

## Lunch Clubs



Originally known as Luncheon Clubs, Lunch Clubs were a place where 'older people, not housebound or in need of Meals on Wheels, may get a good nourishing meal on several days each week, find friendship and help whenever they ask for it, and where they can enjoy a hot meal in the company of others, always a stimulus to those living alone.'<sup>1</sup>

During the Second World War WVS provided meals for older people in British Restaurants.

In the immediate post-war period meals were provided through Meals on Wheels services to some Darby and Joan Clubs.<sup>2</sup>

The first mention, in the Archives, of a dedicated Luncheon Club is the Malvern Luncheon Club in 1949 it had 220 members and met once a month. Other Luncheon Clubs appeared through the 1950s in different areas including St Marylebone, Bakewell Rural and Mablethorpe.<sup>3</sup>

However it was not until 1962 when the scheme really took off and WVS realised the need to increase the number of clubs providing midday meals.<sup>4</sup> Clubs provided tea, coffee, a two or three course meal and in some clubs activities such as Bingo, a quiz or a raffle.

Every Luncheon Club had a club leader, cook(s), pot-washers, and servers, all of whom were volunteers though in some cases the local authority paid for permanent cooks. In some clubs members who came for a meal would help volunteers with the washing-up. However in some areas the meals were cooked in kitchens outside the clubs, such as Guys Marsh Open Borstal for the Parish Centre luncheon club in 1974.<sup>5</sup>

Today Community and Lunch Clubs are still run by Royal Voluntary Service.

<sup>1</sup> RVS A&HC, Luncheon Clubs, 812, 1967

<sup>2</sup> RVS A&HC, Report on 25 Years Work 1938-1963, 1963, Report of Ten Years Work for the Nation 1938-1948

<sup>3</sup> RVS A&HC, Bulletin, WRVS/HQ/PUB/BUL/BUL-1949-04, April 1949, pp10-11, Bulletin, WRVS/HQ/PUB/BUL/BUL-1953-01, p15, Bulletin, WRVS/HQ/PUB/BUL/BUL-1954-06, June 1954 p14, Narrative Report, WRVS/HQ/NR/R3/1958-LINC/MTP, Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire, May 1958

<sup>4</sup> RVS A&HC, 807, Work for Old People, 1962

<sup>5</sup> RVS A&HC, WRVSA&HC/WRVS/HQ/PUB/BUL/BUL-1974-09, Sept 1974 p11