



## NCW NEWS Issue 33 – MARCH 2011

### FROM THE PRESIDENT. . . .

With the coldest winter for a hundred years, snow and travel disruptions, many meetings have been cancelled. Fortunately the weather was kind in January when NCW hosted a meeting at our headquarters in Danbury Street, London, of the Six-O Group leaders and the Deputy Head of the Government Equalities Office (GEO). The pre-consultation meeting was arranged to discuss how organisations could work with Government following the closure of the Women's National Commission (WNC). The Government is committed to enhanced engagement with women across the UK and **they also want to have grassroots participation**. NCW is well placed to do this with our long history and good track record of discussion, research and responses to government consultations.

An important item discussed was the various options of communication: newsletters, a website, e-mails, texting, phone conferencing and Facebook type interaction. All had some merit but could apply to different age groups. Texting for instance is the top form of communication with the teens plus. However we felt that would not work for many organisations still struggling with electronic communication. As the discussion progressed we could appreciate the enormous complexity of the situation. How do you hear and take on board the views of 640 organisations that were part of the WNC? All have different Equality and Human Rights issues; women, the disabled and ethnic minorities etc. The Government has no easy answer, but has held a number of pre-consultation meetings with various groups over the last few months and is to launch in March a **12 week national consultation, which will allow contributions from all parties**. When this is completed and analysed plans and policies will be revealed in 2012.



The Government's 'Equality Strategy' is built on two principles – 'equal treatment and equal opportunity.' For women they state, **'We are also tackling the barriers women face getting into decision making positions by setting an aspirational target that 50% of all appointments to public boards will be women by 2015 and we have established the Lord Davies review into the lack of women in our top companies'**(see page 2). The GEO has now produced its first new communication, a short, informative newsletter, 'WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT', (circulated to NCW members on e-mail). I will be interested to hear your views.

Sheila Eaton

### CONTENTS

AV Referendum .....	Page 3	ICW Vice President.....	Page 3
Bovine TB & Badgers.....	Page 6	International Women's Day .....	Page 4
British Library exhibition.....	Page 7	Lord Davies Report.....	Page 2
Bus services -cuts.....	Page 6	New Year Honours.....	Page 2
Diary.....	Page 8	Parallel event CSW.....	Page 4
Editorial.....	Page 2	President's letter.....	Page 1
Environment.....	Page 7	VLV Conference.....	Page 7
Golden Book.....	Page 2	YW Viewpoint.....	Page 5

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## EDITORIAL

This edition of the newsletter may reach you a little later than originally planned. However it has meant that, thanks to some speedy reporting from the contributors concerned, you can access at least some preliminary reports about recent meetings. These include several International Women's Day events and also news from New York where a delegation has been representing NCW at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

The second edition of Work and Policy Matters is included and we hope that together with the contents of NEWS you will feel better informed and will also be able to continue your discussions and debate in the best NCW tradition. Your comments are always welcomed by your Editor.

**Gwenda Nicholas**

## NEW YEAR HONOURS

NCW President Sheila Eaton is delighted that our Honorary Associate and representative at the United Nations **Indira Patel** has been appointed a **Dame of the British Empire DBE** in the 2011 New Year Honours List for services to Human Rights. Sheila said that Indira's honour is excellent news. For the past 6 years Dame Indira has represented the National Council of Women of Great Britain on the UN NGO Commission on the Status of Women and continues to play a pivotal role in policy making.

**Margaret Owen**, Director and founder member of Widows for Peace Through Democracy, (now an NCW Affiliate) was awarded an **OBE** in the New Years Honours List for services to human rights, particularly widows overseas. At our conference in 2009, Margaret proposed the resolution on the plight of widows worldwide, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations. This of course includes our own current war widows. With input from Margaret, President Sheila Eaton presented a similar resolution at the International Council of Women's (ICW) Triennial Conference in South Africa, which became policy throughout ICW; thereby gaining worldwide recognition of the issues.

**Tatjana Hine**, the President of another Affiliate, the British Association of Women Entrepreneurs, has been appointed **OBE**, for services to business, a well deserved honour. "In this difficult economic time it is good to know we have women of Tatjana's ability and dedication working in the area of business" commented NCW's President.

**Biographies of all three can be accessed on the NCW website [www.ncwgb.org](http://www.ncwgb.org)**

## Doreen Crockford's name has been added to NCW's Golden Book

Doreen, a major in the Salvation Army, brought a wide experience of social conditions and problems to NCW. She became Chair of the Social and Employment Policy Committee and drafted NCW responses to many government consultation papers with skill and understanding. Her warmth and commitment are greatly missed.

## The Lord Davies Report has been published

Lord Davies recommends that UK listed companies in the FTSE 100 should be aiming for a minimum of 25% female board member representation by 2015. He has recommended in his report for government that FTSE 350 companies should be setting their own, challenging targets and expects that many will achieve a much higher figure than this minimum. The report says that companies should set targets for 2013 and 2015 to ensure that more talented and gifted women can get into the top jobs in companies across the UK.

Lord Davies said "Over the past 25 years the number of women in full-time employment has increased by more than a third and there have been many steps towards gender equality in the workplace, with flexible working and the Equal Pay Act, however, there is still a long way to go. Currently 18 FTSE 100 companies have no female directors at all and nearly half of all FTSE 250 companies do not have a woman in the boardroom. Radical change is needed in the mindset of the business community if we are to implement the scale of change that is needed.

This is not about aiming for a specific figure and is not just about promoting equal opportunities but it is about improving business performance. There is growing evidence to show that diverse boards are better boards, delivering financial out-performance and stock market growth."

*This report can be accessed online. NCW will be looking carefully at this report and commenting in due course.*

## **Alternative Voting Referendum AV or First Past the Post**

In recent weeks women's organisations have held discussions about the proposals on Alternative Voting, and NCW has been represented at a meeting about women's representation in Parliament at the House of Commons, organised by the Centre for Women and Democracy, Fawcett, the Hansard Society, and the Electoral Reform Society. Here for the information of members is a statement of the situation as it appears to me at present.

**Nature of the Proposals** - Members will be aware that this year the Government is proposing changes to the electoral system in Britain, including re-drawing some constituency boundaries, with a view to reducing the number of MPs in the House of Commons by up to 50.

The proposals also include a historic "first" - a proposed change in the voting system for electors from the existing "First Past the Post" (FPTP) method of selecting Members of Parliament, to a system of Alternative Voting (AV), whereby the voter will have the **option** of listing candidates in order of preference, should the candidate of his/her first choice fail to secure more than 50% of the votes. It is this Alternative Vote System, which is already used in selecting the Speaker of the House of Commons, which will be the subject of a referendum on May 5<sup>th</sup> this year. (A very similar system is used in elections for the Scottish and Welsh Assemblies.

In cases where one candidate has a clear lead, the need for the second choice of votes to be considered will not be necessary. However the possibility of giving an alternative choice to electors in constituencies where no clear lead emerges, or where the vote is low and narrowly split among contesting parties, is being proposed in order to widen the contest, and to permit voters to feel more engaged in the choice of their Member of Parliament. Many observers also feel that it offers a more democratic way of choosing Parliamentary representatives.

Many people currently feel disenchanted with politics, and young people are particularly disaffected. A change from the present adversarial system, where political parties tend to adopt polarised positions, would also benefit the country it is suggested, by securing a more consensus-style of Government.

**NCW has no direct policy on these proposals**, but as these offer, for the first time ever, a major change in the system of voting, members should consider seriously the possible benefits of an innovative scheme, which may open up the log-jam in British politics today, and improve the democratic nature of our elections. Britain remains almost the only democratic country in the world to retain the old adversarial FPTP system.

**Effect on Women** - It is also worth bearing in mind in forming a judgement on the AV proposals, that the Government, in considering major changes to the electoral system, has at no stage mentioned the present under-representation of women in the House of Commons – a subject on which NCW has a great deal of established policy, debated and ratified at Annual Conferences since 1920, and most recently at the 2010 NCW Conference in Gloucester. The link in this case is that women candidates are often considered as a second choice, and that a change of this type might help to open the way to the election of more able women MPs, as has been proven in many other countries including Scotland and Wales. Women's issues might also be given more weight in future pre-election campaigns.

**Role of NCW** - In order to carry out our duty as an educational Charity, informing women of changes in legislation and Government policy affecting them, NCW will be circulating to Branches, short leaflets on the subject published by the independent Electoral Reform Society.

**Grace Wedekind, ICWGB**

*The following message has been received from Cosima Schenk, International Council of Women President:*

On behalf of the ICW Board I have the pleasure to inform you that Ms Jane Prichard, President of the Regional Council Asia-Pacific and Ms Grace Wedekind, President of the Regional Council ECICW have been co-opted as ICW Vice-Presidents.

It is an honour to be able to count on the high degree of competence and complete dedication of those ladies who served ICW for many years in different capacities.

The Board and all the ICW members wish them success and happiness in this new commitment.

**President Sheila Eaton warmly congratulates Grace Wedekind on behalf of all NCWGB members.**

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY – Centenary – 8<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2011

*This is a specially important day this year as it is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of International Women's Day when women all over the world can celebrate women's strength and achievements and seek to promote women's greater participation in improving society for the benefit of all, particularly by working together.*

### **Global and domestic challenges for women in the centenary year of International Women's Day** **Margaret Field, Company Secretary and Secretary ICWGB writes:**

On March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011, deputising for the NCW President, I was in the public gallery for this debate in the **House of Lords**. A full report of the debate is available at [www.publications.parliament.uk](http://www.publications.parliament.uk)

The debate was opened by Baroness Gould, who said that the empowering of women and girls was the most effective way to enable women to participate fully in society. Much had been gained through the implementation of CEDAW and the Millennium Goals, but discrimination against women remains; there are women who suffer from domestic violence, women who are innocent victims of war, women who have no control over their fertility and health and have no income or assets.

**Women for Women International\*** is organising a 'Join me on the Bridge' Campaign. Women, children and men, whether it's 2, 200, 2000, or more, will be joining together on bridges across the world, holding up banners, making a public statement that 'Stronger Women Build Bridges of Peace' and supporting women in war-torn areas. They will be calling for women to have a greater say at the peace negotiating tables and for countries to honour the UN goals they have signed up to, to bring an end to violence against women in areas of conflict. NCW too supports these goals and is partnering Women for Women, together with many other organisations.

Local communities are raising awareness of this important day. **Middlesbrough Cohesion Group is hosting an event to celebrate Two Centenaries, International Women's Day and the famous Transporter Bridge.** The group has invited members of **NCW's Northern Region** to attend. **Sheila Petersen, Chair NCW Foreign Affairs Committee** has organised a 'Join me on the Bridge' event in her village in Cumbria.

*\*For details of their history, development and current work, see FAB, the Foreign Affairs Committee's bulletin for February 2011, available from the NCW Administrative office*

### **FEMM is a Committee in the European Parliament working on Women's Rights and Gender Equality.**

On the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first International Women's Day, the FEMM committee organised a meeting, with the participation of national parliaments, on the topic of **WOMEN IN POLITICS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION** President Jerzy Buzek opened the event, followed by speeches from Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and Nicole Fontaine, former EP President.

### **INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN PARALLEL EVENT – 25<sup>th</sup> February 2011** **UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

CO-SPONSORED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF GREAT BRITAIN, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF THE UNITED STATES, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF KOREA

#### **'EVERY GIRL'S RIGHT TO AN EDUCATION'**

Including access to the **Science and Technology** arenas

Within a human rights framework the workshop covered issues including: Identifying barriers to BASIC EDUCATION for girls: exploring girls' access to non-traditional learning in Science and Technology; sharing ideas and experience in overcoming these barriers

SPEAKERS: BASIC EDUCATION – **Monica Tolman, NCWGB and ICW:**

SCIENCE EDUCATION – **Marilyn Foote-Hudson, Executive Director, Glaxo Smith-Kline**

**Report to follow**

# THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN - **YOUNG WOMEN'S VIEWPOINT**

**\*\*COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN NO 55 – New York 22<sup>ND</sup> February 2011**

**NCWGB holds special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. This entitles us to send delegates to and participate in the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Monica Hall, Immediate Past President NCW, has been in New York (see bottom of page 4). There will be a full report but here is a short selection of some points from the opening event which may be of special interest to you.**

- \*\* The purpose of CSW55 is to monitor progress achieved on the Beijing Platform for Action and to highlight emerging Themes. Much progress has been made on the Theme of Education (including access to Science & Technology Education) for Women and Girls.
- \*\* Girls are still not getting the knowledge they need to be participants in their communities
- \*\* Lack of education for women and girls threatens progress and makes it more difficult to achieve necessary development
- \*\* No country can develop without the full participation of women in every aspect of life.
- \*\* OLD CHINESE PROVERB If you plan for a day catch a fish, if you plan for a year plant a bush, if you plan for a decade plant a tree, if you plan for a lifetime EDUCATE A GIRL

Two seminars to tell you about. The first takes place on International Women's Day (see page 4):

National Council of Women/National Council of Young Women  
An intergenerational Seminar

## **THE RIGHT TO BE YOU!**

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011  
Nottingham Girls' High School  
Starting at 10.00 am with a welcome and light refreshments and concludes at 3.00 pm

### ***One of the crowd or follow your dream?***

Do you identify yourself as an individual or as a member of a group?  
Why do we need to be a member of a group?  
Do things happen your way or the way of the group?

The day will be led by Anne Wilson, NCW Nottingham and Notts, and Jeanette Orrey, Broadcaster, Author and Award winning Dinner Lady.

Three years ago the National Union of Teachers ran a campaign 'Growing up in a Material World' in an attempt to stem advertising and marketing which conveyed a sexual message misrepresenting children. This theme was taken up at the October 2010 Triennial conference of the International Council of Women, when a resolution was put by the New Zealand Council, strongly supported by NCW GB, which called upon all Councils to urge their governments to ban products and advertising material that enables children to be seen as sexual objects. NCW GB put such a resolution at our own Annual Conference in October 2010 at which the reports from two of our Link schools on this topic were taken into account. The South West and Midland Region decided to run a seminar on this theme to bring the matter to a wider audience.

**PORTRAYAL or BETRAYAL** takes place in Cheltenham on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April. Speakers will be Dr Tim Brain, recently retired Chief Constable of Gloucestershire, Zarin Hainsworth-Fadaie, who spoke to this subject two years ago at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, a member of the National Union of Teachers and a senior student from Cheltenham Ladies College.

**Details on page 8**

Look on page 1 of Work and Policy Matters – **Josephine Butler, Noble Woman** and see the link with NCYW!

**Comments from students in Link schools welcomed by the Editor: e-mail – [info@ncwgb.org](mailto:info@ncwgb.org)**

## **BUS SERVICES - CUTS**

Reports have been coming in from members in different parts of the country commenting on proposed cuts to local bus services including timetable cuts and services being withdrawn on Sunday. Often people will have difficulty getting to hospital and young people will have difficulty getting to their colleges often many miles away from their homes. Older people who would like to give up driving are being forced to continue because of poor bus services. The economy in rural areas is particularly badly hit as the workforce will find it more difficult to get to work.

Research has been carried out by the Campaign for Better Transport. They concluded that buses are a basic public service and a national concern, enabling people up and down the country to stay self sufficient and economically active. Cuts to bus funding might look like an easy saving in the short term, but in the longer term greater strain will be put on the public purse because of the knock on effects for people, the economy and the environment. It would be irresponsible for Government to turn a blind eye to the local effects of the national decisions that they have made to local authority funding streams. Adequate local public transport services are needed if the government's national objectives for the economy, for society and for the environment are to be met.

***The Campaign for Better Transport has addressed a letter to the Prime Minister and copied it to a range of government departments. NCW president Sheila Eaton welcomed the opportunity to contribute to and to sign the letter. The signatories represent 26 organisations.***

The letter considers that bus cuts are damaging economic recovery and that local authority support for bus services as a result of funding cuts will have severe negative knock-on impacts for people, communities, the economy and the environment. Cuts in bus services will affect government objectives in a broad range of areas; their research shows that the poorest and most vulnerable are the hardest hit. Young people need transport to take up opportunities in education and work. Women are less likely to drive than men so they are more likely to be dependent on public transport. Bus cuts result in more car journeys and buses are an essential part of the strategy for reducing carbon emissions. The letter asks the Prime Minister to ask government departments to examine their own role in supporting people's travel option and to identify ways for local authorities to support bus services.

## **Bovine TB, Badgers and UK Dairying – an update**

A long-standing concern of NCW has been food security, researched through seminars and resolutions taken forward to Government. At the Regional seminar in Stroud (The Politics of Food -- March 2010) supported by NCW affiliate the National Farmers Union, members and others, particularly from the local farming community, listened to eminent speakers including Dr John Gallagher, a veterinary surgeon, on the facts surrounding the suffering of cattle and badgers. He gave a clear presentation on the worsening epidemic and its cost to the public purse. Further information from Iwan Lewis, Past President of the Women's Food and Farming Union, and local farmers highlighted the need for the UK to address the loss of dairy farms and their reservoir of herds of dairy cows, carefully built up over generations, caused through the spread of bovine TB. The subsequent report on the seminar was published by NCW.

A resolution urging government action was passed at the 2010 NCW annual conference, and forwarded to DEFRA whose reply noted that responses to the public consultation on this issue were being collated and that a balanced TB eradication plan would be published in February 2011.

The letters page in a local newspaper, the Hereford Times, at the end of 2010, featured correspondence initiated by an ill informed writer, which provoked some excellent factual responses. This included one from the Chair of Hereford branch, Dr Maureen Beauchamp and others from leading members of the local farming community in Herefordshire, which has been affected. Dr Beauchamp was subsequently invited to a meeting of the National Farmers Union in Pershore with well-qualified speakers including a scientist engaged in a long-term study of the problem and also a member of the Badger Trust, who conceded that targeted culling of infected setts would be acceptable. With 25,000 cattle killed in 2010 and the threat to the UK dairying industry, all agreed that action is necessary.

There is a recent report that vaccination may be available around 2012 but EU legislation will not permit its use and it could take some years for this to be changed. In any event it is only one tool in the control of bovine TB.

As we go to press the DEFRA report is awaited. NCW will continue to see that members are correctly informed and will be monitoring developments.

*RuSource briefings can be accessed online; Briefing 1197 is a summary of the Veterinary Association of Wildlife Management's response to the Government consultation on bovine TB and badger culling.*

## **ENVIRONMENT Did you know?**

The bumblebee population continues to decline worldwide. Of the 25 British species, three have become extinct and half of the rest have declined by up to 70% since the 1970s. About one-third of everything we eat depends upon pollination by bees. The loss continues of butterflies, dragonflies and some beetles.

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The Government has given the green light to deepwater oil drilling in the North Sea. Oil company, Chevron, admits that an oil spill from their drilling off the Shetlands could reach the coastlines of Scotland, Norway, Greenland and the protected salt marshes and sand dunes of the north Norfolk coast. Chevron also said that we shouldn't worry about the whales and dolphins because they are clever enough to swim out of the way of a spill!

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Speaking during E.U. Green Week in 2010, and referring to biodiversity, the President, Jose Manuel Barroso, said: "It is our world to lose – so we had better be careful because if we cut this lifeline there won't be another".

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Also during Green Week, Professor Jim Jackson, appealed to society to end its addiction to new products. "We have been encouraged to spend money that we don't have on things we don't need to create impressions that won't last on people we don't care about."

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A volcanologist at Edinburgh University predicts that Iceland is about to enter a more active phase with larger and more frequent eruptions which could last for several years. In 1773 an eight-month long eruption killed over half of Iceland's livestock and a quarter of the human population. The ash cloud smothered Europe and thousands died after inhaling the poisonous gas. The temperature plummeted and brought extreme weather for many years.

**Beryl Kemp, Individual Member**

### **A viewpoint - HOW EATING SARDINES COULD SAVE OUR SEAS**

A major scientific study has found that changing our eating habits from eating less large, predatory fish such as tuna and cod to smaller 'grazing' fish including anchovies and sardines, would help to preserve our dwindling large fish, numbers of which have fallen by two-thirds over the past 100 years. By comparison the number of smaller, foraging fish that feed on plankton has doubled simply because there have been less large predatory fish to consume them. Professor Villy Christensen of the University of British Columbia, speaking to the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington, pointed out that if consumers could be persuaded to buy more of the smaller fish, the imbalance of the marine ecosystem could be redressed. At the present time most of the smaller types of fish are processed into fishmeal and fertiliser rather than for human consumption. Society must now decide what we want from the oceans - turn it into a fishery farm or have a more natural and sustainable ecosystem?

### ***Risking Quality in Times of Change – What future for Public Service Broadcasting?***

NCW Affiliate **Voice of the Listener and Viewer** Spring Conference will address a range of topical issues including the future of BBC News, World Service and journalism in the light of the new responsibilities and cuts in funding announced in the 2010 licence fee settlement. It will also look ahead to the new Communications Bill promised in 2012. Speakers include **Helen Boaden, Director, BBC News**, and the Chairman is **Stewart Purvis, Professor of TV Journalism**.

**Tuesday, 12 April 2011, London W1** For further details and tickets please contact [Linda.Forbes@VLV.org.uk](mailto:Linda.Forbes@VLV.org.uk)

### **“ONE LANGUAGE, MANY VOICES”**

This exhibition traces the evolution of the English language from Germanic invaders and settlers to the language of the people, alongside the French spoken by our Norman rulers and the Latin writing of the scribes and literate people. Today's rich and diverse language is spoken by 2 billion people of whom only 400 million are native speakers.

The library's greatest treasures range from Beowulf and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to posters and early newspapers.

**British Library, London NW1. Exhibition to 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2011.**

South West and Midland Region seminar

## **PORTRAYAL or BETRAYAL**

*The Sexualisation of Girls*

Sacred Heart Hall, Charlton Kings,  
Cheltenham

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2011 10am – 4pm

Tickets inc Ploughman's Lunch £16  
Students £8

Enquire NCW Admin office  
Tel: 01325 367375

NCW Health Committee  
Birmingham City University  
Seminar

## **SUBSTANCE MISUSE**

*From Birth to Old Age*

Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2011  
Birmingham City University, Edgbaston

Further details to follow

## **NCW ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> October

Gateway Hotel, Nottingham

Details and booking form in the June issue of NEWS

## **DIARY DATES 2011**

March	3 Foreign Affairs
	7 S & T (Darlington)
	8 Headquarters
	8 NCYW Seminar (Nottingham) (see page 5)
	9 Media
	9 Consumer (Nottingham)
	17 Management
	24 S & E
April	16 South West & Midland Region "Portrayal or Betrayal" Seminar (see box and page 5)
May	19 Management
	23 Housing

Meetings at 36 Danbury Street unless otherwise shown

Last thoughts for the day.....

27<sup>th</sup> March 2011 CENSUS DAY

56 questions  
to be completed by 25 million households

\*\*\*\*\*

Major theme for the United Nations  
Commission on the Status of Women 2012

**CLIMATE CHANGE**

## **MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN**

If you have found some items of interest in this newsletter, and you are not already a member of NCW, you are invited to find out more about the benefits of membership from our Office Administrator. NCW can keep you better informed and enable you to participate in policy-making either through Branch or Individual Membership. Information about our Organisation is available on our website: [www.ncwgb.org](http://www.ncwgb.org)

For membership information, write or telephone:

Administrative Office at 72 Victoria Road, Darlington, DL1 5JG, telephone 01325 367375.

*The Editor thanks all contributors and proof readers! The next NCW NEWS will be published in early June 2011*

**Please send all contributions for the next edition \*\*\*\* BY 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011 \*\*\*\***

The Editor: [info@ncwgb.org](mailto:info@ncwgb.org)

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the National Council of Women of Great Britain