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LIONESS



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THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 206184

Founded in 1919

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Back Cover

Field of Remembrance November 2000

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EDITORIAL

I always plan to have the editorial written well in advance – somehow it never happens. There have been changes, yet again, here in the Headquarters. Derek Dallamore decided to move on to pastures new and we have a new Case Secretary. Jane Freebairn retired from the WRAC nearly 10 years ago. Since then she has worked for the Open University and latterly at Savill Garden in Windsor Great Park. Like me, she still hasn’t decided what she wants to do when she grows up!

Sadly, Rosie Mills, the Chief Clerk, also decided that it was time for a change after being a Civil Servant for 20 years. I am sure that all of you who had dealings with her over the last 9 months will miss her cheery personality – we certainly do in the office.

Our ‘Life in the Army Today’ article this time is by Lt Pip Tattersall, an education officer in the AGC. She has written about the Physical Training Programme she undertook in preparation for attending the All Arms Commando Course and the article was first published last year in ‘Torch’, the journal of the RAEC Association. Subsequently, she was selected to attend the course along with two other women and you may have read about this in the newspapers. She made it to the final week, outlasting some of her male colleagues but, unfortunately, did not complete the course. A magnificent achievement none the less as I am sure that most people assumed that no woman would make it half as far.

Articles of Interest

A CHILDS EYE VIEW OF THE LAST WAR AND BEYOND

Mrs C M Bass, (Pte C M Rooney W/377094.)
130 Banksbarn Digmaor, Skelmersdale, Lancashire.

I was seven years old and had just made my first Communion when the Second World War started. It was the only time in my life that I looked like a traditional bride because when I did get married, I wore a lovely pink and grey suit that my sister sent me from Canada. I was living in the tenement in Glasgow where I had been born.

When the air raid sirens sounded, everyone closed the shutters and all our neighbours who had prepared food and flasks would come down to our landing. All sorts of stories would be told while the planes flew overhead and the bombs fell and some of the adults would sing to try and drown out the noise. Anderson Shelters were built in the back court of the tenement where my aunt lived, but there was also space under her building where we used to play. We put chairs and bedding in there and when the alert sounded we crossed the street and went down into the shelter we had made.

Then we were evacuated. Along with my brother, sister and cousins, I was sent by train to Perth. When we arrived, gas masks and all, we were driven to what looked like a big mansion. Before we could go in we had to take

off our shoes and change into our house shoes. This we had to do every time we went in or out. Some of our own teachers had come to the school so we did not feel too lost. My brother and male cousins would go fishing after school and we girls would watch or find other things to do. Our meals were served to us by a maid. One time she came in and said we had rung the bell for her. We did not understand what she was talking about until she pointed out that there were bell pushes under the carpet. One of us had obviously trodden on one by mistake.

When the time came to return to Glasgow, it was like coming back from a long holiday. I had a new brother and sister and the streets were full of American soldiers handing out sweets and gum to the children and nylons to the older girls. Our tenement still stood, although others had gone and my aunt’s bungalow in Clydebank had been turned into rubble by the bombs. I left school at 14 and another cousin got me a job with her making headache powders and capsules. My wages were thirteen shillings a week which I gave to mum. She would give me sixpence back, that was for the Saturday matinee and sweets. To earn extra money, we would do the neighbours’ shopping, collect a jug of milk from the dairy and take the wireless accumulator to be recharged. We only had one room and a kitchen although we were lucky enough to have an inside toilet, even if you couldn’t turn around in it! In the kitchen there was a ‘hole in the wall’ bed with boards

which often fell down. My bedchair was next to the range where the iron kettle was kept on the boil with 'jorries', or marbles as the English call them, rolling around inside. When I was twenty, the Parish Priest suggested that I join the Forces. I told him that I had failed at school, but he said I could buy my way in. So I made my way up to the careers office in Sauchiehall Street where I was surprised to find that, despite being only 4' 10" tall, I passed to join the army! So began the next stage of my life, which maybe you will read about in another edition of the 'Lioness'.

**CAN YOU BEAT THIS?
PERHAPS I CAN**

In Lioness 2/1998 we published an article about 3 volunteers all from one family under the title "Can You Beat This?" Well apparently someone could. This article was written by Mrs Lanchester who, sadly, has since died.

We have followed her article with extracts from the tribute paid to her at her funeral. She epitomised the spirit of the ATS and we send our condolences to her friends and family.

The SHORROCK family of HALL GREEN, BIRMINGHAM produced the following:

On Sept 9th 1938 it was announced that volunteers would be required as the result of the formation of the AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL SERVICE – the ATS. Volunteers were also required for the TERRITORIAL ARMY. This is how we joined.

ATS

Mother	MARIE SHORROCK	46 yrs	09 Sep 38
Eldest Daughter	KATHLEEN MARY	23 yrs	09 Sep 38
Middle Daughter	FRANCES ELAINE	21 yrs	11 Sep 38
(The 9th was my 21st Birthday and I was on holiday, so I joined on my return.)			
Youngest Daughter	AUDREY NEILSON	16 yrs	
(Applied but told she was too young and to re-apply in one year.)			
	Her name recorded	17 yrs	1940

TERRITORIAL ARMY

Father	FRANK SHORROCK	46 yrs	09 Sep 38
	Searchlight Brigade		

During 1938 and 1939 we all attended regular training sessions at various Army Depots and Units in our immediate area. Audrey was included only as an "observer". In August 1939 Elaine was at Camp in Warwick attending training including administrative experience of the Army Records and Pay Office at St John's Warwick, which was responsible for eight infantry regiments – if I remember correctly. Our Camp was supposed to finish at the end of August. On the 28th, the Camp Commandant called us together, told us we would not be going home and informed us that we were on Active Service. After the Declaration of War on 3rd Sept 1939 we were given 24 hours leave after which I did not see my home again until late 1941.

ON ACTIVE SERVICE

Mother MARIE SHORROCK Sept 1939 – 1941
General Duties in RA Units & AA Command England.
Discharged 1941 to care for my father.
1st Daughter KATHLEEN MARY Sept 1939 – 1941
General duties in RA Units & AA Command, England.
Married to Major A Lamb RA 1940. Discharged to have first child 1941.

2nd Daughter FRANCES ELAINE Aug 1939 – 1945 Army No. W/953
Admin and Clerical Duties in mixed Signal Units, Scotland and England. To Staff Duties – GA & Q Eastern Command, Western Command, & Mid-West Dist Wales.
Married to Major C W Lanchester RE 1941.
Commissioned at Craigmillar OCTU, Edinburgh 1941.
Attended and passed ATS Wing of Staff College, Bagshot Park Sandhurst 1944. Demobilised at end of war in Europe.

3rd Daughter AUDREY NEILSEN 1940 – 1945
General & Clerical Duties. Various units in England.
Married in 1944 to Cpl F Hull, Canadian Infantry.
Discharged 1945 to have first child

TERRITORIAL ARMY

Father FRANK SHORROCK Sept 1939 – 1941
Searchlight Brigade RE in AA Command. Various places in England.
Discharged 1941 having sustained abdominal injuries.

In 1945 Cpl Hull took Audrey and their child to Canada with the returning Canadian forces. In 1946 Frank & Marie Shorrock emigrated to Canada to join Audrey. In 1948, Kathleen and her husband and children also emigrated to Canada. In 1947 Elaine's husband returned from Germany on his demobilisation and the family stayed in England. There is one survivor from all those listed above Audrey in Canada who is in her 77th year. Sadly all the records documents and photographs of their war service went with those who had emigrated. The only ones given to me and the bulk of my own records were accidentally destroyed in a bonfire whilst clearing out a loft while I was moving house in 1967. This was particularly painful in the case of those relating to the years 1938 to 1941. The only photograph I have left which I enclose is that of me taken in November 1939 A/Sub Leader (Cpl) Elaine Shorrock taken whilst serving in No. 11 Company ATS, St John's Record and Pay Office, Warwick. This was a small Company and had as its first Commanding ATS Officer Jnr Commander Jean Knox, who went on to become the second Director of the ATS, and after remarriage, in retirement, was Lady Swaythling. We also had A/Sub Leader F Maud Hadley later promoted to Sergeant and who was eventually posted away and rose to the rank of Regimental Sergeant Major in the ATS.

Stationed for some years at Aldershot, Guildford and Liphook many who attended training courses there will remember her! I understand that her portrait was painted as a true representative of the ATS and if my information is correct the picture now hangs in the War Museum.

**A CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE
OF MRS FRANCES ELAINE LANCHESTER
(née Shorrock) – 09.09.1917 – 22.12.2000**

Kirsten Lanchester, 137 Highfield Lane,
Oving, Chichester, West Sussex PO20 6NN

The early years of Elaine's life were determined largely by her father's work in the cotton trade and his evident wanderlust. She was born Elaine Shorrock in Ahmedabad, India in September 1917. She attributed all



Corporal Frances Elaine Lanchester and friends

successes thereafter to the fact that she was fed on the milk of the Aga Khan's buffalos! At the age of 7 her family was in the Durban area of South Africa and at about the age of 11 living on the Isle of Man. From there she was sent as a boarder to a Convent School in Ireland and seems to have made the journey across the Irish Sea quite regularly. As well as enjoying the sea trips, Elaine also acquired a love of motor cycling by riding pillion to competitors round the course of the Isle of Man TT.

The family moved next to Birmingham and although of an age to be employed, her father forbade Elaine to take a job that might deprive a breadwinner of needed income. She worked first in a jeweller's shop: I guess the pay wasn't sufficient for a breadwinner. Then she took a job that introduced the happiest experiences for her throughout her working life – employed at Boots to sort out their library. Those who know of her much more recent work at West Dean will know how natural have been her talents in that direction.

The notorious Munich appeasement Agreement was signed by the leaders of Germany, France, Italy and Britain on the 29th of September 1938. About three weeks before that, four members of the Shorrocks family, still living in Hall Green, Birmingham, volunteered for Territorial service: Elaine's mother and father and older sister did so on Elaine's 21st birthday. Elaine, herself volunteered on returning from holiday a couple of days later. The youngest child, Audrey, was too young to join but did so as soon as she could and all of them served during WW2, mother and three daughters in the newly formed ATS: father in the Searchlight Brigade of the Royal Engineers of Anti Aircraft Command.

Kathleen Mary married Major Lamb in 1940, Elaine married Major Clive Lanchester in 1941. The same year, her father was injured and discharged, and her mother discharged to look after him. Audrey married a Canadian infantryman, Cpl Hull in 1944.



So it was that Elaine came to be part of that family of engineers who in the early decades of the twentieth century designed and built Lanchester cars. By contrast, Elaine herself disliked machinery and gadgets so that the mechanical genius of Clive's family caused her to describe herself as "only having a bird's brain". Of course, this was quite untrue as was proved not least by her gaining a commission in the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1941.

Family life began in 1947 with the birth of Richard. Kirsten was born in 1953 and a few years later the family moved to Itchenor. After living in Birmingham and Sutton Coldfield it was a delight to Elaine to be near the sea again. There were two further moves before coming to West Dean: via Cocking and Somersdale.

They lived on the West Dean Estate for some 30 years occupying a cottage in the centre of the village. Elaine worked initially as a volunteer librarian at the College but then became the first volunteer to be offered a paid post. She really enjoyed giving tours of the College.

Books were a major part of Elaine's life. For 6 or 7 years she worked in a second-hand antiquarian bookshop owned by a friend. Elaine always enjoyed reading and owning books many of which had press cuttings inside the covers. Lots of the books have been about the countryside, wildlife, rural history, arts and crafts, India and the Himalayas, Native Americans and Eskimos. Her interest in Natural History was a treasured inspiration she caught from her father.

In like manner she inspired the same love of books in her own children. She was also a talented storyteller in her own right. Watching TV was forbidden until Kirsten was 18! However, Elaine did allow Kirsten to visit an elderly and lonely lady who had a TV. It required a half mile walk each way.

The list of Elaine's interests and enthusiasms is formidable. She was a strong supporter of The Chichester

Festival Theatre as one of their "Cavalcaders" – the amateur performers during the festival. She supported the Open Air Museum at Singleton, was a volunteer at the Pallant House Gallery, occasionally was a warden at West Dean as well as inspiring, through her librarianship, the creative work of others.

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She was a member of the Chichester New Park Film Club, an avid attendee at the Chichester Festival Theatre and the Minerva. She gave a lot to charities, particularly those concerned with the environment and humanitarian projects – WWF, Bombay Natural History Society, The Gurkhas and many others.

Being adventurous has been characteristic of Elaine's attitude to travelling and activity. With Richard she went on a camping trip along the Pacific Coast of the United States. She went to Spain to visit Kirsten. Greater financial stability in their 60s enabled Elaine and Clive to travel more freely so that they went to Alaska and India. In her 70s she went alone to New Zealand for 6 weeks. Her last trip was to Australia last September, an ambition that that had kept her going towards recovery after her operation in the spring.

Gardening and wildlife were a mainstay for her. When young she was active in sports, played hockey at school and has loved watching athletics, rugby and all the Olympic games. She would walk long distances and cycle to the village shop in her old policewoman's sit-up-and-beg bicycle.

Elaine enjoyed a simple, uncomplicated life, gardening without chemicals, reading the paper, enjoying the greenhouse, reducing the consumption of energy, and just sitting quietly without the light on. What an example to us!

THIRTY YEARS ON GUNS 'n ROSES

Mrs Barbara Crabbe née Rowbottom.

(Intake 5 Camberley 1969)

Little Lodge, Hensting Lane, Owslebury,
Winchester, Hants SO21 1LE

I wonder how many of you watched the programme "Guns and Roses" which followed a girls' platoon during their year's training at Sandhurst, with a sense of horror and very glad that it was not like that in our day. For our family it was interesting as our middle daughter Hazel, was one of the platoon.

It came as quite a surprise when, in her final year at Bristol University studying microbiology and pathology, Hazel suddenly said at the end of Christmas break "I think I might join the Army". As both her father and I had been army officers, it never occurred to us that any of our three daughters should even consider it! Had it been that aid trip she did to Bosnia during a holiday that had sparked this off, or the fact that she did not want to be stuck behind a computer like so many of her contemporaries? However she certainly had quite a good idea what she would be getting in to.

As the selection process went on, the differences in the thirty years since my time seemed very wide. It was a



Mrs Barbara Crabbe and daughter on commissioning night

long journey even to get to Regular Commissions Board (RCB). After the initial interview and medical she put everything on hold until after finals. Then it was straight into interviews, pre RCBs, with the Royal Logistic Corps (RLC), who agreed to sponsor her to RCB. She thought she was managing to keep quite a low profile being an army brat when the officer-recruiting Colonel "bubbled" her at dinner. He had in fact met her for the first time when she was only days old! The RLC also sent her on two weeks adventurous sailing off Scotland. We had done a lot of sailing as a family in army boats and she was already an experienced hand, with more miles in her logbook than most.

Hazel started serious training, culminating in her attendance at RCB thirty years to the same week, after I had done so. RCB did not seem to have changed very much other than the physical side. She immediately went off to friends in Wales after RCB and was there when the all-important envelope arrived at home. I telephoned her to report its arrival, and she said I could open it if I wanted to, but I declined at that stage. However, by midday my curiosity got the better of me and I opened it. She had passed! I telephoned her at a rugby match she was attending with her friends, so half of Wales knew from them that she had passed.

It was then full steam ahead to get fit enough for Sandhurst. The suggested training programme arrived, and it looked horrendous to me. She gave up her "fill in" job at Bendicks chocolate factory in order to get in three hours training at the gym! I used to join her at the end in the swimming pool where she used to do 2 lengths to my 1! We admired her dedication. She also had a long kit list of articles to take with her, all those things that were issued in our day now had to be bought. Shoe brushes, towels, grey skirt, clothes brush, iron, smart suit, bun nets, sports bras, court shoes, ironing boards, tights (do you remember those awful issue stockings that were virtually purple and short even on short girls?). I had to chuckle because they still needed three pairs of knickers that were never worn but looked good on room inspection. They even recommended a mobile phone. A familiarisation weekend visit resulted in more advice on what to take in the way of vitamin supplements! They were also asked on this visit whether they would mind being filmed for the documentary on the girls at Sandhurst. The producer came down to our house a couple of weeks later and did some filming of Hazel packing.

The New Year arrived and on a crisp January day we took her into Sandhurst after having been hosted to lunch by the RLC at Deepcut. We went in via the wonderful front portico of Old College with hundreds of other parents, sons and daughters. I remember arriving at WRAC College Camberley by train and being terrified as Ruth Henderson seemed to know so much about what we were in for. I was just beginning to think that I, as a lass of Lancashire, was going to find this a bit difficult to fit in when up piped Diane Kinchin from the corner with her rich Yorkshire accent. We had only been 18 and did not have degrees to our names as most of these cadets did. Course 51 had arrived wearing hats and gloves. Course 1 of 99 arrived clutching ironing boards! There was however the same rich variety of accents and backgrounds. Hazel was whisked away and we were given tea in an anteroom. We met 11 Platoon Commander, Capt Mackinley Bennett RLC (originally WRAC), who was amused to hear that I had attended that rather select WRAC establishment down the road. Hazel returned to us to organise the unloading of the car and said, "They have started shouting at us already!". They were also sharing small rooms, which surprised me, but they did have fitted carpet (no floor to bull).

As you saw the year unfold on the series, they started off as most recruits do with the endless round of kit inspections and cleaning. As a cadet I seemed to be always cleaning loos. Where it differed most dramatically from our day was the physical training. There were in fact two platoons of girls originally, but by week six they had lost so many that they merged into one. Despite all the training Hazel had done she found the physical training gruelling. As one cadet said "they were so tired that they easily became emotional". Hazel told us she broke down when she failed her weapon handling the first time, but she took it half an hour later and passed. We could only offer encouragement over the phone. She telephoned us much more frequently than she had ever done at university. She must have got very tired of our "war stories" as we tried to let her know that tomorrow would be a better day.

About three weeks into the course Staff Marriner appeared on the corridor with some old framed photographs of WRAC cadets from Camberley, up until then the corridors only had photos of ancient male cadets from the early 1930s. Hazel said "Oh I wonder if my Mum is there?". Staff Marriner was surprised but unearthed Course 51 and we were placed on the wall outside Hazel's room. Later as I wandered along the line of photos I saw many old friends up there, Miss Doig our CSM especially. For those who thought SSgt Marriner was fierce, she was as well respected as Miss Doig. The cadets had thought that running them back from training on Barrozza was a bit sadistic until they realised that if they did not get back before the male cadets all the cakes at tea would have gone. Cakes played an important part in 11 Platoon's life.

It is a family tradition that whenever the children have gone into university or new accommodation I have made a cake to go with them. Over the year many cakes went up there, it did not matter about weight watching as they used up all the calories so quickly. By the end of the first term, Hazel was a size ten and even then some clothes looked baggy on her. Odd things showed up from the

girls weight loss, like if their webbing was not tight enough it rubbed and their hips became red raw. It made the bruise we got in the first few weeks from those unaccustomed collar studs look paltry! There was a great need for cranberry juice as it is supposed to help with problems of the urinary tract. There were other emergency calls for more bun nets, black M&S knickers etc.

Over the year I got to know the girls quite well, they teased me about our training, which had included one flower arranging lesson and a makeup lesson. We, I pointed out did not have to have the "How to use a knife and fork lesson". When I was delivering something one Saturday, one of the girls asked me my opinion on the white belt she was putting blanco on. I replied that I did not have any expertise in the matter! Another asked me to check over her formal "thank you" note she was writing, this was something I did know about! Bulling shoes is another ability we all share of course, some of us used to manage to get the male cadets to do this in our day; this tradition has not died out. Hazel even had one particularly stubborn pair of shoes bulled up by a Staff Sergeant from one of the boys' platoons in the Company!

Drill played quite a large part in their first term as it had in ours. They ended up with a bigger squad than ours did but the height range was the same from 6ft something (in their case known as "Big Bird") down to 5ft and a bit (in our case known as "Flea"). Our lectures from academics were interesting, though I remember being delegated by "others" to ask some questions so that they could write letters. Our successors seemed to find it difficult to keep awake in theirs because inevitably they were just back from yet another exercise. They however did not seem to have those mysterious "personal relationships", lectures which mystified me at the time until I went to Guildford as a Platoon Commander. Those who went to Camberley will remember that Ex "First Flight" entailed working in the kitchens and cleaning yet more loos, 11 Platoon's meant night marches in the snow or digging trenches.

Hazel said at one point that the only time in those first few weeks that she knew what was expected of her and what was coming next, was in chapel. The padre was also generous with the chocolate on exercise. Other differences were in uniform of course, we wore No.2 dress most of the time, they had working dress, combat dress, overalls, blues etc. They also had a skirt made of the same material as the working dress trousers to wear with "woolly pully" or short sleeve blouses. The short sleeve blouses were the same, I can testify as I ironed them once!

Second term arrived with the intake moving over to New College, I still think it looks like a public loo. By the way, the ladies loos in Sandhurst have not been renovated in 30 years either. They had a male platoon commander and Para Staff Sergeant, which made for a steep learning curve for them on how to treat women. We remember our Maj Williams, "a gunner", who was not keen on his posting to a girls' unit and the lovely Maj Lewis, a "Cherry Picker", who had held three different commissions in three different armies. He had encouraged us all to get married as quickly as possible, our Commandant did not approve of that. 11 Platoon had been well trained in the

first term and in many ways the girls were more organised about chores like washing and ironing than the boys were. Rooms were allowed to be more personalised than ours and posters were encouraged.

The girls gained in confidence as they started to hone their military skills. Hazel came home on the odd occasion for a weekend; mainly to sleep. It was odd to see combat kit on the washing line again. I had combat kit when I was an admin officer for the REME at Bordon but it was not a general issue item for girls, indeed the QM at Bordon had to get a set from the Gurkhas at Church Crookham for me. Another cadet came with Hazel and they were working on military abbreviations for a test. I quite surprised myself at remembering some of them.

There were social occasions for the cadets tucked in between exercises; my husband very proudly attended the "Dads Dinner" something they definitely did not have at Sandhurst in his day. They had platoon nights out to clubs, which we of course did not but the signing in system still exists. I did not hear of subterfuge going on in this, but no doubt it still did. Cathy Lewis and I remember hiding behind the driveway lights to cadet wing to avoid being caught by the guard when the Sandhurst cadet's car in which we had been returning broke down. (The cadet with the sickly car joined the REME and is now an incredibly senior officer).

Sports were different too, Hazel all 5ft 2ins of her took up Rugby and even got her Sandhurst colours, which made her father rather jealous. He attended a couple of the matches and was impressed with the standard. We played tennis and hockey.

During this term the cadets had to be finally selected for their Corps. This too was a change from 30 years ago when we all went into the WRAC and later had attachments. Now they are posted directly into the Royal Artillery, Signals, Engineers, REME, RLC, AGC etc. I think they all found that the Corps were all quite keen to have the girls. I like to think it is because their predecessors, who were the first to serve with the Corps, got it right!

The end of second term seemed to arrive quickly, Hazel seemed to fit a lot into her three weeks leave, a week at the Edinburgh festival and an adventure training expedition diving in the Red Sea where she celebrated her 22nd birthday.

The third term rushed by culminating in an Exercise in Cyprus and then straight into preparations for commissioning. The girls were playing a Rugby match against the Navy at Portsmouth the week before, so Freddie and I went to support them (they ran rings round the Navy!). When I mentioned to the girls that I had left something in their coach they assumed that it was another chocolate cake. It was in fact a huge flower arrangement, showing that the one lesson at Camberley in flower arranging had not been wasted. As it went into the lines the platoon Commander was disappointed that it was not a cake but then he is in the Royal Tank Regiment! The girls appreciated it though.

It seemed to be freezing and pouring with rain for two weeks before commissioning but on the day the weather

was sunny and bright if very cold! Now you really needed to have some military training to last the day! It was freezing and we sat on Old College Square for 2 hours. It was however a wonderful day and we were a very proud group of friends and family, this included giving a commentary to an American who seemed to have lost the group he should have been with. Then lunch for the parents, and we returned for a dinner in the evening. It was good to see them all in their differing mess kits, none of them had an ounce of fat on them and they all looked very glamorous! Thankfully we adults were then dismissed and they got on with enjoying the ball.

The girls are, by now, all well launched into their careers. They will probably all serve on average much longer than Course 51 did, as we had to leave when we were expecting our children. However, having completed the Sandhurst course, childbirth will seem a doddle! As a totally biased onlooker, this generation is good, much fitter than ever we were, more mature and capable of handling whatever they come across. Ten years earlier, when girls had just arrived at Sandhurst, the then Commandant said that the girls were proving to have great courage and to be of higher moral fibre than the boys. These are girls all with different qualities who are good successors to those whose motto was "Gentle in manner, resolute in deed".

PS Should Mary Palmer or Maggie Cross née Spencer read this article I would love to hear from them on E-mail Crabblesleg@aol.com

THE LONG JOURNEY

Mrs Betty Campbell (W/99278 McKay 1941-46)
1 Guthrie Place, Rhu, Argyll & Bute, G84 8RF

It was the beginning of the Millennium when I last wrote a letter to your magazine, and I was very pleased to have it published. It opened several doors to me; two ex ATS wrote to me wishing to correspond, Irene Pugh from Brecon and Doreen Bond from Greasby, Wirral. We now write regularly and it's good to find some people with the same interests; reminiscing on the old days.

As our AGM was held in Inverness this year many ladies from our Glasgow Branch attended. I met up with a lady from Perth, Anne Smart, who was going to London to the Cenotaph Parade so I made arrangements to accompany her. We knew there would be draw backs before we started our train journey because of the dreadful flooding in England, but, feeling young at heart, decided nothing would stop us and so we set off. I travelled from Rhu and met up with Anne in Glasgow. Excitedly we set off for Central Station where our train was due to depart at 12.20 pm arriving in London around 5pm. The journey was slow but bearable until we got to Crewe. For me Crewe Station had many memories still at the back of my mind, having spent four or five hours there in a siding during a raid, sitting in a blackout on our kit bags. However this was not wartime. No one seemed to know which platform our connecting train for London would arrive at, but we did get a nice cup of hot tea which helped and eventually our next train arrived. To our disappointment it was jam packed and we could only get standing room in the

corridor which makes balancing yourself and your luggage difficult; especially at 80 years young! Four hours later we arrived in Euston and picked up a taxi to take us to our hotel; feeling good that we were going to make it to the Sunday Parade.

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As I am the last survivor of a family of six who all served in uniform during the war I felt it was a great honour to be taking part in the Parade of Millennium year. Sunday dawned a most beautiful morning. At Horse Guards parade everyone was really friendly; there was a lovely atmosphere. A young WRAC Warrant Officer came along to lick us into step, Left - Right, two little words that meant so much to us as we all marched out with our heads held high, on and past the Cenotaph. Unfortunately that day we were invisible to the television audiences, we were neither seen nor mentioned on the television coverage. Did this upset any other members of the ATS who may have travelled further than us for this very special day in our lives?

Returning home on the Monday we experienced the same difficult journey, arriving hours late but at least having had a seat this time. Having missed her connecting train to Perth, Anne came home with me for the night where she met my family. This gave us some additional time together to reminisce about our travels old and new and made for a lovely ending to our weekend.

I have been attending our Glasgow branch meetings and making more new friends with every visit. May I give them all my best wishes for this the new Millennium of 2001. They say life begins at forty so perhaps I am a late starter.

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2000

B Dranter, 30 Blake Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 5JL

Last November, Remembrance weekend was one of the highlights of my life. It was the first time that I had been to London for that occasion.

What with railway repairs and the flooding, it seemed to have a nightmare start, but after getting over those obstacles, everything began to fall into place. The Saturday afternoon spent in the Albert Hall was very entertaining and filled my friends and me with pride. Though it was teeming with rain outside, the sun was shining inside the building with the comradeship and friendliness - it was as if we were as one. When Sunday dawned, it was bright and sunny in readiness for our parade along Whitehall - I could hardly believe it. I met up with my friends from the Leicester branch on Horse Guards Parade, and the six of us looked very smart indeed. Very soon we were marching towards Whitehall - we managed to keep in step to the delight of the crowd, and the reception for us all was truly wonderful. The Princess Royal took the salute, after which we went on our way to find some lunch. We were stopped by quite a number of people from other countries including a young couple from Russia, a lady from Poland and another from America. All wanted to know the kind of work we did in the Services, and were quite amazed when we told them of the many different trades we had been employed in,

most of which women had never been involved in before 1938.

The field of poppies was our next stop, and a gentleman told us that a service was to take place in Westminster Abbey later that afternoon, so we decided to attend - it was for the British Limbless Association. It was really nice to be there for such a service. When the day was over, it was with considerable sadness that I said goodbye to my friends, but you know, just for a little moment in time, I had felt seventeen again. I enclose a photo of the six of us parading down Whitehall, on that very sunny Sunday in November 2000. I shall never forget it.

I did think however, that it seemed a shame that such a lot of people did not know who we were, and the BBC cameramen never seemed to get us on film satisfactorily, or even mention us - is it because we are not in Khaki? My son taped it for me on video, but all we saw was a brief view of our backs!! Nevertheless, the six of us, Lilian, Barbara, Vi, Ellen, Sheila and myself had another great memory to look back on, me especially because it was the first time I had been a member of that special parade.



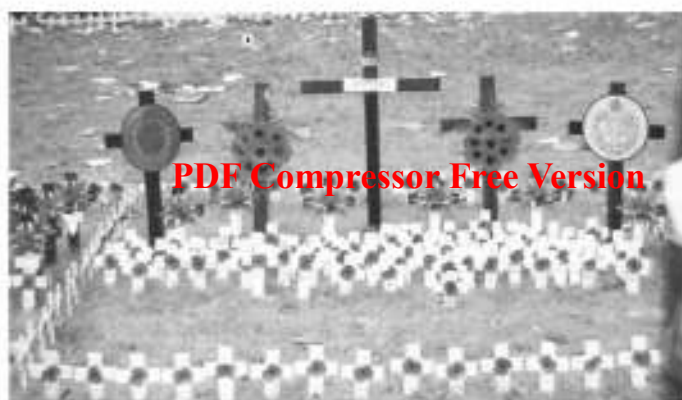
B. Dranter and friends from the Leicester Branch on Horse Guard Parade, Remembrance Day 2000



WE REMEMBERED THEM

Norah Bagnall (W/22377 Turpin (Dick)),
33 Glebe Street, Chiswick, London, W4 2BD
(first published in Age Concern's "The Pensioner")

I am a member of the WRAC Association as I served for almost five years in the ATS during the last war, and for the past few years I have joined with WRAC friends at the Field of Remembrance in the grounds of Westminster Abbey for a short service.



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*The A.T.S./WRAC plot at the Field of Remembrance
at Westminster Abbey*

Each branch of the Services has its own plot and crosses are planted in remembrance of those who gave their lives in service to our country.

Every year for as long as anyone can remember, the Queen Mother has attended this service. She used to plant her wooden cross but more recently, as she is unable to bend properly, she has laid it on a plaque, but last year she had to cancel owing to her broken collar bone. Her deputy was HRH the Duke of Kent.

Before the service, we were told the Queen Mother had sent a message to say how deeply distressed she was at being unable to join us this year.

The service started with a short prayer given by a member of the Abbey clergy, then Mrs Jones, widow of the Falklands hero Colonel Jones VC, asked the Duke to lay his token cross.

Trumpeters sounded the Last Post, Mrs Jones recited the Prayer of Remembrance and we observed two minutes' silence. Then the trumpeters sounded Reveille and everyone started chatting again whilst the Duke and Mrs Jones moved down the pathways speaking to various ex-Service personnel.

The vast number of people there prevented us from getting a good view of the Duke but some gentlemen at the front pulled a friend and me forward so we could take photographs as they could see over our heads.

After a cup of tea we returned to the Abbey Gardens for more photographs. Most of the crowd had gone and the sudden view we had of the thousands of crosses and poppies was very moving. By this time the gates were open to the general public and there were lots of foreign visitors around, most of whom stood back when they saw us with cameras. At one point, two tall ex-servicemen stopped by me but I said, 'thank-you I'm just waiting for those three people to move so I can photograph the Royal Artillery plot (my unit in the war). I was amused when one said if I was a bit smaller I could have stood on his shoulders! They returned after a minute or two and on discovering I was still waiting for a photo, one of them said: 'Oh, this is no good. I'll stop people this side and you (to his pal) stop them your side.' With that he swept away the offending three saying in a loud sergeant major type voice: "Excuse me, this lady wants to take the Royal

Artillery!" They held up all the pedestrians on the path and Norah got her photograph! I thanked them and we all laughed as they shook my hand and departed. I don't know who they were but ex-Service people don't need to be introduced before helping one another.

There were still people coming to plant crosses; they were directed to the appropriate plot and supplied with a small wooden mallet to knock the crosses firmly in. One young lady seemed too young to have remembered the war and I wondered who she was commemorating. The tap, tap, tap of wood on wood is a sound I shall always associate with that garden.

By this time my camera film had expired and it was time to make for home with a head full of memories. I had spent a memorable few hours, part sad, part happy, in the company of fellow ex-Service personnel and, God willing, I shall do it all again this year.

WRAC WORKING WITH RAPC

John A Hudson, Low Well House, 16 Main Street,
Wheldrake, York YO19 6AF

In 1993, having been retired for five years, I decided that it was an appropriate time for me to try to trace some former pals from my National Service days. I had reported to Devizes for training in July 1953 after which I was posted to Nottingham PRO (Hucknall Camp) where I stayed for only two months when a posting came through for BAOR. After ten months at CPO BAOR I got the opportunity to move on to the Hook of Holland for my final ten months.

My search for former pals started with letters being sent out to newspapers around the country inviting anyone from any of these postings to make contact with a view to organising a Reunion Dinner. Very quickly I started to receive many calls from the other former RAPC men asking if they could also come to the proposed Dinner. This made me realise that there seemed to be a demand for one big event for former members of the RAPC. At this stage I was not aware of the existence of the RAPC Regimental Association.

A number of ladies also made contact to tell me that they had been with the ATS and had worked with the RAPC and could they also 'enlist' ...and why not. I would therefore wish to appeal to any former ATS/WRAC ladies who worked with our Corps to make contact and my existing lists include former members from all postings worldwide. We do not have a formal membership and there are no charges/fees for enlisting with this group.

Please contact me by telephone or letter for more information. My telephone number is 01904 448575

AN ATS KNEELER

Phyll Harvey (née Birch), 9 Baders Crescent,
Shipston-On-Stour, CV36 4BD

The Millennium project for my local church, St Edmunds,



The new A.T.S. kneeler presented to St Edmund's Church, Shipston. Courtesy Stratford-upon-Avon Herald

Shipston-On-Stour was a cry for new kneelers. I placed a notice on the British Legion Notice Board asking if there were any ex-ATS ladies who would care to join me in providing an ATS kneeler. Six ladies replied and – what luck – one actually belonged to the Embroiderers Guild and offered to do it for us. The result as you can see was very worthwhile.

In November there was a Service of Dedication when the new kneelers were presented to the church. Amongst the Navy, many Army Regiments and RAF we were very proud to show that ATS stood for something other than the tyre company!!

AN ELDERLY LIONESS

Joan Awbery, Norfolk and Suffolk Branch

LIONESS No. 1, Vol. XXXVI, dated February 1963 is a gem in the possession of the Norfolk and Suffolk Branch. It is a very slim edition, compared with today's Journal. It measures only 7" x 10" with just 14 pages. The front cover, in green and white, the only colour in the magazine, features a handsome young girl, unfortunately not named, her cap-badge that of the WRAC.

Inside the front cover, we are first attracted by Dorothy Perkin's "Hosiery", "Foundations", "Lingerie" and "Fashions". Bare-leg nylons from 3s.11d., Tricel slips at 14/11 and other coveted garments at reasonable prices! The illustrated model, wearing a collared cardigan, with

imaginatively long legs clad in tight trousers, her hair in the bouffant style of the time, seduces us into imagining how we could look if only we took advantage of the delights of the shop where "Lovely Things Cost Less".

Next there appears the standard list of the Contents and Who's Who of the Association when the HQ was at the Duke of York's Centre, King's Road, S.W.3. The General Secretary was Major E B Dixon (Retd) and the Editor, Lieutenant-Colonel M S F Millington, OBE TD (Retd).

On the same page we are asked to consider the merits of the NAAFI car hire-purchase scheme now available in the UK, Germany, Gibraltar, Singapore, Malaya and Hong Kong.

The Editorial mentions the new illustration on the cover and the fact that it was twelve years since the last change of cover and that the LIONESS is always "in the red"!

A long and descriptive account follows on later pages of what must have been a very moving Festival of Remembrance in Edinburgh in which the three Women's Services had been asked by the British Legion to put on the main 20-minute feature in the programme.

A Grand Evening Reunion of Association Members was to take place on 16th March 1963 (tickets priced 10/-) at Derry and Toms, Kensington High Street. The QMAAC Reunion was to be held on 15th May at the same venue, tickets 4s. including refreshments. Also, the ATS Dinner Club recorded its second Annual Dinner on 20th October 1962, again at Derry and Toms, where Brigadier Dame Mary Tyrwhitt was in the Chair. The evening was a great success and members were looking forward to celebrating the Silver Jubilee of the formation of the ATS on 19th October 1963 to which HRH The Princess Royal had graciously consented to be present.

News of Old Comrades mentions the move to her new home in Storrington of Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan. Mrs I B Waddell wrote that her husband, who served in the Highland Light Infantry and the Nigeria Regiment, and her daughter, who was a WRNS radio mechanic, are all members of the same branch of the British Legion and wonders whether this is a record. The Bandsmen and Drummers Branch of the Regimental Association of the Middlesex Regiment would welcome WRAC Bandswomen at their quarterly meetings at the All Ranks' Club, Chelsea. Members would be sorry to hear that Mrs Bucklee, the hard-working secretary of the Preston Branch had had a very nasty fall on her way to lay the branch wreath at the Armistice Day parade and the Association sent sympathy and best wishes to her. Miss Woodthorpe of Nottingham Branch was congratulated on her work with the physically handicapped.

Several interesting articles appear; an account by Sgt Mandeville of a journey from "Essex to Istanbul"; an Australian trek undertaken by Sgt H Ainscough and Sgt M T Beaver with a large group of friends who travelled the 300 miles from Salisbury via Port Augusta to Woomera and on to the opal fields at Andamooka giving vivid descriptions of the country, the means by which the opals were mined and of the primitive conditions they endured.

An amusing article "Scots at the Depot" describes a visit made to a TA Annual Camp at Crowborough by Pte A Graham and Pte A Patterson who envied the girls stationed there, "very smart", they described them, "all wearing court shoes instead of beetle-crushers" and "each one had a dressing table". They further say "The Tudor Rose" is a much nicer name for the NAAFI and the dining room looked more like a restaurant. We liked the idea of a room being set aside for smoking". However, while agreeing the Army is a good opportunity for girls to do a job which they might never get the chance to do in civilian life, "we decided we both prefer the TA where we can live at home and have the best of both worlds".

A page titled Home and Leisure treated us to recipes for French Pancakes, Russian Fish Pie, Hot Cross Buns and Simnel Cake. A seasonal (but necessarily short), description of the horticultural delights of February took care of the Leisure paragraph!

Branch News came from Bath, Bournemouth, Bristol, Glasgow, Hartlepool, HQ Area, Ipswich, Liverpool, London, Norfolk, Preston, and Wimbledon. It is of particular interest to us as this appears to be the earliest recorded news we have of what is now the Norfolk and Suffolk Branch. It obviously functioned around that time as simply the Norfolk branch, a separate one for Suffolk being based in Ipswich. The Norfolk Branch then lapsed for a number of years before being set up again in 1982 covering both counties. I quote from the Norfolk News – "Branch Meetings have not been so well attended lately, as members get older they dislike turning out in the bad weather. Future monthly meetings must be discussed in the near future. We would like some younger members to take an active part. Mrs Murton thanks the branch for her LIONESS and also for her New Year Gift which enabled her and her aged husband to have a little extra for Christmas. This year (1963) should bring Molly Howes, Kenya, back to England and Mrs Liley from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The branch was remembered by its President, Dame Frances Coulshed on her return from Italy."

The Obituary Column recorded the deaths of Viscountess de L'Isle, (Senior Commander); Miss M F Laidlaw, MBE (Senior Commander) and Cpl M K Meacham who would have completed 23 years' service in November 1963. The WRAC Benevolent Fund thanked all who had given generous support but unless the Fund can build up its capital appreciably, the day will come when help will have to be refused to the many deserving cases that come up for consideration by the Joint Grants Committee each week.

The Journal was rounded off with advertisements on the back page for Dress Uniforms by Bernard Weatherill Ltd, and "All You Need is Crème Puff" by – guess who?– Max Factor. But it was the back cover which summed up the times, the needs, the fashion and the way of life in 1963 – a whole page devoted to the merits of NELSON and SENIOR SERVICE cigarettes "The outstanding Cigarettes of the Day".

Much remains the same in the Association as in 1963 – and much has changed.

THE 'NOT FORGOTTEN' ASSOCIATION

Mrs Lilian Hollis, 3 Parklands Avenue, Groby, Leicester LE6 0BL

Following on from the report from Maggie Purkis on the above Association, I was asked by Maggie if I would like to attend the Christmas Party of the Association being held at St James's Palace. I had never heard of this Association but accepted the invitation along with Chris Grigg of Shropshire Branch.



Mrs Lilian Hollis and friends at the 'Not Forgotten' Association Lunch in the Throne Room, St James' Palace.

We had to report to the Reception desk at the Victory Club on the 5th December where we were given our room keys and our elephant head badge for identification.

Chris and I met in the cafeteria and arranged to meet later for dinner. We had to be in the Trafalgar Room for pre-dinner drinks and to meet the Trustees, Committee and Staff of the Association along with all the other guests made up of disabled ex-service men and service pensioners, some with their wives or carers. We then made our way to our table, sharing with eight other people including Rosie Stewart (now Thompson) the Association Secretary, a lovely lady greeted by everyone with affection. The Christmas Dinner was superb and we spent a lovely evening amongst many happy people.

The following day we had to meet at 1.45 pm in Reception and were taken by coaches to St James's Palace. There were several rooms with tables set out and we were in the Throne Room. This is a most beautiful room; gold leaf on the walls, ceilings and doors along with red flocking walls, curtains and carpet to match and superb chandeliers. The thrones at the end of the room were also gilded with dark red drapes and furnishings. The tables were for ten people and the Trustees and the other Officers of the Association again spread amongst the ex-service men at different tables. We were given delicious punch on arriving and there were plates of sandwiches and cakes, tea and coffee. The band of the Welsh Guards played whilst we ate and celebrity guests from the arts, TV etc moved around the tables talking and signing autographs. There were Magicians doing their tricks and magic, and Caricaturists drawing various people. Sir Norman Wisdom, Jess Conrad, Isla St Clair, Dora Bryan also entertained us as did two

children's choirs; The Voices Foundation Choir and The Finchley Children's Music Group. We also joined in with Carols and the old favourite songs and looking around the room at the men the enjoyment was clear to see. We eventually left the Palace around 6.00 pm and the coaches took us back to our various places. We had a quick freshen up and had to be in the El Alamein Room at 7.00 pm for dinner. Again the same format and an excellent dinner followed by entertainment. It had been a really lovely two days for everyone. The aim of the 'Not Forgotten' Association is to bring some comfort and happiness into the lives of ex-servicemen and this they really do achieve.

The Officers of this Association work tirelessly, it was a great privilege to have been invited, and it is a charity well worth supporting.

UPDATE ON THE FORMER QUEEN ELIZABETH BARRACKS, GUILDFORD

Mrs P J Smith (formerly W/425499 Sgt Stark, P J,
WRAC Staff Band 1965 – 1969),
The Arbour, 7 Grove Road South, Southsea,
Hampshire PO5 3QR

WRAC Association members who do not live in or around the Guildford area might like to know that the former Queen Elizabeth Barracks have finally passed into history. The MOD has at long last sold them to Lainghomes and Lindenhomes.

Over the next few years the site is to be re-developed to provide a large housing estate with community amenities. All the buildings, including the Map Depot next door are to be demolished. The only exception is the former Museum building, which has already been taken over by the TA.

The Planning Applications for this very large development arrived at Guildford Borough Council Planning Department in May and will be available for consultation by the public during the summer.

I understand from the Planning Department that the Applications include a detailed history of the use of the site by the WRAC, which might interest members. In principle, the Department supports its sympathetic development in regard to this. However, unlike Stoughton Barracks, the buildings themselves are not considered to have any architectural merit.

It might be possible though to retain the original road names and/or produce new ones with WRAC associations – Cookhouse Close? Bandroom Boulevard?!!

The Planning Applications can be consulted at Guildford Borough Council Planning Department Offices in Millmead House, Guildford. This is the opportunity for us to see for ourselves what will finally happen to the Barracks and to send in our views.

The Case Officer is Mr Dave Barton on 01483 – 444630

MEMORIAL TO THE WOMEN OF WORLD WAR II

At the AGM in April, we promised to give an update on the memorial. We have received a progress report from Maj (Retd) David Robertson which is reproduced here. This report is followed by an open letter to all Lady Veterans concerning a project being undertaken by the Imperial War Museum. Some of you will already have received a copy of this letter, but it is important that it reaches as many women who lived through World War II as possible.

"We have completed the judging of the three finalists who wish to undertake the work for us, having received their costings and scaled drawings which we will need to submit to Westminster Council. Assuming approval of the drawings, we will then be in a position to instruct the sculptor to make a macquette prior to undertaking the work. We are also in the throes of making an application for Lottery Funding. That should conclude the total sum we require for the Project, but there is no absolute guarantee we will be awarded a grant – but we are optimistic!

The initial site offered, called Raleigh Green in Whitehall, has presented us with a variety of challenges, such as a 20,000 gallon underground storage tank and a tunnel, not to mention water works, electricity and all the other services. We have had a further meeting with Westminster Council and said we are firmly of the opinion that the most suitable site is in the middle of the road of Whitehall about 200 metres from the Cenotaph. I have written to the Director of Planning saying we must meet soon and discuss this. I am chasing him for his reply!

We hope to have the Memorial ready for unveiling later next year, but as you can see there are a variety of matters which could influence arranging a final date, including negotiating with the Palace to arrange for HM The Queen to do the honours for us. I would hope that this time next year I should be in a better position to advise on a possible unveiling date."

My Dear Lady Veteran

You will be aware that as a Charity we intend to raise a Memorial to the Women of World War 2. This is not only to servicewomen, but all women, regardless of what they were doing during the war, including housewives. By the way, this is not a begging letter asking for funds.

We feel very strongly that if we do not raise the Memorial now, there is a great danger that in years to come, our children and their children will not know of the crucial work done by our womenfolk at that time. It was also the dawning of the wider female emancipation; in itself a major turning point in human evolution.

Hopefully the Memorial will act as a permanent and visible reminder of that incredible part of our heritage. But again there is a danger that in fifty or a hundred years time people will say, "what was that all about?". To ensure that does not happen, we intend to have a plaque placed

on the Memorial telling people why the Memorial was raised, also informing them that the Imperial War Museum has an archive **containing personal accounts of women's experiences at that time.**

It is for this purpose, and in collaboration with the Imperial War Museum, that I am writing to you. Those who worked and lived during those terrible years have fascinating experiences to pass on to the future generations. It would be unforgivable, if in years to come, that invaluable information of what life was like during those dark years was lost. Such as; how you coped with the fear, the cold, the loneliness, the hunger, the terrifying noise, the pain, the misery, what you did to make do, how you cheered yourself up, how you saw your father, brother, husband, boyfriend off to war, what you did for a wartime job, the conditions you worked in, the clothes you wore, the hours you worked, how you coped (or didn't) with the blackouts, the effect on your children, the effect on your family, on your friends. We would like to see anything that you have written down about your own personal experiences in wartime, whether in the services, in industry, on the land or in the home and, if you have not already done so, for you to consider writing such an account to ensure that your story is preserved for future generations. We are also particularly keen to see any contemporary written records which you may have retained. For instance a personal diary, or letters to family or friends, as these types of contemporary records contain an immediacy and an emotional impact that enable researchers to gain some insight into women's lives in the Second World War. Photographs or other related material would also be of interest.

We believe this project is equally important as the Memorial, because it will help preserve our heritage in perpetuity of that very unique time. I hope you feel as I, excited by the thought that your experiences could help to make an outstanding and wonderful archive for the future. Please help and write your experience to:

Memorial to the Women of World War 2
c/o Department of Documents
Imperial War Museum
London
SE1 6HZ

If you have any friends or relatives who you think would like to help with this historic Project, please ask them to contact me. Likewise, if you are a member of a club or organisation that has Women who were adults during the War Years, we would very much like to hear from them.

You may like to know that the Imperial War Museum will be opening a major exhibition on the role of the women in twentieth century conflict in early 2002.

On behalf of the Charity and the Imperial War Museum, thank you very much.

Yours sincerely

David Robertson

IN MEMORY OF PTE THOMAS

Mrs C Powell (W/397710 Pte Christine Street)
387 Harden Road, Walsall WS3 1RR

W/399036 Pte M Thomas died on 29th September 1958 age 18 years at CAD KINETON, Warwick from peritonitis and was buried in All Saints Church, Burton Dassett, Warwick.

I understand she was an orphan. One of her friends, a Pte B Leadbetter, on leaving the camp asked some of the girls if they would carry on taking flowers up to the church for her.

Although Pte Bronwen Bau arrived at the camp later in 1959, she remembers going up to the church with some of the girls and placing flowers on Pte Thomas's grave.

On Remembrance Sunday my husband and I placed the vase and flowers on the grave on behalf of Bronwen, Rita and Len, and Cyril Hawksworth who was a pall bearer at the military funeral. It is for them this photograph was taken.

Burton Dassett is still a lovely, peaceful village surrounded by the Burton Hills. If you are out there Pte B Leadbetter, please write in.



*Pte M. Thomas' gravestone in All Saints Church,
Burton Dassett, Warwick.*

ATS Reminiscences

FROM LONDON TO GERMANY

Mrs Silvia Wild (W/26201) Cook
18 Redwood Court, Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5RD



Mrs Silvia Wild in Amiens, 1944

In 'Lioness 2001/1, page 26' I came across an article received from a Mrs Collins at 42 Hodder Avenue, Peacehaven. I immediately contacted my sister, Joan, who lives at 60 Hodder Avenue. There were two ex-ATS members living close by but did not realise it.

My sister Joan joined up early in 1942, and after training at Strathpeffer was posted into GHQ Home Forces in London. I joined up early in 1943 and after initial training at High Legh, Cheshire, I too was posted into GHQ Home Forces. Until then, Joan had worked under Whitehall, seldom seeing daylight during the winter months, but soon after my posting, GHQ Home Forces became HQ 21 Army Group and moved to Hammersmith. Joan worked in St Paul's School but my Royal Engineer officers in TN (Transportation) were spread around the area in requisitioned houses. We were twice bombed out in Edith Road and finally ended up in Nevern Mansions, Earls Court.

We never discussed our Top Secret work on 'D' Day preparations, in fact we were so busy we seldom saw one another. I remember walking back from Earls Court to our billet in Argyle Mansions at near midnight sometimes.

At the end of July 1944 I went over to Normandy with HQ 21 Army Group, and was one of the first ATS to be sent out there. Joan had married and, although still in the ATS, was able to live at home in Clapham.

I had been in Bayeux only a short time, living and working in tents within hearing distance of the frontline, but when Caen was finally liberated I was asked whether I would accompany a detachment of Royal Engineers going forward to Rouen. One of our Colonels was put in charge of reinstating the railways and needed a shorthand typist for the numerous orders going out to Railway Operating Groups and Companies. As the only female I was billeted

with a French family. They had suffered a great deal during the German occupation and I understood their daughter had been taken away with the retreating Germans not long before I arrived.

After about five weeks, we moved forward to Amiens where, again, I was billeted with a French family. As we were there from October until the beginning of February, I spent my first Christmas and New Year with them. It was a bitterly cold winter and snowed practically the whole time.

The detachment were then moved on to Holland and I rejoined TN in Brussels, billeted in the Ave Louise and working in the Shell Mex building.

I was told that for most of the time I had remained in France I was the only ATS girl in that country. Others were mainly Americans.

After VE Day 1945, I was flown into Germany and stationed at Bad Oeynhausen, but before my demobilisation in the latter part of 1946 I was given Compassionate Leave to spend a few days with my sister Joan, who had been in an air raid in Clapham and lost her baby. My family too had suffered from the heavy London bombing, I spent the last months working in Kensington for Colonel Marcus Lipton, who was also MP for Brixton.

My two closest ATS friends have both since died. I feel I have had a 'charmed' life, living through heavy London bombing, service abroad, followed by the removal of a diseased kidney and, more recently, a mastectomy, but I had a wonderfully happy marriage until my husband died at the end of 1989.

I hope this, and the enclosed photograph, will prove to be of interest to girls in the army today.

GOOD AND BAD ATS MEMORIES

Margary Owens (ex W/295552.)
10 St Pannas Avenue, Plymouth

During the War I was an ATS driver and, on finishing my training, was posted to 123 Coy (CMT) RASC at Chatham. We went through the machine gunning and Doodlebugs but were really happy.

At the end of the War, our dear old unit split up and we were posted to another (CMT) RASC at Shorncliffe Camp - it was my worst time in the Army! At Chatham all detachments were treated with respect. It certainly wasn't like that at Shorncliffe. The Unit there obviously didn't want us and made it quite plain. We were not assigned to any vehicles, seldom went out of Camp. We lived in wooden huts where we could see daylight through the roof. We woke up one morning in the winter of 1946 to find snow on our heads! We were given no fuel ration for the stoves in our hut. We used to go out on recce's to find wood for them. Needless to say, we found coal and wood quite illegally but we did it to survive!

It even entered my head to go AWOL, but I only had six months to do. I was demobbed in June 1946 and re-enlisted on my demob leave! I was clear of Shorncliffe! My remaining years of service were happy ones but I shall never forget those dreadful days at Shorncliffe and how we were treated there. I'm sure if I had had another year to do there, I would have gone AWOL. Surely the 'Glasshouse' couldn't have been as bad as that! At least we would have known we were there for doing something wrong. Our only crime at Shorncliffe was the fact that we had come from 123 Coy!

LOOKING BACK TO 1942 – 1944

Mrs Eileen Ellis (W/235971 Attwood),
25 Hillside Crescent, Holland On Sea, Clacton on Sea,
Essex CO15 6NZ

*(Eileen served with 156 and 188 (M) HAA Regt
and 533 Bty)*

I have happy memories of my time in Northern Ireland during 1942. Whilst in hospital for a short period, Mrs Flynn (mother of Erroll) took those of us that were fit enough, to see some of her son's films at a cinema in Belfast, this was followed by a sumptuous meal in the upstairs restaurant.

Later on, after posting to the Battery Office at Eglinton, we clerks were allowed, although only one at a time, to have a pass into Eire. This necessitated us wearing civvies, the "YWCA" in Londonderry allotted us a locker in which we could deposit our uniforms till our return. We greatly enjoyed our visits over the Border, especially as it enabled us to purchase some non-rationed goods.

Returning to London in 1944, I was on a Clerks Course at Hampstead – billeted in "Millionaires Row". We girls had the luxury of using Harry Roy's (the Bandleader) huge black and white marble bathroom. We were taking part in a typing exam on June 6th when there was great excitement after the announcement of the "D Day" Landings – our exam was postponed till the next day!

'GOINGS ON' IN THE ATS APRIL 1942 TO APRIL 1946

Miss J Hawker, 85 Dermot Murphy Close,
Withington, Manchester, M20 1FQ

After joining the ATS we left Manchester on Friday 17 April 1942. It was around 10.30 am and we left by train from the London Road Station (now named Piccadilly Station). There was quite a party of us and there seemed to be a lot of confusion as to where we were going, lots of stops and rushing to the RTO (Railway Transport Officer) until we got to Lancaster. We then had to march to a hall to be medically examined. After that off to the Barracks to be kitted out. Then to an old building which used to be an asylum. The grounds were vast and lovely (don't forget I came from Manchester town). We were very lucky because it was a sunny dry spring. By this time it was eight o'clock and we had not eaten all day. I was appalled when they brought buckets of cool cocoa with lumps of bread and cheese for us to eat, I must say there were not many takers. We had to sleep in bunk beds and there were

far too many of us for the facilities that had been laid on. We had to queue every morning to use the toilet and have a wash. One morning I heard an officer say "there are too many bodies here".

On the Saturday we had TAB in the right arm and another vaccination in the left arm. These made some of the girls very poorly. We were confined to barracks until Monday and then we were able to go out, but only if you had full uniform. Some of us needed alterations to parts of our uniform and so we had to stay in barracks until they were finished.

I made friends with a very nice person who was called Robbie who came from Liverpool. We used to go out to the swimming baths for our 'baths' once a week. We liked all the folk in Lancaster and we also enjoyed bus rides to Morecombe, the fare was 6d and at the Milk Bar it was 4d for a Milk shake. The Service Clubs were really good and one even had an electric iron that we could use.

Our CSM was a Mrs Frost, a Dunkirk Veteran. She was very strict and regimental but also humane and fair. She put us through our paces and turned us into good marchers. When we had our first parade on St George's Day she took us to the barracks – we couldn't have a band so she just played on a drum for us. We had all the usual "Rookie" training, not too rough, although I didn't relish the gas experience without gas masks on.

After 6 weeks Robbie and I were sent to Worcester on a clerical course. We were lucky enough to be placed in private billets with a Mrs Jones who was a lovely old lady. She was also a good cook and kept everything spotlessly clean. She really spoilt us and even wanted to do our washing and ironing.

To put the icing on the cake she provided us with a bath, in a tin bath in front of a fire, each week – bear in mind she had to boil all the water. Also remember, in those years water had to be used very sparingly, quite a luxury, regular bathing!

The course lasted 4 weeks at a college where we were the only female students. We had a male sergeant for details who was 'military wise' and lady teachers for English, Mathematics and touch-typing. We used to sit by the River Severn when lessons were over and do some studying. Yes, it was very pleasant as were the people. I think the place was called Barbourne, they had nice shops and a beautiful church. They also had a small Dance Hall where we had to queue to get in. After the course had ended we had our first 14 days leave and were given particulars of our 'postings'.

After having a good time at home, including celebrating my 21st birthday, I travelled to Warwickshire, Robbie joined me en-route at Preston. When we arrived at Warwick station, there were no officials to tell us how to get to our headquarters. By a stroke of luck, two soldiers arrived who knew where we needed to go. They carried our kit bags and took us to a large Hostel. We assumed they had been sent to help us but that was not so, it was purely their kind-heartedness to ladies in distress. We did see them the next day and thanked them. We were picked up the next day and taken to Leamington Spa where our headquarters were situated.

It was then decided that Robbie and I should go to Marlborough Farm Camp in Kineton C.R.E., it was still being built. Previously it had been a 480 acre farm and eventually it became a Central Ammunition Depot. The Munitions Factories were camouflaged as hills and it had its own railway. We were taken by the Assistant Postman to the camp, where we had a snack and then we were taken to Northend Village. Once again we were lucky enough to have private billets, but we were not quite as well looked after. We had to eat in the NAAFI and do our washing there. The camp was 2 miles away across the field or 3 miles by road. It was lovely country and we were able to go for walks during our lunch break and of course during the evening. There were also a few country pubs where we had various celebrations. Our office was in a cottage with steps outside and there was a Nissen Hut for the stores-office and another for the draughtsmen.



Taffy, Joan, Jean, Dot, Jenny and Joan at Marlborough Farm Camp in Kineton C.R.E.



Jenny, Dot and Doreen – still friends years on

There were over 3,000 men and most of them did not know that we women were there. As the camp grew more ATS arrived, first were the Signal Corps for the switchboard and two shorthand typists for our office. These were Dorothy Walker and Dawn. Just after they came we moved into the camp and into the hut that was to be used for the officers. It was great because we had our own cook and orderly, waited on hand and foot and there were no Officers or NCOs. Our pay was brought to us

from Leamington Spa. After 3 months we were moved to what was to be the NCOs hut, we then had to eat in the main mess. Our last move was to our own lines, Cracker Nissen huts, 20 people at each end with the ablutions in the centre. By this time we had Officers and NCOs in charge of us and an ATS office. We also had our own cook house though the food was never very good. I spent 4 years at this camp and mostly with the same girls in the Nissen huts. We had lots of good clean fun and got on very well together. Of course we all had our share of bad times, especially when someone close in the other services was reported missing, injured or killed. Robbie's only brother (whose wife was expecting their first baby) was killed in France. I don't know how things went on for them as Robbie was posted to Chester, being nearer to Liverpool, and we lost touch.

I am still in touch with four of the girls, we did intend going to the old camp but could not contact many of the others. Jenny, who tried to arrange it, did visit the camp a few years ago, it was still a CAD Depot but who knows what will happen now that the Ministry of Defence has been depleted.

On reflection I realise how fortunate I was to have enjoyed the company and friendship of so many good people, whom I really missed for a few months after my de-mob. The one person who became my truest friend is Dorothy Davies née Walker. We slept in adjacent beds for almost 4 years and are still very close. We have had many weekends and holidays together since the war ended.

RAOC BICESTER

Mrs June Capon (W/246880 Monier-Williams),
10 Everard Road, Ringwood East 3135,
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.



June Capon at RAOC Bicester, 1943.

I started my service in January 1943, aged 17½ years, at Guildford No. 7 Training Centre, 1 Platoon, C Company. I then went on to RAOC Bicester, Oxon where I stayed until 1946 when I was demobbed.

As an only child and a young 17½ year old, I was very naïve. The Orderly Officer on her evening round of Barracks, was highly amused to see my hair curled up in rags!! Then, on inspection on the Parade Square one day, I got into trouble for having my hair on my collar! My excuse was as I had washed it, it was hard to keep up with the shoelace or was it elastic we used?

We were all quite nervous when we had to go through a room or tent with our gas masks on and tear gas was let off. We had to walk around then take our masks off! We were glad to get out into the open air!

We all had interviews for job training and told what we were going to do. Being a cook was suggested to me but I asked for something else so got RAOC. That is all I remember of Guildford.

I was then posted to RAOC Bicester, it was made up of very large sheds and I have a feeling a Train Line went through it – in one huge door and out the other. We had freezing weather in winter and fires in big metal bins that we stood around every so often to thaw out.

We had German POWs working outside and one day my cigarette ration was exchanged for a wooden box that a POW had made. I think the guard of POWs must have arranged it, I still have it.

After demob I went to Manchester School of Art for a course in Textile Design.

My Uncle had friends in Australia who nominated me to go there. I did and arrived in Melbourne May 1949 and have lived here ever since. I married a New Zealander and we have two married daughters and six grandchildren. I have been back to UK 3 times with the girls when they were young, last time my husband and I spent 4 months travelling all around England and Scotland in a hire car. He still has bad dreams of the M25! I came over for the 50th Anniversary Year 1995 and went to all the things on in Hyde Park and stayed at the Victory Services Club, Marble Arch.

MEMORIES OF A SIGNALS GIRL'S WAR

Mrs Susan Johnson (W/182647 Pte Susan Bailey – 1942 to 1946)

“Sandbanks”, 17 Deganwy Road, Deganwy,
Gwynedd LL31 9DH

I have been a life member of the Rhyl Branch of the WRAC Association and Royal Signals Association for a great many years. I joined the ATS in July 1942, did my initial training at Leicester followed by a six weeks teleprinter course at Queensbury near Bradford. After that I was posted to Didcot Ordnance Depot for three months where I operated a teleprinter on live traffic, I had been a typist in civilian life which helped me.

Next I was posted to Putney for a three month wireless course – while I was there we had a visit from the late

Princess Royal. I was working a fullerphone when a group of people stopped by me. The tall officer wearing all the red tabs and gold braid chatted to me but I was more interested in the elegant lady wearing a smart black suit and pearls. Afterwards, in our billet, one of my friends, Pat Rossiter, remarked that I had been very casual with the Princess. I replied that I hadn't spoken to her, but then I realised to my horror that the lady in civilian clothes was the lady-in-waiting and the high ranking ATS officer was the Princess Royal, – I never lived it down. I learned later that the Princess Royal was our Patron and as there was a wonderful painting of her in the Mess I had a constant reminder of my mistake.

On completion of the wireless course I was a fully fledged O.W.K. – Operator Wireless and Keyboard and I was posted to 2 Corps HQ Felsted for about fifteen months. During that time the preparations were going on for “D-Day” and as there were only ten of us employed there as wireless operators, we worked a three shift pattern, seven days a week and no leave! However, we made the best of a bad job and made our own entertainment. The Army had taken over the gymnasium of Felsted School and at Christmas 1943 we performed a pantomime. It was surprising how much talent there was. A man called Bert Weedon formed a small band in which I played the piano, it was a beautiful Steinway Grand. One of our officers had a wife who was a professional actress in London and she played principal boy, it was a great success.

I left Felsted in September 1944 to go to Catterick and then Scarborough to do a “High Speed” operating course. Then I was given the choice to stay on as an instructor or go down to the War office as an operator. I chose the latter and was billeted at Queen Anne's Gate. It was a wonderful posting. The girls were all nice, there was one called Marion Robinson who I became close friends with. We joined the Queensbury Club, and went to the Nuffield Centre where we could do our laundry and ironing. We often went to the “Old Maids Club” in Victoria Street where we could relax, read and have a snack. We both loved music so we went to the Albert Hall, Saddlers Wells and various theatres. We queued in Bond Street for our soap ration, – Coty or Yardley's – and popped into the Express Dairy for a coffee. These were just a few of the privileges of being at the heart of things.

It is only now that I am approaching my eightieth birthday (have had two hip replacements and am crippled with arthritis) that I've had time to reflect what a privilege it was to be in the ATS and serve our country. All this nonsense about division and devolution breaks my heart, – the Scots, Welsh, Irish and English girls never gave thought to any such things.

I wonder if anybody out there remembers any of the things I have written about when I was Private Susan Bailey W/182647 1942 – 1946.

REMINISCENCES

Rosa Bailey (née Davis)
from Norfolk and Suffolk Branch

I joined the ATS in January 1942 – I had been waiting over a year to be released from the Home Office. My initial

training was at Glen Parva Barracks in Leicester and then I was sent to Oswestry for training as a Radar Operator. Eventually I was posted to 525 Battery Royal Artillery at Danson Park, Welling in Kent. After a short time in Rye we were sent on to the marshes just outside Burnham-on-Crouch for several months. Arriving there in June the weather was perfect, sunny and warm, but by October it was a different story. Being under canvas and with some very dodgy latrines we were not so happy. Our nearest bathing facilities were in the Royal Marines' Quarters in Burnham itself, five miles away, so washing was a secondary consideration in our lives. We lived in our battledress and rubber boots for two months and were very relieved when we were told we would be billeted in real houses for a while, before being posted to Belgium.

I shall never forget that sea crossing! Our sailing had been delayed for a week and we spent Christmas 1944 in a transit camp in Southampton. When we finally left we found we were in one of the old Isle of Man paddle steamers, I think it was the Ben Macrea. It was a very long and uncomfortable voyage from Southampton to Ostend. Many of us (including myself) were very seasick and half an hour before we docked the boat stopped and in the distance we heard a loud explosion. We were later told that it was a mine – so it's just as well we had stopped!

After spending a few days in Ostend we arrived in Antwerp, living in Nissen huts in the grounds of a chateau. It was very cold, with deep snow and at first the Belgians thought we were effeminate soldiers – they hadn't seen girls in battledress before! However, they soon became very welcoming and helpful. In fact one of my friends married a charming Belgian lad soon after the war and they still live in Antwerp. We are still in touch and meet from time to time.

Six or seven of us hold our own reunions either here or in Belgium. The people of Antwerp invited us to be their guests at the 50th and the 55th anniversaries of their liberation and we greatly enjoyed both occasions. We live in such scattered parts of the country, Norfolk, Inverness, Newcastle, Liverpool, Staffordshire and Hampshire, it takes a considerable effort to meet up with our friends in Belgium and we wonder how long we can continue our reunions.

I find it very touching that although Antwerp was liberated in the September of 1944 and we did not arrive until December, it did not seem to matter to them and when we took part in the celebrations of both the 50th and 55th anniversaries of their liberation we were all presented with special medals, of which we are very proud.

PUTTEES THE DAY I REBELLED

B Horness (née Varty) – Cleveland Branch

I was serving as the Lt Col's Don R at CRASC 4th AA Group near Chester, 1944 – I think. The Chief Clerk, a Warrant Officer, seemed to us young 'uns, to be a dour old soldier, but only at first. He answered to the name of Staff.

He called me to his desk one morning saying "Pte Varty, go to the Men's Stores and collect a pair of breeches and puttees". I stood speechless, but did I detect a twinkle in his eye? He showed me an ACI stating ATS motor cyclists were to wear these.

Reluctantly I obeyed. The Stores Cpl laughed as the khaki "bandages" were handed to me. I said "I'm not wearing those".

Returning to the hut I put on the articles but could not make them stay "put". I crept to the office, grumbling to everyone I met.

My first detail was to take despatches to Liverpool. On my way through Birkenhead my bike hit a bit of badly repaired, bomb damaged road. The bike shuddered and my knee popped out between breeches and puttees. I stopped by the roadside to put on my waterproof over trousers, to cover my embarrassment.

On my return to Chester I went to the hut to remove the horrors. I refused to wear them again (Yes REFUSED) I wore slacks or overalls – anything but puttees.

After a few days, the "powers that be" relented, and life returned to normal.

The following poem written by Staff appeared on the Notice Board for all to see.

Brenda has her slacks on
Puttees she won't wear
She told Elsie Jackson
They showed her knees all bare
She had a pair of breeches
That were a sight to see
They covered unknown reaches
But didn't cover her knee.

She told Ada Soar
That puttees were no good
Something she had never wore
And didn't think she would.
She complained to Lilian Bond
That breeches were too baggy
Of bagginess she wasn't fond
They made her tummy saggy.

She had a moan to June Roland
On the way those breeches fit
She couldn't compete for the rose bowl
And didn't quite feel "it".
Then to little Sybil Hewitt
She had a real good cry
She didn't know how to do it
And was afraid to try.

In desperation to avoid a laugh
She cocked up her leg
Put on my puttees please dear staff
This favour I do beg.

ONE GIRL'S WAR

Ex L/Cpl M M Collinson W/219080 16/10/42 - 28/5/46
Mrs Merville Pidgeon, 52 Castlemain Avenue,
Bournemouth, Dorset BH6 5EL

After training in Guildford, I joined 601 HAA CO Battery. We spent a short time at Holt, Norfolk and then ten months in N Ireland. The Battery then moved to Gosport and I well remember hearing the troops leaving for France on the evening of the 5th June. Shortly after this, I volunteered for overseas duty and found myself in Normandy with 21 Army Group on 12th August. The heavy fighting was still raging in Caen at that time.



Mrs Pidgeon and colleagues working in Northern Ireland at BHQ, September 1943

Because the troops gained ground so well, we shortly found ourselves in Brussels, where I stayed for 6 months. After this a few ATS were sent into Holland to join Netherlands District HQ where we worked on the food distribution for the starving Dutch people. I stayed with 2 sisters in Utrecht, a lovely elderly couple in Utrecht and in camp in The Hague. On one occasion a friend and myself hitched a lift into the City in Queen Willamenia's car. Her chauffeur spoke excellent English and warned us to be careful as the Dutch SS were still around!

My friend and I were then sent to Potsdam, which was a wonderful experience, I still have my Russian pass! The victory Parade held in Berlin was wonderful, I still have my programme.

Earlier, when we heard the news of the collapse of Germany my friend and I set out to hitch from Utrecht to Brussels to see old friends, but finished up at a party with a Dutch family and their friends! (When I told my OC of this experience, he asked me if I ever read anything I typed; hitchhiking was forbidden!). After Potsdam it was back to 21 Army Group at Bad Oeyenhausen. I was demobbed in October 1946.

Were any of your readers at the above places at the dates mentioned?

MEMORIES OF VE DAY

Mrs Jessie Lowe née Dunsmore, 24 Grahame Terrace,
Gilmerton, By Crieff, Perthshire, PH7 3NB

In 1942 I volunteered to be posted from Perth to serve with a (M) HAA Unit. After training at Oswestry and Whitby we spent most of our time in action on the South Coast. I think it was the following year that one of our gunners returned from 24 hours leave in London, to tell us that planes were flying there without pilots.

We thought he was having us on, until it became known that they were V1 (doodle bugs). One night we heard a buzzing over our camp and the engine stopped. We dived under our beds and waited. Fortunately there was a wind and it drifted a few miles before hitting the ground and caused no damage.

The South Coast around Brighton was a 'restricted area' with troops ready to sail into action. On 6 June 1944 the night sky was alive with squadron after squadron of planes. It was a clear night with no clouds.

We had our backs to the wall for so long, but we were sure we would be victorious in the end. However, it was another 11 months before we heard the glad news on the wireless on 08 May 1945.

In the meantime our Battery had been posted to a stone quarry on Portland Bill, Dorset. One by one many of my colleagues had been posted elsewhere. Nevertheless, we who were left had permission to make our way down to Weymouth to celebrate. The streets were alive with the sound of different bands, civilian and service personnel dancing, cheering and drinking, to health of the Victory.

Reminiscences of the WRAC

STAND BY YOUR BEDS 1960 STYLE

Mrs Marion Yeats née W/405943 Acton,
11 Tidworth Road, Porton, Salisbury, Wilts SP4 0NJ

I was a green 17½ year old as I made my way to Guildford from Stockport in January 1960. Arriving at Guildford on a cold, dark, wet late afternoon and bundled into a 3-ton truck (most unladylike) then taken straight to the cookhouse for warm sausage, warm potatoes and cold cabbage, I began to wonder what I had let myself in for. I spent the night in a large barrack room with about 16 other raw recruits, talking and finding out where we all came from and why we had all joined up. The next morning we were taken back to the cookhouse for breakfast, which was so different from the meal the previous evening. On then to the Stores to collect our uniform, this being one of the reasons I had joined up (to wear a uniform!). I was so disappointed to be told they did not have one my size, just the blouse, tie, beret, shoes and the passion killer stockings, so for the first few weeks I wore all these with my civvy skirt!! Then up to the M.I. room for all the necessary inspections, they called it the F.F.I. and some of you may remember how many variations of those initials were used. Kit inspections – well what can you say about them? My one fear was the shout that came with each kit inspection ‘stand by your beds’. We were shown how to ‘display’ our kit and no matter how I tried I could not get mine to look as neat and tidy as everyone else’s (probably because my stuff was so big). We were also told that every item issued was to be labelled with our name and number, that’s where our trusty ‘housewife’ came in. We had one girl in our barrack room who was, to say the least, a bit ‘dozy, (no name, no pack drill). When we did the first kit inspection she had labelled every sanitary towel and folded them all and laid them down the side of her kit on the bed. When questioned by the Officer, she said that we had been told to label every item – I still get the fit of giggles when I think about this.

Then came our passing out parade, we could ‘show off’ in front of our families and friends. There we were in our No. 1 greens, bright shiny shoes, black stockings (with seams). No.1 Platoon were on the parade ground doing their bit, I was feeling so proud, but not for long. As we marched in front of the stand to take the salute one of my legs felt cold, I don’t know why my suspender chose that moment to snap but there was my black stocking half way down my leg, the only white leg on parade, oh didn’t I get grief from the RSM after the parade.

By the time I left Guildford I had been given the name Slim, and that name stayed with me all through my time in the Army and even now some of my friends still call me that. I can remember one of the girls I made friends with at Guildford, her name was Dorothy Eyo. She came from Liverpool, if you are out there Dorothy drop us a line. A few more names from Guildford are Peggy Anderson, went into catering, Pauline Bland, Kathleen Aspinall, went into postal, Vi Allen, Kath Andrews, Anna Hay and N Nicolls. I was in Holding & Drafting for a short time until my uniform was ready.

Next came our postings and off I went to Yeovil to learn to drive. If I was to be remembered for anything, it was for singing Harry Bellefonte’s song “Up in the Morning, out on the job” every single morning. I had more boots and shoes thrown at me than a bootmaker!!

The first vehicle we got into was a Land Rover, then the 1 tonner, 3 tonner, and finally the staff car. I had a lovely instructor called Mr Burt, he was from Chard in Somerset and was so patient with us. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Yeovil and although I failed my test 4 times and was told by one examiner I would never pass on a bike, I did eventually pass and finished up as a Staff Car Driver.

Oh the larks we had at Yeovil!! Girls from Yeovil, Sandy Bridges, Jackie Jardine, J Jeffreys, Yvonne Green, I have all the first names of our crowd and some lovely photographs, but unfortunately cannot remember all the surnames.

I was posted to Larkhill, but once I got there I was told I was going down to HQ, Southern Command, Wilton, Salisbury, where for a short time I drove a Land Rover. Not long after arriving there I was made Staff Car driver and I was assigned to Maj Gen Robinson, DDMS. The happy times I had driving him up and down the country, and the tales I could tell of my escapades, but that’s for another time maybe. One incident I do recall was when I was driving the General to Aldershot to take a big parade and the car started to splutter and kangaroo hop. I knew I had enough petrol in the car, but I was a bit worried that the General would be too late for this parade. He, being the gentleman he always was jumped out and told me to lift the bonnet, he fiddled about under the bonnet for a while then went to the rear of the car and took the petrol cap off. He then told me to watch the carburettor and he then put his mouth into the hole where the cap went and he blew until he was red in the face. He reckoned if there was any dirt in the carb this would flush it out. I am glad our mechanical instructors were not there to hear this, but who was I to argue with a General? Anyway when he had finished he had the biggest black ring round his mouth, how I did not burst out laughing I do not know. However, he did when he saw himself in the mirror. But we got to the parade with about 10 minutes to spare. He was a lovely man.

If there is anyone who remembers me, Slim (Marion) Acton, I would love to hear from you especially, Dorothy Eyo and Judy Roberts from Liverpool, Irene Wright, Joan Smith from Newcastle, Maggie Shucksmith who married Roy from the cookhouse at Wilton, Heather Feltham married Don, Gloria Welch from Sheffield; also J C Bowman, Iris Smith, Pauline Street who married Nick from Manchester and Bobby Seal (who’s real name was Roxana Aurelia!!).

I have lots of photographs that I often look at and think of all the lovely people I got to know back in those happy, happy days.

THE DAY THE RAINS CAME

Mrs Hazel Roberts (W383132 Cpl H Meads 1953 – 1959),
24A Priory Road, Wombridge, Telford,
Shropshire TF2 6HU

I was met at Nairobi Airport by a (Kenyan African Soldier) who was driving me to report to a WRAC camp near Nairobi during the Mau Mau crisis. The soldier smiled cheerfully, his teeth were brilliantly white. His face had tribal patterns etched on it, and his ear lobes had been stretched. His introduction to me was "Jambo mensab", which I did not understand, so I said "Hello", hoping I was with the right person. Later I realised he was perfectly capable of speaking in English, and his name was Alex.

So this is Kenya I thought, as I struggled with my kitbag into the dusty seat of the landrover. Disappointment welled over me, as the vehicle bumped over the dry cracked tracks in the red earth, and the overpowering stench of sour soil made me feel sick. I wondered what had possessed me to ask for a posting to such a God forsaken place, the shimmering heat of the sun seemed to burn all the energy from me.

The driver stopped his battered vehicle at the top of an escarpment which overlooked the great Rift Valley, a wide panorama stretched before me, on a clear day I might have seen to the Red Sea, over one hundred miles away. Laid before me I saw, a tragedy of immense proportions, for the once grassy valley looked dry and empty, sun bleached bones of dead animals littered the crusted earth. A few scattered wildebeest and zebras grazed on the burnt stubble. Proud orange cloaked Massai nomads accompanying their herds of bony cows, searched desperately for signs of water, still the sun beat mercilessly onto the ground from a cloudless sky.

We continued the long journey, in the far distance I heard a low rumble of thunder. I felt hot and irritable. Except for the bumping of the vehicle and the nearing noise of the thunder an eerie silence reigned, the sky was darkening. When will I arrive at camp I wondered?

As we pulled up I heard the first gentle patter of rain hitting the tarpaulin cover. I alighted stiffly from the landrover and, staggering under the weight of my heavy kitbag, made my way to report to HQ hut. The Kikuyu tribesmen were dancing for joy at the coming of the rains.

After reporting, I was shown to my sparsely furnished room (Banda), by now the rain was a deluge, gusting and great was its power. The dried cracks in the soil were now streams and the rough dirt track on which I had travelled was fast becoming a raging torrent of red mud careering madly, carrying away all in its path. Still the relentless rain came down, splashing unceasingly on the galvanised roof, and rattling against the flapping shutters. Over the Banda black vultures are swooping after large flying insects.

Thank God I am safe and sheltered, I thought, as I sat on my hard mattress and pulled the mosquito net over and

lay down. The incessant rain hammered on, the whole building was groaning. I repeated to myself "Rain, rain go away, come again another day", and drifted into fitful sleep.

MORE MEMORIES OF THE 1950s

Mrs Daphne Joyce James (W/371153
Cpl Pilcher) 216/30 Baldwin St, Golden Beach,
Caloundra, Queensland, Australia 4551

I have read the current "Lioness" with great enjoyment, it was a great pleasure to see my name in print (Southampton Branch News).

It is good to see so many more articles from girls who were in the WRAC around the same time as myself.

I joined on the 15th May 1951 and went to Guildford at the end of that month.



Daphne James, while in the WRAC.

I was in No. 1 Company; I remember the "jabs" and the window cleaning which followed to save us from getting stiff arms, the drill parades and all that went into the six week basic training. I think the Corporal in charge was Cpl Wade.

From Guildford I was posted to Gresford Hall for the clerical course. I was put on my only charge at this time, our platoon was marching towards the parade square, on approach we could see from the head of the platoon a gardener watering the weeds, the three of us thought it funny so we started laughing. We were put on a charge; even the officer saw the funny side but kept it to a wry smile.

My next posting was to Chilwell Depot where I worked in the vehicle headquarters helping to keep vehicle movements up to date. During my time at Chilwell King George VI died. That night in the NAAFI you could have heard a pin drop when the nine o'clock news came on.

We used to go to the dances at Long Eaton and I remember the long walk from Long Eaton to Chilwell as well as returning from weekend leave on the milk train from London.

My third posting was to Kingston-upon-Thames. I was an ammunition examiner; this came to a sudden halt when I was posted to Aldershot to take a shorthand writer's course.

The last post was the War Office. We were stationed at Kingston-upon-Thames and were bussed into London; we wore civvies except for payday. I worked in Lansdowne House, Berkeley Square in several departments finishing my service in the compassionate branch of AGI in April 1954.

This was a good time to be in London with all the preparations for the coronation. We went to London the evening before the event, spending the night in Whitehall having fun, pretend bullfighting etc. We had window seats in Northumberland House, even the rain did not spoil the day, and we watched the return of the procession from the Nuffield Club on TV, later joining the crowds at the palace.

I still recall those years. I now live in a retirement village and have plenty of time to reminisce and wonder if there is anyone else that remembers this time. I now have cancer so live from day to day. I would love to hear from anyone with memories of these times.

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OVERSEAS PAYMENTS

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

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

SPONSORED RUN

The Great North Run is an annual event at which participants run a half marathon race ie 13.2 miles!

Maureen Lowson of Fife Branch will be taking part this year and has agreed to seek sponsorship to support the 'Lioness'

The race takes place on 16 September 2001.

If you would like to sponsor Maureen, forms can be obtained from the Secretary of Fife Branch:

Mrs Janet Berwick
3 Kinnaird Place,
Forgandenny,
Perth PH2 9EU

ATS DINNER CLUB

The Annual Luncheon of the ATS Dinner Club will be held this year on Saturday, 6th October 2001 at the Cumberland Hotel, Marble Arch, London.

Tickets will be available from June onwards and can be obtained from the Ticket Secretary:

Mrs Margaret Rogers
103 Lion House Road, Hailsham,
East Sussex BN27 2SE

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Further details will be in the next ATS Dinner Club Newsletter.

Life in the Army Today

'A Few Good Women'

Developing the Physical Training Programme (PTP) for female candidates attending the All Arms Commando Course (AACC) by Lt Pip Tattersall

The Royal Marines are preparing for the prospect of their first female candidates on the AACC. Though MOD policy, which precludes women from service in the Royal Marines, has recently been upheld by the judgement of the European Court of Justice they are eligible to apply to serve in combat service support units of 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines.

A Prerequisite for service in 3 Cdo Bde for all non-RM cap-badged personnel, irrespective of their rank or gender, is the completion of the AACC at Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM). The Royal Marines are developing a physical training programme to prepare individuals for the rigours of the course. They required volunteers to follow the PTP for six months before attending an assessment module in April 2000.

This is where I come in. Gone was the familiar warmth and comfort of 6 Army Education Centre, replaced by a vast span of cold, oozing mud of the estuary near CTCRM Lympstone in not so sunny Devon. Seven volunteers and one PTI stood in this watery concoction up to their knees. It is during these 'special' moments one can take time to reflect and ponder, 'how did I get here and what am I doing?' It was no use, there was no one to blame except myself! This was the famous 'mud run', used to develop team cohesion and provide an opportunity to get to know the other volunteers on the module. This was Monday, day one of what was to be a busy week.

On Tuesday we spent the majority of the day in the gym where we completed a VO2 Max test (shuttle run), rope techniques and climbs, strength tests and the United States Marine Corps (USMC) entry test and swim. For the USMC we joined a Recruit Troop and proceeded without any of them batting an eyelid. I think they had more important things to worry about!

Wednesday began with the 'Tarzan Course' which was an aerial assault course – wires, ropes, death slide, etc and the climbing of a 30ft stone wall with little more than a rope for assistance. The Tarzan assault course is a confidence test and if I failed this element it is not really something you can work on. We watched the demo and then got stuck in, encouraged by the staff and each other. Fortunately, everyone proved that they had what it takes. We spent the rest of the morning on the 'bottom field'. The majority of the group achieved the 30ft rope climb with no weight but Capt Claire Philips managed one better by completing the climb with 21 lb without weapon – no easy task.

A walk-through, talk-through of the assault course was followed by a race against the clock. The morning was rounded off by attempting full regains on ropes stretched

across the static tank (yes, a big tank full of very cold water!). We were given the option of attempting the regains initially without kit or with kit, we chose 'with kit'. Cold water is a great incentive not to let go of the rope and both Sgt Mandy Mason and myself completed a full regain with 21 lb. With a little time to catch our breath and get something to eat we headed for Woodbury Common, the main training area for CTCRM, and straight into a load carrying test with 69lb of equipment without weapons across country.

We knew that Thursday was going to be sore on the feet. We started with a six-mile speed march with kit weighing 21lb without weapons. It was a glorious sunny day and I am sure the surrounding countryside was magnificent but my eyes stayed firmly locked on the black boots in front of me pounding out the pace. The Royal Marines have a slightly different method for speed marching, striding out up the hill and then 'shuffling/jogging' downhill and along the flat. The PTIs continually call out the step. Which acts as a great incentive and allows everyone to work and stay together. A great effort meant that four out of the seven of the group completed the march.

Our final challenge was the endurance course. A series of tunnels, hills and lots of water in between spread over two miles. Not exactly what you would call a stroll in the park. Crawling through the long, narrow tunnels it was hard to imagine some of the marines fitting through and we didn't even have any kit! A four-mile fun back to camp followed this. A hectic few days were completed by a meal at a local restaurant followed by the mandatory visit to the 'Royal Marines School of Dancing' better known as Samantha's Nightclub. Well, if you work hard you should play hard!

Our final day was less arduous than the previous few and consisted of returning kit and a debrief. We all felt we had learnt a great deal during the week and achieved a great deal. We all realised that the AACC is not just about being physically fit, it is about developing a camaraderie and spirit without which you will not succeed.

The Royal Marines are looking for a 'Few Good Women'. If for one will be volunteering.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please remember to pay your annual
subscription of £5 for 2002 by

31 OCTOBER 2001

Where Are You Now?

WHERE IS THE SERGEANT MAJOR?

Mrs Connie Deakin, 1 Rosedale Close, Christchurch,
Dorset BH23 3QP

During the war I was stationed in 504 Battery of 144 Regt RA. We had an ATS Sergeant Major whose surname was Allen. She was very strict but fair and we all admired her. Before she joined the ATS she was the matron of Pepper Harrow School in Surrey and after the war joined the TA. I often speak of her and wonder if anybody has any information about her?

SEEKING DORIS BROWN

Mrs Edna Goble née Boxall, Little Cowdray Farm,
Highfield Lane, Thursley, Near Godalming,
Surrey GU86 2J

I joined the ATS with a girl called Doris Brown and we became good friends. However, eventually she became a Sergeant and was later commissioned so we lost touch. We were in 504 Battery of 144 Regt RA. I would be very interested to hear news of her.

WERE YOU IN KIDDERMINSTER IN THE 50s

Barbara McNee née Methven, 43 Cambridge Road,
Hove BN3 1DE

I was in the WRAC from '56 to '58, did my training at Guildford and then spent six weeks at Yeovil, Somerset to train as a clerk. After that I went to RPO Wolverly, Kidderminster and served with the Royal Army Pay Corps for the rest of my time. I would love to hear from anybody who was there at that time.

SEEKING PTE BRIGID CROUCH

Mary MacDonald, Unit 591, 355 Byres Road,
Glasgow G12 8QZ

Did anyone know Private Brigid Crouch, W/376489 in 1951/1952. She was then about nineteen years old and came from St Leonards on Sea. I would be pleased to hear from anyone who knew her then and knows where she served and where she went. If anyone has any information about her could they please write to me. Thank you.

IRENE & ISABEL

Mrs Barbara Noble née Babs Luxton, 'Braeside',
Fairfield Road, Reydon, Southwold, Suffolk IP18 6QR

Like others, I wonder what has happened to old Army friends with whom I have lost touch, especially Irene Hindhaugh (whose home was at Brierly Hill). We did initial training at Brine Baths Hotel, Droitwich in January 1942. Another friend was Isabel Burns from Belfast. We last met up when I did a brief spell as Sgt Clerk with HQ 301 (EA) Bn WRAC/TA at Colchester around 1956. Here's hoping.

LADIES I KNEW BETWEEN 1949 - 1953

Ena Howard (formerly Maxfield) née Binyon,
1 Howell Terrace, Elim, Llanddeusant, Holyhead,
Isle of Anglesey LL65 4AG

It is always with great pleasure, and high expectations of seeing news of my ex-service pals that I receive my copy of the 'Lioness'. Each time, I determine that I will write and ask 'Where are you now?' - This time I have!

I joined the TA in Birkenhead at Chetwynd in January 1949 493(M) HAA P Battery. I enjoyed it so much that I enlisted in the Regular Army in September 1949. My recruit training was with No. 1 Company at Guildford. I completed my training and remained there, in the same company, as a Training Instructor. Our Company Commander was the much respected and, may I say, much loved - Captain Eileen Nolan. I see from her photo in the current edition of 'Lioness' that she still has that wonderful smile. The Company included Sgt Maj Cockburn (she of the twinkling blue eyes!), SSgt Vi "Stuff" Long (the original Blarney Stone kisser), Sgts Tommy Tucker, Anne Colman, Avis Ashworth. The Junior NCOs were 'Billy' Galloway, Ella Adams, Madge Wade, Rosalie Irwin, Dot Hay, Sylvia Rigby, Gerry Germaine, Nan Hunter, myself Ena 'Binny' Binyon. Ena Goode was one of the company clerks.

After eighteen months I transferred to 140 Provost Company WRAC at Sloane Court West London. Again, I remember so many names, particularly Sgt Eileen Illingworth - where are you Eileen? My daughter's God Mother!

I'd love to hear from anyone who remembers me. I put a letter in the local Anglesey paper - not a single reply.

My one claim to fame is the fact that the poet Lawrence Binyon, who wrote "For The Fallen" which is quoted at all Remembrance Services and inscribed on war memorials, was my Grandfather's cousin.

MOLLIE WALKER

Lawrence (Larry) E Walsh (19087663 Cpl),
115 Langley Lane, Middleton, Manchester M24 5LL

I am trying to contact a lady who was a Lance Corporal in the ATS called Mollie Walker and who came from Wishaw in Scotland. She was stationed with me at Leicester Pay Office in Gypsy Lane where we both worked on the Burroughs accounting machine. She was still there when I was demobbed in January 1949.

WERE YOU THE WEDDING GUEST?

Mrs N Sparkes, 213 Luton Road, Dunstable,
Bedfordshire LU5 4LP

This photograph was taken at my wedding on 17 March 1945. The lady in uniform was Junior Commander King, E Company Officer of First Avenue, Dunstable, Beds. She

was a great lady, kind and full of fun but a good disciplinarian at the same time. Unfortunately I lost touch with her because she had been posted abroad while I was on my honeymoon. I would very much like to get in contact with her again.

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Junior Commander King

WHERE ARE YOU NOW, ENA?

George Critchell, The Lilacs, Westbury Lane,
Purley on Thames, Reading RG8 8DL

In mid-1941, as a newly commissioned 2/Lt in the RAOC, I was serving in Northern Ireland with 5 Div Ordnance Field Park near the city of Armagh. In my leisure moments I was a keen dancer and at a dance in the Armagh City Hall I was privileged to meet a young lady, then serving in the ATS, whose company I enjoyed. She tried to teach me the steps of the Pride of Erin and the Moonlight Saunter. Alas, before I could succeed, I was posted back to another unit in England to pursue the war elsewhere. My dancing partner's name was Ena Newell (or Newall) and her home address was in Gilford Park, Ballsbridge, Dublin. For old time's sake I would be so glad to know what became of her and how life has treated her over the past sixty years. Can any friend or former colleague point me in her direction?

THERESA WALLACH AND FLORENCE MARGARET BLENKIRON

Mr Barry M Jones, Heather Cottage, Bixley Lane,
Beckley, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6TH

I am working on a biography of Theresa Wallach and Florence Margaret Blenkiron, pioneering women motorcyclists who were the first to cross the Sahara Desert by motorcycle in 1935.

Theresa served in the ATS from 1938 and is believed to have been the first woman army motorcycle courier rider, helping lorry convoys. As a qualified engineer, she was later promoted to Sergeant with the REME and helped run one of their workshops. She emigrated to America in 1947. Florence was the first woman motorcyclist to achieve 100 mph at Brooklands in 1934. Between 1939 and 1940 she served with 56 Field Ambulance in North Africa and was Commissioned in 1941.

Any information gratefully received.

A REQUEST FROM NEW ZEALAND

Mrs Pauline O'Connell (385432 L/Cpl Yeo),
3 Cumbrae Place, Aramoho Wanganui North Island,
New Zealand

Reading through the latest copy of Lioness was very enjoyable. I wonder if Maureen Brown née Merrit knew Jean Satchell who was also a postal worker stationed at Richmond. Jean joined the NZWRAC in London before coming to New Zealand. We were both at the same camp near Wellington, New Zealand. Maureen's letter is on page eighteen of Lioness, and reading page seventeen I wonder if the Drill Sergeant that Irene Whittaker speaks of was my friend Bimbo Coleman, it sounds very like her. Bimbo and I first met at Wilton Park Army School of Education in Beaconsfield where we were General Duties Orderlies.

I served my three years at the above mentioned camp and have got in touch with three others from there thanks to Lioness. If any ex-WRAC who served in other camps would like to write I would welcome their letters.

SEARCH FOR A MISSING GRANDFATHER

I Burton, 40 Featherstone Drive, Glen Parva,
Leicester LW2 9RD

Could you please help me? I am trying to find my American Grandfather. I started searching for information on where my Grandmother served in the ATS during the Second World War and after ten months I have finally got some leads.

Her name was Elsie Florence Swift. She was 18 when she enlisted in 1941. She was only 4 foot 9 1/2 inches tall with brown eyes and brown hair, and came from St Anns, Nottingham. She trained at No. 2 Training Centre in August 1941. I believe she then served in 43rd Kent Platoon Company October 1941, followed by 2nd Western "C" Company, "N" Company East Lancashire

Group and "H" Company. She was posted to Scottish Command in September 1943. In October 1943 she was posted to No. 8 Training and Holding Unit and discharged in April 1944.

I am particularly interested in the last unit, which apparently was in Leicester. Did anyone serve in this unit, or know where it was based? Does anyone remember if there were Americans around Leicester at that time – maybe near the training unit? Finally, did anyone know my Grandmother? I really do want to find my unknown American Grandfather and can't give up now, so any information would be gratefully received.

SWIMMING IN EGYPT

Mrs Eileen Munson (W/390376 LCpl E Dunn),
13 Leyside, Rayne, Braintree, Essex CM7 8RX

Looking through the last issue of 'Lioness' (p 11) I could hardly believe my eyes, there was a picture of me! Under "Swimming in Egypt" I was W/390376 LCpl E Dunn, now Mrs Eileen Munson. What memories that brought back! I'd love to hear from Ptes Low and Noble if they happen to read this. We were at Fayid, I think Sgt Colby was from Moascar.

I still have the badge that is on the costume, together with 1 Bronze and 4 Silver medals and a Cup. The year of the photograph would be 1953. I also swam for the Army in 1952. I would love to hear from anyone who knows anything of Nancy Thompson, she was a very dear friend and used to stay with my family. My Mum, who is now in her 96th year, often speaks of her still and if I could get in touch with her it would be great. I'd also love to hear from Heather Manual, Doreen Atkinson or anyone else who remembers Eileen Dunn.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Mrs Mona Orchard née Hinchliffe, 16 Rostholme Square,
Bentley, Doncaster, South Yorks DN5 0PL

While sorting through old correspondence I came across this photograph. It was taken in 1943 and is of the staff who were stationed in the Ordnance Depot at Hunt Lane, Doncaster, in what was the old skating rink. I wonder if there are still some ladies who will recognise themselves. I am now 77 years old.



Staff at Ordnance Depot, Hunt Lane, Doncaster, 1943.

CALLING FROM AMERICA

Ms Barbara J Clayson, 10 Putnam Road, Apt 8 Foxboro,
MA 02035

I find the 'Lioness' magazine extremely interesting, especially the "Where are You Now?" section.

I am enclosing a photo of a girl I met when I was stationed in Devizes. She had served on the coast of England in the Ack-Ack and was injured. She was a lovely companion and when we parted she gave me a photograph together with the Catholic medal that she wore around her neck. I still have it on the chain with my cross. I cannot remember her last name but I know she signed the photo "Your pal, Phyl". I found the photo in my grandmother's bible recently and I would love to get in touch with her if it is at all possible.



"Phyl"



Barbara J. Clayson

BARBARA DOROTHY WELLS

Brian Dulston, 7 Mallard Close, Bradley Stoke,
Bristol BS32 0BL

My mother served in ATS during the War and I am researching into the family tree and also the War period and I am hoping someone may remember her service days.

Barbara Dorothy Wells served with the ATS during the period of 1944/45, possibly earlier than these dates. She may have served in Yorkshire and had an address in Bracebridge Heath, Lincoln near RAF Waddington. If anyone knew her, could they please contact a family member, Brian Dulston on 01454 884601 or write to the address above.

THREE MISSING BRIDESMAIDS

Mrs Mary Wilson née Curry, 116 Melrose Avenue,
Billingham Cleveland TS23 2JE

When my late sister, who was then Ethel Curry, married an American Serviceman, Pte Howard Dills, at Leicester during the war she had four bridesmaids, of whom I was one. Unfortunately, as she did not want to go to America, the marriage did not last and later she married again.

I have one photograph of the wedding showing all four bridesmaids and I know at the time that there were other photos taken. If any of the other three bridesmaids read this or have any photos of the occasion I would love to hear from them.

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Marriage of Howard Dills and Ethel Hay Curry

LOOKING FOR A DRIVER

Mrs Maisie Harradine (W/73829 Pte Puttock)
1 Smock Mill Loke, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 0PG

I would like to trace a lady I knew as Vera Tubbs. We were both drivers and served together from 1941 to 1945. We were stationed at Salisbury and lived in a house called Heathfield. We shared a room with a lady whose name is Jackie Westfield and with whom I am still in touch. Vera's home address was 3 Saxon Street, Southampton but we lost touch with one another when we were demobbed. I have been wondering what happened to her for many years and it would put my mind at rest if anyone would give me any information.

If there is anybody who remembers me from Aldermaston, Camberley, Salisbury and Catterick Camp, or who lives near to me now, I would love to hear from them too.

PTE EDITH THURIBY

Mrs E Rashbrooke, 49 Peel Road, South Woodford,
London E18 2CJ

Mrs Edith Rashbrooke, who is now a widow, served in the ATS from 1942 to 1946 as W/127403 Pte Edith Thuriby. After her basic training she worked in an Officers' Mess as a batwoman for the male officers in London until it was decided that ATS should not perform these duties. She then went to Bicester as a cook and became a corporal in charge of the Other Ranks' Mess. She wonders if any other ladies remember her from those far off days.



Edith Thuriby - ATS 1942-1946.

"D" COMPANY NO. 1 LONDON GROUP

Majorie Humphrey (W138649 Cpl Marjorie Miles),
381 Holywood Road, Belfast BT4 2LR

During 40 or 50 years of reading 'The Lioness', I have never seen or heard a mention of a very large Company ("D" No. 1 London Group) in which I worked for three years from Easter 1943. It was mainly a living out Company attached to the Pay Corps in Knightsbridge.

I heard today that our very 'Regimental' Company Sergeant Major, CSM Irene Bossett, died about two years ago in her nineties and that my own room-mate, a Staff Sergeant Gwen Gorwyn, died on 1 April this year aged 82.

We must be getting pretty thin on the ground but surely some of the characters must have survived - like Cpl Enid Williams, LCpl Chris Warren, Sgt Norman, Cpl Doris Allen and one very elderly lady whom everyone knew as Georgie - I cannot remember her other name.

WERE YOU AT TALYBONT ON USK?

Mrs Edith Armitage, 15a Marion Road, Prestatyn,
North Wales

My maiden name was Edith Mansfield when I was stationed at Talybont on Usk from 1942 to 1944. I had a friend called Edie Jones from Wrexham who I would like to get in touch with, can anybody help me?

My telephone number is 01745 853568

WERE YOU AT LINGFIELD BARRACKS IN OCTOBER 1963?

Mrs Jean Lander, 175 Marion Road, Prestatyn,
N Wales LL19 7DG

In 1963 my name was Jean Brown and my number was W/420252. I would like to trace a lady called Margaret Brown who came from Scotland, and also the twins who, like me, joined from Manchester. If anyone has a Platoon Photograph from this time please could they let me know as my mother lost mine. My telephone number is 01745 854267

UP FOR ADOPTION!

Mrs Gwen Wallace (W/362388 Gwen Hussey),
983 East Chezzetcook, Halifax Co., Nova Scotia,
BOJ 1N0, Canada

Being in Nova Scotia, I have no branch to connect with and feel like an orphan. Couldn't somebody adopt me!

I joined the WRAC in January 1950, did a clerical course at Gresford in North Wales and then went to Blacon Camp, Chester and worked in Western Command. From there I moved to Cophorne Barracks in Shrewsbury, then back to Chester. Next came an overseas posting to MELF and I spent the rest of my service in Fayed.

I am now a widow and would like to hear from anybody who remembers or served with me.

MARGARET OWENS

Margaret French, 9 Happy Trails Drive, Las Cruces,
New Mexico 88005-2973

I have been trying to get in touch with the girls I worked with in the Royal Corps of Signals. I was stationed in Aldermaston and also Knightsbridge. My maiden name was Margaret Owens. My ATS number was W/150555. I served 2 years and 341 days 22 May 1942 to April 1945.

DO YOU REMEMBER "THE BOMBERS' ARMS"?

Alan C Rogers, The Old Court House, 16 Middle Street,
North Perrott, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 7SG



Members of 455(M) HAA Bty KA

During the war, I was a Sergeant Instructor at the Weybourne Practice Camp RA and was privileged to instruct many ATS girls who were members of Mixed Ack Ack Batteries. We had a rather original building which was used as a training base and was loosely modelled on a pub and called "the Bombers Arms" - this for aircraft recognition! I am enclosing a photograph of one such group of girls who were members of 455 (M) HAA Bty RA and would be pleased to hear from any of these ladies or from any others who remember Weybourne Camp and especially the "Bombers Arms".

On a recent visit to the camp site I was pleased to see that there was a Museum on the site, and they said that they would be interested to have any photographs or "mementos" of the Camp during the war years. They can be sent to:

Christine Snettenham
Office Manager, Weybourne Military Camp,
Muckleburgh Collection, Weybourne
Norfolk NR25 7EG
Tel: 01263 588210

"JOCKIE" GOLDMAN

Mrs Lorna Raymond née MacCoby, 11 Lowthian Terrace,
Washington, Tyne & Wear, NE38 7BA

Mrs Lorna Raymond would like to hear from a friend she made whilst at Newmarket. She is: Jockabed (Jockie) Goldman. Jockie was very kind to her and invited her to her home. Jockie (or anyone who has news of her) can write to Lorna at the above address.

WERE YOU IN SINGAPORE IN 1946?

Gordon Richards, 7 Briars Close, Long Lawford,
Rugby CV23 9DW

Are there any ex-ATS readers of this edition who were stationed with the Royal Army Pay Corps, 11 CPO, Singapore in October 1946 and who were working on a section under the control of either Lt Hume or Lt Spicer? If so, I would be obliged if they will take the trouble to contact me - Gordon Richards - either by phone 01788 - 551846, or by letter at the above address. I am seeking help to trace an ATS colleague from that time.

JESSIE REID

Mrs Laura Jobber (ex-ATS W/212472),
16 Woodroyd Gardens, Horley, Surrey RH6 7LP

Jessie Reid and I were both in the 443 (M) HAA Bty, stationed for some of the time at Redbarn Farm, Wardle near Newcastle. I would so like to contact Jessie, I still have the telegram sent to Cambridge on my Wedding Day in February 1944 - from Jess, Tess, Joan and Joey.

I wonder if they remember? We were all GL 'Girls'. Our hut was named Vigilante. I believe Jessie lived in Aberdeen or Inveraray. I always check the lists put up in York at the RAA Reunion every year, hoping to see more names from the 443 Bty.



*Laura Jobber, 443 (M)
HAA Bty, 1944*



*Jessie Reid, 443 (M) HAA
Bty at Redbarn Farm,
near Newcastle*

WERE YOU ON A COURSE IN 1940?

Mrs Betty France née Parkinson, 11 Warwick Avenue,
Golcar, Huddersfield, W Yorkshire HD7 4BX

Does anyone remember what must have been the first
ATS course of the war? It was a Corporals' Course held in
London in January 1940. We were billeted in students'
rooms in Queen Alexandra's Mansions, Kensington,
marching each day to the Imperial College of Science for
lectures. One evening we managed to see Mrs Miniver
(film) and one evening went to the Circus at Olympia. I
remember a girl named Beth who was attached to The
Black Watch in Perth Castle and who wore the kilt. How
we envied her. I would love to hear from any classmates
about their subsequent wartime adventures.

"REGT PAYMASTER CAV & RAC"

Mrs I Beecham (W/172622 Sgt Bonner),
4 Normanbrook Court, Market Drayton,
Shropshire TF9 3BK

I would like to hear from anyone on this photo, taken on
Sports Day, Horsfall Playing Fields, Bradford 1944/45. I
am first on the left and known as 'Bonny'. We were in D
Coy, No 12D GRP, ATS, attached to 41 Det RAPC, known
as "Regt Paymaster, CAV & RAC". At the end of 1946 the
office transferred to Knightsbridge, London. We were
billeted at Lennox Gardens. Friends I remember are -



Sports Day, Horsfall Playing Fields, Bradford, 1944/5

Marjorie Rushworth, Millie Butterfield, Joan Cheetham,
Doreen Woods, Marie Dukewicz, Pat Money, Ruby Scott
and Bronwen Plocica.

When at Bradford we worked in Taranto House and
Gresham House. As my home was in Bradford, I was
fortunate to be billeted there. Unfortunately I cannot
remember the names of the girls in the photograph.

MYSTERY PHOTOGRAPH

Mrs Hazel Gordon, Hilton House, Shildaig,
Strathcarron, Ross & Cromarty, Scotland IV54 8XN

I would like any information about this Photo found in our
house about the 1940's, the only details I have, is that
Lady Helen Murray was OIC Inverness, her parents lived
at the Hall near Kishorn, Strathcarron, where my
husband's father was head gardener. Lady Helen married
an American and went to live in America.



Lady Helen Murray (in charge) Inverness

RAPC WOLVERLEY, KIDDERMINSTER, 1958

Mrs C M Powell née Street, 387 Harden Road,
Walsall, West Midlands WS3 1RR

I would be very pleased to hear news of my old room
friends - Meg Lynas, Sheila Sutton, Gwen Higham and
Sheila Smith.

John RAPC also wishes to make contact with Meg Lynas.

WERE YOU A GL OPERATOR?

Eileen Sullivan, (Ex 618 (M) HAA), 37 Goodwin Road,
Slough SL2 2ET

I recently received a nice letter from Gladys (Cody)
Williams née Jackson in Australia. Gladys served with 618
(M) HAA as a GL Operator and would love to hear from
anyone who remembers her. She can be contacted
through me.

DID YOU KNOW CATHERINE JONES AND JACK DEACON?

Iona Williams, 234 Village Street, Derby,
Derbyshire DE23 8DD

My late mother Catherine Jones, who was in the ATS was
born in Anglesey on 19 April 1912.

She was stationed at Ty Croes Barracks Anglesey, North
Wales in 1945. She had a friend at the barracks called

Jack Deacon. On my birth certificate my name is
recorded as Iona Deacon Jones and when I questioned
my mother she said that Deacon was the name of my
father and that he had died during the war. I later found
out that they had married.

I wonder if any ex-ATS ladies remember my mother or
Jack Deacon because I am trying to piece together my
family history.



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Association £1.50



Warley

DEDICATION OF A PLAQUE ON MARCH 4TH 2001 AT THE CHAPEL OF THE ESSEX REGIMENT AT WARLEY, NEAR BRENTWOOD, ESSEX

Gina Shadrack, Hon Secretary, Chelmsford Branch

In December 1999 a number of members from the Chelmsford Branch attended a Carol Service at the Chapel of the Essex Regiment at Warley in response to an invitation from the United Services Association (who are also based in Chelmsford). The Chapel contains numerous Colours and brass memorials but there was no reference to the service of ATS stationed there during the Second World War. Colonel Geoffrey Morgan, OBE, DL, the Chairman of the Chapel and also the President of the Essex Regimental Association, welcomed the suggestion of a commemorative plaque and permission was received through the Chapel Committee to begin the planning.

The plaque, presented by Chelmsford Branch commemorates the service given by ATS who served in Essex during the Second World War including over 200 who were stationed at the former barracks at Warley.

A Roll of Names was prepared and almost 100 people replied. This surprising response showed the great variety of trades undertaken by women. These included members of the ATS who had formed the first 5th Essex Coy in Chelmsford in 1938. Other names include people from all parts of the country and from as faraway as New Zealand and other parts of the world. Copies of the Roll have been sent for safe keeping to the WRAC Association, the Chapel and the Essex Museum of Military History which is in Chelmsford, for their respective archives.

As readers will have already read in the "Lioness", anyone wishing to take part in the Service of Dedication on March 4th at 11 am was very welcome and approximately 170 people attended. These included former ATS and their families, affiliated Branch members, representatives of other ex-service Associations and the regular congregation.

The service was conducted by the WRAC Association Chaplain, the Rev. Susan Wing. In her sermon she made reference to the importance of remembering the past, whilst equally holding on to the same sense of importance



Commemorative Plaque
(by courtesy of the Essex Chronicle)

of things we believe in today. Lessons were read by Brigadier Shirley Nield, CBE, the Chairman and Vice-President of the Association who had made a long journey to be with us, and Colonel Morgan.

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Standard Bearers gathering prior to the Dedication Service

Standards were paraded. The Association Standard was carried by Debbie Lofts from Brighton and escorted by two Chelmsford members, Joan Scrivener and Joyce Wright. Mr Eric Seymour, County Secretary RBL marshalled the parade of 14 standards which was made up by those from the Women's, County, and Branch Sections of the RBL, from the RASC/RCT, and RNA Associations. During the first hymn our Association Standard was laid on the altar – an honour to mark the occasion. At the conclusion of the service a specially arranged version, by the organist, of "The Lass of Richmond Hill" was played on the organ.

A reception followed in the adjacent TA Centre during which Lady Valerie Kembal, the Area Group Chairman for East Anglia gave a vote of thanks to those involved with the arrangements. She had also made a long journey to be with us, as had many others. Chelmsford Branch is very grateful to those who supported us by coming to the service or by sending donations enabling us to stage the event, – it is much appreciated by us all. If you wish to see the plaque, it is possible, but as the Chapel is normally kept locked, arrangements should be made through the Essex Regimental Office near the Chapel.



*(left to right) Lady Kembal, Revd Sue Wing, Debbie Lofts, Mrs Gina Shadrack and Brig Nield
(by courtesy of the Essex Chronicle)*



The Association Standard and escort



Warley Barracks during WWII

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31 OCTOBER 2001

Reunions

ATS PROVOST REUNION
9TH - 11TH MARCH 2001
Amy Maund (née Kemp)
from Norfolk and Suffolk Branch



To my delight this year, I attended my first re-union of former members of ATS/WRAC Provost. I had not known of this Association until a copy of a newsletter called "Provost Lady" came my way and I noticed that their fourth re-union would be held in Colchester this year from 9th to 11th March. Colchester being within easy rail distance from my hometown of Gorleston, I contacted two friends of mine with whom I had served in Northern Ireland and we arranged to meet at the reunion.

Disappointingly, at the last minute one of them was unable to attend, but on the first evening, I met my friend Alma Jennings (née Taylor) who now lives in Chesterfield. I guess we didn't stop talking until we had to part on Monday morning.

We were the only two ATS present – and felt like veterans! Everyone was so welcoming. Even though she knew our service days had been spent under wartime conditions, one of the younger ones, implying that she envied us, said "You had a real purpose being in the ATS at that time". I know she was right.

The reunion dinner was on Saturday evening, about 40 of us present, with one or two husbands in support, and a very good meal it was too. As most of the girls were staying in the same hotel they had quickly become great friends with the staff who were very helpful, and so there was a welcoming atmosphere. Our places at the dinner table were set with a mat showing the Provost Logo, the date and place of the reunion, a Menu specially prepared with the Chef's name on it – and we all had a nametag as well. Someone had been very busy. These were all laminated so we were able to bring them home as

souvenirs. Afterwards there was a very large raffle, Alma won a rose bush and I won a box of chocolates then we all settled down to a long evening of exchanging news and happy gossiping. It was one o'clock before Alma and I returned to her son's house in Colchester where we were both staying for the weekend.

One of the girls to whom I had been talking has kindly sent me a book detailing the experiences of four Provost girls. I found it very interesting reading and compared their experiences with my own.

We are looking forward to the next reunion in 2002, there is some suggestion that this may take place in Cambridge. I have every intention of being there if I possibly can and enjoying it as much as I did this one in Colchester. I would like to pass on my thanks to all those who took such pains to make the weekend so enjoyable and memorable.



ATS/WRAC Provost Reunion

WRAC DINNER CLUB WEEKEND Ann Mahony, (Standard Bearer) Cleveland Branch

On 13 October 2000, we packed our bags (Safeway, Asda or Tesco!) and made our way to Stockton-on-Tees to meet our friends from Darlington Branch to board our mini coach to Stafford for our WRAC Dinner Club Weekend. Our driver was, once again, Edith Seabrook who, I promise you, could park a double decker bus on a postage stamp.

We duly arrived at our hotel, signed in, unpacked, then went looking for our friends. Unknown to me, MI4, had arranged a surprise party for me, as that day I was "21" again. Irene's room was decorated with streamers and balloons (where *did* she get the puff!), a lovely birthday cake, with one or two candles, and all my cards. Thanks girls, you put MI5 to shame!

Our re-union dinner on the Saturday was a great success, and our table did well on the raffle. You did a great job once again Val (Kemball). After plenty of dancing, I think I went to bed.

Sunday morning we had church parade – what can I say? It was wonderful, and seeing our Standards paraded brought a lump to my throat, and a little tear to many an eye. Thanks to Anne Deakin and the committee for such a wonderful weekend, see you all in Birmingham in October 2001.

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HIGHLAND GATHERING OF EX-ARMY POSTIES

J R Deasey, QMs Dept, 1st Battalion
The Royal Highland Fusiliers

Last November in Blackpool, a group of RE and WRAC Association members (former posties), decided to have a get together in the Highlands of Scotland. This took place over a long weekend in April when people arrived at the Thistle Hotel, Inverness on the Thursday afternoon, departing the following Tuesday morning.

At 2030 hrs on the Thursday, the last of the group arrived and we sat down to a very enjoyable and much needed meal. It was then off to the bar (where else) for some liquid refreshment and to be briefed on the program of events for the weekend.

After quite an early breakfast (for some) the party departed at 0900 travelling down the east side of Loch Ness to Fort William, visiting The Legend of the Dew of Ben Nevis (Distillery) of course. It was here that one of the party, Bert Leighton, met up with an old comrade from the time he served on Christmas Island (38 years ago). I must add that the distillery shop manager commented to me that "this lot must think there is no tomorrow the way they are spending their money". No need to guess what was being purchased! It was then on to Fort William for lunch, returning to Inverness via Fort Augustus with a short stay to admire the locks. (This is where the Caledonian Canal links the water way between Fort William, Loch Ness and the Beaulieu Firth at Inverness). The journey continued on home up to the west side of Loch Ness passing Urquhart Castle and Drumnadrochit. Then it was back to the hotel for dinner and another good chat.

On Saturday morning we visited James Pringle Weavers, where it was planned that we would weave a piece of tartan, but unfortunately the member of staff was off sick. We then made our way to the Moniac Castle where they make country wines, liqueurs and preserves. Tasting the goods was of course welcomed by all. The rest of the day was spent wandering around Inverness. At 1900 hrs all assembled for a photograph to commemorate the occasion and then we all went into the restaurant for a special dinner. We were to have a private room for this, but we were outnumbered by the Al-Anon's. Yes, Alcoholics Anonymous. So you can guess that there was great competition at the bar, cokes versus whisky galore. Our entertainment for the evening was a singer with guitar giving us a varied selection of Scottish songs and rhyme.

The Sunday morning again started with a 0900 hrs departure, this time heading out to Cromarty on the Black Isle stopping en-route at the Fairy Glen to tie strips of cloth to a tree. This is a local tradition which was

passed on to us by Mrs Pat Gray, a member of the group. On arrival at Cromarty we visited the Courthouse museum. Here one of the displays include a trial from the 1770s, created in the original courtroom using computer controlled animated figures. It was here that two of our party June Lowe and Alan Davies dressed up in costume and enacted out a trial. Yes you have guessed it, they were both convicted of sheep stealing and sentenced to serve a number of years in prison at Fort George. We then proceeded up the East Coast to Dunrobin Castle and Gardens where we had lunch and enjoyed the surroundings. Whilst on our way back to Inverness, we passed through the town of Dornoch and stopped to see the now famous Cathedral where Madonna had her baby christened.

On Monday morning we went east to Fochabers to visit Baxters the famous food producers. Here we were given a cookery demonstration and observed a film about Baxters. While in the area, we had to go and see Spey Bay before going on to Fort George. This is a Historic Scotland site and also occupied by a regular Battalion of the British Army. In this case the 1st Battalion The Royal Highland Fusiliers who arrived from Germany in July 2000. The Gordon Highlanders have their museum here and it is well worth a visit.

Tuesday morning was now here and this was the day of departure for most of the group. One couple had left on the Monday due to work commitments and another couple was staying until Wednesday morning.

My congratulations to all that attended and kept up with the packed timetable.

RASC/RCT ASSOCIATION

A branch of the above Association has been formed in Shropshire. Any ATS/WRAC who were attached to RASC/RCT Units will be given a warm welcome to join the Association. They meet monthly on 3rd Wednesday 7.30 pm at the Perkins Club, Shrewsbury.

There are also Branches at Birmingham, Coventry, Leicester and Liverpool,

Anyone interested please contact:

Mr R Rogerson, 10 Dunkeld Drive,
Telford Estate, Shrewsbury, SY2 5UZ
(Chairman) after 4.30 pm.
Telephone No. 01743 357881

Wedding

DIAMOND WEDDING (DUNLOP - LANHAM)

Present Address: 112 Teversham Drive, Cherryhinton,
Cambridge CB1 3JY

On 22 February 1941 Craftsman Hugh Dunlop REME married Pte Peggy Lanham ATS at Hardwick Church, Cambridge.



Hugh Dunlop and Peggy Lanham, sixty years on, celebrating their diamond wedding anniversary



Craftsman Hugh Dunlop REME and Pte Peggy Lanham ATS at Hardwick Church, Cambridge, 1941

DID YOU USE DIVIDERS?



Photocopies of photographs showing an unusual 'divider' instrument

The problem I am trying to resolve stems from an inquiry from Dover Castle regarding various instruments shown on war time pictures with ATS personnel carrying out plotting operations. I have been able to resolve some of the queries, but am stumped over the 'Dividers' shown on the enclosed prints. These appear to show rather odd features not usual on instruments of this type.

The query was passed to me because I am the Archivist for the old firm Henry Hughes and Son, who used to make similar instruments.

Thank you.

Please contact: H S Harvey, 153 Stradbroke Grove, Ilford, Essex IG5 0DL. Tel: 0208 5508294

Branch News

BEXHILL BRANCH

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It is a year since you heard from us down here in Sussex but we are still going along quite nicely, I am glad to say! Congratulations to all who have come along, despite the awful winter weather and to everyone who has supported the branch in each and every way possible.

We had our fair share of illness and other mishaps, our past Secretary, Hilda, has had a very tough year, with a triple heart by-pass which was successful and we all wish her well for the future. Officers in the branch have been doing the usual swings and roundabouts, which is probably a well-known fact in most branches but we survive. We send out copies of the minutes to those who, for a variety of reasons simply cannot make the meetings.

The usual mix of events has taken place during the year, our Social Committee works very hard on our behalf, so many thanks to them. We make money (sometimes!) but we have a lot of fun too. Of course we would like more members but realistically we know that is not a great option but we can always hope.

As Secretary, I thank my "girls" for all their support and for just "being there" as the saying goes.

Best wishes to you all!

BLACKPOOL BRANCH



Blackpool Branch visiting a Garden Centre

We still have monthly meetings and some 15-20 members attend.

This year we hope to visit our outlying members' locations

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| April | - Skipton and Boudary Mill |
| May | - Meeting |
| June | - Windermere and Lakeland Plastics |
| July | - Meeting |
| August | - Birthday Party for all members in our Area |

- R.R.B. Club, Thornton, Cleveleys. 1pm
- Buffet Lunch with Wine
- £5.00 (Members Only)
- £6.00 Guests - £1 is for Benevolent Fund
- September** - Wigan Pier
- October** - Meeting
- November** - Shopping Trip
- December** - Fulwood Bks, Preston for Christmas Party

As we are covering a large area from Blackpool up into Cumbria, we like to keep meetings and trips to the 3rd Friday in the month.

Come and see us.

BOLTON BRANCH

It is with regret that we have to announce the death of yet another of our members, Mrs Ada Lancelot of Leigh.

In an effort to boost our declining membership we contacted the local radio station who did a feature about us. This resulted in 2 ladies, who were not aware of our organisation, expressing an interest and we hope to welcome them as members of our branch. We are also compiling details which will be published in our local paper.

On November 11th some of our members joined Combined Services for the service and firing of the maroons and one of our members had the honour of reading the Homily. Three of our members attended the service and march past on the following day.

In June I shall be travelling to Bridlington for the Combined Services weekend and I look forward to meeting old friends at the Civic Reception and Ball.

BRISTOL BRANCH

How time flies, it doesn't seem so very long ago that the last report was being done.

We have continued to increase our membership and look forward this coming year to meeting and recruiting more ex-colleagues.

In November we were represented by two of our members at the Remembrance Service at the Colston Hall in Bristol and at the Remembrance Parade the following Sunday. We also attended the parade at the Cenotaph in London and went to the Remembrance Service at the Albert Hall. It felt an honour to be able to participate in these services, we remembered those who served during those dark days of the war. A cross was laid in the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey.

At our December meeting we had a party atmosphere with wine and cakes and we had a very good raffle.

In February we had our Annual Lunch which we held once again at the Marriott Hotel, we had as our honoured guests, the Lord and Lady Mayoress of Bristol, Lt Col (Retd) Val Trout and Commander Margaret Farrell USN who is also the Assistant Naval Attaché to the Embassy of the USA. Our meal was excellent and it was a most enjoyable occasion.

In April we moved to a new meeting place at the local recruiting office, everyone there is most helpful and as the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force also occupy the building, we have a ready supply of speakers. Lucky for us!! In April we attended the AGM in London (London was slightly busy, as it was the weekend of the Marathon!) It was nice to meet up with fellow members. Maj Dee McElligott introduced us to our Chief Clerk, Mrs Rosie Mills, who is most helpful. Those of us who stayed at the Victory Club had a very nice weekend. On the Saturday night we had our own 'choir' we didn't realise that we knew so many words to so many songs, I don't think however we will be taking any bookings. Those who missed out will just have to wait until April 2002, but look at the treat that is in store for the 'unwary'.

Bath members shared a coach with us to attend the Southern Area Re-Union at Weymouth, we all had a superb day, met lots of people, including Lt Col Sue Westlake's mum. Thank you to Weymouth for a most enjoyable day. One of our members met with a colleague from Bath Branch that she had not seen for at least forty years, you can guess that they never stopped talking – good for them!

We have a new committee and we have various plans to include a network of contact for members if they are sick or would just like a visit. We also plan a trip to Guildford and another coach trip is planned for the very near future.

We look forward to meeting members in October and again perhaps in November at the Union Jack Club. Best wishes to you all.

CANTERBURY BRANCH



Members of Canterbury Branch at their seat dedication

Several years ago Mrs Rosina Lock, a member of the Canterbury branch of the WRAC Association, approached the local mayor and asked why there was no memorial to women who had served their country in the World Wars.

She was thinking of an appropriately inscribed plaque suitably positioned in the Thanet area. She didn't let the matter rest and after much chivvy and dogged determination her dream was realised. With the support of local councillors and a grant from the Arts and Libraries Department of Thanet District Council, a seat was commissioned from two local craftsmen.

Several designs were considered and discarded sadly because of the problems of vandalism. Finally in the summer of 2000 a design was approved and on Saturday 2nd December members of the Association, friends, Standard bearers from many groups, together with the Mayors of Margate and Ramsgate gathered in Trinity Square Margate for the dedication of the seat. After weeks of continuous rain there was some watery sunshine and few dry hours.

The Revd Brian Sharp, vicar of St. John's Church, Margate led a short Service of Dedication, particularly remembering local women, military and civilian, who had lost their lives in conflict.

After the ceremony everyone made their way to the RBL Club, Margate, where a delicious buffet lunch was enjoyed by all.

CARDIFF BRANCH

Those of you who attended the Grand Reunion in Cardiff last year will, no doubt, recognise the garden outside Cardiff Castle.



Councillor Michael and members of The Cardiff beside the WRAC emblem outside Cardiff Castle.

After years of requests by past Secretaries we have at last succeeded in having the WRAC Emblem planted by the Parks Dept. Councillor Michael who supported our request is pictured with some of our Members. On 25th April we were invited to a reception at the Mansion House in Cardiff – hosted by Councillor Michael. We enjoyed refreshments and were taken on a tour of the House. Our meetings continue to be well supported and we are arranging various day trips this Summer.

Some members attended the AGM in London on April 21st and enjoyed meeting up with friends from other Branches.

CHELMSFORD BRANCH

We are pleased that our Branch is able to welcome between 30 and 40 members who come along to the British Legion Hall in London Road, Chelmsford on the third Tuesday of the month. This is the usual arrangement for meetings and we welcome members from any other Branch to join us should they be in the area.

Since our last report, in September, we have entertained 27 disabled people to tea at the hall where we hold our meetings. They enjoy "shopping" from a stall set up by members as these are folk who are housebound or wheelchair users. Following tea we hold a raffle and share a game of cards with them before they depart with their carers.

We held our AGM in October with no major changes on the Committee and in November we enjoyed hearing of Margaret Kliskey's adventures in New Zealand which she illustrated with slides. The Branch took part in the Remembrance Day Service at the Cenotaph in Chelmsford and a wreath was laid on behalf of us all.

Our Christmas Lunch at the local hotel restaurant was well attended and we were very pleased to have with us our Area Chairman, Lady Val Kemball. This nicely rounded up our activities for the year.

We met in January 2001 and watched an immensely interesting slide talk on Essex Villages, and some of us spent a few days at the Warner Holiday Centre in Norfolk.

In February we had as our speaker a retired representative from the Women's Section of the Police Force who came along dressed in the uniform of a Woman Police Officer of the Victorian period. She gave us a detailed account of "the life of a "Lady Bobby"" during that time. (The ATS was definitely better!!)

In March we met for an afternoon of tea and chat followed by a card game of Hoy led by Peggy Turner who is a gifted leader and makes sure we don't cheat. But the highlight of the year was the occasion when our branch had the honour of presenting a plaque to the Chapel of the Essex Regiment on 4 March. The plaque commemorates the service given by ATS who served in Essex during the Second World War including those at the former Warley Barracks, near Brentwood in Essex. There is a separate account of this event elsewhere in the "Lioness".

At the April meeting we had a competition for a decorated Easter Bonnet and several members gamely took part making a colourful group showing real talent. Some had real eggshells on their hats! whilst the others were so effectively decorated it was very difficult to pick a winner. To conclude that meeting we had a demonstration of a floral decoration with an "Easter" flavour.

At our meeting in May we had a return visit from a retired Nursing Sister who spoke amusingly on her life in the nursing profession – a splendid speaker who could recount many hilarious episodes during her career.

We continue to support, whenever we can, the

Chelmsford branch of the United Services who work so hard to attract members to this necessary Association. This year we have experimented with a change from our regular Bring and Buy stall to having a stall centring on one type of item, eg a cake stall, or a bookstall. This has proved popular with our members and may be an idea for others to copy.

Our membership remains steady though we have lost one or two who now find it too difficult to attend meetings for all sorts of reasons. We appreciate the help given by those who assist at meetings, those who come along despite the weather and give loyal support without which it would be difficult to run a Branch; and for this, many thanks indeed. We include in our thanks the help and advice we receive from Worthy Down.

CLEVELAND BRANCH

Although 2001 will be almost over when this Newsletter goes to print, in reality "it's only just begun".

It is a dark Saturday afternoon in January, the decorations and Christmas tree all stored away, only the last few chocolates left (even the dog won't eat Turkish Delight) and the Christmas cake crumbs have been scoffed. Ah well – the diet *really* starts Monday. Now, down to business – the Cleveland branch sends greetings to you all. Some of our members are back to health again whilst others are not so good. The "family" at the branch send our best wishes to you.

Our Secretary, Mrs Friday is on extended leave at the moment to the family in America, so she missed our Christmas Party. Once again, we had a buffet lunch at the Royal Navy Club in Stockton. Our members were most generous with raffle prizes, and were entertained by a lady organ grinder – most original. Our Standard has been out and about, so I have asked its bearer to give an account of herself in this 'Lioness'.

The committee was rather low on members, so one of our youngsters volunteered – or was she pushed!!! Now, we have two ex-WRAC in post, welcome aboard Amelia Ford. Our January meeting was our Annual Auction. It was very lively, with money changing hands very quickly, raising money for our funds.

February was a bit thin, owing to snow, sunshine and more snow. It was decision time about our summer outings. Do we go North, South, East or West? It was decided to go North, to visit the lovely countryside around Kielder Water. Those of us looking for retail therapy will be disappointed I fear! Unfortunately the foot and mouth problems have put paid to that so we are going to visit Hornsea Pottery instead.

One of our members, Ivy Mole, hit our local TV screens and newspapers recently. Ivy had gone shopping and the poor lady was mugged, but she did *not* give in to her attacker. She told the reporter that she didn't go through the war in the ATS just to hand her handbag over. We are all very very proud of her fighting spirit. Well done Ivy – even so, the thief got away with her pension.

April brought our Annual Coffee Morning in Stockton Parish Church. Each stall was full of goodies, and, as usual we were well supported by local shoppers. At our April meeting, we had a gentleman advising on the making of wills. It was very enlightening – many ladies were off to their solicitors the next day!!!

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I hope you have a lovely summer ladies, and may Cleveland branch be the first to say "Happy Christmas".

COLCHESTER BRANCH

I was nearly put "On A Charge" for being late with sending this report to HQ, but, unfortunately I have been a wee bit under the weather of late and it's been an effort to keep going but I'm feeling better now.

Our last report ended in September 2000 so now I can report that our plans for Christmas 2000 went off very well with both the Dinner and Party being very enjoyable indeed.

As mentioned in the last report, Mr Bob Russell MP was so amazed to see so many ladies still together after all these years that he took himself off to the Evening Gazette Office in Colchester and asked them to do an article on us which was reproduced in the last edition of the 'Lioness'. This was all done over the phone apart from the photos which were taken at home. I was hoping that I might have heard from some of the members with whom I had served but no luck, too late now I fear.

November was rather a sad time for us as our very active Chairman, Mrs Elizabeth Tinker, went down with heart trouble and in February 2001 she was forced to stand down as Chairman which we were all very sorry about. Elizabeth had been an excellent Chairman, being a retired Major she was well able to keep things under control. She has not lost her interest in the branch and is hoping to return to the meetings in the near future. However we were fortunate in having a very good Deputy Chairman, Barbara Reeves, who was quite willing to take over as Chairman.

Unfortunately quite a number of our members have undergone serious operations but, thank goodness, they are all now on the mend. I do not think that any of us would pass A1 today and route marches are definitely out of the question.

We do have this year's Christmas Dinner already booked like the Christmas Party which will be held in January 2002.

In July we are off to visit a Museum to the memory of the British Resistance Organisation, Churchill's Secret Army. This was manned by certain members of the Home Guard, backed up by the ATS. It is situated along a road leading off the A12 at a village called Glenham. We are having lunch at the Glenham Crown so it should make for a happy day. In September we hope to have Mr Bob Russell MP come and talk to us once again and he is also hoping to be able to invite us to visit the House of Commons in the near future.

That's more or less all for now, but in passing I will confirm that our membership is now 134 and attendance to the meetings are between 30 on a bad day and 50 plus on a good day. Colchester Branch sends all Good Wishes to the other branches and hope that you all had a lovely Summer.

CREWE BRANCH

We held our usual Autumn Dance at the Crosville Club, Crewe in October, we also hold our monthly meetings there on the first Thursday of each month.

In November, five of us went to London for Remembrance Day. Betty and Edith went to the Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall on the Saturday night. Only Mabel Lightfoot went on the Cenotaph Parade on Sunday, the rest of us went to the Westminster Abbey Service.



Members of Crewe Branch arriving at the Area Reunion at Donnington

Come December we went on our annual visit to Crewe Theatre with our friends and relatives to see the Christmas Pantomime, an outing which we always enjoy. Then we had our usual break until February.

The last few years we have left having our Christmas Lunch until the New Year, but this year, for various reasons, we did not manage to have it until Sunday April 1st when we went to the Crewe Arms Hotel with husbands and partners and we were very pleased that our Area Chairman Maggie was able to join us too.

Also in April, on the 5th, we held another Table Top Stall at Nantwich which, although it entails a lot of hard work to set it up, we enjoy. On April 21st Betty and Edith attended the AGM at the Victory Club in London. On May 10th we held our Spring Dance at the Crosville Club, it was a very enjoyable evening.

Now the summer has arrived we hope. Now that there are less of us to fund raise and it is the holiday period, it is difficult to arrange to do things, but we hope to get together socially and we will also be making arrangements to go to our Area Reunion at Leicester on September 1st which we are all looking forward to.

DONCASTER BRANCH

We are still going well at the Doncaster Branch. We have had a quiet start to 2001, except for our trip in March when 10 of our members took a ferry to Belgium where we visited the **PDF Compressor Free Version** bus around the city which was most enjoyable (pity it rained all day). I am enclosing a photograph of our group on the ferry.



Members of the Doncaster Branch on a ferry to Belgium

We have planned our next trip for June or July to Barden Mill in Lancashire which should be a good day out. Several of our members will be attending the Combined Services Reunion at Bridlington in June. Six of us will also be attending the Ack Ack Reunion at York where we will enjoy meeting old friends once again; and, of course, we are all looking forward to the N.E. Reunion at Cleethorpes in September.

I will end with best wishes to all branches, also to the ladies at Worthy Down who do such a wonderful job.

EDINBURGH BRANCH

Although we have not had a report in the 'Lioness' recently – we are very much alive!

Attendance at our monthly meetings can be small although membership of the branch stands at 76. We would really like to see more of you coming, even occasionally, to join in our friendship. To re-cap, our venue is very central – The Scots Guards Club, 2 Clifton Terrace, Haymarket (opposite Haymarket Station) at 1400 hrs on the first Thursday of the month, February to May inclusive, then September to December. We decided last year to forego meeting in June – now a most popular month for holidays etc, and make the December Christmas Lunch 'Special'.

Our Bring & Buy in February was well attended and a great success – home produce still the best seller. We lost out in March – snow won the day – but made up for it in April when one of our own members gave us an insight into being a Warden of a Caravan Site at Glencoe. A Beetle Drive in May should produce some very 'artie beetles'. Two of our members will represent the branch at the Scottish National War Memorial Service, Edinburgh Castle, on 31st May.

In September our guest will be Mr Arthur Adair, Area Co-ordinator of the New Erskine Hospital for ex-servicemen and women which opens this summer in Edinburgh. October is always a great afternoon when we invite our friends of the WAAF Association to a tea party. If you have not been to one of these afternoons before you don't know what you have missed!

No-one likes November – AGM time.

December makes up for November – Christmas Lunch, Thursday 6th December at the Royal British Hotel (Castle Suite), 20 Princes Street, 12 noon for 1.00 pm, lift available. This is a lovely venue and we are made most welcome. Why not join us this Christmas and renew friendships old and new. Those of you out of town members who used to join us – why not 2001? There are several members with whom we have not shared time for a long while. If you would like to come, please contact Miss Sheila Logie, Chairwoman/Secretary, by November. Unfortunately, during recent months we have lost two of our most loyal and valued members. On 17th November last Jean Barnaby died after a long illness. Jean joined the Edinburgh branch in 1987, became Treasurer then also Secretary for a number of years. She had many friends throughout the Association. On 2nd March, the sudden death of Pauline Yeates shocked us all. Pauline joined the Edinburgh branch in 1954 and no one could have done more for the branch in numerous capacities. Pauline was well known throughout the Association in the UK and overseas.

FIFE & TAYSIDE BRANCH

Twenty six members travelled to Inverness on the 28th October 2000 for the Scottish AGM and Lunch. The lunch, company and entertainment were excellent and we enjoyed it all.

We received a certificate from SSAFA for our efforts at the "BIG-BREW-UP" contributing £307 towards their fund-raising. We hired a room in a Church Hall in the centre of the town and served tea, coffee and cakes. We also ran a bric-a-brac and home bakery stall. SSAFA were selling raffle tickets for a car.

The branch Christmas Lunch was held at the Grampian Hotel, Perth. We had two guests, one being the Perth, Kinross and Angus SSAFA representative Mrs Nancy Johnston and the other, Major (Retd) Sarah Walker.

Our Marathon Runner Maureen Lowson has been very busy. Last October she joined the Inca Trail Trek in Peru then went on to do the New York marathon on 5th November, combining this with pleasure, as she met up with her sister from Portland, Oregon. On the 22nd April this year she again was on the London Marathon also hoping to do the Great North Run in October this year which is a half-marathon.

Our membership numbers 95 to date. Sadly we have lost one member who died recently, Mrs Buntly Hutton, who was a regular attender at our meetings. The Branch AGM

and lunch was held at the Grampian Hotel on the 26th April. Attendance was down due to illness, hospitalisations and other reasons, but the lunch and raffle went well and was enjoyed by those who did manage to attend.

The Scottish Branches Memorial Tower at the Murray Royal Hospital Walled Garden continues to look very welcoming for visitors. Flowers look lovely, and seating within makes it a peaceful place to spend some quiet time. A coffee shop is being built, garden produce sold and garden crafts made.

We are looking forward to our Scottish AGM in October at Stirling (Saturday 26th October).

Our best wishes to all branches. Hope you have a good summer, and the weather is kind wherever you are.

GLASGOW BRANCH

We have had our usual busy session with two new ex-WRAC members and another two ex-ATS hopefully joining in September. One of our meetings produced a surprise visitor in the form of Mrs Matthews, she had been staying with Miss Thompson who brought her along to share the afternoon. We do like visitors.

Our change to afternoon meetings has been a boon, with quite a few members returning. One disadvantage, we are unable to have our WAAF friends, or go visiting them. They have always met on a Monday afternoon, so we, and they, have to be content with a couple of representatives to each.

Our meeting with the WRNS ladies took the form of "Chairobics" and we would like all our readers to know we were able to keep up with the instructress. Lots of laughter, the good effects ruined by tea and cakes afterwards.

We attended the Armistice Night in Hamilton again, and 21 ladies marched on the parade at the Glasgow Cenotaph.

October found us in Inverness – "the capital of the Highlands" – at the reunion organised by their branch. Well done Ladies, a super weekend. The arrangements for the reunion itself were excellent. Thank you one and all. We were also delighted to meet up with Colonel Nan Robertson.

Our last meeting this session was a talk from two members from the "Open Door Trust", they spoke and showed many slides about their various activities. Both, having been drug addicts, were positive proof addiction can be overcome.

We finished the season with a bus run to Perth via Aberfoyle and the Trossachs. The trees were in full bloom, all colours and the sun shone all day. We had a stop in Calandar – bacon rolls and strawberry tarts, then on to Perth. Most of us sat by the river, what bliss, till it was time to have high tea. The meal in the Waverley Hotel was excellent and then we set our sights on home.

I am sure many of you, particularly "Betty's fellow Secretaries" will be sorry to hear she is now unable to come to our meetings due to illness. Betty Alexander was our secretary and served us for many, many years. We miss you Betty.

GREATER LONDON

Our branch meeting at Orange Street, Leicester Square, on Saturday 28 April was honoured by the visit of Brigadier Shirley P Nield, CBE who kindly came along to talk to our members about her life, her Army career and her present post as Vice-President of the WRAC Association, which she is enjoying.

She said that the two highlights of her Service career were being appointed Commander WRAC of the WRAC College, Camberley in 1982 when it was the 4th college of RMA Sandhurst, and in 1986 becoming Director WRAC when she travelled extensively visiting many units in the Corps. Brigadier Nield said 'shadows do lengthen, life gets more difficult, but it is important that the Association carries on'.



Brigadier Nield talking to Mary Crofton, 28 April 2001

Our members will be attending the London Area Reunion to be hosted by Dacorum and Luton branches in Luton on 15 September. We hope to meet fellow members from our host branches, also from Ilford, Medway, London and Wimbledon there.

We do hope our younger members who served in the WRAC will come along to our meetings. You will receive a warm welcome. We need you.

GRIMSBY AND DISTRICT BRANCH

Hello once again, hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year, and survived the winter ailments.

After our York Reunion in September, we settled down at Grimsby, ready for our busy year's end. September 24th saw our Standard on parade at the Grimsby Town Hall, carried by Carole Tyler, ex-WRAC staff band.

Our Secretary, Mrs Eunice Dillerstone, and also other committee members were invited to "The Conferment of

the Right of Freedom of Entry into the Borough", upon B(250 Hull) Medical Squadron. Originally it was a field medical ambulance bearer company formed in 1854. It is now part of 5 General Support Medical Regiment which has served in many parts of the world. The unit can now march through the Borough with Standards flying bayonets fixed and bands playing etc. On the day, 150 Yorkshire Transport Regiment and Royal Logistics Corps Band led the parade. The weather was gorgeous, as were the refreshments afterwards in the Town Hall, where we joined the men and women of the Squadron, and swapped yarns. Some of these people had seen action both in the Gulf War and Bosnia.

In October we had the AGM, it was a good turn out, the current committee was asked to stand again and they have all agreed to.

In November branch members sold poppies in the Grimsby branch of the ASDA store from Monday 5th to Saturday 11th each day from 9 am to 5 pm and collected the grand sum £1,147.76. We are very proud of our effort, and in November 2001 some of the branch members are to receive their enamel poppy brooch. The Royal British Legion is making the presentation at ASDA during Remembrance week. The Branch also laid wreaths of poppies at the Grimsby Cenotaph and also in Cleethorpes at St Peter's Church.

I would like to mention Mrs Gladys (Mitch) Mitchell, one of the founder members. For the first time in 14 years, she did not parade on Remembrance Day due to her fighting a grave illness. She has been ill since last summer but bravely battles on. We all hope and pray that she will beat this awful illness and once again join us selling poppies. She was 80 in April 2001.

In December, the 14th anniversary dinner of the branch was held at the Victoria House Restaurant in Grimsby, most of the members attended. We held a raffle with prizes of wine and meat.

We had our Christmas Fayre on December 16th, a bit near Christmas, but we did well with many stalls, tombola, cake stall, bric-a-brac, a wine basket and a Grand Raffle, a good effort by the members. We also had our branch Christmas Party at the Church Hall, plenty to eat and drink, a good ending to the year.

January and into 2001. One of our ex-WRAC Staff Band members, Mrs Diana Davis née Brady who played the French Horn, was invited to Radio Humberside. She talked to presenter Gloria Johnson about her musical background, in the Army, and how the WRAC Staff Band took part in the filming of "Carry on Sergeant" with the late William Hartnell and Bob Monkhouse which was filmed at Guildford. Bob Monkhouse was always in the front line, he took to marching very well. The other men were all recruits from the Queens Regiment, if you saw the film, the WRAC band could be seen playing in the background.

Diana left the Army in 1960 and worked at the BBC TV Centre, London, where she prepared contracts for actors and actresses. When she left in 1963, Miss Mansfield Clarke for whom she had worked, wrote to her about an



Four members of the Great Grimsby and District Branch who laid wreaths in the Cleethorpes Parade

"Awful Saga" she had booked – science fiction, not what they were used to. How wrong she was, *Dr Who* became one of our great TV favourites.

Diana spoke about the WRAC Association and how much it has kept us all together after our service years, old and young alike. Nobody need be alone, just find your nearest branch and join us if you are an ex-servicewoman.

February and March were quiet months, too cold to go anywhere, just the usual branch activities.

On April 1st the Standard Bearer and other members attended a service at the Baptist Church on the Cleethorpes seafront to commemorate the 34 men of the Manchester Regiment killed in action in the 1914 war. They were in temporary billets at the church when a German Zeppelin dropped a stick of bombs on the church. Many more were also injured. The church was later restored after the Great War.

Well I'm afraid that's it for the last 7 months, we've had a good winter. I hope you will all keep well and enjoy life to the full. There's always somebody from your Army days thinking of you even at this very moment, remember that. God Bless for now.

HEREFORD BRANCH

Owing to the very bad weather we have had a slow start to the year 2001, but things are looking better now and we are having more members attending the monthly meetings. Sadly we lost former Chairman and founder of the branch, Mrs Celia Davies on January 12th. We sent a cheque to the Benevolent Fund in Celia's memory. Several of us attended her funeral and burial service on January 16th, and many also attended a Memorial Service at her local church in Ewyas Harold on February 10th. We miss Celia very much – she was a lovely lady.

As usual, we have to say a big thank you to all our members who generously continue to donate money and gifts to our Social and Branch Funds. We are so grateful for all the wonderful support we receive. We have 68 members and our last three ladies all live in Tenbury Wells. Mrs Jean Robins MBE has transferred from Salisbury branch and we were happy to see Jean at our April meeting. She was driven into Hereford by Barbara Higgs along with Margaret McKay who we were pleased to welcome also. Jean was in the ATS and Barbara and Margaret served in the WRAC.

In November 2000 Jackie Neave had been unable to take the Standard on parade for Remembrance Sunday, owing to another commitment, but a few members were present and Eva Burton kindly laid the poppy wreath on our behalf. We held our Christmas Lunch at The Imperial on November 20th and 18 members enjoyed a happy time and lovely meal. Joyce Nicholls continues to edit a Newsletter which is printed by Sue Walton and her husband Kim. It is enjoyed by all our members and we are very grateful to Joyce, Sue and Kim for this asset twice yearly. Well done!

Five members travelled to the AGM in April at the Victory Club and we look forward to travelling to Leicester for our Area Reunion in September.

Joyce Nicholls arranged a meeting of ex-WRAC members, most of whom work and cannot attend afternoon meetings. It was held at The Imperial in the evening of April 3rd, 12 members met and it was so successful that Joyce has arranged another one on June 12th. We hope the "young ones" feel part of their branch now, and that we can all meet together sometime. Joyce has also arranged two car boots for us at the Cannybrook Inn in June and July. We have a Table Sale booked at the Butter Market for June 21st and our big raffle will be drawn after the June meeting on June 27th, so hopefully funds will come flooding in! We hope to attend, with our Standard, "Sounding Retreat" on Castle Green on July 3rd. We seem to be making up for the time we lost at the beginning of 2001 because of the awful rainy weather.

Best wishes to all our "not so well" members and "get well" soon.

Congratulations to Sue Walton on being awarded the Volunteer Reserve Service Medal (VRSM) for her work in the TA.

ISLE OF WIGHT BRANCH

It is quite some time since you heard from us but we have not been idle!! Last year we held a special Millennium Lunch when we welcomed members from Southampton and Portsmouth Branches and, as it was in May the weather was very kind to us. After the meal our Chairman Mrs Bonnie Earle had the pleasant duty of presenting one of our founder members - Mrs Mary Robbins - with the Certificate of Appreciation. She has worked so hard helping us to raise money for various charities over the past years, including many hundreds of pounds sent to HQ for welfare. Apart from the usual social "get togethers" in the form of coffee mornings and afternoon teas, we are no

longer able to take part in any of the local Fayres because we are all feeling the effects of being born too soon, - but they were good fun while they lasted.



Members of the Isle of Wight Branch after the certificate of merit presentation

Last Christmas we had our usual Lunch to which we invite members of the other local Ex-Service Associations with wives, partners or whatever and again we saw our friends from Southampton and Portsmouth midst torrential rain and wind. The weather, however, did not deter us from enjoying the festivities. By the time this is printed we will have had another Birthday Lunch and no doubt be making enquiries etc for Christmas!! Several of our members thoroughly enjoyed the visit to Cardiff last year and we have several going to the Area Re-Union in Weymouth.

LEEDS BRANCH

Our monthly meetings continue to be well attended in spite of bad weather and illness. Our invalids are now back to health. We have two new members and hope that the recent publicity will encourage more ex-WRAC to join us.

In November Gabrielle gave a most interesting talk about her life in and out of the Forces. We had our usual happy Christmas Party in December in spite of several absentees due to illness.

In February our cups of tea were augmented by Sausage Rolls, Cake and Sherry in celebration of Audrey Tasker's Golden Wedding. "After Eights" were supplied by Betty France to celebrate gaining her BSc Degree from the Open University.

In March we discussed Bridlington Combined Services Reunion and N.E. Area Reunion at Cleethorpes. Members will be attending both functions. In April some members met for lunch in Barwick-in-Elmet. We hope to repeat this later in the year.

In May some ex Ack-Ack members will be present at the official opening of the National Memorial Arboretum by the Duchess of Kent.

Emily, our Secretary, attends all the official meetings and keeps us well informed of all activities. We await news of the progress of the Memorial.

LEICESTER AND NOTTINGHAM BRANCH

By the time this report appears in the 'Lioness' we will have hosted the Wales & West Area Reunion along with Ashby Branch. Our members have been brilliant with donations to the various stalls and we all hope for a successful and happy day.

Our AGM was held in October and Officers and Committee re-elected.

In November, a few of our members attended the Remembrance Service at Whitehall, always a moving experience, and we were fortunate to have tickets for the Saturday afternoon performance of the RBL Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall. This year the Festival had some changes to its usual programme and we especially enjoyed the singing of the children's choir and Ilsa St Clair.

We had our Christmas party in December and invited a few ladies from the WAAF, WRNS and Land Army Associations. As usual there was mountains of food and we had a lovely afternoon. Our Bring and Buy was held a little earlier this year in January. In February Edith Frances the Secretary of Wales & The West Area joined us and gave us the benefit of her experience for our forthcoming reunion.

Doris Doswell (our Treasurer) shared her memories of her early years in the ATS and we were all very interested in her experiences. Then in April we had our usual Beetle Drive for a fun afternoon.

Our Welfare Officer, Irene, has had a busy time over the past few months with members who have not been well. Sadly we lost Norma Cox and Kathleen Quincey.

We continue to have an attendance of between 25 and 30 members at meetings in spite of all the wet weather and hope for some sunny days to continue our programme and to make us all feel better.

LONDON BRANCH

We held our Christmas Party in December with slightly depleted numbers as a few members have found it difficult to get to meetings because of the disrupted train services, but we had a good time. Meetings this year have included a diverse number of subjects from our speakers, beginning with a delightful account from Major Peter Horsfall of his career in the Coldstream Guards and the House of Lords. He joined as a drummer boy at sixteen and served for thirty-four years before retiring as Major Quartermaster. He then had a second illustrious career for fifteen years as Staff Superintendent at the House of Lords. In March the delightful Pearly Queen, Peggy Oliver, entertained us with tales of the Ladies of the Music Hall and we all joined in the choruses.

In April we had a privileged tour of the Mansion House which is really a splendid showcase for the City of London having been recently refurbished. The gold and silver plate is quite fabulous. We were particularly struck by a beautifully elegant ceremonial sword, presented by the Master Cutler of Sheffield, because it was made by a

woman cutler! In the afternoon we also saw the new Guildhall Art Gallery and had a tour of the Guildhall itself. We then had another welcome visit from our ex-RAF friend, Alan Bryett, who kept us laughing with his 'Perils and Pleasures of a Professional Public Speaker'. I am glad to say that none of the perils have occurred when he has been to talk to us, and for us it has been all pleasure.

Many members attended and enjoyed the AGM at the Victory Club.

LUTON BRANCH

Although our numbers have dwindled lately, due to illness and some of our members reporting for duty on a higher plane, we continue to have interesting and informative meetings. We asked Guide Dogs for the Blind if they could provide a speaker, and we were privileged to meet Marlene Stewart, and her guide dog with whom the members fell in love. She gave us a very good talk about the selection and training of these canine wonders, and how the Training Centres take great pains to match dog to owner. We also had an informative and funny talk by a retired Pest Control Officer (rat-catcher). He really made us laugh, describing some of the antics of the general public. Like the Fire Brigade and others, they have right of entry into your property, if they think you have a resident pest – a fact I was not aware of.

To a more serious subject – the latest member of our branch to join the Heavenly hosts was Barbara Mitchell, whose funeral we attended on May 3rd. Barbara finally succumbed to cancer after a 2 year fight. She had arranged her funeral service stipulating that it should be as military an occasion as possible. Her coffin was draped with the Union flag, her cap-badge, medals on top, together with our Poppy wreath. Eight of the branch attended, including Eleri Pirie, with our standard. Unlike a lot of funerals, it was not a maudlin event, her choice of hymns and readings making it otherwise. I am sure a precedent has been created, and my cassette of the Last Post, 2 minutes silence and Reveille has not had its last outing. We were not able to source a bugler – a suggestion for former members of the Corps Band – how about forming a pool of buglers/cornetists for such occasion in the future?

Plans are under way for our joint hosting, with Dacorum Branch, of the London Area Group Reunion on September 15th. By the time you receive the 'Lioness', you should have had your tickets and programme of events – Final numbers and cash to Luton branch by August 23rd please.

MEDWAY BRANCH

The branch's first event of the year was to combine lunch with the WRNS RAFA Association. Ninety eight attended, each table was mixed so that it gave everyone a chance to say what they had done in their service days. This was followed by a good old sing song.

In May, we held a bring-and-buy sale and decided on places for our days out, Dover Castle to see the war

rooms, the bench that Canterbury had dedicated and a trip on the Pocahontas from Gravesend to the Thames Barrier. Cream teas, coffee mornings and a strawberry tea have been chosen by members, as being better than boot fairs to bring in the funds.

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Some members have been under the weather and the branch wishes them a quick recovery from all their ills. Membership has stayed the same, but we would like to see more ladies even if only occasionally. 'The Lioness' was agreed by the members as being first class reading and they said they have no objections to paying for it.

An invitation from the WRNS to join them for a trip to Portsmouth had to be declined due to the early start, and as many members live on bus routes there would be no buses to get them back home as they do not run after 6 pm.

For our Christmas Dinner this year we hope to return to the same place as before, St George Hotel in Chatham.

Medway members wish everyone good health and luck.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

Our monthly meetings are well attended. Members enjoyed their day at York Racecourse for the North East Re-Union. We also enjoyed a day at Doxford Hall, Northumberland where we had been invited, along with Veterans of the Far Eastern Prisoners of War, for the planting of trees which would form a remembrance maze. The coach and lunch were provided for us.

Members attended the dedication of a stained glass window in St Thomas's Church for the George Cross Island Association.

The Normandy Veterans invited us to their Christmas Dinner in the Old Assembly rooms.

One of our dedicated members who helped to start the Branch, Mrs Betty Arkle, died last December after a long illness bravely borne.

Every success to all the Branches and best wishes to all.

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK BRANCH

The Branch is very fortunate in having the support of a loyal and co-operative band of some twenty ladies who regularly enjoy the comradeship of our monthly meetings. Only once this year have our numbers fallen and that was on a day in February when we were deep in snow, some roads impassable and public transport in chaos. For those who cannot get to Norwich meetings we have instituted a twice-yearly Newsletter to keep them in touch with our activities and to let them know they are valued members although we have not met them personally.

This year has been a busy one – and we are looking forward to an even busier summer! We have a number of speakers willing to give their time to come to tell us about their lives and activities. We are waiting to hear about life in Australia and the Society there set up for the

conservation of the Koala. One of our own members, Mrs Simpson, is to describe her experiences as a Major in the WRAC Military Police. A local gentleman will relate his time as a boy growing up in war-time Norfolk and in September a locally-based TA Troop is coming to give us a presentation. We shall also hear about our Treasurer's holiday in South Africa. So, our horizons continue to be greatly expanded. During the past year we have heard about the Loss and Finding of the Titanic, Training to be an Opera Singer, Life aboard a Barge in France, Learning to Fly – at the age of 50! The whole world is open to us to be enjoyed sitting comfortably in our warm meeting-room.

We had a very pleasant day last summer attending the special Muster put on for former ATS and WAAF at the Flixton Air Museum in Suffolk and have been invited again this year.

Several of our members live in West Norfolk and for them it is surprisingly difficult to get to Norwich but they have easier access to King's Lynn. We have therefore arranged to meet as many of them as possible for a luncheon in Lynn in June. I hope that in our next Newsletter we can put forward a suggestion for a lunch in Ipswich to meet some of our Suffolk members.

We were very sad to lose our oldest member, Miss Kate Todd, who died in March in her ninety-fifth year. Kate had been a very enthusiastic member and her memory was phenomenal both of her ATS Service days and her life as a girl in Norwich. What she didn't know about Norwich history and its citizens really wasn't worth knowing. She had been acquainted with the two Misses Colman (of the Mustard family Colman), who were great benefactors and charity workers in Norwich in the first World War and as a young child she had met Edith Cavell. On more than one occasion when we had a speaker on local subjects, Kate was able to correct them on some detail, or to give them hitherto unknown information on their subject!

Our financial state had become rather shaky, but we have benefited greatly as a result of the first Newsletter to which members responded with real generosity. Our grateful thanks to all. We are planning a coffee morning at our secretary's house in June and a garden party at our treasurer's home in August – we hope by then we shall be enjoying a considerable improvement to our gloomy April weather, when this is being written, and have good attendances.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH

Now that Spring has arrived and brought the lighter evenings I should like to wish all our members good health for the coming months. Firstly we Branch members wish our President, Lenora, better health in the near future, and Jean, our Secretary, a speedy recovery after her recent operation, we look forward to their return when possible.

I thank Ruth, our Vice Chairman, for helping out with computer work, Betty for her contributions, not forgetting our able Treasurer, Mary, guarding our finances; plus our Public Relations Officer, Ethel for keeping our name in

the local paper – well done. We have a very willing Social Secretary in Eileen and Welfare Officer Marjorie. All backed up with our ladies of the committee doing the rest of the work. Thank you ladies for your help when I take the Standard on parade. We have a happy Branch!

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Mary and I attended the AGM on the 21st April, Mary also stood in for the Secretary and attended the Secretaries meeting before lunch. The main topic at the Secretaries meeting seems to have been money – or lack of it - A review of Life membership and possible alternative ways of paying for the "Lioness" before it drowns in a sea of debt. Discussions were also held about putting the names of ATS killed during the war or who subsequently died of war wounds on to local war memorials. ATS ladies start digging into your memory banks. We need details of your comrades who were killed or seriously wounded in action, send them to the Secretary, Mrs J Cundy-Borge, 125 Beacon Park Road, Plymouth PL2 2PH

We have our Annual Service at 11.15 am on Sunday 10 June at The Royal Chapel of St Katherines upon the Hoe in the Royal Citadel, Plymouth. On 13th June we have once again been invited by the WRNS Association to join them on their trip to Marsh Barton.

The S.W. Area Reunion this year is to be hosted by the Exeter Branch and held at the Globe Hotel, Topsham on Tuesday 19th June.

Our second "Eden Project" trip is still being arranged for later this summer.

RHYL BRANCH

We have just a short report this time. The branch continues to meet every 2nd Monday of the month. There are normally 22 members who attend.

The Christmas Dinner was a success. A few ladies who cannot attend the meetings were able to join us, which was very nice for them and the regular members, plenty of chatting to catch up on for all.

January came and we were busy deciding on our activities for this year. We will be having three coffee mornings, two table tops sales and we are holding our annual Social Afternoon again in June. Work is already going on arranging entertainment, food etc. We had a day out to the Llyn Peninsular in March and this turned out to be lovely weather so the views were even more spectacular, well worth a visit. In April we went by local coach to Wrexham Market, again the day was very good.

One of our members, Mrs Dorothy Medcalf, celebrated her 95th Birthday in April which is an achievement in itself. She is still one of our regular attenders at the meetings and is always 'on the door' of our Coffee Mornings and 'Table Tops'. Well done Dorothy.

A few members will be joining Chester Branch at their 'Strawberry Tea' in June. The membership continues to grow but, unfortunately, there are a few who can't join us at the meetings as they live too far away from Rhyl.

To everyone who can call in to see us whilst on their holidays or just visiting Rhyl we would be very pleased to see you. Finally, on behalf of all the Ladies here at Rhyl, I hope that everyone has a very good, healthy and prosperous year.

ROCHDALE BRANCH

Our last letter ended on the sad note that our friend, Mary Campbell, was in hospital after a bad fall.

Apart from our monthly meetings, which have been reasonably well attended, we were looking forward to our visit to Stockport to celebrate their 15th Birthday, but, unfortunately, owing to sickness, it had to be cancelled. We hope their Secretary is now improving in health.

In September our Secretary, Joyce Goddard, who has also been the Secretary for the Rochdale Branch of the British Legion for the past 30 years, was honoured and given a certificate and gold badge for her services and we all send our very best wishes. I have to report that the honour didn't go to her head, but a few weeks afterwards, she landed up in the same hospital as Mary Campbell (Birch Hill, Rochdale). However, after an operation she is now home again, a little bit lighter with a sizeable stone in a jar (no prizes for guessing the weight)! Poor love – she is very cheerful and all our prayers and good wishes have been with her. Hope she will soon be back keeping us all up to date with everything. Mona, our Treasurer, and Doris, our Chairman have kept things ticking over, for which we are all very thankful.

Really bad weather affected attendance at our January meeting, but we did have a visit from a reporter from "The Rochdale Observer", who was interested to learn more about the proposed tribute to all women who served or contributed to the War Effort – including Nursing; Land Army; Munitions; Fire Service; Bus Drivers, and dozens of other jobs, and how the women of Rochdale helped.

In February the weather was still dreadful and this affected attendance once again. However, we were told about the presentation for services to the WRAC Association to be given to our Secretary, Joyce Goddard, Treasurer, Mona Schofield and Mary Campbell, who served as Chairman for a good many years, but owing to ill health is not able to attend meetings now.



Members of the Rochdale Branch at the January meeting

SALISBURY BRANCH

We continue to meet once a month with the average attendance about 25 members. Rather more attended the Christmas Lunch at the Red Lion Hotel. (This was the original meeting place when the Salisbury Branch was formed). Now we meet in a very comfortable room at Hedley Davis Court.

We have had two interesting competitions. In February members brought and talked about their 'favourite cup and saucer'. Thirza Sillick was judged the winner and in March we devised a cryptic quiz on Salisbury street names. This was won by Maureen Robertson.

Our visiting speaker in March was Mrs Barbara Robinson who read from her collection of poems, some of which are on sale in the Cathedral.

Four members attended the National AGM at the Victory Club. We are most impressed with the new information/enrolment brochure.

Those who rushed away from the National AGM missed hearing the 'Victory Club Choir' who performed magnificently during the evening!!

Sadly missing from the photo call was Kath Hughes who was the main inspiration for all the songs

Last Sunday 22 members attended the Southern Area Reunion. Many thanks to Weymouth Branch for organizing a splendid venue and day - the International Kite Display was a bonus!!



*Members of Salisbury Branch - The Victory Club Choir,
April 2001.*

*Back Row: Gladys, Janet, Joan, Jackie, Daphne,
Sylvia, Peggy.*

Front Row: Cordelia, Ann, Edna and Mary

SHIPLEY BRANCH

Here we are again with our report from Shipley branch. Since our last report we have some very sad news of the sudden death of our Treasurer, Mrs Jean Clegg, on the 2nd February of a heart attack. Jean was a well loved and respected member of our branch, very efficient at her job as treasurer, and very well liked for her ever cheerful manner.

She was appreciated by us all for her baking, especially when we had cake stalls. She brought her homemade shortbread biscuits and crunch and they soon disappeared. She is sadly missed by us all.

We have had our usual Easter Fayre to help raise our bank balance to enable us to make our usual donations to the Benevolent Funds, and had a variety of speakers at our meetings.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

It is with deep sadness that we have to report the death of one of our long standing members, Sheila Clement (née Parvin), who was a popular active person right up to the end, and always keen to take part in all the various functions. Sheila will be greatly missed as will her husband, Jack, whom we often met.

The last two months of year 2000 saw our two usual members attending the Remembrance Service at Westminster Abbey, whilst the Service of Remembrance at Southampton Cenotaph saw our Standard paraded by Margaret Barham (née Hope) and a wreath laid by our new Chairman Jean Doe (née Cotter) on behalf of the branch.

Our usual Christmas party plus buffet supplied by members was held on 6th December whilst on the 13th December we enjoyed a Christmas Lunch at the Ex-Servicemen's Club, where our meetings are held throughout the year. Still with food on our minds in January we saw year 2001 in with a buffet supplied by the Ex-Servicemen's Club.

We meet monthly on the first Wednesday and in February we had a thought provoking talk by the Reverend Richard Palmer who spoke in depth on the Monarchy. In March our Treasurer, Jean Houghton (née Apps), gave a colour demonstration of quilting needlework, with samples of completed works.

Back to food! Our Annual Dinner was held for the first time at the Ex-Servicemen's Club, after some 25 years at the Kings Court Hotel in Chandlers Ford. All went very well and we were very pleased to see two members who had been unable to attend for a long time, Cindy Brewer (née Roberts) and Joy Grant. It was to be the last Annual Dinner to be attended by founder member Audrey Pickett (née Stott) as a Southampton Branch Member, as she will be moving to Bexhill later in the year. It was an ideal opportunity for a going away presentation to be made to her by another long-standing member, Betty Rush. Just Au Revoir Audrey, not goodbye, with sincere thanks for many happy years of branch gatherings, and with all good wishes for the future from us all. Also at the Annual Dinner a farewell gift was presented to Margaret Woodhead (née Butler), an active member who will be very much missed and who has already moved to Lancing. Another Au Revoir together with all good wishes for the future from us all.

Three members attended the AGM in London on 21st April, and on 28th April our first table top sale was held for much needed branch funds.

On 6th May we had an excellent journey, weatherwise and blossomwise, to Weymouth and Portland Branch who were the hosts this year for the Area Re-Union, this being held at the Pavilion. It was an excellent day in every way and great to meet up with old friends plus a most interesting talk by a female officer on her experiences in the Army and her present duties in the Royal Engineers. Our meeting room overlooked the beach so an added bonus was being able to see the many kites flown during the whole day. Many thanks Weymouth and Portland for a memorable day.

Coming right up to date, on 14th May four of us went along to the Isle of Wight Branch's Birthday Lunch at Bembridge. Again a very enjoyable day. Many thanks Isle of Wight.

We still continue to have regular contact with our fellow WAAF and WREN Associations.

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

"Stand by yer Beds", here is our Report again, ongoing from last September. I think our greatest wish at the moment is for some SUNSHINE, as it seems to have been raining forever.

Our Vice-Chair, Chris, celebrated her 80th Birthday in October, with a party at Dawley House, where she was presented with a 'This is your Life' book for all the years of service she gave to the Council.

In November some of our branch travelled to London for Remembrance Day, others attended local services. They say 'Never volunteer for anything', however when the Wellington and District RBL asked Nancy T if she would carry the 'Women's Section' Standard, as their usual Standard Bearer had broken her elbow, she duly obliged. On the 10th, Lucy took our Standard, and Nancy the Women's Section Standard, to the Charlton School, Wellington with other RBL members, for their service. On the 11th they were both in Wellington Square for the Two Minutes Silence. On the 12th, Lucy with our Standard and several branch members attended the Remembrance Service at Donnington Garrison Church, afterwards lunching at the Sergeants' Mess.

In the evening Nancy took part in the Women's Section RBL service at Christ Church, Wellington, with their Standard. Later the same evening, quite a few of our members went to the 'Ceremony of Light' service at Oakengates Theatre, where Lucy gave the Exhortation, many Standards were there. Nancy T's comments after the Weekend were, "I admire all Standard Bearers, it's like carrying a Telegraph Pole" (not that she's ever carried one!)

In December we enjoyed our usual Christmas Party, and were able to send £50 to the local Day Hospice, from donations collected in lieu of Christmas Cards, and the sale of food left from our Buffet.

No meeting in January. February was a busy month, our Area Chairman, Maggie Purkis, joined us at our meeting and spoke about the possibility of having two branches in Shropshire, 'Telford & Shrewsbury', the results are not yet known.



Members of the Shropshire Branch at their Christmas Party, 2000

On 27th a service of Dedication took place at 'Dawley House' a plaque was installed to the men of Dawley who died in WWII, the vicar of Dawley, Rev Stuart Deane officiated, and Chris Grigg read the Lesson. Amongst those attending were local dignitaries, RASC/RCT Association and Maggie representing Wales & West Area. The six Standards paraded were KSLI, RAFA, RNA, RBL, WRAC Association, Women's Section RBL. Looking resplendent in their uniforms were two Buglers of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and Troopers of the Royal Mercia & Lancastrian Yeomanry.

Still in February we had an Attic Sale in liaison with RBL with good results, enabling us to send £50 to the Hospice. Usually we have our Annual Dinner in January/February, Irene booked it up for us at a Hotel in Shrewsbury. Unfortunately they had a fire in the kitchen so it was cancelled, but all was not lost as we decided to have a Free Lunch in March at the Swan Hotel, Wellington. Afterwards we had our usual meeting and everyone really enjoyed the day.

In April, several members made their train journeys to London for the AGM at the Victory Club with a few breakdowns on the way!

Two of us were fortunate to see the wonderful horses of the RHA, the men and women riders were very smart, we also heard the Gun Salute for the Queens 75th Birthday.

We have sadly lost another comrade. Maureen Talbot died in April after a long illness, courageously borne, some members attended her funeral but unfortunately not our Standard, as Lucy was at the AGM but the Union Flag draped the coffin.

Recently 2 of our members joined the Shropshire branch RASC/RCT Association (see separate article) a very friendly group, the only requirement needed is to have been ATS/WRAC attached to these Units.

This year is the 21st anniversary of Shropshire Branch and we are hoping to have a celebration. We thank our members for coming to our meetings and all the support they give us, please keep coming. Our best wishes go out to all those who cannot join us and a speedy recovery to those who are ill. Now we are looking forward to some summer sunshine and our Area Reunion at Leicester in September.

We give a warm welcome to new members, (both ex-WRAC) Caroline McMahon and Pauline Rogerson. Good health and happiness to everyone. Keep the flag flying.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH

Just after the last newsletter was submitted, we were sorry to learn of the death of our former Secretary, Mrs Sue Smith. Ten of our members formed a Guard of Honour at her funeral. Many of you will remember her as she was a regular attendee at the ATS Dinner Club. Sue was suffering from lung cancer and had not enjoyed the best of health for some time, so although not totally unexpected, we were still very sorry to say goodbye to her.

One of our members, Mrs Doris Elsy, has had a book published. It tells of Doris's life from her childhood in South Shields in the 1920s up to the present time. Anyone who formerly came from the area might be interested in reading her book. It is entitled "Into the Darkness" by Doris Elsy and can be obtained from: Central Library, South Shields, Tyne & Wear at a cost of £3.95 + 54p postage and packing. Doris is now registered blind, hence the title, but it doesn't prevent her from attending meetings and taking part in many of our events.

Another of our members, Mrs Daisy Weaver, has a disabled daughter, Joanne, who is a Sunderland football fanatic. She and other disabled fans were invited to the Stadium of Light to meet the Manager and members of the team. They had a great time and Daisy was green with envy as she had not been able to attend.

We had our usual successful Christmas Lunch and had a Fancy Dress competition. The three winners were: Mystic Meg (Lorna Raymond), Nell Gwynne (Doris Elsy) and the Bathing Belles (Cissie Atchison & her friend June).



Joanne with Niall Quinn

The Secretary caused much amusement by appearing as "The Flasher". Details of her costume can be left to your imaginations.

We have received an invitation from Newcastle Branch to their April meeting. About twenty of our members hope to attend, but I hope we don't win all the raffle prizes like we did at Cleveland Branch, otherwise we may not get any more invitations. Cleveland Branch hope to get their revenge when they visit us in June.

We are also planning a visit to Gilsland Spa Hotel in July for a day's outing with entertainment. We will once again be hiring the mini-bus and our driver will be John, our Chairperson's husband. She has begged us to be gentle with him as she has him down for "Hoover" duty that week.

Best wishes to all other Branches.

SWANSEA BRANCH

The meeting at Donnington in September was thoroughly enjoyed by the 4 members who attended, the details of how to get there were excellent.

Our Christmas Lunch at the Oxwich Bay Hotel was great, all 16 members enjoyed the afternoon.

We did not meet in January in anticipation of bad weather and the aftermath of Christmas and New Year celebrations. February saw our AGM with the same members being returned on the committee.

We had a very good speaker in March, Mr Eric Thomas, who gave a talk on Clyne Castle and the history of the Vivian family who built up the copper industry in Swansea. However death duties forced the break up of the Estate, resulting in Swansea benefiting with the gardens being open to the public. We often pay a visit there in May when the shrubs are at their best.

In April we had tea with the Mayor and a tour of the Guildhall including a visit to the Council Chamber with its beautiful Australian Walnut panelling and tapestries and blue and white ceiling, also the Brangwyn Hall and its famous panels.

In August we have our usual meeting at Veronica's house on the seafront at Mumbles, Maggie Purkis, our Area Chairman, has promised to visit that day and we are all looking forward to her visit.

We still meet at the Guildhall first Wednesday in the month. The members of the branch all look forward to receiving the 'Lioness', so many thanks to all concerned in the publishing.

ULSTER BRANCH

'Ulster on the Brink' – not a dramatic headline in the press, thank goodness! It's just that the Lioness cut-off date for contributions always seems to find our branch just about to do some reportable activity. It was a week before our AGM last time and this time it's the very same day as our annual Summer Outing. By the time the next edition is

due all the quotable quotes and bon mots are as riveting as Boxing Day turkey Can I indent HQ for a crystal ball?

The AGM resulted, like wedding preparations, in 'something old something new' (and ages have nothing to do with it!). *Former* President, Vi Jones, agreed to continue; *new* Chairman Ruby Agnew gave up her Vice-Chairmanship and moved up. *Former* Hon Sec, Trudy Watson, was flattered into another year's duty and *new* Hon Treasurer Amy Wall replaced Peggy Bailie who brushed aside the Branch's genuine praise for years of kitty-keeping. Let's hope we don't have to look forward to 'something borrowed; something blue' unless the latter is summer skies.

Sadly the branch lost two long-standing members this year: Mrs Muriel Wallace and Mrs Nellie Archer. Both had joined up in 1939, had reached the rank of WOII. Muriel had been demobbed in May 1945 and Nell in September 1946. Muriel had been an outstanding member of the Association serving on Committee, and as Honorary Everything from Secretary to Chairman to President. An enthusiastic member of the Royal British Legion, she was an example to us all. Nell, a rather retiring member, had had a most interesting service life. She had been stationed in Washington, USA, working in the enigmatic world of code making and breaking. Muriel died on New Year's Day and Nell on 14 March 2001.

Our Annual Luncheon in February welcomed the return of the Bring-and-Buy stall where re-cycled free gifts from mail-order firms and unfortunate Xmas presents from male disordered infirmity were re-homed and profited Association funds. The ground-floor location in the 'Three' Penny Bit' was quietly appreciated by a small percentage of legs and the slightly larger percentage of the 'gels' (note the anagram!) who enjoyed the attentions of the wine waiters. A lively time was enjoyed by all; we dispersed feeling years younger.

Now a mention of that Summer Outing about to take place on 19 May. We're off to the cathedral city of Armagh. It's name is derived from 'the Heights of Queen Macha' or Ard Macha. It's modern fame is derived from the breathtaking Planetarium and it continues to be the focal location for those who follow both faiths in the island of Ireland. One of our members, Mrs Marjorie Humphrey who is a supporter and does a lot of work for St Dunstan's, will not be able to come as on that day she is spending the evening at Buckingham Palace with the Royal Family.

I have recently had a visit to the Fountain of Youth – via Romie Lambkin's *'My Time in the War'*. Her "un-put-downable" book spanned from 1941 to 1946. My service was from 1943 to 1946. Déjà-vu unrolled as she took me back to St Patrick's Barracks, Ballymena; the Nissen huts; the pot-bellied stoves; the joy of synchronised drill; the pain of TAB and ATT jabs; and the dances. The Yanks with Hershey Bars and Lucky Strikes, and accents straight from the cinema. London and the end of the Blitz - and the beginning of the Doodlebugs – and dear old Drum House and the loft above the stables where we Central Engineer Accounts Office girls slept above the CO's horse. And later the Belgians and that invitation to go to the Congo as his second wife!! And just like me, Romie met DAVID NIVEN – Pass me the Kleenex.

BUY THAT BOOK! And, Romie, whom *did* you marry?

WIMBLEDON BRANCH

At our AGM in October, Bessie Wright stood down as Chairman and resigned from the committee. Marie Wade, formerly Vice-Chairman was elected to replace her and Vera Neil agreed to become Vice-Chairman. The remaining members all agreed to continue and were duly elected. Lively and enthusiastic discussions then took place on a variety of subjects, which in the main were satisfactorily resolved.

In November we had a Bring and Buy sale and, with donations, raised, a considerable sum of money which will help towards the rental of our meeting room. The quality of the nick-nacks and bric-a-brac never cease to amaze and we are always assured an excellent supply of very popular homemade produce.

December is one of the highlights of the year when we have our Christmas Party. The food brought by members to share is of the highest quality and is enjoyed by all, and the wine and soft drinks flow. Barbara Young, who unfortunately is unable to join us nowadays, sent a generous donation to provide some delicacies which were devoured with relish. Barbara is always in our thoughts and we thank her very much for her 'gift'.

We had no meeting in January but in February we had the first of our speakers who gave a very interesting account of Kew Gardens throughout the seasons, each one of which has its own attractions. His talk was accompanied with some breathtaking slides.

It was the first of our DIY meetings in March when members talk about their Service days. Elsie Newman told us of her time spent in a large and beautiful house in Kent which had been commandeered by the Army. Unfortunately Elsie suffered injuries when the house was badly damaged in a raid. After a spell recovering from her injuries Elsie returned only to be caught up in yet another raid on the house, this time happily without personal injury. We are so pleased to have Elsie with us to tell the tale. It was at this meeting that we said goodbye to Peggy Abbott who had been our Social Secretary for a number of years. Peggy has moved to Sussex and will be looking for a local branch to attend.

In April we had another very successful Bring and Buy sale and it was at this meeting that Ruby Godfrey agreed to take over from Peggy. We were all very grateful to her. Ruby is tackling the takeover with tremendous enthusiasm. Before Peggy left she arranged for us to have lunch at the Wimbledon YMCA on 25th April. The food was very enjoyable, the long table was attractively prepared for us and the atmosphere was particular good. Thank you Peggy. We are all looking forward to our next lunch there.

Our average attendance has dropped to 19 but hopefully it will prick up again with the prospect of better weather. We obviously look forward to the return of temporary absentees and of course to new members joining.

Best wishes to all and keep soldiering on!

WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH

Our monthly meetings continue to be well attended with an average of 20 members. The branch was represented at the Mayor's Evening Reception and Coffee Mornings. Members attended the Remembrance Service in Wolverhampton and two members are on the committee of the Festival of Remembrance Concert, which takes place on the Sunday before November 11th. Also another member is responsible for "Remembrance" which is a short service of hymns, prayers and readings held in the main church on November 11th each year, and is well supported by the general public.

There is a need for younger membership and suggestions as to how this can be achieved would be appreciated.

YORK BRANCH

Well here we are once again after a year's absence. Unfortunately my husband Bob Nesbitt, who many will remember as Geordie Nesbitt (who was more or less an associate member – honorary member, or guest of honour, whichever you wish to remember him by) in the Sergeants' mess at Rheindahlen in the 1950s, has been suffering with cancer. After a year of radiotherapy, the big operation and six months of chemotherapy, he is now well on the way to recovery. So once again I can put pen to paper to write a report for the York Branch.

In May 2000, we had a lovely afternoon being entertained by the Leeds Branch. I think we all travelled home with at least one raffle prize each. Many thanks to our hosts.

June – our guest speaker was Elly Fiorentini from Radio York who gave us an insight into how she became a Radio Presenter. She also spoke of her Italian background and her connection with the great opera singer Andrea Bocelli.

July – we had a quiet afternoon and discussed future meetings and the forthcoming North East Reunion.

August – we entertained the ladies from Harrogate who thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon tea party supplied by the York members.

September – we had our annual produce stall which is our main fund raising day. We also attended the North East Reunion which was held in York. Our thanks must be given to the Chairman and Secretary of the North East Area who put in so much work and effort to make sure the afternoon was really enjoyable and a memorable occasion. Well Done "Frankie and Gwen".

October – the AGM. The Chairman and Secretary were re-elected and we have at last a most welcome Treasurer in Colonel Hazel Powell. Mrs Eve Gordon came to the end of her three years and was duly thanked for all her help and commitments. Mrs Kay Dobson was elected as her replacement. (Kay was a member of the late Scarborough Branch). So may I take this opportunity of welcoming Hazel and Kay to the committee.

November – was a horrific month for York residents. The rains came and the rivers rose, then more rain and the rivers overflowed. Many houses were flooded for the

second and third time in as many years. It was quite a heartbreaking time for many people. At the peak of the storm the famous York Racecourse (The Knavesmire) was flooded so badly, that people were using it to sail their boats and dinghy's. Luckily none of our members were affected other than they couldn't go shopping as a lot of shops were flooded and closed. Many thanks for enquiry letters and cards from other branches.

December – we had our annual tea party – catering and preparations carried out by the committee (with a lot of help from all the members). Lt Col Bob Nesbitt finished off the afternoon with his usual half hour on the piano. The ladies certainly do enjoy the Saint Bernard's Waltz, the Palais Glide, The Hokey Cokey, finishing up with Knees Up Mother Brown.

January 2001 – once again we had our late Christmas Lunch at the Newington Hotel. It was even better than last year's so we will be booking soon for 2002.

February – Mrs Pantin from the Harrogate Branch gave us a very interesting talk about the "Gurkhas".

March – we had a quiz supplied by Kay and ended the afternoon celebrating the 80th Birthday of Mrs Betty Wilshaw (in the No 2 Lioness of 2000 I recorded Betty's belated birthday wishes, but she was in fact 80 in March 2001). Apologies Betty!

We have had three new members recently, Mrs Dianne Walsh WRAC, Mrs Mamie Berrie ATS a hearty welcome to you both. The third member Mrs Jean Thompson joined us in December and unfortunately passed away in January. Another member, Mrs Flo Palphramand passed away in June 2000. Flo put up a very brave fight against cancer for over a year, and attended all of our meetings whilst undergoing strong doses of chemotherapy. She will be remembered for her continuous hard work on the committee and her forever smiling attitude to life. Fourteen members attended her funeral.

Our best wishes for a speedy recovery go to Mrs Anne Jamieson who is in hospital.

Eightieth birthday wishes for 2001 go to the following members: M/s Mary Robinson (19 April), Mrs Joan Aldridge (25 May), Mrs Cora Calvert (20 September), Mrs Gwen Hall (2 October) Mrs Anne Jamieson (4 November). A very belated 90th Birthday goes to M/s Carolyn Smith, also known as Lyn Smith who was Chief Instructor at the Drivers and Clerks Training Centre in Yeovil in the 1950s.

We are now looking forward to the North East Area Reunion to be held at the Winter Gardens in Cleethorpes on 15 September 2001.

Our meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month in St Lawrence's Church Hall at 2 pm. Any visitors will be most welcome.

Good health to all our comrades wherever you may be.

Letters to the Editor

MEMORIALS

Dear Editor **PDF Compressor Free Version**

During my 20 years as Secretary of the Wolverhampton Branch WRAC Association, I too noticed that there was no tribute paid to the women who had served their Country so well, and not just in the Second World War. As a founder member of the Wolverhampton 'District Ex-Service Council', I brought this to the notice of the Council and was informed that one must have proof that the women had been killed in action, or died of wounds. I then started my search for this information.

First I placed a notice in our local paper, but got no response. I then sent a letter to each of the three Services HQs but they too were unable to help. I then approached a local historian. He was surprised to know there was no tribute to the Wolverhampton Women of the Second World War. However he did inform me there was a Book of Remembrance of the First World War in the archives of Wolverhampton Public Library. I made an appointment to see this book, which was wrapped in brown paper and tied with string! When this was undone, and the book opened I saw the most beautiful copperplate writing in gold leaf. I cannot describe the beauty and nobody could tell me when it had last been on display to the public. I couldn't find any women's names, although later I found out that to have a name in the book would have cost 3/- (about 15p today). Before the Second World War that was a lot of money to many people.

Since I discovered the book, I now make a request to the Archivist each October to have the book on display for the General Public, which I am pleased to say they do, I take poppies to have placed around the book, but my search did not end there.

I sent a letter to the War Graves Commission but they had no names of Women from Wolverhampton killed in action either. Regretfully I came to a full stop.

Mrs Mary P Beeston ex-ATS, 77 Campion House,
Hobgate Road, Wolverhampton WV10 0PU

RECRUITING

Dear Editor

I recently browsed through a copy of my mother's 'Lioness, issue 1/2001'. I read the letters about the need for the Lioness and the need to promote WRAC recruitment for the Association. My reason for this letter is about the lack of publicity for the Association.

My mum, Margaret Moule (née Douglas), served in the Postal Unit. She left the Army approximately 36 years ago and lived in Hendon North West London until 2 years ago when she moved to Hemel Hempstead. She went to

church one day and noticed a lady wearing an Association badge. She approached her and they talked about the WRAC Association Branch that the lady attended, Dacorum. My mum would never have known about the existence of such an Association if she had not met Freddie Weatherly by chance. Thirty odd years is a long time not to have known about it. How many other people do not know of its existence but would like to?

Your magazine indicates that quite a number of groups would like to boost their numbers, so I would suggest a big publicity drive, from all branches as well as the HQ. There are many ways to advertise and not all cost money.

1. Local Paper – send in a written article about your group, what you do, event holding or attending, etc.
2. Web World – A website, run by our local paper the Gazette & Herald Express, it lists clubs and societies, again Free Of Charge. There must be similar sites throughout the country.
3. Local Library – Keeps listings of clubs and many also have computers with database for local information.
4. Local Tourist Information Centres – Dacorum holds files for all clubs and societies to promote themselves Free Of Charge.
5. Many Shops, including Tesco's and Sainsburys – have "Community Notice Boards" who will allow you to display a poster or postcard again usually Free Of Charge.
6. Also many Community Centres and Churches will often allow you to place notices on their boards.
7. The Sticks Magazine – a free publication (monthly) can be found at Community Centres, Information Centres, Shops. (I get mine from Sainsburys). It contains details of what's on and has a section Service Associations. It is distributed by area, Herts, Cambs, Suffolk, Essex, Norfolk, Beds, Bucks, Oxon, Berks, Kent & Surrey. Advertising is Free Of Charge. Contact: The Sticks (Listings) Magazine, Plain English Publishing Co Ltd., Pixmore Centre, Pixmore Avenue, Letchworth, Herts, SG6 1JG. Tel: 01462 486810
8. Local Radio – by way of requests for songs for Association Birthdays.
9. Ensure, current serving members know about the Association.

So come on, let's promote the Association before it dwindles for lack of members.

Pam Moriarty, 2 Bodwell Close, Warners End, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP1 3RG

WRAC DINNER CLUB

Dear Editor

I joined the WRAC in September of 1972, and although I only stayed a year it was one of, the best years, if not the best, of my life.

I first became aware of the WRAC Association after joining the WRAC Dinner Club in 1999 and subsequently I joined the Association. I must be honest and confess that when I joined the dinner club I felt like an outsider as all the women I met had been in the Army for years and had been to places I had not. I was forgetting the comradeship that existed when I was in the Army and, which I am glad to say, still exists to this very day.

I was very nervous on my first trip to Stafford for the Dinner Club weekend, but I met with another lady from Scotland who wanted to go, so we travelled down together in my car and, within minutes, I felt as though I had known Helen all my life. After arriving and having settled in we met with other members of the club and it was like coming home. I returned to Stafford on my own in 2000 and I will never forget the welcome I received at the door to the Hotel. Ann Deakin threw her arms around me and gave me a great big hug and from that moment on I knew I was part of a family bigger than I could ever have anticipated. I would like to give a great big THANK YOU to all the members of the Dinner Club and the Association for welcoming me home. Can I say a special thank you to Ann Deakin, Hazel Edwards, Helen Dixon, Maureen Hickman and Anna McKinley.

Mrs Elizabeth McLaren née W444010 McDonald, Flat 1/2, 2 Bellgrove Street, Glasgow, G31 1AF

THE FINAL 'FINAL WORD' ON THE DORNIER

Dear Editor

Browsing through some back copies of 'Lioness' which had been lent to my wife, I noticed a letter from Eileen Sullivan in 'Lioness 1999/1 Page 16, concerning the flashes worn by those who served in Ack Ack Formations. Remembering that my wife had worn the Cupid's Cavalry flash before being posted to SHEAF about "D" Day, I checked the subject in Howard Cole's *Formation Badges of World War Two*. I quote:

"1st Anti-Aircraft Division

This was the first Anti-Aircraft operational formation and was raised on the 15th December 1935. Composed originally of Territorials drawn from London and the Home Counties, it became in 1938 a purely London TA formation. The Divisional badge subsequently chosen was a Dornier, in black, pierced by a sword in red, on a light blue background within a black border. The badge had a distinctive shape – an inverted isosceles triangle, the angle at the apex being square off. The sword in the badge was taken from the arms of the City of London. An earlier pattern of the badge had a plain khaki background."

"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."

I trust that this will be helpful to the former ATS at York who raised this question.

Dr Francis G Smith, formerly RA (Field) 1939 – 1946, 36 Vincent Street, NEDLANDS WA 6009, Australia

ATS RELEASE LETTER

Dear Editor

Thank you so much for another wonderful issue of the 'Lioness'. When it pops through the letter box I read it from cover to cover, (the chores have to wait). Up to now, I have not seen, or heard of any of my ex-comrades, but maybe some day I will. I love reading of all the experiences of the "girls" and can relate to many of those experiences.

I met and married my late husband whilst serving in the Army, and in 1945 when the war with Germany ended, we married women were in Group 1 for demobilization, and I was demobbed in July '45. Reading page 5 of the 'Lioness', I noted that the late Chief Controller L E Whately, CBE wrote a letter to all ATS Servicewomen and it was in their Release Documents. This is the first time I knew of the letter, because I did not receive one, and neither did any of the other girls demobbed with me. I realise that it would be very unlikely for there to be any left, but I wondered if it would be possible to have a photo-copy, I would like one very much, because as Phyll Harvey says, "it really says it all".

Isabelle Smith, The Conifers, 36 Brookside Gardens, Yockleton, Shrewsbury SY5 9PT (W/101822 Smith G I ex 499 H.A.(M) Bty & Army Pay Corps)

NOT SUCH HAPPY MEMORIES

Dear Editor

I served in the WRAC from 1961 – 1964 spending my Basic Training in Guildford and Office Training in Yeovilton. After that I was posted to Bovington. I have never seen any letters from people stationed at Bovington.

The first 6 months were very enjoyable and then a new CSM came. What a change! She made the rest of my time in the Army hell. Nothing was ever right. She would keep me and the girls in my room in every week without fail. Walking round with white gloves on to find dirt. My kit was never right or my bed space never clean enough. When I read the letters, everyone seems to have enjoyed their Army experiences so much, surely there must be someone else who was unhappy?

Margaret Rawles, 29 Warwick Drive, Hazel Grove, Stockport SK7 5LQ

DRUM & BUGLES PHOTOGRAPH

Dear Editor

I read with great interest in the 'Lioness, Issue No. 2 2000', a letter sent in by Mr. F.V. Powell, Maudslough, West Australia, saying that she was disappointed that nothing was mentioned regarding the Drum & Bugle Band formed at ECRD, Droitwich.

I have written to her to tell her I was CSM 'B' Company at the time the band was formed and remember it well. Three of my sergeant friends were also part of the band. On our visit to the last Passing Out Parade of the WRAC at Guildford, I took with me a picture of the said band, taken by the press. I couldn't get to see anyone in charge of the band at that time as they were dashing around getting ready to go on tour but I did hand the photo to a member of the band who said she would hand it to her officer. That is the last I heard of it, even though I had enclosed all details of the band and my name and address and name, rank and number, ex-CSM Hardicre (maiden name), W/12933, now Mrs J Shelley.

I wonder if, by any chance of a miracle, the picture could, even now, turn up again.

Josie Shelley, 45 Chauncy Road, New Moston, Manchester.

ATS AT OLYMPIA

Dear Editor

Recently I was given a copy of the 'Lioness' and on reading through it, to my great delight, found a photograph of Capt Audrey Mitchell née Wilkinson who I met during my ATS career.

I thought you might be interested to know that in 1948, when I was Staff Officer Physical Training/ATS AA Command, we took part in the Royal Tournament in Olympia. Together with contingents of fifty each from the WAAF and WRNS, a total of 150 arrived for training at Worthy Down, two months before the great event. I have photographs taken during the training (and actually at Olympia) of the displays of PT and dancing. These include an old picture of Dame Helen Gwynne Vaughan inspecting a group of ATS personnel – quite a contrast in uniform and exercise!!

At the conclusion of the Royal Tournament I took the ATS team on an AA recruitment drive around UK – which had its problems!

Hilary M Searle née Partington, The Ancaster BLESMA Home, Alligan Road. Crieff, Perthshire, PH7 3JU

WOMEN'S LAND ARMY

Dear Editor

I am the daughter of a British War bride (Margaret Helen Brastock Turner, Islington, in London and Land Girl in Salisbury/Dorset area) and a native Tennessean through my Dad, James Patrick Turner. Both parents are still living and in Tennessee.

I am researching and designing a book honouring all WWII war brides who were also in the Women's Land Army. I am producing a series of portraits of these women that will contain memorabilia from those days...court-ship, journals, detailed descriptions of life in the WLA, photos, letters, cards, drawings, the exact breeds of livestock they cared for. Memories, stories of any nature, uniforms, bits of fabric, your dancing shoes or farm boots. Anything you are willing to loan me to create the images for this monumental endeavour would be wonderful. Nothing is too trivial for this project. I need to connect with as many Land Girl War Brides as possible to obtain hand-written and visual documentation to produce my book and the exhibition. The visual portrait/illustrations will also be exhibited in all countries the WLA existed (England, Scotland, Wales, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and colonies).

I left the US in August 2000 to teach as a Senior Lecturer in the School of Design at Wanganui Polytechnic (Private Bag 3030, Wanganui 5001 New Zealand).

Any items you send will be archivally stored and returned as soon as images are complete. This is a lengthy and tedious research project and will keep all participants informed of all progress as well as strict privacy in the development stage.

Thank you for any help in making this book! I will acknowledge any and all who contribute.

Write (airmail to this address):

Peggy Ann Turner

WRCP/School of Design

Private Bag 3020

Wanganui

New Zealand

(Private and Confidential) – this is very important, as they open our mail here!

Prof Peggy Ann Turner MFA

FLOGGER GATES REMEMBERED!

Dear Editor

LCpl Irene Whittaker's letter in the 'Lioness 2001 No. 1' issue asked 'Who remembers Flogger Gates?' Well, I certainly do and I managed to find the attached photograph to prove it. It was taken at a WRAC Company of 28 Signal Regiment party, probably in 1964.



Unfortunately I cannot remember many of the names, though I do remember the faces and the characters, but who could forget Flogger? She is standing in the centre in a dark dress holding a glass.

Seated from left to right are 2Lt Pam Pitt, Sgt Bell, WO2 Lal Joblin, Lt Jenny Jackson (now Bryan). Standing immediately behind me is one of the Camille sisters from the Seychelles. Her sister is half visible on the right. Can anyone put further names to this picture?

I left Rheindahlen in April 1965 to command a training company at the Depot. Married in November of that year at Guildford with a reception in the Mess, I joined my new husband in Singapore in April 1966, where I was OC of the Tanglin telephone exchange as part of 18 Signal Regiment. Typically, my husband's emergency tour ended with the end of Confrontation with Indonesia a few months later and his regiment (of Gunners) went back to UK in November. Unable to fix a further posting to UK so soon after arriving in Singapore, I resigned in December 1966 and returned home to my husband. Twenty-six more years 'following the drum' followed, including two years in Ottawa and three in Fort Bliss, Texas, until his retirement in 1992. We are now happily settled in Andover and do not plan to move again in a hurry.

Capt (Retd) J S Bryan née Jackson, 37 The Avenue,
Andover, Hampshire SP10 3EP

COMPARISONS

Dear Editor

Our WRAC "Girls" have blended well into the branch, and are always most interested in our war time stories, comparing their time in the WRAC to our times in the ATS, for example.

While we were having our Annual Christmas Lunch, I was telling about my memories of my Ack Ack Training in Devizes. After our normal duties, we had mountains of "spuds" to peel. We were all in a circle, knives at the ready, a bucket to drop the potatoes in, with peelings covering our feet. One of our WRAC girls (Amelia, who was a cook in the WRAC), wondered where the machine was? Such luxury, - any ATS remember these times?

Olive Kinghorn, Cleveland Branch

OFFICERS' BRANCH LUNCHEON

The annual Officers' Lunch will take place in the Officers' Mess AGC Centre at Worthy Down, Winchester on Saturday 22 September 2001.

The inclusive price for the event including morning coffee, aperitif, lunch and wine will be £17.

Please send your cheque for £17 made payable to WRAC Association together with the application form below and a SAE for your ticket by 10 September 2001.

To: **WRAC Association HQ
AGC Centre
Worthy Down
Hants SO21 2RG**

From:

I wish to attend the Officers' Lunch on
Saturday 22 September 2001.

My car details are:

Make:

Colour:

Reg No:

I enclose a cheque for £17.00 for the lunch.

I enclose a stamped self-addressed
envelope for my receipt and ticket.

**CHEQUE MADE PAYABLE TO
WRAC ASSOCIATION PLEASE**

Date:

Signed:

Poems

LONDON'S BURNING

Bofors are trundled down the street.
Next door, the sound of marching feet.
(Poor Yanks! It is their first night here –
They'll find war's not all skittles and beer!)
I hear them running helter-skelter
Out the door to air-raid shelter,
While I lie trembling here in bed
And watch the dog-fights overhead.

The flowers still bloom and
The birds still sing
But man's eyes are closed to beauty,
While man lusts for man's blood and
Calls this murderous instinct "Duty".

"I say there, Joan, are you sleeping?"
"No – but I can hear Jan weeping."
"Jan go back to 'Golden Slumbers'.
You know our bomb will have our numbers!"

I wonder if that Hun up there
Is having fun or is aware,
In spite of all of Hitler's might,
We're in the fight for God and Right.
Perhaps he feels a bit like me,
Extremely near eternity;
Or does he long for his true love
Whom MINE may be bombing from above?

"Bring out the dead," They used to say
(Our dead are with us night and day);
But life and death go hand-in hand
And we are young – and life is grand!

London's burning, left and right
But Jerry has been put to flight.
Not to worry, soon be day ...
And lots of time for work and play!

C J Morrison (ex ATS W/13890)

WRAC DINNER 2001 – 12-14 OCTOBER 2001

The venue for the WRAC Dinner 2001 is
The Copthorne Hotel, Birmingham. If you
would like to join us for the weekend, or
just for Dinner, then contact Ann Deakin,
01785 249992, for more information and
application forms.

The closing date is – **1 October 2001**

See you there

THE BRANCH

When you join an Association, Society of Guild
Just pause for a while as your form's being filled
And think of what being a member entails –
Don't turn out to be one more member who fails

It's not just the cost of your annual fee
But attending the branch instead of TV
Of actively helping to arrange the club "dos"
And not opting out whenever you choose

Don't say all decisions are made by the few –
Get on the committee and state your own view
Don't slate the club officials behind their backs
Be honest and face them when grinding the axe

Drum up fellow members when interests lag
Don't say, "Not tonight it's too much of a drag"
Or, "There's gardening and painting and lots more to do"
A branch is made up of such members as you

Remember the comradeship found when abroad
With that and hard work the future's assured
So please do your bit be it large be it small
Without you my friend there'd be no branch at all.

John Hyde (Reproduced from an AVC Newsletter)

WRAC POSTAL REUNION

The next WRAC Postal Reunion will
be held at Eastbourne 12 – 15
October 2001.

We have Members who have served
from 1952 to 1975 at present, so if
you are an ex-WRAC postie why not
find out more about our Annual
Reunions and Newsletters.

Please contact:

Miss M Grant MBE
Forth Cottage
254 Church Street
Tranent
East Lothian
EH33 1BW
Scotland

'D' DAY

MEMORIES OF AN ATS DRIVERS 'D' DAY

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Violet Carlyle, Dorothy Carlyle and Margaret Philip on 'D' Day in London

My memories of D-Day were the most exciting for me. I, with other drivers from 32 VRD Irvine, Ayrshire, were driving Jeeps with trailers attached, towing light-weight motor bikes down the Great North Road, weaving in and out of the men's vehicles towing huge guns and being cheered from the roadside as we went through towns and villages, all going South. I think our destination was the Vehicle Repair Depot at Burnham Beeches in Surrey. We no doubt stayed the night in London at the Transit House in Gower Street, returning to Scotland by rail the next day. Like today, the journey used to take anything up to 14 hours!

Violet Carlyle ex W/75736 32 VRD Irvine, Ayrshire
4 Firlands, Stanmore, Carlisle, CA3 9FB

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

(Reprinted courtesy of the Press & Journal, Aberdeen)

A Northern woman, who worked through the night of the D-Day landings decoding war messages, has spoken of her disbelief on hearing that Operation Overlord had swung into action. Chris Morrison was on nightshift duties in the code and cipher branch at the War Office in London when the historic communication clicked through the wires. But she admits she was so busy she was totally oblivious to the fact one of the most momentous events in the history of the 20th century was slowly unfolding.

Mrs Morrison, of Uig, Skye, had the task of encoding and enciphering outgoing messages and decoding and deciphering incoming messages – arriving almost every minute from all over the world. She distinctly remembers

lifting her head in surprise when she thought she heard the wail of bagpipes during the night. She discounted the noise as probably being only a variation in the hum of the air-conditioning – but later heard that Lord Lovat and his piper Bill Millin had been among the first to land on the Normandy beaches.

Mrs Morrison said: "I then told myself what I heard during the night was not the hum of the air conditioning, but the echo from the ancient Highlanders rallying call to battle – the pipes of war!" She worked in an office in air-conditioned bunkers below the main building in Whitehall. It was manned night and day and Mrs Morrison was on duty from 5 pm on June 5 to 9 am on D-Day. She said: "Looking back, I suppose one could call it a fairly exciting job, but it became routine after a while – so I was glad that night to be put on 'Duds'. This was the term used to describe messages that could not be deciphered because the key to the code had become corrupt. She added: "To have asked the sender to repeat the message would be dangerous in that the enemy could have a better chance of cracking the code if it were sent over the air twice."

"Soon we had all settled down to work and nothing was heard but the clackety clack of the cipher machines – rather like teleprinters. I think it was about 6 am when a huge batch of messages came in – most marked 'Emergency'. "This was the highest of the classifications – even higher than 'most immediate'. I was oblivious to all this at the time, being in a world of my own – stuck in a corner with my 'Duds'."

Mrs Morrison said she later became conscious of a lot of whispering and hilarity from the other side of the room, but didn't pay much attention as this often relieved the intense concentration. Just before the day shift came on, she cracked the last 'Dud' and it was only then she heard Operation Overlord had begun. She recalled: "I was stunned... my eyes popped out like organ stops. Here was I thinking I had done so well by struggling with a message which contained only details about a cargo of ghee (a kind of butter) coming from the Far East while, all around me, history was being made."

Mrs Morrison was a member of the ATS at Cameron Barracks, Inverness, where she did part-time training. But two days before war broke out in 1939 her company was called up to the barracks and had to leave their civilian jobs. She said: "The average duties of servicewomen were very unspectacular and far removed from the exploits of Odette, Violet Szasbo and other famous secret agents who showed such indomitable courage. We did have the satisfaction of knowing that, by performing everyday tasks, we were releasing another man for the front."

When the news came through, Mrs Morrison became anxious about her husband in the RAF, her brothers in the Army and Navy and her thoughts also turned to her French teacher who had been engaged to a German professor. Had she gone to live in Germany? Mrs Morrison has also wondered over the years if the teacher

had known that the first couplet from a poem she taught – Chanson d' Automne by Paul Verlaine – had been used to alert resistance leaders about the D-Day landings.

Mrs Christina J Morrison née Chisholm (W/13890),
2 Boyd Terrace, Digby, Portree, Isle of Skye
Inverness-shire, IV51 9YQ

D-DAY THROUGH THE EYES OF A COOK

In 1944, the war had been going on for more than four years. Only the stormy waters of the English Channel had saved Britain from being invaded.

Battle fatigue was everywhere. Meat, milk and eggs were almost non-existent. Chocolate was but a faint memory of the past. And we girls serving in the ATS had almost forgotten what it was like to wear a pretty dress!

The winter of 1944 had been particularly hard, with heavy snows, ice and fogs. Coal was scarce and we shivered our way through the cold months in unheated rooms.

But then, as the warm days of spring arrived, rumours began to circulate that an invasion of Europe was being planned by the Allies. We spoke about it in hushed voices, looking over our shoulder at who might hear.

I was then stationed at Bury St Edmunds, East Anglia. All around, American Airfields had sprouted like mushrooms after a rain. Daily we awoke to the roar of Flying Fortresses leaving for missions over the Continent. Then, suddenly, the roars became louder and stronger as Bombers almost darkened the sky at dawn.

On June 6, 1944, the Allies launched the greatest seaborne invasion in history. Landing craft dropped off thousands of troops in waist-deep water, with rifles held over their heads, the men waded through the surf towards the beaches of France.

We girls, working in the Mess Halls and Cookhouses of Bury St. Edmunds, could only follow events on the map, as the Allies pushed their way across Belgium and France into the heartland of Germany. Thousands fell every day. It was a terrible price to pay for victory which finally came.

We "girls" who served at that time, are old ladies now. But every year, when May turns into June, we think back to that fateful day of long ago. Those were desperate times that demanded great sacrifices, but in the end we prevailed against the evil that threatened to engulf the world.

Frances Nunnally, 7139 Cherokee Road, Richmond,
Virginia 23225, USA

D-DAY 6TH JUNE 1944 FROM ALDERSHOT

Being stationed at RAOC Aldershot, I was an office messenger delivering messages to all the different camps, (the first faxes – e-mails).

For many weeks leading up to this, the outlying camps had been filling up with supplies, tanks, lorries etc., and the long valley, home to the famous Tattoo was a mass of canvas tents as far as the eyes could see. A sea of khaki in every shape and form. The town itself was a mass of men, of all regiments and languages. There was such an atmosphere. I can still recall now, and as we watched the line of troops marching onto the Railway sidings little did we know, but we all guessed something was afoot. So many young faces smiling, laughing at the girls they left behind them, shouting "we'll see you after". When the tannoy broadcast the news that morning, we knew what it had all been about. How many came back? I often think of those days. I was glad to be there, and proud to say so!

One Commando came home on leave, whom I later married.

Mrs Joan Frampton, ex W/69088 ATS (RAOC)
68 Alan Road, Ipswich IP3 8EY

6 JUNE 1944 – "D-DAY"

In the last issue of "The Lioness" you asked for memories of D-Day. Accordingly here is the illicit record of that day taken from the diary I kept and which is now in the Imperial War Museum. 601 Heavy Coy AA Battery was stationed at Gilkicker Point, near Gosport, and from our "hard" the invasion troops went to France.

"6 June 1944. Ghastly night of "D" manning. Have an idea this may be the real thing, judging from the stuff that has gone past, and not just an exercise. The tanks have full kit aboard, even down to pushbikes and kettles. A Dakota overhead all striped – planes not giving radio signals – everything points to battle.

1600 hours. Invasion! We merely walked to the fence and prayed inwardly for the lads in the convoys. Not allowed to talk to briefed troops. But we wished them luck and hoped for action. Watched gliders being towed over."

Needless to say the rest of the record is more interesting, but you asked for "D-Day".

Miss Petrie then W/99012 Petrie, J C, WOII
33 Rufus Close, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1BG

MEMORIES OF D-DAY

I was interested to read Brigadier Nield's letter in the 'Lioness'. It certainly brought back memories.

I know it was an exciting time as I was stationed on Hayling Island, with a Mixed Heavy ACK ACK Battery. 602 to be exact and I was a Gun Laying Girl on RADAR. We were confined to the Island for 4 weeks before D-Day, and watched the Mulberry Harbour being towed out, also lorry loads of sailors passed and we were told if they told us where they were going we would have to go with them!!!

The sad part after D-Day was going along the beach and seeing wreckage, personal belongings and even body parts. It rather took all the excitement away.

Mrs L G Collins née 226675 Ingram, 42 Hodderd Avenue, Peacehaven, BN10 7PH

A SPOTTERS VIEW OF D-DAY

I was W/110617 Elsie Windsor 518 H(M)AA Bty 139 Regt RA and was stationed in a "Restricted Movement Area" at Crab Lane, Gorleston-on-Sea. We had seen imitation barges, made from wood and canvas moored along the river banks, perhaps to look as if an Invasion Fleet was ready. Privilege leave had been stopped for some time.

June 5th. Reading Battery Orders I saw my name under "Duty Spotters". My usual work was as a member of the predictor team, as a Plotter, or "Gas" Instructor. I went on duty on June 6th with an experienced Spotter. We saw lots of air activity and my colleague said "Big Raid On" as all 'planes were heading eastwards.

Our orders were to "Report Everything to HQ" and by 8.15 we had counted 200 aircraft in all, including planes towing gliders, relaying this information to the telephonist who was our link with HQ. Then HQ said "Tell us when planes return". Almost as soon as that came through the planes began coming back. Some were severely damaged (these had priority for landing purposes), some skimmed the rooftops, and some ditched out to sea. We counted the open parachutes reporting the bearings, some planes were American.

Then we heard the roar as the Motor Transport Boats used for air sea rescue boats started up. The world was filled with noise.

Our reliefs came on duty, "Heard on the radio that it's "D" Day" they said. I was glad for the planes that had returned, sad for those that ditched, concerned for the crews aboard the damaged ones as they could be wounded. I wondered how many had not returned.

"D" Day, now, brings back a memory of noise, the Flying Fortresses and other planes, and the eerie swishing sound of the gliders as they travelled eastwards, and of the only time during my service in AA when I was a "Spotter".

Mrs E Walker, 65 Ashbury Drive, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset BS22 9QL

GUN LAYING

Your request for information "Where were you then - D-Day June 1944" brought back many memories of those days when one was young and sprightly and nothing was a burden.

Very little of those days survives. How one does regret neglecting to maintain contact with one's comrades in arms!! But...I do have one record which survives, albeit very dog-eared indeed, and the wonders of modern technology have allowed the enclosed reproduction of the photograph taken at the time. The original bears the signatures of all the members of the Gun Laying team 555(M) HAA Battery attending Practice Firing Camp at Beaumaris, Anglesey.



Members of the Gun Lay Team 555(M) HAA Battery attending practice firing camp at Beaumaris, Anglesey

I recall it as a beautiful June day and General Eisenhower's message being broadcast through the loud-speaker system for everyone to feel part of such a momentous event. Certainly, we were all immensely stirred to hear him.

I attend the ATS Dinner Club luncheon every year, but have long since ceased to expect to meet anyone from those distant years. We're all too much changed by the passage of time to be recognisable I fear.

Mrs Dorothy Hall née Eldridge (W/190696)
27 Earls Court, St Vincent's Road, Torquay, TQ1 4HF

MEMORIES OF 6 JUNE, 1944 at 1 AA Gp HQ ATS Coy

I was a plotter - my duty station was the Headquarters Operations Room of the London Gun Defended Area. In the early hours of 6 June we were called down to the Operations Room - all the plots on the tables were "friendlies" - mass raids heading towards the French coast, - not a hostile in sight!

After about an hour we were stood down. During the morning (a lovely sunny day) after coming off duty I walked along Brompton Road (possibly to change my soap coupons at Harrods) and saw the newspaper placards arriving announcing the start of the invasion.

Miss Bessie Wright, 58 Rokeby House, Lochinvar Street, Balham, London, SW12 8PX

6 JUNE 1944 D-DAY

When D-Day occurred I was a patient at Pontypool Hospital, can remember standing by my bed, looking towards the window, imagining the horror of it all.

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At that time I was the only member of the Forces in there, a situation soon to change. Wards were cleared and ambulances started to arrive bringing in wounded servicemen, along with a Sergeant-in-charge who set about organising us. Hospital Blues were issued and I was given blue jacket, white shirt and red tie, and a workshop with various handicrafts became available. I can still remember conversations with one of the servicemen, his face very badly damaged, hopefully at some later date he would receive specialised treatment and his situation would be much improved.

I have so many memories of my two months stay at the Hospital, the hard-working and kindly staff, patients or their visitors, generous and thoughtful, the workers at a nearby factory who sent us much appreciated gifts, one day in the middle of all this came the strong feeling of a Presence that somehow seemed to be truly in keeping with the circumstances. Certainly a time to remember.

Name and Address Supplied

MEMORIES OF D-DAY – 504 HY MXD A A Bty RA 'A' TROOP, SAWCLIFFE HILL, SCUNTHORPE, LINCOLNSHIRE 6.6.44

We woke, suddenly! This drowning noise was getting louder, and more thunderous. What was happening! It was as if we were being invaded. We sat up in bed looked at each other, then bounded out of the barrack room. Some of us in pyjamas, some pulling battledress on. The whole camp was turning out, all looking upwards.

What a sight! The sky was a mass of Troop Carriers towing Gliders. We couldn't believe our eyes. There was a hushed silence. We stood and looked in bewilderment. I think we were scared, yet elated, frightened, but exuberant. I can't remember what we did next although I think it was to wave and cheer.

Eventually, back in our barrack room, no one could sleep. It was far too early for breakfast. We all had our own

thoughts. After morning parade we were taken to the NAAFI, where our CO explained what was happening. 'D' DAY HAD STARTED.

A few days previously, a contingent of Canadians arrived at the Coppice a few hundred yards from the camp. Our Major was very good, and let them join us for an Evening Dance, also Bingo, and use of NAAFI. They left as silently as they had arrived.

We now knew where they had gone. Our thoughts were with them, and those thousands of men who had gone to liberate occupied Europe. As an anecdote, it was also my husband's birthday. He was in our 'B' Troop, the other side of Scunthorpe. Our job was to defend the steel works of that area.

We had not long been married, so in true army tradition of that time, we had been separated. I was sent to 'A' Troop! I hope that this will help in the mosaic of what we did.

Mrs Nina Garnham, 32 Keswick Gardens Ruislip,
Middlesex HA4 7XN

D-DAY

In the weeks running up to D-Day we drivers worked very hard ferrying stores from factories to Ports or Units. I was a convoy driver although before that I was the CO's driver at Norwich.

The day before D-Day we were on our way to Southampton, and stayed the night at Reading. The next day we had to wait for further orders, – to either go on or return to camp which was Gospel Hall, Twycross Near Nuneaton. While we were waiting we had the radio on so we did some country dancing in a country lane! About lunchtime we had orders to return to camp. On the way back all along the route people were standing at the sides of the road waving flags and cheering, it was a wonderful feeling although we hadn't been anywhere!

I loved my time in the ATS and have wonderful memories.

Mrs Kathleen Batson née Cordy, Lavender Cottage,
10 Castleacre Road, Great Massingham, Nr Kings Lynn,
Norfolk PE32 2HD

Obituaries

JOCELYN ST JOHN ('BERTIE') BAXTER

1920 – 2000
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Jocelyn St John Baxter was born on the Isle of Man on 04 November 1920. He spent the first years of his life in India where his father was serving with 1/8 Punjab Regt before returning to England to go to school. He was commissioned in 1940 into the Royal Engineers and served in France during the time that the Germans overran the place. He escaped through Cherbourg. He then went to Nigeria where he helped to form Engineer units in the Royal West African Frontier Force for possibly service in the war in East Africa. Sadly, persistent malaria forced Bertie to be invalided home in 1942. During his recuperation he was appointed Adjutant of the RE Officer Cadet Training Unit in Nottingham where he met his future wife Pauline, a VAD nurse. He then took part in the Normandy invasion in June 1944 serving with the Airfield Construction Group. He moved on to 17 Field Company RE in the July of that year, and spent the rest of the war with them, fighting through Europe and finishing at Bremen. He was mentioned in despatches in 1945. There followed service in Palestine, Austria, then as a student at Staff College, Camberley; staff appointments followed in Egypt, Cyprus, Aden and the MOD. He was promoted Colonel in 1970, was awarded the CBE in 1972 and retired in 1975. He did not remain retired long however. Instead he joined the WRAC College, giving the Corps the benefit of his experience and professionalism.

"Bertie" as he was affectionately known, went to the WRAC College as Assistant Adjutant, a euphemism for the steady central cog in the wheels that made the place tick, in 1976 as a retired officer. He quickly became a permanent and much valued member of staff. He served for 8 years and stood with the last Commandant as they closed the gates for the last time. He gave her a much-needed hug as she closed a part of the history of the WRAC. Bertie was, for me, the steady voice of reason on the end of the phone during my time as WRAC officer career manager. I had to talk about the future postings both for the young cadets graduating and for most of the officer staff of the College. To do this I had to tackle the Commandant and Bertie always gave me a hint as to what I might face over the phone. He was the only man ever to have been made a full member of Headquarter Mess and thus could attend functions in his own right. His last commandant – Shirley Nield - says of him; he was a super man, a tower of strength and an island of sanity in a busy place. Blessed with a sense of humour he managed to see the humorous side to some of the difficult moments thus easing the situation. We will miss him as I am sure will his many Army colleagues.

Sue Wing

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NAOMI CHRISTY

During her life, which was to span nearly nine decades, Naomi was to experience great social and technological

change of which she took full advantage, particularly in the field of fast cars, gliding and flying.

Born near Chelmsford in October 1911, Naomi enjoyed life to the full participating in the many outdoor activities of that era. She excelled at sports, in particular tennis and hockey, and rode regularly to hounds with the Essex Union. On one occasion, she was riding her very lively horse down a friend's drive when someone exclaimed in a very anxious voice 'that girl shouldn't be riding that horse', at which point the old gardener popped his head up from amongst the bushes and said 'don't you worry Ma'am, that Miss Christy could ride an elephant!'. She was educated in both England and America, and whilst at school in America she and her partner won the Connecticut Doubles Tennis Championships in 1926 when she was just fifteen years old.

In 1938, she joined the Territorial Army and was soon commissioned, becoming Adjutant of the ATS Company in Essex. Most of her war service was spent in a variety of Training Units, and by 1945 she had risen to the rank of Senior Commander (the equivalent rank to Major). Naomi continued to serve in the ATS after the War and went on to hold two appointments in the War office before making the seamless transition into the Women's Royal Army Corps in 1949 on its formation as a regular Corps in the British Army.

Naomi had a long and varied career in the WRAC starting in the prestigious appointment of Officer Commanding the Officer Cadet Wing at the WRAC School of Instruction at Liphook. Having made her mark in this post, she was selected to attend the very first course at the WRAC Staff College, Frimley in 1951. Following a posting to Catterick, she assumed command of 301 EC Battalion TA in 1954; she proved to be a very popular CO – enterprising and full of energy and new ideas. During this time she ran three very successful TA Camps, one of them in Scotland which was a real highlight in the girls' lives, as so many of them had never left East Anglia before.

In 1959, Naomi was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and posted to HQ BAOR in Rheindahlen. Here she wore two hats, that of a Staff Officer in the Headquarters and also CO of the WRAC Battalion; it is a strange coincidence that both appointments were subsequently filled in later years by the Reverend Sue Wing and myself.

Whilst in Germany she decided to take up gliding and became well known as an instructor in the British Services Club flying in the Austrian Alps at Zell am Zee. Following her tour in Germany she was posted to Headquarters Northern Ireland as Assistant Director WRAC where she continued her gliding and achieved the Northern Ireland height record. As well as her passion for gliding, Naomi continued to play sport to a high standard throughout her career, representing the WRAC in both tennis and squash against the other two Services.

Naomi's last posting before her retirement was to Headquarters Western Command in Chester. Whilst there she became very involved with the Girls' Venture

Corps, a youth organisation that developed from Pre-service Training Units in the war. Cadets were encouraged to learn to fly, and flying scholarships were awarded to assist them in obtaining a Private Pilot's Licence. Naomi eventually became president of the Corps. She was also a development officer to the British Gliding Association and became a tug pilot of the RAF Gliding and Soaring Association at Bicester. Much later, she celebrated her approach to the world of octogenarians by being photographed enjoying a wing walking experience on her seventy-ninth birthday.

Naomi obtained her Private Pilot's Licence when, in her own words, "I was old enough to have known better!". The British Women Pilots' Association became a very important part of her life. She was a Committee Member and, in the late 1970s, became Chairman of the Association. Upon her retirement as Chairman she was honoured with the position of President - a title not previously awarded. Although she retired as President in 1998 she continued to take an interest in the Association, keeping her hand gently "On the throttle". There is a lovely story that whilst a resident at 'Crispins' Nursing Home, Naomi, then in her mid 80's, was taken to Lasham Aerodrome by gliding friends for an afternoon out. Before she was lifted into a glider 'for old times sake', she instructed the club to ring back to the Matron of Crispins to say that she would be a little late back. The Matron then inquired 'Is the Colonel having a nice time? To which the club replied 'we don't know, she's at 5000 feet'. Her influence in the gliding world will be greatly missed.

During her lifetime Lieutenant Colonel Naomi Christy touched the lives of many people. She had very strong views which she did not hesitate to voice when she thought it necessary. She had high standards and a great sense of humour. She was also a staunch friend and there are many who will recall her generosity and kindness. Above all, she was a trail - blazer who will always be remembered for living life to the full.

Naomi has requested that her ashes be scattered from a glider over Bicester Aerodrome - a fitting finale to a remarkable life.

Lt Col Mary Soames

W/13990 EX-WO1 EVA HADLEY ATS/WRAC

On Thursday 15 February, we said farewell to Kate Hadley. It was absolutely right that she should go out with full military honours. The British Legion were in attendance with their standards, and the funeral service ended with the Last Post, and the Exhortation. Eva Nellie Hadley was born in 1910. In her young days she was a distinguished cub mistress, beloved by her boys. In 1937 she joined the ATS and was already a corporal when war broke out in 1939. She served with distinction and at the end of the war she was one of only two female WO's in the British Army. She was a Sergeant Major, and we knew it! She often told me off always with a twinkle in those blue eyes of hers, and made me stand to attention! She served the British Legion with distinction as well, and was very proud of the poppy brooch they presented to her for selling poppies over the years. Kate later worked

as a Prison Officer and an Usher in the courts. Kate never missed a service at Saint Peter's and was part of our family for so many years, helping in the Coffee Bar at Saint Peter's House, and in so many other ways. We shall miss her dearly, and our sympathy and prayers go out to her family and her many friends in the church and in the community.

J Nicholas

SGT SANDRA FAWCETT



Sgt. Sandra Fawcett, aged 24 competing for the Baor Womens Ski Trophy

Sandra Fawcett sadly died Saturday 3 February 2001 aged 55.

Sandra enlisted in the WRAC February 1967, served in Germany with 68 Sqn RCT Rheindahlen September 1967-1971, then COD KINETON then Shorncliffe, Folkestone.

Sandra trained as a nurse in civilian life and worked very hard as a District Nurse in Stoke-on-Trent bringing care and comfort to many sick people in their homes. She died within two months of being diagnosed of cancer and passed away peacefully at home. I served with Sandra at 68 Sqn before transferring to the QARANC. She was a wonderful person and will be sadly missed by a great many people.

J Windsor

CHIEF COMMANDER MARJORIE BAILEY, ATS

Marjorie Bailey joined the ATS in the early days of its formation, serving in Western Command and when Conscription of Women started she became CO of Lancaster Training Centre. In 1942 she was appointed to the Command of No. 9 ATS Training Centre at Pontefract where she proved an efficient and well-liked commander. It was a very busy and demanding job organising four Training companies with average intakes of 200 to 250 girls weekly, the HQ Company, a Holding Platoon and, in 1945, a Pre-OCTU Company. The Pontefract Barracks also housed a Dental Unit, a Military Hospital, two Cookery Schools (ATS), and a small detachment of the York & Lancaster Regiment in charge of their Guard Room and the only Military lock-up in the area. Also attached was the Band of the 2nd Battalion of the York & Lancaster Regiment with two Band Masters. So it was a very varied responsibility, which she conducted with utmost tact and diplomacy for four years until January 1946, when, with hostilities over and ATS recruiting diminishing, No. 9 ATS Training Centre was closed and staff deployed to other units.

Her husband, a Colonel in the Royal Corps of Signals, was demobbed about the same time, after several years in the North Africa War Zone, and they happily retired to their home in Watford, Hertfordshire. Sadly he died after very few years from heart failure. Some years later Marjorie suffered a severe stroke which left her very disabled and she spent over twelve years wheelchair-bound. Her passing in September 2000 aged 91 was a great sadness to her many friends.

ANTON Lt Col (Retd) Elaine Kathleen Anton MBE of Malvern on 5 June 2001. ATS/WRAC

ARCHER Mrs Dorothy Archer, née Ward, of Rugeley Staffs on 21 December 2000. ATS

ARCHER Mrs Nell Archer, née McCullough, of Belfast on 14 March 2001. ATS

ARKLE Mrs Elizabeth Arkle, née Appleby, of Gateshead in December 2000. ATS

AUSTIN Mrs Roxanna Austin, née Courts, of Truro on 5 March 2001. ATS

BAILEY Mrs Marjorie Bailey, of Watford in September 2000. ATS

BLACKWELL Mrs Barbara Blackwell, née Chandler, of Newhaven in February 2001. ATS

BRACKLEY Mrs May Brackley, née Funnell, of St Leonards on Sea on 22 February 2001. ATS

BUDD Mrs Nora Budd, née Cann, of Bristol on 24 February 2000. ATS

BUCKE Mrs Molly Bucke, née Davison, of Dorchester on 14 June 2000. ATS/WRAC

CHRISTY Lt Col (Retd) Naomi Christy, of Aldershot on 22 February 2001. WRAC

CLARKE Mrs Stephanie Clarke, née Buckholtz, of Colchester on 11 December 2000. ATS/QARANC

CLEGG Mrs Jean Clegg, née Wilson, of Shipley on 2 February 2001. ATS

CLEMENT Mrs Shelia Clement, née Parvin, of Southampton on 24 April 2001. ATS

CONNELL Miss Edith Connell, of Stirling on 18 August 2000. ATS

COX Mrs Norma Cox, née James, of Leicester on 1 February 2001. ATS

CUTMORE Mrs Ella Cutmore, née Murphy, of Braintree on 31 May 2001. WRAC

DAINES Mrs Alice Daines, née Williams, of Edenbridge on 20 April 2001. ATS

DAVIES Mrs Cecilia Davies, née Gooding, of Hereford on 21 January 2001. ATS

DONNELLY Miss Kay Donnelly, of Nicosia Cyprus on 1 March 2001. ATS

FAWCETT Miss Sandra Fawcett, of Stoke On Trent on 3 February 2001. WRAC

FLEMING Mrs Olga Fleming, née Bell, of Workington.

ATS/FORD Mrs Betty Ford, née Bignell, of Plymouth on 1 February 2001. ATS

GRAVILLE Mrs Joan Graville, née Tomlinson, of Doncaster in 2000. WRAC

GROOMSBRIDGE Mrs Betty Groomsbridge, née Norton, of Ashford on 15 February 2001. ATS

HADLEY Miss Eva Hadley, of Wolverhampton on 3 February 2001. ATS

HALES Mrs Eileen Hales, née Evans, of Redhill in 2000. ATS

HAMMOND Miss Barbara Lilian Rosina ("Babs") Hammond MBE, ex WO1 (EAG) of Chelmsford on 20 May 2001. WRAC

HARRIS Miss Hilda Harris, of Romford on 23 January 2001. ATS

HORNE Mrs Emily Horne, née Poplett, of Woodford Green. ATS

HUMPHRYS Mrs Maud Humphrys, née Cook, of Dymchurch in 2001. ATS

HUTCHINGS Mrs Betty Hutchings, née Sims, of Winchester. ATS

HUTTON Mrs Isabella Hutchings (known as 'Bunty'), née Jolly, of Dundee on 18 May 2001. ATS

KELLY Mrs Doreen Kelly, née Morris, of Prestatyn on 9 December 2000. ATS

KELSALL Mrs Lucy Kelsall, of Richmond on 22 January 2001. ATS

KENNARD Mrs Joan Kennard, née Wood, of Southampton. ATS

KERSHAW Miss Peggy Kershaw, of Christchurch New Zealand on 6 May 2001. ATS

LANCELOT Mrs Ada Lancelot, née Charnock in January 2001. ATS

LANCHESTER Mrs Frances Lanchester, née Shorrock, of Chichester on 22 December 2000. ATS

LAWRENCE Mrs Plantillo ('Zella') Lawrence, of Ramsgate on 14 January 2001. ATS

LEONARD Lieutenant Kay Leonard, 7 February 2001. ATS

LINNELL Mrs Constance Linnell, née Sutton, of Crawley on 29 October 2000. ATS

LLOYD Mrs Daphne Lloyd, née Stokes, of London on 3 January 2001. ATS/WRAC

McHUTCHON Miss K McHutchon, of Stirling on 8 February 2001. ATS

MAGGS Miss Irene Maggs, of Bristol on 19 December 2000. ATS

MAGRATH Mrs Elizabeth Magrath, of Rye on 18 February 2001. ATS

MAJOR Miss Joan Major, of Romford on 17 May 2001. ATS

MIDDLETON Mrs Joan Middleton, née Elen, of Forest Hill on 12 November 2000. ATS

MITCHELL Mrs Barbara Mitchell, née Dryer, of Harpenden on 24 April 2001. ATS

MOLE Mrs Pat Mole of Whitham on 22 May 2001. ATS

MORRISON Mrs M Morrison, née Duffy, of Dumbartonshire on 1 February 2001. ATS

MUIR Mrs Helen Muir, née Hutton, of Stirling on 14 May 2001. ATS

MUNTON Mrs Olive Munton, née Thompson, of Peterborough on 18 May 2000. ATS

OLIVER Mrs Vera Oliver, née Butcher, of Middlesbrough on 21 March 2001. ATS

OLSEN Mrs Margaret Olsen, née Hardman, of Carolina USA on 20 January 2001. WAAC

PALMER Mrs Florence Palmer, nee Hill, of Burnham on 25 February 2001. QMAAC/ATS

PALMER Mrs K Palmer, née Haynes, of Norfolk on 1 December 2000. ATS

PETCH Mrs Jean Petch, of Hull in March 2001. ATS

PRINCE Miss E Prince, of Hammersmith on 3 February 2001. ATS

QUINCEY Miss Kathleen Quincey, of Ruskinton Lincs on 26 February 2001. ATS

RENSHAW Mrs Agnes Renshaw, née Drinkwater, of Manchester in December 2000. ATS

ROSE Mrs Jean Rose, née Davies, of Grimsby on 25 April 2001. ATS

ROSIE Mrs Oriana Rosie, née Waller/Taylor, of Gloucester on 14 February 2001. ATS

SEARLE Miss Barbara Searle, of Beverley in January 2001. ATS

SHALE Mrs Rhoda Shale, of Gillingham on 12 May 2001. ATS

SMYTH Mrs Marjorie Smyth, née Revell, of Thanet on 7 February 2001. ATS

SNELLING Mrs Gladys Snelling, of Manor Park on 17 December 2000. ATS

SNUGGS Miss Violet Snuggs, of Shipley on 13 February 2001. ATS

SOAR Miss Ada Soar, of Swadlincote in February 2001. ATS

SOUTHCORBE Mrs Nora Southcombe, née Stalker, of Bradford on 17 April 2001. ATS

STAPLETON Mrs Eileen D Stapleton, of Kingston-Upon-Thames in March 2001. ATS

TAYLOR Miss Marion Taylor, of London on 17 January 2001. ATS

THESIGER Miss Patience Thesiger MBE, of Tunbridge Wells on 13 March 2001. ATS

THOMPSON Mrs Jean Thompson, née Wallace, of York on 21 March 2001. ATS

THROWER Mrs Gladys Thrower (known as 'Penny'), née Wakefield, of Norwich on 25 December 2000. ATS

TODD Miss Kate Todd, of Norwich on 21 March 2001. ATS

TROAKE Mrs Dulcie Troake, née Sparkes, of Wellington on 1 April 2001. ATS

TYLER Capt (Retd) Mary Tyler, of Middleton-on-Sea on 22 May 2001. FANY/ATS

VICKERS Mrs Elsie Vickers, née Davidson, of Margate on 17 February 2001. ATS

WALL Mrs Olive Wall, née Ash, of Lincoln on 15 December 2000. ATS

WALLACE Mrs Muriel Wallace, née Browne, of Donaghadee on 1 January 2001. ATS

WILKINSON Mrs Elsie Wilkinson, née Foulds, of Bradford on 29 March 2001. ATS

WOODALL Mrs Grace Woodall, née Pipe, of Stanmore on 23 December 2000. ATS

YEATES Miss Pauline Yeates, of Edinburgh on 2 March 2001. ATS

GIFT AID DONATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE WRAC ASSOCIATION (Reg No 206184)

and

THE ATS AND WRAC BENEVOLENT FUND (Reg No 247793)

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

If you are a UK Taxpayer, you can make a Gift Aid Declaration when you make a donation to charity. By making such a declaration, the receiving charity can reclaim any tax you have paid on your donation. This will give the Association or the Benevolent Fund an extra 28p for every £1 you donate.

Gift Aid Declarations may be written or given orally over the telephone.

If your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and/or capital gains at least equal in amount to the tax that the charity reclaims, you should cancel your declaration.

You can cancel the declaration at any time simply by notifying us that you wish to do so. If an oral declaration is cancelled within 30 days from the date on which written confirmation is sent, it will be as if the oral declaration had never been made.

If you are a high rate taxpayer, you can claim further tax relief in your Self-Assessment Tax Return.

If you are unsure whether or not your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, please contact the Association HQ on 01962 887570 or ask your local tax office for leaflet IR 113 Gift Aid.

Please notify the Association HQ of any change of address.

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE VICTORY SERVICES CLUB, LONDON AT 1430 HRS ON 21 APRIL 2001

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1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed members to the AGM. She made special mention of the branch secretaries and the importance of the work of all of the branch officers, thanking them on behalf of the membership.

She then went on to give a brief resume of the year's events including the Council's decision to sponsor a plot in the National Memorial Arboretum, the Memorial to ATS at Warley and the work being done concerning women's names on War Memorials.

It had also been a sad year with the loss of Brigadier Helen Meechie, Lieutenant Colonel Naomi Christie, Lieutenant Colonel "Bertie" Baxter and Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Conroy, the latter two having been adjutants at the WRAC College for many years.

The Chairman concluded her remarks by reading messages received from the Association's Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, and President, Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dame Joanna Kelleher, Brigadier G Ramsey, Lt Col H McMahon, Mr S Parsons, Mrs S Baker and secretaries of the following branches: Andover, Ashby-de-la-Zouche, Blackpool, Chester, Dacorum, Doncaster, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Grimsby, Isle of Wight, Omagh, Rhyl, Stirling, Ulster and Leicester.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated and no comments received. It was proposed that the chairman sign them as a true record.

Proposed: Bournemouth Seconded: Salisbury
Unanimously agreed

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

- a. Publicity and Recruitment A colour leaflet, as proposed by Salisbury Branch, has been produced and distributed to branches.
- b. National Lottery Grant for the Lioness This is being investigated through the following grant making organisations – Grants for All, the Arts Council and the Charities Board. There may be a possibility of a grant through the first but it is highly unlikely that applications to the others will be successful.
- c. War Memorials The policy of the Royal British Legion with regard to the addition of names to War Memorials was given by the Chairman. In summary, there is no discrimination between men and women and the RBL will support all efforts to have names of eligible individuals added. They will not finance the addition of names however as local authorities have a statutory duty to bear these costs. The General Secretary is also in communication with the War Graves Commission to identify where the ATS Battle Casualties who died during the Second World War are buried.

5. REPORT OF COUNCIL

The Council has met twice during the past year. They have agreed to underwrite the cost of sponsoring a plot at the National Memorial Arboretum to the sum of £5000. (The Chairman of Birmingham Branch wished the meeting to be informed that all Standards would be welcome at the official opening of the Arboretum on 16 May 2001.)

The following branches have closed within the last 12 months: Richmondshire; Manchester; Southport; Middlesbrough.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

In the absence of the Honorary Treasurer, the report was given by the General Secretary.

The Audited accounts for the year ending 31 October 00 were circulated in the January Lioness. The Association, excluding the Benevolent Funds, made a deficit for the year of £17,830. However, this was more than offset by the increase in the value of the investments of £27,238. The Association's contribution to the Grand Reunion amounted to £14,450, £5,550 less than the sum set aside.

A comparison of the Lioness publication costs and income shows an overspend of £7,784. This is in fact a little on the conservative side as it does not include the cost of postage when journals are despatched from the headquarters.

Although investment income in the Benevolent Funds for the year decreased by almost £3,000 compared to the previous year, this was more than offset by a reduction in management expenses. The value of the Benevolent Funds increased by £366,701 of which the gain in investments held amounted to £276,846. The income from specific legacies amounted to £122,470, a substantial increase on previous years. Grants made to former members of the ATS and WRAC amounted to £174,589, as opposed to £183,337 during the previous year.

It was proposed that the financial statements be accepted.
Proposed: Darlington Seconded: Hereford
Unanimously agreed

7. REPORT OF THE BENEVOLENT FUNDS GRANTS COMMITTEE

The following report was given by the Chairman of the Grants Committee.

I am delighted to be addressing our AGM again on behalf of the Trustees of the Benevolent Fund. They have, as usual, met twice during the year. The number of cases received was 1020, an increase of 12% on the previous year and the total amount spent was £158,939. The ratio of cases was 656 ATS to 364 WRAC compared with 608 ATS to 296 WRAC in the previous financial year. All cases these days demand more research and greater liaison with other Funds because of their increasing complexity and the relatively larger amounts of money being sought. Our grants were again topped up by the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, the Army Benevolent Fund, the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund and most other Army Regiments and Corps as well as the Royal British Legion. They continue to provide generous financial help and by inviting us to their meetings, we are able to make personal contacts which are so important.

We continue to administer annuities, which are now set at £11 per week plus a Christmas bonus of £60, from our own Princess Royal's Memorial Fund to those who are in particularly difficult circumstances – in poor health, alone, elderly and poor. The number has reduced from 31 to 20 during the past year, but new annuitants are being identified. The Army Benevolent Fund also continues to grant annuities to our members and the amount is now set at £50 per month. Following the project undertaken by the previous Case Secretary, the ABF now support over 100 of our members with these annuities. In addition, 4 of our beneficiaries receive an annual grant of £416 from the Women's Section of the Royal British Legion. Last year, the total amount granted for all these annuities was over £61,000.

Grants continue to be made for essential regular needs like gas, electricity and water; clothes, furniture, cookers, fridges and washing machines; dentures and spectacles are costly regular requirements for the elderly. In addition, there are expensive special

needs such as wheelchairs and stair lifts which have to be chosen carefully to meet the particular disability involved. It is very rewarding to be able to improve the quality of life of our former servicewomen, even in a small way, and we frequently receive thank you letters from grateful recipients.

In conjunction with the ABF, Pontins Holidays are provided for needy applicants with children under 16 and, in 2000, a total of 13 families were given a holiday. We are delighted that this facility is being continued and that the ABF are considering expanding the range of holidays which are available. Our thanks go to Mrs Babs Mitcheson who has co-ordinated the Pontins holidays for many years and who was also the knitting co-ordinator until last year.

The WRAC Benevolent Fund Knitting Circle, spread throughout the UK has produced woollen garments for children for many years. Some older members are finding it harder to knit because of arthritis or failing sight, but we still have a steady stream of garments arriving. The number of families helped varies from year to year with an average of over 50 cases per year since 1995. The aim is to provide at least 2 jumpers per child plus other small knitted items such as hats and gloves. We are delighted that Brigid Archdale has now taken on the task of co-ordinator.

Derek Dallamore took over from Ruth Watt as Benevolent Case Secretary in August, but has recently left for pastures new. We hope to appoint a new Secretary in the near future, meanwhile thanks go to the General Secretary for holding the fort.

Now I should like to describe a case: - a widow, aged 79, who served in the ATS from 1941 – 1946 living in Co Durham whose home was badly flooded during the severe weather conditions experienced last Autumn. Her carpets, furniture and domestic equipment were ruined. Placed in temporary accommodation by the local authority, many local charities rallied round to restore her home and replace her carpets and furniture. The Committee was pleased to grant £700 to replace her domestic electrical equipment. There are many such cases worthy of mention and members of the Committee continue to try and respond as best they can.

Lastly, I want to say how grateful we are to all of you in your branches who have shown so much initiative in raising money for the funds. Thank you again for all your support. It is greatly appreciated.

8. LIONESS REPORT

The following report was given by the editor of the Lioness.

Lioness 2/2000 was distributed at the beginning of August 2000 and 01/2001 at the beginning of February. The journal continues to run at a loss, as you have already heard. Last year this was somewhere in the region of £8000.

Combined Service Publications, our advertising sales agent, went into liquidation in July of last year and we have not yet found another agency to replace them. Therefore, there has been no advertising revenue from the most recent edition. I have approached a number of publishing companies who provide a full production package including advertising sales. Their quotes are based on production costs offset by projected advertising revenues. However, to date none of the quotes are particularly competitive with our current printers. I have also approached an advertising sales agency, part of the Norman Hardy Group, but they did not consider the Lioness a viable proposition. I will continue to seek other agencies.

Further measures to cut production costs while maintaining quality have included moving our distribution contract to another firm, renegotiating our contract with Royal Mail and cutting down on the number of copies produced. In future, the order will be based on the number of live members plus 2% to cover essential complimentary copies and New Members joining within 3 months of publication. For the purposes of calculating the order for the first journal of the year, live members are life members and annual members whose subscriptions have been received and processed by 01 January.

9. RESOLUTIONS

a. Motions of Urgency

Nil.

b. Council Resolutions

Nil.

c. Branch Resolutions

Luton – It is proposed that the cost of the Lioness be separated from the subscription for all members whether life or annual.

It is generally agreed that the continuation of the journal is of the utmost importance. The chairman informed the meeting that it had been recognised that both the cost of the Lioness and the cost of mounting Grand Reunions were becoming a drain on the Association's resources and therefore an initial plan of action had been drawn up to examine all aspects of funding. She asked the meeting therefore, to delay any decision on the proposal until the executive committee had had time to complete its investigations. Any recommendations for changes in rules or entitlements could then be brought before the AGM in 2002 for discussion and approval.

10. ELECTIONS

a. Vice Presidents Of Council

There being two vacancies, the Council nominated the following candidates for election as Vice Presidents of Council:

Lt Col A K Brown
Maj J Freebairn

The election of the nominated candidates was:

Proposed: Bradford Seconded: York Unanimously agreed

b. Honorary Treasurer

There was one nomination.

Lt Col M Rook

Proposed: Plymouth Seconded: Shropshire
Unanimously agreed

11. PRESENTATIONS

A Certificate of Appreciation was presented by the Chairman to Mrs Monica Kenny of Bradford Branch.

The following members who were not present at the meeting have also been awarded Certificates of Appreciation:

Miss Doris Lee	Wimbledon
Mrs Sylvia Parkin	Hull
Mrs Joyce Goddard	Rochdale
Mrs Mona Schofield	Rochdale
Mrs Mary Campbell	Rochdale

The Chairman spoke briefly about the importance of the Certificates and how she hoped to see more awarded in the future.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a. Salisbury Branch wished to inform all branches that they could advertise their branch on page 172 of Ceefax on Channel 4.

b. WO1 A Denham announced that there was a lot of interest in opening a branch of the Association in Winchester and she would be asking Council to approve formation of the branch at its next meeting.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Annual General Meeting was set for 06 April 2002 to be held at the Victory Services Club.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 1535 hrs.

Chairman

Date

