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Spring 2008

No 68

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Letter from the Chairman

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

Dear Member

Firstly, I would like to thank all those of you who have telephoned, emailed and sent cards wishing me well as your new chairman

I have spent the last couple of months keeping very busy publicising our association, as my ambition is to raise the profile and therefore attract new members. I think it important that we stress that there is fun, support and a link between friends in the association and I also think we are one of the best kept secrets in the WRVS. I am therefore endeavouring to place posters in all the projects and to this end I have enlisted help from WRVS managers and the members of the Vice Chairman's Committee, most of whom we now welcome as members.

I have also visited the York office, and met the team of ladies who work there. We had an interesting and I think constructive day. Lots of ideas came out of it as we discussed everything from constitution to computers, with a very good sandwich lunch 'sandwiched' in.

I have already done some visiting. I went to Derby to join in the celebrations of the 60th. Anniversary of a Darby and Joan club in and in November I was invited to attend the WRVS AGM as your chairman, this was a great occasion with awards being presented to several of our very special volunteers, I also had the opportunity to meet the new chairman and the new chief executive, as well as renewing old friendships with many present.

We are busy at present updating our constitution with the help of Janet Turner QC so watch this space

Greetings to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Sylvia Hatchell', written over a horizontal line.

Sylvia Hatchell

Random jottings from the Editor

Dear Members

Well I start with the lesson that was learned whist at the AGM in Cumbria last year. I thought we were going to 'The Lakes' but it was pointed out that it should be singular because there is only the one. Bassenthwaite is the only lake; there are many Meres and Waters but only the one Lake. Well that told me!



Now we are looking forward to the next AGM, which will be 19-21st September. Because we travel round the country to enable everyone the opportunity to attend, we are due to be in the South East but not surprisingly finding hotels to be much more expensive.

The time has come for me to share with you a recently re-discovered joy. Not perhaps what you might expect - this joy is the simple pleasure of the jigsaw puzzle. The first revelation came many years ago when I met my first 'jig' saw, a simple tool for cutting shapes, so that I understood why the puzzle was so named. But I digress. Do those of us that are smitten all work in the same way? Finding first all the edge pieces and getting them into the general area and then the exquisite thrill of the four corner pieces, the strengths that hold the four previously wavy lines into formation. Grouping the colours, shades and tones around the outer edges and making up small areas of the whole, in approximate alignment to where they should be. Discovering how the cleverness of the cut outs actually work so that even in a one colour sky, they will only go one way. But the best bit? Even better than finishing, for me at least, is seeing a single piece in the jumbled mess of pieces that are still in the box and knowing exactly where it goes without having to glance at the box lid again. Such joy!

Remember this motto to live by: Life should not be a journey with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, chocolate in one hand, wine in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming 'Way Hey, what a ride!'

Best wishes to you all

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Paulene'. The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent 'P' at the start.

Paulene Lambert

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

GLOUCESTERSHIRE, HEREFORDSHIRE, WARWICKSHIRE, WORCESTERSHIRE

Div. Rep. Vacant

The report from the Cheltenham group comes from Jean Connop. The speaker at the autumn meeting was Joan Phillips who told us of her childhood in Canada when her father was in the Royal Navy and was posted to Halifax, Nova Scotia. They sailed from Liverpool on the Duchess of Bedford, which was quite a luxurious ship. The convoy consisted of a mixture of ships including troop carriers. Joan was only allowed to take one doll and became friendly with another girl on board. Two of the other boats were torpedoed and the crew of the Duchess of Bedford rescued some children. When they arrived in Canada they lived in a four bed roomed house. There was no uniform at the school Joan attended and in the mornings the children lined up in the cellar of the school and sang 'Oh Canada', then the teacher would blow a whistle and they went to their classroom. She remembered celebrating Halloween but there was no Guy Fawkes and the snow came in November and did not clear until May. When they returned to England it was on an aircraft carrier. The group had a very enjoyable afternoon and ended with tea and cakes provided by Miss Irene Owen and Dr Gwen Owen

SOMERSET AND AVON

Div. Rep. Mrs Sheila Scholey

First, I must say how much I enjoyed being your National Chairman over the last three years. It was a steep learning curve, very busy, but I made many new friends. A wonderful experience, and now I leave you in the most capable hands of your new Chairman, knowing full well you will support her as you did myself. The Team in York Office gave me wonderful help and guidance. Thanks Girls.

As Div. Rep. for Somerset, unfortunately I have to report that yet another of my Branches has had to close, due to loss of Members and age catching-up!

I would appreciate any ideas on how we can keep in touch. Although Groups have closed, may be a coffee morning, lunch or tea can be arranged in different parts of Somerset for a convivial couple of hours together. We only need a few of us to get together and chat over a light meal or cup of tea or coffee.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy summer

WEST MIDLANDS
Div. Rep. Vacant

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

I was unable to attend the Wiltshire Autumn Coffee Morning as it coincided with my grandson's starring role as Joseph in his school nativity play. It was also the birthday of Marjorie Darby, for years our County Rep. and responsible for our thriving branch, so I went over the day before to deliver a birthday cake in order that the occasion could be suitably celebrated. Marjorie said she couldn't remember when she last had a cake! The Swindon branch were holding their Christmas Lunch the same week and I was due to present two long service medals and a 27 year clasp to members and guess what – at the nativity play I caught that sick bug that has been going around. So no show there, but we have since had a very nice lunch in a local pub to present one of the medals and the clasp. These were to Jackie Roe (clasp) who is the organiser of our Swindon branch, formerly Deputy District Organiser of WRVS Thamesdown District, and still delivering books on wheels – and Dorothy Knights (medal) ex Finance Officer for WRVS Wiltshire till the last office closed in 2004, still helping with the Association's finances and with fundraising. The second medal was for Betty Hughes who for years was a stalwart of the blood donor service as well as representing us every year, with Dorothy, at Swindon's British Legion Festival of Remembrance (in full uniform), but sadly she was not well enough to come to the lunch. We are now looking forward to our 2008 events; not least a Birthday Party on 21st May to celebrate WRVS's 70th.

We are hoping that the **WRVS National Archive** material that is currently in store will be coming to Devizes in Wiltshire for sorting and cataloguing by volunteers under the supervision of Matthew McMurray, the WRVS Archivist. Plans for the future of the Archives are still undecided but the first step is to catalogue the enormous amount of material from all round the country, which is currently piled unlisted into boxes. If you have any material that you would like to be stored with the Archives, contact Matthew on 01 234 442 977

A PIECE OF APPLE PIE

In a home that seldom had guests, the young son was eager to help his mother after his father appeared with two guests from the office. When the meal was nearly over, the boy went into the kitchen and proudly carried in the first piece of apple pie, gave it to his father, who passed it to a guest. The boy came in with a second piece of pie and again watched his father give it to a guest. This was too much for the boy who said, 'It's no use Dad, all the pieces are the same size'

WRVS SOUTH WEST JACKPOT CLUB

Would you like to join our Club? You don't have to live in the South West! This Jackpot Club, (or 100 Club) has been in existence since 1999, originally for members in Dorset, Wiltshire, Somerset and Avon (hence the name). But now we have extended our membership nationwide and even Editor Paulene was a recent winner

The annual membership is £12, payable by cheque or standing order, and we give £80 in prizes every month. 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

WRVS Jackpot Club,

⌘<

I wish to join the Jackpot Club for 2008

Name: (printed) _____

Address _____

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

I enclose my cheque for £12.00 (or) STANDING ORDER FORM (please delete & complete)

Name of your Bank or Building Society _____

Address _____

Account No _____ Sort Code _____

Please pay £12 on 1st _____ 2008 and annually thereafter to:

WRVS South West Jackpot Club
HSBC, 90 Baker Street, London W1M 2AX
Account No. 01786776 Sort Code 40-01-06

Last summer I was diagnosed with Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder. A.A.A.D.D. - This is how it started

I decided to water the garden. As I turned on the hose, I looked over at my car and saw that it needed washing. Then as I walked toward the garage, I noticed post in the letterbox so I decided to go through the mail before I washed the car.

I lay my car keys on the hall table, put the junk mail in the rubbish bin under the table, and notice that the bin is full. So, I decide to put the bills back on the table and take out the rubbish first. But then I think, since I'm going to be near the post box when I take out the rubbish, I may as well pay the bills first. I take my cheque book off the table, and see that there is only one cheque left. My new cheque book is in the study, so I go inside the house to my desk, where I find the can of Coke I'd been drinking earlier.

I am going to look for my cheques, but first I need to move the Coke aside so that I don't accidentally knock it over. The Coke is getting warm, and I decide to put it in the refrigerator to keep it cold. As I head toward the kitchen with the Coke, a vase of flowers catches my eye because it needs a top up of water.

I put the Coke on the side and discover my reading glasses that I've been searching for all morning. I decide I better put them back on my desk, but first I'm going to water the flowers. I set the glasses back down on the work top, fill a container with water and suddenly spot the TV remote, on the kitchen table.

I realize that tonight when I go to watch TV, I'll be looking for the remote, but I won't remember that it's on the kitchen table, so I decide to put it back in the room where it belongs; but first I'll water the flowers. I pour some water in the flowers, but quite a bit of it spills on the floor. So, I set the remote back on the table, get some towels and wipe up the spill. Then, I head down the hall trying to remember what I was planning to do.

At the end of the day: the car isn't washed; the bills aren't paid; there is a warm can of Coke sitting on the counter; the flowers don't have enough water; there is still only one cheque in my cheque book; I can't find the remote; I can't find my glasses, and I don't remember what I did with the car keys.

Then, when I try to figure out why nothing got done today, I'm really baffled because I know I was busy all day, and I'm really tired.

This is a serious problem, and medical science has not yet found the answer.
Oh and do not mock - if this isn't you yet - your day is coming!

Happiness is wanting what you have, not having what you want

WALES

Div. Rep. Mrs Mary Gibbons. OBE

The Bluebell Inn was the venue again for the members from Abergavenny for their lunch in January and I was delighted to join them. I am unable to say 'Ladies who lunch' these days as George Lane has joined the group 'officially' following the death of his wife last April. It is good to hear of a new member in Monmouthshire. George had always brought Doreen to the lunches, and of course stayed, but is now a member of the Association. Another member who is no longer available to come is Ann Woods who has moved back to Guernsey to live. We are hoping that she will be back for a visit sometime over the summer and can join the group for lunch in either April or July. Some of the members still work at Neville Hall Hospital and Usk Prison and there was much discussion regarding the new 'service' badges being presented by WRVS. Contact has been made with Mrs. Banwell, who moved to Abergavenny from Kent, but unfortunately owing to a misunderstanding she missed the January lunch.

The Falcon in Carmarthen was again the Dyfed Groups meeting place in November for their Christmas Lunch. It was very good to see Jill Walden-Jones back in Wales and particularly as she was County Organiser for Dyfed before she went to Welsh Headquarters and then to London. Some of the members are still involved with WRVS work in both Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, which is good news. Anthea Evans and Mary Morris have again taken it upon themselves to organise the summer 'outing' and this will again be to Aberglasney. This is a delightful house and gardens not far from Llandeilo, which has a very good café!

The Colwyn Bay members have not really got back into the swing of things since the New Year as quite a few of them have had the virus that has been going around. Miss Boden hopes that they are able to start meeting again very soon

The Newport members keep in touch with each other by phone. Doris Travis still sees some of the WRVS friends she made when she was District Organiser but although they are not members of the Association they are able to tell her what is happening with the service in her area – which isn't much.

As I mentioned before in these newsletters, I should be delighted to hear from any members so please do phone or write. It can be praise for the newsletter in general or a moan about the Welsh item I don't mind. And though it is really too late to wish you all a 'Happy New Year', at least the thought is there!

WRVS is 70 – A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

What better way to say “Happy Birthday” than with a party? And our association with tea is almost as strong now as it was in the war when our ladies would greet men returning from the battlefield with that welcoming mug or jar of tea. So let’s make it a tea party!

To celebrate reaching such a tremendous milestone this summer, we’re inviting our volunteers and supporters to hold tea parties in honour of ... ourselves.

The WRVS Tea Party is Friday 4 July – just before Wimbledon Finals weekend. The idea is to gather a group of friends together, drink a toast to WRVS and raise some funds for our projects in the community so that we can continue to provide much-needed support in the coming 70 years. *(Much more fun than buying raffle tickets)*



We’re launching this in our anniversary year and we hope it will become a popular fixture in our calendar and that it will grow year-on-year, just like the Macmillan Coffee Morning, which is now one of the UK’s most successful fundraising activities. We have tested it out on some of the companies who have supported us, and the feedback we got showed it could be a really good, fun way of getting new friends and old involved in fundraising for WRVS. And it’s a great, friendly introduction to the organisation for those who don’t know us.

Look out for your copy of Action, due to arrive in May. It will have more information about the event, some ideas for making the most of your party and details of how to order your party organiser’s pack. If you’d like to pre-register and be one of the first to receive the pack, call Ruth Dickson on 01 235 442 920, e-mail her on ruth.dickson@wrvs.org.uk or write to Ruth Dickson, Fundraising, WRVS, Garden House, Milton Hill, Steventon, OXON OX13 6AD



At the post office in December, a woman went to buy stamps. She said to the clerk, ‘May I have 50 Christmas stamps please’. The clerk asks, ‘What denomination?’ The woman says, ‘Oh dear has it really come to this? Give me 30 C of E’s, 10 Catholic, 5 Baptist, and 5 Muslim’

CHANNEL ISLANDS

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

GUERNSEY - No report
Ass. Rep. Mrs Margaret Chilcott

BBQ RULES

The woman buys the food

The woman makes the salads, prepares the breads, and makes dessert

The woman prepares the meat for cooking, places it on a tray along with the necessary cooking utensils and sauces, and takes it to the man

The man places the meat on the grill

The woman goes inside to get the plates and cutlery

The woman comes out again to tell the man that the meat is looking great.

The man asks for another beer while he flips the meat

The man takes the meat off the grill

The woman collects the utensils, napkins, sauces, and brings them to the table

After eating, the woman clears the table and does the dishes

Everyone PRAISES the MAN and THANKS HIM for his cooking efforts

The man asks the woman how she enjoyed 'her night off'

Upon seeing her reaction he concludes that there's just no pleasing some women



NORTH EAST DIVISION

NORTHUMBERLAND, TYNE & WEAR

Div. Rep. Mrs Sheila McCormack BEM

I was delighted to be able to share Christmas lunch with members of each of the three groups in this area, Northumberland, Newcastle and Sutherland.

The Newcastle lunch was an extra celebration, because one of the long serving members Mrs Paddy Robson had received her 50-year long service badge (through the post). She is still active in a Speech after Stroke Club in the city and it was only by chance that one of her friends had informed the group leader Mrs Doyle, about the award. So we were able, somewhat belatedly, to give her some flowers and acknowledge her long and continued service. Having contacted Milton Hill about this I understand that they have had a large back log of 10, 20, 30, 40 and 50 years of service to be recognised, hence the need to post the badges to individuals. Nevertheless, I personally still feel that recognition of 50 years service should not be allowed to pass without some more organised event for friends and colleagues of the recipient.

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

The meetings for the Sunderland branch resumed in September having had a summer break in August. We were entertained by one of our members Mrs Ethel Elliot, with her wartime memories of singing in Musicals in Barnes Park. She brought programmes, photographs and even one of the costumes from the shows performed. It was a most enjoyable morning, especially as several of our members knew some of the cast

The October meeting was vastly different. Mr G W Wilson, a retired Durham farmer, talked about potatoes. It does not sound very interesting but he brought such a selection of samples including red, black, purple but far too many to mention individually. And there were lots of questions asked, especially why stores stock certain varieties

With Christmas fast approaching we had early celebrations on November 28th once again being catered for by Serve-U-Well, who provide a good selection of savouries and we then buy our desserts, wine and juices at a local supermarket. We were delighted to welcome Sheila McCormack to this meeting and were

pleased that she was able to hear Mrs Ethel Elliot regale us with a selection of after dinner speeches. This was so good we have asked her to continue with more at a later date. The Sherry and Mince Pie Morning in late December was noisy with everyone's mind being on Christmas the following week

January will be our AGM and surprise meeting. News of this next time!

CLEVELAND, DARLINGTON, DURHAM, NORTH YORKSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Ros Rowntree

Sadly I have to report that after much discussion with members the Darlington Branch is no longer able to meet. Ten members will continue to keep in touch via the Newsletter. I thank them all for their help in reaching this hard decision and send them my best wishes.

Mrs Sheila Pantin of the Harrogate Branch is slowly settling down after her Annus Horribilis - we wish her good health for 2008. She reports that a super Festive Lunch was had at the Pine Marten in Harrogate in January -which I was sorry to miss. She has welcomed three new members in the past year, Mr Keith and Mrs Katy Carmichael and Mrs Ivy Martin. The Branch meet on the first Friday in the month at St Paul's U R Church when there are sometimes 4 or sometimes 12 present depending on weather, sickness or commitments but always have a lovely time - lots of news and always laughs and reminiscences.

They have also had visits to the theatre at the Conference Centre, shows and concerts as well as to a wonderful production at the Sun Pavilion in the Valley Gardens. Their oldest member Lady Hilda Laycock will be 100 years old in January and members are invited to an Open Day at her Nursing home when they will take her cards and flowers.

The Hartlepool report from Mrs Edith Stamp states we continue to meet monthly - ever since we were first formed in 1986. The members are very loyal with regular attendance. We have enjoyed a very interesting talk about "The History of the Old Hartlepool Headland Story". Some of our members who have lived in Hartlepool since their youth were able to reminisce and share memories. Our Outing secretaries organised a successful outing to Northallerton for coffee and shopping followed by lunch at the Crosby Hotel Thornton-le-Beans. Then on to Kilburn to visit the furniture factory that is famous for the trademark of a carved mouse on all its work. In November we celebrated the 67th Wedding Anniversary of Nellie (outing sec) and Charles Smith. The lunch in the New Year was again a success with 25 attending among who were Ros Rowntree and her husband.

In Scarborough on a glorious September day 16 members travelled to Hutton le Hole for lunch at The Crown and a visit to Ryedale Folk Museum. In October Dr Roger Coles gave a very interesting talk about Acupuncture with several members taking part in demonstrations.

The Annual Lunch was a splendid affair attended by 43 members at the Everley Country Hotel, Hackness with Derek Hails, the WRVS North East Emergency Services Manager, as guest speaker.

December saw us again visiting Irton Garden Centre to see the Christmas decorations, spend money and enjoy coffee and scones together.

On an appallingly wet day in January, 22 members attended the AGM followed by coffee and homemade cakes. We welcome one new member, Miss Sheila Spink making 69 members in total.

Mrs Millie Wilks from the York Branch reports that at the AGM there were 20 members present. Those holding office were to continue for a further year. There was concern at the considerable increase in rental for the room. It was agreed to take a smaller room as the venue is so convenient and they were loath to move out of the city. Three members attended the National AGM at Bowness on Windermere and Mrs Burlingham reported on her visit. The business meeting was followed by afternoon tea.

Members assisted at the stuffing of envelopes at Priory Street office and as usual were sustained by Maureen and her friend Molly who bring the excellent results of their baking.

They were so pleased that our President, Mrs Ness Venables was able to be at the Christmas lunch and to welcome Mrs Irene Winter who was previously a York member before she moved to Scarborough to become an active member there.

EAST YORKSHIRE TO HUMBER AND HULL

Div. Rep. Mrs Robina Priestley

It has been a rather sad period for our group having quite suddenly lost several of our members. The first was back in August when our oldest member Millie Grisewood died a few days before her 103rd birthday. Her interest in life and people continued to the end, she was a truly wonderful person. In September Mrs Pat Byass MBE passed away in hospital after a short illness. Pat was District Organiser for Beverley for many years and was a tremendous support in all aspects of WRVS work. Her contribution to society as a whole was considerable both by supporting many organisations and at one time being Mayor of Beverley. In the following month there occurred the death of well known resident of Samford Bridge, Dorothy Arnott. Part of Dot's voluntary work was her contribution to the Meals on Wheels Service and she was a regular supporter of the WRVS Association. November brought sad news of Pocklington member Vera Dawson. Vera had given much support to the Hospital Service in Wakefield before retiring to Pocklington where she continued with her WRVS Service and became a regular member of the Association. Finally, after being unwell for some time, Joan Lord, a Wilberfoss member, died in hospital. She had been a Meals on Wheels driver for many years and had joined the Association only a short while before being taken ill.

Our members will miss all these ladies and we send condolences to their families

The regular lunches continue to be well attended and several friendships have formed. I learned of a group of WRVS ladies from Bridlington who join up for coffee and a chat. I am hoping they will join us, as I am sure they will find more friends and discover lots of experiences to share.

SOUTH AND WEST YORKSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs June Pitts BEM

On behalf of the Association, Congratulations have been sent to Caroline Naylor of Leeds, who received the MBE in the New Years Honours list. Caroline, who recently stepped down from her role as vice-chairman for the North of England and Scotland after completing six years as a trustee, was cited 'for services to the WRVS and to the community in Leeds'. She was presented with her 15-year long service medal at the WRVS AGM in November and says: "What a brilliant way to finish! From no medals at all to a matching pair!"

Mrs Gillian Highley MBE writes from Calderdale. We are sorry we missed sending our report for last half year. As you will know I am sure, June has not been well and we have not seen her at our meetings for sometime. She did contact me and suggest I might take over the job of writing the report but not until it was a bit too late for the last issue.

The year 2007 began with our usual Fish and Chip Lunch, which is always popular. We have this in a cafe in central Halifax that seems easy for everyone to reach. We continue with our bi-monthly meetings at Halifax Town Hall, starting with coffee at 10am followed by a speaker. We are very grateful to one of our male members who arranges the speakers and we are assured of a good talk. In May we were told how two booklets 'Seeking the Heart of Old Halifax' published by Halifax Parish Church came to be written.

In July our old friend Canon Frank Carless came yet again to entertain us with stories of his life as a vicar. This was entitled 'Fifty Years Hard Labour?' The question mark is important. September saw us marking the 300th anniversary of Charles Wesley with a talk about his life and hymn writing, entitled '300 And Still Singing'. In November we heard about the Halifax Town Centre Ambassador Scheme that operates in our town centre to help members of the public and help to reduce crime.

We continue to hold a coffee morning each month to which any elderly person is invited and this helps us keep contact with former members of our now closed

Afternoon and Luncheon Club. Unfortunately we seem unable to increase the membership although we have now added a light lunch to try to attract more people. Never the less, our Pre Christmas tea with entertainment was very successful and we welcomed 40 people.

In November six members represented WRVS at the Halifax Cenotaph and Mrs Dorothy Bunce laid the wreath. My husband and I attended the WRVS Christmas Carol Concert at Guards Chapel, London and found it a splendid occasion and an opportunity to see the New Chairman and Chief Executive in person. A much appreciated Christmas Present for me. At the service we were each given a bag containing various items donated by firms and asked to deliver this as a present to an elderly or lonely person living alone. This was a real 'goody bag' and the pleasure it gave to the recipients was a joy to see.

LEICESTERSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Div. Reps, Jenny and Mike Smith

The first report from this Division comes via Jean Neal of Gelding. There are about fifteen members who meet once a month and they have enjoyed 'afternoon tea' whilst on visits to various garden centres; a 'Bring and Buy' sale and a very interesting talk from Fire Safety Officers on safety in the home. In October there was a lovely cruise on the River Trent on a surprisingly still, warm day, the original cruise in June having been postponed due to the heavy flooding. An early Christmas lunch in November and in December we read our favourite poems whilst enjoying mince pies

Then we hear from Sheila Kent who tells us that the Leicester branch continues to meet for coffee each month and for lunch about three times a year. Although numbers are decreasing due to illness and advancing years, they have gained a new younger member so welcome to Mrs A K Bailey who lives in Thurnby. We are arranging a visit round Leicester Town Hall followed by tea with the Mayor in April, bearing in mind that 2008 is the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the WVS

While driving in Pennsylvania, a family drove up behind an Amish carriage. The owner of the carriage obviously had a sense of humour, because attached to the back of the carriage was a hand printed sign.

*Energy efficient vehicle
Runs on oats and grass
Caution
Do not step in exhaust*

One of our members in Canada, Jenny Balme has responded to the last edition about one of the 'extra's'

I read, with some amusement, your article on language changes in the Autumn Newsletter, 'Ze Drem Vil Finalli Kum Tru' for I had a similar experience while working in the Publicity Department at WRVS Headquarters many years ago. This was, of course, before the days of the computer and everything was still in short supply. One day an extra typewriter mysteriously appeared in the office. It was an Olivetti and a good machine. It just had one snag: the position of the 'Y' and 'Z' was reversed. Now one might think this would be no great problem, and of course one could adapt to it, and a little 'white out' or 'snowflake' would help.



In any case the mechanic came to see it and he was ecstatic. He said it was a 1905 Olivetti and had belonged to Lady Reading and should be in a museum. As mysteriously as it came, the next day, the typewriter disappeared from the office.

But in the short while I had access to it, I had great fun writing a piece for the Headquarters Newsletter with as many words that I could conjure using the letters Y and Z – making a great exaggeration of the problem. (Bet you are good at Scrabble Jenny!)

Good old QWERTY; are we really meant to find it difficult to adapt from typewriter to computer keyboard when the letters are in exactly the same position?

On average a person's left hand does 56% of the typing. 'Stewardesses' is the longest word typed with only the left hand. 'Lollipop' is the longest word typed with your right hand. 'Typewriter' is the longest word that can be made using the letters on just one row of the keyboard. And finally, 'the quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog' uses every letter of the alphabet.

I commend your knowledge that the tomato is not a vegetable, but please respect my wisdom by not putting it in the fruit salad!



SIMPLE FIRST AID AT HOME

For high blood pressure sufferers: simply cut yourself and bleed for a few minutes, thus reducing the pressure in your veins. Remember to use a timer

ARE YOU IN NEED OF FINANCIAL HELP?

The WRVS Benevolent Trust holds funds, for use by you, the WRVS member. It is managed by eight Trustees, all of who have been volunteers like you.

If you find yourself in unexpected financial difficulties, or know of someone in that situation, you can make an application for a grant.

We never just give money, but regularly make single one off grants for something specific. Recent examples include installing a downstairs lavatory, replacing carpet after flooding, emergency dental work, and the purchase of a wheelchair.

Applicants can be retired or still volunteering, 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

Whilst it is a fallacy that there are 27 words for snow at the North Pole, there is a two letter word in the English language that has more meanings than any other and that word is UP

It is easy to understand the word UP meaning towards the sky or at the top of the list, but then why is it in the morning why do we wake UP? At a meeting why does a topic come UP? Why do we speak UP and why are the officers UP for election? And why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report? Why does a deputy act UP when a teenager plays UP?

We call UP our friends and we brighten UP a room, polish UP the silver, warm UP the leftovers and clean UP the kitchen. We lock UP the house and some guys fix UP the car

At other times the word has special meaning. People stir UP trouble, queue UP to pay, work UP an appetite and think UP excuses. To be dressed is one thing, but to dress UP? Well that is another

A drain must be opened UP when it is blocked UP. Then again, a shop is opened UP in the morning and closed UP at night

I am surprised this doesn't all get me down!

NORTH WEST DIVISION

CUMBRIA AND LANCASHIRE - Div. Rep. Vacant

MERSEYSIDE AND CHESHIRE
Div. Rep. Mrs Sylvia Hatchell

Not a great deal to report this time. I am a member of the Wirral Group who under the able leadership of Dorothy Whittingham, meet for lunch monthly. Our new members are thoroughly enjoying the company and join us each month.

Prior to Christmas we met together for a splendid lunch with Turkey and all the trimmings, on this occasion we were joined by a cousin of one of our members who had flown in from Canada for a visit. She was last seen at the sales table which was groaning under the weight of some very interesting items, I think several of which will find their way across the Atlantic.

Unfortunately I was unable to join the Crosby group in their celebrations, as I spent Christmas with my daughter and her family in the USA, and left early in December. I understand they had a very successful get together.

Members will be disappointed to hear that Wirral WRVS lost the contract for the MOW service, which worked a very successful 365 days per year. However following huge objections the matter has gone to appeal and we are hopeful of a happy outcome. I was ready to go on Radio Merseyside as a WRVS volunteer MOW driver, but hopefully it will not be necessary

One of the problems of being your Chairman is the amount of food I seem to be consuming as I visit with our members, who knows, next time I cross the Atlantic I may need two seats on the plane and will have a very large carbon footprint....or something!

Belated Post Script: Wallasey WRVS branch are mourning the sudden death of Joe Watson, one of the most popular members of our local WRVS. Up until a few weeks ago Joe volunteered at a local luncheon club. After a morning of volunteering at a contact centre Joe went home and had a massive heart attack on Saturday Feb. 16th. Our condolences to his family, Pat, John and Jane.

Spanish Proverb: How beautiful it is to do nothing, and then rest afterwards

NORTH AND SOUTH MANCHESTER

Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Matthews BEM

The AGM and Reunion last September proved to be a most successful weekend at the Bellsfield Hotel in Windermere. On the Saturday morning we were pleased to welcome three day-delegates from the Bury Group, Barbara Pollitt (thank you for being the driver), Barbara Holloway and Nancy Waller. An interesting AGM followed by an excellent lunch and an afternoon cruise on Windermere was much enjoyed and made their journey very worthwhile.

In October forty-nine members and friends from the Bury Group travelled into Yorkshire for their autumn outing. After stopping for morning coffee at Pendle Village Mill, the guide took us through an area of outstanding natural beauty whilst telling us the interesting history of rural Nidderdale. We stopped for lunch at an old coaching inn situated on the side of a hill with superb views of the Yorkshire Dales. We spent the afternoon in Ilkley where some members went shopping for bargains and others strolled to the well-known Betty's Restaurant for tea.

In January twenty-five members had a very successful lunch at Park Farm in Ramsbottom, now very popular following their award winning performance on the Gordon Ramsay TV show.

We were all saddened by the unexpected death of Audrey Wood, who until shortly before becoming ill was conscientiously doing weekly WRVS duties at North Manchester Hospital and hosting monthly coffee mornings for our Prestwich members. We are all missing Audrey very much.

Our sincere thanks go to Rosemary Walsh for continuing to hold the coffee mornings and for taking on Audrey's responsibility for the Blood Donors' rota.

The Sale members still enjoy meeting on a monthly basis in each other's homes. We would like to express our appreciation to Rosemary Cooper for acting as co-ordinator and for organising the Christmas lunch at the hotel in Altrincham. We all enjoyed an excellent meal in the cosy Tudor dining room and Joan Allmark and I were so pleased to be invited once again.

STAFFORDSHIRE, SHROPSHIRE, DERBYSHIRE - Div. Rep. Vacant

MORE FIRST AID

If you're choking on an ice cube simply pour a cup of boiling water down your throat and the blockage will instantly remove itself

SOUTH EAST DIVISION

CAMBRIDGSHIRE AND NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Div. Rep. Vacant

Mrs Brenda Smith writes from the Rushden Club that 22 members had an early Christmas lunch at the end of November at the local golf club and gives thanks to Mrs Chris Carter for organising it. Muriel Allebone, who at 94 is their oldest member, proudly wore her long service medal for the occasion. After the excellent meal there was a raffle where everyone was a winner!

OXFORDSHIRE, BEDFORDSHIRE AND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Callaway

Bedfordshire members regret the death of Mrs Edna Woods, the founder of this county's branch of the WRVS Association. In the 1960's Edna, who had been in the police, joined WRVS as Emergency Services Organiser. We still have members who remember her excellent training courses. She later took on the work of Area Organiser and, on retirement, handed over the responsibilities to her daughter, Beryl Seymour. She was therefore well placed to say in 1988, Golden Jubilee Year that Bedfordshire should have a branch of the WRVS Association and to receive the filial reply, "Why don't you start one, Mum?" We were all organised into finding those WRVS members eligible to join and by the end of the year the first members had sent in their forms and a simple programme of events started. We are grateful for the good start. There are now more than 70 members.

The last report from Bedfordshire ended with John Deamer suggesting an October outing to Wisley, to The Royal Horticultural Society's 'Taste of Autumn Show'. The outing was well supported. I am not sure which were more admired, the new glass houses which 'rival the Eden Project', or the selection and tasters of Autumn fruits, but there were a lot of comments about Pumpkin soup and the superior taste of Bedford's own apple – the Laxtons Superb,

The year ended with the traditional Christmas Lunch. The Committee prepared, served and cleared up after a buffet meal for 58, helped by the traditional spread of mouth-watering puddings provided by the members. One more tradition was upheld as table decorations were collected to be taken with a Christmas Card to long serving members no longer able to attend the lunch.

Congratulations to Margaret and 'Mac' McRoberts of Buckinghamshire on the occasion of their Diamond Wedding. In 1947 Margaret was working closely with Lady Reading in the Park Lane Head Office. The celebration brought back happy memories of Lady Reading,

WVS founder, for whom Margaret had great affection and admiration

Oxfordshire has nothing to report

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK

Div. Rep. Vacant

M. Taylor has reported the passing of Mrs Vivien Jackman who was the first chairman of the Association when it was formed in Great Yarmouth. She was an enthusiastic and caring leader, under whose guidance the branch went from strength to strength. Her zest for life, and for organising luncheons and outings she has left us with a legacy of very happy memories

Mary Harris writes from the North Norfolk group that on a wet September morning they met for coffee at the bungalow home of Jane Bowden where there was a warm welcome and plenty of conversation. Then early in December members of the Great Yarmouth group joined them for a very enjoyable Christmas lunch at the Virginia Court Hotel in Cromer

ESSEX AND HERTFORDSHIRE - Div. Rep. Vacant

Hertfordshire County Rep.

Mrs Gwen Rowley,

SURREY, KENT AND SUSSEX

Mrs Joan Rosling,

In Surrey, Guildford members attended their annual Christmas lunch at the local technical college just before Christmas. As ever this was most enjoyable and the food was delicious, cooked and served by the students. They have a very varied menu, which means there are other dishes on offer as well as the traditional turkey and Christmas pudding. We had a good turnout, filling two long tables, so it was a good way to start the Christmas season.

Our editor Paulene, and I went to Kent at the end of November to have lunch with West Kent members at Julia Cooper's house. I was amazed to find it took less than an hour to get there as the M25 was easy for once and the same was true coming back. The lunch was a great success and the food marvellous. We had a fish pie to die for, made by one of the members - several people had seconds - followed by two delicious puddings and then coffee. It is such a treat to have home-cooked food and Julia had a good number there to enjoy it all.

I am sorry to say that there is nothing else to report from our area this time but hopefully there will be more in the autumn edition.

LONDON S.W.

Div. Rep. Vacant

LONDON N.E. AND CITY

Div. Rep. Mrs Wynn Taylor OBE DL

I am sorry to say that there is little to report regarding the members of London NE.

Last year when a letter was sent to London members asking if they were interested in attending a meeting and lunch in Westminster, as they had on previous years, the response was so low that no meeting took place. I wrote to them at Christmas asking if they wished for anything to go into the newsletter or if they needed any help, but there was only one reply.

We are now reduced in numbers, however I would like everyone to know of the death of Marjorie Stagg. An Association member since 1990 she was involved in emergency services, feeding participants of the Lord Mayors Show and she ran the refreshment bar at St Barts Hospital. We can remember her with pride as she was Masonic Grand Lodge librarian and also a Freeman of the City of London

LONDON N.W. - No report

Div. Rep. Mrs Dorothy Stevens

LONDON S.E. - No report

Div. Rep. Mrs G Cleverly

HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WHITE

Div. Rep. Mrs Beryl Adams

For our autumn reunion in Hampshire we had a complete change. We all met up at the Country Market near Bordon. We gathered upstairs in the restaurant for a short meeting and then we all went off to buy lunch and take it back to the tables where we could all sit together. There was a huge selection of hot and cold dishes, soup or sandwiches and such delicious looking puddings, making it very difficult to choose what to have. After our fairly extended lunch we all wandered around to see what we wanted to buy. There was so much to see! Vegetables, fruit, clothes, shoes, cards, plants and so much more. We were all amazed at the selection and all at bargain prices. The fruit and vegetables were especially tempting as they were so fresh, and the plums were delicious. I think we all bought something, if not several things, and went off laden. Now we look forward to our annual lunch in March, which is always popular

From the Isle of Wight we have heard from Shirley Shambrook that she has not been involved with the club over last year and we hope that she is up to joining in again soon. However Pat Chaplin-Orman has said that their last meeting was in October and they are hoping to meet again in February to organise the new seasons events

BERKSHIRE
Div. Rep. Vacant

Berkshire County Rep
Mrs Morag Gordon,

NEW WINE ESPECIALLY FOR SENIORS

Introducing a New hybrid grape that acts as a diuretic

Vintners in the Napa Valley area of California, which primarily produce Pinot Blanc, Pinot Noir and Pinot Grigio wines, are excited to have developed a new hybrid grape that acts as a diuretic.



It is expected to reduce the number of trips older people have to make to the bathroom during the night.

The new wine will be marketed as Pinot More.

We Heard It through The Grapevine!

Some Definitions from Modern Life - Jean Matthews

Imagination: what makes some politicians think they are statesmen

Immigration: the sincerest form of flattery

Impatience: waiting in a hurry

Inflation: being broke with money in your pocket

Intuition: what enables a wife to contradict her husband before he says anything

WARN YOUR FRIENDS. This is not a hoax. It is happening to women in every town every night, really scary, but read on ...

My thighs were stolen from me during the night a few years ago. It was just that quick. I went to sleep in my body and woke up with someone else's thighs. The new ones had the texture of cooked oatmeal. Who would have done such a cruel thing to legs that had been mine for years? Whose thighs were these and what happened to mine? I spent the entire summer looking for my thighs. Finally, hurt and angry, I resigned myself to living out my life in trousers.

Then, just when my guard was down, the thieves struck again. My butt was next. I knew it was the same gang, because they took pains to match my new rear end (although badly attached at least three inches lower than my original) to the thighs they stuck me with earlier. Now, my rear complemented my legs, lump for lump. Frantic, I prayed that long skirts would stay in fashion.

It was two years ago when I realized my arms had been switched. One morning I was doing my hair and I watched horrified but fascinated as the flesh of my upper arms swung to and fro with the motion of the hairbrush. This was really getting scary. My body was being replaced one section at a time. How clever and fiendish.

Age? Age had nothing to do with it. Age is supposed to creep up, unnoticed, something like maturity. NO, I was being attacked repeatedly and without warning. In despair, I gave up my T-shirts. What could they do to me next? My poor neck disappeared more quickly than the Christmas turkey it now resembled.

That's why I decided to tell my story. I can't take on the medical profession by myself. Women of the world, wake up and smell the coffee. That really isn't plastic that those surgeons are using. You know where they are getting those replacement parts, don't you? The next time you suspect someone has had a face-lift, look again. Was it lifted from you? I think I finally found my thighs and I hope that Julia Roberts paid a really good price for them!

PS. Just last week I thought someone had stolen my breasts. I was lying in bed and they were gone! But as I jumped out of bed I was relieved to see that they had just been hiding in my armpits as I slept. Now I keep them hidden in my waistband.

Are you in need of a support group? Try Happy Hour with the girls!

When life gives you lemons - turn it into lemonade and mix it with vodka

Take life with a pinch of salt (a wedge of lime, and a shot of tequila!)

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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

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Pcontact details with your report

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