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Autumn 2007

No 67

WRVS Association NEWSLETTER

Letter from the Chairman

Priory Street Centre, 15 Priory Street, York, YO1 6ET

Dear Member

This sadly will be the last letter to you, the members, from me as your Chairman.

I have had a fantastic three years. Met with so many of you, attended numerous meetings and various venues. These memories will remain with me always, but - especially my three AGM's. In Scarborough, then Failand in North Somerset and this year in Windermere, Cumbria. Also my WRVS Meetings at Abingdon, Oxon, my association with the WRVS Benevolent Trust and the wonderful WRVS Carol Concert at the Guards Chapel, London.

My most grateful thanks go especially to the staff at York Office for their help and support during my time in Office.

Best wishes to you all, and I know you will welcome your new Chairman from 1st October, Mrs. Sylvia Hatchell MBE and support her as you have me.

Sincere Greetings to you all

Sheila Scholey

ROYAL
VOLUNTARY
SERVICE

ROYAL
VOLUNTARY
SERVICE

Random jottings from the Editor

Dear Members

(Oops! Yes, this one really is the autumn edition)

In the past we have had contributions from members who have moved abroad to be near their families, and one of those ladies, Mrs Jenny Balme in Canada, has asked that I send her copy by email. Well having trailed it for two issues this will be the third copy and I have to say that it is quite successful. It saves on paper and postage, so in fact costs nothing to send out. If anyone else living abroad would like to get a virtual newsletter, do let me know. I can be contacted at



Many of the contributions that I receive very obviously come from Church magazines and as I have said before, I do not really think this is the correct forum for that kind of thought provocation. I also avoid those poems and comments that decry how painful, sad and miserable it is to be getting old. (As if we need reminding!) However, the last entry for this issue is an exception so I hope you enjoy it as much as I did

It is not often that I fall out with anyone, but after 'words' and when moving on, do you forgive and not forget, or forget and not forgive? Well I have discovered a clue in a book that I read recently which said that if you forget, then history repeats itself. So that's sorted then! Mind you the same book also said that history is not what has happened, but what has been written down. So it may not be historical fact, because it is only the observation of the one person who records the event. Therefore to get the true picture, or at least a personal viewpoint, we all need to get on board the TARDIS!

I am finishing my jottings this time on the eve of the AGM in Windermere. It does seem a long way to go and quite expensive for a meeting, but I am looking on it as a weekend break in a nice hotel, meeting up with some old friends, hopefully making some new ones, and all in one of the most beautiful areas of the country. Please consider joining us next year when it will be in the South East

Best wishes to you all

Paulene

Paulene Lambert

NB: PAGE 3!

By the time you get this newsletter, your new Chairman will have taken over the reigns of the Association for the next three years. Therefore I would like to introduce you to Mrs Sylvia Hatchell MBE.



I have been a member of WRVS for over 20 years. I joined in 1986 as a Meals on Wheels volunteer and became a member of the Emergency Team. I then held the following posts: Meals on Wheels Organiser; Local Organiser Wallasey; District Organiser for Sefton, Knowsley and St. Helens; Area Manager for Merseyside and South West Lancashire.

I am an Emergency Services Instructor. I have completed the Trainers Course and have trained volunteers across the North West.

In 2000 after the closure of Area Offices, I was appointed a member of the Vice Chairman's Committee (VCC) to represent Merseyside and Wirral. In this post I was responsible for bringing the views and concerns of the volunteers in my area to the attention of the WRVS Board of Trustees, for feeding back information from the Board, ensuring that volunteers were thanked and rewarded, and acting as an ambassador to the outside world. I served for six years on the Committee; also representing North Wales for some of the time. I retired in February 2006.

In 2000 I was made a Member of the British Empire and in November 2005 I was honoured to represent WRVS at the Garden of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey.

In November 2001 I was appointed a trustee of WRVS Benevolent Trust, initially acting as its Honorary Secretary. I gave up this post when my husband died but remained a trustee. I continue to deliver Meals on Wheels weekly in Wirral and am now the Association Divisional Representative for Merseyside and Cheshire.

The wise man does not lay up treasure. The more he gives to others, the more he has for his own ~ Lao-tse

SOUTH EAST DIVISION

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Div. Rep. Vacant

OXFORDSHIRE, BEDFORDSHIRE AND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Callaway

From Oxfordshire, Ursula Goulding writes that there is a more noticeable presence of WRVS volunteers in the county, especially in the hospitals. She wonders if contact between them and the Association could be established, we are trying to do so.

Bedfordshire says a sad farewell to Mrs Ellen Knapp and Mrs Winifred Sharp, two long serving members and a very warm welcome to Mesdames Patricia Allen, Mary Bartram, Christine Bundy, Laura Harvey, Doreen Marsh, Valerie Martin, Valerie Wren, Ann Waywell. We also welcome back Kay Thorpe. I think this must be a record for new recruits in the county with credit due to Barbara Statham the County Representative. She has continued to work as a volunteer at Bedford Hospital and when that hospital decided to dispense with WRVS volunteers and recruit its own volunteers, she was on hand to encourage WRVS members to maintain links with the service by joining the Association.

Several of the new members attended the March Lunch and AGM and helped with the chores. After that, the usual spring & summer programme was in full swing. In April Pru Gardener gave another amusing talk, this time on her family's appearances on TV. Despite her self-deprecating manner they were obviously of star quality and we also were given intriguing glimpses of what goes on behind the scenes. In May the largest number yet of Association members attended the County Service for volunteers. As we were one of the better represented groups the County Representative, Barbara, was asked to read one of the lessons.

In June John and Gus Deamer organised a visit to Ickworth Hall, Suffolk. There was no formal guided tour but National Trust Volunteers in every room answered individual questions in a very satisfactory way, the gardens and parkland were beautiful to walk or sit in and the restaurant offered a good range of food and drink in pleasant surroundings. What more could hard-working tourists require?

In July members were invited to the Annual Garden Party at the home of Professor & Mrs Vesey ('Do' to her WRVS friends). Last year the emergency supplies were ice cubes, this year umbrellas were at the ready. Our hostess provided live music and entertainment and the sun shone until the last few raffle prizes were being collected. Maybe there are dispensations from that decree about rain and the just and unjust – if you are a very just fella #. The programme ended with a visit in August to Beryl & Doug Rees at Flitwick.

Beryl had organised coffee in the garden and everyone could appreciate sitting in comfort, on a beautiful morning, saying 'Doug, how do you manage to do all this by yourself?' John Deamer had brought along plans for an October visit to Wisley and so a new programme begins.

*# I am told this is a quotation, which explains the reference from Jean –
The rain it raineth on the just and on the unjust fella, it raineth more among the just, because the unjust stole the justs umbrella- Ed*

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK
Div. Rep. Vacant

Mary Harris writes from North Norfolk. The group met for lunch at the Manor Hotel Mundesley, where they presented Jan Gilderson, their retiring Rep. of over twenty years, with a painting and a bouquet of flowers thanking her for all her hard work in keeping the branch together. The group also enjoyed a hot and sunny day in April when they joined the Great Yarmouth Branch at the Priory Maze in Beeston Regis, where they were able to have a lovely ramble round the gardens. Then in June nine members met at Groveland for shopping, afternoon tea and a good chinwag

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 are now inviting other members to join, regardless of where they live.

The annual membership is £12, payable by cheque or standing order, and there is a monthly prize draw. Half of the money 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, but this will go up as more people join.

The other half of your subscription goes into a managed fund to provide small gifts that allow us to say 'Thank You' to WRVS volunteers. 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,

ESSEX AND HERTFORDSHIRE - Div. Rep. Vacant

HERTFORDSHIRE - County Rep.

Mrs Gwen Rowley,



Former Div S Rep for Essex and Hertfordshire, as well as former Chairman of the WRVS Association, Mrs Pat Copping seen here receiving her long awaited, Long Service Medal from VCC Caroline Naylor. It was delayed because service records were lost. So not long after, she also received her twelve-year clasp!

THE WRVS LONG SERVICE MEDAL

The medal is a true medal in every sense of the word. It is not easily won, nor lightly awarded. It represents 15 years of service faithfully carried out. The medal is struck

at the royal mint and when presented, the presenter, for just a few seconds whilst presenting it, represents Her Majesty the Queen. It is a very beautiful medal bearing on one side the symbol of rosemary, for remembrance. Remembrance for the service of our colleagues, some of whom gave their lives in the days of the last war (over 200), whilst carrying out their duty of helping those in desperate need. Also, the ivy leaves are the symbol of steadfastness, which is characteristic of the 15 years of devoted service given by all worthy medal winners. On the other side of the medal you will find the words 'Service Beyond Self' which in three words describes the whole concept of the voluntary service of our members. The presentation of a long service medal is an honour shared by us all, and it is a privilege to rejoice along with the recipients on this splendid achievement.

Former Southend WRVS member Kathleen Collins, MBE passed away peacefully in her Leigh-on-Sea home in April 2007 aged 92 years. She joined WVS in the early 1950's and was awarded the MBE in 1972.

In June, Mrs Gwen Rowley told us of the death of Mrs Amy Godfrey of Hertford. Amy joined in 1961 working in Welfare Foods, Trolley Shop, Clothing and many years in the office doing so much to assist the MOW service.

SURREY, KENT, EAST & SUSSEX.

Mrs Joan Rosling,

You may remember that in the spring edition we asked if there was anyone who worked for WVS during the war. I was delighted to find someone from Guildford who joined in 1941. Peggy Pates worked for WVS in London during the blitz and was able to give an audio account of her work for the WRVS archives. Thank you Peggy.

It is with much sadness that the Waverley group announces the death of Betty Ashford. She was their District Organiser and then moved on to the County Office where she looked after Prisons and Magistrate Court Tea bars. Betty was a great character with a wonderful sense of humour. We send our deepest sympathy to her family. In April I was invited with our editor to lunch in Haslemere as the guests of the Meals on Wheels team. The home cooked lunch was delicious and much enjoyed by everyone, so much so, that four new members were signed up. Welcome to Elaine Maggs, Norah Smith, Murielle Brice and Joyce Lees

The Guildford club organised a tea during August in the Garden Centre attached to the National Trust property, Clandon Park. A good number of members enjoyed homemade cakes, with fresh scones and cream. Not sure what the other diners made of all the chatter!

LONDON S.W. - Div. Rep. Vacant

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

THINGS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME (from Joan Sadler)

Logic – Because I said so, that's why!

Envy – There are many less fortunate children in this world

Hypocrisy – If I've told you once, I've told you a million times not to exaggerate

HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT

Div Rep Mrs Beryl Adams

Once again we all met at our favourite pub at Sheet, near Petersfield for our annual meeting and dinner. This is becoming a regular event. We are always made so welcome and the room arranged as we request. The committee meet there a few weeks beforehand and over lunch we choose the menu, always something different from the year before but always finishing up with our favourite, Syrup Sponge and Custard! After the meal, Anne Roberts our secretary gave us an interesting account of her Christmas and New Year spent with her daughter in Sydney, Australia.

Sadly I have to report the deaths of two of our members – Molly Ebden MBE who died in May following a long illness. She had been a very active WRVS member since 1982 and had been Fleet local organiser before working in Hampshire County Office setting up Child Contact Centres. She also became Hampshire County Deputy Organiser and Community Service Manager.. Also Valerie Drakely who had been a valuable member in Havant for a long time, helping in the Magistrates Tea Bar, the clothing department and the Emergency Team. Valerie died in March, also after a long illness. They will both be sadly missed at our reunions

BERKSHIRE - Div. Rep. Vacant

BERKSHIRE - County Rep
Mrs Morag Gordon,

EVERYTHING IS FURTHER AWAY THAN IT USED TO BE

It is twice as far to the corner shop, and they've added a hill, I notice. I've given up running for the bus; it leaves much faster than it used to. It seems to me they are making the steps steeper than in the old days. And have you noticed the smaller print they are using in the newspaper? There is no sense in asking anyone to read aloud, everyone speaks in such a low voice I can hardly hear them. And the material used in clothes is getting skimpy, especially around the waist and hips. Even people are changing; they are so much younger than they used to be when I was their age. On the other hand, people my own age are so much older than I am. I ran into an old friend and she had aged so much she didn't recognise me. I got to thinking about her while combing my hair this morning and, while doing that, I glanced at my reflection and do you know what? They don't make mirrors like they used to!

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

GLoucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire - Div. Rep. Vacant

Jean Connop writes from the Cheltenham Group who had a meeting in April when the speaker was Mrs Frances Lawrence who spoke about 'Hearing Dogs for the Deaf'. The dogs always belong to the charity and are trained to act as Assistants and Companions to the severely or profoundly deaf. Their training takes place at the Grange in Sanderton or Derby. People requiring a dog tell the charity of their lifestyle and the dog is trained accordingly. Not other dogs should be in the home but an exception is made where there is an old dog and they are compatible. Veterinary bills can be expensive and the charity will help. They take all types of dogs but not guard dogs. Each new recruit completes a period of socialisation training to introduce them to all different types of environments they will encounter as a Hearing Dog. Prospective new owners will be asked to go to the centre to see if the dog will suit them. It costs £5000 to exclusively sponsor a hearing dog.

The group had a very enjoyable afternoon ending with tea and cakes provided and served by Mrs Margaret Norman and Mrs Joan Vernon. Although all were sad to hear of the deaths of Mrs Margaret Drew who was a past joint District Organiser in Tewkesbury; Mrs Doris Corradi and Mrs Edith Davey who both worked in Cheltenham General Hospital Canteen

SOMERSET AND AVON - No report
Div. Rep. Mrs Sheila Scholey

WEST MIDLANDS - Div. Rep. Vacant

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

If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, then what is baby oil made from?

Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day; teach that person to use the Internet and they wont bother you for weeks.

DORSET AND WILTSHIRE; DEVON AND CORNWALL

Div. Rep. Mrs Alice Cleland CBE

No news from Dorset and Cornwall, but two groups continue to meet in Wiltshire regularly. Alice Cleland reports that the Wiltshire group, mostly made up of ex County staff who have all known each other for many years, now holds a lunch in March and a Cream Tea in August, both at The Shaw Trust café in Trowbridge. This café is part of a Garden Centre, with good parking and excellent food, and a private room where we can catch up on each other's news, which is what we like best, as we are all such old friends. Our third event is a Coffee Morning in late autumn at the home of one of our members, Denise Smyter.

Jacquie Roe reports that the Swindon Group has had a successful year so far with a well-attended coffee morning in the spring and a fine sunny day for their Summer Tea in June. They are happy to welcome four new members from the Books on Wheels project that covers the whole of Swindon. Great Western Hospital in Swindon has a thriving WRVS Shop and Trolley Service and an Escort Service, which is a much-valued asset to patients and their families. Swindon had some areas of flooding during the recent disaster – the rest of Wiltshire escaped – but we were proud to see the work done by WRVS Emergency teams in neighbouring counties.

We say goodbye and thank you to Mark Lever as he steps down as Chief Executive of WRVS and hope that he may join his local Association branch – in Swindon!

Margaret Dunn writes from Devon that it has been a quiet year for the Association in Bideford and District. The reason for this is just that many members are now much older and are happy just living along day by day. Many live alone and show their strong independence by looking after themselves so well, even one at 95! In August, we were invited to the home of our chairman Mrs Margaret Lomas. After a very warm welcome we discussed business for a short while and then had a time of much talk, remembering WRVS in the past and exchanging news with each other. We talked of the AGM last year when three members went to Bristol and were pleased to note that three are hoping to go this year to Windermere. Seven apologies were received due to illness, holidays and friends staying, so we only numbered eleven, but enjoyed a delightful afternoon in wonderful surroundings. Some members walked through the gardens coming to a spot with a lovely view of the coastline and Lundy Island – luckily the weather was very good that day. Tea followed which can only be described as gorgeous with an abundance of raspberries, meringues and Devonshire cream. No one was in a hurry to leave!

WALES

Div. Rep. Mrs Mary Gibbons. OBE

How quickly the time goes by, it seems no time at all since I wrote the last notes from Wales.

Unfortunately I have been unable to join the Abergavenny Ladies for lunch this year but hope to rectify that in October. Their last outing was in July when they visited Peterstone Court, near Brecon. The numbers were sadly depleted, for one reason or another, but those who went had a wonderful meal and caught up with the local news. They have lost 2 of their faithful members in the last 6 months. Mrs. Doreen Lane, a member of the service for 49 years – 24 of these spent running the tea bar in the local magistrates' court – died in April. The other member was Mrs. Joan Marney, who died in the summer, again someone who will be sadly missed. However, We are delighted to welcome Mrs. Banwell to Abergavenny from Kent and do hope she will be able to join the group. Mrs. Stinchcombe's number is _____ for those who need it.

The Dyfed Group had their Summer (!) outing to Colby Wood and Gardens that is a National Trust property near St. Clares in Carmarthen. I was able to join about nine others for lunch and a walk round this delightful place. The weather was very kind to us – eventually. As we got out of cars the drizzle was not very pleasant but by the time we had eaten the sun was out and the afternoon remained warm and bright. The summer trips are organised by Anthea Evans, who continues to organise Meals on Wheels in Pembrokeshire, and Mary Morris. It is lovely to meet up with old friends and to find out what they are doing these days.

Miss Bowden's group in North Wales still meet for coffee although that has lapsed over the summer months with members being away etc. They resumed at the end of August and hope to continue on a regular basis now the autumn has set in. This includes Mrs. Taylor who moved to North Wales a few years ago and despite being 93, still manages to get around on the bus.

Unfortunately the Newport members no longer meet. Speaking to Mrs. Doris Travis recently I was able to catch up with some of the members I knew in my former life with the Service. Those of you who remember Mrs. Doreen Dunn – onetime County Organiser for Gwent – will be pleased to know she is still going strong although perhaps 'strong' is not quite the right word.

I should be interested to know if there are other groups in North Wales who meet or even if there are other members of the Association who would like to make comments via the Newsletter. Mary Gibbons

CHANNEL ISLANDS

JERSEY - No report
Ass. Rep. Mrs Jill O'Byrne

GUERNSEY - No report
Ass. Rep. Mrs Margaret Chilcott

ARE YOU IN NEED OF FINANCIAL HELP?

The WRVS Benevolent Trust holds funds, for use by you, the WRVS member.

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

Actor George Burns, famed for his love of fine cigars, was a long time member of the exclusive Hillcrest Country Club in Los Angeles. When Burns complained one day about the clubs new ban on smoking, a sign was promptly posted for the comedians benefit CIGAR SMOKING PROHIBITED FOR ANYONE UNDER NINETY FIVE

Humour keeps the elderly rolling along, singing a song. When you laugh its an involuntary explosion of the lungs. The lungs need to replenish themselves with oxygen. So you laugh, you breath, the blood runs and everything is circulating. If you don't laugh, you die. Mel Brooks

NORTH EAST DIVISION

NORTHUMBERLAND, TYNE & WEAR

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

In Northumberland, Cynthia Sealey reports that members meet for coffee once a month, in Ponteland where most of the members live

Maureen Doyle reports that the Newcastle club continues to meet monthly but with numbers still falling due to illness and sadly the death of members they cannot manage a speaker every month. Their outing in July started with a visit to Kirkharle, a group of farm buildings converted to house various crafts around an excellent Coffee Shop and Farm Shop. It was a good spot to break for coffee, and have a look round before going onto Wallington Hall for lunch and a visit to the house and extensive gardens

From Sunderland, Sarah Hardy tells us that their club has had an interesting year with plenty of excellent speakers. Miss E Jones made a return visit with a slide show of one of her many holidays then next was Mr Vickers who gave a very amusing talk on his apprenticeship as a chemist in the 1940's at the start of the National Health Service. As usual there was the early Christmas dinner in November and the Sherry and Mince Pies 'do' in December. 2007 began with our AGM and in February Miss Oliver came to receive a cheque for £200 in aid of St Benedict's Hospice. Mrs Martin, a guide at Durham Cathedral gave an excellent slide show and talk, Miss Hindmarch spoke about 'Open Gate', an organisation that helps women on their release from prison. Mrs Pennell talked about Japan and brought lots of artefacts for us to see. We had a very interesting morning with two ladies from the Great North Air Ambulance. It was of particular interest to us as the ambulance had attended one of our members when she was taken ill on the moors – fortunately it was not needed. For the final meeting Mr Hardy showed slides of various foreign holidays, ending with the bulb fields in Holland.

It is with sadness we report the death of Mrs Monica Smith who started the Under 60's Stroke Group and worked very hard to make it a success. Unfortunately our numbers are falling because of old age and illness, so we will have to start a recruiting campaign

Have you ever noticed that when you blow in a dog's face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him on a car ride; he sticks his head out the window?

We cannot change the direction of the wind ... but we can adjust our sails.

CLEVELAND, DARLINGTON, DURHAM, NORTH YORKSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Ros Rowntree

I have now met four of the five groups in the Division and have been made most welcome

Mrs Edith Stamp reports from Hartlepool that members were very happy to welcome their new Div. Rep. to a meeting earlier in the year when they heard of her past duties with the WRVS. Members continue to support the monthly meetings making it easier to ask speakers to attend. One month they welcomed Rev M Unwin and Rev Kay with the subject 'What is HIV and Aids' – they say they learned a lot, interesting if very sad. The following month they enjoyed a talk and film of the speaker's visit to Zulu land. In a lighter vein the next month they had a games leader who led a Beetle Drive and other writing games, which were different and enjoyable. The outings secretaries organised a Spring Trip to Morpeth and Craggside. Morpeth was much enjoyed with a really nice lunch at the Queens Head pub, but owing to the heavy rain, Craggside was out of the question, and so plans were changed to a visit to Otterburn Mill and a little shopping. In spite of the weather all enjoyed being together

In Scarborough 41 members enjoyed lunch at the North Cliff Gold Club in February when flowers and gifts were presented to retiring chairman Mrs Barbara Gardiner, as well as flowers to retiring committee members Shelagh Chamberlain, Barbara Hurford and Irene Winter in recognition of their many years in office. At the coffee morning in March, new members Mavis Curtis, Audrey Butler, Liz Gilfillan, Pauline Gregory and Lyn Dodemont were welcomed. In April, at a moments notice, Mrs Laura Bradley gave a humorous talk entitled 'This and That', which was much enjoyed by all. On a lovely day in May 16 members visited Staintondale Shire Horse Farm for coffee and 'Care of the Horse and much more'. Many stayed on for lunch as well. An outing to Orchard House, Flixton for Afternoon Tea and a picture quiz of Church Doors, was enjoyed by 25 members in June

Mrs Millie Wilks reports from York that at the March meeting the guest speaker was Mr Graeme Robertson. He and his wife make discreet visits to cafes in and around York and then write of their experiences in the York Press under the heading 'Quick Eats'. He wore an appropriate tie displaying yellow cups and saucers and told of many amusing incidents from the 454 visits that he has made. In May 20 gathered at the Blakeney Hotel for an excellent Afternoon Tea. They were especially pleased that President Ness Venables was well enough to attend. One of their members Mrs Kathleen Judson celebrated her 100th birthday in July and love and congratulations were sent to her. Mrs Eileen Burlingham, their treasurer, has produced some interesting facts recently. She has calculated that during her 23 + years as a MoW driver and 10 years as a volunteer at the Retreat Hospital, she has cycled at least 4500 miles from home to point of duty and back!

Eileen now volunteers at the Association Head Office and is still cycling. May she long continue.

Sadly I have to report the death of Mrs Joan Altass, late of Filey, but who was a much loved and respected member of Selby WRVS from 1967. Involved in everything from the Tufty Club to becoming District Organiser in the 1980's. She was also chairman of the Selby WRVS Association until it disbanded in 2002

And also, Mrs Isobel Patterson, chairman of the Darlington group, who was also a very committed member from the 1960's. I am pleased that I was able to meet and have lunch with Mrs Patterson along with five other members of that group back in April. I am sure that the entire group will miss her

EAST YORKSHIRE TO HUMBER AND HULL

Div Rep. Mrs Robina Priestley

I expect that there will be a few places that have not been affected by the severe rainfall experiences this summer – ourselves included. The worse affected place being of course Hull and its surrounding area, but Beverley, Market Weighton, Pocklington and several small villages (Wilberfoss included) also suffered flooding. However, I only had one report of a member having to be evacuated, Doreen Thompson of Hessle in Hull. She made news in the press and on TV by being visited by Archbishop Sentamu during his pastoral visit to the area.

This year we have had just one new member, Mrs Esme Wheeldon at Bridlington, but we heard of the deaths of Mrs E Vickers of Hull and Mrs Eileen Spence MBE of Cherry Burton, Beverley, who regularly attended our meetings until her health prevented her from driving. The death of Doreen Roebuck, a long serving and faithful member of WRVS was also reported and at her funeral, 14 of the 15 mourners were WRVS colleagues. Flowers were in the original WRVS colours and she was buried with her long service medal

Fewer members have been attending the lunches during the summer and one had to be cancelled, but I hope this is only due to holidays and visits to and from grandchildren! Now then, is it down to Christmas preparations again?

SOUTH AND WEST YORKSHIRE - No Report

Div. Rep. Mrs June Pitts BEM

FROM NESS VENABLES OF YORK. Now that the WRVS Association moved from its old home at 82 Bootham, I often recall the many things that we did in that building whenever I pass it by

On the ground floor we had a book room, the walls lined with shelves containing books supplied by Central library that we delivered to the housebound. (This room was later used as the Association HQ, and was where our 'stuffing parties' fill envelopes with the Newsletter.) Behind this was a busy clothing store open to the public twice a week, when we always had a queue at the entrance. When I think of this room I remember old George the tramp, a real 'Gentleman of the Road' who came each autumn for a supply of warm clothing for the winter. He got underwear, warm woollen "combinations" and sweaters before he went on his way again up the Great North Road. The clothing store was always in need of little girl's knickers and I remember the group of ladies making them out of summer dresses which we always had in profusion. Some little girls in York certainly had colourful knickers from this store.

My domain in the building from 1974 to 1985 was on the first floor where Meals on Wheels rota's were given out, where secretaries typed letters and recruits were welcomed and told about our services. The Meals service was always the busiest. I remember one cold Christmas day when my husband and I were delivering Christmas day meals. We visited an old gentleman sitting in front of a cold fireplace with no fire. While I gave him his hot dinner, my husband found paper, wood and coal and made him a warm fire. We found later that his name had accidentally been left off the Home Helps list. The turkey, pudding and crackers seemed quite inadequate for his lonely "Happy Christmas".

On the children's holiday scheme there was a boy whose father, I had been warned, might be "difficult". When we collected him his mother quickly opened the door, thrust the child and his small suitcase out of the door and hurried me away. The father stood at the top of the stairs in his pyjamas, yelling to his wife not to send him. A fortnight later chatting to the boy as I drove him home he was full of his marvellous holiday. I asked what food he had liked. His eyes beamed as he answered "and do you know Miss, we had puddin' every day".

The recent floods in Yorkshire have reminded me of the cold, wet winter of 1979. I was in a boat, pushed by a wading soldier, with urns of hot soup. The householders were very cold and as we came to each, hot soup was passed up. The soldier shouted up to them to persuade the elderly ones to come to a rest centre that we had set up. One old lady refused and the soldier did his very best but to no effect. He suggested that I try. I stepped forward in the boat and repeated the appeal. Seeing me the lady immediately agreed. Later, as I helped her to get out of the boat she said, "I wasn't going to go for the soldiers Miss but I recognised you, you sometimes bring me meals." That day I saw the benefits of the WRVS uniform.

Number 82 had old cellars full of old WRVS Emergency equipment; insulated urns, Hot Locks, Soyer boilers and modified dustbins used for boiling water. This equipment was last used to my knowledge when the Pope visited York 25 years ago and we were on the York Knavesmire serving refreshments to 800 policemen and 2500 papal officials. This, we were told, was the biggest hot-drink service the WRVS had ever tackled without laid on water, gas or electricity. We were there for two days and all through one night keeping the police and other forces supplied with drinks and sandwiches.

I expect all WRVS members have memories like this.

LANGUAGE CHANGES

A decision has been reached to adopt English as the preferred language for European communication, rather than German, which was the other possibility. As part of the negotiations, the British Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a five year phased plan for what will be know as Euro English (Euro for short)

In the first year, 's' will be used instead of the coft 'c'. Certainly sivil servants will resieeve this news with joy. Also the hard 'c' will be replaced with the letter 'k'. Not only will this klear up konfursion, but typewriters kan have one less letter

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year, when the troublesome 'ph' will be replaced by the letter 'f'. This will make words like 'fotograf' 20% shorter

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will enkorage the removal of double leters, which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horrible mes of silent 'e's' in the languag is disgrasful, and they would go

By the forth year peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing 'th' by 'z' and 'w' by 'v'

During ze fifz year, ze unesesary 'o' kan be dropd from vords kontaining 'ou', and sililar changes vud of kors be aplidto ozer kombinations of leters

After zis fifz yer, ve wil hav a reli sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubls or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi tu understand ech ozer

Ze drem vil finali kum tru!

LEICESTERSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Div Reps Jenny and Mike Smith

We have heard from her daughter that Mrs Catharine Packer BEM died in January. She was 96. Having joined WVS in 1938 and served throughout the war she remained to become the organiser for Kesteven and as well as running the Home Help Service and MoW, she raised funds to buy the delivery vehicle. She was involved in finding clothing for refugees from Hungary & Uganda; and as well as her BEM (1965) had the WRVS Long Service and Civil Defence Medals. She had moved to Hemel Hempstead in 2005 to be near her family where she still maintained her links with WRVS

Someone from the Gelding branch tells me that the club has had another good year with fifteen members meeting once a month. This has included a humorous talk by one of their own members on 'Loos'; readings from Dickens by members of the Dickens Society as well as the ever popular gatherings in local tea rooms and garden centres. Sadly, the June river cruise had to be cancelled because of the atrocious weather

As Secretary of the Bassetlaw Association, Jean Heason sent this report. Our group still meet on a monthly basis and we are very active, some of our members still participate in WRVS duties and enjoy being part of the services to the community. During the first part of 2007, we have maintained our membership and had two new members making us a total of 49 members.

Although we don't have everyone present at all our meetings we do have a large proportion that like to get together with their friends for different activities and have a cup of tea and a chat. We like 'quiz' afternoons that keep the old grey matter active and we like to go to local restaurants to lunch – so much better than eating on your own. Unfortunately our annual Strawberry Tea had to be cancelled due to flooding difficulties but we will look forward to next year (so look out Mike and Jenny!) Our next outing is to the Japanese gardens so I hope the weather is fine and sunny so that we can soak up some of that tranquillity.

The group in Broxtowe have a monthly coffee morning, except for the July outing and the Christmas lunch. Barbara Kiernan writes that this July, the month of rain (that was before August – Ed) we were blessed on 15th with a warm sunny day for our outing to the Springfield's Shopping and Festival Gardens in Spalding. Everyone was given a leaflet and map showing the many attractions, including outlets of well known stores. We returned with more than we arrived with! Many thanks to Barbara Wilson for organising such an enjoyable day

At her Keep Fit Class earlier this year, Mary Roberts chatted to a new member, Joan Jones. She found that whilst she had moved to Nottingham to be near her family, so had Joan.

Joan had moved from Manchester, and Mary had a son in Manchester and so was interested to learn that Joan had worked for four years as a WRVS volunteer in the coffee bar at the busy Hope Hospital Ladywell - where Mary's son had received treatment over many years. Mary recruited Joan to the Association where she has been a very welcome new member since May

Sheila Kent says that the members of Leicester branch continue to enjoy coffee mornings most months with a luncheon three times a year. In glorious April weather four members enjoyed a coach trip to the Cotswolds with a river cruise on the Thames and a Cream Tea on board.



At our May luncheon meeting we presented our Chairman, Merle Ellis with a Rose appropriately named Golden Celebration. She started her service at Clatterbridge Hospital in 1956 and in June we were very proud when she received a third clasp to her medal presented to her by VCC member Ann Tribble.

NOTTINGHAM

The meetings in Rushcliffe now follow a familiar pattern; coffee mornings to chat and catch up with friends' activities and local gossip, so those meetings were in February, May and July. Then we have our other meetings. In March we had a speaker from the National Trust, Mrs Marion Wallwork who showed slides and talked about the gardens of the Trust. A splendid history lesson as well as some unusual information about the work and make up of the gardens. Well worth contacting N.T., there is a great choice of topics and our members voted overwhelmingly for the gardens, followed a close second by the Children's Toy Museum. Some of us never grow up!

April is the month for our AGM. There were two resignations from the committee, sisters who have been volunteers at the lunch club in Cotgrave and stalwarts on the committee. Always there first when coffee or tea needed to be made or served and often first at the sink if no one beat them to it. Sadly Mrs Win Pengelly, one of the sisters, died later that month. She is missed by us all, but especially by her sister Doris. We were very pleased that Mrs Ruth Ferguson and Mrs Audrey Jones volunteered to join the committee, so we have a compliment of nine again

We also hear via the grapevine of the death of a former member of the Nottingham WRVS and the Association, Mrs Joan Needham, who died in Canada where she had gone to live in 2003 to be near to her family. She had been the organiser for the Books on Wheels in Nottingham (as a long time volunteer for BoW, I cannot get used to calling it the Home Library Service)

The summer lunch outing was in June to a pub in a nearby village, and we have a break in August, hoping for a little more good weather – one month and a few odd days of sunshine do not make a summer.

CHANGE AT THE TOP

After five years as **Chief Executive, Mark Lever**, is leaving WRVS. He will then be flying to Australia, at the invitation of the Australian Meals on Wheels governing body, to be a keynote speaker at their annual conference. When he returns to the UK he will focus on setting up his own training and development consultancy business. Mark said: "Having been with WRVS for 12 years, I felt the time was right to look for a new challenge. I am very proud to have been part of such a great organisation whose volunteers have real expertise in delivering caring, responsive services with a personal touch. I believe that our communities want and deserve that type of service. I have always believed that volunteering adds an extra dimension – it enriches the lives of the volunteers, of service users and also makes communities healthier and stronger.

WRVS' chairman Ruth Markland said: "I'd like to thank Mark for the energy and commitment he has given WRVS. During his time as chief executive, WRVS has gone through major changes, which position us well for the future. I'd also like, on WRVS' behalf, to wish him all the best for the future."

WRVS' new **Chief Executive, Lynne Berry OBE**, joins WRVS on 10 September. Ruth added: "I am delighted that Lynne is joining us and am confident WRVS will go from strength to strength under her direction - her wealth of experience in social care and her leadership skills will be a huge asset. Previously Lynne was chief executive of the General Social Care Council, the regulator for social care workers. Having begun her career on the front line of social care as a social worker and community worker in London, she became a specialist and lecturer in social care and then a social services inspector. She became chief executive of social care charity, the Family Welfare Association, in 1991: leading the organisation for five years. She also spent three years as an executive director for the Charity Commission, and two years as chief executive of the Equal Opportunities Commission. She was awarded an OBE for her contribution to social care in 2006.

NORTH WEST DIVISION

CUMBRIA AND LANCASHIRE - Div. Rep. Vacant

MERSEYSIDE AND CHESHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Sylvia Hatchell

I am delighted to report that in Merseyside we have had some success with recruitment. Our thanks to members of staff who have been supportive, particularly in the formation of a new group in Whiston under the leadership of Mrs. Jean Kearney. The Retail Manager for Hospitals, Mrs. Jean Le Gros a new member herself, is encouraging other volunteers to join the Association and has invited me to address meetings of Hospital Project Managers to publicise the Association; whilst as a volunteer on Meals on Wheels I have been actively promoting the Association in Food Services.

Wallasey are very pleased to welcome Mrs. Dorothy Whittingham back home, and in her leadership role after a stay in hospital and respite care. Lots of members visited Dorothy, and this illustrates the supportive side of our Association. The lunches continue monthly and everyone has a splendid time with lots of chat as well as food and the occasional liquid refreshment. A luncheon club that recently closed in Wallasey has seen the team there join us and have become an active part of the existing Wallasey Group.

In Sefton there is a new member as well, and Linda McEvoy is now ably leading the group. Another example of WRVS staff taking an active role as Linda is not only the Food Manager for Sefton but is acting Emergency Services Leader which role she undertakes as a volunteer. We certainly have the best of both worlds here in the North West.

Linda McEvoy writes from Cheshire: University Challenge, Mastermind? They are just child's play compared to a quiz at a Crosby WRVS Association meeting. This was as entertaining or even more entertaining than the aforementioned TV programmes. On the day, categories included general knowledge, entertainment and sport!!! Some answers were debated, but as usual the quizmasters decision was final. A worthy winner was awarded a spectacular prize (a box of chocs) and all adjourned for tea and bickys while discussions ranged from modern day pop lyrics; when and with whom a certain 1960's film was seen, to where Sylvia Hatchell's answer sheet for sections 2 & 3 had disappeared to while she never left her seat. Another meeting saw all assembling at a local tearoom where the usual chat and laughter filled the whole establishment.

In August a local gardener allowed us entry to his stunning garden and showed us how to improve our hanging baskets. Next year will tell if anyone was really paying attention! For the future, a 'reminiscence' meeting should prove very entertaining, which reminds me I must dig out my objects for then. I am looking forward to the Association AGM in Windermere and hope to see lots of you there.

NORTH AND SOUTH MANCHESTER

Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Matthews BEM

Bury members held their March AGM in the Parish Church. Jean and Ken Matthews arrived with their homemade meat and potato pie and were met by the sound of much chatter, as everyone was relaxing over a glass of wine. Family and friends had kindly made trifles for dessert and some had brought their husbands along to act as waiters - our grateful thanks to them for creating a jovial atmosphere and for helping with all the chores. Our guest speaker, Miss Carys Bannister, a retired neurosurgeon, spoke to us about her life and career. The stories of her childhood spent in Brazil and her determination to be accepted as the first female neurosurgeon in this country proved to be of enormous interest.

In July, 48 members and friends left Bury for a delightful run through the Fylde countryside before arriving at the Springfield House Hotel in Pilling where we enjoyed a superb lunch prepared from local fresh produce. Later we continued our interesting journey to Morecambe where we were lucky to have a very warm and sunny afternoon for the remainder of our trip.

We are very sorry to announce the deaths this year of three founder members of our Group - Mrs Iris Currie, Mrs Muriel Richmond and Mrs Margaret Martin - these ladies had also been very loyal, conscientious, long-serving members of WRVS.

Prestwich members have been very sorry to learn of Audrey Wood's collapse and hospitalisation. We all hope she will make good progress and soon be home. We are grateful to Rose Walsh for stepping into the breach and having the monthly coffee mornings at her home.

Sale members still continue to meet monthly for coffee in each other's homes under the guidance of Rosemary Cooper. Everyone enjoys having a good chat and keeping up with the local news. As I write this report, I am mindful of the warm and lasting friendships many of us have made through WRVS. Today I have so enjoyed going to Sale Water Park restaurant to meet Margaret Spriggs, ex-Greater Manchester Area Organiser and her ex-Metropolitan Organisers. We meet three times a year and always have a super time. We were pleased that Val Everitt, also an ex-Manchester Metropolitan Organiser and now WRVS Vice-Chairman, was able to join us on this occasion.

STAFFORDSHIRE, SHROPSHIRE, DERBYSHIRE - Div. Rep. Vacant

In the beginning God covered the earth with broccoli, cauliflower and spinach, with green, yellow and red vegetables of all kinds so Man and Woman would live long and healthy lives.

Then using God's bountiful gifts, Satan created Dairy Ice Cream and Magnums. And Satan said, "You want hot fudge with that? And Man said, "Yes!" And Woman said, "I'll have one too with chocolate chips". And lo, they gained 10 pounds. And God created the healthy yoghurt that Woman might keep the figure that Man found so fair. And Satan brought forth white flour from the wheat and sugar from the cane and combined them. And Woman went from size 12 to size 14. So God said, "Try my fresh green salad". And Satan presented Blue Cheese dressing and garlic croutons on the side. And Man and Woman unfastened their belts following the repast.

God then said "I have sent you healthy vegetables and olive oil in which to cook them". And Satan brought forth deep fried coconut king prawns, butter-dipped lobster chunks and chicken fried steak, so big it needed its own platter. And Man's cholesterol went through the roof. Then God brought forth the potato; naturally low in fat and brimming with potassium and good nutrition. Then Satan peeled off the healthy skin and sliced the starchy centre into chips and deep-fried them in animal fats adding copious quantities of salt. And Man put on more pounds. God then brought forth running shoes so that his Children might lose those extra pounds. And Satan came forth with a cable TV with remote control so Man would not have to toil changing the channels. And Man and Woman laughed and cried before the flickering light and started wearing stretch jogging suits.

Then God gave lean beef so that Man might consume fewer calories and still satisfy his appetite. And Satan created McDonalds and the 99p double Cheeseburger. Then Satan said "You want fries with that?" and Man replied, "Yes, and super size 'em". And Satan said, "It is good." And Man and Woman went into cardiac arrest. God sighed and created quadruple by-pass surgery. And then Satan chuckled and created the National Health Service and MRSA

THE FINAL WORD ON NUTRITION

After an exhaustive review of the research literature, here's the final word on nutrition and health.

1. Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
2. Mexicans eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
3. Chinese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
4. Italians and French drink excessive amounts of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
5. Germans drink beer and eat lots of sausages and fats and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.

CONCLUSION: Eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is apparently what kills you.

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Send contributions for the next Newsletter via your Div. Rep. if you have one,
If you do not have one, then direct to me

The Editor

By 31st January 2008

Please remember to give your
Pcontact details with your report

Better still –

Printed by North Wolds Printers Ltd, Pocklington, York, YO42 2QP
