

WRVS ASSOCIATION FINAL NEWSLETTER

Issue 78

Spring 2013



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WRVS Association - Linking the Past and Present

Letter from the Chairman

This sadly is the final Association Newsletter. It is a time to look back and remember all the very happy times, and there are lots of them. Many of us have enjoyed A.G.M. weekends in various parts of the country. There have been the Divisional Representative's meetings in York and latterly Committee Meetings, held at the Office in York.

Many of you have been involved with the Association for much longer than I have and I am sure you have lots of tales to tell. No doubt when we have our final event those attending will have lots of 'do you remembers' and the time will not be long enough to fit in all the anecdotes.

People always say that 'all good things must come to an end' and I am sure that we all feel that the Association is one of those 'good things'. A great deal of pleasure has been derived from the local group meetings and we hope that individual groups will carry on meeting and enjoying happy times in the future.

The Association was started forty years ago and has been a great way of helping volunteers to keep up with friendships that were made over many years working within the WRVS.

Congratulations from the Association to the WRVS and all the volunteers on the 75th Anniversary. As we all know the volunteers have put a lot of time and effort in over those years but I know from personal experience that the more one puts in the more pleasure and satisfaction one gains as a volunteer.

I am still trying to see as many members as possible before we draw the final curtain so please get in touch with the office in York if you wish me to join you at one of your meetings. I will try my best to attend.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Birmingham in June for our final event. This will be quite an occasion I am sure.

Best Wishes
Marilyn Openshaw

PS - We are thrilled that 120 people have said that they would like to attend the Celebration Lunch at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens on 12th June. Each one has been written to with confirmation of times and directions etc. If you cannot be there with us in person, please be there in spirit and raise a cup of tea to toast fellow members

Finally, remember to pass any funds in WRVS Association accounts to the WRVS Benevolent Trust (after using what you can for the benefit of your club members)

WRVS Association Chairmen and AGM Venues

1974 – 1982

AGMs were all in London and the First Chairman was Miss Kathleen Mary Halpin

1983	Birmingham	Mrs Helena Foster
1984	Pudsey	
1985	London	
1986	Bristol	Mrs Ava Christophersen
1987	Newcastle	
1988	London	
1989	Chester	Mrs Peggy James
1990	York	
1991	London	
1992	Cardiff	Mrs Elizabeth D Claydon
1993	Norwich	
1994	London	
1995	Leicester	Mrs Sheila McCormack BEM
1996	Ambleside	
1997	London	
1998	Milton Hill	Mrs Diana Price
1999	Durham	
2000	London	
2001	Birmingham	Mrs Pat Copping
2002	Bath	
2003	Chester	
2004	Northampton	Mrs Sheila Scholey
2005	Scarborough	
2006	Somerset	
2007	Windermere	Mrs Sylvia Hatchell
2008	Maidenhead	
2009	York	
2010	York	Mrs Marilyn Openshaw
2011	Kenilworth	
2012	York	

The only reference I can find regarding News Letter Editors show that the first was Doris Moss until June 1984, then Viola Price followed by Mrs Gross.

Ness Venables was my predecessor and I have had the honour since 2003 – so ten years with friends all over the country. How many do you remember? Ed

NORTH EAST DIVISION

NORTHUMBERLAND

We are very sorry to report that Mrs Sheila McCormack BEM lost her battle with pancreatic cancer and passed away in a care home in November

CLEVELAND, DARLINGTON, DURHAM, NORTH YORKSHIRE

Mrs Ros Rowntree

At this my final entry for the Association Newsletter I am pleased to tell you that all members of all branches of the Division are to continue meeting for as long as possible thus enabling them to enjoy the friendships made and support each other. My sincere thanks to all chairman and members for working so diligently in true WRVS style 'not why we can't, but how we can', to get a satisfactory result

The Scarborough branch members continue to meet monthly under the chairmanship of Mrs Christine Hepworth. At the September meeting we were treated to a talk by Laila Bradley, one of our own members, who is also a guide at Sledmere House. Her talk on the 'History of the House and Its Family' was full of humour and totally absorbing.

The October talk on the 'Role and History of the Mayoralty' given by Alderman Sheila Kettlewell and Hazel Lynsky, both of whom have been Mayors of Scarborough, said what an honour it had been to serve the community in this great voluntary capacity. They spoke of their achievements and the special highlights of 2011 when they made over 600 visits, met the Queen and welcomed the Yorkshire Regiment to Scarborough and much more. We met for lunch in November at the Downe Arms, Wykeham and enjoyed a delicious meal and good company.

The Annual Visit to Irton Garden Centre for coffee and shopping on a frosty and foggy morning was a good start to the Christmas festivities. The centre has had a 'makeover' and been enlarged with more to buy and a magical Christmas Grotto. In January at our 'AGM with cakes' we made final preparations to bring the branch to a close and gave members the proposals for forming a new group that were accepted in full.

We have sadly lost three members - Miss Jean Richardson, Miss Margo Sanderson and Mrs Christine Allott.

York Branch led by chairman Mrs Millie Wilks met in October for their AGM followed by Afternoon Tea. For the final celebration of the WRVS Association to be held in the Botanical Gardens, Birmingham enquiries are to be made regarding joining with Wilberfoss members and to hire a coach for the event.

Regarding the future of the branch it was unanimously agreed to meet informally four times a year. Details to be finalised.

The death of two members were reported, Mrs Cath Winter and Miss Phyl Cawood

The Hartlepool Branch report from Co-Ordinator Mrs Ida Hodgman told of a wet and windswept day in September when they visited St Hilda's Church on the Headland for afternoon tea. In October they held their final meeting in the Library, which was attended by Div Rep Ros Rowntree.

A presentation of an orchid plant was made to founder member Mrs Nellie Smith. Nellie then spoke about the formation of the group by Edith Stamp at a meeting held in a Scout hut in 1986.

It was unanimously agreed to continue to meet in a local community cafe from November on a 'pay as you go' basis. This has proved to quite successful and convenient for all.

SOUTH AND WEST YORKSHIRE

We are very sorry to report that Div Rep Mrs June Pitts BEM lost her long battle with illness and passed away in November

Gillian Highley reports from Calderdale that another six months has gone by and the club are still going strong. Our main event this year has been a Jubilee Party to celebrate the Queen's 60 years. We had an old fashioned afternoon tea, not cucumber sandwiches but potted meat, salmon and egg followed by fancy homemade cakes and scones. Once again our 'Cake Maker In Chief' Kathleen Robinson, excelled herself with a lovely diamond encrusted cake topped by a photograph of the Queen. We were once again entertained by old friends who had put together a Jubilee concert, finishing with Land of Hope and Glory and much flag waving.

We continue to meet once a month and still cook lunches for 35 elderly people who come from all areas of Calderdale. We are in the process of collecting various bits to send to the Archives. They bring back many happy memories of the fun we had and the friends we made.

So often as I read the local press I see new organisations doing the things WRVS initiated so many years ago. Today I read that the local Rotary club is making Christmas parcels to distribute to the less fortunate of Calderdale and I am

reminded of the parcels we made each year for Meal-on-wheels recipients, families who came to the clothing store and those living alone. I am sure WRVS did this all over the country. So many now 'Statutory Services' were thought up and started by WRVS.

LEICESTERSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Mike Smith

Sheila Court writes from the Rushcliffe Club in Nottinghamshire with the report for September to December 2012. This is the last report that I will write, another deletion to make on the computer. I have to admit that I wasn't too happy to start using this machine but it is most useful for items like this, it has made putting a report together very easy especially being able to use spell check!

This part of the year started with a very welcome chat and coffee morning, with the emphasis on chat. In October I was able to tell our members about the AGM that Olive Humm and I attended in York, with the lovely news of a great gathering at Birmingham in June 2013. We have had a good response to the invitation to attend and have already booked a coach for 15/16 members, so please give us good weather as we have always had for the AGM's that we have been to. November saw us thinking of Christmas and the annual lunch that we have at the local Masonic Hall. Only 16 were able to come this December, this did include Mike Smith who was made very welcome again, joining us in another good meal.

But on a sad note the reason for so few members attending the Christmas lunch was illness on the part of two of our members and very sadly the death of Mrs. Jean Loach, a former chairman of the group. Jean had been a member of WRVS for over 30 years, leader of a Luncheon club, and when that club closed joined another Lunch club. She was also a member of a team that took a trolley around 23 wards at the City Hospital in Nottingham, and finally a committee member and Chairman of the Rushcliffe Association. A large number of us attended her funeral; she will be very much missed.

So we are starting 2013 with meetings beginning in March, just in case bad weather arrives in January/February, and lots to look forward to over the next few months.

Post Script from Sheila to announce that Chairman Myrle Ellis has been awarded the MBE for her dedication to the WRVS at Leicester Royal Infirmary. Congratulations Myrle!

The Leicester branch are holding a buffet luncheon in May to celebrate 40 years of the Association and 75 years of WRVS, to which all of our members are

invited. In spite of the Association finishing this year we shall continue to meet socially as long as members wish

The news this time from Bassetlaw, comes from their chairman Daphne Turner. It is with sadness that I write the last ever report from our branch. We have been alive for at least thirty years. Our records were destroyed when our local office was closed, so cannot be exact. Over the years we have been a very active branch, as our programmes were always varied and kept the members interested.

As chairman of the branch I have been very proud of the input they have given, especially our past chairman Mrs Jean Moore and our secretaries Joanne Buffrey and Jean Heason and treasurers Jenny Smith and Brenda Willand.

We have made so many friends over this time and plan to keep together if at all possible, if only to meet for lunch maybe every one or two months.

We send our good wishes to all members of the, now old, WRVS Association

Here is a little story to go into the Newsletter from Mrs. Hilda Smith and Mrs. Elizabeth Walton, two of our members who worked in the clothing store in Nottingham (amongst other things)

A gentleman arrived one morning asking for a very specific outfit. A black suit, a pair of black shoes, a pair of black socks, a black tie and a white shirt. Well of course the ladies in the store knew exactly what he would need these for, we would almost certainly have guessed the same idea

As he was leaving, very happy with his clothes and the lovely ladies who had been so helpful, he said 'If I get the job I will let you know'. This caused puzzlement all round. A couple of days later he came back to the clothing store, looking very pleased with himself. Yes, he had been given the job. He had needed the specific-clothes to work in a funeral parlour, to keep the cadavers company overnight, but he had to be dressed respectfully. Would anyone have guessed that this was the reason for the special clothes?

Hilda later became City Organiser for WRVS in Nottingham.

Buzz, Buzz - A woman walked into the kitchen to find her husband stalking round with a fly swatter. He claimed to be hunting fly's having already killed 3 males and two females. Intrigued she asked how he could tell them apart. 'Three were on a beer can and two were on the telephone'

Children's Exam Answers are almost better than a cup of coffee to start your morning.... These are real answers given by children.

Q: Name the four seasons.

A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q: Explain one of the processes by which water can be made safe to drink.

A: Flirtation makes water safe to drink because it removes large pollutants like grit, sand, dead sheep and canoeists.

Q: How is dew formed?

A: The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire.

Q: How can you delay milk turning sour?

A: Keep it in the cow.

Q: What causes the tides in the oceans?

A: The tides are a fight between the Earth and the Moon.

All water tends to flow towards the moon, because there is no water on the moon, and nature hates a vacuum. I forget where the sun joins in this fight.

Q: What are steroids?

A: Things for keeping carpets still on the stairs.

Q: What happens to your body as you age?

A: When you get old, so do your bowels and you get intercontinental.

Q: What happens to a boy when he reaches puberty?

A: He says good-bye to his boyhood and looks forward to his adultery

Q: Name a major disease associated with cigarettes.

A: Premature death.

Q: How are the main parts of the body categorized? (ergo, abdomen.)

A: The body is consisted into three parts. The brainium, the borax and the abdominal cavity. The brainium contains the brain; the borax contains the heart and lungs, and the abdominal cavity contains the five bowels, A, E, I, O, and U.

Q: Give the meaning of the term Caesarean Section

A: The Caesarean Section is a district in Rome.

Q: What does the word benign mean?

A: Benign is what you will be after you be eight.

SOUTH WEST DIVISION

SOMERSET AND AVON

Mrs Sheila Scholey

I joined the Women's Royal Voluntary Service in June 1983. At that time I was living in Norfolk and Myrtle Moss was the County Organiser; who recruited me into the Service. In November 1983 I was nominated the H.Q. Publicity Organiser for Norfolk County. I held this post until the County Office was closed at the end of 2001. I loved all my working days and the companionship of the Girls and the Male members of the staff right to the end. Whilst in the office I was Emergency Trained and was called out on several occasions; most rewarding and fulfilling experiences. One of the highlights of the year was the running of the Children's Crèche at the Royal Norfolk Show on behalf of the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association, over approximately eighteen years; I have wonderful stories of the children from this time.

In March 2002 we moved to North Somerset, to be near the family. At that time Pat Copping, who was then, WRVS Association Chairman, persuaded me to become the Somerset and Avon Association Rep in the South West.

I received my WRVS Medal in the summer of 1998 and proudly sewed the Ribbons to my uniform. Sadly uniforms are no longer worn; although I still have mine. I have had many happy associations with WRVS over the years, accumulating with my appointment as Chairman of the WRVS Association 2004 to 2006, and now as a Vice-President. Unfortunately we are to disband in the Summer of 2013, but what great memories I shall have always.

Not Rome last year, this was the Italian philosopher Cicero in 55 BC

The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome become bankrupt. People must again learn to work, instead of living on public assistance.

People who think that they know everything are aggravating to those of us that do

Gillian Highley - 50 years with WRVS, well almost!

It seems almost impossible that it is almost 50 years since I joined WVS in 1965. So much has changed since then but I have every reason to thank WRVS as it opened up so many opportunities to me. At that time it was simply WVS. Training took some weeks and we had lectures about various parts of the work. Remember 1 in 5 anyone? For the later members this was training in what to do in the event of a nuclear bomb dropping. I joined WVS as I was a driver with nothing to drive, being fairly recently married and not having a car. I began with MOW in the school holidays once I had proved myself able to drive to the required standard. In those days WVS had it's own transport given by the Council! Soon after joining it became WRVS and how proud we were of the Royal Insignia (quite the nicest badge we ever had I think)

I then answered an advert in the local paper to become Treasurer at a Darby and Joan Club, which I did for the next 10 years during which time I was trained as OPW deputy Organiser by a lovely old lady who knew Lady Reading. I did so many things organising the clubs, Handicraft exhibitions, Choir Festivals. It was a good time to establish new clubs and Trolley shops and I became responsible for 18 Clubs, 7 Trolley shops, and a Dancing club. I also belonged to Emergency Services and was Organiser for some years, attending call outs and numerous exercises. I also learnt about public speaking and handling people and situations.

In 1973 I was needed to work in the family business each afternoon so that Clubs work became impossible. Determined to continue with WRVS I set up a Luncheon Club with a friend. We began with 12 members and by week three we were up to 50 and shortly 60. Later a second club was formed with a different team. I organised and cooked at the first club for 33 years until the venue closed down. My team of ladies were so reliable (WRVS always is) and we moved down town and reduced the club to once a month as we were all over 70 by then.

The highlight of WRVS for me was to be awarded an MBE for 'Services to WRVS' but of course this was not only for me as I had had such a good team. WRVS opened up a new world to me and as we never had a family, became MY Family. I met such nice people and was offered amazing opportunities such as Westminster Abbey for the 50th Anniversary and tea with the Queen Mother. Unfortunately there was a mistake in the numbers of invitations and I was unable to go! I represented WRVS on various committees through out Halifax and got to know so many people. We tried to promote WRVS at every opportunity, even pushing a giant birthday cake in the Gala Procession, which had 50 candles on it and the WRVS badge.

In common with many members reading this I will remember the confidence I gained, the comradeship and fun, the sad and happy occasions and the gratitude of the people we were able to help. Good luck to WRVS in its new role

Mary Taylor, Norfolk tell how she became involved in WRVSWRVS Association

My father for many years had many spells in James Paget Hospital. I decided when he passed away; I would try to give something to the hospital for all the wonderful care he had received there. I enquired at the WRVS shop there if I could join. I was interviewed and duly accepted. My first duty was to take the trolley around the wards one afternoon per week. Next in line was delivering meals on wheels. This soon escalated to a duty in the shop. There I met a lady who asked if I was interested in joining the WRVS Association. She explained that they had coach outings and coffee mornings. I joined. At one of the coffee mornings the branch leader said to me as I entered, "You sit here". I replied "my friends have a seat for me". "No", she said, "sit here". I did as I was told! This I found was to be me replacing the current branch leader as she had decided to retire. Apparently the look of horror on my face said it all. Trouble was, you did not argue with her.

The first outing I was taking over I did not have a clue as to what was expected of me. I should have prepared raffle tickets, but no advice had been given on procedures. Quick remedy, stop at first newsagents and buy tickets and prepare. That I decided was the first and last time I would not be prepared. At this point my predecessor offered me advice. It took a while, but I gradually organised how I would continue. I enrolled a number of new members, arranged outings and luncheons. All well attended. Then came the time when our area representative was moving to another part of the country. She asked if I would take over from her. I thanked her for her confidence in me, and asked what was involved.

As I had time to spare, I decided I could quite enjoy the challenge. I can honestly say I have enjoyed every minute in my role. I shall be sad to see the Association close, but all good things end. However, as we have such a following here, we intend to continue the way we have for years. Only change will be our name, as yet to be confirmed. Thank you to all members and friends for so many enjoyable years, long may they continue

The credit crunch has helped me get back on my feet.
The car has been repossessed

Money isn't everything, but it sure keeps the kids in touch

A fine is a tax for doing wrong.
A tax is a fine for doing well

Inflation allows us to live in a more expensive area, without the hassle of moving

NORTH WEST DIVISION

NORTH AND SOUTH MANCHESTER

Mrs Jean Matthews BEM

In October the Bury Group, along with friends were able to fill a fifty-three-seater coach for a popular outing to drive through the Illuminations in Blackpool. 2012 was the centenary of the lights and we were all impressed and very much enjoyed seeing the special display. We left Bury at 1.30pm and travelled first to St Anne's taking a longer route through the Fylde countryside for the benefit of our less mobile members. Unfortunately this took longer than planned, so those looking forward to spending time at the shops or walking on the sea front had less time than expected. The Lindum Hotel situated on the promenade served us with a first-class meal and many of the group enjoyed sitting in the nice lounge for an aperitif before our meal. The traffic was not too heavy that night so we had a leisurely drive through the Illuminations, arriving back in Bury soon after 9pm

In November a smaller group returned to the DITTO Bistro in Bury town centre where we had our AGM last March. Everyone appreciated another reasonably priced homemade meal. Councillor Trevor Holt, a keen and popular Meals on Wheels driver for many years, joined us on this occasion and it was obvious from the noisy chatter that everyone was enjoying being together again. Also in November Yvonne Holland, one of our Association Members, laid the WRVS wreath once again on Remembrance Sunday at the War Memorial in Bury. We send sincere thanks to Yvonne for carrying out this duty so competently each year, still wearing her full green WRVS uniform! We have been given a lovely photograph of Yvonne and myself taken as we processed with the Civic Party into Bury Parish Church for the special service following the wreath-laying ceremony

Prestwich members continue to enjoy hospitality on a monthly basis at the home of Rose Walsh. Rose deserves our very heartfelt thanks for doing this, despite not being too well recently

The Sale members continue to enjoy their monthly coffee mornings in each other's homes - sadly the number is getting smaller due to ill-health and other problems, but everyone looks forward so much to meeting together and they hope to continue doing this after the official closure of the Association. Once again I had the pleasure of being invited to their Christmas lunch at Mersey Farm Restaurant, and as always had a great time amongst a lovely, jolly, group of ladies. Sincere thanks to Joan Allmark for arranging such an enjoyable lunch and for her kind and caring way of organising the members throughout the year.

Thank you also to Rosemary Cooper for continuing to provide reliable back-up support to Joan

The 2012 AGM took us back to the Monk Bar Hotel in York for a truly memorable weekend. This time the weather was superb and everyone had a very enjoyable time despite the sadness of this being the final AGM. The hotel, food and service were all first-class - Ken and I would like to send sincere thanks to all concerned for ensuring that we all had a comfortable and pleasant time

We hope that the final meeting in June will be a huge success, and hope to be able to hire a small minibus for Bury members. We look forward to seeing all our WRVS friends there. Whatever happens in the future we shall always be mindful of the message depicted on the WVS Long-Service Medal - Rosemary for Remembrance, Ivy for Tenacity - and most of us will want to keep in touch with our members as long as possible

MERSEYSIDE

Mrs Sylvia Hatchell

We have heard that Sylvia is going to be emigrating to join her daughter in Canada. Best Wishes to them all!

LANCASHIRE

Mary Jones,

After the very successful Jubilee party things seemed a bit quiet in the second half of the year. Some of us visited the local garden centre for coffee and a look around and some shopping, a very convivial afternoon with a young gentleman joining us - Linda's grandson on half term.

In November we had a 'balloon' debate deciding which modern invention to save, after much discussion it was decided to save all 4 chosen inventions as they were very small.

The Christmas lunch was well supported and enjoyable but service was poor - I am sure that WRVS could have done much better. A few of us are hoping to attend the celebration lunch in June and look forward to seeing all our friends.

My friend has kleptomania, but when it gets bad, he takes something for it.

Kaye Holmes writes from Canada

I hope this is not too late for inclusion in what is to be our last WRVS Newsletter. I'll miss them, although at 96 years of age it takes ages to read through publications

How WVS lead me to my husband, now in our 57th year of marriage

Not able to settle down after being widowed in 1942, I heard through a friend of my Mother, (both WVS members) that the Association was needing people for overseas. Quitting my job in July 1945 I trained in Portsmouth, then Tothill Street and left Liverpool early December for SEAL (South East Asia Command). After wonderful adventures and experiences in India, Burma and Singapore I finished my 2-year contract in Hong Kong. I left there for England via the USA and Canada.

I met my second husband whilst in Toronto, Canada in 1956 at the Royal Overseas Club, a meeting place then for Commonwealth people. I was telling a group about experiences in Singapore and explaining the reason for a mound of granite atop the tallest part of the Island. The Japanese had made prisoners build an obelisk in honour of their emperor. At the surrender of WWII, a jeep full of British officers arrived at Changi Prison looking for an engineer to blow up the obelisk. A man recently arrived from England said, "you may think I am shooting a line but I blew up that thing". Five months later we were married!

All through seeing a mound of granite we both knew the origin of, and two extremely fantastic, satisfying, edifying years I experienced with WVS Overseas, I met the man of my dreams.

Like many, I find it very difficult to throw out things I have treasured for many years. I have a small box with a powder puff inside which my youngest sister gave me over 50 years ago. She died just this last December. Someone else will have to discard this and other treasures after I have left this planet, although I have in past years sent items for the archives of WRVS

Teacher: Why are you late?

Student: Class started before I got here.

Teacher: Why are you doing your math multiplication on the floor?

Student: You told me to do it without using tables.

Teacher: Give me a sentence starting with 'I.'

Student: I is..

Teacher: No, no, you must always say, 'I am.'

Student: Okay... 'I am the ninth letter of the alphabet.'

SOUTH EAST DIVISION

LONDON NE & CITY

Mrs Win Taylor OBE DL,

I have received several replies to my greetings cards and letters of thanks sent to London N.E. members and hope they will keep in touch.

After June 2013 any queries that may arise, such as urgent requests re the Benevolent Trust, will be passed on. The small balance of the WRVS Association London N.E. Account at the Nationwide Building Society will be passed on to the WRVS Benevolent Trust and the account closed.

Members will still have happy memories of WRVS Emergency exercises such as feeding the Dunkirk Veterans and the Glider Pilots Association and such activities as acting as casualties etc. Some years ago a company called Anchor Press compiled a book of poems relating to voluntary work of all kinds. Several poems were submitted from WRVS/WRVS Association members throughout the country. Best wishes to them all, whoever they were. A poem, which I submitted, was printed and may remind those members who assisted with the feeding of the participants in the Lord Mayors Show for several years. Their work has thus been remembered and passed down to posterity as the book is now in the British Library and other archives. (Copyright Anchor Press 1997)

Thank you Paulene for your good work by keeping us in touch via the News Letter. Best wishes for the future. Over and out!

NORFOLK

Marv Taylor - Great Yarmouth branch

Here I am preparing what is to be my last newsletter entry. I feel quite sad on two counts. One being the closure of the Association later this year, and also not having the chance to share our outings with you.

August we decided not to have an outing, mainly as we all have grandchildren and our services are required elsewhere, for child minding in the school holidays

September was our next outing; we arranged to visit Hunstanton, North Norfolk. Sunshine was in short supply on that day, but we had an enjoyable time. After lunch we travelled on to Bircham windmill. Our plan was that the fit passengers

would climb to the top of the windmill and report back to us. Apparently, there is a wonderful view over North Norfolk, if you can manage the climb. Before we had time to start the climb, not myself included, the heavens opened, and the wind howled. Not the best conditions for climbing. However there were a few brave souls who simply would not be beaten.

October is to be our last Mystery Trip of the year. I say again, Mystery Trip, Why do I repeat? So many passengers ask me where we are going! Our driver gives clues on route for us to try to guess our destination. Each time someone thinks they know the answer, he gives a double meaning clue. We have a break at Swaffham, just time for a coffee. We then continue on our route. Leaving Swaffham we travel along country lanes just wide enough for the coach until we reach the village of Great Cressingham. Here is a beautiful county pub/restaurant named "The Olde Windmill Inn", our destination for lunch. We spend so much time talking there is not time enough for what should have been our destination for the afternoon. Never mind, next year we will have an earlier lunch and visit what should have been our afternoon tea stop on this day.

Remembrance Sunday, 11th November. The service is annually held within St Georges Park, Gt. Yarmouth, weather permitting. It is a beautiful morning, sun shining brilliantly, but with an autumn nip in the air. The procession begins in the Market Place. We know when they are nearing the Park as we can hear all the bands playing. It is a wonderful scene. All in their uniforms, marching. True what is said, nobody marches as the British forces do, even when retired. All dignitaries of the borough, plus armed forces and youth groups are there. I meet with Margaret Spink, a member of the WRVS, and also the WRVS Association. The service is conducted by The Reverend Chris Terry, music by Gt. Yarmouth Brass. The last post is sounded and two minutes silence kept. Reveille is sounded and the laying of wreaths begins. Some wreaths are laid on the memorial for the First World War, others for the Second World War. We lay ours on the Cenotaph for the Second World War. There are 57 wreaths laid including ours, plus family members and ex-service men, lay the wooden cross with the poppy on. Always a very moving service.

Our last outing of the year, on 21st November was to Thursford. If you have never been to the Christmas Spectacular you have missed a very special treat. We set off with the intention of going to Holt for our lunch. Each goes their separate way and thus chooses what they would like to eat. It is another of those wet and windy November days. However we are only in Holt to eat, so time soon passes. We then travel on to Thursford. There are Christmas shops, full of wonderful decorations, which are something the town excel in, plus an olde sweet shop. Of course there are the usual restaurants and bars, but we wisely ate earlier, so no queuing for us. We wander around inside the theatre to admire their decorations, truly wonderful. There are also the old Steam Engines and organs we can look at. So to our seats. Just have time to talk to the people seated close to us before the

performance begins. It really is breathtaking. The costumes are spectacular, the dancers so elegant, so slim, remember those days of our youth? A wonderful choir and orchestra, reminiscent of days gone by, completed our entertainment. The show is so difficult to describe, with such variety, and so many wonderful performers. The dancers and artists are all auditioned from London shows. Afterwards, we make our way back to our coach, through the still heavy rain, and prepare for our journey home. Our passengers are all in Christmas spirit, not sure if it is from the show, or the help of mince pies and wine, but they are definitely in full vocal singing Christmas songs, plus the few other unmentionables.

This is our last meeting for 2012, so, may we at Gt. Yarmouth and district take this opportunity to wish all our fellow members and friends a very Happy Christmas and Healthy New Year

January 16th we held our Spring Luncheon, at The Pier Hotel, Gorleston. This was a regular venue for our luncheons, until three years ago when the hotel was undertaking major updating. This is now all complete, and most impressive. We had what we thought a very good menu to choose from. Chicken supreme in chasseur sauce, Steal and Ale pie, or Deep fried cod fillet, all served with a choice of vegetables, dessert was either apple pie with custard or fresh fruit salad. 47 members and friends thoroughly enjoyed themselves, (so they said), and are all looking forward to our first outing of the New Year. We are going to Walsingham. This should have been an outing for us last year, but weather was so bad, it was unwise to risk, so we had a compromise. Hopefully, all our snow and ice will have cleared before we venture out. Hopefully the expected floods from all the excess water will not spoil our day.

We shall not be at Birmingham to join you for the Final Luncheon. We will however be holding our own luncheon here, when we shall raise our glasses to all our happy years as a branch of the Association. We are going to continue as we have for many years, as has been requested by the members and friends who join us. We shall just rename ourselves, as yet to be decided. May we wish all other branches god luck, good health and say what a privilege it has always been to meet so many of you.

We have heard from Alan Kirby that his wife Joan died in October 2012. Her mother Lily Crocker, who was one of the founder members of the Chertsey, Surrey branch, introduced her to WVS at just 9yrs old and she continued as a little helper when war broke out the following year. She was County Organiser for Hampshire 1980-86 and was awarded an MBE in 1984. Much of her later work was at the Royal Hampshire County Hospital in Winchester, where she continued to volunteer until 2011

TRY READING THESE OUT LOUD

I did not object to the object

The dove dove into the bushes

The farmer taught his sow to sow

We must polish the Polish furniture

A bass was painted on the bass drum

The leather lead was as heavy as lead

The farm was used to produce produce

The insurance was invalid for the invalid

The wind was too strong to wind the sail

They were too close to the door to close it

The bandage was wound around the wound

I had to subject the subject to a series of tests

Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear

The seamstress and the sewer fell into the sewer

How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert

The buck does funny things when the does are present

There was a row amongst the oars man about how to row

The rubbish tip was so full that it had to refuse more refuse

There is no time like the present, so it is time to present the present

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Mrs Mary Harber,

This is the last report from the Rushden and Raunds branch of the Association. We have enjoyed a Tea afternoon in September although it was not nice enough to sit in the garden but we all enjoyed our Christmas dinner when 14 of us sat down to a lovely meal at Rushden Golf Club.

It is very sad to think that this is our last report. I have only been a member of the Association since 2002 but some of our members joined in the 1980s. Most of us have delivered MOWs at some time or been a member of the emergency team and have been called out in the middle of the night to feed people in distress. I remember heating up meatballs in the early hours of the morning to feed firefighters dealing with a thatched roof fire at Titchmarsh.

We hope to continue to meet now and again for our afternoon teas and Christmas Dinners and we send best wishes to you all.

Constance Potter, Andover, Hampshire writes Just a note to say that I shall miss the WRVS Association newsletter and especially the little 'funnies' included from time to time. WRVS is no longer the service I joined as a schoolgirl in 1941 but at least it has a past to be proud of and is still there is an emergency. I have enjoyed my years as County ESO \ Instructor \ etc even though it is a long time since I gave up (1980!).

Constance was my trainer in Surrey, Oh remember the joy of a Soyer boiler! Ed

Joan Pollard, Surrey writes I joined the WRVS in 1967 as a MoW driver, then in 1974 I was the ESO, followed by D.O. Runnymede in 1979 and ended up as MoW Organiser 1984-2000. Life was 'fun' in the early days. I can remember the first Gala Day we took part in – we won 3rd prize for our stand and lorry in the parade. Wonderful! One of the happier times was working on the WRVS Information Desks at Wimbledon Tennis. I did it for eight years and made some wonderful friends from all over the country. I loved my work as a DO, meeting so many people and being invited to special event. I really loved my work and am sorry that the WRVS has changed so much. I am now 93 but still doing voluntary work at one of our day centres

Teacher: Your essay on 'My Dog' is the same as your brother's. Did you copy?

Student: No sir, it's the same dog

WALES

SOUTH - Mrs Mary Gibbons OBE

For many members this is a very sad issue, being the final Newsletter for the WRVS Association. In South Wales there is very little to report apart from the Dyfed Group and their reunion at the Falcon Hotel in Carmarthen just before Christmas. It is good to meet once or twice a year to exchange news of what members are still doing with WRVS or how personal families are – because over the years we have all learnt a great deal about our friends and their families. I am quite sure that those members who meet twice a year at the present time will continue to meet twice a year. May be their numbers will grow as ordinary WRVS members will come along for the friendship, the visiting of places of interest and the meals! I do hope so.

In December, Elizabeth John organised once again a celebration lunch at our favourite hotel, The Falcon in Carmarthen. I consider myself very lucky because although I do not live in the old County of Dyfed the members have always invited me to their Christmas Meal and to their summer outing. Long may it continue!

Marjorie Stinchcombe, who many moons ago was the Local Organiser in Abergavenny, is not in the best of health, is housebound and as she was the member who made all the arrangements for their get-togethers her group has not met for a couple of years. Very few of them were continuing with WRVS work apart from working at Neville Hall Hospital and the reason for this was age, which is fast catching up with all of us I am sure. Unfortunately, Pat Akins, one of the younger members of the Group died recently so there are very few members left.

When I look at the list of members in South Wales I am afraid there are quite a few members of the Association who are isolated in that there is not, and never has been, a group near them. It is a large area and the cost of transport means it is not viable to set up a coffee morning etc. I apologise to those members who have been left out. I must try and set something in Cardiff even if it is only coffee!

Recently someone ask me about the Benevolent Trust and I had noticed that they have improved their advertisements. Having been the Chairman of the Trust some years ago I realised, even then, how few WRVS Members remembered, or even knew, that it was there. You do not need to belong to the Association or even be doing WRVS work now, but as long as you were a member if you find

yourself in special need and don't know where to turn, stop and consider if the Benevolent could help you. We are all getting older and isn't there a saying that 'old age never comes alone', it's right. I always think of the Benevolent Trust as a help line, not that people are receiving charity.

Because this is the last Newsletter I felt I should try and get as much information about older members as possible, so as well as phoning Marjorie I also phoned Doris Travis who was District Organiser for Newport for many years. I have mentioned before that Doris has been registered blind but has kept in touch with many of her old Gwent members. Unfortunately that is no longer possible as they have either gone into nursing/residential home care or have died. Doris has had more contact with WRVS than many of us as one of the Services local members goes in to read to Doris on a regular basis. I believe the 'Service' put an advert into the local paper asking if they could help at all and responded to Doris' pleas for a Reader.

I send my good wishes to all the Association Members in Wales – both South and North and those who are still members but no longer reside here. May 2013 be a good year for you – healthy and happy – and also the years ahead. Like a nagging old woman I will repeat – PLEASE USE THE BENEVOLENT if you find yourself in need.

Manure... An interesting fact (*and I just hope it is true*)

In the 16th and 17th centuries, everything had to be transported by ship and it was also before the invention of commercial fertilizers, so large shipments of manure were quite common.

It was shipped dry, because in dry form it weighed a lot less than when wet, but once sea water hit it, not only did it become heavier, but the process of fermentation began again, of which a by product is methane gas of course. As the stuff was stored below decks in bundles you can see what could and did happen. Methane began to build up below decks and the first time someone came below at night with a lantern, Boom! Several ships were destroyed in this manner before it was determined just what was happening

After that, the bundles of manure were always stamped with the instruction 'Stow high in transit' on them, which meant for the sailors to stow it high enough off the lower decks so that any water that came into the hold would not touch this volatile cargo and start the production of methane. Thus evolved the term using the initials of the instruction (Stow High In Transit), which has come down through the centuries. You probably did not know the true history of this word. I had always thought it was aligned to Murphy's Law

Barbara Strattan BEM writes as the County Rep for Bedford. Fifty four of us wished to carry on with the Association last year, sadly now down to fifty three. Just before Christmas we had a really good meal when thirty eight of us met together for amidst much chatter as always. We shall have a small committee meeting in February at which we shall have to decide whether to carry on again for another year. We should if we can as it means so much to meet together whilst we are still able to. In this, my last offering I would like to say thank you to everyone in the York office, Marilyn and all previous chairman and Paulene for her excellent little magazine which has given us all so much pleasure. We have really enjoyed the privilege of being members and we shall miss it all so much. Thank you and best wishes from Bedfordshire

THE IMPORTANCE OF EXERCISE

I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me

Every time I hear the dirty word 'exercise', I wash my mouth out with chocolate

If you are going to try cross-country skiing, start with a small country

An old man lived alone in the country. He wanted to dig his garden, but it was very strenuous work as the ground was rock hard. His only son, Vincent, who used to help him, was in prison. The old man wrote a letter to his son and described his predicament:

Dear Vincent, I am feeling pretty badly because it looks like I won't be able to plant my potatoes this year. I'm just getting too old to be digging up a garden plot. I know if you were here my troubles would be over. I know you would be happy to dig the plot for me. Love, Dad

A few days later he received a reply from his son: Dear Dad, don't dig up the garden, that's where I buried the bodies. Love, Vinnie

Because his mail had been censored at the prison, police arrived the next morning, and dug up the entire area without finding any bodies. They apologised to the old man and left.

That same day the old man received another letter from his son:

Dear Dad, go ahead and plant the potatoes now. That's the best I could do under the circumstances. Love you, Vinnie

A final last message from Jilly Fraser Malcolm, Scottish Chairman of our friends north of the Border

TRAVEL BROADENS THE MIND

I have been in many places, but I've never been in Cahoots. Apparently, you can't go alone. You have to be there with someone.

I've also never been in Cognito. I hear no one recognises you there.

I have, however, been in Sane. They don't have an airport; you have to be driven there. I have made several trips there, thanks to my friends, family and work. I live close so it's a short drive.

I would like to come to Conclusions, but I believe you have to jump, and I'm not too much on physical activity anymore.

I have also been in Doubt. That is a sad place to go and I try not to visit too often.

I've been in Flexible, but only when it was very important to stand firm.

Sometimes I'm in Capable and I go there more often as I'm getting older.

One of my favourite places to be is in Suspense! It really gets the adrenalin flowing and pumps up the old heart! At my age I need all the stimuli I can get.

Sometimes I think I am in Vincible but life shows me that I am not.

People keep telling me I'm in Denial but I'm positive I've never been there before!

So far, I haven't been in Continent; but my travel agent says I'll be going *soon*, it's only a matter of time.

Mrs I Bradley-Feary, Woking, Surrey

W is for wartime when the 'green ladies' did sterling work in helping the war effort. As a travel weary WAAF I was served a very welcome snack once. Years later I donned the green and enjoyed helping at WVS Elstree centre

R Our (*R!*) family were overseas for twenty years, but on our return I joined up again and with a new style badge and overall, spent happy years helping around Woking. When did we become Royal?

V Very Happy days. But sadly WRVS was no longer needed in Woking. How I missed the happy times of service and friendship and fun. And how I envy the stories in the newsletter of good times enjoyed by the 'green ladies' going on outings and having tea parties

S So, now the WRVS, as we knew them, are history. RIP!

Teacher: What do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested?

Student: A teacher

This office will close on Friday 26th July 2013

PRESIDENT RICHARD GREENHALGH - Chairman WRVS

VICE-PRESIDENTS

The Hon Dame Mary Corsar
Lady Toulson CBE
Mrs Diane Price 1998 - 2000
Mrs Pat Copping 2001 - 2003
Mrs Sheila Scholey 2004 - 2006
Sylvia Hatchell MBE 2006 - 2009

COMMITTEE

Chairman Marilyn Openshaw
Hon. Secretary Mrs Jean Pickard
Hon. Treasurer Mrs Maureen Hudson

Voluntary Member Katherine Carmichael
Minutes Secretary Linda McEvoy
Newsletter Editor Paulene Lambert

And final random jottings from the Editor

Dear Members

Having been wittering to you for so many years, I do feel as if I am talking with friends. And rightly so. Since the start of WVS, like minded people have joined together to serve a common purpose and in that friendships have been made. Long standing and deep relationships that have endured through, thick, thin and the many changes within the service.

Many of those relationships finally end with a passing. And this is where ours is going to end. Yours and mine that is, not the ones you have made in your own groups and projects. Whilst I am not passing in the usual sense, I will not be speaking to you in this way again. Goodbye, Good Luck and God Bless



Paulene

Paulene Lambert