

# LIONESS





## **WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION**

(Incorporating the QMAAC & ATS Comrades Association)  
Registered Charity No. 206184, founded in 1919

### **Patron**

Her Majesty The Queen

### **President**

Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Kent GCVO

### **Life Vice-President**

Brig (Retd) Dame Joanna Kelleher DBE  
Lt Col (Retd) The Lady Martha Bruce OBE TD DL  
Brig (Retd) S P Nield CBE  
Col (Retd) F M Cook  
Col (Retd) E J Bowles  
Mrs E Carter MBE TD  
Brig (Retd) N P Moffat CBE  
Lt Col (Retd) S J Westlake MBE

### **Trustees**

#### **Vice President & Chairman of Trustees**

Col (Retd) A K Brown

#### **Vice Chairman and Chairman of Executive & Finance Committee**

Lt Col R C Griffiths MBE

#### **Honorary Treasurer**

Col (Retd) I M McCord

#### **Chairman of ATS & WRAC Benevolent Funds**

##### **Grants Committee**

Col (Retd) A J Smith

Brig (Retd) S P Nield CBE  
Brig (Retd) N P Moffat CBE  
Lt Col (Retd) S Donovan  
Maj (Retd) R D Patrick MBE  
Maj (Retd) M C M Jones  
Maj (Retd) C H Merrington-Rust MBE  
Maj (Retd) J A Walton  
Mrs C Corker  
Mrs K Loftus

### **Members of Council**

#### **Vice President & Chairman of Council**

Col (Retd) A K Brown

#### **Vice Chairman and Chairman of Executive & Finance Committee**

Lt Col R C Griffiths MBE

#### **Honorary Treasurer**

Col (Retd) I M McCord

#### **Chairman of ATS & WRAC Benevolent Funds**

##### **Grants Committee**

Col (Retd) A J Smith

#### **Life Vice Presidents**

##### **Area Chairman**

Lt Col (Retd) J M Young (Scotland)  
Maj (Retd) D Ryder (North East)  
Mrs H A Edwards (North West)  
Mrs W Hooton (East)  
Vacant (South East)  
Mrs M Purkis (Wales & West)  
Vacant (London)  
Vacant (South & S West)

**Association Secretary & Editor Lioness** - Maj (Retd) S Hatton

**Benevolent Fund Secretary** - Maj (Retd) G M Shanahan **Finance Officer** - Maj (Retd) J R Doig

**Office Manager** - Ms Tanya-Jayne Park

Published by the WRAC Association [www.wracassociation.org.uk](http://www.wracassociation.org.uk)  
Printed in Great Britain and distributed worldwide by Tiger Ink Ltd, Eastleigh, SO50 4JR

Contributions for next issue by 15 July 2016 to [editor@wracassociation.org.uk](mailto:editor@wracassociation.org.uk)

## Message from the Vice President

Welcome to this first edition of *Lioness* in 2016. I hope that your celebrations at Christmas and New Year were enjoyable and spent with friends and family. A massive thank you to all those Branches who hosted me to Christmas lunches during December. It was just fantastic to see the spirit of the Association alive and well and full of ladies who had seen service with the ATS, the WRAC and other organisations all sitting down together and spending the afternoon laughing and enjoying each other's company; esprit de corps and benevolence in action.



I have great pleasure in welcoming Julia Doig to the team in the Headquarters. Julia joins us in the role of Finance Officer as we have split those responsibilities out from the Benevolent Fund casework, which Gabi continues to manage. Julia served in the AGC(PS) and has experience of working in the charitable sector and I am thrilled to have her join our small team.

Farewell and thanks must go to Kate McGregor on her departure from the role of the Area Chairman of the South East. Kate has been Area Chairman since 1999 and we will miss her enormously. On behalf of all our members I would like to publically thank her for everything she has done for the WRAC and the WRAC Association. Kate, you will be missed and we look forward to saying farewell to you in person at the Council meeting in February 2016. This position of Area Chairman is now gapped and the Branches in the South East should address any concerns or queries to Association Headquarters.

I am extremely delighted to announce that we have gained a Life Vice President. Sue Westlake MBE has been appointed and we will welcome her back into the fold at the Council meeting in February. Staying with Life Vice Presidents, I would like to take this opportunity to inform our members that Dame Joanna Kelleher DBE, who was a former Director WRAC, celebrated her 100th birthday on 24th December 2015. Flowers were sent on behalf of all of our members.

As we seek to increase our membership numbers we are now starting to investigate a more formal approach to publicity. Great strides have already been taken with the Facebook groups and these have produced many new members. Recently all Branch Secretaries received posters and smaller leaflets to spread the word as wide as we can. Other options to attract new members are under discussion, and if any members have any experience in marketing or suggestions to add please do get in touch with the Association Secretary increasing and maintaining our membership is essential as the Association moves forward.

The opportunities for representation of the Association have been many in the last 6 months, at both national and Branch level. Sharon Joyce paraded with the National Standard in the ceremonies marking VE and VJ Days in London and our members paraded at over 40 events in various locations. over the Remembrance period including 110 members parading at the Cenotaph. We have tightened our links with the Adjutant General's Corps (AGC) ensuring that we are appropriately represented at events in our capacity as an antecedent Corps. Work has now started on our plot at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) with the replacement and replanting of the back beds. The next phase is to replace and replant the remaining

beds. The laying of a path to the central plinth is still in the planning stage until the NMA carries out work to reduce the amount of surface water flowing into our plot from the drainage ditch to the rear.

During the last 6 months I have met many of you at various Area and Branch events and thank you to all who have hosted me and been involved in the organisation of events. I do appreciate all of you who give up your time so willingly to arrange activities at Area and Branch level. I would also like to thank all those members who kindly donated to the Association or the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund in 2015, your actions are much appreciated.

You will see in this edition of the *Lioness* the first notice for the WAAC/QMAAC Centenary Dinner in 2017. At this event we will celebrate the first time in history that women went into uniform for duties other than nursing. Thus the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) was born and the road to the QMAAC, the ATS and the WRAC was embarked upon by these pioneering women. Please do spread the word and come along to Stratford-upon-Avon and celebrate this moment in history with us.

I do hope that you enjoy this edition of *Lioness* and all that the WRAC Association offers. I look forward to visiting more Branches in 2016 and seeing as many of you as possible at our AGM at the Victory Services Club on Saturday 12th March 2016.

Ali Brown

|                                                   |           |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Message from the Vice President</b>            | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Letters</b>                                    | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Notices A-Z</b>                                | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Royal Hospital Chelsea</b>                     | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Remembrance</b>                                | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Articles of Interest</b>                       | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>ATS &amp; WRAC Association Benevolent Fund</b> | <b>18</b> |
| <b>Memorabilia Shop</b>                           | <b>20</b> |
| <b>Branch News</b>                                | <b>21</b> |
| <b>Branch Meetings</b>                            | <b>42</b> |
| <b>ATS Reminiscences</b>                          | <b>45</b> |
| <b>WRAC Reminiscences</b>                         | <b>47</b> |
| <b>Reunions</b>                                   | <b>50</b> |
| <b>National Standard</b>                          | <b>52</b> |
| <b>Mentioned in Dispatches and Birthdays</b>      | <b>53</b> |
| <b>2017 Centenary Dinner</b>                      | <b>54</b> |
| <b>Women in the British Army 2015</b>             | <b>55</b> |
| <b>WRAC Officers' Dining Club</b>                 | <b>58</b> |
| <b>WRAC Dinner Club</b>                           | <b>59</b> |
| <b>Fundraising Events</b>                         | <b>62</b> |
| <b>Obituaries - Their Final Salute</b>            | <b>63</b> |



How time flies, this is the seventh edition of Lioness that I have edited. It's always interesting to see it coming together as the articles and photos begin to pop into my Inbox. It is your magazine and very much reflects what you, the members, submit, so please keep the copy coming!

I would like to draw your attention to the AGM proforma in the centre section of this magazine. The AGM is on Saturday 12 March 2016 and if you are planning to attend we require your completed form returned by 26 February. Please note that we will be starting at 14.00, not 14.30 as previously advertised.

Inside this edition of Lioness you should have received a book of Prize Draw tickets giving you the chance to win a place to attend the The Patron's Lunch on The Mall on Sunday 12 June 2016. The WRAC Association has purchased two pairs of tickets (at a cost of £300 per pair) which will form the Draw prizes. The Draw will take place at the AGM on Saturday 12 March 2016.

The closing date for the next edition of Lioness is 15 July 2016, email to [editor@wracassociation.org.uk](mailto:editor@wracassociation.org.uk). Please type the text into the body of the email, not as an attached document. Please only send a maximum of 3 or 4 good quality photos (jpg format only) as attachments, do not embed them in a document!

Sue Hatton  
[editor@wracassociation.org.uk](mailto:editor@wracassociation.org.uk)



In October 2014 I joined the team as the Finance Officer, there was a lot to learn but I was lucky to have Gabi who was very patient in teaching me all I needed to know. Once the handover was complete I had to sprint before I could run as it was fast approaching the end of the Financial Year. But as I see it every challenge is an opportunity

and so through the end of year process I have learnt even more and formed good relationships with the auditor, fund manager, insurer and bank staff.

And so from where do I hail I hear the Membership call? Well it won't surprise you to know that I am, like all of you, an Army veteran having served 16 years with the AGC(SPS) 2004-2010. There was a short period of time when as an Officer Cadet with Oxford University Training Corps I wore the WRAC uniform when completing the TA commissioning course in 1992. But before I continue, I cannot for one minute allow any of you to think I was at Oxford Uni, but far rather you knew that I studied at Oxford Poly now Oxford Brookes University.

Sixteen years in the AGC(SPS) threw up lots of great opportunities; first off I put on my dream sheet at Sandhurst 'willing to serve anywhere in the world and didn't join the Army to serve at home in the North East of England' - a punt that paid off as I was sent to Cyprus for 2 years, albeit with 1 KINGS - a cross I was willing to bear.

When my time came to retire my number one goal was to be a Mum at home to my two children; Jasmine and Fraser, now 13 and 11, oh and of course support my husband Andy, who has also since left the AGC(SPS) and settled into civvie life. We have chose to live in Amesbury, Wiltshire and it didn't take long for neighbours and school to realise there was a retired officer not to be wasted; I found myself as Guider, running the school Thrift Shop, fundraising for the local community hall, helping at rugby and running Home-Start South Wiltshire. I've been extremely lucky and enjoyed these last few years at home but this job has come at just the right time in my life. I'm still helping at rugby on a Sunday and running Home-Start South Wiltshire but I am loving being back in the working world again. It's been a real eye opener to see the valuable work of the Association and Benevolent Fund. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the AGM in March.

Julia Doig  
Finance Officer

## **WRAC Association (incorporating ATS and WRAC Benevolent Fund)**

### **Anti-Discrimination Policy**

The WRAC Association does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in any of its' activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, employment of staff, selection of Trustees and Council members, membership and esprit de corps activities, and the distribution of Benevolence and other services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all our members.

## **WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016**

The 2016 AGM of the WRAC Association will be held will be held at the Victory Services Club, London at 14:00 on Saturday 12 March 2016. Afternoon Tea will be served on completion of the meeting (for WRAC Association members only, must be pre booked via attendance form). See the centre pull out of this edition for full details of the meeting.

Dear Editor,

*Searching for ATS members with links to Dalkeith*

*Newbattle Abbey College, Dalkeith, Scotland, has recently received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to delve into the fascinating history of their military past. From 1939 until 1945 Newbattle Abbey was used as a training base for both the ATS and the RAMC. Many new sign-ups to the ATS were sent to Newbattle Abbey to receive their initial training before being assigned their official war time roles. ATS members lived in Nissen huts in the abbey grounds and were issued kit, received lectures and undertook physical training and marching instruction. From 1945 until 1950 Newbattle was then used as the No. 1 Army Training College, a college for demobilised servicemen and women, equipping them with the skills required for careers after the war.*

*The college are working to compile information on this period in order to produce an exhibition, a DVD and guided tours to share their heritage with others. They are appealing to anyone who was stationed at Newbattle during this period to make contact and are keen to record oral history interviews of people's memories of their time at Newbattle.*

*Anyone wishing to make contact can call the college on 0131 663 1921 or can email the project Co-ordinator, Charlotte Johnson, on [charlottejohnson@newbattleabbeycollege.ac.uk](mailto:charlottejohnson@newbattleabbeycollege.ac.uk)*

Dear Editor,

*I was interested to read the letter in the last edition of Lioness from Mrs Sylvia Wild regarding Normandy 1944. I too arrived in Bayeux early in August (the 10th I think). I was with 21 Army Group at the time, and later when our troops fought their way forward, moved on to Brussels (Avenue Louise).*

*With another ATS I was sent to Tilburg, Holland where we were billeted with two sisters who made us most welcome (and made delicious ice cream too!). I then went to another family and finally to the Hague. One day when walking in the town a large car stopped and offered a lift. We gladly accepted and felt honoured when we were told it was Queen Wilhelmina's car! We were finally sent to Berlin and saw all the great leaders.*

*I joined the Normandy Veterans Club a few years ago but unfortunately it has recently closed because of small numbers, however a few of us met for a Christmas lunch.*

*Merville Pidgeon (nee Collinson)*



Dear Editor,

*Searching for WRAC who served in Aden between 1964 and 1967?*

*I am in the process of putting together my third book on Aden covering 1964-1967, about what went on in Aden itself during those years with Internal Security. I am including as much information as possible, such as how it affected the families, and as far as WRAC Association members are concerned what they did and experienced. Your information does not have to be lengthy, just what happened to you, funny items welcomed. If you can be of help please contact me using the details below.*

*The first "Aden in Pictures". In Which We Served. It is an A4 size with history and about 800 half page photographs of in and around Aden. The second, same size "Aden's North West Frontier 1881-1967. In Which We Served. This book tells the history over 100,000 words with maps and more new photographs of what happened up country. I have written and produced both books then had them printed by a local company who also has family connections with Aden. All to keep the price as low as possible, my first book has been reprinted twice by request. Both are available from myself £39.90 including P&P.*

*Denis Sparrow  
Tel: 01453 763552  
[djsparrow@live.co.uk](mailto:djsparrow@live.co.uk)*

**AGM 2016.** The 2016 AGM will be held at 14.00 on Saturday 12 March 2016 at the Victory Services Club, London. Afternoon Tea will be served on completion of the AGM. If you wish to attend please complete and return the attendance form in the centre of this edition.

**Change of Address.** Please don't forget to notify us of any change of address. Every time *Lioness* is distributed a number of copies are unnecessarily returned as members have failed to inform us that they have moved.

**Donations.** Did you know that you can send a donation to the Association at any time? You can specify whether you want your donation to go to the main Association account – please make cheques payable to WRAC Association – or, if you want it to go to the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund then make your cheque payable to ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund. Please read page 69 before making a donation. Donations can also be made on line via the Association website or by phone 01962 887570. Whatever you decide to do, PLEASE make sure that we have a Gift Aid form (see centre pullout) from you. If you pay tax, the funds can reclaim the tax and it adds to the donation you have made without it costing you any more.

**easyfundraising.org.uk.** If you shop online easyfundraising.org.uk provides an easy way for you to raise funds for the WRAC Association with no effort or cost to yourself. Sign up at <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/wrac>, download the find and remind toolbar and carry on shopping. easyfundraising work with the UK's best-known retailers including popular names such as Amazon, M&S, and John Lewis. When you buy something, up to 15% of the purchase price is donated to your good cause, at no cost or effort to you!

**Event Tickets.** We occasionally receive free tickets for events, or invitations to attend functions organised by The Not Forgotten Association. Historically these have primarily been offered to regional Branch members. However if you are an HQ Branch member and would like to register your interest in being sent information about these events please email [office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk](mailto:office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk) and type EVENT TICKET REGISTER as the subject heading. Please note that the vast majority of these events take place in London or the South.

**Lioness (audio version).** *Lioness* is available as an audio magazine on CD. If you suffer from failing eyesight and would like to receive an audio version of *Lioness* please email [office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk](mailto:office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk) or phone HQ WRAC Association on 0300 400 1992

**Lioness.** Articles for inclusion in the next edition of *Lioness* must be received by Friday 15 July 2016. Please email to [editor@wracassociation.org.uk](mailto:editor@wracassociation.org.uk). Please type the text into the body of the email, not as an attached document. Please only send a maximum of 3 or 4 good quality photos (jpg format only) as attachments, do not embed them in a document (or email)!

**Medals and Badges Etiquette.** Etiquette rules for wearing medals only allow the wearing of official awards. Unofficial purchased medals and foreign medals which do not have the Sovereign's permission to be worn are not allowed. The medals awarded to a deceased Service/ex-Service person may be worn on the right breast by a near relative (no more than one group should be worn by any individual). The WRAC Association badge and the Veterans badge may be worn on the left lapel by the

position of the buttonhole. Unofficial medals, or badges other than the WRAC Association badge/pin and Veterans badge, should not be worn when representing the WRAC Association.

**Memorabilia.** Items are available to purchase on-line via the website, by post (prices include P&P) or by phone. See page 20 for details.

**Remembrance.** The Association receives an allocation of tickets for the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on the Thursday prior to Remembrance Sunday, for the Cenotaph Parade and for the service in Westminster Abbey on Remembrance Sunday. Tickets are open to any member of the WRAC Association who wishes to attend, prior attendance or Branch participation are not a prerequisite.

**Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey Thu 10 Nov 16**  
**Cenotaph Parade Sun 13 Nov 16**  
**Westminster Abbey Service Sun 13 Nov 16**

**Tickets:** Ticket applications for all three events to be made no later than 31 Aug 16 by email ([office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk](mailto:office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk)) or letter only. If demand exceeds supply a ballot will take place in early September.

**Overseas Members.** Overseas Members are requested to pay an additional £5.00 per year to cover additional *Lioness* postage costs. Only sterling payments can be accepted.

**Service Records.** Veterans UK is your one stop shop for all queries about Service Records, Medals, Pensions and much more. Go to [www.veterans-uk.info](http://www.veterans-uk.info) or phone 0808 1914 2 18.

**Subscriptions.** Annual Members are reminded that subscriptions (£10.00) are due as at 01 October. Subscriptions can be paid via your Branch, online, by phone (0300 400 1992) or by post with a cheque/postal order (sterling only) payable to WRAC Association.

**Veterans UK.** Veterans UK is your one stop shop for all queries about Service Records, Medals, Pensions and much more. Go to [www.veterans-uk.info](http://www.veterans-uk.info) or phone 0808 1914 2 18.

**WRAC Dinner Club.** The WRAC Dinner Club meets every year on the second Saturday in October, full details can be found at [www.wracdinnerclub.co.uk](http://www.wracdinnerclub.co.uk)

**WRAC Officers' Dining Club.** The WRAC Officer's Dining Club Dinner takes place annually, usually in late November. For more details email [wracofficersdc@gmail.com](mailto:wracofficersdc@gmail.com)

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP STANDING ORDER

Have you ever thought about settling up a Standing Order to pay your annual membership subscription? Please see the pullout in the the centre pages of this *Lioness* for the details to enable you to set up a Standing Order, plus a proforma to inform us that you have done so.

## NEW ARRIVALS!

The Royal Hospital Chelsea welcomed two new In Pensioners in 2015, Joan McLoughlin and June Lowe both served in the WRAC and are thoroughly enjoying life in their new home.



**Christmas Grants Lunch**  
*Joan McLoughlin, Ali Brown, June Lowe, Madge Cole*



**Dorothy Hughes making poppies**



**Joan McLoughlin and Bimbo Coleman enjoying a visit to Pegasus Bridge, Normandy**



**Audrey Merton BEM**  
*visiting Battersea Dogs Home*



**June Lowe enjoying Christmas celebrations**

## THAT'S LIFE Madge Cole

I think when I first arrived at the Royal Hospital Chelsea the saying that 'life begins at 65' was certainly true for me. I have met thousands of people from all walks of life and from all over the world.

It is indeed an immense privilege and honour to be a Chelsea Pensioner and attend a vast selection of events that we get invited to. These include attending commemoration services at both St Paul's cathedral and Westminster Abbey, taking part in various parades, attending VIP dinners and visiting schools. I also have the honour of being an Honorary Scout in Lincoln, the list is endless. In between these events I regularly support our outreach programmes; Veterans Aid, Tedworth House Recovery Centre and the Night Shelter Homeless programme at St Columba's Church in Knightsbridge. I am also a chapel attendant in our beautiful Wren Chapel.



Variety is the spice of life, the following was my schedule for one busy day in December; 08:55 cutting the tape for the opening of a new Wilko store in Kensington, 14:00-16:00 wrapping parcels (fundraising) for customers in Waterstones on Kings Road, 16:30-17:30 readers rehearsal for ABF The Soldier's Charity carol service, 18:30-20:00 back in chapel for the ABF carol service. December is my busiest month in the chapel but I love being busy and meeting wonderful people.



**Marjorie Cole and Bill Murdock were honoured to receive a very generous cheque for £45,000 from Knightsbridge School**

The Royal Hospital Chelsea have built up a close relationship with Knightsbridge School over the years; with Chelsea Pensioners attending Knightsbridge School's Remembrance service and the pupils reciprocating, with the school choir singing at the Royal Hospital. This money was raised by pupils, parents and teachers over the course of the year through a number of community fundraising events.

Finally I must say a big thank you to those who organised the Grand Reunion at Harrogate and also the WRAC Dinner Club at Dudley, both were outstanding.

## VE70



### *Barbara Hurman (centre)*

On Sunday 10 May 2015 a Service of Thanksgiving was held at Westminster Abbey as part of the VE70 events. WRAC Association member Barbara Hurman read the following prayer on behalf of The Royal British Legion: "We pray for nations still devastated by war, for their people and their leaders, and for those who suffer the effects of memories of past wars; for veterans, for those who mourn, and for all innocent victims whose lives have been shattered by the cruelty of others; Lord hear us. Lord, graciously hear us."

## FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE Belfast City Hall Monday 02 November 2015



*Joan McCabe and Sylvia Conachan*

## FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE WESTMINSTER ABBEY Thursday 05 November 2015





## CLEVELAND



*Suzanne Allen and Jan Williams-Landess*

## GUILDFORD



*Rowena Patrick MBE lays a wreath on behalf of the WRAC Association*

## ROTHERHAM



*Mary Cartledge*

## CENOTAPH PARADE Carol Traynor

As always the Cenotaph Remembrance Parade was very poignant and an amazing event, the atmosphere and scene with the hundreds of colours of uniforms of all descriptions was hard to take in. Set against the backdrop of the autumn colours of St James's Park, and with the leaves floating down amongst us in Whitehall it was stunning. We are so fortunate that we could once again be there to pay tribute, and give thanks to those who gave their all.



## ARMISTICE DAY Ypres



*Betty Herschel*

*Editor: The majority of the photos that follow were taken by Heather Gaughran*



## THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

**Rachel Crawford**

I recently attended my first WRAC Association Scottish Area AGM in Perth, during which one of the subjects raised was about using social media to attract more members. As someone who was recruited on Facebook I must throw my full support behind the idea.

After serving three years in the WRAC I was gutted when told I would have to exchange my beret for an AGC(SPS) one. Still, although we were no longer one Corps I always felt that we had an unbreakable bond, and I have recently been proven right in the most wonderful way. Having served 25 years I was a little lost when I took redundancy three years ago. I worried that whatever career path I chose it would never give me the sense of achievement that serving my country had done. I decided to take a gap year to reassess my options and fulfil a long-standing ambition to write a novel. Believing that few people were aware of the support offered to those families who lose loved ones in action I wanted to highlight the difficult role Casualty Visiting Officers carry out. I also wanted to promote women in the army so the heroine in my novel is a female Captain.

I enjoyed penning my novel but writing is a very insular pastime and I missed the daily banter of army life. As my husband and I had decided to settle in Scotland I was also isolated from my family and friends. One day I noticed a link to a WRAC Facebook site, intrigued I joined and I immediately felt at home. I had hoped that by joining I might reconnect with some old friends, what I had not envisaged was the new ones that I would make and the support they would offer.

In total I joined four WRAC sites. One, 'The Soldiers Formerly Known As WRAC', asked me to introduce myself to the group. I explained that I had left the army in 2012 and had just published my first novel. I was told not to be shy and post the link to my book. This I did and the following morning was shocked to see that one lady (Cathy Munro) had read the whole book the previous evening and was raving about it on the site. In a matter of days fifty books were downloaded and I was being asked to publish in paperback. I tentatively ordered a hundred books, which to my relief sold quickly.



I was extremely touched by the Lionesses support but it did not end there. As well as writing some wonderful reviews and posting their encouragement for my next book, the girls rallied round to publicise the book. Cathy Munro created my novel its' own Facebook page and offered to help sell it. Angela Slater went on a one woman PR campaign which resulted in people turning up at my door asking to purchase the book.

I truly believe that my first book 'Too Good to be Forgotten' would not have lived up to its title had it not been for the ladies of the WRAC. With their encouragement, and in some cases insistence, I penned the sequel. This is when I truly felt the benefit of reconnecting with my fellow lionesses.

When publishing my first book I had naively employed a company to edit, proof read, format etc. I handed over quite a lot of money and, in my opinion, received a sub-standard service. One of the WRAC girls (Lisa Barnes) agreed with me. She contacted me to say that as much as she enjoyed my book she had spotted a couple of errors and, if I wished, she would proof read my second novel. Having accepted her kind offer I was overwhelmed by the added assistance she provided. Not only did she do an excellent job of proof-reading the book, she also formatted it and offered invaluable advice.

The sequel now written I turned my attention to the front cover. As the mother features heavily in this book I wanted to have a picture of her holding photographs of her son. I was keen to use a real soldier's photograph and not a model. My thoughts immediately turned to a lady from the Formerly WRAC site, Alison Fleming. Her posts about her late son Jamie always moved me, especially the one about his poppy wreath being vandalised. I contacted Alison and she graciously agreed to Jamie's photograph being featured.



Since the launching of the second book things have really taken off. I have been interviewed for a number of newspapers and even managed to get the WRAC Association mentioned in a couple. I am travelling to meet Alison and her family and whilst there I will be conducting two book signings.

In typical WRAC tradition three Lionesses from the Facebook sites have offered to travel down from Torquay to support me. I have never met any of these ladies but I am sure we will get on famously. The reason for my confidence? Since joining the four WRAC Sites I have become a member of the Stirling Branch, attend monthly social events in Edinburgh and have been to my first ever AGM. Whenever I attend these events the warmth and laughter in the room is in abundance.

I find it amusing that I seem to have gone full circle. I spent the first three years of my army career as a WRAC soldier and I have spent the last three re-engaging with so many wonderful ladies. My life is so much fuller for doing so. Now whenever I have a spare moment I log into Facebook and find thousands of ladies ready to share a joke, offer advice or just listen. I would encourage all lionesses to join a WRAC social network site, especially those who are in isolated areas. It is a wonderful way of interacting with like minded women. I am sure if the Association utilises these sites to encourage new members their numbers will swell.

Recently another group was founded on Facebook, 'WRAC Griffin Branch'. It is a virtual group initially designed to unite those ex members of the WRAC who do not belong to the Association or, if they do belong, may not have a physical branch to attend (or do not wish to attend a physical branch). It aims to support the WRAC Association as well as the wider WRAC Community. The Group actively encourages members to join the Association. Hopefully members of the Group can also meet with fellow "Griffins" in their area and be more than virtual friends.

## DIY SOS THE VETERANS BUILD MANCHESTER 2015 Jann Brant



**Jann Brant second from right**

**Day 1.** After being instructed on the do's and don'ts of working on a building site we signed in and were given our hard hat, hi viz jacket and ear plugs. We were then taken to the site and handed over to a building manager and allocated to where we were needed. I was assigned to Team Holly, along with my brother Gary, who I'd cajoled into coming with me! I struck lucky, working with the guys building the walls and paving in the gardens at the back of Nos 42 & 44 Canada Street where I shovelled sand into a cement mixer and learned how to make mortar, in the pouring rain! Not worked so hard or been so wet in a long time but totally enjoyed every minute! Even with the horrible weather, everyone on site was smiling and laughing.



**Day 2.** Definitely a different day from yesterday, no rain! More shovelling of sand and dishing out of mortar to brickies, along with gophering! I met Gabrielle Blackman (the interior designer) and mentioned that I used to be in the army myself. She later asked me, as a female veteran, to do an interview with Dominic Littlewood for The One Show to say what I thought about the work they were doing for the veterans. Even though I'd been avoiding the cameras, how could I say no? I also found out their Roy al Highnesses, Princes William and Harry would be visiting the site the next day, awesome!

**Day 3.** Wow, what a day! Spent all morning shovelling sand again but I got to make a mix of mortar all on my own...ooh get me! The Princes's arrived just before lunchtime and both of them were working where we were. Prince William was painting in the house directly behind me and Prince Harry laying flags 3 doors up. I even got to speak to Prince Harry, he shook my hand and said it was nice to meet me, I may never wash that hand again! Things kind of ground to a halt a bit while they were there, we couldn't have the cement mixers going during filming and the usual loud bantering had to be whispered but hey, it's not every day you get to be in the very close presence of the heir and spare is it! The build was running 3 days behind so I was there till Monday 28th September, the new date for the big reveal, if I lasted that long! Apparently I was on Sky News earlier that day, plus my interview with Dominic Littlewood was shown on that night's One Show as well, fame at last!



**Day 4.** Today was a lot quieter than yesterday (can't think why) and I think maybe a bit of an anticlimax too after all the hoo haa of yesterday. Nick gathered all the workers together and gave a fabulous speech saying he knew how much everyone had already given but could we all just keep on for a few days more and we'd get there. Shovelled more sand but added another shovelling experience, shovelled hardcore too! Transferred a gazillion bricks by a wheelbarrow from the drop site to where the walls were being built, trotted to and from the site office on

numerous occasions to get supplies, permanently borrowed wheelbarrows and spades from wherever I could filch them and then shovelled more sand, and hardcore. To say I was feeling my age pretty much sums it up, really tired and sore, but I was determined to be there to the bitter end. I met some amazing people, one of which, another ex WRAC, Teresa Warburton, who is a one woman army and never stops smiling. She was a true inspiration to the two volunteers she had with her.

**Day 5.** Today was a full on graft day from start to finish. Arrived to find some so and so had half inched one of our cement mixers so had to use the same one for red sand mortar and grit sand mortar, so it had to be cleaned out in between each mix. How do you do that I hear you ask? Well, once all the mortar has been tipped out, you slosh a bit of water into it and then chuck a few half bricks in and turn it on. The bricks knock the left on mortar off the sides and the water washes it, simples! Spent the first half of the day shovelling the usual, in between hauling bricks in a wheelbarrow from where they could dump them to where they were needed. A huge amount of plants were brought down the back ginnell where we were working, so it was a couple of shovels full into the mixer and stand back while the plants passed, a couple more shovels full and stand back while the plants passed and so on, and so on! After lunch I jumped ship so to speak. The guys I'd been working with all week moved further down the ginnell to build some walls there, so I stayed where I was and helped the landscape architect Laurence and his partner Dean with the block paving in one of the back gardens. Julian was working with him so I got to be Julian's mortar and brick elf for a couple of hours, plus I gained a new skill! I can now brush kiln dried sand over the newly laid block paving until every last little crack is full. Sounds easy, it's not! Little cracks keep opening up again, I think there was a sand worm underneath eating the stuff! It got so late, I had to go and get some portable outside lighting so we could see what we were doing. We finally wrapped it up at gone 8.30pm. On the plus side, I made another new friend, Donna Simpson, who is a TA girl and came all the way from Bury to help. On the downside, I had an argument with a full barrow of topsoil and lost. Big lump on my leg which went very black!

**Day 6.** Another late night but really enjoyed the day, working on the landscaping and my usual stints on the cement mixer. I'm getting quite good at mixing even though I do say so myself! Dean paid me a huge compliment.....he said I was better than most of the labourers he'd worked with! One of the two gardens I've been working behind was planted up today and it looks gorgeous. When I left there were still loads of people on site, painting, decorating, plumbing etc, made me feel a bit guilty for going home but after nearly 13 hours my body was saying enough! Plus, my forehead, which thought I'd still got a hard hat on hours after I'd taken it off!

**Day 7.** The last day of actual building, painting, decorating and planting etc before the big reveal. Everyone on site seemed to go into overdrive so it would be finished in time, but still with smiles and laughter. The full quartet of ex WRAC; Teresa Warburton, Lesley-Jane Holt, Sam Stretch and me were all working in and around the same place, along with two TA girls; Donna Simpson and Jules Smith, helping to finish planting the gardens and cleaning up the mess of a building site! It was after midnight before I left but I know lots of volunteers worked right through the night, painting, building furniture and cleaning inside the houses.



**Day 8.** The day was lovely. A massive number of those who'd worked on the houses were there for the reveal and it was like a huge school reunion! We got to meet some of those who will be living there and shake their hands, it was extremely emotional to say the least. There were lots of big burly men quietly wiping their eyes and I saw our Teresa Warburton blinking like mad, trying to hold the tears back, and failing! I've met some truly amazing people during these last mad 8 days, none more so than the serving soldiers who kept everyone fed with fabulous food, all prepared in a tent, and I've made some lifelong friends. It has been a truly inspiring and humbling experience and I'd do it all again in a heartbeat. As we were leaving for the last time, I gave Nick a hug and said thank you for letting me be a part of it, and he asked me what I thought of it all. My answer 'absolutely awesome'! Life's going to seem very dull for a little while but I've got so many wonderful memories to look back on and stories to tell to my friends and family and you can't say fairer than that can you? Until the next time.....

## THE ATS & WOMEN'S FOOTBALL Gail Newsham

I was inspired to share this story after seeing some wonderful pictures of ATS ladies on Facebook groups and wonder if any of our ATS ladies out there might have served with Joan Burke during the War years? As well as being a soldier during WW2, Joan also had the distinction of having played football for the most successful women's football team of all time, the Dick, Kerr Ladies. She was immensely proud of her service to her country and also her contribution to the best women's football team ever, and I am sure she would be chuffed to bits to be remembered in Lioness today.



**Joan Burke**

In the early 1990s I was the organiser of an International Women's Football Tournament and I wanted to do something special for the 1992 event. I had the idea of organising a reunion of the Dick, Kerr Ladies who were a famous women's football team from my home town of Preston in Lancashire. I knew little about them at that time other than them being recognised as a very good team but had ceased playing many years earlier. Their origins began at a munitions factory in the town during WW1 when they formed a team to raise funds for wounded soldiers. That's how the idea came to pass and The Dick, Kerr Ladies were reunited at the tournament for the first time in almost forty years.

It was only after meeting some of the ladies that it became clear to me that their story was perhaps bigger than anyone realised and something needed to be done before it was too late. I set about researching their history and eventually wrote a book about them, *In a League of Their Own*, which was first published in 1994.

Joan Burke (Tich) began playing for the team in 1939 just before the outbreak of WW2 at the tender age of fourteen. She was kicking a ball about more or less as soon as she could walk and used to run rings around her brothers. In fact all the lads in the area wanted her on their team! She was spotted by a former player of the Dick, Kerr Ladies and the rest as they say, is history.

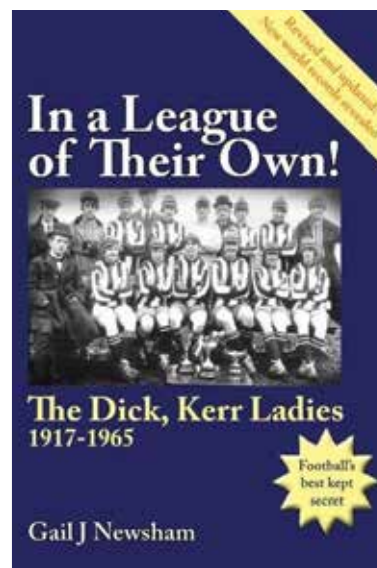
She joined the ATS in 1942 and served with the Anti-Aircraft Battery for four years and was demobbed in 1946. Tich told me, *'I did my basic training in Lancaster and from there I went to Oswestry where our Battalion, 544 Anti-Aircraft Battery, was formed. We went to Bude in Cornwall for three months training in firing the guns out to sea. My first posting was Newcastle upon Tyne where I was on a height finder. They were mixed Heavy Ack-Ack Batteries and the men were on the guns. There were three of us looking out for the aircraft. One would be the spotter, one the height finder and the other would be following the flight path of the plane, plotting it with the radar. I only served in England so I still managed to play for the team whenever I got home on leave'.*



**Oswestry 1942**

She was a very good player for the Dick, Kerr Ladies and was leading goal-scorer for three consecutive seasons from 1950-1952 and continued playing until the latter part of the decade. She was always very proud of her contribution to the team's history and enjoyed reminiscing about their success. She died on 22 May 2007 and I was with her only hours before she passed away. I knew how important her part in the team was to her and I promised I wouldn't let her be forgotten. I read the Eulogy at her funeral and she was given a wonderful send off by the remaining Dick, Kerr Ladies as they sang their club song at her graveside. There wasn't a dry eye to be found.

It could be said that the Dick, Kerr Ladies were the original 'Help for Heroes' as their fundraising efforts both during, and after, WW1 were ground breaking. When taking part in the Blackpool Carnival in 1923, the Ex Servicemen's float stopped opposite theirs and they stood up and saluted them! It was a tribute I know they were very proud of. During their forty eight year history they raised somewhere in the region of £180,000 for charity, but today we would be looking at a figure of around £10 million! They truly were In a League of Their Own!



I published a revised and updated edition of my book last year and have recently been contacted by a worldwide media company interested in making a drama about the team. Fingers crossed, watch this space! *In a League of Their Own! the Dick, Kerr Ladies 1917-1965* by Gail J Newsham. ISBN-10: 1782221832, ISBN-13: 978-1782221838

## **PRESTON ARMY PAY OFFICE LADIES' FOOTBALL TEAM**

*Editor: Following on from the article on ATS football readers might be interested to read about the Preston Army Pay Office Ladies' team in c1918*



**Preston Army Pay Office Ladies' Football Team, 1918 ©**

The National Army Museum has a memoir written by a Miss McLean of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (later Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps). The daughter of a Preston North End footballer, she describes playing for the Army Pay Office establishment at Fulwood Barracks, Preston, in 1916:

*'Record Office also formed a ladies team and we played each other on the Preston North End football ground. This game was a huge success, the money went to war comforts etc. A match was then arranged for Dick Kerr's Ladies team to play Pay and Record office teams on the Blackburn Rover ground. I think we were the first to beat Dick Kerr's team. This match was a treat for the convalescent soldiers stationed at Whalley Hospital who filled the stands. I was proud to be captain'.*

*'The Directors of Blackburn Rovers invited us to dinner after the match. The Chairman had known my father, who had played at Blackburn many times. The Chairman said if we were only men he would have signed us for Blackburn. I had been brought up on football as long as I could remember, my father being known as Jimmy McLean who played for Preston and many other teams. The Chairman remarked on the likeness of my play with my fathers'.*

## **JEN'S JAUNT FOR JON** **Jenny McMahon**

I first met Jonathan in May 2014 at a lunch at St Michael's Church Sheerwater where I live. We just happened to be sitting at the same table and got chatting about a variety of topics. When we got on to the subject of holidays Jonathan said he had been to France as a teenager on a school trip, and had two weeks in Mere, Wiltshire in 2013 whilst his bathroom was being refurbished. I asked where would he like to go if he had the opportunity and he replied Barcelona, Spain. We continued our conversation and I thought what a charming guy he was.

After the meal as I left the table I said to Jonathan 'I am going to get you that holiday!' I came away thinking what have I said? I still do not know to this day what Jonathan's thoughts were at that time! After much deliberation I eventually contacted Jonathan's mum to say I wanted to do something to get him the holiday he so richly deserved. The only problem was I didn't know how I was going to do it. I assumed it would be a fundraising event, but what could I do to raise some money. What I did know was that I wasn't going to do bungee jumping; swim the Channel; climb Kilimanjaro or run the Sahara desert, just not do-able for an overly mature person. I am not a spring chicken, just an old hen! It had to be realistic with minimal cost, minimal risk, local and achievable.

I decided to set myself a challenge and walk the length of the Basingstoke canal, a total of 33 miles over 3 days - minimal cost, minimal risk - unless I fell in. It is local as the canal passes through Sheerwater and hopefully achievable! I eventually met up with Jonathan and his mum to discuss how we would put into action this fundraising venture. We met fortnightly initially, planning and organising with ideas and suggestions. We were a great little team, just the three of us. The final few weeks we met weekly as things were moving swiftly and deadlines approaching.

A date was set for 16 - 18 June 2015. Posters went up in local shops; letters were sent to local businesses; sponsor forms printed off, 'T' shirts produced with Logo and photo. It was all systems go. I planned the walk and volunteers were recruited to take me to the start and finish points each day, the route was to be:

Day 1 Upnately to Fleet - 12 miles

Day 2 Fleet to Brookwood - 12 miles

Day 3 Brookwood to Woodham - 9 miles (plus another 2 to get back to Sheerwater)

In the meantime I communicated with lots of people to ask for sponsorship. I was overwhelmed with donations before I had

even started the walk, from family, friends, neighbours, ex army pals, tennis players, Woodham Walkers. All willing to contribute to help achieve my aim.

I had a fabulous time walking the canal. The weather was glorious, perfect in fact. I met friends who walked with me some of the way (witnesses). I met wonderful people and would stop and ask them to take a photograph of me at some strategic point such as a bridge, there are a variety of bridges that cross the canal. I then asked if I could take a photo of them for evidence, all were very obliging and names exchanged (I have kept a record of names). I then explained the purpose of the walk and pointed to the photo on my T shirt. Some responded and even gave a donation there and then, £1 or £2. I collected £11.00 in total, people were giving without asking - amazing.



### **Greywell Tunnel**

On the first day I met a couple at Odiham Castle who gave me a £1.00. I then met a young mum and daughter with a dog. They asked if I was on facebook, by the time I had returned to Sheerwater they had been on facebook wanting to make a donation! They sponsored me for £10, complete strangers. I was late finishing as I had spent so much time taking photographs and chatting to people. Friends Kathy and Graham from Woodham Walkers met me at the Fox and Hounds in Fleet which is strategically placed on the edge of the canal. It was a hot day so we went for a cool drink.

The following day I met 4 men on a barge all very obliging to have their photo taken. I was then invited on to the barge to have a photo taken with them (more evidence), they donated £6.00. I met anglers who donated plus another walker, all complete strangers. Some of the route I walked in isolation for long periods which gave me the opportunity to reflect and enjoy the peace and tranquility, admiring the stillness of the canal, fauna and flora. On the route were an assortment of benches dedicated to loved ones; quaint cottages and posh houses with pristine gardens leading down to the canal bank. Plus lots of people in narrow boats all willing to be photographed. Herons, swans with their young cygnets, moorhens and ducks were frequently seen along the canal. In the fields were donkeys, horses and cattle.



### **On the barge**

Other times I had heaps of fun and laughter such as when I went 'off piste' with a friend Hilary (Army Vets Tennis player and super fit) who had joined me near Aldershot. We visited the Army School of Physical Training (an old haunt) and the Tennis Centre where I am still able to play to a fashion. Some fun photos were taken with me and two squaddies outside the PT School; then with a tennis racquet wearing walking boots, not a pretty sight! I stopped for lunch at the Basingstoke Canal Visitor Centre in Mytchett, well worth a visit for maps, information booklets, history of the canal. There is a café with picnic tables and kiddie play area, plus a small car park, the staff in the Information Centre are very helpful. At the end of the second day I was late again and met up with Judith another friend and we walked the last four miles together to Brookwood and she invited me to a welcome cup of tea and cake at her house before taking me home.

The final stretch of the canal goes through Sheerwater to Woodham, near Byfleet, where it meets the Wey Navigation. Jonathan was able to join me in Woking town centre to complete the final journey. Kathy and Graham came along too for a short distance, and Hilary re-joined us on her bike for the last 2 miles, or was it 4 miles by the time we walked back to Sheerwater.

Photographs were taken at the finish line with Jonathan, Peter (Petra the Personal Assistant) and myself flying the Union Jack in achievement of our aim. We all headed back to St Michael's Church for delicious strawberry cream tea and to meet some of our sponsors, including local residents and corporate sponsors Express Dispense, all of whom have made a significant contribution to the fund raising event. After 33 miles my feet were sore and my legs stiff, but I did manage to play a few games of tennis the following day!



### **At the finish**

At the end of each day I went to see Jonathan to let him know what I had been up to and he would bring me up to date with what had been happening back at Sheerwater. I would then go for a swim and do some stretches in the pool to alleviate any morning stiffness, it works. There are so many people to thank and I have been overwhelmed and touched by the response to this fundraising project to enable Jonathan to have the holiday of a lifetime. All money raised has gone directly towards Jonathan's holiday and nothing towards administration. The total amount raised was £2,139.

Footnote: Jonathan is 35 years old, severely disabled since birth and dependent on 24 hour care provided by a Personal Assistant who attends to all his daily needs. He has had little opportunity of a proper holiday due to financial constraints plus the cost of a full time carer.

Thanks to everyone's generous sponsorship Jonathan was able to plan the holiday of a lifetime and in September 2015 had two fabulous weeks in Barcelona. Staying in a well equipped hotel, he had the opportunity of visiting many of the tourist attractions; the highlights being a 2 hour boat trip around the harbour; parasailing - an amazing achievement; and 'swimming' in the sea (a sun lounge on wheels that floats)! More photos can be found on the Facebook page Jen Jaunts for Jon



### **The cheque**

### **M62 MEMORIAL FEBRUARY 2015 Jenny McMahon**

The 41st Anniversary of the M62 coach bomb was held at Hartshead Moor Service area to commemorate the death of twelve people plus two young children. I had the privilege of attending and meeting many of the bereaved families, survivors and witnesses including Dave Harrison a policeman who attended at the scene. Here is his story:

The explosion on the M62 motorway occurred about quarter past midnight on 4th Feb 1974. That evening I was on 6pm to 2am evening car duty, it was the last shift after 7 consecutive nights and it had been a really quiet week. I was looking forward to the end of the shift and a couple of days off. We were just off the motorway at junction 25 when we received a radio message to attend an incident near Birkenshaw. The control room had received a number of telephone calls about a loud explosion in the vicinity. We traveled eastbound passing the services at Hartshead Moor towards junction 26.

It was a freezing winters night, quite misty and that section of the motorway was unlit. A couple of minutes later I heard another officer inform the control room that they had arrived at the scene. I will never forget hearing that transmission, a number of bodies had been seen on the carriageway and debris scattered over a vast area of both carriageways. When I arrived I could see that the debris consisted of suitcases, clothing and seats, and my first thoughts were it was the scene of an aircraft crash. The coach was a considerable distance ahead of us on the hard shoulder. There was a strong smell of cordite hanging in the air and I could hear people in distress. I ran towards the commotion, although it was dark I could clearly see the rear third of the coach was torn apart obviously ripped open by a violent explosion. There were obvious fatalities and seriously injured passengers trapped in the tangled wreckage and others scattered over a fairly wide area, most were distressed and disorientated.

I clearly remember trying to assess the passengers who were still alive. Whilst searching the carriageway I found a young woman Jenny McMahon. Jenny had extensive injuries to both legs and obviously needed urgent medical attention. Because of the number of other casualties and limited number of ambulances in the early stages of the incident it was quite a while before an ambulance crew arrived. I covered Jenny with my coat, tried to reassure her and remained with her until medical assistance arrived. The ambulance was single crewed so I went with her to Batley General Hospital.

I went to see Jenny twice over the next couple of days, she was heavily sedated and I do not think Jenny can recall the visits. I never forgot Jenny's name and over the years discussed her with my wife Margaret and often wondered if she ever fully recovered from her horrendous injuries. In 2009 Margaret and I attended the Re-dedication Memorial Service at Hartshead Moor Services when I was introduced to Jenny. We had a brief chat but I think Jenny was emotionally affected by the service and meeting other survivors and we parted company without exchanging contact details. In 2014 on the 40th Anniversary I met Jenny again and on this occasion she attended with members of her family in the hope I would be there. We spent a couple of hours together, exchanged email addresses and have been in contact since. Jenny is a lovely lady who I am pleased to say will be a friend for life.

*Footnote: The Memorial is located at Hartshead Moor Service Station on the westbound carriageway of the M62 between junctions 25 & 26. It can also be accessed from the eastbound carriageway via the footbridge. View Facebook: M62 Coach Memorial*

## AGC EXERCISE FREEDOM OF WINCHESTER

On 24 October 2015 the Adjutant General's Corps exercised their Freedom of Winchester with a parade through the city followed by a service in the Cathedral and a reception at the Guildhall. As the WRAC is an antecedent Corps of the AGC several members of the Winchester and Southampton Branches took part in the event and Sharon Joyce paraded the WRAC Association National Standard.



**Jenny McMahon and Dave Harrison**

**SUEZ VETERANS ASSOCIATION**  
**Evelyn Norton WRAC Fayid 1954-55**



***Suez Veterans Association Committee members attending the Not Forgotten Association Garden Party at Buckingham Palace 26 June 2014***



***Evelyn Norton laying a wreath at the NMA on the 60th Anniversary of the Anglo/Egyptian Treaty Signing 19 October 2014***



***Evelyn Norton at Wayne's Keep Cemetery, Cyprus 21 November 2014***

**WAR PENSIONS**  
**Isabel McCord**

Did you know that if someone who has served in any one of the Armed Services has an injury or illness that they think may have been caused by their time in the Services they can claim compensation from the Ministry of Defence? I knew very little, if anything, about this until I started my resettlement programme when preparing to leave the Army. My sister-in-law rang me to say there was an advert in the Times asking for people with experience of the Services to become tribunal members. She added I could do it until I was 70! I applied to become a Service Member, was successful and have been sitting on tribunals since 2005. Other Service Members you may know include Joan Ford (now retired), Joanna Findlay and Catherine Birtwistle. The tribunal was called the Pensions Appeal Tribunal (PAT) until 2005 when it was renamed the War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Chamber (WPAFC Chamber) as it needed to cover not only the War Pensions Scheme (WPS) but also the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) introduced on 5 April 2005. It is one of the oldest tribunals having been formally established in 1919 by the War Pensions Act. It was set up to hear appeals arising from the WPS introduced in 1918 to compensate for injuries occurring in WW1. It was renewed for WW2 and then in 1949 the law changed and the Scheme was extended to disablement arising from peacetime military service as well as that from the two world wars. It continues to cover all injuries arising from service before 5 April 2005. All injuries sustained after 5 April 2005 are covered by the AFCS. The WPAFC Chamber is part of the Tribunal Service in the Ministry of Justice and completely independent of the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

The WPS and AFCS are different schemes and anyone making a claim needs to understand the rules underpinning them. The Royal British Legion has much experience and a thorough knowledge of the details of each scheme and will provide free help and advice to anyone making a claim. They will also represent appellants if the claim results in a tribunal hearing.

So how is a claim made? The first step is for the service person (or Veteran in the case of those who are no longer serving) to submit a claim for the injury they have suffered during their service to the Veterans UK branch of the MOD. Veterans UK will consider whether it was caused or made worse by the individual's service. If it decides it was then it will award compensation. This could either be a one off payment for less serious injuries or periodic payments for the duration of the disability (akin to a pension) for more serious injuries.

When MOD does not think the injury is related to the individual's service in the Armed Forces then the person making the claim has the right to appeal the decision. That appeal will be heard by a tribunal convened by the WPAFC Chamber. It will be made up of 3 members – one who is legally qualified (the Judge), one who is a registered doctor (the Medical Member) and one who has at least 10 years experience in any of the Armed Services (the Service Member). The role of the Service Member is to provide specific expertise in service matters and assist the tribunal in assessing the credibility of the person making the appeal (the Appellant).

Most appellants attend their tribunal and this enables the tribunal to hear their oral evidence and ask questions so it can establish the facts of the case. Also it helps the tribunal to assess whether the facts give a credible picture of the incident leading to the

injury and the functional limitations in their day to day life arising from the claimed medical condition resulting from the injury. After considering the evidence which could be written (contained in the case papers provided by the MOD) or oral provided at the hearing, the tribunal decides whether the injury or illness the appellant is claiming is associated with their service, whether the claim falls within one of the Schemes (WPS or AFCS) and what is the appellants level of disability.

Appellants cover a broad spectrum of individuals across all 3 Services and may include members of the Polish Forces, Merchant Marine and civilians injured in WW2. Their ages range from those serving in WW2 to those youngsters injured in recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some may be widows/ widowers who are claiming compensation on the death of their husband/wife or dependent children claiming on the death of a parent. The injuries covered are equally varied with many cases concerning musculoskeletal and mental health conditions. In any one day a tribunal can consider injuries arising from WW2, the Falklands War or recent conflicts or those arising from rigorous physical training or sporting activities.

And finally why do I enjoy being a member of the Tribunal? I enjoy the intellectual challenge of working through cases, analysing the evidence and learning from the legal and medical experts. But even more importantly it is a privilege to help those still serving or those who have left the Forces have a fair tribunal hearing and appropriate decision.

*Editor:*

**Royal British Legion:** for a claim form, help with an Appeals Tribunal or for general advice, freephone on 0808 802 8080, or email [info@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:info@britishlegion.org.uk) [www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-support/finances/compensation-advice/war-pensions-scheme/](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-support/finances/compensation-advice/war-pensions-scheme/)

**Veterans UK** can be contacted on Freephone (UK only) 0808 1914 218, or from overseas on +44 1253 866 043. Email [veterans-uk@mod.uk](mailto:veterans-uk@mod.uk), [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk)

**Service Pensions:** for Service Pension enquiries, ring the SPVA (JPAC Enquiry Centre) on 0800 085 3600 or write to: JPAC Enquiry Centre, Mila Point 465, Kentigern House, 65 Brown Street, Glasgow G2 8EX

**MARY (MOLLY) McLEAN BEM**  
**Anne Clissitt**



*This plaque has been installed in St John's Guildford. Molly McClean BEM was the Head Steward in the Officers Mess at Guildford*

## THE PATRON'S LUNCH PRIZE DRAW

Inside this edition of *Lioness* you should have received a book of Prize Draw tickets giving you the chance to win a place to attend the The Patron's Lunch on The Mall on Sunday 12 June 2016. The WRAC Association has purchased two pairs of tickets (at a cost of £300 per pair) which will form the Draw prizes. The Draw will take place at the WRAC Association AGM on Saturday 12 March 2016.

Due to the nature of the event, and the ticket funding, only WRAC Association members (or those who match the membership criteria) will be eligible to attend. If required, a carer may attend but this will be in the place of a WRAC Association member. The tickets will be drawn in pairs. In the event of the owner of a winning ticket not having a WRAC Association member to attend with, a second ticket may be drawn (to attend with the primary ticket holder). All travel is at individual expense.

Additional books of tickets can be purchased by phone (0300 400 1992) or by post: WRAC Association, Unit 39, Basepoint, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD. Tickets are £5 per book of 5, cheques payable to WRAC Association.



## THE PATRON'S LUNCH

THE MALL | 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2016

# ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund - Making A Difference

*"I am sending this email to convey my heartfelt thanks and gratitude for the generous and unexpected financial help that the Fund awarded me. I cannot express how much this has helped my family and I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you. When I first applied for assistance with my house move I did not expect the generous amount of money that was awarded to me! Thank you very much again; it has made life so much easier". £200 for removals, £850 towards the deposit and first month's rent, and £250 to meet the family's general needs in establishing their new home.*

In the 12 months of the financial year 14/15, your Benevolent Fund received 370 applications for assistance: 103 from former ATS and 267 from WRAC servicewomen. In all the Fund awarded £198,473, of which over £33,000 was for funeral expenses and over £23,600 on general needs grants. A further £29,768 was awarded in the form of Princess Royal's Memorial Fund maintenance grants to 26 beneficiaries. Your oldest beneficiary was 101 and your youngest 42, and applications were received from as far afield as the USA, Zimbabwe, Spain and France.

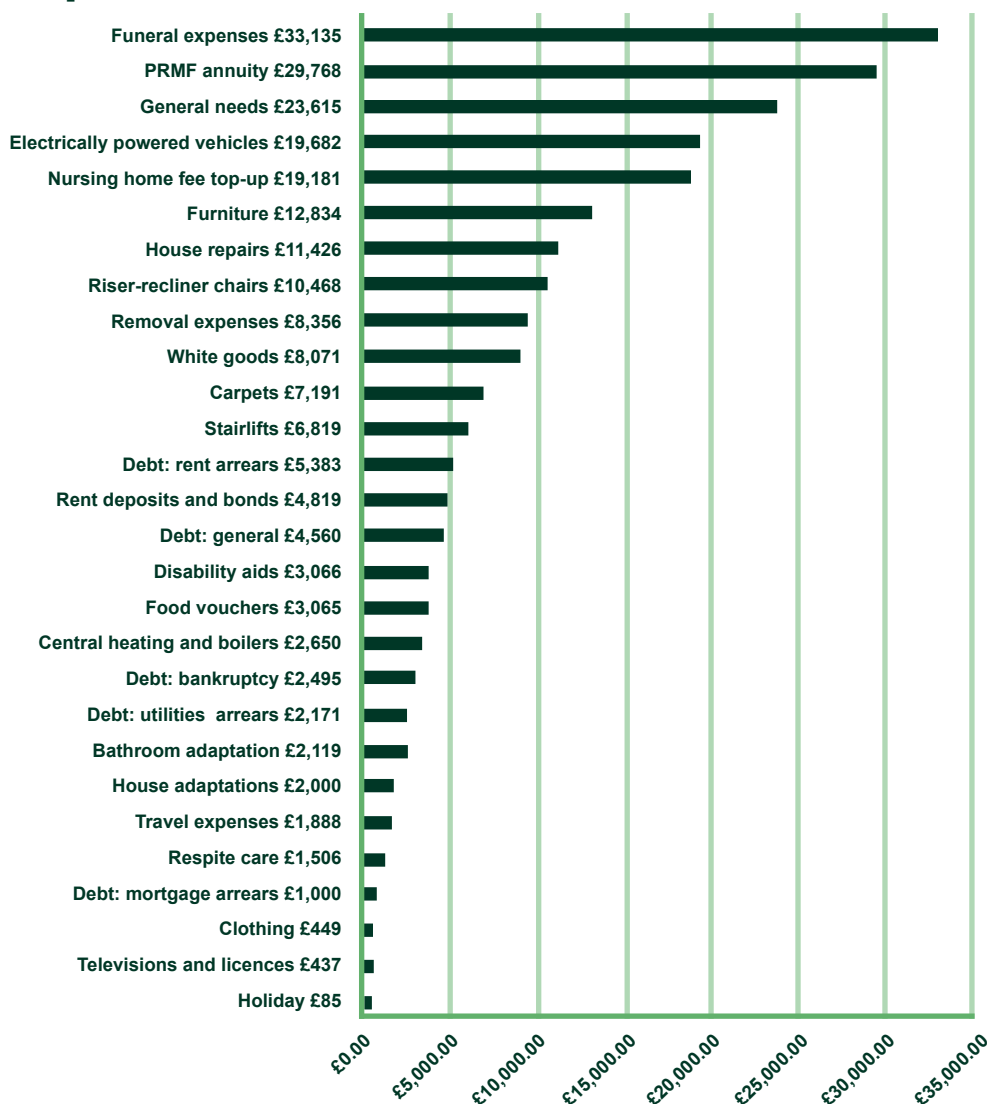
*"I cannot say enough how lucky I have been that the ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund helped me. I am so, so grateful - it means so much. My marriage failed after a long time and I was left with nothing and it has been so hard but now I am debt free - yippee, and it will help me until I receive my pension in the new year with what you have all done for me". General needs including council tax payments until pension date.*

## Who is eligible for help?

Any former servicewoman, including TA, with one day's paid service or more is eligible for assistance.

*"I am writing to say a huge thank you for my chair and vouchers both of which have been a great help. It has made my life a bit easier - thank you". £1,248 for a riser-recliner chair and £240 in food vouchers.*

## ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund Expenditure 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015



### Are there any other criteria?

Yes, you must be in need of financial help.

There's also a limit on the amount of savings that you can have above which the Benevolent Fund is unable to make an award.

To qualify for a maintenance grant you must be living alone on a basic state pension and in poor health.

*"I have received my wheelchair and am delighted with it. It will be very useful". £93.98 for a folding hand-operated wheelchair.*

### How your Benevolent Fund can help

Since the start of this financial year your fund has helped with grants in a wide range of categories including:

| How your Benevolent Fund can help                                                                                |                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Since the start of this financial year your fund has helped with grants in a wide range of categories including: |                         |
| bathroom adaptations                                                                                             | central heating/boilers |
| house repairs and adaptations                                                                                    | carpets and flooring    |
| EPVs and electric wheelchairs                                                                                    | clothing                |
| riser-recliner chairs                                                                                            | furniture               |
| stairlifts                                                                                                       | tv's and tv licences    |
| disability aids                                                                                                  | white goods             |
| funeral expenses                                                                                                 | removal expenses        |
| priority debt                                                                                                    | rent, deposits and      |
| food vouchers                                                                                                    | bonds                   |
| respite breaks                                                                                                   | maintenance grants      |
| travel and transport                                                                                             | care home fee top-ups   |
|                                                                                                                  | general needs           |

*"My new combination boiler and heating system is now installed and I shall no longer have to worry about water pipes bursting in my loft. My sincere thanks to the WRAC Association Benevolent Fund for the finances that were made available to meet the cost. Your kind consideration is very much appreciated". £747 for a combination boiler.*

### Is there anything with which your Benevolent Fund cannot help?

Your Benevolent Fund is unable to assist with clearing non-priority debt such as overdrafts, bank loans, credit card bills, HP payments; legal fees; or medical and dental procedures available via the NHS.

*A daughter writes, "I cannot begin to say the difference it has made. For my mother to have her name associated with debt was something she would have hated but your help has removed that spectre. Now the last chapter of her life can be closed without stain and it allows me to deal with her loss and move on". £600 to clear the balance of funeral expenses.*

### So how do you apply for help?

If you are a former ATS or WRAC regular or TA servicewoman who needs assistance, or if you know someone who is, then your first port of call is your local branch of SSAFA or regional RBL office.

SSAFA or the RBL will arrange for a trained caseworker to interview you in your home to establish the full range of assistance that you need.

The caseworker will complete a report that includes details of your household income. This is called means-testing and ensures that your Benevolent Fund's charitable money goes to those in real need.

When the report is complete it is sent to the Benevolent Fund Secretary.

Once received, applications are considered at the appropriate grants committee meeting and a decision is taken.

*A daughter writes, "Your Fund has offered wonderful support and financial help to my mother over the years. Because of help from organisations such as the ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund, my mother, who suffered from Parkinson's Disease, was able to spend her final years at a first class residential home that was comfortable, extremely well maintained and very well run. The staff are kind and caring and my family and I are so very grateful to you. Please accept our grateful thanks for all your help and support which has been very much appreciated by all of us". Nursing home fee top-ups since May 2005.*

### How often do the grants committee meetings meet?

There are 2 types of grants committee meetings:

- Minor grants committee meetings are held daily as required and can award immediate grants up to £1,000
- Major grants committee meetings (MGCM) are held at least once a month and can award grants up to the annual maximum of £3,000. The MGCMs also consider applications for care home fee top-up fees and maintenance grants, and for applicants with fewer than 6 months service.

### What happens next?

When a grant is awarded it is paid by digital bank transfer to either SSAFA or the RBL rather than direct to an applicant. This means that SSAFA or the RBL receive the grant immediately and are able to ensure that it is used for the specific purpose for which it was awarded as soon as possible.

**Please find below the contact details for SSAFA and the Royal British Legion if you, or someone you know, are in need of assistance.**

#### **SSAFA**

**[www.ssafa.org.uk](http://www.ssafa.org.uk)**

**0845 241 7141**

#### **The Royal British Legion**

**[www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk)**

**0808 802 8080**

All items can be purchased online via the website, by post, or phone 0300 400 1992. Cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association and sent to: WRAC Association, Unit 39 Basepoint, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD. All prices include postage & packing.

See page 44 for information on our new WRAC Association membership gift vouchers



## WRAC Association Fleece

**£25.00**

Green fleece with embroidered WRAC Association logo.  
Sizes XS, S, M, L, XL  
(these are unisex and come up large)



## WRAC Association Umbrella

**£15.00**

Dark green golf style umbrella with WRAC Association logo



## WRAC Association Polo Shirt

**£19.50**

WRAC Association Polo Shirt is a high quality, unisex Fruit of the Loom cotton shirt with embroidered WRAC Association logo.  
Sizes S, M, L, XL



## WRAC Association Trolley Token

**£2.00**

Next time you go shopping don't be caught without a coin for your trolley



## WRAC Association Brooch

**£4.00**



## WRAC Pin Badge

**£3.00**



## ATS Pin Badge

**£3.00**



## WRAC Association Tea Towel

**£7.00**

Superb quality large tea towel (50x80cm) with green WRAC Association logo



## WRAC Association Notepad

**£10.00**

A5 lined hardback notebook in dark green with gold embossed badge and logo



## WRAC Association Wristband

**£1.50**

A simple and stylish way to show your support for the WRAC Association



## WRAC Association Ballpoint Pen

**£5.00**

High quality WRAC Association branded ballpoint pen in dark green



## WRAC Association Paperweight

**£15.00**

A beautiful 4 inch diameter paperweight crafted from Bristol Blue glass (includes display stand)



## WRAC History Booklet

**£2.50**

A short history of the WRAC from 1949 to 1992

## WRAC Association Notepad and Pen

Purchase the A5 notebook and ballpoint pen together for only **£12.50**

## **ABERDEEN** **Joan Bartlett**

The Branch now numbers 14 with the addition of June Fisher who is most welcome. We continue to meet in Ma Cameron's Snug. The place has just had a revamp and is looking pretty good, with tartan type upholstery and flooring.

In May we had an outing to The Mains of Drum for lunch, and a jolly time it was too. We had a look round the gift shop before heading for the bus home. In June the Armed Forces Day Parade was attended by those members of the Branch able to march, and cheered on by others.

In September 4 of us went to Perth for the Scottish Area AGM and had a fine time meeting up with friends from the other Branches. The competition was for a decorated box and there were some very nice entries. Aberdeen Branch did well in the raffle and I won 6 bottles (2 groups of 3 miniatures).

In October I went to a memorial service for Alice Gorrod, a former Branch member who died just 9 months short of her 100th birthday. She was a quiet soul who was missed when she was no longer able to attend meetings.

The Fife and Tayside Branch invited us to their Christmas lunch and at the time of writing 3 of us were planning to attend. We wish all Branches a good year in 2016.

## **BAND** **Ann Jones**

I have no doubt that many of you have now heard the very sad news of the death of our Director of Music Major Jean Barclay MacDowell, aka Mrs Collyer. I was so very glad to have attended the Service of Thanksgiving in Kent on the 10th August 2015. It was, despite the sadness, a very a good day and after the long journey it was rewarding. I also went on to visit the National Memorial Arboretum to lay a wreath in her honour from us all at our WRAC Memorial Stone. Again a very worthwhile journey



and visit and I for one would urge everyone to make the trip. It is a wonderful place, and with the improvements now being made, an excellent place for all the family. I now also have to inform you all of a further sadness, I have been informed of yet another of our Directors of Music, who passed away in January 2015, Zara Bowness-Smith (Director from 1966-1973). There are obituaries for both former Directors of Music on pages 63 and 64.

**Ann Jones at the NMA**

I am well on the way finding accommodation for our reunion in Manchester in May 2016, but I will need confirmation from you as soon as possible in order to obtain the very best prices. Please contact me with your Confirmations ASAP as it may well be our last Reunion, and one in which we will celebrate not only our unique and singular Staff Band but Major MacDowell's life as well. I am delighted to say we have had several more ladies join us, I am hoping this may well be the saving of the Branch, do you know of anyone who would like to join us? I am also delighted to inform you that Carol Tyler (nee Tupling) has been nominated to the top 3 among many hundreds of volunteers to be the best in her region, we look forward to hearing who won.

## **BIRMINGHAM** **Babs Anderson**

Where does the time go? Birmingham Branch seem to lurch from meeting, to event, to get-together seamlessly and without breaking stride, but we have lots of fun and spend most of our time together laughing. We have been lucky enough to have picked up a new member since the last Lioness was published. Margaret Kirby has thrown herself wholeheartedly into the Branch and we hope she will be able to join us on our various trips and events over the coming years.

Sadly we had to say goodbye to one of our members in November. Jean Midford fought the fight but then got posted to the big parade ground in the sky. We were privileged to escort her chariot (hearse) right to the door of the crematorium and then stood Guard of Honour as she was taken in for the service. She was a quiet lady, compared to most of our members, but she will be greatly missed.

Our quarterly Pizza Night is really taking off. We have even had members of Tamworth Branch join us on one occasion. It is usually necessary for us to spread ourselves over several tables, which adds to the general hubbub. The staff are used to us though so we get treated very well indeed. Many of our members attended the WRAC Dinner Club in Dudley and had a great time. There is something therapeutic about singing, dancing and laughing.

The Branch AGM happened as usual in October and members were invited to wear interesting shoes so that they could look at them intently when the question of standing for office was voiced. Consequently, Betty Webb MBE, Babs Anderson and Chris Fretwell have been re-elected and will do their best to keep things on an even keel. An idea we have in the planning process is to invite ladies in the Birmingham area who have also served, to join us at our meetings. Members of the WRNS and WRAF, Civil Defence and other women's services do not have their own Branches within our area so we will be extending a welcoming hand to them in 2016. We will report on progress in the next edition of the Lioness.

November is usually our busiest month and this year proved no different. There was another great turnout from Brum Branch at the Cenotaph. The weather was kind to us yet again so we were able to march without waterproofs. The highlight for us all was to see Prince William up on the dais, taking the salute. The icing on the cake was hearing him say "Well done ladies, you're much better than the men." An RSM was also heard to say that we were the most enthusiastic squad on parade. We certainly know how to represent our Association. There was even a shot of us on the TV this time.



### ***Birmingham Branch at the Cenotaph Parade***

At the same time as many of us were in London a small contingent of Brum ladies were representing us in Birmingham City Centre. Our wreath was carried by Susan Pearce and handed over with pride. Several of us also attended the Armistice Day service at the Hall of Memory in Birmingham on 11 November. It was a short service but we managed to turn it into another great day by popping over the road to have a pub lunch. Any excuse!

The Birmingham International Military Tattoo took place at the end of November and a large group of us turned up with family and friends. On the Saturday evening Sharon Joyce paraded our National Standard and Rosie Garrison carried our Branch Standard on the Sunday afternoon. We are always proud of them both.

Our Branch Christmas lunch has now become a smile fest, with the vast array of Christmas jumpers, crazy hats and additional decorations for the tables. Members of Tamworth, Shropshire, Swindon, Hereford, Phoenix, and Leicester & Nottingham Branches were able to join us, along with our Area Chairman, Maggie Purkis. We were honoured to have our Vice President, Ali Brown, present again and this year she was able to judge the decorated table competition without sitting on the fence. The winning table was actually awesome and deserved winners. They were presented with a lovely prize of bottles of wine for everyone, generously donated by Rosie Garrison and Heather Gaughan. They had also placed small jars of sweets at every person's place setting, thank you ladies. Unfortunately Ali was unable to beat the local traffic into submission in time to make the team photograph but it is confirmed that she was sporting a lovely Christmas jumper. There were no jackpot winners on our gift scratch cards but we had fun whilst there was still hope. We thank everyone for bringing their broad smiles to this event and look forward to doing it all over again next year.



***Christmas Lunch***



### ***Marg Davies and Frances Jenkinson sporting Christmas attire***

The December Pizza Night was a fun time with another showing of Christmas jumpers. The noise we made reached epic proportions but we were not ejected so perhaps we weren't as bad as we thought.

Birmingham Branch had been approached by the National Army Museum, through HQ, to get involved in a project which will gather stories and experiences of women who have served in the Army. The writer is based in Birmingham so we were happy to help. A group of us presented ourselves at the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham for a workshop, run by the National Army Museum, in mid December. It was an interesting experience and we are now looking forward to going to London to see how our efforts have been interpreted by the writer and artist we talked to. Watch this space for an update this time next year, when the totally re-vamped National Army Museum is open again.

Brum Branch has a busy schedule for 2016, starting with a small group joining in the 'He's behind you!' at an Aladdin pantomime. We are also taking a large group to the theatre to see 'Let It Be' in April. We'd better dig out our old records and practice our Beatles' songs. We don't need much of an excuse to get together in Brum Branch.

Birmingham Branch send best wishes to you all and an open invitation to join us at any of our meetings on the first Wednesday of every month except January, or on any of our trips. The only thing left to say now is "You can count on Brum Branch. We have an abacus."

## **BRISTOL**

### **Jackie Naysmith MBE**

Branch meetings continue to be very well attended, and are always 'happy', members look forward to having a catch up with others, so whilst it makes for a noisy meeting it is also good. We had our Annual trip to Weston-super-Mare for a Fish & Chip lunch. It was at a different venue, recommended and organised by our members Pat Carter, Mary Perkin and Vi Slater who live in Weston. Members agreed that it was very good and we will definitely be going back next year.



***Committee Meeting***

Our AGM was in October and the Committee were once again all re-elected. We had an invite from the RBL to participate in the Poppy Launch event in a local shopping centre. This was very successful and some ladies were interviewed on local TV and had photos taken with Noel Edmonds who was also selling poppies. The Band of the Royal Artillery were playing and the RBL looked after us very well and gave us refreshments. Credit must go to the older ATS ladies who did their bit selling poppies. Hopefully we will be able to be involved next year.



### **Poppy sellers**

Sadly one of our members, Phyllis Gage (ATS), passed away, she was a very quiet and unassuming lady. I attended her funeral and her son, who took the service, spoke to me afterwards and told me that he had several items of his mother's that he wanted me to have. When he brought them to my house I found there were personal records and her 'dog tags' which were held together with a cross and chain. I was able to show these to Branch members, and also, out of respect for her memory, I put them in the pocket of my uniform and carried them on the Remembrance Sunday parade. Two of us paraded and our wreath was laid by Jean James, Pat Carter laid a wreath at Weston-super-Mare.

We received an invite from The Not Forgotten Association for their Christmas Tea Party at St James's Palace. Stella Fogg (our Chairman) and myself attended, it was brilliant. We were seated in the Throne Room, within touching distance of the Throne, how special was that! The food was delicious and mulled wine was a bonus. Several artists were circulating round the tables and I didn't realise that one of them drew a caricature of me, it was good and made me look younger which made me like it even more. We were shown a film of The Not Forgotten Association Mt Kilimanjaro Summit Challenge, awesome is the only word I can use. The courage and tenacity of these veterans is to be applauded, it was very humbling. The film is on their web site and I will be showing it to our members at our next meeting. Four members also attended at Not Forgotten Association Christmas lunch in Gloucester and thoroughly enjoyed their day.



**Stella Fogg and Jackie Naysmith MBE at St James's Palace**

Our December meeting was enjoyable, we had Xmas nibbles, a Bring and Buy and a Raffle. Xmas cards, a newsletter and lunch menu were also given out. Our Annual Lunch is on February 11th and we once again have a theme, I love it when the ladies 'dress up'. We hope to see many of you at Association AGM in London. On behalf of all our members I wish you a happy 2016.

### **BURY**

#### **Susan Feeney nee Reeves**

As a Branch we have had a fairly quiet 6 months leading up to November. In October and November our ladies could be found selling Poppies for the RBL in both Marks and Spencer and Debenhams in Bury town centre. Between the two stores we managed to collect £9,000, the overall total for Bury was £63,000 a stunning amount for a small town. Well done the Lionesses. A number of Branch Members made the journey south for Remembrance Sunday at the Cenotaph, one of our members went a little further afield to Orlando where it was Veterans Day.

We had our Christmas Dinner at the Old White Lion Hotel and as usual the food was very enjoyable and we had great afternoon plenty of gossip, laughter and cracker jokes. The majority of us remained sober. Two of our ATS ladies Maisie and Joan joined us for lunch as they are finding the Tram journey from Altrincham a little tiring during the winter months, it was great to see them both looking so well. Another of our ATS ladies, Joan, celebrated her Birthday in December, she was very popular during her time in the ATS as she was a Pay Clerk! We all wish her well. Our lovable Chairwoman Pat Oldham and her husband Brian celebrated their Golden Wedding in December and we all send our Congratulations.



**Pat Oldham (Chairperson) and Yvonne Dunbar (Treasurer) who organise our events** **Maise and Joan, both ATS**



**Christmas Lunch**

## CHELMSFORD Gina Shadrack

Chelmsford Branch resumed meetings in September after a summer break. At this meeting we enjoyed listening to another talk from Margaret Kliskey. This time it was on East Anglia so we could relate to that and we are grateful to Margaret for giving us the opportunity to learn more about the county in which we live.

At our October social meeting members shared with us some of their experiences of service life or other events. Everyone had a turn to speak and it proved very successful. We ran out of time as there was so much to be said (we all like to talk don't we)! The November meeting had a good turnout as we had a demonstration of "Flowers for Christmas" which is always popular. Five arrangements were raffled and taken home by delighted winners.

In December we gathered for Christmas Lunch at our usual venue, though probably for the last time as it is closing down. It was lovely to welcome our Area Chairman, Wendy Hooton, who spoke about her forthcoming running event and also proposed the Loyal Toast.



**Christmas Lunch at the Miami Hotel Chelmsford on 1st December**

Our thanks and best wishes for 2016 go to the HQ staff at Winchester, also greetings to all Branches for a specially good 2016.

## CHESTER Pat Sanders

We were very busy for the last half of the year what with our outings; to the Arboretum, Chester Canal Trip, Chester Zoo, a 40's do in Chester, and our Queen's Celebration in September. We also fitted in a holiday in Scotland. Not bad for a load of old biddies.



**Queen's Celebration**

December was very busy with all the Christmas lunches we attended at various Branches and with other Associations. We were very fortunate to be invited to the Not Forgotten Christmas Lunch in Wrexham and a good time was had by all our ATS ladies; Audrey McDermott, Dorothy Garnett, Doris Wallington, Frances Rimmer and of course the amazing Elsie Roberts who had only just had a hip replacement after having had a fall. Nothing could keep Elsie down, her daughter had told her she was not to drink but that did not stop Elsie, after a couple of glasses of the grape Elsie was up dancing along with the other ATS ladies, nothing can stop these ladies from having a good time.

We also attended a 50's do where all the ladies attending joined in the fun and dressed in 50's costumes. Pat Sanders won a prize for wearing an Andy Pandy outfit, another great day out. We are now looking forward to the forthcoming year to see what we can get up to next. Hope you all have a great year from everyone at the Chester Branch.

## CLEVELAND BRANCH Audrey Grainge

Once again it is time to put pen to paper and share with you antics of our ladies, the meetings are very noisy indeed. We have a good turn out every month, on average about 16 members attending. We welcomed our new member Morag Lippe at the November meeting, I bet she wondered what we were all on, when we had a game of Bingo which was utter chaos. In July our speaker was a lady called Pam Towers, who gave an interesting talk on some of her holidays taken mainly in the desert regions, and gave a funny demonstration making various hats and items of clothing using silk scarves. As usual we had our annual outing in August and this year it was to Barnard Castle and we also visited a Garden Centre at Eggleston Hall. Nine ladies attended the Area lunch in York, going by train, and I think there was a bit of retail therapy involved on the way from the station to the hotel.

Sadly in September we lost another Lioness, Robbie Emmerson, a former Branch member who was our Lioness Correspondent and Minutes Secretary for a while. Five members were able to attend her funeral where, along with Dot Ryder and Chris Corker, we formed a Guard of Honour as her coffin was led in. As usual we had a good turnout going to the Dinner Club which was thoroughly enjoyed by all who went, a big Thankyou to the DC committee for all your hard work. Mary Nicholson brought us some poppies she had knitted, although in the photo it looks like Chris Mimms is also wearing one in her hair she's not!



**Standing: Pam Ashenden, Suzanne Allen, Irene Mclean, Hazel Adamson, Judith Gallacher, Jenny Severn  
Seated: Chris Mimms, Mary Hill, Wendy Wall**

Many of the Ladies played a big part over the Poppy Appeal period; Jan Williams-Landess and Suzanne Allen spent most of the week selling Poppy Merchandise in Tesco, and as a Poppy Organiser in a nearby village I was also very busy organising and selling poppies. On Remembrance Sunday a wreath was laid on behalf of the Branch at Middlesbrough by Jan and Suzanne who, along with Jenny Hall, also marched in the parade. Wendy Wall laid one in Eston and Judith Gallacher in Billingham. This is the first year a wreath has been laid in the three towns in the Cleveland area. Well done to you all as the weather was awful that day.

It was a very busy time also for our Standard Bearer Anne Mahoney who donned her uniform and sold Poppies in Asda Billingham, and attended a ceremony at the College of Further Education at Hartlepool on the 10th. She was in London on the 8th Nov on parade at Hyde Park Corner for the RA Memorial, and on the 11th she was at the War Memorial at Hartlepool. This year Jenny Severn was our sole representative who went to march at the Cenotaph in London on Remembrance Sunday.



**Jenny Severn**



**Hazel Adamson (formerly Crammen)**

Our congratulations go to our secretary Hazel Crammen who got married to John on Nov 9th and will now be known as Mrs Hazel Adamson here she being presented with flowers and a card from the Branch.

## **COLCHESTER & DISTRICT** **Kerry Warnes**

With the help of other WRAC Facebook groups rounding up ex WRAC/ATS in our area, we formed our own Facebook group WRAC/ATS Veterans of Colchester and Surrounding Area's. I am pleased to announce that since having several informal get togethers we are now becoming a Formal Branch, Colchester and District Branch will be reborn!



### **Seaside Havoc**

Our day out in Clacton "Seaside Havoc" was a great success and included a Fish and Chip lunch, great fun in the Amusement Halls on the pier, a sandcastle building competition (of which myself and Vinnie were robbed) and finally kite flying fun. Our last "Get Together" was Brunch at the Harvester Stanway organised by Yvonne Wilson. It was a great turn out with some new faces attending. We all enjoyed our food, apart from my metal sausage, luckily I didn't break a tooth! A big thank you to Yvonne for organizing it, a job well done.



### **Enjoying Sunday Brunch**

A few of us attended the WRAC Dinner Club and had an absolute fantastic weekend, a big thank you to all involved. Our final event of 2015 was our Xmas Dinner Night at The Last Anchor in Ipswich, where we enjoyed a 3 course dinner, Secret Santa and of course, Xmas jumpers. If anyone would like to join our Branch please find the contact details under Branch Meetings in Lioness.

## **FIFE & TAYSIDE BRANCH**

### **Kate Arnold**

The Fife & Tayside Branch held its Christmas Lunch in Perth on 3rd December. Despite the inclement weather 15 ladies sat down for lunch. We were delighted that 3 members from Aberdeen Branch and 1 member from Glasgow Branch were able to join us. Sandra Johnston, one of our newer members, had a baptism of fire as this was her first meeting; we hope she's not been scared away! We also had three members of one family at the table: Margaret Selfridge and her sisters Kate and Nancy. It was a very happy affair and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. The hotel provided a delicious lunch and a raffle was held.

Branch Membership now stands at 53: 41 Life Members and 12 Annual Members. It was with much sadness that 2 members gave their Final Salute in 2015. Annie Smart died in June; her obituary was in the last edition of Lioness. Doreen Peggie, ex-Secretary of the Fife & Tayside Branch, died in October. Both are sadly missed by all their friends, both within the Branch and throughout the wider Association community.

The Branch meets on the last Thursday of the month in Reids Bar of the Salutation Hotel in Perth.

## **GRIMSBY**

### **Gail Davy**

July was a busy month with 12 members having a trip to Springfield shopping outlet in Spalding. Much retail therapy was enjoyed and bargains purchased. With a selection of eateries all appetites were satisfied and some of us had time for a ride round the gardens on the little train. Later in the month a few of us attended a ceremony to unveil an Army plaque at the Veterans Memorial Gate at Cleethorpes. Carole carried the Standard on the windiest day of the summer.



### **Plaque unveiling**

At the August meeting a representative of St. John Ambulance Brigade gave an interesting talk on first aid. The North East Area Reunion took place in September and 6 members attended and had a good time eating and remembering their days in the WRAC. Later in the month 10 members had a lovely day out at the National Memorial Arboretum, some of us had been before but there is always some new memorial to visit with on going projects each year. Afterwards we had a meal at the nearby Royal British Legion Club in Alrewas. An excellent meal at very reasonable cost.

The October meeting was our AGM at which all officers were re-elected for a further year. At the end of October Carole paraded the standard at the ceremony to launch the

Poppy Appeal in Grimsby. Several members manned a stall in the shopping centre to sell poppies during the run up to Remembrance Day.



### **Carole Tyler and Monica Barnes**

At the end of November we held our Christmas Lunch, as usual it was an excellent meal at Cleethorpes golf club. Ali Brown was our guest and spoke about herself and her new role in the association as Vice President and Chairman. We held a Christmas raffle at our December meeting and a New Year party in January.



### **Grimsby Branch members enjoying Christmas Lunch**

## **HEREFORD BRANCH**

### **Sharon Joyce**

It is with sadness that I have to report the sad news that our Branch President, and a founder member, Ena Price has passed away. You can read a full obituary on page 66.



### **Hereford Branch members attending the funeral of Ena Price**

On a happier note Ena had achieved her goal of reaching and celebrating, on the 11th October, her 100th birthday. Branch members joined her at Newstead Nursing Home to help her celebrate this great landmark. She opened her card from the Queen and said "The old girl remembered then" which was Ena all over. Ena's last attendance was our Branch 25th Anniversary Party in July 2014, which she enjoyed very much and thanked everyone for coming to her party! Well done Ena. Also in October Mary Nicholls (Chairwomen) and Jean Butler both celebrated birthdays, aged 93 and 91years respectively.



***Ena celebrating her 100th birthday***

In August we had our annual Picnic/Summer Draw at our usual haunt Queen's Wood near Leominster. The weather was kind to us this year so no umbrellas were needed, members had a very enjoyable day. Also several members attended Gallipoli Day at Hereford AR centre. The Herefordshire Regt fought and lost many men in this campaign, a plaque was laid to commemorate this event. Beating Retreat by The Rifles followed and 16 standards were on parade including the Hereford Branch Standard.



***Enjoying the Branch Picnic at Queen's Wood***

The Branch Standard was on parade for Hereford City Remembrance Sunday Parade and Heather Bradbury laid a wreath on behalf of the Branch.

## **LEEDS Pat Harpin**

We have had a very quiet time this year. Due to some of our senior members having difficulty travelling, and ill health, our membership is falling but we manage to meet every month. The younger members are working and unable to come to meetings during the day. Trish, through facebook, tried to arrange Saturday get-togethers but without much success.

We enjoyed the Grand Reunion, especially as it was in the beautiful Harrogate spa town and in easy reach. Our visit to York and the NE Area Lunch was very enjoyable, our thanks go to the Chairman and her helpers for putting on such an enjoyable event.



***Mary Nicholls (93) and Jean Butler (91) enjoying their birthday celebrations***

Since the last Branch News we have been a little quiet, we had our Summer Lunch at The Green Man at Fownhope (this is where we had our 25th Branch Party in July 2014) 25 plus members and guests attended. A great time was enjoyed by all. The Branch Standard was taken to the RBL County Rally in Ross-on-Wye in June where over sixteen standards were on parade. It was a lovely warm sunny day with the Rifles Band leading the way, people lining the streets clapping and cheering as we marched through the town for a church service, quite a day to remember.



***Elizabeth, Chris and Ann enjoying the Grand Reunion***

Members have attended various events this year to commemorate 70 years since VE and VJ Day. Betty and Elizabeth were able to attend the laying up of the AckAck Standard in York Minster. Trish is still busy with her running events and supporting various charities through her efforts.



***Paddy, Pat, Ann, Trish, Betty, Iris, Elizabeth, June and Agnes enjoying the Branch Christmas lunch***

We ended the year with a very enjoyable Christmas Lunch organised this year by our new Events Organiser, Ann, a very welcome addition to our team. We would like to wish all members a happy 2016.

## **LEICESTER & NOTTINGHAM** **Sue Slattery**

We are halfway through winter, the festive period is almost a distant memory and we can now look forward, hopefully to an early spring. The second half of 2015 seemed to have been a quieter period for the branch.

**July.** Twenty three of us enjoyed a talk by Peter Cousins who explained about the under age boys and girls who served in the great war. Two ladies had birthdays this month, our Chairman Doris White and Margaret Jephson. Our Standard and 15 ladies attended Leicester's Armed Forces Day service and parade which marched through the town centre. After the parade we all returned to the cathedral for a buffet lunch.

**August.** Twenty six members enjoyed birthday cakes supplied by Joan De-Vall and Rose Barbour, also flowers and gifts were presented to Joan on the occasion of her 90th birthday. Our final popular outing of the year to the Sailing Club was attended by 31 members and 7 guests, including our Vice President Ali Brown. We were treated to a lovely buffet lunch. Our thanks go to Pam Richards for providing the wine, Pam Hughes for decorating the tables and also branch members who helped to clean and prepare the room and food. Later in the afternoon we enjoyed cakes made for us by Sandra Smith. Once again thanks to Carol Morris and all her team for their planning and hard work they put in which once again made this day a success.



***Enjoying the Princess River Cruise***

**September.** Our Harvest Festival raised £169. Three services and parades this month were attended by various members and our Standard, including the Parachute Regiment at Somerby, the Battle of Britain at Victoria Park, and at Leicester Cathedral to commemorate HM The Queen becoming our longest serving monarch.

**October.** Our AGM where all committee members were re elected (surprise, surprise). Our Standard and 4 ladies attended the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the De Montfort Hall. Eighteen branch members attended the annual WRAC Dinner Club week end at the Copthorne Hotel, Dudley. Our thanks to the committee for all their hard work.



***Pat Waite, Vi Rawlins and Barbara Danter visit the Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey***

**November.** Our Christmas Fayre raised £137. We all enjoyed mince pies (provided by Pam Hughes) and wine. The 8 ladies who provided the Guard of Honour for King Richard III during the period he lay in repose received a certificate from the Dean of Leicester Cathedral. Two ladies attended the Leicester City poppy football match where they sold poppies, and were then joined by our standard bearer. All 3 of us then joined other Veterans to march round the pitch at half time. Always a very moving time when 30,000 fans clap and cheer. A number of our branch ladies spent Remembrance weekend in London where 9 of them proudly marched down Whitehall, on the preceding Thursday 5 ladies visited the field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey. Joan De-Vall was asked to join Charles Cufflin, of the Italy Star Association, to lay a wreath at the Curve Theatre performance of "We'll Meet Again", the proceeds of this concert went to the county Royal British Legion poppy appeal.



**Visiting Belvoir Castle**

**July.** Tuesday 14th saw us at our usual watering hole, the Carre Arms, for a very enjoyable evening meal. On Saturday 25th Marion King and Sylvia Stubbs ran a Tombola stall raising funds for the branch at the Mablethorpe Illuminations Day and also along with help from Dot Ryder, Chris Corker and Shirley Dawe sold some of the wonderful memorabilia made by Cathy Munro MBE.



**Mixing with the local dignitaries**

**August.** On a very rainy and cold Tuesday a large number of the branch visited Mablethorpe for lunch in the Linkage Green Café but any plans for walking on the beach were scuppered by the weather so we adjourned to Marion and Sylvia's for afternoon tea.

**September.** On Saturday 5th the NE Area Reunion Lunch was held in York and it was lovely to see so many members making the effort to come along. Thank you to Nora Jones for organising transport. Sunday 13th saw the "walkers" from the branch, along with guest Sue Taylor, setting off for a walk around part of Rutland Water. You had to have your wits about you on the path as it is also used by cyclists and some did not do as the signs advised "Take care - beware of pedestrians and cyclists"!



**Visiting Rutland Water**



**Joan De-Vall at the Curve Theatre, Leicester  
11 November 2015**

We now seem to be moving into that period where some members either feel under the weather or unfortunately end up in hospital, but Pam Richards is usually up to date with them all and when and where required provides cards, flowers or visits. As with many branches we are all getting older and some ladies are not too happy to drive their cars to meetings, functions and outings, so transport can be a problem at times. We are lucky that our 3 fund raising meetings and donations go towards helping the cost of alternative transport.

We enjoyed our Christmas lunch in December, and look forward to another varied and interesting year in 2016. Our best wishes and thanks to all the staff at WRAC Association headquarters for all their hard work they do on our behalf. May we wish everyone a happy and healthy 2016.

## **LINCOLN & DISTRICT** **Chris Corker**

A busy time for the branch since the last report.

**June.** On Sunday 21st several members, and guest Belle Jenkinson, visited Belvoir Castle. The Porsche Club were holding a meet on the esplanade of the castle and we were all most amused at the amount of dusting and polishing that was going on by the owners of the vehicles. The view from the battlements over the Vale of Belvoir and surrounding countryside was breathtaking and well worth a visit if in the area. On Saturday 27th The branch was represented at the Armed Forces Day in Guildford and we marched proudly up the High Street over the notorious cobbles!

Much hilarity at the branch meeting on Tuesday 15th as Gwyneth Stratten had organised a Beetle Drive. This is always good fun and maybe a little bit of underhand play. Rules must be relayed next time ladies! Thank you Gwyneth.

**October.** The WRAC Dinner Club weekend was held as usual on the second weekend and it was great to see Jean Evans there, who cannot at the moment attend branch meetings. On Friday 16th 4 members were in Darlington to attend the funeral of Robbie Emmerson. Thank you to the Cleveland girls who also came along to say goodbye to a loved friend. The branch meeting on Tuesday 20th was termed "Exercises with Sylvia" but how you are supposed to exercise while laughing so much is quite difficult. You are a star Sylvia.

**November.** Once again at our favourite eatery the Carre Arms, where they now know us so well on Tuesday 3rd for an evening meal. The branch meeting on Tuesday 17th November was the pre-Christmas lunch hosted by Marion and Sylvia (we are so pleased you came to Lincolnshire from Worthing!), who provided a sumptuous meal for the members who attended. Everyone rallied round to help and hopefully it will become an annual event.



The final event of the year was on Saturday 12th December at - yes, you have guessed it the Carre Arms - where we enjoyed a Christmas lunch and took part in Linda Hilton's Christmas headgear competition.

We still meet on the third Tuesday of the month (except for April, August and December) at the Central Methodist Church Hall, High Street, Lincoln LN5 7PR at 12.00. You can be assured of a very warm welcome.

## **MEDITERRANEAN BRANCH**

### **Ann Colclough**

This is my second report "from the Med" and it seemed that I had lots of time to complete it way back in the summer. Now of course the shops, even in Spain, are full of Christmas gifts, and if you want to visit our local Iceland then time is getting really short, unlike the queues!

As you know, the Med Branch is different to the UK Branches in that we don't have regular meetings, something I think lots of us miss. There are 64 members on our Facebook page, of which 36 are WRAC Association members, many of whom are UK based and claim us as their 'secondary' branch. We are scattered far and wide, with Spain and France being the two countries with

most members. Of course we welcome any ex ATS/WRAC personnel with open arms, not just those who live "abroad".

I was very pleased to welcome Chris Powell and Mel Howell to one of the Lions concerts we hold down by the sea in Moraira in the summer. We had a lovely time getting to know each other, and generally "people watching" Despite my best intentions Chris does have photographs of the event, this is one of them, with Chris "passing on messages" to me from other members!



### **Chris Powell passing on a message to Ann Colclough**

I was able to help Mel celebrate her very special birthday in September, also in Moraira. The food was very good, and we didn't have to wait for service, in fact we were the only people in the Restaurant! This is the picture that the local paper published celebrating the event.

The next event was the Dinner Club weekend, and goodness what a busy time that was, but such fun. So much to do, so many faces to put names to, and so many lovely hugs to return! I would like very much to express my personal admiration to the whole Committee for the splendid organisation that went into making the evening such a success.

The highlight of the year for me was undoubtedly the Remembrance weekend in November. As a member of the Royal British Legion I was able to obtain a ticket for the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall. It was exactly 52 years to the day that I left Liverpool Lime Street as a civilian of 17, and got down from a 4 tonner in Lingfield as a 17 year old recruit. Like many other girls I had put on my best clothes to travel, also like many others, my first real challenge was how to get into the 4 tonner in a tight skirt and stiletto heeled shoes, with only a rope with a knot in it to hang on to! In 1966 it was my great honour to be chosen as one of the WRAC contingent from Mill Hill to march across the Albert Hall in that years Festival, so the whole evening was an emotional one for me. It was lovely to meet Elaine Forman and Stefanie Harrington too, and for me one of the best memories was the three of us waiting in the road to try and get a taxi when a very large and well lit up car swept past with "Royalty" in it!

The WRAC/ATS March past on Sunday was not covered by the BBC (again), but luckily some wonderful pictures were taken by spectators. It really made me laugh to hear that the Duke of Cambridge actually complimented the WRAC/ATS on their marching, which was, he said "better than the men", I will not

mention the name of the marcher who shouted “no brainer there then Sir”, in case it was treasonable! My hotel was near Leicester Square and I was delighted to hear that “the gathering” was at the Imperial Pub, also in the square. I was treated to an enthusiastic round of applause by the large contingent sitting out in the brisk November sunshine as I arrived. It was a great afternoon and I met many folks who had simply been names to me until then.

I had hoped to join the Shrewsbury Branch for their post Christmas lunch, but have sadly had to cancel. The good news is that I was able to change my flights to October, so Dinner Club here I come again, with good friends Sue Webster and Shirley Taper from the West Country. We hit it off as soon as we met at the last DC and I look forward to seeing them both (and lots more of you) again in October.

I am pleased to tell you that another “Benidorm Babes” trip has been arranged by Mel Howell, this one is late April/early May, and I know lots of you are hoping to come over. That’s a really nice time to be here, so if you’re even just thinking about it, start saving your pennies just in case you decide to come!

By now Christmas and New Year are over, whatever Santa brought you in the way of gifts, I hope that good health and happiness were amongst them.

## NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

The Newcastle Branch had, as usual, a busy few weeks during November and December. Some attended local Armistice Day parades and many from the region made it to London for the Remembrance Day parade at the Cenotaph. Ninety two year old Branch member Betty Herschel represented the Newcastle Area War Widows Associations in London and was interviewed by the BBC’s Sophie Raworth. After Remembrance Day Betty then travelled over to France and Belgium to attend the Armistice Day service at the Menin Gate in Ypres.



*Betty Herschel interviewed by Sophie Raworth*

Branch members attended an excellent Christmas lunch at the Marriott Hotel, Gosforth hosted by The Not Forgotten Association. The Newcastle Branch Christmas lunch was held at The Assembly Rooms, although just a few attended it was a nice afternoon. All the Branch members would like to thank our Secretary, Tanya Hall and our Treasurer, Molly Summerell for all the work they do.



*Enjoying the Not Forgotten Association Christmas lunch*



*Branch Christmas Lunch*

## OXFORDSHIRE Christine Townsend



**Christine Townsend, Catherine Jones, Jean Mills, Lorraine Luckhurst and Rosa Charlesworth attending the first meeting of the newly formed Oxfordshire Branch**

## PERTH (WESTERN AUSTRALIA) Ann Page

This is the first news for a while, since our long-time Secretary, Joyce Seward, found she could not make the journey to Perth for meetings. Prior to that little items from Perth used to appear regularly in the Lioness. Joyce remains well, but is confined to her home. She has had a long year or two of health problems but is quite philosophical, and looking forward to Christmas 2015 with her family.

Despite declining numbers, the ATS/WRAC girls meet for lunch four times a year at the ANZAC Club in Perth, which happens to be the HQ for the Returned & Services League of Australia WA Branch. It is a well appointed venue, with an excellent restaurant where we can enjoy the company of each other, along with veterans from all walks of life. Perth has a strong British expatriate community, dating back to pre WW2 days, so new members often find someone from "the old country" to talk to.

Regular attendees (not in the photo) include Joyce London, Muriel Watson, Beth Newham, Margo Collins. Margaret Jones (formerly known as Midge Lundberg) attended the 11th Reunion of P&EE Shoeburyness in October 2013 at the Marriott Hotel in Northampton. The story was featured in the Lioness issue No 1 of 2014. These days Margaret and her husband live and work in outback Western Australia (imagine the heat, dust and flies!!) She always comes to Perth in time for our end of year lunch, usually bringing Anne along. Margo Collins and Ann Page previously served with the WRAC Provost, and are currently the only two female members of the local Royal Military Police Association.



**Back row L-R: Margaret Jones (nee Lundberg), Pat Thyer, Wyn Hesketh, Phyl Haggas, Julia Jecks  
Front row L-R: Anne Lundberg (Margaret's Mum), Ann Page (nee Doherty), Joyce Seward, Milly Marlowe, Kim Fielding**

## PETERBOROUGH & DISTRICT Catherine Munro MBE

What a year 2015 turned out to be for the former members of the WRAC residing in Peterborough. What started out as 3 who used to battle the A14 to travel to Cambridge monthly soon turned into 60 plus in the Peterborough and District area, culminating in a brand new Branch. The power of social media, especially Facebook has seen our numbers steadily rise since our inception at the start of 2015.

It was an idea, a thought, some even said a dream. It was thought that there would not be the numbers in order to justify the work involved in setting up a new branch. But thank goodness for the dreamers and the thinkers and the just plain stubborn ones amongst us, because it became apparent very quickly that this would not just be a small Branch, but a significant one for the Eastern region led by Area Chairman, Wendy Hooton.



**The Handover - L-R: Cathy Munro MBE, Jean Legg, Chris Corker, Dot Ryder**

Peterborough and District Branch have held several get togethers this year, and although we are still finding our feet regarding meeting places and timings, it is working because so far we have shown a flexibility which suits all members, both those working and retired. At the beginning the backbone and the heart of this fledgling Branch, Dot Ryder and Chris Corker, soon got through the initial stumbling blocks (where to meet? what date? what time? how will we let people know?). They simply, like a military mission, swept it aside with the "we don't do problems, we do solutions" attitude and before we knew what was happening the ladies started to come, and they have kept on coming ever since.

It wasn't long before as a Branch, we started to become more confident, and we started to reach out to other Veteran Agencies, asking what they were doing in the local areas, searching for those ladies that did not yet know we existed... and still more came and they joined. With Val Dixon at the helm of "Breakfast Club Co-Ordinator", we have linked up with more potential members and our numbers are growing. Pam Sussex and Jean Legg, recruiting from the Engineers Association, we have even been known to stop people in Tesco simply because we thought they looked like they could have been a former soldier! We are simply on a mission.



***JJ and Pauline modeling uniforms***

Peterborough, it would seem, is an ideal location to hold get-togethers and we are already planning for next year. Mobilisation Madness III is on the cards, the Entertainments Secretary (Nikki, with her able assistant JJ and the Venues Secretary Pam) are already on the lookout for new events and venues. We are planning two major events next year. Easter will see us taking a train ride on Thomas the Tank Engine, cream teas and high jinx on the Peterborough Express and we are hoping to invite all the Branches throughout East Anglia to join us. Then later on in the year we are negotiating to have a female contingent to march with the Veteran's parade on Remembrance Sunday in Peterborough. This will culminate in a traditional curry lunch at the Army Reserve Centre hosted by our local Regiment 158 Regiment RLC. It will be a fantastic way to capture those who may not be able to attend the main parade at the Cenotaph in London, or indeed those still reticent about joining the WRAC Association.



### ***Pre Christmas get together***

Our Pre-Christmas get together saw 15 members (and their families) join together for an afternoon of frivolity, especially trying on the various uniforms on display, it was a fabulous fun filled afternoon which culminated in several "Volunteers" taking up new positions within the Branch. Nikki and JJ volunteering as Entertainments Secretary and able assistant, Pam as Venues Organiser. Pauline and Val as stepping up to take the role of Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, and finally the keys being handed over to Jean as Chairman and myself as Secretary. Dot and Chris have been wonderful in helping this Branch move forward in what has been an exciting few months for all of us in Peterborough, as a fledgling Branch it has been wonderful to receive the support from those around us. Now with Jean as our Chairman, and the team we have supporting and driving this forward, we look forward to a fabulous year ahead. It has been magnificent to see the WRAC flag flying once again as members come together in friendship and comradeship. As we often say on Facebook "Onwards and Upwards". For further details on how to join the Peterborough and District Branch please contact the Branch Secretary on 01733 244075 or via email at [cathmunro@hotmail.com](mailto:cathmunro@hotmail.com)

### **PHOENIX Sheila Johnson**



***A snowman arriving for lunch***



### **Enjoying Christmas Lunch**

The Branch AGM was held on 11 July at the Crewe Arms Hotel. On 04 September 8 intrepid members embarked upon a cruise on the River Severn, having previously dined at the Beaconsfield Club, Shrewsbury. The weather was kind and apparently no one had one over the eight whilst afloat so were able to fully appreciate the delights of a September afternoon amongst friends and fellow 'sailors'.

The Christmas gathering for lunch (again at the Crewe Arms Hotel) on 05 December comprised 14 attendees. Once more the venue proved to be a truly acceptable one, and the inclusion of a 'Secret Santa' pleased everyone with its varied selection of gifts on offer, a good move.

Here's to 2016 and the prospect of more enjoyable gatherings. Grateful thanks go to those Phoenix ladies who worked so hard to make the 2015 event a success.

## **PLYMOUTH Ruth Jennings**

During this year our branch has been teetering on the edge of closing down due to insufficient numbers attending, combined with the lack of committee members, which left a heavy load on too few shoulders. Happily Jean Cundy-Borge has stepped into the breach and relieved me of all secretarial duties for the next year. What will happen in future years is now in the lap of the gods but for now we soldier on, thank you Jean. The second half of 2015 was as busy as most years. Socially we have been true to our tummies and have had several outings for lunch and still continue to meet each month at the Chinese restaurant Buffet City before our meetings, a tradition that we recommend. Another is our lunch at Knightstone Tea Rooms during the August Bank Holiday when we were pleasantly surprised to find that there was a small but very enticing group of stall holders selling whatever they could lay their hands for the support of RAFA; most of us parted with a few pounds to help their cause. Our 2016 social calendar was decided upon at our November meeting.

Militarily we have been quite busy too, following the Armed Forces and Veteran's weekend in June we had a couple of quiet months but in October Plymouth Council, with the Plymouth and District Federation of exServices Associations, arranged a late afternoon Service of Remembrance at the Saltash Passage U.S. Army Memorial to honour the very brave men from the Vth and V11th US Army Corps who left our shores en route for the west coast of France in 1944. We were only told that a VIP would be attending, speculation went wild, right to the top of the U.S. totem pole. Our guest was not the President, but his Ambassador to the UK. Ambassador Matthew W Barzun was very nice and took a lot of time to speak to everyone who was there, he had particularly asked to meet WW2 veterans. Our Plymouth Branch met for lunch first where we were joined by our President, Mrs Doris McCoy ATS. She had recently celebrated her 90th birthday and met and had a good chat with the Ambassador. There were several veteran gentlemen too, I think the oldest being Garth Wright who is 96 and still very active at reunions all over Europe.



### **Plymouth Branch President Doris McCoy meeting the United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom Matthew Barzun**

November is very busy in Plymouth with Remembrance services for many of our military Associations, the highlight being the Festival of Remembrance on the Friday before Remembrance Sunday. Jane and Evon escorted our standard, paraded for us by a Cadet. Also Jane, Sid and I represented the branch at the Citadel, courtesy of the ABF the Soldier's Charity for a fundraising curry supper, what hardship we suffer! Finally, I attended the South & South West Area AGM at Wilton Bowls Club on 17th October and enjoyed a lovely lunch courtesy of Joan Ford, Area Secretary. To finish the year off we gathered at St Aubyn's Masonic Hall for our Christmas Lunch in December

On the 4th Tuesday of the month, 28th January 2016 we held our 1st meeting of the year at 13.30 in our usual venue, the Lower Abbey Hall, Catherine Street (behind the Minster Church of St Andrew on the Royal Parade). As always the meeting was preceded by lunch at Buffet City at 12 noon. Our contact details are now found in the new branch listing pages in the Lioness which is a great idea. Our 2016 Truro Reunion will be held on Saturday 14th May 2016 at The Kernow Club (12.00 for 12.30).

## SCOTTISH AREA

### Kate Arnold

The Scottish Area of the WRAC Association held its Annual General Meeting in Perth on Saturday 26th September 2015. Thirty eight members from all 5 Scottish Branches attended. Jo Young, Chairman of Scottish Area, brought Members up to date on various activities and events within the Association. She reported that new format for the WRAC Trustees and Council is working well and also spoke about the need to encourage new members.

The Competition this year was for a decorated box and was won by Lily Bell of Fife & Tayside Branch. The meeting was followed by a most enjoyable lunch after which ladies from Fife & Tayside Branch ran a very successful Raffle. At the Remembrance Service held in St John's Kirk in Perth the Secretary laid a Poppy Spray on behalf of Scottish Area.

## SHEFFIELD BRANCH

### Ann Williams

I've taken over writing the news from Sheffield for now. There hasn't been a lot happening here in the past few months but I hope you find it interesting anyway. We've been having our usual monthly meetings on the first Thursday of each month. These are held at 11am in the Benjamin Huntsman, which is at the side of John Lewis in Sheffield city centre. We always look forward to meeting new members so please come along.

In September five of us attended the Northern Area Reunion in York. It was a lovely day. We all met old friends and made new ones. Ali Brown, Vice President of the Association, was there and introduced herself to every table as well as giving a short speech. Ali reminded us that the Benevolent Fund is available to help any ex servicewoman, including TA, and not only those who are members of the Association. The meal was delicious and the brownies were the best I've ever tasted.

Before going into the dining room we were having coffee in the lounge when an elderly lady we didn't know asked if she could join us. We got chatting and one of our group asked her if she had been ATS. She said no, so we said WRAC? Again she said no, so we asked her what she was doing there. She replied that she was there for the wedding, it turned out that there was a wedding party in another room in the hotel and people were out looking for her! Roll on next year! Also in September three of our members were able to go to Eden Camp in North Yorkshire. You can see from the photograph that Iris Howe enjoyed the day.



*Iris Howe*

June Lowe left Sheffield on 12th October to become an In Pensioner at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea (RHC), something she had been looking forward to very much. I'm sure she'll be an asset to the RHC and that she'll be very happy there, but she will be missed here. We had a 'leaving lunch' for June on 6th October. The chocolate orange cake was baked by Meg Sparrow, assisted by her granddaughter Lydia, it looked great and tasted delicious. You can see from the picture that it was perfect for the occasion.



### *'Leaving' cake for June Lowe*

November saw 8 of us, including one lady from Leicester & Nottingham Branch, heading off to London for Remembrance weekend. Two of our group went to Westminster Abbey and the rest to march at the Cenotaph, as usual it was a wonderful weekend. On the Friday night we went on our yearly visit to the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, where we had the usual warm welcome from the residents, including our very own June Lowe who had settled in very well. Charmaine Coleman also joined us in the bar. It was wonderful to see her, she was my platoon sergeant when I was in basic training at Lingfield in 1964, a truly amazing lady. Three of us had the chance to visit the Royal Hospital again on the Saturday morning. What a beautiful place to live, and with the refurbishment the accommodation is so much more comfortable than previously.



### *Lingfield 1964*

*Sgt Coleman (centre), Pte Farrell (Anne Williams) 2nd row, 2nd from right*

We thoroughly enjoyed our Christmas lunch at the Novotel, Sheffield, although for various reasons there were fewer of us attending this year. All that's left for me now is to wish you all the best for the coming year.

## SHROPSHIRE Sandra Davies

Hello once again from all at the Shropshire Branch. We hope that everybody is in good health. I begin my ramblings with our Branch monthly meeting on 1st July, this meeting is seen not only as a gathering of Branch members to discuss this that and the other but as a way for friends to see each other and catch up on what has been going on, oh and I almost forgot to mention to eat! The 21st July saw the first cocktail afternoon in Shrewsbury at the Rising Sun pub. Those who staggered in for this were Debbie, Alison, Chris, Maggie, Babs and Wendy. The last 3 ladies were drafted in kicking and screaming and if you believe that then the

tooth fairy lives next door to me!



**Remembrance Sunday, London**

On the 14th of August Sandra took Nancy and Irene to see one of our members, Lucy, to see how she was getting on. We had a wonderful afternoon and it was so good to see Lucy again.

**Visiting Lucy**



We had the 25th of August in our diaries for the Chester Canal trip. Now, we had this down in our list of events for this day but somehow it wasn't the right date and we and the ladies were so disappointed to learn this. Instead Debbie, Alison and Chris did some sightseeing, eating and the new craze of cocktails! It was a good job that they were traveling there and back by train! The 26th August was a REME trip to the Imperial War Museum North in Salford. This time the journey was made by coach, they gave the rail system a rest and time to recover! A good time was had by Sheila, Debbie and Chris, they were led kicking and screaming by Debbie into a bar called the Alchemist, had to text around for the correct name of this bar as it seems the cocktails were flowing quite freely!

In September the Branch event goes re-charged their batteries! In October it was the WRAC Dinner Club weekend at a new venue in Dudley. Debbie, Alison, Sheila, Chris and Mel made the trek, by all accounts they had a fabulous time and what's even more amazing, the hotel is still standing, well done ladies!

In November Sheila, Debbie, Chris and Mel represented the Branch at the Cenotaph parade in London, an important occasion. The photo shows that they enjoyed themselves! London, I do believe, was on alert during their visit but luckily they behaved themselves! On the 25th of November Chris, Sheila, Debbie and Alison terrorised the rail system in order to attend the Manchester Xmas Market. I have seen the photos and it looks like they had a really good time.



On 2nd December Debbie, Sheila, Alison, Francis, Mel and Chris made the local train journey to join Birmingham Branch at their Xmas Lunch. This annual event is always enjoyed by all that attend. They also found time to see the sights of the the German Xmas Market. Alison found a new friend in the shape of a bratwurst!

**Alison and the bratwurst**

On 5th December Phoenix Branch held their Xmas lunch. Chris, Mel and Alison attended this event and had a fantastic time. The photo just goes to prove why I always make mention of their train journeys!



**Refreshments on the train**

Well I come to the end of my ramblings and as usual I would like to send our best wishes to our ladies safely tucked up in care homes, we miss you. Yet another year is over and the Shropshire Branch would like to say a happy 2016 to one and all and hope that our paths may cross at some point during the year.

## **SOUTHAMPTON**

### **Jean Doe**

Hello everyone, well where did 2015 go? Following on from a lovely visit to the Not Forgotten Association Garden Party at Buckingham Palace and a trip to Burley in July we were joined by some of the Portsmouth Branch for a very interesting talk by Gillian Hearst, from Bournemouth, on the War Graves.

We also were at long last able to cram in a visit to Hengistbury Head where we went on the 'little train' over to Mudeford, an invite given to us by Joyce Faris (from Bournemouth) at last years Grand Reunion. Thank you Joyce, we very much enjoyed the trip, despite the weather being a iffy. We also had some friends from Pompey join us.

Four of the Branch very much enjoyed taking part in the veteran contingent of the Adjutant General's Corps parade in Winchester in October, when the AGC exercised their Freedom of the city. I phoned the Hampshire Chronicle hoping a sharp eyed photographer would spot Penny Bailey, who at 94 was wearing her father's WW1 Military Medal, no such luck but what what an advert for the veterans.

On 9th December we held our Christmas Lunch in Christchurch, another good day out. I hope you all had a good Christmas and wish you happiness and health for 2016.

## **SUFFOLK**

### **Sheelagh Wilson**

Firstly my apologies to the Suffolk ladies for no report in the last edition of Lioness. Whilst on holiday in Scotland, with my sister and niece, my husband decided to pop into Papworth Hospital for a triple bypass followed two weeks later by an ablation. All is now well but with all that was going on the Lioness was completely forgotten, his fault not mine!

Meetings have been very quiet this year with some months only 4 or 5 attending. We have had the usual quizzes, chats, debates and discussions this year and all had enjoyable afternoons catching up with everyone. We did meet a new member this year, Nikki Young from Yaxley. Unfortunately Nikki has now abandoned Suffolk and moved north of the border to Norfolk. Nice to have met you Nikki and you are always welcome to visit us if you are down this way again.

I laid a wreath at the War Memorial in Christchurch Park on Remembrance Sunday and two other members were also there for the ceremony. That's all for now, hope you had a good Christmas and New Year and 2016 is kind to you all.

## **TAMWORTH & DISTRICT**

### **Marie Smedley**

16th August 2015 was a beautiful summers day and it saw Vee Moore, Tammy Kirkwood, Shirley Goodwin, Belle Jenkinson and myself at the annual memorial service for Colin Grazier at Two Gates, Tamworth. For those of you who do not know, Colin was one of the 2 navy boys who found the Enigma machine and code books, handed it over to a colleague and went back into the submarine to resume their search. Unfortunately the submarine sank and he tragically died. His sacrifice enabled Britain and her allies to win World War II.



***At the annual Colin Grazier memorial service  
Tammy Kirkwood, Shirley Gladwin, Marie Smedley,  
Belle Jenkinson and Vee Moore***

On September 9th Vee Moore, Christine James and myself went up to Birmingham Branch for their Pizza Night, thank you for the invite Ladies, we had a blast. On 13th September Elaine Wharmby, Belle Jenkinson and myself paying our respects at the Battle of Britain Service at the Congregational Church in Wilnecote, Tamworth. On Saturday 19th September Ann Gwynne, Tammy, Vee, Christine and myself were on parade at the National Memorial Arboretum for the Northern Ireland Veterans Service, a very moving service and parade in glorious sunshine. It was so good to see so many female veterans under several cap badges on parade, comradeship at its best.

On 10th October we put on our glad rags and trooped over to the Copthorne Hotel in Dudley for the WRAC Dinner Club Night. For many in the Branch it was our first foray to the event, we had so much fun catching up with old friends and making new ones.



***Enjoying the WRAC Dinner Club  
Ann Gwynne, Pat Williams, Lesley Wallace, Elaine  
Huggins, Vee Moore, Nicola Scott, Nancy Puckey,  
Tammy Kirkwood, Christine James and Marie Smedley***

On Remembrance Sunday we formed up in Tamworth and were honoured with a place at the front of the parade. Tammy Kirkwood carried our Standard and did us proud as always. The rain stayed away but it was very windy and Standards had to be lowered for the honour guard after the Church Service. A few days later Pat Williams was lucky to be in New York on Armistice Day and attended a moving Service at Ground Zero with many US Forces and Veterans.



**Remembrance Day Parade - Nicola Scott, Tammy Kirkwood, Nancy Puckey, Christine James, Pat Williams, Ann Gwynne, Marie Smedley**

Before we knew it, it was Christmas jumper season and Ann Gwynne and myself attended Birmingham Branch Christmas Lunch, in the Irish Centre on December 2nd. Nicola Scott, Tammy Kirkwood, Nancy Puckey and Christine James joined the Royal Engineers Association for Christmas Dinner the same evening. Good food, good friends, good times. The festivities had begun. Tamworth Branch would like to take this opportunity to wish all our fellow Lionesses a very happy and healthy 2016.

## TORQUAY



**Sheila Burton, Gwenda Easton, Lillian Green, Isla Bruce-Robertson**

On Tuesday 21 October I (Patricia Hewitson) had the pleasure of accompanying my Aunt, Lillian Green, a long standing member of the WRAC Association, to a lunch held in Torquay. Although the ladies learnt with sadness the passing of one of their group two days before the lunch, they carried on and raised a toast to Eve D Tichy (nee Creasy), remembering her long association with the Exeter Branch. The lunch conversation was interesting covering; local politics, exercise, meditation, family history, and of course their ATS service.

## ULSTER Joan McCabe

Well that's my first full year as Secretary of Ulster Branch. There have been a mixture of feelings along the way, we have gained some new members, but unfortunately we have also lost some, which is disappointing but it happens and there is not much that can be done to prevent it. I am sure I have made mistakes along the way, but hopefully I have addressed them and we can move on as a stronger group.

We had our AGM on Saturday 19th September, meeting at our usual little Italian in Lisburn for a bite to eat before getting down to business at the local British Legion. We had lots to discuss and I felt it went well and was happy with the outcome. We decided to make some changes, and one of them was to give each member a chance to host their own event from start to finish, the purpose of this was twofold, to give members some responsibility to do things their way, but also to host it in their hometown so that everyone gets an equal opportunity with travelling to other parts of the country. With so many of us having some mobility issues I think it's only fair that events are not always in the same area, and we all travel a little out of our area to be fair to others. This went down well and members have welcomed it and are planning their events.

On Monday 4th November Sylvia Connaghan and I attended a "Field of Remembrance" Ceremony at Belfast City Hall, a relatively new ceremony where plots are laid beside the Cenotaph for various different Regiments. I am pleased to say, this is the second year that the WRAC Association has been part of this and we have our own plot, where we can lay a cross for female members who are no longer with us. It is an emotional but proud day, and Sylvia and I were honoured to be part of this.



**Laying of Cross Ceremony in Belfast Garden of Remembrance - Sylvia Connaghan, Joan McCabe, Amy Wall**

Another proud day, as always was the Remembrance Sunday Parade at Belfast City Hall, one of those moments when you just love to put the extra effort into bulling those shoes, and standing tall with your shoulders back. It was a very cold wet day, and sad to see three of the elderly collapse nearby. St Johns Ambulance were a credit to their badge when they moved in without no disruption to the ceremony and looked after those who needed it. For me the highlight of my day was to watch the people who had braved the weather to show their support, I looked around while I was standing in line and watched and what got me was small children falling silent for the two minute silence. It was great to see people teach their children respect like that, and fills you with confidence, that we will never forget those who sacrificed so much for us.



**Remembrance Sunday Ceremony Belfast City Hall**  
**Maggie Pridgen, Mary Wilson, Joan McCabe**

Saturday 12th December was the Branch Christmas lunch, organised by Phyllis Liggett, in her home town of Lurgan. Although the numbers were smaller than usual the day went well (unfortunately I was unable to attend) and I had some good feedback.



**Ulster Branch Christmas Lunch L to R: Maggie Pridgen, Sylvia Connaghan, Phyllis Liggett, Mary Wilson, Rosemary Stewart, Marie Jenkins, Florence Logan**

The venue seemed to be a good choice and everyone enjoyed themselves, Phyllis brought along some of her own family and a great lunch was enjoyed. I would like to thank Phyllis for organising the event and also for her lovely donation of a teddy bear to raise money for our branch funds. That's all from me, I will catch up with you all soon.

## **WIRRAL** **Pat Sanders**

The Wirral Branch is going from strength to strength expanding all the time with new members. We were very busy for the last half of the year, joining the Chester Branch on lots of outings; to the Arboretum, Chester Canal Trip, Chester Zoo and a 40's do in Chester. The Chester Branch celebrated the Queen's longest reign in September, we had a lovely buffet and many dressed up, least said about the cake the better at least it tasted nice. Some of our members even joined the Chester Branch on a holiday to Scotland, we had a great time and are hoping to have another holiday this year.

December was very busy with all the Christmas lunches we attended at various Branches and with other Associations, especially the Christmas lunch with the Chester Branch where we were served a lovely meal. We had a Christmas quiz and the raffle was amazing, everyone went home with a prize and some with more than one.



**Chester and Wirral Branches enjoying The Not Forgotten Association lunch in Wrexham**  
**Standing: Dot Thomas, Frances Rimmer, Pat Sanders, Jackie Jones, Jan Gillison**  
**Seated: Doris Wallington, Audrey McDermott, Dot Garnett, Elsie Roberts**

Two of our members were very fortunate to be invited to the Not Forgotten Christmas Lunch in Wrexham along with the Chester Branch and a great time was had by all. The ATS ladies from the Chester Branch certainly know how to party, nothing can stop these ladies from having a good time. We also attended a 50's do where we joined in the fun and dressed in 50's costumes. Pat Sanders turned up in an Andy Pandy outfit and won a prize, another great day out.

We are now looking forward to the forthcoming year to see what we can get up to next. Hope you all have a great year from everyone at the Wirral Branch.

## WINCHESTER Herme Emary

Thinking back to AFD in Aldershot last year when we all got cold and wet, this year's AFD in Guildford was the opposite, very hot and dry. Maggie, Lynn and I travelled to Guildford by bus, a very nice trip. Other members of the branch also made their way to Guildford but we actually only saw Ishbel.

Unfortunately, we arrived in the High Street too late to get to the front and actually see the parade. I did manage to get a couple of terrible photos of the girls. Lynn managed to get a good video of the parade but I don't think Maggie saw anything. Then the long trek to Stoke Park, I had to stop 3 times on the way, when we did finally get there we didn't see any of the arena displays because of the crowds, even the big screens were difficult to see because of the crowds. We gave up on the arena and went in search of the WRAC Association stand, after a while we even gave up on trying to find that as it was too hot, so we started to make our way back to the bus station. We did not have to wait very long for the bus so were home earlier than we had reckoned. A nice but unproductive day out.

Once again we gathered at the Golden Lion for our Branch AGM on 10 September. Ten of us gathered, fewer than usual but it was nice to see everyone. The building work that the pub has had done means that they now have a function room which we were able to use. A bit more private than the main bar area, and definitely quieter. We were therefore able to enjoy a nice meal and a chat without having to shout. The main complaint was the portions were very generous!



### AGC Freedom Parade

On Friday 13th November 2015 eleven of us met at The Porterhouse for lunch. We welcomed Sandy, a new member from Andover, who was attending for the first time. As a branch we had not been to the Porterhouse for a while so it was nice to go back. The food was still very good and the service was friendly and efficient.

## WORTHING Janet Goldsbrough-Jones

What a wonderful 6 months we have just had, as usual. The end of June saw us back in Steyne Gardens with our stall at Armed Forces Weekend. We made enough money to keep us going for the year. On 26th July we went to a party to commemorate the closing of Cornerstone Church where we used to meet, we have now settled into our new 'home' at St George's Church Hall.



**Outside Cornerstone Church: Jean Pointer, Eddie Sinclair, Maggie Costan, Carol Hill, Janet Goldsbrough-Jones and Greta Carlisle.**



### Enjoying the AGM

Having sent out the agenda as normal, which included the Secretary's report and Treasurer's report, the main order of the day was the re-election of officials and to decide where and when we were meeting in 2016. We used a tick sheet which included the choices of some of those who could not attend, once everyone present had filled it in the choices were quite clear.

On Saturday 24 October the AGC held a Freedom Parade in Winchester, marching from Peninsula Barracks at the top of town to the Town Hall, where the parade was inspected by the Mayor. The parade then marched to the Cathedral for a service and then on to lunch in the Guildhall. Lesley, Jane M and Penelope all took part as did some members from Southampton. I have a short video of the parade if anyone wants a copy, I was also interviewed by Meridian News for their news report.

On 16th August some of our local ladies went to the Canadian Memorial on Worthing Seafront, then to the FEPOW (Far East Prisoner of War) service in Portslade for VJ Day.



*Waiting for the parade in Portslade. Eddie Sinclair chatting up three Chelsea Pensioners; Janet Goldsbrough-Jones is in the back row, laughing.*

On 10th September we paid a visit to Amberley Chalk Pits Museum, on a lovely hot summer day. Unfortunately I have no photos. Four of us went to lunch with the Combined Ex-Services Association, of which we are members. After meeting at least once a fortnight over the year, we finished in our usual grand style with our Christmas lunch. We always have much laughter at this.



*Kate Woodcock, Eddie Sinclair, Jean Pointer, Heather Thayre, Joanne Griggs, Sheila Clements and Irene Cross, our two ex WAAFs*



*Heather Thayre and Jackie Bentley having a laugh together*



*Heather Digweed getting into the mood, Janet Goldsbrough-Jones, Brenda Mead, Carol Hill and Greta Carlisle*

## WRAC LIONESSES 4th FUNDRAISING EVENT

**Great Newham 10k Run  
Olympic Park, London  
Sunday 17th July 2016 at 0900hrs**

If you are interested in joining the WRAC LIONESSES team please contact Wendy Hooton by email [wendyhootonski@aol.com](mailto:wendyhootonski@aol.com), on Facebook/ messenger or via the WRAC Association HQ (Tel: 0300 400 1992). If you would like to sponsor us you will find our fundraising page on the Virgin Money Giving website [www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/wraclionesses4](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/wraclionesses4). We are raising funds for the WRAC Association and Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS). You can find information about the event, details of the route, and how to enter at [www.greatrun.org](http://www.greatrun.org). We finish the run/walk in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, crossing the finishing line where many famous athletes claimed their victory in the 2012 Olympic Games!

If you're not a runner/walker COME AND SUPPORT US, we would love to see you cheering us on in the Olympic park or at the finishing line in the stadium. Our supporters are important to us all, you can wear your WRAC Association fleeces, polo shirts, t-shirts or hoodies. Come and fly the flag and enjoy the esprit de corps!

Each entrant can have 2 guests so please let me know if you are coming to support, I wouldn't want you to just turn up and not be able to gain entrance into the Olympic park. It's a fabulous weekend, don't miss it!

## 100 MILE WALK 2016 Marg Davies

This year I'll be doing my third annual Challenge for Charity by walking The South Downs Way from Winchester to Eastbourne in mid April 2016. I'll be doing it to raise money, split 50/50, for the WRAC Association & the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

You can email me to find out more at [43margied1@gmail.com](mailto:43margied1@gmail.com) or you can sponsor me directly through Virgin Money Giving at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/MargaretDaviesWRAC>

*If you wish to amend your details please email [editor@wracassociation.org.uk](mailto:editor@wracassociation.org.uk) or phone 0300 400 1992. If there is no Branch listed for your area but you would like to meet up with like minded members, and consider forming a Branch, contact HQ WRAC Association.*

## LONDON

### Greater London

When: 14.00 on a Saturday in March, May and September  
Where: Hyde Park Barracks, Knightsbridge, London  
Contact: Val Gaff Tel: 020 8854 8477

### London (Informal Branch)

When: 1st weekend of each month  
Where: Location varies, phone to confirm  
Contact: Lauren Fia MacKenzie Tel: 07709 172351

## SOUTH & SOUTH WEST

### Bath

When: 14.00 on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month, except on a Bank Holiday when the meeting is held on a Wednesday  
Where: Manvers Street Baptist Church, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JW  
([www.manversstreetbaptist.wordpress.com](http://www.manversstreetbaptist.wordpress.com))  
Contact: Sylvia Musgrave Tel: 01225 339904

### Bournemouth

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month, except January and August  
Where: Premier Inn, Poole Road, Bournemouth, BH2 5QU  
Contact: Val Wright Tel: 01202 314047  
or Jillian Hurst Tel: 01202 679433

### Bristol

When: 10.30 on the 1st Thursday of the month  
Where: Broadmead Baptist Church, 1 Whippington Court, (entrance on Union Street), Bristol, BS1 3HY  
([www.broadmeadbaptist.org.uk](http://www.broadmeadbaptist.org.uk))  
Contact: Jackie Naysmith MBE Tel: 0117 971 2524

### Plymouth

When: 13.30 on the 4th Tuesday of the month (except December)  
Where: Lower Abbey Hall, Catherine Street, Plymouth, PL1 2AD.  
Contact: Jean Cundy-Borge Tel 01752 567844

### Portsmouth

Contact: Sally Watson Tel: 02392 666712

### New Forest (Informal Branch)

Contact: Madge Evans Tel 01425 620995

### Salisbury (Informal Branch)

Contact: Lt Col (Retd) Val Trout Tel: 01980 623692

### Southampton

When: 19.00-21.30 on the 1st Thursday of the month  
Where: Eastleigh Working Mens Club, 18 Upper Market Street, Eastleigh, SO50 9FD  
Contact: Jean Doe Tel 01794 523146

### Swindon (Informal Branch)

Contact: Sharon Bingham [slbingham1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:slbingham1@yahoo.co.uk)

### Torquay (Informal Branch)

Contact: Elaine Harwood Tel: 07821 942947 or 01803 394323, alternatively email [elaine.wayne@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:elaine.wayne@hotmail.co.uk)

### Weymouth & Portland

When: 13.00 on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month (no meetings from late December to late February and late June to late September)  
Where: RAFA Club, Maiden Street, Weymouth, DT4 8AY  
Contact: Di Lawrence Tel: 01308 425149

### Winchester

When: 2nd Thursday of January, March, September and November plus a summer outing  
Where: Location varies depending on lunch or evening meeting  
Contact: Herme Emary [sec.wrac.winchester@gmail.com](mailto:sec.wrac.winchester@gmail.com)

## SOUTH EAST

### Bexhill-on-Sea (Informal Branch)

When: 14.00 on the 1st Thursday of the month (except January)  
Where: Poppins, 40 Devonshire Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 1AX  
Contact: Jenny Nye Tel: 01424 731882

### Canterbury

When: 13.00 on the 1st Wed of the month  
Where: Housing 21, Cowdray Place, Canterbury, CT1 3PB  
Contact: Sue Foulks Tel: 01304 823824

### Medway (Informal Branch)

When: Meetings held monthly, location varies.  
Contact: Margaret Gallafent Tel 0208 308 0521

### Worthing

When: 10.00 for 10.30 on the last Tuesday of the month (except December)  
Where: Cornerstone Methodist Church, Brighton Road (by Steyne Gardens), Worthing, BN11 3EA  
Contact: Janet Goldsbrough-Jones Tel: 01903 207485

## EAST

### Cambridge

When: Lunchtime on the 1st Monday of the month (2nd Monday if a Bank Holiday)  
Where: Location varies, phone for details  
Contact: Avril Williams Tel: 01954 210859

### Chelmsford

When: 13.30 - 15.30 on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, except January and August  
Where: RAFA Club, Oliver House, Hall Street, Chelmsford, CM2 0HG  
Contact: Georgina Shadrack Tel: 01245 251088

### Colchester

If you are interested in joining the newly forming Colchester Branch contact Vinnie Vincent on 07814 869520 or via Facebook.

### **Norfolk (Informal Branch)**

When: Once per month (most months) for an outing or lunch, phone for details.

Contact: Joan Awberry Tel 01603 455070

### **Peterborough & District**

Contact: If you are interested in joining Peterborough & District Branch contact Catherine Munro MBE on 01733 244075 or email [cathmunro@hotmail.com](mailto:cathmunro@hotmail.com).

Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/groups/WRACPeterborough](http://www.facebook.com/groups/WRACPeterborough)

### **Suffolk**

When: 14.00 - 16.00 on the 3rd Thursday of the month, except December

Where: Ipswich Labour Club, 35 Silent Street, Ipswich, IP1 1TF

Contact: Sheelagh Wilson Tel: 01473 725707

## **NORTH EAST**

### **Cleveland**

When: 13.00 on the 4th Wednesday of the month

Where: Newport Youth and Community Settlement Centre, St Pauls Road (off Union Street), Middlesbrough, TS1 5NQ

Contact: Hazel Crammen Tel: 01642 290830

### **Darlington**

Contact: Sandra Hubbard Tel: 07923 572917

### **Doncaster**

Contact: Veronica Hanson Tel: 01226 714575

### **Grimsby**

When: 14.00 on the 2nd Friday of each month

Where: Cartergate Social Club, Cartergate, Grimsby, DN31 1QZ

Contact: Gail Davy Tel: 01472 347868

### **Hull & East Riding**

When: The 1st Friday of the month

Where: Wenlock Barracks, Anlaby Road, Hull, HU3 6PB

Contact: Confirm details with Janet Mitchell Tel 01482 508087 or Janet Marshall Tel 01482 806799

### **Leeds**

When: 12.30 on the 1st Wednesday of each month (except January)

Where: The New Headingley Club, 56 St Michael's Road, Headingley, Leeds, LS6 3BG

Contact: Pat Harpin Tel: 01226 201628

### **Lincoln & District**

When: 12.00-14.00 on the 3rd Tuesday of the month

Where: Central Methodist Church Hall, High Street, Lincoln, LN5 7PR

Contact: Chris Corker: [chris.corker425@aol.co.uk](mailto:chris.corker425@aol.co.uk) Tel: 01476 979422

### **Newcastle**

When: 12.00 on the 3rd Thursday of the month

Where: Newcastle Companions Club, 45-47 Leazes Park Road, Newcastle, NE1 4PG

([www.newcastlecompanionsclub.webs.com](http://www.newcastlecompanionsclub.webs.com))

Contact: Tanya Hall Tel: 07552 758093

### **Sheffield**

When: 11.00 on the 1st Thursday of the month except January and August

Where: The Benjamin Hunstman (Wetherspoons), Cambridge Street, Sheffield

Contact: Brenda Colley Tel: 01709 365828

### **York**

When: 14.00-16.00 on the 1st Wednesday of the month (except August), phone to confirm

Where: Haxby & Wigginton Methodist Church Hall, Haxby, York, YO32 2JJ

[www.haxbyandwiggintonmethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.haxbyandwiggintonmethodistchurch.org.uk)

Contact: Feona Dixon Tel: 01904 633438

## **NORTH WEST**

### **Bury & Rochdale**

Monthly Meeting at 13.30 on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at The Old White Lion, 6 Bolton St Bury, BL9 0LQ

Contact: Pat Oldham Tel: 0161 761 7926

*Informal Evening Meeting* on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the Toby Carvery, Burnley Lane, Chadderton, OL1 2QS.

Contact: Susan Feeney Tel: 07813 313508 or

Kath Kirtley Tel: 07912 617694

### **Chester**

When: 13.00 on the 2nd Monday of the month

Where: Chester Military Museum, The Castle, Chester, CH1 2DN

Contact: Pat Sanders Tel: 07733 270567

### **Cumbria (Informal Branch)**

If you are interested in joining a newly forming Cumbria Branch please contact Kerryanne Wilde on 07972 799307 or email [khtraining@aol.com](mailto:khtraining@aol.com)

### **Liverpool**

When: 13.30 on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 12.00 in the hotel foyer if you would like to join us for lunch

Where: The Adelphi Hotel, Ranelagh Place, Liverpool, L3 5UL

Contact: Pat Brown Tel 0151 733 3453

### **Wirral**

When: 19.30 on the 1st Wednesday of the month

Where: TA Centre, Chetwynd, Wexford Road, Birkenhead, L43 9TF

Contact: Pat Sanders Tel: 07733 270567

## **WALES & THE WEST**

### **Birmingham**

When: 12.00 on the 1st Wednesday of the month (except January). There is also an evening meeting every quarter (phone for location)

Where: Irish Centre, 14-20 High Street, Deritend (Digbeth), Birmingham, B12 0LN [www.irishcentrebirmingham.co.uk](http://www.irishcentrebirmingham.co.uk)

Contact: Babs Anderson Tel 07921 832094

### **Cardiff (Informal Branch)**

If you are interested in joining a newly (re) forming Cardiff Branch contact Karen Francis on [ranaridibunda@hotmail.com](mailto:ranaridibunda@hotmail.com) or phone 07702618100

### **Derby (Informal Branch)**

Contact: Judy Smith at [judy.hirst123@ntlworld.com](mailto:judy.hirst123@ntlworld.com) or phone 07790 848364.

### Hereford

When: 19.00 on the last Tuesday of the month  
Where: The Herdsman, 54 Widemarsh, Hereford, HR4 9HG  
Contact: Sharon Joyce Tel: 01905 821189

### Leicester & Nottingham

When: 13.30 on the 2nd Tuesday of the month  
Where: Devonshire Place, 78 London Road, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 0RA  
Contact: Sue Slattery Tel: 0116 259 2743

### Marches & Mid Wales

When: 3 - 4 times per year  
Where: Location varies, phone for details  
Contact: Carys Palmer Tel: 01588 640985

### Oxfordshire (Informal Branch)

*If you are interested in joining a newly forming Oxfordshire Branch contact Christine Townsend Tel: 07756 681441 or 01869 324319*

**Phoenix** (a regional Branch covering Wales, parts of the Midlands and North West)

When: Every 3 months  
Where: Phone for details  
Contact: Maggie Purkis Tel: 01952 251717 or 07808 139543

### Shropshire

When: 14.00 or 19.00 (alternates month by month) on the 1st Wednesday of the month (except December and January). Come 1.5 hours earlier if you wish to join us for lunch/dinner  
Where: The Red Lion, Holyhead Road, Wellington, Telford, TF1 2EW  
Contact: Chris Powell Tel: 01743 241646  
chris.powell3@mypostoffice.co.uk

### Tamworth

When: 19.30 on the last Wednesday of the month  
Where: RAFA (Flarepath) Club, 22 Lichfield Street, Tamworth, B79 7QD  
Contact: Marie Smedley Tel 01530 273980

## SCOTLAND

### Aberdeen

When: 10.15 on the 1st Monday of the month (except January & May)  
Where: Ma Cameron's (Snug Bar), Little Belmont Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1JG  
Contact: Joan Bartlett Tel: 01224 596520

### Dumfriesshire

Contact: Susan Marcroft BEM Tel 01556 611944

### Edinburgh (Informal Branch)

*If you are interested in joining a newly forming Edinburgh Branch contact Senga Palmer Tel: 07876 782773*

### Fife & Tayside

When: Last Thursday of the month  
Where: Salutation Hotel, 34 South Street, Perth, PH2 8PH  
Contact: Kate Arnold Tel: 01577 830136

### Glasgow

When: 13.00 on the 2nd Monday of the month  
Where: RHF Museum, 518 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3LW  
Contact: Joyce Steele Tel: 0141 322 5639

### Stirling

When: 12.00 on the last Saturday of the month  
Where: Allanpark Hotel, 20 Allanpark, Stirling, FK8 2QG  
Contact: Liz Dixon Tel: 01786 743635

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Ulster

When: Meetings 3-4 times per year  
Where: Location varies, call to confirm details  
Contact: Joan McCabe Tel: 02842 788013 or 07702 751010, joanmccabe24@gmail.com

## NATIONAL & OVERSEAS

### Band

When: The Band Branch is a national Branch and does not meet on a monthly basis. Phone for details of our next meeting.  
Contact: Ann Jones Tel: 0117 9406185

### Griffin Branch

Griffin Branch is a virtual Facebook group primarily designed to unite those ex members of the WRAC who do not yet belong to the Association, or if they do already belong do not have a geographic branch to attend.

### Mediterranean

When: At least every 6 months or more  
Contact: Melanie Howell melphil@britvegas.com  
Tel: 0034 9658 78963 Mob: 0034 622 036333

### Postal & Courier (Informal Branch)

When: A WRAC Postal & Courier reunion is held once per year.  
Contact: Margaret Grant MBE Tel: 01875 611777 or mgrant2009@live.co.uk

## WRAC ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP GIFT VOUCHERS

Do you know anyone who served in the ATS or WRAC who is not yet a member of the Association?

Why not give the gift of WRAC Association Membership?

Membership Gift Vouchers are now available to purchase online, by phone (0300 400 1992) or by post. Cheques payable to WRAC Association.

UK Annual Membership £10

Overseas Annual Membership £15

## HERE COME THE SKIRLS: WORLD WAR II PIPE BAND WOMEN WHO RAISED MORALE ON THE HOME FRONT

*Editor: Article published in the Daily Record 16 May 2015.*

Mary Munro recalls her time as a member of the Auxiliary Territorial Service Pipe Band during World War II as the happiest of her 93 years. Her story was told as part of a VE Day Exhibition in Rutherglen. As World War II raged, the women of the Auxiliary Territorial Service Pipe Band brought music and a morale boost to the home front.

For Mary Munro, this was a period to treasure, one of the most exhilarating and happiest times of her 93 years. She said: "Friendships were made which greatly enriched our lives and we saw places we would otherwise not have seen. We had a great deal of happy times together as we travelled to many different places, raising the spirits of many different people." Mary's story was told as part of a VE Day exhibition, founded on a small book she has written, titled *They Shall Have Music Wherever They Go*. By the time war started in 1939, Mary was already an accomplished bagpiper. Born in 1922 into a working class family to a mother who had always wanted to be a concert pianist, she was raised in the Lanarkshire towns of Motherwell and Larkhall.

Her uncle was a pipe major in the Seaforth Highlanders and from the age of 11, Mary dedicated herself to the pipes. She said: "I wanted to play as good as any man. It was my chief interest. I had no interest in anything else. I needed all my spare time. I practised and practised."

When war broke out, Mary joined the Auxiliary Territorial Services and left Scotland for the first time to head for London, becoming a founder member of the services' all-female pipe band. A call was put out to army women across the country to find enough pipers. It took some time to get the band up to scratch and Mary coached the less talented. Three times a week, following a bugle call at 7.30am, the women faced gruelling physical training, followed by six hours of music practice. Then it was laundry, the pressing of uniforms and shining of shoes and buttons before some free time. Looking smart was top priority and the women were given three uniforms and a dozen collars which they had to have regularly starched and laundered at their own expense.



*Mary Munro (right)*

Two afternoons a week they took drill sessions with the Coldstream Guards at London's Wellington Barracks and Mary went on to win a medal for her admirable marching skills. The pay for a female private was £1.05 a week, with free food and lodgings, and there was little money left over for fun. For some of the women, the practice schedule and strict regime were too much and they returned to their original units. But Mary embraced the life and never resented what she saw as the key to musical success. On the downside, Mary recalls the tension of living in London in May 1943 and the fear of constant bombing raids on the city. She said: "Air raids happened frequently, day and night, and personally the wailing alert always gave me a deep chilled feeling in my spine."

In June 1943, the band of 11 women were at last ready to go on parade, with 24 members of the service's drum and bugle band marching behind them. In their early days, the band followed army exhibitions around the country, where women were shown driving jeeps and troop carriers, and servicing field kitchens. Mary said: "It was important to show just how hard-working the girls were in the service."

While Mary insists she had "no time for boyfriends", many of the girls were caught up in whirlwind romances during the war. She said: "Everyone seemed to be living in the moment and a decision was made very quickly. I can remember one of our girls going to meet her husband coming back from India after being away for two years. She was in a panic because she just couldn't remember what he looked like and she had to meet him at Euston Station."

In August 1943 the band embarked on their first tour to Northern Ireland, performing concerts from Belfast to Lisburn, to troops in the evening and in public parades throughout the day. Sometimes they treated neighbourhoods to impromptu performances in their free evenings and to workers in munitions factories. The women were given a welcome wherever they went. They toured the country, usually in three-week blocks, once performing in a parade at Windsor Castle with a salute from King George VI. They played at displays in Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool, where they stayed with local families or were billeted in a large hall. Members of the Women's Voluntary Service would do their cooking and laundry. The band travelled to Aberdeen, Glasgow, Elgin, Perth and Inverness.



*Mary (right) and her fellow bagpipers check out the Daily Record*

Dorothy had kept the most incredible scrapbook of her time in the ATS and some of the photos were lovingly restored for the exhibition (May - September 2015) by Rutherglen historian Carol Foreman. The exhibition at Rutherglen Library, pulled together by heritage librarian, Zen Boyd, was a remarkable insight into one aspect of women's tireless contribution to the war effort.

Wherever the women went, they created a wonderful spectacle. They were greeted with rapturous cheers when, in October 1944, they played to a crowd of 90,000 at Wembley Stadium. In May, the war was over but the band carried on and in June 1946, performed at the British Army Exhibition in Grand Palais, Paris. One French reader wrote a tribute to the women which was published in a newspaper. Comparing them to "Pied Pipers", he wrote: "Not a person in the crowd is anything other than captivated by this music. Its brightness, its lightness, its rhythm, as well as the proud bearing of the pipers in their charming Scottish dress." In December 1946, the band travelled to the Middle East and among their tasks was to play at emotional passing out parades of soldiers taking leave of the war. Among the places Mary visited were Haifa, Mount Carmel and Gaza.

Not long after, Mary was demobbed and went to work in an insurance office, where the mundane contrast threatened to drive her crazy with boredom. At the age of 34, she moved to a small flat in Rutherglen and abandoned the pipes as she felt there was nowhere to practise with the freedom she had enjoyed at the ATS. Instead, she sent them to her best friend, former band member Athleen, who had moved to Canada. Mary's book is dedicated with "many happy memories".



### Mary Munro 2015

*Editor: Mary subsequently featured in a Daily Record TV advert published in Oct 15 and available to view on YouTube (search for 'My Record of the Moment - Daily Record Advert'). Mary was made a member of the WRAC Association in November 2015.*

## FOXBURY MANOR, CHISLEHURST Edna Sinclair

I was billeted with Joyce Maguire at Foxbury Manor but lost contact with her after demob, many years later she got in contact with some of us and we corresponded for several years. I'm not in this photo as I was on leave in London at the time it was taken. As we were fairly close to Biggin Hill we used to have trucks come and pick us up on a Saturday to go to Dances (those were the days!), one could always rely on getting a lift from a fellow soldier to a destination in wartime. As soon as peace was declared we had to vacate Foxbury, I would love to visit it today to see it restored to its' former glory.



Foxbury in the 1930s



And today

*Editor: The following is taken from "Chislehurst History Today": 'Both the ATS and the Army occupied*

*Foxbury during*

*the war. Foxbury is said to have been the Headquarters of the 3rd Battalion of the London Scottish Regiment. Foxbury was twinned with the men's training centre based at Liskeard Lodge at Woodlands on Ashfield Lane (whence the name Liskeard Close). The training centres both moved to Birmingham in 1968, and Foxbury became a retreat. In 1976 the Woolwich Building Society bought Foxbury as a training centre. In 2003, it was acquired as a private home. In 2009 Foxbury became one of the world's worst kept secrets when it emerged that the singer Michael Jackson had taken a one year lease on the house and grounds from June that year. He was due to give a number of concerts in London, between July 2009 and March 2010, and Foxbury had been identified as a suitable location for him and his family to live. Jackson died in Los Angeles on 25 June, just days before he was due to come to Foxbury.'*

## ATS GIRLS WOULDN'T LET A V2 SPOIL DANCE NIGHT

WONDER if any former ATS girls who were billeted at Foxbury in Kennal Road, Chislehurst, can remember the day a V2 rocket fell near the house and all of them escaped unscathed?

Joyce Taylor (née Maguire) can. "I was working at the pay office in Footscray when a large explosion was heard in the distance," she writes. "Over the Tannoy came an announcement that all the girls billeted at Foxbury must find alternative accommodation as the mansion had been damaged."

"I was going to a dance that evening so, with a few friends, I went back to the house to collect my clothes. Our room wasn't too bad but a support column was split in the corridor. We realised we had had a lucky escape."

Joyce and her chums had dinner, got ready for the dance and walked to the bus stop at New Eltham. They heard an explosion in the distance.

It was another rocket. Struggling to get off, they continued with their journey to Lewisham, where they were told a bomb had just dropped outside the dance hall. Joyce writes: "We took the whole thing in our stride. Our evening was wonderful."

This occurred more than 50 years ago, Joyce tells me that for her 50th birthday her son



GIRL POWER: ATS line-up, with Joyce Taylor née Maguire centre row, right.

arranged for her to re-visit Foxbury, where she found her old room and enjoyed a nostalgic tour around the house, even visiting places that were

once "out of bounds". "The owners presented me with a birthday cake she writes. "I just wish my old colleagues could have been there too."

THE KENTISH TIMES. 30<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2003 (BK)

## QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK: FIFTY YEARS ON Jane Smith



*Jane Smith (nee Stark) and Shirley Prime (nee Wilks) at the obelisk in Forster Road*

Shirley and I have been friends for fifty years. We both joined the WRAC Staff Band in 1965, and as the Band was based permanently in Guildford we got to know the town and the camp very well. We both served just under four years and have been in touch ever since. During that time we both married, Shirley had a daughter and in 2007, became a Grandmother. So, what better way to mark this anniversary could there be than to pay a visit to Queen Elizabeth Park? We were also keen to see the obelisk with its new commemorative plaque illustrated in Lioness No. 2 of 2014.

The day we chose for our expedition, 24 September 2015, was fine and bright. We deliberately travelled by public transport in order to experience the bus ride up the hill from Guildford Bus Station, along Manor Road and then Grange Road, disembarking just as we always did at Little Street. The bus shelter there doesn't seem to have changed in half a century and neither had the bus ride with the driver having to negotiate the narrow, twisting road up the hill dodging oncoming traffic as he went. At three per hour, the buses seem to be slightly more frequent these days.

We took street maps with us, one from 2015 and one showing the original lay-out of the camp for comparison purposes. Even with the maps though, we both felt pretty disorientated and found it very difficult to locate the sites of well-known buildings such as the Band Room and the Church. The one original building (the former Museum with its flagpole) remaining when I visited the site in 2009 seemed to have disappeared but generally, the landscaping looked as green and lush as it did six years ago.

Arriving at the obelisk and plaque in Forster Road, (there is also one just off Hopkin Close), an obliging postman took pictures of us. Many memories came back, particularly of all those friends and comrades we had known over the fifty years and some recently lost. For example, two of our Directors of Music have died this year alone, Captain Zara Bowness-Smith ARCM, on 10 January 2015 (DoM 1968-1971) and Major Jean Collyer MBE (nee MacDowall) on 18 July 2015, (DoM 1955-1962).

Major MacDowall was our first female Director of Music and was notable for her official arrangements of the WRAC slow and quick marches, which the Band played for many years. The photograph of her aged 94 with Major Lynnette Hopkin in the "Lioness" (No. 2, 2014), is probably the last photograph of her at a Band Function. Our good friend Corporal Rita Thurman also died this year, on 17 February 2015.

Although the Queen Elizabeth Park site has been under development since 2000, it has taken 14 years for the WRAC to have a memorial there. We felt that the fact that a number of roads are named after Directors of Music, and that this is now mentioned on the plaques is very important for ex-Band members. We now have a focal point in an attractive and familiar setting for us to visit and I do hope that former Band members will be able to take advantage of this.

Following our reflections, we were just in time to catch a number 26 bus back down the hill and round off a most successful day with a delicious plate of steak and chips in the Wooden Bridge Pub!

## WRAC PROVOST Sue Steel (nee Johnson)

*Editor: If you are reading this and thinking about your own service photos sitting hidden in a drawer or album please do dig them out and share them with us.*



*Sue Steel (Johnson) and Steve Jones RAFF, Newry RUC 23 August 1973*



*Sue Steel and Peter Chinnock*



*Guildford August 1971*



*L-R: Cpl Babs Bowers, Brig Nolan, Sgt Sue Johnson in Hong Kong circa 1975*



*On Exercise: HQ Pro Coy RMP on Lantau Island circa 1974*



*On duty in NI circa 1973*

## 1959 - 1962 Mary Marshall



*6 Platoon, 2 Company, Guildford July 1959*



*Mary Marshall (right)*



*1960 A Company 12 Battalion WRAC, Richmond Park. Ready for a day out to Bournemouth  
Back Row L-R: Anne Pearson, Norah Cole, Anne Hugget, Nicky, Barbara Owen, Anna Kreisler, Jenny Stott, Moira Applegate, Margaret Millward, Paddy McDade  
Front Row L-R: Joyce Turner, Joyce Mowe, Jean Mowe, ?, Sandy, Di Tomlinson, Sylvia*

## P&EE SHOEBURYNESSE 1968

### Avril Major nee Went



*Elsie Renshaw*



*W/432794 Pte Avril Went, front rank 4th from right*



*In the cookhouse, Richmond Park 18 December 1960*



## WHERE ARE YOU NOW?



*Queuing for Christmas Lunch, Richmond Park 18 December 1960*



*Yvonne Harris (nee Lamerton) WRAC*



*Jean M Bradley (nee Ross) outside Buckingham Palace circa 1951*



*In the Officers Mess, Richmond Park 18 December 1960*

I am trying to track down Yvonne Harris (nee Lamerton) WRAC who I served with at Shrivenham in the 1950's. Yvonne was a cook and I was a Mess Orderly in the Officer's Mess. Yvonne emigrated to New Zealand and the last address I had for her was in Palmerston North. If anyone has any information about Yvonne please contact me at: 16493 Grant Street, Omaha 68116, Nebraska, USA.

*Jean Bradley (nee Ross)*

## COURSE 38 WRAC COLLEGE MAY - DECEMBER 1965

**50 years on...but it could have been  
yesterday!  
Sue Ingham**



### 1965

On the 14th July 2015 (Bastille Day!) 9 members of Course 38 of 1965 met at the VSC for a 50th Anniversary Reunion lunch. Most had not set eyes on each other since that memorable December of '65 for our commissioning and posting far and wide. Would we recognise each other? Of course we did, everyone looked just the same!

We had travelled from the four corners of England, sadly our Scottish member could not make it, but no matter, in this age of communication we were able to Skype and all chat with her. It was fascinating to hear where everyone's paths had taken them. We all agreed that through thick and thin our WRAC training had stood us in good stead.

A notable feeling was how strong the bond, forged over only 8 months all those years ago, remained. A most happy occasion and we look forward to meeting up again next year.



*In 2015 the following were present: Margaret Robinson (Crawford), Sue Ingham (Bonavia), Erica Pattinson (Jones), Margaret Andrews (Fleeman), Melody Drake-Lee (Green), Margaret Carter (Lloyd), Lesley Simms (Reynolds), Sue Barker (Taylor), Taniya Keoghan (Hanson Lester) and Kate Robertson (Swallow) on Skype. In spite of all our searching we could not find Ruth Cooke (Birtles) QARANC. Sadly Anne Rainbird (Williams) has died.*

## WRAC 60's - 16ers ANNUAL REUNION Lorraine Torrie-Moore

The photo below is the 2015 Reunion, held in Bideford, of WRAC who served in 16 Signal Regiment. The names listed are maiden names.



*Back Row L- R: Rita Priddle (NAAFI), Hazel Crockett, Beverley Robb, Bridget Smith, Geraldine Hine.  
Front row L-R: Evelyn Crow, Margaret Kerr, Denise McCrea, Elizabeth Gibb, Rosemary Coombes, Laurie Torrie, Josephine Watts, Ann Fossett, Noreen Byrne, Susan Galantree, Gwen Smith.*

## WRAC POSTAL BRANCH 27th REUNION Miss Margaret Grant MBE

Our 27th annual weekend reunion was held at the Smart Aston Hotel in Derby. The Hotel and accommodation was very good and the staff were very helpful and kind.

We had a private room every evening where we held Bingo, Raffles and Quizzes. The winners of the quizzes were given small toy cups and medals by me and everyone enjoyed themselves.



*Back Row: Margaret Smith, Sylvia Knowles, Dorron Phillipson, Maggie Watt, Pat Gray  
Third Row: Pat Carter, Ella Reast, Isabel Bodman, Val Sanders, Brenda Griffiths, Margaret Moule, Isobel Duffy.  
Second Row: Margaret Gran MBE, Pam Sussex, Kath Leighton  
Seated: Jean Legg, Janice Bond, Chris Fretwell.*



**Quiz Winners L-R: Ella Reast, Kath Leighton, Janice Bond, Val Sanders, Maggie Watt, Pat Gray**

Many places were visited and plenty of shopping done. Bakewell was visited and naturally a few Bakewell tarts were purchased. I have to thank all who helped at the entertainment and other tasks, they were greatly appreciated. The Raffle was a great success thanks to Members, Friends and the Hotel who all donated prizes. Bookings have already been made for our 2016 reunion so hope to see many of you again.

## **PROOF AND EXPERIMENTAL ESTABLISHMENT SHOEBOURNNESS 12th BIENNIAL WRAC REUNION**

**Janet James**  
[janetjames@ukgateway.net](mailto:janetjames@ukgateway.net)

Our 12th reunion took place in October 2015, as ever under the careful stewardship of Jo Crutcher and her band of intrepid assistants. They had duly reconnoitred the landscape for possible sites of SSIs ( Special Shoebourness Interests in this context) and eventually fixed the coordinates of the Glebe Hotel in Barford, near Warwick. No guns, gunners, batteries, mud flats or cold and draughty OPs along the sea wall, but a very pleasant and quiet village in which to enjoy the weekend.

In all our party numbered around 45, comprising of 24 WRAC Experimental Assistants Gunnery and Admin staff, plus many husbands, some of whom had also been posted to Shoebourness. We were especially pleased this year to welcome Lynda Hole who had seen references to our reunions in the Lioness and was able to make contact with us through the good offices of the Association.....many thanks to them.



We had one or two last minute cancellations from our regulars because of illness but members of the gathering still manage to cover the best part of 30 years of service at the Establishment, from 1955 until the mid-80s, after which time it was "civilianised".

We shall be hoping to enjoy the 13th reunion in October 2017, with a view to possibly returning to the same location, and as ever hoping that we might see some more new-old faces. It would be great if we did.....and we know that you are out there!

## **WRAC DINNER CLUB Carol Traynor**

A wonderful WRAC Dinner Club weekend was had by us in Dudley, and it's so good to see old and new pals again. As always we had great entertainment by Kim and Jake who generated a fabulous atmosphere. It was so lovely to see Kathleen Hughes and Agnes Doig again, who in spite of serious health problems, make long journeys to join us. Many thanks to the Dinner Club Committee for their hard work to enable us to have this great weekend.



**Anne Gurney, Lesley Annable, Rita Broomfield, Carol Traynor, Rose Friend, Christine Greenwood**



**Lesley Annable, Rose Friend, Anne Gurney, Irene Maclean, Carol Traynor, Belle Jenkins, Christine Greenwood, Rita Broomfield, Irene Hall**



**Kathleen Hughes, Rose Friend, Anne Gurney, Agnes Doig**



**Lesley Annable, Anne Gurney, Carol Traynor, Rita Broomfield, Rose Parsons, Susan Aldridge**

## NATIONAL STANDARD Sharon Joyce - National Standard Bearer

**VJ 70 Commemorations 15 August 2015**



## Battlefields of Belgium Tour September 2015



*At the Menin Gate*

Ross-on-Wye Branch of the Royal British Legion gave me an invitation to go with them on a Battlefield tour to Belgium and Northern France. As this had been on my bucket list I was glad to accept.

The object of the tour was to visit the graves and memorials of the 33 men of Ross-on-Wye who gave their lives during the First World War and to place wreaths and crosses to remember them. Our tour guide Bob belonged the Guild of Battlefield Guides, needless to say he was very knowledgeable and could identify within yards the spot where men fell in battle. I did not realise just how much information was logged in the midst of battle.

The base for the tour was Ypres where the Menin Gate is situated. We visited the following Cemeteries/Memorials: Essex Farm Military Cemetery Dressing Station, Artillery Wood, Langemark German Cemetery, Passchendaele Museum, Tyne Cot Memorial and Cemetery, Railway Dugouts Burial Ground (Transport Farm), Bailleul Road East Cemetery, Arras Memorial, Thiepval Memorial (Memorial to the Missing of the Somme), Lochnager Crater (largest man-made crater of the First World War on the Western Front), Shot at Dawn Memorial and Talbot House in Poperinge

Reading about it and seeing pictures does not give the true enormity of the devastation and loss of life. In the fields one can easily find bullet cases and pieces of shrapnel and farmers are still finding remains of soldiers.

Four RBL and three Association Standards (including ours) were taken to the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate. It was one of the most moving times for me to have paraded the WRAC Association Standard. The visitors taking part said having the Standards there, made the occasion very special. The photo shoot after took nearly half an hour, the pictures must have gone global!



## AGC exercising their Freedom of Winchester 24 October 2015



*Birmingham International Tattoo November 2015*

## Mentioned In Dispatches

*Editor: 'Mentioned in Dispatches' replaced the system of considering Branch members for the award of a Certificate of Appreciation. The new process allows all Association members to be eligible for nomination, and enables everyone to read about the contribution an individual has made, either to their Branch or to the Association.*

### **STEPHANIE CAWS** **Southampton Branch Treasurer**



**Stephanie Caws second from right**

Stephanie has been a member of Southampton Branch for many years. She joined the Committee and became Treasurer, a role in which she has really excelled. She has been an incredible help to myself and the Branch, which has in turn put Southampton Branch on a sound footing.

*Jean Doe*

### **MARY (PADDY) J BARKER** **Leeds Branch**



**Paddy Barker fourth from left**

Mary has always been known in the Branch as Paddy. She served in the ATS with the Royal Signals from January 1941 until February 1946, serving in the War Office, AA Command and in Germany with the BAOR.

During her time in Leeds Branch she has rarely missed a meeting and is always willing to help with the organisation of events, collecting any monies during the meeting and keeping a record for the Secretary. Paddy can keep us amused with a funny poem or tale about her life experiences. Her work with the Royal British Legion enables us to use the facilities of the club to hold our meetings.

*Pat Harpin*

## Birthdays

### **DAME JOANNA KELLEHER DBE** **FORMERLY BRIGADIER HENDERSON**



*Congratulations to Dame Joanna Kelleher (nee Henderson) DBE who celebrated her 100th birthday on 24 December 2015. She enlisted in the ATS in 1941 and rose to the rank of Brigadier, serving as DWRAC 1964-67. Dame Joanna is a Life Vice President of the WRAC Association.*

### **COLONEL ELEANOR BOWLES**



*Life Vice President of the WRAC Association, Col (Retd) Eleanor Bowles celebrated her 94th birthday in December 2015 with a visit from Col (Retd) Nan Robertson*

## WAAC/QMAAC CENTENARY DINNER 1917-2017

**Saturday 18 March 2017**  
**Holiday Inn, Stratford-upon-Avon**

### The History

The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) was established after a War Office investigation in December 1916 into the number of non-combatant tasks being performed by soldiers on the Lines of Communications in France. It was estimated that 12,000 men could be freed for service in the front line.

The first WAAC party of 14 women arrived in France on 31 March 1917, and eventually 9,000 women were to serve there. It was a continually evolving service with rules and regulations being formulated in response to experiences. The WAAC was formally established by Army Council Instruction 1069 of July 1917. On 9 April 1918, largely as a result of their sterling conduct during the German March offensive of that year, the service was renamed Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (QMAAC), with the Queen becoming Commander-in-Chief.

The QMAAC ceased to exist on 27 September 1921, but some 57,000 women had served with the Corps, both at home and in France. As part of the mobilisation of the whole country this milestone in the push for equal rights formed the basis for women's service in the British Army to this day.

### The Event

- When?** Saturday 18 March 2017
- Where?** The Holiday Inn, Stratford-upon-Avon
- What?** A formal Dinner (the WRAC Association 2017 AGM will be held earlier the same day)
- Who?** As the event is subsidised by the WRAC Association attendance will be limited to Association members only (and those eligible to join)

**Entertainment?** Music will be provided by The Yorkshire Military Band (formerly The Yorkshire Band of The Royal British Legion), including their Corps of Drums, led by WRAC Association member Louise Lingard-Snape

**How do I book?** Full details, including a booking form, will be published in the next edition of Lioness and on the website



# Women In The British Army 2015



**Brig Sharon Nesmith, Comd 1 Sig Bde (first frontline female Brigade Commander)** Crown Copyright



**A Junior Soldier prepares for her Graduation Parade**  
Photo: Sgt Si Longworth, Crown Copyright



**LCpl Mairi Greive catches the ball against Olney Women's Nikki Moore** Photo: Richard Watt, Crown Copyright



**LCpl Lacey, AGC Band** Photo: Cpl Daniel Wiepen, Crown Copyright



**Lt Col Phaedra McLean, first female Army Reservist to command an Intelligence Corps Reserve Battalion**  
Photo: Sgt Si Longworth, Crown Copyright



**Lynx pilot Capt Charlie Hay** Crown Copyright

**LCpl Chloe Artis with Gwen** Crown Copyright



**Field Kitchen** Crown Copyright



*On parade at the NMA Photo: Cpl Timothy Jones, Crown copyright*



*Pte Alex Warchol awarded 'Best at Physical Training' in her platoon Crown Copyright*



*In September 2015 Brigadier Susan Ridge became the first female Major General in the Army when she was appointed as the new Director General Army Legal Services (DGALS), General Sir Nick Carter congratulates her on her new appointment. Photo: Corporal Paul Shaw, Crown Copyright*



*Pte Sam Hoskins applying the finishing touches to her dish Photo: Cpl Daniel Wiepen, Crown Copyright*



*1 R Anglian, Woolwich Photo: Sergeant Rupert Frere, Crown Copyright*



*Pte Kathryn Davies 230 Squadron, 154 Regiment RLC Photographer: Mark Owens, Crown Copyright*



*Undergoing selection for Exercise ICE MAIDEN. In October 2017 an all female British Army Team will attempt to cross the Antarctic landmass under its own steam Photo: Corporal Max Bryan, Crown Copyright*



**Gnr Christie Farren**

Photo: Sergeant Rupert Frere, Crown Copyright



**Cpl Amy-Jane Harrop, a Military Working Dog handler with her dog, Troy, before moving off again into the heat of the Afghan sun.** Photo: Cpl Daniel Wiepen, Crown Copyright



**LBdr Pockett of 32 Regt RA inside a Sultan, commanding the Desert Hawk III flying above the target area.** Photo: Lee Matthews, Crown Copyright



**The soldiers, horses and Guns of The Kings Troop Royal Horse Artillery pulling six First World War-era 13-pounder Field Guns** Photo: Sgt Rupert Frere, Crown Copyright



**Gnr Jessica Powell grooms Broome**  
Photo: Sergeant Rupert Frere, Crown Copyright



**March through London to Parliament recognises the vital role played by personnel in the battle against Ebola** Crown Copyright

## WRAC Officers' Dining Club

Serving and retired Officers and guests enjoyed an excellent evening at the annual WRAC Officers' Dining Club Dinner at the Victory Services Club on Saturday 21 November 2015. The event was wonderfully organised by Debbie Coupland who had included an 80th birthday celebration for Nan Robertson and raised the bar with the inclusion of an excellent brass quintet. As ever we welcomed some first time attendees, please do spread the word for future years and mark your diary now for this year's event. Details of the 2016 event will be published at the earliest opportunity. For more details email Sue Hatton wracofficersdc@gmail.com



*Sue Westlake MBE, Audrey Purton OBE, Janet Lawson*



*Rowena Patrick MBE, Audrey Smith, Jane Freebairn*



*Debbie Coupland and Rachel Woods*



*Ishbel Thomson and Sue Mackenzie*



*Maggie Purkis, Brig Fiona Gardner CBE, Mack Maskens-McIntyre*



*Netty Harper, Imogen Corrigan, Nicola Dawtrey*



*Nan Robertson*

## Karen Radford

The weekend of the 10th and 11th of October 2015 saw the Women's Royal Army Corps Dinner Club event take place at The Copthorne Hotel, Brierley Hill, Dudley. It was a new venue for us this year, after scouring central England for one that was large enough to fit all our diners and provide enough room for the vast number of dancers that attend each year!

On Friday morning at 10:00hrs the doors were flung open to a barracking crowd who wanted to get their programmes, buy their raffle tickets and see what other goodies were available for them to purchase. The programmes were quickly viewed to see who was attending and to see if anyone could spot long lost friends, and to look at the names of the new ones they would make over the weekend. Name badges were at the ready to help those of us who can't remember what we did an hour ago let alone the name of every new face we would meet. "A marvellous idea" and "oh brilliant" comments muttered as ladies scurried away to work out what name to put on them and which box to write it in! The one that says "name" is always helpful but some came back laughing for a second go, as one go clearly wasn't enough. You know who you are!

The raffle was a huge success this year with the prizes being purchased in advance and everyone was able to see a list of what they could win before they bought their tickets. There was much amusement and chatter between everyone and threats to maim the sellers if some ladies tickets weren't pulled out for specific prizes. We didn't realise that selling raffle tickets was such a hazardous job but the sellers survived the experience to fight another day!

Babs Anderson was left a collection of photographs belonging to one of the Dinner Club founders, Maureen Deeley, who sadly lost her fight against illness in 2012. This brought happy and sad memories back to some of those who knew her but gave ladies an opportunity to take pictures away with them that they hadn't seen before.

There were opportunities to win a beautifully hand painted picture by our very own Lauren Mackenzie. This also had a health warning for the winner, as many fell in love with it and would have paid thousands to take it away. Wendy Hooton was able to make everyone aware of the marvellous fund raising events she organises and Jules Calder, with her catalogue, enabled ladies to purchase clothing and other items with various logos and badges embroidered. Teddies and other goodies were available to win with name guessing and a further raffle was held for our resident Lioness "Razz". Many walked away with happy faces and new gifts. An amazing £350 was raised and donated to Mo Deeley's favourite charity, Troop Aid.

Friday also saw our Dinner Club President, Maggie Purkis, fulfil her crazy challenge of dressing up in public in her penguin suit. In true fashion she completed the challenge (much to the amusement of onlookers) and claimed a £277 charitable donation to the Dinner Club from the Facebook Page "Crazy Festivities"

The doors closed at 4pm on the Saturday and everyone was seen rushing around to get themselves ready for a 6pm call for pre-dinner drinks. At 6.45 the call to enter the function room was given and, as is traditional, 226 ladies skipped through the door clapping to the sound of our Regimental March 'Lass of

Richmond Hill'. That's an amazing number, bearing in mind this year also saw the WRAC Association triennial Grand Reunion in Harrogate. After a warm welcome from our co-opted Chair, Margaret Davies, and another interesting Grace from our Dinner Club President Maggie Purkis we sat down to eat. The food came flooding out piping hot and very well presented and the extra wine on the table was a real treat for those who partake. It wasn't long before the food was demolished and we toasted Her Majesty and absent friends. The raffle was completed in super swift time and this allowed for extra time to fit in our extended evening of entertainment.

This year saw Kim and Jake return as Mr and Mrs Jones, who again provided us with top quality entertainment. We also saw two newbies in our midst; Sarah Lee who sang songs from the 1940's to the 1960's and our 17 year old young Magician and entertainer Sam Turner, Kim's nephew who wandered the bar before pre-dinner drinks and throughout the evening until the starters came out. Both of them had the time of their lives and have never met such a lovely bunch of ladies. Yet again Heather Gaughran was blissfully running around with her camera, collecting happy snaps of everyone, as you can see.

After an extended show, the last of the partygoers left the room at about 2am. Some headed to the bar and some to their rooms but it appeared all had a wonderful evening, even if a few were a little worse for wear from the consumption of funny coloured water!

There were a few cobwebs being blown away the following morning with a cooked breakfast, orange juice, water, tea and coffee being consumed in vast amounts but this enabled a full recovery for some and a feeling of being comfortable and replete for others. Some had early plans to leave and get home, however 126 remained for the Extraordinary General Meeting, which was finished at lunchtime. More than usual stayed over on the Sunday night and yet again there was a wonderful evening of fun and laughter in the bar.

Monday arrived and it was time for the stragglers to leave. Another weekend of song, dance and great fun was over. So that leaves us to say "Oh go on then, let's do it all again next year."







## WRAC LIONESSES 4th FUNDRAISING EVENT

**Great Newham 10k Run  
Olympic Park, London  
Sunday 17th July 2016 at 0900hrs**

If you are interested in joining the WRAC LIONESSES team please contact Wendy Hooton by email [wendyhootonski@aol.com](mailto:wendyhootonski@aol.com), on Facebook/ messenger or via the WRAC Association HQ (Tel: 0300 400 1992). If you would like to sponsor us you will find our fundraising page on the Virgin Money Giving website [www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/wraclionesses4](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/wraclionesses4). We are raising funds for the WRAC Association and Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS). You can find information about the event, details of the route, and how to enter at [www.greatrun.org](http://www.greatrun.org). We finish the run/walk in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, crossing the finishing line where many famous athletes claimed their victory in the 2012 Olympic Games!

If you're not a runner/walker COME AND SUPPORT US, we would love to see you cheering us on in the Olympic park or at the finishing line in the stadium. Our supporters are important to us all, you can wear your WRAC Association fleeces, polo shirts, t-shirts or hoodies. Come and fly the flag and enjoy the esprit de corps!

Each entrant can have 2 guests so please let me know if you are coming to support, I wouldn't want you to just turn up and not be able to gain entrance into the Olympic park. It's a fabulous weekend, don't miss it!

## 100 MILE WALK 2016 Marg Davies

This year I'll be doing my third annual Challenge for Charity by walking The South Downs Way from Winchester to Eastbourne in mid April 2016. I'll be doing it to raise money, split 50/50, for the WRAC Association & the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

You can email me to find out more at [43margied1@gmail.com](mailto:43margied1@gmail.com) or you can sponsor me directly through Virgin Money Giving at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/MargaretDaviesWRAC>

## THE PATRON'S LUNCH PRIZE DRAW

Inside this edition of Lioness you should have received a book of Prize Draw tickets giving you the chance to win a place to attend the The Patron's Lunch on The Mall on Sunday 12 June 2016. The WRAC Association has purchased two pairs of tickets (at a cost of £300 per pair) which will form the Draw prizes. The Draw will take place at the WRAC Association AGM on Saturday 12 March 2016.

Due to the nature of the event, and the ticket funding, only WRAC Association members (or those who match the membership criteria) will be eligible to attend. If required, a carer may attend but this will be in the place of a WRAC Association member. The tickets will be drawn in pairs. In the event of the owner of a winning ticket not having a WRAC Association member to attend with, a second ticket may be drawn (to attend with the primary ticket holder). All travel is at individual expense.

Additional books of tickets can be purchased by phone (0300 400 1992) or by post: WRAC Association, Unit 39, Basepoint, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD. Tickets are £5 per book of 5, cheques payable to WRAC Association.

## WRAC BIENNIAL FORT WILLIAM WEEKEND 1st - 3rd April 2016

(All profits raised will be donated to the WRAC Association)

All former members of the ATS and WRAC (and friends and family) are invited to a weekend of friendship and laughter at the Croit Anna Hotel, Fort William from Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd April. The outline programme is:

Friday 1st April - Arrival and catch up with old and new friends in bar, entertainment will be provided  
Saturday 2nd April - Morning/Afternoon - Coach Trip to Oban and Isle of Seil  
Evening - Dinner Dance and Raffle (please bring a suitable Raffle Prize)  
Sunday 3rd April - Morning - Visit to Commando Monument for placement of WRAC Plaque  
Afternoon - Buffet lunch and games afternoon  
Evening - Paula MacAskill (singer and entertainer)

For full details contact CJ Johnson on [CJMcdoodle@gmail.com](mailto:CJMcdoodle@gmail.com), call 01383 872621 or Facebook Group WRAC FORT WILLIAM EVENT

Editor: Please note this is not a WRAC Association sponsored event.

# Obituaries - Their Final Salute

## **CAPTAIN ZARA E BOWNESS-SMITH ARCM 10 January 2015**



*08 August 1969 - Husband And Wife Join Forces On The Rostrum: Two bands and two conductors providing a harmonious marriage on the parade ground at the WRAC barracks at Stoughton, near Guildford. Capt Zara Bowness-Smith, 26, conducted a rehearsal for a concert in Guildford given by the combined bands of the WRAC, of which she is Director of Music, and the 3rd Bn. the Royal Anglian Regiment, whose bandmaster, Mr. Robert Bowness-Smith, stood by to take over the baton. They are the only husband and wife in the Army with their own band, but Capt Bowness-Smith said: "It makes a change conducting next to each other".*

Zara joined the WRAC Band straight from grammar school in 1962, as a french horn player, and studied music at Kneller Hall Military School of Music. She was commissioned on 12 December 1968 and was later appointed Director of Music WRAC Band. She joined the Royal Choral Society in 1969 and was a life long member.

Whilst serving she met her husband Robert who was Bandmaster for the 3rd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment. They were married at Kneller Hall on 26 April 1969 and held their reception in the Officers Mess. One of the highlights of her career as Director was when she took the band on tour to Japan. She retired from the army in 1973 just prior to the birth of the first of her three daughters Emma, Hannah and Rebecca.

In civilian life Zara became involved with the Girl Guides as a company leader in Plumstead. Robert and her subsequently formed the national Guide and Scout Band which performed at various venues and parade in the Lord Mayor's Show in the City of London. She was an enthusiastic camper and one one occasion took her Guides to a Girl Scout camp in Canada.

In the years prior to her death at age 71 her health sadly deteriorated. This meant she could no longer meet up with friends at the Old Girls Annual Reunion at Gainsborough Girls High School where she is greatly missed. She was a talented musician from an early age and her contribution to the WRAC Band's achievements and reputation for excellence deserves recognition.

*Shirley Dawe*

## **WO2 EILEEN GREEN nee Hansell 07 October 1921 - 19 September 2015**



*Eileen Green (centre) at a Chelmsford Branch meeting*

We were all very sad to say goodbye to Eileen Green who died in hospital in her sleep. She had spent much of her life in Essex, living in Margaretting near Chelmsford. She joined the ATS before World War 2, initially as a Cook and later as Quartermaster Sergeant in charge of catering at Warley Barracks near Brentwood, the home of the Essex Regiment. Eileen's husband was in the Essex Regiment and they served together at the barracks, however Eileen had to return home each evening as there was no female accommodation.

She joined Chelmsford Branch in 1990 and was a great supporter, enough to receive a well earned Certificate of Appreciation. We shall remember Eileen with special affection for a long time to come.

*Gina Shadrack*

## **EDNA A M HIND nee Whittam (formerly Duffy) 22 October 1920 - 14 August 2015**



Margaret (known as Edna) had two siblings, Joan and Basil and was born in Dawley, Shropshire. Her family later moved to Bury, Lancashire then to Goole, East Yorkshire, where she lived until she was 16 years old. One of the jobs she had was as a barmaid in the Gyn Hotel, Blackpool where she loved meeting and making many new friends. Margaret was in charge of the stationery stores at Firth Brown Tools for 21 years. Throughout her life Margaret made friends and acquaintances from all over the country and from all walks of life.

Margaret's military career spanned 1940 through to her demob in 1946. She volunteered for the ATS and after 3 weeks training in Lancaster was posted to the Motor Transport Services Depot No. 4 as a Technical Motor Transport Clerk with the RASC and then, in 1942, to the RAOC in Derby. In 1944 she attained the rank of Sergeant. The many aspects of the military life she enjoyed stayed with her for the rest of her life.

After her demob Margaret lived with her father in Pitsmoor, Sheffield where she met and married a local man, Ronald Duffy in 1949. Ron served with the Royal Air Force and was a Companion at the Sheffield Companions Club, a social and meeting place for members of Fellowship of the Services. Margaret served on the Ladies Section Committee for many years and loved acting and singing at charity and fundraising events with the Sheffield Ladybirds.

Ron died in 1997 after 48 years of happy marriage. Margaret remained a widow for 15 years and kept herself busy. Her busy social life included regular visits to Eden Camp and the National Memorial Arboretum. She was Secretary of the WRAC Association Sheffield Branch and an active member of the Normandy Veterans, RASC, Royal Artillery and Memorable Order of The Tin Hats. As a member of the Royal British Legion for 26 years, she attended the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall in London with friends every November and the service on HMS Belfast where she became friends of Lord and Lady Alan West. Lord West was formally Admiral of the Fleet.

Despite failing eyesight in 1992, Margaret continued to manage her affairs, household chores and keep up her enviable social life. She was registered with St. Dunstan's (now Blind Veterans UK). At one of their functions she met her second husband, John Hind, in 2007. Margaret (92) and John (86) were married in November 2012. Such was the media coverage that it was almost like a 'celebrity wedding', appearing on news channels such as BBC Look North. One magazine had the headline, 'I've got myself a lovely toyboy, - 92 year old Margaret Duffy ready to tie the knot'. Sadly John passed away in May 2013. The Chapel of Remembrance at Hutchcliffe Wood Crematorium was full of veterans, friends and family. A Memorial Service was held on 22nd October 2015 at Christ Church. Margaret was a woman of substance, outspoken, proud, loyal, generous, modest, respected, funny and loved. She died with her poppy on.

Lynne Forrest

## **MARJORIE HUGGETT nee Matthews 22 December 1919 - 07 August 2015**

Marjorie Huggett, 95, passed away in the early morning of 7th August 2015 at her home in White Rock, British Columbia. Marjorie was born on 22nd December 1919 in Penarth, Wales. During the war she was a Corporal in the Auxiliary Territorial Service serving with the Royal Artillery as a spotter on Anti-Aircraft Batteries stationed in Enfield and London. During the war Marjorie met Ronald Huggett, a Royal Engineer stationed in India, and they were married on 13th May 1944. The wedding took place in an annex of the church, as the main church had been destroyed by enemy action.

Marjorie's life was an example of strength, perseverance and faith. Despite the untimely loss of her husband to cancer she raised two sons who went on to earn scholarships and engineering degrees. Her lack of a driver's license never prevented her from getting around. In fact, she was very well travelled, having visited locations throughout the UK, Europe and



North America, eventually emigrating to Canada in 1997. Marjorie was outgoing and friendly to everyone she met, always eager to recount the fascinating stories of her service to her country during the war and her travels later on in life.

Marjorie is survived by her son Jonathan (Carolyn); daughter-in-law, Fiona; grandchildren Matthew (Ai), Will (Dana), Katherine and Clare (Andy); and great grandchildren, Madeline, Caitlin, Gabrielle, Gavin, Yuji, Alice, and Amelia. She was preceded in death by her husband Ronald (1960), her son Clive (1997) and her grandson Edward (2006).

Carolyn Huggett

## **MAJOR JEAN B MacDOWELL (later Collyer) MBE, LRAM, ARAM 28 June 1920 - 18 July 2015**

*Editor: Members of the WRAC Association attended the Thanksgiving Service for Jean MacDowall (as she was better known in the WRAC), at Boughton under Blean on 10 August 2015. Her two Sons in Law gave the eulogy, from which this obituary was submitted by the Revd Susan Wing, combined with an obituary submitted by Band Branch Secretary Ann Jones.*

Jean was born in Salisbury in June 1920, the daughter of a Scottish Doctor and English governess. Her early years were spent in Northumberland and then Maldon, Essex. After school she went to Royal Academy of Music where she studied with Benjamin Britten. At the outbreak of War her father insisted that she leave for her own safety, much to her regret. She joined the FANY's in 1939 and became a driver. Driving a General in his Staff car to Salisbury Plain, she was told to remain with the vehicle. Sometime later she was disturbed to hear the sound of mortar fire, she was being fired upon. Shortly afterwards some very embarrassed Home Guard came running up full of apologies and relief that she was safe.

She was posted to Catterick and then Aberdeen where she met and married David MacDowall. VE Day saw her in Edinburgh, 8 months pregnant, dancing down Princes Street. Seventy years later, just shy of her 95th birthday, she donned her medals and walked up and down Broughton High Street, 2 weeks later she was in hospital.

In the late 1940's and with 2 children to support, Jean turned to the newly formed WRAC and enlisted in 1949. Whilst an Instructor at Officer Cadet Wing, WRAC Depot, her talents as a pianist and musician with perfect pitch were recognised. She was asked to become Director of Music of the Corps Band and go to



Kneller Hall to train in 1954. She was the first woman to do so and caused outrage by graduating top and winning the Silver Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. On collecting this Medal she had to sit in the gallery with the chauffeurs as no women could attend the Dinner. She became Director of Music in 1955, 6 years after the Band was formed. She was unique in being the only British officer to attend the Bandmaster's course and is unique in being the only Army Director of Music not to have been a playing member of a Band. Many Band members, both at Kneller Hall and our own WRAC Staff Band, were very well aware of her enviable genius of perfect pitch which meant she could pick out any musician who dared play a wrong note, but she was held in great respect and many tried to emulate her.

She arranged the WRAC march "Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill", which was played at the end of her Thanksgiving Service. Her career saw her taking part in prestigious occasions including the Royal Tournament, Edinburgh Tattoo, The Horse of the Year Show and overseas tours. She appeared on "What's my Line" and "Friday Night is Music Night" on the radio and she and the band made an appearance in the film "Carry on Sergeant". With the building of a new housing estate on the old WRAC Depot in Guildford a road was named after her.

She did find it difficult being a single Mum as benefits such as a Quarter were not available to her. She managed, and members of the Band became babysitters. She married Peter Collyer in the late 1950's, received an MBE in 1960 Honours List and started a late family. The loss of her independence as she became "wife of" was frustrating. However she flourished and at a Ladies Dinner night in Malta surprised everyone. It was the tradition to invite a lady to conduct the Band. Jean rose to the challenge and quickly sorted out the Band, much to their surprise and the admiration of dinner guests – no one knew of her past.

Eventually the family came back to Kent and Jean followed a new career path as an Antiques Dealer, specializing in late 18th and early 19th century porcelain. They had a house in France and she was a first class French speaker. Jean was lively to the end, conducting some music from her bed the day before she died.

Intelligent, fiercely independent, warm hearted, entertaining with an enquiring mind and definite opinions, a pioneer, she brought much to the lives of others. A couple of years before she died she said: "I love life. I am so lucky to have so many good friends and a loving family". Jean, we salute you.

*Revd Susan Wing  
Ann Jones*

## **JEAN L MIDFORD nee Jefferies 03 November 2015**



Jean joined the WRAC/TAVR in Worcester in the mid 1960s and spent an amazing 36 years juggling her family, civilian and military lives. She trained, attached to 267 (Worcestershire) Field Regiment RA, initially as a driver but retrained as a cook. When Worcester TA was disbanded in 1967 Jean and the other Worcester members of the WRAC were re-deployed to 202(M) General Hospital, Birmingham. Her Worcester colleagues from those days remember that it was always good to know, particularly on exercise, that their friend Jean was in the cookhouse when they were late for meals. They knew she could always "liberate" something from the cookhouse for them to eat. It made her very popular!

It was while serving with 202 Hospital that Jean met her husband, John Midford, who was Chief Clerk at that time. The pair of them continued to serve together and they were even interviewed together by British Forces Radio in Cyprus whilst on exercise in 1976. Somehow they managed to organise their civilian jobs, raising two children, Joanne and Nigel, and their weekly TA training and annual camps. On top of this Jean was a keen skittles player and a very active member of her children's school PTA.

After 28 years service Jean decided she would like to retire from the WRAC/TAVR. Birmingham University Officer Training Corps had other ideas as they couldn't find anyone to replace her. Jean ended her 36 years service as Catering Manager to BUOTC. According to the local newspaper reports on her 'final' retirement, Staff Sergeant Jean Midford reckoned she had fed a few thousand Potential Officers during her career. Jean was finally "Dined Out" in the summer of 2001.

After the death of her husband in 2010 Jean joined many new groups. She had recently become re-acquainted with the WRAC Association via both Hereford and Birmingham Branches. She enjoyed making new friends and was delighted to renew old friendships in Birmingham. Jean's funeral service was held at Worcester Crematorium on Friday 20th November 2015 where the Hereford Branch Standard and members of Birmingham and Hereford WRAC Association were in attendance.

Margaret Davies

**WO2 CATHERINE M PRICE**  
**26 June 1968 - 27 May 2015**



Catherine Mary Price was born in Bolton on 26 June 1968. Sadly, she passed away on 27 May 2015 in Bolton Hospice after a short illness. Her funeral was attended by many ex army personnel who travelled from all over the country to pay their last respects.

At the age of 11, Cathy took on her first job, delivering newspapers around Adlington. She left school at 16 and moved on to Bolton Catering College, following in her brother's footsteps. At the age of 18, she embarked on her career in catering, firstly running her own delicatessen and then as manageress of a bakery shop in Horwich, Nr Bolton. She then spent a short spell as manageress of a delicatessen attached to the Intercontinental Hotel in Dubai. On her return, she returned to her old job where a passing remark from an ex army bread delivery man planted a seed in her mind that an army career may be the life for her.

In June 1990, Cathy enlisted into the WRAC. After a 6 month strenuous training period, her family proudly attended her passing out parade in Guildford and she was offered employment in the Army Catering Corps. Thereafter she served in units in Northern Ireland, England, Wales, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Brunei, Norway, Canada and Cyprus. Cath completed 22 years exemplary colour service reaching the rank of Warrant Officer Class Two. She was awarded numerous campaign medals during her service, including the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

Throughout her career, Cathy was highly motivated and proactive in representing her units in numerous sports, including athletics and football. Towards the end of her career she was heavily involved with the RLC (W) Rugby team. After hanging up her boots, she carried on as Manager. Her calm attitude & commitment contributed towards a very successful team until she retired in 2012.

After a successful career Cathy retired from the Army and embraced civilian life. Never one to rest on her laurels, she applied for and was offered a job as catering manageress at St James High School in Farnworth. She was well liked and made an impact in a very short time. Such was her strength of character that, when she was diagnosed with lung and bone cancer, she insisted on carrying on with work until she could no longer walk unaided. On being told her cancer was terminal, she married

true and only love Linda, with the blessing of her mother Maureen Price and brother Paul Price. The ceremony was held at the Bolton Hospice, a moving yet heart breaking experience for family and friends that were in attendance.

Cathy didn't like to make a fuss and was very much true to the WRAC motto; gentle in manner, resolute in deed. Cathy leaves a huge hole in the lives of many. She was taken too soon.

*Maureen Price and Cheryl Jones*

**ENA F J PRICE nee Boucher (W07421)**  
**11 October 1915 - 05 November 2015**



Ena was born on 11 October 1915 and managed to reach her goal, her 100th Birthday, on the 11 October 2015 before passing away peacefully in her Care Home in Hereford on 05 November 2015. Ena grew up in Green Street Hereford, helping her parents run their Greengrocer shop. She joined the ATS in 1938 and served until 1945, reaching the rank of CSM. She spent most of her time in Hereford based with the TA in Harold Street. She enjoyed her drill sessions and going on exercise out on the Malvern Hills and the Brecon Beacons. Ena was in charge of the cooks at The Green Dragon, looking after the Military based there. She received her Defence Medal.

In 1939 Ena met a very nice man called Charles Price but they went their separate ways and pursued their careers and lives in the Army. On leaving the ATS Ena moved back to Hereford to look after her mother. She and Charles renewed their relationship in 1979 (Charles was now a widower and had joined the police force) and they married on Ena's birthday. They spent fourteen wonderful years together before Charles sadly died in 1992. Ena worked as a school secretary at St Martins and then at St Owens, both in Hereford. Six years ago Ena moved into Newstead Care Home where she made friends and was very happy.

In 1987, while shopping in Hereford, Ena had met Mary Nicholls (ex ATS) they had both been based together in the Green Dragon, both were members of the WRAC Association and from that meeting (and with a few other ex-army ladies in Hereford) in 1989 they formed the Hereford Branch of the WRAC Association. Ena held most of the posts within the Branch and was Honorary President to the end. Ena's last Branch event was at Hereford Branch 25th Anniversary Party in July 2014, where she and Mary had the honour of cutting the cake. She will be sadly missed.

*Sharon Joyce*

**LIEUTENANT COLONEL  
MARGARET M SALT TD**

**06 January 1919 - 06 December 2015**



Like many of her generation it was the outbreak of war in 1939 that signalled activity that would shape and define Margaret's life. Margaret saw her brother Laurence, already serving with the TA in the Artists Rifles prior to the war, commission into the Devonshire Regiment. Margaret decided that she should do her bit. She enlisted in the ATS, undergoing training in Camberley. For a young lady of 20 educated in the sheltered life of convents this was the first time she had been exposed to the broad spectrum of humanity. She wrote in her diary that; 'she had never eaten off such thick and heavy plates before' and was amazed at the table manners of some of the girls. As the war progressed Margaret was posted all over the United Kingdom (Cheltenham, Guildford, Catterick, Edinburgh, London etc) firstly as a driver and later as an officer. The war saw bombs fall in the fields around her family home in Kent and the horizon glow red at night as London burned under the Blitz. Meanwhile her youngest brother John joined the Royal Navy as a Midshipman and deployed in support of the Arctic Convoys.

By the end of the war Margaret had reached the rank of Junior Commander. Following a tour of post War Germany in late 1945 Margaret decided to stay in the military, serving in the Territorial Army. The WRAC provided status and security, something that was not easily available elsewhere for an unmarried woman. Margaret continued serving until 1967 when she retired as a Lieutenant Colonel, a recipient of the Territorial Decoration as well as the British War Medal and the Defence Medal for her Service in WW2.

*Major James M Salt RAMC*

*A memorial Mass will be held at 1100 on Friday 19th February at St Mary's RC Church, Lyme Road, Axminster Devon EX13 5BE.*

**ROSEMARY J WATSON  
18 October 2015**



Rosemary Joan Watson died on the 18th October 2015 at Aveley Lodge, Fingringhoe, Essex at the age of 98. Rosemary enlisted in the ATS at Southampton on the 25th March 1942 and served until January 1946. She spent the majority of her time as an instructor in radar, both at a school and at a gun emplacement on the South Coast. On her discharge from the ATS with the rank of Sergeant, she returned to work for the Post Office, rising to be Senior Librarian at Post Office HQ in London. Until well into her 90s, she remained in regular contact with friends she made when she first joined the Army.

*Chris Brazier*

**WRAC BIENNIAL FORT WILLIAM WEEKEND**

**1st - 3rd April 2016**

(All profits raised will be donated to the WRAC Association)

All former members of the ATS and WRAC (and friends and family) are invited to a weekend of friendship and laughter at the Croit Anna Hotel, Fort William from Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd April. The outline programme is:

Friday 1st April - Arrival and catch up with old and new friends in bar, entertainment will be provided

Saturday 2nd April - Morning/Afternoon - Coach Trip to Oban and Isle of Seil

Evening - Dinner Dance and Raffle (please bring a suitable Raffle Prize)

Sunday 3rd April - Morning - Visit to Commando Monument for placement of WRAC Plaque

Afternoon - Buffet lunch and games afternoon

Evening - Paula MacAskill (singer and entertainer)

For full details contact CJ Johnson on [CJMcdoodle@gmail.com](mailto:CJMcdoodle@gmail.com), call 01383 872621 or Facebook Group WRAC FORT WILLIAM EVENT

Editor: Please note this is not a WRAC Association sponsored event.

## LAST POST

**ALLAN**, Mrs Christina, nee Craig, of Bridge of Allan on 04 July 2015, ATS.

**BALFOUR**, Mrs Roberta J, nee Atkinson, of Leeds on 12 October 2015, WRAC.

**BEECHAM**, Mrs Jo V, nee Tilley, on 20 November 2015, WRAC.

**BENNETT**, Mrs Joan M, nee Winter, of London on 12 December 2015, ATS.

**BIRDSALL**, Mrs Jennie, nee Walker, of Moffat on 03 May 2015, ATS.

**BOWNESS-SMITH**, Mrs Zara, on 10 January 2015, WRAC.

**BRADLEY**, Mrs Gillian M, of Queensland on 03 December 2015, WRAC.

**BROWN**, Mrs Freda M, nee Dugdale, of Bournemouth on 03 July 2015, ATS.

**COLEMAN**, Mrs Mary A, nee Clark, of Lanarkshire on 21 Feb 2015, ATS.

**CULPIN**, Mrs Joyce I, nee Moseley, of Bushby on 21 March 2015, ATS.

**EMMERSON**, Mrs Robbie, nee Wallen, of Darlington on 27 September 2015, WRAC.

**GAGE**, Mrs Phyllis, nee Brice, of Keynsham on 29 September 2015, ATS.

**GALPIN**, Mrs Dorothea E, nee Hargreaves of Edinburgh on 13 September 2015, ATS.

**GREEN**, Mrs Eileen, nee Hansell, of Margareting on 19 September 2015, ATS.

**GORROD**, Mrs Alice, nee Knowles, of Aberdeen on 17 September 2015, ATS.

**HARDING**, Mrs Edna L, nee Powell, of Sutton Coldfield on 30 November 2015, ATS.

**HART**, Mrs Eileen D, of Bournemouth on 01 May 2015, ATS.

**HAWKER**, Mrs Theresa, of Weymouth on 05 July 2015, ATS.

**HAWKSWORTH**, Mrs Rita, nee Myles, of Hemsworth on 30 October 2015, WRAC.

**HAYES**, Mrs Phyllis, of Preston on 02 August 2015, WRAC.

**HIND**, Mrs Edna A M, nee Whittam (formerly Dufty), of Sheffield on 14 August 2015, ATS.

**HODDER**, Mrs Betty, nee Halford, of Portesham on 06 August 2015, ATS.

**HUGGETT**, Mrs Marjorie, nee Matthews, of British Columbia, Canada on 07 August 2015, ATS.

**KELLY-WALSH**, Mrs Irene, nee Whitbread, of Farnborough in 2015, ATS.

**KIRK**, Mrs Mary P, nee Green, of Leicester on 22 September 2015, ATS.

**McLENNAN**, Mrs Alison, nee Millar, of Stenhousemuir on 20 August 2015, ATS.

**McMILLAN**, Mrs Mary, of Menstrie on 27 June 2015, ATS.

**MEALING**, Mrs Margaret E, nee Day, of Eastbourne on 24 March 2015, ATS.

**MERFIELD**, Mrs Doris W, of Kings Lynn on 29 December 2015, ATS.

**MIDFORD**, Mrs Jean L, nee Jefferies, of Worcester on 03 November 2015, WRAC.

**NEWCOMBE**, Miss Margaret, of Milford-on-Sea on 14 November 2014, ATS.

**NOWELL**, Mrs L, nee Smith/Haywood, of Windsor on 10 November 2015, ATS.

**PATERSON**, Mrs Patricia A, nee Haydon, of Yeovil on 03 April 2015, ATS.

**PEGGIE**, Mrs Doreen, nee Lelyveld, of Broughty Ferry on 31 October 2015, WRAC.

**PLUMMER**, Mrs Elsie M, nee Crossley, of Huddersfield on 13 September 2015, ATS.

**PRICE**, Ms Catherine M, of Bolton on 27 May 2015, WRAC.

**PRICE**, Miss Ena F J, of Hereford on 05 November 2015, ATS.

**RANDALL**, Mrs Beryl, nee Yates, of South Australia on 11 June 2015, WRAC.

**SKERRATT**, Mrs Ethel, nee Blencoe, of Warwick on 21 May 2015, ATS.

**TICHY**, Mrs Eve D, nee Creasy, of Exeter on 19 October 2015, ATS.

**WARREN**, Mrs Alice H, nee Dreghorn, of Eastbourne on 05 August 2015, ATS/WRAC.

**WATSON**, Miss Rosemary J, of Fingringhoe on 18 October 2015, ATS.

**WHITMARSH**, Miss Dorothy L, of Harwich on 30 October 2015, ATS.





## LEGACIES & DONATIONS

### The WRAC Association Needs You



Those of you who read the Annual Report, or the excerpts published in *Lioness*, might have the impression that the WRAC Association is well provided for financially, with the total worth of our funds being approximately £6 million. However, due to the way that the original trust funds were set up the vast majority of the money, some £5.4 million, is mainly for the use of the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund. This means that anyone who has served in the ATS or the WRAC for any period of time, who is in financial need, can be considered for help by the Benevolent Fund (providing they meet the grant giving criteria). The youngest person who served in the WRAC before it was disbanded in 1992 would now only be just over 40 years old and therefore, with life expectancy increasing all the time, there will still be applicants eligible for assistance for over 50 years. All costs of administration of the Benevolent Fund have always been paid for by the Fund and the Trustees are confident that the reserves held will be sufficient to provide for the all future needs.

The Association provides other functions to members who are not in financial need but are a great benefit and support to those women who have this special bond of having served, irrespective of the length of that service. You all wait eagerly for *Lioness* to arrive twice a year and for those who are visually impaired we have financed a recorded version. Many of you enjoy Area and Branch functions and attending the Grand Reunions. Additionally there are several important anniversaries to commemorate in the next few years, however there are financial implications that we now have to consider. As you know we have a plot at the National Memorial Arboretum, which has to be maintained, and we are always anxious to establish permanent memorials, most of which also need funds to maintain them. In order to ensure that all that was achieved by women up to 1992 is not forgotten we must make sure that we continue to have representation wherever possible, particularly connected with Remembrance events.

Until recently the staff and overhead costs of the Association was provided by the MOD, however the Association now has to cover the full cost of staff and office space. We must continue to provide these key functions and as part of this you have already agreed to increase the membership fee to £10.00. This was very welcome but this will not prevent the speedy depletion of the Association Funds, as we strive to maintain the Area and Branch network and continue our representation at a national level. We therefore need to consider raising funds in other ways.

Many members already make regular and one off donations or are kind enough to leave legacies which help the WRAC Association to continue its work, for which we are very grateful. As the future of the Benevolent Fund is secure, if you are considering making a donation or leaving a legacy please consider making such a donation or legacy specifically to the WRAC Association, rather than to the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund. This will enable us to continue to provide you with all of those activities that contribute to esprit de corps and comradeship, both now and well into the future.

The WRAC Association is so very grateful for all of your support so far. This appeal is made with the aim of ensuring that the Association can continue in its' key role; that of supporting and maintaining our esprit de corps.

Leaving a legacy to the WRAC Association is a special way to give help, as it costs nothing now and a gift of any size will make a big difference. Legacies do not get taxed, so every penny comes straight to the Association. It can also reduce Inheritance Tax because the taxable value of the estate is calculated after charitable bequests are made. We appreciate that leaving a gift in your will is a big decision and you will want to take professional advice prior to any decision.

Thank you.

WRAC Association Charity No. 206184

WRAC Association, Unit 39, Basepoint Business Centre, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD  
Tel: 0300 400 1992 (local rate call, including mobiles) Email: [office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk](mailto:office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk)  
Benevolence: [benfund@wracassociation.org.uk](mailto:benfund@wracassociation.org.uk) Lioness: [editor@wracassociation.org.uk](mailto:editor@wracassociation.org.uk)  
Website: [www.wracassociation.org.uk](http://www.wracassociation.org.uk)

