

WRVS Association

NEWSLETTER

Issue 73

Autumn 2010

Letter from the Chairman, Sylvia Hatchell

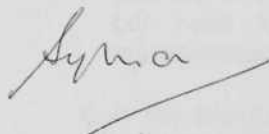
Priory Street Centre, 15 Priory Street, York, YO1 6ET (office)

Dear Member

It has come as a rather nasty realisation that this is my last letter to all of you, and my final chance to write to all of the Association members who I have been very proud to represent during the past three years. How quickly time passes, and as I look back over the time I have been your Chairman, I realise how very many friends I have made, and through the letters I have received, come to know so many of you.

In September I was invited to attend a Service at St. Paul's Cathedral representing all of you, when the nation saluted the Veterans of the Battle of Britain and the London Blitz. I sat in the Cathedral together with members of our Committee, remembering the members of our Service who played such an active part in supporting both the Armed Services and the civilian population, and felt very proud to have been invited. We have a wonderful history in WWSWRVS and must never forget those who served at a time of national peril.

So it is adieu, dear friends, adieu, adieu to you and you and you as the song says. I have had a lovely three years my thanks to all especially my friends in the York office who represent us so well, and who must have felt a little overwhelmed with the things we have done over that time.



WRVS Association - Linking the Past and Present

Random jottings from the Editor

Dear Members

Where did the summer go? I ask this because all of a sudden Christmas is looming, children are back at school after their half term and it seems like only yesterday that they broke up from school for the long August break



They say that as you get older, time goes quicker and that is very definitely true. When you're little, the days stretch out in front of you. A six year old thinks that Christmas is 'ages' away and that even next week is a long, long time. Whereas you and I know that next week is a mere blink away. It helps to think in terms of how many 'sleeps' are involved. Something I did for my children's birthdays that at 39 they are still doing!

One of the weird things about time is that one's memory can be a bit tricky regarding time. For example it is now thirteen years since Princess Diana died and nine years since the 9/11 terrorist attack in New York. Both these events are quite clear in my memory but if you asked, I would probably say, 'Oh, they were a couple of years ago.' To lots of our readers, the Second World War is very vivid in their memories and I'm sure it must have been a shock for many that it was the seventieth anniversary of the Battle of Britain that was commemorated this year.

Women in particular start feeling guilty if they are not on the go twenty-four hours a day. There are not many women who can put their feet up with a drink, a box of chocolates and a good book or glossy magazine for more than five minutes without feeling like they ought to be doing something else with their time. When we see someone, lying on the sofa staring into space we feel that they are wasting time. They should be out there doing something in our view. Might we suggest Volunteering?

Special thanks this time to Brenda Smith who is not a Div Rep but has sent in reports from her club in Northampton. If you meet up with a group of friends that you met through WRVS, why not write in and let us know about it.

Best wishes to you all

Paulene

Paulene Lambert

SOUTH EAST DIVISION

SURREY, KENT, SUSSEX

Div. Rep. Mrs Joan Rosling,

Sadly, I have nothing to report this time. It is becoming increasingly difficult to arrange teas, lunches etc. as many of our members are now quite old and do not drive anymore, but Guildford will be asking their members if they would like an Afternoon Tea this autumn and it is hoped we shall arrange a Christmas lunch which everyone loves.

We are very sad to have to announce the death in July of Committee Member Joy Wykes. Joy died very peacefully just short of her ninety second birthday. She was a delightful lady with a great sense of humour and she and I did the Visitors' Tea Bar at our local prison once a month on a Saturday for twelve years. Joy was the proud *great* grandmother of nine as well as two-step great grandchildren!

OXFORDSHIRE, BEDFORDSHIRE AND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Joint Mrs Jean Callaway,
Div. Reps. Mrs Sheila Wilson,

The AGM for Bedfordshire in March was well attended. There are now 75 members of this branch. Di Bradley and Pat Ashby agreed to be co-opted on to the committee and we look forward to their input at future committee meetings. The treasurer's report showed finances were on a sound footing.

At our Spring talk In May Mrs Jill Linley gave us a very amusing account of her Life as a GI Bride. Jill moved around a great deal in the USA as her husband was in the Forces and she had a large number of anecdotes to relate which brought her experiences very much alive for her audience.

Unfortunately it was not possible to arrange an outing this year due lack of support. Our thanks go the John and Sheila Deamer who put so much work in this and past years in organising these trips.

Another change was made to the traditional Summer Programme. For nearly 20 years Professor and Mrs Do Vesey have hosted a delightful Summer Garden Party. Due to Professor Vesey's declining health the club felt that we could no longer expect them to provide the facilities (and all the hard work that goes with this event). Everyone missed the friendly get-together in the beautiful garden. We were however able to arrange an alternative Summer Lunch at a Garden

Centre close to Bedford which was well supported and very much enjoyed by members.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Brenda Smith,

Twenty members of the Rushden and Raunds Club met on a lovely warm morning in May for coffee and home made goodies at the home of Pearl Jones. Whilst she actually lives in Rushden, her home is near to Higham Ferrers a market town in the Nene Valley and birthplace of Henry Chichele in about c. 1364 who is noted for becoming Archbishop of Canterbury and founding of All Souls College, Oxford. Just one of a number of famous landmarks for the county. Pearl was thanked by Chris Carter for being our hostess and we give thanks to Chris for organising the meetings. We have an afternoon tea planned for August, which will be hosted by another member

On a lovely afternoon in August some twenty members enjoyed a scrumptious afternoon tea hosted by Sharon Smart at her home in Chelveston. A great deal of chat and laughter made the way for catching up with old friends. The village is situated between Rushden and Raunds and during the war it was a base for the American Air Force. An impressive memorial is erected there in their honour.

Although it is the WRVS that brings us together the ladies have (or had) other interesting jobs and hobbies. We have singers, a health visitor, a past golf captain, tourism and last but not least eight members of Raunds WI. There is always much conversation and laughter, what more could one ask?

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT

Joint. Mrs Beryl Adams,
Div. Reps Carol Milford,

On behalf of the group Carol writes as the newcomer. As requested I have been in touch to see if I could come alongside and help the group.

However I am sad to say that despite great efforts by Beryl and Ann in the past, the main feeling is that there has been a lack of support and therefore there has been no activity. They think that without new younger members joining it is difficult to encourage some of our less able members to attend meetings, lunches or function's, due to the difficulties of getting to venues in such a rural county. Any ideas? It seems in a way that 'The Spirit is willing but the body is weak'

What has happened to the Isle of Wight group that only started in 2006? Are you still meeting? Do write and let us know. Ed

St Paul's Cathedral



Following an invitation from RAFA (Royal Air Force Association) the Chairman and four members of the committee went to St Paul's Cathedral in London to commemorate 70 years since the Battle of Britain and the start of the blitz. Shown L-R are Marilyn Openshaw, Maureen Hudson, Sylvia Hatchell and Jean Pickard

THE BATHTUB TEST

During a visit to the mental asylum, a visitor asked the Director how do you determine whether or not a patient should be institutionalised.

'Well,' said the Director, 'we fill up a bathtub, then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the patient and ask him or her to empty the bathtub.'

'Oh, I understand,' said the visitor. 'A normal person would use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or the teacup.'

'No' said the Director, 'A normal person would pull the plug. Do you want a bed near the window?'

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

SOMERSET AND AVON

Div. Rep. Mrs Sheila Scholey

Sadly, I have had no response from members to setting up a 'get together' in the Weston-Super-Mare region of Somerset. No need to be a large group - 6 would do! Do let me know your ideas. When I was Div. Rep. for Norfolk and Suffolk, I found I was very involved attending lunches and teas etc. we had so much fun

Hope you enjoyed the summer and maybe we shall see a few of you at the AGM in York in early October

Thoughts go out to the families who have lost dear ones in recent months. I know they are missed by all

My regards to all friends in Somerset, Norfolk and Suffolk and also my thanks to the Staff in the York Office

DORSET & WILTSHIRE; DEVON AND CORNWALL

Div. Rep. Mrs Alice Cleland CBE

The Wiltshire County Branch enjoyed a Lunch in March and a Cream Tea in August. We are a small but close-knit group having all worked together in the County and District offices in the 80s and 90s. One of our members, Frances Child, is now 97 and has recently moved to a Care Home - but that does not prevent her from joining us.

Some of our members, including myself and also some from the Swindon branch, work at the WRVS Archive & Heritage Collection in its new home in Devizes. Our current tasks are to catalogue the entire photographic collection (thousands of photos), to sort out all the uniforms and pack them in special conservation boxes (lots of hairy green tweed coats etc), and to deal with donations of memorabilia from members or their families, or from closed offices. It is fascinating work. The Narrative Reports in the Collection have this year been awarded a place on the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register, along with nine other outstanding UK archives. The World Register includes the Magna Carta, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Domesday Book, so we are in very illustrious company.

Jacque Roe tells us that the Swindon Branch continued with their usual programme of events - a Spring Coffee Morning and a Summer Strawberry Tea, which were both well attended. We have slowed down somewhat with no new members and the inevitable loss of a few, for various reasons. We all enjoy the Newsletter and find it most entertaining. I found "My favourite things" particularly apt and I did sing it out loud! We are now looking forward to our Autumn coffee morning and our usual Christmas Lunch in early December.

When Paddy Jefferis of Dorset read my last 'Random jottings' she was inspired to write with her own memories of MoW.

I first got roped in for M.O.W. in the 1960s in Bingley in Yorkshire when we collected and delivered the meals. I also took over running a Trolley Shop there where I had my own stock cupboard to keep replenished.

Then my husband was transferred south and we bought a house in Tunbridge Wells. Needless to say my name was also transferred to the local WRVS office and M.O.W. There we had members cooking the meals and a team who did the deliveries. Then WRVS found a block of retirement flats on the edge of town and negotiated to use the kitchen for meals. It was about 200 yards from our house, so you can imagine I was pretty well roped in. I think today's volunteers would be surprised to know that we had the ingredients delivered there in the morning. We prepared the vegetables, cooked the meals, dished them up into individual metal containers and made the deliveries (and I might say this was a country area through lanes to different villages). We served the meals on to the recipients' plates, then back to the kitchen to wash up and stack the containers away for the next day. Rain, hail or snow, it was hard work but fun and we had a good team organised by a lovely lady called Molly Jones. I wonder is she is still around as I am 90 myself? I also ran a trolley shop there, collecting goods from a local shop, where the manager let me take things on sale or return

In the 1970s my husband was nearing retirement and we bought our dream cottage on the Ashdown Forest and soon sure enough WRVS came knocking on the door. This time it was a different job in the County Office in Lewes working with an incredible lady – Laura Heft. We had the task of trying to find holidays for deprived children, matching up the child with a hostess willing to take one in. I distinctly remember one little girl from the back streets of Brighton. The hostess rang me to say she was astounded to know the child came from Brighton but had never seen the sea!

After my husband died I moved to Dorset to be near my daughter and – you guessed it - back to M.O.W in Bridport until I really had to retire and gratefully accepted my Long Service Medal. I hope you have found it interesting. I did try to not go into too many details. I could go on forever!!

We have mentioned the **WRVS ARCHIVES** several times over the last few issues as it is an important part of the history of WVS \ WRVS



Shown here at the opening of their base in Devizes in 2008, are Val Everett, Vice Chairman of WRVS cutting the ribbon and on the left the archivist Matthew McMurray along with five of the ladies who sorted out the hundreds of boxes that arrived from the offices all over the country.

Obviously this is an important record of the setting up of the service at a time of national emergency and it's subsequent growth. We are thrilled to know that this has now been recognised internationally by UNESCO.

Our records are one of the first among ten items and collections on a list of the UK's outstanding documentary heritage. The ten winning items come from across the country, span nearly 1000 years of history and embody the pivotal moments and periods that have shaped the UK. They include the Charter of King William I to the City of London, the Peniarth Manuscript Collection (National Library of Wales), The Pont Manuscript Maps (National Library of Scotland) and The Life Story of David Lloyd George (National Screen & Sound Archive) which is referred to by many film historians as 'the find of the century'.

WVS/WRVS Narrative Reports 1939-1996 (WRVS)

The Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) for Air Raid Precautions was established by Lady Reading in May 1938. By 1943 WVS had just over one million members, making it one of the largest volunteering organizations in British history. Following the World War II, WVS transformed itself into one of the leading providers of social care; its activities over the following fifty years were inextricably linked to the growth of the welfare state.

The UK Memory of the World Programme is part of the UK National Commission for UNESCO's work to promote preservation of and access to the world's archive holdings and library collections.

During WWII, the WVS grew to have a centre in most towns in the country reaching a peak of over 2000 in all. Between 1938 and 1992, each centre was required to make a monthly report of its activities and these narrative reports form the backbone of the WRVS Archive and Heritage Collection and provide a rich account of one of the largest volunteering organisations in British history.



In July, Div Rep Alice Cleland CBE went to the House of Lords, along with representatives from the other nine nominees to receive the accolade. (Pictured centre in long white coat)

Mince Pies have been associated with Christmas since at least the 17th century. In 1662, Samuel Pepys wrote a diary entry for the 6th of January of an evening's repast with his friend Sir William Penn. Sir William served Pepys 'a good chine of beef and other good cheer, eighteen mince pies in a dish, the number of years that he has been married.' The earliest mince pie 'recipe' (dating from around 1615), lists, amongst its ingredients, two rabbits, two pigeons, two partridges, a hare, a pheasant, a capon, the livers of all these animals, as well as eggs, pickled mushrooms, dried fruit and spices. The whole thing was made into a huge pie and held together with iron clamps. Over the years the pies shrank in size and it became a tradition to hand them out to visitors. It was considered lucky to eat 12 pies in 12 different houses during the 12 days of Christmas. The idea, which endures to this day, was that each pie would bring you happiness for a month. So, for a good year, make sure you eat the full quota!

WALES

SOUTH Div. Rep. Mrs Mary Gibbons OBE

Anthea Evans and Mary Morris organised, once again, the summer meeting of the Dyfed Group in West Wales. This time we went to Scolton Manor just outside Haverford West. This is a manor house, museum, garden and a restaurant. We all considered we had 'value for money' as the parking was free and to go round the house and the museum was only £2.00. There were only about 10 present but we never stopped talking!! This group only meet twice a year – November and June/July so there is always a great deal of catching-up to be done. Anthea continues to organise the meals on wheels in Pembrokeshire but most of the rest of the group do not have any contact with WRVS (apart from 'Action'). The next get-together will be towards the end of November when Elizabeth John will organise the Christmas Lunch in Carmarthen once again

Unfortunately Marjory Stinchcombe has had to cancel the last two lunches for the group centred on Abergavenny. The reason for this has been holidays and illness of members so we hope for better luck next time. Mary Howard-Jones is hoping to join other members either at Carmarthen or Abergavenny, she has not long been a member of the Association. I think her philosophy must be 'have car- will travel' because both meeting places are some way from her home in Mid-Glamorgan. Members are looking forward to welcoming her when she is able to get to their meetings

If there are other members about who would like to join either of the two groups mentioned please let me know and I am sure they will welcome you with open arms. My phone number is shown above

I don't know if other Welsh members recognised Margaret Davies' photo in the last copy of 'Action'. She is the longest serving WRVS member working at Head Office in Cardiff. She had worked at Cathedral Road for many years before moving to their present office. 'Mags' looks quite different now with short hair. It was lovely to see someone from the old Welsh H.Q. still with the Service

PS I must apologise to members of the Association if, when reading the last Newsletter, they had the impression that WRVS were still working in prisons. This is not the case. I work in Swansea Prison in the visiting area crèche and we are always looking for new volunteers. Hence, as a member of the Mothers Union, I did some recruiting at the Dyfed Christmas Dinner

There is very little happening in North Wales just at the moment. Gwyn Bay members went on an outing in July. Unfortunately I was unable to go with them however I understand that a good time was had by all.

Earlier in the year I met Eileen Taylor, who though now in her 90's, has just written and had published a book about her husband who was very involved in the development of radar. It is entitled 'Living with a Boffin'. She tells me she is in the process of writing another one.

I have now written to all the Association members in my area. If anyone feels like contacting me I would love to visit and have a chat.

An old, tired-looking dog wandered into my garden.

I could tell from his collar and well-fed belly that he had a home and was well taken care of. He calmly came over to me and I gave him a few pats on his head; he then followed me into my house, slowly walked down the hall, curled up in the corner and fell asleep.

An hour later, he went to the door, and I let him out. The

next day he was back, greeted me in my yard, walked inside and resumed his spot in the hall and again slept for about an hour. This continued off and on for several weeks. Curious I pinned a note to his collar: 'I would like

to find out who the owner of this wonderful sweet dog is and ask if you are aware that almost every afternoon your dog comes to my house for a nap.'



The next day he arrived for his nap, with a different note pinned to his collar: 'He lives in a home with 6 children, 2 under the age of 3 - he's trying to catch up on his sleep. Can I come with him tomorrow?'

In Memoriam

With all the sadness and trauma going on in the world at the moment, it is worth reflecting on the death of a very important person, which almost went unnoticed recently. Larry LaPrise, the man who wrote "The Hokey Cokey", died peacefully at age 93. The most traumatic part for his family was getting him into the coffin. They put his left leg in. And then the trouble started

CHANNEL ISLANDS

JERSEY No Report
Mrs Jill O'Byrne

GUERNSEY
Mrs Margaret Chilcott

Our Association Members met up in April for our Spring lunch at La Villette Hotel. Then in June I had the pleasure of meeting up with Jean Pickard again, whom I met when I attended the Association's AGM in October last year and, invited her to stay with me for a holiday. Jean is our Hon. Secretary at Head Office in York. Jean came with Edna, a friend of hers on the 21st of June for a week. We had lovely weather and I took them round the island to interesting places, one of them was The Little Chapel at Les Vauxbelets I should think nearly everyone who has been to Guernsey has visited it. Covered in little pieces of china to form patterns; both inside the chapel and on the outside. It is quite unique and well worth a visit. We also spent a day in Sark, which is nine miles from Guernsey, on a very hot day. Traveling by Trident, which takes about an hour. We landed at the harbour and made our way to a vehicle I can best describe, as like a covered toast rack on wheels, with seats and driven up the steep hill by a tractor. We had a drive round the island on a horse drawn carriage, then lunch and afternoon tea later. We boarded the boat for the 6 o'clock sailing, after a very pleasurable day out. I invited Association' Members to tea in my garden to meet Jean on the Saturday. A very enjoyable week that we hope to repeat one day.

The 9th of November will be the date for our next luncheon at La Villette Hotel.

A volunteer sometimes took her four year old granddaughter with her whilst delivering Meals on Wheels. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One day she was found staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. Bracing herself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she was surprised to hear the whispered comment, 'The tooth fairy will never believe this!'

After her first week at school the same little girl said 'I'm just wasting my time. I can't read, I can't write, and they won't let me talk!'

NORTH EAST DIVISION

NORTHUMBERLAND

Div. Rep. Mrs Sheila McCormack BEM

In May, Mrs Frances Somers and Sheila McCormack had a meeting with Christine Graham, head of WRVS Services North East. She outlined the aims of the work with which she, and the other two Service Delivery Managers North East are involved. There was an interesting discussion on the various activities of WRVS and the need of the WRVS today

Mrs Cynthia Sealey reports that Ponteland members monthly Coffee Mornings have lapsed during the summer months, due to holidays, family commitments and ill health. However, they hope to re-commence in October and catch up with news.

TYNE AND WEAR

Div. Rep. Frances Somers

The only group meeting regularly in the area is the Sunderland branch, which holds monthly gatherings with an average attendance of seventeen. The January meeting was the AGM where Association business was briskly dealt with and an enjoyable New Year Catch Up ensued.

In February Charles and Sonia Slater took us through a year of Jewish Festivals, with Charles explaining the religious significance and ceremonies associated with each major event and Sonia describing the special foods, which are an important part of each celebration, as well as the day-to-day management of a Jewish kitchen. They were an excellent double act and evoked a lively question and answer session at the end

We took a breather in March with a coffee morning that allowed us to spend quiet time with old friends. Then it was off the seaside in April when Phil Curtis brought us a remarkable collection of slides to illuminate a wide ranging and knowledgeable talk on the history of our two seaside villages, Roker and Seaburn. Familiar to us all in their present state, remembered by many as back ground to their whole lives, yet we were given historical and social insights which could still surprise

As a follow up to a talk last October, the speaker in May talked about representing WRVS at a variety of events including the visit of HM The Queen to present a Charter to The city

It was onto forensic science in June and July. First a fascinating talk by Mr Gilliard about fingerprinting and the part it can play in investigations. Members were offered the opportunity to have their own fingerprints taken and since naturally none of us had ever had this done before the offer was eagerly accepted. The following month Mr Kirkland, a forensic artist talked about how features can be reconstructed onto a skull, why witness led artists sketches can be better than photo-fits and how the artists skills can help the police in a variety of ways. He illustrated each part of his talk with reference to actual cases, which made it was a fascinating and unusual exposition

There is no meeting in August and we re-assemble in September

Ethel Elliott of Sunderland recalls working in the Clothing Store and finding a multitude of hats from the black bags that were donated. Fur, straw, felt, deerstalkers, bowlers, cloches; all styles, all old, some very old and none suitable for our customers. Disintegrating brown paper bags contained hats that their previous owners had worn on high days and Holidays, to weddings and garden parties, where undoubtedly they had represented the finest fashion of their day.

Nobody wanted them but me and I couldn't bear to throw them in the salvage bags. I love hats to the extent that some Girl Guides in our village called me Mrs Hat! Of course you can imagine what happened to them all and at one point in time (Mr Hat can confirm this) I had 115 hats in loft storage.

I had no idea what I was going to do with them all until one morning I woke and announced to Mr Hat that I would hold a show. I would be 'Madame FiFi and her Chapeaux' ('er 'ats) and I would do the show in French. My models would be from local women's groups, and some of them had never worn a hat in their adult lives. Suitable clothes and accessories were added to heighten the effect. I wore a long black chiffon gown printed with roses at the hemline with a gorgeous black straw with roses on the brim. The vision was complete.

My command of French is basic so I started with an exaggerated accent accompanied by my elaborate, extravagant French as I introduced the models, as they in turn entertained their friends from the stage. Between us we could do no wrong and the result was hilarious. Mr Hat who had accompanied us on the ivories with his sentimental mood music took us to the finale with a triumphant version of 'Where did you get that hat'. It brought the house down

Where are the hats now? They were actually passed onto a grateful amateur dramatic group, but I often reminisce about the stories they told, especially when I look at the few that I hung onto, most especially the black cloche. I still love hats!



I recall some shifts in the clothing store myself where I 'rescued' a beautiful real fur stole that would have been 'de rigueur' in the 30's or 40's but was wholly inappropriate for the clients, and yet totally impossible to pass onto a charity shop because of the anti fur lobby at the time. I am hopeful for a Hercule Poirot themed fancy dress so that I can actually wear it! Ed

Grants for WVS and WRVS members

The WRVS Benevolent Trust was set up by Lady Reading to help members of the WVS later WRVS.

Any current or former member finding themselves in unexpected financial need may apply for a grant.

To apply write to:

The Honorary Secretary
WRVS Benevolent Trust
14 Wykeham Road
Guildford, Surrey, GU1 2SE

Or e-mail wrvsbenevolenttrust@hotmail.co.uk

Visit our webpages at www.wrvs.org.uk
Charity no. 261931



Our founder Lady Reading

Birthday Presents

We got our son an iPhone for his birthday the other week, he was over the moon, and our daughter an iPod for hers, she was really excited. The family clubbed together and bought an iPad for Father's day. But I have to say that I was not best pleased when I got an iRon for my birthday

CLEVELAND, DARLINGTON, DURHAM, NORTH YORKSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Ros Rowntree

All members of the Division have had a busy Spring/Summer programme with outings, theatre trips, tea parties and speakers. On their behalf I would like to thank all chairman and committees for the hard work involved in the organisation of these events. I have been able to attend many of these 'meetings', often with my husband, and eagerly look forward to your Autumn/Winter programmes.

The Hartlepool Branch report came from Co-ordinator Mrs Ida Hodgman. Our year started with the usual New Year lunch on one of the worst days of snow of the winter. Despite that, the only ones unable to make it were our Divisional Rep. Ros and her husband William and one local member. In February we had a very enjoyable meeting when our own members took turns in reciting poetry and reading anecdotes.

The March meeting was our AGM when due to ill health our treasurer Gladys Hall resigned and to whom we thanked for all she had done. Margaret Leck volunteered to take over. We were grateful to Ros for chairing the meeting. In April a lady came to talk to us about 'Simplicity'. She was like Mary Poppins pulling lots of things out of a carrier bag - starting with a darning mushroom! Our Spring Outing in May was to Skipton. Some of us went on the steam train ride from Bolton Abbey to Embsay, and also on a canal trip before a Fish & Chip tea.

At our June meeting we discussed our future activities of an Afternoon Tea in the Park and an outing to Keswick before a Community Worker came and talked to us about her work with children and young people.

Not such good news is that another of our long-standing members, Betty Thomas, has died. After a minutes silence in her memory, members spoke about and reminisced about working with her. But to end on a good note, Edith Stamp, our founder chairman, has had a difficult time with illness but is now home and hoping to join us again soon.

In February Scarborough Branch members were given an excellent slide show and talk by Les Hutchinson of Cayton in Bloom and Sheila Johnson of Scarborough Parks Department on the preparation and participation for the judging of the 'In Bloom' contest.

March saw members travel to Filey Council Chambers for coffee, meeting with Filey members and our invited guests from Filey WRVS Books on Wheels service. Sadly this service is no longer provided by WRVS but all of the WRVS members are carrying on giving service through the Library scheme.

In April 34 members had an excellent lunch at the Royal Hotel followed by a little retail therapy before going home.

In May we were treated to the lovely Sue Herdman, a retired actress, who gave us a selection of verse and prose readings relating to 'women from birth through life'. Sad, thought provoking or funny very much enjoyed by all. In June members met for Afternoon Tea in the Church Rooms with quizzes and plenty of talking.

Sadly we have said good-bye to four members who have died recently. Wyn Donoghue a good supporter of the Association. Kathleen Gray who died suddenly aged 86, gave many years service with the WRVS Meals on wheels and Hospital Shop. Irene Winter, who was a member of both York and Scarborough, a gracious lady with a mischievous sense of humour and a delight to know. Many members were able to attend the Service of Thanksgiving for her Life.

Finally Lady Gwenllian Enid Whittaker MBE of Thornton le Dale, Scarborough who died on the 12th June 2010, peacefully, following a long illness. Family, friends and representatives from the Church, WRVS Association, the Red Cross and the many other organisation who benefited from her support gathered for a Service of Thanksgiving in All Saints' Church, Thornton le Dale. Born in 1914 she joined the WVS in 1938/39 at the beginning of the Second World War resigning in the mid 2000's due to her failing health. She was District Organiser for Scarborough and District from 1971 - 1982 and was awarded an MBE for her services to the WRVS. In 1986 she formed the Scarborough Branch of the WRVS Association. She was a tireless worker, much loved and respected by all, very generous with her praise and hospitality - ensuring that her volunteers had the 'tools for the job'. Her total commitment to the WRVS truly represented the WVS motto of 'Service Before Self'.

The York Branch report came from chairman Mrs Millie Wilks. At the March meeting, James Titchener, Fire Safety Officer of York spoke to us about the importance of smoke alarms, their correct positioning and regular testing. What to avoid in keeping safe from fire and what steps to be taken in the event of fire. He handed out well illustrated booklets to each member and answered questions. We met in May for an enjoyable Afternoon Tea with the usual delicacies! Our AGM this year, in October, will be special as we celebrate our Silver Jubilee with refreshments and a birthday cake.

We have been saddened by the news of the death of Mrs Irene Winter who was for many years an active member of York WRVS working in the tea-bar and shop at the Retreat hospital before her move to Scarborough. She continued to attend events in York whenever she could and it was always a great pleasure to welcome her. We extend our sincere sympathy to her family.

Apparently, 1 in 5 people in the world are Chinese. There are 5 people in my family, so it must be one of them. It's either my mum or my Dad, or my older brother Colin, or my younger brother Ho-Cha-Chu. I think it's Colin.

EAST YORKSHIRE TO HUMBER AND HULL

Div. Rep. Mrs Robina Priestley

Robina writes that due to personal circumstances this report is only short and is just to say that all continues as usual in East Yorkshire. Club members are looking forward to the annual visit to Flamborough in September.

Robina did however also mention an 'electrical surge' in the village, (which is something that I have never heard of) when half the village had most of their electrical items destroyed and gives a warning to those of us that take our computers for granted.

SOUTH AND WEST YORKSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs June Pitts BEM

June tells us that member Daisy Martin of Wakefield died in April. She worked for WRVS in Hounslow, London before moving north in 1985 taking on both Meals on Wheels in the town as well as the Pinderfield Hospital Tea Bar.

Gillian Highly MBE reports from Calderdale. Things have changed a little since our last report. We have combined our monthly WRVS Association meeting with the Monthly Lunch club, which we run in the Town Centre. Most of our Association members attend and we provide coffee and biscuits, followed by a cooked meal and a cup of tea for any elderly or disabled person who likes to come down. Several of our elderly club members followed us from King Cross when we had to close there. The eldest member of 97 years has just died and two have celebrated their 90th birthday this year. Most of the other members are between them in age. One of our WRVS members makes a cake to celebrate and the birthday celebrant receives a visit from Dorothy, the former club Leader. On a good day we serve about 15 visitors and 15 Association members. There is always much laughter and catching up with news. In June we took a day out travelling through the Yorkshire Dales and out to the coast at Morecambe. We have taken this route before and it is always popular. Once again we were favoured with a fine day. WRVS members Ron and Dorothy Bunce arrange the route and the meals. We will shortly be planning out Annual Afternoon Tea and Entertainment.

We were very sorry to learn that Mrs Lindy Tatham, a former WRVS Organiser in Calderdale had suffered a stroke but pleased to see her out and about in her wheelchair supported by her husband Norman. Both were very active in WRVS in former years.

LEICESTERSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mike Smith

Sheila Court writes from Rushcliffe, Nottinghamshire where the club decided not to meet in January and February, as the weather can be difficult. This year we were proved right, so our first meeting was in March. This was a celebration lunch at my home for all the members as on a very special day in February, St. Valentine's, I had come of age reaching my three score years and ten. Not a large number to reach compared with the age of some of the members in the countrywide Association, but a significant one for me. *Congratulations!*

April was our AGM and again another significant change. Mrs. Jean Loach who has been our chairman since 1997 resigned because of ill health. The members voted and asked me to become chairman, so I now hold two positions secretary and Chairman. Mrs. Wendy Greaves the treasurer was also appointed Deputy Chairman. The rest of the committee stays the same.

May and July were coffee and chat mornings, but we had a lunch outing in June to the Country Cottage restaurant in Ruddington, a village just outside Nottingham, and easy to get to by car or bus. It is a place we have returned to as the meal and all the staff are very good. As is our routine we do not meet in August some of us still have grandchildren duties. So another half year has passed and we all still gather and enjoy meeting. Two of us will be attending the AGM Reunion in York in October and are looking forward to seeing everyone again.

Secretary Mrs Jean Heason writes from Bassetlaw branch. This year has gone by very quickly and it is getting more and more difficult to remember what we have been doing for the last six months. It's a good job we have a programme to refer to! We are very lucky to have members who are relatively fit apart from the creaky bones and aches and pains we all have from time to time. I don't know what it is about WRVS members but they soldier on tirelessly still doing what they can for other people, they certainly made them sturdy in their days.

Each year we try to have one meeting of 'Swing into Shape' everyone joins in and does what exercises they can, but all enjoy themselves and there is always a lot of laughter followed of course by tea and cakes! In fact at most of our meetings we to have a large portion of food and laughter: We had our annual Strawberry Tea in June at the home of Mrs Mavis Wollerton which was very pleasant even if the sun was not shining.

In August we had our now annual 'Buffet Lunch' at the home of Mrs Jean Heason, it is really good to get together and enjoy one another's company.

In October we will have a speaker who is the Director from the local Robin Hood Airport. He is going to talk to us about the trials, tribulations and responsibilities of running an airport. Then of course we shall be at Christmas and our usual lunch; we really look forward to that! We might be putting on a 'bit' of weight but who cares as we have a very nice time. We wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year

Sheila Kent has sent in a short report of the Leicester branch. We continue to meet for coffee in the foyer of the Bishop Street Methodist Chapel, which is very convenient for members as it is in the town hall square.

At the July meeting two of our still active members, Val Ridsdale and Mary Godby, who had attended a Royal garden party, recounted to us their impressions of the big day. We have a lunch about four times a year at the Leicester College of Catering. This is very popular with members and is an opportunity to meet up with friends over a good meal

LET'S PUT THE SENIORS IN JAIL AND THE CRIMINALS IN NURSING HOMES

This way the seniors would have access to showers, hobbies and walks. They'd receive unlimited free prescriptions, dental and medical treatment, wheel chairs etc and they'd receive money instead of paying it out. They would have constant video monitoring, so they could be helped instantly, if they fell, or needed assistance. Bedding would be washed twice a week, and all clothing would be ironed and returned to them. Someone would check on them every 20 minutes and bring their meals and snacks to their room. They would have family visits in a suite built for that purpose. They would have access to a library, weight room, spiritual counselling, pool and education. Simple clothing, shoes, slippers, PJ's and legal aid would be free, on request; a private, secure rooms for all, with an exercise outdoor yard, with gardens. Each senior could have a PC, a TV, radio and daily phone calls. There would be a board of directors to hear complaints, and the staff would have a code of conduct that would be strictly adhered to.

The criminals would get cold food, be left all alone and unsupervised. Lights off at 8pm, and showers once a week. Live in a tiny room and pay £900.00 per month and have no hope of ever getting out. Justice for all we say.

As a surprise, a chief executive's wife pops by his office. She finds him in an unorthodox position, with his secretary sitting in his lap. Without hesitation, he starts dictating: 'and in conclusion, gentlemen, credit crunch, or no credit crunch, I cannot continue to operate this office with just one chair!'

NORTH WEST DIVISION

MERSEYSIDE

Div. Rep. Mrs Sylvia Hatchell

The Wirral branch of the Association are mourning the death of Dorothy Whittingham, who was the County Rep. for Wirral for many years and is particularly associated with Wallasey where she lived and gave her great commitment to the WRVS.

Whilst still an active member of WRVS Dorothy was the Meals on Wheels Rota Organiser, no small role as in the latter years 18 rounds of MOW went out daily into the Wirral Monday to Friday and on Saturdays and Sundays there were six rounds with a Driver and Helper in each car. Dorothy always managed to fill every rota and knew everyone of the team extremely well. She would visit the Local Office and meet and greet all the volunteers as she sat at her desk.

Latterly when her talents were given solely to the WRVS Association, she arranged monthly lunches, extra special lunches at Christmas and Easter and until prices became too steep, trips by coach for the members. Every member received a birthday card, and this was not only for Wallasey members but after the death of Mary Seed she added the Bebington members to her list. Dorothy will be sadly missed, for her friendship, support to all of us and her organisational skills.

CHESHIRE

Pauline Blyth has contacted the office to say that since agreeing to undertake the role of County Rep she has been unable to fulfill the duties required and was very conscious of that. She hopes there may be someone else within the area willing to take the time required to build up the membership and maintain contact with current members. She offers sincere apologies for the lack of activity, it wasn't the intention when she agreed to the role but circumstances have dictated otherwise. Pauline will remain a member and looks forward to reading about what is going on in future newsletters

The statement below is true.
The statement above is false.

NORTH AND SOUTH MANCHESTER

Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Matthews BEM

Bury members eventually held their delayed Christmas Lunch at Park Farm Restaurant on 2nd February. The weather was fine and sunny, the meal very good and we were all so pleased to have an enjoyable day out after being housebound during the long period of ice and snow. In March we held our AGM as usual in the Blackburne Hall at Bury Parish Church. Ken and Jean Matthews once more made the meat and potato pie (potatoes all peeled by Ken!), others made trifles, served wine, tea and coffee. Our sincere thanks to everyone who helped and particularly Janet and Frank Hewitt and Marjorie and Bernard Sharples for their hard work in the kitchen - we couldn't manage without their support. Our Guest Speaker Ms Heather Slater gave a talk entitled "A Nanny in Saudi Arabia". It was a very interesting account of her time spent looking after the children of the richest Prince in Saudi - we were all fascinated and could have listened to her all afternoon.

In July fifty members and friends had a great summer outing to North Wales. We had a pleasant coffee stop en route at the Tea Pot Cafe before arriving at the St. George's Hotel in Llandudno for a super lunch in the Conwy Suite. A glorious afternoon gave some of us the opportunity to relax on the pier or promenade, whilst others explored the Great Orme or picked up excellent bargains at the shops. Many of us finished our day out by guzzling cream teas back in the hotel's luxurious veranda cafe/bar before arriving back in Bury at 8pm.

The Prestwich group continue to have the pleasure of meeting each other once a month at Rose Walsh's home - her hospitality is much appreciated by the members and it was also very pleasing that most of them joined the trip to Llandudno in July.

We are sorry to report the recent death of Mrs Joan Wilson who was a most dedicated and respected Secretary of the WRVS Jubilee Club in Bury for over 20 years. Later she was a valued member of the Association and we have all missed her since she moved to live with her daughter in Congleton after the death of her husband.

The Sale members thoroughly enjoyed their summer outing to the restaurant at the High Leigh Garden Centre. Our thanks to Joan Allmark for organising this outing and for kindly coordinating the monthly coffee mornings which are held in the homes of members and much looked forward to by all concerned. We were so pleased to hear that Evelyn Blackshaw had received a Civic Visit from the Mayor and Mayoress on the occasion of her 100th birthday and that she had a wonderful day - we send sincere good wishes and congratulations from us all.

PUBLICITY / RECRUITMENT REPORT

I have recently been asked by one or two groups to advise on the best way to recruit new members to the Association, so thought it would be useful to offer some general pointers which might help others

The personal approach is still, above all, the best. If you know someone who has been, or still is, a volunteer then do ask them if they know of the Association and if they have thought of joining. Better still; invite them to your next meeting. All too often we think that people know about us when they don't. People are also shy and don't like to appear 'pushy'. An invitation to join is far friendlier

In those areas where WRVS is still active it should be possible to seek out the managers of local projects and gain their help. Our new leaflets are colourful and explain quite fully what we offer so taking a few to distribute would be quite useful. Again, an invitation to attend a meeting would be a nice gesture

The local press can also be made use of. Most newspapers like to hear of approaching events in their area so, if you have a special occasion coming up, do let your local paper know. Many people are nervous at dealing with the press but so long as you remember to include the basic details in your written or telephone approach all will be well. Every report requires the who, why, what, when and where of your event, along with a little background information about the Association and a contact telephone number. This could be then be used by anyone wishing to become a member

As I have said before, we know what a wonderful organisation we belong to. We just have to develop the habit of telling other people

Lily Carling

Sadly no reports from

ST HELENS, Diane Smith,
LANCASHIRE, Mary Jones,
CUMBRIA, Mrs Pat Gill,
LONDON SE, Mrs G Cleverly,
LONDON NE & CITY, Mrs Taylor OBE DL,

Do write and tell them your news or send to me direct at address on back page

And loads of counties without a rep, let us know if you want to volunteer!

WRVS Association
15 Priory Street, York, YO1 6ET

01 904 634 500
wrvs.association@talktalk.net

These contact details are for all administration of the Association including change of address notification, Membership, Subscription & Newsletter Circulation

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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

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Mrs Sylvia Hatchell MBE

HON. SECRETARY

Mrs Jean Pickard

HON. TREASURER

Mrs Maureen Hudson

HON. EDITOR

Paulene Lambert

The following address is only for contributions for the next Newsletter
By 1st February 2011 please

The Editor

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