

2000

No. 1

LIONESS

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THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

REGISTERED UNDER THE CHARITIES ACT 1960- No 206184

Founded in 1919

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Cover Photographs

Front Cover

The Benevolent Case Secretary Ruth Watt
in her TA role with WO2 Nancy Thorne

Back Cover

Brigadier Helen Meechie CBE with members
of Salsbury Branch and the staff of
Association HQ



Member of the Association of Service Newspapers

Contributions for next issue by 19 May 00

CONTENTS

Editorial1

WRAC Dinner Club Weddings.....2

Grand Reunion.....3

Stories6

Another Life After the WRAC17

Reunions18

ATS Dinner Club19

Gunners Corner20

Where are you now?.....22

A Prayer for Later Years25

Branch News.....26

Officers Branch Luncheon.....48

Weddings49

Letters50

Obituaries52

Royal Military Tattoo 200055

Application for membership.....56

Draft Accounts.....58

EDITORIAL

Yet another new editor! My name is Dee McElligott and I took over from Ruth Watt in September. Ruth has not gone far however. She is still here at the Association Headquarters, but has now taken on the important role of Benevolent Case Secretary.

For those of you who have not yet heard, I was a QA during my Army days, so the WRAC, let alone the ATS, is all new to me. The thought of coming into post with a Lioness due to go to print was rather daunting, but in fact it has been a brilliant way to learn about the Association. I have really enjoyed reading all your letters and articles and I have learned so much from them.

I must thank everyone I have met at various Association events and spoken to on the telephone. You have made me feel so welcome. I am really looking forward to the Grand Reunion and hope that as many of you as possible will be there. You will find details of the event inside this edition together with another copy of the application form.

I look forward to meeting you all at Cardiff.

ATS AND WRAC ASSOCIATION BENEVOLENT FUND
CASE SECRETARY

The post of Case Secretary to the Benevolent Fund will become vacant in June 2000.

This is a highly rewarding and fulfilling post requiring an interest in welfare and good interpersonal skills together with proven administrative ability and a knowledge of IT.

For further information, contact: **General Secretary, WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester, Hants. SO21 2RG**

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WRAC Association HQ, Block 32, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester, Hants SO21 2RG

WRAC DINNER CLUB

Tillington Hall Hotel, Stafford
8-10 October 1999

Friday Despite being slightly dull, the weather in Stafford was surprisingly warm. I arrived at the Hotel early and went into action. The Welcome Desk was ready. At 12 o'clock a steady trickle of guests started to arrive. This was the moment I had been working and waiting for during the last 12 months. Smiling faces all glad to have arrived safely and eager to enjoy the weekend including 35 new faces this year. The foyer and Castle Bar began to fill quickly as arrivals unpacked rapidly and joined the ever growing throng. Pearl Hicks, Janet Watkins and I were kept busy checking everyone in and dealing with queries. The Hotel filled with the laughter and chatter of 100 ex WRAC. Isabel Jenkins remembered to bring her dresses. The weekend was underway.

The Potters Restaurant was besieged by hungry guests eager to sample the tempting smells wafting from the Carvery. The rest of the evening was spent chatting and catching up on news with old friends. As Val Kemball said, you could sit at any table in the Restaurant and enjoy not only the food but also the company. Everyone was a friend.

Saturday I was amongst the first in the swimming pool which was lovely. Then I enjoyed a hearty English Breakfast which sustained me for the rest of the day. 10 am found a small army busy in the Tillington Suite. Standards were unfurled and displayed in the ensign stand; Daphne, dressed in uniform was elegantly positioned. A gold banner declaring "50th Anniversary WRAC" was assembled by Maureen Deeley and Hazel Edwards before being stapled high above the stage. The WRAC Anniversary Cake, baked by Maureen Deeley, was prominently displayed and the 128 Raffle prizes were numbered in readiness by Sue Dolphin, Irene Oliver, Sue Thomas, Pat Neale and Jenny Bryne. Apart from last minute touches, flower arrangements by Pearl Hicks and favours by Mabel Lightfoot and Glenys Fitzpatrick, everything was ready.

Beryl Butcher, Averill Ward and Nora Jones were in the foyer selling WRAC Sweatshirts, TShirts etc and knitted WRAC Dolls who sported every rank from Private to Brigadier. I overheard Val Kemball say "It even looks like me" as she gazed at her doll. By midday the majority of guests had disappeared into Stafford town in search of bargains or to Schott Glass for crystal. Daphne Jervis and I slipped into town to collect bouquets and have lunch.

Evening and drinks in the Bar; introductions all round for Brigadier Field, informal photographs, last minute Raffle Tickets. Dinner was announced to the strains of 'Early One Morning'. Val Kemball said Grace and dinner was eaten to such a cacophony of voices that the background music was turned off. Maureen Deeley took a photo call when she cut the Anniversary Cake, which was served with coffee. Dinner over, our glasses were raised to toast the Queen and absent friends. Our very best wishes for a speedy recover were extended to Dabs Brook MBE who is undergoing chemotherapy at this time. Brigadier Field's speech involved much laughter and audience participation as she went through the ABC of the WRAC. Speeches over, Val Kemball started the Raffle. I am convinced that she must be an auctioneer in her spare time because she set a remarkable pace. The runners, Sue Thomas, Maureen Deeley, Pat Neale, Jenny Bryne, Mabel Lightfoot, Glenys Fitzpatrick, Joyce Nichols and myself were kept on our toes trying to keep up with her. If you have ever wondered what happened to Zola Budd well let me tell you she was at the

WRAC Dinner 1999. She has undergone extensive cosmetic surgery and now bears a striking resemblance to Mabel Lightfoot. I might add that she manoeuvred around the tables at lightning speed. Although I announced the wrong name as winner of the Star Prize, Lesley Warner and Janet Cameron didn't bat an eyelid. Janet offered to share the prize, a weekend for two at Tillington Hall, with Lesley. Thanks a million ladies.

A Charity Spot was organised to raise funds for Carol Rowat's favourite charity the PDSA. Jenny Podesta generously offered to sing. Thanks Jenny you deserve a medal for bravery, Annie Hamilton added a song for good measure and we raised £85.00.

The DJ was then recalled from the Bar and the dancing began. Mabel Lightfoot and Maureen Deeley (minus shoes) jived like teenagers. I found myself jiving with Jenny Payne. The 'club set' Karen Freack, Debbie Mcleod, Christine Wallace, Annie Hamilton and Carol Martin looked as though they could easily dance the night away. Groups had formed in various parts of the Bar and foyer all trying to escape the heat. I found Frances Green, Gladys Pope, Nora Jones, Agnes Doig, Barbara Hook and Daphne Jervis enjoying the balmy night air under the porch canopy of the Tillington Suite. Midnight was announced when Averill Ward played Auld Lang Syne on her cornet. As the notes died away Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill filled the room. Once again marching feet could be heard and the room began to move. The DJ played on but tiredness had overtaken a few of us – including me. I headed for bed.

Sunday The Standard Bearers assembled in the Tillington Suite to rehearse for the Thanksgiving Service and I discovered that I knew nothing of the nuances of being a Standard Bearer. However, discussion with Ann Mahony, Maureen Deeley, Margaret Barham and Beryl Butcher illustrated what was needed and how it could be carried out. Rehearsal time was limited but in true military style we grasped the rudiments and crossed our fingers..

The Service was all I could have hoped for, and more. From Averill playing 'Greensleeves' to Annie Hamilton singing 'Amazing Grace'; the Readings by Brigadier Field and Irene Maclean; the very relevant talk by Reverend Beth Leach to Sarah Brightman's 'Time to Say Goodbye'. Added to this was the very obvious pride of the Standard Bearers as they marched out to 'Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill'. Frances Green very proudly carried the HQ Association Standard, Maureen Deeley – Birmingham, Ann Mahoney – Cleveland, Madge Evans – Luton, Gladys Pope – Salisbury, Beryl Butcher – Shropshire and Margaret Barham – Southampton. I was equally proud to be amongst them pushing Frances' wheelchair.

Brigadier Field enjoyed Sunday Lunch with 35 ladies before leaving to catch her train back to London. It was a good weekend and to prove how good, I received an application form for the WRAC Dinner 2000 from Pamela Richards dated 11 October 1999.

May I take this opportunity to thank the committee for all their help during this last year and to thank everyone for the flowers, letters, cards and telephone calls, they are much appreciated. See you next year.

Ann Deakin.

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PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

APPLICATION FORM

3



Cardiff Tourist Information Centre

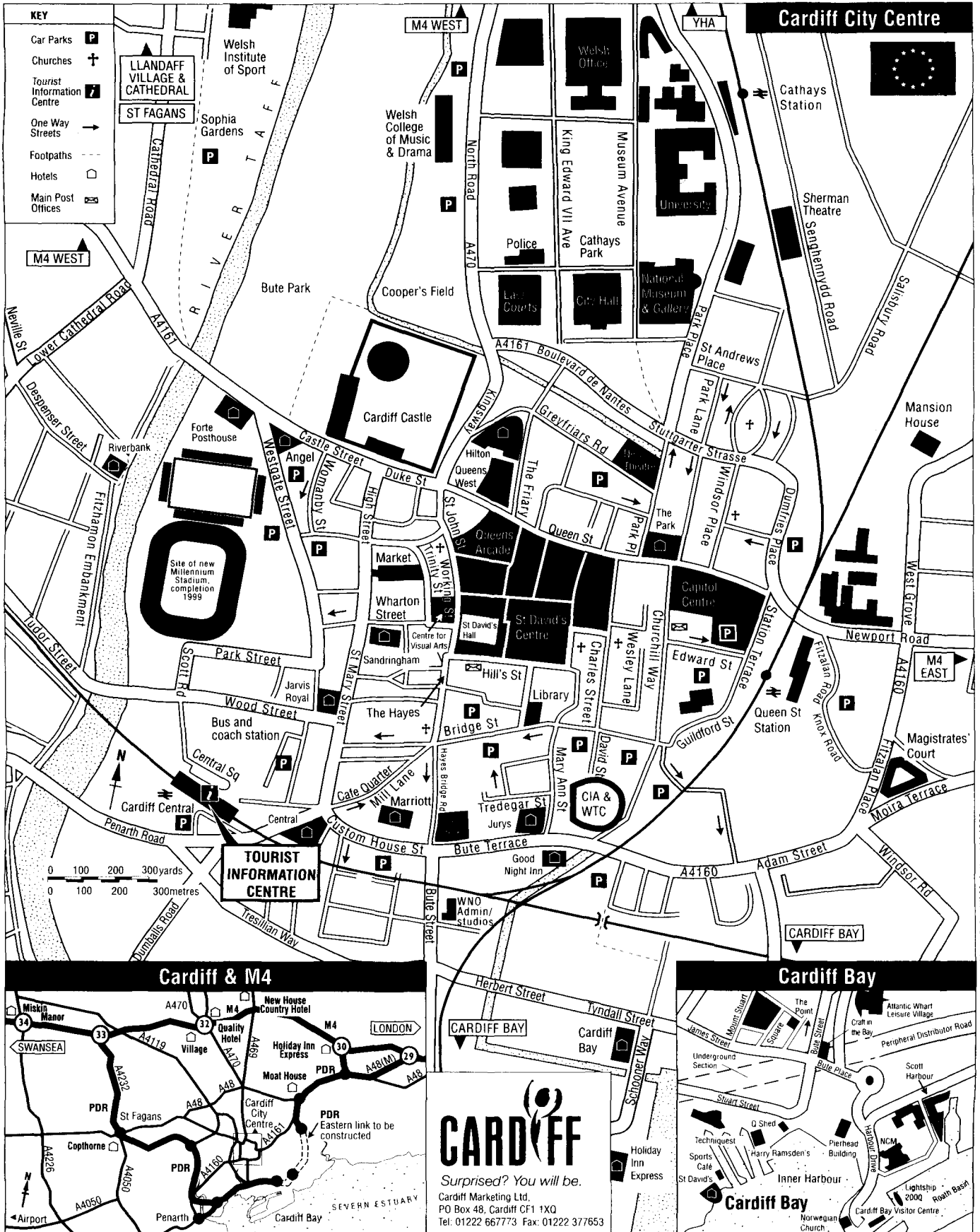
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Our services include:

- Friendly and knowledgeable staff
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- Information and leaflets about what to see and do and how to get there
- Reservations can be made for local accommodation that evening. For accommodation at your next destination use the BABA ('book a bed ahead') service.
- Bureau de Change 7 days a week
- Fax and photocopying services
- Maps, souvenir books, postcards and stamps, phone cards, street parking vouchers, Cardiff Card, CADW and BTA Heritage passes, souvenirs made in Wales and Bristol Channel cruise tickets
- Agents for Thrifty Car Rentals



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The Cardiff Card – great value visitor pass

Cardiff 2000

There are many hotels in Cardiff. The selection printed here is from the top end of the market and these have been earmarked especially for our Reunion at a special price.

There are smaller hotels and B&Bs, not so near to the centre which could not be block booked. A list has been sent to each branch. If you wish to book any of these you must contact them direct.

For all information about the following accommodation please contact CARDIFF MARKETING – 01222 667773

Cardiff Marriott Hotel

De Luxe

Centrally located in the colourful Cafe Quarter, 5 minutes from Cardiff International Arena, Theatres and Museum, this stylish air conditioned hotel has outstanding facilities including a large leisure club. Spacious bedrooms have one or two double beds and offer all the extras you would expect from one of the world's favourite hotel groups.

City Centre £158.00 Single £108.00 Sharing

Jurys Cardiff Hotel

Highly Commended

A warm welcoming hotel situated opposite Cardiff International Arena, in the heart of the capital city. Extensive shopping, entertaining and attractions are within strolling distance.

City Centre £127.50 Single £93.50 Sharing

Quality Friendly Hotel

Highly Recommended

Close to the junction of the M4 and the A470 on the northern edge of the city, this modern hotel lies in the shadow of the fairytale castle - Castle Coch. Facilities at the hotel include carvery restaurant, friendly bar and a relaxing leisure club.

FOUR MILES FROM CITY CENTRE

£156.50 Single £101.50 Sharing

The Park Thistle Hotel

De Luxe

Situated in the heart of the city on the edge of the shopping precinct, within walking distance of all facilities, 10 minutes walk from Cardiff International Arena. Built in 1883, the hotel recalls an era of Victorian opulence. The park is spacious and elegant.

City Centre £199.50 Single £139.00 Sharing

Cardiff Bay Hotel

Highly Recommended

Strategically located for both Cardiff Bay and the City Centre, 5 minutes walking distance of the Cardiff International Arena.

City Centre £195.00 Single £120.00 Sharing

Riverbank Hotel

Commended

Family owned and operated. Recently refurbished. Situated in the heart of the City and only 5 minutes walk from the Cardiff International Arena and central bus and railway stations. Secure car parking, licensed bar and restaurant.

City Centre £93.00 Single £69.00 Sharing

Forte Posthouse - City

Commended

Modern three - star hotel located in the heart of the city opposite Cardiff Castle, Bute Park and River Taff. Within 5 minutes walking distance of the Cardiff International Arena, arts and theatrical venues. Offers free car parking to residents.

City Centre £136.00 Single £96.00 Sharing

Cardiff Moat House

Highly Recommended

Four miles east of the city centre, the Cardiff Moat House offers superbly appointed bedrooms, a popular carvery restaurant and bar. To complete the picture, the hotel boasts a first rate leisure club, with swimming pool.

FOUR MILES FROM CITY CENTRE

£134.00 Single £114.00 Sharing

Forte Posthouse - M4

Commended

Positioned on the western side of the city this three star hotel places an emphasis on creating an atmosphere of welcome and informality. Facilities including health club with swimming pool.

FIVE MILES CITY

£126.00 Single £86.00 Sharing

Lincoln House Hotel

Commended

Privately owned family run hotel offering high quality personal service. The Victorian house has retained its original features and atmosphere. Conveniently situated in a select area, within easy reach of the city. Regular bus service into city.

ONE MILE FROM CITY CENTRE

£115.95 Single £84.95 Sharing

The Central Hotel

Approved

Situated close to train and bus station, within 2 minutes walking distance of Cardiff International Arena.

City Centre £109.50 Single £69.50 Sharing

Holiday Inn Express

Newly built hotel adjacent to junction 30 of the M4 motorway. All rooms have tea/coffee making facilities, satellite TV in-room movies, hair dryer and direct dial telephone. The hotel has no bar but is adjacent to a Big Steak House. Continental breakfast only.

SIX MILES FROM CITY

£126.00 Single £106.00 Sharing

Dinner not included.

Campanile Hotel

Commended

A comfortable, friendly hotel situated 3 miles from the city centre. Separate from the accommodation is a Bistro restaurant and bar featuring daily French specials plus Hors d'oeuvres buffet.

THREE MILES FROM CITY

£79.45 Single £49.50 Sharing

The rates given above are per person and inclusive of a week-end delegate rate for 2 nights bed and breakfast, with Dinner and VAT.

Stories

FOLLOW UP ON BESSIE GOODMAN

by Mrs E. Storr

5 Cyclamen Road, Swanley, Kent, BR8 8HH

I have just read the latest issue of the Lioness and as usual have found it very interesting. Among the familiar but never boring photographs of attractive young khaki-clad girls there is always the unexpected and enlightening anecdote of Service life. I should mention here that I am just one of your male readers, it is my wife Betty who is ex-ATS, known in the Service as Jeannie Holmwood of 594(M) HAA Bty. My respect and admiration for the ATS goes back to the early days of the war when as a Sassenach I was armourer attached to the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders in Stirling Castle; however that's another story.

What prompted me to write this letter was the article about Bessie Goodman, who, with others, lost her life while flying in a Lancaster en route to Italy. This is the first time I have seen reference to this mode of trooping since the time when I was one of the thousands that travelled by it. Also I now find out that it was code-named Operation 'Dodge'. The airfields of Bessie's departure and her unreached destination were the same as mine but in reverse order. I was returning home on 'Python', (the operation for getting the troops home as fast and as fairly as possible). I had been four years in the Near and Middle East and was waiting with more than a thousand other homewardbound hopefuls in Lammie transit camp near Naples. Troopships were at the premium and flying home by the then redundant bomber aircraft was an option. I had previously flown from Greece to Italy in a Halifax, so I did not hesitate to put my name forward when the opportunity arose. My flight was only two months before Bessie's, so I am sure that her experience would have been similar to mine, no cabin comforts, nor plastic lunches en route.

Our departure was about dawn and as the lorries loaded with troops arrived at Pomigliano airfield, each was directed to one of the many planes waiting there. There were about twenty soldiers to each plane with a senior rank or WO in charge. After briefing by the pilot we climbed aboard. There were no seats, just round numbered circles painted on the wooden floor along the length of the dim interior of the fuselage. I was fortunate to be the one in charge of our plane-load and had the prime position and benefit of the intercom of the redundant bomb-aimer in the perspex nose of the plane just behind the crew. I knew none of my fellow passengers, we were just names lumped together to fill the plane.

It was quite an experience to be in the cabin of the legendary Lancaster ready to take off. I cannot recall many details now but I do remember the pilot running his engines up and pointing out to me how easy it was to see that the engines of each pair were synchronised. Looking out to the wings, the propellers could be seen to be in phase or not. After the usual delays we took off in our turn and once airborne I was able to get a wonderful view of the countryside and the many other planes in the air all around us. I was told that there were about eighty as it was the first good day for flying after some unsuitable weather. In our briefing, the pilot had pointed out that as we were not issued with parachutes neither were the crew. He told us to stay where we were and only move one at a time if it was necessary to visit the Elsan in the tail. He also gave us a

few details of our route. The journey would take about six hours and we would be flying at about 6000 feet except when it was necessary to cross the Maritime Alps. The weather was fine and sunny with few clouds. This did not have much interest to the passengers though, as without windows there was little chance of seeing anything. However, once on our journey up the west side of Italy, the pilot brought all those who wished to stretch their legs and see the sights, up to the front, one at a time. Flying over Rome it was easy to pick out the Vatican and St Peter's and later, the Alps.

At last we left France and approached the English coast. It was a beautiful sight. In bright sunshine the brilliant greens of the fields and woods of Dorset were a picture and enough to bring a lump to any homecomer's throat. Not long after, we landed at Glatton near Peterborough and after one night's stay were quickly on our way home.

For us it was a happy journey. For Bessie and her loved ones a tragic one. How especially sad it was for the crew and their families. The crew were probably veterans of many dangerous missions yet had to lose their lives along with their passengers on a routine flight after the war was over.

During her time with AA, Betty moved with her battery to many different sites, mostly in Yorkshire, and her memories of them are prominently flavoured with accounts of their arrival at new sites in some desolate field either in the dark, or in damp mist or rain, facilities only for males, latrines at the far side of a muddy field, a bath in a bucket of water heated on the hut stove and then, as her duty as one of the gun laying team required, having to go out in all weather to scrub the aerals. Little wonder then that once back in civvy street she said that she was never going back to Yorkshire. Ah! the cruel twists of fate. We met soon after I came home and were married in August 1946. I was still serving and my next posting and the place we set up our first home was York. However this was a very different experience and we have been back many times since, most recently to this year's ATS gunners' reunion. Sadly though, there were no 594 Bty girls there.

PS. It is coincidental that on the day I finished this letter I attended a local Battle of Britain wreath laying ceremony and I was able to remember Bessie, her companions and the crew at an RAF ceremony.

55TH COMMEMORATION OF THE LIBERATION OF THE CITY OF ANTWERP

by Mrs Lucy Bowyer

3 Berberis Road, Leegomery, Telford, TF1 4XF

I am writing to tell you of the recent visit to Antwerp during the weekend 4th/5th September by ex-ATS involved in the Ack Ack defence of that city during WWII. The invitation came from the Royal British Legion Branch there through the good offices of the Mayor. The group consisted of the following ex-ATS ladies from all over the UK: Mabel Bolton, Mona Heeley, Hilda Taylor, Helen Wilson, Rosa Riley, Margaret Musket, Nell Mose, Ida Lees and myself Lucy Bowyer. Included in the party were nurses of the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service who tended the wounded during the Normandy conflict. One of whom,

Brenda Fuller, writing under the name of McBride has written two books entitled 'Quiet Heroines' and 'A Nurse's War'. I must not forget the sailors of the Algerines Association in the group who kept the party lively. They take the name of their Association from the class of mine sweeper they served on and which is no longer in existence.

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Two services wreaths were laid on behalf of the WRAC Association by Mrs Nell Mose of Eastbourne (ex-484 HAA Battery) and Mrs Lucy Bowyer (ex 487 HAA Battery). The whole group were well cared for by Major (Retired) Diana Wilson, Regimental Secretary of the QARANC, who proved adept at keeping discipline with a kid glove over a very motley but friendly crew.

It was a very emotional time and it is hard to express our thanks to our Belgian hosts for all they did and the kindness shown towards us. They suffered much during the war and their gratitude to the liberation forces has to be experienced to be understood. I am sure I express the thoughts of us all when I send our sincere thanks to the citizens of Antwerp for their unbelievable hospitality.



A happy group of ATS and QAIMNS personnel attending the commemoration of the 55th Anniversary of the Liberation of Antwerp

OPERATION AGRICOLA 1999

I am currently serving with 2 Battalion REME as a Control Equipment Technician. My job is to repair electronic equipment which controls the firing of Challenger tanks. I thought you might be interested to hear what it is like serving here in Kosovo as part of the NATO Peace-Keeping Force.

I deployed on Operation Agricola in March after about a month on standby. The first part of the deployment was to take our vehicles from our camp in Fallingbommel, Germany, to Emden on the German-Dutch border for loading onto a boat for the sea passage to Thessalonika in Greece. It took about 24 hours to load the boat with our unit's vehicles and those from other units also deploying. After the vehicles were loaded we returned to Fallingbommel for some last minute training and a couple of days leave.

Ten days later we left Fallingbommel and flew to Thessalonika to re-join the vehicles which had arrived the previous day. As it was two days before the road move up into Macedonia, we took full advantage of being in a holiday resort and sampled the waterfront cafes and bars! We left

Thessalonika at 4 o'clock in the morning for the 4 hour drive in convoy up to Macedonia.

When we arrived at our location in the town of Kavadarci, the first thing that hit us was the smell. We were located next to a wine making factory. All around the site were the rotting grape skins from the previous season's wine making. We soon made ourselves at home and set up for work. I work in a self contained mobile workshop which is mounted on the back of a truck. The workshop is powered from a generator which is towed behind the truck. We are quite lucky as the workshop has normal power sockets so we can run kettles, TVs, etc. Some people even have their computers set up in them. It also has heating and air-conditioning to keep the test equipment (and us!) at a constant temperature. This was put to full use within the first week we were there as when we arrived the temperature was well above 20°C, but three days later we woke up to three inches of snow!

Work came in at a steady rate over the first two weeks as the tanks went on the Macedonian ranges for some practice firing. The start of the NATO bombing campaign didn't affect us until Easter weekend, when our unit was required to provide personnel to erect tents at the refugee camps, which were springing up along the Macedonia-Kosovo border to house the thousands of Kosovar Albanians fleeing ethnic cleansing by the Serbs.

We were taken up to the Stankovec refugee camp at Brazda, just north of Skopje, about 5 miles from the border. Our first task was to erect tents for the waiting refugees. To begin with, the refugees stood dejectedly watching us as we put the tents up, but they soon began to help us. We even got the children involved, tying guy ropes onto the tents. With the help of a refugee who spoke English we started allocating tents to families. These were 8 man tents but families of up to 15 were crowding into them as we had fewer tents than there were refugees. By night-fall we were still erecting tents but the supply was running out so we had to start giving them to children with just a couple of adults to take care of them.

When the supply ran out, we went to our rest area for a quick break, then began giving out blankets and plastic sheeting to the waiting refugees who hadn't got tents. When we ran out of supplies, another aid truck came bringing more blankets and plastic sheeting. The refugees surged forward, all trying to get their share. We had to form a human barrier to hold them back as others went to the refugees who were too old or young to come for their blankets. It was heart wrenching to see these people who, only a few weeks before, had been living in apartment blocks in town centres, were now reduced to asking us for a blanket and a bit of plastic sheeting and rummaging through the packaging from these items for something to burn to keep warm. It really made you wonder how you would cope in such a situation.

Later in the night we were able to distribute some food and water. The refugees queued up to get their share, then shuffled off into the darkness to their tents or pile of blankets. Eventually the queue of refugees disappeared and we were able to get a couple of hours sleep. The next morning we woke at 6 o'clock and the full enormity of the situation was revealed. As far as we could see there were tents and in the areas between them, humps of blankets which were people sleeping. A queue of refugees had already formed, patiently waiting for whatever we could give them. We began handing out the food and water we had

remaining from the previous night, but this soon ran out. The queue continued to grow even though we had nothing more to give them. After helping refugees move into more tents which had been erected during the night, we moved to another part of the camp to put up yet more. After 24 hours at the camp, the group of soldiers turned up to relieve us and we eventually left to go back to our unit. We got back to Kavadarci totally exhausted, both physically and mentally. Everyone agreed that it was one of the most worthwhile things we had ever done.

As the Peace Talks progressed, the remaining half of our unit arrived in Macadonia. The site at Kavadarci was not big enough so we moved to a field beside an engineering factory just outside the town of Stip. Like many of the units in Macadonia we were accommodated in the local hotel. Our unit took over the whole building, putting our chefs in the kitchen and putting a guard in the foyer. Although the rooms had en suite facilities it was rather similar to Fawltly Towers. On many occasions we returned from work to find there was no water in the hotel. Quite a problem when there were no alternative toilet facilities.

During the time at Stip when we had a lull in technical work I helped the MT section out with delivering engines ('Packs') to the units further towards the front line. This was a nice break from my normal job as it also gave me chance to see a bit more of the country. It was often quite dangerous as the local children in Skopje decided that throwing stones at passing NATO vehicles was a good game. I was quite lucky, as I only ever got hit on the side of the cab. Some who weren't so lucky had their windscreens smashed.

We all watched the TV with great interest on the day NATO troops crossed the border. That evening I was asked to do a Pack run up to some of our unit who were about 6 miles from the Kosovo border. As we approached Skopje we joined on the end of an Italian convoy heading for the border. When we passed through the town centre, the locals were on the street shouting, cheering and waving as we passed. It made such a change from having stones thrown at you. I actually felt quite guilty waving back to them as I wasn't going across the border but stopping short of it to drop Packs off. When I got back I was told to turn round and take some more Packs up to our unit. I had to have them there by 6 o'clock in the morning as they were going across the border at half past six. After pushing the truck to the limit, I got there with 10 minutes to spare, then watched proudly as they moved out of the location to head for the border. When I eventually got back to Stip I fell into bed after an exhausting 30 hours without sleep.

A week after NATO entered Kosovo I had my first trip into that country. The border crossing was very busy with refugees returning to Kosovo and with queues of taxis and mini-buses waiting to return into Macadonia after dropping off returning refugees. The US Army was making a vague attempt at controlling the chaos, but the locals seemed to think they knew best so long delays at the border were inevitable. In the tunnels just over the border, there was evidence of the Serb Army positions. Sandbag defences were pushed to one side in the tunnels and at either end were mine boxes stacked several high. Mine fields also lined the road so care had to be taken at all times to ensure the wheels of the truck stayed well clear of the verges. After seeing the destruction in Bosnia, I was surprised how little damage was visible. There were several burnt out houses and a damaged barracks, but apart from that the countryside looked very undisturbed with farmers beginning to harvest the crops which had ripened in their absence. Everyone we passed stopped what they were doing and waved which made us realise that what we were doing

really was worthwhile.

Once the forward units had secured Pristina and the surrounding area our unit began planning the move into Kosovo. Several sites were looked at before a factory making equipment for the local power stations was finally decided upon as the most suitable. The site is about 5 miles north of Pristina close to an open cast coal mine which provides fuel for the two nearby power stations. Our workshops are parked on a patch of grass at one side of the factory. Some of the unit are using part of the main building for workshops and stores. There is quite a well equipped kitchen and dining area, but the other facilities are rather limited. There are several 'hole in the ground' toilets and now there are also two 'luxury' portaloos. Showering facilities don't exist yet so a great deal of improvisation is going on. Ponchos become shower curtains, hosepipes become showerheads and water is heated by putting black jerry cans full of water in the sun all day (cold showers on cloudy days!).

My accommodation is a 9' x 9' tent shared with a driver. We have made it as homely as possible with calendars, photos, and, of course a cuddly toy each. Mosquito nets are essential as well to avoid being eaten alive by the local insects. It gets very hot during the day, well above 30°C, but the evenings feel quite cool by comparison, even though the temperature only drops to 15°C. With the temperatures as warm as they are we have to do our PT in the early morning or in the evening. The volleyball court which we have built is in constant use from finishing work in the evening until it gets too dark to play.

One of the biggest problems locally is that it was a mainly Serb area prior to the conflict. Now the returning Kosovar Albanians are punishing the Serbs for what they have suffered. Every night the air is full of smoke as Serbs are driven from their homes and the houses burnt. This leads to a heavy smog in the mornings which isn't helped by the pollution from the coal mine and power station which have now started production. The unit also helps with repair work at a local clinic and school. Unfortunately I have not yet had the opportunity to visit the project.

We are now into the last two months of our deployment so our thoughts are turning to returning home and having leave. Most of my leave will be spent moving from Fallingbowl to Tidworth as I am posted shortly after I get home. No doubt it will be only a short time until I deploy back to the region with my new unit. Hopefully, I will be able to witness the region returning to normal next time I am in this part of the world.

CENTENARY CELEBRATION IN HUDDERSFIELD

By Mrs Betty France

11 Warwick Avenue, Golcar, Huddersfield, HD7 4BX



From left to right: Mrs France, Miss Shaw, Mrs Lewis

The Territorial Army Drill Hall in St Paul's Street, Huddersfield was 100 years old on 15th May 1999. Local people had dug deep into their pockets to raise the money for this permanent base for the 5th Duke of Wellington's Regiment which has the freedom of the Borough. To fulfil this honour, soldiers from the Regiment marched through the streets of the town with Band playing, flags flying and bayonets fixed.

In the evening the Drill Hall was open to anyone who, at any time during the previous 100 years, had been connected with it. The Band marched and played while a large gathering of former soldiers and their families enjoyed a free drink and buffet supper as they remembered the good and bad times of the past. This huge memorial is a testament to their companions who had given their lives for their country.

Among the guests were three former members of the ATS company which was formed at the Drill Hall in 1939 - 3rd West Riding Company ATS commanded by Mrs B Schofield was attached to 43rd Searchlight (5th Duke of Wellington's Regiment) Royal Engineers TA.

Miss Christina Shaw who will be 90 years old in February 2000 was the Regimental Telephonist.

Mrs Betty France (Sgt Parkinson) was the Orderly Room Clerk later posted to HQ 31 AA Brigade. She enlisted at the Drill Hall in May 1939 exactly 60 years to the day.

Mrs Vera Lewis (Copeland) helped in the QM Stores, later serving in several Brigade and Divisional Headquarters in the south.

They had many memories of the Drill Hall in wartime, makeshift sleeping and cooking arrangements and being accepted as useful members of the Regiment. They were disappointed that more ex-ATS had not joined them as they were treated as VIPs and invited to join the 5th Duke's Old Comrades Association, an honour readily accepted even if it has taken 60 years!

AWARD OF THE MBE

Congratulations to Mrs Auriel James of Bath Branch who has received the MBE in the Honours List.

Mrs James's award was for setting up the charity called 'Search'. This charity is one of the very few set up specifically to ensure that elderly people in genuine financial need receive help that is available to them from charitable sources.

If you would like more information write to: The Administrator, Charity Search, 25 Portview Road, Avonmouth, Bristol, BS11 9LD, Tel Bristol (0117) 9824060 (10am - 4pm).

ONE WAY OF GETTING PROMOTION

By J Peggie Dudgeon (Nee Ricardi), ATS W/246994
1943-1946

PO Box 2428, Murrels Inlet, South Carolina 29576-2428

I have enjoyed reading about others' adventures in the ATS, so felt a bit guilty that I had not contributed. I thought about the many occasions which were a bit funny or very serious, and decided to write about one.

Friend, Marion Rose and I were a bit envious of two friends who had completed the Physical Training Instructor Course. They returned to Winchester sporting a LCpl stripe on their sleeves, which meant they would have an increase in their pay.

We discussed the possibility of also trying to become PE Instructors, and without a second thought about it being November and much cooler weather, we applied for training.

Marion and I were sent to a training camp in the Midlands, and were soon in shorts and short-sleeved shirts on the barrack square, performing daily exercises from early morning through to tea time.

Having come from a job that mainly required the use of a pencil and paper, we found this routine exercising was causing aches here and there we never noticed before.

One weekend, we decided to take a trip into the nearest town and ventured off on a bus to have a change of scene. I remember it was not easy stepping up into the bus after all our PT.

Neither was it any easier getting off. We decided a walk-about, sightseeing, would be helpful.

We found we even had difficulty stepping off the curb down to the street due to the aching muscles in our legs. While attempting this feat in an awkward manner, a dear lady of some years, spry as could be, spoke to us. "Oh, my dears, have you both been injured from some bombing incident?" she asked.

One look at us, attempting to make our legs return to the pavement without undue groans, and to reply to this kind woman, showed we must have been under great stress. However, we maintained straight faces while nodding our heads, thanking her for her concern, and trying to maintain an orderly appearance as we watched her pass out of sight.

We actually did complete the course, found that exercise every day took the aches away, and we felt better for it. Also, we did earn our LCpl stripes.

It was the beginning of one of the fun-sides of my career, for I really enjoyed it.

LIFE IN THE WRAC IN THE 1950s

By J James, (ex W/387478 Randle J, WRAC)
21 Brands Farm Way, Randlay, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 2JF

The following is a resume/summary of my life in the WRAC. I hope it will reach out to other WRAC members and encourage them to write something too.

I love the 'LIONESS' but have noticed that nearly all the letters are from ex-ATS ladies, who I know all have a grand repartee with each other, as most of them served through a very grave part of life for them, and I admire them greatly. Unfortunately, I was only seven when they were keeping me safe in my bed. It was not until years later that I was able to serve in any way, and I really did enjoy the friendship and togetherness that existed even then. I missed it very much when I took my discharge to help at home.

My service in the WRAC started in April 1954 - my training was at the Depot at Guildford. After the first shock of having

people shouting at me, I settled down and did begin to enjoy myself. I loved the drill, the PT and keeping my own kit neat and tidy. I entered the Service as a Clerk/Typist, and my clerical training was done at Salisbury. It was very different from anything I had ever done before, except the typing. How hard my PDF Compressor Free Version but I still use only two fingers on each hand! I passed the course and when asked where I would like to be posted, I opted for overseas, keeping my fingers crossed. I got my wish and went to Kingston-upon-Thames transit camp, where I received new summer kit and some nasty injections. After a stay of only a few weeks I, along with many others, was on the way to a port down south to embark on a ship for EGYPT. On waking the next morning I could not get out of the cabin quick enough and spent the rest of the day in a deck chair out in the fresh air. I had nothing to eat or drink - until a lovely steward (who said he was assigned to my table in the dining room, and had heard why I was absent from meals), brought me a glass of lovely cold water and a dry cob. He said that I must try to eat the cob and drink the water or I would be very ill. I obeyed him and the rest of the journey was like a holiday voyage.

We were told, about 14 days later, that we had arrived at Port Said. We watched the boys trying to catch coins thrown from the deck of the ship, although we could not see anything that looked like land! As we got closer we began to see something emerging from the heat haze, we had indeed arrived. About seven of us were taken to Ladysmith Camp, Fayid, and allocated our rooms and beds in oblong shaped blocks of concrete and brick, which were very hot. I thought I would never be able to sleep in that heat, and mentioned it to one of the women already occupying the room. She replied, "Wait until the winter comes, then you will really feel cold". I did not believe her of course, but by the time the end of September arrived, I was cold. Then I was posted to a camp at Moascar which, compared with Ladysmith, was very small and next to a railway line. The trains were overflowing with people every time they came past the camp - clinging to the sides, sitting or lying on the roof, an amazing sight. The accommodation there was in nissen huts covered with bamboo. It was here that I experienced my first locust swarm which was frightening to say the least as they fell down in between the hut and the bamboo sheeting; we were shut inside with windows and doors tightly closed!!

When trouble blew up again out there, I was posted back to Catterick - from the extreme heat of Egypt to the coldest place in the world! I remember I sat in front of the fire on my dis-embarkation leave at home until the front of my legs were mottled! I did not like it there and applied for a posting nearer to my home. Luckily I landed at Donnington in Shropshire and ended my service there as a Corporal. I loved most of my service and did not want to become a civilian. However my family needed a wage from me, so I left after turning down a posting to Algiers as a Sergeant.

I hope that this brings back memories to some of the people who were out there whilst I was. I have read lots of items written by ATS members, but seen only one mention, I think, of WRAC service. I love the "together-ness" that the ATS members seem to have with each other and think that it will be a shame if the same thing is lost for the ex-WRAC members, because it was there whilst I was serving. I am a member of the Shropshire WRAC Association Branch whose members are mainly ex-ATS, and that feeling is still there amongst them, as I am sure it is in all the other branches throughout the country. Come on WRAC members, put pen to paper, and share your time with us.

A CLERKS LIFE IN THE ATS

By Mrs Ursula Stevenson (nee Worts, W/32526)
28 Church Street, Baldock, Herts, SG7 5AE



*Sgt Worts on the Sergeants' course at the
ATS NCOs School, Litchfield in April 1942*

Immediately war was declared I volunteered for the ATS. I sat an examination and had a medical, both at Scotland Yard, and then was called up in February 1940.

First I went to Saltdean, near Brighton, for my three weeks' training and from there I was posted to HQ Eastern Command at Cavalry Barracks, Hounslow. I was a clerk and worked in an office above the stables.

While I was there a bomb fell and buried itself in the barrack square but did not explode. When it was eventually exhumed it was found to be full of rubble and painted on the outside was "Good Luck England". I understand that it was placed on display in the window of a large London store on one occasion.

Also whilst there I had tonsillitis and was sent to sick bay where the mattress was on the floor under the bed.

Later Eastern Command was split and I was posted to Reigate, then Dunstable and then Norton Camp near Taunton. My last posting was to 354 S/L Regiment at Kintbury, near Newbury, where my office was a servant's quarter in the home of Lord Burnham. Whilst serving at Cavalry Barracks I became friendly with Cpl Vi Baxter who became Mrs Vi Pascoe. Unfortunately we lost touch.

So many times I recall events and each time I receive my Lioness I eagerly look to see if there is anybody I remember. I wonder does anybody remember me?

WOMENS' ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION, DACORUM BRANCH

By Mrs V Thompson (Secretary)
54 Leys Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP3 9LE

Our Chairman, Mrs Freddie Weatherley, has returned from visiting her family in America. Whilst there, she took some photographs of the Memorial to their servicewomen, and wondered whether it would be of interest to our members.





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80 YEARS YOUNG

Violet Middleton, 36 Cottage Grove, Bockings Elm,
Clacton on Sea, CO16 8DJ

These ex ATS Ladies get everywhere! This is one of our members, Violet Middleton, having rather late flying lessons to celebrate her 80th Birthday. Last year it was a Helicopter Flight; now she is contemplating either a Hot Air Balloon ride or maybe a submarine – I wonder what was in her injections that we all missed.

Violet, single name Martin, Army No W/30644, joined up on 1 February 1940. Her Basic Training was at the Ocean Hotel, Brighton. She started out as a Cook, then on 30 July 1942 went to Kimel Park to train as a Searchlight Operator – much more up her street I would say. She joined the Colchester Branch in 1995.

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

The photograph published here is of Lady Val Kemball presenting a Certificate of Appreciation to Mrs Brenda Manning in recognition of all the work she had undertaken in keeping our Raffle Stall in operation for 11 years, only having to stop because of failing hearing.

Brenda, single name Piles, Army No W/374460, was a Corporal Cook. She had many postings but her proudest time was being asked, or rather chosen, to cook for the Colonial Officers at Kingsford Park on the occasion of the

Queen's Coronation. She served from 13 Feb 1952 to 12 Feb 1955.



*Mrs Brenda Manning receives her certificate
from Lady Kemball*

MEETING UP AFTER HALF A CENTURY

An article in a national magazine led an elderly Dovercourt woman to a reunion with wartime colleagues after more than 50 years.

Miss Dorothy Whitmarsh was called up to the Civil Nursing Reserve at the start of the war but towards the end of 1940 she joined the newly-formed ATS and although she wanted to go into the medical service, she found herself with 455 (M) Hvy AA Battery.

She was posted all over the country – the Midlands, London, Wales and Scotland, and later doodlebug alley on Romney marshes in Kent where her unit was responsible for intercepting 40 per cent of missiles directed at London.

When a plea came for volunteers to train as State Enrolled Nurses, the then Sgt Whitmarsh applied, but she was turned down, so she handed in her stripes. Eventually however, she was transferred to medical duties and to her delight she was posted back to her old battery.

She then saw service in Belgium, Holland and Germany, sustaining an injury which required years of hospital treatment and left her a 100 per cent war disabled pensioner.

As a member of the Not Forgotten Association, Miss Whitmarsh has attended 18 Buckingham Palace garden parties, meeting several members of the Royal family.

The 1981 event was held soon after the announcement of Prince Charles's engagement to the then Lady Diana Spencer and Miss Whitmarsh has fond memories of speaking to the couple.

Even at these times she had never met any of her former colleagues since being demobbed in 1945, but then early last year she saw details in Yours magazine about a reunion for members of her old battery.

It was held at Leigh-on-Sea with ex-ATS members travelling the length and breadth of the country to attend, and revive memories of their years together.

"We had some great times. They were wonderful years, but no-one will ever forget the horrors," Miss Whitmarsh told a local reporter who interviewed her.

BERLIN RE-VISITED

By Mrs Dot Nixon, (nee Cpl Dot Vernon),
6 Weldon Drive, Ormskirk, Lancs



The 4 ex-ATS girls in this photograph lived in Berlin between 1946 and 1949 during which time the Berlin Air-Lift took place. They are Sgt Kath Fielding (now Mrs Paul), Cpl Elsie Wilkinson (now Mrs Hardy), Cpl Jean Hart (now Mrs Eastham) and Cpl Dot Vernon (now Mrs Nixon). Kath Fielding and Jean Hart were actually stationed in Berlin during the 11 months of the Air-Lift, and Kath was awarded the BEM for her services. They both belong to the Berlin Airlift Association which celebrated its 50th anniversary in Berlin 9-13 May 1999. Each member was allowed to take one guest and so Elsie and Dot went as guests.

This was a really wonderful 5 day visit in which Berlin said "thank you" to the people who manned the Airlift in 1948/9.

The visit included a coach tour round Berlin where we saw the great difference between the East and West Sectors – in the West the rebuilding is in the old style but in the East, which was under Communist rule for so long, a large number of buildings are still derelict and a massive rebuilding programme is in progress. We saw the remains of "The Wall" and also walked by the Brandenburg Gate where the photo was taken.

We also had a 3 hour boat trip with lunch on the Harvel Lake, a concert by a Berlin Chamber Orchestra and a magnificent display in the Olympic Stadium by the RAF Para-Gliding Team followed by the bands of the RAF,

American Army and Germany Army. The Grand Finale was a beautiful firework display.

When we arrived in Berlin on the Sunday we were free to do as we pleased so we 4 ex-ATS took ourselves off on the U-Bahn and S-Bahn to find our old accommodation in Charlottenburg and re-live the time we spent there over 50 years ago.

The years rolled back and for a short time we were those young ATS girls who lived and worked in war ravaged Berlin.

It was a wonderful experience and a great privilege to go back and see Berlin as it is today.

VISIT TO DIKSUIDE – BELGIUM

By Mrs N H Garnham, 32 Keswick Gardens, Ruislip,
Middlesex, MA4 7XN

A Party from the Hertfordshire No.1 Branch of the British Korean Veterans Association and Friends, went to Diksmuide in Belgium on 28 May 1999, to attend the Belgium Korean Day Commemoration Memorial Service. They were joined by other groups as guests of the Belgium Korean Veterans for this ceremony on 29 May. I was lucky enough to be one of these guests.

During the ceremony we were honoured to have the Diksmuide Brass Band leading us. The standards were carried by the various representatives and a very memorable service was conducted at the Korean Memorial. The local population lined the route as we marched back through the town. They were very enthusiastic and cheered us on our way.

The salute was taken at the Town Hall by the Korean representative, Burgomaster and local dignitaries who had attended the Ceremony. This was followed by a civic reception inside.

Sunday saw us out again. We went to Gent with its historic buildings and beautiful cathedral, not forgetting the lovely hand made lace. Our journey back took us to Tyne Cot Cemetery at Passendale. With so much dignity and serenity, words could not express our feelings.

The evening of Sunday 30 May, our party attended the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres. Five buglers from the local fire station took part and a large gathering of visitors and local people – all very impressive.

It was with dignity and pride that the march and standards were paraded in a very moving ceremony to commemorate all those brave men and women who lost their lives in the two World Wars, but have no known grave.

Among the many wreaths was one jointly laid by Mrs Ethel Shaw and myself, Mrs Nina Garnham, on behalf of the Greater London Branch, WRAC Association.

The return march after the ceremony was led by Mrs Doreen Dennis and Mrs Mavis Littleton, two ladies from Kent WRAC Association who were with the Kent BUFFS on this parade.

My visit to Ypres holds special memories for me as I had been born and lived there for many years. My father had

worked for the War Graves Commission. Although quite young, I remember being at the unveiling and dedication of the Menin Gate with my parents.

It was very nostalgic to be participating in this ceremony after all these years.

My thanks to the Hertfordshire No.1 Branch of the British Korean Veterans Association for allowing me to be their guest on this special occasion.



HAPPY DAYS

By Mrs G E Hansford (W/181911 WO2 G Shreeve)
3 Whinmoor Street, Katoomba, NSW 2780, Australia

I was delighted to see "Memories of the WRAC" story on page 87 of the No 2 issue of the Lioness written by Barbara Parks (formerly Barbara Michaels). I too was in Edinburgh in 1950, as Chief Clerk to ADWRAC in the Castle. Then in 1951 I was posted to FARELF, travelling by sea in "Empire Windrush". I first worked for a few weeks at Fort Canning, then to the job of Chief Clerk in AG(PS) in FARELF. I really enjoyed being there with 26 clerks of various races as well as British other ranks. I found it interesting hearing about their lives and families, I had one clerk who had two wives!!

Several of us girls went on leave together to the Sandcroft Leave Centre in Penang, Sgt Adelaide White, L/Cpl Baker and myself among others. We had a wonderful leave looked after by the WVS. I remember Barbara Michaels quite well, although I can't remember which Branch she was in. I have quite a few photographs in my FARELF albums showing Barbara in the Waterfall Gardens, at the Ayer Itam Temple and the Cable Railway up to the top of Penang Hill. If I hear from her I will get some copies printed and send them off by Air Mail.

RECORD OFFICE GIRLS

By Mrs Joan Halliwell (nee Moon W/222554)
26 Foxdale Court, Appleton, Cheshire, WA4 5BS

I rarely, if ever, see mention of ATS Record Office clerks so may I mention a little about 'us'?

Having trained at Northampton, many of us were sent down to the RASC Record Office at the back of Hastings, this was housed in a former stone built Monastery. It was believed to be a 'marker' for the enemy, standing as it did, high on a hill overlooking the town. Hastings certainly had its share of bombing raids and later the 'doodle-bugs'.

My work was concerned with communications regarding personnel in the Middle East. There were around five

hundred ATS girls working alongside older civilians. We ATS were billeted in large houses nearby (B Coy and D Coy). In spite of much enemy activity in the area we were unscathed and suffered no casualties, that is, until a tragedy occurred. A young Corporal, along with others, stepped out on to the roof of her billet to watch the gun flashes across the Channel. She fell to her death and what added to the anguish was the fact that she was an only child and also a local girl.

One bright event, later in the War, was the visit of Mary Churchill one Saturday evening to our Dance. Her Ack Ack Battery were stationed on the Hastings Clifftop temporarily. I met my late husband, who was stationed at the nearby Camp and we were married at the little old Church close by, a very happy occasion with mainly khaki-clad guests! I'm sure none of us could ever forget our Service days – a time like no other! Speaking for myself, having previously lived through the Battle of Britain on the Sussex Coast, the experience left me with a lifelong admiration for the RAF.

ACHIEVEMENT OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION!

By Enid M Holmes, 40 Shepherds Hill, Harold Wood,
Romford, Essex, RM3 0ND

In July 1999 two members of Ilford Branch celebrated their grand-daughters being presented with a Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award at a Royal Garden Party.

Frances Dukeson is the grand-daughter of Phyllis Bearham a member of Ilford branch. Phyllis together with her own daughter Linda accompanied her grand-daughter Frances to this event.

Katy Mann, grand-daughter of Betty Nelson, was presented to Prince Edward on 20 July to receive her Award. Katy is the second member of her family to receive this award, following in her elder brother's footsteps.



*From left to right: Linda Dukeson, Frances Dukeson
and Phyllis Bearham*

FURTHER TO BESSIE GOODMAN'S STORY COPY OF LETTER SENT TO HER GREAT NIECE (MRS VICKERY FROM MRS BETTY CULLUM)

I have just received my copy of the Lioness and was very interested to read your article, and find out a little more of what happened on that fateful day in 1946. It is incredible to know that it happened over 50 years ago and the facts are only just coming out.

I too took off from Glatton Airport on the same day. Three planes took off to return to Naples and, as I have heard, one plane returned to France, because of bad weather. My plane reached Naples safely.

The plane carrying your Bessie was lost. Everything was very hush and details were never published until recently.

Bessie looks very familiar to me although I didn't really know her. However, I was Company Sgt Major of 6 OZ Coy stationed in Caseitta I did know some of the ATS girls who perished on that fateful trip, many of them came out to N Africa when I did. I was one of the lucky ones. The fact that I didn't know until recently what happened, although it was known that the plane had ditched in the sea, has worried me over the years.

About a year ago an article appeared in the magazine and I did write a little article which was published. As a result the fiancé of Pte May Mann (who died) contacted me and he eventually married the wife of the pilot of the plane. As a result we have met on several occasions so I have sent a copy of your article to him.

It was all a long time ago but to me it could have happened yesterday. I only hope there is never another war as it leaves so much unhappiness.

Bessie would have been about the same age as me, now 79, and as you lived in Cambridge perhaps she did too. I was born and lived in Cambridge all my life until I married, and I wonder if I knew her before joining the ATS.

I don't know whether you have any knowledge as to the location in Italy – I was in Caseitta which was outside Naples and we worked in the Palace there. There were ATS units in Naples and Padua but I doubt if they were due for leave in October as 6 OZ Coy 3rd Mediterranean Group was the only unit in Italy 1944/45.

I do hope you have more information from ATS girls and I am sorry that you lost your dear aunt.

WOMEN IN THE ARMY TO-DAY

How are you getting on? What are you doing? Those of you who are still serving have little idea how many of us who are now civilians want to know the answers to these questions. Some of us are lucky enough to attend briefings, some receive regimental magazines from their former employing arms and some have married into the army, but many of us do not have access to information by any of these means. The accounts in the various media are not really satisfying for those of us who have had experience of what reporters can do and rarely give credit to the daily hard grind which is so often the soldiers' lot.

The following extract is from the Royal Signals' regimental magazine "The Wire". It is published every two months and in every issue prints, in addition to notes from every unit, items under the general heading "News from the Balkans". The enclosed picture shows Signaller Roberts on duty with the Italians in Kosovo; she is one of several woman soldiers to be pictured in this theatre quietly carrying out the duty assigned to them. It is only in service journals that the nature of the difficulties faced by our soldiers in the Balkans are brought home; it is the understated comments of those who are there that impress: "There was a lot of activity and much to see in the initial phase of the Kosovo element of the deployment much of which was not very nice. A number of dead or injured animals, lots of wrecked and burned out cars with personal belongings scattered everywhere. Some of the team were unlucky enough to discover corpses. The



Signaller Roberts on duty in Kosovo

smoke rising from burning houses could be seen all over". The reports from various units end with a comment from Signallers Amitage and Perry of 16 Signal Regiment, (with whom many WRAC readers will have served in BAOR): "Some members have been able to visit war crime sites and what they have reported back has made us realise exactly why we are in Kosovo and has made this long and arduous tour worthwhile". On a happier note members of 251 Signal Squadron, Aldershot, where many ex-WRAC have served and some are still serving, were pictured after taking part in this year's Fleet half-marathon, having raised £342 for the Queen Mary's Nursery Aldershot.



Those branches near enough to attend Corps Day at Worthy Down are of course able to see women of the AG Corps in action. The following photograph, taken in 1999 shows the woman leader of a combined AG Corps team over from BAOR to compete in an event which they won together with a member from the ASPT dressed as an "Edwardian".



The Winning Team

There must be many others serving in corps and regiments not mentioned here who have interesting stories to tell and pictures to be reproduced; please send them in.

THE MILITARY CEMETARY IN RHEINDAHLEN

L/Cpl Wilson, WRAC, died on 19th May, 1957 at BMH Hostert, BAOR. She knew that she was very seriously ill but had asked to stay in theatre so as to be near her friends. She was a popular girl and received many visitors up to the day of her death. The military funeral was held at the Garrison Church of St Boniface and was attended by as many of the WRAC Battalion as could be spared from duty. Burial took place in the pouring rain in the newly laid out military cemetery which by that time was awash with yellow mud. It was a sombre occasion – lines of WRAC soaking wet in No. 1 dress standing to attention, some with tears running down their faces as L/Cpl Wilson's colleagues from her user arm fired a final round of shots and the Last Post was played.

At the time the whole cemetery had a desolate air which, combined with a few bedraggled wreaths on newly heaped mounds, must haunt the memories of some who were there 42 years ago. It is for them that this photograph was taken, so lovely and peaceful now, it was hard to find and unrecognisable from that remembered scene from the past. The roses on either side of the headstone seem to be St Boniface, a lovely clear red. Pte Almeida was a particular friend of L/Cpl Wilson; if you are out there, please write in.

Alison Schofield



BERLIN RE-VISITED AFTER 50 YEARS

by Jean Eastham, nee Hart, Ex Cpl ATS/WRAC
11 North Houses Lane, Lytham-St-Annes, FY8 4NT

During the latter part of my service in the ATS/WRAC I was stationed with HQ British Troops Berlin 1948/49. We were cut off from the rest of the world and blockaded in Berlin by a reported 350,000 Russians from 24 June 1948-12 May 1949.

On 24 June 1948 the Berlin Airlift began and the RAF including the Commonwealth and the American Air Forces combined to fly in food, clothing, medical supplies, coal for us and 2½ million Germans trapped in our sectors. They also flew in generators when the Russians cut off the electricity supply. These gave us 2 hours use per day and then ran steam rollers to build new runways, desperately needed to enable more aircraft to land with supplies.

It was the biggest airlift operation attempted before or since and we were able to win the beginning of the 'COLD WAR' by peaceful means.

As a member of the British Berlin Airlift Association (mostly RAF), I was honoured among them and invited to return to Berlin as a guest of the German Gratitude Foundation run by the Berlin Senate. Kathleen Paul nee Fielding ATS was also invited and travelled from Canada where she had emigrated some years ago.

Unfortunately Junior Commander Chester, now Quinlan, who was our officer in charge at the time, was unable to attend. Two other ATS ladies who served in Berlin, but not during the airlift were our guests, Dot Nixon nee Vernon and Elsie Hardy nee Wilkinson. Defence Secretary George Robertson was among the VIP's who attended the 5 day reunion together with the Governing Mayor of Berlin Eberhard Diepgen. They addressed the gathering of British, Commonwealth, American, French and German at the Airlift Memorial Templehof, Berlin at a wreath laying ceremony which was very moving. Each country had bands playing.

It was said "Courage and determination, staying power and the spirit of resistance and finally the readiness to accept temporary material disadvantages in the cause of freedom and democracy paid off".

The 5 day visit included a 3 hour boat trip on Berlin's Lake Havel (which brought back memories of when we used the Yacht Club), a concert and sightseeing of the restored buildings of the Reichstag, Rathaus, Brandenburg Gate and the airfields used for the 'lift' – Gatow and Templehof.

We also visited the Allied Museum to which I have donated some of my memorabilia, including Russian passes, movement orders, arm flashes and a photo giving out Xmas 1948 presents to the children in Berlin. The latter was used for publication in a book called 'Pioneers of the Airlift'.

At the museum I was delighted to meet Gail Halvorsen again, the American Pilot who became so famous, known as the 'Candy Bomber'. He dropped chewing gum and sweets (tied in handkerchiefs) to the German children as his plane approached the perimeter of Templehof airfield Berlin.

On our last night, 12 May 1999, the tattoo was staged at the Berlin Olympic Stadium. To open the proceedings in front of German, British, American and French spectators, we marched out first, round the arena behind the RAF band and the Union Jack flag, followed by America and France – approx 300 in all.

We were given a standing ovation, with cheering and flowers on our way round. Chills went up and down our spines and we were very proud indeed to represent the ATS/WRAC.

The Berliners have never forgotten and have been eternally grateful to us for staying with them and providing for them during those dark days. They have provided for and

supported wives and families of those who lost their lives on their behalf during that time ever since.

Is there anyone out there who was in Berlin during the Blockade who I have not already contacted, please get in touch with me on 01253 722081.

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Left to right:- Jean Eastham, Dorothy Nixon, Elsie Hardy and Kathleen Paul

WALL OF BADGES

The idea of a Colchester taxi driver, Mr Douglas Morgan, is coming to fruition with the lead being taken by the ATS.

He suggested that to mark the Millennium, badges of 16 regiments who have connections with Colchester should be displayed on a wall at a local landmark called Balmerne Hill. Each badge would cost £200.

The ladies of Colchester Branch immediately jumped into action and very quickly raised their £200, had their badge manufactured and it was the first to be mounted on the wall.

The badge was unveiled in the presence of Mr Bob Russell MP, badge coordinator Douglas Morgan, Maj (Retd) Elizabeth Tinker, and many ladies from the local Branch of the Association. Maj Tinker then read the following citation to all those assembled:

During the Peninsular Wars the Duke of Wellington rallied his troops with the call "Up and at 'em".

Well, we did!

In 1938 on September 9 the Auxiliary Territorial Service – the ATS – was officially born by Royal Warrant and on September 29 the BBC broadcast the foundation of the ATS in a special announcement after the 9 o'clock news.

Two days later Chamberlain flew to Munich to meet Hitler.

The Territorial Army didn't really know what to do with the women who joined up (all volunteers) with the peacetime reserve Army, but things got sorted out and by July 1939 the ATS consisted of 912 Officers and 16,547 volunteers. The then Princess Royal had joined up in October 1938, and of course her niece, Princess Elizabeth, joined in March 1945.

On 3rd September 1939 war with Germany was declared. The TA having been mobilised a week earlier 20,000 women faced life in the Army, first mainly as cooks, clerks, orderlies and drivers, but later as signals, mechanical

engineers, on Ack-Ack Sites and Searchlights, and anywhere they could replace the men to fight.

In Spring of 1940 the first members of the ATS arrived in France, and were the first ATS to come under attack when the Germans bombed their base at Dieppe.

During the evacuation of the British Army at Dunkirk between 27th of May and 4th June ATS telephonists were still in Paris and remained there until 14th June being among the last Allied troops to leave, actually driving out as the Germans marched in.

Throughout May and June the ATS in cookhouses, offices, communication centres and as drivers worked day and night catering for the returning troops and re-equipping the Army to replace the enormous quantities left behind on Dunkirk beaches.

In June 1940 there were 1,060 Officers and 30,443 ORs, and we received 2/3rds of the men's pay!

On March 5th 1942 the National Service Act was passed and women aged between 18-30 were liable to conscription and the ATS came under Military Law.

In September 1943 the ATS celebrated its 5th Birthday and parades took place in Great Britain, USA, Egypt, Palestine, Eritrea, Kenya and the West Indies. By this time the ATS numbered 214,420 women and were doing every job in the Army except in the front line and had been accepted as part of the Nation's defences.

The War ended in Europe on June 18th 1945 and demobilisation started, but the ATS carried on until it ceased to exist on January 31st 1949.

There were 405 ATS casualties (67 killed in action, 9 died of wounds, 16 posted missing and 313 wounded in action) during these war years.

Women had come from all walks of life to serve their Country, taking hard conditions and uncomfortable surroundings in their stride, and paving the way for the Women's Royal Army Corps to be formed on 1st February 1949 as a permanent Regular force in the Army.

We are proud to have served our Country in time of need, and I am proud and privileged to unveil our ATS badge today, to stand as a reminder to future generations of what we did to ensure their freedom.



Left to right:- Mr Bob Russell MP, Major (retired) Elizabeth Tinker, Mr Douglas Morgan

Another Life After The WRAC

W/432981 Jenni Luxton

I served in the WRAC from November 1967 until November 1971, being employed as a Clerk. I spent most of my service at Rheindahlen, West Germany where I met and married my husband, Vincent Pizzuto. We have two daughters, Krys and Paula.

In 1980 I decided to take up trampolining at an evening class at the local Sports Centre. In September 1982 I started to help with a class of young ladies with learning difficulties. I took my Coach qualification in May 1983 and then met up with Carol Jobson. We formed the Special Needs Committee as part of the British Trampoline Federation and, with support from others, we created a Proficiency Award Scheme and a coaching Module.

In 1984 I took a part time position as a Trampoline Coach at the Lexden Springs School for students with severe learning difficulties. Seven years later I became self-employed and now work almost full time, with clients ranging in age from 8 years to 76 years - and every day is a pleasure.

Over the years I have worked with a very wide range of disabilities, including a coma patient and many clients from Headway, the National Head Injuries Association.

A trampoline is a wonderful piece of equipment that can be used in so many beneficial ways. It can be used to improve balance, co-ordination and spatial awareness, developing strength and flexibility, increasing self esteem and of course it is GREAT FUN.

From the high jumping capable student to the non-ambulant student lying in the large bean bag for support, everyone can derive some benefit from the sessions.

The youngest person I have taken on the trampoline was 4 days old; the oldest was 84 years - so there are no age restrictions.

I travel around the country tutoring and examining the Coach Courses and always have great fun watching new coaches develop their skills, knowing that they will go back to their own centres or units to put smiles on the faces of their clients. I go to work each day looking forward to all my sessions. I have job satisfaction and then get paid for it!

Jenni Pizzuto, 49 Chapel Road, West Bergholt, Colchester, Essex CO6 3HZ. 01206 240060.

LIFE IN KIWI LAND

W/427514 Avril Jones joined the WRAC in 1965 and became a Medical Assistant. While serving in No 4 Ind Coy WRAC in Singapore from 1969-1971 and working at Tanglin Medical Centre, she met a New Zealander called Alan Keith. When No 4 Ind Coy disbanded in 1971 Avril married Alan and left the Corps. They moved to New Zealand and now have three grown up children. Since Alan's retirement from the Army they have lived on the Hibiscus Coast, North Island. Avril returned to paramedical work and qualified as a NZ Enrolled Nurse. Alan progressed from Enrolled Nurse to Registered Nurse and now has a BSc (Health Sciences)

in nursing. He is, at present, working for a year as a Theatre Nurse at Withington Hospital South Manchester UK to enable Avril to visit family, friends and hopefully rekindle some WRAC kinship. She will also be able to attend the 2000 Reunion at Cardiff.

Should any of her friends wish to contact her the address is: Mrs A Keith, 64 Winchester Drive, Heaton Norris, Stockport SK4 2NU.

IRENE STONE (BOYCOTT) ARMY SERVICE 1942-1946

I enjoyed my Army Service, in fact my children say I have never been demobbed! I learned to type on a teleprinter. We were taught to touch type in six weeks to the accompaniment of songs sung by Vera Lynn played on the gramophone. One I recall was "I don't want to set the world on fire, ... carriage return ... line feed space bar." The keys and our fingers were covered by a board so that we couldn't see them.

My memories include sharing a barrack room with thirty odd girls, living in a convent or a stately home, crawling under barbed wire for a swim on the beach, travelling all over the country and always, always having a lot of laughs - feeling "in it" and proud to belong to the Royal Corps of Signals.

After the war I worked for British Airways in London for five years. As we were mostly ex-service personnel the camaraderie was the same. London was a happy place if you were young and free. Good shows were everywhere - Oklahoma, Annie Get Your Gun, Bless the Bride, the Ivor Novello musicals - we had a wonderful time.

In 1964 I became a Legal Secretary - it was very absorbing and interesting. Typing Wills and other legal documents on parchment type paper on a manual typewriter - everything had to be accurate or you typed it again. No one had repetitive strain injury in those days!

In Cambridge I learned about computers and worked at a Computer Centre for a time. One day they closed down a huge old computer called Atlas. People came from everywhere to say Goodbye to Atlas. They bound the machine in black ribbon and sang Auld Lang Syne - it was very funny!

In 1976 I had an opportunity to work in New Zealand for six months, it was paradise. The lovely blue skies and little white clouds, the friendliness of the people who took me everywhere - I loved it all. I worked for lawyers in Wellington. It fascinated me that the offices were built on reclaimed land as if we were at the bottom of the sea.

Then I discovered Australia. I spent six months travelling around. Sydney was so exciting. Two years later I emigrated to Adelaide, a peaceful beautiful city where I worked for almost 12 years for barristers and I enjoyed it all.

I owe so much to my Army training - it has fortified and strengthened me all my life.

Mrs Irene Stone (nee Boycott), Flat 23/4 Rangoon Street, Oaklands Park, South Australia 5046.

Reunions

REUNION OF 455 AND 476 MIXED HAA BTY RA

On 30 June 1999 fourteen ex-AOK AOK ladies enjoyed a wonderful reunion at Leigh on Sea. They came from all corners of the UK, their ages ranged from 75 to 86 years.

My daughter provided a delicious buffet while we discussed our service days. All our memories came flooding back, the talk was not about the price of butter or knitting patterns but of Me 109, Ju 88, Dorniers and of course the flying bombs. We all agreed that those days were the most exciting days of our lives and inspite of the close living quarters sometimes 25 in a hut we never had rows and all mucked in to make life as comfortable as possible and made our own entertainment. It was a very special day.

Mrs Margaret Pike.



Members of 455 and 476 mixed HAA BTY RA celebrate their reunion

MIXED HAA REUNION YORK 1999

It was a brilliant weekend, about 400 people took part. The uniform was different though, white curly hair and glasses, with a smattering of walking sticks, and the odd wheelchair but the pride and camaraderie were the same.

A civilian band played all the afternoon, the bar was open and a delicious buffet meal was prepared.

On Sunday morning everyone gathered for tea and coffee awaiting the arrival of eight coaches to convey us to York Minster at 12.30. After the service we took part in a March Past. We then returned to Imphal Barracks for lunch followed by chat, music from the band, photographs, speeches and farewells till next time.

Mrs M Hampton.

ATS ANNUAL REUNION 1999, LONDON, ONTARIO, CANADA

Another happy and successful reunion was held in London, Ontario, Canada, on 10-12 September 1999. About 100 members and friends enjoyed the 3 day event. We had members from England, the USA and just about all the Provinces of Canada. Each lady was presented with a

Royal Doulton cup and saucer and the men with matching mugs. The craft tables were full of contributions from the ladies and just about all of it was sold. We had entertainment and dancing on Friday and Saturday evening then on Sunday we closed with a traditional English breakfast followed by our fond farewells until next year.

The 12th Reunion will be held in London Ontario Canada on 8-10 September 2000. For further information contact Wyn Raven, 595 Knights Hill Road, London, Ontario, Canada, N6J 3A3.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This was obviously a very successful reunion – endorsed by the following account sent in by Mrs Harriet Wilson.*

On 10-12 September 1999 my sister and I decided to drive to London, Ontario, Canada for the A.T.S. Reunion.

When we arrived we met with a few friends who had come great distances like ourselves. Friday noon most had arrived, there were over ninety A.T.S. plus their spouses or companions. While registration was going on the tables were set for our Bazaar. The ladies had made very nice crafts. I had made Angels again as they always go very quickly, someone had knitted Tele Tubbies.

Friday evening we all enjoyed a beautiful dinner.



Top table at the 1999 ATS Reunion, London, Ontario

Our entertainment was provided by our good friend Bob Finlay with his guitar.

Saturday we had a meeting then broke up for the afternoon. We met for dinner and cocktails at 6pm. The Chaplain and his wife from London's Royal Canadian Legion joined us together with one of the officers and his wife. Betty Anderson's sister was there. Enclosed is a snapshot of the head table. The entertainments started with the Classic Tappers (all Seniors) from London. They did an excellent job.

Next Sgt Jessie Seddor called us to fall in and we were put through a few drills before inspection by Col George-inaw. After the speech of thanks we were led on a march through the halls of the hotel before being each presented with a gold medal (chocolate). Sgt Jessie does a very good job!

At our meeting the minutes were read and passed. It was discussed where we would meet next year. Winnie Kirk who had graciously offered to host it at Victoria B.C. had passed away suddenly. Our condolences were sent to her family. Wyn Raven and Betty Anderson volunteered their services for next year and it will be held in London at the same place 8-10 September.

Sunday morning was our final get together for Breakfast at the hotel and we all expressed our thanks to Betty and Wyn for the wonderful job they had done putting everything together, despite both having health problems.

Harriet Wilson (nee Moreton W77526 459 Bty 134 Reg)
4206 E Wonder Lake Drive, Wonder Lake, Illinois, U.S.A.
60097-8332

WRAC BAND 50TH REUNION

On 22 May 1999 30 original members of the WRAC Band from 1949, attended a 50th Birthday Luncheon at "Blanes Court Hotel" in Guildford.

Most of the original "Forty-Niners" had travelled from all over the country to reminisce and meet friends they had not seen for many years. We all enjoyed ourselves and would like to thank Miss Joan Ellis for her hard work in organising this reunion.

Janet Cox.

SCOTLAND AREA AGM AND REUNION 1999

The citizens of Central Glasgow could have been forgiven on Saturday 16 October for wondering if there was some kind of female take-over bid when over 160 women of varying ages descended on the City Chambers! The ladies were members of the WRAC Association and they were gathering for the AGM of the Scottish branches, organised by the Glasgow Branch. The WRAC Association's aim is to provide friendship, camaraderie, and financial help where needed to former members of the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps, the ATS and the WRAC.

With branches throughout Scotland from Inverness to the Borders, the Scottish Area is geographically the largest in the United Kingdom, with the members ranging from the cities to remote rural locations which, of course, can often mean travel difficulties in attending meetings.

Any difficulties were at the back of everyone's mind on that Saturday, however, as acquaintances were renewed over a cup of coffee or tea in the City Chambers' Banqueting Hall before the business meeting. The volume increased by the minute - 160 plus ladies can make an awful lot of happy noise!

At the end of the morning session, the ladies were welcomed by Baillie Jean Macey. Lt Col (Retd) Janet Lawson MBE, the newly-elected Scottish Chairman, replied on behalf of the guests and presented her with a WRAC Association plaque and a pennant in the Glasgow tartan.

A splendid buffet lunch was enjoyed in the Satinwood Suite. Everyone then returned to the Banqueting Hall for entertainment by an accomplished pianist. The shield for the best floral arrangement, the subject of this year's

Inter-Branch Competition, was won by Susan Sinclair of the Glasgow Branch. Then there was time for a final cup of tea before the ladies headed for home.

This Civic Reception by Glasgow gave everyone a superb day and bodes well for the Millennium Scottish AGM, which is to be hosted by the Inverness Branch.

ATS Dinner Club

The Annual Luncheon of the A.T.S. Dinner Club was held on Saturday, 2nd October 1999 at the Cumberland Hotel Carvery, Marble Arch, London. 185 members attended.

Grace was said by the Vice Chairman, Joyce Edwards, and members sat down to a starter of Melon followed by a choice of Pork, Beef, Lamb, Turkey, Fish with a selection of vegetables. There was also a Vegetarian and Salad Bar. A wide selection of Sweets were available and coffee was served.

The Chairman, Mrs Marguerite Fellowes, read letters of congratulations from Her Majesty The Queen and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother. Toasts were proposed to H.M. The Queen, The Queen Mother, Absent Friends and The Club.

The raffle was drawn and all members duly wended their way home having thoroughly enjoyed themselves and once again renewed comradeship and memories of those War Time years.

Any ex-ATS who would like to become a member please contact the Membership Secretary, Mrs Doreen Brookes, 99 Meadow Road, Coventry, CV6 4GW. Tel: 01203 362866.

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(Dept LS), 8 Lower Grosvenor Place,
London SW1W 0EP

Tel: 020 7828 2468 Fax: 020 7630 6784



Gunners Corner

GUNNERS IN ACTION

Mrs Edith Atkins (nee Stamp) W/17669 has sent in these 2 photographs taken on 14 March 1944 in North London. This photograph shows No 2 & 3 guns in action, manned by M Section No 2 & 3 Guns 469 H (M) AA Bty.



In action No. 2 & 3 guns – March 1944

This photograph is the camp on fire as the result of the bombing. Fortunately no one was hurt but the damage was severe.

Although Mrs Atkins is in touch with three members of 469 Battery she would like to hear from others.

Contact: Mrs E Atkins, 34 Kingsham Avenue, Chichester, Sussex PO19 2AX.



Camp on fire – March 1944

ANNUAL REUNION OF ATS MEMBERS OF ACK ACK COMMAND RA HELD AT YORK ON 1 AUGUST 1999

Even the total eclipse of the sun could not have outdone the latest reunion of ATS Members of Ack Ack Command Branch RAA held at Imphal Barracks, York over the weekend of 31 July-1 August 1999. This was the 6th reunion organised for us by Maj (Retd) David Robertson and his team of helpers headed by the Membership Secretary, Philip Sowerby. How they manage to present something new and exciting each year, whilst maintaining the familiar format we've all come to expect, is quite unique!!

We all know "You can't please all of the people all of the time" but, personally speaking, I have only received letters of congratulation and heard messages of complete satisfaction. Most of the ladies said "Wonderful weekend – the best yet". I believe there WAS something for everyone in 1999, but we mustn't become complacent – 'There's always room for improvement!!'

As wonderful as Saturday evening was with its excellent entertainment provided by 'The Bob Crossland Jazz Band' and 'The Harlequin Singers', surely the highlight of our reunion was Sunday! What a moving Service we had within the walls of beautiful York Minster in the company of our Guests of Honour – our Branch Patron, Gen Sir Martin Farndale KCB; the new GOC of 2 Division, Maj Gen R D S Gordon CBE and his charming wife; The Lord Mayor of York, The Rt Hon Councillor Peter Vaughan and The Lady Mayoress, Mrs Vaughan. The Rev Geoffrey Holman (OUR PADRE as we have come to regard him!) conducted the Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance beautifully. Everyone enjoyed the lighter aspect of his address as he recounted his experiences as an Army Padre and this year it was good to hear him read out the names of those members who had passed on since our last reunion.

GSM Ron Smith and his 'team' maintained 'Law and Order' in the ranks throughout our March Past. It's amazing how we all respond to the discipline, and the general feeling amongst the ladies was that "We'd all marched better than ever this year!" I've no doubt that's why our Branch Patron gave us an even higher mark for our 'turnout'! Don't rest on your laurels girls – what an achievement it would be to get 10 out of 10!!

During lunch we were right 'Royally' entertained by The 'King's' Division Waterloo Band whose presence and musical expertise in the Minster and on our March Past was inspirational. To 'round off' a wonderful weekend, we witnessed the moving Sunset Ceremony. My sincere thanks to everyone who made even the smallest contribution to our enjoyment but especially L/Bdr Shona Fraser who carried Our Standard.

Contact: Mrs E B Holder, 10 Dale Road, Dronfield, Derbyshire, S18 1YG.



GUNNERS SPORTS 1942

I am enclosing a photograph of my Battery Sports team, 469 Bty 132 Regt RA on 10th June 1942 – at Whetstone, London.

I am 2nd from right back row, also my friend Meg Garrett 4th from left 2nd row, we are still friends.

I was known as Pte Bunce (Bunny/Ex Gun Layer). Hope this may bring back some "Happy Memories".

Contact: Mrs W Wells, 13 Westmead, Windsor, Berks, SL4 3NN.



469 Bty 132 Regt. RA 'Sports Day' Whetstone - London
June 10th 1942

BATTERY LINKING

May I thank Beryl Holder and Gladys Warner (544 Bty) for their appreciative comments in Lioness 2/99 regarding my efforts over the past 10 years.

The same applies to everyone who has been in touch with me, regarding details of their service - whether in Ack-Ack or any other branch pertaining to the ATS.

Many people have suggested I write a book, for there are many stories I could tell - of meetings or phone conversations, between people you have contacted for the first time in 50 yrs. One was from a 'girl' who had been with the Bty where the film 'The Gentle Sex' was made.

My most recent 'link' was at the end of August '99, just 3 weeks after I was contacted by a lady in Devon. She had been staying in British Columbia, with a lady who had served in Ack-Ack (435 Bty). Mrs Hazel Hughes (nee Byham) had said that she would dearly love to get in touch with her bridesmaid of 53 years ago. After several phone calls, I traced Mrs Lillian Incles (nee Archer) to Whitstable in Kent. It was quite an emotional moment when I spoke to Lillian. Within days she had phoned Hazel. She too was 435 Bty.

I could not attend York reunion. For all those searching for me in vain, I did send a notice for the noticeboard. Maybe next year we can make a chain from our links? Fingers crossed. I have noticed several names in the 'Obits' column. Please forgive me if I have included their names in outgoing lists.

To those whom I have not written for some time, I hope you have made contacts.

Sincere good wishes for Health and Happiness in the New Year.

Contact: Sue Crook, 14 The Larches, Horsell Vale, Woking, GU21 4RE.



Naafi wishes you a Happy, Prosperous New Year, and looks forward to providing you with a world-class value for money service in the new Millennium.



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Where are you now?

Calling an Ex-WRAC Lady

I am enclosing a wedding photograph of a lady called Rita Carroll. Unfortunately I do not know her husband's name but believe he was in the Grenadier Guards. Rita and I were friends at the WRAC School of Instruction, Huron Camp, Hindhead between 1952-1955. Contact: Mrs C Bass, 27 Beavers Way, Digmoor, Skelmersdale, Lancs, WN8 9BT.

Mrs Pat ASH (nee Mabbutt)

Does anyone remember me? I was in the Ack Ack in Batteries 517, 570, 582 and 172 Regt H(M) AA. I was stationed at Gorleston, Lowestoft and Norwich area and went to Nottingham and Leicester for relief sites. I married a PTI called Tommy and became Mrs Ash. Contact: 13 Bentley Road, Wolverhampton, WV10 8DZ.



Pat Ash (nee Mabbutt)

Japanese, German and British Swords, Daggers and Memorabilia Wanted



I have a special private collection of war time and military memorabilia and would very much appreciate items to increase the collection for which I am pleased to pay.

Almost any items would be very appreciated including war time posters, flags, air force flying equipment, caps, log books, medals etc. will collect anywhere.

**Please contact Ron Warner
46 Langdon Road, Southdown, Bath BA2 1LS
or telephone 01225 314353**

Cpl Jessie MATTHEWS

I would be very pleased to hear news of my old room mate Jessie Matthews. We were Corporals together. I would also like to get in touch with anyone from the PRI Office, Portland, Dorset, and Admin Office, 5 Corps School, Sandbanks between March 1940 and October 1942. As I am 87 years old, my daughter tells me that my friends may no longer be around, but I hope that some of them are. Contact: Mrs Simmonds (nee Barrett), Flat 40 Taylor Court, 48 Tilehurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TL.

Central Mediterranean Forces (CMF)

I am enclosing a photograph for the Lioness which was taken on Armistice day 1998 – following the Armistice Service at Westminster Abbey.



From left to right: Maiden names: Jane Sandys, (Officer), Joan Guy, Barbara Sanders, (NCO), Eileen Maloney.

We were together in Italy 1945-1947, Royal Signals, 605 Coy ATS, and were stationed at BARI, MILAN, CASERTA and PADUA. Eileen has lived in Australia, since the war, she has kept in touch with Joan Guy and was here on holiday. As you can well imagine, being able to take part in the Armistice Service and for us to meet up again, in my case after 51 years, helped to make Eileen's holiday most memorable. What memories we had, they all came tumbling back, as if all those years hadn't passed between. Joan and I only met up a couple of years ago in Birmingham, at the ATS Dinner Club Luncheon. Perhaps this photograph may help to find a few more of us ATS Signal girls who were in Italy? Where are all the other 605 COY ATS CMF girls????? Contact: Mrs Barbara Hurman (nee Sanders), 77 Old Stoke Road, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP21 8DE.

No 2 Section 532(M) HAA Battery, Chadwell Heath, Romford

Mrs Harman (nee Green) would very much like to make contact with the ladies in the photograph. She is the one in shirtsleeves and Marjorie Card (nee Webber) far right in steel helmet. Others are Ann Howard, Connie Fowler, Ethel Bishop, Olive Stone, Lollipop French, LCpl Toop, Sgt Walkden, Lt McLeod and Phyllis Copp, (not in the photograph). Contact: Mrs Jean Harman, Tudor Place, Stevenston, Basingstoke, Hants, RG25 3AY.



Mary RUSSELL

Following the success of my WAYN request in Lioness 1/99 I wonder if it would be possible to have another one published. I had a very good friend called Mary Russell when we were stationed at Kampenhout, Belgium from 1944-1945. She used to live in Botley, Oxford. I would be pleased to have news of her. Contact: Mrs L G Collins (nee Ingram), 42 Hoddern Avenue, Peacehaven, East Sussex, BN10 7PH.



Mary Russell and Gladys Ingram

Calling a Lost Cousin

My wife and I wish to trace a cousin called Joan Sutcliffe who was a private in the ATS and the last known station was at HQ BAOR at Bad Oeynhausen, about 1947-1948 at the Labour Directorate. It is not known whether she married or not. Can anyone help and also can anyone give any units that would have worn the shoulder flash divisional badge? Contact: Vera and Joe Rogers, 22 Lowfield Crescent, Silsdon, West Yorks. Tele 01535 654418.



Pte. Joan Sutcliffe

Mrs Hilda Jessie RAYNER (nee Brooker) W/92723

Jessie Brooker was stationed in Records Dept at Louise Margaret Hospital, Aldershot. At the end of the war she married Albert Rayner of Walthamstow. Hilda would now be aged 78. Contact: Mrs Ann Partington, 5 Hawthorne Grove, Leigh, Lincolnshire, WN7 5SS.

Were You a Trainee Driver?

Mrs Edna Wilson (nee Raistrick) (W/62777) would be pleased to hear of any friends who were on the Drivers Course with her at Hereford in 1941 from July to October. The only name she can remember is that of Ann Barkworth, but she would like to make contact with any of the others. Contact: Mrs E Raistrick, 17 Shann Avenue, Keighley, Yorks, BD21 2TL.

Where Are The Gun Layers?

I am searching for some of my gun laying colleagues from 508(M) HAA Battery, 148 Regiment RA who served with me between 1943-1945. Contact: Mrs Kay Tucker (nee Richardson) (W/131892), Failte, Rue de la Corderie, Vale, Guernsey, GY1 1PR.

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Calling the R.A.M.T.S.

I am wondering if there are any members who were in the R.A.M.T.S., in other words The Royal Artillery Mechanical Traction School, who were billeted at Rhyl or Kimnel Park in North Wales, and Bordon in Hampshire between 1944-1947; if so I would love to hear from them. Contact: Mrs Peggy Cannell (formerly Peggy Snelling, P Company), 8 Fiske Gardens, Holton Avenue, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, NR32 4RS.

Calling All Ex-Pay Corps Ladies

I've only recently joined the Worthing Branch of the WRAC Association. I was very impressed with the Lioness and when I read it through it brought back a lot of memories. I was W/335844 Dorothy Smith now Lade with the RAPC stationed at Tunbridge Wells and then at Canterbury. The enclosed photo was taken at Canterbury - I'm on the right, Eileen Huxtable (nee Gunnell) is on the left. We are still in contact with each other. I wondered if the middle girl is named Frances Poxton? If so I'd like to contact her or anyone else who knew me from the Pay Office at Canterbury from 1946. Contact: Mrs Dorothy Lade (nee Smith) Sunnybank, 11 Oakdene Crescent, Portslade, Brighton, Sussex, BN41 2RP.



*Eileen Huxtable (nee Gunnell) Frances Poxton,
Dorothy Lade (nee Smity)*

Pte Nancy JOHNSON

Mrs Jackie Cooke is searching for information about her mother who was born on 6 February 1925 and is believed to have enlisted under age. She was serving with the Army Catering Corps so was probably a cook which is substantiated by the fact that she burned her arm and spent time in hospital. It is thought that she enlisted in 1941 and was discharged in 1946. Contact: Mrs J Cooke, 7 Nevill Road, Ham Hill, Snodland, Kent, ME6 5HU.

W/301729 Pte Ellenor CLOUGH

I wonder what has happened to all my old Army friends and the barracks I served in? I enlisted at Fulford Barracks, York on 12 May 1941 and from there went to Pontefract for a Cooks' Course where my friends were Pte Street and Pte Smith. Kettering followed, then on to Guildford. Next to Dovercourt and Harwich which was the most enjoyable of all. The barracks have now become a housing estate but I would like to know what became of Flash, Cath, Jennie, Jemima and Wilemina. I left there for Uxbridge and then Biddick Hall, near Chester Le Street which was near to where I lived. My friends were Winnie, Jessie and Phyllis. Contact: Mrs E M Marsh (nee Clough), 120 The Brooms, Ouston, Chester Le Street, Co Durham, DH2 1RP.

Mrs Betty ROBERTS (nee Sullivan W/160739)

Mrs Roberts would like to hear from anyone who served with her between 1942 and 1943 at HQ, 3 Field Training Regt RA, Milton Hall, Whalley, Lancs. Contact: Mrs E Roberts, 26 Lannoweth Road, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 3AB.

Hello Ex A.T.S. Ladies

I wonder if anybody out there once belonged to the 721 Car Company and was stationed in Bad Ouyhausen in Germany from mid 1946 to 1949? My maiden name was Vickers always known as Vicky Vickers. Contact: Mrs M Hodgson (nee Vickers), 9 Church Close, Atwick, Driffield, East Yorkshire, YO25 8DJ.

Miss Dorothy BOOTH (W353190 Ex Cpl)

I would be very pleased to hear from friends who were stationed with me at RAF Watnall in 1949, Bedford Barracks, Colinton, Edinburgh 1951 and Bad Ouyhausen 1950-1953. Names I remember are Betty O'Brien from Glasgow, Jean Hammon from Birmingham, Joyce Grosvenor from Manchester and Sgt Oldham from Wrexham. Contact: Miss D Booth, 40 Lansdowne Street, Worcester, WR1 1QF.

Isobel SHAW

Mrs Betty Berwick would like to know the whereabouts of an old friend, Isobel Shaw, who was stationed at No.3 VRD REME Aberford, Leeds in 1943/1944, and who was a driver. Contact Mrs B Berwick, 3 Kinnaird Place, Forgandenny, Perth, PH2 9EU.

Success of a Bakers WAYN

Dear Editor

In a recent issue of Lioness you said you would be interested to hear of anyone who has had any success in finding people through the WAYN column. I am pleased to tell you I have. About 2 years ago I had a letter and a company photograph published in Lioness enquiring about friends working at the Army Baking Camp at Danesbury Park, Welwyn, Herts, during the last war. I had 4 replies, one from a Mrs Cicely Wardman of the Shipley Branch who recognised herself in the photograph. She was also stationed there. We worked in the Bakery, lived in the same hut, and went out together off duty. I am pleased to tell you after over 50 years we met again at the North East Reunion at York on September 4th this year. Many happy memories. Thank you very much.

Mrs Irene Spedding, 121 Glendale Road, Tollesby, Middlesborough, Cleveland.

Poem

A Prayer for Later Years

Lord, Thou knowest that I am growing older.
Keep me from becoming too talkative, and particularly
keep me from falling into the tiresome habit of expressing
an opinion on every subject.
Release me from the craving to straighten out everybody's
affairs. Keep my mind free from the recital of endless
details. Give me wings to get to the point.
Give me grace, dear Lord, to listen to others describe their
aches and pains. Help me endure the boredom with
patience and keep my lips sealed, for my own aches and
pains are increasing in number and intensity, and the
pleasure of discussing them is becoming sweeter as the
years go by.
Teach me the glorious lesson that, occasionally, I might be
mistaken. Keep me reasonably sweet. I do not wish to be
a saint (saints are so hard to live with), but a sour old
person is the work of the devil.
Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful, but not
pushy; independent, yet able to accept with graciousness
favours that others wish to bestow on me.
Free me of the notion that simply because I have lived a
long time, I am wiser than those who have not lived so
long.
If I do not approve of some of the changes that have taken
place in recent years, give me the wisdom to keep my
mouth shut.
Lord know that when the end comes, I would like to have a
friend or two left.

Author unknown.

Memorial Requiem Mass

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales held a Memorial Requiem Mass for the late Cardinal George Basil Hume OSB OM the 9th Archbishop of Westminster 1976-1999. It took place on Wednesday 6 October 1999 in Westminster Cathedral. He was a patron of the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund and invitation was by ticket only. The Corps was represented by Col (Retd) A M M Clissitt who was one of the thousand plus attendees in the congregation. HRH The Prince of Wales represented HM the Queen and HRH The Duchess of Kent was also present.

The Principal Celebrant was The Most Revd Michael Bowen, Archbishop of Southwark.

The Liturgy of the Word was read by the Rt Revd Richard Llewellyn, Bishop of Lambeth (representing the Archbishop of Canterbury).

Cathy Corcoran, head of the International Division CAFOD (Catholic Action for Overseas Development), read the second lesson.

Fr Frank Turner SJ read the Gospel and the Rt Revd David Konstant, Bishop of Leeds, gave the homily.

At the conclusion of the mass there was a procession to the Chapel of Saints Gregory and Augustine where the Cardinal is buried and prayers were said by the Rt Revd James McGuinness, Bishop of Nottingham. This was a memorable occasion and highlighted the huge numbers of associations connected to this humble and deeply spiritual man whose death affected so many of all beliefs.

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

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Branch News

ALDERSHOT

Four intrepid, but somewhat apprehensive members of the branch, former WRAC Captains Lesley Clargo, Jane Knight, Lynne Marsh and Alison Schofield, braved the Royal Signals Association Quiz Night in Aldershot at the beginning of the summer, and were horrified to discover that they were competing with 28 other teams. They were christened "The Lionesses" by the organisers, and they were concerned lest they disgrace the Corps on its 50th birthday. However their fears were groundless – they were placed third against some very stiff opposition and have been invited to return next year. Corps Day at Worthy Down gave some of our members the chance to meet up with those branch members still serving (and to take some embarrassing photos!). Our summer barbecue which we held to raise money for the Benevolent Fund was memorable for the downpour and the improvised tentage in true military style which was able to shelter the participants, except for Brenda Killick, our secretary, who braved the elements to cook in the open air for safety's sake.

A larger than usual audience turned out to hear a very professional delivery by WO1 Andrea Denham on the subject of "Women in the Army to-day". She has already been booked for a return visit so popular was her talk, which incidentally, has inspired another article on the same theme.

The venue for the branch annual dinner, Government House, Aldershot, proved so popular that it was heavily over-subscribed. We are honoured to have as our guests Brigadier Nield, our new Association Vice-President and Major (Retd) D McElligott, our new Association General Secretary – a very fitting celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Corps.



Brig. Nield cuts the 80th Anniversary cake which was baked and decorated by Mrs "Tewy" Davies

ABERDEEN

The branch continues to meet once a month on the first Monday, and now has a few more members.

The social programme has been increased. There was a lunch in an Aberdeen hotel and tea in the Park, but the

highlight was a visit to the Gordon Highlanders' Museum in Aberdeen. Members were made very welcome, especially as the WRAC (TA) used to be attached to the Regiment. The displays were interesting, particularly the array of regimental silver and glass laid out as for dinner. It was a lovely day, we were able to stroll in the garden and see the Garden of Remembrance. There was also the usual Christmas Supper, but next year this will be a lunch as the weather is not to be relied upon.

It is hoped to arrange a visit at some time to Fort George in Morayshire, at present the home of the Black Watch, a Scottish regiment still in existence!

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH

It's a year since we last reported on our Branch, so we start back before Christmas 1998. We were represented in our local Remembrance Day Parade and one member marched in the Cenotaph Parade and another was in the Albert Hall for the Commemorative evening.

A Christmas lunch in December, then into the programme of fellowship and talks. These covered "Stained Glass", "Beatrix Potter", "Calke Abbey" and the "Air Ambulance". Our usual attendance is about 14, but expanded at our pub lunches by a few stalwart husbands.

We have a few members who have given personal profiles. These are interesting and varied – in September two members who served in the same Battery shared the afternoon with another who served in East Africa.

Our wounded (more hobbling than walking) have recovered well from hip and knee surgery and we rejoice that no other health problems have occurred.

The only blank in our programme was a cancelled visit to a winery, due to a change in members' holiday arrangements. Our financial situation is very satisfactory, with a sum set aside to subsidise Christmas lunch and pay for petrol for occasions like the Area re-union. At the AGM we shall decide which sums will go to our Servicewomen's charities – then it will be Christmas again!

To our friends in other branches (and you know who you are) we raise our glasses as we enter the new Millennium!

BATH

Membership of the Bath Branch has decreased this year but for a very good reason! We have been instrumental in forming a Branch in Bristol thanks to two of our members who live there, Mrs Jackie Naysmith and Mrs Anne Jones, both ex-WRAC. Anne Jones was a member of the WRAC Band. Members living in Bristol who belonged to our Branch and found the travelling difficult and somewhat expensive have now been able to transfer and hopefully will be able to be more active in our Association. We send them our very best wishes and we shall work in close co-operation with them.

We continue to hold our twice monthly meetings which are quite well attended, and we have had social events in the form of a lunch at the home of our Vice-Chairman, Betty Keating, and a tea party at the home of Orience Burton in Warminster. Dents Glove Factory and Museum is situated in that town so members were able to visit and learn the history of glove making which was very interesting.

At the time of writing, still to come are a Christmas shopping trip to Wilton and Salisbury and our usual Christmas lunch. Also some of us will be at Cardiff next April.

BEXHILL

Time to write again, summer has just about passed for another year, so what have we been doing? Meetings have continued, fairly well attended despite holidays and counter attractions. A first for us was a half day outing in September to Michelham Priory, not too far from home but blessed with good weather and certainly enjoyed by everyone.

We had our usual strawberry and cream tea in July, arranged by our social committee, who are now well ahead with Christmas plans.

You will no doubt have seen the T.V. programme I mentioned in my last report. What was your verdict of it? We were in the main very disappointed by it and none too happy with the ATS representation.

This past six months has seen changes with the officers of the branch but we are all in place again now and rearing to go! We regret the loss of Olive, our oldest member and we miss her at the meetings, she was always there.

Our membership has risen to 45 and we hope for more new recruits. Jenny Nye our only WRAC lady was presented with some tokens to mark the 50th anniversary in September. Our AGM was attended by Kate McGregor, the new S.EAST area representative, a first for us both and we enjoyed meeting her.

Another first was to welcome Pauline from Florida, home on a short holiday. We hope to welcome her again as soon as she can make it.

Our good wishes to all branches, especially for health and happiness.

BIRMINGHAM

I have to start off on a sad note. We lost our well loved Chairman, Mrs Nora Darrigan, on 14 August 1999. She was our Chairman for 8 years, we will miss her very much.

I would like to thank Crewe for a very enjoyable afternoon and how they made everybody welcome. Thanks again for all your hard work.

I am afraid we have not done very much these last few months as we have had a lot of illness in the Branch.

A few of us went to Wolverhampton to an Old Time Music Hall and to do some shopping of course. Then there was the dinner in London – it was nice to meet up with some of our friends who we served with and meet those we know from reunions.

The next big event we are looking forward to is the one in

Cardiff. We hope the weather keeps fine and as great as Scotland was.

We still meet every first Wednesday in the month. We have had quite a few new members and we have 6 WRAC ladies who attend regularly. Our numbers are 62 annual members and 55 life members, not that they all come to the meetings – age is creeping up on us.

My many thanks to our ladies for all their support in keeping the Branch going and may you all have good health in 2000. Your secretary Helen Thomas.

BOLTON

This year we have recruited 6 new members. All are ex ATS and we would welcome some younger members from WRAC.

Our members visited Preston for the NW Reunion and we enjoyed our lunch followed by dancing. In July some members attended Bolton Parish Church to welcome the new priest. A good day was had by all when most of our members spent the day at Fleetwood in September. We browsed around the shops at Freeport and around the stalls at Fleetwood Market, ending the day enjoying the sunshine by the sea. We are looking forward to our Anniversary Lunch at the local college in October and meeting old friends at the Cardiff Reunion in April 2000.

BOURNEMOUTH

In the six months since my last report we have continued with our busy lives.

It was our great privilege in May, to host the Southern Area Reunion, which gave us a good opportunity to make new friends as well as renewing many old friendships. We were naturally very disappointed that Brigadier Meechie was unable to come along; and also that our expected speaker, RSM Sarah Stonier was too ill to attend. Lt Col Val Trout, who came as our guest, found herself taking over the speaker's "slot" and I am sure everyone appreciated the opportunity to get some of their queries sorted out. Thank you Colonel Trout!

The Mayor and Mayoress of Bournemouth certainly found pleasure in walking around the tables and meeting the 140 guests. We know that one participating Branch made use of their free tickets for the Noddy Train at Hengistbury Head by planning a day's outing there; we hope that others also enjoyed their visit to this beauty spot.

In June, the Branch appreciated a garden party at the home of our Chairman, Doreen Snell; after a morning of rain showers, the afternoon became quite hot and sunny so we were able to sit out in Doreen's garden after all.

At AGC Corps Day on June 12th at Worthy Down, 16 of us thoroughly enjoyed the displays and sideshows. The food, both lunch and afternoon tea, was delicious and greatly appreciated, particularly as the weather turned unseasonably cold.

The following day a group of us were up bright and early to join local WAAFs and WRNS on a coach bound for Weymouth to attend a Veterans Remembrance Parade and March. We joined the 2,000 veterans on parade and

managed to march the whole length of Weymouth promenade. It was most uplifting to hear the cheers of all the holidaymakers who crowded the route, particularly as we were flagging a little, the weather having become as hot as the previous day was cold.

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In July a coach took us on a tour of the Dorset countryside and we were again entertained to tea by the ladies of Bere Regis Branch of the British Legion.

At our August meeting we enjoyed listening to our speaker, the Reverend Timbrell, who always has a store of interesting and amusing tales to tell. Our September meeting took the form of a Bring and Buy sale to swell Branch funds.

As ever, individual members have attended their special regimental reunions in varied venues throughout the country and some also went over to France and Belgium with the Normandy Veterans.

As this report goes to print we will be planning our Branch AGM, looking forward to our Christmas luncheon party – then forward into the new millennium and the Cardiff Reunion – see you there.

BRISTOL

Bristol has at long last got its own Branch again. Our inaugural meeting was held in September when Mrs J Naysmith (nee Wade) was elected as Secretary and Mrs A Jones (nee Hiscox) as Treasurer. Our Chairwoman is Mrs J Cook. Jackie is ex WRAC and Ann is ex WRAC Band, whilst Joyce is ex ATS. We were pleased that Bath Committee and members came along to give us their support on this very special day.

Our membership at the present time is 27, but with publicity we hope to increase this, especially as we will be having an advertising 'slot' on HTV in the New Year.

We have two meetings monthly, one on the 1st Thursday in the month at the Broadmead Baptist Church at 10.30am and the other on the 3rd Friday of the month at the Marriott Hotel in Bristol at 7.30pm. This is for those members who are working and unable to come along to the morning meeting. We appreciate that some of our members have to travel into Bristol, so have made the venues within easy reach of everyone, whether they are travelling by bus, train or car.

Our Committee have made several plans for the forthcoming months, including a Millennium Lunch in February, Fund Raising activities and organised trips.

We look forward to meeting you all at the Grand Reunion in Cardiff in April.

CANTERBURY

A meeting of the Canterbury Branch of the WRAC Association was held on the 4th August 1999 on the beach at Heme Bay, Kent.

Unfortunately only ten of us were able to attend, due to the fact that our members come from all over East Kent. The weather was hot and sunny. A good time was had by all and no arguments over who would make the tea!!



Branch meeting with a difference!

CARDIFF

We have had a very good year, and also 6 new members bringing our branch up to 73 members.

One of our members, Mrs Eunice Watson of Newport, died on Tuesday 10 August and is sadly missed at our meetings.

The Crewe Reunion was a great success and we enjoyed it very much. They must have worked very hard to have put on such a lovely afternoon. Congratulations to all involved.

We had a very interesting tour of the Cotswolds in June and another day in Stratford-Upon-Avon in September. A couple of us went on an organised coach tour to Althorp Park in August to see the House and also Princess Diana's burial place on the island.

We Cardiff members are looking forward to meeting everyone at the Grand Reunion and hope everyone will enjoy themselves.

Edna Thomas

CHELMSFORD

Since our last report we have been encouraged by the regular attendance and support of our members, some of whom travel long distances to join us on the third Tuesday in the month at the British Legion Hall, New London Road, Chelmsford from 2-3.30pm. It is indeed a real joy to have the friendship and companionship of "like-minded folk".

It is with deep regret we report the death of two members. Joan Wilkes – a former WRN, an affiliated member since 1992 who died on 24 April 1999 after a very long and difficult illness. Gladys (Stevie) Sherwood ATS – Stevie as she was known to all her friends died on 11 August. Her death was unexpected. She had been a member since 1995.

During the last 6 months we have held a May Fayre. We bring things along to sell and then buy them back again! A painless way to raise money for our funds which is much enjoyed by those who take part. Our thanks go to everyone who helps to make this event possible.

At the end of May we went to Bodelwyddan Castle in N Wales which is an Adult Holiday Centre owned by Warners. Thirty four of us enjoyed first-class accommodation and food and a lovely holiday.

In June we visited Felixstowe for the day, ending up with a

Fish and Chip Tea at a well-known restaurant. It turned out to be a wonderfully warm and sunny day making this outing a particularly good one. We hope to repeat this outing!!

Our 10th Anniversary Tea was well attended by over 45 people. The caterer provided an excellent assortment of home-made cakes, sandwiches and savouries which by the look of empty plates spoke for the themselves!

In common with most other organisations, we do not hold a meeting in August as it is, for most, a time to have a bit of a rest and a holiday. We look forward, therefore, to our September meeting when our speaker gave a demonstration on the use of a food blender that produced cappuccino coffee (with cream) before you hardly had time to say the words. As he topped it up with "a little drop of the hard stuff" and then passed round samples for us to try, he instantly became a very popular man and we watched enthralled as pate, mousse and a "dip" all appeared with almost no effort. Thank you Joyce (Wright) for arranging our speakers – especially this one.

It is nice to be able to record that 2 of our members, Joan Orme and Edna Gilbert, took part in a sponsored walk to help to raise funds for a new Orthopaedic Unit at Broomfield Hospital near Chelmsford. Those entering had either had surgery themselves or knew of someone who had and the challenge was to walk one mile at their own pace around the hospital grounds. It was a large event with many taking part. Joan raised about £200 and Edith over £100 so this was a tremendous achievement on their part and very well done indeed to them both.

Our Committee continues to meet regularly and hopes to meet the requests and suggestions put to them. Our appreciation goes to Nellie who now makes the tea, Peggy who collects our 50ps, Barbara who makes sure you have an envelope for your Newsletter and Margaret and Irene who do such a good job on the Bring and Buy and the Raffle.

We also appreciate the support from HQ and all they do to help us. Many thanks indeed.

CLEVELAND

Hello again ladies from what has been "the Sunny North East". Having said that, on one of our days out to York, in June, the rain poured down. A handsome young man selling umbrellas in the market did a roaring trade.

To compensate, in July we had another day out to Skipton – much better.

Moving on to August, our Branch tea-party was a great success – not a weight watchers paradise, but not to worry! A young man entertained us with songs from musicals with everyone joining the choruses.

Then September saw us at the Northern Reunion at York. Our guest speaker was Brigadier Ramsay. It was good to see her again, although she practically got up from her sick bed to join us.

Our Standard was paraded in September at the Annual Veterans Service of Remembrance at Eden Camp, Yorks, along with 127 others.

Our next branch meeting in September, saw us having a beetle drive. I don't think anyone put a foot, a leg, or an arm

wrong – what a laugh we had!

In October (aren't we a busy lot?), six of us took off to the WRAC Dinner Club weekend, along with two ladies from the Darlington Branch doing the driving. Thanks girls! We made many more friends, along with "Girls" from our service days. In January 1963 my training Sgt at Lingfield (who shall be nameless, but you know who you are Mary Pearce) stripped my bed, disgusted at my "civvy" method. In October 1999, I got my own back on her, who said "revenge is sweet". The weekend ended with a lovely church service, and we were very proud to have our Standard paraded along with the others. Well done Ann, our bearer. Thank you to everybody for a memorable weekend. May we wish everyone good health (most important – keep taking the tablets ladies). enjoy your meetings and keep recruiting. See you all in Cardiff.

Irene Maclean

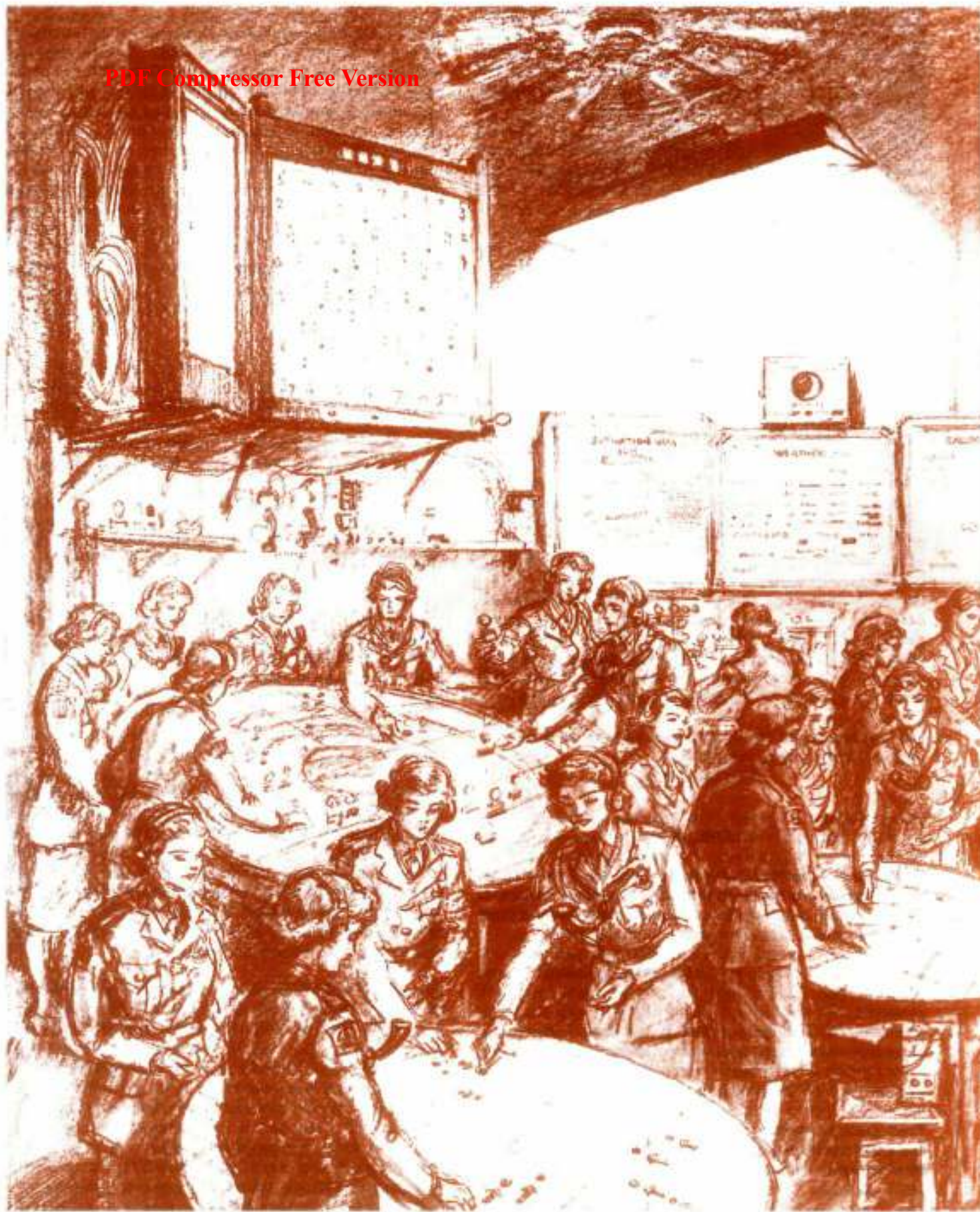
COLCHESTER

It is some years since I last prepared the Colchester Report for the Lioness but unfortunately Mrs Sheila Tooley, who has been making an excellent job of this for quite a long time, has had to give up due to personal circumstances. Volunteers being thin on the ground, it is on my plate again. Thank you Sheila for all your help in the past. Here I can tell you that Sheila and her husband Dr P J Tooley, were invited to attend a Garden Party at the Palace in recognition of Peter's 50 years in Education. When getting ready, Sheila carefully pinned her Silver-plated ATS Badge on her Lapel hoping that should she be fortunate enough to be seen by the Queen, this little Badge might catch her eye. Alas that was not to be as it was the Duke of Edinburgh who spoke to them, the Queen having gone down another line.

As mentioned in the last Report the outing to Bury St Edmunds was good, especially the stop at the Rushbrooke Arms for lunch. Such a grand old building, an original grain barn of yesteryear, and the food and service was excellent. Another outing was to Sue Ryder's Stable Restaurant near Ipswich recommended by our Area Chairman. Yes, real stables complete with the mangers and rings, one almost expected to see the horses file in. Again the food and company were good, the desserts were delicious for those who do not have diabetes! We have also paid another visit to the Felixstowe British Legion. We never seem to visit this seaside town on a warm and sunny day.

In September, 27 of us paid another visit to the Grand Hotel in Clacton. This concern caters for the not so young and it is quite fun with the food being of the 1940's line, as is the entertainment. The cost is reasonable and clubs attend from far and near. Unfortunately our outings have not been so well attended this year, could be a sign of the times, but few or many there is still a lot of work involved in organising these events. Despite this I am pleased to report that our Christmas lunch has been booked up and to date attendance is good. Our bright light of the year is that on the 27th September 1999 we attended an unveiling ceremony on Balcerne Hill Colchester of a large replica of our ATS CAP BADGE. This has gone up as part of the Colchester Millennium Military Badge Project. A Mr Douglas Morgan put the scheme into operation and, upon a request from one of our members, he was pleased to include our badge. Sixteen Regimental badges are being put up along this wall so we are proud to have been included and the Badge is a

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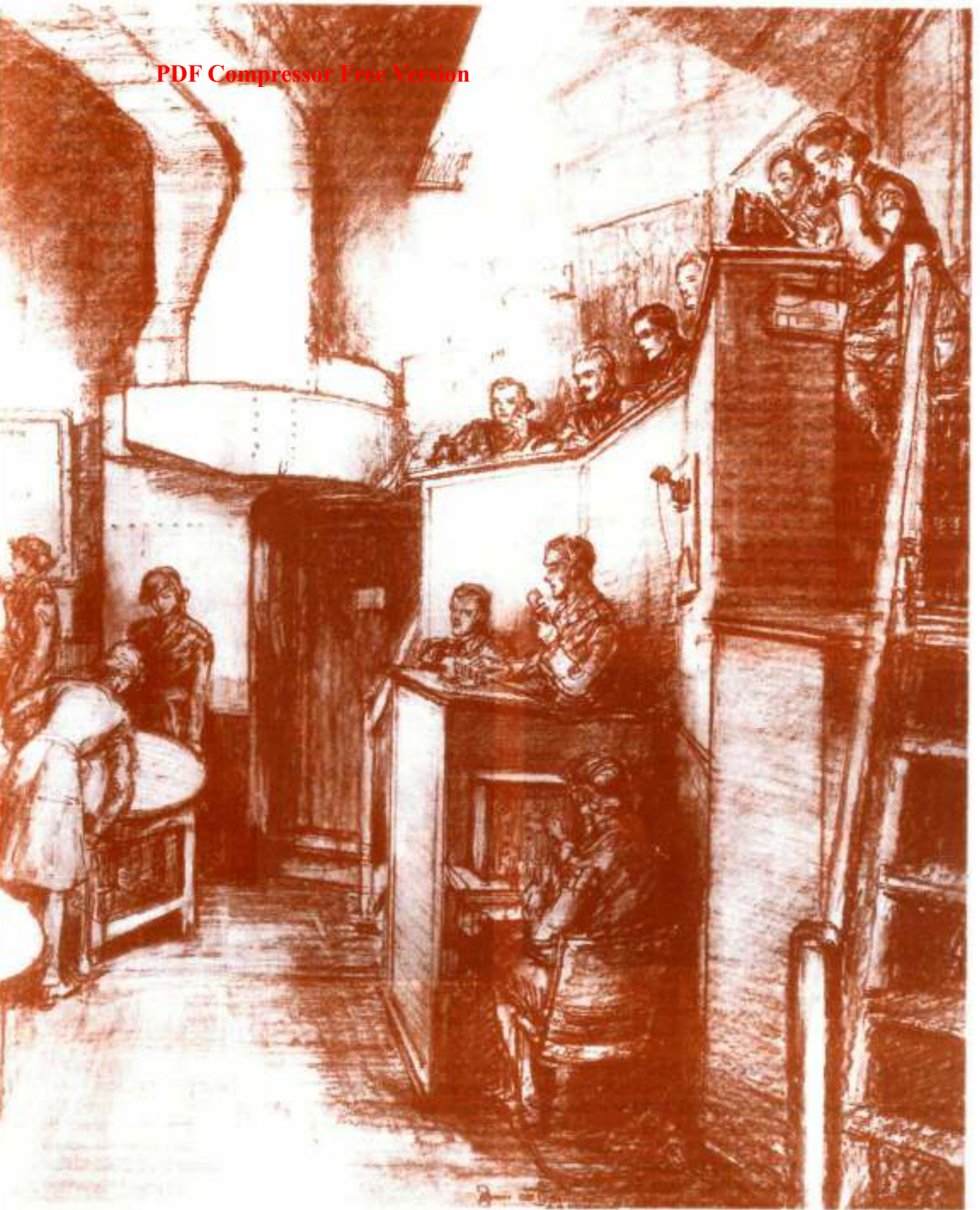


THE HUB OF LONDON'S ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEFENCES: THE HEADQUARTERS STAFF, SEATED HIGH ON THE

I am sure that this picture will bring back memories to many of our readers. As we all know, throughout this century, women have served in many parts of the world, including Malaya, the Gulf, the Balkans, Northern Ireland and many more. Many of you must have photographs or drawings of your own achievements of the ATS and WRAC over the last 60 years. So, if you do have any pictures that you think would be suitable for publication, please send them to the Editor.

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WOMEN AT THE GUN CONTROL ROOM, DIRECTING THE DEFENCE OF THE LONDON AREA DURING A RAID.

Women played a vital role in our Armed Forces – not only in the two World Wars, but subsequently in conflicts all over the world: nurses, clerks, drivers, mechanics, and other women in operational settings. We would like to make a feature of these in the Lioness as a tribute to the women who served. Please send them to the Editor.

tribute to all ex ATS Ladies. Fame at last!

As Sheila mentioned in her last Report we had the pleasure of a visit from our Area Chairman, Lady Val Kemball, to present Mrs Brenda Manning with her Certificate of Appreciation. **PDF Compressor Free Version**

We also had a visit from a Representative of British Telecom who explained to us the advantages of the latest models of phones especially for the hard of hearing and those with poor eyesight. The young man took names and addresses of all members who needed help and true to his word each and every one was visited and help given irrespective of where they lived and all free of charge.

I'll end this report with another ATS Badge story. One of our members moved to Kent and one day she had occasion to visit a Dry Cleaners. This lady always wears her little ATS Badge on her lapel and on entering the shop the assistant took one look at it and said "What a lovely little badge, are they giving them away at the garage down the road? If so, I must get one at lunch time". Needless to say, this member wasted no time in telling her exactly what the badge was and why she was wearing it. The assistant, a lady in her 50s looked dumbfounded and then said "Oh I didn't know ladies served in that war", well she does now!

Before closing, I must say that our Membership goes up and down. Unfortunately we have lost 2 dear members but gained 3 brand new ones and 2 transfers from other Branches so at the present time we are 139 strong and, thank goodness, we have a few young WRAC members which, we hope, will fill our places as and when we get promoted to that great parade ground above the bright blue sky.



Colchester branch members gather for the unveiling ceremony on Balkeine Hill.

CREWE

In June we started the second half of 1999 with the Area Reunion as our priority.

By July things had calmed down a bit and we managed to have another Sunday Lunch at the Crewe Arms Hotel with husbands which we all enjoyed. Later in July Betty and Edith went down to Stafford for a meeting with Stafford and Shropshire Branches to finalize the arrangements for the reunion.

Betty was booked to go to the York Ack Ack Reunion on July 31st but was not well enough to attend. She was very

disappointed and sends her best wishes to her 93rd S/L Regt friends.

Then in August calamity! We lost our entertainer for the Reunion, however he very kindly found us a replacement for which we were grateful but apprehensive.

September. D Day approaching fast and we were very busy with last minute things which could not be done earlier. Everyone had a job to do and they did it well. At last September 18th, we were expecting rain but it stayed fine, and with fingers crossed everything went well.

We were so pleased that our new General Secretary Miss D McElligott and her predecessor Mrs R Watt were able to join us as our guests of honour and we hope they enjoyed the day with us.

We need not have worried about the entertainer, Mr Geoffrey Coles was great and he did us proud. Our Chairman Betty was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation by Mrs Maggie Purkis our Area Chairman.



Area Chairman Mrs M Purkis presenting Mrs Betty Patton with Certificate of Appreciation at the Wales & West Reunion at Crewe.

We were very grateful to Stafford Branch who did the Raffle which raised £205 and Shropshire Branch who did the Tombola Stall which made £109.50. A lady did a "Name the Dolly" which raised a further £19.80. Crewe did a big cake stall with jam and marmalade also a Bric a Brac Stall. Mabel provided a lovely cake decorated with the Association Badge to "Guess the Weight", and Edith crocheted a Blanket which was raffled.

At the end of the day we raised a grand total of £660 and because the Association is badly in need of funds with the approval of our Area Chairman Mrs Maggie Purkis we have sent it to the WRAC Association.

Since then we have had numerous letters and phone calls from Branches expressing their appreciation of the day which we found very rewarding.

Our AGM was on October 7th and two ladies resigned from office. The Vice Chairman is now Joan Berry and Mabel Lightfoot has now joined Betty in charge of the Social Fund. The Chairman Betty and Secretary Edith are unchanged. Mabel and Glenys our WRAC members attended the WRAC Dinner Club Reunion at Tillington Hall Hotel Stafford on October 8-10. There was a special service on the Sunday commemorating the 50th Anniversary. They said they had a marvellous weekend and would like to send many thanks to Ann Deakin for arranging it.

We have one more fund raiser this year. It is a Dance at the Crosville Club on November 4th, then we will have a welcome break until February. In the meantime there will only be four of us attending the Cenotaph Parade in London this time.

With our friends and relatives we shall be going to Crewe Theatre in December to see the Pantomime then in the New Year we shall be looking forward to going to the Grand Reunion at Cardiff.

May we send our Good Wishes for the New Year 2000 to all our friends in the Association.



*Wales & West Area Reunion at Crewe
L to R:- Mrs B Patton, Miss D. McElligott, Mrs M. Purkis,
Mrs R. Watt, Mrs E. Francis*

DACORUM

Greetings from Dacorum, and best wishes to our members who cannot get to our meetings because of ill health, or difficulty in distance and transport.

We all enjoy reading the Lioness, and especially some of the activities that different branches participate in.

Since April we seem to have been quite busy with talks and speakers, we started our May meeting with our Chairman telling us about her visit to her son and family in America. She went to see the American Memorial to Women who served in the War. We found it very interesting, especially as we in Britain are now trying to collect enough money to have our own dedication.

After the formalities we had a quiz. Those who were able were knitting squares to make a blanket, we are hoping to raffle it to raise some more money towards the WWII

Womens Memorial Fund.

We thought our June meeting would be rained off, the weather was appalling, but twelve of us managed to get to the hall. We had a speaker who told us the history of thimbles and other needlework implements, bodkins etc. It was fascinating, especially to those of us who are needlewomen.

On the 9th of June we went to Kew Gardens, an excellent day, although there was not enough time to see everything, so we would like to go again some time.

In July our Chairman spoke about the interesting visit to the London Reunion at the Union Jack club at Waterloo, also the rather traumatic breakdown of the train home. We followed with a "nearly new sale", it was fun.

Our guest speaker in August was from Age Concern, very appropriate for some of us, it was very interesting and made us more aware of the things that they can do for people who need help.

The September AGM followed the usual routine, subs to pay in etc. This was followed by a quiz and our usual tea and biscuits.

By October the blanket was finished, it really looked superb, congratulations ladies.

Fundraising is always a lot of work with all the regulations involving raffles.

So far we have raised £550.00 in sponsorship and are looking to raise more later.

We also enjoyed a slide show and a talk about the history of the Grand Union Canal; there have been so many changes since many of us were born in the 1920's.

Some of us visited the craft store in Greenford, what a temptation to overspend.

EASTBOURNE

No outside entertainment was needed this year as members gave talks with slides, a picture quiz and a flower-arranging demonstration. Members have also attended a wide variety of places and events.

A member and her husband, attended the 55th Anniversary of the Liberation of Antwerp and laid a Poppy Wreath from the Branch. They also conveyed our Best Wishes to Antwerp. The member had been stationed in Antwerp at the time of the Liberation in 1944. Both enjoyed the weekend.

Members also visited the North East, Iceland and the Alamein Museum and Church at Enham Alamein in Hampshire. They also attended the AGC Open Day at Worthy Down, the AGM at Guildford, the Presentation of New Colours to the Princess of Wales Regiment, the ex POW Reunion at Hayling Island, a Navy Dinner Dance at Portsmouth and the Kine lunch at the Union Jack Club in London.

Those who live too far away or cannot get transport are kept up-to-date with our twice-yearly Newsletter.

We are now looking forward to our Christmas arrangements and the AGM at Cardiff.

Since our last letter, sadly, 2 of our members have died. They are Mrs O M Montwill (nee Buchanan), Fife and Major (Retd) Miss C Wales, also Fife.

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Our membership still numbers 90 as we had 2 new members join us, one of whom is an ex WRAC and she had a letter published in the last issue of Lioness about her service in Northern Ireland.

The venue for meetings is still the Royal British Legion Club, Perth on the last Thursday of each month.

A few of our members were in and out of hospital last year and early this but seem to be on the move again with some crutches and sticks discarded.

Once again exotic climes have been visited by members, Hong Kong, Venice, Spain and Canada to name but a few. Wonder if the piggy banks are still intact !!!!!

We were invited to a Garden Party at the Walled Garden, Murray Royal Hospital in July where we have a bower contributed to by all the Scottish Branches. It was a beautiful day, the sun was shining and there was a band playing in the shelter of our bower (sitting down). Stalls with home baking, garden produce, plants etc added to an altogether very enjoyable afternoon.

In August we held a boot sale at the local football park but there were so many cars that we did not make as much as we usually do. However we handed over £57 to our treasurer and the local charity shops benefited from what we had left, so in the end everyone benefited.

Next year we are hoping to be alongside the Army at any displays in Fife or Tayside to set up shop – hoping to recruit more members to the Association and possibly sell some of our memorabilia. Incidentally, Glasgow Branch, who are hosting the Reunion and AGM this year on 16 October, have kindly allowed us to set up a stall to enable us to do this and we are all looking forward to our trip to Glasgow when 30 of our members will be travelling, complete with a few Floral Display Entries – to compete for the Scottish Branches Shield.

After our Glasgow trip, we will get down to arranging our Cardiff visit. There are a few going from our branch and we are making arrangements to enable us to travel together.

Our Christmas lunch will be at the Isle of Skye Hotel, Perth 16 December 1999.

We wish everyone all the best for the MILLENNIUM.



Four Fife & Tayside branch members at Walled Garden Fete August 1999

Greetings Ladies of all branches.

Hope you all had a lovely Christmas and especially a Very Happy New Year on the occasion of the Millennium. What miraculous changes we have all seen during our lives; from tin baths on a Friday night and chamber pots under our beds to flush toilets, men on the moon, computers, the internet and roads not big enough for all the cars etc, on a lovely summer weekend! I would not have missed one day of it! How about you? – I digress, so back to the goings on at the Grimsby Branch.

May found us all gathering at the local Town Hall, boarding a coach and making our way to Nottingham. We visited one of the Lace Markets and very much admired many of the beautiful exhibits which were on display.

After this short visit, we made our way to the Crown Derby factory at Derby where we were able to catch a quick snack in the restaurant. Then a party of us went on a conducted tour around the factory. It was very interesting and we were intrigued by the lady giving a demonstration of moulding the very small and minute flowers. We then made our way to the Gift Shop where much of the pottery was for sale.

On the homeward journey, we made a stop at a local fish restaurant where we enjoyed "Fish, Chips and Mushy Peas" and arrived back in Grimsby around 8pm, thus ending a very enjoyable and interesting day.

In June we had our Summer Fair which was not as successful as usual, but we ended with a profit which was better than a loss.

In July 6 of the Committee were invited to a very interesting presentation by the Army at our local Town Hall. Nothing like the Army we knew! Everyone enjoyed the evening chatting to the young soldiers who were excellent hosts. The food and drinks were an added bonus.

Also in July, we had a Mystery Tour. We found ourselves going through the lovely Lincolnshire Wolds. Our first stop was the Louth Garden Centre (they make lovely coffee there!). Next we went to Mablethorpe Market. From there it was on to the "Kinema in the Woods" at Woodhall Spa. There was a restaurant in the middle of the woods where we had a choice of Bangers and Mash or Ham Salad, followed by a choice of sweet and a pot of tea. The weather was lovely. A very enjoyable afternoon out.

At our September branch meeting we had a visit from Peter Gray and Gail Stephenson of the British Legion (Gail is also a life member of the WRAC Association). The purpose of the visit was to present several branch members with certificates in appreciation of their work for the poppy appeal over the last ten years.

At the time of 'Going to Press' we are busy planning a Jumble Sale in October and making preparations for our Christmas Fair in December. We are looking forward to our visit to Cardiff next year for the reunion. What a busy life we lead!

Best wishes to all members and may all your tomorrows be beautiful.

HARROGATE

Another successful half year with good attendances at our monthly meetings. There is always a great feeling of camaraderie, an excellent variety of good speakers and a lively interest in the work and aims of the Association.

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Our new Chairman, Barbara Dawson, had us all astounded and flummoxed by a superb collection of antique tools which she hoped we would identify – only a few proved correct! Vicky Radford brought a friend to display and demonstrate the Art of Lacemaking – a very gifted member of our Branch.

A Yoga expert explained and demonstrated to us the mental and physical mysteries of her work. We were all relieved to know that we were not expected to stand on our heads or adopt the Lotus position.

Susan Lister's husband gave us a most interesting talk on a lifetime of living and working on the Harewood House estate (apart from their War Service).

Our Annual Outing was a coach trip to the Bradford Industrial Museum. A most interesting 'working mill' museum and the Shire horses were an added delight. The N.E. Annual Reunion at York was attended by 22 members who enjoyed the event as usual.



Harrogate branch annual outing – July 1999

HASTINGS

In 1949 the ATS became the WRAC and we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of its formation in 1999. Our first photograph shows members of this Branch at the Anniversary Service in Guildford Cathedral and the second photograph shows the WRAC Standard Bearer with our newest member – Mrs Ivy Jones.



The year 2000 brings a combined reunion and we hope those who attend the events in Cardiff in April will have a wonderful weekend. To celebrate locally we are holding a Tri-Service Lunch – suggested by the Association of WRNS and supported with enthusiasm by local ex WAAFs and our own Branch.

Last year Branch members attended the usual Parades and were still able to Parade our Standard with ten supporting members on the stage at the White Rock Theatre on Remembrance Sunday. In the past we have met members of Medway Branch in Rochester and were so impressed we had our summer outing to the town in Dickens Week.

Two years ago our outing was to the Star & Garter Home in Richmond and one member was so impressed she has started a Fund Raising Committee in Hastings and several Branch Members are supporting her. Brenda Moor was with us on the visit and is now a resident in the Home – we do hope you are really contented in your new abode Brenda.

We are sad Helen Dodd has had to resign as the S.E. Chairman and wish her a long and contented retirement. We welcome Mrs Kate McGregor whom we hope to meet some time before LIONESS 1/2000 is published.

Greetings and best wishes to you all. May this century be more peaceful than the last.

HEREFORD

Several new members have joined the Branch recently and we now have 42 Life and 26 Annual. We still meet each month except December at the Belmont Road RBL Hall at 2.30pm.

In May 1999 we held a Car Boot Sale which was very profitable and a group of us went to Cardiff, to discuss plans for the Reunion in April 2000.

Chair Mary Nicholls and Secretary Jo Anscombe went to Cardiff again in July 1999. This was a meeting with Cardiff and Swansea members chaired by Mrs Ruth Watts. It was a very good meeting which included a thorough investigation of the venue, the Cardiff International Arena, an excel-

lent building. Plans for the Grand Reunion 2000 are well on the way at Cardiff. We held a second Table Sale in July, and although profitable, was a bit of a damp squib as far as customers were concerned.

It was ten years ago on July 29th 1989 that Hereford Branch was formed and so to celebrate we hired a mini-bus on August 9th and took ourselves out for the day to Bridgenorth. After an excellent lunch with the "Bar flowing" we were entertained by a singer/comedian to some great jokes and songs, ending with many wartime favourites and the usual sing-song. A few games of bingo quietened us down and then tea and biscuits before returning home to Hereford.

In September we received an invitation from Shropshire Branch to join them in their Church Service and Parade to celebrate 80 years of Women in Uniform. Unfortunately owing to other commitments we were unable to attend. Mrs Doris Kirton one of our newer members who is an ex Ack Ack girl met with her local MP in Tewkesbury to discuss the proposed memorial in Trafalgar Square to Women in Uniform during WWII. He promised to write to Sir John Mortimer who is in charge of the project. Everyone is urged to write to their MPs to ask them to raise awareness in Parliament.

Several ladies went to Crewe Reunion on September 18th and had a really great time. Our thanks to Crewe Branch and the other Branches for their assistance in the Raffle etc.

Also in September Joyce Nicholls, our Treasurer, and Sue Walton sent out our 6th Newsletter with an up to date Nominal Roll of Branch members. Both gratefully received by everyone and thank you to Joyce and Sue for their hard work. Thanks also to all members who send gifts and donations for Branch causes. Best wishes and "Get Well Soon" to Celia Davies, Phyl Martin, Sybil Grafton, Heather Kemp and all those not so well members. We think of you constantly.

Our Treasurer, Joyce Nicholls, went to Germany and met up with the Padre who dedicated our Standard in Sept 1998. He sent his good wishes to us all as did Liz Kemp and Debbie Casey. It is so nice to be remembered by our "young ones". Joyce Nicholls and Peggy Rose were at the WRAC Stafford weekend and had a wonderful time, as did Phyl Bates, Win Birt and Una Heap at the Ack Ack August reunion in York.

November will see us with our Standard at the Remembrance Parade in the City again and also our early Christmas meal is on 22nd Nov.

HULL

Hull Branch is still alive and continuing to meet monthly on the first Friday of each month in the premises of the Royal British Legion, Beverley Road, Hull.

Eighteen of us were present at the Northern Area Reunion in York at the beginning of September and for the first time ever it was a glorious summer day and we were able to view York Race Course.

During the year we have had a visit to Hornsea for fish and chips and a trip to Doncaster market.

It is sad to note that out of 8 new members during the

course of the last 12 months we have only seen one of them.

Our Standard has been in 'moth balls' for some time but in September we were very pleased to have one of our WRAC members, Miss Marjorie Booker, parade it for us on the occasion of Hull City's 700 year celebrations. Units from HMS Iron Duke, the 1st Battalion Princess of Wales Own Regiment, RAF Staxton Wold, and TA units from 150 Transport Regiment and 250 Field Ambulance proudly marched through our city streets headed by the Band of the Royal Marines. It was splendid – the largest gathering of the armed forces the city had every seen. Fortunately the Standard Bearers did not march but formed a cordon at the saluting base. Once again wonderful weather.

We now look forward to the Grand Reunion in Cardiff.

LEEDS

Our monthly meetings are still very well attended. Emily, our Secretary, keeping us in touch with news from Northern Area and Headquarters.

In August, our usual Tea and Biscuits were supplemented with 80th Birthday Cake provided by Ruby Gill.

The Mixed HyAA. Reunion in York was a great success. Our thanks, as usual, to Major Robertson and Philip for their hard work organizing it.

In September, 15 members attended the Northern Area Reunion at York Racecourse, a most enjoyable occasion.

At our October meeting, a WRAC Plaque was presented to Headingley Royal British Legion as a thank you for their hospitality. This will be placed near to the ATS Plaque as a reminder of the old and the new.

Two members will represent the Branch at the Remembrance Day in London, others will be helping with local Poppy Days.

It has been decided that our Christmas Party in December will be a celebration for all those members who have already reached the wonderful age of 80 and those who will do so in year 2000.

LEICESTER AND NOTTS

We have continued to hold our meetings on the second Tuesday of the month during the afternoon and we average 25/30 members. We have gained another 11 members this past year, although only one is able to get to our meetings. Sadly we lost Kathleen Hockley who was one of the original members when the branch started.

We finished 1998 with our AGM in November and our Christmas party in December which is always a very enjoyable occasion.

Our usual Nibble and Natter took place in February and another favourite, our Bring and Buy in March, raised £55 for our funds. We had a different kind of speaker in April – a poet, who read his own poetry which was mostly about his grandchildren and family. It was a refreshing change.

In May we again made our journey to W. Bridgford, thanks

to Barbara Danter who arranged the meeting and also provided a speaker – a lady talking about 'Boarder Dogs'. These are guide dogs who for some reason cannot be looked after by their owners and so the dogs are boarded out until they can return home once more. We visited Boots the Chemist and had an interesting afternoon. Some of us found the museum fascinating and would have liked to have spent more time there. Our July meeting was a noisy, happy one with a Beetle Drive and in August we spent a super afternoon at a BBQ thanks again to Doris and Irene and their helpers. Even the rain didn't dampen spirits. The Harvest Festival raised even more money for our funds. Our members are very generous in bringing and then buying back the produce.

We do tend to repeat our activities year to year but these are favourites and are happy meetings.

Our Standard Bearer, Vi Rawlins, continues to represent us at various parades supported by some of our more able members.

A few ladies went to the Ack Ack reunion at York and had a lovely weekend, even the weather was perfect, and two ladies attended the Crewe reunion and had a wonderful afternoon in the company of our Ashby friends. Our thanks to Crewe Branch ladies. Some of our members made the journey to London to take part in the Remembrance Service in Whitehall and will be going again this year.

We now have our AGM to come in October having moved it forward a month. In November we are joining the RBL at Melton Mowbray on the 11th for a Remembrance Service. December brings us full circle and the end of another year.

We wish all our members and friends a Happy and Peaceful 2000 and thank them for their continued support.

LONDON

The two London Branches hosted the London Area Reunion in July and we had an enjoyable day with interesting slides shown by Ray Dunkley and a talk from James Mill the Director of Finance at The Royal Star & Garter Home. In London it is difficult to keep the cost of functions down but we did our best and thanks to a well-patronised raffle we were able to send donations to the WRAC Association and the Home, which now has ex-ATS among its residents.

In September we celebrated 80 years of both the Association and London Branch with a Birthday Lunch at the Union Jack Club. Doreen Reid persuaded her local branch of Safeway Supermarket to make and ice us a cake,



The Cake

which was really splendid. The cooks were so pleased that they paid for it and donated it to the branch. Betty Morris produced the menu cards and Jean Taylor worked hard making more than sixty little favours containing sugared almonds for good luck. Everyone agreed it was a memorable occasion and in toasting Absent Friends we were particularly mindful of the late Emily Richards whose generous legacy subsidised the cost. Sadly it was also the occasion of our farewell to our devoted Vice-President who has moved to Colchester. We presented her with an ATS statuette so that she will remember us. Charlotte has now joined Colchester branch.

We have also celebrated two ninetieth birthdays this year, Charlotte in May and Evelyn Parks in October when a party of us enjoyed a great Lunch at the Victory Club.



Presentation to Charlotte Lawrence by the Chairman, Dorothy Foster

In June we were treated to one of Alan Bryett's amusing talks 'Today is the First Day of the Rest of Your Life', something we all should bear in mind and make the best of every day. Our coach trip to Audley End in September was very enjoyable although as members become increasingly frail it becomes difficult to have sufficient numbers to pay for the cost of the coach.

LUTON

Luton has had a fairly quiet period since our last report, although we have had some interesting speakers. Amongst them was a talk on the history of our town, one on old post-cards, and a particularly good demonstration of reflexology and aromatherapy.

In September six members donned blazers and berets to attend the dedication of the local Far East Veterans Association Standard. A very moving occasion, as always, where a total of eight regimental Association Standards were paraded, including our own.

At our September branch meeting we were visited by Lieutenant Colonel Trevor Veitch, Royal Anglians, who is co-ordinating the establishment of the new Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire regimental museum, Kempston Barracks now having been disposed of. He brought with him Mr Jack Leach who joined the Beds and Herts in 1935, aged 15. He kept us enthralled with tales of his exploits during the war and was awarded the Military Medal for his actions behind enemy lines in Italy.

Another event attended by Madge Evans was the WRAC Dinner Club weekend, where all concerned had a whale of a time. Brigadier Ann Field was our guest of honour, giving an amusing speech after dinner. Should you qualify (WRAC, WRAC(TA), QARANC, QARANC(TA)) do come to the next one – you won't regret it!

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We shall be on parade at our local War Memorial in November, hopefully behind our standard, and will try to acquit ourselves in the best traditions of our Association.

We are looking forward to our visit to Cardiff next April – see you there.



Members of the Luton branch 'on parade' at the dedication of the Far East Veterans Association Standard – September 11th 1999

NEWCASTLE

It seems no time since our last report in which we mentioned having joined the Normandy Veterans and their relatives and friends at their 1998 Christmas party and we have recently received an invitation to their 1999 "celebration" to be held in the Civic Hall, Gosforth, on 7 December 1999!

Members who went to the North East Reunion at York in September enjoyed a good lunch. They listened to an enlightening account by Brigadier (Retd) Gail Ramsey on the work of the Voluntary Service Overseas.

There is still a great interest within our Branch in the forthcoming Grand Reunion in Cardiff in April 2000 and those members attending are kept fully informed by Evelyn who is still looking after their regular savings account.

Sadly, one of our members Miss Mona Mills, who has been in the Branch since its inception, died in late August after a long and painful illness. She was a good member, and a personal friend of our Secretary.

Our meetings are continuing to attract a fair average of members and our best wishes go to those unable to attend.

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK

Norfolk and Suffolk take the opportunity of using their paragraph of Branch News to write personally to all members who never have the opportunity to get to meetings in Norwich and with whom, because of their numbers (currently 140), it is otherwise difficult to make contact. For instance, we have some 36 members living in Suffolk and the distance involved is too great for regular attendance. Over the years we have tried to form a separate Branch for

that county, unsuccessfully, I am sorry to say. Those ladies who live just over the border between the two counties are able to meet once a month at Gt Yarmouth where we have a separate Group, under the secretaryship of Mrs Beryl Coupar.

We have members as far afield as Australia and Canada. Our Canadian friend, Mrs Heather Heninger, a native of Norfolk, is a wonderful letter-writer. She visited us a few years ago and related her experiences as a war-bride sailing off into the unknown. We send her greetings and also to Miss Kay, in Australia. Mrs Sheila McIlwraith was a staunch supporter of meetings since the formation of the Branch, but moved to Sussex and still keeps in touch. Other Sussex-based members are Mrs Prangley and Mrs Beard. Mrs Empsal and Mrs Aldous are in Lincolnshire; Mrs Pickard and Mrs Hodges have addresses in Cambridgeshire (but I expect Mrs Hodges agrees with me, Peterborough is still properly Huntingdonshire) and we send them all our best wishes.

We are very proud of the fact that our new Chairman of the Association, Brigadier Shirley Nield is one of our members, as is also Lady Soames, who was presented with Life Membership in recognition of her kindness in unveiling the Plaque at Great Yarmouth in 1994 to the memory of the 26 ATS girls who died as the result of enemy air action in 1943.

For all those ladies whom we never see, some news of the Branch's activities may be of interest. We meet regularly, usually 20 to 25 of us, on the first Saturday of each month at the St Luke's Centre, Aylsham Road, at 2pm, with a speaker alternate months; the intervening months are taken up with general pleasure at getting together and chatting over cups of tea. We arrange 2 or 3 outings a year. Our New Year's luncheon is well-attended and we would welcome anyone who could get to Norwich for that special occasion in future although by the time this appears in LIONESS it will be too late for 2000. However, if sufficient numbers are interested and able to come to Norwich, we would be very happy to arrange a luncheon and get-together during the summer. Do please let me have suggestions. At our regular meetings we have a bring-and-buy sale and a raffle which, while not bringing in a fortune, enable us to pay for the hire of the room, contribute to our speakers' charities and make a donation annually to BLESMA and to the ATS Benevolent Fund. Twice a year, on November 11th and on May 11th the anniversary of the incident, we hold services at the site of the commemorative Plaque at Great Yarmouth and would welcome anyone able to attend either of these ceremonies.

Two members of our small Committee, Helen Green and Marjorie Spears, are making successful efforts to raise money towards the statue to the Women of World War II by approaching local firms and businesses.

Unhappily during the past year we have lost two members, Mrs Joan Ward and Mrs Grace Juby. At Mrs Juby's recent funeral we were asked to form a Guard of Honour in the church porch and the vicar spoke movingly of Mrs Juby's life in the ATS. She had attended meetings regularly over a long period.

For those ladies who have in the past supported meetings but who, through various reasons of health or transport difficulties, are no longer able to do so, we send our good wishes: Mrs Muriel Bullock, Mrs Irene Chapman, Mrs Victoria Johnson, Mrs Doris Lammas, Miss Ann Scott, Miss Kate Todd, Miss Audrey Told, Mrs Ida Ward, Mrs Grace

Huxtable, Mrs Dorothy Geary, Mrs Maisie Harradine, Mrs Barbara Noble, Mrs Sheila Pluck, Mrs Gladys White. We miss you all and hope that you may be able to return to meetings some time in the future.

We extend a welcome to our former WRAC members – please remember that we look to you to carry on the Association. We know you are probably still tied up with family and work responsibilities, but, you are our future and we rely on you to take up office and to foster the spirit of comradeship that we all experienced in our service days and which regular meetings of the Branch engender. Come and join us at a meeting when you can tell us of your experiences.

If anyone cares to contact me as Hon Secretary, I am Joan Awbery, now of 25 Meadow Rise Road, Norwich, NR2 3QE. Tel: 01603 453075. Do get in touch and do consider joining us at a summer luncheon even if you cannot come to meetings. Finally, I would like to thank personally all those ladies who have written to me recently and for the prompt payment of subscriptions this year, making life so much easier for our new Treasurer, Mrs Audrey Juby.

PLYMOUTH

Word must be getting around about our friendly Monday Branch meetings, they are going from strength to strength. At the AGM on 4 October we had 31 members present and everyone keen to take part. Keep up the good work ladies, it's great to see you all. I am sure it must be the varied programme of talks, competitions and outings which keep the members attending. Sadly, Betty Mitchell, our treasurer, decided to hang up her money bags and retire to the back bench after 8 years of keeping our balance in good order. To ensure Betty keeps writing her poems and letters of protest, the Branch presented her with a smart pen set as a token 'thank you' for all her hard work. We were lucky enough to have a volunteer to carry on the good work and Betty has promised to be available should Mrs Mary Davis need any advice. Thank you for stepping in Mary, you have a hard act to follow but we are all sure that you are more than capable.

We all enjoyed our coach trip to SW area reunion at Wellington, thank you Doreen and all your workers, it was a very enjoyable day.

On 2 October, 14 members turned out to work at our table top sale and between 10am and 2pm raised £92 for our funds. We are hoping for a repeat performance on 27 November. We may be able to find out what our chances of success are at the November meeting because our speaker is Mrs Shirley Wallis and her topic is Astrology!

Our Standard Bearer, Doris McCoy, has been a credit to our Branch. She has been on parade regularly over the summer. The most recent parade being the Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving for Victory in the Battle of Britain 1940. The large number of Standards marching into St Andrew's Church was a most impressive sight. The November parades are looming, on the 11th our Standard will parade on St Andrew's Church Green at 11am; on the 12th we have the Plymouth Festival of Remembrance in the Pavilions and on the 14th six of our members will join the March Past at the Cenotaph in London. We round this section off with our Christmas lunch on 15 December, once again catering courtesy of Brian and Jean Stedman.

One sour note in this year has been the TV programme made by Wall to Wall TV Ltd. It was called 'Hidden Love' and put out on Channel 4 on 29 August. We re-titled it 'Hidden Lust' and wrote a strong protest letter giving our views about the programme. We are awaiting answers! But we won't hold our breath!

On a happier note, we hope you all enjoyed a wonderful Christmas and a peaceful New Year. We look forward to meeting many of our friends at Cardiff, and hope you all have a busy and interesting year 2000 and enjoy it in the company of your family and friends.

PORTSMOUTH

Portsmouth meet every month 2nd Thursday at 7pm at The Hampshire Ex-Service Club, Fratton Road, Portsmouth. We still meet in the evenings as we hope to attract younger members who are still working but so far we have not been very lucky, and sadly we lose older members each year. We started the year with a few members going to Guildford for the AGM and Service on Sunday which we all enjoyed. In May we had our usual trip to the Isle of Wight Branch for their luncheon which we always look forward to, thank you all on the Island. May 23rd saw us at the Area Reunion in Bournemouth. The weather was fine and it was a happy reunion made more enjoyable for us as we saw our Standard Bearer/Treasurer Mrs Phyllis Price receive her well earned Certificate of Appreciation from Lt Col V E Trout. Thank you Bournemouth for all your hard work. Local events started with a Bring & Buy at our Chairman's home Mrs Edna Metherell on 17th July. It was a good morning and £55 was raised which Mrs Metherell asked to be sent to Association HQ to help with expenses of The Lioness.

Saturday 7th Aug was a Coffee Morning at Mrs Joan Jelley's the weather was fine and we had a good get together. The sum raised £25 was given at Joan's request to the British Heart Foundation. On September 11th we held a 50th WRAC Anniversary party at Mrs Joy Elmer's home in Fareham. The weather was fine and Joy helped by Maureen decorated the garden with flags and balloons saying 50th Birthday. A cake with the Corps Badge was enjoyed by all. It was a lovely afternoon but sadly not so well supported as we hoped, some members were away or too infirm to come. We shall finish the year with an American Tea Party at Mrs Mary Lindsey's home on 16th October and a Fish & Chip Lunch at Mrs Mary Moore's new home on 6th Nov; we hope to arrange a Christmas Lunch for the middle of November.



50th WRAC Anniversary Party – September 1999

During the year we have attended parades for Anzac Day in April, D-Day & The Falklands in June and will attend the usual Remembrance Service in November. At all these parades our Standard is carried with great dignity by Mrs Phyllis Price. We are all looking forward to the Grand Reunion in Cardiff.



*Mrs Phyllis Price receiving her certificate from
Lt Col V.E. Trout - May 1999*

ROCHDALE

Apart from holidays and sick parades our meetings are well attended.

On 12th June quite a few of our members were able to attend the Group Reunion Meeting at Preston, held at the Masonic Hall. This was well supported by other branches and we were pleased to meet more old friends. The weather was very kind to us and our Standard Bearer, Doris Huntback, and her husband, Jack, worked hard with the Tombola, which was a great success, as were the usual raffles, etc. The launch was really lovely and after the presentations and speeches, singing and dancing, we all thanked the Preston ladies for their hospitality and a happy day.

On 5th September a special concert was held at the Carlton Ballroom, Rochdale to commemorate the outbreak of the War. This was well attended by our group and the Ashton on Mersey Brass Band gave us a truly happy and nostalgic and special afternoon, celebrated with great feeling amongst old friends.

On 12th September sixteen of us headed for Eden Camp once more to take part in the March and Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance of the declaration of the Second World War. As usual the weather was glorious and the camp was bursting at the seams. A record number of Standards were carried - 129 - a wonderful sight, and although we were all another year older the numbers on parade didn't seem any less. We were all so pleased to see our friends of the Land Army with us with their banners, and carrying a doll dressed in Land Army uniform. Needless to say they were very enthusiastically applauded.



Members of Rochdale Branch at Edencamp



Doris Huntback

Whilst waiting for the parade, my mind went back 60 years to when like all T.A. units we were called up before hostilities were declared and on 3rd September we, the 3rd East Lancs A.T.S., were attached to the 71st Searchlight R.A.T.A. Regiment and were on a Drum Head, Church Parade on Lord Lane Playing Fields, Failsworth, Manchester, when War was declared at 11.00 am. I wondered how many of us on parade that day have been spared to remember it.

I enclose a picture of the Rochdale Branch when we attended Eden Camp and one of our Standard Bearer. For the Remembrance Parade and Service November 11th, about 9 of us will be travelling to London. Only one or two hope to take part in the March Past and the rest will attend the Service at Westminster Abbey, after this we will be concentrating on our plans for Cardiff next year.

Jose Shelley

SALISBURY

Thank you Bournemouth Branch for hosting a successful and enjoyable area reunion.

A very big thank you to Brigadier Meechie and Colonel Trout for hosting our lunch meeting in the lovely garden of their home in July. How nice it was to welcome three members of Headquarters staff, Sue Myers, Ruth Watt and Dee McElligott. Good luck to Dee as she takes over as general secretary. The competition winners were Frances Green, Dorrie Rose, Muriel Viney and Kay Cassey.

Our annual meeting in September saw the re-election of all our officers: chairman Alison Ogden, vice-chair and press officer Gladys Pope, secretary Joan Morgan and treasurer Veronica Dodkins. The vote of thanks for all their work, proposed by Nancy Bloom, was much appreciated.

SHEFFIELD

1999 has been quite a full year for us at Sheffield. It started with a wonderful visit to a pantomime, then we had our annual Xmas dinner and I am pleased to report that, despite a flu epidemic, we were all able to attend.

In March a few of our members who come from Doncaster set up a branch of their own. I am pleased to say they are doing very well with quite a few new members. All are full of new ideas about how to raise money to get them off to a good start. We wish them every success, and hope to keep in touch.

But the main item for us in 1999, was the retirement of our Secretary "Flo Bell". She has given of her best for us for a number of years and we wish her well. We took her out for dinner and presented her with flowers and gifts. It was a very enjoyable outing. "Good luck Flo".

We are looking forward to York Reunion on 4 September and Cardiff in 2000.



Mrs Bingham presenting Miss Flo Bell with gifts and flowers - May 1999

SCARBOROUGH

Our year started in March 1999 with the North East Group Secretary's Meeting at York. A discussion took place on how we should celebrate our 10th Anniversary of the formation of our Branch.

At our meeting in April the report on the Secretary's Meeting was read and discussed. One of our members has completed a jigsaw depicting the D-Day landings and it was

suggested that the picture could be made into a tapestry. The venue for our July outing was to be chosen from Catterick, Beamish, Zebrugge and York.

We held a collection for Branch Funds.

In May a member invited us to her Garden Party in aid of Talking Newspapers.

We held our monthly meeting at another member's house, where we sorted and filed the previous ten years' branch correspondence.

In June we had a pub lunch followed by the anti-aircraft reunion at York in July. In August there was no meeting.

In September we had another pub lunch to re-establish ourselves after the summer break and there was the N.E Reunion at York Racecourse.

October brought us round again to our Branch AGM.

SHIPLEY

Another six months have gone by, so here we are with our report from Shipley Branch.

We have enjoyed our monthly Monday afternoon meetings at Shipley Library with, usually, about 20 members.

We have had some very interesting speakers, enjoyed several slide shows, had our usual Faith Tea and held an Easter Fayre which helped us to raise enough money to send our usual donations to the benevolent funds.

About 12 of us managed to attend the Northern Area Reunion at York and one of our members, Mrs Cicely Wardman, was delighted to meet up with an old army pal she hadn't seen for over 50 years so we were all very pleased for her.

Several of our members also attended the Veterans and Remembrance Service at Eden Camp, which they all enjoyed.

Now we are looking forward to the year 2000 and the Grand Reunion in Cardiff but before that we shall enjoy our usual Christmas party celebrations.

SHROPSHIRE

Here we are in Year 2000, let's hope it will be a Happy, Healthy, Rewarding Year for us all.

The main attraction is the Grand Reunion at Cardiff, meeting old friends, and generally living it up, its wonderful to still feel the Comradeship amongst us all.

We were quite busy last year in April celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the WRAC. Dedication of our Plaque was performed by Rev Peter Vickers during the Service at the Garrison Church. Chris Grigg read the Lesson, and Lucy

carried our Standard for the 118th time. We are very proud of her. Afterwards we had a delayed lunch at the "Swan Hotel" Wellington due to a power cut. Later in April we attended the Guildford Weekend, and were able to see the beautiful Window in the Cathedral, commemorated to our Corps.

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In May, we had another successful day on "Dawley Day" at the village fete.

In June, Lucy once again took our Standard to the Combined Services Annual Reunion at Bridlington, an excellent day, very moving with large crowds and countless Standards.

On 1 July, we accepted the invitation to attend the Farewell Parade of Regiments and Beating the Retreat at BOD Donnington. This was a sad occasion, but afterwards we enjoyed refreshments in the Sgts Mess. Some of us went to the ATS Tea Party in July at the Victory Club.

On 29 August we celebrated the 80th Anniversary of the Association, the 50th Anniversary of the WRAC and All Women in Uniform with a Special Service and Parade at Holy Trinity Church, Dawley. Chris and Beryl worked very hard to organise this event. The Rev Stuart Deane and Rev Michael Williams officiated at a most wonderful and uplifting Service with Lessons read by Maggie Purkis and Chris Grigg. Amongst those attending were the Mayor of Shrewsbury and other dignitaries including our MP, Bruce Grocott, who took the Salute. The Boys Brigade Band kept us on our toes! There were representatives from RBL, RNA, Fleet Air Arm, the Nursing Profession, and WLA. Many more were unable to attend because it was Bank Holiday Weekend. Nevertheless the Buffet we provided afterwards disappeared in a flash! Unfortunately Lucy was away, so couldn't carry our Standard. Nancy stood in for her ("with legs like jelly"). Edith Francis from Crewe kindly came with her Standard. It was a memorable day for us all.

In September we had our AGM at Nancy's house. The Committee were reinstated as before. On the 18th we travelled to Crewe for the Area Reunion where we manned the Tombola Stall. We all had a wonderful day. Thank you Crewe.

In October, we will be going to the Houses of Parliament again.

The time rushes on so quickly keeping us all very busy. We will be on Remembrance Parade in November again, some of us at the Cenotaph.

Before we know it Xmas will be here, time for our Party activities, hoping the WRENS and WLA will join us.

Now back where we started in 2000, January is reserved for our Annual Dinner.

We still have our Attic Sales whenever possible to boost our funds and we have donated £100 to the Benevolent Fund.

Sadly another Member has died, Elsie Teece, on 28 May.

We continue to meet on the 1st Wednesday of the month at 2pm in the Haywood/Lonsdale Community Centre, Wellington.

Wherever you are in the Millennium, we will be thinking of you. Long Live the Lioness.



Shropshire branch parading in August

SOMERSET (TAUNTON)

Wednesday 9 June 1999 will be a date well remembered by the ladies of the Somerset Branch as the day they hosted the group re-union. The weather was warm with sunshine and fine blue skies which remained with us for the whole day. Well before the 11 o'clock start time, the Committee Members assembled at the Beambridge Hotel near Wellington to set up the reception areas, raffle tables, display of prizes and the memorabilia corner. Everyone was busying themselves, nerves twanging with excitement and anticipation, hoping that nothing had been forgotten or would go wrong. When we were satisfied that everything was as well as it was going to be, we waited for the guests to arrive.

The car park started to fill, even a coach from Plymouth arrived, spot on time. The ladies piled into the reception area and very soon the air was buzzing with cheery greetings.

Our guest of honour arrived, WO1 (RSM) Sam Simon, resplendent in her AGC uniform. What a popular guest of honour she proved to be. Everywhere she went she attracted attention and everyone wanted to meet her. After initial introductions we all sat down to a splendid and impressive lunch, ably served by efficient and friendly waitresses who looked after us in a delightful manner. Eighty three persons (including husbands and partners) enjoyed the camaraderie of that part of the day.

After lunch it was the turn of Lt Col and Mrs Wynn who gave an illustrated talk on their experiences of 'Living in the Tower of London'. It was kind of them to come along and share the experience, and an enjoyable end to the day.

In the late afternoon our day was over. As the ladies drifted away to their respective homes, there was just time to take the usual photos and to reflect on the pleasures of a great re-union. It had been the success we had hoped for... Here's to the next one...

SOUTHAMPTON

We start our report as we ended it last time, ie the South Area Reunion hosted by Bournemouth Branch on 23 May. Thirteen of our members went along and thoroughly enjoyed the day. It is always good to renew old acquaintances. All the hard work behind the scenes once

again paid off and it was a fitting occasion for Lt Col Val Trout to present Mrs Jean Doe (nee Cotter) with a Certificate of Appreciation.

In June we held our Annual American Supper to which we always invite members of the WRENS Association and the WAAF Association. We have the same speaker each year by popular demand – Miss Margaret Newcombe who has a photographic memory and has a great sense of humour, mostly dry!

Several of our members always go along to Corps Day at Worthy Down where they are not always blessed with fine weather, but a day we always enjoy.

Since June, members have gone along for a social gathering at the Secretary's home and our speakers have been on flower arranging and St John Ambulance, the latter undertaking many more roles than were realised.

During recent months we were invited to the 9th birthday party of the local branch of the WAAF Association. We also attended Earl Mountbatten's Annual Memorial Service in Romsey Abbey at which our Standard was present, and went to the RAF Association's 59th Battle of Britain Service at Woolston where again our Standard was on parade. The last time our Standard will be paraded will be at the Remembrance Service at Southampton Guild Hall.

Hengistbury Head near Bournemouth was to have been our last little outing, but due to bad weather we found ourselves enjoying a pub lunch!

With just three months to go before the end of the year we have our AGM, the Remembrance Service at Westminster Abbey and our Christmas party to look forward to.

Regrettably we have just learnt of the passing of Miss Clarissa (Clary) Iverna Ellis on 29 September 1999. A long-standing member, but one who was unable to get to meetings.

STAFFORD

We are still gaining new members and since our last report we have gained another 5; Mrs Dulcie Cora Lewis nee Brandon from Rugeley, Mrs Jean Kathleen Evans nee Day/James from Abbey Hulton, Stoke, Mrs Beryl Whitehouse nee Collins who lives in a village just outside Stafford, Mrs Gilian Alexandra Burke nee James from Lichfield and Mrs Kath Ward (WAAF). With 3 Associate members our total is now 55.

November Eight members attended the Local Remembrance Sunday Parade at which a wreath was laid. We were invited to the Mayor's Parlour for refreshments afterwards. One of our members, Mrs Betty Thurley, gave an interesting talk on her family's connection with Glamis, Scotland.

December Christmas Lunch was held at Tillington Hall on December 15th and 25 members attended. It was advertised as a Golden Oldie Festive Lunch and an organist played "Auld Tyme Songs" throughout the meal. In spite of this there was no Christmas atmosphere. We were very disappointed.

- January Mrs Win Plant, one of our members, entertained us with her collection of amusing stories and sayings.
- February Mrs Edith Francis – Area Secretary; Chairman of Crewe Branch; Committee of Telford and our own Committee met together in Stafford to discuss the joint Area Reunion which was to be held in Crewe on 18 September 1999. Mrs Joan Higgins, organised an entertaining quiz for our usual monthly meeting.
- March 24 members attended the monthly meeting and took part in a quiz.
- April Our 35th Anniversary was celebrated, by 25 members, attending a delicious lunch at the Red Lion, Bradley. Bradley is a small village a few miles from Stafford.
- May 25 members enjoyed an interesting talk on Windmills and saw slides of our local windmill.
- June Due to increasing numbers our present meeting room has become too small so enquiries were made regarding the use of a larger room within Trinity Church.
- July Two of our members, Mrs Joan Higgins and Mrs Marjorie Powell, visited local shops asking for donations/contributions towards the Raffle which we organised for the Area Reunion in Crewe on 18 September 1999.
- August Sadly, one of our long standing ATS members, Mrs Brenda Peck nee Bird died on 5 August 1999. Our Chairman, Mrs Ann Deakin, invited us to a 'bring a plate party' in her garden. Thanks to kind weather we had a great time.
- September We moved into our new meeting room at Trinity Church. Unfortunately the move necessitated a change of date/time – meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of each month from 1400 hrs – 1600 hrs. The Wales and West Area Reunion on 18 September 1999 was a great success – 16 members of the Stafford Branch not only worked hard but also enjoyed themselves enormously.

STOCKPORT

The ladies of Stockport have had a good year with many events to hold our interest. A few of us went to the Victory Club for the ATS Dinner Club afternoon tea. This event wasn't as enjoyable as other years, but better luck next time.

In June, one of our members held a Bring and Buy sale in her home and garden. This was an excellent event. The weather was gorgeous and we had lovely food and a very happy atmosphere. This effort, hosted by Mrs Joan Clarke, raised £160.00 for the Memorial Fund. Thank you Mrs Clarke. This donation is very much appreciated by the Memorial Fund Committee.

Later in June we all gathered at the Masonic Hall in Preston

at the invitation of the Ladies of the Preston Branch. Once again a very enjoyable occasion.

The final year of the Royal Tournament was a 'Must' for most of us. What a wonderful entertainment this has been all these years. It will be impossible, I think, to replace it with anything of the same standard.

One or two of the Stockport ladies attended the Rhyl reunion and in September we all went on a coach trip to St Anne's-on-Sea, and then to "Owd Nell's" in Lancashire. We had a couple of hours at St Anne's in gorgeous sunshine and then went on to have our meal at "Owd Nell's" at Bilsborrow near Preston. It is beside the Lancaster Canal, an ideal venue for a relaxing afternoon out. This is a restaurant that really does cater for all tastes. The menu covers just about everything anyone could wish to eat and a price range to match. (No! they are not paying me for advertising.)

Again in September we all met up with the Crewe ladies, who had invited us to their reunion. This again was excellent, a very pleasant venue and delicious food. A bonus was meeting so many girls from other Branches who had also been invited. "Thank you" Betty and your Committee. We look forward to next time!!!

In the early Summer, Stockport's Horticultural Dept did a floral display of flowers depicting the ATS. We were too late to have it done for our 50th year celebrations so it was made with the wording "AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL SERVICE FORMED IN 1938". The letters ATS were about 8ft long and were very prominent.

A few of our ladies were invited to the celebration of Helen and Jim Gardiner's Golden Wedding. Helen transferred to Stockport very soon after the Branch was inaugurated and rarely missed a meeting until bad health meant she had to take things very easy for a while. We all look forward to her recovering and being able to return to us.

The Remembrance Service in London will be our final outing for this year, but we still have our regular meetings and, hopefully, our usual Christmas Party.

We send good wishes to all our friends and colleagues for the new Millennium.

SUNDERLAND

In April we were visited by 4 Newcastle Branch members, two of whom kindly judged our Easter Bonnet competition. This was won by Mrs Norah Forsyth who was awarded the magnificent prize of a box of maltesers.

Fifteen of us went to visit Hartlepool Historic Quay in July, our Chairman, Mrs Lynn Jenkins, being the driver of the mini-bus. We all enjoyed ourselves and the experience of being aboard a Man 'O War during a sea battle was particularly realistic.

September saw twelve of us attending the North East Reunion at York. The weather was glorious and we had a very informative talk about the work of BESO (Brisith

Expeditionary Service Overseas).

As this year was the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the WRAC, one of our members, Mrs Betty Elliott, assisted by one of her former colleagues, organised a Reunion for members of her old unit, 90 Coy South Shields WRAC(TA), now alas disbanded. Forty five ex-members from all over the country (one in fact making the journey from Canada) attended. The guest of honour was the Unit's ex-RSM, Joan Greenfield OBE, who cut the cake bearing the badge of the WRAC. There was music from the 50s and 60s and a good time was had by all. Some of those attending had not seen each other for 30 years. Betty is hoping to arrange another get-together next year.

Plans are well in hand for the Grand Reunion in Cardiff next year and we are all looking forward to this.



*Four of Sunderland branch with other friends
at York Reunion*

SWANSEA

Our meetings are still held at the Guilding, the 1st Wednesday in the month 2-4pm.

Since our last report we have lost one of our first members, Mrs Muriel Price, who died after a long illness. Muriel was a WAAF but she liked to meet up with the ATS girls.

Her husband kindly gave a donation to the branch at Muriel's request.

In April, 2 members attended the reunion at Guildford.

In May, 10 members met up with 2 Cardiff members at Harry Ramsdens for fish and chips and a good old sing-a-long.

At our June meeting Dr Buhari gave an interesting talk with video and slides on the Morriston Orpheus Choir tour of Australia and New Zealand.

We had our August meeting at Veronica Barrington's lovely old house on the sea front. We were joined by a few WREN friends for tea, cakes, a raffle and a bring and buy sale which greatly helped our funds.

Eight members attended the Crewe reunion and we all thoroughly enjoyed it. Congratulations to Crewe for a lovely afternoon.

The photograph is of ATS members with the Lady Mayoress at the Swansea Mansion House in April which was described in the last edition of The Lioness.

Our Xmas lunch will be held at the Oxwich Bay Hotel early in December.



Swansea and District ATS WRAC branch on their annual visit to the Mansion House, April 7th 1999, by the kind invitation of the Lady Mayoress of Swansea City.

ULSTER

Our summer outing took 40 of us to Cookstown, some 60 miles away from Belfast. Fortified by a splendid lunch in the Cookstown Presbyterian Church Hall, most of the group took part in some serious retail therapy (shopping without dropping) or the less serious, virtual retail therapy (yes, window shopping). It was a really fine summer's day and an afternoon tour in the Sperrin Mountains made us realise just what a beautiful part of the world we live in.

On 16 October our group of 'Golden Girls' (or maybe 'Silver Sylphs') met at the City Hall Belfast, some ex-WRAC but most ex-ATS, 21 in all. We headed for the Silverbirth Hotel in Omagh with a welcome coffee-stop on the way. A beautiful cake was on display, commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the outbreak of war and even the individual menus were headed '60 Years of War - European and Japanese', rolled like a scroll and tied with ribbon.

We were welcomed by Omagh Branch President, Mrs Kathleen Twist, marshalled on parade at the hotel entrance and photographed by Alan Neill of the Omagh Constitutional. Yarns were swapped over the delicious lunch and later in the reception area we had a continuous fashion show - guests at a wedding reception, one of whom was Kathleen Twist who, with ATS efficiency, managed to attend both functions.

Mrs Penny Bailie regaled our table with her funny stories from past and present. How did she join up? She heard a Senior Commander calling for recruits in England when she was a teenager. "We want you..." 'Yes' answered Penny and stepped up. She signed on the dotted line, with no thought of asking Dad! She was having trouble recently with a wilful shopping trolley (not the supermarket type) and solved it by placing a very heavy book in it. Weeks later she had a look at the title - 'Streets of London'. She felt she'd at least done all the 'streets of Belfast'.

Next outing: Our AGM in Bangor. Lunch, yes - but SHOPPING - NO!

WALES & WEST GROUP ANNUAL REUNION

The Annual Reunion was held at Crewe on 18 September when Association members from South Wales, the Midlands and North West Area enjoyed a very entertaining day.

A thank you to Stafford who ran the raffle and Shropshire branch who held the tombola stall without whom Crewe branch could not have hosted this very successful reunion.

The next Area Reunion is to be hosted by Shropshire Branch on 23 September 2000. Further details will be published in the next Lioness.

WALES AND THE WEST

We have had a very good year, and also 6 new members bringing our branch up to 73 members.

One of our members, Mrs Eunice Watson of Newport, died on Tuesday 10 August and is sadly missed at our meetings.

The Crewe Reunion was a great success and we enjoyed it very much. They must have worked very hard to have put on such a lovely afternoon. Congratulations to all involved.

We had a very nice tour of the Cotswolds in June and another day in Stratford-upon-Avon in September. A couple of us went on an organised coach tour to Athorp Park in August to see the House and also Princess Diana's burial place on the island.

We are looking forward to meeting everyone at the Grand Reunion, and hope everyone will enjoy themselves.

WEYMOUTH AND PORTLAND BRANCH

Once again the Branch has had a good year, starting with a Veteran's Festival Week in June 1998. The stall on the sea front that week, in aid of the ATS Benevolent Fund, enabled us to send a cheque for £115.

To celebrate the 60th Birthday of the ATS, we had an exhibition of ATS memorabilia, including khaki knickers, displays of old photos and our Standard at the Veteran's Rendezvous in the Pavilion. Also, we had a floral ATS badge displayed in Dorchester Gardens. The ATS badge is also being included in a Civic Millennium Quilted Wall Hanging to be hung in the Borough. The badge was embroidered by the late Nell Mitchell of this Branch some years ago.

Our Xmas Social on 15 December was a great success with many Raffle prizes, which brought in extra money for the Branch funds. Other activities included a most interesting talk on 'Nursing in S.E. Africa', a talk from 'Help the Aged' concerning safety in the home, with free alarms and locks etc, a talk on 'Reflexology' and 3 Bring & Buy sales.

Edna Kerry became our Secretary in October 1998 and is settling in well - keep at it Edna! Muriel Pearce, our Treasurer, had a nasty accident in October, dislocating her right arm, with a chipped and fractured shoulder. After 2 operations to re-set it, she is recovering very slowly. She is still in charge, overseeing the 'deputy' doing the finances, but we hope to have her back in her chair by the summer.

Esther Pring carried our Standard at the Remembrance Parade in Weymouth and the Battle of Britain Service. She also carried it in the Veterans' Parade in June. She is a credit to us and we are very proud of her.

Our annual Branch lunch on 23 March was well attended with members travelling from Worcestershire, Bristol and different parts of Dorset.

We had our Summer Outing to Minehead by coach and steam train and went to the Veteran's Festival and Parade during 13/19 June, which attracts more ex-service people from all over the country every year. US Rangers, who embarked from here in 1944, joined us as it was the 55th Anniversary of D-Day this year.

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A stalwart member, Edith Carruthers, died in April. She also worked hard for the British Legion and was the President in Dorchester for some years. Sadly, she just didn't reach her 90th Birthday.

We enjoyed the Area Reunion in Bournemouth on 23 May. Our membership remains steady and attendance at twice monthly meetings in the RNA Club in Weymouth is very good.

Members attend the monthly Veterans Rendezvous meetings in Weymouth Pavilion to meet up with Old Comrades. This is organised by the Leisure Committee of the Council and is well attended by ex-servicemen and women from all over the country.

The Borough Millennium Quilted Wall Hanging, which has our embroidered ATS Badge included in it, is nearing completion and we will soon know where it is to be hung.

Our Autumn/Winter programme includes speakers on the ancient Portland Court Leet, Pt II of Nursing in S.E. Africa, and The Lifeboat. There will be Bring & Buys and our Xmas Social in December and finally, on 28 March, our Annual Lunch.

WILMSLOW

It is with regret that we report that we have lost one of our members, Margaret Bingham, who passed away earlier this year at St Dunstons, Brighton. She always looked forward to receiving letters about our activities. She was a Despatch Rider in the ATS. We send our condolences to her family.

The branch members are preparing for holidays at home and abroad.

In May we visited an Ice Cream and Cheese Farm, a Chocolate Factory, and then on to the Water Gardens at Stapley for Lunch and a Browse. That was a hectic day!

On 12 June we visited Preston for the North West Area Reunion where we met up with other branches in this area.

Our 5th Anniversary lunch was, as usual, at the Pinewood Hotel, Handforth on Thursday 1 July. In August we were invited to the Rhyl Branch for a party, and of course we will go anywhere for a party!

One very exciting thing that is happening in the North West is the proposed Traffords Imperial War Museum to be opened on the banks of the Manchester Ship Canal in the year 2001. It will be linked to the Lowry Centre and is expected to turn the area into one of the biggest tourist attractions. There will be exhibitions, displays etc, and the Imperial War Museum will be sending some of its films and photographic resources. This will be an exciting event!!

WIMBLEDON

Members have continued to meet at the Wimbledon Community Centre and in April we held one of our Bring and Buy Sales. We welcomed Mr Molir in May who gave a very interesting illustrated talk on "Exploring the Waterways".

Later that month we heard of the death of Doreen Rowledge, a long standing member, we were represented at her funeral and observed a Minute's Silence in her memory at our June Meeting.

We held our mid-summer tea party at that meeting and in July revived our "Bake a Cake" competition. Our President, Mrs Iris Smith and her husband Geoffrey, welcomed us to their home in August, when on a sunny afternoon we were able to enjoy a delicious afternoon tea and wander around their colourful garden.

Our last meeting before this report was in September when we welcomed Mr Woodward who told us about the lives of Jack Hulbert and Cecily Courtenidge and the shows with which they were connected.

I must not fail to mention how pleased we were that Mrs Grace Mathers was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation at the Association's AGM at Guildford University in April.

Bessie Wright

WINCANTON

We look back on another interesting year with a variety of speakers.

For example, we had an interesting talk on the Somerset dialect, with the speaker reciting a wonderful fund of her poems.

A Salvation Army Officer told us about his experiences and then entertained us with his trumpet playing.

Some of our members gave talks on their different jobs in the ATS and their experiences were greeted with great hilarity, each episode being familiar to many of us.

Our summer outing was very successful with wonderful weather - we met for lunch at an Old World pub and afterwards visited a lovely old fashioned garden where we were able to buy the plants we had admired.

In July we celebrated our 10th birthday with a garden party, complete with a cake. It was a particular pleasure for us to greet two of our founder members who had returned especially for the day.

A fund raising coffee morning was held in April, and over £100 was raised.

Thank you to all the members who worked so hard.



The Produce Stall at Wincantons Coffee Morning

WOLVERHAMPTON

Wolverhampton Branch has a current membership of 51, but unfortunately quite a few either live away or cannot attend meetings through ill health. We have 20-25 members who attend fairly regularly.

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Most of our members are ex ATS, but we do wish we could attract more WRAC. We are still an active Branch but old age is slowly creeping up on us and we can see the time getting closer when we shall be unable to get the officers to preside over the meetings. We have lost one of our members this year. Marjorie McVie died on 14 June. Marjorie was our blind member, and we were very sorry to lose her.

We have had two Speakers this year, an Easter Fayre, and an Autumn Fayre. On 23 June some members related their experiences of Service Life which proved very entertaining. We did not have an Outing this year, instead we invited members to bring a friend for tea and scones. This was very enjoyable and many thanks to Betty Clyne and Mary Hodgson who kindly made the scones.

Our Area Reunion is always an enjoyable occasion and this year we visited Crewe on 18 September. October will bring us our AGM, and the start of a New Year, and then it will be all systems go for the Grand Reunion in Cardiff next April 2000.



Jane Smith and Ethel Wilkie outside the Band Practice Room

Coincidentally, we were both woodwind players, Ethel on oboe, then flute and me on solo clarinet. We were also both recipients of the Mary Naomi Wallace Memorial Medal which was awarded by the Worshipful Company of Musicians of the City of London to the best instrumentalist of the year.

One of two sisters who both received the award, Ethel was the second recipient in 1953, her sister Eden, the fifth in 1956, and me at number 14 in 1967. The Fiftieth Anniversary of the first award, to Lynette Hopkin in 1952, occurs in 2002.

Also accompanying us on this visit were Betty Waller (W/334639), who served from 1945 – 1951 and Joan Ahrens (W/345770), who served from 1947 – 1963.

Joan takes a keen interest in the history of the WRAC and had very kindly brought along some of her extensive collection of scrapbooks so that we were able to see how the site had looked in the 1950s. The black and white photographs really brought it to life although we had some difficulty in connecting the lay-out of the original site with that of the 1960s.

Some of the buildings of Queen's Camp had been retained such as the Assembly Hall and the Churches, but unfortunately, the Band practice room was not one of them. However, we were very pleased to be able to visit the 1960's version on such an important anniversary and to acknowledge the important role that the Band played in the life of the Camp for almost half a century.

On leaving the Bandroom, I was given the key to lock up and reflected that the last time I had held that key in my hand it was 1968 and I was Orderly NCO!

Joan would like to hear from anyone else who possesses black and white photographs of the Offices; the Messes; QM Stores; the Guardroom and the old-style accommodation spider blocks. She would like to borrow them for copying if possible and would return them promptly. Her address is:

Miss J Ahrens
45 Doveney Close
Main Road, St Mary Cray
Orpington, Kent BR5 3EW

Lastly, Lt Col Berry of HQ 4th Division, Aldershot had yet again made another excellent trip possible and we were all very grateful to him. As before, Mr Mike Cope took us round and managed admirably with us all – their help is very much appreciated.

Mrs P J Smith
(Formerly W/425499 Sgt Stark P J, WRAC Staff Band, 1965-1969).

THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS STAFF BAND GOLDEN JUBILEE - 1 JULY 1949 – 1 JULY 1999

The Fiftieth Anniversary – A Celebration

On 1 July 1999, I was very pleased to be able to mark the formation of the WRAC Staff Band on 1 July 1949 by a special visit to the Band practice room at the former Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Guildford, and my third visit to the camp as a whole.

The Band is associated very closely with the Queen Elizabeth Barracks and its function as the showplace of the Corps. It was based there from its formation in 1949 and became a constant factor during the five manifestations of the site, from Queen's Camp, No. 7 ATS Training Centre, 1941 – 1951; the WRAC Depot and Training Centre, 1951 – 1953; Queen Elizabeth Camp, 1953 – 1960; Queen Elizabeth Barracks, 1964 – 1968; to lastly, the WRAC Centre, Queen Elizabeth Park, 1968 – 1992. While the site was being re-built in the 1960s, the Band transferred to Hobb's Barracks in Lingfield.

The Band was, of course, very closely associated with Guildford itself, holding its very last concert in the Civic Hall on 21 March 1992.

It was a great pleasure and privilege for me to be accompanied on this visit by one of the original members of the Band, Ethel Wilkie (W/361953). Ethel served from 1949 – 1958 and was the first female Band Sergeant Major when the rank became separated from that of Drum Major.

YORK

As we reported in the last newsletter our new venue, St Lawrence's Church Hall (200 yards East of Walmgate Bar) has proved immensely popular with both new and old members. **PDF Compressor Free Version**

In May we entertained members of the Leeds Branch. An enjoyable tea was provided by our members and the afternoon was completed by a good old sing song and dancing to the music provided by Lt Col Bob Nesbitt (the husband of our Chairman).

In June we had a General Knowledge Quiz afternoon followed by a discussion about the North East Reunion and the Grand Reunion in Cardiff.

In July Mrs Pat Carpenter gave a demonstration on how to make our own Christmas tree decorations. This was followed by a glass of bucks fizz to celebrate the 70th birthday of our Chairman Mrs Pam Nesbitt. The ladies were quite delighted when Pam told them they could keep the glasses as a souvenir.

In August Sandie Dunlevy from BBC Radio York was kindly promoting the Memorial to the Women of World War Two Fund. On 3rd August two of our members – Mrs Joan Aldridge and Mrs Vi Taylor (who both served in the War) – were invited along to BBC Radio York to take part in a live programme about their life whilst in the ATS. The following day there was a Royal Gun Salute in the Museum Gardens at 12 noon to celebrate the Queen Mother's 99th Birthday. Once again Sandie (who did serve in the WRAC) was there with her outside broadcasting van ready to interview Colonel Frankie Cooke, Mrs Cora Calvert, Mrs Betty Hudson, Mrs Joan Holden, Mrs Feona Dixon and Mrs Pam Nesbitt. She was very interested to learn that both Frankie and Cora had both met Her Majesty.

September brought our own produce stall, the proceeds of which went into the Branch Fund. The North East Area Reunion was held on the York Racecourse. The Guest Speaker was Brigadier Gael Ramsay.

We are now looking forward to our Christmas Party in our new venue and a Christmas Lunch at "The Old Lodge" Malton in January.

Ten of our members will be attending the Grand Reunion in April.

Pam Nesbitt

Officers' Branch Luncheon

The annual meeting of the Officers' Branch of the WRAC Association will take place in the Officers' Mess, AG Corps Centre at Worthy Down, Winchester on Saturday 23 September 2000.

Further details will be published in the next Lioness.

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Ex-Servicewomen may also use this opportunity to train for a new career.

- To offer respite breaks for ex-Service families which may include a disabled member, with particular emphasis on providing respite for child carers.

For further information please call 020-7973 326/225 or write to:

The Royal British Legion Women's Section,
48 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JY

Weddings

GOLDEN WEDDING (SMITH - RYAN) On 6 August 1949 Annie Ryan ex ATS and Ernest Smith ex-Able Seaman were married at Middlesbrough Church. Present address - 12 Sunnydale Road, Ossett, West Yorks WF5 0QT.

RUBY WEDDING (WARSOP - FOX) On 29 August 1959 at St Margaret's Church, Edgware. Sergeant Aubrey J Warsop RAF to Sergeant Jacqueline A Fox WRAC (Staff Band). Celebrated their 40th Anniversary at Niagara Falls, Canada.. Present address - 17 Ashfield Road, Carterton, Oxon OX18 3QY.



GOLDEN WEDDING (RILEY - PRICE) On 3 September 1949 at St Paul's Church, Hampstead Road, Great Barr, Birmingham. Gordon Riley ex Navy married Audrey Price ex ATS RAPC (Footscray) Sidcup Kent. Present address - 32 Norwich Court, Burch's Close, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4TR.



GOLDEN WEDDING (TAIT - TROWBRIDGE) On 5 July 1949 at Summerhill Hotel, Dumfries. Kenneth Trowbridge formerly SQMS, RASC to Sergeant Jean Tait ATS and WRAC. They met while serving at HQ Scottish Command, Edinburgh Castle. Present address - 4 Yelfs Cottages, Spindlers Road, St Lawrence, Ventnor, Isle of Wight PO38 1XB.

Letters

ARE WE DOING ENOUGH

Last year I was lucky to have a letter and photograph of some of our Salisbury Branch members printed in Woman's Weekly magazine. From that letter I received letters from ladies in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Australia and recently one from the daughter of a GI bride in America! All of whom wanted information about the WRAC Association.

My question therefore is - do we do enough to promote our Association? Is there a notice in every library giving details? Does your branch put up notices each month giving details of the next meeting - with a local name and telephone number for contact? Is there a copy of the Lioness in your doctor's surgery? (that one is difficult because I would not want to part with mine!!)

Does your branch get Press coverage or reports in your local paper? Should Headquarters have a stall at the County Shows? Even at the Show in my area the Army was there. Could we incorporate a small area for our Association literature with a person to talk to? Could Headquarters print an informative leaflet we could all distribute (leaving room for a local contact)?

We need more members and the people I have been in contact with are delighted to find out that there is an Association. There is a bond and friendship in our local, area and national meetings that is quite unique. I am sure more would join if only they knew we existed.

Mrs Gladys W Pope W/389156 (nee Jones)

(Editor's Note: Food for thought ladies!)

WRAC BAND

In the article "Corps Diary" in the Lioness 2/99 (page 80) mention was made of the ATS Band but nothing of the WRAC Staff Band that was formed by WO1 (BM) Fred Goddard of the Bedfordshire and Herefordshire Regiment in April 1949.

Our first big engagement was on 22 April 1950 when the band appeared at the Royal Albert Hall playing two marches at a concert given by the Kneller Hall Band.

Mrs Jacquie Warsop (nee Fox)
17 Ashfield Road, Carterton Oxon OX18 3QY

ATS IN NORWAY

When reading the extract from the Corps Diary 1954 in Lioness 2/99, I was surprised to see that the ATS were in Norway in 1944.

It was not until the 8 May 1945 that the Germans capitulated and the Allied Military Commission arrived at Fornebu Airfield.

Then it was that the ATS arrived by air or sea from Scotland and took up their duties. We were a small unit based in a little hotel in the centre of Oslo which was a beautiful city in the spring. We watched and enjoyed all the celebrations of the long awaited peace. It was a wonderful experience.

Some of us worked in the HQ in Storgatan 33. I was in the RASC office, our Colonel in Charge was American as was the Top-Sergeant and the office staff - it made a change!

The ATS were in Norway until just before Christmas and then we returned to Scotland by boat.

Mrs Dorothy May Melby (nee Dobson) (Cpl W/23880)
Melby Gard, N 2072 Dal, Norway

OPERATIONAL TOUR IN KOSOVO

I thought your members might be interested to hear what it is like to be on an operational tour in Kosovo.

I have now been in the Army almost 12 years starting off as a WRAC Range Assistant in the Hebrides before being re-badged to Royal Artillery when the WRAC disbanded. I then spent 2 years training Artillery recruits (male and female) at the Army Training Regiment at Pirbright. I then transferred to REME as a Control Equipment Technician after 20 months training at Arborfield. On completion of my training I was posted to 2 Bn REME in Fallingbommel, with whom I have had a 6 month tour in Bosnia and now this deployment to Kosovo. When I return from this tour, I am posted to the Royal Dragoon Guards' LAD at Tidworth. I think I am the first female Control Equipment Technician to be posted to a first line unit. I will keep you and your members informed of what it is like.

I became a member of the WRAC Association two years ago after seeing an advertisement in a magazine. I really enjoy receiving Lioness and reading about other ladies in the Army, some of whom were never in the WRAC. There have certainly been a lot of changes in the Army since I joined in August 1987, some for the better and some which make life more difficult (like PT for example). I certainly never imagined I would still be in the Army after 12 years, but I am glad that I am.

by W0804517 Cpl Elaine Corner (nee Pace)

**Editor's Note: Cpl Corner's account of life in Kosovo can be seen on p.7*

ANTI AIRCRAFT COMMAND

I was stationed at Ack-Ack HQ Stanmore in 1946/47 and wore the familiar red flash with the archer's arm drawing back the bow. I didn't realise the origin of the badge until one day, entering "Glenthorne" I happened to look up and to my surprise saw the emblem above the front door, picked out in rustic brickwork. All was now made clear to me, by chance:

"The black bow and arrow, aimed upwards, set on a scarlet square was the familiar badge of Anti-Aircraft Command. Originally the badge was worn only by the staff of General Sir Frederick Pile's Headquarters, but in 1943 it was universally adopted for use by all formations and units of ADGB (Air Defence of Great Britain), including the Home Guard batteries, and the use of separate signs (as previously worn

by the three AA Corps and twelve divisions) was discontinued.

The AA Command badge was symbolic of defence against air attack, but its choice was influenced by the crest of the Gordon Family, in which the sign was a reproduction, which by coincidence appeared above the entrance of "Glenthorne" at Stanmore, which was built by a member of the Gordon family in the nineteenth century and was taken over as the Command Headquarters, and the fact that the badge of the first School of Anti-Aircraft Defence at Biggin Hill was a kneeling, nude archer, his bow and arrow pointing skywards."

Mrs Eileen Mander, 14A Sheean Drive, Brodick, Isle of Arran, KA27 8DH.

MEMORIAL TO THE WOMEN OF WORLD WAR 2

As requested in the No 2 Lioness for 1999, I obtained the Information Sheet regarding the Memorial to the Women of World War 2 and forwarded a copy to my MP, Mr Crispin Blunt, with a covering letter. He replied that he was one of the 260 (sic) signatories to the Early Day Motion calling for such a memorial. He had consulted his mother who was a World War 2 veteran of the WRNS and had been involved in code breaking at Bletchley Park and in Ceylon.

Let us hope that there are many more MPs whose mothers saw service of that nature and who will heed mother's advice and attend the Adjournment Debate in support of the memorial!

As well as passing on copies to my old friends in the Services, I sent one to the President of the Home Counties Branch of the France & Germany Star Veterans Association, to which I also belong. He in turn passed a copy to a friend in the Normandy Veterans Association and other wartime associations, and promised to raise the matter at the next branch meeting, as well as including it in the news-sheet.

I hope the ensuing publicity will bear fruit.

Mrs Daphne Clarke (nee Smith), 58 Orpin Road, South Merstham, Surrey RH1 3EY.

RETIREMENT OF ALICE MATTHEWS (nee FERGUSON)

I feel I cannot let the retirement of Alice Matthews (nee Ferguson) pass without a little reminiscing and also further tribute to her very hard work for the Benevolent Fund and the Association.

I was posted to the WRAC College at Camberley in April 1967 to be an Instructor on WONCO Wing. 2 people already there were Kate Collins and Alice Ferguson, Instructors on the Officer Cadet Wing.

Outside lecturers used to visit Officer Cadet Wing and one of those was a certain young lecturer from Southampton University called Geoff Matthews – you know from Alice's surname what happened to him!

Alice's work for the Benevolent Fund and the Association has been tremendous. I'm sure those who have been recipients of Benevolent Fund grants have reason to be very grateful to her. I know she had many contacts and if the

Benevolent Fund could not help, for whatever reason, Alice would contact any other organisation she thought might possibly be able to help. She was tireless in her efforts.

I enclose a photo which you might like to publish. It was taken at the WRAC College in the summer of 1967 and shows (left to right) Major Eileen Nolan, Alice, Geoff, Major Margaret Snowden and Captain Joan Evans.

Jean Bazeley (nee Chatterton), 2 North Standen Cottages, Hungerford, Berks, RG17 0QZ.



IMBER COURT MEMORIAL

Dear Editor,

On the 30th June 1944 the Welsh Guards were holding an athletics meeting at the Metropolitan Police Sports Ground at Imber Court when tragically a "doodlebug" dropped, killing 18 Welsh Guardsmen, one Physical Training Instructor and our own ATS - W/148928 Pte Jean Jefferies.

The Metropolitan Police have laid out a small garden in remembrance and Frankie Fox and I were invited to a short, moving commemorative service on this anniversary.

Afterwards the police provided an excellent buffet lunch and we swapped memories with former colleagues. We found that they remembered us, since we were such a small platoon, they could hardly miss us.

Our day concluded with a tour of the stables and the small museum.

Doris E Lee, 5A Burbank, 71 Dukes Avenue, New Malden, Surrey KT3 4HP (Tel: 01 949 5060)



Left to Right:- Frankie Fox, LCpl Perry Welsh Guards, Doris Lee.

Obituary

**BRIGADIER DAME JEAN RIVETT-DRAKE, DBE,
FORMER DIRECTOR WRAC, DIED ON AUGUST 8
AGED 90. SHE WAS BORN ON JULY 13, 1909.**

In a life devoted almost entirely to public service, Jean Rivett-Drake gave 25 years to the Army and as long again to local politics and social work in Sussex. Tall, of distinguished appearance and with a sharp intellect, she was the antithesis of her army nickname, "Puddleduck", which was irreverently derived from her name, not her personality.

Jean Elizabeth Rivett-Drake began her military service in the 1930s with the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY), which the Army Council had authorised in 1907 – no doubt with a touch of self-congratulation over the choice of title – to provide for the enlistment of women into the then new Territorial Army. Women were also recruited to drive military vehicles and that was Jean Rivett-Drake's metier. In 1940, she transferred to the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) – formed as the war clouds gathered. Commissioned in 1942, she never gave a backward glance until she became Director of the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) 19 years later.

The war years, with their acute sense of national endeavour, highlighted her personal strengths, her leadership and organisational qualities in particular. Military transport was a key, if initially miscellaneous facility, with requisitioned bakers' vans often in convoy with the archaic army vehicles of the day. She was a Captain by 1944 for the start of a period of intense military activity in preparation for Operation Overlord, the invasion of Normandy in June that year.

Eagerness to get ashore in France once the Normandy bridgehead was secure became a national obsession and none were more eager than the women of the ATS Continental Group North-West Europe, responsible for the support of 21 Army Group. It was the first ATS element to arrive in France.

Rivett-Drake commanded a company in this mixed transport force equipped with three-ton vehicles responsible for delivery of ammunition, fuel and a huge range of supplies. Alternative demands for ammunition – when German resistance was stubborn – or petrol for the Allied tanks to resume the pursuit kept the transport companies working around the clock. Exhaustion was commonplace but Puddle-duck's care for her drivers was legendary. She was mentioned in dispatches for her services and appointed second-in-command of the group as it became part of the British Army of the Rhine in July 1945.

Never again, until she became Director of her service, did Rivett-Drake find herself so tested to the limit as she juggled the operational transport priorities of the group in a devastated Europe. She was faced with a constant turnover of drivers and staff to meet demobilisation demands and the necessity to train new arrivals. She was appointed MBE for her services with the continental Group in 1947.

With her name known and her competence firmly established in the war and its immediate aftermath, the Army offered her a career of challenge and opportunity. She was accepted for a regular commission in 1949, the year in which she became an acting Lieutenant Colonel. The best

posts in a new corps were opening up to her.

She was appointed Commandant of the WRAC Warrant Officer and NCOs' School at Liphook in 1949. This was a unique chance for her to get to know the women who would shortly be providing the backbone of the service. her caring manner was the key recollection of the women who were trained under her command. Thereafter, she moved quickly up the promotional ladder.

She went to Singapore in 1954 as Assistant Director Far East Land Forces. This was a turbulent period in the Far East. The insurrection in Malaya, just across the causeway, still had six years to run. The Singapore military base, with stockpiles in support of contingency plans to resist any further Chinese expansion in South-East Asia, required WRAC staff in many roles. Throughout the command, there were close to a thousand women under her care.

On appointment as Director WRAC in 1961 she found changing policy at the top more difficult to achieve than it had appeared from below. she set herself three priorities for her tenure in charge. These were a widening of the range of WRAC trades and specialities – so easing the pressure on manpower following an end to National Service in 1962; replanning WRAC redeployment worldwide, as detachments were withdrawn from some theatres and established in others; and a smooth move of the WRAC depot and training regiment out of Guildford and back again, to permit construction of a custom-designed barracks.

Shrewdly, she seized this opportunity to set up the WRAC museum at Guildford. By the time of her retirement in 1964 the way ahead had been carefully charted. She was an honorary ADC to the Queen during her time as Director, and was appointed DBE in 1964.

On return to Sussex, where her family had lived before the war, she became a JP and later chairman of the bench at Hove. During the 1970s she joined a team of JPs visiting Canada, at Ottawa's request, to advise on setting up a similar justice system. She served on Hove Borough council, 1966-84, and was an enlightened supporter and eventually president of the Brighton Youth Orchestra. She represented Hove Goldstone as a Conservative on the East Sussex Council Council, 1973-77, and served as a lay member of the Press Council, 1973-78. She was Mayor of Hove 1977-78 and a Deputy Lieutenant for East Sussex from 1983.

She was unmarried.

(First published in The Times 18 Aug 99.)

**CHIEF COMMANDER ELSA O'LEARY (NEE FRANKLIN)
1902-1999**

Born in Manchester, Elsa Franklin studied at the Old Vic together with John Gielgud and Noel Coward. she was a serious actress but never a star. She married Anthony O'Leary, a tea planter in Assam in 1934. He was killed in an accident 15 months later so she returned to England to earn a living. During 1937/8 she was employed on a voluntary basis to discuss, with the Commanding Officers of TA units in London, their views on the setting up of women's units at their drill halls should the need arise. When the

decision was made to raise women's units they were set up in drill halls where they were welcome.

When the ATS was founded Elsa was one of the earliest recruits and was rapidly commissioned. She served in the UK, Middle East and completed her ATS service in Singapore as a Chief Commander (Lt Col). After her discharge she worked for Shell helping to run their ladies' hostel and later their residential training centre at Teddington. She was deeply involved with the WRVS 'Meals on Wheels' and was awarded their Long Service medal. She was concerned with the British Red Cross and the local Stroke Association. She belonged to the Royal British Legion and was the Ladies Group Chairman in Seaford for some time. For the last 30 years she lived in Seaford and latterly in the RBL Mais Lodge, Bexhill where she died on the 26 July 1999.

MISS VERA THURSBY EX WO1

Vera Thursby died on 29 May 1999 in hospital after a short illness.

She served in the ATS and WRAC from 1940 to 1954. Her first posting was to North Africa and she was one of the few women to receive the Africa Star. Vera also served at the then "War Office" and in the Intelligence Section. She retired to Sevenoaks in Kent and lived there for 44 years, moving to West Drayton in April 1998.

She was "one of the best" and will be sadly missed by all her friends.

Y Dingwall

LIEUTENANT COLONEL KATHLEEN (KATY) COOPER 17 DECEMBER 1919 – 1 JUNE 1999

Katy Cooper died last summer after a valiant battle against illness. She had seemed to be making good progress and her many friends were shocked when she succumbed during a second operation.

She joined the FANYs pre-Second World War, and transferred to the ATS as soon as it was embodied. She soon became known for her efficiency and for her sense of humour – "a Corps character" is how many people described her.

She served in North Africa, Italy and the Middle East during World War II, the convoy in which she was travelling being harried by U-boats en route to North Africa.

After the war, she was the senior woman officer instructor at the WRAC Staff College, Frimley, where she met many students who went on to the highest ranks in the Corps.

Katy left the Army in 1956 in order to care for her parents and worked in several civilian fields of employment, then, in 1977, she was appointed the First Administrative Director of St Columba's Hospice in Edinburgh. She retired from this post in 1987.

Dr Derek Doyle OBE, who delivered the eulogy at Katy's funeral, told the congregation that only a few weeks before her death, Katy had been seen dancing a little jig in her driveway, calling, "You'd better be warned!, I'm on the road again!" Those present who had experienced being a passenger in Katy's car knew exactly what that implied!

Katy was a staunch supporter of the Edinburgh branch of the WRAC Association, and at the time of her death she was Vice Chairman of the Scottish Area.

MRS EMILY ROBERTS – WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH

Sadly Mrs Emily Roberts, whose 100th Birthday celebrations were reported in the last edition of the Lioness (p. 87), has died. Her life is celebrated in this letter written by her daughter.

Emily has taken her last walk; this time to meet Victor, they are already debating how far it was and how long it took.

Mum died peacefully in the early hours of Friday, September 24th. Her life ended in her beloved Wales.

What a life! One lived to the full – no time wasted. Her wit, her wisdom, her generosity of spirit, her sense of fun, her razor-sharp mind never left her.

The love and loyalty she gave us her children; the joy, love and pride she had in her grandchildren and great grandchildren knew no bounds.

Life for her had been one great adventure she was always eager to know and learn about so many things. From the days when as a thirteen year old she started work, through her days when she saw active service in the 1st World War in the QMAAC, as a wife and mother and up to her "retirement" when at 65 years she joined the Youth Hostels – not for her the senior citizens or over 60s Clubs – No, she was in the second flush of youth!

Her middle years had been filled with cooking, animal husbandry, knitting, sewing, soft furnishing, wood making – foreign travel, picnicking, caravanning, walking, and always walking. Her wonderful Cannock Chase, - the Welsh mountains, beloved Snowdonia. The Lowland and Highlands of Scotland. The valleys, coasts, the Burren in Ireland. The majesty and splendour of Gods creation filled her with awe and satisfied her every need; she wouldn't swop the simple things of life for the "crown jewels".

Mum was still reading avidly until shortly before her death, the Daily Telegraph was read cover to cover, nothing was missed. She could discuss all the column, all the columnists were scrutinised Peterborough – Bill Deedes – Tom Kemp – the Sport – athletics, tennis, cricket, racing – The Ryder Cup. Football – Hednesford and the Villa – she loved and enjoyed them all.

After a service to celebrate her wonderful life at St Chads Church Chads Moor at 4.00 p.m. on Monday October 4th she will be buried with Dad at St Peters Churchyard Hednesford.

Although latterly she had lived happily amongst her neighbours at Hazel Slade, she lived and died a lady of Chads Moor – born and bred there, schooled there and still had her shopping done on Chads Moor, Friendships old and new were precious to her.

Think of mum with love and joy. Few women can have been so liberated and have passed 100 years 4 months 21 days with such humble fulfilment. Emily knew enormous joy, and sorrow but her inner peace and serenity enabled her to cope with any challenge even those that confronted her in the last three weeks of her life – Give thanks to God for her

wonderful life – she was “a one off” a star – a legend in her own lifetime.

PDF Compressor Free Version

ASHBY. Miss Beatrice Ashby of Bulbeach, Cambridge. ATS.

BESNARD. Mrs M E Besnard of Guernsey, Channel Islands on 20 August 1999. ATS.

BINGHAM. Mrs Margaret Bingham (nee Stanway) of Ovingdean, Brighton on 13 February 1999. ATS.

BROAD. Mrs E F Broad (nee Vaughan) of Maidstone, Kent on 6 July 1999. ATS.

CASTLE. Mrs Elaine Castle (nee Flint) of Fareham, Hants on 2 July 1999. ATS.

CATHERALL. Capt (Retd) E.M. Catherall died on 8 October 1999, WRAC

CHEYNE. Miss Marjorie Cheyne of Sewell Road, Lincoln. ATS.

CLARK. Mrs H G Clark (nee Mills) of Nailsworth, Stroud, Glos. ATS.

COOKE. Miss Sylvia Hardy (Peg) Cooke of Potters Bar, Herts on 30 August 1999. ATS & WRAC.

COOPER. Miss Kathleen Cooper of Edinburgh on 1 June 1999. ATS & WRAC.

COPELAND. Mrs E M Copeland (nee Savory) of Rhyl, Denbighshire on 8 August 1999. ATS.

CRAWLEY. Miss Sylvia Margaret Crawley of Saxmundham, Suffolk on 15 July 1999. ATS.

CREASEY. Mrs M Creasey (nee Spence) of Leicester. ATS.

DARRIGAN. Mrs Nora Frances Darrigan (nee Swindale) of Solihull, W Mids on 14 August 1999. ATS.

EDGAR. Mrs Marion Edgar (nee Jamieson) of Stockport, Cheshire on 7 June 1999. ATS.

ELDRED. Miss Olive Teresa Eldred of Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex on 17 July 1999. ATS.

ELLIS. Miss Clarissa Iverna (Clary) Ellis of Otterbourne, Winchester, Hants on 29 September 1999. ATS.

ENGEL. Lt Col (Retd) Ruth Margot Engel of London on 9 October 1999. WRAC.

FAIRBANK. Mrs Grace Fairbank (nee Dawson) of Bury, Lancs on 27 September 1999. ATS.

FLETCHER. Mrs Ena May Fletcher of London. ATS.

FLETCHER. Mrs Mary Geraldine Fletcher (nee Dolan) of Whitby, N Yorks on 7 July 1999. ATS.

FUREY. Maj (Retd) M.M. Furey died on 17 July 1999. WRAC.

GAMBRILL. Mrs Rita M Gambrill (nee White) of Coventry on 19 April 1999. ATS.

GORDON. Dorothy V Gordon of Dawlish on 18 September 1999. WRAC.

GRAY. Mrs Charlotte Gray of Grays, Essex on 14 September 1999. ATS.

HAMMOND. Col Catherine Elizabeth Hammond CBE (formerly Haynes) of Highworth, Nr Swindon on 25 October 1999. ATS & WRAC.

HAYNES. Mrs C J Haynes of Ashford, Kent.

HIGGINBOTHAM. Mrs J Higginbotham (nee Wood) of Andover on 11 June 1999. WRAF.

HIGGINS. Mrs Doris Mary Higgins (nee Wright) of Bolton. ATS.

HILL. Mrs Muriel Irene Hill (nee Berry) of Colchester, Essex on 5 August 1999. ATS.

HULME. Mrs Joan I Hulme of Crewe, Cheshire on 5 June 1999. ATS.

HUNT. Mrs Dorothy Hunt (nee Burkhill) of Cottenham, Cambs on 2 July 1999. ATS.

JOHNSON. Miss Mary Johnson of Berwick on 1 April 1999. ATS.

JUBY. Mrs Grace Hilda Juby of Dereham, Norfolk on 30 September 1999. ATS.

KEARSLEY. Mrs Gertrude Evelyn Kearsley (nee Kirk) of Didcot, Oxon. ATS.

KIMMERLING. Mrs E J Kimmerling (nee Scott) of East Horsley, Surrey. ATS.

LANCE. Maj Daphne Beatrix Lance of Colchester, Essex on 17 July 1999. ATS & WRAC.

LANGRISH. Mrs D M Langrish (nee Charles) of Fareham, Hampshire on 22 October 1999. ATS.

LEBISH. Mrs Muriel Vera Mary Lebish (nee Lakeman) of Chesterfield, Derby. ATS.

LeNEVE. Mrs Stella Veronica LeNeve (nee Stokes) of Elsham Nr Brigg, Lincs. ATS.

LEEPER. Eileen Shirra (nee Nelson) of Woodbridge, Suffolk.

MacDIARMID. Mrs Mary MacDiarmid (nee Waller) of Macclesfield, Cheshire. ATS.

MacDONALD. Mrs Janet M MacDonald of Inverness, Scotland. ATS.

MacNAUGHTON. Mrs Dorothy Victoria MacNaughton (nee Young) of Aldershot, Hants on 8 July 1999. WRAC.

MAILEY. Maj (Retd) Evis Edwina Mailey of Bangor, Gwynedd on 3 June 1999. WRAC.

MALYON. Mrs Winifred Malyon (nee Calvert) of Ontario, Canada on 21 August 1999. ATS.

MASSON. Mrs E Masson of Moray. ATS.

McVIE. Mrs Marion McVie (nee White) of Sedgley, Nr Wolverhampton on 14 June 1999. ATS.

MILLER. Mrs Olive Doreen Miller (nee Lawrence) of Hythe, Kent. ATS.

MILLS. Mrs M Mills of Hebburn, Tyne & Wear. ATS.

MORRISON. Miss Evelyn Morrison of London on 6 September 1999. ATS.

MORTON. Mrs Jean Marjory Morton of Worcester. WRAC.

O'LEARY. Chief Comd (Retd) Elsa O'Leary (nee Franklin) of Bexhill on 26 July 1999. ATS.

PECK. Mrs Brenda Joyce Peck (nee Bird) of Baswich, Stafford on 5 August 1999.

PIETTE. Mrs Joan Elsie Piette (nee Carridine) of Soignies, Belgium. ATS.

PILKINGTON. Miss Jean F Pilkington of Isle of Wight. ATS.

PRICE. Mrs M Price of Swansea, W Glam. WAAF.

RAYNER. Mrs Irene Gladys Rayner (nee Durrant) of Rushden, Northants on 14 August 1999. ATS.

RAYNOR. Mrs Kathleen Raynor (nee Batchelor) of Scunthorpe, N Lincs. ATS.

RILEY. Maj (Retd) Pamela Riley of 17 Palmeira Avenue, Hove, East Sussex on 8 August 1999. WRAC.

RIVETT-DRAKE. Dame Jean Rivett-Drake of Hove, East Sussex on 8 August 1999. ATS & WRAC.

ROBERTS. Mrs Emily Roberts of Hednesford, Staffs on 26 September 1999. QMAAC.

ROBERTSON. Mrs M Robertson (nee Usher) of Cleveland, on 7 July 1999. ATS.

ROBINSON. Mrs Elizabeth M Robinson (nee Lapsley) of Bridge of Allen, Stirlingshire on 9 August 1999. ATS.

ROWAN-HAMILTON. Miss Sheila Rowan-Hamilton of Nairn, Scotland. WRAC.

ROWLEDGE. Miss D M E Rowledge of Surbiton, Surrey on 26 May 1999. ATS.

SHARP. Mrs Agnes Sharp on 22 May 1999.

SHERWOOD. Mrs Stevie Sherwood of Chelmsford, Essex on 11 August 1999. ATS.

STRIVENS. Mrs Daisy Strivens (nee Tranter) of Andover, Hants on 6 June 1999. ATS.

TEECE. Mrs Elsie Teece (nee King) of Wellington, Shropshire on 28 May 1999. ATS.

THURSBY. Miss Vera Thursby of Riverhead, Sevenoaks, Kent on 29 May 1999. ATS & WRAC.

TOYE. Maj (Retd) Betty Toye (nee Hayne) of Wheatley on 29 July 1999. ATS.

WALES. Maj (Retd) Christina Hunter Wales of Ballingarry, Fife on 3 June 1999. WRAC.

WARD. Mrs Joan E Ward (nee Symonds) of Norwich, Norfolk on 30 June 1999. ATS & WRAC.

WATSON. Mrs E H Watson of Newport, Gwent on 10 August 1999. ATS.

WILKES. Mrs Joan Wilkes of Chelmsford, Essex on 26 April 1999. WRNS.

WILSON. Col (Retd) D H I Wilson of Morton-Cum-Graton, Yorks on 2 October 1999. ATS & WRAC.

Royal Military Tattoo 2000

The MOD and the three Armed Services will celebrate the Millennium with a flagship event on Horse Guards Parade from 10-15 July 2000. It will comprise a unique spectacular, combining the most imaginative staging, state-of-the-art technology, pageantry, 'son et lumiere', lasers, fireworks and the largest mobile video screen ever seen in the world. The show will portray 1,000 years of military history with a glimpse into the future. The theme will be "Defence of the Realm: Past, Present and Future".

The three Service Charities: King George's Fund for Sailors, the Army Benevolent Fund and the RAF Benevolent Fund, will be the beneficiaries of this unique Millennium event.

Tickets cost between £20 and £50 which includes a commemorative programme and cushion but there will be a Preview on **Sunday 09 July for Service and Ex-Service personnel only.** Tickets for this preview will cost **£6 and £10** and will be available from Wednesday 01 March 2000.

To obtain tickets for either the Tattoo or the Preview, contact the Ticket Office of RAF Benevolent Fund Enterprises on 0870 241 0301

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Application for Membership

To the General Secretary
THE WRAC ASSOCIATION
AGC Centre Worthy Down
Winchester Hampshire
SO21 2RG

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

OR

I enclose £5 cheque for Annual membership which is in payment of the first annual subscription up to the 31 December.

Date..... Signature.....

Subscriptions include "LIONESSE" (Please complete in Block Letters)

QMAAC/ATS/WRAC/TAVR Army Number

Last Rank held (Present Rank if still serving)

Surname Miss/Mrs/Ms

Christian Names.....

Surname when serving

Address for Correspondence

.....

.....

..... Post Code.....

Telephone

Units during service.....

.....

Date of Enrolment..... Date of Release

Decorations..... Date of Birth

WRAC SNCOs and WO ANNUAL DINNER

The WRAC SNCOs and WOs Annual Dinner for the year 2000 is due to be held at the Garrison Sergeants' Mess, Aldershot in June 2000 (date to be confirmed). Any ex or serving member wishing to attend should contact SSgt Dawn Bagnall RLC at ACIO Strand on 0171 414 4044 (military: 94631 4044).

Numbers will be limited so a first come first served basis will apply. More details on application.

Book early - avoid disappointment!

SHOEBURYNESS

Major (Retd) Tony Hill has been researching the history of the Experimental Establishment and Garrison at Shoeburyness for many years. He has now produced a brief illustrated account for publication to mark the 150th Anniversary of the purchase of lands at Shoeburyness by the Board of Ordnance.

Among those who, since 1939, have contributed much to this history, were of course very many members of the ATS/WRAC who, from 3rd September 1939, served at the XP (later P&EE) over a period of 47 years; some on General Duties and some as Experimental Assistants in Gunnery.

The book is to be published at the end of this year with a pre-publication price of £17.50 plus £2.50 postage & packing (post-publication £25 include P&P). It will comprise fourteen chapters and some 150 illustrations, with £1 per copy donated to Royal Artillery Museums Ltd. Cheques should be made payable to 'Guns and Gunners Account' and sent to "Guns & Gunners, Pannels, Roman's Farm Chase, Mill Road, Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex CM0 8PZ". As a limited edition, subscribers names will be listed.

SHADOWS OF WAR EDITED BY ANNE POWELL

A book of Prose and Poetry by British Women during, and about, World War II was published in August 1999, in hardback, price £20. One Hundred and Thirty One authors, both service and civilian, have contributed to the book, which is published by Sutton Publishing Limited and available at Waterstone's.

Mrs Powell, herself a service wife (RN), has spent a very long and industrious time collating the material. Also, she has published the widely acclaimed *A Deep Cry*, an Anthology of poetry and prose of World War I, and *The Fierce Light*, about the Battle of the Somme from July to November, 1916. The books record the trauma and agonies suffered by those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the years of conflict.

Mrs Powell's address is: Palladour Books, Hirwaun House, Aberporth, Nr Cardigan, Ceredigion, SA43 2EU. Tel & Fax 01239 811658.

AMENDMENT TO ATS REGISTER LIONESS 2/99 PAGE 100

The Post Code for Mrs Ellen Powis should read CH41 2ZA.

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF ATS

I know it's a bit late for the 60th Anniversary Celebrations, but I thought you would like this photo of our badge which was planted in Ipswich Arboretum. Having been born in Ipswich, I wrote to Ipswich Council asking if they would commemorate this event. Unfortunately, the plot for June 1998 had been reserved for the Inner Wheel, but they arranged for it between June and October 1999, still being in the 60th year. They have kindly sent me a photo for our magazine, which I enclose. I have written to the lady in charge of this department (Helen Clancy) and thanked her

for their kindness.

Mrs M G Pearce, 64 Denison Street, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 1AX.



'ATS' Flower Bed

ANNOUNCEMENT

I take great pleasure in announcing that
Lady Val Kemball
has agreed to be the
President of the WRAC Dinner Club

Ann Butler-Deakin
WRAC Dinner Club

LETTER TO THE ATS DINNER CLUB

I would like to extend my personal thanks, and the thanks of the WRAC Dinner Club, for the sincere greetings sent to us on the occasion of the WRAC Dinner 1999. Your thoughtfulness was appreciated by us all. I apologise for not reciprocating the sentiments in time but prior to your Dinner my 90 year old mother-in-law had an accident, breaking her hip. Her health, and chances of surviving the operation, gave grave cause for concern. I am now happy to say she is making good progress.

I would like to publicly thank your Chairman, Marguerite Fellows, for all her kind help and advice since April 1997. Without her encouragement, and continued support, I might never have put any of my ideas into practise.

One of our members, Miss Win Carnegie, made two framed silk paintings of the ATS and the WRAC Badges. The WRAC Badge was auctioned and raised £25.00. Win has asked me to forward the framed ATS Badge to Marguerite to be either auctioned, or used as a Raffle Prize, at the ATS Dinner 2000.

May I, on behalf of the WRAC Dinner Club, take this opportunity to wish the ATS Dinner Club, the Officers' Dinner Club, the Warrant Officers/Senior NCO's Dinner Club and all Association members a happy, healthy and prosperous Millennium year. See you at Cardiff.

Ann Butler-Deakin
WRAC Dinner Club

DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31 OCTOBER 1999
AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION
(INCORPORATING QUEEN MARY'S ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS AND AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL
SERVICE COMRADES ASSOCIATION)

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RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIRECTORS AND AUDITORS

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of financial statements. It is our responsibility to form an independent opinion, based on our audit, on those statements and to report our opinion to you.

BASIS OF OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by trustees in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the charity's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

OPINION

In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Association at 31 October 1999, and of its net movement in funds for the year then ended, and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 1993.

BAKER TILLY

Registered Auditor

Chartered Accountants

The Clock House

140 London Road

Guildford Surrey GU1 1UW

2000

	Notes	General funds	Membership life subscription fund	Lioness life subscription fund	1999	1998
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE						
Incoming Resources						
Life subscriptions		—	985	3,942	4,927	4,772
Annual subscriptions		2,924	—	—	2,924	3,171
Investment income	1	11,474	—	—	11,474	12,698
Lioness publication income	2	10,314	—	—	10,314	15,348
Sale of badges and souvenirs		2,005	—	—	2,005	801
Donations		16,035	—	—	16,035	—
1997 Reunion income		—	—	—	—	2,329
Total incoming resources		42,752	985	3,942	47,679	39,119
Resources expended						
Direct charitable expenditure:						
Grants and donations		201	—	—	201	—
Lioness publication costs		23,413	—	—	23,413	24,960
Other expenditure:						
Management and administration	3	9,390	—	—	9,390	6,429
Total resources expended		33,004	—	—	33,004	31,389
NET MOVEMENT IN RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS						
		9,748	985	3,942	14,675	7,730
Transfers between funds		3,113	(983)	(2,130)	—	—
NET MOVEMENT IN RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR						
		12,861	2	1,812	14,675	7,730
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES						
Gains/(losses) on investments:						
Unrealised		(8,053)	—	—	(8,053)	(31,267)
Realised		—	—	—	—	23,286
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS						
	8	36,075	2	1,812	37,889	(251)
Balance brought forward at 1 November 1998		223,290	10,617	24,971	258,878	259,129
Balances carried forward at 31 October 1999		259,365	10,619	26,783	296,767	258,878

BALANCE SHEET

31 October 1999

	Notes	1998	1997
FIXED ASSETS			
Investments PDF Compressor Free Version	5	234,747	211,533
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stock of badges and souvenirs		4,616	1,036
Association standard		199	199
Accrued Income		14,131	6,442
Cash at bank and in hand	6	59,384	41,806
		78,330	49,483
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	7	16,310	2,138
NET CURRENT ASSETS		62,020	47,345
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		296,767	258,878
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	8	296,767	258,878

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

BASIS OF ACCOUNTING

The financial statements have been prepared to comply with current statutory requirements, and under the historical cost convention in accordance with applicable accounting standards, except as modified for the annual revaluation of fixed asset investments.

INVESTMENTS

Investments are stated at market value at the balance sheet date. Realised and unrealised gains and losses on investments are taken to the statement of financial activities in the year in which they arise.

STOCKS

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

LIFE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Life subscriptions are accounted for when received and allocated to specific designated funds to be released to general funds on a straight line basis over a period of 20 years.

	1999	1998
1. INVESTMENT INCOME		
Dividend income	10,062	10,758
Deposit account interest	1,412	1,940
	11,474	12,698
2. LIONESS PUBLICATION		
Subscriptions	10,314	14,937
Advertising revenues	—	411
	10,314	15,348
3. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION		
AGM expenses	2,340	1,888
Printing, postage and stationery	1,782	1,226
Audit and accountancy	2,556	2,230
Sundry expenses	548	79
Meeting expenses	644	—
Badge and souvenir costs	1,520	1,006
	9,390	6,429

EMPLOYEES

There were no persons employed by the Association during the year.
No trustee received any remuneration for services to the Association in the current or previous year.
No trustee was reimbursed for expenses incurred on behalf of the Association in the current or previous year.

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5. INVESTMENTS

	1999	1998
Listed investments at market value:		
M & G Charifund Units (9,005 units)	91,977	87,349
Schroder Charity Equity Fund Units (61,891 units)	142,770	124,184
	<u>234,747</u>	<u>211,533</u>

The historical cost of the investments, purchased at various dates, is £242,800 (1998: £242,800). All investments are monitored and administered by CCLA Investment Management Limited.

	1999	1998
6. CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND		
Current Account	33,614	16,566
Deposit Account	25,240	25,240
Cash in hand	530	–
	<u>59,384</u>	<u>41,806</u>

7. CREDITORS

Amounts falling due within one year:		
Accruals	2,916	2,138
Deferred income	13,394	–
	<u>16,310</u>	<u>2,138</u>

8. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	DESIGNATED FUNDS			TOTAL
	General funds	Membership life subscription fund	Lioness life subscription fund	
1 November 1998	223,290	10,617	24,971	258,878
Net movement in resources	36,075	2	1,812	37,889
31 October 1999	<u>259,365</u>	<u>10,619</u>	<u>26,783</u>	<u>296,767</u>
Analysis of net assets between funds:				
Investments	234,747	–	–	234,747
Net current assets	24,618	10,619	26,783	62,020
	<u>259,365</u>	<u>10,619</u>	<u>26,783</u>	<u>296,767</u>

Unrealised losses on investments included in unrestricted funds at the year end amounted to £8,053 (1998: £31,267).

9. CONNECTED CHARITIES

The Association is connected by virtue of common management and administration, and by related objectives and activities to the Auxiliary Territorial Service Benevolent Fund and the Women's Royal Army Corps Benevolent Fund and the Princess Royal's Memorial Fund.

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WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS DINNER CLUB

All cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association and sent to:
WRAC Association HQ, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester SO21 2RG

