

LIONESS

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THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 206184

Founded in 1919

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HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT GCVO

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Field of Remembrance 2003

Back Cover:

Mary Naomi Wallace Memorial Medal Board

(By kind permission of the Director Corps of Army Music)

Contributions for next issue by 31 May 2003

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EDITORIAL

I have just glanced through the editorials in the last half dozen journals. For the first time since I became editor, I can report that no-one is leaving – not the Case Secretary, not the Chief Clerk and not even me!

We are all busy preparing for the Grand Reunion in April. There has been a very good response and the lists are now closed. I am sure that it will be a great success and we will put a full report with lots of pictures in the next edition of the Lioness. Meanwhile, in this edition we have some interesting reminiscences about life in the ATS and the WRAC – Maj Gildea's dog has yet another mention along with a much less popular canine companion! There is also an update on Queen Elizabeth Barracks and an interesting article about the Mary Naomi Wallace Memorial Medal.

Please keep sending in your articles for publication. You have all had such varied experiences in the ATS and WRAC that with your help we can continue to ensure that the Lioness remains a vibrant and interesting journal. There is a lot of interest in the role of women in the services, particularly during World War 2, at the moment. A number of post graduate students have contacted the Headquarters for help with their theses and although the Lioness is produced for you, the members of the Association, it could also prove a useful source of information in the future, ensuring that your efforts and achievements are not forgotten.

Letter from the Vice President of the Association

As some of you might know, I have decided not to stand for re-election as Vice President of the WRAC Association when my present four year term expires after July 2003.

I have taken this step because I believe that the time is right to hand over to the next generation both the powers and the responsibility to shape the future of the Association.

It is in the nature of organisations such as ours to look backwards in order to enjoy together the remembrance of past triumphs and disasters, shared laughter and hardship. It is good to renew the strength, confidence and comfort of comradeship forged in difficult times, and to take continuing pride in the achievements of our youth. At the same time I believe it is also necessary to look forward to the future.

We have many members of the "40-50 something" tendency, some still serving. I know they too are proud to look back at our history. They are, however, still "living our present" and should take on the mantle of shaping our future over the next few years.

The foundation stones are in place. Finances are sound. The Association HQ is fully staffed and there is a chance of stability for a few years. Our rules are now properly adjusted so that we can meet the needs of younger members whilst maintaining, as always, the traditions of the ATS and WRAC which are embodied within the life of

the Association. Last, but by no means least, I am encouraged to see that a growing number of younger members are prepared to stand for election to posts on the Council. They bring energy, enthusiasm and imagination which give hope of a bright and lively future.

The Executive Committee is, of course, hard at work on the Grand Reunion to be held in Birmingham in April. I believe that we shall have well over 500 members attending, a tribute, I think, to our durability. How many of you in your first week of recruit training would have believed that you would be actually asking to March Past some 60+ years later? If the 40-50 year olds are as durable, and they certainly look as if they might be, the future could extend towards 2050.

I am confident that this Reunion will be just as lively and enjoyable a week-end as always. I look forward to it and hope that as many of you as possible attend the AGM as well as the more social events.

As I mentioned earlier, many of our members are still serving. As I write, at the end of January 2003, they are no doubt wondering what the immediate future might hold for them. I am confident that, whatever they are asked to do, they will acquit themselves well, as their mothers and grandmothers did, in the best tradition of the Service to which they belong. I know I speak for all members when I wish all those "living our present", God speed and a safe return.

ATS Reminiscences

MEMORIES OF RSM PARKIN AND CAIRO

Mrs E. V. Fraser (née Middleton) W/ 182031
5/14A Lowelly Road, Lindisfarne, Tasmania 7015
Australia

I was surprised and delighted to see in *Lioness* 2, 2002 a photograph and article on page 35 about RSM Grace Parkin on her 90th Birthday.

I was one of the 500 ATS girls in 510 (GHQ) ME Company under her. I resided for 2½ years in Flat 8 in the bug-infested Kasr el Nil Barracks in Cairo and worked in the Registry at GHQ next door to the army post office.



Eve Middleton and Evelyn Pleasants at Kasr-el-Nil Barracks 1945

We would never have dared to call RSM Parkin 'Parky' but I remember her as strict but sympathetic and with a sense of humour. She attended my wedding in Cairo Cathedral in May 1944 but sadly I cannot see her in any of the photographs. As I recall she was a little plumper then than she seems in the birthday photograph – the reverse is the case with me.

I recall one encounter I had with her. I had been on leave to Alexandria and on the way there had lost my sling bag containing all my money, my glasses worn in cinema only, photographs of my husband and family, letters, AB64 and

other precious bits and pieces. On my return to Cairo I stayed at the beautiful YWCA Darbhanga House for a few days. I went to the barracks one afternoon to see friends and encountered the RSM coming down the stairs.

"Oh! Fraser" she said, "the officer (I can't remember which one) wants to see you." I immediately panicked.

"Do you know why she wants me Ma'am? I quavered.

"No I don't. I know almost everything but not that," she said.

Full of trepidation I went up to the office and was duly chastised for losing my bag which the officer said might have contained something of value to the enemy. She then produced a sling bag and asked if it were mine. I said it looked like the one bought for me in Durban, so she told me to examine the contents. I could not believe my eyes for everything was there intact – and in Cairo that was a miracle. She told me the taxi driver had handed it in having noticed it just after my train left. I was so relieved and grateful I ran down the steps only to meet RSM Parkin about to ascend.

"Really Fraser", she rebuked me sternly. "First you crawl up the steps like a lamb going to face a dragon in its cave and then you charge down as if you had a pack of hounds behind you. Why can't you walk with dignity as befits a member of the British ATS?"

Crimson faced I mumbled, "Sorry Ma'am."

She then smiled and said, "Well I am pleased to see the dragon did not devour you. Now go off and enjoy the rest of your leave."

I walked out of the building very sedately but then, hoping she had not reached the window on the landing, I ran across the railway line and jumped up the other side hugging myself with glee. Now after repaying the money my friend had lent me I had enough money left to buy a dress and nothing was rationed in Cairo.

I am so pleased to see that Miss Parkin is alive and looking well at 90 and I send her my very best wishes.

With the death of Isle of Wight member Vera Royall, the only person from 510 company GHQ and Kasr el Nil days still in contact is Evelyn Stubley (née Pleasants) who travelled with me from the RAPC offices in Leeds, was my bridesmaid and is godmother to my daughter. I belonged to the WRAC Association branch in Canterbury until coming to live in Tasmania in 1995 and always look in *Lioness* to read news of them. I also look for Leeds news as I was born and lived there until joining the ATS in May 1942.

I should love to hear from any other ex-Kasr el Nilians but of course we are all growing older. I have some photographs taken in Egypt but should so much like to have a copy of one of Kasr el Nil main gates if anyone has one. A Hilton Hotel now occupies the site.



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*New South Barrow Hotel, Umkomaas, South Africa,
March 1943*

This photograph is of some of the draft staying at the New South Barrow Hotel in Umkomaas, South Africa in March 1943, midway on our journey to Egypt and beyond. We sailed to South Africa on the SS Volendam in January 1943 and then to Egypt on the SS Empire Woodlark – known to us as the Mudlark. I am on the left in the left archway and on my left is FANY Sgt Margaret Douglas. In the right archway on the left is Anne Dunne and on her right is Evelyn Pleasants. The girl playing with the manager's dog is Joan Akerman and on her left is Esther Woods. I can't remember any other names as we all split up after arriving in Cairo. Maybe some of the others can recognise themselves.

A VERY KEEN RECRUIT

Mrs Sheila Steines (née Hills) W/242085
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Australia

Your article "Recollections of a Recruiter" bring back memories of my enlistment in 1942 at Aldershot. The recruiter was Corporal Cecilia Spurgeon, whom I will never forget.

On my first visit to the recruitment office, I was 16½ years old and quite sure of being accepted but Cpl Spurgeon told me to try again in a year's time. I tried hard to persuade her that I was reliable and capable but to no apparent avail. Finally I said, "I will get in, I'll put my age up, I look older." Cpl Spurgeon then said she would tear up my current application and that she had never seen me. About 10 days later, again at Aldershot, I enlisted being hurried through the procedure by Cpl Spurgeon.

I was sent to Talavera Barracks in Northampton and whilst there, received a letter from Cpl Spurgeon asking me to look up a friend of hers in Northampton. Unfortunately I never did, being far too involved with my training but I think she felt concerned about me. I've often regretted not having re-assured her. I would also have liked to thank her for my 4 happy years in the ATS. I wonder if I'm too late!

..... AND ANOTHER

Anne M Pickup, ex- Sgt, W/11982
16 Haggate Crescent, Off Cecil Street, Royton,
Nr Oldham, Lancs, OL2 5NF

On 29 August 1939 I received a telegram (that I still have) telling me to report to headquarters that night. The following morning I went into work in uniform, to tell them I was leaving and would not be back until the emergency ended. So started my seven years service. I was awarded the silver Territorial Medal with my name Sgt A M Pickup around the edge. I never went back to my firm.

One of my ex "girls" lives at Dodworth, in Yorkshire. I visit her from time to time. The whole village knows that Nell's Sergeant is coming to visit. In her large kitchen the kettle is always boiling. We sit around her large table, as one person leaves another takes her place. It reminds me of the knights of the round table. They all listen to our never ending tales of our life in the ATS.

MEMORIES OF THE 'Y' GROUP

Mrs Marjorie Hay (née Blacklock) W/198729
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I felt I must write to our magazine after reading the first two reminiscences in the current edition. I too, was with the "Y" Group, and it was great to read their memories, which were, and are, so very similar to my own. I was at Garats Hay for a short time whilst waiting for the new camp to be built and then we went up to Brand Hill which was literally four huts for the four watches, one for the cooks and orderlies, a medical room and cookhouse set in a field – but it was home! The officers lived in a big house next to the field. As has been said, because our work was so secret we stuck together and all became good friends, many of us still being in contact sixty years on. This photograph was taken at the Golden Wedding celebration of "Maggie Reilly" and her husband Brian.



L to r: Pauline Rabbetts (McNichol), Sheila Passmore (Byrne), Marjorie Hay (Blacklock), Sheila Moore (Taylor), Margaret Renwick (Maggie Reilly), Topsy Gray, Lorna Wallace (Popham)

A group of us from D Watch meet every year, and how we enjoy those few days together, laughing over old times and exchanging news of old friends. Next week I shall be packing my case again ready for another happy reunion in Bridlington!

BEHIND THE WIRE (or EXODUS)

Doreen Walden, W/326799

27 The Beeches, Ponteland, Northumberland NE20 9SZ

During the last two years of the British Mandate for Palestine, I was a member of the Palestine Coy ATS in Jerusalem. It was a small company, comprised of about 60 girls, and the only ATS company left in Palestine. Half of the unit were in Signals and we manned the switchboard at the King David Hotel on a 24 hour basis, it being HQ for the whole of the country. Most of us were volunteers from GHQ Cairo, seeking refuge in the Promised Land, though after the closure of GHQ Cairo, a few arrived from the Canal Zone in Egypt.

We were billeted in Allenby Barracks on the outskirts of the city in what had, in days of yore, been the married quarters of the Army personnel – a pleasant camp though now surrounded by barbed wire. It was manned by Arab labour so there were no “extra duties”, except in the Company Office where we had to do the occasional evening stint to check everyone into camp at 11 pm. We were a fairly cohesive bunch and, being a small unit, everyone knew each other. It was here that I first met Sandy Webb (now Sandy Heswell) who arrived in Cairo early in 1947.

After the blowing up of the King David Hotel in July 1946, and subsequent terrorist activities, life began to change for us, and our freedom was very much curtailed. Most of the cafes, restaurants and cinemas in the Jewish area of the City were out of bounds, and we were only allowed out of camp if accompanied by four armed escorts because of kidnapping threats by the Zionists. We were allocated one leave of two weeks per year which was spent in Cyprus at the leave camp in Famagusta, or at Army Ski School in the Troodos Mountains, both being wonderfully free from restrictions. Apart from this, we lived our lives in Allenby Barracks – no weekend passes here.

In spite of this, ancient history was not repeated, and there was no great flight across the wilderness back into Egypt!

In 1947, the United Nations met in Jerusalem where the decision was taken to end the British Mandate in May 1948, and for Palestine to be divided between Jewish and Arab nations. This did not deter the terrorists, who continued their campaign against the British Army and the Palestine Police Force. In the dying months of 1947 quite a number of the girls in Palestine Coy ATS were due for demob and made the journey across the Sinai back to Egypt to await the “Boat Home”. Back at “Fortress King David Hotel”, they were replaced by men of the Signal Corps, and our numbers grew less. With those friends who still remained, I made my last Christmas visit to Bethlehem (about 5 miles from our Camp) and at the end of February 1948 I joined the exodus to Ismailia in Egypt to await my turn for the “Boat Home”.

Our only re-union took place in 1949 at the Albert Hall, after which we all repaired to a nearby Lyons Corner House – a very merry and noisy bunch whom the worried manager was glad to see leave. In subsequent years, I have managed to keep in close contact with only one member of the group, that is until the year 2001 when, through a mutual acquaintance, I learned of the

whereabouts of Sandy Heswell. We have corresponded since, and on 5 October 2002, at Sandy's invitation, I attended the London Group Re-union at the Royal Green Jackets Drill Hall.

My anxiety about whether we would recognise each other after 55 years was unfounded – there she was behind a table busy selling raffle tickets. I spent a lovely day with Sandy and her friends, catching up on what little news we had of others.

Members of Palestine Coy ATS seem to have gone to earth. Perhaps this letter may jog someone's memory – if so let's hear from you.

THE DAY I MET MONTY

Mrs Eileen Mander née Clarke, W/338306

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In August 1948 I was serving in Germany. I was an ATS driver in 721 Car Coy at Rhine Army HQ, Bad Oeynhausen. An important conference was about to take place at HQ and Monty was to host it – at that time he was CIGS (Chief of the Imperial General's Staff) and nearing the end of his term of office. It was a wonderful opportunity to see him and, hopefully, to get a picture of him. So I set forth with my newly acquired Voigtlander



Field Marshal Montgomery with Lt Gen Sir Charles Keightley

camera and secured a position at the front of the crowd, all set to snap my hero. There seemed to be hundreds of officers from all parts of the British Zone and I began to doubt that I would even see Monty, let alone photograph him. Then, suddenly, there he was, walking along the path where I stood. He was accompanied by General Sir Charles Keightley and they were talking quietly together, having turned aside from the main stream of officers, who were heading towards the Kurtheater where the conference was being held. I fumbled with my camera trying to focus on them but without success, as they were constantly moving. Then, Monty spotted me and fixing me with those steely-blue eyes he walked towards me and stopped. For an awful moment I was scared that he was going to ask me how I came by my German camera! I would not have dared to lie to him. I got it on the black market for 400 cigarettes. I snapped to attention and saluted – rather difficult with a camera in one hand. I need not have worried, although he did glance at the camera. He knew it was a German one. He asked me a series of quick-fire questions about my service and I answered in quick-fire reply. The adrenaline was fairly pumping by this time. Then he said, "Did you get your picture?" "No Sir" I replied. "Why not?" retorted Monty. "Well Sir, every time I get you in my sights you move on". Monty threw back his head and laughed – the allusion obviously amused him but I could have bitten out my tongue! Monty turned to Sir Charles Keightley, who had been listening to all this, and said "Well Charles, I think we can stand still long enough for this Auxiliary to get her picture, don't you". Sir Charles readily agreed and the two of them posed for me, Monty giving me a kindly smile, those blue eyes twinkling. The picture taken, I saluted smartly and thanked him. He nodded, smiled and said "Carry on" then turned away and walked towards the entrance of the Kurtheater. He was soon lost to sight but the memory of that brief encounter stays with me. I got the picture of a lifetime and felt proud enough to burst!

6th GLOUCESTER CLERICAL COMPANY

Mrs Betty Mitchell, W/42300
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Devon PL7 4EL

Did you think when you joined the ATS between 1939 and 1945 that you would find yourself in a theological college? Pictured here is the former Salisbury and Wells Theological College, now Sarum College, in the Close, Salisbury.



The Theological College

During the war the 6th Gloucester Clerical Company ATS lived there and worked in different offices at HQ Southern Command. I arrived there in the summer of 1940. There were no spare rooms, so 13 of us had to be housed in the lecture hall. I slept in the middle of the stage with a blackboard and easel behind my bed!

The building is now a resource centre for religious study and spiritual refreshment. It is possible to stay there and in May I spent a weekend there. The facilities and food were excellent and the staff friendly and welcoming.

They were so interested to hear of my earlier stay and, with their help, I found the exact spot where my head had rested. However, alterations are being made, so some parts of the building will change. The main staircase with the grandfather clock and the chapel remain intact however.

Also pictured is the building which housed the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess. Now it is a private home.



Former WOs and Sgts Mess, now a private house

I worked in the Command Pay Office and every morning we marched out through St Anne's Gate to Barnard's Cross to work. Square-bashing took place on the quiet roads within the Close and the Close Gate was locked at dusk with the Close Constable having to unlock it for the many girls returning to college barracks.

It must have been quite a culture shock for the other residents of the Close to have over 400 girls in their midst, but a great experience for us.

A GUNNER'S TRAVELS

Mrs A Hill, 3 Knights Close, Doddington, March,
Cambs. PE15 0SD

I volunteered for the ATS in March 1942. In April I went to Cambridge for my Medical. On 17 April, having passed A1, I was on my way to Northampton for my Basic Training (marching, immunisations etc). Whilst we were there an order was issued that we were not allowed to go to bed on a Monday night before midnight! We could clean buttons, shoes or enjoy a singsong in the Garrison Theatre, but no bed!

After three weeks, five of us were posted to Devizes as Operational Fire Controllers (OFCs). But at the time we had no idea what that stood for. Arriving at the camp we

found we were to operate the radar, in other words we controlled the guns. After two weeks of theory we went on to the sets. In between lectures about radar, we had instruction on plane spotting and lectures about gas. After eight weeks we passed out as OFCs. We had also passed the gas test. **PDF Compressor Free Version**

Richmond Park was our next posting – this was to an eight-gun battery. 435 Bty had been formed in 1941, but now it was going to be divided, so they needed more personnel. Over the next few months A & B sections went round relieving other batteries to go to firing camp. This was about the only time I did guard duty. Why did the men have guns at night, but we only had sticks in the daytime? We had been taught to use guns.

Next stop – Walthamstow Avenue. When the battery left here for Buckhurst Hill the OFCs were sent to different batteries as we had no radar on the hill. My friend and I went to Croydon, not as radar, but testing the teams who came there.



435 Bty, Buckhurst Hill 1943

Radar came to Buckhurst Hill so we were back with our friends. Having been off radar for some weeks when the rest had a trade test, I wasn't ready so I went on a course at Chelmsford for three weeks and passed.

Then it was our turn for firing camp. We went to Weybourne, then back to Buckhurst Hill for a few weeks, followed by another week at Walton on the Naze. While we were away, the two halves of the battery changed sites so we returned to Waltham Abbey. During our time there I celebrated my 21st birthday. The ATS officer sent for me and presented me with a cake. The cooks had iced a slab of cake for me, it tasted good! At the end of our time here we were expecting something to happen, but did not know what.

On the journey to our next site, Manor Park, we got mixed up with the "D" Day boys. People were giving them sweets, sandwiches, drinks, even money, but when a lorry load of girls passed by they looked amazed.

Whilst we were on this site the V1s arrived. We used to get "Take Post". Ten V1s are over Dover followed by another ten. All clear, stand down. Before we could reach

the manning hut where our Radio Mec was making us a cup of cocoa, it was "Take Post" again, ten followed by another ten. This went on all night. We never got our cup of cocoa that night and for several nights after. Next to this site was a Bty of 64 guns manned at night by the Home Guard. What a din when they fired! But what a picture watching the flashing of the Ack Ack shells, tracer bullets, flashes from other guns and searchlights. The V1s going through.

After leaving Manor Park, we had a few days back at Waltham Abbey. Then they decided we were bringing the V1s down on important places, so we were moved to Horley under canvas. It was while we were there that the V2s started. One landed in the next field to us at breakfast time, what a clatter of tin plates and mugs when we hit the ground! A few weeks there then, one hot sunny Sunday in August, we climbed in the lorries and made for St Leonards. After going up seven flights of stairs, seven times with our kit, we had another flight to go up to the cookhouse for stew and cabbage! Next day came another order – we had to move everything down to the cellars, as it was not safe to stay up high.

Then, when the V1 and V2s moved away from the South Coast we came back to London – to Chingford. As the battery was going overseas, Ann and I were posted to 534 Bty who were stationed on Denji Marshes, Tillingham. It was in November, we came away from brick built barrack rooms with five blankets, to tents with duck boards floating in water and three blankets.

However, we moved into the Nissan huts just before Christmas, what lovely fires we had, but no water. We were allowed one bowl of water for a dozen of us to use. As we were all OFCs in one hut it was very thick after we had all used it!

After VE Day we moved overnight by train from Essex to Whitchurch, Bristol. Here we were sorted out for different jobs, as the ACK ACK was no longer needed in England. I was sent to Clifton to work in the Army Post Office at Nottingham. Early in September my future husband came home after four years in the Eighth Army as a Desert Rat, so I applied for leave and was married on 22 September 1945.

My sister was also in ACK ACK, in 531 Bty. We used to meet in London when we could get a 24 hour pass together. Sadly, she and brother-in-law were both killed in a road accident in 1949.

My name was Gunner Alison Margaret Hill, née Edgely 435 HAA Bty and 534 Bty.

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.

Reminiscences of the WRAC

Miss Moira Applegate, W/401925,
15 Beanley Place, High Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne,
NE1 7DQ

Reading Sue Foulkes' letter in the "Lioness" 2/2002 was like opening up the pages of my life in the WRAC, except that I was doing my stint in 1959/60.

My initial posting was to Queen Elizabeth Barracks in Guildford and then on to Yeovil for trade training. I was already a shorthand typist in civilian life though I did not join up until I was the grand old age of 22 years! I too was posted to Kingston Gate Camp, Richmond Park and everything she wrote about it brought it all back to me.

I was sent to work in London to the Ministry of Defence, which was then housed in Great George Street/Storey's Gate, overlooking St James' Park. I was told initially that I would be working for a Brigadier so would have to watch my Ps and Qs. However, we had only been there a few weeks when we were told that we were to work for Lord Mountbatten who was coming as the first Chief of the Defence Staff. Wow, were my parents impressed, as they were not happy about me joining up in the first place. Why did I not choose the Senior Service instead of the Army! We were a 3-man (woman) team, acting as shorthand writers to CDS and his staff. There was one girl from each Service as this was a joint-Service appointment. I was always disappointed that I never had a flash to wear on my uniform so always looked like a rookie.

Sue mentioned Sgt Honeybone and this brought back memories of times when we would be asked to help out with the collation of reports. I also remember having to type the Queen's Speech for Parliament and in those days we had manual typewriters. We were not allowed to make any errors and you could bet your life we would get down to the last line and make a mistake!

Like Sue, we travelled up to London by coach, or underground depending on shifts, and had to wear civilian clothing. This was because there were so many officers around the Whitehall area and we would be forever saluting. We only wore uniform one day a week when we had to attend Pay Parade at, I think, the Civil Service Club in Great Scotland Yard. To get there, we would have to walk past the Cenotaph and would have to salute and 'eyes right' every time, so we used to take a short cut through the Foreign Office and then through the gardens of 10 Downing Street where we would come out on to Horse Guards Parade. Most of the time this was OK but I remember one occasion when we suddenly came upon a parade already in position. We tried to beat a hasty retreat, but were spotted by a Sergeant who immediately marched us across the Square and we had to salute the officer on parade, then go through Horse Guards' archway where the officers were ready for changing the guard! Were our faces red with all the tourists watching us?

Life at that time in London was quite exciting and we would go to the Nuffield Club and get free tickets for a

West End show. We were also called on to carry out ceremonial duties and I too was at the Royal Albert Hall for the Festival of Remembrance Service. We practised all day under the watchful eye of Sir Ralph Reader who would shout at us until we could march down those awful steps, then across the centre to arrive on stage and take our place without getting out of step. I don't think there was a dry eye in the house when the Chelsea Pensions came on!

I was with Lord Mountbatten for over 12 months and it was during that time that Lady Louis died and we had the awful task of receiving, sorting and replying to over 6,000 letters of condolence. It was a very sad time and we also had to help with the arrangements for the Memorial Service at Westminster Abbey.

I was subsequently posted to Cyprus where I worked for the headquarters of the Near East Land Forces. I was there for 18 months and enjoyed every minute of it. Cyprus then was not a tourist area and we had access to the whole of the island. A lot of my friends there were in the Royal Military Police and I went with them for lots of trips out to Famagusta, Kyrenia etc.

After my demob, I married the brother of one of my army friends, but this did not work out and I returned to my parental home where I am to this day. I am glad that at the ripe old age of 22 I joined up and, although there were a few times when I would cry into my pillow at nights, most of my 3 years were just great. I was a very shy person with little or no confidence in myself, but the Army gave me that team spirit and confidence and the knowledge that I was as good as anyone else.

In the same Lioness edition there was a letter from Mrs Hazel Roberts, showing a photograph of the last WRAC personnel to leave GHQ East Africa. In this photograph was a Sgt Betty Lewis. I am sure she was working with me in Cyprus, so if anyone knows of her whereabouts now I would love to hear from them, or from anyone else who may have been serving in the WRAC at that time.

IT'S A DOG'S LIFE IN THE WRAC!

Brenda Hancock, W/365080
"Stone-E-Broke", Hill Rise, Old Woodstock,
Oxon OX20 1AA

The photograph of Colonel Christy and Major Gildea printed in the 1/2002 Lioness seems to have stirred memories in many ex-School of Instruction members. I too was stationed at Hindhead during 1950/51 and remember Leo, the Giant French Poodle, very well. He was, without a doubt, the most remarkable and intelligent dog I have ever met. He certainly seemed to know and understand every word that was spoken to him. He could understand and count numbers, do tricks and obey even the most silly requests. Everyone loved him because he was clever and playful. It was rumoured that his intelligence was due to him having worked in a circus and that Major Gildea had "rescued" him – true or not, it was easy to believe. Major Gildea was well liked by

Headquarters Staff as, whenever she came back from leave in Scotland, she always handed out endless Blue Riband Wafers – and this at a time when we still had sweet rationing – but then, she was a Specialist Messing Officer!! I do still have a photograph of Leo in the care of Corporal Mollie. **PDF Compressor Office Version**

Myself, I worked as a clerk in the W&NCO Wing Office at the School of Instruction – my boss being Major L B M Anwyl-Passingham (later to become Colonel Davies) so I must therefore take issue with Mrs Betty Freak (Lioness 2/2002) who described Maj A-P's dog as a "long haired sausage type dog". Champion STAR-KING, who was a pedigree Standard Long-Haired Dachshund, would have been mortified to hear himself described as a "sausage dog", as would Maj Anwyl-Passingham. He was indeed a little monster at times and just loved to wait until his mistress had left the office to walk over to the W&NCO students' classrooms, so that he could then leave his mat in front of her lovely hot coke stove (kept stoked up by myself and the other clerk, Val Stokes!) and leap up via the chair onto Maj A-P's desk and stretch himself out across all the freshly typed letters and précis awaiting signature. On wet days, and after STAR-KING's walkies, all of the top letters had to be re-typed. He wouldn't move if he didn't feel so inclined and all our threats were met with a disdainful snarl – only the sight of the poker would persuade him to move. I recall the day when, poker in hand, and a snarl on *my* lips, I was in the process of telling him what I thought of his behaviour when the boss came back into her office!!! STAR-KING of course immediately obeyed her command to "get down Darling", merely snapping at my ankles in passing on his way back to his mat. Maj A-P then drew me over to her office safe and took out a long, printed scroll which she handed to

me with the words "Hancock, I know STAR-KING can be a naughty boy at times, but he is not to be called a "bl—dy little mongrel" because as you will see, he is nothing of the sort". What she had handed me to read was STAR-KING's Kennel Club Pedigree Registration Certificate. Soon after, I was posted to an Emergency Draft to Egypt during the "troubles" – I've often wondered if it was STAR-KING who signed my posting order!!!!

As an ex-Recruiter Sergeant myself, Johnnie Kick's "Recollections of a Recruiter", in the same issue of the Lioness, brings back many happy memories for me. Most recruiters who pass through the Central London Recruiting Depot will remember Johnnie, also her son David who used to act as our office tea-boy during his school holidays and not forgetting husband Fred who had to put up with all us female recruiters at office parties, celebrations etc. Yes we recruiters were a motley crew, but I think we all enjoyed our stay in the Great Scotland Yard Office. Captain Toni Harrison was a wonderful boss, she cared about her "girls" and they all loved and respected her. We all seemed to get on well together and genuinely liked each other. There was talent galore amongst the staff – musicians, singers, artists, actresses, teachers, administrators – we had the lot and binding us all together was a great sense of humour, tolerance of each other's foibles and dedication to the job in hand – selecting the very best to join us in the Corps in which we were all so proud to serve.

It's a shame that ex-Recruiters don't have a reunion. So come on girls – speak nicely to Mrs Kick and maybe we'll all meet again for something we all excelled at – a Recruiters' Rave-up.

GIFT AID DONATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE WRAC ASSOCIATION

(Reg No 206184)

and THE ATS AND WRAC BENEVOLENT FUND

Since 6 April 2000, Deeds of Covenant have been replaced by Gift Aid as a 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 higher 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.

To obtain a Gift Aid Form please contact the Association HQ on 01962 887478 and make your donation go further.

Where Are You Now?

TRAINING CENTRE, LANCASTER

Mr. Doris Williams (nee Buttery) 82 Chesterfield Road, Great Crosby, Liverpool, L23 9XW

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During the many years I have happily received the Lioness I cannot recall seeing any photographs taken at the Training Centre in Lancaster so I am enclosing two. I am still in regular contact with Mrs Hedges who was the very first ATS RSM, but have lost touch with anyone else.



4/17 ATS TC Sergeants' Mess, Ripley, Lancaster 1943

Back row: Sgts Wrennall, Law, Wright, Falder, Roberts, Carpenter, Eastham, Czapski, Ratcliffe, White, Webster, Lees, Constable

Centre row: Sgts Frost, Bramley, Lancaster, Loakes, Lawton, Bergmann, Murray, Powell, Houghton, Walsh, Coleman, Downham, - ? -, Perry, Sutton

Front row: Sgts Leeder, Barlow, SSgts Blachford, Buttery, CSM Bex, QMSI MacGregor, RQMS Kemp, RSM Hedges, CSMs Hogg, Phillips, Chapman, Sgts Crosby, Chapman, Bradley, Slinger, Richards, Willman



Permanent Staff 4/17 ATS TC, Bowerham Barracks, Lancaster 1943

Back row: Cpls Love, Harthill, Dearden, Haas, Barwell, Pte Kerley

Centre row: Sgt Wright, Cpls Bagley, Mars, Sgt Freer, Cpls Hines, Pickles, Sgts Hetherington, Wrennall

Front row: Sgts Hogg, Powell, 2/Sub Crowe, Sub Hellyer, JCmdrs, Mackley, Barfoot, Sub Lloyd, CSM Bex, SSgt Buttery

PTE EVELYN HILL

Mr G A Weale, 6 Ling Dale, East Goscote,
Leicester LE7 3XW

My late wife served in the ATS from 1941 – 1944 and so I like to keep an interest in her.

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I do not have any photographs of my wife in uniform. I have tried various channels without success. I wonder if anyone might have a group photograph with her in it. Her details are:

W/71398 Pte Evelyn Hill, enlisted July 1941 and served at:

No. 8 Training Depot, "B" Hut, Glen Parva Barracks, Leicester, then "London Group, 45 Lansdown Road, Sidcup, Kent, then, Wilderness Road, Chislehurst, Kent and finally as Pte Weale, Stoneygate Court, London Road, Leicester

SGT BETTY BOWLES

Mrs D Peggie (née Lelyveld) W/371935
115 Hamilton Street, Broughty Ferry, Dundee DD5 2NW

I am trying to find Sgt Betty Bowles who was a friend of mine in 11 Independent Company stationed at Chilwell, Notts, 1952/53. Betty was a guest at my wedding in August 1953 in Somerset. As next year will be my Golden Wedding, it would nice if Betty could be a guest again.

DID YOU KNOW W/26393 PATRICIA (PAT) GREGORY-JONES?

J D Cunningham JP, Villa 7, The Village, 21 – 35 Wallace Street, Swansea 2281, Australia

Pat joined the ATS 1938 or 1939 and originally served with the City of London Clerical Coy stationed at Blackdown, Hants. She was seconded to Command Pay Office, Aldershot in 1939 (Flint Quarters) and subsequently transferred on request to serve with the Royal Artillery.

She attained the rank of Sergeant Gunner and served in or around London and South East England. Later she was posted to 24th Heavy Mixed Anti-Aircraft Training Regiment.

I am at present researching Pat's life for a biography on her, and am hoping someone will remember her and/or will have photographs.

Any information would be appreciated and all letters answered.

PHYLLIS FLORA TREADWELL -

DOB: 19/10/1919 -

BORN TOWER HILL, COVE

Sarah Treadwell Craig, 20 Saffron Meadow, Standon, Hertfordshire SG11 1RE Tel: 01920 823697

E-mail: Sarah@STCraig.co.uk

My family researcher believes that I may be able to trace some of my mother's colleagues through the "Lioness".

Since my mother's death, I have found various

photographs and documents relating to her past and mine too! I am in the process of obtaining her Service Records but have been told that this could take up to three months. All I have, at the moment, is a photograph and I am reliably informed that she is shown as a Sergeant in the ATS. I believe that she was posted to Germany at one time around 1947 – 1950 but I cannot be sure of this.

If you recognise her, please contact me. I hope someone will be able to fill in quite a lot of large gaps in her life around that time for me.



Sgt Phyllis Flora Treadwell

DRIVER JOAN COOPER

Mrs Joan Esther Maryan (née Cooper) W/93123
24 Winchester Road, Delapre, Northampton NN4 8AY



Joan Maryan née Cooper

I was a driver in the ATS. I would like to have my photograph put in the 'Lioness' in hope that somebody will remember me.

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Mr W I Miller, 26 Wilton Crescent, Bishopdale,
Christchurch 8005 E-mail: billmiller@extra.co.nz



Jean P Cowan, 1 July 1945

My enquiry concerns a girl I fell in love with between 30 June and 01 July 1945. She was:

W/191057 Pte Jean P Cowan
D Coy
RAOC Chilwell
Beeston
Notts

Jean married me at St Cuthberts Church, Kirkcudbright, Scotland on 17 September 1945 before I was returned home to New Zealand. She then followed me by War Bride ship. I do not remember many of her ATS friends, but Muriel (Mickey) Lumsden and Mavis Fitchett, who was one of her bridesmaids, spring to mind.

I have always believed that I was extremely lucky to meet Jean, and that we should remain in love for all those years. Her death on 1 March 1999 was all the harder to bear after learning that she had an incurable form of cancer. I'm determined that I should write her life story for our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren and with that in mind I have gathered all the information available. There may be people out there who remember, and would like to fill in some of the gaps for me. I enclose a photo taken in our first few days acquaintance.

I visited Nottingham in July 2000, and photographed areas I recognised, but without Jean they were few.

DO YOU RECOGNISE YOURSELF?
Mr T Tart, 'Marny' Old Office Road, Dawley, Telford,
Shropshire TF4 2LF



*Royal Military College of Science
D Coy Trg Bn RA, Hartshill, Stoke on Trent 1944/45*

Bombardier Tom Tart, known as 'Busty', first left, in charge of the Cookhouse, would like to hear from anyone on this photo, taken at The Royal Military College of Science, D Coy, Trg Bn, RA, Hartshill, Stoke on Trent. 1944/45.

The only name he remembers is Cheg Whitton, (butcher) far right.

WRAC SWEATSHIRTS FOR SALE

Bottle Green Sweatshirts, Polo shirts and T-shirts
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Price List and Further Information from:
**Miss B P Butcher, 15 Westwood Drive,
Swanpool, Lincoln
Tel: 01522 878413**

WRAC DINNER CLUB

Are you interested in knowing more about the
Dinner Club?

Would you like to attend the WRAC Dinner 2003?

Then please contact:
E Ann Butler-Deakin
'Cobblestones', 2 Chesham Road, Stafford
ST16 3JP
Tel: 01785 249992

Reunions

THE SOUTH WEST REUNION

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The South West Reunion was held on the 10 September 2002 at the Sparkford Inn, Somerset. It was Wincanton's turn to do the honours. We had a bright and sunny day following one of the rainiest days this autumn.

Our guest speaker was Ian Glasby of the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance. He told us the Ambulance was run entirely by retired expert volunteers, maintaining and piloting the helicopter. As there is so much more space in the aircraft than in an ordinary ambulance they can carry many more life saving appliances such as defibrillators and ECG machines (Electro-Cardiograph machine), etc. A donation was made to the Ambulance.

Everybody seemed to enjoy the occasion and we look forward to our next Reunion.

ATS DINNER CLUB NEWS

The ATS Dinner Club held a very successful reunion at Lyme Bay Holiday Village, Seaton in Devon on September 27 – 1 October 2002. One hundred and thirty members arrived from different parts of the country by coach. It was a very happy event, with ladies meeting old friends and making new ones.

As yet there are no plans for a repeat "week-end away", but if anyone is interested in another trip next year, please write to:

Mrs Doreen Brookes, 99 Meadow Road, Coventry,
CV6 4GW

More news will follow in Marguerite's Newsletter in February 2003.

If you have any suggestions, comments, complaints or problems, please write to:

Mrs Marguerite Fellows, 19 Ave. Lavoisier, Maisons
Lafitte, France 78600

ATS DINNER CLUB

Mavis Middleton, Canterbury Branch WRAC Association

I felt I had to write a few lines, to say how much we appreciated the lovely weekend that we spent in the Lyme Bay Holiday Village with the ATS Dinner Club. The weather was "spring like" and on our side. We travelled to Devon by coach from Victoria in London. About 20 of us boarded there at 10 am on the Friday with two pick-ups en-route, the latter in Bournemouth. Our village was near the sea and our cabin looked out on rolling hills and green pastures. The food was A1 and the entertainment in the evenings was first class. The resident band really set our feet tapping. That's about all we can do at the present time. Coach outings both days, to Dorchester on the Saturday – and to Weymouth on the Sunday. Each time

we opened the door, the chickens came round to be fed. We couldn't have had a better setting for our AGM. I'm sure the weekend was enjoyed by one and all.



Feeding the chickens in Lyme Bay

ATS RECORDS REUNION 5 – 6 JULY 2002 KING ALFRED'S COLLEGE, WINCHESTER

Betty Unsworth, W/146007 Cpl

At our Annual Reunion in 2001 it was decided that we would like to mark the 60th anniversary of our occupation of King Alfred's College by a gift to the college. A bench was suggested and in due course the College was approached to see if this would be possible. They were delighted with the idea and said they would ensure it was properly treated and securely fixed on the terrace. They gave details of a particular make of bench (cost about £300 plus plaque). We decided to go ahead and the bench was duly ordered. An appeal was sent out and to our amazement a total of £380 was received. Great enthusiasm was shown, even by girls who, because of age, health problems or distance from Winchester, could not attend the reunion. All wanted to be involved.

We gathered on Friday 05 July 2002 for lunch at the Royal Hotel, Winchester and had a very enjoyable meal and a great deal of "catching up" of each others news. After dispersing, some girls went shopping, others to the Cathedral where there was an unexpected bonus in the shape of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and massed choirs rehearsing for a concert.

On reaching the College we registered and then went to see the bench in place on the terrace. We were very pleased with it and duly tried it for size!!

The plaque reads:

"TO COMMEMORATE THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE OCCUPATION OF KING ALFRED'S
COLLEGE BY ATS RECORDS 1942 – 46.
DONATED BY ATS STAFF WHO SERVED HERE"



l to r: Elsie Heider (Hunt), Nina Pickering (Ruffels), Betty Venworth (Elsworth), Marie Dove (Hales), Audrey Harvell (Port)

We stayed in the College overnight and next morning attended the College Reunion Service in the Chapel (closed during our occupation of the College and filled to the ceiling with furniture).

Ex-ATS are made very welcome at the college and at the Saturday Lunch which is attended by well over 200 ex-students, the ATS received a great cheer. This happy occasion sadly ended in the collapse of one of our number who had to be taken to hospital. Luckily she made a good recovery, to the great relief of the College authorities and ourselves.

The balance of the money collected was, by the agreement of all, donated to the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund.

Despite increasing age and disabilities, we hope to keep the reunion going for a year or two yet. Lunch at the Royal Hotel on 04 July 2003 has already been booked!

All who served at ATS Records are very welcome to join us – if you haven't attended before, please contact me on 01295 710479.

WRAC DINNER CLUB – 6TH ANNUAL WEEKEND

One hundred and forty seven members gathered at the Moat House Hotel, Stoke on Trent, for the 6th Annual Dinner Club weekend, in this, the Queen's Golden Jubilee year.

Friday was meet and greet old friends, with a warm welcome for new ones. Enough time to have a swim, sit in the Jacuzzi, steam room, sauna, or, for the very keen, the gym!! Many members took advantage of the Beauty Parlour facilities too.

We gathered in the foyer at 6pm to prepare to raise the Corps flag on one of the hotel flagpoles. Beryl Butcher conducted a prayer of welcome and Major Maskens-McIntyre raised the flag. How good it was to see that fluttering in the breeze again.

Saturday morning saw Ann Deakin, Maureen Deeley and Chairman Gladys Pope off to Radio Stoke for an interview

with their friendly presenter, Janine Machin. Ann explained about the WRAC Association, the Dinner Club and why we had gathered in Stoke. Next year Janine thought it would be a good idea to do an outside broadcast and hear member's tales herself!

Back at the hotel, Nora Jones had collected and mounted member's photographs taken when they were serving members of the WRAC. These created a lot of interest and comments throughout the weekend.



The Memorabilia Stall

l to r: June Jones, Renee Ogden, Diane Lawrence, Beryl Butcher

June Jones and Renee Ogden were busily selling memorabilia and raffle tickets, Beryl Butcher and Avril Ward the sweatshirts, shirts and lovely WRAC dolls. Frantic preparations in the Ballroom ensured that when we assembled for the Dinner, the room looked very impressive.

White tablecloths with green overlays with gold napkins emphasised our Corps colours. The Standards were in place, as was "Daphne", our model dressed in officer's uniform. The many raffle prizes made a wonderful display. The whole effect was stunning.

The Chairman welcomed members, and our President, Lady Val Kemball, said grace. Maureen Deeley cut the beautiful cake she had made – suitably decorated as a Union Jack. The meal was sumptuous, the staff friendly and very efficient.

The loyal toast was made by Daphne Jervis.

Sue Westlake then spoke about the Association and the National AGM at Birmingham next April. She thanked Ann Deakin for initiating the Dinner Club six years ago and congratulated her on the success it had brought. She also thanked each member of the committee for their contribution.

Gladys Pope then gave details for next year's Annual Dinner, which was provisionally booked at the same hotel. (She was later surprised to discover a very long list of provisional bookings already at the Reception Desk).

Lady Kemball conducted the raffle with her usual speed,

keeping runners and recipients "at the double". We do thank all the members who brought such a wide variety of prizes. So many beautifully crafted objects – we seem to have very talented people!! Thank you all. The raffle raised £650 which will be divided between the Arboretum Fund, The Lichfield Compressor Free Version



Oh what a happy band!

On to the entertainment and the dancing, marching, conga – you name it, it happened on into the early hours.

Sunday morning at 10 am we all gathered for 'flag down'. Once again beginning with prayers of thanksgiving for the many friendships we all enjoy so much. "We'll meet again" rang out – and we will!

Many hugs of goodbye as we dispersed, many declaring 'the best ever'. What a wonderfully happy weekend it was.

WRAC DINNER CLUB WEEKEND (CLEVELAND BRANCH)

As soon as we (finally) arrived at the Moat House Hotel in Stoke, we knew it was going to be a great success. Many loved and familiar faces were milling around, lots of happy smiling faces to welcome us – what a good start! Daphne was doing sterling work giving us envelopes, and Ann Deakin hugging everyone in sight. Of course, most of the 'girls' were in the bar, so after unpacking our party frocks, Amelia Ford, Edith Seabrook and myself, Irene MacLean, went looking for our old (and not so old) friends. It was so good to see everyone again although quite a lot of our friends were AWOL – through ill health and various other reasons. 'Our Gang' was quite depleted this year. Mary, Mfanwy, Helen and Maureen, Edith and Ann, our Standard Bearer. Girls, we had a ball, but you were very sorely missed.

One of the highlights of the weekend to me, was our very own 'WRAC Gloria Hunniford'. She put the 'River Dance' to shame with her version of Irish dancing. My sides ached with laughter – Verna – you are a star.

Thanks again to the committee for looking after us, again. See you all next year.

SCOTLAND AREA

The AGM and Reunion for the Scotland Area was hosted by the Aberdeen Branch in the Station Hotel, Aberdeen on 26 October 2002. Seventy six members attended what proved to be a most enjoyable occasion. After the business part of the meeting, the raffle was drawn and followed by a splendid meal served by helpful staff – but the portions were fit for oil rig workers! The raffle raised £165. Then we were entertained by Mrs Gerrard's Accordion Band. The dance floor was soon full of ladies doing the Gay Gordons, a Military Two-Step and the Charleston, among others and, of course, we sang our heads off when the old tunes were played. Many thanks to all those who attended, including Colonel Nan Robertson who flew up from the deep south to be with us, and contributed in every way. The Aberdeen Branch is congratulated on organising a day which was filled with fun, camaraderie and happiness.

CANADIAN ATS 14th ANNUAL REUNION



Wyn Raven (left), organiser of the Canadian Reunions

Our reunion was held from 6 – 8 September 2002 and every minute of those three days were filled with happy faces and lots of fun. Registrations took place on Friday afternoon and we had 70 people sign in. Each person was given the itinerary for the weekend also a gift of a silver tray with a crystal insert which everyone seemed to like very much. The craft tables were laden with the beautiful items our members had made, and a raffle was held for "Jessies" dolls. This lady makes such loveable dolls and donates them every year. In addition Taffy donated a lovely doll in a crochet gown, such a lot of work goes into all these items. Friday evening opened with cocktails from 5.30 to 6.30 then dinner was served followed by entertainment and dancing.

On Saturday morning we had a members' meeting and our ladies from Jamaica told us that 2003 marked the 60th Anniversary of a group being chosen to come to Britain to serve in the ATS. They are having a reunion in Jamaica

and asked if any of the members were interested in attending. Quite a few would like more information and Ena Woodstock said she would send me the details later. We closed the meeting at 11.30 am and a delicious lunch was served. The afternoon was left for shopping or to relax by the pool or **PDF Compressor Free Version** cocktails followed by dinner, dancing and entertainment. The 'Starlight Cloggers' strutted their stuff and, oh boy, what a lot of energy those ladies have. Our door prize table groaned under the weight, we had donations from the Royal Doulton Shop also from members. It wouldn't be an ATS reunion without Col Georgina (aka George Yelland) in full regalia, accompanied by Sgt Major Jessie Seddon taking our ladies through an inspection, then a march through the hotel reception area and hall. I think the hotel staff enjoy it as much as our members.



Col Georgina briefing her troops.

On Sunday we all met for a full English breakfast. Two of our members had birthday wishes sung to them. Then it was time for our cheerio's until next year, so all in all you can tell we had a great time. It was voted to do it all again next year from 5 - 7 September 2003.

If anyone is interested they can contact:

Wyn Raven, 595 Knights Hill Road, London, Ontario
N6J 3A5 or E-Mail d.w.raven@rogers.com

In closing I'd like to say a big thank you to all who helped, and to all who attended to make this reunion a fantastic success.

Best wishes to all.

WRAC POSTAL REUNION

The next WRAC Postal Reunion will be held at the
NORBRECK CASTLE HOTEL, BLACKPOOL
17 - 20 October 2003

We have members who have served from 1952 to 1979 at present, so if you are an ex-WRAC Postie why not find out more about Annual Reunions and Newsletters. Please contact me enclosing a SAE.

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

ACK ACK AND BURMA STAR REUNIONS

Seven ladies from Cleveland Branch attended the Ack Ack Reunion in York once again. The weather was great, and there was a wedding reception in the Sergeants' Mess with 300 "uninvited guests" getting photographs taken with the bride and groom. What a way to start their marriage!! The horrible Sergeant from the recent TV show "Lads Army" attended, and marched in the parade to York Minster with us. All good fun!

Another reunion, this time in Blackpool, was attended by Mrs Kinghorn, Mrs Hill and their husbands - the Burma Star Reunion. You had to be there to appreciate the wonderful atmosphere and emotion in the Winter Gardens. To see and hear 1500 veterans waving flags and singing 'The Road to Mandalay' accompanied by the Ghurkha Band. Viscount Slim, whose father was with the 14th Army, was one of the honoured guests.

We were blessed with lovely weather, and Pat Hill and I marched to the Cenotaph in our husbands' places - obviously 'The Road to Mandalay' had taken it's toll on their poor old legs!

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.

WRAC DINNER 2003

10-11-12 October 2003

**The Moat House Hotel
Stoke on Trent**

If you would like to attend then please contact:

E Ann Butler-Deakin
'Cobblestones', 2 Chesham Road,
Stafford ST16 3JP
Tel: 01785 249992

COPY DEADLINE

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

23 June 2003

News from the Past

The following exert is taken from the QMAAC and ATS
Comrades Association Gazette of Mar-Apr 1945.

PDF Compressor Free Version

MIXED A-A BATTERY IN BELGIUM BAG 20

"DOODLES"

GIRLS BEST ON "PRECISION"

From EVELYN IRONS

"Evening Standard" War Reporter

Men and girls of a mixed A-A regiment in Belgium have just had their flying-bomb score verified. They have shot down 19 up to the end of January, and since then they have put in a claim for one more.

They were the first mixed batteries to reach Belgium and they began operations on Christmas night.

Today I visited one of this regiment's three batteries in a lonely field a foot deep in mud. Each Battery is divided into two half batteries of four guns, operated by some 70 men and 120 girls.

MIDDAY ALARM

They were in the middle of the midday dinner of stew and baked apples when the alarm went. The Nissen hut mess of the half battery I was visiting was empty in an instant. Men and girls in battledress and waterproof capes clattered along the narrow duckboards in streaming rain to take their places. Then men dashed to the guns. Three girls whipped the cover from the predictor and swung it into readiness. Three more took the height finder. A spotter and telephonist ran to their places.

Inside the control hut the ATS plotting officer and her assistant stood by.

Three minutes later came the order to stand down. The girls were disgusted.

"We get lonely without those doodles" said 21 year old Cpl Dorothy Strain, auburn haired ex-weaver from Chorley Lancs. Dorothy was one of a group of 15 girls I found clustered round the stove in the manning hut where the crews stand by ready for an alarm.

They agreed that gun-site life was tough. With the temperature 25 degrees recently, they found frost on the inside walls of the Nissens where they slept.

Now there is damp to contend with and their daily outlook is a sea of chocolate-brown mud with the twisted remains of a flying bomb half submerged in the centre by way of ornament.

"But we're glad we came" declared Dorothy, "even when we get as many as 24 turn-outs in one night."

The wreck of a flying bomb, which the battery treasures as a souvenir, was a kill that fell to their guns only 300 yards away. It did no damage beyond breaking a few windows. Said Pte Amy Hall, who was on the predictor outside when

this V-bomb was shot down in daylight recently, "The tail dropped off and the whole thing whizzed down in flames. It was 'smack'. We all cheered like mad."

I asked one of the men officers, Capt L Povey, what he thought of the girls.

"Better than men on precision instruments like predictors." he said.

The captain admits that his peace-time job gave him special qualifications for bossing women around. He was a West End hairdresser.

ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA FOUNDERS DAY 2003 Thursday 5th June 2003

Members are invited to bid for tickets for Founders Day. Numbers will be very limited and bids must be received at WRAC Association HQ by 21 March 2003.

EX-SERVICE HOMES REFERRAL AGENCY (ESHRA)

ESHRA is a new agency that has been funded for a trial period by several ex-Service charities. Due to its success it is to continue as part of The Royal British Legion. The service is provided for older people who served in the armed forces and their dependants.

ESHRA has details of all Care Homes providing residential and nursing care and independent living accommodation managed by ex-Service organisations. Also available are details of homes run by private and voluntary organisations as well as sheltered accommodation, if this is more appropriate for the needs of the individual.

The advisers can provide guidance regarding Social Services assessments/funding; welfare benefits, Service charities and other organisations that provide help for the elderly.

ESHRA has a website; www.eshra.com, e-mail: eshra@britishlegion.org.uk and a telephone helpline: 020 7839 4466 which is staffed from 9.30am to 12.30pm and 2.00pm to 4.00pm on working days.

Application for Membership

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

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

OR

I enclose £5 cheque for Annual membership which is in payment of the first annual subscription up to the 01 November.

Date Signature

Subscriptions include "Lioness"
(Please complete in BLOCK LETTERS)

QMAAC/ATS/WRAC/TAVR Army Number

.....

Last Rank held (Present Rank if still serving)

.....

Surname.....

Miss/Mrs/Ms

Christian Names

Surname when serving

Address for Correspondence

.....

.....

.....

..... Post Code.....

Telephone

Units during service

.....

Date of Enrolment

Date of Release

Decorations

Date of Birth

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for next year are due for payment **PDF Compressor Free Version**

Members of Headquarter Branch should send their subscription together with their membership card and SAE to:

WRAC Association
AGC Centre
Worthy Down
Winchester
SO21 2RG

WRAC DINNER CLUB

Are you interested in knowing more about the Dinner Club?

Would you like to attend the WRAC Dinner 2003?

then please contact

E Ann Butler-Deakin
'Cobblestones'
2 Chesham Road
Stafford
ST16 3JP
Tel: 01785 249992

COPY DEADLINE

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

23 June 2003

ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA FOUNDERS DAY 2003 Thursday 5th June 2003

Members are invited to bid for tickets for Founders Day. Numbers will be very limited and bids must be received at WRAC Association HQ by 21 March 2003.

WRAC DINNER 2003

10-11-12 October 2003
The Moat House Hotel
Stoke on Trent

If you would like to attend then please contact:

E Ann Butler-Deakin
'Cobblestones'
2 Chesham Road
Stafford
ST16 3JP
Tel: 01785 249992

WRAC NATIONAL REGISTER

Are you interested in trying to find old friends?

Did you serve/enlist between 1949 and 1992?

Why not join the WRAC National Register?

Contact: E Ann Butler-Deakin
'Cobblestones'
2 Chesham Road
Stafford
ST16 3JP
Tel: 01785 249992

WRAC SWEATSHIRTS FOR SALE

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

Sizes 36 – 46

Other colours available

Also
Knitted WRAC Dolls

Price List and Further Information from:
Miss B P Butcher, 15 Westwood Drive,
Swanpool, Lincoln
Tel: 01522 878413

WRAC STAFF BAND

GUIDED TOUR OF THE ROYAL MILITARY SCHOOL OF MUSIC, KNELLER HALL, KNELLER ROAD, TWICKENHAM, MIDDLESEX TW2 7DU WEDNESDAY 28 MAY 2003 AT 10.00AM

To all former members of the WRAC Staff Band – a guided tour of Kneller Hall has been arranged for 28 May 2003 at 10.00am and places are available for anyone who would like to come.

The tour will include an introductory talk, the School buildings, the chapel, the museum (including the board showing the names of all the winners of the Mary Naomi Wallace Memorial Medal) and a visit to the Band rehearsal on the Bandstand outside, weather permitting. There will also be time for a visit to the NAAFI for refreshments.

There will be a small fee of £2.00 to cover administrative costs, payable in advance.

Admission is by ticket only. Guests are very welcome.

.....

APPLICATION FORM

(Photocopies of this form are acceptable)

From

Address

Post Code Telephone

I wish to attend the guided tour of Kneller Hall on 28 May 03 and require tickets.

I enclose a cheque for £..... made payable to Mrs P J Smith

Please send your completed application form and cheque to:

Mrs P J Smith
7 Grove Road South
Southsea
Hants
PO5 3QR

(For further information telephone: 01392 873259)

Please enclose an SAE for tickets

WRAC ASSOCIATION OFFICERS' BRANCH

PDF Compressor Free Version

ANNUAL LUNCHEON

The annual officers' luncheon will take place in the Officers' Mess of the AGC Centre at Worthy Down on Saturday 31 May 2003.

Please send applications to together with a cheque for £20.00 to the Association by 09 May 2003

.....

To:

WRAC Association
AGC Centre
Worthy Down
Winchester
SO21 2RG

I would like to attend the annual Officers' Branch Luncheon on 31 May 2003 and enclose a cheque to the value of £20.00

Name

Address

.....

*I will/will not be travelling by car. My car details are:

Make and Model

Registration Number

EX-SERVICE HOMES REFERRAL AGENCY (ESHRA)

ESHRA is a new agency that has been funded for a trial period by several ex-Service charities. Due to its success it is to continue as part of The Royal British Legion. The service is provided for older people who served in the armed forces and their dependants.

ESHRA has details of all Care Homes providing residential and nursing care and independent living accommodation managed by ex-Service organisations. Also available are details of homes run by private and voluntary organisations as well as sheltered accommodation, if this is more appropriate for the needs of the individual.

The advisers can provide guidance regarding Social Services assessments/funding; welfare benefits, Service charities and other organisations that provide help for the elderly.

ESHRA has a website; www.eshra.com, e-mail: eshra@britishlegion.org.uk and a telephone helpline: 020 7839 4466 which is staffed from 9.30am to 12.30pm and 2.00pm to 4.00pm on working days.

Letters to the Editor

LEST WE FORGET PDF Compressor Free Version

Dear Editor

The photograph on page 11 of *Lioness* 2/2002, picturing HM Queen Elizabeth II while serving in the ATS as Princess Elizabeth, prompts me to write this.

Together with other gifts for German friends at Christmas 2001, knowing their great interest in everything connected with our Royal Family, I packed a book entitled 'The House of Windsor', edited by Antonia Fraser. Prior to despatching the parcel, I was glancing briefly through the book's illustrated pages and text when my eyes spotted a couple of errors on page 77 with a photograph of the then Princess Elizabeth. The caption claimed she had served in the *Auxiliary Transport Service*. I wrote to the publishers, Cassell & Co., asking whether the text had been edited and verified prior to final printing and publication, and suggesting that they might be prepared to make the necessary amendments, as indicated by me, should the book be reprinted. I further said that I had inserted typed amendments in the book which, of course, is not great publicity for the publishers, but as I had myself served in the ATS, I felt the errors ought to be rectified. In the meantime, as my amendments looked embarrassing, I would not be buying further copies as gifts for other continental friends as planned. I did not receive an acknowledgement for my well-motivated action.

As though it had not been enough that the ATS were not even mentioned in David Dimbleby's TV commentary during the Remembrance Day Parade in the year 2000, it would appear that some quarters may succeed in sending us into oblivion by default. This we cannot permit, and whenever the opportunity arises we should not neglect to highlight the not insignificant contribution made by the ATS in the service of our country.

Conversely, I recently noticed, in the waiting area of a local health centre, a full-size poster in colour showing an ATS recruit, proclaiming the message 'Join the ATS'. It was next to a photograph of Winston Churchill and took me back for a moment. I tried to obtain a copy, but there were none, and no one knew who had affixed the poster and for what occasion. Maybe it will prompt younger visitors to the centre to ask questions.

Mrs A R Alexander (née Siesel), 23 Brodie Road,
Chingford, London E4 7HF

14TH ATS REUNION – CANADA

Dear Editor

I attended the 14th Reunion ATS in London, Ontario. This was my second visit and everyone made me so welcome. A wonderful weekend, with Dinner on Saturday evening being the highlight of the occasion, a thoroughly enjoyable time.

This is all arranged by Mrs Wyn Raven, her husband and some ladies who work very hard to make this a very memorable weekend. I thank them all for such a splendid effort including the hotel staff of "Four Points Sheraton Hotel", London, Ontario.

Mrs Carol Stephenson (née Carter), 2 Birkdale Road,
Broadstone, Dorset BH18 9AY

CITY OF LONDON FLASH

Dear Editor

I would like to comment on the letters about the City of London Sword Flash.

I joined the ATS in Bristol in July 1940 and was sent to Aldermaston for training – then to Bournemouth for attachment to the Royal Army Pay Corps. Among the ladies already there were several wearing (as I understood) the 2nd City of London Sword. We were billeted at Suncliff and worked at the Cumberland Hotel. I was 3 weeks short of my 18th Birthday then.

Mrs Rosemary Richards (née Roach), 3 Allfrey Plat,
Lower Street, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 2BU

Dear Editor

As an avid reader of the "Lioness" I do wonder if many of the service wives of the Household Cavalry 1940-75 who were mostly ex-Service or Nurses are members of our Association although, like myself, getting very aged and infirm.

We are hoping that some of us can meet in Hyde Park in March 2003 at the Cavalry Sunday Parade. It would be wonderful to meet again as such a large slice of our lives were spent together with the Regiment.

Pamela M Green, 5 Mill Laner, Woodford Green,
Essex IG8 0UN

Dear Editor

I have belonged to the WRAC Association for more than ten years now and have seldom come across any of my old comrades. I was very surprised to find in Lioness 2/2002 articles from, or about, three of them. Strangely too, they were linked.

Firstly, there was a letter from Sue Foulkes (née Saunders) who was in the same intake as me in December 1963 and also went on to Yeovil for clerical training as I did, although I'm afraid I cannot remember her. She finished her service at Mill Hill in March 1966 – I was posted in a month earlier.

Then there was the letter from Sheila Ashton (née Rea) who was appealing for Aden veterans from 28 Independent Company to come forward and be recognised. By the way it eventually lost its independence and became plain 28 Company WRAC. I was posted there after Yeovil clerical training and a stint on their permanent staff. I'm afraid I cannot remember her either but then, she may well have left before I got there.

Finally, and sadly, there was Rene Ludlow's obituary. As I said I arrived in Mill Hill in February 1966 and lived in the same corporal's block as Rene for about eighteen months. I even joined her on one of her many Royal British Legion Festivals of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall. She must have been in her mid 40s then and used to 'mother' us young flibbertigibbet corporals a bit, in her quiet gentle way.

Like Sue Foulkes, I never regretted joining the Army. I served for 4½ years, was discharged two days after my wedding and remained 'married' to it for a further 21 years until my husband's retirement in 1989.

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

"NOT FORGOTTEN" ASSOCIATION

Dear Editor

Your readers may remember an article published in Lioness, Issue 2/2000 regarding the hospitality shown by members of the "Not Forgotten" Association toward members of the WRAC Association.

Since the first invitation received, to nominate 6 members of our Association to attend a Garden Party in the grounds of Buckingham Palace, I have received many similar invitations to nominate our members to share in the hospitality of the "Not Forgotten" Association around the country. Every year the invitations get more numerous and functions and events are more widely spread across Britain. I know that the ladies who have attended the various functions have enjoyed themselves and I have received many letters to that effect.

I am aware that two of the functions arranged annually by Mrs Thompson, the Events Organiser at The "Not Forgotten" Association, are for those in receipt of War Pensions. There is, sadly, no way of my ascertaining which of our members are in receipt of a War Pension, and I have been unable to nominate anybody to attend.

Any members of the WRAC Association who are in receipt of a War Pension and would like to be nominated for outings and parties hosted by the "Not Forgotten" Association should write to me and give details of name, address and telephone number.

Mrs M Purkis, Chairside Manor, 6 Sulby Drive, Leegomery, Telford TF1 6FP
(Tel: 01952 251717)

ADEN VETERANS ASSOCIATION

Dear Editor

The Aden Association was formed by Mr John Hotston and Mr Ernie Iszard during March 2000. The Association receives the backing of the Ministry of Defence, The Royal British Legion, and all the Associations of the Services that were in Aden during the early 60's and before, and up to the departure of the British in November 1967. This year marks the 35th Anniversary of our departure.

The Association is not only open to former service personnel, but also those civilian personnel who were there during this period, eg NAAFI, WRVS, CABLE & WIRELESS, and BFBS Staff. The Association has a membership of around 800 members, this includes people from different parts of the world. We have a web site which is www.britains-smallwars.com/ava. This can be very interesting and informative and people have been able to make contact with old friends.

Brian Bryson, "Jeabri", 6 Preston Avenue, Linlithgow, East Lothian EH49 6HT
Tel: 01506 842022 E-mail Jeabri@btopenworld.com

Dear Editor

As a Life Member of the Association and a member of Liverpool branch, at your suggestion in *Lioness* 2/2002, I am happy to make regular annual donations with Gift Aid and I enclose the necessary documentation for processing.



Lord Kitchener's Memorial Holiday Centre at Lowestoft, August 2002

I also enclose a photograph which I do hope you will be able to feature in the next issue of the *Lioness*. It was taken on holiday in August this year at the Lord Kitchener's Memorial Holiday Centre which I and my husband (Irish Guards Association) have been visiting regularly for ten years now – it is a real "home from home" and we look forward to each successive visit. My husband Bill and I are top left of the photo and other guests include ex-ATS from Hull, Bradford and Liverpool branches, an ex-WAAF member from Grimsby and ex-Royal Navy and Royal Air Force members. Also shown are the current manager Steve and his wife Lorraine and other caring members of their staff.

Can I say how much I do enjoy receiving and reading the *Lioness*. It is a high class journal packed with so many interesting features and of course news of the Association. I do hope that it will continue to be published for as long as possible.

Eileen P Marsden, W/277940,
29 Burrows Court, Chancery Lane, St Helens
WA9 1TE

Dear Editor

Referring to the letter from Mrs Amy Maund in the last *"Lioness"*, I was very interested to read her account of being posted to Northern Ireland in 1943 as I myself did the same journey.

I too remember leaving Helensburgh on that very cold April morning and embarking at Stranraer en route for Larne. It was indeed a very rough crossing, and as my pal and I leaned on the ship's rail, feeling very ill and forlorn, she informed me it was April the First to which I replied that it would be a date I would always remember.

As it was exactly 5 years later. I was anxiously awaiting the birth of my first baby, when the nurse reminded me it was the first of April.

Mrs E E Ellis (née Atwood) W/237971
25 Hillside Crescent, Holland-On-Sea, Clacton-on-Sea,
CO15 6NZ

Dear Editor



l to r: Brig S P Nield and Mrs Pat Gibson

Mrs Pat Gibson, Past Chairman, of the Greater London Branch WRAC, received her Certificate of Appreciation from Brigadier Nield at the WRAC AGM on 6 April 2002. Pat had served for 12 years as our Branch Chairman, and done a tremendous job. We would now like to wish her Good Health and Good Luck as she has retired and moved to Wales.

As she is a Life Member of the WRAC, I am sure we have not seen the last of her, and will hopefully be welcoming her at some of our future meetings.

Mrs N H Garnham, 32 Keswick Gardens, Ruislip,
Middlesex, HA4 7XN

Branch News

ABERDEEN BRANCH

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Many thanks for your effort in keeping us ladies in touch via the "Lioness", it's great.

We applied for a Grant to help us organise a 3-day trip to Edinburgh, to take in the Tattoo, and to see the sights as part of the Golden Jubilee. Unfortunately, by the time our grant came through the Tattoo was sold out but we still set off for Edinburgh. We were to stay at Travel Inn, Musselburgh. When we got there at 5 pm however, we were told by the manageress that she had let our rooms at 4 pm! Shock, horror! We'd been travelling since 1030, so were ready for a meal and a rest. Nobody had told us of a 4 pm cut-off, and there were no rooms to be had in the area. The nearest place with 10 rooms was in Melrose, 80 – 100 miles south, so off we went. It was a lovely hotel, real old style and comfortable, so what started as a disaster, turned out great. We all agreed it was the best 3-day break ever. Best of all, the grant people accepted the change of plans, so all was well. This then led to our coffee and tea with the Lord Provost, when she presented us with our Award Certificate. Lord Provost Margaret Smith encouraged us all along the way, on our trip for the Award.



*Members of Aberdeen Branch being presented with the Award Certificate by the Lord Provost
(Reproduced by kind permission of Aberdeen City Council)*

The next trip on our calendar was down to share a lunch with our Perth and Tayside Branch members. We were made very welcome and had a lovely meal. I would recommend musing with your neighbours, it made for a lovely day for our members. Thanks Perth and Tayside.

Our AGM was a success. We had a super day, the hotel, meal and company were great and our Mrs Gerrard Accordion Band topped the day. We couldn't have asked for anything more. Can you imagine so many ladies up marching to the music. Up went the heads, the backs straightened and with arms swinging we were on "Parade", over 80% of the company were on the floor enjoying every minute of our marching display. Good on you Ladies, you were smashing. The bookmark competition was won by Mary Newton of Aberdeen

branch. Glasgow branch came second and third. Mary was presented with the shield at our October meeting.

Two of our ladies attended Westminster Abbey for the Service, while one attended the march to the Cenotaph and, despite the rain, enjoyed every minute. What an experience.

Helen Thomson attended a different service. She went with the British Legion Remembrance Travel Group to the Menin Gate, Ypres. She also laid a wreath at the grave of her uncle who was killed in 1915 – a very moving time for all.

Four of our ladies were asked by Ann Brown, to make a tape for Scottish Radio, to be broadcast on 10 November 2002 – *The Women Who Went to War*. Well we got a copy and its good, she blended our stories and others into 30 minutes of tape.

Our Christmas Lunch is booked at the Station Hotel, 02 December at 12pm.

So far about 6 of us are going to the AGM at Birmingham and we are looking forward to it.

After such a full and lovely year, we'll have to think up some good trips for next year. God Bless you all.

ALDERSHOT BRANCH

The last year has been a very busy and varied one for the branch. It began with a Christmas Dinner at the Army School of Catering at St. Omer Barracks. Subsequent activities included visits to the home of "Enigma" and ATS "Y" Corps operators at Bletchley Park, to the dress rehearsal for the Sovereign's Parade at Sandhurst and to the former home of Sir Winston Churchill at Chartwell. Two talks were given in Aldershot, one about the Star and Garter Home and one on the benefits of Magnathrapy; a pub lunch was also held in Farnham. A team of four "Lionesses" competed in the annual Royal Signals Aldershot quiz night and came an honourable third out of an entry of thirty-one teams. Several of our members attended the annual Remembrance Day service, wreath laying and march past at the Royal Garrison Church, Aldershot – the church was more tightly packed than many of us could remember. A spray of poppies was placed beneath our memorial window in Guildford Cathedral, a donation from Beryl Montague-Butlin, who is a cathedral guide.

Despite the variety of the events on our programme, sadly, when the Annual General Meeting was held, no volunteers were forthcoming to fill places on the committee; we have been without a chairman for the past year and now a career promotion for our secretary and the relocation of our treasurer to the Welsh borders have together made it impossible for the branch to continue. Although we are called the Aldershot branch, only ten of our members actually live in Aldershot; by far the greatest number live

in Reading, Guildford and Basingstoke and as people get older they find it difficult to travel to meetings and to take part in outings. Our members will now be transferred to Headquarter branch who will look after all their administration, but there is something on offer for anybody out there. PDF Compressor Free Version based activity. The Royal Signals Association Aldershot's Chairman, Brigadier Noel Moss, will be attending our closing-down meeting and will extend to all those present an invitation to join his members in any of the activities on their programme. (It is through his association that we have already enjoyed several outings and entertainments). WRAC members who have served with Royal Signals may join their association as full members, if they so wish, whilst other WRAC members may become associate members; a third option is just to be on their mailing list without any other commitment. If you are not coming to our final meeting you can get further details from Mrs Alison Schofield c/o HQ, WRAC Association.

ASHBY-de-la-ZOUCH BRANCH

Our membership remains steady, our attendances consistent and our finances are very satisfactory. This happy state is due to the continuing support from our regular attenders and a conscientious Treasurer, Mavis Litchfield-Parry.

A varied programme in 2002 included "Beauty and Health", "Time spent as a Magistrate", "A visit to Africa", "The National Trust Coastal Path" and "The National Arboretum". The latter was followed by a visit which, unfortunately, took place on a very wet day. In July, a visit to Ashby Museum was greatly enjoyed and Mavis Litchfield-Parry's two-part Personal Profile proved to be amusing and most informative. Several pub lunches, to which husbands are welcomed, took place in the summer and a Christmas Lunch in December is planned.

Highlights of the year were, firstly, a visit by the Area Chairman, Maggie Purkis, who filled us in with details of the AGM in London, and gave us a progress report on the Grand Re-union arrangements. Secondly, eight members greatly enjoyed the Area Re-union in Birmingham in September last. Two members marched in the Remembrance Day Parade in Ashby and eight attended the service in St. Helen's.

Finances being in good order, the Christmas Lunch will be subsidised from the funds for regular attenders. The Treasurer was warmly thanked for all her hard work.

Our officers have been re-elected and members with special duties – Gwen Monk – Programme, Anne Bradshaw – Social Secretary, Doris Sherrat – Welfare were thanked. We are continually indebted to Betty Carter who loans us a room in her hotel.

We look forward to seeing you at the Grand Re-union and send comradely good wishes for 2003.

BATH BRANCH

The Branch continues to hold twice monthly meeting with

an average attendance of 25 members. The meetings are mostly a "social get-together" preceded by any business, but we have, on occasions, had speakers.

The local Crime Prevention Officer from the Police gave us useful information on how to protect ourselves. Later, some members received a visit from him to fix locks and chains on their doors. A magistrate gave us details on court procedures, the editor of the local paper gave us an insight into how a newspaper goes to press, the City's Mayor's Officer spoke about civic duties and his own life in the British Army before he took up duties in our city, and we had a very interesting talk by a psychologist on memory loss in old age.

We have applied for funding from the Lottery to enable members of our Branch to attend the Grand Reunion next April. We are hoping that, after the recent publicity concerning the lack of funding for ex-service groups, we may be lucky!

The Golden Jubilee was celebrated with a coach trip around Wiltshire. We picked up members living in that area whom we rarely see, and ended up at the National Trust village of Lacock where we had a sumptuous tea at The King John's Hunting Lodge. Branch funds ensured our members had a very enjoyable afternoon.



l to r: Pam Finney, Betty Keating and Kay Rolfe

In July we met with members from Bristol Branch for a coffee morning at a hotel in Weston-Super-Mare. Mrs Kay Rolphe made a cake decorated with the Association Badge to celebrate the Jubilee.

We continue to hold fund raising events not only for ourselves but other ex-service associations, and we look forward to 2003 with confidence and, hopefully, perhaps an increased membership. We do try to advertise ourselves whenever possible, we receive good coverage from the local press and in other media.

BEXHILL BRANCH

This will be short and sweet but then our report usually is! Most importantly, we continue to function with monthly meetings and excellent attendance, but of course we would like more members. However we know that will not happen unless more ex-WRAC come to join us, our destiny is in their hands.

Summer has drifted into Winter and cream teas are but a lovely memory but there is always another year to look forward to. A very good muster attended the Armistice Day ceremony at the Bexhill Memorial which is, quite literally, a stone's throw from the sea. However the weather was kind and it was a hit down.

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Thanks to all who have kept the branch afloat, keep well.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

2002 has been quite an eventful year for us, bringing sadness and happiness.

Our Standard Bearer, Maureen Deeley, went to London to watch the parade on the occasion of HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother's funeral, and laid flowers at Clarence House.

Several of our members attended a very moving service at The National Memorial Arboretum for the unveiling of the "Shot at Dawn" Statue.

Our Standard Bearer took part in the Golden Jubilee Parade in London, and the Golden Jubilee Veterans Parade held at Weymouth.

Four of our members accepted an invitation from the "Not Forgotten Association" for a day trip on the Severn Valley Railway. They had a really lovely day with lunch on board which was excellent. The train journey to Kidderminster was like going back in time. They thank everyone for their kindness.

We also had an outing to Worcester including a river trip. It was a glorious sunny day enjoyed by all. A slight hiccup on the return journey resulted in being stuck in the lift at Worcester Railway Station for thirty minutes. Fortunately the Fire Brigade came to the rescue.

September was the Wales and West Area Reunion. We hosted the day with 154 members arriving from all over the area. The stalls, tombola and raffles were a great success and we made approximately £500, some of which was donated to the Benevolent Fund at Worthy Down.

Five members attended Coventry branch Birthday Party, and enjoyed the buffet and entertainment.

Several of us were at the Midland Festival of Remembrance held at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham. After the Parade of Colours and Service of Remembrance there followed a Concert Party which was enjoyed by all.

After heavy rain on Sunday 10 November, the sun shone for us and we paraded for Remembrance Day at the Hall of Memory in Birmingham. After the parade, our veteran poppy seller, Mrs Betty Wood, was in constant demand, selling all the wooden crosses and most of the poppies.

Our Christmas Lunch will be held on 04 December and we hope all will be well enough to attend.

Our fearless member, Pat Oakes, aged 83, took her first Wing Walk this year, Standing strapped to the upper wing of a Bi-Plane she took a hair raising trip of about 10

minutes in aid of Warren Pearl Hospice. Pat would be pleased if any members who served with her would get in touch. Pat Oakes (née Mottershed), Driver, 534(M) HAA Battery, GHQ Signal Company, Caseth, Italy. Telephone: 0121 745 9588

BOLTON BRANCH

Although this has been a very quiet year for the branch it has been a momentous year in the Manchester area, with the Queen's Golden Jubilee and the Commonwealth Games.

The Queen attended a service in Manchester Cathedral and one of our members was lucky enough to obtain a seat in the Cathedral. We also joined in with the Jubilee celebrations of other branches and we have to thank Rochdale, Wilmslow and Ryhill branches for inviting our members to their celebrations.

The other big event, the 'Games', started with the televising of 'Songs of Praise' on Bolton Town Hall Square and a few of our members were there. I saw the baton, accompanied by the runners, the cavalcade of various Cadbury's cars and numerous police outriders arrive at our local McDonalds in Westhoughton and I'm sure others of you also witnessed such events. Some of the Games were held at Bolton's Indoor Arena at Middlebrook, which was visited by the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince Edward. The outdoor cycling events were also held in the Bolton area and big crowds of local people attended all the events. After two weeks of excitement things fell very flat and all that is left to remind us are the banners hanging from the lampposts.

BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH

June saw our group enjoying Corps Day at Worthy Down – good food, comradeship, fun and a spectacular display by the "Red Arrows". The following week we attended the Veterans Festival at Weymouth, always a special occasion although we are sure that the promenade gets longer each year. Our annual garden party went well as we celebrated Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee, colourful decorations, tasty food and a sing a long of nostalgic songs. We also said farewell to Treasurer Jean Banahan, as she and her husband retired to South Africa to be with their family; a presentation was made to Jean.



Bournemouth Branch sing-a-long at their Golden Jubilee Garden Party

In July we held a Bring and Buy Sale and Auction. In August, member Carol Stevenson gave an interesting account of her meeting with Canadian comrades, whilst visiting her sister in Ontario.

In September we held a trip and in October a forum to discuss the programme for 2003. Also in October, 16 of us enjoyed a conducted tour of the Royal Star & Garter Home, preceded by lunch at "The Lass of Richmond Hill".

We now look forward to a meeting with Southampton members at a hostelry in the New Forest, a Christmas Coffee Morning with the WAAFS, our own Christmas Lunch and of course meeting old friends at Birmingham in 2003.

BRADFORD BRANCH

Greetings to all members at home and abroad – and if not too late a Happy New Year to everyone.

This has been an eventful year – with the death of our beloved Queen Mother in April, to be followed in June with the celebration of The Golden Jubilee in June. Who will forget events in London and the parade along the Mall past the Queen, Prince Phillip and the rest of the Royal Family. I was honoured to be a part of the parade and the memory of the march with thousands of cheers in our ears and the swing round the Queen Victoria Monument with the family smiling at us is something to remember and treasure.

We have two new members, Mrs Vera Moore who is local, and Mrs Sylvia Yates who lives in Essex and is a wartime friend of mine as we served together in Haywards Heath, Sussex and then in Germany. We wish them very welcome.

We held our usual summer fair in July. This was a great success.

The main activity is, as always, in November with the 56th Festival of Remembrance – followed a week later by a Parade to the War Memorial for a service and the laying of poppies. This year it was especially poignant in view of the dreadful events in different parts of the world.

In the presence of the Lord Mayor and other dignitaries, and presided over by The Dean of Bradford Cathedral, this was a multi-cultural service with leaders of the many religions who live in and around the city, and was very moving.

I almost forgot another great event, the Northern Area Reunion at Marston Hall in September. All our members enjoyed it. The meal was good and the entertainment great. Funny – I didn't know the Andrews Sisters had moved to England. To the ladies of the Cleveland Branch – our thanks. You did a great job. Let us all hope for peace and good health in 2003.

BRISTOL BRANCH

Our Branch continues to flourish, we have good

attendances at our meetings, and our organised trips and events are always very well supported. Thank you to our members.

We were pleased to have representation at the Queen's Jubilee Parade in London, it was a 'not to be forgotten' occasion.

At our June meeting we had a special Jubilee Morning, we had fancy cakes including a Jubilee cake made by one of our members. We also had a surprise for everyone, each member being given a handmade Book Mark celebrating the Queen's Jubilee. We also distributed 'flowers' knitted by two other members, one did the knitting and the other stitched and stuffed them, they looked good. Our thanks to all of them.

We joined with Bath Branch for their trip to Weston-Super-Mare and had a most enjoyable day. It was an opportunity for members from both branches to meet up and have a chat. In August we had a stall at a local village fête which was most successful. We met a BBC researcher who was interested in talking to the ladies especially those in the ATS. It is hoped that she will come and give us a talk on her work.

Our annual trip to Wilton for the Southern Area Secretaries meeting was interesting. It is always nice to meet up with other Branches and hear what they have been doing. It is a good opportunity to swap ideas as well, this meeting is always a pleasure to attend.

Our itinerary, in keeping with other branches, has been speakers and outings. We are making preparations for our Christmas Meeting, and our Annual Lunch which is in February.

We are looking forward to attending the Grand Reunion in April, where we hope once again to meet up with 'old friends'.

CAMBRIDGE BRANCH

You may think that we are a new Branch, or think that the Cambridge Branch no longer exists. Not so, we are still alive and kicking.

The Branch was formed on the 18 April 1980 and we now have 76 members, but due to travelling distances, infirmities etc, only an average of nine attend our meetings on a regular basis, five being original members who have hardly missed a meeting in 23 years.

We meet on the first Monday of the month at the Sergeants' Mess at Waterbeach Barracks. At our meetings we chat about old times, have a raffle, the proceeds going to the Branch funds, and we finish off with a buffet.

Below are some of the things we have done during the year:

- A few of us attended the AGM at the Victory Services Club in April.
- In August we had a dinner at the Gonville Hotel,

Cambridge, in memory of our late Chairman, Dabs Brook.

- The Secretary attended the WRAC Dinner Club weekend at Stoke-on-Trent, in October whilst another member went to the ATS get together.
- The Branch donated £50 to the ATS/WRAC Benevolent Fund.



Avril Williams (centre front) with friends from the Cleveland Branch at the WRAC Dinner

The next couple of events we are looking forward to will be our Christmas Dinner, and six are hoping to attend the Grand Reunion at Birmingham in April.

So you see, we are trying our best to keep the Branch going under difficult circumstances.



Our two newest members!

CANTERBURY BRANCH

We continue to meet at the Dominican Priory on the first Wednesday of each month, except August. We have an average attendance of between 30 – 40 loyal members and although we keep contact with over 50 Life members we are sad to report that very few of them ever respond to letters.

This year we had a very quiet start in January, but members returned in full for a Quiz in February, ably organised by our President Jenny Wells. In March we welcomed Maj (Retd) Imogen Corrigan, one of our members, who found time in her life to talk about

interpreting medieval art. Imogen is a gifted and enthusiastic speaker and her talk was greatly appreciated.

We always have a Fish and Chips Lunch in April, combined with an Easter activity, which this year was an Easter card competition. All the cards were impressive, but Joan Ratcliff's card won. After a social meeting in May we set to work to prepare for our Jubilee Tea Party on 05 June. Many members were invited, but found the distance too daunting. Nevertheless, a sizeable group from Medway came to enjoy a splendid tea. Well done to those who dressed in red, white and blue and entered so well into the spirit of the occasion.

Next, Mr Michael Bingham delighted us with a talk on 'Hearing Dogs for the Deaf'. It was fascinating to learn how these amazing animals improve the quality of life for the deaf. Another highlight was our annual trip to Mavis's beach hut at Herne Bay. It was a perfect day, only two brave swimmers, but plenty of chatter.



Canterbury's Bathing Belles

Our AGM in October was well supported and after a social meeting in November, when our speaker couldn't come because she was ill, we now look forward to our Christmas Lunch on 04 December.

We were sad to lose several members this year, but delighted to welcome three new ladies to meetings. We were particularly pleased to welcome Mrs Cathy Dewar who brought her six week-old baby, Kieran, to the November gathering. He certainly wasn't short of aunties and grannies!

We wish all members of the Association a happy and a healthy New Year and hope to see them at the Grand Reunion in Birmingham next year.

CARDIFF BRANCH

It has been rather a quiet year for our Branch but our meetings have been very well attended and we have held a few bring and buy sales – always well supported by our members.

We have visited Gloucester and Newport and, of course, the very much appreciated Reunion at Birmingham. Our thanks to all involved in making it such an enjoyable occasion.

We have also attended a Memorial Service on 11 September and took part in the planting of the Cross at St Johns Church, Cardiff.

Five of our members travelled to London for the Remembrance Parade and Weston of Abbey. As the years go by fewer of our members are able to make the journey but many attend services locally.

We have had our Christmas Lunch at the Park Hotel (Thistle) and all 22 people enjoyed the festive atmosphere and music.

We hope that all our ATS and WRAC friends in the Association have had a very pleasant Christmas and wish them all they could wish themselves for the coming year.

CHELMSFORD BRANCH

We begin our report by sending our very best wishes to everyone for a Peaceful and Happy New Year. We are pleased to tell you our membership has increased and attendance at meetings averages about 30.

Usually on the third Tuesday of each month we meet at the RAFA Club in Chelmsford and enjoy each other's company over a cup of tea and "something to follow".

In May one of our members, Betty Turner led us in a picture quiz game which must have taken ages to prepare. In June we were delighted to have as a speaker WO1 Andrea Denham from Worthy Down who was about to retire. Her excellent talk on "Service Life Today" showed very clearly the differences between now and then. Her visit was much appreciated and we wish her well in the future.

July came and went very busily:

From 01 - 05 July some of our members went on holiday to Thorseby Hall, one of Warner's palatial hotels in the Sherwood Forest region. Set in a magnificent setting one could enjoy all kinds of out-door sports, swim, or use the fitness room. During the evening there was excellent entertainment and the food was delicious. On the way to the hotel a stop was made at St Ives market where holiday money was disappearing before we even got there! Excursions were made through the Derbyshire countryside including one to Bakewell where we sampled a genuine bakewell tart. A very good holiday indeed.

A never-to-be-forgotten event took place on 9 July when our Chairman and Hon Secretary attended a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. Despite a rainy start we arrived complete with posh hats and enjoyed the afternoon. That afternoon the Band of The Royal Logistics Corps were performing and we learnt that two former WRAC Band members were playing with them.

The highlight of our year was the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth combined with celebrations for the 13th Anniversary of our Branch. A Buffet Luncheon with red, white or blue featuring prominently on our dresses, hats and accessories was probably one of the happiest occasions we have ever held.

We are proud to recall that we received a letter from the Queen wishing us all "A very Happy and Successful time on the occasion of our 13th Anniversary" and after a "sing-a-long of some golden oldies" we went home - still singing!



Chelmsford Branch in full voice at their anniversary party

In September we met again to hear the result of a photographic competition. The subject "anything that forms a circle" resulted in some very unusual shots and the winners were Peggy James and Vi Duckett. In October we held our AGM and in November enjoyed a fascinating talk on dolls houses and miniatures. We hold a stall of various kinds and a raffle at our meetings and our thanks go to those who run them and indeed to all our helpers.

If you would like to join us and have not as yet become a branch member, you will be most welcome to our meetings. Please contact The Hon Secretary Tel: 01245 251088

CHESTER BRANCH

Hello to all and though a bit late - A Happy New Year.

It is quite some time since an item has been printed from the Chester Branch, but as we have all found out, time goes so quickly and before you know where you are you have missed the deadline again. We have several new members since our last report, so, in spite of losing members to sickness, and some who find the journey very tiresome because of transport problems, we do manage to field a reasonable attendance each month.

We have been able to attend several of our North West Branch socials, a special one in Wilmslow and the usual excellent get togethers arranged by the Rhyl Branch. The North West Area held a special event in honour of the Queen at The Blossom Hotel in Chester and it would seem that all attending had a good time. Several members are attending the Remembrance Service and Parade in London on Armistice Sunday as always and our Wreath will be laid locally as usual.

The ATS Dinner Club's Officers are to be congratulated for the very splendid weekend recently held at Lyme Bay Holiday Camp in Seaton, Devon. Very pleasant and extremely well organised. The 9 members who attended from Chester are already queuing up for next year. We

held the Branch AGM in October and also had a Bring and Buy Sale – which was quite successful, both in fun and money. The same “EAGER OFFICERS” were elected totally unopposed and completely unanimously – what makes me think we are not on our own in our Branch! We have arranged a Buffet Lunch in December at The Belgrave Hotel with, of course, different ‘nosh’ from previous arrangements in the ‘40’s.

We have a very friendly and, we hope, happy membership, there is always a pleasant atmosphere, we have a cup of tea and a natter and the members always rally round when necessary – truly something to look forward to each month. Long may we survive!!

We must pay special tribute to our very efficient and excellent Secretary/Treasurer of some 21 years service – she conjures money out of thin air – and if the air is too thin – then out of us. The Branch thank you for your dedication Vera.

We have been discussing the Laying-Up of The Branch Standard. Very sadly we no longer have a member who is able to carry the Standard for any length of time. Although we have tried in many ways to tempt ex-WRAC members to join, we have not been very successful. We have approached some local Churches and Chester Cathedral, but they politely declined the honour of accepting Standards. The Chester Military Museum at Chester Castle, which originally started as a Regimental Museum for The Cheshire Regiment but has now expanded, is only too willing to accept our Standard. We will be making arrangements for the Laying-up possibly in the Ancient Church of St John where the Standard was dedicated and then present it to the Museum for safekeeping. This will probably be some time in March/April 2003 and we trust our friends in the Group will support us on this sad occasion.

On a lighter note we are going to try for ‘another’ Strawberry Tea in Chester possibly in June 2003, the last one turned out to be a splendid afternoon. All our best wishes to all our colleagues and trusting they had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year celebrations.

We comfort ourselves with the thought – IF WINTER COMES, – CAN SPRING BE FAR BEHIND

CLEVELAND BRANCH

Hello once again from “up North”. It seems like only yesterday that I reported on our ‘doings’, but here goes.

Our Secretary, Gwyn Friday shocked us all by having a stroke, and for a while was quite poorly, but not quiet! She still isn’t 100%, but is a very amazing lady.

Over the last couple of months, we have had speakers at our meetings – one showing some lovely slides from Spalding Flower Show, then a local lady telling us of a Hospice in memory of her dear husband. It seems so wrong that these hospices rely on public donations to function, but it’s time I got off my soap box! We had our annual Birthday Party in July, and had a great feast. Why do we bring so much food?

August saw us at the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle on our ‘Day Out’. The Museum has family connections with our dear late Patron, and two of her gowns were on display – they were beautiful. Then we headed for a country hotel for high tea – posh or what?

I sadly have to report the death of one of our oldest and very respected members, Mrs Elizabeth Jones (née Curbishley). Before the war, she was WPC Number Two in Lancashire. We will miss her.

Now we are planning the North East Reunion in Middlesborough next month and looking forward to seeing all of you.

Hopefully, we will all meet again in 2003.

COLCHESTER BRANCH

As the conclusion to a very sad year our Secretary, Vera Cole, died on 18 October. She had been a tireless worker for the Branch for many years, having taken over from our original Secretary when she had become ill and subsequently died. We have lost five other members during the year.

On a happier note – in January we held our Post-Christmas Party with a superb buffet and a three piece band who entertained us with ‘our’ kind of music. In April we visited the Houses of Parliament, kindly arranged for us by Bob Russell, the MP for Colchester, and in May Lady Val Kemball visited to present Certificates of Appreciation to Joan Hare and Peggy Williams. They have run the Bring and Buy Stall for more years than I can remember. Peggy has recently had a serious operation, but is recovering well. In June, two of our members from Dovercourt invited us to a buffet lunch, as they had last year. Once again, we were well looked after and had a happy afternoon.

Four tickets were presented to us for a trip on a Sailing Barge by the ‘Not Forgotten Association’. The event was much appreciated by the members lucky enough to win the tickets.

October saw our last outing of the year, a return visit to the USAF Air Museum at Parham, Suffolk, followed by lunch at the Glemham Grown. Both venues are highly recommended.

Our Christmas Lunch is on 04 December at a new place, but we hope it will be a success as usual.

CREWE BRANCH

We had a break in June this year mainly due to holidays. In July Betty attended the Ack Ack Reunion at York which she always enjoys and she sends her Best Wishes to all her Ack Ack friends.

On 07 September eight of us went to Birmingham for the Area Reunion. Thank you Birmingham for a very pleasant day we all enjoy getting together with everyone. We attended the Naval Dance at the Crosville Club,

Crewe on 12 September and on 28 September our Branch Secretary, Edith, reached her eightieth year. Her family gave her a party – Betty, Joan and Molly were there – and then took her off to Sorrento for a lovely holiday. On reaching this milestone, Edith decided to resign as Area Secretary, an office she held for the last twenty years. I am sure most of the Branches in the Area will agree she has always been available if any of them needed any help or advice. However she will still be around as she has now accepted the office of Area Vice Chairman.



*Edith's 80th birthday party
l to r: Joan, Edith, Betty and Molly*

We held our AGM on 03 October. We were pleased to welcome Mrs Maggie Purkis, our Area Chairman, and Mrs Irene Hall, our new Area Secretary, to the meeting. Although we are not able to do as much fund raising now, we still sent a donation for £150 to the Association. All our Officers were returned unopposed.

On 10 October we held a Dance at the Crosville Club. This was our last fund raiser this year.

Edith, Betty and Mabel were busy poppy selling prior to their trip down to London for the Remembrance Weekend. On the Saturday, along with Molly, they went for a ride on the London Eye. It was a wonderful experience, the visibility was perfect and they all enjoyed it very much and have a photo to prove it. Six members in all travelled down but only Mabel Lightfoot and new member, Sybil Hesketh, went on to the Cenotaph Parade. The others including Doris Fairclough went to the Westminster Abbey Service.

We will have our annual visit to the Theatre to see the Pantomime in December. Then we have a break for Christmas and New Year and meet again in February.

May we send our Best Wishes for 2003 to all our friends in the Association.

DACORUM BRANCH

Greetings from Hemel Hempstead, another year nearly over and my word processor is playing up, hopefully it will last until the newsletter has been printed.

April was a sad occasion for our group as our Chairman was moving to Kent to be near her son and family.

Freddie Weatherley had been our Chairman from the time the branch formed on 02 April 1996 and she will be sadly missed. Fortunately Jean Westrope, our vice-chairman, was willing to take over.

In May our new Chairman welcomed us and told us that our speaker would be talking about policing today. Unfortunately he did not appear, so we spent the afternoon discussing our future as a group. So few of us are now able to attend and only three WRAC members near enough to attend our meetings, so age is against us. It will be sad if we cannot keep going as we have enjoyed our meetings.

In June we had a very pleasant afternoon flower arranging. Joan Ewing brought in flowers and greenery and showed us how to make the most of almost any flowers etc that were available.

Only ten members were present in July, unfortunate as we had a speaker. Mrs Anne Parsons gave us a very interesting insight into Royalty. Her father worked for Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, so she told us about her very happy childhood spent in the surroundings of the Royal family. She also brought a lot of her own and her father's memorabilia.

In August, 'Keep fit', so enjoyable to all of us, we should have sessions more often. We have progressed to dyna bands, they certainly make you feel that you are really stretching.

On 14 August we went to Kent to visit our ex-chairman Freddie. She gave us a very warm welcome and a superb lunch. Thank you Freddie from all of us.

'September's here so dark and drear' – maybe not too bad but time definitely is passing too quickly. At the AGM we felt maybe a new committee could be formed, but once again the same group were asked to stand. Camilla Cope was asked if she would stand as vice-chairman and we were very pleased when she agreed. For the first time in all our meetings we followed on with a game of Bingo. I have read somewhere that Bingo is a challenge to the brain, maybe we should play it more often!

We visited the Poppy factory at Richmond in September. After a lunch in their canteen, we were welcomed and told how the idea of raising funds with poppies was formed after World War I. We then met the workers in the factory, and were struck by the very peaceful and happy atmosphere in the workshop.

In October Mr David Stevens of the Boxmoor Trust gave us a talk and slide show about a journey he and his wife made by train to Switzerland.

We would like to send best wishes for Christmas and New Year to everyone at Worthy Down, and all the members of the WRAC Association.

EASTBOURNE BRANCH

We have had another interesting year. Members have visited Rye, the Royal Albert Hall for the Royal British

Legion Festival of Remembrance and also the Remembrance Concert in the Congress Theatre, Eastbourne. As we are members of the Eastbourne Combined Ex-Services Association we have once again received £100 as our share of the profits. One act was "Dad's Army" ~~PDF Compressor Free Version~~ and another was "The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas". All enjoyed as was our Christmas Lunch. New hips and knees are prevalent and all are doing well.

Our Memorial donation has not been returned. Jean Crawley, Canada, keeps in touch with us, we appreciate her hard work and that of Joy Bone, Colchester. We note that the Memorial Gates to the Commonwealth Forces have just been unveiled, funded partly by a £1,000,000 donation from the Lottery. Even Paddington Bear has a Statue. Now is the time to ask again for a Lottery grant. The Branch is well supported by the attending members, others have twice-yearly newsletters if they so wish. Each member bringing a small raffle prize to the meeting helps pay for tea, biscuits and rent.

Best Wishes to all for 2003.

EDINBURGH BRANCH

Since the last Lioness, I am sorry to report that after some 20 odd years the Scots Guards Club advised that they would not accommodate us any more. Some 24 hours before our September meeting – no place to go! Result – a short meeting of some 12 regulars to think about the future. We agreed to delay our branch AGM until 05 December when our Christmas Lunch was being held at The Royal British Hotel. The decision taken is to meet on the first Thursday of each quarter (March, June, September and December) for a friendly afternoon tea at The Royal British Hotel, Princes Street at 2.30 pm and take our future from there.

Meantime, best wishes to all our friends of the WRAC Association.

FIFE AND TAYSIDE

Fifteen of us journeyed north to Aberdeen for the Scottish Area AGM and Reunion on the last Saturday of October 2002. We enjoyed an excellent day organised by our friends of the Aberdeen Branch. We have been dealt a very sad blow however, with the death of Betty Berwick exactly a fortnight later. Betty suffered a stroke three days after the Aberdeen meeting and seemed to be rallying, but she suffered a second stroke from which she never regained consciousness. Betty was a long-serving and much-loved Branch Secretary, only standing down from that office in April 2002 in order to spend more time with her husband. Sadly, that time was to be all too short.

GLASGOW BRANCH

We celebrate our 55th Anniversary this year, five of the founder members still attend some of our meetings.

In August the 'Not Forgotten Association' invited four of us to sail on a canal barge. We had a very happy

afternoon with a delicious lunch.

Mr King from Erskine Hospital for disabled ex-service men and women was our September speaker. We saw a video of the work undertaken at Erskine and presented a cheque for £250.

Our Branch AGM in October was well attended. The Bring and Buy sale raised £200.

On 26 October, 25 of us took the high road to Aberdeen for the Scottish Area AGM. Aberdeen Branch, our hosts, certainly excelled themselves – a well run business meeting, a well run raffle, a plentiful supply of food and, to round everything off, a Ceilidh (Scottish Party), the best we have been to in many a long day. Thank you Aberdeen.

While we were in Aberdeen, Susan Sinclair née Hendry was in Perth, Scotland, attending the 60th Anniversary Memorial Service for those who had served at El-Alamein. She had seen a letter in a Scottish newspaper announcing the service but thought that as a "mere ATS" she would not be eligible to attend. However, she enquired and having the Africa Star, was indeed eligible. She was the only ATS there. There was one other ex-service lady – she had been a nurse.

We send greetings to all Branches for a happy successful 2003.

GREATER LONDON BRANCH

Although we only have three branch meetings a year, some of our ladies have been busy throughout. As ever, some of our members helped out with the Army Benevolent Fund collection at the Chelsea Flower Show in May. In June, three lucky ladies took part in the Queen's Golden Jubilee parade. They felt very honoured and proud. In July, four members were invited through the Not Forgotten Association to be guests at the Royal Garden Party – a lovely experience, and the chance of a lifetime. No doubt we do benefit from living in and around London so we are on the spot for all the important events.

On 05 October, we held our annual London Area Reunion and had an excellent turnout of 136 ladies. We were very well looked after at the Royal Green Jackets Drill Hall, which proved to be an excellent venue. We are very grateful to all the staff there for the first class service we had. In the morning, Major Peter Horsfall entertained us with his stories of "Humour in the Royal Palaces". What a great life he has had. After a pleasant lunch, Major Bowes-Crick and his two daughters brought us up to date with life in the modern Army – Katie serves with the RLC, and Emma with the QARANC. Our ATS ladies were astounded at the differences now from their wartime experiences. Everyone seemed to enjoy the day, and the question on everyone's lips now is "which Branch will host the next Reunion" in 2004? There is a gap year because of the Birmingham Reunion next year. For those of us who attended the Field of Remembrance on 7 November, it was wonderful to see Her Majesty there, full of smiles. Lieutenant Colonel Sue Westlake reminded the Queen of her days with the ATS. For that

she gave us an extra smile. How we would all have loved to have a cheer for her! But we were on parade!!

Overall a good season for the branch. We look forward to meeting all our friends in Birmingham next April.

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HEREFORD BRANCH



Joyce Nicholls

Our ladies would like to thank all the ladies of Birmingham for what can only be described as a memorable event. The Regional Reunion gave a golden opportunity for our treasurer, Joyce Nicholls, to shine and show her ability at a 'Hula Hula' dance. Joyce's rendition brought tears of laughter to our eyes. The rest of the day, including the rain, only improved. Edith Francis leading the charge of the 'Conga' was a sight to see and will be a memory that will be hard to eclipse. It was a great day and well organised.

During the Summer we held a dinner at our local garden centre which also doubles as a restaurant. A healthy number attended and afterwards it gave the ladies a chance to wander round the gardens before making their way home.

One of our ladies has come across a book, which she considers a little gem and would like to share the details with you.

'On Target: Memoir of an Ack-Ack Girl' by V Robinson (1991)

We in Hereford are slowly getting our members to give us their renditions of experiences in the army and these are being compiled into a Branch Book of Memories. Along with the fun, laughter and comradeship also come memories of sadness and tears, leaving home, losing a loved one. However, these are also welcome as it gives a comprehensive and more realistic understanding of the times and will be held for posterity and in memory of our members.

Up and coming events for the Hereford Branch are our Christmas Dinner on 10 December and a reminder to all our ladies that our own AGM is to be held during our March meeting.

HULL BRANCH

Sadly we have to report the death in September of Mrs Pollie Ward, a member of Hull branch since 1975. Pollie had been Branch Secretary, Treasurer, and Group Vice-Chairman at various times, and at her death was Branch Treasurer. Pollie was also involved with other ex-service organisations such as the Royal British Legion and this was reflected in the number of standards present at the funeral.

The branch received a grant from 'Awards for All' to enable us to go to the Northern Area Re-Union at Marton. Fifteen members enjoyed the weekend trip, especially the entertainment at the Re-Union.



*Northern Area Reunion
Area Chairman, Col Cook, seated left and Mrs Kirby, seated right, with other members of the branch*

Our oldest member Mrs M Kirby (92) received a special gift from the host branch for being the oldest lady there.

This year we have been able to move to a better room for our meetings thanks to the Royal British Legion. We now meet in a downstairs room with a ramp to the outer door making it much easier for us to attend. Because of this we have been able to welcome back two of our members. We have had just one new member this year.

By the time this is printed we shall have had our AGM when we hope Miss E Long will be our Treasurer.

LEEDS BRANCH

Our monthly meetings continue to be well attended in spite of illness and the weather.



The Golden Jubilee Lunch

Our Jubilee Lunch was voted a great success with all members joining in the spirit of celebration. One member was lucky enough to take part in the actual Jubilee Parade in London and told us all about the thrill of it at our July meeting. Late July saw our annual visit to the Mixed HAA weekend in York. As usual it was most enjoyable, even the weather did us proud.

Only a few members were able to attend the NE Area Reunion in September but this was voted most enjoyable. Perhaps more will manage York next year.

Two members were honoured to represent the Branch at The Festival of Remembrance in the Albert Hall and at the very moving service in Westminster Abbey. In spite of inconvenience due to the very strict security, the weekend was most memorable.

We are now planning our Christmas Lunch and a visit to the Theatre in the New Year. Happy Christmas everybody.

LEICESTER AND NOTTINGHAM BRANCH

My apologies for the absence of a report in "Lioness 2/02", this is how our year went.

We ended the year with our Christmas Lunch held at the Masonic Hall (the venue of our 2001 Reunion). After a splendid lunch we were given a tour around the private Hall of the Masons where the lodges hold their meetings, and we were given an explanatory talk. In January we enjoyed the musical, 'Fiddler on the Roof', in February our Bring and Buy and in March a Bingo session, all well attended, happy meetings. Our April meeting was cancelled in respect to the Queen Mother and to enable members to watch her funeral.

We had a very interesting talk on the National Memoriam Arboretum which we were hoping to visit later in the year, and in June we again made our way to W. Bridgford for our meeting, courtesy of Barbara Danter, who books the hall and lays on refreshment for us. We had the company of some ex-WAAFS, WRENS and LAND ARMY ladies

and, to finish, an hilarious talk from a Blue Badge Guide.

July saw us once again at the Sailing Club for a picnic. Because of flooding on the roads some of our ladies couldn't get through but others managed and we had a Jubilee Celebration, a lovely afternoon thanks to Doris Doswell and Irene Bell, our hosts, not forgetting Sandra Smith who seemed to be at the sink or serving tea etc all afternoon.

We visited the National Memoriam Arboretum in August and were very moved by the Chapel of Peace and Forgiveness, aptly named. Some of the plots were very poignant and must bring many memories. Our own WRAC was rather a disappointment to many of us as it had only been dug over, but we understand it will be ready in time for the National Reunion at Birmingham, when members are visiting.

The Harvest Festival in September raised money for our branch and so to October for our AGM with no change to Officers and Committee who all work so willingly. For our November meeting we were entertained with a talk and lovely slides of New Zealand. Now we have come full circle.

Our other branch news is that sadly some of our members have lost dear ones and others have been ill. We hope coming to our meetings helps in some small way. Our Standard continues to be represented at various parades by Vi Rawlins and this year she and some of our ladies have been further afield to Bristol where they were well looked after by Jackie (Bristol Secretary) and to Weymouth for the Veterans Parade. Six of us went to Westminster Abbey, including our Standard, at the invitation of the 8th Army 60th Anniversary of El Alamein. Two of us met some of the Royal Party after the lovely service.

To end on a bright note, Marjorie Brutnell was awarded the MBE for her work over many years with the RBL. It was well deserved. Marjorie doesn't enjoy good health but is always cheerful and positive.

To all our members spread through 4 counties we send good wishes and thanks to many of you for supporting our branch.

LONDON BRANCH

My, how time passes. Here we are nearly in 2003 and another report. We have had two Bring and Buys this year (May and November), always a good excuse for a laugh and a natter. In June we welcomed Trudy Miller who told us all about Magnatherapy, the use of magnets to help keep us fit and well. Very interesting, many magnetic bracelets were bought. One member says hers has changed her life. For the better I may add.

Our July meeting was marred by an Underground strike. Only 18 members braved the journey. Getting home in a heat wave was no joke. It is difficult to cancel meetings at short notice. Later in the month we had our Annual Quiz with the WRENS and the RBL Women's Section City of London branch - we won the Cup at last! All good fun.

September – and a visit from Derrick Fulford who's talk 'A day in the life of a JP' gave a highly amusing account of his experiences as a Magistrate in London.

We all enjoyed our Area Reunion in October, some say best ever. Miss H. E. Ellis attended the service of Thanksgiving to Commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Battle of El Alamein at Westminster Abbey – very moving, and probably the last of it's kind. Many members were at the Field of Remembrance and at the Cenotaph on 10 November, numbers are getting lower unfortunately. Not everyone can do the standing these days.

LUTON BRANCH

I hope that, even allowing for the vagaries of the Christmas post, I shall meet the deadline for branch reports, so here goes: Luton branch soldiers on enjoying our monthly meetings and, as ever, any excuse to party.

We had our annual quiz match against the Far East Veterans Association for which, this year, a shield was awarded in memory of a FEVA member. This now takes pride of place in my lounge because WE WON! Other speakers were a lady from SSAFA and one who spoke very well about the local Homeless Persons' Refuge.

In November we entertained the very new local branch of the Association of Wrens. We presented them with a memento of their visit, a horse-brass with their badge which really pleased them, as did the fact that they won the majority of the raffle prizes. At that meeting, we had arranged a demonstration of "Decorative Ropework", by a local chap who, I have since found out, was ex-RN and whose work is on HMS Victory. Very appropriate he should be there with the Wrens, but in fact it was pure coincidence. We do hope to maintain our links with the Jenny Wrens. I was in fact AWOL for this meeting, as I thought it a bit far to commute from Florida!

We still enjoy quizzes and beetle drives, but so far have not managed to put on a whist drive – we will one day I hope.

Two of our members have sadly passed away – Wyn Mills and Stella Ross, but we have gained two new members – Jean Vickers and Frances Angliss.

We attended our local Remembrance Parade, laying a wreath in memory of all our comrades no longer with us.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

In June our members enjoyed a great afternoon at the invitation of Sunderland branch. A coach took our members to the North East Re-Union in Cleveland, it was excellent and many thanks go to the Secretary and Committee members. Twenty three reservation forms have been sent in for the Grand Re-Union at Birmingham. At the invitation of the Ex-POW's in Newcastle 20 of our members are joining them for Christmas Lunch at the Assembly Rooms.

Members attended the Armistice Parade in London.

Good health and every success to all Branches.

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH

2002 has been quite a good year. We started with the Area Reunion 11th May hosted by Salisbury at Larkhill. Everyone said it was the best Reunion we have had. Thank you Salisbury for all the hard work. On 13 May we had a nice lunch at Ryde with the Isle of Wight Branch.

This year the highlight in Portsmouth was the visit of HM The Queen to Whale Island. Four members went to the rehearsal on 25 June and were well looked after by young members of the three services. Our Treasurer, Mrs Phyllis Price, was a VIP on 27 June representing the Association. She was thrilled and honoured to have been chosen to attend.

On 10 August we went to a nice tea party at Mary Lindsey's home on Portsdown Hill. Mary was not well but we didn't realise at the time how ill she was and, sadly, on 8 September she died. She did a lot for the branch and we have all lost a good friend. Her funeral was attended by many members and our Standard was paraded by Mrs Phyllis Price.

During the rest of the year we have had coffee mornings at the usual members' homes and more are to come in January and February. A nice lunch was held at Fareham on 11 September. We have attended parades for Anzac Day, D-Day, The Falklands and Civil Remembrance Service. The branch is still active but numbers are falling, especially among people who run branch events. We are all looking forward to the Grand Reunion in April.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH

We were quite active throughout 2002 and try to keep in touch with our members through the "Lioness" and our newsletter.

Several ladies attend our annual service in June at St Catherine's Chapel in the Royal Citadel upon the Hoe.

Also in June, we celebrated the Queen's Jubilee at a Jubilee Concert at the Athenaeum Theatre in Plymouth and had another trip to the Eden Project. Because the Biomes are filled with plants that are ever growing and changing, and because there are always new displays both inside and outside on the hillsides of the old clay pits it is good to go on a regular basis.

The Music of the Night Concert in the Royal Citadel in July was a great success and we have enjoyed lovely lunches out in the Ferry House Inn at Saltash Passage. September 10th saw us off to the Sparkford Inn to join friends at the South West Re-union hosted by Wincanton Branch. A lovely lunch, thank you, ladies, enhanced by a beautiful, sunny day.

Mrs Pauline Evans proudly carried our Standard for us at the Battle of Britain Service held at St Andrew's Church, Plymouth on 15 September and we were then treated to a very generous lunch at the RAFA Club in Mutley. Unfortunately we have fewer ladies each year who are able to attend the Cenotaph Parade and even fewer who can march the distance now.



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WRAC Association Memorabilia

All items of memorabilia can be obtained from the Association Headquarters.

Please make cheques or postal orders payable to WRAC Association and forward with your order to WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester, Hants. SO21 2RG.

All prices include postage and packing



Bone China Mugs
£4.50 each



Teapot Stand
£3.50



Square Tray
£4.80

Badges



Association
£3.00



ATS
£2.75



Sandwich Trays
£4.60



WRAC
£2.75



Association
£1.50



Regi-Bears
£7.50 each



Key Fob
£2.50

Pauline was also on duty for us, with her escorts, Doris McCoy and Mary Davis, on 15 November at the Festival of Remembrance in the Pavilions, Plymouth.

As always, there is a warm welcome awaiting any member who is in Plymouth on the Monday of the month (except Bank Holidays, when the meeting is held on the following Monday). Come to the Royal Fleet Club at Devonport at 1.30 pm and join us.

Contact phone numbers for the branch are:
Secretary 01752 363118
Assistant Secretary 01752 348632

SALISBURY BRANCH

Our July meeting was held in the beautiful garden of our Secretary, Val Trout, who also provided a delicious lunch. A number of competitions were most interesting. Winners of 'name the celebrity' were May Brown and Maureen Robertson. Identifying the dogs correctly were Bimbo Coleman and Carol Ederle. Quiz winners were Veronica Dodkins, Claire Edwards, Suzanne Gordon, May Brown, Maureen Robertson and Gladys Pope. Our Treasurer, Jill Trainor, thanked Val and her two sisters for making it such an excellent meeting. The money raised from the competitions would start a 'transport fund' for members attending the National Reunion in Birmingham next year.

In August we visited the shopping centre at Street. Our chairman, Alyson Ogden, seemed to acquire a lot of shopping bags!!

Our AGM in September saw all the officials returned 'en bloc'. It was agreed to make the following donations: £50 to Arboretum Fund, £10 for RBL Flower Fund, £50 for AGC Museum, Worthy Down. Our membership is now 30 Life Members and 26 Annual Members. About 30 members regularly attend our monthly meetings held at Hedley Davis Court.

Three members attended the WRAC Dinner Club weekend in Stoke. What a happy event it was. Two members took part in the London Remembrance Parade and attended the Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall.

When this is published Christmas will be over, so may we wish everyone a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

SHIPLEY BRANCH

We have had another year when a large number of our members have been unable to attend meetings through ill health. They have all been missed and we hope that they will soon be well enough to join us again.

We were very sad when one of our most faithful members, Mrs Dorothy O'Neil, passed away on 5 August 2002. One of our members who was able to attend her funeral at Keighley represented the Branch. Dorothy was also a member of the Ladies' Section of the Royal British Legion and was presented with a Lifetime Award for the work she did. Tributes at her funeral were given by her

granddaughter, a member of the British Legion, and a representative from the Airdale Hospital at which she had been a loyal helper for many years. We shall all miss her at our meetings.

Members who could attend our meetings enjoyed talks, slide shows, Bingo, faith teas etc and we look forward to a full programme next year.

We send our best wishes to those who work so hard to present the Lioness which we all enjoy reading, and our best wishes to you all for the year 2003.

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

A Happy 2003 to all our Comrades far and near.

We still meet at the Heywood/Lonsdale Court Residential Lounge, Glebe Street, Wellington on the first Wednesday of the month, at 2pm.



Shropshire Branch celebrating the Golden Jubilee

In June we held our Jubilee Party, inviting guests from the 'Court', we had a lovely time, and the Mayor of Wellington, Mrs Mary Lewis, cut our Jubilee Cake which had kindly been donated by Brenda and Bill Adams.

Our monthly meetings have included an interesting talk and slides on 'Tourism in Shropshire' by Mr Bifield, and a quiz led by Terri and won by Irene Beecham ('Pills')! We had our usual Tombola Stall on Dawley Day and continue to have our Table Top Sales at Belmont Hall, Wellington to boost our funds.

One of our members, Terri, and husband, Fred, have celebrated their Golden Wedding, congratulations to both.

In September, our AGM resulted in the same committee being reinstated, with the addition of Hilda Dakin. Still in September, 6 of us went to the 'ATS Dinner Club' Reunion at Seaton, Devon. We had a really wonderful time, food, entertainment etc was excellent, in the company of good friends. In November, we attended many Remembrance Services in the Area.

Our Christmas Party is in December, and we are inviting guests to join us. Later in December, we're looking forward to our Christmas Lunch, at the "Buckatree Hall Hotel", Wellington. This brings us up to 2003 again. There

is no meeting in January. We are looking forward to the Grand Reunion at Birmingham in April, and hoping to meet old friends. Two new members have recently joined our branch, Joan Bennett, (ATS) and Olive Downing, (WRAC). We give you both a warm welcome.

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Good Health and Happiness to you all, wherever you are.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

The second half of 2002 saw us in the garden of Gail Langdon (Louise's daughter) very much enjoying once again a Luncheon she had cooked, and in July we went along to a tea party in the garden of Betty Rush.



Back row l to r: Frances Allen, Jean Kingdon and Peggy Sorley

Front Row: Jean Houghton, Hazel Hutchins, Doreen Pledge, Audrey Boyce Betty Rush and Beryl Blampied

Speakers have been our own Margaret Newcombe and local historian Genevieve Bailey. Margaret talked about her experiences whilst on the Queen's boats and mentioned in particular our late Patron the Queen Mother whom she had met. Genevieve told us of the new Southampton TV Channel on which she appears. "Just tune in your TV" she said!

To further increase our funds, we re-introduced our stall during the Eastleigh Carnival week which contained produce, goods, etc. In addition, Mary MacDonald, née Marshall, made a clown to raffle. This event made over £150.

Our standard is still paraded by Margaret Barham née Hope. In September she attended a Remembrance Service for Earl Mountbatten at Romsey Abbey, then on 02 November a Concert and Remembrance Service at Eastleigh and again the Remembrance Service held in Southampton Guildhall on 11 November.

To come up-to-date, on 14 November members from Southampton and Bournemouth Branches met for lunch for the first time in the New Forest in the Sway Manor Restaurant and Hotel (previously the White Rose). Well recommended and very much enjoyed by all 21 members who attended. Food for thought, for this will not be the last meet up by any means!

STAFFORD BRANCH

What a surprise we had when our "Lioness" arrived and there on the front cover were our Chairperson, Ann Deakin and Maureen Deeley from Birmingham.

At our June meeting we had a Bring & Buy Sale which raised £50. This was split between the "Lioness" and the Arboretum.

In August we decided to have a Pub Lunch instead of our usual meeting and it was enjoyed by all.

Five members attended the Wales and West Area Reunion hosted by Birmingham Branch in September. It was most enjoyable, well attended, wonderful food and good entertainment. Well done Birmingham Branch!

Representatives from our Branch attended the Battle of Britain and Remembrance Day Services. Two of our members joined the march in London and one had a ticket for Westminster Abbey.

This month our speaker will transport us to Cuba!

Best Wishes.

See you at the Grand Reunion.

STIRLING BRANCH

The branch has two life members and 31 annual members of whom about 20 attend meetings.

It was becoming difficult to get suitable speakers on Saturday afternoons so it was decided to meet in a hotel nearer to the centre of town and have a bar lunch. This has proved to be very successful and it is hoped to continue in the coming session.

The branch hosted the Scottish AGM in October 2001 and had a successful reunion in the Golden Lion Hotel where entertainment was provided by the Milton Fiddlers. Thanks are extended to all the branches who provided prizes for the raffle which made £176.

Twenty members had a very enjoyable Christmas Lunch which was as usual held at the Terraces Hotel.

Several members collected small change and a cheque for £60 was sent to Erskine Hospital. One of our members had an eightieth birthday party and she asked for donations in lieu of presents. She sent a cheque to Erskine Hospital for £100.

Four members made the annual journey to York for the ACK-ACK Reunion. After a wonderful service in the Minster, the salute at the March-Past was taken by the Master Gunner, the Right Honourable Lord Mayor of York and the Garrison Commander. Three hundred and twenty ex-ATS marched to the music of 150 Transport Regiment RLC Band.

The Branch wishes to express their appreciation of the work that goes into producing "The Lioness" twice a year and each issue is eagerly awaited.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH

In June we entertained some of Newcastle Branch to a Pies and Peas lunch to celebrate our birthday. We had a Country and Western entertainer and we all enjoyed the singing and a **PDF Compressor Free Version** asked if we could have him again for our Christmas Lunch and that has now been arranged.



"Lining up!"

In July fourteen of us had a day's outing to Gilsland Spa. The lunch, as usual, was very good as was the entertainment and dancing. The weather was beautiful and some of us had a walk around the grounds. John, our Chairman's husband, once again was our driver (and also our photographer). He has a digital camera and also did the printing of the photographs.

At our September meeting John gave us a woodturning demonstration and a display of some of the beautiful articles he has made, some in very unusual woods. They are, of course, unique. Also in September about twenty five members attended the North East Re-union at Marsden Country Club. Everyone enjoyed the meal and the entertainment and Sunderland Branch provided the "surprise" entertainers - the Andrews Sisters. Many thanks to Cleveland Branch for the organisation.

We held our Branch AGM in October and our Committee was re-elected. (We must be doing something right).

Three of our members received tickets for Westminster Abbey for the Remembrance Day service. They were also lucky enough to get tickets for the Albert Hall ceremony. The majority of our members attend their local Remembrance Day services.

Our preparations for our Christmas Lunch are well in hand. The buffet is booked, and the entertainment. Because we are having our Country and Western entertainer again, some of us will get in to the spirit of the thing by "dressing up".

May I wish all Branches a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

SWANSEA BRANCH

Here we are again, with Christmas nearly here. Our Christmas Lunch will be held at the "Oxwich Bay Hotel" with Father Christmas, we always enjoy our visit there.

We have two new members to our branch which is good news. Unfortunately a good few members live a distance away, we do try to send them news letters occasionally, but we do need more attendance at our monthly meetings. These are held at Swansea Guildhall from 1.30 - 4.00 pm on the first Wednesday in the month from February to November, the exception being August when we usually go to Veronica's house near Mumbles.



Branch members at Veronica's house, August 2002

We have had some very interesting speakers this year and our thanks go out to those wonderful people who spare time to come and talk to us.

Sylvia Oates celebrated her 80th Birthday at the British Legion HQ which was well attended and enjoyable.

Four members attended the Reunion at Birmingham. Although we had difficulty in finding the hall, we enjoyed the meeting, full marks to the organisers. Dot Sterry attended the Remembrance Service at Westminster Abbey and several members attended the local service and parade.

If any member is in the Swansea area on holiday please come and meet us, you would be most welcome, if you need help in finding us ring Doris Craig tel: 01792 873537.

A Happy Christmas to you all and a healthy 2003.

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.

ULSTER BRANCH

Our AGM in September mustered only 22 members out of the 26 Lifers and 44 "Hardy annuals" on the books. Peg Bailie, though living in Belfast, had loyally kept her membership of the Original Omagh Branch. As Secretary, I had to remember to "add one" (like a cake recipe) when declaring membership numbers. However on our October visit to Omagh we heard the sad news that the little branch was closing down – but Honorary Secretary Veronica Muldoon would organise Peg's transfer to the Big Yin (Ulster) who would now welcome her with open arms (the traitor had been our very efficient Honorary Treasurer not so long ago!). I was gently ticked off for omitting Stephanie Harris from my new-members-list in the last Lioness. An interesting addition to our group, she regaled me with verbal "snapshots" of her life in the Far East on the coach home from our summer outing. (Add one?). And, sadly, subtract one: Isobel Webb, a long-standing member, has had to resign through illness – but we hope to keep in touch.

At our AGM in September our Treasurer, Terri Turner, carried out her promise of last year and resigned. As Secretary, Trudy Watson had trawled (and threatened and buttered-up) possible replacements. Her success is evident – Trudy is now Honorary Secretary, forward slash, Honorary Treasurer. Watch out – "forward slash" has acquired a rather sinister connotation for action next year!

Our poppy wreath was laid at the Cenotaph, Belfast City Hall, on Remembrance Sunday by our President, Vi Jones, TA, Vice-Chairman, Maureen Murphy, TA, and Assistant Secretary, Dorothy Wraight, WRAC. They faithfully take part each year, rain, hail, snow or blow.

We are looking forward to Christmas, the Annual Luncheon in February, the Summer Outing in May and the AGM 2003 – and Kathleen Twist and Veronica have promised that our visit to Omagh will keep going strong in October, even if the branch has folded its tents!

WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND BRANCH

After the summer recess our meetings resumed in September 2001 and it was reported that our Treasurer, Muriel Pearce, was in poor health and by October she had decided that she would resign the post after serving on the Committee of the Branch for over 35 years. At the AGM on 6 November, Edna Moore took over this onerous post and the remainder of the Committee were re-elected at that time.

Two of our members have been awarded Certificates of Appreciation – Muriel Pearce and Esther Pring, and I (Diane Lawrence) received these on their behalf at the AGM on 06 April. Lt Col Trout presented Esther with her Certificate at the South Area Reunion and we are waiting for Muriel to let us know when she is well enough to attend her presentation.

The South Area Reunion was organised by Salisbury Branch and was held at Larkhill. Many of our members are ex-Ack Ack so they were particularly interested to visit this Army Garrison. We were looked after extremely

well and enjoyed our day out catching up on each other's news. Well done Salisbury!

Throughout the year we have had various speakers at our Branch Meetings talking on subjects as diverse as Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises; the "Scandal at Ilstington House" which concerned Princess Sophie who had an illegitimate child. She was the daughter of George III, and the father of the baby was purported to be her brother, the Duke of Cumberland; and "Look Back with Laughter, an Encore", where we were regaled with memories of the old music hall.

We also had our annual luncheon at the Crown Hotel, Weymouth which was well attended, and an outing to Bath and the American Museum at Claverton Manor – we were lucky in that we had chosen a day when they put on a special show of the War of Independence with soldiers dressed up in uniforms of the time, complete with muskets and lots of loud bangs.

In June we were well represented at the Veterans Parade on the Sunday of Veterans Week, when the British and American dead from the Normandy invasion are remembered. Other Standard Bearers, including the WRAC National Standard borne by Maureen Deeley, were on parade, and we had a stall on the seafront on Thursday 20th. The proceeds of £150 were sent to WRAC Association HQ with a request to place £75 to the Benevolent Fund and the other £75 towards the Lioness.

Our numbers remain fairly constant; three members, Mary Polley, Sheila Major and Linda Roots have sadly died, but we have recruited two new ladies, Joan Young and Janet Cox (both ex-WRAC).

We look forward now to an interesting year and to the Grand Reunion in April 2003 at Birmingham.

WILMSLOW BRANCH

Our report this time will be brief as our hearts and heads are full of Christmas and New Year plans.

We are all eagerly awaiting our Grand Re-Union in Birmingham in March. There are possibly 10 members attending. Whilst there, we have arranged to meet the Secretary of the Norfolk Branch to confirm our visit to Great Yarmouth and the plaque to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the incident when 26 ATS girls were killed during the raids in May 1943.

Our branch will be on holiday in Lowestoft in May 2003.

WIMBLEDON BRANCH

Once again we have had a varied and interesting programme.

In May we had an excellent talk on Washington and Oregon States, USA illustrated by superb slides. Sadly, owing to sickness, attendance was very poor.

Our Summer Party was held in June, always a popular event but this year few members were present.

Another interesting illustrated talk was given in July by a very knowledgeable speaker, Mr Symes. He was very keen on his subject "Thames Sailing Barges" and their history. Also this month ten members went on an organised visit to the Royal British Legion Poppy Factory in Richmond where they saw the process of making the whole process from the receipt of the rolls of specially produced red material through to the production of the individual button holes and the various styles of wreaths. We were given the history of the work and had the opportunity to speak with many of the workers – and to make our own poppy!!

September was a members afternoon where fashions, knick knacks, tea and tableware from previous decades were shown. The afternoon ended with a quiz.

In October the Branch Annual General Meeting was attended by 17 members. It was essential to have as broad a discussion as possible to decide whether the branch could continue. As you reported in the last copy of the "Lioness" both the Branch Chairman, Marie Wade, and Secretary, Jean Lloyd, felt unable to continue in office and resigned. They have served the Branch well and we are most grateful to them, sympathising with them on their health and family problems. Despite appeals, no members offered to serve in either capacity, but our valued Registrar, Doris Lee, has offered to take on additional secretarial duties provided she receives help from members if needed. With our small membership we are not required to appoint a chairman.

So we live a little longer.

In November we held our second "Bring and Buy" which raised the magnificent sum of £120 which benefits the branch and our favourite Charities.

WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH

There is very little to report from Wolverhampton Branch for this issue. Branch meetings continue to be well supported with various speakers, bingo and seasonal fairs. Our meeting room has recently been refurbished making it more attractive to any potential new members. Members continue to support the Civic Sunday service and Remembrance Day service held at St. Peter's Church in the city centre. Most of the members attended the Area Reunion which was extremely well organised by Birmingham Branch.

The season of Christmas lunches has just begun with an event at Holme Lacey, a stately home near Hereford recently acquired and refurbished by Warners, where members were warmly welcomed and where they enjoyed a very good meal.

During the year the Secretary had received a research enquiry but because of the paucity of information on the record cards was unable to give a satisfactory reply. As a result a History of Service Form has been devised which members have been invited to complete but are under no pressure to do so.

Diamond Wedding



Cpl. Doreen Davies ATS to L/Cpl Alec Peeters R. Signals, June 27th 1942 at St Christopher's Church, Brislington, Bristol

Poems

WOMAN IN UNIFORM **WRITTEN IN FRANCE 1940** **PDF Compressor Free Version**

The click click clacking of my silly machine,
And the swearing of the Don R's below.
And the tinkle of glasses in the O.R's canteen,
Are the only War Sounds I know.

The prittle prittle prattling in the hut by day,
And dull despair at night,
And the Censor's blue pencilling all that I say,
Are the only foes that I fight.

My lover and brother are there in the mud,
Is my arm than their's less strong?
Less cool my head? Less red my blood?
Less right my hate of wrong?

A spirit that's brave and impatient and free,
To a skirt must bow – futility.

SO LONG, MATE

We don't want to lose you, but we think you ought to go,
The edict has gone forth; there's no reprieve.
It's hard to say goodbye – we've learnt to like you,
And now we can't say more – it's time to leave.
But don't forget us when you're back in "Blighty"
Think of us – the lads you've left behind.
Accept our thanks for hours of willing service,
We were lonely. Very homesick. You were kind.

We shan't forget the way you stormed our stronghold
Vanquished quite our grumbles with your guile.
Called our Sergeant Major "Topper" – ragged our Sergeants.
Even made a certain Lance Corporal Jack smile.
How you started crusted bachelors picking roses
Made a party of each morning cup of tea.
How you drunk our beer, and "Never heard" our language,
How you civilised poor exiled brutes like me.

You pulled your weight; you settled down in earnest,
You knew the hours were long, the Service tough,
You never groused. You brought a breath of England
Each time you flashed a mirror. Dabbed a puff.
We shall feel a little lonely when you've left us
You've got the stuff that makes good soldiers, ATS.
So as soldiers lets shake hands and get it over,
Cheerio, mate, "Be seeing you". God bless!

Submitted by Mrs K Portman, 4 Kemble Close,
Ross Road, Hereford HR2 7SB



WORDS TO A SONG WRITTEN AND SUNG BY THE HEAVY ACK ACK BATTERY FOR THEIR HOSTS, 509 HAA

(Sung to the tune of "We haven't said thanks for that lovely weekend".)

We wish to say thanks to the 509,
For while we were with you
We had a good time,
The Officers, The Gunners, the ATS too
Have all made us welcome
We hate leaving you.

We'll miss all the rounders
The netball as well.
We wish that old Hitler
Would just go to hell,
But still, what's the use?
We'll have to go as we came,
And hope that one day, we'll all meet again.

Submitted by Heather M Morris (née Norris),
W/1235354, 544 HAA Bty, 1942 – 1946

Does anybody hear from ex-544 Battery HAA. I would love to hear from anybody?

EX-SERVICE HOMES REFERRAL AGENCY (ESHRA)

ESHRA is a new agency that has been funded for a trial period by several ex-Service charities. Due to its success it is to continue as part of The Royal British Legion. The service is provided for older people who served in the armed forces and their dependants.

ESHRA has details of all Care Homes providing residential and nursing care and independent living accommodation managed by ex-Service organisations. Also available are details of homes run by private and voluntary organisations as well as sheltered accommodation, if this is more appropriate for the needs of the individual.

The advisers can provide guidance regarding Social Services assessments/funding; welfare benefits, Service charities and other organisations that provide help for the elderly.

ESHRA has a website; www.eshra.com, e-mail: eshra@britishlegion.org.uk and a telephone helpline: 020 7839 4466 which is staffed from 9.30am to 12.30pm and 2.00pm to 4.00pm on working days.

Articles of Interest

MEMORIES AND REUNIONS

Mrs Celia M. Bass (née Mickey Rooney) W/377094
118 Banksbarn, Dignmoor, Skelmersdale, Lancashire
WN8 9EX



"Mickey Rooney" with her collection of badges and brooches

We all wear our WRAC badges with pride. When people ask me what my badges are, I just say "On my left are my army ones, yes I was in the WRAC, and on the right are my Scottish brooches which I am collecting."

I was at Huron Camp in the 1950s. I had bought a black and white camera from one of our girls and snapped quite a few photos which I had enlarged and now have a friends' wall in our living room. I am still in touch with about 50 girls from that time.

We've had mini reunions and we keep looking for more of our old friends. I have just found one of our cooks, Terry Braine, who knew most of us and we are planning to meet her soon - 50 years is a long time to wait. We are going to have a mini reunion in June in Birmingham. When Terry heard, she said she would love to meet up with her pal who came from there. So I wrote to a WRAC in that town and was surprised when I checked 1571 to hear a voice giving me the friend's new name and phone. They're now in touch catching up on 50 years news. I only wish we could find our other friends from Huron Camp that easily.

FROM AUSTRIA TO HONG KONG

Pamela D Barton MBE, W/270292, A1126 New World
Apartments, T.S.T. Kowloon, Hong Kong, S.A.R. CHINA
E-mail: pambar@netvigator.com

I understand that in the 1/2002 edition of Lioness, which I

missed, there was a photo of WRAC in Hong Kong which I would have loved to have seen. However, Jill Trainor's description of Hong Kong is very accurate and, I am sure, of interest to all WRAC members who served in Hong Kong.

When I disembarked on 09 November 1959 from the Troopship Oxfordshire with my husband and two children, Hong Kong was little more than a sprawling city with most of the population living in broken down huts on steep hillsides. It has been a wonderful experience watching it grow into the huge vibrant metropolis that it is today and I have loved every minute of it. Since the handover in 1997 I have become a Permanent Resident of the Special Administrative Region of China and carry an Identity Card carrying this and other details. Like thousands of former Colonials I have given time and financial help to many charities for the indigenous people, animals and the environment and we feel proud to be made Permanent Residents. Of course we still retain our birth passports.

I joined the ATS in May 1943 and served for 6 years, the last two being in Klagenfurt, Austria as a motor cyclist/mechanic. When I wasn't busy in workshops I was out in the countryside taking spare parts to repair vehicles that were driven by a group of soldiers known as General McLean's Special Mission who were engaged in rounding up Nazis.



Pamela Barton in Klagenfurt

To the best of my knowledge I was the only member of the WRAC to be demobbed in Austria - one day a corporal and two days later out of khaki and into navy blue carrying the honorary rank of Captain, as P.A. to the Director of the Army Kinema Corporation. (Incidentally I applied for that position in full motorcycle kit complete with crash helmet). This change of rank presented some interesting situations!! Those two years were the most exciting of my life although I have been in many scrapes and adventures since, travelling many times around the world in the last 52 years.

I have kept in touch with several friends from the days at

Jaeger Barracks, Klagenfurt and whenever possible we have celebrated my birthday together each year in many different places. I would love to hear from anyone who served with the RASC Austria in 1947 to 1949 and hope to meet many old friends at the Reunion.

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I look forward to the "Lioness" – keep up the good work.

THE QUEENS JUBILEE PARADE – 4 JUNE 2002

Mary Clements, 15 Orchard Avenue, Stanley,
Nr Wakefield, W Yorks. WF3 4PB

We mustered at 2.30 pm or thereabouts, 20 across, 20 deep, Major Maskens-McIntyre being in charge and our right hand marker. We all used the ladies' room at the Home Office before moving off! The camaraderie was great as you can imagine, we were tucked in right behind the Royal British Legion plus Standards, like being behind a 20ft high wall! Once we were on our way the atmosphere was fantastic and very emotional. We all thoroughly enjoyed our day, no mishaps. Major Maskens-McIntyre thanked us all. Thankfully the weather forecast was wrong and it was fine and dry.

After the parade, Diane from York Branch, who I was marching alongside, invited me back to her hotel for a cup of tea. Her mum arrived and invited us back to her hotel for a barbecue on the rooftop and to view the RAF fly past. What a bonus! The barbecue was great and plentiful courtesy of London Transport; their generosity knew no bounds. What a friendly bunch they were.

As for the fly past, well we couldn't have got any nearer to the aircraft, they just flew alongside, words cannot describe the breathtaking sight and proximity. This was the icing on the cake. When the crowd sang "You'll never walk alone" and "Land of Hope and Glory" outside Buckingham Palace so did we, what an atmosphere.

I made my way back to Kings Cross on the underground with thousands of very happy people. On arrival I spotted Doreen, also from York Branch, waiting for her train. Nearby sat two young ladies dressed in red, white and blue from head to foot. They asked if I'd been marching. I said yes. They said they'd seen us. I said I was surprised anyone had seen us and they said "We saw you, and you all looked b—— marvellous." Praise indeed.

A very proud day to be remembered always.

ROYAL GARDEN PARTY

Ms W M Phillips, (known as Phil Phillips)
4 Gerald Palmby Court, Northwall Road, Off Western
Road, Deal, Kent CT14 6RP

I was fortunate enough to receive an invitation to the "Not Forgotten Association" Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 25 July 2002 and enclose a photograph taken with one of the Yeomen who also lives in Deal.

It was an excellent afternoon and thoroughly enjoyed by all on a very warm sunny afternoon.



Phil Phillips and friend at Buckingham Palace

POPPY'S IN A FLANDERS FIELD

(Extract from Dacorum's Branch visit to the Poppy Factory)

Mrs V Thompson, 54 Leys Road, Hemel Hempstead,
Hertfordshire, HP3 9LE

Since the First World War the modest scarlet field poppy has achieved a prominence unequalled by any other wild flower in history, it changed from being the emblem of consolation to becoming a symbol of remembrance.

The following verses captured the imagination of the British people in the dark days of trench warfare on the Western Front when so many young soldiers failed to return home.

In Flanders field the poppies blow
between the crosses, row on row,
They mark our place: and in the sky
the larks still singing, fly,
scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead, short days ago
we lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
in Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
the torch, it is yours so hold it high
if you break faith with us who die
we shall not sleep, though poppies grow
in Flanders field.

The verses were written by Colonel John McCrae, a Canadian, who had served as a gunner in the South African war. At the outbreak of the First World War he opted once again to join the fighting ranks. Having become a distinguished professor of medicine at McGill University, Montreal the authorities decided that his abilities could best be used in that direction so he was appointed a Medical Officer and landed in France with the first Canadian contingent.

It was during a lull in the action at the second battle of Ypres in 1915, when in charge of a small First Aid Post,

that he wrote the verses in pencil on a page torn from his despatch book and sent them to Punch who published them under the title 'In Flanders Field.'

With only six months to go before Armistice, Colonel McCrae was brought to the hospitals on the French coast. On the third evening he was wheeled onto the balcony of his room to look over the sea towards the cliffs of Dover, the verses were obviously on his mind as he told the doctor who was caring for him: 'Tell them this...If ye break faith with us who die, we shall not sleep.' That night Colonel McCrae died. He was buried in a cemetery above Wimereux, within sight of the cliffs of Dover. Colonel McCrae's poem by then was well known, the last verse in particular impressed an American lady, Miss Moina Michael, who wrote a moving poem in reply:

The Victory Emblem

Oh you who sleep in Flanders fields
sleep sweet - to rise anew;
We caught the torch you threw
and holding high we kept the faith
with those who died.

We cherish too the poppy red
That grows on fields where valour led,
it seems to signal to the skies
that blood of heroes never dies,
it lends a lustre to the red
of the flowers that bloom above the dead
In Flanders' fields.

Two days before the Armistice was signed some colleagues, at the YMCA, gave her a small gift of money with which she bought 25 red poppies. Wearing one herself, she sold one to each secretary and this is claimed to have been the first group selling poppies to raise money to help ex-servicemen.

The first poppy day was held in 1921, the poppies obtained from France. The newly formed British Legion opened its own factory in London in 1922, its purpose to give practical help in times of need to all men, and now women, who served in the forces, and their dependants.

The 'Royal' prefix was conferred in 1971, the factory now manufactures over 35 million poppies and 65,000 wreaths at Richmond in Surrey for the annual poppy appeal.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY IN CYPRUS

Mrs J A Groundsell née Davis, W/100349
Herakli Araouzou str, Constantia Court, Flat 26, 6th Floor,
Neapolis 3106, LIMASSOL, CYPRUS

This year the chairman of the Limassol Branch of the British Legion, Cyprus invited my husband and I to go to Dhekelia on Remembrance Sunday. I asked if it would be possible for me to lay a wreath on behalf of the WRAC Association. I obtained an insert for a wreath from Col Cook, then another Legion member who is good with computers managed to find and print a badge in colour.

We gathered at the Military Cemetery at Dhekelia where

RBL members laid 200 crosses on military graves, including that of Sgt J M Harry WRAC. We went on to the Garrison Church for the Remembrance Service where I took part in the wreath laying ceremony. Afterwards we were invited to the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess for an excellent traditional roast lunch.



I was married in Cyprus in February 1962 after serving at Episkopi and am still going strong 40 years on. My husband Jim was a Lance Corporal in the ACC and we returned to live in Cyprus in January 2000. Is there anyone out there who remembers us?

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NINETY TWO YEARS YOUNG
May Kirby née Redmore, W/32892
119 Westcott Street, Hull HU8 8LZ

On 13 September I travelled North with members of the Hull Branch to attend the North East Reunion at Marston, Middlesbrough and what a very enjoyable weekend we had.

The reunion dinner was excellent, and the entertainment first class.

I would like to say a big thank you to the members of Cleveland branch for their hard work and also for the surprise gift presented to me for being the "oldest member there", what a nice thought. I am 92.

The afternoon was over all too quick and everyone started to get ready to leave before I had time to speak to a Cleveland member but I am planning to attend the 2003 Reunion and hope to meet some members there.

I was at the first Reunion at the Royal Albert Hall, I believe it was 1947, my memory is failing, and have only missed one since then. My accommodation then was under the Clapham South Tube Station at one shilling a night.



Recruiting drive at the door of Hammonds with Lady Atkinson (May is in the middle)

I enlisted in March 1940 and reluctantly retired June 1963.

Does anyone remember?

AN EMIGRANT'S TALE
Miss Emily M Bright, PO Box 404, Gosford,
New South Wales, Australia 2250

On Saturday, 26 May, 1951, three months after leaving the WRAC, I sailed from Tilbury and arrived in Australia on 02 July, to join my parents, married and single siblings and their children. By the time I arrived there were sixteen close relatives over here and four cousins. I was

fortunate enough to find employment in Gosford and remained there until retirement, at the age of 60. By the beginning of March 2003 I will have been retired from employment for 25 years, though there are times when a function is held at which we former employees are able to meet socially in this area.

Except for the family members, I do not know of many British ex-servicemen or women other than an ex-Troop Officer and an ex-Corporal who served with 93rd Searchlight Regiment to which I was assigned as a driver/mechanic on 31 July 1942. Initially I was a generator operator, though eventually I became a co-driver on the ration lorry, then driver of the Troop Officers' utility. In the event of shortages of generator operators I could be relocated on detachment, though towards the end of the war drivers also seemed to be in short supply. The Troop Officer to whom I refer was very well known to myself and I believe you will be interested to learn that she became the first Lady President of an RSL Sub-Branch in Australia and she was awarded Life Membership of the Services Club to which she belonged for her tireless and, at times, selfless work for the Club. She was also the first lady to be granted Life Membership of the Services Club.

This officer was the first 93rd Searchlight Regiment Troop Officer I actually had, and what she has achieved within a Returned Services League Club, is very unusual as indicated. She has no relatives out here, though she says she has friends.

I keep in touch with her by telephone, though I doubt if I will ever be able to see her now due to health reasons and difficulties with using public transport.

It has only been through contact with people who served with the 93rd and through Lioness that I was ever able to contact these two old comrades. It is far easier to find people in UK, than it is here.

With kind regards and best wishes, yours in friendship.

THE WRAC STAFF BAND
THE MARY NAOMI WALLACE MEMORIAL
MEDAL 1952 - 2002
MARY NAOMI WALLACE 1920 - 1951:
ATS 1939 - 1945
by Jane Smith

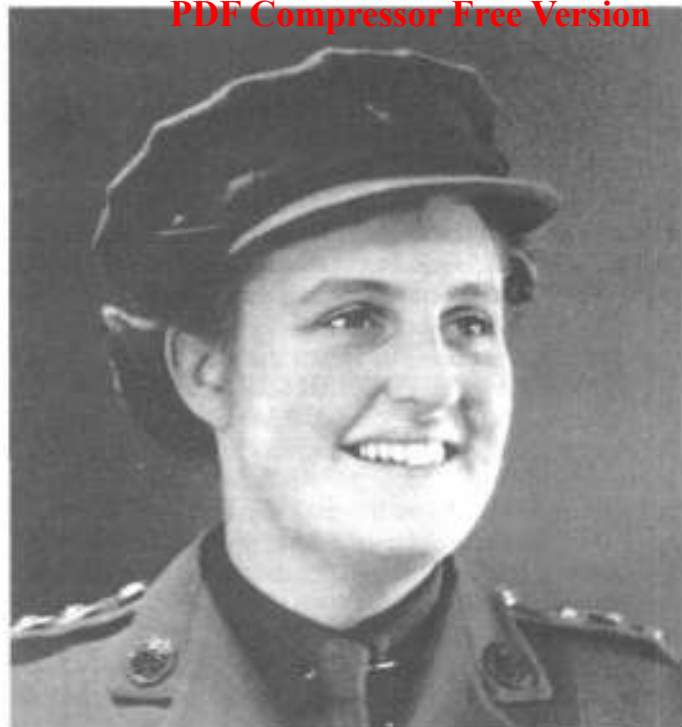
The year 2002 marked the 50th anniversary of the award of the Mary Naomi Wallace Memorial Medal. This Medal was awarded every year by the Worshipful Company of Musicians of the City of London, on the advice of the Director of Music, to the best instrumentalist of that year in the WRAC Staff Band.

Mary (known as Naomi) died in 1951 and the Medal was established in her memory by her father, Mr William Graham Wallace, who was the Master of the Worshipful Company from 1952-53. It was struck in bronze with the Company's crest on one side and the Goddess of Music represented on the other.

On the occasion of the Medal's Golden Jubilee, I would like to take this opportunity to look, for the first time, at

the person behind the medal. Who was Naomi Wallace and what was she like? Her brother Malcolm and her sister Diana have very kindly supplied the following information about her.

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Junior Commander Naomi Wallace

Mary Naomi Wallace was born on 27 March 1920 in South London, the eldest of three children. Her father, William Graham Wallace, was a Chartered Accountant who, in 1926, took a job in Maidstone, Kent to improve his financial position and meet the growing expenses of a young family.

Naomi was a bright child who could read fluently at five and gained a scholarship to Rochester Grammar School for Girls. She was also a strong character and, after a couple of years, her Mother thought that she would develop better at a boarding school. So, in 1935 she went to Queen Anne's School at Caversham near Reading where she did equally well. Being a quick reader with her father's photographic memory, she decided to train to become a professional librarian. In 1938 therefore, she went to London University to obtain a degree.



The Family in 1944

l to r: Lt Malcolm Wallace, Jnr Comdr Naomi Wallace and Maj Graham Wallace

Her father had, for some months, been very realistic about the gathering war clouds and, in August 1939, the family holiday at Lee-on-Solent was cut short to take up "battle-stations". Graham Wallace was already a voluntary reservist, having served in World War I and he rejoined the Army in the Pay Corps. Even before war was declared, Naomi followed his example and joined the ATS.

She was stationed at Storrington in West Sussex with a search light battery (the fact that they had radar detectors was then strictly secret). After a while, she was deemed to be officer material and she attended an Officer Training Unit. She spent most of the War at Eaton Hall near Chester where she rose to the rank of Junior Commander and was in charge of some 200 women and girls before demobilisation at the end of 1945.

While still at school, Naomi had heard about the sterling work being done by the Toynbee Foundation in East London and, although drawn to working among the disadvantaged in life, she was aware that a sheltered upbringing ill-equipped her for such work. Her wartime experience now amply equipped her for fulfilling her vocation and, after demobilisation, she took a Social Science Diploma at Barnet House, attached to Oxford University. While there, she was sent to Huddersfield as part of her training to become a Probation Officer. She proved to be an outstanding student and was offered the post which her training officer was vacating. She dealt mainly with young women and children. While in Huddersfield, she and a colleague pioneered a scheme for taking young boys on probation to holiday camps.

In 1950, Naomi took a similar job in Worthing, Sussex but after a few months she developed "Bronchitis", which eventually and rather belatedly was diagnosed as lung cancer (though she never smoked). After Christmas 1950, she was transferred from Rochester Hospital to Brompton Hospital in London where she died in February 1951.

Naomi had a strong Christian faith which shone through her work and her relationships with family and friends. She had a lively wit and was very well read. She enjoyed good music and played the piano a little. One of her main joys was singing in a Ladies Choir in Huddersfield.

THE WRAC STAFF BAND MEDAL RECIPIENTS 1952 - 2002

The Medal was awarded on 46 occasions to members of the WRAC Staff band. The first person to receive it was Major Lynette Hopkin in 1952, then a corporal, who went on to become Director of Music from 1974 - 1984.

Following the band's demise, the medal is now awarded to female musicians in training at the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall. The complete list of Medal winners to date can be obtained from the WRAC Association HQ.

To conclude, it is obvious that this Medal is unique. It not only commemorates Mary Naomi Wallace and her service in the ATS, but also celebrates the young women military instrumentalists of the past, present and future. Their names are inscribed on a board of honour, which

for many years was sited on the wall of the Assembly Hall in the Queen Elizabeth Barracks. Now, it can be seen in the Museum at Kneller Hall. While the WRAC Staff Band is no more, its traditions live on in the Mary Naomi Wallace Memorial Medal.

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QUEEN ELIZABETH BARRACKS REVISITED

Hi, my name is Mal French (W441605) but I was known as Chops in my Army Days. I did my bit for Queen and Country in the late '70s which seems like a lifetime away.

Recently I was fortunate enough to have a tour around the derelict Queen Elizabeth Barracks in Guildford and thought some of you might be interest to hear about it.

In May 2001 I started work with Guildford Borough Council. I had to do a 2 week induction course based at the Council Offices and while there I saw maps and promotional materials on the Q E Barracks. I thought to myself "What's this all about? How can they build on the Camp? What a shame, I would love to have a look around before it all gets pulled down".

To cut a long story short, I made extensive enquiries and eventually contacted Laings Homes who said they would take me around. I wasn't allowed to go alone; obviously my reputation was still following me around!!

I was told to expect the place to be vandalised and so I was very apprehensive. It was with an unsure heart I went along, a lot like when you join up, not sure what to expect. It wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be. It was a really strange experience though, to be on camp with no noise from the girls, no NCOs shouting out orders. I did a naughty that day – I *ran* on the Parade Square! Mind you I did wonder if someone would shout at me out of the blue. It goes to prove that some things are so instilled in you from training that you never forget them.

I nearly caused a riot because I wanted to take some photos of the Camp. By the time my escort had phoned his boss to ask permission, and he had rang MOD (getting the top brass out of a meeting), I felt if I had nearly caused World War 3. Unfortunately I was not allowed to take any.

It was so strange passing the Sands Club (shoe polish and Robins starch), the Medical Room (memories of needles etc) the Guard Room, (trousers tucked up under long coats to hide them), the Stores, (those awful PE Bloomers) and memories flooded back of walking around in your PE kit until your uniform was ready.

The feelings, thoughts and orders never leave you (not that I stuck to the rules or obeyed orders anyway). It was sad to think no more Q E and no more WRAC. As I said, it was an experience I was glad I had.

Out of the blue I received a posh invitation from Laing and Linden Homes to the launch of the redevelopment of the Q E Barracks to be held at Guildford Guildhall. The developers did a good job with the presentation and have tried to take on board the suggestions of residents and organisations.

Last month I had another call from Laings to ask me if I would do an interview for a National Newspaper. I said yes and I was asked if anyone else would be interested to go! I said I thought I could muster up one or two more ladies. I then contacted the Association who contacted various members of the WRAC and ATS. About 20 of us went along for breakfast and a tour of the now defunct Q E Park. It took us ages trying to work out where all our buildings used to be.

If anyone out there remembers me I was posted to Bicester, Kineton, Rheindahlen between December 1971 and December 1975 and also if anyone remembers Lynne Pullen 1972 – 1976 Guildford and Rheindahlen. We would love to hear from you. Mobile telephone No. 07929664223

UP-DATE ON THE FORMER QUEEN ELIZABETH BARRACKS, GUILDFORD

by Jane Smith

Laing Homes South West Thames and Linden Homes South East, organised a tour around the new housing development on 19 October 2002, to which former WRAC members were invited.

A press release and photograph were produced and are reprinted here by kind permission of TTA Public Relations Ltd.

"November 5th 2002

THE WRACS RETURN!

Eighteen former members of the Women's Royal Army Corps, including two former colonel/commandants, once based at Queen Elizabeth Barracks in Guildford, were invited back to the site by Laing Homes South West Thames and Linden Homes South East to see for themselves how things are changing as the former barracks is transformed into Guildford's new 'garden suburb'.

After meeting up in one of the development's luxurious show homes for coffee, pastries and shared memories, the ladies were taken on a tour of the other four show homes now open and then for a drive around the site.

Despite the lack of landmarks – only one of the original buildings remains, the former museum – the ladies were able to identify where they lived, worked and marched and enlivened the morning with their memories.

Mr and Mrs David Davis are one of just three couples who married at the barracks. They made the journey back to Guildford along with two former colonel/commandants and several majors and sergeants. Another former trainee, Mrs Cattermull, was delighted to see that so many of the trees had been kept. She noted that "the houses are extremely nice, certainly not like the accommodation we had as trainees! My husband and I are particularly impressed with the gardens which have been beautifully landscaped".

Just before the Second World War, an area of land to the north of 'Stoughton Barracks'; was developed into the

Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) Training Camp; the ATS was formed of women who helped to support the Armed Forces. The women were involved in logistics, administration and secretarial duties or driving ambulances and supply trucks. This ATS Training Camp developed into **PDF Compressor Free Version**

During the war, the ATS Training Camp was visited by Eleanor Roosevelt and Clementine Churchill in October 1942.

After the Second World War, this ATS site served as a base for the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) from the Corps' founding in 1949. The barracks had one of the largest parade grounds in England and part of the installation housed the Royal Map and Chart Depot, where sensitive military maps, battle plans and charts of the various parts of the British Empire were stored for safekeeping.

Christened 'Queen Elizabeth Barracks' in 1951, the site was used as a depot and training centre where virtually all WRAC servicewomen were trained. 'Queen Elizabeth Barracks' was the only exclusive WRAC unit in the British Army, the only men on the site were the army trainers.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, Patron of the now defunct regiment, attended a WRAC reunion there in 1979. A WRAC Museum, whose contents now reside in the National Army Museum in Chelsea, was opened on the site in 1991 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

Due to the reorganisation of the British Armed Forces following the fall of the Berlin Wall 'Stoughton Barracks' and 'Queen Elizabeth Park' became surplus to requirements with the latter becoming derelict since its closure by the Ministry of Defence in 1991. When 'Stoughton Barracks' was redeveloped the need for a new role for 'Queen Elizabeth Barracks' was highlighted. Now, Laing Homes and Linden Homes are creating an exciting new chapter in the history of the site.

Linden currently has three and four bedroom, detached and semi-detached homes available at Queen Elizabeth Park, with guide prices from £292,950 to £649,950. The show homes are open daily from 11 am to 5 pm. To arrange an appointment to view, or for further information please contact the Linden Homes' sales team directly at



Recapturing old memories

'Queen Elizabeth Park' on 01483 237188.

The Laing Homes' show homes are open for viewing daily from 10 am to 5 pm. For more information, or to arrange an appointment to view, please telephone Suzie Magness directly at Queen Elizabeth Park on Tel 01483 511013. Guide prices for the current phase of 3 and 4 bedroom homes range from £340,000 to £635,000."

WORLD WAR II AND SMALLPOX - EITHER POTENTIALLY LETHAL... BUT BOTH?!

Hilda Christina New née Gamble, W/33581

It was mid-summer 1943, I had been married for about 3 months and my husband had been sent from Nairobi to the Far East. I discovered, to my delight that I was expecting our first child and wanted the baby to be born in England. I applied to be sent home. My instructions were that I should report to the authorities at Mombasa and I would be allocated my passage home on a troop ship. This I did, and boarded the SS Lancashire, which was supposedly on its way to England. Incidentally, I had travelled on the same ship previously from Durban to Mombasa.

The journey was uneventful really, we did what most people travelling at that time did, and I joined a concert party on board. I had always been in a concert party, and we entertained the troops on board. At the time, I did not feel very well, but put it down to the early stages of my pregnancy. In my innocence, I assumed that I would stay on board until we docked in my homeland. However, war is war and, as they say, orders is orders.

In the morning early, I do not remember which morning, although for some reason I have it in mind that it was a Thursday, a note was given to me informing me that I was to get ready to leave the ship in 20 minutes time. As I was not at all well by this time I cannot remember whether I questioned this decision or not, but I do know that when we arrived at Tewfik, which is at the Red Sea end of the Suez Canal, I left the ship with difficulty. The ship could not dock in the harbour. So, with my kit bag, a small tin trunk full of presents and a "moses" basket full of baby clothes, I went down the side of the ship on a rope ladder and scrambled into a boat which took me ashore. I remember it was very hot, very humid and I felt like death.

I reported to the Regimental Transport Officer who is supposed to be aware of all troop movements, but he had never heard of me, had no paperwork to account for my being in his area of responsibility and had no idea why I had been told to leave the SS Lancashire. He hadn't a clue as to what he should or could do for me. I did not know a word of Arabic and it was some time later that I found out which country I was in - I was not a happy young lady!

Eventually, he arranged to send me to El Kantara which was, I found, a staging place half way up the Suez Canal occupying space on both banks. He placed me on a train quite some time after my arrival and my orders were to report to the RTO at El Kantara. I have no recollection of my reaction to all of this, I cannot imagine that I did all of it without complaint, but I felt so ill, what with pregnancy

and a sore throat, I do not think I really cared. I do remember quite clearly that it was very dark and late when I arrived and that this second RTO had no knowledge of me either. There was a billiard table in the room next to his office and he made me up a bed on it because I was **PDF Compressor Free Version** very long when he woke me to advise me that he had a lorry going over to the other side of the Canal where I could be billeted in a Palestinian ATS camp. I went over and was allocated a tent in which there were seven other girls asleep. I had to drag in my bedding and eventually went to sleep.

The next morning I awoke to the sounds of activity from the other occupants of the tent. Most of them did not speak English, but one, Elizabeth Oppenheimer, introduced herself and told me that they were attached to a British Hospital. When she had had her breakfast, (I could not have eaten anything – I felt too ill) she took me over to the hospital and introduced me to a sergeant orderly from Birmingham. When he heard that I came from Wellington in Shropshire he introduced me to his colleague, Reg Vaughan, who I knew by sight and who turned out to be very good to me.

I then reported sick and the Medical Officer, having checked me over, decided that I needed rest and medicine for my throat. For a whole week, because I could not face the food served to the Palestinian girls, Reg accompanied me to the Church Army Canteen each evening so that I could have a good meal. On the Saturday evening, when we arrived at the canteen, I was too poorly to have anything more than a cup of tea. On the way back to the camp, I remember we called in at the ward where he worked and he was given permission to give me a dose of Veganin.

When Reg arrived to take me to the canteen on the following evening, he came into the camp visitors' tent because I was too ill to walk anywhere. He left early, said goodnight and that was the last time I saw him until after the war.

The next morning, the Monday, when I looked in the mirror, I realised to my horror that my face had broken out in a rash. Once again I attended the sick parade. The doctor, a Lieutenant, examined me and then ordered me to go and wait in an empty tent next to the parade tent and wait for him. I remember that there was a bed and a bedside locker, there may have been a chair also but nothing more.

I stayed in that tent all day and was visited by one Lieutenant, two Captains, one Major, one Lieutenant Colonel and even a full Colonel. Not one of them offered me any explanation or diagnosis and I wished that I was dead.

Late that night, I was taken by ambulance down the road alongside the side of the Canal to a place called El Bala. When the ambulance arrived, a Nursing Sister and Doctor examined me in the ambulance. At that point I began to realise that I probably had some form of serious illness. An area had been set out and cordoned off about 50 yards from the wards. Inside the roped off space were two tents. I was taken to one of them and I noticed two

Palestinian girls in the other. These girls had volunteered to enter quarantine with me to act as not only nurses but also my companions for the duration of my incarceration. They had been vaccinated accordingly.

A crate had been placed on the rope marking the perimeter, opposite the ATS Ward. At mealtimes our food was brought out and placed in the crate, a bell was rung and one of the nurses had to go and collect the food. I learned that the reason I had been kept waiting at El Kantara all day was that there had never been a pregnant woman with this disease and they had tried to keep me at El Kantara for observation, but as they had no ATS accommodation I was moved on.

As well as the two nurses, I was visited by a Nursing Sister and a Doctor, Colonel Caird. I seem to remember him as middle aged. Colonel Caird told me that I was suffering from "Variola" – the technical term for Smallpox. As well as his daily ward rounds, he would, upon occasion, don his protective clothing so that he could just have a chat to prevent me, as he put it, "getting morbid". He brought me a Times Crossword book, a small dictionary and a pack of cards. I have never had the opportunity to thank him properly, but I still remember him as one of the kindest men I have ever known. At first, of course, I was very ill but as I began to recover, so my mind began to focus on what had happened and how I could cope with it all. I do not remember exactly how long I was in that tent, time meant nothing, but it was weeks.

As my health improved, so did my outlook. I began to be interested in the creatures around me, I watched the ants at work. I would drop a piece of cake and watch them carry it away, admiring their ingenuity. I became aware of the irrigation work being carried out by Prisoners of War from a nearby camp – Italians I think. Within sight of my tent was a well, looking for all the world like the ones pictured in children's books. During the day, I watched the POWs utilising the well, collecting the water for their work. However, as soon as I closed my eyes, the well would somehow transform itself into a gallows, and I would suffer the most frightening of nightmares.

One evening, the calm and tranquil desert suddenly erupted into a frenzied sandstorm. Sand filled the world, eventually settling as a thick layer on everything. The tents were covered as was everything inside. My bed was full of sand and somehow I lost my watch, doubly sad as it not only helped to measure the time, but it had been a 20th birthday present prior to my leaving England. While the sandstorm raged, I became more and more frightened as I realised the tent pegs were being blown away. In my fright, I became convinced that the tent would collapse injuring my unborn children. The two nurses were very kind to me calming me down despite their own fears and concerns. Eventually the tent did collapse and I was sent out into the sandstorm to sit, huddled under a blanket on the boundary crate while we waited for a squad of soldiers to don protective clothing and re-erect it. I do not remember whether it was just my tent which blew down or both mine and the nurses tent. I do remember that for the duration of the storm we were all very frightened by the most unpleasant experience. (How I wish I had the chance to go back to thank those girls again for their care of me).

Eventually the storm abated and we returned to our previous calm (if boring) existence. The time continued to pass slowly and without further upsets. I had become more and more agitated about getting word to my husband about my predicament, that I was expecting our first baby and was still stranded in Egypt. My only worry was the concern with regard to normal war time censorship, but there was the problem of infection to consider. Eventually I was allowed to write my letter, which was laid out in the sun to parch before the infectious and contagious nature of my illness was considered to have been counteracted.

At last the day came for my discharge from hospital and I entered Colonel Caird's office for the first and last time. Colonel Caird told me that I was not to be able to continue my journey to UK for the birth of my baby. Arrangements had been made for me to proceed to Cairo where I would receive the care necessary. I asked if my baby had been affected by the Smallpox. He explained that the baby would have suffered the disease with me, that when he or she was vaccinated before travelling home, the vaccination would either not take or would induce vaccine fever. In the event, my son did get vaccine fever, but he is now in his mid fifties and has never suffered from any infectious illnesses – he is totally immune.

So... this period of my life was over and I said thank you and goodbye to those who had been so very kind in their care for me – especially “my” two nurses and Colonel Caird. I set off for Cairo in a fair amount of fear and trepidation. It is normal to be concerned about an unborn child, one which had suffered through smallpox brought even greater anxiety.

To this day I do not know from whom or how I contracted smallpox. I do not know if the crew of the SS Lancashire was aware of the seriousness of my illness and that is why I was made to disembark. I gather that the passengers and crew themselves were made to go through quarantine before they were allowed to leave the ship.

I now find it almost unbelievable that I calmly accepted the instructions I was given. The thought of calmly getting off a troop ship in the middle of Egypt, in the middle of World War II, feeling like death-warmed-up and suffering, as I thought from the discomforts of pregnancy, now seem incredible. I certainly would not do so nowadays. But then, especially in the forces, if one was given an order, one obeyed it without question. An enquiring mind was not something to be encouraged, if one asked “why” one was likely to be told “because I said so!”.

One thing I do know – every word I have written is true.

**FORTUNE FAVOURS THE BRAVE
300 YEARS OF HONOUR AND GLORY
THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S REGIMENT
1702 – 2002
FORMED AS THE 33RD REGIMENT OF FOOT,
SERVED IN EVERY WAR SINCE 1714
10 VCs, 1 GCM
by Betty France, Leeds Branch**

The local drill hall in St Paul's Street, Huddersfield has always been a Headquarters of The Duke of Wellington's

Regiment, so, when I joined 3rd West Riding Platoon, ATS in May 1939, I was automatically attached to that part of the Regiment currently in occupation of the drill hall namely, the 5th Battalion TA.

This Battalion had been converted in 1938 to Searchlights as part of the Anti-Aircraft Defence of Great Britain. Our small detachment was integrated into the Regimental Headquarters, wore the Regimental Cap Badge above our left pockets and drilled on the Parade Ground under the RSM. It was impossible not to be impressed by the air of pride and history emanating throughout the building, especially as we looked up at the panels portraying every battle in which the Regiment had fought with honour.

On being mobilised, the ATS were quickly divided amongst the four Companies of the Battalion and served with them until 1944 when they moved into Europe. When three former ATS members attended the Centenary Celebrations of the Drill Hall in 1999, they were given the honour of being admitted into The Old Comrades Association (previously reported in 'Lioness').

This Summer, the Regiment has celebrated its tercentenary with Parades across South and West Yorkshire, recruiting exhibitions and a revival of The Havercake March. The latter was a recruiting ploy before the Battle of Waterloo when volunteers, after enlisting, were given a flat loaf of bread known as a 'Havercake'. The Regiment, the 33rd of Foot were known as 'The Havercake Lads' for many years and were regarded as one of the finest Foot Regiments in the British Army.

After rationalisation in 1947, the Regiment was reduced to one regular battalion, the 1st, one TA Infantry Battalion the 5/7th, one TA Artillery Regiment, 382 Medium Regiment RA (DWR) and the Depot at Halifax. The Regular 1st Battalion is now Armoured Infantry with AFVs and Warrior Tanks. It has served in Northern Ireland and Bosnia in recent years. The 300 year celebrations culminated in the presentation of new Colours to this Battalion at Osnabruck, their base in Germany.

I am very proud to still be included in The Old Comrades activities and have purchased a Tercentenary Commemorative Plate which will hang alongside my ATS plates as a reminder of the comradeship of WWII when we very happily served together.

Many ATS members who enlisted before the War must have been attached to Regiments with similar glorious histories. Please let us join in some of your proud memories.

**ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA
FOUNDERS DAY 2003
Thursday 5th June 2003**

Members are invited to bid for tickets for Founders Day. Numbers will be very limited and bids must be received at WRAC Association HQ by 21 March 2003.

Obituaries

GRACE GIBSON Dumfries Branch

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Grace Gibson was born in Glasgow and moved to Dumfries with her family when she was very young. After her education, which included a Bursary award to the Academy and then another Bursary to De Bear's Commercial College, Grace worked in various businesses in Dumfries using her commercial skills. She later took the Civil Service examination which she passed with distinction. This changed Grace's work location, as she was sent to London to work in the War office and later the Ministry of Health. She was already doing Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) in the London Underground. She explained that the London VADs were exhausted, and required help from, as she says, "those of us in the country". And with typical understatement she says "So we did just that."

Grace returned to Dumfries to help support her family, working at the Employment Exchange, and in her account of her years there, she comments wryly that she, as a woman, was paid two thirds of what her male colleagues were paid – "Changed days", she added.

On the outbreak of World War II, Grace joined the ATS and became a driver, working on Ambulances, heavy lorries and water carriers in places as far a field as Devon and the North of Scotland. She was on the short list for overseas service, but, in her own words "never made it". She talked of long and arduous work, but commented "Mind you, I've usually only remembered the good times, the funny times, and the special companionships formed".

After the War, Grace returned home to Dumfries and worked in different positions, some of them managerial, in offices of the Ministry of Labour. At home, she played a major role in caring for her parents, and in later years her sister Annabella (ex ATS). She belonged to many other organisations, such as the RSPB and National Trust. She was an avid fund-raiser, especially for Erskine Hospital and our own Association.

Grace liked to travel, at first in many parts of Europe and later in the British Isles. One of the affectionate tales about her is how hard it was to track her down – had she just returned from a trip, or was she on her way out to another one?

She had, on various occasions, been invited to attend Garden Parties at Buckingham Palace. Every year she had been proud to represent the Dumfries branch at the Remembrance Service at Westminster and I was privileged to have accompanied her for the past few years, I shall sorely miss her this year.

Her last week was a particularly appropriate one. Grace was invited along with other members to an event sponsored by the 'Not Forgotten Association' in Edinburgh. She arrived back in Dumfries on Friday 16th August, full of the excitement and pleasure of the visit, which included staying in the Halls of Residence for Edinburgh University, a visit to the Edinburgh Tattoo and a barge cruise on the Forth-Clyde Canal. Over the weekend, she passed away relatively peacefully – a sad day for all of us. It is good to know that Grace's last week included a celebration. She had a wonderful personality and will be greatly missed, but she left us with so many happy memories.

Grace's Nieces
and Susan Marcroft – Treasurer Dumfries

IRIS CORDELL

Iris died of pneumonia in hospital in Sydney, Australia on 01 May 2002. Before she emigrated in November 1953, she had served in the ATS and the WRAC. Born in Edmonton, London in 1921, Iris was called up to the ATS in 1942, and after about a year's service was posted to East Africa as a clerk. Her draft sailed on a troopship round the Cape. She served in Nairobi and later was posted to the Canal Zone. She was promoted Staff Sergeant and during this time managed a quick visit to Jerusalem. Iris was posted home in 1949 and took her discharge. However after trying a civilian job and a short spell in the Metropolitan Police, she re-enlisted in 1950. This was just about the time that 12 Battalion WRAC and the Holding and Drafting Company had to leave our requisitioned houses in Kensington and Chelsea and move out to Richmond Park Camp. War Office personnel had to shuttle up to Whitehall in coaches.

Iris was a clerk in the War Office for a spell, but it was at the time of the Coronation in Summer 1953 that she really

shone! She was appointed “chaperone” to the contingent of Servicewomen from the Commonwealth who came over to take part in the Coronation Parade. They were accommodated in Richmond Park Camp. There were Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders and one from Southern Rhodesia. Perhaps that was the reason they insisted her to emigrate! She was discharged and left the UK in November 1953. During her years in Sydney she worked in various offices, and took Australian citizenship, returning twice to see her mother and friends. When she retired she studied the theory of Music and passed several examinations. She took a lively part in concerts and entertainments for the Community. Her friends arranged her funeral and attended at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium.

Veronica Dodkins

MURIEL TATUM MBE

It was with great sadness we heard in August of the death of one of our most stalwart members, Miss Muriel Tatum MBE. Muriel attended meetings resolutely. Even when no longer able to drive, she came from Ringwood by bus, no mean feat for an 86 year old. Come rain or shine, whether well or poorly she came and rarely faltered. The last branch meeting she attended was in May, she also attended Southern Area Reunion at Larkhill. Her wonderful service career was from 1940 – 1965, most of which was on “the secret list”. We miss that diminutive, special lady very much and offer her sister Connie our condolences.

D Brookes

APLIN Mrs Marjorie Aplin of Gatley on 19 April 2002. ATS

ASHWORTH Mrs Gwen Ashworth of Bury in September 2002. ATS

BAKER Mrs Ada (Bunnie) Baker, née Parram of Sussex on 8 December 2002. ATS

BELL Miss Muriel E H Bell of Omagh, Co. Down on 3 October 2002. ATS

BERWICK Mrs Janet Elizabeth Berwick, née Kennedy of Perth, on 9 November 2002. ATS/WRAC

BOOTH Miss Dorothy Joan Booth of Worcester. ATS/WRAC

BROWN Miss Violet Isabella Brown of Hereford. WRAC

BUCKLE Mrs Kathleen Maud Buckle of Pershore. ATS

CHAPMAN Mrs Mary Chapman, née Scott of Newark. ATS

CHENEY Mrs Mary Monica Cheney, née Gettliffe of White Hill on 31 August 2002. ATS/WRAC

CLARK Mrs Kathleen Ellen Alice Clark, née Neal of New Milton on 28 December 2002. ATS

COLE Miss Vera Constance Cole of Colchester on 18 October 2002. ATS

COLVIN Mrs Gladys Emily Colvin, née Richards of Hastings on 17 July 2002. ATS

COOPER Ms Sybil M Cooper of Knaresborough on 9 July 2002. ATS

CRABB Miss Joan Mary Crabb of Exeter on 1 June 2002. ATS

EVANS Mrs Nella Evans, née Raymond of York on 17 October 2002. ATS/WRAC

FISHWICK Mrs Rita Judith Fishwick, née Stubbs of Darlington on 28 December 2002. WRAC

FLEGG Mrs Anne Ellen Flegg, née Coburn of Frinton-on-Sea on 14 October 2002. ATS

FLYNN Mrs Edna Flynn, née Dale of Worthing on 12 November 2002. ATS

GIBSON Miss Grace Gibson of Dumfries on 18 August 2002. ATS

GOAD Ms Vera Goad of Plymouth on 8 August 2002. WRAC

GOURLAY Mrs Sara (Clara) Gourlay, née Smith of Edinburgh on 30 July 2002. ATS

GREBBELL Mrs Eileen May Grebbell, née Thompson of Maidstone. ATS

GREEN Mrs Margaret Green, née Leech of Dumfries on 18 August 2002. ATS

HALL Mrs Jean M Hall of Folkestone. ATS

HARPER Mrs Agnes Urie Gilmour Harper, née Kerr of Dumfries. ATS

HARRIS Mrs Kathleen Matilda Harris, née Williams of Bexhill On Sea on 17 June 2002. ATS

HARTE Mrs Thomasina Harte, née Berry of Watford. ATS

HELM Mrs Annie Helm, née Nicol of Lockerbie on 4 September 2002. ATS

HERBERT Miss Eleanor Herbert of York in October 2002. ATS

HOLLIS Mrs Veronica Hollis, née Ede of Dumfries. ATS

HOWELL Mrs Lily Howell, née Aves of Orpington on 18 September 2002. ATS

HUGHES Ms Iris Joan Hughes of St Leonards-On-Sea on 8 October 2002. ATS

HUNT Miss Freda Hunt MBE of Bracknell on 7 November 2002. ATS/WRAC

HUTCHINSON Mrs B A Hutchinson, née Wilson of Bexhill on 20 July 2002. WRAC

JOHNSON Mrs Monica Gertrude Johnson, née Houston of Sutton Coldfield on 10 November 2002. ATS

JONES Mrs Dorothy Frances Jones, née Apps of Bristol on 12 October 2002. ATS

JONES Mrs Elizabeth Lloyd Jones, née Curbishley of Billingham in July 2002. WRAC

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KEEN Mrs Pamela Joyce Keen, née Aylmer of Canterbury. ATS

LAWTON WO2 Josephine Mary Lawton on 1 November 2002. WRAC

LEA Mrs Shelagh Rosemary Lea, née Green of Warminster. WRAC

LEITCH Mrs Audrey Eileen Leitch, née Anthony of Sidcup on 5 December 2002. ATS

LINDSEY Mrs Mary I Lindsey, née Morgan of Portsmouth on 8 September 2002. ATS

MacLEOD Mrs Rene MacLeod, née Bowden of Northampton on 2 August 2002. ATS/WRAC

McNAUGHTON Mrs Bridget A L (Biddy) McNaughton, née Gwyther of Dyfed on 8 November 2002. ATS

MAJOR Mrs Shelia Major, née Cowan of Truro on 7 September 2002. ATS

MALONEY Mrs Ena Maloney, née McNulty of Bexhill-On-Sea on 2 January 2003. ATS

MILLINGTON Mrs Alice Millington, née Thompson of Congleton on 28 July 2002. ATS

MILLINGTON Col (Retd) Edith Ivy Millington of Thornbury on 13 January 2003. ATS

MILLS Mrs Winifred Mills, née Clarke of Luton on 17 August 2002. ATS

MITCHELL Capt (Retd) Shirley Jane Mitchell of Fareham on 7 December 2002. WRAC

MONKCOM Mrs Margaret Florence Monkcom, née Hilton in Bury St Edmunds on 8 August 2002. ATS

MONKMAN Ms Olive A Monkman of Coventry on 1 November 2002. ATS

MORGAN Mrs S M Morgan, née Edmondson of Wigan on 22 July 2002. ATS

NUNN Mrs Daphne Margaret Nunn, née Burnett of Cambridge on 25 December 2002. ATS

O'NEILL Mrs Dorothy O'Neill, née Pearson of Keighley on 5 August 2002. ATS

PAGE Mrs G Page, née McNeil of Newcastle-Under-Lyne. WRAC

PANTON Mrs Anne Panton, née Walker of Brokenfield on 2 November 2002. ATS

PATIENCE Miss Isabella Patience of Inverness. ATS

PEARCE Ms Muriel Pearce of Weymouth. ATS

RELF Miss Ruby Elizabeth Relf MBE of Worthing on 15 June 2002. ATS

RILEY Mrs Patricia Riley, née Steel of Basildon on 21 August 2002. WRAC

ROOTS Mrs Ellenda Dashwood Roots, née Cave of Beamminster on 24 October 2002. ATS

ROSS Mrs Stella Lucy May Ross, née Day of Luton on 8 October 2002. ATS

SELF Miss Sylvia Self of Nottingham on 2 September 2002. ATS/WRAC

SIMPSON Mrs Betty Simpson, née Gawthorpe of Rockingham, Western Australia. ATS

SLACK Ms Gladys Slack of Billingham on 19 October 2002. ATS

SMITH Mrs A Smith of Barnsley on 17 June 2002. ATS

SMITH Miss Elizabeth Smith of Driffield on 25 March 2002. ATS

SNOWDEN Maj (Retd) Margaret Elizabeth Snowden of Wimborne. WRAC

STEPHENSON Miss Elizabeth Stephenson of Driffield on 25 March 2002. ATS

TATUM Miss Muriel Tatum MBE of Ringwood on 10 August 2002. ATS

THOMSON Mrs Barbara S Thomson, née Atkinson of Shanklin, Isle of Wight on 7 September 2002. ATS

THORNE Mrs Isabel Mary Thorne, née Dodson of Surbiton on 13 August 2002. ATS

TURNER Mrs Ivy Agnes Turner, née Gray of St Columb Major on 28 November 2002. ATS

TURNER Miss Margaret Martin Turner of Polegate on 1 May 2002. ATS

WAITE Mrs Pamela Mary Waite, née Serls of St Leonards-On-Sea on 22 December 2002. ATS

WARREN Mrs Phyllis Joan Warren, née Thompson of Exeter in May 2002. ATS

WEBBER Mrs Betty Muriel Webber, née Weare of Alberta, Canada on 27 October 2002. ATS

WELLAND Mrs Phyllis Ida Welland, née Popham of Exeter in November 2002. ATS

WILLIAMS Mrs Edith P Williams, née Hodgson of Bromley on 18 October 2002. ATS

WISE Miss Hazel J Wise of London on 14 August 2002. ATS

WOODFORD Mrs Catherine Ferguson Woodford, née Hickie of Hemel Hemstead on 07 November 2002. ATS

THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

PDF Compressor for the year ended 31 October 2002

	<u>Unrestricted</u>				
	General Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2002	Total 2001
INCOME & EXPENDITURE					
Incoming resources:					
Subscriptions	3,603	1,250	–	4,853	2,628
Income from branches	80,654	–	–	80,654	76,769
Lioness publication income	17,242	–	–	17,242	4,911
Investment income	10,090	–	154,387	164,477	182,788
Donations	45,490	–	81,824	127,314	246,169
Other income	3,176	–	–	3,176	1,418
Total incoming resources	160,255	1,250	236,211	397,716	514,683
Resources expended:					
Direct charitable expenditure:					
Grants & donations	–	–	199,053	199,053	171,912
Expenditure by branches	79,330	–	–	79,330	73,157
Lioness publication costs	17,077	–	–	17,077	–
Other expenditure:					
Management & administration	13,213	–	23,941	33,082	40,238
Grand Reunion	–	–	–	–	–
Total resources expended	105,548	–	222,994	328,542	285,307
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS	54,707	1,250	13,217	69,174	229,376
Transfers between funds	3,176	(3,176)	–	–	–
NET INCOMING RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR	57,883	(1,926)	13,217	69,174	229,376
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS & LOSSES					
Losses on investments:					
Unrealised	(40,476)	–	(495,143)	(535,619)	(539,914)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	17,407	(1,926)	(481,926)	(466,445)	(310,538)
Fund balances brought forward at 1 November 2001	295,019	35,073	4,078,767	4,408,859	4,719,397
Fund balances carried forward at 31 October 2002	£ 312,426	£ 33,147	£ 3,596,841	£ 3,942,414	£ 4,408,859

The net movement in funds for the year arises from the charity's continuing activities.

No separate Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses has been presented as all such gains and losses have been dealt with in the Statement of Financial Activities.

BALANCE SHEET

31 October 2002

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	Notes	2002	2001
FIXED ASSETS			
Investments	10	3,421,622	3,957,242
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stock of badges & souvenirs		1,760	2,980
Association standard		199	199
Debtors		320	214
Cash at bank & in hand		549,497	459,445
		551,776	462,838
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year		30,948	11,221
NET CURRENT ASSETS		521,792	451,617
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		£ 3,942,414	£ 4,408,859
		=====	=====
FUNDS OF THE ASSOCIATION			
Unrestricted funds:			
General funds		312,426	295,019
Designated funds:			
Membership life subscription fund		8,746	9,460
Lioness life subscription fund		24,401	25,613
Restricted funds:			
The Benevolent Funds		3,028,155	3,501,610
The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund		568,686	577,157
TOTAL FUNDS		£ 3,942,414	£ 4,408,859
		=====	=====



THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

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(Incorporating Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps and Auxiliary Territorial Service Comrades Association)

REGISTERED UNDER THE CHARITIES ACT 1960 - No 206184

President: HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT, GCVO

ATS & WRAC BENEVOLENT FUND DONATION

To: The General Secretary
WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester. SO21 2RG

I have forwarded a Banker's Standing Order to my Bank as undernoted:

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Bank Name.....Sort Code.....

Amount.....Effective from...../...../.....

I am a UK Taxpayer and wish the Charity to treat the donations made by this Banker's Order, until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations. (Please delete if this does not apply)

Signed.....Date...../...../.....

✂



BANKER'S STANDING ORDER

To: The Manager

.....(Bank Name and Address)

.....

.....

Please pay to **The Royal Bank of Scotland (16-34-25), 67-68 High Street, Winchester,**

Hants. SO23 9DA, the sum of.....on

...../...../.....(date) as a donation to the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund, **Account No**

10006478, and a like sum on each succeeding year until otherwise instructed.

Name.....A/C No.....

Signed.....Date...../...../.....

Bronze Medal
of
The Worshipful Company of Musicians



MARY NAOMI WALLACE MEMORIAL
RECIPIENTS

1952	CPL L.A.E. HOPKIN.	1973	CPL E A JONES	1996	MUSN L.A.WILLIAMS
1953	W.O.II. E.A. WILKIE.	1974	SSGT E M WEIGHT	1997	MUSN C.L.BARKER
1954	CPL M. CAMPBELL.	1975	L/CPL A PETERS	1998	MUSN L.HALLET
1955	SGT S. TRUSSELL.	1976	L/CPL L A HENNIKER	1999	MUSN S.MARTIN
1956	SGT E.M. WILKIE.	1977	SGT F.A.M.TULL	2000	MUSN J.A.NEX
1958	CPL S.M.SOUTHCOTT.	1978	CPL A.P.PELLATT	2001	MUSN R.F.ALLISON
1959	CPL J. HANCOCK.	1979	WO.II. G.E.SALE	2002	MUSN V.L.EVANS
1960	CPL P. M. BALE.	1980	CPL S.C.GRIFFIN		
1961	CPL R. CROMBIE.	1981	MUSN C.L.STATHER		
1962	CPL M. SMITH.	1982	L/CPL S.I.PILE		
1963	L/CPL P. J. SEAGER.	1983	L/CPL H.M.CORLETT		
1964	NO AWARD.	1984	MUSN M.E.JONES		
1965	L/CPL C.F.SOUTHWELL.	1985	CPL M.J.STEARN		
1966	CPL L.I.GRAY.	1986	NO AWARD		
1967	L/CPL P.J.STARK.	1987	L/CPL S.BURLEIGH		
1968	MUSC P.A.WOODWORTH.	1988	L/CPL E.WILLIAMS		
1969	SGT. R.A.CROOK	1989	MUSN K.GEDDES		
1970	SGT. M.F.LLOYD.	1990	SGT A.M.COWLES		
1971	S.SGT. N.JOBSON.	1991	L/CPL S.J.CAEN		
1972	SGT. V.M.LEWIS.	1992	CPL D.A.TAYLOR		
		1993	L/CPL K.A.DAY		