

# WRVS Association

## NEWSLETTER

Issue 77

Autumn 2012

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

*Dear Member*

Here I am writing the Autumn newsletter. The spring and summer have produced some very mixed weather so we have had to make the most of the good days. One of these days was last Tuesday, which I spent on the beach with my three grandchildren. It was such a delight to see them enjoying the sun, sea and sand and eating huge ice-cream cones. Life changes in many ways but some of the simple things stay the same

Since my last letter I have visited a few Association groups but would still love to visit more before the Association finally comes to a close. I really enjoy meeting with you all. As I have said before please get in touch with the Association office and I will endeavour to come along to see you

I shall look forward to seeing those of you who are coming to the A.G.M. at the beginning of October. It is always such a happy, sociable event, although, being our final one, it will be tinged with sadness. We shall still no doubt enjoy it

In the centre pages you will find information about the final national event of the Association, which is to be in June 2013. I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend. We have chosen Birmingham as the venue, as it is probably as central as we can get. We know that it is on the doorstep for some people and yet others will have a quite a journey

This is not quite the final Newsletter, so I shall look forward to writing to you all one more time.

*Marifyn Openshaw*

**WRVS Association - Linking the Past and Present**

## **Random jottings from the Editor**

Dear Members

Issue 77! How many of you when hearing that number slip into the refrain Seventy Seven Sunset Strip? And remember the click, click of the fingers? It was an American TV detective programme in the early 60's. But it reminds me how certain numbers mean something. For instance I bet you all know what 57 advertises, what sort of dog there were 101 of and how many trombones were in the big parade! The list goes on and I have been known to create a quiz along those lines at members meetings

Talking of memories, isn't it strange what provokes a memory? The travel report on the radio this morning mentioned a problem in Wednesbury. This instantly brings back the phrase 'O'I'll give it Foive', from someone called Janice giving her verdict on a new pop song. I suspect given enough time I will even remember the name of the programme it was on!

Mush as I love my digital camera, I wonder if children of tomorrow will get as much pleasure as I used to have thumbing through the box of black and white photos. I still have most of those tiny blurred images, but can no longer name everyone on them. My mother was regularly 'advised' by me to write on the back of them, but I suspect that by the time she got round to it eyesight and memory were her downfall as well

Has anyone out there had more luck with de-cluttering than I have? Almost everything in my home holds a memory of when and where it was bought, received or otherwise acquired. In fact I probably get more now, as charity shops are my latest downfall

Finally. This is the penultimate newsletter. For the last one, which will be in the New Year, as well as 'reports from the divisions'; I am inviting EVERYONE to send in a contribution on a personal level. Meetings, friendships, memories of happier WRVS times, whatever you are inspired to write. In case I am inundated I cannot promise to include your contribution, but I will even stop my 'random jottings' or witterings in an attempt to fit you all in

Best wishes to you all

Paulene

Paulene Lambert

## WALES

SOUTH - Mrs Mary Gibbons OBE

There is very little to report this time and it will get less and less I am sure as time goes on and members get older and are no longer able to participate in meetings etc. Since the last newsletter the Dyfed group have had their Summer (if you can call it summer!) get together. They went to Lampeter to 'The Old Town Hall' where there was an exhibition of Quilts. This was of Welsh ones and also others on loan from Bath where there is a Museum dealing with the Amish. Apparently it was a very interesting exhibition and much appreciated by those who went. The talk is now of the Christmas Lunch – when and where. I am sure the 'where' will be the Falcon in Carmarthen as we have been going there for many years. Those going to Lampeter were delighted that Jill Walden-Jones was able to join them as she was staying with Family in the County. Jill was County Organiser for Dyfed many years ago before she went to Welsh Head Office as Chairman for Wales and then on to London as Vice Chairman.

Unfortunately the Abergavenny members do not meet now as the Organiser, Marjorie Stinchcombe, is very unwell and I have not contacted Doris Travis from Newport recently.

If this was a 'School Report' I am sure there would be a comment here saying 'Could do better!' I will try to do better for the next one.

NORTH - Shelagh Murray

Shirley Bellis organised a lunch at the Rhos on Sea Cricket Club for the Queen's Jubilee. In all there 100 people attended. It was a good mix of people including Association members, past and present WRVS volunteers and clients from Shirley's luncheon club. It was a really great occasion and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended it. I am looking forward to attending the Christmas dinner. A new Service Delivery Manager (SDM) has just been appointed (the 5<sup>th</sup> in 3 years). We are all looking forward to meeting him and wish him luck in his new job. We also hope that he stays with us for a little longer than his predecessors. I would still like to hear from any Association members in my area I would love to visit for a chat over coffee or a cup of tea.

## NORTH EAST DIVISION

### **EAST YORKSHIRE TO HUMBER AND HULL**

Mrs Robina Priestley

East Yorkshire & Hull It has been a quiet year so far but the regular lunches have continued albeit with reduced numbers. We have had one new face at the last few lunches, Jean Barton who was a regular volunteer with the Wilberfoss Meals on Wheels Service. Congratulations were sent from this Group to a member Mrs. Eileen Taylor, who moved to Wales from Cottingham some years ago, but liked receiving news sent by Barbara Gillard. Eileen reached the grand age of 100 years and still enjoys an active life -Well done Eileen and love from us all. I'm afraid I have to end on a sad note as we have just lost one of our most regular Lunch members. Jean Creaser died suddenly this month. Although she has not had the best of health this last year or two it came as a great shock to all her friends in Wilberfoss and she will be missed very much by us all. As I write her funeral has not taken place but I am sure it will be well attended by her fellow WRVS members

### **CLEVELAND, DARLINGTON, DURHAM, NORTH YORKSHIRE**

Mrs Ros Rowntree

The past few months have been very difficult for all our members making decisions about their future with Association and with the WRVS.

Sadly Harrogate branch folded in March.

Hartlepool will fold at Christmas with members continuing to meet at a new venue. York members will probably do something similar.

Scarborough, as I write, being a much larger group are still seeking satisfactory answers regarding the WRVS Network. If they are not forthcoming I fear that they too will fold. I do thank all chairmen for steering members through this sad process. I do know that whatever the outcome we will all continue to meet and support one another.

The Hartlepool Branch report came from co-ordinator Ida Hodgman. She says at our April meeting, due to decreasing membership, it was decided not to invite speakers - so we discussed future plans. We arranged our May outing to Kiplin Hall in North Yorkshire calling at our favourite farm shop and café, the Mainsgill on the A66 on the way. Kiplin Hall is well worth a visit and we enjoyed a lovely,

delicious lunch. In June, two of our ladies told us about their visit to the Queen's Buckingham Palace Garden Party. They had been invited because of the work they had done during the Second World War. Our July meeting was taken up with further discussion of our future. We talked about the outing we are going on in August to the Durham Dales Craft Centre and the Afternoon Tea in September. We also discussed our New Year lunch.

We did decide that we would like to still meet as a group but not in a formal setting. It will be sad to lose our involvement with WRVS but our local friendship group will continue to meet under a new name, which has not yet been decided.

The Scarborough Branch members continue to meet monthly. The February speaker was retired Cloughton Blacksmith, Alan Readman, who began by showing a film made in the early 1960's (by a BBC cameraman and with detailed commentary by Richard Baker) showing the process of making a horseshoe and the fitting of it to the horse. He spoke of the history of the blacksmith and recalled many stories from his childhood travelling with his father to farms and stables throughout the area.

Member Chris Ridley, who for many years had an Antiques Shop, was the speaker in March delighting us with her talk entitled 'Eight Antiques based on a Desert Island Disc theme'. Starting with a piece from when she first began collecting to the present day and appraising each item. In April 29 members went for lunch at Ravenhall, Ravenscar on bright but cold and windy day. In May 47 members and friends went to Yarm for a cruise on the river Tees with a good lunch on board. Again a cool day but thankfully dry.

A Diamond Jubilee Tea in honour of the Queen was held in June when Margaret Porter decorated the hall and tables in all things red, white and blue, and members joined in with their dress as well. Mark Gay played popular music on the electric organ all afternoon while members enjoyed a scrumptious tea and plenty of 'talk'. The summer outing was to Glaisdale, we crossed the moors in glorious sunshine with the heather at its best. In absolute contrast on the return journey we were shrouded in fog, heavy rain and thunder and lightning. On the way we stopped at the Cross Butts Stables and devoured a good, substantial, sandwich lunch before travelling on to the Glaisdale Robinson Institute for a performance of Bernard Slades romantic comedy 'Same time next year' given by the Esk Valley Theatre Company. A full coach of 47 members and friends had a thoroughly enjoyable day.

The York Branch met in March at the Friends Meeting house when chairman Mrs Millie Wilks reported the death of her friend and fellow member Miss Joyce Beale. She also reported the death of Mrs Stella Wallace. Mrs Hudson gave an update on the future of the Association followed by discussion. The appointed speaker was unable to attend due to illness and so members enjoyed a 'Fishy' quiz and a

'Fishy' poem was read, followed by tea and plenty of chatter. In May members enjoyed a 'Vintage Afternoon Tea' at the Bar Convent, Blossom Street to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

## **LEICESTERSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

Mike Smith

First report from the counties is from Sheila Kent, Leicester branch who says that they continue to meet for coffee mornings each month with usually about twelve members. They have got used to their new venue and enjoy the chat and socialising. Sadly, two of their members died in July, Grace Brigstock and Daphne Thake, both of who will be missed

Sheila Court writes from Rushcliffe. I seem to be starting my report in the same way again. 'It has not been much of a summer', but at the time of writing this we are seeing and feeling the sun which will give us a boost to face the coming winter.

As usual this half year starts for our meetings in March to avoid any problems with travelling to the meetings if there is bad weather. March was a chat and coffee morning with the usual raffle, which over all the meetings brings in enough money to subsidise lunches etc. In April at our AGM one of the committee members, Mrs Ruth Ferguson, offered her resignation, as she is unable to get to meetings because of her health. We miss Ruth at the meetings to discuss future events, but as these usually happen after a coffee morning we had hoped that she would be able to come along to one of these. May and July were once again chat and coffee mornings.

June was a major event as we had a super tea party to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. We usually have a lunch outing at this time of the year that is subsidised, so for this very special occasion we bought all of the food from M&S. There was a wonderful selection of sandwiches, vol-au-vents, mini-fruit tarts, assorted patisseries and a super large fruit cake that we decorated with crowns. Tea and coffee of course, and to finish the afternoon a toast to the Queen with Fizz. The day we chose was not excellent weather wise but we all had a lovely time remembering events when we had seen the Queen, either here in Nottingham or at special occasions for WRVS. The afternoon was held at the home of our treasurer Mrs. Wendy Greaves, the house was decorated with red, white and blue bunting lent to us by Mrs Jeanne Burn, it all looked very splendid. So another half year has gone by and we look forward to starting our meetings again in September, then Olive Humm and I will be at the AGM at York in October, so we'll see some of you there.

When my wife Jenny and I became Joint Div Reps for Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, and Leicestershire in late 2005, little did I realise what the future would hold in store.

In the early days we struggled for information on our 'patch' as the previous Div Rep, Joan Newman had been struck down with a major stroke and there was no paperwork for us to call on. After much searching and enquiring we found that we had one branch in NE Lincs, one in Leicester and no less than six in Nottinghamshire! To add to our confusion there appeared to be no branch in Lincolnshire despite it being, geographically, one of the largest counties in the country. We made contact with a number of our Lincs. members only to find that they were the only member for miles around but a few of them still managed to meet with each other on the odd occasion.

We were able to make contact with our existing branches and we were made most welcome. Coffee mornings in Rushcliffe and Broxstowe were always most welcome along with lunches at Newark and Leicester. The biggest problem were the Christmas Lunches which always occurred in the two weeks before Christmas, so by the time the 25<sup>th</sup> arrived we had had a sufficiency of turkey! However we were always delighted to be invited to the Festivities at Rushcliffe, Gedling and Newark. We were grateful that our own branch of Bassetlaw always had a New Year lunch instead! Over the years we made a large number of good friends and I was delighted that after my wife Jenny died in 2009 the invitations kept coming and I have been able to continue to attend branch functions.

The highlight of the Association Year is always the AGM and Reunion weekend. It has been very good to move around the country each year and I have fond memories of weekends in Bristol, Bowness-on-Windermere, Maidenhead, York and Kenilworth all at my own expense I hasten to add. It seems a great shame that this year's AGM, to be held in York, will be the last. However this will not be the end as I gather that there will be a final event to be held in Birmingham next year to celebrate the 70th year of WRVS and the 40th year of the Association. I will certainly be there and I hope as many of you who can, will be there also.

The great thing about the Association is the friendships that have been made and have lasted. I wonder how many others, if any, have been as lucky as I have to have met a new partner through the Association? Chairman Marilyn and I became good friends at the AGM two years ago, and haven't look back since.

I feel sure that branches will continue to meet and friendships last until there are none of us remaining. I have much to thank the Association for and I feel sure that I speak for many of our members. The concept was brilliant it is a pity that others do not see it this way.

## **SOUTH WEST DIVISION**

### **SOMERSET AND AVON**

Mrs Sheila Scholey

Sheila says that unfortunately there is nothing to report from the area, but she is looking forward to seeing old friends at the AGM and Reunion.

## **CHANNEL ISLANDS**

### **GUERNSEY**

Mrs Margaret Chilcott

We had the first of our twice-yearly lunches in April at our usual venue, when twelve of us including guests, enjoyed a delicious meal. Most of us not having met up since the November lunch always think that the five months between have gone very quickly. Too quickly or is that a sign of my age?

I usually invite members and guests to a garden party in June at Le Pres, but this year Fiona Willis who has been invited to join us for our lunches, very kindly offered to have the garden party at her home. It was a perfect day, lovely warm and sunny. Fiona lives at Les Cache Hall, a lovely Guernsey manor house. We duly arrived at 2pm and were offered a glass of champagne or orange juice by Fiona's husband Peter, in their sunroom. We then went through patio doors to a walled courtyard where we were served the most delicious tea. Everyone enjoyed it so much and, it was so kind of Fiona and Peter to invite us. They have of course started a precedent with the champagne and afternoon tea

Our next meeting will be the lunch in November. However, I hope to be in York for the AGM in October and meet up again with members I met two years ago. Following that, Secretary Jean Pickard came over to stay with me on the Island and we still keep in touch. My best wishes to everyone.

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"If I'd known I was going to live this long I'd have taken better care of myself"

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## NORTH WEST DIVISION

### NORTH AND SOUTH MANCHESTER

Mrs Jean Matthews BEM

Bury Group members continued with their tradition of having their Christmas lunch at Park Farm Restaurant on 7th February. Turkey was still on the menu along with a choice of three other mouth watering dishes and homemade desserts. It was a nice sunny morning but still rather cold after a recent nasty snowfall, so sadly our number attending dropped from 18 to 11. Those present thoroughly enjoyed a good natter and we were all delighted to be able to congratulate and offer our good wishes plus a small present to Pam Whitfield on the occasion of her 90th birthday that week.

Our AGM a month later saw us break with tradition and move to the Ditto Bistro situated in the centre of Bury near to the bus station. The owners gave us a very warm welcome and kindly excluded other customers on that day. The homemade food was excellent and reasonably priced so we hope to meet there again soon.

Despite the poor weather in early July we were blessed with a nice day for our summer outing to Southport - lunch at the luxury Ramada Plaza Marine Lake Hotel was first class and we can recommend this venue to other Northern groups. Beautiful gardens nearby for resting, a tram ride to the end of the long pier (and back again for the poor walkers like me!), plus the shops and gardens on Lord Street or cream teas back at the hotel later, provided plenty of choice for the remainder of the day.

Our Prestwich members are still enjoying seeing each other at their monthly coffee mornings hosted by Rose Walsh at her home. Sincere thanks again to Rose for providing this hospitality. We were sorry to hear that she wasn't well enough to come on the July outing and do hope that she is now much better.

Sale members also had nice weather for their July outing to Highleigh Garden Centre in Cheshire. They enjoyed a good home-made lunch but some of their members were not well enough to travel and sadly the number was down on last year. It is also a smaller group able to join in the monthly coffee mornings but those attending have a very pleasant time and look forward to being together.

We are sorry to hear that Ella Collier has moved into a Rest Home - she was the Div Rep for this area for many years and was responsible for persuading me to take on this role. Ella's enthusiasm and continuing interest in the Association has

been much appreciated by us all. We also offer sincere thanks to Joan Allmark for co-ordinating this Group and to Rosemary Cooper for her assistance.

Some of the founder members of the Bury Group were sorry to read in the Spring magazine of Ava Christophersen's recent death. We have a lovely photograph taken by the Bury Times in June 1988, showing Ava sitting in the sunshine, with a large group of Association members at our Garden Party celebrating the Golden Jubilee of WVS/WRVS. We all felt very privileged to have our National Chairman attend this function. Ava charmed us all and her interest in local matters impressed everyone - a very happy occasion. On a personal note, I also had the pleasure of continuing to see Ava and Dorothy Stevens for many years whenever I was in London - we always enjoyed having a meal and a natter together

### **MERSEYSIDE**

Mrs Sylvia Hatchell

Wallasey continue with their monthly pub lunches but numbers are declining due to infirmity and age. However we shall all continue to support one another for as long as possible.

### **LANCASHIRE**

Mary Jones,

As we only have scattered members in Lancashire there no group meetings to report on. I have managed to visit some members this year, which was a pleasure, and I will visit again. If any other members would like me to visit please contact me so we can arrange a suitable time. I will be attending the AGM in York in October and will write to our members with a full report.

Crosby in Merseyside has a busy programme this year starting with a talk from Kevin Harvey, a local actor, this was very enjoyable. In April we had a quiz afternoon, the quizzes were set by Linda McEvoy and stretched our brains somewhat. Our trip to the new Museum was cancelled as it clashed with the Queens visit to the museum as part of her Jubilee visit to Liverpool. The highlight of the year so far was our Jubilee garden party - in the rain. How 40 of us fitted into Linda's house was a puzzle but it was a great success with a lot of red, white and blue outfits and a display of 50s memorabilia. Later this year we have a garden centre trip for coffee and shopping, a 'balloon' debate, and Christmas lunch at a local pub - always a convivial event. Sadly I have to report the deaths of 4 of our members - Gordon Ramsay, Olive Short, Audrey Walmsley, and Nancy Newton-Jones who was 101.

## SOUTH EAST DIVISION

### LONDON NE & CITY

Mrs Win Taylor OBE DL,

Eve Sheppard (mentioned in the last issue of the WRVS Association Newsletter) telephoned me recently with the news of the death of Elizabeth Hutchison, who was Deputy London Region Administrator during the time of Ava Christopherson (whose death was also recorded recently). Elizabeth had been an Ambulance Driver during WWII and was also involved in Forces Welfare.

At that time London Regional H.Q. was situated at St. Chad's Street, King's Cross. Training and meetings of London Borough Organisers took place there. The equipment for Emergency Feeding such as urns, boilers, stands etc. were stored at that H.Q. Later on the premises became a Clothing Store for the WRVS.

Eve and I had a trip down Memory Lane and we recalled that WRVS Headquarters were situated in Old Park Lane, Hyde Park. It was a large mansion and had been used as a Military Hospital during WW2. It had a creaking lift with a clanging metal grille door (and the building was believed to be haunted!). The offices of the organisers of all WRVS projects were situated at H.Q. and training and conferences were held there. It was also possible to buy ones uniform there and in the early 80's a new uniform was designed. A number of WRVS members in their smart new apparel appeared on a BBC Evening News Programme in a 'Fashion Parade'. (I recalled that a small proportion of my right leg appeared on the screen on that occasion). The WRVS Headquarters subsequently moved from London to Milton Hill in Oxfordshire.

I recalled various clothing Stores throughout the London Region. Clothing was collected from the tall green boxes situated at various locations and from other sources. On one occasion a client gratefully accepted some expensive monogrammed pyjamas. Gentlemen's underpants were never accepted from donors but such items were purchased with money received from rag and bone merchants for non-usable clothing. I particularly remembered Bow Road and Rochester Row Clothing Stores and the WRVS Clothing Depot at Woolwich presided over by Dotty and Eddie Powell. They were a lovely Couple and are much missed. Not only did Eddie collect and supply Borough clothing stores but at the Woolwich premises clothing was dry cleaned and large quantities were packed for distribution overseas for use in the relief of disasters such as floods, earthquakes etc.

We also recalled the Escorts provided by London Region members for displaced persons who had to flee their countries in times of emergency. London members went to Gatwick Airport to meet people from Asia and later to meet residents of the Falklands at the commencement of the hostilities there. They were met at the Airport and taken to overnight accommodation. Next day they were picked up and taken to railway stations on their way to friends and relations in U.K. On that occasion my arm appeared on TV round the shoulders of an elderly gentleman!

Another type of Escort, not well know/n was that of the escort of children of members of the Armed Forces whose parents were stationed abroad. Members across the U.K. picked up the children from various locations and travelled to St. Pancras Station where there was a special military office. This office dealt with the arrangements for the onward journeys of the children to meet their parents and for their return journeys. The liaison with the military and the escorts were also organised from London Region.

At the other end of the age scale what fun we enjoyed in the running of the Darby and Joan Clubs and organising their parties and coach outings to the seaside. None of these projects could have continued without the dedicated WRVS members and in some case WRVS Association members who may be reading this today. I expect there are many of us who regret the passing of such projects.

With regard to Emergency training, Borough Organisers attended an Emergency Training Session at a military establishment at Easingwold, North Yorkshire, where discussions and lectures took place such as feeding, the provision of clean drinking water and toilet facilities. I remember we treated some water from a pond with a chemical preparation as a test for purity. We drank some and suffered no repercussions.

Until about five years ago London WRVS Association members held their AGM/Reunion at a church hall in Hide Place, Westminster. This ceased as membership declined and some members could not travel. Dorothy Stevens, one of the organisers, died a few years ago. Contact since then has mainly been by way of letters and telephone calls. Except of course through the Newsletter, thanks to our Editor, Paulene

## **NORFOLK**

Mary Taylor - Great. Yarmouth branch

Mary's last report arrived too late to be included in the first Newsletter of the year so the details are included here

The Memorial Sunday wreath was very kindly laid by Mrs June Miles and her husband, on behalf on the WRVS Association. This service was at the Cenotaph in St. Georges Park, Gt. Yarmouth. The Band from 901 Troop, Winterton Marine Cadets, led the procession from the Market Place to the War Memorial. Prayers were led by Rev., Chris Terry, team rector for Gt. Yarmouth.

Our last luncheon of 2011, and also our Christmas Luncheon were held at The Star Hotel, Gt. Yarmouth on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011. We held the event early to ensure all our members and friends would be able to join us, knowing that many belong to other clubs, and therefore have many Christmas functions to enjoy. We had 54 friends and members attend. This was our first meeting at the hotel. The food was most enjoyable. The raffle followed, as usual. Have you ever heard 54 ladies chatting all at once? A truly wonderful sound

North Norfolk Christmas Luncheon. The luncheon was held at The Virginia Court hotel, where we have met before. 5 ladies from the Gt. Yarmouth branch joined our friends from North Norfolk. It is so nice to meet with our near neighbours, as they are such a small group. Also, their area is regarded as rural Norfolk. We all received a surprise Christmas present, delicious shortbread biscuits, beautifully wrapped. A most enjoyable meeting.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

We, in Gt. Yarmouth arranged our first event of 2012. We should have gone to Walsingham for the snowdrops, but unfortunately, the weather won. We decided it was too dangerous for our ladies to walk around the Abbey Grounds in 6 cms of snow, so a quick substitute outing was arranged. We visited Holt, a lovely North Norfolk town with a very famous school, Gresham Hal where parents pay over £6000 per term to have their offspring educated. We then continued our journey on to Bawdeswell Garden Centre for lunch and browse. Food was very good, excellent choice, prompt service and well presented

We held our spring luncheon on 7<sup>th</sup> March at the Star Hotel, Gt. Yarmouth. Although we have had a previous luncheon at this venue, we were all rather disappointed. The service was poor, and, although we had a time booked for our meal to be served the staff seemed unprepared for us. We were quite disappointed in the quality of our meals. Needless to say, we are now looking for a new venue for future luncheons. Thank goodness we have true friendship among the 47 friends and members who attended to compensate.

18<sup>th</sup> April, and we all are once again off on a day out. This time we are going on a Mystery trip. It is amazing how many passengers ask me our destination beforehand. Of course, I am sworn to secrecy, as our drive also makes up a quiz for us on route. The idea being, at stages we are given clues of our destination. All adds to the enjoyment of our journey. This time we are headed for Suffolk. Naturally, many of our passengers guessed the answer, only to have several red

herrings given to us. We are lucky to have such a knowledgeable driver, makes our day so much more interesting. He has got to know many of us now as we have the pleasure of him on all our outings. The weather was a little unkind to us, but it was April and we are in the UK. However, our 46 passengers enjoyed another good day out.

16<sup>th</sup> May and we are off on our travels once more. This time we are visiting Peter Beales Roses of Attleborough. Usually, they have a wonderful display. Unfortunately, due to adverse weather conditions, their prize specimens were stored away ready for the Chelsea Flower Show, to which they exhibit. Gave us time for a coffee and browse of the hundreds of roses they cultivate. We then travelled on to Wymondham, an attractive, historical Norfolk market town with its red roofs and the massive towers of the Abbey church set against green fields of the Tiffey Valley. Like many East Anglian towns Wymondham earned its wealth from wool, but another industry which survived in the town was the making of small wooden objects – spoons for example - some of the streets in Wymondham take their name from this such as Spooner Row. Wymondham has a magnificent, twin tower Abbey, founded in 1107 by William d'Albini and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Alban, this was later changed to St Mary and St Thomas of Canterbury. When built the church was intended to serve both Benedictine Monks and the parishioners of Wymondham. However, quarrels between the two groups over issues such as bell ringing led to each faction building their own tower! The parishioners built the great west tower... and the monks built the east tower, which has since become a ruin. At the Dissolution in 1538 Abbey church was granted to the people of Wymondham and a wall was built blocking up the Monks tower. Sir Ninian Cooper designed a great gilded screen, and dedicated it to the young men who had fallen in the First World War. The railway station is still in use. Built in 1845 and on the Norwich to Ely line, the station once employed over 100 staff. The station still links Norwich, London, Cambridge and the Midlands. This award winning station has been restored and there is a railway themed restaurant, called Station Bistro, complete with train carriage seats. The theme is from the film "Brief Encounters" with old photographs and paper cuttings. The station masters lounge/dining room has also been restored to its former glory.

20<sup>th</sup> June, and once again we are off on another coach outing. Today we visit Snape Maltings and Aldeburgh. Snape Maltings is an old mill partially converted into luxurious residential apartments. The remainder of the building is shops that include some unusual craft stalls, boutique, children's toys, cards and books, and restaurants. The Maltings are adjacent to the river where you are able to take a very pleasant walk. We travel on to Aldeburgh in time for lunch, fish and chips, mainly local caught. Aldeburgh is mainly a fishing town, very quaint. As you walk along the promenade there are the fishermen's huts where they sell their daily catches. As we arrived afternoon, all was sold out. The beach is all shingle. We

did find an Ice Cream parlour, which they make, delicious. Our day was also blessed with beautiful sunshine.

July 4<sup>th</sup> Once again we are on our travels. Today it is Wisbech Rose Fair. Originally called that as the main displays were roses, this annual event, is no longer just roses. All the towns' churches have a flower festival, with the most beautiful arrangements. The leading themes this year being the Olympic Games and the Royal Jubilee. Although 2012 marks 50 years since the first 'Rose Fair', the big celebrations are being arranged for 2013. A most enjoyable day and with the bonus of beautiful sunshine.

### **OXFORDSHIRE, BEDFORDSHIRE AND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

Mrs Jean Callaway,  
Mrs Sheila Wilson,

Barbara Strattan BEM writes as the County Rep for Bedford. We are delighted here in Bedford to have 54 of our members who have decided, after a bit of a referendum, to continue their membership with each one paying £5 to cover annual basic costs. We had a lovely afternoon tea, followed in July by lunch at our local garden centre with 38 members enjoying a good meal and a wander round the gift shop and beautiful plants. Now we are planning an autumn talk, a lunch at Christmas and a future too.

Recently, after receiving a letter from the Archives Museum in Devizes I saw my chance to donate the Bedfordshire Archives, which I had saved from the Bedford office when it closed in 1996. The 100 plus items I had in the garage and in boxes, under various beds, go back to the 1940's. The two items on the centre page of the latest Heritage Bulletin are from Bedford. Two tea urns (© 1950's and the crotchet doll – did anyone recognise it?

I am pleased they and all the other items are now in safekeeping. Bedfordshire had a great WRVS history and now a little part of it is still there, in Devizes

### **NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

Mrs Mary Harber,

News from the Rushden and Raunds Club. We had chosen a very warm and pleasant morning in May to have our annual Coffee Morning so we were able to sit in Diane Brooks beautiful garden and enjoy the sunshine.

In August we usually have our Tea Party but unfortunately we had to book it for September so I will report on it in the next issue of the Newsletter.

We still have 24 members and I hope that we will all be able to get together for the Christmas dinner in December.

**WRVS Association**  
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**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

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Mrs Sheila McCormack BEM 1995 - 1997

Mrs Diane Price 1998 - 2000

Mrs Pat Copping 2001 - 2003

Mrs Sheila Scholey 2004 - 2006

Sylvia Hatchell MBE 2006 - 2009

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Mrs Maureen Hudson

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Katherine Carmichael

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This address is for contributions for the next **and last** Newsletter

**By 1<sup>st</sup> February please**

Paulene Lambert

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