

WRVS Association

NEWSLETTER

Issue 71

Autumn 2009

Letter from the Chairman, Sylvia Hatchell

Priory Street Centre, 15 Priory Street, York, YO1 6ET (office)

Dear Member

Thanks to all of you who completed and returned the questionnaire, this has been a great help to the ladies in the office who deal with all matters of administration.

One completed questionnaire was returned by a lady who is a life member of the Association and she enclosed a lovely letter telling us of her time with WVS and her memories of Tothill Street, the very first HQ of WVS. You will be able to read more about this further on in the magazine. I have passed copies on to members of the Archive Committee including Val Everitt, Vice Chairman of WRVS.

I have just come home after spending four weeks in Canada with my son and his family. The weather was a mixture of sunshine and thunderstorms that brought torrential rain. My next trip is to Lake Garda in early September. I understand from many of you who have been there that it is very lovely.

You will all be delighted to learn that at long last through efforts made by the Association, we have managed to have a tree planted in the National Arboretum in Staffordshire. There is to be a memorial plaque on the tree that will be inscribed as follows: **'Dedicated to the 246 women of the Women's Voluntary Services (now WRVS) killed in service to their country during the second world war and in Cyprus. Service Beyond Self.** The cost will be shared between ourselves, the WRVS and a fund managed by Alice Cleland. Copies of all the correspondence have been circulated so hopefully we shall get some coverage in Action. My grateful thanks to Jean Matthews for bringing the lack of a memorial to my attention.



WRVS Association - Linking the Past and Present

Random jottings from the Editor

Dear Members

With the last newsletter, the office sent out just over two thousand questionnaires and up to the beginning of September there have been just over one thousand returned. It has been a good exercise although they are a long way from analysing the returned forms yet. There were quite a lot with messages on, some wishing to resign, others from relatives saying that the member was no longer able to benefit from membership, some asking about outstanding subscriptions etc. All these queries have had to be answered before we begin to analyse the information regarding group membership etc. Several members wrote messages expressing sadness that they were not in touch with many other members now.

Since May, 165 names have been deleted from our database. Not all as a result of the questionnaires but a large proportion were. Of those 165, there were 30 deleted as a result of Newsletter being returned marked either 'Gone away' or 'Not known'. There was one particularly good reply from Mrs. Eileen Knight from Hertfordshire and it is shown on page 13. The really sad thing is that despite everyone having been sent a stamped addressed envelope almost half have still not been returned to the office.....

I am very conscious of the fact that this Newsletter will not get to you until late October at the earliest. So by the time you read this we will have had our Association AGM in York, you may well have dealt with the Ghouls 'n Ghosts of Halloween, attended Cenotaphs for Memorial Services and will undoubtedly be thinking of the December festivities. Much as I love Christmas, it is more the memory of what it used to be, as I can honestly say that I do not enjoy it anymore. It is now so psyched up to be the be all and end all for small children, with 'stocking fillers' being the cry in each shop; the excuse for young people to drink to excess in order to quantify what a good time they have had, and the loneliest time of all for those who feel they are alone. But despite all that, may I be one of the first to wish you Peace, Joy, Health and Happiness for the Festive Season

Best wishes to you all



Paulene Lambert



NORTH EAST DIVISION

NORTHUMBERLAND, TYNE & WEAR

Div. Rep. Mrs Sheila McCormack BEM

Mrs Cynthia Sealey reports that Northumberland members continue to meet monthly in Ponteland for coffee and chat

We have been informed that a very well known member, Bessie Newham MBE died in May aged 100 years. She had given over 60 years of service to WRVS in the Whitley Bay area including cooking and delivering MoW for 30 years. She worked in the local office, Magistrates Court and Hospital shops in North Tyneside and Morpeth Hospital. In 1991 Ross Youngs Foods awarded her a Silver Salver and certificate by for outstanding charity work. A wonderful record

The report from Sunderland comes from Mrs Sarah Hardy MBE. In February Miss J Hardy gave an interesting talk on her visit to the Cayman Islands. Miss D Moakes was our next speaker in March talking about the Sunday Evening Drop In for the homeless at Burr Park Methodist Church. There were many questions after the talk including where the food came from. The next two months were both security talks, one by the Fire Service Safety Officers and the second by Mr A Greenfield a retired Police Officer. One interesting fact we learned was that the fire service will fit smoke alarms free of charge and a number of ladies filled in the forms there and then, and have had them fitted already. Mrs Hardy was on holiday and Miss Somers poorly at the time of the June meeting so the chair was taken by Mrs Pat Duffy, who told us some funny stories and Miss Doris Langley, one of the members, told of her working life in the May Fair Toffee Works in Sunderland. Our last meeting was a slide show of Sunderland in the 1940's by Mr Phil Curtis. One final act was to present Mrs D Douglas with a plant for her special birthday celebrated during our holiday. We send kind regards to everyone for the holiday

CLEVELAND, DARLINGTON, DURHAM, NORTH YORKSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Ros Rowntree

The Hartlepool Branch report, which came from Co-ordinator Mrs Ida Hodgman, reports that at a business meeting in February Mrs Edith Stamp announced her retirement as chairman after 23 years, having been a founder member and the chairman the whole time.

In April they were given a talk by a member who attended the Queen Mother's 100th Birthday Parade followed the next day with an Invitation to the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. The Spring Outing was a visit to Whitby after morning coffee at the North York moors Centre at Danby. The July meeting was a quiz and poetry morning. Members are looking forward to an outing to Ampleforth College and Abbey in north Yorkshire during August.

Scarborough members continue to meet monthly starting in February with an excellent, witty and informative talk by the Rev. Martin Doe, Hospital Chaplain, on the Spiritual Care Needs of patients and staff in a modern day environment of health and safety, data protection etc in the NHS.

In March, at the invitation of Jill Corner and our Filey members, 45 Members had coffee in Filey Council Offices with a welcoming address from Ken Leathley. Members enjoyed the memorabilia and many photos from the Filey WRVS history that are now being stored in the Council Chambers.

In April 50 members, plus WRVS members and WRVS Managers gathered for lunch at the Mount Hotel when presentations were made to Mrs Christine Hepworth, Chairman of Scarborough WRVS Association. Yvonne Morgan of the WRVS Vice Chairman's Committee presented her with her Long Service Medal and Derek Hailes ESM (North) presented her with the VCC Certificate for her outstanding dedication.

Jean Dixon of Yorkshire Air Ambulance came to a coffee morning in May when 30 members heard about her involvement with the service and in helping to raise seven and a half thousand pounds per day to keep two helicopters at the ready. A Summer Tea Party was held in June when 30 members spent a happy afternoon looking at photographs and 'chatting'

The York Branch report from chairman Mrs Millie Wilks says they were sorry to hear of the death of Ruth Helliwell in March - she had worked in the Bootham Park Hospital Shop. At the meeting in March 25 members had a talk from Lesley and Angela of the Independent Domestic Abuse Service about the Outreach Work of the organisation. In May 20 members enjoyed Afternoon Tea at the Blakeney Hotel. Congratulation are sent to Miss Phyllis Cawood who works in the Bootham Park Hospital Shop and who is also a Friend of York District Hospital. She has received the award of 'Volunteer of the Year' from the Friends.

Sheila Pantin writes from Harrogate, to say how much they all enjoy the Newsletter, that they are delighted that the National AGM will be in York and that three members are hoping to attend. They continue to meet every first Friday of the month at St Paul's UR Church for Coffee and Chat. Often there is news of other members who cannot get to meetings and social occasions due to ill health or infirmity, but love to hear about us and our activities.. In January, our long awaited Christmas lunch party fell on the very day when we had our only heavy

snowfall of the winter and not only was our venue snowbound, but so were we! However we have made up for it since and have lovely happy times together. Now that the Royal Hall is 'mended' we are once again enjoying the shows there at the Saturday matinee. We are so lucky to have access to such culture in Harrogate. We were sad to hear that one of our members, Betty Buck, had died. She was always happy, laughing and the life and soul of our group until recent years. Two of us are still 'active' in Harrogate District Hospital and find that volunteers are hard to come by these days. My disabled son in law Ian Gardiner has recently joined the WRVS and really enjoys being able to help others. Looking forward to seeing you all in York in October

EAST YORKSHIRE TO HUMBER AND HULL

Div. Rep. Mrs Robina Priestley

In my last report I was delighted to report on the 100th birthday of Phylis Clarke of Bridlington but I am now saddened to have to report her death in June. She enjoyed a wonderful full life that was reflected by the many people who attended her 100th birthday celebration when she greeted each guest personally. We will miss her lovely smiling face at our lunches. We have also had a report of the death of another Bridlington member, Mrs. Joyce Hunsley and news that Mrs Lee of Hull has moved away but we know not where.

Happily we have had some new members this year, Mrs. Jean Crossley, who helped with the Meals on Wheels Service until it's closure, and Mrs. Anne Wright who still organises a Club for the Elderly in Stamford Bridge. Both ladies are from Wilberfoss. We were also pleased to welcome Mr. Peter Robertson from South Cave. Peter organised the Meals on Wheels Service in that area for many years until it also closed. He has already joined us with his partner at our last two lunches. Our latest new member is Mrs M Kirby from Hull who still works at the Castle Hill Hospital and hopes to join us at our lunches. I am delighted to welcome them all to our group.

To end on a happy note, I and three other WRVS members and spouses were invited to lunch with Peggy James to celebrate her 90th Birthday. It was a lovely occasion and Peggy looked well and happy. I know there are many of you who know her well will wish to join in sending Peggy our very best wishes - For She's a Jolly Good Fellow - and So Say All Of Us.

LIVING WILL - Watching a hospital drama recently, a man said 'I never want to live in a vegetative state, dependent on some machine and fluids from a bottle. If that ever happens, just pull the plug.' His wife got up, unplugged the Computer, and threw out his wine

SOUTH AND WEST YORKSHIRE - NO REPORT

Div. Rep. Mrs June Pitts BEM

LEICESTERSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mike Smith

Jean Heason writes from the Bassetlaw Branch. I have to start this report with the sad news that one of our members and Regional Representative Mrs Jenny Smith died in April this year. She was District Organiser for Bassetlaw for over ten years making her responsible for all the projects within the district, a very dedicated member of the WRVS and a very kind and talented lady. Jenny will be very much missed by everyone she came in contact with. We send our warmest wishes to Mike, her husband, and are pleased that he will continue to join us for our monthly meetings.

We continue to have a strong group of WRVS members attending our meetings and we are always hoping to welcome more whenever we can. We began with an Activity afternoon in April, when we had a quiz and played a number of games, everyone gets very competitive.

Then we had our Strawberry Tea at the home of member Mrs Mavis Wollerton, what a feast we had, the weather was good and we were able to sit outside in her lovely garden.

In July we had our annual outing to Stamford and Burghley House we had a lovely day and we all came home weary but happy.

In August we had a Buffet Lunch at the home of Mrs Jean Heason; again we were fortunate to have good weather and were able to sit in the garden enjoying each other's company and the rare bit of sunshine. Our next meeting in September is "Swing into Shape" so we are hoping to get rid of the few pounds we have put on over the last few months.

Sheila Kent writes from Leicester to report that their numbers are gradually decreasing, but there is a central core that still enjoys regular coffee mornings and the chance to exchange amusing anecdotes and general chatter.

Also, Joan Miles, one of the members who does hand massage on the patients at the Leicester Royal Infirmary, does the same for one or two of the members at

each meeting, using her own therapy lotion and charging a small amount which helps to pay for our room rental – and is very much appreciated!

Sheila Court, of the Rushcliffe Association sends their report. February started the half year of meetings with a very funny speaker, Mrs. Margaret Harrison, who is a Blue Guide in Nottingham and also speaks on Radio Nottingham. This is her second visit to us and her talk this time was "The Monthly Menu of Mirth". Lots of little stories tied in with each month of the year, once again we laughed 'till our sides ached'

March was a coffee/tea and chat morning, and April was the AGM meeting when we had a big discussion about the viability of the continuation of the club. Membership numbers are falling and one of the venues that we have been using for a great number of years is becoming unreliable. In order to keep us going for a little longer it was decided to reduce the number of meetings, only use one of the meeting places, and at times meet at a members house. We will still have a summer lunch outing, which we did in June this year to a very popular pub with a splendid carvery menu.

Of course before this, in April, we heard the very sad news of the death of Jenny Smith, I had known Jenny when we became District Organisers within weeks of each other and her work in WRVS was never ending. She will be very greatly missed and all of our good wishes and condolences were sent to Mike.

The half year ended for us in July with a morning of chat but with a sad tinge to it as one of our committee members, Mrs. Barbara Betts, is seriously ill. No meeting in August, but in September we are having a party to celebrate the 30th birthday of the Rushcliffe Association, so something nice to look forward to.

I and another member of the committee will be attending the AGM in York, and we are both looking forward to seeing everyone again.

Best wishes to all at the York office.

A private school was recently faced with a unique problem. A number of 12-year-old girls were beginning to use lipstick and would put it on in the bathroom. That was fine, but after they put on their lipstick they would press their lips to the mirror leaving dozens of little lip prints. Every night the maintenance man would remove them and the next day the girls would put them back. Finally the principal decided that something had to be done. She called all the girls to the bathroom and met them there with the maintenance man. She explained that all these lip prints were causing a major problem for the custodian who had to clean the mirrors every night (you can just imagine the yawns from the little princesses). To demonstrate how difficult it had been to clean the mirrors, she asked the maintenance man to show the girls how much effort was required. He took out a long-handled squeegee, dipped it in the toilet, and cleaned the mirror with it. Since then, there have been no lip prints on the mirror.

There are teachers.... and then there are educators

NORTH WEST DIVISION

MERSEYSIDE AND CHESHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Sylvia Hatchell

During Sylvia Hatchell's term as Chairman, the following stand as local Div Reps

Diane Smith (Merseyside) NO REPORT

Pauline Blyth (Cheshire) NO REPORT

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CUMBRIA AND LANCASHIRE

Mrs Pat Gill (Cumbria) NO REPORT

Mary Jones (Lancashire) NO REPORT

NORTH AND SOUTH MANCHESTER

Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Matthews BEM

The Blackburne Hall at Bury Parish Church was the venue for the Bury Group AGM in March. Ken and Jean Matthews again brought homemade meat and potato pie whilst other friends provided trifles, served the wine and food and dealt with the kitchen duties - our very sincere thanks to everyone who helped in this way. Our guest speaker gave a superb slide show and interesting commentary entitled Tale of Two Cities (Manchester and Salford).

Our luck held out once again for the July outing - perfect weather, a first class lunch in the Marine Suite at the new Ramada Plaza Hotel in Southport. Some members found good bargains in the shops on Lord Street whilst others enjoyed strolling along the promenade. Many of us ended the afternoon by treating ourselves to a cream tea back at the Ramada Hotel!!

We were very sad to hear of Elsie Mahon's unexpected death in August - Elsie was a very devoted and conscientious member of the Bury Meals on Wheels team for many years and had been a keen founder member of the Association. Elsie's friends will miss her and we send our condolences to her family.

Our Sale members continue to meet monthly for a chat and coffee in each other's homes, co-ordinated by Joan Allmark, who has kindly taken on this responsibility in place of Rosemary Cooper for the time being. We are very grateful to Rosemary for her conscientious commitment to the Sale Group for many years.

Members of the Prestwich group continue to do likewise at the home of Rose Walsh who recently celebrated a special birthday - congratulations and sincere good wishes Rose from us all.

OBITUARY LENNIE HOLMES

Sylvia Hatchell writes 'I know that like myself, many members of this Association will mourn the death of Lennie Holmes in May. She was a remarkable lady who served WRVS long and faithfully. She was always associated with the North West where, in Oldham she ran a trolley shop in the local hospital and after some many years was appointed to the role of North West Divisional Director a post she held until 1999.

Lennie's funeral was held in Oldham Parish Church and was attended by very many WRVS members who had known Lennie over the years. The congregation included three members of the Vice Chairman's Committee and Jean Matthews, the Divisional Representative for Gr. Manchester. I attended as your Chairman and as one of the Area Managers who worked closely with her when the Divisional/Area structure was in place. The service had been planned by Lennie; whose talents in organisation were brought to our recollection by Janine, one of Lennie's two daughters. Her grandson also spoke beautifully and one had the feeling that Lennie looked down and smiled proudly at him. Apart from her work in WRVS Lennie was a Magistrate who served on the Oldham bench, a volunteer in The Citizens Advice Bureau and a regular worshipper and supporter of the Church in which we gathered to say our farewells'

Weight Watchers will meet at 7pm at the Village Hall. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

If Movies teach us anything....

If you decide to start dancing in the street, everyone you bump into will know all the steps.

It is always possible to park directly outside the building you are visiting.

A detective can only solve a case once he has been suspended from duty.

If being chased through town, you can usually take cover in a passing St Patrick's Day parade - at any time of year.

All beds have special L-shaped top sheets that reach up to armpit level on a woman but only waist level on the man lying beside her.

All grocery shopping bags contain at least one stick of French bread.

The ventilation system of a building is a perfect hiding place. No one will think of looking for you there and you can travel to any part of the building easily.

The Eiffel Tower can be seen from any window of any building in Paris.

A man will show no pain while taking the most ferocious beating but will wince when a woman tries to clean his wounds.

Cars and trucks that crash will almost always burst into flames.

A single match will be sufficient to light up a room the size of a football stadium.

All single women have a cat.

Any person waking from a nightmare will sit bolt upright and pant.

One man shooting at 20 men has a better chance of killing them all than 20 men firing at one.

When you turn out the light to go to bed, everything in your room will still be clearly visible, just slightly bluish.

Dogs always know who's bad and will naturally bark at them.

All bombs are fitted with electronic timing devices with large red readouts so you know exactly when they're going to go off.

SOUTH EAST DIVISION

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK

Div Rep Vacant

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Barbara Titcomb

Way back in May, Brenda Smith wrote from the Rushden and Raunds club to say that they had met for a Coffee Morning at a members home, which although not everyone could attend, was enjoyed by those who did. It was a good opportunity to catch up on local news and to ask after those ladies we do not see regularly. Thanks were given to Chris Cater and our hostess. (*What a shame that the name of the hostess was not given. Ed*). Chris and several Rushden members were invited to the dedication, given by the Mayor of Rushden, in the placing of a plaque in honour of Mrs A Muxlow who was in charge of the WVS during WWII (*I wonder where the plaque was placed?*)

OXFORDSHIRE, BEDFORDSHIRE AND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Callaway

DEPUTY DIV REP & BEDFORD COUNTY REP

Mrs Barbara Statham BEM,

And

Mrs Sheila Wilson,

During May there was a Lord Lieutenants Service of Thanksgiving and Re-Dedication for Voluntary Organisations in Bedfordshire at St Paul's Church and Dorothy Ward told us about it. There was a very inspiring address in which the Rev Robin Griffith-Jones mentioned WRVS and the work being carried out (sadly, not very much in the county now). This brought back so many happy memories of my time as County Organiser and the marvellous 50th Anniversary Service that was held. In those days we had a very smart turn out of at least a dozen uniformed members on parade and the Emergency Services served tea afterwards. This service reminded Dorothy of friends like Alice Cleland, Ava Christophersen, Mary Gibbons and Sylvia Hatchell and she remembers with pleasure many meetings in London and at Milton Hill. Luckily Bedford has a good Association membership and Dorothy enjoys going to most of the events, which have to fit in with her being involved with other charities as well as her family life.

Also in Bedfordshire, Jean Callaway offers a warm welcome to three new members Mrs Pat Ashby, Mabel Benson, Isabel Radford. But very sadly records the death of Mrs Phyllis Gershon who joined in 1974. Phyll was a very busy county councillor up to her death in January. At the Associations last Christmas lunch she was talking of her interest in promoting more research into the treatment of dementia in the elderly. A newspaper cutting handed to Jean at the lunch mentions more than 700,000 people living with dementia in the UK, with 244,000 of them in nursing homes. Another article on the same subject implies that elderly nursing home residents, who were exposed to nine hours of bright daytime lighting, saw their rate of mental decline slow down, by a similar amount to that found with drugs.

Bedfordshire as usual began the year with an AGM in March. Of course members were tempted to attend by preceding the meeting with a lunch. All went smoothly and all the committee agreed to serve another year.

This year the spring talk was about the East Anglian Air Ambulance charity. No charge was made but at the end members could donate to the charity. Over £100 was collected which shows the talk had appealed to the audience.

Members were also generous in the support they gave to a coffee morning my daughter gave to organise sponsorship for Jimmy Wildman, her son. He entered the London Marathon to raise funds for a portable CT scanner for the Critical Care Unit at Addenbrook's Hospital, Cambridge. Even members who were not able to come and enjoy coffee and cakes sent generous donation. That morning alone raised £255.20.

In June Gus & John Deamer kindly organised another of their varied & interesting outings. This year it was to Snowhill Manor & Gardens in the Cotswold's. Over a century ago a Mr Charles Wade bought the property to store his fantastic 'Collection of Collections' & to redesign the farmyard as a series of 'outdoor rooms.' It was a fascinating meeting with an eccentric mind epitomised for me when I mounted the final stair & was confronted by a unusually high roof space stuffed with a collection of bicycles – penny farthings etc. To the family Motto 'Let Nothing Die' I added one word, I leave you to supply your own.

Finally, members enjoyed the 17th Annual Garden Party at Do and Godfrey Vesey's house. We owe a massive debt of gratitude to the Vesey's who for so long have made us welcome to a lovely garden which is also easily accessible. Knowing that Do enjoys dipping into a poetry anthology to relax & recruit her strength the committee gave her "Shadows of War" an anthology of women poets in the 2nd World War. As this was the period that saw WVS develop and prove its worth (and at least 7 of the poets worked for the WVS) the book brought together Do's love of poetry and her dedication to the work of WVS/WRVS.

Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Sadly nothing to report.

ESSEX AND HERTFORDSHIRE

Div. Rep. Vacant

Hertfordshire County Rep.

Mrs Gwen Rowley,

News reached us from former Div Rep Pat Copping of the passing of Elsie Tytherleigh in January. Bunny, as she was known was 96. She worked tirelessly for WRVS for 38 years joining the Association in 1984 holding meetings once a month with interesting speakers. One of the largest projects that was undertaken in Southend, was the knitting of 1,144 individual five foot scarves which were then stitched together to make a single scarf the length of Southend Pier. This was part of a national WRVS project in 1999 to make the longest scarf in the world and therefore qualify for the Guinness Book of Records.

When the members could no longer travel to the monthly meetings, whether through age or frailty, Bunny used to visit them. She really was a remarkable lady who was awarded the MBE in 2003 and who will be missed by so many who had the privilege and pleasure of knowing her

As mentioned by the Chairman and Editor, there is a lovely contribution from Mrs. Knight of Tring, Hertfordshire, where she recalls memories of her years with WVS \ WRVS. She starts by thanking us for the Association newsletter, which she reads with great interest.

Regarding the questionnaire on WRVS background, I have for sometime intended writing to explain how I joined the service in 1946 and later became a life member. At that time I lived in London, and was a civil servant in the Home Office in Whitehall and was seconded to the WVS 41, Tothill Street, ("Totters" as it was affectionately called). WVS received a government grant and a small number of HQ staff were employed to oversee expenditure including members' claims for mileage, telephone etc!

Meeting Lady Reading, and learning how WVS, helped the community, impressed me, and I joined the Headquarters team. Lady Hillingdon was Deputy Chairman. Kathleen Halpin, Sylvia Thursfield, Averil Russell ran Regional Departments. Margaret Triggs was in charge of Transport. Mrs Tingry who cycled to work every day was Emergency Services. Peggy Morden ran the Services Welfare Overseas - members were recruited and trained to serve with our forces overseas, where they provided welfare "back up". I believe when Peggy retired she moved to Jersey where she became involved in local WRVS

Sada Hider ran the "Say It With Flowers" section - an interflora service for Forces and their families. Miss Wolfe (Home Office) was in charge of accounts. Maudie Jones (HO) was secretary to Lady Reading. Margaret Birks (HO) helped on administration. Other names I recall, and older members may recognise are

Mrs Creswick Atkinson, Mrs Carroll Marx, Margaret Hamilton, Babs Newell, Clemency Greatorex (Kent) Mary Grey (Birmingham) Merle Houghton (Greater London). Everyone was so friendly and helpful.

Do people remember Women's' Home Industries? A Headquarters scheme that started by supplying members with wool to knit squares for blankets for the needy. Later a designer joined the Department, and original knitting patterns were sold. I bought a waistcoat pattern with tartan front. I chose Buchanan, and it was greatly admired. I recall Lady Reading wearing a knitted two-piece, which she had been wearing on a return flight from USA with great pride she went round every office showing it had not creased during the long journey.

Queen Elizabeth brought the princesses Elizabeth and Margaret on several unofficial visits, and Queen Mary donated some hand worked tapestry chair covers to help fund when Government funding was cut back.

Totters was always a hive of activity. Numerous courses were held for Centre Organisers, members connected with Meals on Wheels, Darby and Joan clubs, Toddlers play groups etc. They came from all parts of the UK some staying over two and three days at a time. I wonder if anyone recalls the "One in Five" scheme, under the organisation of Lady Lucas Tooth? The idea being that one out of every five women should be taught how to deal with an emergency of any type, accidents, terrorist attacks, fires – just anything. Unfortunately people were apathetic and the scheme although a good idea, did not really prosper. (*Later used for how to deal with a nuclear catastrophe – Ed*)

Every year, the people working in Tothill St. HQ received a diary embossed with their personal initials on the front, and a handwritten message inside from Lady Reading. She would remember personal events, e.g. bereavements, illness, moving house etc and write to the member on a personal basis. Lady Reading was a dedicated, forthright, sincere person. I watched Housewife 49 on TV and was intrigued to see the similarity between the actress who played the Organiser, and Lady R. No doubt she was well rehearsed in the role.

One incident typical of the Chairman happened in 1952 when King George VI was lying in state in Westminster Hall I believe it was February – bitterly cold, Lady Reading was concerned for the long queue of people waiting to pay their last respects. The queue stretched along the Victoria Embankment over Lambeth Bridge down to St. Thomas' Hospital. She wanted to serve hot drinks. Unfortunately she was refused permission by various Government officials, so she immediately went to the Prime Minister who gave his approval! At 5pm she rallied member at HQ to form a 24-hour rota. The Ministry of Food supplied tea, sugar, dried milk and plastic beakers. My tour of duty was 4am – 6am and when I arrived at Victoria Gardens, the first person I saw was Mrs Tingey in her element chopping logs for the "field oven" for the water to heat.

In 1953 I returned to Home Office duties, but shortly afterwards was thrilled to receive from WVS, tickets for my husband and I to watch the Coronation Day events from the stand immediately opposite Buckingham Palace. In 1958 at Kathleen Halpin's request I was seconded again to HQ I worked in the Regional Department with her and Sylvia and Averil until 1962 when I finally returned to Home Office duties and a move to Hertfordshire.

I was able to join in the celebrations when WVS was granted the Royal Charter, and Lady Reading became Baroness Swanborough of Sussex. I promised that when I finally retired, I would return to WRVS. Lady Charles gave me a wonderful farewell party at her flat, and although Lady Reading was in America at the time she wrote me a letter and enclosed a pair of earrings - which I still treasure.

In 1982 I did finally retire from the Home Office and was delighted to be offered the vacant post of Centre Organiser in Tring. By now HQ had moved finally to Park Lane, and I went there to buy up to date uniform and met up with several of the "old" members. Tring was a small town but we had clothing, meals on wheels, books on wheels and two mobile shops in residential homes. For several years we were kept busy and happy but the town population expanded and we could not attract volunteers. We had no immediate need for hospital canteens. We had a very supportive County Organiser Eleanor McCloud but she moved to Australia, and after ten years HQ decided that in view of diminishing government funding we would have to close the office. As Tring center organiser I went with Eleanor McCloud to a service in Westminster Abbey.... would it have been the 50th. Anniversary?

A sad day but we had a really good send off and money we had accumulated through coffee mornings and a legacy was divided between two local charities. Our offices were taken over by CVS but we are still remembered by many people in the town. The local history society has acquired local premises for memorabilia and I am happy to donate some of our local records, photographs, newspaper cuttings etc.

I have such happy memories of WRVS Days. Each Christmas Mrs de Rothschild (as she was then) donated a beautiful geranium to each office at Tothill Street. I could go on forever. Even now, whenever I visit Stoke Mandeville hospital I always have tea in the WRVS cafeteria.

So in conclusion I hope I have not bored you. Maybe I have helped with some HQ background and perhaps evoked some memories for others

May WRVS continue to flourish.

SURREY, KENT, SUSSEX

Div Rep Mrs Joan Rosling,

Joan starts by offering congratulations to Association Vice President Lady Elizabeth Toulson CBE, who is this year's Lord Lieutenant of Surrey. Perhaps we will be lucky enough to get a report on her year for the next issue?

Seventeen Guildford members enjoyed a Cream Tea at a local garden centre in August, but it was tinged with sadness as we remembered Jane Twinning who died earlier in the year. She had been a stalwart member of Guildford WRVS and the Association and will be sadly missed.

Back in June, Binker Parker and I met with Julia Cooper and Anne Troup from West Kent for lunch on the Surrey \ Kent border at a pub convenient to us all

LONDON S.W.

Div. Rep. Vacant

LONDON N.E. AND CITY

No REPORT

Div. Rep. Mrs Win Taylor OBE DL

LONDON N.W.

Div. Rep. Vacant

LONDON S.E. No REPORT

Div. Rep. Mrs G Cleverly

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT No REPORT

Div. Rep. Mrs Beryl Adams

PART OF THE OBITUARY PAID TO LINDY WOOD BY ALICE CLELAND

Lindy joined WRVS in 1970 in Derbyshire to deliver Meals on Wheels once a month. No-one could have guessed that from this small beginning Lindy would end up being a nationally known and greatly loved volunteer in this organisation of thousands and thousands of members. She delivered Meals on Wheels for 25 years but that was only a small part of her incredible voluntary service.

She found her niche in Emergency Services, a branch of WRVS that helps local authorities and the Police, Fire and Ambulance Services in times of disaster –

fires, train crashes, unexploded WW11 Bombs, floods, whatever. Lindy became a Senior Instructor to teach others how to work in a professional manner to support the community at times of emergency. I first met her in the early 1990s and I have to admit I was rather frightened of her. We were at the Home Office Training College at Easingwold in Yorkshire, Lindy was an Instructor, and I was a very junior trainee. In those days we wore uniform so there we all were dressed in bottle green, it was a bit like school except that we were mostly aged 40 to 50, we were there for a week and at the end we had an exam. It was a tough course and you couldn't assume you would pass. Lindy was very good at it and trained many people like me over the years. She also trained at the Police National Training College and the Red Cross National Training Centre.

In 1986 she and her husband Jess moved to Southampton and she joined Hampshire WRVS. Her work was full-time now but of course unpaid, and at one time she was commuting daily to London to work in the SE Divisional Office of WRVS.

Over the years she was involved with many events of national importance. In 1983 she organised teams of WRVS members to feed policemen for 3 months during the Miners Strike.

In the 1990s she trained to be part of an Overseas Disaster Team that was on standby to go abroad if needed. A colleague remembers spending many a happy hour with Lindy on manoeuvres with the army in North Wales, deciding how heavy a rucksack they would be able to carry, and then back at Easingwold practising feeding in the field. I think it was probably rather fortunate that the WRVS team was never called on, as members were quite worried about not being able to wear lipstick or find a plug for their hot hair curlers!

After the death of Diana Princess of Wales, Lindy was part of the WRVS team that helped to deal with the enormous amount of flowers and soft toys laid out at Kensington Palace which were then distributed to hospitals and care homes.

She worked at the WRVS feeding station for the lying-in-state of The Queen Mother. She led the WRVS contingent at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Day on at least two occasions. I remember one well. I was one of the contingent of 16 and we stayed the night before at a hotel in Russell Square. Lindy briefed us on what to wear – flat shoes, thick warm tights, WRVS great coats down to our ankles, it would be very cold, no question of thinking of looking good – then the next morning we all turned up for our 6am start dressed as per instructions and there was Lindy looking a million dollars in a short skirt, thin tights and stilettos.

In 2003 she had the honour to represent WRVS at The Royal Albert Hall for the Festival of Remembrance, marching down those steep steps as part of the muster.

She was a leading light at the annual WRVS Carol Concert at The Guards Chapel in London, organising the team of volunteers who acted as ushers at the service and helped at the reception afterwards in the Officers Mess.

In 2000, I founded the Vice Chairman's Committee of WRVS and Lindy joined as a founder member representing Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Surrey and part of Greater London. This small and prestigious national committee acted as a liaison between WRVS volunteers and the Board of Trustees, the members also being the official face of WRVS in their area Lindy was brilliant in this role of VCC. She had an amazing rapport with grass roots volunteers, probably because she was so hands-on herself. She was adamant that they should be recognised for what they had given for nothing and arranged for long service medal presentations and other thank you events, She served her full term of 6 years in this position and then became a representative for WRVS Association, which is our branch for retired members. She had already received WRVS's Long Service Medal for 15 years service, and a clasp for another 12 years, -and in April this year Jess brought her up to York to receive her second clasp bringing her total up to 39 years.

For most of these years, Lindy was on standby for emergency call-outs 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, only resigning in July this year

WRVS is a bit like a secret society. If you are not in it, you don't really get it. But it brings together people of all different ages and backgrounds and turns them into Friends for Life. This is what Lindy loved so much about WRVS and why we-all loved her so much.

If Lindy had lived, I think her next big thing would have been helping to preserve the WRVS Archives – an amazing national record of the past 71 years. She had already come over with Jess with a carload of her personal papers to deposit at the Archives' temporary home in Devizes. I believe there are more to come. She has also made a CD of her reminiscences of her career. She will be remembered as one of the very special shining stars of WRVS, exactly the sort of person that our founder Lady Reading had in mind when she said, "Service to the community is, the way in which each of us, ordinary human beings, can serve our country, and through our country the world. For it will not be by the genius of the few that posterity will be served but by the faithfulness of the very many.

BERKSHIRE County Rep – No Report
Mrs Morag Gordon,

PUBLICITY / RECRUITMENT REPORT

Recruitment over the last 12 months has improved enormously, with new members more than doubling those of recent years. It is not yet enough to halt the decline but it is most encouraging and I am confident that, as our recruitment drive gains momentum, we shall turn this round and see an increase in our overall numbers.

A fresh application form has also been designed and by the time you read this report I hope it will be available to those who need it. Printed on two sheets of A4 paper, the new layout is more colourful and user-friendly with the top sheet suitable to double as a small poster or leaflet if necessary. I do hope people will approve and take the opportunity to put one or two up when they hold a coffee morning or meeting. People cannot join us if they don't know we are there. Should anyone have a prospective member you can contact the office for a copy of the new form, which can then be posted to you or emailed if you are able to receive it that way.

What I would like to see now is a closer look taken at the size of the areas that fall to the responsibility of one person. This matter has been touched on before but I feel that it needs to be afforded greater consideration. Given the changes within WRVS and the gentle falling-off of our membership, many sections now have vacancies at County or Divisional level. There are others that are run by dedicated people who have held the post for a long time and would like to give up, at least in part, but have no-one to hand on to. Allocating smaller areas would not only encourage new people to come forward but would take the pressure off those organisers struggling to stay in touch with a thinly spread membership.

Lily Carling

Delia's Way

Freeze leftover wine into ice cubes for future use in casseroles

The Real Woman's Way

Left over wine???? Hello

Long ago when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft. Today, it's called golf

You know your children are growing up when they stop asking you where they came from and refuse to tell you where they are going

A mousetrap, placed on top of your alarm clock, will prevent you from rolling over and going back to sleep after you hit the snooze button

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

SOMERSET AND AVON

Div. Rep. Mrs Sheila Scholey

Not much to report, but here's a few jottings for the Newsletter from the West Side of the country. I do hope you have had a good summer season, enjoyable both health wise and with friends and family. No comment on the glorious weather!

We have a new member - Mrs. F.B.P. Buckingham BEM, who has recently moved to Taunton - a very warm welcome to this area. We also, sadly, sent condolences to the families of those members we have lost.

I am still hopeful we can make plans for a 'Get-Together'. So far these have not come to fruition! Please let me know your wishes, even a small group would be great. My best wishes to you all for a healthy autumn season.

THE SHIRE COUNTIES OF GLOUCESTER, HEREFORD, WARWICK, WORCESTER

Div. Rep. Vacant

DORSET & WILTSHIRE; DEVON AND CORNWALL

Div. Rep. Mrs Alice Cleland CBE

Div Rep Alice says 'Everything here in Wiltshire has been overshadowed by the death from motor neurone disease of Judith Wicks, a life member of the Association and a former Organiser for the County. Judith joined WRVS in 1965, as the Children's Holiday Organiser, a role she held for 17 years. She then became County Organiser for 7 years, when she retired and helped run meals on wheels in Chippenham where she lived. Judith was very much loved by us all and we send great sympathy to her husband Brian and their family. Several of us attended her funeral that by chance was the day before our annual cream tea, which she always attended. She would have been happy to know that we raised our cup of tea to her in true WRVS fashion'

The report for the last edition from Jacquie Roe of Swindon arrived too late for entry into the newsletter, so it is reproduced here.

We were delighted and honoured to have the photograph of our 70th Birthday Celebrations in the latest Action magazine, reminding us of a very happy day.

Voluntary Service

We had a successful lunch at the beginning of December; so good in fact we have already booked our next one. As ever our membership committee provide the lunch, both preparation and serving, and to finish we have the raffle. One of our members Wynne Reddaway, is excellent at flower arranging and decorates the tables and at the end of the meal these get raffled as well. We presented flowers and a signed card to Mrs. Dorothy Knights our Treasurer and Secretary who has been in post since inception within the Association. She is looking forward to a peaceful retirement. We will miss her very much and send all good wishes for her future

For this newsletter Jacquie says that there is little to report this time. We maintain our level of membership, which is pleasing, and have good attendances for the Spring Coffee Morning and the Summer Tea in June. We will be meeting again in October for Coffee at one of our local garden centres. This is a popular event, as after we have had coffee and plenty of chatter, we can browse around the centre, as most of it is undercover. Very important when the weather is so unpredictable. We will be rounding off our year's activities with a Christmas lunch in early December

ARE YOU IN NEED OF FINANCIAL HELP?

There are three meetings a year of the WRVS Benevolent Trust. In the past all applications were heard at these meetings but in this electronic age, most are now dealt with by email

So 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

WALES

SOUTH Div. Rep. Mrs Mary Gibbons OBE

No REPORT

NORTH Div. Rep. Shelagh Murray

Newly appointed Div Rep Shelagh sends apologies that she has been unable to undertake her duties, due to both her husband and daughter in law being unwell. As soon as normality has returned she hopes to meet each of you for a cup of tea and a chat.

WOMEN'S REVENGE

'Cash, cheque or charge?' I asked, after folding items the woman wished to purchase. As she fumbled for her wallet I noticed a remote control for a television set in her purse. 'So, do you always carry your TV remote?' I asked. 'No,' she replied, ' but my husband refused to come shopping with me, and I figured this was the most evil thing I could do to him legally.'

THE SILENT TREATMENT

A man and his wife were having some problems at home and were giving each other the silent treatment. Suddenly, the man realized that the next day, he would need his wife to wake him at 5am for an early morning business flight. Not wanting to be the first to break the silence (and therefore lose), he wrote on a piece of paper, 'Please wake me at 5am' He left it where he knew she would find it. The next morning, the man woke up, only to discover it was 9am and he had missed his flight. Furious, he was about to go and see why his wife hadn't wakened him, when he noticed a piece of paper by the bed. The paper said, 'It is 5am. Wake up.'

Men are not equipped for these kinds of contests.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

JERSEY No Report
Ass. Rep. Mrs Jill O'Byrne

We have news that Mrs Peggy Morden MBE died in February aged 99

GUERNSEY
Ass. Rep. Mrs Margaret Chilcott

The Guernsey members enjoyed a lunch at La Villette Hotel, St Martin in April. (Highly recommended if you are looking for somewhere to holiday!) In June we were invited by Barbara Gaiger to have tea in her lovely garden. She provided the most delicious tea and Barbara's husband William help to serve it and then showed us round the garden. Our thanks to them both for a very enjoyable afternoon on what was perhaps the hottest day of the year. June seems to have been the best month as regards weather. Since then we have had a very mixed bag. As I write this it is very windy and the lawn at the back of the house is covered with sycamore leaves from the three trees.

We have sadly recently lost one of our staunchest members with the death of Roselle Bartlett. Although no enjoying the best of health over the last few years she would always make the effort to attend the lunches. She will be sadly missed. The next club lunch is planned for 2nd November. On a personal note, I am looking forward to attending the AGM in October and meeting with other members

It is important for us to remember, every day of our lives, that the same power that brings us good fortune brings us bad fortune and it does so according to how we use it. An old Native American elder was talking to his grandson and telling him that as he gets older, there will be two wolves that will occupy his mind. The black wolf will be full of deceit, hatred, jealousy, lies, guilt and unpleasantness and the white wolf will be full of joy, abundance, happiness, compassion, understanding and love. He went on to tell his grandson that these two wolves will be constantly fighting. The young boy, intrigued by this said, 'Tell me grandfather, who will win?' Without a moment's hesitation, the elder replied, 'The one you feed the most.'

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*Please use these contact details
for all administration of the Association
including Membership Subscription,
Newsletter Circulation
and change of address notification*

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Ruth Markland - Chairman WRVS

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Mrs Ava Christophersen

Mrs Pat Copping

The Hon. Dame Mary Corsar DBE

Mrs Peggy James MBE

Mrs Sheila McCormack BEM

Mrs Diane Price

Mrs Sheila Scholey

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Mrs Ness Venables

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Mrs Sylvia Hatchell MBE

HON. SECRETARY

Mrs Jean Pickard

HON. TREASURER

Mrs Maureen Hudson

HON. EDITOR

Paulene Lambert

Send contributions for the next Newsletter via your Div. Rep. if you have one.
If you do not have one, then direct to me **By 31st January 2010**

The Editor

Please remember to give your
contact details with your report,
mention the group and Division,
and print any names or places

Better still –