

WRVS Association

NEWSLETTER

Issue 75

Autumn 2011

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

Dear Member

I arrived back from a very enjoyable holiday in Atlanta only a week ago and am now trying to get back into a routine once again. I hope the summer has been good for you and that you are ready to face the falling leaves and the cooler weather of the Autumn Season.

By the end of my first year as your Chairman I will have visited a few Association branches around the country. I really enjoy meeting members whenever possible and would love to be invited along to your group at sometime.

You will have noticed in the latest edition of 'Action' an article about 'The WRVS Network'. This will be running alongside the Association until such time as a decision has been made as to whether the Association should carry on or be disbanded. There are fewer members now and those of us who are still in there are getting older.

A representative from WRVS is coming along to our A.G.M. next month in Kenilworth to tell us all about the new 'Network'.

We hope to keep our members informed of the situation re the future of the Association and if anyone wishes to comment perhaps you could write to the Association Office in York.

My best wishes to all

Marilyn Openshaw

WRVS Association - Linking the Past and Present

Random jottings from the Editor

Dear Members

Those of you that are avid readers of the newsletter will have noticed that it was much smaller last time, more of the reports indicated that numbers had dropped, recruitment was almost impossible and members were unable or not inclined to meet up for whatever reason. As a monitor, this gives us an indication of the state of the Association and where it is headed. A sad time, but I personally believe that it has had its day and that it is time to draw a line under a piece of history that, thanks to Matthew McMurray and the WRVS Archives, will be able to remain a fond memory for many



Some Members and indeed Clubs will throw their hands up in horror at this as they still meet regularly, go on outings and find interesting speakers for their members. Well I say, 'Good On You' and long may you continue. But the bottom line is that you will continue and do not need the structure and restrictions of a National Chairman, an office and committee to keep going

My job as an editor is to fill the publication with news from the clubs that are still running and then find a few interesting bits to fill in. These days I have to find more and more of these extras without choosing anything that will upset anyone s- not an easy task as you can imagine. Then I try to get the right sized 'fillers' to fit in a page with some actual news, so that a new region is always at the top of the page. This means that I sometimes have to change a few words, or précis an item. (Crikey, that takes me back to my school days), but I try very hard to keep the context. Having said all that, I would not want to tackle any of it without access to a computer and the ability to make changes on a screen before making the commitment of print on paper. How did my predecessors manage?

The AGM in Kenilworth is our next get together and sadly this year the numbers will be even fewer. Probably by the time you read this, the decision about the future of the Association will have been taken, so it may be that this is the penultimate opportunity that I have to speak to you all. Time now to get off my soapbox for another six months.

So have a happy one and a good new one as well

Paulene

Paulene Lambert

OBITUARY

It is with great sadness that we have to report that Peggy James died on Easter Sunday morning. Peggy enjoyed a long and fulfilled life amongst a devoted family and wonderful friends. She would have been the first to admit that she was fortunate to have lived so long and, together with her husband Bill, have experienced so much. Her funeral and service of thanksgiving was on May 6th, the day before what would have been her 92nd birthday

Peggy joined the WVS in 1959 and ran the East Yorkshire County Office in Beverley during the Cold War Years. She was in charge of a twelve vehicle 'Food Flying Squad' and met with Lady Reading at Pocklington aerodrome. She was awarded the MBE in 1977

Peggy became Div Rep for Humberside and Lincolnshire and then became only the second Chairman of the Association in 1989 for her three-year term. One of the earliest Vice Presidents of the Association she became a strong advocate for developing the friendships of retired members

Jean Pickard recalls that she worked with Peggy at that time in the top floor office when it was at 82 Bootham. Peggy drove over from Beverley 3 days a week and never missed a duty through bad weather or for any other reason. There was a staff of five sharing the duties and under Peggy, it was a very happy band

Our condolences go to her family

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

A man of 82 asked his wife what she wanted for her 80th birthday to which she replied 'I want to be 10 again'

A week later on her birthday he took her to a theme park and made her go on all the rides until she was shaking and exhausted. He then took her for a burger and even got the people in there to let her have a child's happy meal. Finally they went to the cinema and saw the latest 3D kids cartoon movie.

When they got home he asked how she had enjoyed the day. His exhausted wife said that it had been interesting. He probed further and said 'Yes but how did you like being 10 again?'

His wife looked a little confused and then said 'I meant my dress size'

WALES

SOUTH Div. Rep. Mrs Mary Gibbons OBE

NORTH Div. Rep. Shelagh Murray

Sadly, no reports of activity from anywhere in Wales, *but please contact me if you are a member there and know different!*

GETTING MARRIED

Jack, age 92, and Gill, age 89, are excited about their decision to get married. They go for a stroll to discuss the wedding, and on the way they pass a chemist shop and Jack suggests they go in.

Jack: 'We're about to get married. Do you sell heart medication?'

Pharmacist: 'Of course we do.'

Jack: 'How about medicine for circulation?'

Pharmacist: 'All kinds'

Jack: 'Medicine for rheumatism?'

Pharmacist: 'Definitely.'

Jack: 'How about suppositories?'

Pharmacist: 'You bet!'

Jack: 'Medicine for memory problems, arthritis, and Alzheimer's?'

Pharmacist: 'Yes, a large variety.'

Jack: 'What about vitamins, sleeping pills, antidotes for Parkinson's disease?'

Pharmacist: 'Absolutely.'

Jack: 'Everything for heartburn and indigestion?'

Pharmacist: 'We sure do...'

Jack: 'You sell wheelchairs and walkers and canes?'

Pharmacist: 'All speeds and sizes.'

Jack: 'Adult incontinence pants?'

Pharmacist: 'Sure.'

Jack: 'Then we'd like to use this store for our wedding present list'

NORTH EAST DIVISION

SOUTH AND WEST YORKSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs June Pitts BEM

Gillian Highley MBE writes from Calderdale. How quickly the time goes, I can't even begin to think it is nearly 12 months since the AGM. It is a pity that no-one can come this year, (in fact I can't even remember where it was to be held) but I know that it was difficult from Halifax whereas York suited us so well. I look forward to receiving the next newsletter with any further details about the Association.

Our report this time is short as we have been unable to do some of our regular things. Regrettably we have had no contact with June Pitts for a couple of years.

Since the last Newsletter our routine of several years has been changed. Instead of the fish and chip lunch we have all enjoyed for years we went to a restaurant that is on a bus route, there being some difficulty for some in getting to the fish cafe. This worked out very well. We have continued to provide a lunch on the third Friday in each month and this year we have managed without any cancellations. If the 3rd Friday fell on a centre closure date we altered it so that we still kept contact with our members. The menu alternates between Meat and Potato pie and Salmon, both of which go down really well and numbers have almost doubled in the past 4 months. We serve 35-40 people each time, including our 14 Association members. Most members help in some way although the provision on a new dishwasher has made some of them semi-redundant!

Two 90th birthdays have been celebrated for our Club members and each received a cake made by Kathleen Robinson. Our eldest member is now 97 years old. We don't disclose the ages of Association members! We're as young as we feel, older some weeks!

We were unable to have our usual outing this year as so many members are now too frail and our faithful route planner, Ron Bunce, has not been well enough to undertake the job. Our afternoon tea had to be cancelled due to a mistake in the room booking and the alternative dates offered were too near to our Christmas Lunch. It has been decided to 'go to town' to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee in place of the usual tea so that is something to look forward to in the Spring.

We are sorry to report the death of Norman Tatham, a long time members of WRVS and a great support to the Association. Norman was responsible for

providing a speaker for several years for our regular bi-monthly meetings. He had also helped with meals-on-wheels in Halifax and been a great support to his wife Lindy, when she was Calderdale WRVS Organiser (back in the good old days)

Finally, I have had the following poem in my possession for at least 30 years. It was sent to WVS back in 1963 as a Christmas card and I found it in the effects of a long standing WRVS member who taught me much about the Organisation and working with the public and members.

There's a splendid League of Ladies who each day the whole year through
Are always on the lookout to see what they can do.
To try and ease the burden of anyone in need
No matter what their colour, their politics, or their creed.

They've got their plain green uniform for everyone to note
But mostly just a tiny badge to wear on dress or coat.
Their badge is never issued till much service has been done
That's why it's worn so proudly for each one must be won.

So when I see this token as I travel up and down
Perhaps in quiet country lane or busy street in town
I always pause and murmur 'Thank You and God Bless'
For another worthy member of the WVS

TYNE AND WEAR

Div. Rep. Frances Somers

The Sunderland branch is the only active group in this area, and our numbers continue to decline. However, quality trumps quantity and we continue to enjoy our monthly meeting, keeping in touch with old friends and listening to a series of interesting talks. This report covers the period from January to the end of August and in that time we have learned from and laughed with a variety of speakers

January is our AGM and our Chairman, Mrs Sarah Hardy, conducted the business part of the meeting with dispatch. It is difficult to predict how long this will take so we do not engage a speaker, preferring to settle to coffee, a past-Christmas catch-up and maybe a quiz or competition

This year we returned to our schooldays and tried to see how much of the poetry we all had to learn by heart was still in our memories; given the first line of a

famous poem, could we remember the second? We got them all - and many third and fourth ones - and even second verses!

In February we were looking forward to a visit from Christine Graham, an old friend who has worn a number of WRVS hats and is now Regional Services Director. Sadly, work commitments prevented her from coming but her deputy bravely faced us and gave us a very clear and informative picture of the 'new' WRVS. Many Association members have found it difficult to keep abreast of the seismic changes in WRVS structure and operational practice so an opportunity to hear first hand and to ask questions was much appreciated

March brought us a fascinating talk by Mr Kirkland about his work as a Police Artist. He talked about cases he had been involved in, including some notorious local ones which were familiar to some of our members. He was adamant that a good artistic impression was worth far more than a computer-generated Photo Fit or E Fit and we were convinced

The recent merger between Age Concern and Help the Aged into the new Age UK inspired an invitation in April to Mrs Carly King to come and talk to us about the work of the organisation. It was a very well spent hour as she described all the activities available in the Sunderland area and also all the services offered both locally and nationally. Several members were alerted to services they had not known about and which they would find beneficial

Our old friends Charles and Sonia Slater came in May to give us another talk in the series they offer about the Jewish way of life. This one was specifically about Passover and we learnt, from Charles, the religious significance of this festival and the ceremonies associated with it; from Sonia we learned about the onerous practicalities for the family housekeeper. She must empty her kitchen, clean everything thoroughly, introduce a different set of crockery, cutlery, pans, and dishes, and seek out specific and not easily obtainable foodstuffs. It was a very interesting insight into a different culture

The embroideries of Durham Cathedral were brought alive for us in June by Mrs Maureen Martin who used a series of beautiful slides to take us from the oldest piece of stitched fabric (over a thousand years old) up to the present day activities of a group called the Durham Broderers. These dedicated enthusiasts undertake a spectrum of work from everyday repairs to designing and executing all the fabric for a new chapel - kneelers, tapestries, vestments and altar-front. Their work was exquisite, and, as you can imagine in a Cathedral the size and antiquity of Durham, unending

We have no meeting in August, so we took the opportunity in the July meeting to discuss the Association AGM in October, to mandate the Div Rep and to discuss the future of our own group in light of whatever emerges from the AGM

ALLUDING TO THE OLD DAYS, WHEN WE HAD CLOTHING STORES

It was a cold and lonely job for eleven months of the year, tucked up in the attics, checking and sorting. The equipment, all begged and borrowed, was a row of old tea chests (remember those?) and some metal industrial shelving. The tea chests labelled thus: Baby; Boy 4 - 7; Boy 8 - 12; Boy Teens, were lined up with a matching Girl set. The shelving held books, again age-sorted, and games and jigsaws. The material to fill the chests and shelves trickled in throughout the year and all had to be checked for condition (must be good) and workability - thank Heaven for the 'jigsaw-o-phile' who took each one home and ensured that all the pieces were there - and for suitability.

Each January the cupboard was bare but gradually the levels rose and by December we always had enough goodies to fulfil our commitment to send out 100 Christmas boxes to needy families. They were referred to us by Social Workers, Health Visitors, GPs, etc. etc. and because a family might have 4/5/6 children, to assemble them was quite some task.

So, suddenly, instead of the lonely workers in the attic the entire building was humming with an army of helpers each with a role in the production line. In the attics an age-appropriate toy or gift was wrapped and gift-tagged with the name of the child, and a suitable book was added, then each family got a game and a jigsaw. Now the family's box (cardboard empties begged from local shops) was taken down to the next floor where tins of meat and fruit and boxes of biscuits and packets of sweets were added.

Then down to the ground floor where finally the boxes were sorted into batches to be delivered across the city by volunteer drivers. It was a concerted team effort which everyone really enjoyed being a part of. By the week before Christmas all the parcels were delivered, all the tea chests were empty -and it was back to the attic for some of us.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Div. Rep. Mrs Sheila McCormack BEM

Sheila says that she enjoyed a lunch back in June with some of the Newcastle members. Although the group closed as an Association entity, they still meet occasionally and it was good to catch up with them and all their news.

Mrs Cynthia Sealey reports that the small group of members in Ponteland have been unable to meet latterly for their monthly coffee mornings. This is due to health problems or family circumstances. However they hope to arrange a lunch at some future date and keep in touch by phone calls and visits in the meantime.

CLEVELAND, DARLINGTON, DURHAM, NORTH YORKSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mrs Ros Rowntree

No report from Ros, but some interesting words from Lily Carling

In the last newsletter we were informed that there were plans to create a new Network of Volunteers, to include volunteers both past and present, staff, sponsors and anyone else involved with WRVS. The Association to run alongside it, at least for the time being. Reactions have been a little mixed to the news. Some association members think we should be able to carry on as before while others feel that, given our gentle decline in numbers, we should call it a day

There is no doubt that we have fewer members as time goes on. Last year, despite an influx of new recruits, we found ourselves the lesser by a hundred people. But in spite of this we still have much to offer those who decide to join us. Not just the wonderful camaraderie, although that in itself makes it all worthwhile, but many association members are still active within WRVS and, at the very least, keep the retired ones up to date with developments within their old fields. Particularly numerous are the tales that have been exchanged about the delivery of meals on wheels and the various places that have provided them

Here in Scarborough we have had a large number of providers over the years, many of them excellent, but the best for my money came from Scarborough Hospital. It always amazed me, however, that the wonderful meals we delivered and the meals that we saw being sent up to the wards bore no resemblance to the mess that was finally dished up to the patients. Whether it was because they were left standing for too long I don't know but when the chef, James Martin, took part in the televised drive to improve the quality of Scarborough's hospital food I made a point of watching

James Martin is a man with strong local connections. He grew up on the Castle Howard estate and did his training in Scarborough and his determination to try and help grew out of his Grandmother's long stay in York hospital and the poor food served to her there. His drive to get the patients better meals made from fresh ingredients was admirable but it is one of those situations where you would love to be able to go back in six months and see if anything has changed

By the time you read this you may also have watched the TV series that is scheduled to start mid September about improving the quality of 'Meals On Wheels'. Fronted by the Hairy Bikers, their aim is to revitalise a service that they claim is 'over-reliant on a thinning volunteer force offering unappetising food'

Ooh. One is soooo tempted to say; "Not in my day, it wasn't"!

LEICESTERSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Div. Rep. Mike Smith

Jean Heason writes from Bassetlaw. Once again I have to report that we have had another very successful half year. Our group of committed members continue to meet regularly every month, and we are now recruiting more new members, which is good news and we look forward to their contributions to help make our programme more interesting

In May we did our annual 'Swing into Shape' afternoon. This is to get us into shape for all the outings, with food attached that we have planned during the year. Each year the exercises get a bit more difficult and we can hear everyone puffing and panting more

June was our annual Strawberry Tea. Unfortunately the weather was not so nice and members were confined indoors. Not so many members were able to attend but those that did had lots of nice food to eat and enjoyed each others company. In July members enjoyed a trip to Clumber Park, all did plenty of walking and talking followed by a splendid tea in the cafe. Everyone had a good time walking around the gardens. August we again had our annual buffet lunch at the home of Mrs Jean Heason and despite the changeable weather managed to have a lovely lunch and it was nice just to sit and chat. We still have the rest of our programme to look forward to all mostly indoors with some interesting speakers

Report from Sheila Kent of the Leicester branch. Since our last report, 12 of our members attended a 1940's event at the Newarke Houses Museum in Leicester and enjoyed the music of 1940's played by a trio of older men in the garden, followed by tea and scones

We continue to meet for coffee in the foyer of the Bishop Street Methodist Chapel, which is in Town Hall Square, Leicester, so it is very convenient for our members. We average between twelve and eighteen members attending who enjoy the fellowship and gossip. Unfortunately, during the last year two of our most long standing and valuable members have died and one or two others have deserted us due to increasing age and immobility which affects us all sooner or later

However we still arrange three luncheons a year at the Leicester College of Catering Restaurant which is cooked and served beautifully by the students and is thoroughly enjoyed by us all

Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire is the final report from the division and it comes from Sheila Court. Well we all survived the terrible snowy, cold and downright

dreary winter, and thankfully we decided some time ago not to meet in January and February. It was a very good decision. March saw us meeting for the first time in 2011 and there was a lot of chatter having not seen everyone since the Christmas lunch

As usual the April meeting was our AGM, not a great deal to report now-a-days. There are fewer members so that the money we raise to pay for speakers is less, so usually only one per year is possible now. Unfortunately Ruth Ferguson one of the Committee members has had to resign because of health problems. May was one of our usual coffee and chat mornings and in June a lunch at a favourite restaurant, which was a lovely day for an outing

In July members were asked to bring along something of interest to tell us about. A piece of the Rock of Gibraltar, a gorgeous lustrous brown, used as a paperweight by a family member, handled so much it was beautifully smooth. Another was a large silver cup from the niece whose aunty had been a champion world ballroom dancer; she had the most interesting life. A ring that had belonged to a mother-in-law brought out of Poland on the toe of one of her sons during the long journey they had to make when they were forced out of their home. Thelma Polkowski, one of our committee members is now married to that son. There were a few other items but rather stupidly I did not write everything down and now can't remember all the details. The nuisance of growing older or one of them! As usual no meeting in August one or two of us are still helping/entertaining grandchildren

Two of us will be at the AGM in Kenilworth. It will be nice for us to see another part of the country

EAST YORKSHIRE TO HUMBER AND HULL - NO REPORT

Div. Rep. Mrs Robina Priestley

An elderly couple had dinner at another couple's house, and after the meal the wives left the table and went into the kitchen.

The men were talking, and one said, 'Last week we went out to a new restaurant and it was really great. I recommend it very highly.' The other man said, 'What is the name of the restaurant?' The first man thought and thought and finally said 'what is the name of that flower you give to someone you love? You know the one that's red and has thorns.' 'Do you mean a rose?' 'Yes, that's the one,' replied the man.

He then turned towards the kitchen and yelled, 'Rose, what's the name of that restaurant we went to last week?'

THERE'S NO SERVICE LIKE OUR SERVICE

There's no service like our service, like no service we know.
Everything about it is appealing
Everything the council will allow,
Nowhere else you get that happy feeling
When you are freezing, out in the snow

There's no people like our people, they smile when they are low.
Even with a vehicle that they know is old
They may be stranded, out in the cold
Yet they wouldn't change it for a pot of gold
They just get on with the show.

The lunch clubs, the playgroups, the clothing, the trips,
The books on wheels and holidays for kids.
The headaches, the heartaches, the backaches, the tears:
Your family who sacrifice the most
When all they've had for lunch is beans on toast

There's no service like our service, like no service we know
Many years have passed since we were started
And we all intend to carry on.
Even when a dear friend has departed
We're broken-hearted, but we go on

There's no service like our service, like no service we know.
Yesterday you thought that you would not stay long
But fifteen years or more have gone.
One day on your uniform they'll pin a gong.
Let's go on with the show

Words by Vicky Grimshaw, Sale Association, (with apologies to Irving Berlin)

A man takes his Rottweiler to the vet. 'My dog is cross-eyed, is there anything you can do for him?'

'Well,' said the vet, 'let's have a look'. So he picks the dog up and examines his eyes, then he checks his teeth. Finally, he says, 'I'm going to have to put him down.'

'What! Just because he's cross-eyed?'

'No, because he's really heavy'

They're both dogs, so why does Goofy stand up, while Pluto is on all fours?

NORTH WEST DIVISION

NORTH AND SOUTH MANCHESTER

Div. Rep. Mrs Jean Matthews BEM

Bury Group members were all relieved that the dreadful snow and ice experienced by us all last Winter had abated by the time we met on 1st February to enjoy our "Christmas" Lunch. The meal at Park Farm Restaurant was a great success and everyone was satisfied with the pensioners' sized portions - such an advantage not being overfaced by a huge meal, particularly as fantastic home-made desserts are available!

Unfortunately the AGM in March proved to be a little disappointing - for various reasons the number of members able to attend dropped to 13. Jean and Ken Matthews produced meat and potato pie followed by super trifles made by other members. Mr Statham, a retired WRVS Meals Organiser from the Prestwich area, entertained us with his poetry readings, some written by himself. Our sincere thanks, yet again, to Frank and Janet Hewitt, and Bernard and Marjorie Sharples for all their hard work in the kitchen and elsewhere on the day. We were very sorry that Gladys Golbig had a fall on her way to the AGM and we are grateful to Rose Walsh for looking after her at A&E and taking her back home afterwards

Our Summer outing proved to be very popular and regrettably the coach was already filled by the time some of our members responded to the circular letter. It turned out to be a most beautiful warm and sunny day for the trip to Lake Windermere. We paused for morning coffee at the County Hotel in Carnforth, only five minutes run from the M6, and it proved much more enjoyable than using one of the motorway service stations. At the Bellsfield Hotel at Bowness we were served an excellent lunch and the six acres of lovely gardens overlooking the lake enabled the less mobile members to relax and enjoy the superb scenery, whilst others sailed on the lake or strolled to find bargains in the nearby shops

Members living in the Prestwich area continue to enjoy meeting monthly at Rose Walsh's home - much appreciated by everyone and our thanks again to Rose

It was with sadness that this morning Ruth Warburton and I attended the funeral service of Bessie Knot, aged 91, who had been an extremely dedicated WRVS office helper, and Meals on Wheels driver, for many years in the 1980s and 1990s. Bessie was always cheerful, chatty, and very willing at all times and was much respected by the recipients as well as by colleagues. She continued to be interested in the Association although not able to join in our activities recently.

We are also sorry to report the recent death of Emily Higgins, aged 97, who had been a conscientious founder member of the Meals on Wheels team in Bury and a much respected member of the Association until two years ago

It is pleasing to hear that 10 members of the Sale Group continue to meet monthly for coffee and a chat at each other's homes - always a very pleasant morning. On 27th June the members went to Friars' Rose Garden Centre at Knutsford where everyone enjoyed some lovely food and a stroll around the Centre admiring all the plants, flowers and fancy goods that were on sale. Sincere thanks to Joan Allmark who organises this Group. She also tells us that her friend from Canada arrived unexpectedly and was able to join the outing which she thoroughly enjoyed and in particular the company of all the members

MERSEYSIDE

Div. Rep. Mrs Sylvia Hatchell

I have joined the local group at their monthly lunch and listened carefully to their opinions on WRVS, the changes in the organisation and the turnover of personnel. I have had visits from Chairman Marilyn, Div Rep Mary Jones and Association member Linda McEvoy and we have discussed the proposal to make the Association part of the WRVS Network. Their feelings and those of my members is still the same; that is we are in favour of the proposal, but we would continue to meet as friends, supporting one another until it is no longer feasible

Sadly I will not be joining with colleagues at the Association AGM, as I shall be staying in Chicago during the month of October, with my youngest daughter who is working there for a year

LANCASHIRE

Div Rep - Mary Jones

There have been no meetings in the county this year as we have very few members and they are scattered, but always interested to find out what is going on round the country. Welcome to a new member from Preston Mrs Audrey Sheard

ST HELENS

Diane Smith,

Seven of us continue to meet each month to enjoy each other's company and sometimes reminisce. We all agreed that the 'new' format for the Action magazine is better now, as there is more about projects in our local area

SOUTH EAST DIVISION

NORFOLK

Div. Rep. Mary Taylor

Having spent the last 5 years dividing my time between UK and Northern Cyprus, I am again now a 'full time' resident of the UK, (with the exception of holidays). I have enjoyed my travels, and had many interesting experiences during that time. The Turkish Cypriot life style is so different to here. They have a very safe existence, particularly for females and children. There is very little crime.

Shops do not lock their wares away at night, they are just out on display continually. I am not saying there is not any theft, but the saying is if caught and imprisoned you only do it once. An experience I did not have. There are many historic and interesting parts of the Island to explore, most of which I have done. It is truly an outdoor life, having so many months of continual sunshine. The days simply do not exist when you take potluck on sunshine, more like wonder if it may rain today. Of course the answer is no, as the rainy season is normally 2 weeks during February. However, finally the heat was the winner with me, and I decided I was not born to live in those constant temperatures, so back to the UK. I have many friends there, and half of my family live there, so I suppose my days will still be spent visiting, but, my main home is here.

We, at the Great Yarmouth branch have had the occasional gathering whenever I have been in UK. However, on my return our first organised meeting was a New Year Luncheon early March attended by 50 members and friends. As always the most popular choice of menu was Cod and chips. (Forgetting the diets temporarily). This is when I asked members if they objected to me restarting our Branch programme. I was delighted and truly touched by the response. Accordingly, I have re-assumed the role of chairperson.

Our second gathering was for a Mystery tour in April, when 51 friends and members gathered to enjoy a day together. We have a fantastic coach driver, name of Tony who regularly takes us out. We firstly headed towards Taverham Garden Centre for a coffee break, then onto Fakenham, an old Norfolk town for lunch. The afternoon saw us in Holt, a very quaint town for afternoon tea and walk around the shops.

In May we went to Sheringham Park, now part of the National Trust and it is the place to see a wonderful collection of Rhododendrons and Azaleas. There are over a thousand different varieties, colours and perfumes all so beautiful. Then on into Sheringham for lunch, and finally on to East Ruston Vicarage Gardens.

June saw 41 of us heading to Clacton-on-sea. Firstly we stopped at 'The Out of Town' shopping area. It was quite chilly and wet. We then went into Clacton itself, and thankfully the weather improved. We have to remember however, that we are on the East coast that can be notoriously cool.

August we had another Mystery trip, very popular with our group. 49 of us set off earlier than usual, as it was going to be a longer journey. Of course, the usual question, 'where are we going', on a mystery trip? Our great driver has a cryptic clue quiz for us on these-particular days, trying to let us guess our destination. Even if we give the right answer he will still not confirm until we arrive. This time we headed further inland, finally arriving at Boston. If you have never been it is well worth a visit. The Church, also known as the 'stump' is wonderful. It was a Wednesday when we went, so also market day with over 100 stalls.

May our Branch be the first to wish all other Members a very Happy Christmas and Healthy New Year?

Finally we want to say, PLEASE, do not let our Association disappear. There is too much friendship to be lost.

SURREY, KENT, SUSSEX

Div. Rep. Mrs Joan Rosling

The only group in the area now is Guildford and they finally had their Christmas lunch on 2nd February – two months late because it was previously snowed off!

I think that as we are in the home town of Lewis Carroll we could perhaps borrow the 'un-birthday' rule of any day except 25th December for our Christmas lunch. Why do we all try to have it in winter when it would be much easier for every one to have it six months earlier or later? Ed

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Mary Harber writes from the Rushden & Raunds Club. She has taken over from Mrs Christine Carter who has now retired having run it so very well for many years. Chris is still a member and I know I will be calling on her for advice in the future. On behalf of the members I would like to thank Chris for all her hard work and for the Delicious Christmas Dinners she has always arranged for us. It is with great sadness though that I have to report on the death of a very faithful member Mrs Brenda Smith. As I reported in the last issue Brenda had been taken ill at Christmas and very sadly her health deteriorated so much that she never returned home. We will all miss Brenda very much as she was not only a member of the WRVS but also the WI and The Royal British Legion and she worked hard for all these organisations

Our meetings this year have been a Coffee Morning at my home last May when there were so many raffle prizes we all went home with one and recently sixteen members met at the home of Mrs Pearl Jones for a Tea Afternoon and the members enjoyed sandwiches, homemade cakes, cream teas and strawberries and cream and pots of tea. It was a lovely way to spend a summer afternoon, so thank you Pearl

Our next event will be the Christmas Dinner at Rushden Golf Club and I hope that all our 24 members will be able to attend

LONDON NE & CITY - NO REPORT

Mrs Win Taylor OBE DL,

OXFORDSHIRE, BEDFORDSHIRE AND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE - NO REPORT

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

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT - NO REPORT

Div. Rep Mrs Beryl Adams,

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

As I am no longer the secretary for the WRVS Benevolent Trust, please write to

- Ed

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

DORSET & WILTSHIRE & DEVON & CORNWALL

Div. Rep. Mrs Alice Cleland CBE

The Wiltshire and Swindon Groups continue to meet regularly and we are all such old friends now that we will carry on whether under the umbrella of the Association or not.

We are privileged in Wiltshire to have the WRVS Archives at Devizes and four Association members, Alice, Marguerite, Barbara and Gill are part of the volunteer team cataloguing the collection to be ready to go on line for the 75th anniversary in 2013. We are currently working on the Wartime Narrative Reports - it is the most interesting and inspiring work imaginable. And so much of it is relevant to today - waste not, want not!

Association member Lindy Wood left a £5000 legacy to the Archives and this is being used to educate children about the Second World War and particularly the contribution of women. We think Lindy would approve of this. I hope you are all receiving the Heritage Bulletin telling you about the work of the Archives. Please let us know if not, either by writing to me at the above address or contacting me on the email shown. If you have any memorabilia you would like to lodge with the Archives, they would be very pleased to hear from you. It will be catalogued under your name so that your descendants can find it

SOMERSET AND AVON

Div. Rep. Mrs Sheila Scholey

Sheila regrets that no phone contacts have been made and she has nothing to report

NOT FROM ESSEX OR EVEN BLONDE

A girl was driving down the Motorway when her car phone rang. It was her boyfriend, urgently warning her, 'Sweetheart, I just heard on the news that there's a car going the wrong way on the motorway. Please be very careful!' 'It's not just one car!' said the girl, 'There's hundreds of them!'

CHANNEL ISLANDS

GUERNSEY

Mrs Margaret Chilcott

2011 has seen a great change in Guernsey that no one would ever have envisaged. This has come about, as I understand it, through changes in the constitution in the UK and Guernsey WRVS being run quite separately from the UK organisation. We are now no longer allowed to be The Women's Royal Voluntary Service. We were proud to be members of such a wonderful organisation and feel a great loss and sadness after over sixty years that the WRVS has been established here

The voluntary work will go on - but under a different name, now 'The Guernsey Voluntary Service'. The new organisation was launched earlier in the year when all members were invited to a lunch or tea where they were presented with new badges depicting a family of two adults and a child with arms linked. I hope as members of the WRVS Association that we in Guernsey will still be allowed to belong to the Association

We had a very nice lunch and get-together in April and then in June I invited members and guests to my home for tea and they had a wander around the garden to see the views over the sea. Our next event will be our lunch in November

JERSEY - NO REPORT

Mrs Jill O'Byrne

My short-term memory is not as sharp as it used to be.
Also, my short-term memory's not as sharp as it used to be.

Somebody actually complimented me on my driving today.
There was a little note on the windscreen. It said, 'Parking Fine.'
That was nice

AGE may not weary them, but don't half affect the memory

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

PRESIDENT

Ruth Markland - Chairman WRVS

VICE-PRESIDENTS

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| The Hon. Dame Mary Corsar | Lady Toulson CBE |
| Sylvia Hatchell MBE | Mrs Sheila McCormack BEM |
| Mrs Ava Christophersen | Mrs Diane Price |
| Mrs Pat Copping | Mrs Sheila Scholey |

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Mrs Maureen Hudson

VOLUNTARY MEMBER

Katherine Carmichael

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

The Editor

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