



CWML magazine

Issue 1

Spring 2020

2020



**a new decade
welcomes our
new magazine**

At the **Annual General Meeting** in October 2019 the message coming through loud and strong from members was that you wanted the Newspaper re-instated. Well, we have listened and here it is. A new magazine for every member, delivered directly to your Section.

We hope you like it and enjoy reading this, the very first issue. But in order for it to be a success you, the members, must own it and contribute to it – it is your magazine so, of course, your input is essential.

Please let us know what you think and what you would like to see in it and get those pens at the ready!

There will be three issues per year with Issue 2 out in June.

Read more from Jeanette on page 3



Bishop Peter blesses National President Jeanette as she takes office at the AGM in October 2019

A Message from THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

So, here it is – our first new-look magazine. But let me please take you back to the Newspaper in its previous format – the printers had a stipulation of a minimum of 4500 copies and with only just over 2000 members this meant each member received at least two copies and that, of course, affected the cost of postage.

We have, therefore, spent a lot of time researching the most efficient way of providing you with a Newspaper on a basis of three copies per member. One in the Spring, one in Summer and one in the Autumn.

Now your feedback is crucial to its success - this is your magazine; a magazine that will provide you with interesting material to read; a magazine that will give you information on what is happening in CWL across the Branches, at HQ and internationally; a new size magazine that I feel will easily be carried in your handbag and could be a useful tool for spreading the name of 'CWL'. Each issue will be sent to one member in your Section. She will receive the number of copies for the Section's paid-up members. I ask of you then:-

- Please supply an up to date list of names for each paid up member to our National Secretary as early as possible.
- The name and address of the member in each Section who is willing to distribute the magazine to her fellow members. This can be done at meetings, at mass and other events. I do not expect any Section to incur distribution costs.
- The success of the Newspaper will rely on you, the members, providing articles and features for each issue.

This first issue has Articles written by some of the Trustees and Executive to give you ideas of what could be included. We are also considering minimal advertising to help offset some of the costs and on this we would welcome any contacts you think might be interested in taking a space.

Please enjoy your first edition of the New Look Magazine – a magazine that needs a new name. Any suggestions?

God Bless.

Jeanette

And Jeanette recommends this knitting pattern. Look out at the Spring Conference for these little Easter Bunnies.



BISHOP PETER

Dear Bishop Peter,

All the members of the Catholic Women's League would like to thank you for the wonderful love and support you have given us over the last 13 years.

As Spiritual Adviser to CWL, you have been with us at many of our meetings. Do you remember your first Annual General Meeting at Brighton in 2006, the year of CWL's centenary? And in 2014 when we 'skyped' you at our AGM in Torquay? You were in Rome, taking part in the Synod on the Family. Another highlight was the AGM in 2017 when we visited the National Memorial Arboretum in Arlewas. All very special meetings. But you have not restricted yourself to just meetings. For you to be with us at the National Pilgrimages in Westminster, Oxford and York was always greatly appreciated, too. Your pearls of wisdom in your Talks and Homilies over the years have always been welcomed by

PICTURE TO
FOLLOW

members who leave meetings spiritually refreshed by your words.

We will miss you very much, but wish you a very happy retirement.

***God Bless You,
Bishop Peter!***

Margaret Richards,
Past National President



Our National Officers

serving on the Executive



Jeanette Collins
National President



Christine Burke
National Treasurer



Jean Clarke
National Secretary



Margaret Valentine
Immediate Past National President



Elizabeth Upsher
Past National President



Veronica Cross



Sue Gornall



Margaret von Speyr



Stephanie Crook

A little about our newest Executive members

I am Austrian and have been living in the UK for 37 years. I have two children and I am widowed. I am a language teacher and still working full time. I have been a CWL member for 12 years. I was treasurer and later chairman for the Stamford Section and was president of Nottingham Branch till its closure. I actively supported the local fundraising through baking cakes and organising interesting speakers.

Stephanie Crook

Well, here I am again! They just can't keep an Essex girl down! It must have something to do with the air in my Section, Dunmow, where I am Chairman.

I have worked with the Executive previously as CWL International Representative. More recently, I took on a new and exciting challenge of working for the League as a Trustee. This has given me the opportunity to see all the 'background' work that enables the League to function the way she does. I really am enjoying this side of CWL.

So, I've popped up again and am looking forward to my dual role as a direct link between the Trustees and Executive.

Veronica Cross

My name is Margaret von Speyr and I have been a member of the CWL since the mid 1960s as a Junior member. I joined Letchworth Section in the seven-ties before my husband's job took us to Sussex. I was immediately coerced into being Secretary of Bexhill Section before it closed down. It was impossible to maintain as younger women were not able to attend afternoon meetings. I therefore became a Direct member in Arundel and Brighton Branch, eventually becoming President. This led to me working on recruitment and PR and during that time I started the National Coffee Morning which I am pleased is still going strong. In my Parish of Bexhill I opened a new Section with evening meetings and am very happy to say that we are thriving with members of all ages. I am very pleased to be involved once again with the Executive and hope to help many Sections with ideas for attracting new members, maybe even opening or reopening Sections.

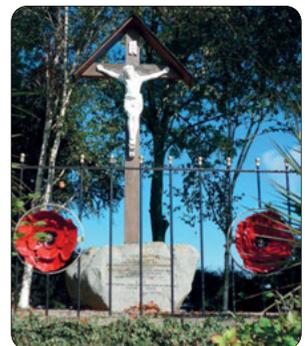
Margaret von Speyr

This Crucifix stands near the site of a CWL Hut and Canteen used by soldiers during WW1. It is known as the Wayside Crucifix.

The huge granite plinth is inscribed as a memorial to those who died in both World Wars.

For decades, on or near to July 1st, members of the West Riding/Leeds Branch have held a Service of Remembrance here.

For the next issue please send in a photograph and a few words of a Shrine members in your Branch like to visit.





BRANCH FOCUS DORSET



A South coast county noted for a warm climate, rolling downland, seaside and tourists from the whole world, and land of the cream tea. Dorset has been fought over by Roundheads and Cavaliers in 17th century, and it has had its share of martyrs too who are still remembered for their Catholic witness in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Lulworth Castle chapel dates from 1786 and was built as a mausoleum to hide the fact that it was a Catholic place of worship built by the Weld family. Dorset members still have mass celebrated here and follow with a picnic in the beautiful grounds.

The five Sections in Dorset are quite a closeknit community as it is just about an hour's drive between the furthest parts of the Branch. Members serve their own parishes, but also relish the chance to get together for Branch events such as Founder's day, which is an excuse for a pre-Christmas celebration, and for a half day of reflection at Bridport, our newest section formed in 2013. Sections also invite people from ecumenical churches as well as CWL members for services and entertainment. Membership has remained around 150 for some years, although the age profile is rising.

The Pilgrimage to Buckfast Abbey where we join Devon members for mass in the Abbey is another occasion to greet old friends as well as to have mass said.

Carol Gregory



The Catholic Church in Wymondham remembers the 'Forgotten Army'

Memories are more powerful if they are tangible and Our Lady and Saint Thomas of Canterbury located in the market town of Wymondham, Norfolk is a House of God built to cherish and honour the memory of those who perished in captivity in the Far East. It is the only memorial church in the world dedicated to the memory of the Far East Prisoners and Civilian Internees of all faiths and nationalities who died in the Japanese Prisoner of War and Internment Camps of World War II.

Father Malcolm Leon Cowin, an Army Chaplain, was released from captivity in 1945 and returned to East Anglia. He vowed that he would create a 'Living Memorial' in the form of a parish church in memory of all those who had suffered and died in captivity. In 1948 he appealed for funds nationally and internationally and enlisted the help of executive committees of aristocratic and noteworthy figures. By 1952 the church was completed and he continued to celebrate a daily Mass for the War Dead.

He commissioned 3 Memorial Books of Remembrance. Then in

1992 a new book was created enabling F.E.P.O.W. survivors, who had died in freedom, to have their names and service details joined to their comrades in the same manner as the original books. These books containing a total of nearly 35,000 names can be viewed in a cabinet in the side chapel. This chapel has become a shrine where an eternal flame burns. Other artefacts are also within the church.

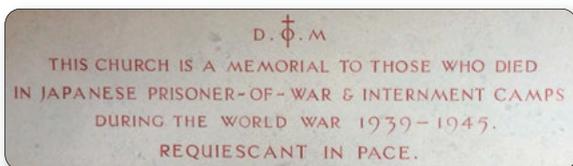
In May 1992 the first Ecumenical Memorial Service was held and has subsequently been celebrated annually on the nearest Sunday to May 14th – the Anniversary of the Relief of Rangoon in 1945. During the service wreaths are laid by representatives from the Armed Services, British Legion, Family and Friends of FEPOW and Internees, Catholic Women's League and others. Many travel great distances to share this experience of remembrance. This year's service is on Sunday 17th May at 12:30pm. All are welcome. One of the aims of this service is to fulfil the sentiments of the now famous Kohima Epitaph, voiced nationally on Remembrance Day in November...

"When you go home tell them of us and say for your tomorrow we gave our today".

The Catholic Women's League organise and serve a full afternoon tea following the service. This is an opportunity for friendships to be rekindled and new contacts established. The church is open every day and conducted visits can be arranged by contacting Peter Wiseman on 01953604144/ phandtmwiseman@gmail.com.

Further details can be found by following the FEPOW link on the Parish website www.wymondhamrcchurch.org.uk

Teresa Wiseman



Reflections on being a member of CWL

Siobhan Garibaldi, Trustee

Some years ago, when I was a trustee for the SVP, a couple of ladies approached me at a conference and asked if I was paid for the role. It had never dawned on me before that anyone would ever think that being a trustee was anything but voluntary.

I gave up my career at the age of 29 when I had my first son and my employer said they “*would test my commitment*” by sending me on more residential courses. It certainly wasn’t conducive with bringing up a family, so I left. With more time on my hands than many of my fellow mums I turned to the voluntary sector to use what little talent I had. A lot of people can give a little time, but not so many can give a lot, so it’s harder to fill the more time consuming roles. I found myself taking on an increasing amount of responsibility as I could identify and empathize with the need, but there were too few people around who were willing or able to help. It was the old adage – if you want something done right, do it yourself! I therefore found myself starting and chairing a residents association, a local refugee charity, taking up school governance, taking on the role of president of the SVP in Westminster Diocese and a term of office as a trustee, launching the Vinnie Pack project for the homeless, becoming a trustee of the Zacchaeus 2000 Trust, the Westminster Caritas Advisory Board and, more importantly than all the

CWL! Maybe, just maybe, I should have stuck with the work option after all!!

The point is, that none of us are perfect for any role, but if you believe that the cause is worth fighting for and you have commitment and a passion to make a difference, it’s worth stepping up to the plate. I’m always willing (and half expecting) someone to tap me on the shoulder to say that they can do a better job and move on.

I’ve only been in the CWL for four years, but it’s wonderful and worth saving. There is a need for Catholic fellowship in today’s secular world and all the members I have had the pleasure of meeting are, without exception, a delight to be with. For an organisation with only two thousand members, it punches way above its weight in terms of charitable work. Ask the recipients of the R&R grants, the Services grants and the hundreds of people who have developed their knowledge through Our Lady’s Catechists whether the CWL is a worthwhile and relevant organisation and you would have a resounding “yes”. Ask the ladies who have developed lifelong friendships and thrived on the camaraderie of their local Section and you would have a similar response. Yes, we have more bureaucracy to cope with in today’s society as we’re required to be accountable for what we do, but it’s a small price to pay for what we get out of it and what we can achieve for those less fortunate than ourselves.

Southend Churches Winter Night Shelter –

Esther Brown, Westcliff Section, Brentwood Branch

For many years I had worked for organisations who promote social action, particularly through churches. Whilst I supported this through prayer and sometimes donating money to those asking for help on the streets, opportunities to physically help did not form part of my role or appear to come my way. But God decided this winter would be different. I had moved home at the start of 2019 to Westcliff near Southend-on-Sea, Essex where for the last 7 years a Southend Church Winter Night Shelter scheme had been providing the homeless community with food, a bed and help to get them off the streets for good. The scheme is operated by 7 host churches each open one night per week, from December – March, in partnership with HARP (Southend's homeless charity), Southend Borough Council and Love Southend. This year, for

the first time my parish, Our Lady Help of Christians and St Helen's Church, Westcliff would be a host church and

needed volunteers to help provide a hot meal, a warm bed and a light breakfast for 20+ guests, so I volunteered.

Five days into the scheme was our first night as hosts. As a volunteer and the female Deputy Shelter Manager I arrived early at 6pm to make sure that everything was in place as we had planned. There were already guests waiting and we did not open until 7pm! As the doors opened there was a steady trickle of guests arriving, ready to claim a bed and have a meal. Guests are assessed by HARP and if room allows are

referred to the Winter Night Shelter. Some self-refer, and for these it was necessary to complete forms to assess if we could provide support for them without putting anyone at risk, particularly fellow guests. Dinner was shared by guests and volunteers, providing them the chance to talk if they wanted to or point them in the direction of agencies that we knew could help them further. That night there was just one female guest. She arrived as I was busy with another guest but asked would I be joining them. I made sure that I sat with her for dinner sensing she wanted some female company within the sea of men. Around the table were young and old, different ethnicities, but all in need of the same thing, a place to lay their head. We had scheduled for lights to go off by 11pm, but by 9.30pm all the guests were already lying down. The Night Shelters is a great

partnership between local churches, HARP and the local council, and has provided me with a real opportunity to profess my Christianity by

helping those in need, and meet many likeminded people. The tasks for volunteers included set up (eating areas, bedding areas, resources for guests i.e. clothes and toiletries), preparation of a main meal, desert and a cooked breakfast, providing support to guests, and cleaning the hall once the guests departed the following day. We are only 6 weeks in to the 18 week scheme but I would definitely recommend it to anyone who could commit to helping a few hours each week.

Esther Brown



A Report from Christine Burke



Christine Burke

On the Spot in Australia

You will no doubt have seen and heard on the news about the bushfires in Australia. There are hundreds of fires, many combining to make super fires which sometimes then blow back on themselves becoming even more dangerous and unpredictable. There had been no rain for weeks before and everywhere was so

dry that it was easy for a fire to take control. There was a total fire ban across the whole area on many days. 40+ degree temperatures and a hot southern breeze made matters worse.

Many people and animals have been evacuated, at campsites and tourist areas. Visitors have been advised not to come or, if already there, to immediately leave. We all saw how one family was evacuated onto the beach and had to wait there for boats to come and take them to safety because the roads were ablaze. At 3.00pm on any day it was like night – the sky was black with soot and ash which covered cars and windows for many miles.

The amount of land that has been destroyed is unbelievable – orchards, vineyards, crops. This will all have a devastating effect on prices of everyday foods for a long while to come. But the loss of homes, livelihoods, livestock and, more importantly, the loss of life is heartbreaking to witness. It is bad enough at any time but at Christmas!!

“Wonderful” is too pathetic a word to describe the efforts and dedication of the firemen and volunteers, many of whom, while they were helping others, had word that their own house or area had been evacuated or destroyed.

Where my family live, they have thankfully been miles away from the fires, but they have a watch and act alert on their phones in case there is anything close to them.

As a lady who was staring at the remains of her burnt out home, street, shops and school said, “Well, we are alive – we can rebuild all this”.

On a lighter note – we had several ways to spend and enjoy Christmas and New Year – a pool party, a traditional BBQ, lots of food, and a rest in the sunshine. I could say that I thought of you all in the cold, the rain and possibly snow – but honestly? I really didn't!

So, a very happy and healthy 2020 to everyone.

Christine Burke



Showing the enormity of the fires

The Fires in Australia

National President, Jeanette, wrote to our CWL sisters in Australia offering our prayers and support.

The response from members here, at home, was tremendous with many commenting on the utter devastation and some recalling times of past visits to family and friends in the fire-torn areas. Everyone affected by the fires were in our prayers.

And National President Australia responds:

Dear Jeanette,

What a wonderful surprise to receive your message expressing concern for the people and the wildlife here in Australia as we suffer the devastation to life and property through the bush fires. The offer to keep us in prayer at Holy Mass and reception of the Eucharist on the special celebration of Australia Day will be a strong bond within the Membership of Catholic Women's League.

With blessings

Peg McEntee

Knowing that many members are concerned about the situation, our own CWL Trustees decided to financially support the rebuilding of lives out in Australia:

Dear Fi,

At our Trustees meeting last night it was agreed to send £2,000 to CWL Australia to use for helping the many needing help as a result of this major disaster.

An appeal is also going out to our Sections via our monthly diary so we would aim to be able to send funds to you at the end of February.

Could you please forward the bank details for whichever branch you feel the money should be sent and I know our members would like to know how you decide the money can best be used.

Kindest regards

Jeanette

Dear Jeanette, CWL England and Wales members, Trustees, and the National League,

It was humbling to receive your generous financial offer to Australians suffering from the bushfires. A true spirit of caring for others through both prayer and action! We are touched by your generosity. Our National Executive will spend the next few days in the process of determining which communities need our assistance and in what capacity. So many CWL members have been affected and it's a matter of being able to make contact with them. Thankfully, the weather has cooled in Victoria. As of last night in NSW there were 57 bush and grass fires. As of the 14th January, fires have burned an estimated 46 million acres, destroyed over 5,900 buildings (including 2,779 homes) and killed at least 34 people of which NSW has suffered the most this time. We will provide your members with as much information and photos as we can so that they understand how their money is being spent.

With many thanks

Fí Fraser

Secretary, Catholic Women's League Australia



Apart from the contacts with our sisters in Australia, CWL news comes from around the world. Do you have any international contacts?



A message from Myanmar:

I would like to get in touch with members of the Catholic Women's League from England. Our Catholic Women's Group here in Myanmar celebrated our 20th Anniversary of the founding and we wish to share with them this great occasion as CWL England and Wales sponsored us with the privilege of attending the World Union of Catholic Women's Organization General Assembly held in Canberra in the year 1996. Although many years have passed we would like to thank them for sponsoring us. The delay has been due to the political unrest that has kept us silent for all these many years.

Now that we have a democratic government, we would like to still keep in touch and if there is a chance for two members to visit the UK and catch up on all the up dates & activities to bring back to our country our ladies will be so grateful. We still use some of the documents given to us translated into our own language.

Editor: I have the email contact if any member would like to correspond.



CWL Canada, in their centenary year, have been invited to the AGM in October — watch this space!

An extract from the message from the President General, WUCWO:

Dear friends, by the grace of God, we begin a new year of life. WUCWO itself is called to give birth to a new year of life. Based on our long trajectory and on our very rich history, we are heading towards the 110th anniversary of our foundation, which we will celebrate in 2020. It is a propitious time for us to grow. As the present pontifical magisterium requires of us, a growing WUCWO means: "WUCWO going forth". This means a growth towards the interior of each one of our organisations and of WUCWO itself. How wonderful it would be if every woman belonging to our organisation felt loved, blessed for being part of our World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations! If this has always been a grace, in this time of networks and connectivity, consciously and gratefully belonging to WUCWO is an even more precious gift.

Editor: Please email natsec@cwlhq.org.uk if you wish the full message.



Many of you receive the WUCWO magazine — **Women's Voice**, where Veronica Cross is a regular contributor.

If you would like to receive the magazine (3 copies per year 18 euros) then please contact the national secretary.