one or two more might join us.

Our speaker in November was a local historian who spoke about shopping in Victorian Halifax, which was very interesting. He also used the opportunity to ask members what they remembered about the shops in Halifax during the 40's 50's and 60's. This evoked quite a discussion and was much enjoyed. In January we had our Fish and Chip lunch, which is always popular and had an almost full attendance.

LEICESTERSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Div Reps Jenny and Mike Smith

Jean Heason writes from Bassetlaw. Once again I have to report that we have had another very successful year. Our group of committed members continue to meet regularly every month and we are now recruiting more new members, and are looking forward to their contributions to help make our programme more interesting. As well as our meetings, many of our members still perform duties in and around the area. We are proud of them and long may they continue

In August we had a visit to Cutlers Hall in Sheffield, with a conducted tour to see the displays of historical silverware and to hear the history of Sheffield Silver. September and October were both lunch meetings. We do like to eat, but it also gives us an opportunity to catch up with old friends. In November we welcomed Mr J Owen, who talked about and played music from the shows of yesteryear. We felt well entertained and went home very jolly. Also in November we were proud to represent the Association at our local Armistice Day Parade, to lay wreaths and in particular to remember our colleagues who worked so tirelessly during that period

We hear that Gedling members have had a good year with an average of fifteen members meeting monthly. We have enjoyed several coffee mornings in garden centres and local teashops, one of which was fund raising with a Bring and Buy stall and a raffle. We have had speakers from Cheshire Homes, Headway and one of our own members spoke about her trip to the Artic Circle. Our very enjoyable outings were a river cruise in June and Willersley Castle in September. The year finished with a Christmas lunch at the Colwick Vale Social Club

The members of the Leicester branch were delighted to welcome Mike and Jenny to their November luncheon. They have coffee mornings most months with an average attendance of twenty and three times a year they have a lunch at the local

catering college which members really enjoy. There is going to be a coach trip to the Cotswolds in April and they hope for a visit to the Newark Houses Museum later in the year

From Rushcliffe, Sheila Court says that as usual they have had a meeting each month, still keeping to the formula of having the 'get together' on a different day each time in the hope that it will not clash with the members other activities. September and October were Coffee Mornings, when we caught up with news of holidays etc. In November our speaker was Helen Catchpole from the Framework Housing Association, who deal with the homeless in Nottinghamshire. She has some very interesting tales to tell and lots of information about the workings of the organisation. Most time and effort is spent in providing a home; room or flat, for the clients. There was a request for household items and toiletries. We collected four boxes of goods and had a lovely letter of thanks from them. In December we celebrated with Christmas Lunch at the local Masonic Hall, the first time that we had been to this venue. Only 21 members were able to be there, but it was an excellent meal and everyone said how much they enjoyed it. January brings in the New Year with another Coffee Morning, at the Willow Tree Pub, where again we catch up with the happenings of members over the Christmas period.

A WELL PLANNED LIFE????

Two women met for the first time since leaving school. One asked the other, "You were always so organized in school. Did you manage to live a well planned life?" "Yes," said her friend. "My first marriage was to a millionaire; my second marriage was to an actor; my third marriage was to a preacher; and now I'm married to an undertaker. "Her friend asked, "What do those marriages have to do with a well planned life?"

"One for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go".

TEN LESSONS FROM LIFE LEARNED FROM NOAH from Joan Sadler

1. Don't miss the boat
 2. Remember that we are not all on the same boat
 3. Plan ahead – it was not raining when the arc was built
 4. Stay fit; when you are 600yrs old you may be asked to do something really big
 5. Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done
 6. Build your future on high ground
 7. For safeties sake, travel in pairs
 8. Speed isn't always an advantage
 9. When you are stressed, float a while
 10. Amateurs built the Arc, the Titanic by professionals
-

And Here He is Again In the year 2007, the Lord came again unto Noah, who was now living in England and said, "Once again, the earth has become wicked and overpopulated, and I see the end of all flesh before me. Build another Ark and save two of every living thing, along with a few good humans." He gave Noah the CAD drawings, saying, "You have six months to build the Ark before I will start the unending rain for forty days and forty nights."

Six months later, the Lord looked down and saw Noah weeping in his yard but no Ark. "Noah!" He roared, "I'm about to start the rain! Where is the Ark?"

"Forgive me, Lord," begged Noah, "but things have changed. I needed Building Regulations Approval. I've been arguing with the Fire Brigade about the need for a sprinkler system. My neighbours claim that I should have obtained planning permission for building the Ark in my garden because it is 'development of the site', even though in my view it is a temporary structure. We had to go to appeal to the Secretary of State for a decision.

Then the Department of Transport demanded a bond be posted for the future costs of moving power lines and other overhead obstructions, to clear the passage for the Ark's move to the sea. I told them that the sea would be coming to us, but they would hear nothing of it.

Getting the wood was another problem. All the decent trees have Tree Preservation Orders on them and we live in a Site of Special Scientific Interest set up in order to protect the spotted owl. I tried to convince the environmentalists that I needed the wood to save the owls - but no go! When I started gathering the animals, the RSPCA sued me. They insisted that I was confining wild animals against their will. They argued the accommodation was too restrictive, and it was cruel and inhumane to put so many animals in a confined space.

Then the County Council, the Environment Agency and the Rivers Authority ruled that I couldn't build the Ark until they'd conducted an environmental impact study on your proposed flood. I'm still trying to resolve a complaint with the Equal Opportunities Commission on how many BME's I'm supposed to hire for my building team. The trades unions say I can't use my sons. They insist I have to hire only CSCS accredited workers with Ark-building experience. To make matters worse, Customs and Excise seized all my assets, claiming I'm trying to leave the country illegally with endangered species. So, forgive me, Lord, but it would take at least 10 years for me to finish this Ark."

Suddenly the skies cleared, the sun began to shine, and a rainbow stretched across the sky. Noah looked up in wonder and asked, "You mean you're not going to destroy the world?"

"No," said the Lord. "The government beat me to it."

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Contributions for the next Newsletter should be with me by 31st August 2007

Please send them via your Div Rep if you have one, or if you do not have one,
direct to me, The Editor,
or I can be contacted at

Please remember to give your contact details with your report

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