

LIONESS

AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL SERVICE



1938 – 2008



THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

(Incorporating the QMAAC & ATS Comrades Association)

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 206184

Founded in 1919

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Cover Photographs

Front Cover

ATS 70th Anniversary, Victory Services Club
 London, 4 April 2008

Back Cover

Extracts from 1945 ATS
 Calendar

Contributions for next issue by 10 December 2008

Published by the WRAC Association, Worthy Down, Winchester, SO21 2RG.
 Printed in Great Britain and distributed worldwide by Warwick Printing Company Ltd, Caswell Road, Leamington Spa,
 Warwickshire CV31 1QD.

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Editorial



The second edition of *Lioness* this year already and I would like to thank all of you who have been kind enough to submit articles and photographs.

You will notice that, again, the front and back covers are dedicated to the ATS who were formed 70 years ago and there is no doubt that both editions of the *Lioness* this year should reflect that anniversary. On the other hand, 2009

will celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the WRAC. So, I would invite our WRAC readers to look through those old scrapbooks and let me have suitable cover material so that both editions next year can be dedicated to the WRAC. Perhaps the WRAC reminiscences section would benefit too – in this edition, the WRAC section is only half the length of the ATS section! As I keep saying, the *Lioness* is our main historical archive so let's make sure it is a good and wide ranging one.

My final plea is actually with my General Secretary hat on! Denise, our Chief Clerk, is working very hard on updating our membership database and we would really appreciate your help in this. On the back of the address sheet that came with this magazine is a short questionnaire. We would be so grateful if you could just spend a few minutes completing it and sending it back to Worthy Down. It will help us to react much better when, for example, we get invitations applicable only to those who served in a particular place or in a particular trade. Your telephone number and/or e-mail address would allow us to contact you more quickly – especially those of you in Headquarter Branch. Thank you very much.

Jane Freebairn

Message from the Vice President



Well, as promised in the last *Lioness*, the party has begun! It started with the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration at the Victory Services Club on 4th April. What a wonderful day it was: a delicious lunch, champagne, birthday cake and superb entertainment courtesy of the "Not Forgotten" Association. We were sad our Patron

was unable to join us for this function but thrilled that we received an invitation for twenty ATS members to attend a Buckingham Palace Garden Party on 8th July. Another wonderful occasion and luckily the weather was kind to us. I was privileged to present four of these ladies to HM The Queen during the afternoon – a memorable day for us all. Our Patron was pleased to be reminded that it was the 70th Anniversary: she was most relaxed and chatted to our group for about five minutes. She was delighted to hear that our ATS members were still very active within the Association, and long may it continue! I know that some Branches are holding their own celebrations – so I do hope that you all have a very happy occasion whenever it happens.

And the party continues....the Grand Reunion next March in Blackpool coincides with the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the WRAC and the 90th Anniversary of the Association. This *Lioness* carries all the important booking and application forms for the Reunion Weekend. I urge you all to complete and return them as soon as possible to ensure that you get a place. You will see that there is a two or three day package on offer to make it a viable proposition for the Association. Unlike the last Reunion which was heavily subsidized by a very generous legacy, this one has to be self funding. We need to guarantee the Norbreck Castle Hotel our patronage for the entire weekend – so please, do not ask if you can just come to the Gala Dinner on the Saturday evening. Remember, this is a Reunion weekend – so let's 'reune' all weekend not just at the Gala Dinner with the 9 others on the table! Can I also encourage you to sell the Grand Draw tickets which come with this edition – and if you feel you can sell more, contact Association HQ for extra books. The prizes are well worth winning – First Prize is £1,000.

I finish with a heartfelt plea to all Association members but particularly to those ex WRAC members – come and celebrate our 60th Birthday with the same pride and enthusiasm that our ATS sisters celebrated their 60th and 70th Anniversaries. The future of the Association now rests entirely with the WRAC membership – we have never needed your support and commitment as much as we need it now. I look forward to seeing you at Blackpool!

Sue Westlake

GARDEN PARTY – BUCKINGHAM PALACE 8 July 2008

Thank you to Mabel Bolton for sending in this photograph taken at the Victory Services Club as the twenty ladies gathered to go off to Buckingham Palace.



Articles of Interest

MEMORIES OF THE BRADFORD BRANCH

Mrs Ethel Skerratt née Blencoe, W/164181
10 Garden Court, Priory Road, Warwick CV34 4XW

It is sad when a branch closes for whatever reason so I thought I would highlight one particular activity of the Bradford Branch.

We always met at RBL Headquarters in Bradford and on one occasion Bill Berry – ex-RAF and sub editor of the local newspaper Telegraph and Argus – came to talk to the members. He was particularly interested in the 1914/18 veterans. He had met a few of them and was in the process of writing about them for the newspaper.

He thought it would be a good idea to organise a get together for them with something to eat and a drink. We at the Bradford branch agreed to organise it and about 120 men put their names forward for a Sunday in November. Cars were offered to transport the men to the local RAFA club and food was donated by various local businesses. The club agreed to donate a drink to each gentleman to have with his lunch. The chat was at a high level and many items of memorabilia were produced.

When it came to the meal, the veterans made it clear that they would prefer to have cups of tea with the meal rather than a drink. Panic stations! A dash across the city to the RBL headquarters to gather up crockery was made and their preference was met!



The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Bradford along with a press photographer attended after the lunch. Speeches were made and photographs were taken. One of the veterans thanked our members for their hospitality and said he hoped that they would all meet at the same place the next year. So what had been a one off occasion became an annual event. Of course, the numbers decreased year on year with old soldiers fading away. The last year of the event for me was 1989 when I then left Yorkshire for Warwick. They were happy days and I do think Bradford Branch contributed a little to the life of the city.

I REMEMBER EDNA SHIELDS

Mrs H Sullivan née Veal, W/5261
3 Widmore Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG22 6LB



I was interested to see the article about Major Edna Shields who was pictured on her 100th birthday on page 4 of *Lioness* 1/08. I enclose a photograph of us at S-8 Gunsite (later 'C' Coy 12 Bn) in 1949 when, as Captain Shields, she was our CO. I remember her as a very outgoing and cheerful person who was a chain smoker. Who says "smoking kills the young!" Capt Shield's previous unit had been a RAOC Depot in the Midlands. She left us on promotion to Major and went to Northern Command.

I also served with Major Daphne Hill who was depicted in *Lioness* 2/07. She was Major Chard, 2IC to Lt Col Christy in 301 (EA) Bn WRAC in Colchester 1957-1958. Our annual camps and weekend camps were perfectly run and really enjoyed by all.

Editor: I spoke to Robbie Emmerson who sent in the original article on 21 April and she was going to visit Edna Shields the following weekend to help her celebrate her 101st birthday!

BONNIE SCOTLAND

Irene Maclean and Carol Traynor
e-mail: i_maclean@sky.com

WRAC ex-Tanglinners/Rheindahleners/Tripoliers, who all meet at the WRAC Dinner Club each October, also have trips to various places from time to time. Up to now we have been to York-Blandford-Wivenhoe and even Spain. In April, we joined forces again and went north of the border to Edinburgh. We took off from all corners of the country, with seven of us boarding trains in Staffordshire, Lancashire, Yorkshire and Durham. The careful planning of all this was down to our own travel co-ordinator Rose Friend – well done Rose – you are a star! Two ladies took flights from Southampton and Birmingham and finally our one Scottish lassie travelled from Inverness. Edinburgh was a fantastic city from the top of an open bus – we were delighted by the beautiful architecture (and some lovely coffee shops!).



Aboard the Royal Yacht

The visit to the Royal Yacht Britannia was a highlight, as at any moment we were expecting HM The Queen to appear! Holyrood Palace was another lovely place and we joined with lots of overseas visitors enjoying its history. The new Scottish Parliament Building along with the old Edinburgh Castle stood almost side-by-side in this great City. At a pub lunch, one of our party wasn't too keen on the haggis – an acquired taste I suspect. The stunning scenery will perhaps take us back to Edinburgh some day.

We owe a huge vote of thanks to our own "Scottish Tour Guide", Sandy Taylor, who went to a lot of trouble to arrange visits and activities for us. She did a fabulous job.

"NOT FORGOTTEN" ASSOCIATION – EDINBURGH CANAL CENTRE

Mrs Doreen Peggie

115 Hamilton Street, Broughty Ferry, Dundee DD5 2NW
Tel: 01382 778893

I am enclosing a photograph taken while we were having lunch before going on our barge trip along the Union Canal.

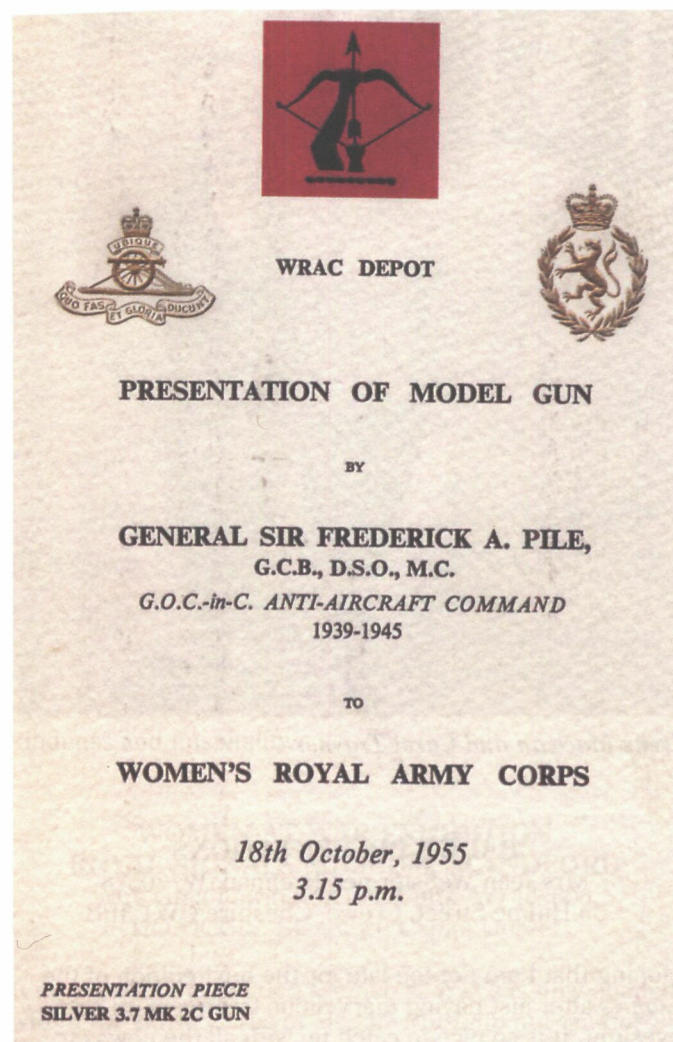
We had a wonderful day and would like to thank the "Not Forgotten" Association for such a memorable day.



*Left to Right: Zena Howard, Audrey Henderson,
Joan Smith, Doreen Peggie*

PRESENTATION OF A MODEL GUN

Jane Freebairn, Editor



I am grateful to Maj (Retd) Helen Haynes who sent this programme and photograph. The silver gun was presented in 1955 to commemorate the huge contribution made by the ATS who served in Anti-Aircraft Command. Brig (later Dame) Mary Railton, then DWRAC, accepted the gun on behalf of the Corps.

The model gun was displayed in the WRAC Museum until 1992 when the contents of the museum were given to the National Army Museum.

TWO WRAC GO AWOL

Irene Maclean and Carol Traynor
e-mail: i_maclean@sky.com

During the dark nights of winter, two ex-WRAC “girls” wanted a bit of sunshine. They found a lovely unspoiled village in Southern Spain called Torrox and within 5 minutes they were booked up – that’s the Internet for you! It was a working village – no English spoken – no English newspapers and NO Internet. It was a laugh a minute, using the phrase book, but the locals soon greeted us every morning “Hola Señoras”. Irene took her WRAC Tote bag to advertise the Association and Carol took lots of photographs and she did a lot of drawings from our beautiful terrace where we had breakfast each morning. Idyllic – let’s hope our hubbies are happy for us to do it again! It is thanks to the WRAC Dinner Club that we met up after both serving in Germany in the 1960s.



Irene Maclean and Carol Traynor

BADGE PRESENTATIONS

Mrs Jean Webster née Brennan, W/70578
35 Hulme Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 3PB

Hoping that I am not too late for the next edition of the *Lioness* after just having marvellous treatment on my eyesight. It is so nice to catch up with all the news etc. The photographs are of myself (the tall one!) and another ex ATS lady taken at Tamworth Park last year when Prince Charles presented the Mercian Badges etc. It was a lovely day and such a pleasure to meet these young men of whom we were so very proud to have met.

The next photograph is of myself and friend taken in the Mayor’s Parlour at Crewe after the Remembrance Service. Now I shall be looking forward to our next Reunion in Blackpool and to having a few days there for Veterans’ week, hoping that the sun will be shining.



Tamworth Park



Jean Webster on the right

THE LEICESTER LADIES

Mrs Barbara Danter
30 Blake Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5JL

We, of the Leicester Branch, thoroughly enjoyed ourselves at the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration at the Victory Services Club and were very sorry when it was over. The entertainment was of the highest standard, the comedian and the whole cast were very talented. It was great to be able to meet them in the lobby as we were leaving and to thank them personally. In return, they kissed us on the cheek and thanked us for our contribution to all that we did in WW2.

Prior to that we had toasted our Association with champagne and a beautiful iced cake, which we managed to annihilate, much to the amusement of the photographer, who continued to call us "the naughty Leicester ladies" (wonder who has been talking?). Yes, a really grand day to remember – you all did us proud. Many thanks to all of you responsible for your time and expertise.

Meanwhile back to normality once again. We, "the Leicester 7" have been having fun and games by attending what is called "a 1940's knees-up" at Nottingham Castle. We were made a great fuss of by visitors and staff and were asked by several visitors where their Mums could apply to join our Association as they had been in the ATS and did not know that we existed. Thank goodness that we could remember the Worthy Down address without too much of a problem.



At the 1940's "knees-up" at Nottingham Castle
(by kind permission of the Best of British Magazine)

Anyway, while there, we were surrounded by all these airmen, WAAFs, soldiers and ARP re-enactors who looked good in their uniforms especially when doing the jive. We nearly joined in but the knees protested a bit so we gave that a miss! We had sirens and an air raid all too real to want to remember!! One lady came to me and asked for a plaster as she had cut her arm badly. I felt so sorry for her until she advised me that it was just make up.

We must have answered many questions, some quite sad, i.e. like one lady whose Mum was a member of our service. She was trying to trace her father whom she believed to be American. However, she had little information and no service number for him so I feel that she will never know the answer.

The day ended around 4.30 p.m. with a small service and silence for all those men and women lost in all conflicts of our time. We had been the only true ex-servicewomen at the event and were thanked profusely by Mr Churchill and the RSM as well as the organisers who booked us for two veterans' days in June. At that event this year the Bevin Boys will be receiving their long overdue badges of appreciation as well as servicemen and women accepting veterans' badges. Yes! Our fun continues! Whoever would have thought that a few years in the ATS would have helped to give our group such a wonderful retirement including sharing a joke with the Duke of Edinburgh at the Field of Remembrance outside Westminster Abbey?



Field of Remembrance November 2007

ANOTHER "NOT FORGOTTEN" DAY Mrs Irene Warren and Miss Beryl Manthorpe Norfolk Branch

On Wednesday 8 May, a lovely sunny day, we two members of the Norfolk Branch joined the "Not Forgotten" Association for their trip on the Norfolk Broads. Boarding the 'Queen of the Broads' at Wroxham Bridge, the route was through Wroxham, Salhouse, Horning and Ranworth Broads.

There were many veterans on board displaying their medals and proudly so. A lively commentary kept everyone aware of the surroundings and points of interest. Descriptions of the wildlife added to the understanding of the many water birds – often parents with their offspring in tow.

Whilst gliding silently through the water, lunch was served and our hosts circulated, speaking to every guest.

We sailed back into Wroxham moorings at 3 p.m. after enjoying three wonderful hours afloat. All of us who were lucky enough to go on the trip passed on our grateful thanks to the "Not Forgotten" Association for their kindness and hospitality.

WOMEN AT WAR EXHIBITION **ROYAL SIGNALS MUSEUM BLANDFORD** Mrs Gina Lewington née Cutts, W/462806 HQ DCCIS, Blandford Camp, Dorset

A new exhibition entitled Women at War has now opened within the Royal Corps of Signals Museum at Blandford, Dorset. Funded by the Heritage Lottery the display is interspersed with the regular exhibits within the museum. The Women at War display is divided into 4 separate areas; The FANY 1907 – 1939; The Second World War 1939 – 1945; Post War 1945 – 1990 and Into the 21st Century

The FANY 1907 – 1939 display describes how the Women's Transport Services were formed during the Great War, and recognises that their war work consisted of driving ambulances, running field hospitals or working in soup kitchens. Although not 'in the regular Army', the

FANY saluted officers once in the morning, as a respect to the officer's rank. The mannequin dressed in her uniform of a red coat and black skirt is accompanied by a touch screen display.

These touch screens are located at each of the 4 displays. On them the visitor can view photos, film footage and filmed interviews describing the duties, emotions and experiences of past and present women serving in the Armed Forces. The film footage mainly comes from the BBC archives, some of which has never been seen before. Martyn Cox, at the opening ceremony, told of an interview he conducted with a member of the ATS. During the war she had been responsible for driving blood supplies to the ships so it could be sent to the front line. Her brother was unfortunately injured on the battlefield and received a blood transfusion. The blood had been collected in Bristol, so could quite possibly have been driven to the docks by his sister. Whilst trawling through the BBC archives, Martyn located a short film clip showing ambulances carrying blood arriving at the docks in Bristol.

The Second World War 1939 – 1945 consists of information on the Y Service and the SOE. The Y Service based at Beaumanor Park ran a program focused on the interception of coded wireless traffic, including the infamous Wehrmacht's Enigma machine, the code of which was successfully broken at Bletchley Park. The SOE, many of whom were female, aided soldiers and airman trapped behind enemy lines. This display shows an SOE operative in her 'working dress' of civilian clothes, together with a suitcase which would contain her wireless transmitter. Visitors to the museum are invited to pick the case up to see how much weight these dedicated operatives had to carry on a daily basis. By the end of the war the FANY had been awarded many decorations, including 27 Croix de Guerre. 3 female SOE agents were awarded the George Cross, 2 of them posthumously.

The post War 1939 – 1990 describes the forming of the WRAC from the ATS in 1949 through to the disbanding of the Corps in 1992. The display shows a WRAC from 97 Signal Squadron (V) dressed in Denims, DMS Boots, and Puttees with her green lovat jumper manning a D11 radio station located in an Austin K9 1 ton box body. In the tent next to the vehicle a WRAC dressed in No2s stands smartly showing the uniform of the day. At the rear of the vehicle the visitor observes a member of the WRAC

erecting an aerial, stood next to a generator. This display clearly shows the diversity of the role taken by the WRAC within the Royal Corps of Signals in the post war period.

Into the 21st Century contains a Portable Satellite to Earth Station, the model dressed in modern uniform could be any one of the Royal Signals female soldiers serving in Afghanistan or Iraq today, however, this display shows modern day FANY. Now a voluntary organisation, their efforts are concentrated on communications roles within the civilian community. Providing communication for relief work after floods or helping during major disasters such as train derailments the modern FANY still play an important role in today's society.

The Women at War exhibition is a living memorial dedicated to the lives and experiences of women at war. It is intended that the displays will be updated at regular intervals as more filmed interviews or photos are received. Any-one who has an interesting story to tell or photos which could be included in the exhibition are asked to contact Adam Forty at the Royal Signals Museum in Blandford.

Telephone number 01258 482329, or e-mail adam@royalsignalsmuseum.com

I feel that this exhibition shows the diverse role undertaken by women during times of conflict and is well worth a visit for members/ex-members of the FANY, ATS or WRAC. For more information on opening times visit the website at www.royalsignalsmuseum.com

CLUB ATS COLCHESTER

We usually go out for lunch every year, so decided that Veterans' Day, 27 June, was a good time. We booked a coach and went to a village pub where we had an excellent 3-course meal at a very good price. Sadly the pub has now changed hands and the new owners do not do meals. No problem – this year we will stay at our normal meeting place, Colchester Conservative Club and have a buffet lunch. The catering is good and we have our Christmas lunch there.

Last September, members of Club ATS joined Great Bentley RBL for a visit to the Poppy Factory at Richmond. We were most impressed as all the workers were handicapped in some way but were kept an eye on by employed staff. They have a new machine which assembles the poppies in one operation and turns out thousands in a short time. Larger poppies are hand made as are wreaths and crosses. We had a very nice lunch, plus tea and biscuits on arrival. Entrance is free.

We have lost two more members this year – Joan Webb who fell and broke her hip but died after a few days in intensive care; and Joan Scanlan who had been unwell for some time. They will both be missed. Our numbers are reducing (age-group, my GP says!)

Some good news – two ex-WRAC ladies have joined us after retiring to the area after serving in Colchester. Anyone visiting the area can always call the Secretary for information about meetings, Beryl Newell 01206 250029.



Branch News

ABERDEEN

It is a chastened Secretary writing this. I got tutted at for not sending in a report for the last *Lioness*. Even if we are doing the "same old things", apparently folks would like to know that we are still around and able to do the "same old things"! We are definitely enjoying life up here – the most northern of the Branches and here's a few photographs taken at our Christmas Lunch to prove the point.



Pat Valentine, Joan Bartlett, Branch Secretary, and Mary McLeod



Jean and May Christie (can you tell they are sisters?) and Jess Gellatly

Some of our members are to participate in the Veterans' Day Parade on 28 June where there will be Pipe Bands and Drummers galore and abseiling cadets. All this will be followed by a Buffet Lunch at Bridge of Don Barracks hosted by the Lord Provost. I hope the weather will be good as Union Street can be a real cold canyon especially if the wind comes directly from Siberia as it often does!

We are looking forward to the Scottish AGM in Perth and hope we win something in the raffle this time. We wish you all a tartan all the best.

BATH BRANCH

Membership of Bath Branch remains static in spite of much advertising by word and mouth at every

opportunity. Advancing years means we have an average attendance of 18 to 20 at our twice monthly meetings. A very inadequate transport system around the area prevents some members attending. We manage to have a varied programme, sometimes speakers, the odd Table Top Sale to raise funds, quizzes etc.

We hosted a special Coffee Morning attended by the Mayor of Bath and many friends from other ex-Service groups and we were able to forward £250 to "Help for Heroes".



The Mayor of Bath, Cllr Sharon Ball with Bath Branch Secretary, Sylvia Musgrave and Branch Chairman Betty Keating

Branch members were very pleased when our hard working Treasurer was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for the many years she has held this position. Pam Finney received this from Air Marshal Sir Peter Norris who was our guest of honour at the South and South West Reunion which we hosted. It was very appropriate that Pam should receive it from the Air Marshal as she had worked, as a civilian, at RAF Innsworth for many years after the War.

We are also very pleased that regular attendees at our meetings are two ex-ATS who joined in 1938 when the ATS was formed. They are Joan Ferguson née Jackson whose Army number was W/42! She has been a regular member of this Branch since it formed in 1947. Our Chairman, Betty Keating née Thomas, joined from Southampton where she served on that Branch Committee before moving to Bath. We still have four members who have been active in the Branch since 1947 besides myself: Jo Morris née Crank and Mary Millard who sadly cannot attend the meetings but is in regular touch with us.

The Chairman and I very much enjoyed the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration in London on 4 April and thank all concerned who organised it – a most enjoyable occasion. We now look forward to next year at Blackpool.

BEXHILL BRANCH

We hold our meetings in the hall of the Bexhill Red Cross Centre and the speaker in June was one of the Red Cross volunteers. He has always been very supportive of us as have we, in turn, been of him and his colleagues. Those members who are able to attend number about 25 at most and the hall, and its furniture, just about accommodates us. Very importantly, the hall has a good kitchen with a generous supply of crockery and teapots, backed up by willing helpers from the membership. We are known by some of the new members as the 'friendly branch' and we are proud of the name. A friendly smile, a listening ear and a warm approach are all that it costs us, plus remembering those three things.

We have also lost a few members due to illness and age. We miss them and try to keep in contact.

The Branch has some dedicated officers and a very good committee. We have collected items for parcels to our soldiers overseas. We are generous with our raffle prizes and giving items for the sales table. We have already booked our Christmas lunch and hope we have a good summer before we reach the festive season. Next month we have our strawberry tea, so it can be seen that our tummies rule our heads. Oh and we have written to the Prime Minister about the Gurkhas and received a reply from the Direct Communications Unit at 10 Downing Street. All others who have written on the same subject will have received the same word-for-word reply.

Thank you Major Freebairn for publication of the paintings by the late Stella Schmolle on the front and back covers of *Lioness* 1/2008. I can personally identify with 'Recruits on the Barrack Square, ATS No 7 Training Centre, Guildford' and 'Cordwallis MT Training Centre, Camberley 1943' although I was there a year later. I remember collecting vehicles from and parking them back on that football field, and leaving them with their taps in the open position to drain the water tanks to avoid them freezing overnight (it was a cold autumn and winter). But any learning about engines was done in the classroom or at the vehicle workshop, where we wore trousered overalls and clogs with leather uppers and steel tipped wooden soles and heels which gave off sparks as we walked on a hard surface. I worried about walking past the petrol pump! In the Barrack square painting I think that the group on the left-hand side is marching on-the-spot as their knees are lifted so high and I can almost hear the male corporal instructor barking out "Come on girls, give it some swagger, like the Guards". The girls walking one behind the other out of the frame look so weary that it brought back memories of how I often felt after a spell on the barrack square. Stella's paintings were so true to life, they spoke volumes and I think that a lot of us will try to get to the Imperial War Museum to see the rest.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

We did not meet in January but held a "catch-up" meeting in February and had an amusing poetry/stories session in March. In April we attended the penultimate Passing out Parade at Whittington Barracks, Lichfield for Army Recruits. The Barracks have now closed but the RAMC will move in later this year we understand.

What a wonderful occasion the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration was at the Victory Services Club – many thanks to all those concerned with the organisation of that and to the "Not Forgotten" Association for providing the superb entertainment.



L-R: Jo Austin, Kath Adams, Frances Jenkinson, Lesley Wallace, Mary Gunning and Margaret Walkeden at the College of Food

We held our Birthday Lunch at the College of Food again and a talk on "Carers" was given in May – many useful leaflets were given out. At our July meeting we have a married couple coming to give talks to us – Captain Al Sutton will tell us about "Troop Aid" and his wife will talk about the Star and Garter Homes. At this meeting we will be taking along toiletries, chocolates, magazines etc for Captain Sutton to take along to Selly Oak Hospital for the returned wounded soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan. Also in July we shall be visiting the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas again. We are keen to view the new Armed Services Memorial. We hope to be able to get into the Chapel for the 11 am. Sounding of the Last Post which is usually performed daily.

Unfortunately two of our members now find the journey to meetings too difficult and Gwen Finney, who was instrumental in reforming this Branch in 1988, is now in a care home. We wish her well. On the brighter side, we have another new member.

On 5 and 6 July Birmingham is holding "Veterans' Celebrations". We shall be manning a stall as we did last year and hope that it will be a dry day this time. We were represented at the Normandy Veterans Association Service and Maureen Deeley paraded the Association Standard as usual. We also had a representative at the St George's Day Service – both at St Paul's Church in Birmingham. We are looking forward to the Wales/West Area Reunion in September at Shrewsbury. This is always a very enjoyable occasion at the Lord Hill Hotel with excellent food and the chance to meet others from the area.

Next year of course is the Grand Reunion – see you there!

BLACKPOOL BRANCH

Summer is here at last! We continue to meet for lunch on the third Friday of each month at 1pm at the Venue, Cleveleys.

Blackpool is well geared up for Veterans Week 21-29 June. Some of our able-bodied ladies will march on the Veterans Parade on 27 June. Our Chairman, Marie Hemmings, attended the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration at the Victory Services Club on 4 April. It was thoroughly enjoyable, a good lunch and great entertainment. Thanks to the organisers!

The following day was the Secretaries meeting and the AGM with a lovely lunch in between. Marie also attended the Wilmslow Branch celebrations on 1 May. She presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Mrs Lilian Edwards. *Editor: See the photograph in Wilmslow Branch report.*

The Irish ferry 'Riverdance,' which came to grief here during a freak storm, has been a great attraction. Traffic jams along the prom! Every effort was made to refloat it but alas to no avail.

We are all looking forward to the Grand reunion in Blackpool!



Lee Telford receiving her medal from the Malaysian Military Attaché

Blackpool Branch member, Lee Telford, was presented with the Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal by Colonel Md Tajri Alwi, Military Attaché, Malaysian High Commission, at a ceremony held in the Royal British Legion, Heswall on 26 March 2008.

The medal is a commemorative medal which the Malaysia Government has graciously awarded to veterans who served in operations during the Malaya and Borneo conflict between August 1957 and August 1966 and Singapore up until independence. Lee served in Singapore as a WRAC Provost NCO from 1962 until 1963.

Editor: Many ladies have already received their medals as you will have seen in previous editions of Lioness. Details about eligibility rules and who to apply to are elsewhere in this edition.

BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH

It seems hard to believe it is a year since I last wrote my report having missed *Lioness* 1/2008 due to illness. This is also a milestone as it is my last report as the Hon Sec of

Bournemouth Branch. It is incredible to think that I moved here twelve years ago from Essex (Ilford Branch) and I have now completed eleven years as Hon Sec and six years as Treasurer as well. They have been good years that I have enjoyed immensely and I am quite sad that indifferent health and anno domini have now got the better of me.

It has been a worrying time as to whether the branch may have to close or not, but, happily, two younger members have now come forward to keep the branch alive. Everyone has different talents to bring to these positions and I am sure the Branch will flourish anew. We have 45 annual and 29 life members. Although we average 25 per meetings I know from the correspondence file that those unable to get to meetings do take a great interest in the branch, the quarterly newsletters and, of course, reading the *Lioness*.

Last August we enjoyed a coach outing to Swanage and afternoon tea at an Hotel. This was arranged and paid for by one of our members which was greatly appreciated.

October saw the closure of the East Anglia Hotel where we had enjoyed our popular informal meetings, also Christmas lunches over several years.

Two members again attended the Remembrance Day Service in Westminster Abbey – always a treasured experience. Our Chairman presented a wreath on behalf of the Branch at Bournemouth War Memorial. Christmas Lunch hurriedly re-arranged at a different venue went quite well.

We were delighted to welcome the Vice President, Lt Col (Retd) Sue Westlake, to our February meeting and were spellbound to hear about her long and distinguished Army career. She presented Certificates of Appreciation to Doreen Snell Dorothy Hall, Vivienne Parsons, and Elizabeth Tucker. Amazingly it was discovered that Sue's mother had attended school with Vivienne Parsons and a reunion was arranged.



Doreen Snell



Dorothy Hall



Vivienne Parsons



Elizabeth Tucker

In April, Roger and Sandra Downton gave a very interesting and illustrated talk about their adventure when they followed, by canoe, the perilous journey undertaken by Commandos in 1942, known as the Cockleshell Heroes, to destroy enemy shipping in the port of Bordeaux.

On 4 April, three members attended the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration held at the Victory Services Club – a most pleasant buffet meal was followed by a concert given by courtesy of the “Not Forgotten” Association, which was very well received – a thoroughly happy time, concluding with cups of tea and an iced cake to every table. Many, many thanks to everyone responsible for organising this nostalgic occasion.

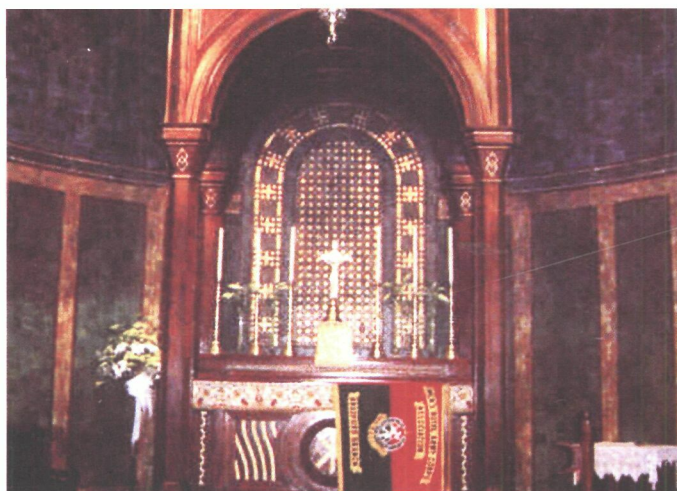
In May, twelve of us attended the South and South West Area Reunion hosted by Bath Branch – thank you Bath for the opportunity to meet again with old friends.

As I write this I am looking forward to announcing at our June meeting that the Branch has been saved and I wish everyone happy years ahead.

Thank you Daphne from all the branch Members – Yours will be a very hard act to follow.

BRADFORD BRANCH (Submitted by Mrs Norah Kendall)

This is an account of the Laying up of the Standard of the Bradford Branch. I have been the Standard Bearer for 22 years – a post I have been happy and proud to hold. It was part of the morning service taken by Reverend R S Crowe at St Chad's Church, Toller Lane, Bradford: a beautiful church with a great sense of history. I was supported by ten Branch members who have always been there over the years and I do thank them for their loyalty. Also present was Col (Retd) FM Cook, our past Area Chairman, from York who gave an address on the history of the ATS and the important work they did during the World War 2, and continue to do today. When the time came for my part in the service, I was more nervous than I had ever been before. Luckily I was accompanied by my daughter and her husband and she walked at my side towards the Minister. I was so pleased and proud of her support. Afterwards there were refreshments in the rear of the church and Canon Crowe showed where the



Bradford Standard drapes the altar

bracket would be placed and the Standard would hang. We will visit when this happens.

Now I feel bereft, the Standard has played such a huge part of my life for so long and as the Branch has closed, life seems a little empty. In closing this account I must also report, sadly, on the death of Mrs Ada Hudson ATS. Ada was our Secretary for many years and was very hard working, always cheerful and ready to listen. We were delighted that she received a Certificate of Appreciation very recently to reflect all the effort she put into the Branch.

Editor: Sadly, Bradford Branch has had to close but it is wonderful that their Standard has been laid up in such an appropriate manner. I am sure that all the past branch members would wish to thank Norah for her dedicated contribution as their Standard Bearer over all those years.

BRISTOL BRANCH

I always find it difficult to think back of what we have done in the Branch, it doesn't seem very much until you start to put your brain in gear and thinking yes – we have been busy. We finished last year with our usual Bring and Buy sale and Christmas nibbles, along with Sandra Steadman's Christmas cake which is always a treat, definitely nothing left over this time, although we did keep a slice for our Chairman.

In January we had a talk by a Fire Service Prevention Officer. This was enjoyed by everyone and several members took up the offer of free checks. Plenty of advice was given. We were looking forward to our Annual Lunch in February, our theme was the ATS and, as it was also Valentine's Day, we had heart shaped balloons and the chef made a special heart shape dessert. We were once again pleased to have as our special guests, Lt Col (Retd) Sue Westlake, Lt Col (Retd) Val Trout, Maj (Retd) Maskens-MacIntyre and a serving officer from the Recruiting Office who is also ex-WRAC – Major Debbie Noble. Sandra Steadman made bookmarks to give everyone and she also had our guests line up and dance (unbelievable). I think everyone enjoyed the day – there was certainly a good atmosphere and the staff at the Bristol Marriott obviously enjoyed it.

Everyone who applied to go to London for the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration was looking forward to it. Congratulations to everyone involved for making it a day to remember. Bristol ladies are still talking about it.

Bristol Branch has been invited to take part in Veterans Day on 28 June, to be held in the City Docks. We are having a display featuring the role of the ATS and WRAC and also what we as a Branch do or have done. Hopefully this will encourage those who visit our stand to take a membership form and join us. One of our members, Edwina Male who is ex-WRAC, is being presented with her Veterans Badge by the Lord Mayor. Edwina also features on a recruiting poster which will be on display. We are looking forward to this and hopefully the publicity will be useful too. We are taking our display on the following Saturday to Weston super Mare – lots of ATS were stationed round that area so again we may generate interest for new members.

Sadly one of our members, Joyce Pullar, died in April. Joyce had been in a nursing home for a while and was being visited regularly by one of our members. The Chairman and Secretary and members attended the funeral and the WRAC Collect was read at the committal and again at the service.

Bath Branch hosted the Area Reunion. It is always nice to meet with members from the Branches in our Area, nice to see familiar faces and do what we all do best – ‘chat’! We had a very good reunion: our thanks to Bath Branch.

Sadly, Audrey Stevens, one of our oldest members has moved to Weybridge. We will miss her in the Branch; she was always ready to give advice and encouragement.

We are organising an ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration Coffee Morning on 11 September which will be preceded by a service in the Lord Mayor’s Chapel and we welcome any ATS or WRAC to join us for the service as will members of the public. The coffee morning will be by ticket only.

Several of our Branch members have purchased an Association Fleece, mine was used at Weymouth and I was glad that I had it as it did turn chilly.

Editor: See the advert elsewhere in the magazine – they really are excellent value.

BURY BRANCH

We still meet regularly at the White Lion Hotel, Bury on the second Tuesday of the month at 2 p.m.

It is with sadness that we record the death on 12 December 2007 of Mary Howarth. I have written about Mary in earlier *Lioness* magazines. She joined the ATS in 1939 at Bury Barracks, the home of the Lancashire Fusiliers and throughout her life had been a stalwart supporter and worker for that Regiment. She had the honour of being permitted to march with them on their final parade in Whitehall. She was the only woman to do so and was presented with a hat and hackle. They held her in great esteem and they formed a Guard of Honour at her funeral. Her coffin was draped with their colours and her hat and hackle will be placed on display at the new Lancashire Fusiliers Museum which is being moved to the centre of Bury.

Another of our members, Betty Navin née Drummond, joined the ATS in 1948. After service in Guildford and Salisbury she was posted to the Cameron Highlands, Malaya. It was a very dangerous time and everyone had to travel in convoy because of bandits. It took three days to do the round trip to collect supplies, a distance of 260 miles. Betty helped in an Army school and had to wear civilian clothes and also had to be accompanied to and from school by an armed guard. She was billeted in the Eastern Hotel, Tapa. When she was returning to the UK by boat in 1955, she was informed that, as Sgt EB Navin WRAC, she had been “mentioned in a Despatch for distinguished service” as a Quartermaster Sergeant in Malaya. Her Malayan Medal with its purple/green/purple ribbon together with the oak leaves is very impressive. Betty met her husband,

an ex-paratrooper, while he was serving as a Lieutenant with the Malayan Police.

In May, two of our members attended the Royal Artillery Reunion in Blackpool and gave us a hilarious report of having a fire alarm at 4 a.m. and using the fire escape – not bad for 80+ year olds.

We were also welcomed recently by Wilmslow Branch for an ATS 70th Birthday Celebration. We also had a small celebration of our own in Bury. Our Secretary will be attending the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in July and we look forward to hearing her report.

CAMBRIDGE BRANCH

Hello all, the Branch is in its 28th year and we still meet monthly. Since my last report we have been allocated three new members – welcome to Mary Kirkham, Jean Pearson and Margaret Waterson. We look forward to meeting them at one of our meetings. However, we have sadly lost Wendy Cracknell who was one of our founder members.

As we could not decide on a venue for our usual dinner in August, we met at Jean Farrington’s house and had a very enjoyable Chinese takeaway.

Five attended the WRAC dinner at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool – a good time was had by all.

As we were unable to organise a Christmas function, we were invited by Joan Awbrey and the Norfolk Branch to a post Christmas Lunch at Norwich. There we had the pleasure of the company of Lt Col (Retd) Sue Westlake and our Area Chairman, Pat Stevenson – a mini area reunion!

Four members attended the AGM in London, two had attended the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration on the previous day and reported having a marvellous time.

CANTERBURY BRANCH

Our last meeting in 2007 was our Christmas lunch. Our guests included the members of Medway Branch and everyone enjoyed a festive meal. Our first meeting of 2008 was in February at the earlier time of 1.00 pm when we



Rosina Lock, Barbara Coleman and Mavis Middleton with Moira Cameron – the first lady Beefeater and ex-WRAC!

held a social meeting. As always members had plenty to talk about and time passed so quickly we had to hold the quiz over for another meeting.

In March, our guest speaker, from the Kent Air Ambulance, gave us an insight into the high cost of running this very vital service which is funded entirely by public donations. In April we all enjoyed our fish and chip lunch. The competition for a small floral table decoration was won jointly by Queenie Evans and Rosina Lock.



Louise Dick is pleased to meet an old friend, former Canterbury Branch member, Nan Waters from Lincoln and District Branch

Seven Branch members travelled to London for the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration at the Victory Services Club. They all had a great time and enjoyed meeting old friends. Our grateful thanks to everyone at HQ for organising such a memorable day. On 17 April, fifteen members attended a matinee show entitled "We'll Meet Again - Hits from the Blitz", at the Theatre Royal in Margate.

Things quietened down slightly for our May meeting. After covering the official business and enjoying a welcome cup of tea, members reminisced about their days in the Services. June saw us having a social meeting including a game of bingo, which ensured much laughter due to dropped counters, missed numbers etc. In July, we will hold our annual tea party in the company of our friends from Medway branch and members of the local WRENS and WAAF Associations.

So Canterbury Branch continues to flourish but it would be lovely to see some of our ex-WRAC members at our meetings. You can be sure of a very warm welcome if you decide to join us. Most months our meetings are held on the first Wednesday at the Dominican Priory, St Peter's Lane, Canterbury. We'd love to see you.

CLEVELAND BRANCH

It looked like I sent my last report into cyberspace, so apologies to my Branch members! We have been furiously saving for a new Branch Standard and I am very proud to announce that we did it. It wasn't easy and our Branch Secretary, Gwyn Friday, contacted local Councils and they certainly helped.

Sunday, 27 April 2008 was the culmination of more than 12 months hard fund-raising! Our new Branch Standard

was dedicated at All Saints Church Middlesbrough and our old faithful Standard was laid up. More than twenty members attended the Service, along with five local Standard Bearers who supported Ann Mahony our very own marvellous Standard Bearer. We took part in the normal Morning Worship with members of the Congregation joining us as some of us took Communion with them. Our Northern Area Chairman, Maj (Retd) Ryder, and our Northern Area Secretary, Irene Maclean, both read a lesson and our Branch Chairman read the Corps Collect. Gwyn Friday said that she was happy to finalise the purchase and dedication of our new Standard – this may be her last duty as Secretary as her health is not too grand now. We are planning a Luncheon in



Cleveland members outside the Church after the Dedication Service



Robbie Emmerson, Dot Ryder and Ivy Rattue after the Service



Coming out through the Guard of Honour

August, inviting a local Mayor and Mayoress (ex WRAC) who have supported us in the purchase of our new Standard – so well done Cleveland branch!

Editor: Thanks to Ivy Rattue's son for the last two photographs

The Branch Secretary along with Area Secretary and Area Chairman attended the AGM and ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration at the Victory Services Club in London. What a fabulous time they had, treating themselves to lunch on the train. Congratulations to the Staff of Worthy Down HQ as you did the ATS ladies proud. What a treat to meet the first Lady warder from the Tower of London!

At our April meeting, our Chairlady invited an ex-RAF friend of hers to recollect his times during the last War. Mike had a few stories to tell about the late great Glenn Miller which we all found very interesting. Of course, to some of our members the actor James Stewart came to mind as we don't remember Glenn Miller in person!

Plans are in hand for a celebration in August (more food!) to show off our new Standard and also for our North East Area Reunion. This year we are going to Hull, so we look forward to meeting up with everyone again. We are also making tentative plans for the GRAND Reunion next March in Blackpool – can't wait!

Hope everyone has had a lovely summer – from all members of Cleveland Branch.

CREWE BRANCH

The Branch has had an eventful few months. On Friday 4 April our Branch Secretary, Edith Francis, attended the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration at the Victory Services Club in London. Edith had a thoroughly good time; she declared it to be the best party she had ever been to. She also attended the AGM the following day.

Later that month some of the Branch members went to lunch and took in a show at the Lyceum Theatre in Crewe. 'We'll Meet Again' was a wartime based concert party that included all the old and familiar songs from those times – a good way to celebrate the ATS 70th Anniversary again.

The next outing planned for the Branch will be on 29 June to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to celebrate National Service Day. The trip has been organised by the Crewe Branch Royal British Legion who have kindly invited us to join them.

We are also looking forward to our summer outing and the Area Reunion in September at the Lord Hill Hotel in Shrewsbury.

It is with great sadness that the branch announces the loss of one of our longest serving members, Mrs Elsie Walton. Elsie passed away peacefully on 24 January 2008 after a long illness. She will be missed and our condolences have been sent to her family.

EASTBOURNE BRANCH

Members attended the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration which was very much enjoyed so many thanks to all who arranged it.

We were interested to hear that Worthing Branch has reformed and we send them our good wishes.

The ATS Dinner Club lunch was also held in the Victory Services Club and some of our members went along. It was very well attended and a photograph is enclosed. I only know that most of the ladies were from Shropshire except for, on the left, Betty Bateman (Cummings).



Members of the ATS Dinner Club enjoying lunch

Margaret Rogers received a form to apply for an invitation to the Royal Artillery Association Garden Party at Larkhill to be held on the occasion of the visit of HM The Queen. An invitation has been received and she is looking forward to the event. She is a Life Member of the RAA and a Kine.

Ex-members of the ATS/WRAC still crop up who do not seem to know about our Branch. I met one recently in Marks and Spencer. Details have been sent!

EXETER BRANCH

The past year has had many ups and downs, starting with the May meeting with a most interesting talk and demonstration by Mrs Line of Plymouth on her life and times with the Bluebell Girls Dance Group. Some may remember the film of Miss Bluebell who lived and worked in France.

In June we had a talk by Maj (Retd) Maskens-McIntyre, our Area Chairman, about her life in the WRAC which was very interesting and enjoyable. July was a chat and a cuppa and no meeting was held in August. We only managed to have six of us for the September event.

Our Birthday Luncheon was held as usual at The Lord Nelson Inn, Topsham and was enjoyed by all. Christmas Buffet Lunch was at The White Ensign Club and we invited the WRENS to join us, unfortunately there is no WRAF Association in Exeter.

A very sad end to 2007 – two of our regular members passed away – Mrs M P Lambert née Seear of Colyton on

8 December and Mrs D M Waters née Shering on 23 December. We all miss them very much.

Only five members managed to get to our February meeting as it was very cold and the same number made it to our AGM in April. Three of us enjoyed the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration in London, a wonderful happy gathering as usual. Our Treasurer Pat Heron entered hospital a few days before so could not join us and unfortunately whilst in hospital fell and damaged her back. We all hope she will soon be up and around once more.



Eve Tichy, Sheila Burton, Isla Bruce-Robertson, Vera Hagen, Gwenda Easton, Peter Easton, Maj (Retd) Maskens-McIntyre, Lt Col (Retd) S J Westlake and Margaret Cramner



The Vice President presents Mrs Margaret Cramner with her Certificate of Appreciation

We had the pleasure of the company of the Vice President, Lt Col (Retd) Sue Westlake and our Area Chairman to lunch at The Lord Nelson Inn, Topsham on 20 May so that Lt Col (Retd) Sue Westlake could present a Certificate of Appreciation to our retired Secretary of 15 years, Mrs Margaret Cramner. This lovely occasion made a very happy ending to our year.

FIFE & TAYSIDE BRANCH

The year started off very quietly. We had our AGM in April which was attended by twenty-one members. The committee remains unchanged – Miss Isobel Gordon is Chairwoman, Mrs Alison Halford-McLeod is Treasurer and Mrs Doreen Peggie remains as Secretary. The Secretary attended the Secretaries Meeting in London so was able to pass on any newsy bits at the AGM. The meeting closed with a very enjoyable high tea and a good raffle.

Plans are going ahead for the Scottish AGM which will take place at the Queens Hotel, Perth on 18 October 2008 and tickets are available. These will include tea-coffee and a 3-course lunch.

Some of our members have had to move into sheltered accommodation but we have three new members already this year. Let's hope for a few more before the year is out. A few of our members will be going to Liverpool to the WRAC Dinner Club which is always looked forward to.

We wish all members and readers of the *Lioness* every good wish and good health.

GLASGOW BRANCH

I finished my last report with us looking forward to our Christmas lunch in the Hilton Grosvenor Hotel. As usual we had a very enjoyable get together.

We started 2008 with a talk from a Polish refugee. He had a very hard life during World War 2. We have enjoyed having film shows and talks from other speakers. Our own Lt Col (Retd) Janet Lawson showed us her film and spoke about her holiday in South America.

We are having a last meeting of this session on 9 June which will be a tea and chat day. We will then have a break for two months when our members will be going off for holidays. So we are hoping for lots of sunshine.

We send our best wishes to all Branch Members.

GREATER LONDON BRANCH

We are still here and enjoying our meetings at Knightsbridge Barracks though only three times a year. Sadly we have 'lost' more than a few members over the last year but we welcome particularly three new ex-WRAC ladies so there is some hope for the future yet.

In February we had a successful meeting with Lt Col Conrad Graham, late R Signals TA, who gave us a most interesting talk about his career with HM Customs and Excise. In April, another excellent speaker from The King's Troop thrilled us with her stories of her career – Captain Catherine Camp was the Orderly Officer of the day and so detailed to come and talk to us and she told us of her achievements and she looked great in her riding breeches. It is encouraging to know that so many girls serve with The King's Troop riding the horses and pulling those mighty guns.

In May twelve of our ladies were lucky enough to attend the service at St Paul's Cathedral to celebrate 100 years of the TA and then enjoy a wonderful reception at the Guildhall. It should not be forgotten that the ATS was formed as part of the TA originally.

We meet again in September and hope the rest of the year will be kind to us all and everyone in the Association – we shall look forward to the Grand Reunion in Blackpool in March 2009 and meeting up with our friends there.

HARROGATE BRANCH

2008 started sadly for us as our oldest member Dorothy Wilcockson died in January, Joyce Scarborough in February and Mary Squires in March. All three were keen loyal members both of the ATS and our Branch.

However, we had our 40th Birthday party to look forward to on 30 April at the St George Hotel, Harrogate (where we had an excellent Christmas lunch!) We were honoured by the presence of the Vice President, Lt Col (Retd) Sue Westlake, previous Area Chairman, Col (Retd) Frankie Cook and our Area Chairman, Maj (Retd) Dot Ryder. Eighteen members were able to attend and we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves – even if the cake, kindly baked and iced by the Hotel Chef, was a rather bright green! Our only remaining founder member Marjorie Harrison was able to attend – making a really jolly, friendly occasion. Our newest 'recruit' Ann Pollard was also able to come in spite of a dreadful time after an accident.



We have moved our meeting place from the Methodist Chapel to St Peter's Church ((we are very ecumenical) and still maintain a good attendance.



Our Chairman Barbara Dawson attended the AGM in London but sadly none of us managed the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration but we will be at the Grand Reunion in 2009 for sure!

HASTINGS BRANCH

Last year was very busy due to an Appeal for money for the restoration of our lovely War Memorial in Alexandra Park. This had been erected soon after the First World War and was in need of considerable repair. Our Branch responded by arranging two functions: a Coffee Morning held in the garden of one of our members raised £400 and an afternoon Concert in the White Rock Theatre raised £738.50. The latter was organised by Win Wakelin who is also a member of the Regency Singers. Together with a miscellaneous donation we were able to contribute £1,158.50.

As usual we have had two talks – "Hastings in War Time" and "The History of Nursing" – both extremely

interesting. Our Annual Outing in 2007 was to Jempsons Store where we were entertained to a very good tea and demonstrations of Bread Making and Cake Decoration. Our outing this year will be to Bewl Water where we hope it will be warm enough to enjoy the boat trip which goes right round the reservoir.

Just before Christmas, our Secretary was invited to attend a full meeting of the Council to receive a Mayoral Award, the citation on which read "For her tireless voluntary work with Service and Ex-Service Men and Women". This honour was, of course, shared by members of the Branch who had supported her when working for SSAFA/ FORCES HELP, The Joint Council of Ex-Service Associations and various Service Associations in the Town.

Editor: Congratulations to Dorothy Dixon....obviously she was too modest to include a photograph of the presentation.



Eileen and Vic Kent – 60th Wedding Anniversary

In May, Eileen Kent née Boswell and her husband Vic celebrated their Diamond Wedding. They met when both were serving as Medical Orderlies in Dunmore, Essex in 1947 and were married a year later. They received a beautiful Greetings Card from Her Majesty the Queen. Their party was attended by children, grandchildren, friends and other relatives – all of whom thoroughly enjoyed the evening. Eileen and Vic are now looking forward to a quiet holiday and are congratulated and wished health and happiness in the future.

We were becoming concerned about the future of the Branch as membership was declining and so many were unable to attend meetings due to ill health or distance. At our last Meeting members were asked to vote on the future, i.e. carry on but with an increased attendance charge, change to a sort of Social Club or close down. We were delighted that the majority voted to continue but with an increased attendance charge so we are safe for another year at least.

We send Greetings to all members for 2008/2009 and wish you health and contentment.

HEREFORD BRANCH

Our Branch Secretary, Mrs Evelyn Radford and her husband, Jan, celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on 4 May 2008. All the Branch members

clubbed together to buy a Patio Rose Bush named "Ruby Rose". Joyce, the Treasurer, presented it to her on our Branch meeting night but unfortunately Jan was not able to be there at the time.



Joyce presents Evelyn with "Ruby Rose"

Here's to another 40 years – with love and best wishes from Hereford Branch.

IPSWICH BRANCH

After three years I am able to bring tidings of great joy. Yes! We have finally found a suitable venue. We now meet on the third Thursday of every month at the Labour Club, Silent Street, Ipswich – meetings commence at 1400 hrs. The Club is at the corner of the main Ipswich bus station which is ideal as many of our members travel into Ipswich by bus. The Club is warm, clean, no stairs involved and drinks are very cheap.

We normally have between twelve and sixteen members at our meetings and we hope that now we have a permanent venue more members will join us.

We had an enjoyable Christmas lunch at the Novo Hotel in December. At the rest of our meetings we have been entertaining ourselves, speakers cost the earth and most have already done the rounds.

In February we had a picture quiz, in March 'a sing, say or pay' – this was a laugh – lots of War time songs with the words changed. "A long way to Tipperary" became "A long way to the pawn shop" and "Land of Hope and Glory" became "Land of Soap and Water". Evidently the ATS did a lot of route marching during the War and used to sing when marching at ease. There appears to be a lot of talent among the ex-ATS. The ex-WRAC showed more expertise at telling jokes (say no more). In April we had a very interesting talk on the origins of the Royal British Legion.

As you can see by the above, we are keeping busy. If you at a loose end on the third Thursday of every month, we would love to see you.

In the mean time – cheers and best wishes.

LEEDS BRANCH

Our few members continue to meet on the first Wednesday of the month. We wish more local members would join us in the summer months.

We had our usual Bring and Buy Sale in February, the proceeds to go to our outing to The National Memorial Arboretum in May.

Two members attended the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration at the Victory Services Club in London. Everything was first class, the service given by the staff of the Club, the food, the entertainment provided by The "Not Forgotten" Association and the general atmosphere making this a day to remember. The evening saw many of us in the Bar where we ate up the Birthday Cake left over from the afternoon. Thanks are due to HQ Staff and The Victory Services Club for a truly wonderful day.

Our May Lunch was special as we were joined by the Northern Area Chairman and Secretary. I hope they realised what a happy Branch we are in spite of the small number. Only our Chairman and Secretary joined the RA Association in Blackpool this year but we still enjoyed ourselves.

We had a great day out at The National Memorial Arboretum thanks to Leeds Branch of The Royal Naval Association who allowed us to join their coach party. It was so well organised that we hope we may be invited another time. The Arboretum is now magnificent and should be visited by everyone. The WRAC Association plot is well established and very attractive. The huge new Armed Services Memorial to those who have died on active service since World War 2 was particularly impressive.

On a beautiful day five members joined a River Trip in York organised by The "Not Forgotten" Association.

Our Chairman and Secretary will be at The Queen's Birthday Parade on Saturday 14 June – a real honour. We also have been invited to lunch afterwards in The Guards' Museum. Our Secretary has been invited to a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 8 July, quite an honour which she will savour.

In August we hope to have a day in Wetherby including a Pensioners' Lunch thanks to Mollie James who sent us the money. She is still very ill but we are keeping in touch.

In September we have the Northern Area Lunch in Hull to look forward to. We may be a small branch but we do pack in a lot of activity.

LEICESTER AND NOTTINGHAM BRANCH

We had a good Christmas lunch in December 2007 and were entertained by an excellent group of harmony singers followed in January with a theatre visit to enjoy the musical 'White Horse Inn'.

In February we had an interesting talk by a member of

the TS Vindacatrix Association (A Merchant Navy Training Ship). The date, 3 September, is dedicated to the Merchant Navy and this association holds a parade and church service on the nearest Sunday to this day. Some of our members attended this event last year and hope to do so again on 7 September this year.

In March we had another successful Bring and Buy for our funds and our usual Nibble and Natter in April.

On a wet cold day in May, we paid a return visit to Ulverscroft Grange and Manor and, in spite of the weather, a few brave souls ventured out in the grounds. We had a very nice lunch served by the volunteers, then retired to the lounge where there was a lovely fire to cheer us and a gentleman entertained us playing the piano. (The helpers are a lovely caring group of people – nothing is too much trouble for them).

In contrast our day out in June was a very warm sunny day and twenty seven of our members boarded two mini-buses for a day out at Rutland Water. This is a very popular sailing and sports area. A very large man-made reservoir beautifully landscaped over the years and an ideal place to spend the day. On arrival, we made our way to the restaurant for refreshments etc which we had outside. There was over an hour to relax before we boarded the Rutland Belle for a trip around the reservoir which took about an hour. After disembarking we made our way back to the mini-buses and were taken to the nearby village of Whitwell, where we had a very good lunch at the village pub. This was a lovely day out organised by two of our members, Carol Morris and Sue Slattery.

This brings us up to date with our programme. Over the remainder of the year we have a talk from a Land Army Veteran, our Sailing Club Day in August, one of our nicest meetings and some fund raising events. We continue to support other associations with some of our members attending parades etc. Lyn Wenham, our new Standard Bearer, has represented us at various events and has slotted in perfectly. She is very smart and competent and a good successor to Vi Rawlins who served us so well for many years.

Five of our members again enjoyed a day on the river at Nottingham courtesy of the "Not Forgotten" Association.

We still have some of our ladies under the weather and we hope they will soon be well again. Two members have now moved from our area to be near family – Kath Barron and Barbara Cameron. We wish them well and will miss them at our meetings.

Our best wishes to all our members and friends – thank you for your support over the year and may you enjoy a good summer.

Will members please note our Annual General Meeting of the Branch will take place on 14 October 2008 at 1400 hours at The Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester.

If you are unable to attend this meeting and have any nominations for posts or items for the Agenda, will you please inform the Secretary by the end of September. Lilian Hollis 0116 2876086

LINCOLN & DISTRICT BRANCH

December saw us enjoying a Christmas party and here is our 'elegant' Christmas fairy who stood in for Father Christmas and distributed the presents. Can you guess who it is? Answer at the end of this article.



Can you see who it is?



Nora Jones, Joyce Gough, Sue Logan and Maureen West

In January we held our first anniversary lunch and AGM with our very welcome guests the Vice President, Lt Col (Retd) Sue Westlake, our Area Chairman Maj (Retd) Dot Ryder and we also welcomed our 56th member, June Skelton. This being our first AGM, things were kept 'short and sweet' and an enjoyable few hours were spent at the Castle Hotel, Lincoln.



Sue Westlake – after lunch speech



Maggie Ashmore cutting our anniversary cake on her birthday

In February we enjoyed a talk from Val Wright on her visit to New Zealand and Bimbo Coleman regaled us with a tale of her bungee jump when she was there – she was 68 at the time of jumping. Could only be Bimbo and those of you who know her will not be surprised!

March was Easter themed and a competition was held for the best Easter entry. This was won by Gwyneth Stratten for her beautifully decorated hat. June Skelton brought along her twins, Alice and Ben, who returned home with some Easter goodies. We also welcomed new member Sylvia Gray.

April's meeting was not so well attended as a few members were on holiday; but we had an enjoyable talk by Beryl Butcher on her childhood in India. We welcomed another new member, who had transferred from Norfolk branch, Jan Burchett-Vass. Also in April, four of our members went to the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration in London and had a truly wonderful time.



The meeting in May was very well attended and a local Community Police Officer came along to talk about 'safety in the home'. He also issued personal alarms which when activated will hopefully scare off most assailants. A new member for the branch this month is Dr Jean Evans.

Also in May, we held one of our quarterly evening meetings. Although only a few attended, it was a great success as we have found a terrific venue in the Carre Arms, Sleaford. Lovely to see Mary Faver join us for the first time.

During the coming year we shall be lunching on the Barge, visiting RAF Digby to view the museum and lunch in the WO's & Sgts' Mess, partying in Jean Sperry's garden, visiting Rockingham Castle and attending the North East Area Reunion lunch. If you live in our area and would like to join us please contact Chris Corker 01205 353246 corker3@aol.com or Gwyneth Stratten 01400 230656 g.stratten@btinternet.com

P.S. In case you hadn't guessed, our fairy was the one and only Averill Ward.

LUTON BRANCH

The members of Luton Branch have been moving in exalted circles recently. On Sunday 11 May, three of us attended a Service of Dedication at All Saints Church, Leighton Buzzard, for all the Voluntary Organisations in Bedfordshire. Most of the county dignitaries were there – Lord Lieutenant Sam Whitbread, the High Sheriff and many others. The address was given by Canon Roger Royle, of TV & Radio 2 fame – he was very amusing – I have never laughed out loud in church before!



Luton Branch with Jean Taylor from London and their Land Army associate member



Anne Stewart is carrying Luton Branch Standard

Then on Saturday 17 May we were privileged to be invited to our local TA Centenary Parade at Woburn Abbey, the seat of the Duke of Bedford. He spoke to some of us, what an unassuming man, a true aristocrat. After the parade I spoke to the RSM to thank him for having us. Looking at my badge he said "My Mum's one of your lot – she's in Cleveland Branch", so Cleveland comrade, whoever you are, you can be proud of your RSM son – he did a brilliant job. In between these two events, on 14 May, we had an afternoon at the theatre. Nine of us went to see "We'll Meet Again" a tribute to the Armed Forces, very enjoyable – we all sang along.



One of you will recognize your son!

We have had other interesting items – a talk about the water supplies to London, since the Middle Ages (it should have been about London buses, from horse-buses to Route-masters, but the speaker brought the wrong slides). We enjoyed it nonetheless.

Annual quiz versus the Association of Wrens – WE WON! Forthcoming events – Bill Toffs (a local Police Officer) is coming to talk to us about his 'alter-ego' as one of HM The Queen's Yeoman Bodyguards, complete with his Beefeater-style uniform. Should be fun.

We are having another talk by a local animal welfare charity; hopefully another theatre trip, et cetera – we shall fill our time somehow.

P.S. Thanks to HQ and the "Not Forgotten" Association, some of us are going to the Colonel's Review of the Trooping the Colour on 7 June – the last time I was there, I didn't see much – I was dishing out programmes!

MARCHES AND MID WALES

Due to an insufficient number of members in attendance, we were unable to hold our AGM last September and so decided to defer the branch business until our March meeting. In the event this proved fortuitous as the news was breaking that Cardiff branch was about to close. We invited the few remaining Cardiff members to join us rather than see them left in limbo. Our spring AGM was held in Clun, and we were pleased that one of Cardiff's members, Joan Lake, was able to drive the long journey (about 100 miles) to be with us. We heard a first hand account of the situation in south Wales. This provoked a lively discussion on the future of our branch; it was even suggested that our branch title should be changed to reflect the ever-expanding area that we serve. The meeting voted unanimously to keep our existing title and, with the Association's recruitment drive in mind, the hope was expressed that eventually enough new members would be found in south Wales to form the nucleus of a new branch to serve that area. In the meantime any Wales member who feels she is out on a limb would be very welcome to join us.

Our Chairman, Lizzie Lawrence kindly hosted our mid summer garden party on Sweeney Mountain, near Oswestry. Lizzie had pitched a big marquee on her lawn but mid summer's day was so wet and miserable everyone went indoors (except the smokers!) This is our annual fund raising event so everyone was invited to bring homemade preserves, plants and 'white elephants' as well as prizes for the raffle. It is also a family and friends occasion.

The smokers marquee did serve another purpose- the two long trellis tables out there were barely enough to hold all the plants. One person, who shall remain nameless, crammed her car so full with plants she said she couldn't find room for her husband! As the members arrived so did more plants. A few raffle prizes and twenty or so 'White Elephants' were displayed on a table in the conservatory.

At just 50p each, the plants sold well, but there were few, if any, takers for the 'white elephants'. Our social secretary, Gill, took charge of the raffle and sold a lot of tickets. It is hard to do justice in words to what happened next but as I was told, "this has GOT to go in *The Lioness*" I will try. The intended raffle prizes quickly vanished but Gill had a bag full of tickets and insisted that they be drawn. Puzzled frowns were soon replaced by laughter as one by one all those white elephants found very reluctant, new owners. Amid much hilarity, tickets were being buried in pockets and handbags, suddenly no one wanted to 'win' a prize but Gill had the measure of us all and totally ignored our protests, no one escaped. The final item was refused over and over again; the 'winners' ran out to the marquee and chose the last few plants instead. There were only two or three tickets left to pull. Lizzie's brother Bryan, who is a farmer, gallantly admitted that he had the next number called and was duly presented with a fondue set. When he asked, "What is it?" someone suggested that it might be useful in his lambing shed! Our raffle was much more fun than a 'car boot,' sixteen people managed to raise £99.70p as well as a great deal of laughter.

There was one particularly poignant farewell at the end of the meeting. Judith, who served as our social secretary for two years, is going to China in August – not to attend the Olympic Games but to teach English to the Chinese. Her adventure begins right away because she is travelling out there on the Trans Siberian Railway. Her journey will take 10 days. Good Luck, Judith and we look forward to seeing you sometime next year.

Having our branch AGM in March made us realise that, with only four meetings per year, this is a better time to hold this event. It gives us the chance to take greater advantage of the better autumn weather. So fingers crossed that the sun will shine on 27th September because we plan to go to Tywyn for a day at the seaside. One of our most supportive branch members is in a nursing home there and, since she can't come to us, we are going to her. The Cardiff ladies say they are coming too- there seems to be no limit to their enthusiasm and willingness to travel and we are very pleased to welcome them to the branch.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

We don't have a meeting in December, as in the middle of the month we usually go with members of the Dunkirk Veterans' Association and those still around from the North East Prisoner of War Association to the very delightful, well known, restaurant in Newcastle, The Old Assembly Rooms. This was held on 13 December last and was again a renowned success. Thirteen of our members attended. The photograph was taken by the son of one of our members.



Newcastle Branch enjoying lunch at the Old Assembly Rooms

We got going again in January 2008 but we were down to fifteen present and eleven apologies! Most of these were due to illness, hospital appointments etc, but we were back up to twenty one in February.

We had hoped to have a trip to Eden Camp in March/April time but we were told that business there had been suspended. We then made plans to make a return visit to Boulmer to the Fishing Boat Inn (FBI). This to be in June.

Then came the news of the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration and due to distance, expense etc we could only promise to have two from here and we'd be joined by

Mrs Irene Crouch who lives in Peterborough but stays as a member here. In the event, only I and Irene Crouch went to the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration as our other member Grace Fatherley was ill – she lost her train fare – and as she had been very enthusiastic to go, she was very disappointed.



Mabel Bolton and Helen Wilson at the Victory Services Club

My now registered blind friend very bravely came all the way from Inverness and back by sleeper! I was able to see to her at the party and in the Victory Services Club and her son who lives in London was there for her at other times. She thoroughly enjoyed it! Her name is Helen Wilson and she is a life member. We were in the same regiment – 155 London area. I was in 525 Bty, she in 537 Bty. When my Battery was sent to Antwerp, Helen joined us and we have kept in touch. I used to organise reunions for a few of our “G L” and some husbands! – useful for taking charge of the “Kitty” etc! Helen’s name in service was McHardie. Anyone recognising the name can contact me (mine was then Dee).

The party was quite something! For organising, presentation, venue and entertainment – everything I give – 100%! Well worth the journey etc. To those responsible for all this, which must have been a mammoth task – many thanks indeed. I also attended the Secretary’s meeting and the AGM next day. Both were well attended. The main issue from the latter was the concentration on the 2009 Big One at Blackpool – the main concern here



Mabel Bolton, Sue Westlake and Mary Gregory at the Secretaries’ Lunch

will be how to somehow find the funds to cover this and the ongoing ages of any ATS interested!

As the Veterans Day will be here and gone by the time this is published, I can now say that we decided to bring Our Vets Day forward and we did in fact go to the FBI in an earlier date in June. If possible we’ll do something on the 27th.

Regretfully there are 3 deaths for the obituary page. These are Agnes Steel, née Gilmour ATS, on 11 February 2008 at Ponteland, Newcastle. Agnes has not attended meetings for some considerable time due to illness but we heard of her from one of our members now and then.

Hilda Mason, née Howes ATS, on 6 January 2008 at North Shields. Hilda was a good member and always enjoyed coming to our meetings. Game for a laugh, a sing song, or a game of Bingo anytime!

Nora Clara Mills, née Clark ATS, on 3 May 2008 at Blyth, Northumberland. Nora joined us when she came to live in our region and soon made friends in the Branch. She also took part in all social happenings. She was elected to take over the Chair from Mabel in 2003. This unfortunately did not happen as shortly afterwards she was taken ill and from then on was hospitalised and thereafter well cared for by family and for a long time in a nice care home in Cramlington.

Sending best wishes to all Branches and hope for some reasonable weather for the autumn at least, and the rest of the year!

NORFOLK BRANCH

Since our last report we have led a fairly sheltered life and not had as many activities as usual. We hope to improve on this in the summer months. In the first three months of the year we welcomed three new members – Mrs Elizabeth Winter (WRAC), Miss Beryl Manthorpe (ATS) and Miss Hazel Pearson (ATS). We hope the momentum continues throughout the year!

We held a very well attended annual lunch in January, our welcome guests being the Vice President Lt Col (Retd) Sue Westlake and our Area Chairman, Mrs Patricia Stevenson. Numbers were increased by Cambridge Branch and several of our local WRENS Association members. The February meeting was poorly supported owing to the usual winter coughs and colds and the dreadful weather. We were outnumbered by the “Trefoil Trillers” a group of former Girl Guides who came along to entertain us with songs, poems and stories.

A number of gentlemen, supported by their wives, came to our March meeting to tell us about the “East Coast Truckers’ Association”. Several years ago a few local HGV drivers got together to see what they could do to entertain handicapped children in the city and county. They began in a small way, taking youngsters to Yarmouth for a day at the seaside. Over the years, this has grown into an enormous campaign; they have had to limit the number of trucks to 80, with many more waiting to join. From the film shown, it is an impressive sight, 80 trucks with happy children transported from Norwich to be entertained at a camp in Lowestoft, and then on to

Yarmouth for a parade along the 'Golden Mile' and home. The whole way is packed with sight-seers and well-wishers. They now have huge support from the public.

Several of us thoroughly enjoyed the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration at the Victory Services Club and we send our grateful thanks to all those who made it possible.

Unfortunately we were not awarded the Lottery Grant which we had hoped would enable us to visit Eden Camp and the National Memorial Arboretum to celebrate our anniversary, so instead we are making our aim to the attendance next March at the Grand Reunion in Blackpool. See you there!

PLYMOUTH BRANCH

Following the loss of our Chairman, Jennie Stimpson, who moved to West Sussex last year, we entered our last two months of 2007 with Betty Mitchell at the helm. November is a bit hectic with Remembrance Services and the Festival of Remembrance and Concert by the Royal Marines Band, always a popular event. Of course, December is busy for most folks so we are rather glad to have a brief rest in January, when we have no meeting except for a committee get-together to discuss the coming year's programme. We were shocked and saddened by the sudden death of Grace Cox, ATS, in March – we knew she wasn't well because several of us went to visit her, but had no idea that she was so ill. She always had a lovely smile and enjoyed a good chat with us and was sorry when we had to say goodbye and leave her even though she was in very good care.



Jennie, Gill, Ruth and Margaret in the Victory Services Club

The main event to plan for was at the beginning of April, the AGM in London with the bonus of the splendid ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration in London. Five members went by train from Plymouth and we were joined by Jennie, from her new home in Sussex and Gill, our ex-Standard Bearer who is now in Doncaster. What a terrific time we had that weekend. Our thanks to the ladies of HQ who organised it all and to Rosie of the "Not Forgotten" Association who brought in the fantastic afternoon entertainment.

In May we had our, now regular, reunion in Truro so that we can meet our Cornwall members. The Royal British Legion Club provided us with a very good roast lunch and 19 of us from all points in Cornwall and around Plymouth had a good yarn together. Also Joan from Bodmin and Margaret from Redruth came for their first lunch with us.

Our thanks to Enith of Truro for organising everything for us at the RBL and to the staff for a superb day. Our next Truro reunion is booked for Tuesday 19 May 2009.

The Army Benevolent Fund Flag Day in mid-June is supported by five or six of our ladies, who year after year volunteer to go to various stores in Plymouth, Plympton and Plymstock with their collecting tins at the ready. The last week of June is Veterans' week and Commander Crichton, the City's Events organiser, has encouraged us to repeat our ATS Table from last year to promote the 70th Anniversary of the ATS and our own 30th Anniversary of the formation of Plymouth Branch. Our ladies will work from a rota in the Guildhall on Friday 27th and Saturday 28th, then on Sunday 29th there will be many events of celebration, plus the RAFA Service of Remembrance and Wreath Laying at the RAF Monument on the Hoe.

We have a cruise with a cream tea on the River Exe planned for 9 September to celebrate our 1938 and 1978 Anniversaries.

Our Christmas Lunch will again be at St Aubyn's Masonic Hall, Stoke on 12 December and we are expecting around twenty five ladies to be there.

We have our meetings in the Royal Fleet Club – 1.30-4 p.m. on the first Monday of the month, except when there is a Bank Holiday – the meeting then is moved to the second Monday. There is no meeting in January. Please feel free to join us anytime. Contact Ruth Jennings, Secretary – 01752 363118.

ROCHDALE BRANCH

We enjoyed our Christmas lunch at our regular venue, the Masonic Rooms. During the first three months of the year attendance at our meetings is always low, mainly due to bad weather and travel problems. Very few of us still have our own transport and some members have to get two buses each way to get to our meetings.

In May we had two very enjoyable day trips – the first was to Wilmslow Branch for an ATS 70th Anniversary birthday party. It was so nice to be there when Lilian Edwards was presented with her Certificate of Appreciation – an afternoon of fun topped with a super buffet.

The second occasion was a trip to the National Memorial Arboretum – what a big change we saw from our previous visit nine years ago. Everything has filled out and matured and the beautiful Armed Forces Memorial has been built. Some of us had to have our photograph taken with the "ATS Girl" and I hope our readers are not sick of seeing them! The guide on the miniature train told us the sculptor's wife was his model.

On Sunday 17 August there is to be a Service in Manchester Cathedral to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Royal British Legion, the 70th of the ATS and WRVS and the 60th of the WRAC, so it should be a great event. We shall be there with our Standard. In September – the first Sunday – we shall pay our annual visit to Eden Camp in Yorkshire for the Remembrance Service and parade of Standards.



L-R: Mona Schofield, Joyce Goddard, Doris Huntbach, Stella Lewis, Lorraine Landers (The lady in pink came over to ask if we had been in the ATS and didn't seem to notice we were having our photograph taken!)

Sadly, we have lost two of our members since my last report, Mrs Mary Campbell (our first Chairlady) who died in March and Mrs Winifred Booth who died at the end of May.

We send our good wishes to all other Branches, you would be very welcome at the Town Hall, last Tuesday in each month. Come for lunch at 1200 hrs and our meeting is from 1330-1500 hrs.

SALISBURY BRANCH

Greetings to all our friends scattered in many branches, also at Headquarters.

I am sure those who have known Joan Morgan (our Secretary for many years) will be pleased to hear she is making a slow recovery after suffering a stroke last year. Our meetings this year have all been well attended. In January our Bring & Buy/Auction raised funds for the Branch.

Our February meeting was a well informed talk on "Legal matters for the Mature" by Ann Orr. Very helpful and reminds us all to get our affairs in order.

In March, Kathryn Lawley, the Business Editor of our local paper the Salisbury Journal, gave a splendid talk, not only telling us about the history of the paper and how it has evolved, but also about the problems they have today with so much emphasis on advertising. Kathryn was surprised to meet our newest member Eileen Pennell. It was Eileen's daughter who taught her so much when she first joined the staff of the Journal!

Three members attended the AGM at the Victory Services Club in London in April. At our own meeting it was a welcome return to a good friend of the Association, Kathy Quinn, who gave a very interesting illustrated talk "The A to Z of Wiltshire Churches".

In May we again visited the Royal Signals Museum at Blandford, mainly to see their new "Women at War" exhibition. This was well presented. The Curator would be pleased to hear from anyone who served during the War and has a tale to tell. His next project is to be a

history of the WRAC and would welcome any relevant memorabilia.



Eileen Pennell with Kathryn Lawley, Business Editor of the Salisbury Journal.



May Brown, Maureen Robertson, Gladys Webb and Thirza Sillick at the South and South West Area Reunion

Also in May, thirteen members enjoyed the South and South West Area Reunion at Bath City Football Ground. What a very happy occasion it was. Lovely meal, the staff so very helpful and a superb cake too. Many congratulations to Bath Branch and a big "Thank You".

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

We continue to hold our meetings from 2pm on the first Wednesday of the month at Haywood/Lonsdale Court Community Room in Glebe Street, Wellington. We would like a coach load of young WRAC members to swell our ranks and help us keep the branch marching on. Any members in the area would be more than welcome and we would love to see you at our meetings.

Well, follow that, as they say. What a wonderful day we had enjoying the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration at the Victory Services Club. Six of us were able to partake of the festivities, food, entertainment and the camaraderie

was outstanding. It was well worth the hassle of travelling by train to and from Paddington instead of Euston, and, in spite of several trains being cancelled, we did arrive home safely.



Lunch at "The Last Inn"

In May our Branch went out to lunch at "The Last Inn" to celebrate the ATS 70th Anniversary. We have sent a donation of £25 to "The "Not Forgotten" Association".

On 3 May we had another battle with the trains (good old Army stamina keeps us going) as five of us returned to The Victory Services Club for the ATS Dinner Club lunch and very good it was too. Still in May, thirteen members joined up with our local Royal British Legion to go the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas. There is always something new to see and the new Armed Forces Memorial was very impressive bringing many a tear to the eye.

Sadly we have lost two more members – Pat Norman in March and Olive Downing in May – but we are delighted to welcome a new member – Mrs Eileen Talbot, née Smith ATS – 1942-46. Coming up is our local Veterans Day with a Service and Parade in Wellington on 29 June.

To all friends everywhere, keep well and happy.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

Hello to all our friends far and wide. Our Christmas function went very well. Southampton Golf Club was a new venue for us and Bill Webb who runs the venue was excellent in making us very welcome. Barbara Bennett's partner Tony was excellent entertainment and sang many lovely songs to us. We were very pleased to share our Christmas party with the General Secretary, Maj (Retd) Jane Freebairn and our Area Chairman, Maj (Retd) Mack Maskens-McIntyre

In March we went to Southwick Wickham Camp which houses the Map Room containing the chart of the Allied Forces during World War 2. People were on hand to explain things and, to the enjoyment of our members, there were armed soldiers on the gate which interested a few of us. In May we went to Tangmere Museum which is steeped in the history of flying. There were several different things for us to try including flying a computer generated plane.....I think we all crashed!

We have a trip to Blandford Museum on 28 June which Beryl Allinson has organised for the Branch. A market trip as well as an In-shop visit during the middle of the year and in October we are going to the Poppy Factory.



Our 60th Anniversary Lunch on 6 April was absolutely fantastic. Jean Doe got the printer to make mementos of the day. Beryl Allinson got the venue and menu sorted. Florrie Groves did the floral table decorations. Gail organised the cake as well as sorting out the raffle with Peggy Sorley. All the hard work, worry and stress were all worth it to see everything slot into place and everyone enjoying themselves. Our guest of honour, Mrs Elspeth Forbes-Robertson gave us more of her talks of World War 2 and there were three local newspapers taking photographs. This was because Jean Doe had reminded them that they had promised to attend our earlier functions and had not turned up. A surprise for Jean Doe was that John, my husband, and I made her a plaque as a Certificate of Achievement for the Branch's 60th and it was presented by the Vice President, Lt Col (Retd) Sue Westlake. However, I was in for a surprise myself when she presented me with a WRAC Association Certificate of Appreciation. Jean Doe had sworn everyone to secrecy so when I saw what was happening, for once I was at a loss for words, which made members very happy – I don't know why!



Guest of Honour, Mrs Forbes-Robertson is seated on the right

The South and South West Area Reunion in Bath was very enjoyable and we all went home happy. The venue, food and raffle were great and I would like to thank Bath Branch for a lovely day. I would also like on behalf of our

Branch to thank Maj Mac and Jackie Naysmith for all the hard work they did. in sorting out the fleeces and making sure that everyone went home with what they paid for! We have been lucky in having four more new members into our Branch. In one evening alone we had three new members join; can any other Branch beat that? So it's a big welcome to Thelma Flegg, Ella Baxter, Diane Pratt and Judith Kipling



Committee members with Southampton Standard

I have the sad task of mentioning that two of our members have died: Pat Welham and Eileen Kisby. Pat Welham lived in Maypole Nursing Home in Southampton and died suddenly on 4 May. Her sister Dee got in touch with us with the sad news. Eileen Kisby lived in Tunbridge Wells for a lot of years and died on 5 May. Jean Kingdon was a good friend of Eileen's and kept in touch with the Branch's newsletters etc. Both members were ex-ATS.

Can we just send out a big congratulation to Mary Macdonald who is retiring in May? Just think Mary, all that free time on your hands now!

HAPPY BIRTHDAYS. I would just like to wish some good friends from the old Sunderland Branch a Happy Birthday. Joyce Atkinson is 80 on 27 July, Vinnie Burgham will be 90 on 23 August and Betty Mitchell will be 80 on 20 November.

LORNA HARVEY. Does anyone know where Lorna is? We met in Hong Kong 1977-1979. Lorna's husband was called Ken Harvey and he had changed his surname from Whitefoot to Harvey when he married Lorna. Her family came from the island of St Kitts and lived in Shadick, Birmingham. I know she was also stationed in Middle Wallop after Hong Kong. Ken and Lorna got divorced and then she worked for the Nat West Bank somewhere in Birmingham.

STAFFORD BRANCH

I am delighted to start by welcoming a new member to our Branch, W/466055 Jane Whitehurst née Stevens.

Jane, who lives in Uttoxeter, served in the WRAC during 1979-1988.

In previous reports I have mentioned that attendance at monthly meetings has been dwindling due to health, mobility and transport problems. Because of these problems the ladies have decided to have a long summer holiday during June, July and August. After much discussion it was agreed that our meetings needed to be more mobile. In an effort to bring the meetings to the members, September will be afternoon tea at the Crown Hotel, Stone and October lunch at the Country Kitchen, Eccleshall. These particular venues will bring the meeting to members who do have mobility and transport problems, i.e. Joan Poole and Ada Sturland in Stone and Betty Wilshaw from Eccleshall. An added bonus is that members will be able to use their bus passes and leave the car behind. We are trying to save the planet. Did you spot that both these outings involve eating? You did – oh my goodness! With the help of members, the committee Joan Higgins, Muriel Lakin, Dory Newton and I will continue to find suitable venues in locations close to members who are in a similar position to Joan, Ada and Betty. Joan, Muriel and I hope to attend the Area Reunion at the Lord Hill Hotel, Shrewsbury on 13 September which is always a good do.

Information to tickle your fancy – we have 41 members, 34 ATS and 7 WRAC with a total age of 2,737 years, this averages out to 80.5 years per member. That is why I am feeling my age! As you can see 2008 has been a good year for birthdays in the Stafford Branch:

90 yrs – Margaret Fuller.
 88 yrs – Phyllis Beardsmore and Kathleen Brookman.
 87 yrs – Vera Faulkner, Glen Lorenz, Dorry Newton, Kath McCabe, Doris Sillito and Betty Wilshaw.
 86 yrs – Linda Ball, Peggy Dutton, Sybil Hembrow, Joan Higgins, Marjorie Seaton and Mary Wilkinson.
 85 yrs – Margaret Acaster, Nan Evans, Majorie Powell and Ada Sturland
 84 yrs – Joan Poole and Edie Rayner
 83 yrs – Monica Baker, Muriel Lakin and Dulcie Lewis
 82 yrs – Margaret Molloy, Nancy Rutter.
 78 yrs – Jean Bird and Grace Hutchinson.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our ladies a very happy birthday and very good health for the rest of the year? As always, if you are in our area, give us a ring and come and join one of our mobile meetings. One condition though – you have to be prepared to eat!

ULSTER BRANCH

Greetings and good wishes from the members of the Ulster Branch. In December, a number of us went along to the pantomime in the Grand Opera House, Belfast which we enjoyed very much. Some of our members come from quite far away and one lady in particular, Ruby, comes from Newcastle, Co Down. I always worry a little in case Ruby will have problems getting to Belfast, but when I went to look for her, there she was in the Opera House restaurant tucking into a large plate of Shepherds Pie – well done, Ruby. You are our little ray of sunshine. The show as usual was quite wonderful and we enjoyed our usual treats of Baileys and chocolates. We all look forward very much to our Pantomime treat each year.

Our Annual Reunion Luncheon was held in Beechlawm Hotel in Dunmurry in February. We had quite a good attendance and once again the Hotel provided a superb meal with plenty of choice and excellent service. Following the meal we had a Bring & Buy Sale and Raffle. We all enjoy occasions like this when we can meet up with old friends and catch up with the gossip. It is just rather a pity that more of our members couldn't make an effort to attend.

There is still quite a lot of illness among our members and we wish them all a speedy return to good health. We are looking forward to having them back with us in the near future.

I would like to wish all WRAC Association members a great summer and if you have holidays organised, I hope you have a wonderful time and good weather.

WILMSLOW BRANCH

The members of Wilmslow Branch send good wishes to you all. For our May meeting we decided to have a party to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the forming of the ATS – our Secretary has some brilliant ideas, so invitations were sent out to Branches in the North West Area and we were pleased to receive many acceptances.

We hold our meetings in the Wilmslow RBL and they very kindly allowed us to use the large hall and the kitchen, so we had plenty of room to move about. We decided not to have a raffle but just to have a tombola instead which was quite successful with lots of very nice prizes. Gwen Johnson, one of our members, brought a lovely doll dressed in Victorian clothes and the game was to guess her name. None of us guessed correctly – Gwen had called her Beatrice. Princess Beatrice is often in the news but nobody thought of it, so all the names of the entrants were put in a box and the one pulled out was the lucky winner who took the doll home.

For refreshments we hired caterers who prepared a very nice buffet which seemed to be enjoyed by all. Afterwards we had a written quiz about characters from fairytales and that certainly got the old brain box working I can tell you. The prize was £10 so it was worth having a good try, but nobody got all the answers correct so the names of those with the highest score were put in the box (again) and the one pulled out won the prize. We thought it had been a successful afternoon but what we didn't know was that Marie Hemmings, Chairman North West Area was there to present our Secretary, Lilian Edwards, with a Certificate of Appreciation. Many congratulations, Lilian – you deserve it. It was lovely to see so many familiar faces, but age seems to be taking its toll as was evident by the number of ladies with walking sticks.

At our June meeting we were pleased to welcome Betty Masterman, our member who now lives in Spain. We had some good laughs talking about old times. We were also pleased to welcome Jean Latham from Stockport Branch, she couldn't come to our party so came to our meeting instead. We are always pleased to see you, Jean. July is our Birthday month so we will be lunching at our usual hotel where we are very well known and always

made welcome. Our numbers are dwindling but we 'carry on regardless' and enjoy all our meetings and outings.



Marie Hemmings, Chairman North West Area presents Lilian Edwards with her Certificate of Appreciation

We were very sad to hear of the death of Lucy Woodcock, one of our founder members and a regular attender at our meetings. The funeral was in Christmas week which was such a sad time for all her family. Most of our Branch went to the Service and it was very sad to say goodbye to her. We miss her at our meetings. It was Lucy's husband who gave the £10 for the Quiz prize – we thought that was a very nice thing to do.

We send our good wishes to you all and to Betty in Spain and Joan in Australia.

WINCHESTER BRANCH

I will start this report by apologising to the Branch membership for forgetting to send in a report for the last *Lioness*. So here it is in all its glory.

This year (2007) ended well although our meetings are still not well attended. In September we held our AGM but unfortunately it was the last time we were able to use the Civil Service Club at Littleton as the Civil Service withdrew its support for it so it had to close.

In November we tried a new venue, The Golden Lion, just outside Winchester. We had an excellent meal at very good prices. It turned out to be a foul night with not many turning out. Cath had hurt her leg and could not walk, Lesley's car broke down and Maggie had her arm

in a sling having dislocated her shoulder on a holiday to Cyprus (she swears she was sober!). Hermé had prepared a quiz so the meal was mostly quite quiet. Karen, Lynn's daughter, won the prize, Lynn was second and Jane third.



Lynn (now the clerk in the RAPC Association) and her daughter Karen concentrating very seriously

January 2008 started with our usual Post Christmas Meal, another change of venue although we had been to Cellar Peking before. A very nice meal and good company, the heavy rain stopped just as we arrived and stayed away until we all got home.



Hermé and Lynn in Cellar Peking

During February, Winchester held a welcome home parade for some of Hampshire's Servicemen. Maggie managed to go and support the event, having served in Iraq herself.

In March we held a Skittles evening at the Cart and Horses, we had been there before but not to play skittles. It was a very nice venue, we had pre ordered our meal so, as soon as they got the word that we have arrived, the basket meals were cooked and handed out. That gave us all time to sit down, recover from the journey (it was very wet) and have a natter. Although the alley was shorter than our previous venue, I still managed to miss all the skittles more than once. I unfortunately had to leave early as I had left my keys at home so needed to

get back before my mother locked me out! So, I am still not sure who won!

A number of members attended the ATS 70th Anniversary Celebration at the Victory Services Club on 4 April and also attended the AGM on the Saturday.

We had no meeting in May but are now looking forward to our July meeting which is our annual garden party.



WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH

Since the last *Lioness* we are sad to report that two of our members have passed away – Eileen Salter and Marjorie Lloyd-Jones. Both had been members for many years and we shall miss them.

For various reasons attendance at our meetings this year has fallen, but the few who have been able to attend have enjoyed the meetings and being together. To the members who have been prevented from coming due to ill health themselves or of members of their families, we send our best wishes and hope they will soon be able to join us again.

We decided not to have a coach outing in May, but instead to travel by bus (courtesy of our free bus passes) to Bridgnorth, a very interesting small market town in Shropshire and only 14 miles from Wolverhampton. Bridgnorth is also well known for the Severn Valley

Railway. However, for various reasons including rain, only three of us went. We enjoyed ourselves, especially the lunch, but returned home on an earlier bus than planned as the weather was too miserable to explore Bridgnorth.

We now look forward to the Wales & West Reunion in Shrewsbury on 13 September – always an enjoyable event – and our own Christmas Lunch on 9 December.

We have been asked by a non-member of the Association if anyone remembers her as she is anxious to obtain a copy of group photographs she was on, as she has no photographs of herself in uniform. She is Mrs Elsie E Gould née Williams, W/353721, of 2 Finger Post Drive, Pelsall, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 4AP. She joined at Guildford, but is not quite sure of the date. However it would be in 1948 as she went from Guildford to 46 Mixed HAA at Carter Barracks, Bulford and served for two years as an Orderly and Sgts' Mess Waitress. She was demobbed on 20 November 1950. If anyone thinks they can help, would you please get in touch with her so that an arrangement can be made for her to get a copy of any photographs available.

We send our best wishes to all members of our Branch and to friends in other Branches. We trust you will all keep well when winter finally arrives.

YORK BRANCH

The members of York Branch send best wishes to you all.

Congratulations go to Joan and James Holden, Joyce and John Marriott and Pat and David Carpenter who have all celebrated Diamond Wedding anniversaries. Also Pam and Bob Nesbitt celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary.

Further congratulations to Joan Holden who celebrated her 90th birthday in August and is still going strong. Joan was our Standard bearer for many years and only retired due to ill health. Pat Carpenter recently celebrated her 80th birthday. Pat was a member of the London Branch until her move to York and is now one of our active members.

Four of our members were entertained by the "Not Forgotten" Association to a boat trip on the River Ouse. We met up with the ladies from Leeds and once again were reunited with Rosie Thompson the Events Officer.

We are now looking forward to the North East Area Reunion this year being held in Hull and our visit to meet up with our Scarborough ladies. Unfortunately Connie Beat hasn't been at all well but hopefully she will be able to come.

We are already making plans to attend the Grand Reunion in March 2009. If it is anything like the last one it certainly will be a sell out.

At the Branch meeting in April the ladies brought photographs of themselves whilst serving. It is really

good to look at and recognise these young good looking ATS/WRAC girls who have now grown into sophisticated young ladies. We have been out for lunch a couple of occasions arranged by none other than Col (Retd) Hazel Powell. As she is now an expert on this, we hope we can rely on her to arrange a few more.

Irene Quarrie has unfortunately been ill in hospital but hopefully is well on the way to recovery. Phyl Lindsell has once again been in hospital for a hip replacement and is now at home learning to walk again. I am now making a good recovery after breaking my pelvis. It's a long drawn out recovery plan as there is no cure – only pain killers. They did warn me that it would take 13/14 weeks and in all it was 20 weeks. I hope to throw my crutches away next week.

We are looking forward to our yearly attendance at the Open Day at Imphal Barracks in York on 12 July – the ATS Dinner Club at the Norbeck Castle Hotel in Blackpool on 22/25 September – and the Remembrance Service at Eden Camp, Malton, also in September.



Mary Rogan and Mary Robinson with Rosie Thompson

OVERSEAS PAYMENTS

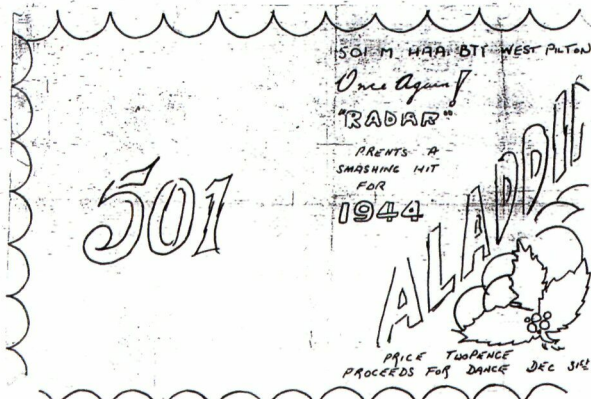
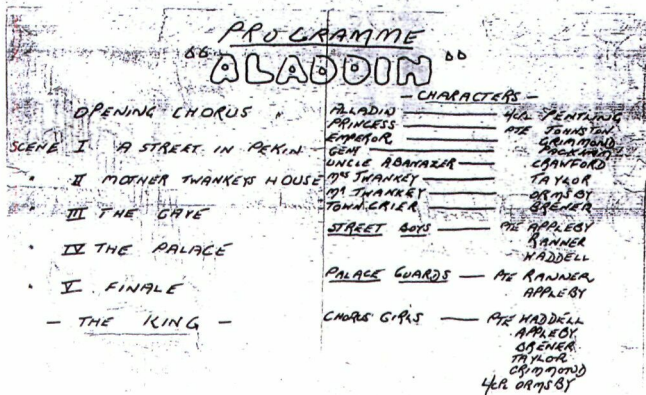
Please note that in future, all payments for subscriptions, postage and memorabilia will only be accepted in Sterling. Please ask your bank for a Money Order or Sterling Cheque.

We regret to have to impose this restriction, but due to the vagaries of exchange rates, the majority of overseas payments fall significantly short of the amount due.

ATS Reminiscences

THANKS FOR THE MEMORY

Ex Pte Daisy Taylor (Clark) (Peach)
11 Carters Croft, Ashdon, Saffron Walden,
Essex CB10 2MS. Tel: 01799 584253



Whitby 1940 – ATS Officers
L-R: West Riding Officer, Mrs Jewitt, Miss Stow



Doris Crosby and Betty Cooper
with 4th East Yorks "occupying" Methodist Church Hall,
Lambert Street, Hull, September 1939

I am enclosing a copy of the programme of Aladdin by 501 MHAABTY (RADA). We did two or three pantomimes during the War and it would be wonderful if you could print this and maybe someone will remember being in one of the plays and get in touch.

One of the ladies was LCpl Emily Ornsby (McCall) known as Mac of 36 Langley Road, North Shields, Tyne & Wear NE29 7NN, Tel: 0191 2581872. We phone each other regularly and reminisce – it would be lovely to share those memories with anyone who remembers either one of us.

Don't be shy – please ring even if it's just a vague recollection – here's hoping to hear something soon.

ANOTHER EARLY VOLUNTEER

Michael Rees
33 Southfield Road, Bricknell Avenue, Hull,
Yorkshire HU5 4ES

I think I have some good news for Betty France in her search for Territorials. My mother, Betty Rees née Cooper, W/11079, joined up on 24 March 1939 at Londesborough Street Barracks in Hull. She was in the 10th East Riding Company ATS and then went to Whitby 1939/40, followed by Kirkburton, Nr Huddersfield 1940 and York in 1941.

My mother left the Army in 1941 to become a leading firewoman in the National Fire Service until 1945 and is now 91 years of age. She can remember Dorothy 'Dot' Burrows, Doris Crosby, Joan 'Yorkie' Hatfield, Beattie, Vera 'Blossom' Mace, Fanny Turner, "Richie" from East Hull and Janet from The West Riding – where are they now?



*L-R: Joan 'Yorkie' Hatfield, Betty Cooper, Janet and Richie
- 10th East Riding Company ATS, Whitby 1939/1940*



*Volunteer Betty Cooper, Whitby 1940. Hair Stylist to the
ATS!!*

Wenlock House,
Wenlock Square,
Hull

5th September 1939

From: Officer in Charge
10th East Riding Coy, ATS

To: Miss Cooper

You will please report at Headquarters at the above address at 6 o'clock on Wednesday the 6th instant, when you will receive your instructions for mobilisation for Thursday morning the 7th instant.

Signed: A E Jewitt
Acting Deputy Coy
Commander
10th E.R. Coy, ATS

Editor: Written in the days when Royal Mail schedules were perhaps a bit more predictable than now!

KATH SMITH FINDS FLORENCE ATKINSON

Mrs Kath Smith née Hodges, W/332524
18 Ryehaugh, Ponteland NE20 9BA

During a recent visit to our local residential home, I came across an ex-ATS member. I obtained the enclosed information and photograph which I said I would pass on to the *Lioness* and see if anyone knew her. I told Florence about the Veterans Badge and gave her the phone number to ring. She has now received it and is delighted. She said the staff were all interested on hearing about it and asked her to speak to the other residents about her Army Service. She did so and told me she felt like a celebrity!

Short Biography of Florence Atkinson, née Lilburn, W/180801 - Room 22, Ponteland Manor NE20 9PZ

Florence was born in 1921 and was brought up in Benton, Newcastle. After leaving school she enlisted into the ATS and underwent training during a very pleasant summer in Hereford, where the SAS is now based. She was taught to drive 30cwt trucks, to map read and how to carry out her own maintenance of these vehicles. She was posted to Scotland for about two years and ended up driving the CO as she had the only undamaged vehicle. She then transferred to a signals course in Edinburgh and from there to the War Office in Whitehall, London.

She witnessed many interesting and historical events there, including VE and VJ Days. There she operated the teleprinter and was a switchboard operator covering UK and European lines. The summer of 1944 was very busy and disruptive because of the bombings - they rarely seemed to sleep in their own beds and at times slept, for example, in the basement of the Army & Navy stores. She recalls coming off duty at 6 a.m. one day to see waves of bombers flying overhead on what turned out to be D-Day.



*Norah, Evelyn and Florence on the
right*

MEMORIES OF RABY CASTLE

Diane Bulley née Ellingworth, PO Box 7205,
Kettering NN16 6DS.

I was delighted to read 'A day in the Countryside' on page 3 of *Lioness* 1/08 by Olive Kinghorn and her description of the Cleveland Branch visit to Raby Castle.

I was stationed there in 1946-1947 when it was 2 VRD (Vehicle Reserve Depot) and am enclosing a copy of a

snap taken in those frugal years when a young man turning up with a film in a camera was a cause of great excitement!



Back row: Bobby Burnip, Joan ?, Kath ? and Yvonne Heatley. Front Row: Diane Bulley née 'Babe' Ellingworth and Catherine Gascoigne (Gassy).

Not in the photo were our colleagues: Joan Green from Newcastle and Evelyn Michison from Spennymoor.

The Castle was 'Out of Bounds' to all ranks but I loved the park where we worked outside from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in all weathers. We were very well looked after. Our clothing was of the best quality wool cloth and we were never cold. We were issued with leather jerkins which we wore on top of battle tops. Boots and gaiters kept our feet warm. We took our collars into the Chinese Laundry in Darlington to be starched. I remember admiring the efficient way the Chinaman ironed a shirt – vellee quick!

Although my father played the banjo, Yvonne Heatley introduced me to the great Piano Concertos. She had a portable wind-up gramophone and played the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No 1 quite often. Even after all these years listening to the 1st movement, I remember the frightened deer rushing out from between the trucks when we went to move them to the REME workshop.

I would love to hear from anyone who was at Raby Castle at that time.

MRS JEAN EASTHAM RELIVES HER BERLIN AIRLIFT EXPERIENCES

During May 2008, a member of Blackpool Branch, Mrs Jean Eastham (ex Cpl Jean Hart ATS) had both an interesting and an exciting experience which began with a visit to Berlin. She had served there in the ATS during the Russian Blockade of Berlin and Berlin Airlift 1948/49 which really saw the start of the Cold War. Sixty years later and because she had donated photographs and information of how things were in Berlin at that time, she



Jean Eastham with the "candy bomber", Lt Gail Halvorsen

was a guest of Baerbel Simon who is the Curator of the Cold War museum which is in Karneko, Berlin. The Museum had been opened by the famous American pilot, Lt Gail Halvorsen. He had been nicknamed the 'Candy Bomber' because he dropped sweets tied in a handkerchief to the Berlin children as he came in to land at Tempelhof Airport.

Then, out of the blue, Jean received an invitation from the BBC to go to Lincoln, stay overnight and to meet Jon Snow the presenter, Stuart Bernard and a camera crew. Next morning, Jean flew in a Dakota aeroplane as used during the Airlift again to mark the 60th anniversary. They flew from RAF Conisby together with an ex-RAF Dakota pilot who had actually flown supplies over during the Blockade.

Jean says it was very exciting and memorable after all these years. In perfect weather they flew for about one hour – door wide open and over Lincoln Cathedral and attached to a belt used by parachutists as if to jump and wearing a pilot's jacket and gloves. No she didn't jump – no parachute!

Afterwards, during lunch, an amazing coincidence was discovered when they were comparing Leslie's, the ex RAF pilot's log book and Jean's diary. Her first ever, of many flights to and fro in and out of Berlin, was on his plane which took off at 0730 hrs 9 July 1948 from Gatow, Berlin to Buckeborg, West Germany en route to HQ Hamburg to prepare documentation for the transfer of the ATS to WRAC British Troops Berlin. Who would ever have thought that they would be reliving these experiences after all these years!

13TH INFANTRY TRAINING CENTRE, INVICTA LINES, MAIDSTONE

Mrs Joan Efford, W/150860, Sgt 1942-1945
8 Springfield Park, North Parade, Horsham RH12 2BF

On reaching page 44 of *Lioness* 1/08 and seeing the cartoon, I immediately thought that it was Subaltern Instone (maiden name). I was in Company Office and she was one of our officers at A Company ATS Invicta Lines in 1943/44. Major Edwina Coven, as she became, can be seen on page 70 in *Lioness* 2/06, sadly in the centre of the photograph accompanying her obituary. I

was sorry to learn of her death. She was always full of fun and produced "Eve Off Parade" with members of our Company on 7 September 1943 at the Maidstone Corn Exchange and gave a violin solo. I wonder if I am correct about the cartoon.



*'A' Company ATS, 12th Corps Group, Maidstone
Joan Efford is seated third from the right in the front row*

Editor: I don't think so as the person is wearing two badges of rank so is likely to have been a Lt Col. Thank you anyway for making the suggestion. I have not received any others.

On page 30 of *Lioness* 1/07 there was a photograph of Wordsworth Road, Maidstone. I was billeted there whilst in Company Office, Invicta Lines and always felt sorry for the civilian family who lived beneath our flat, as they had small children. When this photo was taken I must already have moved to a detached house in London Road to another platoon.

I was tempted to write about my experiences during the Second World War which was prompted by Major David Robertson after I had sent a donation for the Memorial to Women of World War 2, and the script had to be sent to the Imperial War Museum. I decided to write one page but so many memories came flooding back that I called a halt at page 6 having to keep on retyping. To my utter astonishment my ramblings were accepted by the Museum for their archives.

I enjoy the magazine and have contacted a couple of contributors whose photos were published.

VICTORY PARADE IN LEICESTER

Mrs Win Kenway née Collins, W/41150 Cpl
1 Piper Road, Colchester, Essex C03 3SF
Tel: 01206 574118

I joined the ATS in 1940 and, after training in Aldermaston, I was posted to 'Q' Coy ATS attached to HQ Training Establishment RAOC in Portsmouth, my home town.

Because of the bombing, the whole unit was sent by troop train to Leicester where I spent the rest of the War. We were billeted in some of the loveliest houses belonging to wool merchants and we also took over Leicester racecourse where some of the races still took place, so the men could have a little flutter.

As we were a training unit we had new intakes every two weeks and my job was to type our endless nominal rolls and then duplicate them on the old Roneo machine – oh! All that black ink! We used to do our morning PE run in this lovely residential area of Stoneygate in our shirts and bloomers! What a shock for the neighbours.

Being a static unit we made so many firm friendships and were so sad when the War was over and we all went our separate ways.



'Q' COMPANY ATS leading the Victory Parade in Leicester in 1945.

Editor: Sorry but we were unable to make this photo any lighter



'Q' Company NCOs attending a reception in the Mayor's Parlour in Leicester (for a 'pep' talk before the Americans came to town!)

The enclosed photo was of 'Q' Coy leading the Victory Parade in Leicester – note all the hats and caps of the

bystanders! This was a very proud moment for us. I wonder how many of us could do this long march today? The other photo was taken in the Mayor's Parlour at a reception to tell us that the GIs were coming to town. They said that they hoped our "gels" wouldn't cause any trouble – we were a bit put out by this!

We were very happy in Leicester – on occasions we used to babysit for one of the residents in exchange for the luxury of a bath and a lovely supper – what bliss! Happy Days – I would love to hear from anyone from 'Q' Coy and the RAOC HQ.

After the War I joined the WI and the camaraderie and friendship I found was so much like my time in the ATS, so you could say my adult life has been blessed. The discipline and regimentation one never forgets – as an 87 year old and a great grandmother, I still have my morning routine!

WARLEY BARRACKS – SHOOTING TEAM

Mrs Joan de Corte née Brown
'Tintern', Main Street, Barmby Moor, East Riding
YO42 4EJ
Tel: 01759 304150

First of all, I must say how much I enjoy the *Lioness*. Although I served in the ATS from 1944-1947 I have only been a member of the Association a few years since my late husband and I returned to the UK from Ireland.



Warley Barracks Shooting Team

I am enclosing this photograph which was taken in early 1945 at Warley Barracks, Essex. It may be of interest to some members. Since those days I have met Norah Allen and Rosemary Shelley when they stayed with me when I lived in Northern Ireland.

The group photograph may bring back memories of happy times we had in the shooting team! We had competitions against the WRNS and WRAF and I can remember often being packed up into a lorry and driven all over the country to compete. Being a member of the team did wonders for our social life as well!

A MOBILE PTI

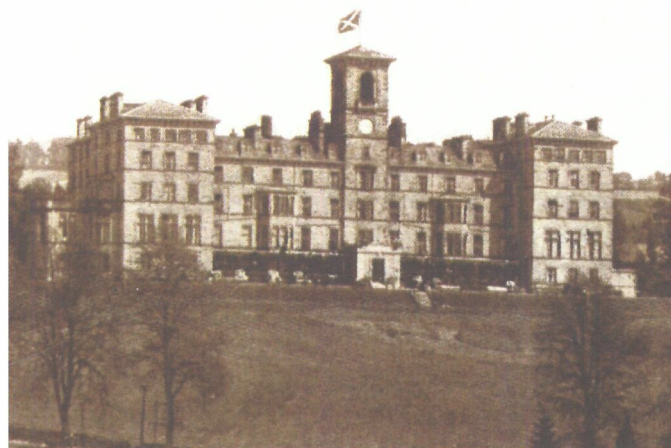
Beryl Manthorpe
353 Unthank Road, Norwich NR4 7QG

My life as an ATS PTI (1942-46) was punctuated with travelling. After initial training and NCO's Cadre at Glen

Parva South Wigston, initial PT course at Fenham Barracks, Newcastle-on-Tyne, I was posted as a Cpl to 236 TRRA Oswestry.

There must have been approximately 15-16 full time PTIs in the Garrison (4 Regiments) under the leadership of J/Com Parry, a delightful little officer. My year at Oswestry included a short spell on loan to 7th Heavy. Sgt Yvonne Gates, Cpls Barbara Beer, Dorothy Clarke and Cpl Thomas are the only names I can remember (forgetting names is a big failing of mine).

After refresher course at Glen Parva, I was Sgt attached to 180 (M) HAA, HQ Aberdeen which had sites at Aberdeen, Dundee, Rosyth, Cowdenbeath, Dunfermline and Donibristle. Before the invasion, 180 (M) HAA moved to South Cornwall. I went back to Scotland on an Advance course at Dunblane – 31 PTIs, 2 courses running simultaneously – advanced and refresher (I think).



Dunblane Hydro



Combined Advanced and Refresher course at Dunblane Hydro 1944. Beryl Manthorpe is 4th from the left on the front row.

Back to Cornwall, later 180 (M) HAA moved to Dorset, HQ Lytchett Minster, disbanded 1944. I went to 157 (M) HAA Cheshire, temporary stay before moving to Central London V2 time, then to South Essex HQ Grays, sites along the north bank of the Thames. 157 (M) HA disbanded, I left the RA.

continued on page 36

WRAC ASSOCIATION GRAND REUNION

FRIDAY 20 – MONDAY 23 MARCH 2009
NORBRECK CASTLE HOTEL, BLACKPOOL
TELEPHONE NUMBER 01253 352431

This Grand Reunion will be a very special one. Not only will it celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the formation of the Association, which began as the QMAAC Old Comrades' Association in 1919, but it will also celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the WRAC in February 1949. We do hope you will be able to attend and share in the celebrations. The Grand Reunion in Warwick in 2006 was judged to be a very successful one so we have decided to retain the same formula of a themed supper and entertainment on the Friday night, AGM and Gala Dinner on the Saturday night and Drumhead Service on the Sunday morning. This two-night package would cost £138 (£12 cheaper than the Grand Reunion three years ago!)

However, because travel on a Sunday can be difficult – especially by train – we have extended the Grand Reunion to include a third night with dinner, entertainment and bed and breakfast for an additional £12. This three-night package will cost £150 only – the same price as the two nights of the last Grand Reunion! We really do hope that the majority of you will be able to take advantage of this third night so you will have even more opportunities to “re-une” and to make new friends in the Association.

The cost of the weekend is based on the principle that **all those attending will stay at the Norbreck Castle Hotel** unlike the previous Grand Reunion at Blackpool. Then our numbers were too great to be accommodated entirely in the same hotel. This time, we have planned on a figure of 400 attending and certainly hope to meet that figure. Indeed, if we do not meet that figure, the Association will have to pay a penalty. Although the Grand Reunion at Warwick was successful, the disadvantage was the distance between the accommodation and the social venues. The Norbreck Castle Hotel provides all the facilities we need under one roof.

You can, if you wish to pay extra, have a sea view or a double room for single occupancy. There is a graph showing the options on the opposite page. These figures are for the hotel only and do not include the £30 which you have to send directly to the WRAC Association. Please read the instructions on the back of each form very carefully before completion.

Seating Plan. Don't forget to let us know by **Monday 3 March** who you want to sit with if you have not completed that section of the form just now.

Money. The Norbreck Castle Hotel requires at least a cheque for £35 to accompany their application and the WRAC Association requires at least a cheque for £30 – you can add your Grand Draw ticket money to that and just send one cheque payable to WRAC Association. This £30 will cover additional items not included in the main package. This is because we are having **two** special events in private function suites and the Association will be providing e.g. additional entertainment and decoration.

Cancellation Policy. You will note that your application for the hotel booking has to be accompanied by a **non-refundable £35 deposit**. You can choose to pay more at this stage or you may choose to pay the rest on arrival next March. Please be prepared for queues when you are booking in at the Hotel while these bills are paid! The cancellation policy for the £30 you send with your form to WRAC Association HQ is different. This will be refunded in full if you have to cancel before 31 January. A 50% refund will be made to those who have to cancel before 28 February. There will be no refund if you have to cancel on 1 March or later.

FILL IN THE FORMS NOW – THERE ARE ONLY 400 SPACES



THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION
(Incorporating QMAAC and ATS Comrades Association) Grand Reunion –
Friday 20th March – Monday 23rd March 2009
BOOKING FORM

1. Personal Details - Please complete as applicable:

Mrs/Miss _____ First Name _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Post Code _____ Telephone Number _____

2. Accommodation – Please tick as appropriate:

a) I wish to book a 3 night Dinner, Bed & Breakfast package at £120 per person

Or

I wish to book a 2 night Dinner, Bed & Breakfast package at £108 per person

b) I wish to reserve a single room

Or

I wish to reserve a double / twin* room (*please delete as appropriate) and **Will Share With**

Mrs/Miss _____ First Name _____ Surname _____

c) I wish to reserve a double room for Sole Occupancy at a supplement of £15 Per Night

d) I wish to reserve a Sea View Room at a supplement of £10 per room per night

e) I wish to stay on the Monday night as well at an additional cost of £35.

3. Method of Payment – Please complete as applicable:

A payment of £35.00 per person is required as a non – refundable deposit for the above booking, cheques to be made payable to The Norbreck Castle Hotel

a) I enclose a cheque for £ _____ as the non – refundable deposit for the above booking

Or

b) I enclose a cheque for £ _____ to cover the full amount

Or

c) Please debit my debit/credit card for £ _____ Type of Card Switch _____ Visa _____

Card Number _____ Expiry Date _____ Security Code _____

4. Special Requirements – If you have any requests regarding Mobility or Special Diets, please detail below and the Hotel will endeavour to accommodate your needs, however pleased be advised this is not a guarantee.

Please return your completed form to:
Reservations Department, The Norbreck Castle Hotel,
Queens Promenade, Blackpool FY2 9AA.
Tel: 01253 352341

THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION
(Incorporating QMAAC and ATS Comrades Association)
Grand Reunion – Friday 20th March – Monday 23rd March 2009

NOTES TO HELP YOU TO COMPLETE THIS FORM

This form has to go **directly to the Norbreck Castle Hotel** so it has to include all the necessary information about your accommodation requirements. Please take care to complete it carefully.

The “three night package” will be for Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights and the “two night package” will be for Friday and Saturday nights.

The Hotel can offer more than a standard en-suite single or double room but you will have to **pay extra for those additional facilities**. For example, you can book a room with a sea view at an extra charge of £10 per night per room. However, you should consider how much time you will be spending in your room during daylight hours to enjoy the view. You can see the sea from the downstairs public rooms or indeed from the promenade if the weather is good enough! Also, you can book a double room for single occupancy for an extra £15 per night. If you require both then you will have to pay £25 extra per night.

If you are sharing a double room, it would be better if you each completed a form and sent them to the Hotel in the same envelope. If a group of you wish to have rooms near each other, it would also help to put your applications in the same envelope.

You will have to send a cheque for at least £35 with this form which is **a non-refundable deposit**. You can choose to pay the full amount at this stage by cheque or credit card or you can choose just to pay the deposit.

Please also make full use of the Special Requirements section. The Norbreck Castle Hotel will do what it can to help but they have to have the right information. So, if you have any mobility or dietary requirements please include them in this section **NOW** to help the Hotel make an appropriate room allocation.

If you have any questions about your accommodation for the Grand Reunion after you have sent off this form, please contact the Norbreck Castle Hotel directly. Keep a note of their telephone number somewhere safe and you might also want to make a copy of this form or at least make a note of what you have asked for.

Please return this completed form to:
Reservations Department, The Norbreck Castle Hotel,
Queens Promenade, Blackpool FY2 9AA.
Tel: 01253 352341



WRAC ASSOCIATION GRAND REUNION FRI 20 MAR – MON 23 MAR 2009

PLEASE RETURN TO:
WRAC ASSOCIATION, AGC CENTRE, WORTHY DOWN,
WINCHESTER SO21 2RG

1. Personal Details:

Mrs/Miss..... First Name..... Surname.....

Maiden Name/Name whilst serving.....Service Number.....

Address

.....

Post Code.....Tel No.....Member of.....Branch

Enlisted.....Discharged.....Rank on leaving.....

I was employed with e.g. RAOC, RCT, R Signals etc

I served in the following units.....

.....

.....

2. I confirm that I have booked accommodation at the Norbreck Castle Hotel as follows:

* Delete as applicable

a. * the three-night package **OR** b. * the two-night package

c. * I have booked a single room **OR** d. * I have booked a double room and I am sharing with

.....

3. Seating Plan. There will be tables for 10.

a. * I would like to sit at the same table asBranch. **OR**

b. * I would like to sit with.....

.....

4. Payment to WRAC Association/Grand Draw tickets.

a. I enclose £30 for additional costs not included in the Norbreck Castle Hotel package.

b. I have purchased Grand Draw tickets and the stubs are enclosed.

c. I am enclosing a cheque for..... (£30 plus £1 for each Grand Draw ticket you have purchased) made payable to WRAC Association.

Signed:.....Date.....



**WRAC ASSOCIATION GRAND REUNION
FRI 20 MAR – MON 23 MAR 2009**

**PLEASE RETURN TO:
WRAC ASSOCIATION, AGC CENTRE, WORTHY DOWN,
WINCHESTER SO21 2RG**

NOTES TO HELP YOU TO COMPLETE THIS FORM

This form has to go directly to **WRAC Association HQ** so it has to include all the necessary information about your service and your seating plan requirements. We have also asked you to confirm what arrangements you have made with the Norbreck Castle Hotel so that we can ensure we have the same list of attendees!

We have asked for some information about your service for the “Reunion Corner” which we hope to enlarge this time. Also, it would be helpful to know your trade/employment group. We often get requests to seat people with “other Signals girls” or “people who were in Aden at the same time”. We can only try to do this if we have the information.

If you had more than four or five postings, perhaps you could select the three most memorable to put on the form. We really do not have the capacity to list more than three postings so it would help us if you put down the ones you remember best.

Who would you like to sit with: a particular Branch, a named person, a group of people or perhaps a Branch that you used to belong to but have moved away? We will have tables of 10 so please bear that in mind when you are planning. The same seating plan will apply on the Friday and Saturday night. We understand that you may not necessarily know who you would like to sit with just yet and there is no need to delay your application. But we would ask you to let us know by **MONDAY 3 MARCH 2009** at the very latest.

We are asking you to send us a cheque for £30 plus £1 for each of the Grand Draw tickets you purchase. Only one cheque is required to cover both these items and it should be made payable to WRAC Association.

**PLEASE RETURN TO:
WRAC ASSOCIATION, AGC CENTRE, WORTHY DOWN,
WINCHESTER SO21 2RG**

Rate for 2 Night Package ~ £108 Rate for 3 Night Package ~ £120 Extra Night (Mon) £35
 Supplement payable: Room with a sea view ~ £10 per night; Double Room Single Occupancy ~ £15 per night

Rates are for Dinner, Bed & Breakfast	Single Room	Single Room With Sea View	Double Room Single Occupancy	Double Room Single Occupancy with Sea View	Double Room Sharing (Each)	Double Room Sharing with Sea View (Each)
Fri & Sat Nights	£108.00 £108.00	£108+(£10x2) £128.00	£108+(£15x2) £138.00	£108+(£25x2) £158.00	£108.00 £108.00	£108+(£5x2) £118.00
Fri, Sat & Sun Nights	£120.00 £120.00	£120+(£10x3) £150.00	£120+(£15x3) £165.00	£120+(£25x3) £195.00	£120.00 £120.00	£120+(£5x3) £135.00
Fri, Sat, Sun & Mon Nights	£120+£35 £155.00	£120+£35+(£10x4) £195.00	£120+£35+(£15x4) £215.00	£120+£35+(£25x4) £255.00	£120+£35 £155.00	£120+£35+(£5x4) £175.00

TIPS FROM THE WEBMASTER

Save money and earn some for the Association at the same time

Do you shop online? Go to www.buy.at/wrac, this online shopping portal allows you to shop at some well known online stores (e.g. Tesco, Amazon, Play.com, BT). You can select the store you want to visit from the list, or if you know what you want to buy and want to compare prices, you can do that as well. You do not have to register with the site, although if you buy something from a store you will probably have to register with them.

Money off Coupons

Visit www.couponnet.co.uk and see if there is a money saving coupon that you can print off and use. They change regularly so check often. You will have to install the sites special printer software which will stop you printing too many of the vouchers!

Online Vouchers

Go to www.myvouchercode.co.uk select the store you use and see if there are any online savings to be made. There are hundreds of shops on the list so have a browse around. As in the case of the coupons, the offers change frequently, so always visit before you shop. And of course if the shop is supported within www.buy.at/wrac you can use the discounts in there.

GIFT AID DONATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE WRAC ASSOCIATION (Reg No 206184) including THE ATS AND WRAC BENEVOLENT FUND

Since 6 April 2000, Deeds of Covenant have been replaced by Gift Aid as means of giving to charity.

- If you are a UK Taxpayer, you can make a Gift Aid Declaration when you make a donation to charity. By making such a declaration, the receiving charity can reclaim any tax you have paid on you donation. This will give the Association or the Benevolent Fund an extra 28p for every £1 you donate.
- Gift Aid Declarations may be written or given orally over the telephone.
- If your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and/or capital gains at least equal in amount to the tax that the charity reclaims, you should cancel your declaration.
- You can cancel the declaration at any time simply by notifying us that you wish to do so. If an oral declaration is cancelled within 30 days from the date on which written confirmation is sent, it will be as if the oral declaration had never been made.
- If you are a high rate taxpayer, you can claim further tax relief in your Self-Assessment Tax Return.
- If you are unsure whether or not your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, please contact the Association HQ on 01962 887570 or ask your local tax office for leaflet IR 113 Gift Aid.
- Please notify the Association HQ of any change of address.

continued from page 33

North Midland District, the hub of my universe was Nottingham. I was in a team of two PT Officers, J/Com Green and J/Com Plidmore, and two other Sgts. We worked with APO and APC in places such as Trent Bridge cricket ground, the ice rink and anywhere possible even out on the streets.

Back to Glen Parva for Remedial PT course. I did remedial classes at Nottingham and Chillwell. Next to Derby in charge of PT at Normanton Barracks, still teaching remedials in conjunction with the RAMC.

My last course was 2nd Advanced at Aldershot after which I was made W02 in charge of ATS PT at Glen Parva where one of the Cpls was Cpl Bates. There were full time PTIs at Derby and Leicester. Other names I remember are CSM Dunthorne, Sgt Wheatcroft, Kathleen Kaye and Gillian Bull.

I would love to hear from anyone who remembers me at any of those locations.

MY MEMORIES OF THE ATS BAND AND 2ND BERKSHIRE PLATOON

Mrs Sylvia Brightwell Johnson
44 Starfield Close, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 5JQ



The Drums of an ATS Band

Whilst sorting through old papers I came across this old calendar. It would be a shame to throw it out – thought it might be suitable for the archives. *Editor: This calendar was most interesting and I had not seen one like it before. You will see that there are other pages reproduced on the back cover of this Lioness. Thank you for sending it in.* My friend, Cpl Norah Pidgeon, gave it to me at Christmas 1944. We were members of the 2nd Berkshire Platoon and wore a tape on our uniform sleeves denoting this. We were still allowed to wear this flash even when moved on to other Commands.

I served for four and a half years with the Berkshires during WW2 and fourteen years with ATS/WRAC/TA 54th Signal Squadron.



2nd Berkshire Platoon, Military Police Depot – November 1942

In all of those years I never saw any other county flashes. We were told that the Berkshire Platoons were the first to be formed, hence the flash was awarded. I'm sure someone will correct me if I am wrong.

Incidentally, I attended the ATS reunion at the Albert Hall in 1949. The ATS band was in attendance. I had the privilege to march behind this band when chosen for Salute the Soldier parades, the last one at Bracknell in 1944.

LIFETIME FRIENDS FROM MY SERVICE DAYS

Daisy Cation, W/64298
197 Wellesley Road, Buckhaven, Fife KY8 1DU
Tel: 01592 712383



Daisy Cation

When I read Dot Whitmarsh's article in the last *Lioness*, it brought back so many memories of my time in the ATS and the many lifetime friends I made. I joined on 11 July 1941 aged 17 and served with 455 HAA (Mxd) Battery, 129 Regiment until 1946. I joined up with Nan Witcomb née Thomson whom I had just met a few days before. Finding out that we were both joining up, we became friends and remained so until March this year when she died. We were constantly in touch and, when she died, it made me think of all the other friends I had had since 1941 and how many are no longer with us.

Susie Loundon was the most natural blonde I ever knew! Susie went to Australia with her firm on the £10 scheme. She got married and had two children but tragically, she and her husband were killed in a traffic accident quite a few years ago now.

Jean Raymond née Barbour contacted me out of the blue in the 1980s – a lovely surprise. We kept in touch by telephone and letters until she died in the 1990s.

Maureen (Pip) Wilson née Phillips caught up with me again in 1994 and it was lovely sharing our memories. Pip often came home with me when we were stationed at Donibristle as I lived in Methil, Fife. She had not been keeping well and passed away in 1996.

Molly Pike née Mapp made contact with me through the *Lioness*. We kept up our friendship by telephone and had a holiday together. She arranged a reunion in 1999 but sadly died in 2002 of cancer.

Joan Coker née Polden and I had kept in touch since we met in 1941: sometimes a PC or a birthday card but always a long letter at Christmas. I once spent a fortnight with her and we had a lovely time remembering the past. Joan suddenly died in the early 2000s.

Edie Nash née Scott and I became close friends in about 1942. She came from Peterculter near Aberdeen but we lost touch in 1948. In 1985, my niece asked me to go to Aberdeen with her as she was going for an interview to specialise in children's nursing. While there, I looked Edie up in the local telephone book, found her number and gave her a call. She was quite amazed! Edie, Bill, her husband, and I met up several times and it was very sad when they died within a year of each other in 2006/2007.



Eileen Belsey, Spotter and Telephonist 455 Bty

Eileen Belsey and I were firm friends from 1941 until she died on 1 November last year. I visited her many times and kept in touch by telephone. Although not in good health for many years, she was always cheery and

we spoke a lot about our Army days, the dances we used to go to and all the friends we had made.

On reading this, it makes me realise that every day is a bonus and I am very grateful for the other friends I still keep in touch with. They include: Milly Edwards née Lodge from Leigh on Sea in Essex and Gladys Fox from Bromley and their photographs are below. Also, I am in touch with Peggy Reid née Curtis from Hawkhurst in Kent, May Jamieson née Meikle from Linlithgow, West Lothian and Sue Goodall OBE who was one of our officers and comes from Glamorgan.



Milly Lodge, Spotter and Telephonist 455 Bty



Gladys Fox, Predictor 455 Bty

It would be wonderful if there were other ladies from 455 Bty who are reading this and would like to get in touch with me.

Editor: If you ever needed any encouragement to send that letter or make that phone call to someone you have lost touch with then this must be it!

MEMORIES OF EXETER AND A MIXED OCTU!

Mrs Ursula Troke née Merrill, W/366510
Flat 1 Grace Darling House, 9 Vallis Close,
Poole BH15 1XY



VE Day in Exeter

Courtesy of the Express and Echo

The ATS girls employed with the RAPC were accommodated in hostels until 1945. Ours (Nancherrow) was troubled with rats and we were placed on the lodging list in 1944. Four of us were lucky to find a home with a Mrs Young who had three daughters who were away from home – one in the WAAF, one in the WRNS and one was a policewoman. On VE Day, three ATS and a friend, the WAAF and the Wren went to dance on the Exeter ruins in front of the Theatre Royal. Everyone was dancing in the streets that day! The six girls swapped hats to dance the “Palais Glide” and a passing friend took this snap which appeared in the Express and Echo in May 1945.

In 2002, a book was published titled “Exeter Burning” and one page referred to the Holloway Street raid on 30 December 1942. As one of the RAPC offices was damaged in this raid, I wrote to the editor of Nostalgia (a supplement to the Express and Echo) to clarify the number of planes involved and their target. I included a copy of the photograph taken on VE Day. Since then, it has appeared in several editions of E & E whenever the Exeter blitz is mentioned. The last time was in 2007 – the 65th anniversary of the raid.

In spring 1946, the gardens of High Leigh Hall, Cheshire, the home of the RAPC OCTU, were especially pretty with primroses and bluebells. (*Editor: The journal of the RAPC Association is called Primrose and Blue!*) Gathered there were nineteen ATS, mainly senior NCOs, who had served in Regimental Pay Offices throughout the country during the War. The War Office had decided that these girls could now be commissioned as “Paymistresses”. It is believed that the RAPC OCTU at High Leigh Hall was, therefore the only mixed OCTU in the country.

There were two intakes that spring. Before No1 course departed, a farewell dinner was held and the top table was decorated with primroses and bluebells and the other two “legs” were decked with rhododendrons in a wide range of colours from white through pink to purple. Then the nineteen officer cadets went off for a month to join the ATS OCTU at Windsor. We were very fortunate that the then Princess Elizabeth took the Parade. We were so proud that she especially mentioned the nineteen female RAPC Officers.



Princess Elizabeth inspects the Parade at Windsor OCTU in June 1946. Captain Mary Matheson, Course Instructor, is on the left.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION REMINDERS

Are you an annual member? If so, your membership runs out at the end of September. If you belong to a geographical Branch, please you're your Secretary or Treasurer your subscription renewal in good time. If you belong to Headquarters Branch then you must send your subscription directly to WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester SO21 2RG.

Cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association and arrive as soon as possible after 1 October.

It is very important that you renew your membership in good time. If you leave it too late, you will not receive your *Lioness* at the right time and it will cost more in money and time to update your membership records accordingly and to post out your *Lioness*.

PLEASE HELP US TO ENSURE YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS KEPT UP TO DATE

PS Why not become a Life Member and then you will not need to worry about renewing your subscription each year? A bargain at £50. Why not ask your family and friends to club together and buy it for your Christmas or Birthday?

News from Overseas Members

NEWS FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Joyce Seward née Winter
Unit 32 – 6 Sepia Court, Rockingham,
Western Australia 6168
e-mail: jeseward@optusnet.com.au

Belated New Year greetings on what should be quite a year – is it not the 70th Anniversary of the formation of the ATS? We wonder what celebrations are being planned in UK. Here in WA, much to my disappointment I do not think there will be any big celebration. Health, age, transport problems do rather preclude anything BIG – but I expect our little bunch will celebrate in some small way.

Our first get together this year saw two new ex-WRAC members join us – Vera Price née Poole (Feb 1959 Clk) and Driver Jean Ryan née Ward (Shorncliffe then FARELF where she got married). We were thrilled to meet them. Both were friends whilst serving, one being bridesmaid to the other, but then they lost touch only to meet up quite accidentally out here.

Also we again were blessed with a visit from Nina Garnham from London Branch. This was her fourth annual visit to us. What a wonderful energetic person she is – we are looking forward to her visit next year!

Last, but no means least we welcomed Vera Fras whom I have “dubbed” WRAC Extraordinaire, being not only ex-WRAC but also ex-WRAAF, ex-WRAAC and ex-NZWRAC! Her history in the Services is unique and I have taken the opportunity to enclose a brief account, together with photos of her in all her different Service uniforms. We found it interesting and hope that you will too.

Again, thank you for a wonderful publication which we look forward to most eagerly.

God Bless you all.

P.S. Looking at Vera's photo taken outside Sgts' Quarters in Guildford, I received a shock – they were so palatial so different from that forming the background of this photo of myself and Billy Galloway taken in 1950!



Sgt Joyce Winter (“Tubby”), Clk GD holding Sgt ‘Billy’ Galloway (the “little” one), Training Sgt, 3 Coy

W/410671 WO2 VERA WALKER – WRAC EXTRAORDINAIRE

Joyce Seward née Winter
32/6 Sepia Court, Rockingham, Western Australia 6168
e-mail: jeseward@optusnet.com.au

I recently met a WRAC Extraordinaire – W/410671 WO2 Vera Walker. Now what makes this person so different, you might wonder? Well, who amongst us can boast that over a period of twenty-four years, sixteen were spent in four different Military Services? I feel sure you cannot, but Vera can.

Born in New South Wales she lived there until the age of three when her parents moved to live in Western Australia. Here, as a young girl during WW2, she enlisted into the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) on 5 April 1944 – Service No: 113177. After two years service, she was discharged on 26 March 1946 as ACW Clerk Librarian.



Vera in the WAAAF 1944/45 – second from right

After six years in Civvy Street Vera was drawn back to Service life, so, on 14 January 1952, Vera again enlisted, changing the colour of her uniform from blue to khaki to that of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps



Vera, on the left in her WRAAC uniform in 1952

(WRAAC). She was now F5/24 Pte Walker, again classified as a Clerk. By the time of her discharge on 17 April 1956 Vera had been promoted to the rank of Sergeant.

Then the travel bug must have hit her, for a few months later we find Vera disembarking from a ship in New Zealand, where upon the dockside she spies a large Recruiting Poster – Join the NZWRAC. Yes, off she goes and does just that, entering the Service on 3 December 1957, having to remember her new Army Number – 38275 – and again resuming her Clerical duties. Reverting to Private on enlistment, she had been promoted to Corporal by the time she left on 24 December 1960.



WO2 Vera Walker in WRAC uniform awaiting discharge in 1968

One might think she had enough of Service life, but not Vera. She decided to enquire about joining the WRAC, so wrote to the War Office and was told that if she found her way to Singapore, Jamaica or Nairobi in Kenya she would be able to enlist there. Considering the options, she decided upon East Africa, and got a passage to Nairobi. Once more she signs on the dotted line and enlisted on 21 February 1961 as W/410671 Cpl Vera Walker and is immediately posted to Tripoli as a clerk. During her two years there, she was sent to UK for "Recruit training" – more as an observer than a trainee. From Tripoli, Vera was posted to UK, promoted to Sgt and found herself for the next year working in Bovington, Dorset before her next posting was approved – Singapore for two years! Upon completion of this period, Vera is posted back to UK to spend a year working with the Parachute Regiment at Aldershot before getting transferred to Guildford. But not for long, as again she was to be posted overseas – to Aden. Because of the political situation this was only a three month posting and she returned to Guildford to await her final discharge from Service life as WO2 Vera Walker. Upon her discharge on 26 February 1968 Vera was given a travel warrant back to where she enlisted – Nairobi, which was about halfway home!

Having reached home Vera 'settled' and eventually became Mrs Vera Fras. I met her through my "Reunion Notice" in our West Australian daily paper, when I published details of our quarterly Coffee Morning/Get together for Lunch. Having heard her details of her extraordinary Service Life I thought it would interest others. If there is anyone who knew Vera and would like to re-establish contact with her, they can contact me at my address above.

Vera's Military Medals include:

Service in WRAAF – Australian Service Medal 1939-45 Medal

Service in WRAAC – Australian Defence Medal

Service in WRAC – Campaign Southern Arabia with Bar for Malaysian Service

Pingat Jasa Malaysian Medal – for service in Singapore during period of Emergency

GREETINGS FROM AUCKLAND

Mrs Joyce Taylor née Prichard, W/366235

3A Wairau Road, Takapuna, Auckland, New Zealand

e-mail: joytaylor@paradise.net.nz

We are only a small group of seven ATS and one WRAC (me) but we manage to meet once a month. At our January meeting, Iris Boyter gave a good account of the reunion at Blackpool and also the November Parade in London. We join in with the NZWAAC's for their functions, although they also are a fairly small group. We also have a combined lunch with the ex-WRENS and ex-WAAF's once a year.

I was issued a green uniform in 1953 at Catterick while on a Cipher course. We also had the most hideous berets designed by Aage Tharrup – cloth that when wet flopped all over the place. I think Catterick was "tryout" Camp as the eventual green uniform was a bit different.

We would be delighted to meet anyone visiting relatives in Auckland.

I VISITED OUR OVERSEAS MEMBERS IN PERTH

Jean McKay Simmons, W/388373

3 Fir Tree Avenue, Auckley, Doncaster DN9 3EY

I joined the WRAC in October 1954 and served until 1959. I was very lucky and was posted first to Catterick and then Aldershot and after that to Egypt and Cyprus.

I recently had a holiday in Perth, Western Australia and had the good fortune to meet up with about 15 ex-ATS and WRAC ladies who meet every three months. We had a lovely lunch in the ANZAC Club and sat and had a good natter about the old days. I had never met any of them before but they were really friendly and made me feel most welcome. They said just to ring the next time I was out there – quite often actually as my sister lives there!

They said that they had been featured in *Lioness* 1/08 (page 34) so I read about them when I got home. My sincere thanks go to Joyce Seward who invited me.



Ladies who lunch in Perth – the one in Western Australia

Reminiscences of the WRAC

MEMORIES OF TWO WRAC POSTED TO 28 COY WRAC HQ MEC STEAMER POINT, ADEN (1965-1967)

Mrs Anne Workman née Scott
7 Cuikenburn, Penicuik, Midlothian EH26 0JG

Miss Catherine Corley
30 Rokeby Street, Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 3RH

In late 1965 or early 1966, the girls of 28 Coy WRAC were asked to give up one half day a week to help the soldiers on the checkpoints to search Arab women who worked on the base, or who went through the various checkpoints in Aden. This was to see if they were carrying small arms and bits and pieces concealed on their persons underneath the layers of clothing they wore which could be used to make small bombs etc. The girls always worked in pairs taking turns to search the women.



Pte Anne Scott



Pte Catherine Corley

These photographs were taken in 1966 and show us sitting at the entrance to RAF Steamer Point waiting for the Arab women who worked on the base to come through the checkpoint. It was a very hot day and little insects from the tree were annoying us – not very nice.

Catherine remembers having three unnerving incidents while on her searching duties. The first was a woman spitting on her and shouting insulting names in Arabic at her. The second time was when she went to search a woman who then went for Catherine and gave her a nasty scratch to her cheek and a bite to her arm. Whilst searching her shopping, Catherine found a thermos flask and remembered in time not to unscrew the top. She gave the flask to one of the soldiers on guard duty! The third incident was seeing a book with the middle cut out containing explosives. Such devices were designed to explode when opened but this one obviously hadn't worked.

My experiences were not so scary. I remember going with Cpl Jean Whittaker and armed guards in an open Land Rover over the causeway. We were travelling at great speed to one of the checkpoints and I had to hold onto my beret and hold down my skirt at the same time – there were no seat belts then! The second time I was on duty with LCpl Pat France. Because there had been a security incident, we were flown to the checkpoint in a Sioux helicopter – no doors and we had to wear men's trousers and shirts. It was an experience I will never forget, flying over white houses with their flat roofs (ideal for sunbathing) and ornate walling which surrounded their houses. Initially, the Arab women wouldn't let us search them because we were wearing trousers but we finally managed to convince them that we were ladies. When we had finished we were taken back to Steamer Point in a metal covered truck. They were very dark inside and I cannot remember exactly what they were called but I was glad when we were dropped off at our compound.

My final searching duty was just before I came home after finishing an 18-month posting. Again I was on duty with Cpl Jean Whittaker but this time the RSM came along as well. The soldiers stopped a small truck (I called them moving bedsteads because of the fancy metal work which covered them) and said, "You'll be alright ladies; there are only four women to search." In fact there were seven – he hadn't seen the other three who had been sitting on the floor – an old lady and six younger women. We searched the first five then Jean checked a tall woman who said an Arabic word when she had finished searching her, but it was the way she said it which made us smile. Then it was my turn to search the old lady. When I had finished searching her she said we were "very nice girls" and if we went with her she would look after us very well. At that moment, the RSM appeared and we both said we worked for her and said we were sorry we couldn't take up her kind offer or words to that effect.

It was a very dangerous time but I am glad that we

helped albeit in a small way to keep people safe. But it wasn't all doom and gloom – we had picnics and sun bathing on the many beaches, nights at the pictures, dancing at the Mermaid Club and the Two and One Club, plus R&R for two weeks at the Silver Sands Leave Centre in Mombassa to look forward to, but that is another story.

Editor: Look forward to reading it!

BOVINGTON REUNION 2007

Mrs Jan Burchett-Vass née Veness, W/425624
Hi-Holmne, Station Road, Old Leake, Boston,
Lincolnshire PE22 9QQ

On September 17th 2007, forty years since we had last all been together, Josie Tyson (Catherwood), Christine Hardman (Green), Janet Burchett-Vass (Veness), plus husbands, Lesley Annable, Jean Gray and Bert Davidson met at the guardroom of Stanley Barracks, Bovington Camp, Dorset. We were delighted to be joined by Gladys Pope who also had been stationed at Bovington, for what turned out to be a truly brilliant day. The lads certainly pulled out all the stops for us starting with coffee and biscuits in the Officers' Mess with the man who made it all possible – Captain Graham Hynde (known as "Dancer", would love to know how this nickname came about!), followed by a tour of the camp, a go at driving a tank simulator then free run of the tanks. We climbed inside and outside, took photos and relived old memories. Then we had lunch in the Officers' Mess, a lovely meal followed by an escorted journey (tank in front and tank at the rear) to the Gunnery School at Lulworth where Lesley had a go at firing a gun on a simulator, successfully blowing up a tank. After that it was back to our hotel to get showered and changed for a well earned and long awaited pint in the NAAFI.



*Rear: Michael Burchett-Vass. Back Row: Lesley Annable, Christine & Cliff Hardman, Bert Davidson.
Front Row: Josie Tyson, Janet Burchett-Vass, Jean Gray and Gladys Pope*



Josie Tyson, Jean Gray, Lesley Annable, Gladys Pope, Janet Burchett-Vass and Christine Hardman

The Camp has changed little over the years, apart from the barbed wire everywhere and more civilians than you could shake a stick at, but it was sad to see our old block in such a state of disrepair – windows hanging out and doors hanging off, totally unsafe and due for demolition the following week but we didn't let it spoil what was otherwise a wonderful reunion and we look forward to the next one.

SOUTH EAST DISTRICT ASSAULT COURSE CHAMPIONS

Jane Freebairn, Editor

This photograph was kindly sent in by Jill Trainor, Treasurer, Salisbury Branch and an ex 'Signaller'. The photograph was taken "around 1980" and shows the winning South East District WRAC Assault Course team competing under the 3 Sqn 10 Sig Regt Flag.



L-R standing: Pte Duffield, Pte May, Pte Silversides, Pte Mulholland. L-R seated: Lt Cooper, LCpl McBroom, Capt Cunningham and Cpl McGrath

I HAVE DISCOVERED POSTAL BRANCH REUNIONS

Mrs Pat Carter née Sgt Hanna, W/418392
4 Partridge Close, Worle, Weston-super-Mare BS22 8TY

After training in early 1963, I was stationed first in Richmond Park then onto Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill. I was in 12 Coy WRAC and worked in the Postal Depot.



Pat Hanna in the mid sixties

I got married in 1968 and apart from one visit back to the Camp and keeping in touch with my section lance corporal and full corporal all these years, none of us had any more contact with the WRAC. Sad I think especially now when I see all these associations and reunions and how happy everyone is and how long they have all been meeting. What have I been missing all these years? I didn't even know at the time, until I saw a news report, that the WRAC was to be disbanded and women recruited directly into male Corps.

My husband and I moved from Royal Leamington Spa, where we had lived for 30 years and brought up our four children, to Weston-Super-Mare. My daughter had gone onto Friends Reunited and found an old school pal so she told me to try going onto the Forces Reunited site, which I did. Low and behold I had a lovely e-mail from my unit Warrant Officer, Margaret Grant. It was wonderful to hear from her and she invited me to join the WRAC Postal Branch Association. I did, and went to my first 'Reunion' in Kendal in October 2006.

I was very apprehensive but shouldn't have been. Margaret came and greeted me and looked after me during the first evening. I didn't know anyone else there but it was really nice to talk to everyone and hear all about when they were at the postal depot or their postings abroad. I felt really welcome, made new friends and am very proud that I have met such wonderful people and now belong to such a vast association.

I also went last year to the Harrogate Postal Reunion where I subscribed to this wonderful magazine. Unfortunately I won't be able to attend our reunion this year in Glasgow which I am very disappointed about but - I'LL BE BACK next year for more fun, food, chat and games!!

SGTS COURSE, WRAC COLLEGE, CAMBERLEY - MAY 1973

Avril Williams
Branch Secretary, Cambridge Branch

Does this bring back happy memories? I am in the back row, second from the right. Mary Linnegan is in the centre of the back row. Hers is the only name I can recall apart from the senior ranks and officers on the front row.

Second from left CSM Marie Templeman, third Lt Col Audrey Purton, fourth Major A E Herdman-Grant, fifth Brigadier Anne Field and next to her RSM Agnes Doig. Then Captains Jane Neeve and Kathy ????



LINCOLN & DISTRICT BRANCH WRAC ASSOCIATION

Chris Corker
8 Grounds Court, Broadfield Lane, Boston,
Lincs PE21 8DU



Sgt's Course



Platoon photo - July 1965

Reference the photograph which was published on Page 44 of *Lioness* 1/08. The lady on the far right of the middle row of the Sgts' Course was in my initial training platoon. The platoon photo (from which I am absent as I was on interview for something or other and when I returned I had missed it!) was taken in July 1965 and the encircled is Dean ? (6th from the right of the first row standing)

Her Christian name was very unusual for a woman but her surname just evades me at present; but it may yet come to me. I remember her well as she was in my room along with Margaret Baker and Kathy Bain and we were 1 Company, 2 Platoon. She was from Broadstairs, Kent and was 32 years old. She was in the TA as a Corporal and was changing to a Type 'R' engagement and had to go through the 6 weeks basic training. Needless to say she was amazing as she knew all the tricks regarding uniform and bulling shoes. We were the best-turned out platoon for ages. The girls used to queue in the corridor outside our room for lessons. I'll let you know if I remember her name.

WRAC CENTRE 1965

Mrs Wendy McGrath née Crawley, W/425215
e-mail: Wendy76@btinternet.com



Guildford 1965

I am seated 4th from the right. The people who signed my photograph are: SSgt G Williams, LCpl Lambert, LCpl James, Ros, C J Davies (Fred), Stevie, Lyne, Geraldine Leadbetter (Gerry), Ann Whale (Fish). How has life treated you all?

On leaving Guildford I went to Yeovil for a driver training course. I was then posted to 3 York Platoon, 20 Indep Coy, Imphal Barracks, York as a staff car driver and Signal dispatch driver. A short while later I was offered a position in my first trade choice as a Kennelmaid/Ridergroom attached to the RAVC at Melton Mowbray. The Officer Commanding was Capt Lesley Kingham. I left Melton to get married in 1968. Our youngest son decided to join the Army. When he went to swear his 'Oath of Allegiance to the Queen' and sign on in 1986, I accompanied him to St Albans recruitment office. The Officer behind the desk was no other than my OC at Melton Mowbray but now Maj Lesley Kingham. How is that for coincidence? Does anyone know how she is now?

My son is now a SSgt in the Royal Anglians nearing his 22 years. He has served one tour of Iraq and is currently on tour in Afghanistan until November 2008.

PINGAT JASA MALAYSIA (MALAYSIAN SERVICE MEDAL)

There were many WRAC who served in Malaya/Malaysia between the 31 August 1957 and 12 August 1966. If you served for 90 days during that period you are entitled to the Pingat Jasa Malaysia (Malaysian Service Medal).

Application forms can be obtained from:

Mr Fred Burden
National Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association
44 Meadgate Avenue
Great Baddow
Chelmsford CM2 7LQ

Completed forms should be returned to Fred Burden at the above address, enclosing 2 postage stamps with your application.

The PJM is awarded posthumously to the next of kin; application forms for Posthumous Awards should be obtained from Fred Burden at the above address.

WRAC INTERNATIONAL REGISTER

The Register continues to grow, albeit slowly at the moment, with members in America, Australia, Canada, Eire, France, Germany, Isle of Wight, Jersey, New Zealand, Northern Ireland and Spain.

The new Register is up and running and includes details of postings – where known. I feel that it is now easier to read and hopefully user friendly when it comes to finding names or army numbers that you might know.

By the time you read this I will have compiled/despached a newsletter and a list of additions, 2007-2008, which I hope to have published in June/July.

Thanks to everyone who took the time to write or ring to tell me their new address – it really was appreciated. Once again if you have moved house would you contact me so I can change your records and keep you up to date.

If you would like more information on how to join the Register, then please contact me on any of the following:

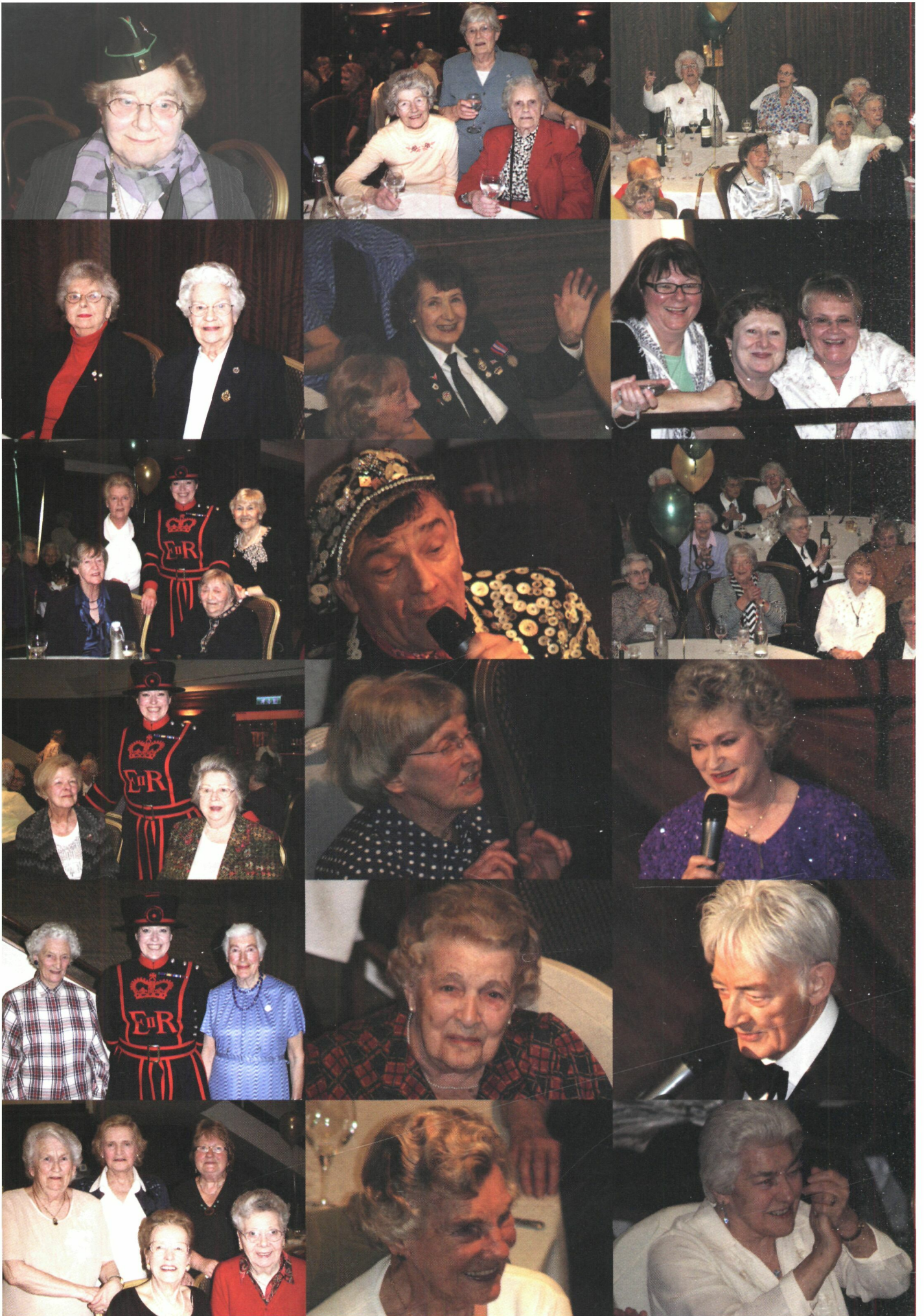
Write to: E Ann Deakin, 14 Ash Rise,
Ashflatts Lane, Stafford ST17 9HE

Telephone: 01785 249992
e-mail: annlives@hotmail.co.uk

ATS 70TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

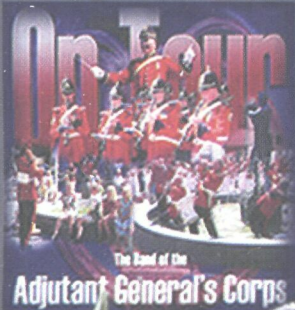
Editor: I am very grateful to Major Leona Jones AGC (SPS) who kindly took the photographs at the Victory Services Club. Those of you who were there will recognise yourselves and I hope that those who were unable to attend may be able to share the enjoyment of the occasion albeit through the photographs.







"ON TOUR"
The new CD from the
Band of the Adjutant General's Corps



To listen and order your copy go to:
www.agcband.co.uk



STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

WRAC DINNER CLUB

**The next WRAC Dinner will be
held on Saturday 4 October at
the Adelphi Hotel,
Ranelagh Place, Liverpool**

The cut off date for applications for
the Dinner is 6 September 2008.
However, if you still wish to go,
please ring Carrole Gorman on
01978 846122. There may be a
chance of a last minute booking.

Where Are You Now?

GRACE LONG née MADELEY



L-R: Renee (Gerry) aged 18, Flo (aged 22), Grace (aged 22) & Faith (aged 21)

This photo was taken outside the cookhouse in 1941/42 at Lenham, Kent. It was an RASC depot where soldiers came for respite. Grace Long (née Madeley) would love to hear from Renee (Gerry) German, Flo Durrant and Faith? (possibly Brown). Please contact Grace via Mrs Chris Corker, 8 Grounds Court, Broadfield Lane, Boston, Lincs PE21 8DU. Tel: 01205 353246 or e-mail: Corker3@aol.com.

TOGETHER AGAIN AFTER 43 YEARS

Mrs Alma Peters née Benson (Benny), W/374502
9 James Place, Tottenham, London N17 8NR



Benny and Skippy at Bicester

I am enclosing two photographs taken 53 years apart. The group was taken outside Eisenhower V 4 Camp WRAC Bicester 1952-1954. I am the one with the beret and the blonde with her head down is Skippy Rowell. We have always been in contact with each other over the

years. We last met in 1964 when she came to visit me at my home in London.



Skippy and Benny 53 years later!

Last year 2007, I went to Bournemouth for a holiday and, as she lives in Hampshire, we decided to meet up. We spent a lovely day together and the above photograph was taken that day. As for the rest of the group, if they are out there please get in touch, we would love to hear from you – Rona Mooney (with broom), Sylvia ?, Gina Pope and Shirley?

My details are above and Skippy's contact details are: Miss Barbara Rowell, 8 Somerville Court, Marryot Road, New Milton, Hampshire H25 5JB

DID YOU SERVE WITH IRENE MUIR?

Mrs Irene Crouch née Muir, W/374065
201 Hinchcliffe, Orton Goldhay PE2 5RH



Irene Muir in 1951

I enclose a photograph of myself taken at the beginning of my training in 1951. I have not met anybody since I was discharged in 1954 on marriage to my husband who passed away 12 years ago. I served in Wilton, Hong Kong and BAOR and would love to hear from anyone who remembers me.

CHILWELL 1944-45

Mrs Cynthia M Needham née Thornton, W/257038
39 Barkham Close, Cheddington, Beds LU7 0RT



Chilwell

Would you please enclose this photograph of my Unit in the *Lioness* as I am still trying to find some of the girls I was with? This was taken at Chilwell Garrison, 1944-45. I am the first person on the right of front row.

A DRIVER CALLED "BLONDIE"

Mrs Marjorie Monkman née Abrahams
24 Hill Rise, Ruislip, Middlesex HA4 7JL



"Blondie" seated on the motorbike with Joyce Beardsley

I was 87 in May 2008 and would like to hear from any girls who knew me as a driver. I passed my driving test on a K2 Ambulance 65 years ago in Camberley and I still drive one for the Military Vehicles Trust of which I am an active member! I would like to hear from anyone who remembers me. Although my name was Marjorie, I was always known as "Blondie". I had several postings including Foremark Hall, Kedleston Hall and Beaumanor. One of the jobs I had there was to drive the Morse code operators to and from Garats Hay to Beaumanor. I used to also post letters for them. When I finished that task, I would be called upon to drive any other vehicle including 30cwt trucks. Sometimes I even had to change into a skirt to drive a staff car!

I also wonder if anyone might have a photograph of our training course at Guildford in 1941? It would be great if I could see a copy again after all these years.

WHERE ARE ALL THE W/369...s?

Mrs Madge Evans née Grundy, W/369015
15 Laburnum Grove, Luton LU3 2DW

Where are all the 369s?
There should be quite a few
Who joined in October 50
But I only know of two

That's Major Kathleen Hughes and me
I got married – she served on
We agree there's lots of others
But we can't find where they've gone

Where are Renny, Joyce and Doreen
Where has Lucy gone to ground?
They cannot all have 'popped their clogs'
There must be some around.

We all are clocking on a bit
I'm fat, and my hair is grey
So, if you joined up same time as us
Please ring me and say "hey"
If you recall Madge Grundy
Please get in touch with me.
My number's 01582 617313

Guildford: Oct-Nov 1950 Gresford: Nov 50-Jan 51
Hounslow: Jan 51-Jan 52 Singapore: Feb 52-Aug 53

SEARCHING FOR STAFF CLERK FRIENDS

Mrs Linda Lambourne née Collins, W/458114
155 Magennis Close, Gosport, Hampshire PO13 9XL
Tel: 07731 967150

I would very much like to contact anyone who served with me in 29 Coy WRAC Rheindahlen BFPO 40.

I would just like to say if there is anyone who remembers me, I would love to hear from them. Friends I remember are "Tia Maria" Murray who worked in the QM Department Rheindahlen in 1980, also Debbie Healey née White who I worked alongside in the Army Legal Service Headquarters.

**SEARCHING FOR BERYL MATTEN OR ANYONE
ELSE WHO KNEW VIOLET MAY GENNER**

Beryl A Scholl

4272 Dillingersville Road, Zionsville, Pennsylvania 18092,
USA

Tel: (International code first) 610 965 6678

e-mail: www.britishrose66@gmail.com



Violet May Genner

My mother, Violet May Genner, and I believe her friend Beryl Matten, were stationed in Northampton first, then in the Colchester area around 1941 to 1943 (approximately). Violet's Army number was W/238448.

Beryl Matten worked in the Army Office and may have married and become Beryl Nichols living in the St Albans area. My mother worked in the Mess hall and cooked outside on tin stoves and may have had several different jobs because I think she had to be moved several times because she did not enjoy strong health. She was hospitalised for several months in hospitals in Colchester and Romford.

I would very much like to speak to anyone who knew her – it's so very important. She passed away two years ago and I'm looking for someone else in her family. I am her daughter who lived with and took care of her here in America. Even if you didn't know her very well or think your information is insignificant PLEASE contact me as soon as possible.

DID YOU KNOW PRIVATE PHYLLIS BACON?

W/77541 Private Phyllis Bacon lost her life in an air crash over the Mediterranean on 4 October 1945. She was returning to Pomigliano, Italy when the plane in which she and fifteen other members of the ATS were travelling, was lost with all aboard.

Pte Bacon joined the ATS in Norwich on 21 August 1941 and trained at Glen Parva. She served in:

9 Signals Coy, D Coy SYA, A Coy Shrivenham, A Coy 133 OCTU, B Coy 41 AA Bde, C Coy 41 Bde, No 1 WO Holding Unit, Draft RQAK, Disembarked 16 May 1944, BNAF X(4) List, B Platoon 600 Coy, B Platoon 603 Coy, O Platoon 602 Coy, HQ 600 Coy.



Private Bacon's granddaughter is seeking information.

Please contact the Secretary of the Norfolk Branch: Joan Awbery – 01603 455070

W/74430 PRIVATE ELSIE FLORENCE SWIFT

Mrs Glenis B Burton

24 Hallam Road, Mapperley, Nottingham NG3 6HP

Tel: 01159 504 759

glenisbburton@btinternet.com



*Elsie Florence
Swift*

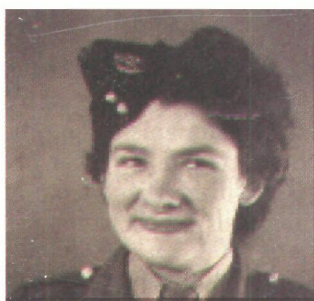
I am trying again to find out any information about my mother. I had no luck last time so this time I am including the only photograph I have. It is not very clear but I do hope it will jog someone's memory.

I would be delighted to hear from anyone who served with my mother, Elsie Swift. She enrolled in August 1941 and was posted to No 2 Training Centre. From there she went to 43rd Kent Platoon "M" Company and seemed to spend most of her service in East Lancashire Group. After a short stay in Scottish Command Holding Unit, she was posted to 8 Training and holding Unit in South Wigston where she worked as an assistant cook until her discharge in April 1944.

I am sorry for the quality of the photograph but I would be really grateful if anyone reading the *Lioness* who might have served with my mother and might have another one would contact me.

FRIENDS OF SHIRLEY MORROW NÉE FARQUAR

Mrs Lynda Birch
8 Garden Grove, Edgewater, WA 6027
Western Australia
birch@iinet.net.au



*Shirley
Morrow
née Farquar*

The above photograph is the only one I have of my mother in uniform. I have these other photographs which belonged to her and, as she is now no longer with us, I wondered if any of your readers would be interested in having them. I am afraid that I do not know any of the people on them but would be delighted if I could send them to someone for whom they do have a special significance. The only information I have is what is written on the back of each photograph as shown below.



28 January 1946



Laura Smith G Coy ATS, The Dale Chester June 1946



No marks on the back

WRAC SWEATSHIRTS FOR SALE

Bottle Green Sweatshirts, Polo shirts and
T-shirts embroidered with the WRAC
badge

Sizes 36 – 46

Other colours available

Also
Knitted WRAC Dolls

Price list and further information from:
Miss B P Butcher,
15 Westwood Drive, Swanpool, Lincoln
Tel: 01522 878413

Reunions

AGM - SCOTLAND

marcroft@talktalk.net

Saturday 18 October 2008 is the date when Scotland is to hold their AGM in Perth for members of the Association! Tickets can be obtained from Branch Secretaries. But those members who would like to attend and no longer have a branch, please contact the Secretary, Susan Marcroft on 01556 611944 for further information. We would love to see you there!

ATS DINNER CLUB

Mrs Audrey Juby, Chairman

On 8 May 2008, at the Victory Services Club, the Annual Luncheon of the ATS Dinner Club was very well attended and a splendid meal was greatly appreciated. As usual there was the pleasure of meeting old friends, exchanging reminiscences and catching up on current news and activities.

It was apparent from the general conversation that we had selected a rather inappropriate day – not only was it a Bank Holiday weekend, but most of the train services were delayed, cancelled, or they otherwise misbehaved, and there were many tales of hardships endured! I am sure not many could equal my record of taking almost 7 hours to get home from Liverpool Street to Norwich. Travel by road between Ipswich and Stowmarket added to the tedium – but not only that – the train broke down!

However it gave me plenty of time to recall the events of the day and to remember the comments of members who agreed that everyone had an enjoyable reunion.

The majority also confirmed that, as last year's holiday at Blackpool had been so successful, that was the place they wanted to go to again. So we have booked at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool, Monday to Friday, 22nd to 26th September. We hope for a good attendance and that, whatever the weather, it will be an enjoyable holiday.

REPORT OF THE SOUTH AND SOUTH WEST AREA REUNION ON 17 MAY 2008

Mrs Betty Keating, Chairman Bath Branch

The reunion hosted by Bath Branch proved to be a very happy occasion attended by just over 100 members. We were astounded that so many members attended and on behalf of the Branch thank you all for your support.

The large raffle raised the tremendous amount of £242 which is being donated towards the *Lioness* costs. Thank you for all your prizes, donations and the hard work of the committee and members – well done.

Editor: The donation to the Lioness Fund was very welcome so "Thank you" to everyone who attended the Reunion and contributed so generously.



Air Marshal Sir Peter Norris speaking to Maj (Retd) Maskens-McIntyre and Mrs Betty Keating

Our guest speaker was Air Marshal Sir Peter Norris who spoke most eloquently on the trials and tribulations of our Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan and the problems keeping pace with new technology. Sir Peter presented our long serving Treasurer, Miss Pam Finney, with an Association Certificate of Appreciation.

The venue of the Bath Football Club provided an excellent buffet lunch and one of our members, Kay Rolfe, made a cake topped by a replica of the ATS statue all done in sugarcraft – a work of art.



Kay Rolfe's work of art

**WRAC BAND REUNION
LITTLECOTE HOUSE 11-13 JUNE 2008**

Mrs Ann Jones née Hiscox,
97 Queensdale Crescent, Knowle Park, Bristol BS4 2TS
Tel: 0117 9406185

All twenty-three of us (including guests) arrived and immediately discovered ex-bandswomen we had not seen for 50 years – and that was the start of a very long gossip! The setting was lovely. Littlecote House is a well preserved house with quite a history including Henry VIII's "dalliances" with several ladies including Jane Seymour. Several rooms are named after the ladies and can be rented. The grounds are lovely and just what is needed for a pleasant stroll after so much good food. There are some Roman remains including a very well preserved mosaic and a marvellous collection of chickens of all colours and types – the eggs were delicious.

The reunion was very successful and I have been asked to arrange another. Maybe in 2010 but PLEASE will any Band ladies out there, please ask to be allocated to the Band Branch or else let me know directly. Otherwise, I cannot contact you.

The next thing is to ask if any of you would be interested in putting a group together for the Grand Reunion in Blackpool. After all, it is the 60th Anniversary of the Formation of the WRAC and it would be tremendous if we could do something there. I have six already so just let me know if you would be willing to join in.

May I thank those who donated a gift for the Tombola. I have sent a cheque to the Association and to SSAFA. I would also like to thank Edith Seabrook for announcing the Toast, Beryl Butcher for the touching farewell, Maurice Warsop for the photos and my sister, Susan Creedy, for being such an efficient taxi service!

Editor: This was obviously a very successful get together and I had several letters from ladies who wished to say "Thank You" to Ann for organising it. From those I can say that the following ex Band members were there – sorry if I miss any out but I did not have a formal list.....



Ann Jones on her 19th birthday in 1959

Jacquie Warsop née Fox told me that the age span was from Jean Houghton née Apps and herself who joined in 1949 to 1962 when Edith Seabrook and Taffy Pitten joined. Jill Hart née Breens sent an e-mail telling me that Sheila Burton née Huxley, Chad, Shirley Oldham, Margaret Kent, Carol Tyler, Joan Lewis and Tewy were there.



The "Four Basses" Ann, Chad, Jill and Carol



Group photo before the celebration dinner



Fun during dinner



The covered Roman mosaic in the grounds of Littlecote House



Littlecote House – perfect location for a reunion

IMPRESSIONS OF VETERANS' WEEK

Mrs Elsie Roberts née Guinan, W/185826
110 Norfolk Road, Wrexham LL12 7RY

Special thanks to Blackpool whose people opened their town and hearts to the thousands of veterans who attended. So many emotions were involved – reunions, memories of lost friends, camaraderie and quite a few tears!

There were thousands of Union Jacks waving in time to the Military bands and choirs. They waved as we watched tanks drive by, a Spitfire fly past and fireworks. We joined in the singsongs and rock and roll dancing and they all contributed to make a most memorable occasion.

Personally, I was so proud to be able to march on parade from the Cenotaph along the Promenade and even managing the "Eyes Right"

COPY DEADLINE

Articles for inclusion in the next edition of the *Lioness* must be received by

10 December 2008

Wedding

GOLDEN WEDDING

JOHN HURT and BRENDA HOMER
15 Hawthorn Crescent, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,
Notts NG17 8FJ



I am writing to you as I was in the WRAC from 1954 – 1957. I was stationed at WRAC School of Instruction, Huron Camp, Hindhead, Surrey – W/388297 LCpl Brenda Homer, my Husband was also on Camp. His name is John Hurt and he served in the RAOC doing his National Service. We were married on 4 April 1957 at Petersfield Registrar and celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary on 4 April 2007.

We have one daughter, 2 sons, 6 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. We have been to two reunions, one at Birmingham and one at Liphook in the Station Hotel. We returned to the Registry Office in Petersfield and stood on the same steps in 2004.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER?

The WRAC Association now has badges to denote how long you have been a member of the Association. The badges are based on a plain version of the Association badge and the silver one is for 25 years membership and the gold coloured one is for 40 years membership.



You can buy the badges from WRAC Association HQ at Worthy Down. The silver coloured ones are £3 and the gold coloured ones are £4. Cheques should be made payable to "WRAC Association".





WRAC Association Memorabilia

All items of memorabilia can be obtained from the Association Headquarters.
Please make cheques or postal orders payable to WRAC Association and forward with your order to:
WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester, Hants. SO21 2RG.

All prices include postage and packing



**Association
Badge £3.50**



**ATS Badge
£2.75**



**WRAC Badge
£2.75**



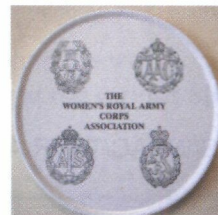
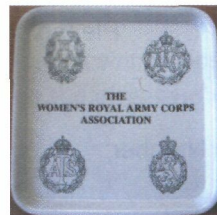
**Calculator
£3.75**



**Fridge Magnet
£2.00**



**Note Book
£1.00**



****Special Offer****
Square Tray
Sandwich Tray
Teapot Stand
All £2.50 each
****Special Offer****



**Trolley Coin
£2.00**



**PVC Coaster
£2.00**

Other Items For Sale:-

Pens	£ 2.50
Paperweights (Boxed)	£12.00
Bookmarks	£ 1.50
Bells	£ 1.50
Table Mats	£ 6.50

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the General Secretary
The WRAC Association
AGC Centre, Worthy Down,
Winchester, Hampshire
SO21 2RG



I wish to join the WRAC Association as a Life Member and enclose £50 cheque

OR

I enclose £5 cheque for Annual Membership, which is in payment
of the first annual subscription up to the 31 October

Date: Signature:

All cheques must be in **sterling** and made payable to "**The WRAC Association**"

Subscriptions include *Lioness*

Overseas members are asked to contribute an extra £3.50 a year to cover postage of *Lioness*

Please complete this form in **BLOCK LETTERS**

ATS/WRAC/TAVR Army Number: Last Rank Held:
(Present Rank if still serving)

Miss/Mrs/Ms: Surname:

Given Names: Decorations:

Surname when serving: Date of Birth:

Address for Correspondence:

.....

.....

Post Code: E-mail: Telephone No:

Units during service:

Date of Enrolment: Date of Release:

Letters to the Editor

CLOSURE OF INGLIS BARRACKS

Mrs Peggy Bush née Wells
7 Meadow Close, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 4PU

Dear Editor

I was saddened to read of the demise of Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill in *Lioness* 1/08. I lived there for nearly four years, first in a Corporals' block, then the Sergeants' Mess and finally in married quarters.

I was posted from Aden to MOD Lansdowne House, Berkeley Square in February 1966 and so was billeted at Mill Hill. I was a Lance Corporal when I arrived and was given a room in the Corporals' block opposite the Sergeants' Mess, promoted to Corporal 3 months later and then to Sergeant in August 1967 when I moved across the road. I was glad I wasn't in the other Corporals' block as that was much further away and it would have been a lengthier and more arduous job moving all my kit.

I then met my husband-to-be in October. He was in REME working at HQ London District in Horse Guards and was also housed at Inglis Barracks. We married in May 1968 and shortly afterwards moved into a married quarter – No 9 Lidbury Road if memory serves me correctly – where we lived for almost 18 months. My husband was posted to Germany in August 1969 and I followed in November after giving birth to our daughter.

I enjoyed living there, it was easy to get out into the country as well as into the city and there was a bus-stop conveniently outside the main gate as well as a station at the bottom of the hill. Yes, I have many happy memories of Inglis Barracks; I learned to drive whilst I was there, I met my husband and I even took part in the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall as well as having some really good friends.

I suppose people don't write so many proper letters any more and, as we have fewer troops around the world, scaling down of the postal services was inevitable but, a question, where do the girls who work at the various MOD establishments rest their weary bones of a night now?

THANKS TO THE MILL HILL EXCHANGE GIRLS

Mrs Mary Beeston née Allison
77 Campion House, Hobgate Road, Heath Town,
Wolverhampton WV10 0PX

Dear Editor

I would like to thank those members of the Association who have sent in their stories about their time in Mill Hill. I was stationed there myself and worked on the switchboard alongside a civilian, Mrs Mollie Childs. We became great friends. I was posted to Mill Hill from Germany because my father was very ill. He had been wounded in the First World War and had a lung removed in the 1930s. He had, what was called in those days, an open wound but he never gave up and even joined the Home Guard.

We lived in East Finchley and I lived at home travelling each day on the Underground to Mill Hill. My brother was serving with the RAF Regiment but was not allowed leave to see his father so I would like to take this opportunity to say "Thank You" to all the ATS and then WRAC who allowed me to work a 9a.m. to 5p.m. shift. If my memory serves me right, there was a Major Clark who often came into the switchboard room for a cup of tea.

When I was demobbed, I visited the sick at Mill Hill. Yes they were happy days but I always remember with gratitude those who arrived early on shift so that I could leave for home at a reasonable time. When I got married, Major Clark sent us a telegram and on 18 September this year, Fred and I will celebrate our 60th Anniversary.

TIDWORTH MUD

Mrs Irma Marriott née Sgt Loader, W/15387
3 Fairfield Place, Abingdon, OX14 1HA
Tel: 01235 525757

Dear Editor

Reading Jane Knight's (née Sandy) letter in the last *Lioness* about the Territorial Camp on Tidworth Pennings in 1939 brought back so many memories because I was also there. I remember how wet those 2 weeks were. I have never seen so much mud. It nearly put me off the ATS, but not quite. I did six and a half years and enjoyed it very much being attached to the Army Post Office for the whole of the time.

I do enjoy the *Lioness*.



Tidworth
1939

SGT GEORGE MITCHELL RAPC, FINSBURY CIRCUS, LONDON

Mrs Alice Part née Stones
Flat 27, Pennington House, St Helens Road,
Leigh, Lancashire WN7 4HW
Tel: 01942 262756

Dear Editor

When our 620/143 (M) HAA Regt disbanded in early 1945, we were transferred to the Pay Corps in London. One day a notice went up in the Canteen asking for anyone who thought they could sing to report to Sgt Mitchell. Needless to say I didn't but the "Pay Corps Choir" was born. After a while, their first radio broadcast was relayed and a few of us dashed to – I think TOC H or similar – to listen and it was great. Unfortunately I cannot remember exactly what they sang. From there they became the "Black & White Minstrels" then the "George Mitchell Singers" – then I lost track – I believe George died just a few years ago.

Does anyone remember? If so I would be interested to hear from you.

Editor: Having looked on the BBC's Website, I can tell you that George Mitchell died, age 85, on Tuesday 27 August 2002.

SHOEBURYNNESS: PROOF & EXPERIMENTAL ESTABLISHMENT (P&EE), 17TH INDEP COY WRAC

Miss Janet A James
5 York House, 18 Kew Gardens Road, Richmond,
Surrey TW9 3HF
Tel: 020 8940 4665
e-mail: janetjames@ukgateway.net

Dear Editor

When you printed my previous letter in *Lioness* 1/2008, I think that I was waiting to see if it brought forth any response(s) more in hope than expectation. But I am delighted to say that I have had five contacts as a result of the letter, from those who served at Shoeburyness both during the War and just after, and from others who perhaps are only now just beginning to enjoy their pensions!

Given that we were never a very large unit in terms of numbers, I wondered if this result might help to encourage anyone who had been thinking of writing to you but had not yet taken the plunge, not to be put off by the thought that no one they know would be reading the *Lioness* or would want to get in touch. Life can be full of nice surprises....!

Editor: Thank you so much for this. I sincerely hope it encourages many more similar articles.

HAVE YOU MOVED RECENTLY OR ARE YOU ABOUT TO MOVE?

PLEASE let us have your new address as soon as you can and help us to reduce the number of *Lioness* magazines which are returned undelivered.

Mrs/Miss Initials.....

Surname

First line and post code of old address

.....

New address:

.....

.....

.....

Post code

Tel. No.

E-mail

Send to:

WRAC Association, AGC Centre,
Worthy Down, WINCHESTER SO21 2RG

FUND RAISING

Miss Jill C S Hunt, W/401658
2 Cunningham Close, West Wickham, Kent BR4 9PJ

Dear Editor

In the last issue, I spoke about advertising in our local Age Concern for new membership. There was no response to the poster, which is sad.

I also thought about fund raising. I will consult my friends in Herne Bay, Kent about a car boot sale and garage sale (all proceeds to the *Lioness*). It will give me and my friends the incentive to clear out our lofts and garages and any other bric a brac that's not wanted.

Regarding my plea in trying to locate the Kinton Girls from 1959-1962 I have enclosed two photographs. I thought these photographs might throw a light on the matter.



CAD Kinton (1960). L-R: Bronwen Hawsworth née Ball, Jill Hunt and Evelyn Gore



Going back to the *Lioness* Magazine, the ATS have worked hard keeping the magazine going. Now it's up to us, the WRAC. Some people haven't got much to look forward to in life, so let's put a smile on their faces – KEEP THE *LIONESS* GOING.

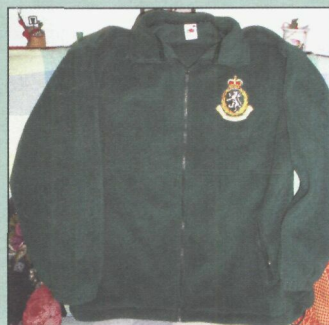
In ending this article, I would like to say: ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT THINGS TO GIVE AWAY IS KINDNESS – IT IS USUALLY RETURNED.

WRAC ASSOCIATION FLEECES FOR SALE

The WRAC Association now has a stock of dark green Fruit of the Loom fleeces embroidered with the Association badge on the left side. They are available in a range of sizes: XS,S,M,L,XL. As a rough guide, the Small is a size 16 and the Medium is a size 18 etc. They are generous in size and a good length with two zipped pockets.

Each fleece costs £25 which includes postage and packaging.

Cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association and sent to WRAC Association, Gould House, Worthy Down, WINCHESTER SO21 2RG.



Poems

WAR SERVICE

Six years of my life – an abnormal time
Unexpected, exciting, in a quite different clime
In my teens, not quite streetwise, home protection behind
Plunged in with others, new jobs – many kinds!

Eighteen – in uniform, frippery banished for years
Apprehensive in khaki, thick stockings, flat heels
Eventually comfortable – when fully kitted
Into civvies on leave – if they still fitted!

There were orders and drilling and working and worry
There was loving and hating – yet lots of good fun
For many, deep fear and heartbreak and sorrow
But the point of endeavour was to see the end come

Six years of my life! Then again complete change
Back into civvy street a little more wise
Few there I knew, comradeship gone
Another new lifestyle, all to revise

Yet it was good, I look back with nostalgia
The few friends who survive, we have common ground
A slice of my time which robbed me of salad days
But awarded me memories for the rest of life's round

Mrs H E Forrester
(Cpl Betty Ross – SOTB Trowbridge)
The Riggs, Courthill Road,
Rosemarkie
Fortrose
Ross-Shire
IV10 8UE
Tel: 01381 620537

AN ATS LAMENT

When the Lord gave out brains
I thought he said trains
And I missed mine

When He gave out looks
I thought he said books
And I did not want any

And when He gave out noses
I thought He said roses
And I ordered a big one

When He gave out legs
I thought He said kegs
And I ordered two fat ones

When He gave out ears
I thought He said beers
And I asked for two large ones

When He gave out chins
I thought He said Gins
And I ordered two doubles

Dear Lord I am in a mess!

Barbara Danter
30 Blake Road
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 5JL

THANKS FOR THE MEMORY

Thanks for the memory
The day we went to war
In Army Haute Couture
A uniform and underwear
The kind our Mothers wore
How lovely it was.

Thanks for the memory
The Army in the spring
Could make you want to sing
But the Army in December
Well now, that's another thing,
But, lucky we were.

We and our loved ones were parted
We tried not to be too down hearted.
But some of us were left broken-hearted
No tears or fuss
Hooray for us.
But thanks for the memory.

Our Army days are gone
But still we soldier on
Remembering all the good things
We have built our lives upon.
We thank you so much.

Also submitted by Barbara Danter

LIVING

Just a line to say I'm living
That I'm not amongst the dead
Though I'm getting more forgetful
And mixed up in the head
I've got used to my arthritis
To my dentures I'm resigned
I can cope with my bi-focals
But ye gods I miss my mind

Sometimes I can't remember
When I'm standing by the stairs
If I'm going up for something
Or have just come down from there
And before the fridge so often
My mind is full of doubt
Now did I put some food away
Or come to take it out

If it's not my turn to write dear
I hope you won't get sore
I think I might have written
And don't want to be a bore
But remember I do love you
And wish that you lived near
But now it's time to mail this
And say goodbye my dear

I'm standing beside the mail box
And my face it sure is red
Instead of posting this to you
I've opened it instead

Submitted by:
Irene Hall, Area Secretary Wales and the West

WOMEN OF YESTERDAY AND TODAY

You are the women of yesterday and today who
Answered the call, in peace and in war
War was declared, what did you do?
You volunteered what else could you do.
Some of you wore khaki, some navy or blue
It didn't really matter, you were loyal and true.
Women were needed more than before,
For nursing, fire service, civil defence,
WRVS keeping up morale,
Was it ever flagging? Sometimes it was hell.
The Land Army girls doing their bit
Cutting the corn
And building hay ricks
Digging potatoes, mucking out cows
All winds and weathers manning the plough.
Women in factories to keep the planes flying
Trucks on the road, the buses and trains running
Women at home bravest of brave, looking after
The children and babies, queuing for food,
Clothing as well whilst loved ones were away
Fighting in some foreign land
Some soon to be widows, their loved ones killed
Fighting for freedom and a better world
Today women are still doing the same, caring for
Families whilst mourning their dead
Killed in war that are still being fought today
Women are still wearing khaki, navy and blue
Protecting our freedom in every way
Civilian jobs too many to number
Giving support and help to all and sundry.
We ask that you stop, take a minute, and say
'Thank you'
To the women of yesterday and today

Composed and Submitted by:
Jackie Naysmith, Secretary Bristol Branch

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER?

The WRAC Association now has badges to denote how long you have been a member of the Association. The badges are based on a plain version of the Association badge and the silver one is for 25 years membership and the gold coloured one is for 40 years membership.

You can buy the badges from WRAC Association HQ at Worthy Down. The silver coloured ones are £3 and the gold coloured ones are £4. Cheques should be made payable to "WRAC Association".



Obituaries – their final salute

MRS EVELYN MAY (EVE) RAYMOND OBE 17 FEBRUARY 2008

It was with sadness that Bournemouth branch heard of the death of Mrs Eve Raymond, née Nation, OBE on 17 February 2008. Eve served in the ATS from 1939-46 becoming a Senior Commander, ending her career as Officer Commanding 3rd Mediterranean Group. She had a keen sense of humour and this was illustrated by her recollection of how she joined up aged 17, having told the authorities she was 21. Therefore she had a miserable time on her 21st birthday as everyone thought she was 25!

Having joined the RBL in 1946, she held many senior posts in the Women's Section at both County and Area level and became National Chairman in 1986. Although her main interests were within the RBL, she always remained very interested in the WRAC Association, being a life member, and she would regularly ring up for a chat or write in with comments to the Branch.

At her Memorial Service in Wimborne Minster, a poem entitled "Memories of a Class Act" was written and read by Meg Fairhurst, one of her 8 grandchildren. This depicted Eve's zest for life, her devotion to duty, her humour and many other attributes. The world was made a better place by this lady and she will be greatly missed by family and friends alike.

MRS MAY KIRBY née REDMORE 27 MARCH 1910 – 8 MARCH 2008



May Redmore, W/32892, joined the ATS at Nevilles Cross on 8 March 1940 and served until 27 June 1949. She re-enlisted in Hull on 28 June 1949 into the WRAC and served until she retired on 9 May 1963 after a total of over 23 year's service. She was promoted to Sergeant in 1945 and her final appointment was in the Recruiting Office in Hull.

May served in County Durham with the AA Regiment and in Lincolnshire and York. She was also based in Leeds, using her training as a Clerk running various offices. She was awarded the War Medal 1939/45, Defence Medal, LS&GC Medal and a Certificate of Devotion to Duty from her General Officer Commanding in 1947 and from 1949 served as a PSI with the WRAC (TA), E Coy 305 (EY & WR) Bn.

In 1960 she met her husband Bill at the TA Centre when he and other members of the St John Ambulance Brigade (Endike Division) were instructing TA members for their St John Ambulance certificates. May and Bill were married in September 1962.

May always said that joining the ATS was the best thing she ever did. She joined the Hull Branch of the Association in 1947 and served as Treasurer whilst still serving. She was a regular attender over all the years and was delighted to be able to be at the Unveiling of the Memorial to the Women of World War 2 and to meet the Queen just after the London bombings which so nearly prevented her from going.

Her funeral was held on 26 March – the day before her 98th Birthday – at the Holderness Road Methodist Church in Hull. Her coffin was draped with the Union Jack flag and seven Standards were paraded. The WRAC Slow March, "Greensleeves", was played and the Last Post sounded as she left the church.

Mrs V M Dorsey (Niece)
24 Daville Close, Hull, North Humberside HU5 5PY
Tel: 01482 503564

MAJOR (RETD) PAULINE GRUNDY MBE 31 JULY 1922 – 17 JANUARY 2008

Pauline went to Goldsworth School in Woking in 1929, and then in 1932 to Guildford County School of Girls where she gained a London School Certificate in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics. In 1940, after the outbreak of World War 2, she received training in analytical chemistry at Woolwich Polytechnic and went to work in an explosives factory, before returning to Woolwich Polytechnic a year later to study Engineering and Telecommunications in preparation for Officer Cadet Training and a commission in the ATS as a 2nd Subaltern. In 1942 she went to the Army Radio School to be trained for work on a "top-secret" system that was the forerunner of Radar and, fully-qualified, was then posted to anti-aircraft batteries in Southern England. Her duties were to maintain the Radio Direction-Finding systems on

the Heavy Anti-aircraft Artillery gun sites. Early in 1944 she was posted to the War Office initially as Junior, and then Senior Commander attached to the RAOC. In June 1953 she was awarded the MBE "in recognition of special work at the War Office, being one of the first batch of girls to be trained as radar officers".



In 1954 Pauline attended Staff College, and in her CV at the time, added as an afterthought "Prefer to work in London". So in October of that year she was posted to HQ British Troops Egypt where she was appointed to the newly created job of Liaison Officer with the Egyptian Army on the strength as she put it of "stretching a few points about her proficiency in French and shorthand".

There she continued to indulge her love of amateur dramatics, having been in several plays with the War Office drama club back in the UK. In Egypt she joined a local drama group and almost immediately met Douglas, a tall dashing RAF officer whom she married in 1957. Pauline was one of the last WRAC officers to leave Egypt in 1956 during the evacuation. She was posted to GHQ Middle East Land Forces in Episkopi, Cyprus and flew there with the General and Chief of Staff in the Commander-in-Chief's private plane. In Cyprus, Pauline completed her three years of overseas duty and resigned.

After Douglas left the RAF, they lived in South America for several years and even after Douglas died in 1983, Pauline continued a very active travel programme taking her literally all around the world. She was an enthusiastic member of Aldershot Branch for many years. She spent the last 2½ years of her life in the Queen Elizabeth Park Care Home built on the site of the WRAC Centre in Guildford.

CAPT PAT EARLS March 1922 – April 2008



Capt Pat Earls with Brig Sheila Heaney, DWRAC

Pat completed her early education at Wesley College in Dublin and in 1940, just after the start of WW2 at the age of 18, and while on a visit to relatives in Northern Ireland, she joined the ATS. She had not discussed this career move with her parents, but she was always proud of the fact that her father had served with the British Army in France during World War 1.

In the immediate post War years, Pat served in several parts of Germany with the Allied Control Commission and was working with the Americans and French during the Russian blockade of Berlin in 1949. Pat returned to UK and was commissioned in 1954. She continued her active service until 1963 when she was appointed as Army Careers Officer, Northern Ireland. Pat's friendly nature and affinity with young people was obviously recognised, for in 1973 she was appointed as Women's Services Liaison Officer which involved visiting some schools in Southern Ireland.



Pat, on the left, clearing up her bomb damaged office with Sgt Bowers

This period in Pat's life also coincided with the height of the political troubles in Northern Ireland, and Pat was commuting on a daily basis from her home to various

military establishments. Her office in Belfast was bombed on two occasions by terrorists, and following the assassination of a fellow colleague in the recruiting service, Pat was obliged over a period of years to take special precautions for her personal safety. She did this without any fuss and seldom referred to the matter.

Pat retired from the Army in 1982 after 42 years service including 18 as ACO Northern Ireland. Throughout her life she was a keen motorist and was one of the first women motorists in Northern Ireland to pass the UK Advanced Driving Test – she was still driving her car after her 86th birthday. It is a blessing that Pat's determined spirit enabled her to maintain her cherished independence virtually to the end.

Tom Earls (Brother)
12 Humphries Park, Exmouth, Devon EX8 4DX

**W/459062 WO1 MARIE EVELYN
(SAMMY/SAM) SIMON
22 APRIL 1959 – 15 MAY 2008**

Sam was born in London on 22 April 1959 and almost immediately went into a children's home at Romford in Essex. At school she was a popular pupil who was quite shy and not a great academic. However, at an early age her sporting talent shone through and at the age of 12 she was noticed as a potential Olympic athlete. Sam left school at 16 and went to college to obtain the qualifications required to join the Army, following in the footsteps of her brother Michael who was serving in the Royal Anglian Regiment.

Sam joined the Women's Royal Army Corps in April 1977 and completed her recruit training in No 1 Training Company which I was commanding. Even in basic training she stood out as a mischievous person who lived life to the full. She then trained as a driver and served in a variety of units in the UK and Germany before gaining promotion to Sergeant in 1988. She then re-trained as an Admin Assistant serving in Northern Ireland and then as CQMS at the Junior Leaders Regiment Royal Artillery at Bramcote, where her leadership qualities shone through and her suitability for employment in a training environment was quickly recognised. Her next move was



to the WRAC Centre at Guildford to the Warrant Officer and NCO Training Wing where she was an instructor in leadership. It was a time of great change at Guildford, with No 1 and No 2 Training Companies being merged to form Training Company. Sam was quickly transferred to Training Company. She was a great team member, always cheerful with a very lively sense of humour, a great motivator who would instil the highest standards in the recruits. At the same time, she would always gain their confidence and trust and encourage them to rise to heights that their parents would never have thought possible.

Although relatively small in stature she was a larger than life character, who was totally dependable, always hard working and willing to offer advice.

On formation of the AGC, Sam was posted to help establish the School of Employment Training at Worthy Down. She was again instructing in leadership and management in the rank of Warrant Officer Class One – although not called RSM that was the role she fulfilled very ably.

Throughout her Army service, Sam maintained an incredible standard of fitness, excelling on the sports field and gaining both her Army Athletics and Hockey colours. One day she announced at Worthy Down that we would enter a team in the inter unit athletics championships. We were not allowed to use trainees and the pool from which we could select our team was quite limited. However, over the next few weeks a number of reluctant athletes went into training, but on the day of the event we still didn't quite have a full team.

Before the team set off for Aldershot I was handed a sealed envelope and told to make sure I brought it with me as we might need 'the evidence'. Only at that point did I realise that Sam really did have a plan. When I arrived at the stadium the team were on top of the points board and subsequently went on to win the event. The evidence I had been handed in the sealed envelope showed that Kelly Holmes was on the strength of Worthy Down whilst training for the Olympics. Sam had known Kelly a long time and had been in touch with her! Kelly had appeared and rather than running on the track, which would hardly have been fair, she had won the Long Jump and the Shot Putt events for us.

Sam's final tour was as the RSM at the Defence School of Languages in Beaconsfield. She completed her 22 years service in late 1999 and she followed a successful career in HR. She also worked relentlessly to support the Naomi House Children's Hospice in Sutton Scotney.

Col Di Davies

COPY DEADLINE

Articles for inclusion in the next edition of
the *Lioness* must be received by

10 December 2008

ATHERTON MBE Lt Col Ruth, of Solihull on 15 Jul 2008, ATS/WRAC
ATKINS Mrs Edith, née Stamp, of Bognor Regis in Dec 2007, ATS
BOOTH Mrs Winifred, née Regan, of Oldham in May 2008, ATS
BREAKELL Miss Edith, of Liverpool on 19 Jan 2008, ATS
BROWN Mrs Phyllis, née Griffiths, of Rhyl in Jan 2008, ATS
BRYCELAND Mrs Cynthia (Cindy), née Spencer, of Donnington on 9 Jun 2008, WRAC
CADEL Mrs Margaret, of Bridport on 15 Jan 2008, ATS
CAMPBELL Mrs Mary, née Horton, of Rochdale in Mar 2008, ATS
CHISWELL MBE Capt Jean Anita, of Weston-super-Mare on 13 Apr 2008, ATS/WRAC(TA)
COBB Mrs Dorothy Elizabeth, née Staig, of Eastbourne on 18 Jan 2008, ATS
CONNAUGHTON Mrs Josephine, née McAleer, of Luton on 5 Apr 2008, ATS/WRAC
COX Mrs Grace Adelaide, née Dry, of Plymouth on 21 Mar 2008, ATS
CRACKNELL Ms Wendy, of Cambridge on 18 Dec 2007, WRAC
CROSS Mrs Doreen, of Isle of Wight on 4 Mar 2008, ATS
DOWLING Mrs Maureen Olive, née Jones, of Telford on 9 May 2008, WRAC
DRAPER Mrs May Torode, in Jan 2008, ATS
EARLS Capt E M (Pat), of Dundonald on 25 Apr 2008, ATS/WRAC
EDWARDS Mrs Margaret Evelyn, née Bradley, of Hastings on 12 Mar 2008, ATS
GIBSON Mrs K P (Pat), née Murphy, of Cowbridge, Wales on 7 Jan 2008, ATS
GRUNDY MBE Mrs Pauline Mary, née Shilton, of Guildford on 17 Jan 2008, ATS/WRAC
HALLADAY Mrs Maisie Florence, née Thompson, of Canterbury on 14 Dec 2007, ATS
HARGRAVE Miss Mabel, of Newark on 7 Jan 2008, WRAC
HAWGOOD Mrs Joan Marguerite, née Skeen, of Bexhill on Sea on 25 Jun 08, ATS
HAWKINS Mrs Gertrude Violet, née Mead, of Birchwood on 14 Mar 2008, ATS
HEADINGTON Mrs Queenie, née Daniels, of Rochester on 29 Jun 2008, ATS
HERON Mrs P H, of Exeter on 16 Jun 2008, ATS
HOWARTH Miss Mary, of Bury on 12 Dec 2007, ATS
HUDSON Mrs Ada, née Tetley, of Bradford in Mar 2008, ATS
HUGHES Miss Margaret E, of Bridgend on 2 May 2008, ATS
JENKINS Mrs Frances, of Ipswich in Jun 2008, ATS
KENNEDY Miss Margaret (Peggy), of Dover on 11 Apr 2008, ATS
KIRBY Mrs May, née Redmore, of Hull on 8 Mar 2008, ATS/WRAC
KIRCHER-SMITH Ms Marjorie, of Broadmayne on 28 Mar 2008, WRAC
KIRKUS Mrs S M, née Hield, of Cirencester on 9 Jan 2008, ATS
KNOX Miss Edith Elizabeth, of Brechin on 15 Sep 2007, ATS/WRAC
LAPPIN Mrs Agnes, née Davies, of Liverpool on 8 Mar 2008, ATS
LAW Mrs Joan, née Dugutis, of Bath in Nov 2007, ATS
LAW Mrs Alice, née Cooper, of Glasgow on 21 Jan 2008, ATS

MacCULLOCH Mrs Jennie, née Chappell, of Prestbury on 23 Apr 2008, ATS/WRAC
MacDONALD Miss Marjory, of Perth in Dec 2007, WRAC
MARSHALL Mrs Betty, née Bull, of Bexhill on Sea on 7 Jun 2008, ATS
MASON Mrs Hilda, née Howes, of North Shields on 16 Jan 2008, ATS
McCLURE Mrs Rose Adeline, of Sunningdale in Jan 2008, ATS
MILES Mrs Winifred (Win), née Melville, of Reading on 13 Mar 2008, ATS/WRAC
MILLS Mrs Norah Clara née Clark, of Blyth on 3 May 2008, ATS
NORMAN Mrs Lilian Patricia (Pat), of Wellington on 5 Mar 2008, ATS
PARKER Mrs J, of Norfolk on 16 Feb 2008
PELLOW Mrs Ilene Betty, née Parrish, of Bewdley on 15 Jan 2008, ATS
PULLAR Mrs Kathleen (Joyce), née Howell, of Bristol on 14 Apr 2008, ATS
RAYMOND Mrs Evelyn May, née Nation, of Wimborne on 17 Feb 2008, ATS
ROACHE Miss Mary Bridget, of County Mayo on 26 May 2008, ATS/WRAC
ROBERTS Miss Mary, of Welling on 13 Jun 2008, WRAC
ROBINSON N, of Dumfries in Jul 2007
SCANLAN Mrs Joan, née Constable, of Colchester on 9 Apr 2008, ATS
SCARBOROUGH Mrs Joyce, of Harrogate on 27 Jan 2008, ATS
SCHRADER Mrs Jessica, née Farley, of Chelmsford on 22 Jan 2008, ATS
SEAR Mrs Nancy C (Nan), of Portsmouth on 6 Jun 2008, ATS
SIMON Miss Marie (Sammy), of Eastleigh on 15 May 2008, WRAC
STEADMAN Mrs Ellen, née Chapman, of Hornchurch on 12 Jan 2008, ATS
STEEL Mrs Agnes, née Gilmour, of Newcastle on 11 Feb 2008, ATS
SWANN Miss June Christobel of Skipton on 18 Sep 2007, WRAC *with sincere apologies for the incorrect notice in Lioness 1/08*
THOMSON Miss Helen (Nell), of Scone, Perth on 2 Jan 2008, ATS
THORNE Mrs Margaret, née Wovell, of Cardiff on 16 Mar 2008, ATS
THURSTAN Mrs Betty Francis May, née Weston, of Bexhill-on-Sea on 24 Feb 2008, ATS
TINGLE Mrs Rita, née Armstrong, of Sheffield on 6 May 2008, ATS
TOMS Mrs EMN, née Weaver, of West Alvington on 9 Jan 2008, ATS
TURNER Miss May, of London on 28 Jan 2008, ATS
WATERS Mrs D M, née Shering, of Exmouth on 23 Dec 2007, ATS
WEBB Mrs Joan, née Napier, of Colchester on 21 Nov 2007, ATS
WHITE Mrs Gladys Mabel, née Lambeth, of St Pauls Cray on 5 Nov 2007, ATS
WILCOCKSON Miss Dorothy, of Harrogate on 28 Dec 2007, ATS
WOOD Miss Mary Irene, of Fareham in Dec 2007, WRAC
WOODCOCK Mrs Lucy, née Williamson, of Wilmslow in Dec 2007, ATS
WOOLLEY Mrs Dorothy, of Harlow on 6 Sep 2007, ATS



*Back Row: Margaret Beattie, Anne Gurney
Front Row: Carol Traynor, Rose Friend, Margo Fraser,
Jackie Foulds, Patricia Gates, Sue Simpson, Rita
Broomfield*



Sue Simpson and others enjoying the dinner

Unfortunately these photographs slipped through the pages as they were being printed last time. This special group of ex-Signallers thought it very appropriate that they should be photographed in the Adelphi Hotel being watched over by Mercury. They are already looking forward to this year's dinner on 4 October – will they see you there?

WRAC Officers' Dining Club

**WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB
DINNER TO BE HELD AT THE VICTORY
SERVICES CLUB
SATURDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2008**

Jane Freebairn, General Secretary

A very successful Dinner was held last December and nearly 120 members and guests attended. A significant number of serving and recently retired "young" officers attended for the first time and hopefully, as the word spreads, more and more of the younger generation will start to support this annual opportunity for officers to "reune".

If you are a member of the WRAC Officers' Dining Club, you will have received personal notification. PLEASE take action now if you have not already sent in the form....photocopy it too and try to persuade some more of your contemporaries to come along. It truly is a case of "The more the merrier." If you are not a member, please ring me on 01962 887570 – you will very quickly receive an application form!

**SATURDAY 22 NOVEMBER –
VICTORY SERVICES CLUB –
SEE YOU THERE**

THE ARMY CHILDREN ARCHIVE (TACA)

Chronicling British Army Children's History
www.archhistory.co.uk

The Army Children Archive (TACA) which was launched online on 1 October 2007, was established by Clare Gibson a writer and researcher, history graduate and one-time army child, to collect, record and preserve details of the unique aspects of growing up as the child of a soldier serving in the British Army, whether that growing up was done during the 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th or 21st century.

Although it is still in its infancy, it is hoped that TACA will eventually provide a useful source for social, military and family historians and particularly that it will interest former and current army children, who, on the one hand, may find that it ignites some sparks of recognition that in turn trigger a string of memories and, on the other, may enjoy the sense of having a rich history all of their own.

Some of the subjects that are covered in TACA online include:

Army children's lives and times: Modes of travel between postings, and between boarding school and home: The reality of life on arrival at postings within the UK and abroad: Accommodation: Schooling: Army children's memories: Army children in literature: Famous Army children: Tips on researching Army children for family historians: Links to related websites and recommendations for further reading.

Visitors to www.archhistory.co.uk are encouraged to contribute snippets of information, memories and images to TACA, both to share with others and to safeguard their survival, for it is a sad truth that many details of the army-child experience have gone unrecorded, and have consequently been lost forever.

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD AT THE VICTORY SERVICES CLUB, LONDON ON SATURDAY 5 APRIL 2008

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all those attending and introducing her support team: Mrs Maggie Purkis, Chairman of the Executive Committee; Colonel Audrey Smith, Chairman of the Grants Committee and Major Jane Freebairn, General Secretary. She welcomed Major Gabi Shanahan, the recently appointed Benevolent Fund Case Secretary, and Mrs Denise Jaballah, the new Chief Clerk, to their first AGM.

The Chairman then thanked the Chairman of London Area and members of London and Greater London Branches who had been responsible for all the front of house activities including the Raffle. She then paid tribute to all the Branch Secretaries whose dedication and hard work ensure the continuation of the vital branch network.

The Chairman outlined her programme of visits to individual Branches and Area Reunions and emphasised how important this contact was.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from many individuals, several Branch Secretaries and the following members of Council: Brig Dame Joanna Kelleher, Brig SP Nield, Miss MM Thomson, Lady Martha Bruce, Col EJ Bowles, Col HE McMahon, Lt Col MW Soames, Lt Col NA Murdoch and Lt Col ML Woollard.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated in *Lioness* 2/2007. No comments had been received. It was proposed that the Chairman sign them as a true record.

Proposed: Canterbury Seconded: Stafford
Unanimously agreed

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

There was no business arising which would not be covered by other Agenda items.

5. REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

The Chairman said that Council had met twice since the last AGM: firstly in July 2007 at Worthy Down and secondly in London at the Victory Services Club in January 2008. The main items of interest were:

a. Strategic Plan. The Chairman and the General Secretary had attended a Risk Management Workshop organised by the Auditors. It had been identified that the Association did not have an up to date formal Strategic Plan on which to base future developments. A draft plan had been put to the Trustees in January 2008 which they

approved after ensuring that it encompassed all the intentions and aims which the Association had always had. It had been useful to produce an up to date document to formalise those objectives and to produce a working document and framework on which to base future studies. The Chairman said that a copy would be sent to all Branch Secretaries and that it would be published in *Lioness* 2/2008.

b. National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) – The National Memorial Arboretum had again asked for a contribution to the upkeep of the Association grove and suggested an amount of £875. They had explained that the floods, in the summer of 2007, had caused a huge amount of damage and many trees, including some of the more mature ones, had died. The Trustees had agreed that, as the previous year, £500 would be sent as a donation towards the maintenance. The National Memorial Arboretum had acknowledged the donation with grateful thanks. The Chairman said that some members had expressed concerns about the state of the plot so she would visit the Arboretum with the Chairman of the Executive Committee and the General Secretary. The Chairman would report to the Trustees at their meeting in July 2008.

c. Branches – Bradford and Cardiff had closed. However, the Chairman reported that 27 new members had joined the Association in March so there were grounds for optimism about the future.

d. Appointment of Auditors – The Trustees had re-appointed Baker Tilly as the Auditors.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

The General Secretary read the report in the absence of the Honorary Treasurer. The Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year ending 31 October 2007 had been published in *Lioness* 1/2008 and no comments had been received.

The General Secretary reminded the members that the Unrestricted General Funds refer to the Association funds and that the Restricted Funds are the Benevolent Funds. The Association funds had shown a net incoming resource of £15,846 which compared to a net outgoing sum of £32,854 in the previous financial year, Nov 06-Oct 07. The unrealised profit on investments had been £10,590, a decrease of £34,851 on the previous year. This had reflected the state of the stock market which had been quite volatile: as these conditions had not shown any signs of improvement, the General Secretary warned that next year's results could show another downturn in the overall performance of the investments and the worth of the Funds.

There had been net incoming resources in the value of the total Benevolent Funds of £36,140. This was because of several very generous legacies amounting to £75,252. This had been an unusually large amount of legacy income which was unpredictable. In comparison, only £23,123, i.e. a third of that total, had been received the previous year. If those

legacies of £75,252 had not been received, there would have been an excess of expenditure. There would likely be an excess of expenditure in the financial year Nov 08-Oct 09 unless the current markets improved. The grants paid to retired members of the ATS and WRAC had amounted to £191,682, an increase of £16,144 on the previous year. The Trustees had again made it clear that the maximum amount of income would be spent on grants and that they would be willing to support an excess of expenditure over income for a short while until the markets stabilised.

Investment income had increased and resulted in an increase to the overall worth of both the Association and Benevolent Funds of approximately £250,000. However, the increase had only been 5.6% instead of the 12% increase the previous year.

It had been noted that cash holdings were 11% of the total worth. The Trustees, at their meeting in July 2007, had decided that no more than 7.5% should be held in cash. However, the Financial Advisor had advised against investing for the time being and would continue to monitor the situation. Although 11 % seemed a high percentage to hold in cash, almost all of it was on deposit thus earning interest.

The new Charities Act had suggested that all Charities should seek specialist investment advice. This advice had been clarified with a legal advisor who had agreed that it would not be necessary for the Association to employ and pay for extra investment advice because all the WRAC Association and ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund monies were invested in major specialist charity funds: Shroders Charity Equity Fund, M&G Charifund and the United Services Trust Combined Charitable Capital and Income Funds.

In summary, the Honorary Treasurer reported that the Funds were sound and would be sufficient to meet future known commitments. She had no hesitation in recommending that the financial statements should be accepted and that the audited accounts should be ratified.

Proposed: Cambridge Seconded: Luton
Unanimously agreed

7. REPORT OF THE EDITOR OF THE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

The *Lioness* magazines produced in the financial year Nov 06 to Oct 07 had been 76 and 72 pages respectively. Both had contained many more photographs than previous issues and the Editor felt that this would be a significant factor in encouraging others to join in events and branch activities.

Following difficulties, especially with overseas mailings, new arrangements for distribution had been made and Warwick Printing had been responsible for worldwide distribution as well as setting up and printing the journal since edition 1/07. The *Lioness* had been delivered to overseas addresses more quickly and had reached all UK addresses well within Royal Mail timescales. Warwick Printing dispatched the journal in a clear plastic cover with a carrier sheet that asked members to provide up to date contact details. There had been an excellent response to this more obvious change of address form with the result that fewer magazines had been returned undelivered.

The *Lioness* had been subsidized by the Association funds by some £3,500 in the financial year Nov 06-Oct 07 even although donations had increased by about £1,000 and publication costs had been reduced by about £2,000. This reduction had been achieved by using the printers to distribute the journal and by reducing the print run in accordance with the current level of membership.

The Trustees again agreed that the *Lioness* should continue to be subsidized as a significant contributor to maintaining esprit de corps and that they did not wish to raise the annual subscription from £5. However, a shortfall of £3,500 had been a significant amount to underwrite so any donations from Branches or individuals would be very welcome.

The Editor concluded by encouraging the members to continue to send in articles. The *Lioness* should reflect all the different experiences and service life of the individual members and without that input, the *Lioness* could not be produced.

8. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

a. Executive Committee

The Chairman of the Executive Committee reported that they had not met since the last AGM but that planning was underway for the Grand Reunion to be held at the Norbreck Castle Hotel in Blackpool from 20-23 March 2009. The Norbreck Castle had been chosen because it offered all the required facilities under one roof. The Chairman of the Executive Committee said that 400 places would be available and that, again, it would be offered as a package. In 2009, however, the accommodation would be for three nights. The Trustees had authorised a planning budget of £5,000 in January 2008 and applications would be in the *Lioness* 2/2008.

b. Benevolent Fund Grants Committee

The Chairman of the Grants Committee gave a summary of the work of the Benevolent Fund in the previous financial year. The Major Grants Committee had met once a month and minor cases had been dealt with on a daily basis. 661 cases had been considered: an increase of 5.9% on the previous year. The ratio of cases was 346 ATS to 315 WRAC so approximately 52% of the cases had been ATS and 48% WRAC. Until recently the ratio had been 60% ATS to 40% WRAC.

The total spent on one-off grants had been £161,125 nearly half of which had been paid in grants for mobility, disability aids, house repairs and adaptations. The Chairman explained that other military and civilian funds had often contributed and thanked the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF), other Army Regiments and Corps, as well as the Royal British Legion for all their support throughout the year.

The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund (PRMF) had provided 16 annuities to those who were elderly, in poor health and who lived alone on minimal income. The annuity was £13 a week plus a Christmas Bonus of £60. The ABF had granted annuities of £60 per month and 72 ladies had received such a payment. The PRMF had also contributed towards the shortfall of Nursing Home Fees for 15 beneficiaries with payments between £5 and £20 a week. The ABF had very often also contributed to these cases because of the amounts involved.

The ABF provided two discrete holiday schemes: the Individual Holiday Grants Scheme for families and Warner's Holidays for adults. Applications to the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund are monitored to identify those who could benefit from such a holiday.

The Chairman of the Grants Committee then described two cases. Mrs G, ex ATS, aged 79 and widowed, had lived in the same property for over 40 years, relying on coal fires as her only source of heat. She lived frugally on a limited income and suffered from ill health. The cost of installing central heating had been shared with The Royal British Legion, the Royal Army Service Corps and Royal Corps of Transport Benevolent Funds. Mrs G wrote, *'Without the help of the grant I would not have been able to have any heating installed. Thank you so very much. I shall be eternally grateful to you all'*.

Ms B, ex WRAC, aged 58 and recently divorced from her husband of 35 years, had unexpectedly had to establish a new home on limited resources. Her washing machine and fridge freezer had reached the end of their serviceable lives and the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Funds provided her with replacements. Ms B wrote, *'I cannot tell you how grateful I am. It is a terrible and hugely demoralising thing to find yourself in the midst of hard times not of your own doing or choice. The help of people and organizations like the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund are a tremendous boost when you are feeling at rock bottom'*.

Lastly, the Chairman of the Grants Committee encouraged all the branches to continue to raise money for the Benevolent Fund. Branches had donated £732 in comparison with £1,923 the year before. These donations had been much appreciated: otherwise the fund would be reliant only on the income from investments and legacies.

The Chairman of Council thanked Col Smith for all her support and commitment as the Chairman of the Grants Committee.

9. RESOLUTIONS

a. Motions of Urgency

There were no motions of urgency.

b. Council Resolutions

There were no Resolutions which Council wished to raise.

c. Branch Resolutions

There were no Branch Resolutions.

d. Election of Honorary Treasurer

The Chairman asked the meeting to ratify Lt Col ML Woollard in her appointment as Honorary Treasurer.

Proposed: Chelmsford Seconded: Lincoln
Unanimously agreed

10. CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

The Chairman explained that, since the last AGM, Council had approved the award of a Certificate of Appreciation to the following members:

Mrs Jackie Neave Hereford

Mrs Ada Hudson	Bradford
Mrs Ann Mahony	Cleveland
Mrs Bessie Hall	Greater London
Mrs Ethel Shaw	Greater London
Miss Edna Down	Greater London
Mrs Mary Buttlings	Chelmsford
Mrs Audrey Juby	Norfolk
Mrs Rosemary Cochrane-Dyett	Dumfries
Mrs Violet Horsley	Birmingham
Miss Pamela Finney	Bath
Mrs Margaret Cranmer	Exeter
Mrs Dorothy Hall	Bournemouth
Mrs Vivienne Parsons	Bournemouth
Mrs Doreen Snell	Bournemouth
Mrs Elizabeth Tucker	Bournemouth
Mrs Lilian Edwards	Wilmslow
Mrs Pauline Jones	Wolverhampton
Mrs Lynn Jenkins	Southampton

The Chairman then presented the certificates to those recipients who were at the AGM. Alternative arrangements for presentation by the Vice-President or by a member of Council had been made for those unable to attend.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a. **Benevolent Fund.** The General Secretary said that one branch, prompted by the floods in the summer of 2007, had asked if the Association could make loans at minimal interest to help members of the Association. She explained that the Association could not make such payments but that the Benevolent Fund could. Anyone who needed financial assistance could apply through SSAFA or the Royal British Legion. Applicants did not have to be a member of the Association as eligibility for assistance was based on service in the ATS or WRAC. In fact, three grants had been made to assist with flood damage. The General Secretary explained that the application form included a section for income and expenditure so it had to be proved that there was genuine financial hardship before a grant could be made.

b. **70th Anniversary of the Formation of the ATS.** The Chairman reminded the meeting that last year, at the AGM, she had said that consideration would be given to holding a function in conjunction with the AGM this year. Indeed, 185 members had attended the ATS 70th Birthday Party on the previous day at the Victory Services Club. It had been most enjoyable and she thanked the Victory Services Club for their excellent food and attentive staff and the "Not Forgotten" Association for their generosity in providing a most entertaining concert party in the afternoon.

c. **"Women at War" exhibition.** Salisbury Branch informed the meeting that this exhibition was on at the Royal Signals Museum in Blandford Forum.

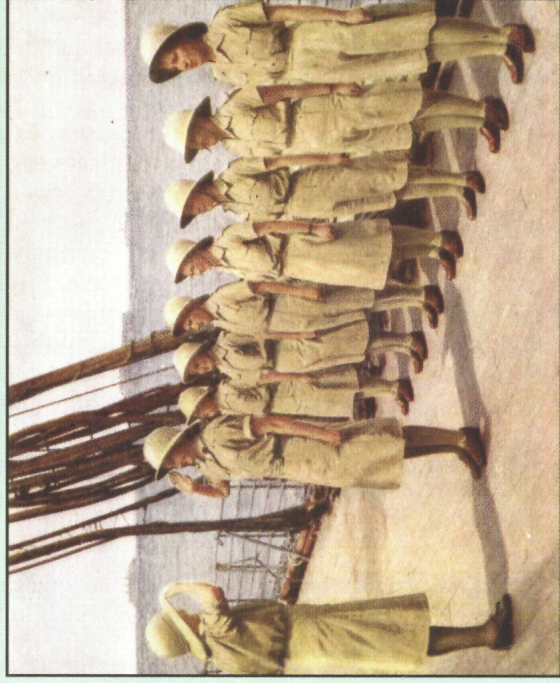
d. **Guildford Museum.** The Chairman said that there would be an exhibition about the WRAC in Guildford Museum opening in November.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next AGM would be held during the Grand Reunion at The Norbreck Castle Hotel on Saturday 21 March 2009.

EXTRACTS FROM ATS CALENDAR 1945

(Sold in aid of the Duchess of Northumberland's Comforts Fund for the ATS)



ATS on a Troopship in a Convoy
going abroad



Activities at an ATS Physical
Training School



British ATS in the Middle East



Kinetheodilite Operators