

LIONESS

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THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 206184

Founded in 1919

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Cover Photographs

Front cover

HM The Queen at the AGC Museum, where she found several items of interest, including her ATS Provisional Driving Licence

Back cover

HM The Queen (as she then was) visiting a wartime Army Bakery. Photo supplied by (former W/138909 SSgt) M Schnobel of Bristol

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first remote controlled *Lioness* where copy is received in Worthy Down, typed by a team consisting of Lesley (at Worthy Down) but because Lesley has been double-hatted for the past few months, also by Jane Freebairn, Alison Schofield and myself. Lesley is a qualified typist, Jane, Alison and I are definitely not, so please overlook this edition's errors. If the magazine is a trifle late appearing, I do apologise, please bear with us - normal service will resume as soon as possible.

Many thanks to all those who have contributed articles and especially photographs for publication. The WRAC Association is now the proud owner of a scanner and colour printer. Also, thanks to all those who responded to the questionnaire in the middle of the last edition, regarding the last Grand Reunion. We will evaluate all the information received before making any decisions, but as we all know, ".....You can't please all of the people all of the time." I have also received several more letters from members who really enjoyed the Reunion, but also expressed their disappointment concerning the behaviour of some ladies during the weekend. I really don't think we should take up any more valuable *Lioness* column inches, I am sure the message will have reached the intended targets. We will need to inaugurate a Sub Committee to help run the next Grand Reunion. All those who would like to join the team either before and/or during the event, please fill in the form in the centre pull-out section and return it to me.

As well as our regular articles, this edition carries news of two of Her Majesty's visits in November at both of which members of our Association were presented. The first was at the Imperial War Museum, when HM The Queen opened the Women and War Exhibition and the second at Winchester, where Her Majesty opened the AGC Museum.

Message from the Vice President



Although it has only been six months since I took over from Brigadier Nield as Vice President, it has nonetheless been a very busy time. On 14th October I was privileged to represent the Association at the opening of the "Women and War" Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in the presence of HM The Queen. Her Majesty was able to relive World War 2 memories by chatting to six fellow former members of the ATS with whom she trained on a driving

and mechanics course. All in all a most memorable afternoon - I commend the Exhibition to any of you visiting London, it's fascinating. Three days later I was on my way north to join friends at the Scottish Area AGM and Reunion in Dumfries. It was wonderful to return to Scotland after 17 years away (I had been Chairman of the WRAC Association in Scotland in 1985/86) and to see so many familiar faces - I had a tremendous welcome and a great day. Thank you Scotland; I can't think of anywhere more appropriate to have carried out my first "official" engagement.

On the Association's behalf, I attended the annual Field of Remembrance Opening Ceremony at Westminster Abbey on 6th November and planted our cross. There was a good turnout at our particular plot mainly by members from the London Branches, but there were also several from further afield as well. HRH The Duke of Edinburgh attended the ceremony. On Remembrance Sunday, Major Anne Maskens-McIntyre and Association members represented us at The Cenotaph. Thanks

to all of you for your unstinting support.

On 21st November, HM The Queen, as Colonel-in-Chief, opened the Adjutant General's Corps (AGC) Museum in Winchester accompanied by Prince Philip and The Duchess of Gloucester. She was "reunited" with her provisional driving licence, which was issued to her in March 1945 when she was serving as a driver in the ATS. The licence is one of the treasures of the museum, which illustrates the history of the AGC and its antecedent Corps. From the Museum, Her Majesty visited the AGC at Worthy Down and was entertained to lunch at the Officers' Mess. I am currently PMC of the Mess so was yet again privileged to be presented to Her Majesty; we spoke about her surprise meeting with her ATS colleagues at the Imperial War Museum in October and she said how thrilled she was to see them again.

Finally, most of you are aware that Major Jane Freebairn has been "holding the fort" by standing in as General Secretary as well as being our Benevolent Fund Case Secretary. Jane, ably assisted by Beth Todd (our Chief Clerk), is keeping "the show on the road" admirably at Association HQ. Mrs Maggie Purkis (Chairman of Wales and West and Chairman of the Executive Committee of Council) has taken on the Editorship of "The *Lioness*" for the time being, until a new General Secretary is appointed. Sincere thanks to Jane, Maggie and Beth for their significant contribution to the Association.

All that remains is for me to wish you all Good Health and Happiness in 2004 and I look forward to meeting up with some of you during the year at one of our many Association occasions.

Sue Westlake

ATS Reminiscences

RIPLEY TRAINING CENTRE

Miss Marjorie Ruston, 37 Mendip Close, Stockport,
Cheshire SK4 1LG

It was a pleasant surprise to see a mention of Ripley Training Centre in *Lioness* No. 1 2003. I did my basic training there in June – July 1942. As a shy 30-year-old, I was like a fish out of water amongst the 18 – 19 year old conscripts. However, a lively 19 year old named Ann took me in hand to share a bunk with her. She showed me how to get a good shine on my buttons and shoes. Ann's home was in Morecambe – a 6d bus ride away. When we were allowed out we went there to press our crumpled uniforms

Ann was posted before I was, and then Sadie Barrett (née Parker) and Beryl Owen took over, and carried me through a clerical course in London, and to our first posting to Beverley in Yorkshire. It was there I met Maisie Edie from Johnstone in Renfrewshire. We remained friends until after de-mob in 1946. We visited each other regularly and spent many holidays together. Sadly, she died 1998. I am still in touch with Sadie Barrett (Co-Durham) Betty Clapham (Guthrie) and Maureen McGregor (Newcastle).

Where is Ann? I had an invitation to her wedding, but was unable to go on account of travel restrictions.

A FADED MEMORY NEEDING RENEWING

Mrs Betty Campbell (née McKay) W/99298
1 Guthrie Place, Rhu, Dunbartonshire, G84 8RF

Just recently there was a very interesting programme on the TV, regarding restoration of old buildings etc. One was about the 19th Century glasshouse in the gardens of Wentworth Castle, Yorkshire also Stainburgh Castle was mentioned, which made me sit up and pay attention, as at one period of my army career I was stationed there. Unfortunately perhaps it was only for a very short period because I had completely forgotten all about it all those years back. I reckon it could have been in the 1942 era, at the beginning of the Red Cap order amongst ATS. I have been around in Ack Ack, Catterick Camp, Belgium and Germany and I can clearly remember places and colleagues often come to mind, but Stainburgh Castle seems a no no area. Perhaps someone out there may also have been on a course there and can enlighten me? Were we stationed in the Castle itself or were we billeted in Nissan Huts in the grounds? The Sergeant Major was used to dealing and drilling men only until we came along. We all felt when he shouted at us we were being hard done by, but on leaving night, we had a party and he sang with a wonderful voice "Old Man River" which surprised us all. I can only think we were there to be drilled properly at the CMP Training Camp.

If anyone reads this and it recalls memories I'd love to hear from you.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Mrs Grace Fatherley (née Bell), W/134871
109 Hartington Road, Mood en Eot, North Shields,
NE30 3PU



I would like to make contact with Laura Dabruz, she is on this photograph which was taken in Germany. We met on a troopship, which was sailing to Antwerp after a short stay in Belgium. We then moved on to Hellmond in Holland where we were billeted with a nice elderly Dutch couple. The room Laura and I shared had been previously occupied by two German Officers. The men in our company were billeted at the local school. Laura was the Corporal cook and I was her assistant. The cooking was done mostly in a large corrugated iron oven, which was situated in the school yard. It gave off loads of black soot. When we had finished our duties we always had to wash our faces and change our shirt collar before making our way to our billets. After spending nearly three months in Holland we celebrated V E Day, our landlady invited us to sit in her back garden and she made strawberry sandwiches and a pot of tea. The wireless was turned on and we were able to listen to the victory celebrations going on in London. The following week we were moved onto Munster, Germany. We stayed in a large house away from the main camp. This house was turned into an Officers' Mess. The house next door was used for the officers' sleeping quarters. Once a week we went up to the main camp with an armed escort to collect our pay and clean bed sheets. The camp is still being used by the British Army.

We celebrated V J Day by having a fancy dress ball. The costumes were loaned to us by courtesy of the local Opera House and we invited some Polish girls who had been brought to Germany for slave labour. My four years in the army were coming to an end. We had a great-knees up knowing we would be on our way to our own homes soon.

Lorna if you are out there in Wales it would be lovely to reminisce.

Mrs Constance Evans (née Britten), W/154701
21 Windsor Avenue, North Hillingdon, Middx, UB10 9AT



*Back Row: (in shirt and tie) Madge Swan, Zella Jones, Edith Hull, Gwen Simpson? Pearl York, unknown
Middle Row: Darky Mann, Margaret Clarke, Margaret Cooper?, Bessie Currie, Kneeling Tich Harrison
The two in front are: Lilly Hammond, Lily Crang*

I was looking through my Lioness No.1 2002 edition and saw the reminiscences of Mrs Betty Homer. Quite a few of us arrived at York Railway Station. There were lorries waiting for us and after the officer had ticked our names off her list we were told to climb in the lorry. Easier said than done! Most of us were in suits i.e. skirts, blouse and jacket. To get in to the lorry we had to put our foot into a metal bar, hike up our skirts and climb in after putting our cases in the lorry first. As there were no tights just stockings and suspenders the squaddies and passers by caught more than a glimpse of stocking-tops. Very embarrassing for 18 year olds fresh from home.

On arrival at Fulford (now Imphal) Barracks we were taken to a very large room with bunk beds along each side and told to put our belongings on the nearest bed. A quick visit to the toilet then off again to be vaccinated, injected and all other things. After that we were once more lined up and taken to the clothing stores. There were long counters with a space between. A Sergeant stood there and we had to stand in the space and the sergeant said 'Small', 'Medium' or 'Large' and one of the ATS behind the counter would hand the appropriate size bundle to us. I was medium. Next we all tried on shoes and hats and skirts and jackets. When we arrived back in the room we had to put on the shirts, skirts, jacket plus underwear. The knickers were a revelation. Mine came half way down my calves and up under my arms. If mine were medium I thought, heaven alone knows what large were!

Of course not everyone had a full outfit that fitted. We had to keep on what did fit and then off again, this time for food. We had been travelling since early morning and it was then about 8pm. Our meal consisted of a small piece of corned beef, one small whole potato, one slice of bread and margarine. Our mugs were filled with tea. When we got back to the room most of us were hungry. My Mother had packed a cake and biscuits and other girls had other food so we shared our food out. It certainly helped us to get to know each other quickly.

I could not wear wool next to my skin. I get an awful rash

so I was able to wear my underwear all through my service. York I loved and still do.

I go each year to the ATS/Royal Artillery Reunion. The comradeship of the war years lives on – long may it do so.

STORY OF AN ARMY CAREER

Sister Josephine Jenkins (Augustinian),
(ex- W/350725 Sergeant J Pollard)

Provincial House, Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, The Ridgeway, Mill Hill, London NWY 1EH

I have started to write the story of my army career and hope that readers will find it interesting, perhaps recognising elements from their own experiences.

PART 1 AT SEVENTEEN AND A HALF

In our family Dad had served in the Army right through World War One. Right through growing up he influenced me with his love of the Army and he familiarised me with the information in encyclopaedias, his favourite marches, etc. He had been dead six years by the time I reached seventeen but there was only one job I wanted to do when I attained that age – to be a woman soldier.

But Mum comes into the picture now. "No!" she said, "You are not going to join the Army!" Being a typical teenager I'm afraid I vehemently replied "Oh yes, I am! You can stop me now but you won't be able to when I reach eighteen!"

When I look back now it's easy to understand her attitude. My brother who is two years older than I, would never be called up because his health has always been too poor for service life. My sister was only seven when I wanted to join up, so she would be left safely at home. No, Mum was worried in case I might succumb to any of the dangers of service life since I was a girl! But that didn't stop me, and in the spring of 1948 I enlisted in the ATS.

Kathleen Kyne, née Martin W/388638
4 Drury Lane, Houghton Regis, Beds LU5 5ED



Memorial to ATS Personnel killed 11 May 1943

Please see above a photograph of the memorial to the ATS personnel who were killed in Yarmouth, when a bomb fell on their billet. This story was told to me a few years ago and when we were in Yarmouth on a bowling tour we searched it out.



Kathleen Martin August 1955



Kathleen Kyne

I have also included a photograph of myself in uniform and as now, in a different uniform.

Mrs M Harris, former W/138909 SSgt M Schnabel
24 Chiphouse Road, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 4TS

I was born in the hamlet 'Welbine' near the medieval town of Leitmereitz on the river Elbe in the Bohemian Highlands. Aged 22 years I left with my employers for Prague when Hitler occupied the Sudeten. I did not come as a refugee, but found employment near Perth, Scotland.

Early 1942 I had my calling-up papers, passed my medical exam and reported to Newbattle Abbey, near Edinburgh for 6 weeks basic training. I was one of the first batch of girls to arrive at the WD Bakery, Aldershot. RSM William Randall, the master baker, devised a crash course releasing men for the fighting zones. Mr Randall was a wonderful man, of unimposing stature, a humanitarian. My friend Netta Ramage, née Dickson of Larkhall, Scotland, always maintains that he should have had a medal. (Yes, we are still in contact).



As you can see from the photographs, The Queen, as she was then visited on one occasion. We bakers certainly toiled and sweated. It always grieves me that no mention was made of our work. (Not that I'm aware of). It was in the Summer 1946 when demobilising went swiftly that cooks began to show the old camaraderie was breaking up. Many returning troops passed through the bakery, but the girls had to carry on.

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Was it the heat, were they so near breaking point with the end so near? One day when the sun shone hottest, several girls sat down and wept, stating they would not move another finger! The strongest and the little ones doggedly coped. RSM Randall's tribute to the small girls. "Their hearts are bigger than their bodies".

The master baker informed Miss Sleigh (CO) who in turn reported it to the Medical Officer. The MO ordered the girls off the heavy work at a moment's notice. War Office turned to the nearby German Prisoner of War Camp for help. I, having recently returned from leave, felt comparatively fresh. I volunteered to stay on and help. I was a SSgt by then and Mr Randall's assistant. Realising that he needed experienced help, Com. Sleigh agreed. That took concentrated effort.

RSM Randall, responsible for production, never took his boots off, so to speak, for 6 weeks, taking over the nightshift from 10pm to 6am and seeing to all the office work during the day. I worked 6am - 10pm, covering 2 day shifts, teaching and working.

The German POWs looked a clean bunch on arrival. Some knew a little English, Mr Randall some 'soldier German' from his days after the First World War with the army on the Rhine. German being my native tongue, we managed well. "If we want work out of them, we have to treat them like human beings. Put a dough cloth on the table in the 'speakeasy', I'll bring my 3 monkey ashtrays and some fags, make it look welcoming" he instructed me. They set to work intelligently. Gradually Mr Randall put them in charge of the different machines and ovens.

My help was no longer needed.

MEMORIES OF BULFORD CAMP

Mrs Muriel Webb, née Durn
8 Partridge Close, Stonehouse, Glos GL10 2HJ

We were a small Signal Unit (later a Coy) attached to 6th Airborne Division, stationed at Bulford Camp, on Salisbury Plain. My time there apart from a few short postings on relief was from 1942 to when I was demobbed in 1946.

We were billeted in the large Sandhurst Block with the ATS Drivers, but were later moved to three-bedroomed semi-detached houses on the camp, which I believed had been Officers family homes. They were heated by a coal fire only in the kitchen, the coal we had to scrounge whenever available which wasn't very often.

We consisted of Wireless Operators, Teleprinter Operators and like myself Telephone Operators. The two-position switchboard and the teleprinter were housed a few miles



W/159575 M Durn

away at Syrencote House, which was the Headquarters of the 6th Airborne Division Southern Command.

Bulford Camp then had two cinemas and a theatre where stars like Roger Liversey and James Mason, among many others entertained us. There were Sgt Mess parties and dancing in the gymnasium most weeks.

The off duty times were great but the shifts including nights were very busy, especially leading up to the invasion. Then the Camp was so quiet and everyone was gone. It was a very sad time when the casualty list came through the teleprinter as so many boys we had known were lost during the drop at Arnhem. However it was a time I would not have missed and the experience had trained me for my civilian work as a GPO Telephonist.

I am now in my late 70's and have spent a number of my retirement years doing voluntary work. At the moment my husband and I are working for SSAFA.

LIFE IN A NISSEN HUT

Mrs B H Matthews, 103 Broadmead, Collington,
Cornwall PL17 7DE

Printed below are memories of W/145604 Cpl Mabs Merritt (née Gipson) who was in the ATS in 1941 - 1945, with 474 HAA(M) Battery at Rhoose near Barry in South Wales. She served with W/77103 Sgt Beryl Dixon (née Matthews) who sums it up as saying "It really is a true account of the happenings at the time 1941 - 1945".

Day began with Reveille at 6.30 am, the O/Sgt bellowing "Come on lets have Yer outside in 10 minutes". Having crawled outside we would be subjected to 20 minutes of sheer cruelty, jumping up and down, arms flaying all over the place. PE was followed by a mad rush to the ablutions, this was a delightful building situated at the extreme end of the ATS billets. It comprised of a line of wash basins, 4 bath cubicles and toilets facing these. The

floor was concreted with duckboards lying on top. The only heating was the water that came from the taps, and that was not always as heated as one would expect, therefore your ablutions took only the minimum of time.

Breakfast 7.30 am We only packed things which went into folding your sheets and blankets in a certain way. Each blanket had a narrow label on which was your name and number, having folded the said blankets and sheets in the correct fashion, one blanket would be folded around sheets and the other two blankets, the label showing and strictly in line. This bundle of bedding went to the top of the bed, next went your respirator and steel helmet, below that, water bottle, followed by tin plate, mug and knife, fork and spoon. Last of all were your walking out shoes, all polished of course. Dress uniforms were hung up in front of your greatcoat, the sleeves of both had to be tucked into the back, buttons and brasses had to be gleaming at all times.

8.15 am O/Officer would inspect barrack rooms and at 8.30 we had to be outside for Battery Parade and inspection by the CO. You were then detailed off to your various duties. The operational sections for the day would proceed to the Gun Park or Command Post, where maintenance on instruments would take place. These sections would be on Standby and Look Out. The sections not on standby would be doing fatigues or drills, some would be in the cookhouse or cleaning windows, white washing stones or anything that didn't move. Those unlucky perishers who had committed some trivial offence would be detailed to clean the ablutions these were "lavvi loo loos" and of course there were those who spent a shift peeling spuds. The best fatigues were when on guard duty, this kept you away from prying eyes, the Guardroom being on the perimeter of the camp. Most fatigues would finish at lunch time and usually meant you would have a pass out from 1400 to 2359. Those on pass would be inspected before being given this pass. Having got out of the camp, you would then either walk through Porthkerry Woods to the delightful town of Barry, or walk to the end of the lane which was about a 1/2 mile of desolation to the main road, hopefully to catch a bus, or thumb a lift, be it private car, military lorry, dust cart, coal lorry. We've been in them all.

The nearest town was Barry. What can one say about Barry? Not a lot! Here was the station, the flea pit, some chapels and Thomson Street which was out of bounds. The nearest town of any size or substance was Cardiff, which offered more and varied diversions.

Sometimes we were allowed 24 hour passes. We had a pretty little scam going we would get platform tickets in Cardiff station, board the London train, give the tickets up at Paddington, when the volume of passengers passing through the ticket collectors didn't have time to notice. We would do the same thing coming back. We would catch the midnight train back to Cardiff and then puffing billy back to Rhose and be in camp in time for roll call.

There were times when the C/O would be bloody-minded and stop all passes for operational exercises. The RAF and Navy co-operated in these and they would last all day and at the conclusion of an exercise the O/C, one Major Bishop would assess. The old devil was never satisfied

and forever reminding us that the Civilian population needed and expected our protection, Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!

Things did get hairy sometimes when there was a spate of Air Raids and we would be in action most of the night. I remember one particularly nasty night, someone somewhere decided to shine a searchlight battery on our site, of course the raid started. The searchlight belched it hideous beam skywards and the Hun, not only was he being shot at, but his plane was being lit up. He didn't like that so he got his machine gunner to shoot down the beam of that dastardly searchlight and out went the light, the Hun was able to continue on his way. I think the aforementioned searchlight took itself off, I know not where.

As D-Day approached all leave and passes were cancelled and camp placed on High Alert, and the only way one could get out of camp was for medical reasons. There were some crafty people in my section, one day 4 of them asked me to get them on the medical list to have their eyes tested at Llandaff Hospital, which had a military wing. I thought what's good for them is good for me too. So with help of the Medical Orderly, we obtained the necessary documents and off we went, we had a lift in the Ration Wagon. Arriving at Llandaff we saw the optician one by one, I was the last one in. Having done his duty the officer said "Corporal, you and your squad have half the error in your eyes that I have in mine. Clear off, enjoy yourselves and don't be late returning to camp". From yours truly a smart salute and "Yes Sir, thank you Sir" and a hasty retreat.

Once, while on leave I had the need to go to a civilian dentist who removed a front tooth. On returning from leave I visited the Army Dentist in Barry, to ask for a tooth to fill the hole in my facial orifice "did I" said he "have difficulty in chewing?" "No, I do not" said I "well then" said he "if it doesn't interfere with chewing, the Army couldn't be expected to supply me with a tooth". Feeling rather put out I found a civilian dentist and had to pay the £1.10s for a replacement tooth.

It is a well known fact that you should never volunteer for anything in HM Forces. There were certain ways of volunteering for benefit, that was courses, because if you passed courses you got an extra 2p or 4p a day, thus I went on courses for Gas, Aircraft Rec', Military Discipline and Education and almost doubled my pay.

About 3 months after D Day our Battery was sent to take over an 8 gun site near Sidcup. This was a very dangerous area being on the flight path of the V1, Doodle Bug Rockets and later the V2. Up till now we had only Aircraft to deal with, this was something very different. Very often the Doodle Bug flew too low for the larger guns to fire, this meant the lighter guns came into play. The plotting of Doodle Bugs was very difficult because they came in droves and would pop up all over the plotting table, but from the numbers that were sent over really very few of them got through. We worked closely with the RAF.

Hairy though it was, there were some hilarious moments, one night there was a stonk on, the Doodle Bugs were coming in numbers the Claxon started blaring, this meant everyone not on duty were to get themselves into the

nearest slit trench. Some girls were so eager to get into a trench they went into the first one at great speed and laded on top of 3 female officers. Another night we were in bed when a stray bug came over. The girl in the bed next to me, who was a Scot, muttered "praise the lord to keep its engine running". At that precise moment the engine cut out, there was an almighty explosion, doors shook, windows caved in, beds danced, women swore, it felt that all hell had been let loose. Fortunately for us the thing blew up in the empty field next door. Another came over by itself the next day, we got it as it came down.

The onset of the V2 was awesome, you neither saw them or heard them until they exploded on impact. There were all sorts of theories of how to deal with them, intelligence found out that a V2 Rocket took 3 minutes from Launch to impact, this was what we had to work with. The idea that we were told was that if we could work out the angle, height and range of the rocket, so that the guns could elevate and fuse the shells and all sites fire at the same time. It was thought that maybe the V2 could be destroyed before landing. It was a huge job because it involved all guns ringing the London Area. The powers that be were worried about the morale of the population, for 14 days we practised, 24 hours a day, at last the drill was perfected and we awaited orders for firing from high. In the event the theory was never put into practice because the launch site was captured. During this time we were very lucky, about 10am one morning when most people were in the NAAFI a V2 exploded in the air over our Camp, shrapnel was falling everywhere, it was very fortunate that there was no one outside. Ten minutes earlier and there would have been numerous casualties. The winter of 1944 was very severe, at one point all our boilers packed up, there was no heating, no hot water, food had to be cooked on field kitchens, and we went to bed almost fully clothed. This condition went on for almost 2 weeks.

VE day arrived to the joy and relief of everyone, all work was suspended except for the most essential, we were all invited by the locals to the Village hostelrys and we graciously accepted. Back at camp some Gunners had produced a horse from who knows where, anyway the C/O was being conducted from the officers mess and was being helped onto the back of the nag. The nag was given a slap on its rump and of it went trotting around the site with Major Bishop hanging onto its mane. The officers mess was raided once again and out was escorted the Second in Command, he was man-handled to the roof of the Radar cabin and was rotated violently. Great fun, but it all ended next day and we were back to normal spit and polish.

During the summer of '45, there being no further use for Anti-Aircraft Batteries, we were disbanded and posted to various other units. I was posted to the Provost HQ in Buckingham Palace Gardens near Victoria Station. The Provost HQ occupied 3 large houses, on arrival I was interviewed by the female Provost Marshal. She invited me to go on a Provost course and become a Red Cap, this meant that I would have to relinquish both stripes and at the end of the course get back one stripe and a red topped cap. I respectfully refused, stating that my rank was substantive and could only be removed by Court Martial or at my own request, which I was not prepared

to do. She seemed surprised that anyone could refuse to join the Elite Corp of Military Police, with a sniff she said I would have to go into admin, and be in charge of the rations. As I only had a few months to go before my demob I didn't mind and as it happened turned out quite to my advantage, and also to the Cook NCO and the Clothing NCO. Knightsbridge Barracks was the ration depot where I came to know a Free French Sailor and we would swap my onions for his sugar, jam for cheese etc.

Needless to say the cook was quite chuffed, and showed her appreciation in many culinary ways. The clothing NCO and I worked closely together too, when a lorry full of used ATS clothing lost a bag, we retrieved it, sorted it, and took ourselves off to Chelsea Barracks and renewed the lot. I was able to have 3 greatcoats which I was able to take home and when demobbed took them to any Railway station where you get £1.10s each, I think I had about 4 pairs of pyjamas and 3 pairs of new shoes as well!

The final day of my war service came on February 26th 1946!

MY MEMORIES OF THE ATS

Mrs Doreen O Lane, W/84093

51 Herne Bay Road, Tankerton, Whitstable, Kent CT5 2LJ

Re-reading the reminiscences in the last issue of "Lioness", it started me thinking about my life in the ATS from October 1941 to March 1945.

My first posting was to the Talavera Barracks in Northampton where I did the normal square basing etc., before being transferred to the Grant Hotel, Southbourne, near Bournemouth for training as a teleprinter operator. We did our training in a hotel called "Crawfords" and the NAAFI was situated in a hotel I believe was called Sunnyside Corner. Most of the hotels along the front were used as billets for various service personnel including the RAF, Pay Corps, etc.

As I was already a touch typist I managed to complete the course in four weeks instead of six – but during that time I met Prue Reynolds who became a life long friend. She was godmother to my second son and I was devastated when she died in January 2000.

Both Prue and I – along with a few others – were posted to No 8 War Office Signals and we were billeted in the Buckingham Court Hotel. At first we worked in the original War Office, but when the Citadel was built we were transferred to our new surroundings (a photo of which was published in a previous "Lioness"). After a while, girls who knew the Morse Code were invited to apply to become Wireless Operators and 24 of us were sent on a Signals Course and were billeted in the Mons Barracks in Aldershot. On passing out we returned to No. 1 War Office Signals as High Speed Operators and transferred to billets in Queen Annes Gate. The houses backed onto Birdcage Walk and St James Park.

Here I became friendly with Pat Sims, Ellen Cox and Mary Richardson among others, some of whom came to my wedding on 3 June 1944 when I married Harold Lane who was a War Office driver. We were given special leave

to get married at that time – all normal leave had been cancelled because of the war situation. I enclose a photo of our wedding – the dress being one of the first American dresses available to service personnel. I believe the Rossevelt wedding dress was worn by a Scottish bride on the same day.

PDF Compressor Free Version



The wedding photo shows, from left to right, Dulcie Watson, Jessie Edwards, Marion Merrill, Jean McNee, Barbara Longman and Mary Richardson. Other ATS members were also there, but unfortunately are not in this picture.

Shortly after my wedding, I overslept one Sunday morning and instead of going to the Guards Chapel in Wellington Barracks, for morning service which I often did when duty permitted – I went for a late breakfast in Angela's café in Petty France – just outside the wall surrounding the Barracks. While there, the V1 bomb fell on the Chapel – so obviously my name was not on it!

When the V1 bombs were at their worst, the Wireless Operators were dispersed around the country as our work was connected with the various front lines, and should the War office have suffered during a raid, the result could have been catastrophic. Some of us went to Habberly Valley, near Kidderminster, another contingent went to somewhere in Surrey and a third stayed at the War Office.

Another change of venue at one time was to Pirbright Guards Barracks where we stayed for five weeks. At the end of our stay a few girls composed a song based on a popular song of the time. I remember the first two lines

which were "We never said thanks for the lovely five weeks, five weeks in the country....." If anyone out there knows the rest of the words I would love to hear them again.

I was discharged under Para 11 in March 1945 and had a daughter in November of that year, followed by two sons, one in 1948 and another in 1952. Sadly my husband died from a heart attack in November 1983 after 39 1/2 years of happy marriage. My family now consists of 10 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.

If anyone has news of Pat Sims who once lived in Maybank Avenue, Elm Park, Hornchurch, Essex I would be thrilled to hear from them. I look forward to receiving the "Lioness" and always hope I will see something about one or other of the girls I served with, but so far without success. I belong to the Canterbury Branch of the WRAC Association and enjoy meeting up with other members at the monthly meetings.

I did see a request in the "Lioness" and Saga magazine from Pippin Henry (who married an Australian Bomber Pilot) asking friends from our service days to contact her and she says it was much to her surprise and delight to receive a letter from me and we have been in correspondence for over 11 years, today mostly by e-mails. My present partner and I went to visit them on the Gold Coast in 1994 and had a wonderful holiday. We had an open invitation to go again, and when my ship comes in, it will certainly be something I should like to do.

CHILWELL REVISITED

Mrs Nancy Crinter, 34 Tonehill, Wellington,
Somerset TA21 0AU

I have been very interested in all the correspondence regarding Chilwell Ordnance Depot as I too was stationed there from 1943 to 1946, in fact, I met and married my husband whilst we were both stationed there ~ he was in the REME.

Last month, my daughter and her husband took us up to the Yorkshire Dales for a short holiday. On the way up I asked where we were going, as I realised we were not on the direct route to York. My daughter replied that as she had heard us discussing our time at Chilwell on several occasions, and guessing that we had never re-visited in the ensuing 57 years, she was taking us back for a look round.

We had a job to find the site in question as it has changed so much. Now named Chetwynd Barracks, which occupies a fraction of the area we knew as the Ordnance Depot, we saw supermarkets, shops and countless houses ~ not to mention a guard at the gate armed with a gun!! My daughter went in to the guardroom and explained why we were there and made arrangements for us to visit on the way home.

On our way home, a very pleasant young lady in the MOD Police got in the car with us and asked us where we would like to go. First on the agenda was Building 157. My husband said that was where he used to work on the tanks. It is still in use to kit out all army personnel. Next I

recognised a building I used to know as "Sandhurst". It is now the cookhouse, and the Policewoman took us inside. After this, I told her that my hut was at the top of a steep hill, which I remember marching up and down daily. Sadly my hut has been pulled down to make way for housing. The gym still stands and is still in use, however, the parade square is now a car park. There is now only one gate as opposed to the original three.

When we left the depot we went to look at the old station at Attenborough, which had been used by us all, but while it is still in use, it is also surrounded by housing.

My daughter wrote to thank the RSM and the MOD policewoman and has arranged for us to revisit in the spring. The RSM has some archived material and videos and likes to conduct visitors round.

BIGGIN HILL

Gwenda Gillham (W/130921 Gwenda Martin)
London Branch

About 8 of us ATS arrived at Biggin Hill in August 1942 from 131 HAA Regiment at Alverstoke which had been sent overseas. We formed No 2 Platoon D Company, 11 Group. We were billeted in houses taken over for the WAAF with whom we shared until more ATS joined and we were given our own houses. The Operations Rooms were away from the aerodrome. The first one was Towerfields, a house near the Mark, in which was situated the plotting table surrounded by a dais. RAF Officers sat opposite their table and Army Officers overlooked both tables. Our table next door had a huge map of the south east of the country, showing all the gunsights and searchlights. We received our information from the RAF radars and passed the information on to the Dover gun sights - a very special line.

Our first top secret operation involved the raid on Dieppe. We were all very upset when we heard it was a failure as we had been in touch throughout. The RAF Commander at Biggin Hill, Sailor Malan, was a very fine man, not above giving any of us a lift to the Opps Room.

After a while we were moved to the Rookery which had been modernised and provided much better conditions. It was a very busy time, we had many a near miss from the German bombing raids around the Bromley area.

Just before the invasion began, we were joined in the Opps Room by Americans, who were newly stationed at the aerodrome. As the flying bombs became more intense the guns were moved to the coast and the barrage balloons inland.

We were bombed out of our house and had to return to Biggin Hill but were to sleep in surface shelters across the aerodrome - no fun at all. Eventually we were moved to a school in Lubbock Road and slept in Chiselhurst Caves.

During 1943 my sister, W/246571 Vera Martin joined us at Biggin Hill. In August 1944 when we were en route to a gun site near Sittingbourne we were hit by a flying bomb. My sister was killed instantly and I survived with cuts and bruises.



Vera (left) and Gwenda (right) Martin

THE EX-ATS LASS

An ex-ATS lass stood at the gate,
Weary, worn and old
And proudly asked Saint Peter
For admittance to the Fold.

"What have you done on earth", said he
"To gain admission here?"
"I've served", said she "in the ATS
For many a weary year".

"Pick up your bags" Saint Peter said
And quickly rang the bell
"Come in and make yourself at home
You've had your share of Hell.

Mrs M Stockdale - Berwick-on-Tweed Branch

ADVICE FROM TRADING STANDARDS

Misleading prices in shops:

Prices on any consumer goods, which you select yourself before buying, must be on the goods or near the goods.



In as much as a group of rags is called a "bundle" did you know that a group of crows is called a "murder" of crows? ~ Not a lot of people know that!

Articles of Interest

WOMEN AND WAR

Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum
15 Oct 03 to 18 Apr 04

Her Majesty The Queen, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh and the Duke of Kent, opened the Women and War Exhibition and was able to relive memories of her World War II service in the ATS as 230873 Second Subaltern Elizabeth Alexandra Mary Windsor. Her Majesty told guests:

"From my experience as a Second Subaltern in the ATS, I began to understand the esprit de corps that flourishes in the face of adversity and forges friendships which last a lifetime. Throughout my reign, I have watched with admiration how women in the three services and many related organisations have taken on wider responsibilities and evermore demanding roles on land, sea and in the air. This exhibition is a tribute to their spirit and to that vital contribution made by women in the past, present and I am certain, in the challenging future."

Lt Col Sue Westlake (Chairman of Council) and Major (Ret'd) Jane Freebairn (Benevolent Fund Case Secretary and Acting General Secretary) were presented to Her Majesty as she toured the exhibition. As the Royal party left the museum, Her Majesty was surprised to find a 1940's Army vehicle parked at the entrance and six ladies who shared service with Her Majesty nearly 60 years ago. Sadly, one lady who was not able to be there was the late Sheila Munro. As Sgt Williams, she was a Sergeant Instructor at No1 MT Training Centre in Camberley. She had the privilege of working on the same vehicle as Her Majesty and also sitting next to her in some lectures. Her widower, Mr Ian Munro M.C. was at the Imperial War Museum and met Her Majesty. He said that Sheila's time on the cadre course remained the highlight of her very full life of service to others.

You may have seen an article in the Daily Mail on 15 Oct 03 which showed three photographs - one of 13 ladies in ATS uniform taken in 1945, one of whom was Her



Majesty. The second picture shows six of their number today: 1. Patsie Young, 2. Betty Royle, 3. Pat Blake, 4. Elizabeth Turnbull, 5. Rosamund Williams, 6. Eileen Hall. ...AND, No 7, The Queen on 14 Oct 03. The Daily Mail has kindly given us permission to publish the article.

Many of our members who attended the Ack-Ack reunions at York will be aware that Baroness Betty Boothroyd, also present at the Imperial War Museum, has been campaigning for a permanent monument to mark the achievements of women during wartime. Baroness Boothroyd announced that permission had been granted to site the monument in Whitehall, adding, "It's been a long struggle but finally this nation will have its own lasting tribute." Describing the role of women in World War II, she said, "No job was too difficult, no job was too dangerous, no job was too small and no job was too dirty."

This is a major exhibition, the most ambitious of its kind ever mounted on this theme, telling the story of servicewomen, nurses, land girls, factory workers, secret agents, pilots and peacekeepers from the First World War to the present day. It includes uniforms, paintings, posters, photographs, film and personal memorabilia from around the world.

Like many of our members, I am disappointed that the memorial to women's service is not more obviously pointed to those who signed up to serve King and Country. I am quite sure that this is because, by the time the memorial was commissioned, the various Associations concerned could no longer afford the costs involved. However, many choose to forget that while there has not been a global conflict since 1949 (thank God), members of the WRAC volunteered their service in exactly the same way as those of the ATS, WRNS and WAAF and many did indeed serve in theatres of war. Since the demise of our Corps, women have, as we know, been choosing to serve alongside the men of the Regular Army, and have been sent, with them, to serve wherever they have been needed. As we in the WRAC took up the baton from the ATS and ran with it, so the women in today's British Army are running with our baton. The Women and War exhibition ensures that they too will not be forgotten.

Maggie Purkis

FIFTY YEARS OF REMEMBRANCE

Evelyn Norton (W/375520 Pte Norton) 10 Dower Close,
Darley Abbey, Derby, Derbyshire DE22 1DJ

Fifty years after I represented the WRAC at the Festival of Remembrance at The Royal Albert Hall, I returned to relive the experience. I, Evelyn Norton, was a Private at Guildford when I was chosen to join the marching ranks at the first Festival of Remembrance in 1953.

I was just one of two Privates to attend, all the rest were NCO's, we had to go to London most days for a month to practise. We marched between NCO's on each step and woe betide us if we looked down at our feet to avoid tripping.



*The Albert Hall Contingent Inspection
Pte Evelyn Norton 5th from the Left - Back Row*

Every day I had to buff and shine 2 pairs of shoes, brown ones for the practises and black ones for the "Big Day". The preparations took up most of my social time but I considered it then and now, an honour to represent the WRAC.

I joined the WRAC in 1952 after serving in the TA for a year from the age of 16 1/2 years. I was stationed at Guildford for 18 months before my posting to Lady Smith Camp in Egypt.

This year's Festival of Remembrance at The Royal Albert Hall was a memorable occasion, as was the parade at The Cenotaph the next day - my third attendance on parade there. I marched with the Suez Veterans Association Contingent. We met up with friends from many parts of the UK, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. As usual, we did our best to keep in step despite walking sticks and wheelchairs. The spectators seemed to enjoy it though, they cheered us all on and even tried to shake our hands.



Evelyn in No1 Dress at the age of about 20

When the parade was over, we all gathered for a "few jars". There was lots to talk about "The Good Old Days". When I'm with my old comrades, I feel 17 again - I wish!

TRUE LIFE IS STRANGER THAN FICTION

Mrs Elizabeth Mattison (ex 538 (M) HAA Battery)
6 Melton Court, 37 Lindsay Road, Poole, Dorset,
BH13 6BH

This year I attended the York Minster service in a wheelchair and at the end of the service all the other wheelchairs and the congregation had gone and I was left alone. The only people in the Minster were several vergers and a few people tidying the hassocks and prayer books. Eventually a verger came to me and said, "Are you all right?" To which I replied, "No, I've been abandoned." He offered to push me to one of the doors, but the door he went to was the one behind the saluting party. I said (probably nearing panic, "You can't leave me here, these are the VIP's taking the salute, you can't leave me here!" At that someone came forward and said, "I'll take care of her". Of course as he was pushing me I had no idea who he was.

When we got to the pavement I said he should leave me and I would find someone to push me to my friends; he was important and should get back to the saluting party. He replied, "But you are important, especially today, I will take you to the other wheelchairs". When we got there, no one volunteered to relieve him and so he pushed me in the parade.

When the parade reached the dispersal point, one of my friends was there and said, "Trust Elizabeth to get an officer to push her in the parade". My knight in shining armour was in fact Lt Col Guy Deacon, in the Cavalry Regiment.

A POIGNANT LETTER

by Eva Gillatt, member of Wilmslow Branch to the
Branch Secretary

"Dear Lilian,

I am writing to you about the Arboretum proposed to be opened this year. I think it is a good idea, yes - better than a lump of stone, as future generations may have their own worries and our efforts will be forgotten.

I volunteered in May 1941, was accepted A1 and had the choice of becoming either a cook or an orderly as at that time we (ATS) were all non-combatant personnel. We all did what we could where they sent us, some eventually in Ack Ack and some like me spent our time as cooks. However, some of us were different and I think that should be acknowledged in the Arboretum.

I was one of those different ones, a refugee from Nazi Germany. I was not British hence the choice of jobs offered to me. I was drafted into the 4th Allied Volunteer Platoon formed at the beginning of 1941 with other non-British, most being refugees, wearing (with enormous pride) the British uniform which would have made us traitors if Germany had won the war and most likely have been accused of treason and shot. I was exceedingly proud to wear the flash 4th A V Platoon.

I did my training at Lancaster and learned to cook for 300 men though I never did that as I became a cook in the Sgts Mess and enjoyed every moment.

So maybe the powers-that-be at Worthy Down will consider my contribution and those of other aliens, and a Thank You to Britain from one who knew what it was really all about.

My thanks to all and in this case to "dieting" with best wishes.

ARE YOU IN THIS PICTURE?

Alison Schofield (née Senior)



This picture was taken outside the Horse Guards fifty years ago. It shows the WRAC contingent marching in the Coronation procession. The photograph was kindly produced by Colonel V I Fisher who had it copied from one in her possession. In common with the other officer cadets on parade I had never seen it. The Coronation, on 2nd June 1953 was only a few weeks before our commissioning on 21st July, so that by the time the photograph reached unit level we had all disappeared to our first postings.

It is a very long time ago. My children, who were fascinated to pick out their mother at the original showing of the TV film 25 years ago, are delighted to have their own copy of the photograph. I hope it will be of similar interest to anyone else involved on that incredibly wet but unforgettable day.

If my memory serves me correctly, those I remember are Far left (as you look at the picture), and by herself, Colonel Colvin. Next file, the officers (Colonel Fisher is in the 3rd rank counting from the front). Front rank, far right, WO1 Hadley, RSM at the WRAC School of Instruction, Liphook. Fourth rank, the officer cadets left to right, Angela Hicholson, Janet Walker, Brenda Thompson, Thea Mitchell, Norah Dugard, Pauline Sheppard, Dorothy Presswell and Alison Senior. On the far right, in the fourth rank, directly behind Alison is WO1 Ashworth, RSM at the WRAC Depot, Guildford. There is a group of Territorial Army WRAC immediately behind the main WRAC contingent – they were wearing khaki and have flat caps.

Fifty years after the Coronation I attended the Royal Signals Association weekend at Blandford. Only a few days before I had received the photograph of the WRAC on parade and it was still fresh in my husband's mind. As the members assembled for the march past

commemorating the end of the Korean War, he whispered "I bet you couldn't do it again". He was pretty secure in the knowledge that I was wearing sandals because of a painful corn, but I try not to refuse that sort of challenge – after all we have marched on all sorts of occasions in court shoes! So there I am, in a tight skirt and glasses darkened by the bright sun, but I didn't trip up or even wobble. Jane Knight, beside me, is more soberly attired!



SISTERS ON BREAD STREET by Frances McNeil ISBN: 0952554712

"I have a friend whose tennis partner's cousin used to live next door but two to Paul McCartney!" That is the closest proximity I will ever get to famous people, but one of our Association members, Patricia McNeil, has a sister Frances, who is a very well known writer. Her most recent novel, *Sisters on Bread Street*, is available in bookshops, but any who purchase through Lioness will earn a donation to the Association, from the publishers (Pavan Press) of £1.50 per copy. Not only that, but the novel is a cracking good read!

This novel in diary form compellingly portrays lives in a working class district of Leeds just before, during and just after the First World War. Bread Street was one of the densely populated streets off York Road, where Ebor Gardens Primary School now stands.

Told through the diaries of Julia, a tough yet sensitive 17-year old struggling to make ends meet after her mother's death, the story seamlessly moulds vivid fiction with the true-life recollections of the author's mother who died this year aged 100.

Frances McNeil also writes for theatre, radio and television. She has written original work for television, as well as contributing to series, most recently *Doctors* for BBC 1. In *With a Little Help from my Friends* for BBC Radio 4 she wrote about Beatles Manager Brian Epstein. Her play, *Jehad*, staged by Manchester Library Theatre, Nottingham Playhouse and The Gate was nominated for a *TimeOut* award.

"An irresistible read. ... as compelling as any Catherine Cookson novel yet has the multi-layered subtlety of Margaret Forster. It is full of humour as well as a gritty realism ... The characters spring off the page – Julia herself ... her

older sister, Margaret, trying to better herself socially by way of the smart suffragette set; her cousin Bernard who longs to be a pianist but is forced to work in his bullying father's pub; Frank her childhood friend who loves her and sets out to solve her problems in the only way he knows – with his fists.”

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Jill Hyem – Writer, Tenko and House of Eliott

“Frances McNeil never labours the point about the harshness and brutality of the world she describes. Her tale is enriched by a fine array of characters, brought to life with warmth, compassion and humour. I found the book thoroughly enjoyable and uplifting.”

David Nobbs – Writer,

The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin and Going Gently

Please use the order form in the centre section of the magazine to send for your copy ~ don't forget, the WRAC Association will receive £1.50 for each copy ordered by Association members via Lioness Magazine

MANY CONGRATULATIONS PENNY SPINK MBE

Penny Spink (née Binny) was awarded the MBE in the last Birthday Honours for “Services to British Fencing”.



Penny started to fence just before joining the Women's Royal Army Corps in 1957, and was fortunate enough to be able to continue her training at Aldershot with a very strong group of coaches, winning the Army Championship for 3 years, and the Inter-Service Trophy in 1961.

After leaving the WRAC she moved to the South West and much enjoyed many years helping to organise fencing, as well as competing, at regional and national level. She is currently a Board Director of British Fencing and the CCPR, and a member of the new South West Regional Sports Board.

As well as working in fencing, she has been involved in sporting administration regionally and nationally as a volunteer in sport in general, including Sports Aid, a charity giving grants to young athletes. She feels strongly that her award is as much for all the volunteers she has worked with over the years as for her own contribution to sport.

DIGITAL HEARING AIDS

Alison Schofield

An article appeared in the November issue of “Pennant”, the journal of the Forces Pension Society. The information it provides could be of use to our members with hearing damaged by war service or advancing years. In essence the article said that a £94 million programme has been put forward to benefit tens of thousands of people who are deaf or hard of hearing. This will help to provide the very latest digital hearing aids, free on the NHS. Furthermore, that by April 2005 these would be available to those who can benefit from them across the country.

Digital hearing aids first became available to NHS patients in April 2000. These hearing aids cost the NHS up to £75 each whereas similar products currently cost those purchasing privately around £2,000.

The Department of Health, together with the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) is looking at different ways of making it easier and quicker for deaf people to get access to the modernised digital service. If you are hard of hearing or have a friend or loved one who “suffers in silence”, it would be worthwhile to enquire of your GP if the audiology department in your area is already equipped to provide these devices. If you don't get satisfaction there, to contact the RNID direct or, consult “Yellow Pages” (under charities) to find the address of your local area deaf helpline.

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Sizes 36 – 46

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**Miss B P Butcher, 15 Westwood Drive,
Swanpool, Lincoln
Tel: 01522 878413**

Where Are You Now?

DOES ANYONE REMEMBER PTE ANNIE CARR,

W/2272777
Mrs W Nightingale, 11656 Dove Hollow Avenue,
Boynton Beach, Florida 33427 USA



Pte Annie Carr, 1944, Paris

I look forward to the *Lioness* magazine, hoping I may come across a name or face I will recognise. Maybe one of your members may know me. I joined the ATS in Bradford November 1942 at the age of 15½. I lied about my age to avoid working on munitions. I did my 6 weeks training at Pontefract, West Yorkshire then stationed in York for a while, after that Easingwold. I was sent to a Searchlight Battery in Stamford. I had a friend called Mary from Doncaster also a pal name of Gladys Wright from around Derby (hope they read this).

Then came D Day and all the men disappeared overnight, and we were all sent to different camps. I remember Brentfleet near Southend also Braunton in Devon. I applied for overseas and was sent to SHAEF in Versailles, France along with another 8 ATS girls.

I worked in the Officers' Mess in St Cloud and had to catch the local train or hitchhike to attend the dances at the camp. I remember winning a Jitterbug contest and dancing to Glen Miller in Paris for VE Day. What a day that was.

After that the American's were sent to Frankfurt, Germany. Quite a few ATS went also. The rest of us were flown to Hanover then by truck to Iserlohn. I had a very dear friend called Norah Hutchinson we were there for 2 years, and this time I met my husband to be Bill, and his friend Quincy Bramley. They were both Dispatch Riders for Pathe News, they'd been together since D Day and

are still pals to this day. We had lots of time on our hands so all took up horse riding. I was Lady Parson's batman and she loaned me her riding gear.

Bill and I have been married now for 56 years and have lived in Florida for the past 25 years. We visit England each year. We have a daughter Carol in St Anns and a Son, Alan in Welford-on-Avon. We have been able to join the NVA at their reunions in York and I have also joined the Parade. It was here in York that I met Phyl Brown (ATS) from Rhyl, who kindly sent me my first *Lioness*. We are looking forward to 2004 for the Normandy Vets visit to Normandy for the 60th Anniversary. We were lucky enough to go with the SHAEF Vets to Paris, Rheims, Luxembourg for the 50th, we meet each year for the SHAEF Reunions here in America. It's nice to meet up with ex-ATS who married a GL Now and again ex-SHAEF come over from England for the Reunions.

Hope someone can remember me and get in touch. I was in the ATS for 5 years 1942 – 1947.

CALLING JOSIE MILNE AND PAT ALLEN

Mr Alan Burke, 21 Bankhouse Road, Bury,
Lancs BL8 1DS

Josie Milne (Glasgow), Pat Allen (East Anglia?) How, has life treated you? You were at Kingston-On-Thames and worked in London with my late wife Jean Greener W/389444 in the mid 1950's. I was a Scots Guardsman and we all met in the Nuffield Centre. My telephone number is 0161 705 1675

WERE YOU AT PICTON CASTLE IN 1943?

Ena L Scott, Tudor House, Shore Street, Drummole,
Stranraer SG9 9PU

I do so enjoy receiving the *Lioness* and have a good look through it to see if there is anyone I know from the far off days of WWIL. I very seldom do, and think that they have all passed on, or never joined the Association in the first place.

I was very pleased to be able to help the brother of one of my friends. He was asking, in a previous edition, if anyone knew how his sister had been killed and I was able to help him, which I was very pleased to do, sad though it was. However, I am enclosing a photograph taken at



*Picton Castle 1943
"Maintenance Day"*

Picton Castle, near Haverfordwest South Wales, of some of us ambulance drivers from the 585 MT, and wondering if any remember themselves. I would so like you to print this, for old time's sake and hope that there is a response.

There is:- Betty, Edna, Rose, May, Dora, Molly Line, Hilda Brinkley and I think Audrey?

Mrs Florence Lyons, née Marshall W/198810
12 Mostyn Avenue, Bury, Lancs BL9 6NP



Looking for a family photograph I came across this photograph of Edna, Rose, May, Dora and myself (bottom row right). All members of 633 (M) HAA Battery. If anyone out there can give me information of their whereabouts I would be grateful. I would also like to thank all involved in the 2003 Grand Reunion at Birmingham and looking forward to the next.

DO YOU KNOW JOAN WHITE?

Enid Latham, née Williams
370 Burlington Crescent, London, Ontario N5Z 3H1

I would like to find a former ATS girl (Signals, Southern Command) who used to live in Seaburn Close, Sunderland. Her name was Joan White. Joan married someone called Douglas and subsequently moved to Roker, in Sunderland. This was the last I heard, but that was over 50 years ago. I would love to contact her again or hear from anyone who has any information.

DO YOU REMEMBER BRENDA ANNIE DANIELL?

Mr Peter Marsden-Allen, 33 Alfred Street,
Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 9HYS

Does anyone remember or know anything about ATS member Brenda Annie Daniell EPE 2643 : 742. She served in the ATS in the 1940s and came from the Isle of Wight. Her sister lived in Cosham and was called Mrs Collyer. I have just found that she is/was my birth mother

and I am anxious to trace her or find out about her. She registered me as Hugh Daniell in 1948.

If anyone can provide any information I can be contacted at the above address and on the following telephone numbers, Home 01933 220700. Mobile 0777 1595149

Thank you for your help.

DO YOU REMEMBER PEGGY McCAULEY?

Mrs Margaret Watson, 31 Mariners Close, Gorleston,
Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 6TU



Peggy McCauley 1943 - 1944

I have been contacted by Mrs Jean Taylor, Weir House, Ynysfforch Hill, Seven Sisters, Neath, Glam SA10 9HA



*Pte Margaret (Peggy) McCauley
Sgt Bob Warner, Married in Lowestoft*

She would like to trace friends of her mother Pte Peggy McCauley who served in 518/558 Bty (MA) HAA and was a spotter and her father Sgt Bob Warner from 485 Bty. They were stationed in the Gorleston/Lowestoft area and married there in 1944. Mr Warner is still living. Any information would be much appreciated.



Evelyn (Iris Mann) is on the far right

Mr Carr is seeking information about an ATS lady, Evelyn (Iris Mann) who was born 3 June 1923 at Hallow, Worcs. The above photograph was taken at Devizes in November 1941. Are you one of her colleagues in the picture?

If you have any information could you please contact Mr Carr either at the above address or telephone 0121 608 8658

Ms Kay Gardner Bergl, 381 L. U. Willets Road,
Roslyn Heights, New York 11577 USA

I am asking for help to trace my Ex-ATS members who may have served with 21 Army Group Signals Dept in 1946 at Bad Oeynhausen. My name Kay Gardner 303733. I was a Teleprinter and Wireless Operator. I would be very pleased to hear from anyone who remembers me. *(Reprinted from the last issue of Lioness - Please note correct address. Ed)*

Mrs CM Smith (nee Marshall), 34, General Graham
Street, Sunderland, SR4 7HL

For several years prior to our golden wedding on 27th October 2001 my husband and I tried to trace our bridesmaids and best man, unfortunately without luck. I was Cpl Cath (Kay) Marshall and my husband was L/Cpl Ron Smith (Black Watch).

In 1951 I was posted to B Coy 14th Battalion WRAC based at HQ BAOR1 in Bad-Oeynhausen and worked in G-Int typing pool at the Konigshof Hotel. A week after arriving there I met my future husband who was also serving at the HQ and after a brief courtship we decided to marry at Bad-Oeynhausen.



Evelyn (Iris Mann) is on the far right

We were married in the garrison church by the garrison Chaplain on 27th October 1951 and our bridesmaids were Cpl Kit Brown and Pte Margot Shepherd. Perhaps they are members of the Association or someone still keeps in touch with either of them? If so we would be delighted to hear from them and/or any of the other girls who remember us.

Jennifer Lightbown, The Bankers Arms,
Manor Road, Studland, Dorset, BH19 3AU

The family of Emily Harley (also known as Ellen), born on 18th October 1923, are trying to locate her. She was in the ATS but is now believed to be in America.

The family would be very grateful if any friends or acquaintances who may know of her location or who have had contact with her, during or since the war would contact us at the address above or by 'phone (mobile no: 07810484422).

Mrs Meriel Bowers (nee Firth), 27 Fairfax Court,
Acomb Road, York, YO24 4HS

I am at last putting pen to paper in an effort to find some of my old ATS friends. I have never seen a request anywhere for any ATS who were at 54 VRD RAOC Queniborough in Leicestershire. I was stationed there from July 1943 to December 1945 when the depot closed. Two of my best friends with whom I was in contact have recently died but I am still in touch with Joan Kirkbride (nee Cook) who lives in Nuneaton.

From Queniborough I was posted to 3 Group HQ at Castle Donnington but Joan and I met up later when 3 Group HQ moved to Leeds and we were together in "civvy billets" until demob.

If anyone remembers us, particularly from Queniborough, please get in touch.

Ms Kay Gardner Bergl, 381 I.U. Willets Road,
Roslyn Heights, New York 11577 USA

I am asking for help to trace any Ex-ATS members who may have served with 21 Army Group Signals Dept in 1946 at Bad Oeynhausen. Mrs Kay Gardner (303733) and I was a Teleprinter and Wireless Operator. I would love to get in touch with anyone who served at the War Office between 1944 and 1946 and in Germany in 1946.

(An article from Mrs Doreen Lane in the ATS Remembrances section may be of interest. Ed)

ANYBODY REMEMBER THE REME WKSPs AT ARMINGHALL OR MILL HILL?

Mrs Dorothy P Geary, 16 Malthouse Road,
Hethersett, Norwich, Norfolk NR9 3JA Tel: 01603 811121



In 1943 my name was Dorothy P Machin and my number was W/243478. I did my basic training at Warrington, Cheshire and was then posted as an "A" "Technical Storewoman" to the REME Workshops at Arminghall, Norwich, Norfolk, where I met up with Peggy Shepherd (who had also lived in Woodford Green, like myself), and we became great friends.



From Arminghall I was posted to the REME Workshops at Ingliss Barracks, Mill Hill. I shared Hut 5 with Connie Dowe, Helen Grandley, Trixie Burden, Jean Napier, Pat Hardle to name but a few. What a wonderful bunch of girls; we spent many happy days together, and I have many great memories – what stories I could tell.

It would be so good to meet with them again, I wonder where they all are and what their lives have been like since we were last together, when we were all so young, innocent, free and fearless. Hopefully you are out there somewhere, so come in wherever you are.

DO YOU REMEMBER MARGARET DRANE?

Mr Martin Bowtle, 107 St Williams Way,
Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, NR7 0AN

Are there any surviving ex-ATS personnel who served with the late Margaret Drane, (nee Boswell), late 1942 onwards, in Radar, West Coast (Bristol Area)? Or is there anyone familiar with the radar, pre-PPI sets, Foo and daily service-life in the ATS(RDF) at that time? Also, Joint-Service Intelligence, Admiralty Arch. Basic information only required for a novel. Notes collected, so far, available to aid further recollections.

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
14 Ash Rise, Moss Pit, Stafford ST17 9HE
Tel: 01785 249992

ADVICE FROM TRADING STANDARDS

Misleading prices in shops:

The seller of goods is under no legal obligation to sell you the goods if the price displayed is incorrect – for example, where a genuine mistake has been made in pricing the goods.



In as much as a group of eggs is called a "clutch"; did you know that a group of priests is called a "pontification" of priests? – Not a lot of people know that!

Branch News

JUST A THOUGHT Maggie Purkis

Chairman, Wales and the West
PDF Compressor Free Version

Before our regular Branch Newsletters from around the country, I would like to share a thought with all members. I have been aware for some time now that our branches are closing one by one and would like to put forward a suggestion.

Time marches inexorably on, and those who have held office within the branches are finding it increasingly more difficult to encourage members to attend monthly meetings. It is more difficult to recruit younger members, as the ex-WRAC members are unable to attend the afternoon meetings more convenient to our older sisters. With heavy hearts, the members agree to close the Branch.

Recently, one of the branches in Wales and the West came to that sad conclusion, but Irene Hall, our Area Secretary, was able to find two ladies, both ex-WRAC, to step into the breach in an attempt to stop the closure. We held a meeting at Wrexham to introduce Liz Lawrence and Carole Gorman to the stalwarts of the branch. Problem solved? You may think so. It transpired that the ladies had decided that they no longer wanted to make the journey into town on a monthly basis (transport in such rural locations is known to be unreliable) and even with a new Chairman/Secretary/Treasurer, were determined to close the branch. We came up with a concept which, while simple and with hindsight obvious, appears to be the answer:

Wrexham Branch will stay open. It will not meet on a regular monthly basis, but will hold at least 3 meetings each year. A Christmas lunch, a Spring meeting (on the way to the AGM, perhaps), and a Branch AGM in the summer (on the way to our Area Reunion and AGM perhaps). It is just a thought, but it may help to keep your branch open.

ABERDEEN BRANCH

We've had a glorious summer and now the nights are coming in and getting cooler. Our thoughts turn to indoor long evenings and even parties. But I will start at the beginning.

Two of us Aberdeen ladies had the great joy of going down to Lord Kitchener's Memorial Home. It's out of this world, the comfort, the food, the company all brought together by Steve and his lovely wife and staff. Gosh it's a holiday home right enough. On opening our curtains in the morning it was to see the sun shining on the large bay and then at night it was the moon shining on the water. They were both lovely sights to see. The only sad part was that my friend took ill and we had to cut our holiday short. God willing we'll be back next year. If you've never been there, you don't know what you're missing.

Two of our ladies attended York Ack Ack Re-union. We hope 4 will be able to go next year as it will be a special one.

We applied for a Grant, which enabled 11 ladies to attend the Scottish AGM at Dumfries. We had the use of the bus at Dumfries, and it was lovely. The trip down through the hills and valleys, the colours of the trees were breathtaking. For some of us it was the first time in that part of Scotland and it was an eye opener. The hotel was tops and the staff all made our break wonderful. We had the use of the swimming pool and we were allowed to join in the evening entertainment so we had a "ball". It was a bonus to visit Dumfries as it is so difficult to get there. Changing railway stations and lugging cases etc is rather tiring. But thank you Dumfries ladies. Well Done. We all had a great weekend.

I'm sorry to say owing to illness and age catching up the 4 ladies who were hoping to go to the Cenotaph didn't make it. Maybe next year will be better for our branch.

Next thing to look forward to is Christmas Lunch and, by popular demand, we're going back to the Station Hotel. They do us proud, and the food is top class. Eighteen ladies hope to attend.

Our Branch Membership is now 24, twenty-one members and 3 life members; our numbers are holding steady.

I wish all our friends at "Lioness Staff", all best wishes for the future. Keep up the good work, as the "Lioness" is read from cover to cover by all members, and keeps us all in touch.

ASHBY de la ZOUCHE

Another year has flown by – made ever more fleeting by the lovely weather. We are lucky in that we are able to keep to our programme pretty well and have much enjoyed the variety that Gwen Monk provided this year. Especially interesting were three talks provided by our own members, "Egypt" by Evelyn Norton, "Life in the WAAF" by Peggy Pill, and "Queen Adelaide" by new member, Joan Noble.

Our finances are in excellent condition and, with the help of the sales table and the raffle, transport to the Grand Reunion and the Christmas lunch were subsidised. We appreciate the hard work done by our Treasurer, Mavis Litchfield-Parry.

Average attendance at meetings was twelve, but this does not in any way reflect the liveliness of our branch! One of our big assets is our venue. We meet at the Holywell House Hotel which belongs to one of our members, Betty Carter. Even on the coldest winter day, members will turn out, knowing that the welcome will be warm in every sense of the word.

We have many members who help in the smooth running

of the branch. Gwen Monk does the programme – one of the most demanding and necessary tasks. Anne Bradshaw, who not only arranges the Christmas lunch but also all the pub lunches during the year and Doris Sherratt for welfare, donating cards and postage. Thanks go to all who provide prizes, the girls and boys at the sales table and Marjorie Ottey for her annual raffle prizes.

BATH BRANCH

The Bath branch has had a memorable year, as having received Lottery funding, twenty-one members of the branch could attend the Grand Reunion in Birmingham. We were able to spend from Friday to Monday in a very comfortable hotel near the university and included a visit to Warwick castle on the Sunday afternoon. It was a very happy time for us, for which we were very grateful, as since then two of our members have passed away – so we have happy memories of them. Margaret Pepper née Henry, joined the ATS in 1941 and served until 1944, leaving as a subaltern. She was married twice, her first husband was a Mr Harris and her second was a cartoonist for Punch. Our second member Pamela Ball née Willcox, had joined the ATS when it was first formed in 1938 and became a sergeant. In July 1939 she joined the tenth ATS Attachment to the North Somerset Yeomanry and late in 1945, whilst still serving, she married Cyril Ball. She attended our twice-monthly meetings regularly and we miss her.

We have had several fund-raising events during the summer months, coffee mornings (at which we are very well supported by members of other ex-service organisations), a tea party and a lunch in our secretary's garden and some small sales of work at our meetings.

Average attendance at our meetings is approximately 21 to 25 members; quite a few live outside the city and so have in some cases difficult journeys. Speakers have included a representative from the Star and Garter Home, which the branch supports and we also learnt about pensions from the War Veterans Agency; this was very informative, but we are a healthy lot so no one was able to qualify! We also welcomed Mrs Furley-King, whom some branches may know as she has contacted many of them on her web-site in her efforts to get information about the ATS. She feels that we have not been given enough credit for what we did and hopes to put members who may have lost contact, in touch with each other. Four members attended the area meeting at Wilton in October – we always find it pleasurable to meet representatives of other branches in our area. We are indebted to Lt Col Val Trout for hosting this meeting, which was preceded by a most enjoyable lunch, prepared by our area secretary, Joan Ford.

BEXHILL BRANCH

Between March and September we lost our Secretary, our Chairman, our Vice-Chairman and our Treasurer. Heartfelt pleas were made for members to come forward and take office, followed by a letter to every member explaining that, without at least a Secretary, the branch

would have to close. The letter brought forward a brave new Secretary/Treasurer, a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman.

Our thanks now go to those who previously held office particularly to our ex-Secretary who began our branch 6½ years ago and who worked so hard in the ensuing years to bring us together and to increase our membership. Arranging events and even acting as Welfare Officer in her “spare” moments. Thank you, May.

During that difficult 6 months we had some good speakers and an outing to a country restaurant for a cream tea, but the highlight was being able to collaborate in a small way with Hastings Branch which hosted the 65th anniversary of the formation of the ATS on behalf of the SE Area – a truly magnificent effort, much enjoyed by all who attended.

We hope to report very positively in 6 months time. Watch this space!

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

Our meetings have been rather mixed since May. Many members absent with various illnesses, including our Secretary Flo who had another hip replacement.

Bring and Buy – because of absentees, the total was less this year.

A very interesting talk “Life with the Colonel” was given by Rev E Heyes. Members have asked for the next instalment and we shall hear this in June 2004. Who is the Colonel?

Our Standard Bearer – Maureen Deeley – paraded the flag at the Arboretum.

A day trip to Worcester was enjoyed by 7 members and included a visit to the Cathedral. Also a day at Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Fourteen members attended.

We were fortunate to receive tickets for Foundation Day at Royal Hospital Chelsea and 6 members had an interesting and enjoyable day.

Doreen Lopacka manned a stall for the War Memorial Association at Whittington Barracks Open Day – dedication of three windows.

Maureen paraded the Birmingham Standard at the Weymouth Victory Parade and will be at the Festival of Remembrance 9 November 2003.

Two members accepted an invitation by the “Not Forgotten Association” to an outing on a canal trip by narrow boat. A beautiful day for boating. Our thanks to Rosie Thompson, Events Organiser.

At our AGM on 1 October 2003 the following appointments were nominated and approved: Chairperson – Flo Banner, Treasurer – Mary Gunning, Secretary – Joyce Smith.

BOLTON BRANCH

This year we welcomed a new member to our branch, Mrs Nell Armitage from Australia; Nell, originally from Bolton hence the posting, had already managed to trace one of our members who was in the same area as the brother of another of our members; it's a small world.

In June we had a lovely day out in Lytham where we saw the show 'We'll Meet Again' which everyone enjoyed. Unfortunately the day was marred by the non-arrival of the bus to take us home. Unbeknown to us the bus had broken down in Fleetwood and a relief coach had to be sent out from Bolton so it was quite late when we finally arrived home, which took the shine off a lovely day out.

BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH

Another few months have sped away and we have been as busy as ever down here in Bournemouth. I write this on a gloomy day in November, but we have had a glorious summer and autumn. The trees in the New Forest have looked wonderful in their autumn tints, in real competition this year with the "fall" in New England.

We have had a reasonable attendance at all our meetings, enjoying our continued comradeship. Sadly, Doreen Hill died suddenly at the end of August, whilst returning from a holiday in Devon. Doreen was involved in many organisations and was a quiet, cheerful and generous lady. We shall miss her at our meetings, particularly at the "Bring and Buy". We joined with ladies from the Winton RBL, of which she had been president, to form a guard of honour at her funeral. Three of us attended the southern area AGM at Wilton and thoroughly enjoyed the lunch, cooked by the area secretary, Joan Ford. (Her husband, bless him, did the washing-up!) We now look forward to our Christmas lunch, to our own usual full programme of speakers and outside visits and in May 2004 to our area reunion, which will be hosted by the Southampton branch.

If anyone is visiting this area, do please contact me, Daphne Brookes, on 01202 390515, we would love to meet you.

BRISTOL BRANCH

Greetings from Bristol! What a beautiful summer we have had, how nice to have such long periods of sunshine, a change to organise a trip and not to have to take raincoats.

We have once again been very busy, in July we had a stall at a local music festival – it went very well and we met lots of nice people. We followed this with an outing to Tewkesbury, where we had a river trip which included lunch on the boat; everyone enjoyed this so much that it is to be repeated next year. We also had a visit to Bourton on the Water which was most enjoyable – such a pretty place. Also in July we had a speaker from the Veterans'

Agency; this was very interesting – a video was shown about the work that they do and leaflets were given out with contact numbers, should members have queries. We also had a visit from Mrs Beryl Furey-King, whose mother was in the ATS. She is collating experiences of the ATS and is collecting material from members, some of which she is putting on the web. Those members she has visited at home have been very pleased with the results, as she gives them a file set out with all the information that they have given her.

In September Sandra Steadman and I represented the branch at a service for the FEPOW which was held at Weston super Mare, they were so pleased that we attended.

In August we ran a tombola and white elephant stall at another fete and this was followed up by a stall at the local boot sale to sell off items left over; any remains from that sale were taken to the local charity shop and to the library. September was the time for collecting membership dues, which were all paid very promptly. In October some of us had another brilliant weekend at the WRAC Dinner Club in Stoke on Trent and also in October a trip to Salisbury and Wilton took place.

We were represented at our local Festival of Remembrance, which was held November 1st and on November 3rd we attended the Garden of Remembrance service at the cathedral and participated in the Remembrance Parade on November 9th.

Finally a very big thank you to the person who does the Lioness talking tapes – it is very much appreciated by one of our members who has very limited sight. Good wishes for Christmas and the coming year to all members of the association.

Editor's note: *What an excellent idea! The talking tapes are NOT produced by the association. If you are interested we suggest you contact the Bristol branch.*

BURY BRANCH

Greetings and best wishes to you all for 2004. Since our last report we have visited Manchester cathedral and had lunch in the cathedral visitors' centre, followed by a visit to the new Harvey Nichols store – rather expensive for some, but we did manage to collect a few free samples!

In November our poppy sellers were busy and we attended our various Remembrance services, two of our members marching and laying an ATS wreath at the Cenotaph in Bury.

Each year the landlady of the White Lion Hotel, where we hold our monthly meeting, serves us a splendid Christmas lunch. Instead of exchanging Christmas cards we donate the cost to Bury hospice. We also take a small, numbered gift and after the meal we have a draw. With a bit of luck we have so far managed not to draw our own gift!

In our last report we mentioned that Mary Howarth had been presented with an award from the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. Mary and her sister Olive joined the Territorial

Army in 1938 and were called up for service on 1st September 1939. Mary's service number was W/12331 and Olive's was W/12332. They moved about the country together, lastly serving with 562 Battery (searchlights) in Suffolk. Olive married in 1942, becoming Olive Slade. Olive was demobilised in 1946 and returned to her home in Canterbury. Olive died in February last year.

At the time of writing we have not made any forward plans but hope to have more to report in the next issue of "Lioness".

CANTERBURY BRANCH

Our Branch continues to flourish with an average of 25 members attending meetings usually on the first Wednesday of each month at the Dominican priory in Canterbury.

In July after the official business was completed, our Vice-President, Angela Cobb presented Mercy Jordan with her Certificate of Appreciation for her many years of hard work on behalf of the Association.



Members and associate members waiting for the coach on 14 Sep 03

August saw us at Herne Bay enjoying an afternoon by the sea at Mavis Middleton's beach hut on what was one of the hottest days of the year. Not many swimmers but many enjoyed a paddle – more to cool off than anything else!

In September we were joined by members of the Medway Branch and of the WRNS and WRAF Associations for a tea party. We always worry that there won't be sufficient food but as usual our tables groaned with good things to eat and we enjoyed a lively chat washed down with plenty of cups of tea ably supplied by our caterer, Marge Dagless. A nice surprise at the party was a visit from two Association members who were visiting Canterbury and called in.

On Sunday 14 September many of us travelled to Hastings to join members of other South East Branches for a service commemorating the 65th Anniversary of the Formation of the ATS. It was a lovely day and we arrived early enough to enjoy a wander along the promenade. The service was very moving and our grateful thanks go to the members of the Hastings branch for organising such a memorable occasion.

At our AGM in October, our Chairman thanked everyone for attending meetings each month despite various health problems and for their generosity in supporting our Branch by donating gifts for the raffle and sale. In November our Vice-Chairman, Doreen Dennis showed us her beautiful hand made quilts and explained the various techniques involved in their making.

Thus our year has quickly passed so may we wish all members of the Association good health and happiness for 2004.

CHELMSFORD BRANCH

Since the last report on the events at Chelmsford we have continued to meet at the RAFA club in Hall Street, Chelmsford usually on the third Tuesday of the month. There are two exceptions to that, one of which was in June when we held a strawberry tea in the secretary's garden – a very happy occasion. The July meeting is always held as our foundation anniversary and this year we celebrated fourteen years together. We were pleased that our area chairman, Lady Kemball was able to join us. After a lovely buffet she presented Joyce Wright with a Certificate of Appreciation. Joyce helped to found the branch, together with Daphne Attridge and has acted as treasurer and latterly as social secretary. We are grateful to Joyce for this and for her help over a long period. Following this Lady Kemball gave an interesting talk, accompanied by slides about the Falklands. We greatly enjoyed this and are very sorry to learn that she has decided to retire from the post of area chairman – we shall miss her and thank her most sincerely for all the support she has always given us.

In September we resumed meetings and had a musical afternoon with entertainment from the Reverend Robinson on his piano accordion. The October meeting is when we hold our AGM. We elected Mrs Eileen Mickleborough as our treasurer replacing Joan Mackenzie who has stood down after holding the post for ten years; we appreciate the hard work she has done in looking after the financial side so well for so long.

In November we welcomed a speaker formerly on the staff of Jersey Zoo. He told us amusing tales of his experiences and showed many unusual and delightful slides of the animals in his care. We enjoy a Christmas lunch together on December 5th and would like to wish you all a Happy New Year from the Chelmsford branch. Our special thanks go to those at Worthy Down who continue to help us whenever asked.

New members are always welcome – please contact the secretary, Gina Shadrack, Tel: 01245 251088.

CLEVELAND BRANCH

Hello again everyone from our Branch. We don't seem to have done a great deal since our last report, and quite a lot of our ladies have been off colour for various reasons.

Instead of our Annual Coffee Morning, we decided on an "at home" at the Community Settlement where we have our meetings. We invited the local WRNS Association to

join us, along with our friends and families. This is one of our main fund-raising events, which enables us to support local charities, along with our own Benevolent Fund.

As usual, our Standard Bearer has had a very busy time, taking our standard to London. We celebrated our birthday in July – as usual, more food than we could eat, our lovely Birthday Cake and a good old sing-along.

Our annual outing this year was to York. We had lovely weather, but the only snag was – it was full of tourists!!

Then came the North East Reunion. Guess where? York. We had a lovely day and a superb lunch at the newly refurbished racecourse. I promise you there were no 'old nags' there. Just a good crowd of ex-ATS and WRAC 'Girls', having fun.

We had two sad losses this month, Mrs Doreen Wake (ATS) and Amelia Ford (WRAC) 'Amelia's Story' is elsewhere in the journal.

Early October, 4 members went to the WRAC Dinner Club Weekend. We had, as usual, a great weekend which passed too quickly. I would like to thank the committee, the hotel staff (and the chef) for a fabulous time – I'm already booked in for 2004!!

The October meeting was a very busy one as it was our AGM. Names were once again requested for committee, and thankfully, two members 'volunteered' our finances were reported (solvent!), and last year's events were reprised by Gwyn, our Secretary. We hope at our next meeting, to come up with ideas for our diaries, and to wish good health to all our association friends.

CREWE BRANCH

At the Grand Reunion in April, Mabel Lightfoot asked friends to sponsor her doing a Charity Walk on May 25th for the Special Needs Students at the Centre where she works. It was a lovely day and with a group of walkers they completed 10 miles. The overall total raised was £1430.50 and the students are having a holiday from the proceeds. Mabel wishes to thank everyone who sponsored her and we say: "Well done Mabel".

In July Betty attended the Ack Ack Reunion at York. Due to the war in Iraq, things had to be done differently this year, however the hard work of the organisers paid off and it was just as successful as in previous years. Betty sends best wishes to all her Ack Ack friends. Betty reached her 80th birthday this year and her husband arranged for a greeting to be broadcast on the radio. She had a wonderful party that evening.

Another special occasion at Crewe Branch – Doris Fairclough, who lives in Stoke on Trent and her husband celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary. Many congratulations to them both.

On September 13th Edith and Betty attended the Wales and the West Branch Officers Meeting at Birmingham, held instead of our Area Reunion. We held our AGM on



Celebrating Betty's 80th Birthday

2nd October. Things are much the same as previous years, the Branch is ticking over nicely and we were able to send a donation to the Association. All our Officers were returned unopposed.

We have booked seats at the pantomime on 6th December and will hold our Christmas lunch on 18th December. We send our Best Wishes for 2004 to all our friends in the Association and particularly to Mrs Maggie Purkis our new Editor who we know will do a good job for Lioness.

DACORUM BRANCH

Greetings to all members of the WRAC Association from the Dacorum branch, which unfortunately is closing.

On May 7th our chairman, Jean Westrope announced that she was unable to continue, health and travel having become a problem for her. Our vice-chairman, Camilla Cope agreed to take over. Being without a speaker we talked about our service life – most of the members able to attend are ex-ATS who served through World War II. Some had served abroad and it was fascinating to hear their stories, quite a few members' wartime romances have survived the last fifty years, although bereavement has unfortunately taken its toll. Our farewell tea followed and on our behalf Camilla thanked Jean for all she had done (as well as being our chairman Jean was also our events secretary – we have enjoyed hearing from so many of the speakers she has arranged); we all wished her well, hoping to see her at future meetings.

Our AGM planned for August, September and October all had to be cancelled, owing to the illness of our treasurer Kath, followed by her husband's stroke.

Finally an AGM was held on November 5th, but attendance was small, so we are not going out with a bang, rather a farewell to so many people who have got to know each other since the branch was opened in April 1996. A last farewell lunch has been planned for November 26th and we hope that some of us will be able to meet occasionally in 2004. Thanks go from all our members to the staff at Worthy Down who have helped and advised us over the years and we send everyone our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

DUMFRIES BRANCH

2003 has as always been memorable for the members in Dumfries. Many Branch members and friends enjoyed a 'Spring Lunch' in March at the Cairndale Hotel and in May, after a lovely lunch at the first to visit a museum where we saw the 'Ascot' hats worn by Gertrude Shilling.

Regretfully I missed this next event in June, (especially as I am a Harry Potter fan) but I have it on good authority that an excellent day out was had by one and all at Alnwick Castle and Gardens. Members and friends enjoyed seeing the wonderful new water features and newly laid out gardens.

If anyone visits Penrith, then like some of our members who went there in July, a trip to 'Rheged' the village in the hill is a must. A most fascinating place quarried into the hillside which houses restaurants, shops and a giant size cinema screen where we saw a great film about Shackleton.

We are very grateful to our branch secretary Dorah Mundell, who hosted the annual September social tea this year at her home at Lochmaben. A wonderful time was had by all those in attendance. Any excuse for a cuppa, cakes and biscuits provided by members, but mostly, a good chance to have a chat!

We were proud to host this years AGM for the ladies of Scotland at the Cairndale Hotel, Dumfries in October. It was a particularly special event for two of our ladies, Margaret Walker and Jean Kerr, as they were presented with Certificates of Appreciation by Lt Col Westlake. We had a very good turn out and a good time was had by one and all.

Still to come is a Bring and Buy Sale, plus afternoon tea at the Aberdour Hotel, Dumfries, in November and we shall have a representative from the Dumfries Branch at Westminster Abbey on 9 November. Our annual Christmas lunch at the Sommerton House Hotel, Locherbie, will take place in December.

If 2003 was busy, wait till you see what we have planned for 2004! So come on you Dumfries Branch members who haven't managed to come on the above events, don't miss out on future ones!

EASTBOURNE BRANCH

We have had a busy few months in which interesting talks were given on Norway and Peru. The sixty-fifth anniversary was celebrated in Hastings with the other south east area branches; it was well attended and enjoyed. The expenses were shared, but many thanks are due to the Hastings branch members who did all the hard work for this event, at which our standards followed the Union flag.

Our October meeting to which husbands and friends were invited was held in the Wish Tower Café. The local travel firm provided free transport to the annual Remembrance concert in the Congress theatre,

Eastbourne which our members attended and we are now looking forward to our coach trip to the "Women and War" exhibition at the Imperial War Museum, London in February 2004. We send our best wishes to all.

GLASGOW BRANCH

Our branch is ticking along very well - 88 on the roll with an average monthly meeting of 35. Sadly 2 of our most faithful members have died.

In June we had a tea party to celebrate our 55 years as an Association. One member baked a Birthday Cake, and Scots living away from Scotland, this may bring back happy memories of childhood birthdays, another member made two CLOUTY DUMPLINGS.



At the start of 03/04 session we welcomed Mrs Alice Mathews from Hereford Branch who was on holiday in Scotland. Since this is Mrs Mathews third visit to us, she is now an honorary member of Glasgow Branch.

The Scottish Area AGM saw us in Dumfries in the south of Scotland. We send Dumfries our thanks and congratulations for a very interesting and happy day. The guest speaker was Lieutenant Colonel Sue Westlake who outlined some of the changes being proposed for the Association which are necessary with the changing times, and the role serving women now face. There are challenging and exciting times ahead, and we wish Colonel Westlake every success in all she and her team are undertaking.

Sadly, there were only 8 of us fit enough to parade and lay our Poppy Wreath at the Glasgow Cenotaph at the Remembrance Service. For those of us who served in the ATS in war-time, this is always a very poignant day for us. Some of us have taken part in this Parade since the 1950's and at that time the men who had survived the war, from all three services were smart, handsome, and marching with a spring in their step. Alas, as the years have passed, we look into their wrinkled faces and can hardly believe what these old men endured in their youth and every year there are fewer of them. Who knows, they are probably thinking the same about us, but maybe not. One old soldier referred to us as "THE GOLDEN GIRLS".

All at Glasgow Branch send good wishes to everyone for a happy 2004.

HARROGATE BRANCH

Not a lot to report from Harrogate Branch. Cecilia Kemp was photographed by the local paper, on parade representing the WRAC Association and St John Ambulance at the Remembrance at St Peters Church. Sadly "Kempie" has now left Harrogate to live in Derby - we will miss her terribly.

We soldier on with good speakers and good fellowship at all our meetings, but missing those who are too sick or infirm to join us. Best wishes to all.

Editorial Note: Sadly, photos supplied from newspapers (and the one of "Kempie" is a great photo) cannot be published in Lioness unless accompanied by permission and an original photo from the newspaper)

HASTINGS BRANCH

We have had a good year with plenty to arrange. We had a lovely Strawberry Tea in June which took place in the garden of one of our members. In September we had a Mystery Tour for our yearly outing which included a cream team. The main event last year was the 65th Anniversary Church Service, hosted by our branch. It was good to welcome so many friends and a full report has been submitted to Lioness by the South East Area Chairman Mrs Kate McGregor. (This can be seen in the Re-union Section).

We are now looking forward to our Christmas party.

HEREFORD BRANCH

It is with great sadness that we have to inform you that one of our very supportive members has died. Heather Kemp will be missed greatly and we extend our condolences to her husband Peter. Our prayers and thoughts are with other members who have had a difficult year.

The ladies of the Hereford Branch have had a very busy year, both in fund raising and entertainment. Knowing that we are holding the Wales and West Area Reunion in September 2004 we have combined enjoying each others company with that of fund raising.

We set ourselves a target and within three months, two thirds of that has been raised. We are not stopping there; we hope to go on and on. Monies raised have been through members, such as Marianne Hooker who has made copious amount of jams, preserves and Khaki chutney. In fact the jars have been returned for refilling. She has said that following this success she will continue with this venture next year and hope to beat her own target. Jo Anscombe compiled a film quiz, which again has travelled internationally. The deadline for completion is April 2004. Donations have been given by generous members and a big thank you goes to everyone.

Our members held a picnic at a famous Hereford site, Queen's Wood. This was open to all family and friends and proved to be very enjoyable. This allowed family

members to meet and talk to friends of their mother/grandmother. There is an adventure playground so grandchildren could use up all their energy. Members again used this event to raise money. Raffles, who could find the most different leaves (won by one of the children), and an impromptu raffle to guess the colour of the underwear being worn by my husband who happened to be wearing his kilt. No one won. The challenge was issued for next year. So Hereford Branch put the date in your calendar. The weather was superb and the Ladies of Queen's Wood let us use one of the sun-spots. Members were sunbathing at the end of August. It was a good day.

Our next event was an outing at a pub, which was holding a 40s evening. The room was decked out with blackout and very authentic decorations. I went along thinking, "I hope the Ladies enjoy this" but the surprise was on me. It was a great evening. We had arranged a mini-bus and booked 20 places. Our chairman, Mrs Mary Nicholls, celebrated her 59th wedding anniversary on that evening. As you may see from the photograph, this man has not only been married for a long time but is also the father of our Treasurer, Joyce Nicholls. If anyone needs a medal I think this man more than deserves one. I raise my glass to you Ken.



Mary, Ken and Joyce Nicholls

Arrangements for the **Wales and West Area Reunion to be held on 11th September 2004** are going from strength to strength. This is to be held at the 'Three Counties Hotel' and the cost is £15.00. We are very limited for venues in Hereford and as this venue is superb and all on one level we, as a Branch decided that this would be ideal. There is good parking and we have been given the services of the local Cadet Force, who will

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HRH The Duke of Edinburgh stopped to speak to Lt Col Sue Westlake at the Garden of Remembrance.



Elvis singing to Lady Val Kemball at the WRAC Dinner Club party



Major (Ret'd) Jane Freebairn was presented to Her Majesty at the opening of the AGC Museum in Winchester.



Some of the Association members at the Garden of Remembrance.



Some of the founder members of the WRAC Dinner Club, seven years on.

Her Majesty the Queen opening at the Imperial War Museum

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Her Majesty The Queen arriving at the Imperial War Museum.



Servicewomen for



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

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



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

OR

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

Date: Signature:

Please ensure that all cheques are in **sterling** and are made payable to "**The WRAC Association**"
Subscriptions include "Lioness"

Members who live overseas are asked to contribute an extra £3.50 per annum to cover postage of "Lioness"

Please complete this form in **BLOCK LETTERS**

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

Miss/Mrs/Ms: Surname:

Given Names:

Surname when serving: Date of Birth:

Address for Correspondence:

.....

.....

Post Code: Telephone No:

Units during service:

Date of Enrolment: Date of Release:

Decorations:

**WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS
ASSOCIATION**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2004

The next Annual General Meeting of the WRAC Association will take place at the Victory Services Club, Seymour Street, London on **03 April 2004** commencing at **1430hrs**.

Provisional Agenda

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Confirmation of Minutes
4. Business Arising from the Minutes
5. Report of the Council
6. Financial Report
7. Report of the Editor of the Association Journal
8. Reports of Committees
9. Resolutions
 - a. Motions of Urgency
 - b. Council Resolutions
 - c. Branch Resolutions
10. Any Other Business
11. Date of Next Meeting

In order for us to know how many people to expect at the meeting, please notify your intention to attend the AGM by returning the proforma below by **Friday 19th March 2004**. Branch members, please reply via your Branch Secretary.

To: WRAC Association, AGC Centre,
Worthy Down, Winchester, SO21 2RG

I will be attending the AGM on 03 April 2004

Name

Address

.....

.....

**WRAC ASSOCIATION
Officers' Branch**

ANNUAL LUNCHEON

The annual Officers' Luncheon will take place in the Officers' Mess of the AGC Centre at Worthy Down on Saturday 22 May 2004

Please send applications together with a cheque for £20.00 made payable to the Association by 01 May 04

To: WRAC Association
AGC Centre
Worthy Down
Winchester SO21 2RG

I would like to attend the annual
Officers' Branch Luncheon
on 22 May 04
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 No:



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THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

(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/...../.....

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WRAC ASSOCIATION GRAND REUNION 2006

In the past, Grand Reunions have been "hosted" by the Association Branches within the geographical area of the chosen venue. Because several Branches have had to close recently, and as the membership of those Branches is increasingly unable to take sufficiently active roles at Grand Reunions, it has been decided to inaugurate a Grand Reunion Sub-Committee to help with running the function. In particular, the Sub Committee will be asked to:

- Ensure maximum sales of Grand Reunion Raffle Tickets, before and during the event
- Man the sales and fund-raising tables
- Supervise any packed lunch provision and act as bus monitors if necessary
- Help with registration and room allocation
- Generally be available to act as a "gopher" should a member need assistance

If you would like to join the team as a member of the Grand Reunion Sub Committee, please complete this section and return it to: **Maggie Purkis, Chairman of the Executive Committee, c/o WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester Hants. SO21 2 RG**

Name: Daytime Tel:

Address:

.....Post Code:

SISTERS ON BREAD STREET by FRANCES M^cNEIL

ORDER FORM

To: Pavan Press, PO Box 150, Leeds LS8 3ZP

Please send me copies of Sisters on Bread Street at £8.99 (inc. p&p). I understand that £1.50 will be donated to the WRAC Association for each copy ordered. I enclose a sterling cheque/money order for £..... in payment.

Please send the book(s) to: Name:

Address

.....Post Code

g the Women and War Exhibit War Museum

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Guard of Honour.



Her Majesty The Queen meeting former fellow members of the ATS on arriving at the Imperial War Museum.



*The WRAC Dinner Club met at Stoke on Trent in October.
A wonderful chance to reunite with old friends and make new ones.*



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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



Association
£3.00



ATS
£2.75



WRAC
£2.75



Bell & Thimble
£2.50 & £2.00



Comb & Nail File
£2.00



Ladies Hankies
£2.00



Key ring
£2.50



Regi-Bears
£8.25 each

Also available:

China Mugs	£4.50 each
Teapot Stand	£3.50 each
Square Tray	£4.40 each
Sandwich Tray	£4.60 each
Leather Bookmark	£1.25 each

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assist those ladies who require help. The Hotel has given us a good rate and is not charging for the use of the conference rooms, etc. They have also given us a reduction of just under 50% for the rate on rooms. So any ladies who wish to make it a long weekend and visit Hereford would only have to quote that they were attending the Reunion (Tel: 01432 299955). The Wye Singers, who will be entertaining us, are also giving their service free. The normal raffles, etc will be present. Don't forget this is the home of the Violet Szabo museum.

We had a most enjoyable Christmas Dinner last year and we hope to repeat this again. The venue is near Ross on Wye, last year it was in Hereford. The 40s event was near Bromyard, by varying the venues, it spreads the travelling for our members who come from as far a field as Warwick, Gloucestershire and Powys.

We look forward to seeing you in September 2004.

LEEDS BRANCH

Branch meetings continue to be well attended – our members are still enthusiastic about taking part in all Association activities. Ten ex-AA members enjoyed the yearly re-union in York in spite of the changed format, the Minster Service and Parade maintaining the usual high standard. Thanks are due to Major Robertson and his staff and our own Officers. Everyone was sad to learn that next year's re-union will be the last, the past 10 years having been such a success.

Our August meeting was an 80th Birthday Part for Lucy, our ex-WAAF, who has been such a staunch member. Mollie James provided a beautiful cake complete with "WINGS".

Fifteen members attended Northern Area Re-union Lunch at York Racecourse. We were honoured to be allowed to use the facilities of the new million pound EBOR stand, an insight into how the other half lives – total luxury and excellent food to match.

The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer were re-elected en-bloc at our October AGM. A bequest of £50, to be used for Christmas Lunch, was received from Mary Butler, an old friend, who had died earlier in the year.

Nan Rigby had a fascinating tale to tell of how she had been able to contact, through "Lioness", a very dear ex-ATS friend.

Two members had the honour of representing the Branch at the Festival of Remembrance in the Albert Hall and at the Service in Westminster Abbey. Crosses were planted for relatives and friends in the Garden of Remembrance, the weekend being a totally moving experience.

We are trying a new venue for Christmas Lunch, our local Catering College. Twenty members are anticipating an excellent meal and celebration.

Due to unpredictable weather we do not meet in January so hope that February will be better than last year and we can get together at the start of 2004.

LONDON BRANCH

Here we are nearly at the end of the yet another year. My how they fly. We have the consolation of an extra day in 2004, so enjoy it girls.

We had the first of our bring and buys in May and in June we welcomed Mr Keith Cunningham from the RNLI for a very interesting talk on how the organisation is run and the fact that it is all funded by donations. Mrs Mary Curtis again entertained us with her slides in July; Mary is the daughter of a former president of the London branch. Looking back at old programmes I discovered she first came to entertain us in 1970 – she must know more about the branch than many of our members. Sadly this was her last visit and we thank her for her long association with us. In September we had a little social music and tales from members, giving us time to collect subscriptions, etc. – it worked out very well. Also in September a group of us who live in Kent went along to the Biggin Hill RAF chapel, it is full of history of those heroic days of the forties and well worth a visit if you are that way. Mrs Gwenda Gillham was with us; she had served at Biggin Hill during those days and related her story to our guide, Mr Laurie Chester, who requested her to write it down to add to the many books of memorabilia.

In October we held our AGM – no offers for taking office, but we live in hopes for next year – two more members have joined the committee which is an encouraging start. In November we wondered how many would brave London during President Bush's visit but twenty-four members made it for our second bring and buy.

May we wish all branches health for 2004 and hope we meet up somewhere sometime; at the AGM in April??

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

Ten of our members attend the North East Reunion at York in September. We enjoyed the lunch and entertainment, our sincere thanks go to Secretary Mrs G Friday and Chairman Colonel (Retd) Cooke, also ladies of the York Branch.

Twenty of our members are joining the Ex POW's at the Assembly Rooms, Newcastle for a Christmas Lunch in December.

In July many of our members joined with Veterans at a large garden party given by the owner of Doxford Hall, Northumberland. We all had fish and chips for lunch and cakes and sandwiches brought round by Cadets, wonderful entertainment and everything was free, even our coaches.

At our General meeting our Chairman for 10 years Mrs Mabel Bolton retired, she has worked hard and been a loyal member. Her post has been taken by Mrs Norah Mills who was our Vice-Chairman. We wish them good health and success. Recently we have had two new members.

Best wishes to all other branches.

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK BRANCH

For the past six months we have held regular meetings. They are enjoyable and they enable us to keep up to date with personal news and any general information that has come our way. **PDF Compressor Free Version** After a summer of ill-health our chairman, Olive and treasurer, Audrey are now well on the way to recovery and able to return to meetings.

On the hottest day of the hot summer we made out annual trip to the Flixton Air museum but, probably due to the heat, which depressed enthusiasm, this was our only outing of the summer. We are now looking forward to our Christmas luncheon at the Assembly House in December.

At one of our meetings we enjoyed the company of Mr Stan Goldman, a visitor from New Mexico on holiday in Norfolk. He was seeking information on the ATS service of his late wife, Brenda Saunders, who had been in 500 HAA Bty. At that particular meeting we had a speaker who showed us films of old railway journeys in Norfolk. These delighted Mr Goldman as he had been stationed in Norfolk during the war and was familiar with the railways of the time. After his return to New Mexico, Mr Goldman wrote to say that coming to our meeting and learning something of what life was like in the ATS was the highlight of his holiday!

In October we were informed, enlightened and entertained with anecdotes by Mr Thompson, organiser of the Norfolk Accident Rescue Service. This is a wonderful band of volunteers, doctors, paramedics and ambulance drivers who are always available to provide instant response to injuries in road accidents. We raised a very good sum towards this admirable service.

At our AGM the chairman, treasurer and secretary agreed to carry on with the branch for another year, when the situation will be reviewed again. We hope we shall be able to continue, but, like many other branches, younger members do not come to meetings, or take over the running of branches. We live in hope!

PLYMOUTH BRANCH

Our Branch has been quite active during the last half of the year. Last June the RAF and Allied Forces Service of Commemoration and Parade was held on the Hoe, 7 ladies attended. Two of our ladies volunteered to collect for the annual Army Benevolent Fund Flag Day street collection. 11 of us had a very pleasant day out with a boat trip from the Barbican in Plymouth, across Plymouth Sound and up the River Tamar to have lunch at the Boatman Inn, Saltash. Evon Roberts completed the "Race for Life", a 5k race in Central Park to raise funds for Breast Cancer Research, she raised over £180. Well done, Evon. She said the camaraderie was wonderful, with over 3,000 ladies taking part in Plymouth and over 30,000 nationwide. Also, The Korean Veteran's Association Service to mark the ceasefire was held in St Aubyn's Church in June. Unfortunately, fewer ladies are able to attend each year, but we manage a small contingent for most military services in the area. The Battle of Britain Service was held at St Andrew's Church in September,

and the Festival of Remembrance at the Pavilions, Plymouth was held on 7 November. We do not have a Standard Bearer at present so the Royal British Legion kindly arranged for us to have a cadet to carry our Standard for us. Doris McCoy and Mary Davis were the escorts and did us proud once more.

We have had two new members this year. Margaret Smith from Landrake in Cornwall, and Gillian Davidson from St Austell. We haven't had the pleasure of personally meeting Margaret yet but Gill came to our October meeting and plans to come again. She had recently moved to Cornwall and saw our Branch Report in the last "Lioness" and contacted us! Oh! The power of the press!

We plan to advertise our Association Branch Meetings locally to try to attract, not only ex-ATS, but we want to make contact with retiring WRAC ladies. Our numbers are dwindling and many ladies are finding it too difficult to get out to attend. After all we do have a lot of OBE's in our branch. No, they haven't been honoured by the Queen with "THE OBE", just managed to reach the "over b——y eighty" mark and have qualified for their extra 25p on the pension and free bus pass!

At our AGM, in October all officers stood down. All officers were immediately re-elected except for our Social Secretary, Eileen Morgan, who is not well enough to cope at the moment, but hopes to help as much as she can, whenever she can. We thank you, Eileen for your hard work over the past two years. The duties of Social Secretary will be absorbed by the other officers.

As announced in our last report, Plymouth Branch is hosting the South West Area Re-union on Friday 4 June 2004 at the Tamar River Sailing Club, Saltash Passage, Plymouth. The secretaries of Wincanton, Taunton and Exeter branches have been sent invitations and every member of Plymouth Branch has received an invitation to the re-union with their Autumn 2003 Newsletter and we are hoping for a very good response from all over the region.

Contact telephone numbers are:

Ruth Jennings, Secretary	01752 363118
Betty Mitchell, Assistant Secretary	01752 348632

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH

We started the year with 10 members attending the Birmingham Reunion. This was enjoyed by everyone especially the visit to the national Arboretum. The chapel is beautiful and the gardens and memorials will be wonderful in years to come. The parade and service in the beautiful Great Hall was very moving.

Our sad part of the year was that we have lost 3 members Violet Wyse who died on the Monday we returned from Birmingham, Vera Fewing who had been ill and moved to Bordon and Maureen Ebers who died in September. They will all be missed.

We went to the Isle of Wight for Lunch and as always enjoyed ourselves as their members give us such a warm welcome. The D-Day Parade was attended in the rain but the Falklands Service was in sunshine.

We are having our usual coffee mornings with Joan, Mary, Edna, Gillian, Joy and Phyllis. These get-togethers are nice social events and our thanks to them all for their hospitality. Our yearly lunch was in September at Fareham and enables our out of town members to attend.

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At our AGM Mrs Mary Moore retired as Chairman. Mrs Gillian Utting has now been appointed Chairman.

It was decided at AGM to no longer meet in the evening. We still meet at the Hampshire Ex-Service Club, Second Tuesday instead of Thursday in the morning at 11 am. We realise this is difficult for members who work but we will try it out and see if it works.

Some members who can still march hope to attend the Civic Service and Parade on Remembrance Sunday and we will lay a wreath for the Portsmouth Branch.

ROCHDALE BRANCH

A prayer for a good summer ended our last newsletter and we are happy to say that it was answered, thanks to God, but I won't be saying one for a good winter, in case he takes it too literally! As in many other groups, attendances at our meetings have been low, but last month numbers doubled, so I thought I would record the event with the attached photograph. Our treasurer, Mona Schofield, sends out a letter to all who can't make it to meetings, which is most helpful and keeps everyone up to date. Mona remarried her first husband on 27th September and is very happy, but has decided to retain her existing surname; we are all delighted for her.



There is nothing much to report at present, except that the usual members turned out to sell poppies for Remembrance Day. On Sunday, 2nd November most of us attended a festival of Remembrance which is now held at Rochdale Town Hall – this was a very impressive and enjoyable programme. On Sunday 9th November there was, of course, the Remembrance service, which quite a number of us managed to attend, but we are finding the speed of marching a bit hard to cope with nowadays.

Arrangements are currently in hand for our Christmas get together at the Rochdale Masonic Hall when we shall all be dressed in best bib and tucker, letting our hair down and having a "knees up". We wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

SALISBURY BRANCH

Time to meet another deadline for *Lioness*? I don't believe it. We have, as usual, been very busy. After a brief meeting in June a mini bus took some of our members on an interesting visit to Mottisfont Abbey and rose gardens.



*Taking a break during the visit to Mottisfont Abbey
Joan Morgan, Jill Trainor, Irene Grey, Jean Middleton,
Alyson Ogden and Dori Rose*

In July we were unfortunate to choose the one wet day for our lunch in Val Trout's garden! Hastily re-arranged for the following week we all enjoyed a selection of eats and drinks then taxed our brains with the competitions. Joan Freeland won the "name the dog" and Gladys Pope won the garden quiz. Jill Trainor had arranged a fiendish quiz based on member's surnames. Fortunately Val was able to supply a full list so instead of the clues fitting the names, it became a communal challenge to fit the surnames to the clues. Hilarious. A small presentation was made to Val to thank her for her hospitality.



Presentation by Jill Trainor to Val Trout thanking her for her hospitality.

Our AGM in September saw the committee re-elected en bloc: Chairman: Alyson Ogden, Secretary: Valerie Trout, Treasurer: Jill Trainor, Press Officer: Gladys Pope. Ideas for the next year's programme were put forward. Our Secretary will issue a list when confirmed.

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Some members attended a Massed Band Concert in City Hall. Gladys acted as Standard Bearer and again at the Battle of Britain Service at St Thomas's Church.

In October Alyson demonstrated some of the Christmas novelties from her catalogue. The singing/playing five-piece band was fantastic.

Four of our members had a wonderful weekend at the Annual Dinner Club reunion at Stoke, and it was good to see Bim Coleman again as she has now moved to Lincolnshire.

We have planned our Christmas Lunch at the White Hart, so we all hope other branches have a good time too. If you are visiting in the Salisbury area, do come along to our meetings held on the fourth Thursday of each month. We could even host a visit from another branch!!

All our members wish to thank the Lioness "team" for such a good magazine and we did enjoy all the photographs taken at the re-union in Birmingham.

SHIPLEY BRANCH

Time once again to send our branch report. We have had our usual meetings at Shipley library, but we have decided to hire a smaller room for which we shall have to pay less, as our numbers are getting fewer; however we do so want to keep on with our meetings as we enjoy seeing each other and talking with our friends and comrades.

Our meeting in January was very sad when we mourned the loss of our chairman, Mrs Lois Bullen – we still miss her and our other members who have passed away. We remembered them all when we met on November 10th and read out a poem called "Remembrance" which was written by one of our members who has also passed away.

Again we send our best wishes to all the staff of the Lioness for a happy Christmas and New Year 2004.

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

Hello again from Shropshire, we hope all our members and friends will have a happy and healthy 2004. As a branch we are still soldiering on, although attendances at our meeting have dwindled a little.

Martyn Clark visited us in July and gave us an interesting talk on pensions. On our local Dawley village day we were shivering with cold in the middle of the Phoenix school playing field as were other stallholders, but we managed to make £40 from our tombola stall at the same time as advertising the WRAC Association.

In August the "flower lady" came again and at the end of

the month the REME Association, Shropshire branch, invited us to a social evening at their meeting place in Dawley – the TA centre. We had a wonderful time, the horse racing event was hilarious, thank goodness we did not have to saddle and ride 'em but we did place our bets and won several times, afterwards eating our way through a delicious buffet. The REME were perfect hosts and gentlemen, headed by Ray they escorted us to their venue and back to our homes afterwards. We are now planning for them to visit us.



The Shropshire Branch at the REME social evening

We held our AGM in September, the new committee being: chairman, Mrs Nancy Tipton; vice-chairman, Mrs Lucy Bowyer; secretary, Mrs Beryl Lane; treasurer, Mrs Brenda Adams; other committee members, Mrs Joan Purcell and Mrs Hilda Dakin. Lucy stepped down from being treasurer after doing a splendid job for us for sixteen years and Brenda has kindly taken over this "hot seat". Thank you Brenda!! (Our next AGM will be in September 2004.) Later we had a little "thank you" party for Lucy who, by the way, thought it was for Beryl's housewarming and thus was completely taken by surprise. We presented her with a cut glass rose bowl filled with silk flowers in the colours of the ATS, courtesy of Hilda.

During November we attended many Remembrance Day services and parades, our own WRAC Association service at the Donnington Garrison church and elsewhere supporting the Royal British Legion – we also did our share of selling poppies. Our local countryside looks brilliant with autumn colours on the trees and the surrounding Shropshire hills, including our own Wrekin. Anyone visiting the area, please call and see us, you will be made very welcome.

Our Christmas party is in December and we are now discussing a programme for 2004, which will of course include the area reunion in Hereford.

Best wishes to all branches and long live the *Lioness*!

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

Sadly we have to report the passing of founder member Mrs Audrey Pickett (née Stott) on 9th June 2003, after a

short illness. Just two years earlier she had moved to Bexhill to be near her sister and indeed had become a member of the Bexhill Branch of the WRAC Association.

During the last four months our standard has been paraded several times. It was a Pies and Peas in memory of Lord Mountbatten, in Bridport and at a massed band parade at Southampton Guildhall. It has also been paraded at a band concert and festival of Remembrance at Eastleigh and lastly at the festival of Remembrance, again at Southampton Guildhall.

In July we had a wine and cheese evening to which we invited members of the WRAF and WRNS associations; the refreshments for this were provided by the staff of the place where we hold our meetings. A tea party was given in a member's garden in July and a garden buffet was held at a member's home in August – two very popular annual events.

Amongst recent speakers, one came to talk about wills, (which reminded one or two that they had not made theirs), and in November a popular talk on Christmas was given by Genevieve Bailey, a local historian.

We held two stalls this year, both at Eastleigh. On each occasion Margaret MacDonald (née Marshall) made a big clown for raffling. This is always an attractive prize and raises a lot of money. The Eastleigh stall has now become an annual event.

On 23rd May 2004 the Southampton branch is the host for the southern area reunion. It will be held at the Royal British Legion at Blackfield in the New Forest, so here's looking forward to meeting many of you there.

STIRLING BRANCH

The branch has 2 life members and 236 annual members and about 15 – 20 attend monthly meetings. Branch meetings take the form of a bar lunch and are held in a hotel in the centre of Stirling. This has proved to be very successful and are held every month except July, which is a holiday month.

Only one member attended the Scottish AGM, held in Aberdeen and we were delighted to hear that this proved to be a very enjoyable occasion.

Twenty members had a very enjoyable Christmas lunch, held in the Terraces Hotel.

The Ordnance Depot at Forthside was recently demolished and the Smith Art Gallery and Museum recorded the occasion. Many hundreds of ATS served in the depot during the Second World War and the Hotels and requisitioned houses where the girls were billeted during their service have been recorded as part of the History of the City of Stirling. We have not been forgotten!

Three members attended the annual Ack-Ack Reunion in York in July when the Master Gunner and the Lord Mayor of York took the salute at the March-Past at York Minster. It has been suggested that the Reunion in 2004 may be the last.

A cheque for £50 has been sent to Erskine Hospital for their Benevolent Fund.

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

We had a very enjoyable trip to Newcastle Branch where we were entertained to a Pies and Peas lunch followed by a delicious meringue. After taking (once again) rather more than our fair share of raffle prizes and table decorations, there was a very good rendition of "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend" by Newcastle's concert party. We all had a really good time and enjoyed catching up with news and meeting our friends from Newcastle.

Everyone at our branch was sorry to hear that we will be losing Lyn Jenkins who has been our Chairperson for the past five years. She will be moving to the Eastleigh area in December to be nearer to her family. We wish her and John all the very best for the future. While Lyn was on holiday in July, we had a collection for a "going-away" present and we brought her a dolphin ornament, which we presented to her in September. I hope it will always bring her good memories of her time spent with us and I am sure she will prove to be a great asset to her new Branch, once she has settled into her new home.

We had a very pleasant outing in July to Kensington Hall Hotel, near Crook in co. Durham. We had a very enjoyable lunch, followed by an excellent entertainer. He was so good, in fact, that we booked him there and then to entertain us at our Christmas Lunch. This will, once again, be a buffet prepared by our good friend Marina. Members may bring friends and we are hoping for a good turnout.

In the hopes of bringing the Association to the attention of further ex-ATS/WRAC personnel, we applied to make a Community Link programme. We were duly accepted and filming took place in September. As we had to be at the venue by 9.00am, and it was also not held on a regular meeting day, it was nice that almost 20 members made the effort to attend. The programme went out on the 13 October every day for 5 days on Tyne Tees Television. Unfortunately there has not been a great response – perhaps the time (15:15) was to blame, so it's back once more to the drawing board.

Some of our members attended the big Remembrance Day Parade held in Sunderland this year, others attending local Parades as buses are not always available to arrive in time for mustering. Mrs Martha Halliday laid a wreath on behalf of Sunderland Branch. She, together with Gladys Atkinson and their friend Margaret Senior (ex WAAF) will be receiving Certificates this year for long service selling poppies in Morrison's Supermarket. They have done so since the store originally opened more than fifteen years ago. The photograph was taken by Ena Hold's son-in-law. The girls met up with her husband at the Sunderland Parade. Ena always used to watch the Parade from her wheelchair.



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May I take this opportunity to wish all other branches a healthy and prosperous New Year.

ULSTER BRANCH

Sad news of resignations through ill-health of Miss Dorothy Hoey and of the death of her sister Nora in 2002. Peggy Stevenson of Killillyleagh died in June 2003 after a long illness. Maureen Humphrey quietly folded her tent and stole away to the Isle of Man – still a life member but with no branch to join. Maybe she'll start one up? Winnie Jackson made a welcome return at the AGM and helped turn up a missing member for me. Very sadly missed will be Mrs Peg Bailie who died just four days before the AGM. One of our earliest members she had left England for a life in Omagh with her late husband. She joined the Association there and even after moving to Belfast she had loyally kept her membership with the little branch. She had however worked hard for the Ulster branch where she was treasurer for years.

Now we look forward to our annual luncheon in February 2004 at Balmoral, Belfast. The October trip to Omagh had had to be cancelled because of 'flu-reduced numbers (in spite of the branch's closure, their secretary, Veronica Muldoon had arranged a get-together). Better luck and health next year Veronica? May will bring the SUMMER OUTING – note the upper case letters! YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED. Details will be sent in April. I wonder if any other branch has the same difficulty in getting members to turn up to meetings? We seriously considered inviting the Chippendales to see if they could boost the attendance figures! I've recommended healthy eating, life-planning with a diary and still only fifteen members turned up last September.

WILMSLOW BRANCH

Greetings from Wilmslow to you all.

In May, 8 of us spent a week at the Lord Kitchener Memorial Holiday Centre in Lowestoft and we can't speak too highly of our stay there, the proprietors were very helpful and friendly and we were made to feel at home straight away. Although the weather wasn't too great we went out every day, some to look at the shops and some to sit out of the wind looking out to sea or walk in the park, have coffee in the café etc. One evening we went to a casino and had a hilarious time 'gambling' with 2p pieces, then one night our hosts arranged for a coach to

take us into town to a show which was an Old Time Music Hall and that was good. Another night some of us went to the Ex-Servicemen's Club and played Bingo but not being Bingo players we had to ask some nearby ladies what we had to do. They were very kind and helpful and got the cards for us and looked after us. We had some fun but none of us won anything so it was first time unlucky. We had told them we were ex-servicewomen and had been in the ATS and as we were leaving one lady came up to us and thanked us for what we had done during the war, which was lovely.

A party of us went to the Military Tattoo in Manchester. We hired a small coach to take us and were deposited outside the venue – then we saw the steps, there seemed to be hundreds of them being the good soldiers that we are we made our laborious way to the top. To get to our seats we had to climb down more steps, our poor legs! We enjoyed the show very much, cheering on the contestants and gasping at the dare devil antics of the motor cyclists. Then it was up the steps to go outside and down the steps again to find our coach. We had a good laugh on the homeward journey recalling all we had seen, we thoroughly enjoyed it all.

During the summer we were invited by the Chester Branch to their Strawberry Tea and the entertainment there was Bingo again, but this time we knew what to do, and later in the year we visited the Rhyl Branch but were sorry to see a reduction in the numbers attending. I suppose more branches now are losing members and we are sorry to read of branches closing but happy for those that are lucky enough to have new members. We also send our condolences to those branches that have sadly reported the deaths of some of their members.

A party of us will be going to London in November but only three will be on the Parade, the rest of us going to the service in Westminster Abbey. On the Saturday we will as usual place our crosses in the appropriate sections for those we knew who lost their lives fighting for our freedom and those we knew who served their country in the Armed Services and now lie at peace closer to home.

We held our July Birthday Lunch at our usual Hotel which was as enjoyable as always next year will be our tenth Birthday and the 60th Anniversary of D Day. We are now thinking of ways to make the occasion something special and I rather think our secretary has something good in mind.

We are planning to visit quite soon to the Armouries in Leeds which should be very interesting and if our legs are still mobile, perhaps we might have enough energy to look at the shops, well! Women always like to look at shops don't they?

One of our members was a German refugee and when she joined us she wrote a letter to our secretary and though that was in 1999, at our October meeting we thought it might be a good idea to send it with our newsletter. (Please find in Articles of Interest section) By the time the next Lioness is sent out Christmas will be long gone, even so, we send you our best wishes and hope you had an enjoyable time during the festive season.

WIMBLEDON BRANCH

Wimbledon branch has suffered declining attendances due in part to ageing and ailing membership and it has also been difficult to fill Officers' vacancies, however we struggled on. **PDF Compressor Free Version** attendance has been only 14; members were invited to bring guests when we had speakers.

We were pleased to welcome our Area Chairman, Mrs Eileen Carter to our Summer party in June, this was a pleasant social occasion to which everyone contributed.

Only nine members attended the July meeting – a Flower Arranging demonstration – the three arrangements were offered as raffle prizes. No meeting in August.

September was members afternoon when they were encouraged to display their talents in embroidery, tapestry, knitting, general needlework and photography. There were many examples of outstanding work.

Only 13 members attended our Annual General Meeting held on the 17 October 2003, when we had a full and frank discussion about the viability of the Branch continuing in the light of poor attendance. It was decided we continue our arranged programme – the November "Bring & Buy" and Christmas Party in December. After that, sadly the Wimbledon Branch, after 55 years, will close down.

WINCANTON BRANCH

We look back again on an interesting year with members around twenty. As we are only a small branch, we are encouraged by the number of members who arrive each month.

We have sadly lost one of our affiliated members, Audrey Jordan ex WAAF, who will be sadly missed.

There have been a number of speakers again and those of our own members were particularly welcomed. One member gave a talk on her journey across America by train from east to west, commencing in New York and finishing in San Francisco, staying for two nights on our own Queen Mary. Another member gave a hilarious account of her life in the Land Army.

A coffee morning in May raised £180. Many thanks to our hard working members who produced such mouth watering cakes and scones.



Our outing in June was to Exmouth, where we sailed down the River Ex on a glorious day with lunch on board. Afterwards we went on to Ottery St Mary and saw a fascinating display of plants and an opportunity to buy.

Our annual Garden Party was held in the home of our President with a delicious Strawberry Tea, followed by various quizzes. Unfortunately this particular afternoon was unbelievably interrupted by torrential rain, the first for months. However, we all took refuge indoors and carried on as usual.

A number of us are attending the Remembrance Day Service in the parish church, where we lay our poppies and remember particularly the war years and those who were our friends.

We are looking forward to our Christmas Lunch, to be held at the Dolphin with husbands and partners invited.

WINCHESTER BRANCH

The branch has been very quiet since the Grand Reunion, with only 2 meetings to report. We held our own AGM at the Civil Service Club, Littleton. Out of 30 members in the branch 10 managed to make the trip, a good turnout all considered. After much chat we actually managed to get down to discussing the agenda items – not that we kept to it!! New committee elected, future meetings discussed we adjourned to tuck into the buffet. A good evening for those attending.

Our next meeting was a bit of a disaster to say the least. The branch Secretary had the date down incorrectly in her diary so everyone close to Worthy Down thought they were going to Hillier's Arboretum on 11 October, unfortunately the rest of the branch thought they were going on the 18 October. The secretary had a lovely day out even if she was on her own. Hopefully the Christmas Dinner will be more of a success.

WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH

During 2003 we have held our monthly meetings as usual, with an average attendance of 16. We have had a varied programme and have heard the history of pearl button making by the gentleman who is now the only pearl button maker in the Birmingham area. Also the history of Bantock House in Wolverhampton, which is now a museum. The ground floor has recently been refurbished by the "Friends of Bantock House" in the style it would have been when it was a family home. The top floor is a very interesting museum and contains many items relating to the industries and history of Wolverhampton. We were able to visit Bantock House in August and were shown round by the lady who had previously spoken to us.

During other meetings we have played Bingo, stretched our minds and imaginations with a quiz or just had a natter. The November meeting was a hands-on meeting when Pat Ash, our recently retired chairman, demonstrated the art of making a Christmas flower arrangement. She had provided suitable greenery,

artificial flowers, ribbons, candles, "oasis" in containers, etc. We had a very enjoyable afternoon and were very pleased with our efforts, which we were able to take home with us. Our annual Christmas lunch, followed by a short meeting, was in December.

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During the year the branch has been represented at the AGM and Grand Reunion held at Birmingham University, the civic service in June, the festival of Remembrance in our Civic Hall, the Remembrance Day service in St. Peter's church and at the British Legion service at the Cenotaph on 11th November.

At our AGM Mrs Betty Clyne was appointed chairman, Mrs Joan Nicholas, who was secretary and Miss Mary Davies, who was treasurer, changed offices.

We send our very best wishes to our friends in other branches also to our own members whom we do not see very often due to various health problems and distances to travel to meetings.

COPY DEADLINE

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

31 May 2004



Pronunciation of Unusual Surnames

We, in the WRAC Association are aware of several surnames where the pronunciation is not immediately obvious by the spelling; for instance *Tyrwhitt* is

pronounced Tirit and *Sandys* pronounced Sands, but did you know that:

Cholmondley is pronounced Chumley ~ *Crespigny* is pronounced Crepin ~ *De la Warr* is pronounced Della-ware ~ *Theobald* is pronounced Tibbald ~ *Featherstonehaugh* is pronounced Fanshaw ~ *Waldergrave* is pronounced Wargrave ~ *Le Fanu* is pronounced Leff-new and *Woolfhardisworthy* is pronounced Woolsey

Not a lot of people know that!

MAKING THE INEVITABLE EASIER TO COPE WITH

by Melanie Adams, National Accounts Manager for Charities

Funeralcare, The Co-operative Group's Funeral Service

We plan for most things but many of us are still reluctant to contemplate life's great certainty its end. Melanie Adams a senior advisor for the UK's leading funeral director the Co-operative Group's funeral Service explains why knowing in advance about funeral procedures makes good common sense.

We meet them on a regular basis; those grieving people who, having lost someone close really do not know what to do about arranging a funeral. They just want "to get things sorted out" at a difficult time and over with as quickly as possible. They settle for whatever everyone else has and that will suffice. As a nation we "deal" with funerals but don't necessarily take a step back to really think about how we could celebrate a life rather than mourn the sad passing of a loved one.

It's understandable that many of us find it hard, or even distasteful, to think about funeral arrangements other than at a time when we need to make them. Yet most of us will have to cope with the loss of a family member or friend at some stage and the last thing we need when we're grieving is to have to deal with procedures we know little or nothing about.

Recent research showed that more than four in ten of us know little or nothing about what needs to be done when someone dies. Nearly half of us who've arranged a funeral wished we'd known more about what the person who died really wanted.

We believe that a funeral offers the opportunity to make a unique tribute to a unique life and everybody should be remembered in the way that they would wish.

When a death occurs

When someone passes away, there are so many things that need to be considered and a number of key decisions to be made:

- Is it to be burial or cremation?
- Will you want to pay your last respects (Many people find it very comforting)?
- Are there any special touches you want to bring to the arrangements? Maybe a particular piece of music, or perhaps they were a member of a particular organisation which could be represented. Perhaps a favourite poem or passage of text could be read.
- Where will the funeral ceremony take place?
- If cremation is chosen, what will happen to the cremated remains?
- Is a memorial/headstone required?
- Should there be flowers or donations to a particular charity/organisation?
- How much will it cost?

The questions can be endless.

Today funeral arrangements can be as diverse as you wish. From a straightforward "quiet" event to an elaborate horse drawn procession, it is all down to personal choice. Knowing that you have carried out your loved one's wishes is so much better than the line "It's just what they would have wanted".

Funeralcare is offering special benefits for the ATS and WRAC Association Members and their immediate family, should the need arise. A £25.00 discount off Funeral Pre-payment Plans (the ability to arrange and pay for a funeral in advance) and also a 5% discount off our Co-operative Funeral Services. If you would like to receive information about our Plans or to find your nearest funeral director, please call Freephone 0800 289 120, quoting code 144/B/C.

Reunions

15TH ANNUAL ATS REUNION

5-7 SEPTEMBER 2003
LONDON, ONTARIO, CANADA

Wyn Raven, 595 Knights Hill Road, London, Ontario
N6J 3A3

It was wonderful to see so many of our ATS friends arriving at the "Four Points Sheraton Hotel" ready to enjoy our 3 day reunion. They came from England the USA and from the East and West Coast and the provinces in between in Canada. We had registrations on Friday afternoon and they were given the itinerary for the weekend. They also received a hand painted porcelain flower as a memento of the weekend. On Friday evening we were served a lovely meal which was followed by entertainment. On Saturday morning we had a meeting and a vote was taken to have another reunion next year on 9 - 11 September 2004 which passed. A really nice lunch was served after the meeting then the ladies had a free afternoon to shop or take advantage of the hotel pool and spa. Saturday night started with cocktails from 5.30 to 6.30 pm followed by dinner. The Starlight Cloggers entertained us, then we had dancing until we were called on Parade by Sgt Maj Jessie Seddon and were inspected by Col Georgina alias George Yelland. (One of our ATS ladies was dressed in full uniform and looked really good). Col Georgina took us on our usual march through the hotel around the foyer and back into the ballroom. The staff at the hotel get a big kick out of this. Then of course around came Sunday. We had a full British breakfast and then came the farewells until next year. If anyone would like more information please contact Wyn Raven, 595 Knights Hill Road, London Ontario N6J 3A3 Canada.

ATS REUNION

Mrs C E Stephenson, 2 Birkdale Road, Broadstone,
Dorset BH18 9AY

Once again, Wyn Raven and her husband Douglas, and all her lady helpers put on a wonderful weekend ATS Reunion from 5th to 7th September. Many thanks to Wyn's friends and helpers - Jessie Seddon, Margaret Garbutt, and Pat who worked so hard to make it a really wonderful weekend, and a special thank you to Wyn Raven.

Mrs Peggy Goodridge, née Tyrrell
1069 Primrose Lane, RR4 Peterboro, Ontario K9J 6X5
Canada



Ex 504/144 Regt at a previous reunion

I met up with some ex 504/144 Regt ATS in 2002. Six of us met at Edna Goble's farm in Thursley where we had a great time. Although I had met Connie Deaken from the Bournemouth Branch year prior, unfortunately for health reasons I was unable to meet up again this year. Hopefully in the future I can make the trip.

My previous home was Southampton UK so I find it extra special hearing about Southampton Branch. I would love to hear from any branch member.

WOMENS ROYAL ARMY CORPS DINNER CLUB

Gladys W Pope - Chairman

183 ladies booked for the 7th Annual Dinner Club Reunion in October 2003 held at the Moat House Hotel, Stoke on Trent. Friday was a pleasure to meet old friends and greet new members.

We started the weekend programme by listening to a few well-chosen words from Beryl Butcher before joining in with the WRAC Association Collect. We then accompanied Major Mac to the front grassed area to raise the Corps Flag on one of the hotel flagpoles. Plenty of cheers as it fluttered in the breeze.

On Saturday many members took advantage of the hotel's swimming pool and beauty treatments, or the proximity of so many pottery museums and outlets, or the Hanley shopping centre, or just exploring the area. The nearby canal basin was busy and in a very peaceful setting - just the place to enjoy coffee.



Rosemary Jones, Jackie Neaves, Gladys Pope, Nora Jones, Vanessa Davidson, Iris Parker and Frances Green enjoying coffee at the canal basin

During the day the raffle ticket sellers were kept busy and if you moved, one of them was there again!! However, they did a splendid job which raised £725. June Jones, Rene Bostock and Frances Green were doing the selling on the memorabilia table and Major Jane Freebairn was delighted with the £295 raised for Headquarters. Beryl and Averill also sold a number of the knitted dolls, t-shirts and tops. Meg Purkis who was busy taking photographs, raised £181 for the Club.

On Saturday evening members were welcomed to the Dinner by chairman Gladys Pope, and very good evening was under way. The hotel staff coped very well in serving the meal and were thanked by our President, Lady Val Kemball. Maureen Deeley cut the beautiful cake she had made for the occasion. A presentation was made to Beryl Butcher for her help in always leading the flag ceremonies (a replica doll of herself in her robes).



There was also a presentation to Ann Deakin on behalf of the members for initiating the Dinner Club and all the hard work she does to make the weekend such an enjoyable time. The raffle was completed in double quick time - our president making sure the "runners" were kept really running! Frank's programme of music and dancing kept us going till the wee small hours of the morning. It would not be the same without Lass of Richmond Hill would it?

On Sunday morning we gathered for "flag down", Beryl sending us on our way with her well-chosen words, and, of course, the Association Collect.

I hope everyone had a good journey home and we look forward to meeting you all again next year. Many thanks for all the messages of appreciation we have received.

WRAC ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND AGM

The AGM of the WRAC Association Scotland was held at the Cairndale Hotel, Dumfries, on Saturday 18th October 2003. It was a glorious autumn day, and it was lovely to see 75 ladies representing every Branch in Scotland. As the day went on, it became more and more enjoyable.

It was sad that Lt Col Janet Lawson MBE, who had given

such sterling service as our Chairman, had decided to stand down. She will, however, continue to be an active member of the Glasgow Branch, and will continue to attend the Scottish AGM whenever possible. We all wish her well.

On a positive note, we were pleased that Major Isobel Gordon TD, who had been the Area Secretary for some years, was elected as the new Chairman. The newly retired Lt Col Jo Young was elected as Vice Chairman and Miss Susan Marcroft BEM was elected Secretary. We are lucky to retain the abilities of Mrs May McGavin as Treasurer.

Lt Col Sue Westlake, our guest speaker, gave an interesting talk on her career and what lies ahead for the Association. She presented Miss Margaret Walker and Miss Jean Kerr, both members of the Dumfries Branch with Certificates of Appreciation.

After a lovely lunch, we had the opportunity to renew acquaintance with members we hadn't seen since the last AGM. Entertainment was provided by two ladies playing harps, with the first air being "Greensleeves". It was just right as background music. After a successful raffle, which raised £150 and in which Lt Col Westlake drew for herself the special memorial prize provided by the Cairndale Hotel, it was time for everyone to return home to "a' the airts".

This years competition, for a poem, was won jointly by Miss Susan Marcroft BEM of Dumfries Branch and Mrs Margaret Webb of Berwick-upon-Tweed Branch.

The next AGM is to be held in Perth on 23 October 2004.

Finally, there is news of our two Scottish Life Vice-Presidents of Council. Those two intrepid ladies are planning world-wide travel. Miss Thomson leaves for South Africa early in the New Year, while Lady Martha Bruce hopes to go white-water rafting down the Grand Canyon next summer. Talk about an example to us all!

SOUTH EAST AREA REUNION 65th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FORMATION OF THE ATS

Kate McGregor ~ Area Chairman

On Sunday 14th September 2003, the WRAC Association Branches of South East Area gathered at St, Matthews Church, St Leonards-on-Sea, to mark the 65th Anniversary of the formation of the Auxiliary Territorial Service (the ATS). Over two hundred members with friends gathered together and welcomed the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, Mrs Phyllida Stewart-Roberts and her husband and many local dignitaries and civic leaders on one of the most beautiful days of the summer. The planning of the event started many months ago with Hastings Secretary, Dorothy Dixon, heading an executive committee, which arranged Service details, tea party and invitations. It was a massive task not helped by the fact that we are all getting older so some contingency plans were needed in case of illness or accidental happenings. Medway and Canterbury Branches decided to share the cost of a coach to attend and nearer members included representatives from Eastbourne, Bexhill and, of course, Hastings. Standards were paraded including the ATS

Standard, WRACA Branch Standards, and representative Standards from local Branches of the RAFA, RBL, RAA, Royal Sussex Association, RASC/RCT, PRA and the Combined Cadet Force.

For weeks our PDF Compressor Free Version and when we arrived a merry band was busy in the kitchen, led by Elizabeth Holmes, and the Hall was being prepared under the guidance of Monica Ellis, Hastings Branch Chairman. There were two beautiful cakes, one to be ceremonially cut (pictured below) and a fine commemorative table cloth signed by past dignitaries, members of Hastings Branch, and then beautifully embroidered.



The Birthday Cake

By 2.30pm everything was ready at the Church, Standards were ready for inspection and the reception party was in place to receive the Lord Lieutenant. Mrs Stewart-Roberts arrived with her husband and charmed everyone who saw or spoke to her. She inspected the assembled Standard Bearers and spoke to each at length. Then it was time to move into Church accompanied by the Area Chairman, Kate McGregor and her husband. The officiating Clergy met Mrs Stewart-Roberts in the porch – the Reverend David Fentiman who was to conduct the Service and the Reverend Sue Wing, formerly Colonel Sue Wing, late WRAC, who was giving the address.



WRACA Standard Bearers

The service had been planned with the theme of peace uppermost in our minds and started with the rousing hymn "Stand up, Stand up for Jesus" during which the Standards were presented. After the welcome by the Reverend Fentiman, "I vow to Thee my Country" was sung with fervour. Margery Lucas, a member of Hastings Branch, held everyone spellbound as she sang "Let there be Peace on Earth" quite beautifully.

Lt Col (Ret'd) MW Soames OBE, who served in both the ATS and WRAC, movingly read from St. Matthew, Chapter 5, Verses 1 to 12. The reading was the choice of the Rev'd Sue Wing, who spoke so eloquently of the nation's pride in women who came forward in the second World War to serve their country. Sue is a great favourite with all and we were so pleased that she was able to be with us on this very special occasion.

In no time, it seemed, we'd sung more hymns, said prayers for our Queen, the Royal Family, our country and ourselves, concluding with the WRAC Association Collect. We finished with the hymn "Now Thank we all our God" followed by the Dismissal, the Blessing and the National Anthem. Then it was off to tea and the pleasure of meeting up with old friends. Brigadier Eileen Nolan CB cut the cake and thanked everyone for a wonderful event which she had enjoyed enormously. She and Lt Col Soames had travelled a long distance to be present, for which we thank them. Letters were read out from a representative of HM the Queen, and Lt Col SJ Westlake, Vice President of the WRAC Association.

In no time it seemed we were packing up to return to our homes having had a really wonderful time. For many there were happy and sad memories of the days when Britain was fighting for its existence. Thank you to all who took part and did so much to make our Service such a success.

£300 was given to the Church collection and this has been donated to our Benevolent Fund.



The Lord Lieutenant, the Area Chairman and Hastings Branch Secretary

FORTHCOMING REUNIONS

WALES AND THE WEST AREA REUNION 11th SEPTEMBER 2004

Hosted by THE HEREFORD BRANCH

Date 11 September 2004
Time 1100 – 1600hrs
Venue Three Counties Hotel, Belmont Road,
Hereford HR2 7BP
All on one level, no stairs. Very good parking.
Short taxi ride from the railway/bus station.
(Direct Tel: 01432 299955)
Cost: £15.00 per head including buffet lunch and
entertainment
Last Orders Monday 12th July 2004

Whilst priority will be given to members within the Wales and West Region, members from other areas, or non-affiliated members will be most welcome, subject to availability and prior booking. The Three Counties Hotel have given us a very good rate (discount of just under 50%) should you wish to stay the night or weekend. Full details when you contact either Joyce or myself by letter:

Joyce Nicholls, 54 Mayberry Drive, Redhill, Hereford
HR2 7QT

Evelyn Radford (née Bertie), 14 Golden Post, Hereford
HR2 7BZ

SOUTH WEST AREA REUNION FRIDAY 4th JUNE 2004 Hosted by PLYMOUTH BRANCH

Calling all ex ATS and WRAC ladies who live in the South West under the umbrella of Plymouth, Exeter, Taunton and Wincanton Branches

Plymouth Branch will be hosting the South West Area Reunion on Friday 4th June 2004 from 11am to 4pm. The venue is the Tamar River Sailing Club Saltash Passage, St Budeaux, Plymouth. Our Reunion is to honour and celebrate the 60th anniversary of D-Day 6th June 1944. The club is on the banks of the river Tamar with the road and rail bridges that span the river to connect Cornwall to Devon just 100 yards up river. There is also a memorial to visit close by.

If you are interested, please contact your Area Secretary or the Secretary of Plymouth Branch: Ruth Jennings, 1 Little Ash Gardens, Saltash Passage, Plymouth PL5 1JZ
Tel: 01752 363118

WRAC PTI REUNION

The 4th WRAC PTI Reunion Dinner will take place in Aldershot on Saturday 18th September 2004 (venue to be confirmed). The event will run alongside the annual APTC Reunion so that members may have the opportunity of participating in the other weekend activities, including the Friday Evening Function, netball/golf tournaments and the Sunday Church Parade.

Full details of the programme will be circulated to all members in the New Year.

If there are any former WRAC PT Officers or Instructors who have not yet registered or have changed address and would like to be included on the mailing list, please contact Kate Bettison at: 19 Olde Farm Drive, Darby Green, Camberley, Surrey GU17 0DU (Tel: 01252 873174 E-Mail: katebettison@supanet.com)

CALLING ALL EX-RECRUITERS

Jennifer Podesta (ex SSgt)
56 Littleddale Street, Kempston, Bedfordshire MK42 8PH

I placed a notice of this Reunion in Issue No. 2 (page 28, column 1 to be precise!) and can confirm the date selected for a proposed reunion is Friday 7 May 2004.

Should you wish to attend (and I sincerely hope many of you will), please register your interest by contacting me with your details via the address and phone number shown below. If under twenty people sign up to this occasion, I am afraid it will be cancelled.

For a flyer with further information, please contact me at the above address or telephone her on 01234 853839. I look forward to hearing from you.

ADEN VETERANS ASSOCIATION

The 2nd Scottish Dinner/Dance is to be held at the Golden Lion Hotel, Stirling, on 6th March 2004. All details are supplied by contacting Mr Brian Bryson on 01506 842022 and at jeabri@btopenworld.com

HMS FORWARD & AGGRESSIVE 1940-45

Geoffrey Ellis, Secretary
'Friends of HMS Forward', 11 Fairholme Road,
Newhaven, East Sussex BN9 0NY

HMS Forward & Aggressive 1940 – 45 WRNS/RN Reunion to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Normandy Landings, to be held at Newhaven Museum, Paradise Park, Avis Road, Newhaven, BN9 0DH, from 1100 hrs Saturday 5 June 2004 with a short service at Newhaven Harbour in the afternoon. Many ATS veterans also served at this establishment and may wish to participate. Contact Geoffrey Ellis at the above address or e-mail him on info@secret-tunnels.co.uk for details.

You may recall I wrote to you on 30 September 1997 in connection with my research into the former RN Headquarters HMS Forward. Since then several ATS have volunteered valuable information regarding this establishment that has since been declared by English Heritage to be of National Importance. It is proposed to revitalise the remains of this subterranean site as a tourist attraction and educational establishment for posterity.

Newhaven played an important role in the Dieppe Raid, Air-Sea Rescue, the Normandy Landings, the Liberation of France, and almost nightly harassment of enemy shipping in occupied harbours and waters from 1941 to 1945. The full cradle-to-grave history of this establishment is documented in a book and video entitled "The Secret Tunnels of South Heighton". Web site www.secret-tunnels.co.uk has more details.

Gunners Corner

THE PENULTIMATE YEAR

Captain Sherri Took TD
PDF Compressor Free Version

2003 the penultimate year for the reunion of the ladies of Ack Ack Command who had served in World War II – the first lady gunners!!



Due to operations in the Gulf and the lack of tentage in the UK, the location for this year's reunion was indoors. HQ York Garrison and members of 101 Regt hosted the event in the Kohima restaurant, Imphal Barracks, York. The atmosphere was not dampened, the fun and games continued though slightly more noisy and a little more cramped. The wine and gin flowed and the party began at 1230hrs after registration.

The entertainment on Saturday was as raucous as ever with the Bob Crossland Band encouraging everyone into a sing-a-long. The GSM, WO1 Ron Smith, had the girls from 101 Regt at his feet singing "Kiss me goodnight Sgt Maj". There was dancing in the aisles, raffles, and auctions, one for a giant teddy that eventually sold for £30 to David from Sodexho who not only buys giants teddies but also provides a fine lunch and all the tea and coffee that anyone could possibly want.

The sun always shines on these ladies and Sunday morning was no exception. The Inspecting Officer this year was the Chairman of the Royal Artillery Association, Maj Gen Mike Shellard CBE. Over coffee on Sunday morning Gen Mike wandered among the ladies hearing their stories and tales. It was then off to the Minster at York for a Service of Remembrance.



All the guests gathered on the South steps of the Minster to await the March Past. The GSM has his work cut out, 300 women to arrange into squads. One minute they are where they should be the next they are standing chatting in the squad next door!!! Then they are off marching to the beat of the drum of Kings Division Waterloo Band, as smart as ever they have been, tall and proud and all in step!! With a snap of the head on an eyes right they are past and back onto the buses to return to Imphal barracks for lunch.



The Standard Bearer is LBdr Diane Bennett and the 3 girls lowering the flag for another year are all from 101 Regt who have taken these ladies to their hearts. It was then all over for another year, next year being the last where we will be going out with a BANG!!

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for next year are due for payment on 01 October 2004

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

Poems

ATS PRAYER

PDF Compressor Free Version

Lord, thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older and will some day be old. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all, but thou knowest Lord that I want a few friends left at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing, and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of others pains, but help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me that glorious lessons that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a saint, some of them are so hard to live with, but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people. And give me O Lord, the grace to tell them so.

Amen.

From a 17th Century Nun's Prayer.
Kindly sent in by Lt Col (Retd) V Trout

"MY TALE OF ARMY LIFE"

Twas in the year of 63
when I decided the WRAC was for me
to do a job that I had picked
a policewoman I thought I could stick!

No bets at Lingfield during basic training
no horses either, just hard grafting!
Trained next, in London, Kensington!
Lovely shops, but it was mainly marching.

When finally I was good enough to don the Red Cap
Catterick is where I was then sent.
What fun I had, what great folk I met
chasing peeping toms, cor, what next!

But then it went pear shaped,
when I got a bad leg!
The choice I had was very clear,
be a driver, or, leave – no fear!

Driving in London was hectic and strange,
not knowing Hounslow, I followed the planes!

They sent me to Germany to drive folk around,
next came promotion, with less driving I found.

After a while, a Recruiting I went
to talk young folk into doing their stint.
I went to schools and conventions as well,
telling them that life in the Army wasn't all hell.

Sign here I often said,
take up your blankets and make your bed.
The Modern Army is just what you need.
Do well and you could lead.

But life still goes on in the corps Association!
With many good friends from near and far
for Queen and country we've done our bit
we are not old enough to idly sit.

The young ones are in and we have Retired!!!

Miss Susan Marcroft BEM
245 High Street, Dalbeattie DG5 4DW

REFLECTIONS

We met and married a long time ago
We worked long hours when wages were low
No TV, no wireless no bath, times were hard
Just a cold water tap and a walk up the yard
No holidays abroad no posh carpet on the floor
But we had coal on the fire and we didn't lock doors
Our children arrived no pill in those days
We brought them all up without any state aid
They were quite safe to go out and play in the park
No valium no drugs and no LSD
We cured most of our ills with a good cup of tea
But if you were sick you were treated at once
Not fill in that form and come back in six months
No vandals no muggings there was nothing to rob
And we felt quite rich with a couple of bob
People were happier in those far off days
Kinder and caring in so many ways
Milkmen and paper- boys would whistle and sing
A night at the pictures was our one mad fling
We all got our share of trouble and strife
We just had to face it that's the pattern of life
But now I'm done, I look back through the years
I don't think of the bad times, the trouble and tears
I remember the blessings, our home, our love
And that we shared them together
I thank God above.....

Mrs Jo Anscombe 12 Brierley Court, Turner Street,
Hereford HR1 2JA



Weddings

Golden Diamond Wedding Anniversary Celebrations

Allen - Coxon

On 7th July 1943 W/29243 Chris Allen (RF Operator
ATS) married Armt QMS Ted Coxon RAOC at Blenheim
Baptist Chapel, Leeds.



Sixty years later, Chris and Ted Coxon celebrated with friends and family, including their seven grandchildren, as pictured below.



DIAMOND WEDDING ~ FAIRCLOUGH ~ KILBY



On September 24th 1943 Doris Kilby, ATS was married to Jim Fairclough, Royal Engineers 21st Army at Attercliffe Parish Church, Sheffield, Yorks.

Present address: 2 Aries Close, Chell, Stoke on Trent.
Staffs. ST6 6NL

ADVICE FROM TRADING STANDARDS

What to do if things go wrong when you buy something:

If you return faulty goods within the first six months after the date of purchase, YOU DO NOT have to prove the goods were faulty. It is assumed that they were.

Misleading prices in shops:

Unfortunately, there is no requirement for the minimum size of the print for the price of goods on sale.

Obituaries – their final salute

VALERIE LADY GOULDING

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Valerie Hamilton Monckton was born at Ightham, Kent, on 12th September 1918. Two of the most memorable aspects of her very full life concerned her acting as a courier between King Edward VIII and the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, during the Abdication Crisis; later she founded and managed the largest charity hospital in Ireland.

Valerie Goulding's father, Sir Walter Monckton, the future 1st Viscount Monckton of Brenchley, who became Attorney-General to the Duchy of Cornwall and a confidant of the King, made her his secretary during the crisis. "My father chose me because I could keep a secret", she later said, "Even my mother never knew where I was going for Father". The first time she carried an important letter between the Prime Minister and the King, she was stopped by the police for speeding in Hyde Park. "They asked where I was going, but I couldn't tell them". She was later fined £2.00

Some time later, Churchill warned Valerie Monckton that war was imminent, and suggested she join the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry. She was encouraged by a senior officer in the Fany's to switch to the ATS. One of her first duties was to identify sites for anti-aircraft batteries and searchlights on the east coast.

While serving in the ATS, after her marriage to Sir Basil Goulding, himself an officer in the RAF, Valerie received a number of letters from her mother, who insisted on addressing the letters to "Lady Goulding". According to Valerie, this resulted in her being put in charge of cleaning lavatories at the training camp. Valerie asked her brother to send her a list of swear words and obscene phrases. "After that things improved."

Valerie Goulding founded the Central Remedial Clinic in Co Dublin during the polio epidemic of 1951. It was launched with just one room and two patients. Today it provides services for 3,500 children and 500 adults, and is the national centre for the treatment of cerebral palsy, spina bifida and muscular dystrophy.

Valerie Goulding was an enthusiastic supporter of the admission of women soldiers to the Irish Republic's armed forces. "If the women's army is to be a real army it should be combatant, and that means they should pull the trigger," she told an Irish Senate debate.

Valerie Lady Goulding dies on 28 July 2003.

AMELIA FORD (NÉE POPE)



*WRAC Dinner Club Weekend
left to right: Amelia – Edith – Ann*

It is with very great sadness, I have to report the death of one of our members. Amelia Ford (née Pope) died on Tuesday, 9 September 2003, after a very brave battle with cancer – she was sixty-six. She joined the WRAC in 1955, serving for five years as a cook.

Being a Cardiff lass, one of Amelia's claims to fame was that she knew a chap – who knew a girl whose cousin knew Shirley Bassey. She told a story about her first

posting after cook's training. She asked the Cook Sgt what to prepare for tea – on being told 'Kippers and Custard'. She boiled every drop of milk she could find. When the Sgt re-appeared, she asked what all the custard was for. The little rookie from Wales was so pleased with her efforts, but not because she couldn't find any kippers!!

Amelia loved going to branch meetings, trips abroad accompanying the Standard Bearer to various cemeteries and to the Cenotaph to parade on Remembrance Sunday.

At the annual WRAC Dinner Club, she was famous (or infamous) for her version of "Roll a Silver Dollar" which she would sing at any opportunity.

At Amelia's funeral, many of her friends from the Cleveland Branch formed a guard of honour at both the church and crematorium. It shows how much she was loved and respected, as many of our ladies are in their eighties. Our sincere condolences go to John and their lovely family.

Amelia – we salute you.

Irene Maclean Cleveland Branch

BETTY BRIGGS (née BELSHAM)

Betty Briggs died at her home at Ickenham, Middlesex on 25 July 2003 the day after her 80th birthday. She was one of three friends living in Holbeach, Lincolnshire, former pupils at Spalding High School, who joined the ATS together in January 1941. After her initial training at the Racecourse, Northampton she went on a course at the War Office Clerks' School at Strathpeffer, Scotland, and afterwards served with the RASC Transport Offices at Norwich, Cambridge and Bedford.

On 22 December 1945 she married Sgt Keith Briggs of the Royal Engineers whom she met at Cambridge. She took her discharge in March 1946. They had two sons and five grandchildren. They moved to Ickenham in 1965 and in 1982 her husband was elected Mayor of the London Borough of Hillingdon and Betty became his Mayoress.



Betty Briggs 1983 with husband Keith in his Mayoral Robe

On an official visit to the British Legion Club at Ruislip she noticed the clubroom had many regimental plaques, but not one for the ATS. Betty remedied this omission by presenting the Club with an ATS plaque. She was active in local affairs for many years and played badminton until the age of 78. She was much loved and will be sadly missed as shown by the large congregation, including the Mayor and Mayoress, a number of past Mayors and other local dignitaries, at her funeral at St. Giles' Church, Ickenham on 4th August 2003.

FREE ONE YEAR PASSPORTS FOR VETERANS

The Home Office has recently announced a scheme to provide free one-year passports to veterans wishing to attend 60th Anniversary Commemorative Events in 2004 and 2005.

Eligibility:

- > The applicant must have taken part in the action being commemorated or be the spouse, widow, widower or partner of the person who took part; Carers, cases of need will also be able to obtain a concessionary passport.
- > The applicant must be travelling as part of a group arranged by a veterans' organisation or to an event arranged by a veterans organisation.
- > Free passports will only be issued to persons who do not already have a British Passport valid for the journey being made.
- > The applicant must be eligible for British Passport facilities.

Accreditation of Associations

All passport applications are required to be submitted via the relevant association in order that the applicant's details can be authenticated. Associations wishing to act as authenticators should, in the first instance contact: Veterans Affairs Secretariat

FAO: WO VAS RAF
Ministry of Defence
St George's Court
2 – 12 Bloomsbury Way
London WC1A 2SH
Tel: 020 73053028 Fax: 020 730530327

Application Process

Applications should be made on normal passport applications from the Post Office. The completed forms should be passed to the relevant association for authentication. (Associations will then send them to UKPS to the address given them during the accreditation process.) Under no circumstances should applicants submit them directly to UKPS. Passports will be posted direct to the applicants.

- > One of the applicant's photographs should be countersigned by the veteran's organisation.
- > UKPS. Due to the accreditation process UKPS will not require documentary evidence of eligibility ie. Expired passports, birth certificates etc.
- > The veteran's organisation must keep a record of receipt and send applications in batches to UKPS.
- > The year long Passports will be available from January 2004. It is the intention for the period for use of free passports to cover up to VE Day on 8th May 2005.

BAILIE Mrs Margaret (Peggy) Bailie, née Whitworth, of Belfast on 23 September 2003. ATS

BALL Mrs Pamela Ivy Ball, née Wilcox, of Bath on 8 November 2003. ATS

BESWICK Mrs W Beswick, née Hunter, of Melton Mowbray in April 2003. ATS

BOWLDER Mrs Pam Bowlder, née Horrocks, of Chester in May 2003. WRAC

BREEDS Mrs Lilian Mabel Breeds, née Mole, of Sidcup on 2 October 2003. ATS

BRIGGS Mrs Betty Briggs, née Belsham, of Ickenham, Uxbridge on 25 July 2003. ATS

BUCKINGHAM Mrs Elizabeth (Mary) Buckingham, née Plewes, of Goole on 13 October 2003. ATS

BUCKLE Miss E F M Buckle MBE of Easterton, Nr Wells, Somerset on 25 August 2003. ATS/WRAC

BUTLER Mrs Florrie Butler, née Uden, on 20 April 2003. ATS

CIESLA Mrs Shelia Ciesla, née Heron, of Inverness on 20 June 2003. ATS

COOTE Mrs Ena Christine Coote, née Murray, of London on 10 July 2003. WRAC

CUNDY-COOPER Mrs C E Cundy-Cooper, née Kershaw, of Putney London on 20 August 2003. ATS

DAY Miss Day, known as "Doris" in Frimley Park Hospital on 27 July 2003. ATS/WRAC

DODDS Mrs E W Dodds, née Marsh/Clark, of Irthlingborough on 19 July 2003. ATS

DODS Miss Joyce Dods of Keighley on 10 June 2003. ATS

EBERS Mrs Maureen Ebers, née Campbell, of Gosport on 21 September 2003. WRAC

FEWINGS Mrs Vera Fewings, née Parker, of Bordon in April 2003. ATS/TA/WRAC

FLETCHER Mrs Marion Fletcher, née Dromfield, of Sheffield on 13 October 2003. ATS

FORD Mrs Amelia Ford, of Stockton-On-Tees in September 2003. WRAC

GIBBARD Miss L Gibbard, of London on 10 October 2003. ATS

GILLATT Mrs Eva Gillatt, née Oppenheim, of Cheshire on 4 December 2003. ATS

GOULDING Lady Valerie Hamilton Goulding, of Enniskerry on 28 July 2003. ATS

GRAVES Mrs Frances Mary Graves of Queensland, Australia, in 2000. ATS

HANCOCKS Mrs Pauline Cynthia Hancocks, of Folkestone on 14 July 2003. ATS

HARLING Maj (Retd) Constance Louise Harling, of Fareham on 8 August 2003. ATS

HILL Mrs Doreen Hill, née Petre, of Bournemouth on 26 September 2003. ATS

HOEY Miss Nora Hoey of Newton Abbey. ATS

HOFMANN Mrs Maude (Paddy) Hofmann, née Doherty, of Knaresborough on 28 July 2003. ATS

HOMFRAY Mrs Rhona Homfray, née Breton, of Isle of Wight on 26 February 2003. ATS

JACKSON Lady Joan Mary Jackson, née Buesden, of Marlborough on 25 September 2003. ATS

JEFFREY Mrs Marjorie Helen Jeffrey, of Folkestone on 30 July 2003. ATS

JONES Miss Wendy Mary Jones, of Castle Bromwich on 20 November 2003. ATS

KEMP Mrs Heather Kemp, née Furr, of Abergavenny on 12 October 2003. ATS

LEWIS Mrs Ruth Mary Lewis, née Evans, of Frodsham on 14 July 2003. ATS

McCULLOCH Mrs Isabel McCulloch, née Habgood, of Idethwood on 5 April 2003. ATS

McKNIGHT Mrs Margaret McKnight, of Glasgow on 16 October 2003. ATS

MARDEN Mrs Kathleen Veda Marden, née Nisbit, of Evesham on 9 September 2003. ATS

MAYOR Miss Catherine Eileen Mayor, of Surbiton on 31 July 2003. ATS

MILLER Mrs Gladys Miller, of Coventry on 5 October 2003. ATS

MILLER Mrs Joyce W Miller, née Butcher, of Hereford in 2003. ATS

MOIR Mrs Alice Mary Moir, née Edwards, of Oldham on 16 October 2003. ATS

MOLLOY Mrs Ann Molloy, née Ryan, of Toronto on 10 February 2003. ATS

MUNRO Mrs Sheila Munro, née Williams, of Wimborne on 10 March 2003. ATS

NOLAN Mrs Lil Nolan, of Merthyr in July 2003. ATS

OWENS Mrs E A Ann Owens, née Tinsley/Palmer, of Sittingbourne on 24 November 2003. ATS

PATRICK Miss Dorothy A Patrick, of Glasgow on 10 November 2003. ATS

PEPPER Mrs Margaret Pepper, née Henry/Harris, of Bath on 27 October 2003. ATS

PHILLIPSON Mrs Dorothy Alexandra Phillipson, née Voller/Punter, of Moreton Wirrall on 30 April 2003. ATS

PITT Mrs Margaret Pitt, née Pattison, of Slough on 13 August 2003. ATS

PULHAM Mrs Doris Emma Pulham, née Mitchell, of Dunstable on 21 March 2003. ATS

RILEY Mrs Audrey M Riley, of Taunton, on 21 May 2003. ATS

RIMMER Mrs Joan Phyllis Rimmer, née Rummery, of Rye on 27 October 2003. ATS

ROBERTS Mrs Freda Jane Roberts, née Atkins, living nr Doncaster on 26 July 2003. ATS

ROUGHT-ROUGHT Mrs Pamela Rought-Rought, née De Castro, of Brandon. ATS

SHAW Miss Christina Shaw, of Huddersfield on 4 July 2003. ATS

SIMPSON Mrs Audrey Edith Simpson, née McAlpin, of Folkestone in December 2002. ATS

SINCLAIR Mrs Hilda Sinclair, of Glasgow on 6 November 2003. ATS

SNELSON Miss Edith Snelson, of Rhyl on 9 October 2003. ATS

STALLARD Mrs Alice Stallard, née Winstanley, of Sale on 23 July 2003. ATS

STORER Mrs Margaret Storer, née Pearson, of Ross-on-Wye on 9 July 2003. ATS/WRAC

THOMSON Miss Helen Watt Gwynette Thomson, of Perth on 6 August 2003. ATS/WRAC

THORNE Mrs Stella E Thorne, née Parker, of Bristol on 31 July 2003. ATS

WALKER Mrs Joan Evelyn Walker, née George, of Bethnal Green, New Zealand on 12 December 2002. WRAC

WALLER Mrs Joan Fredericka Waller, of Weston-Super-Mare on 19 September 2003. ATS/WRAC

WALTON Mrs M C Walton of Dover. ATS

WARDEN Mrs Joyce W Warden, née Butcher, of Hereford. ATS/WRAC

WATSON Mrs Lillian Watson, née Easton, of Gillingham on 12 October 2003. WRAC

WILKINSON Mrs Marion Wilkinson, née Crossfield, of Knutsford on 15 July 2002. ATS/WRAC

Letters to the Editor

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Dear Editor

Thank you for printing my article re: Monty and my encounter with him in 1948 but, oh dear I squirmed when I read it. "Chief of the Imperial General's Staff." I could see Monty's eyes blazing at that one! Please, for his sake, would you print an 'erratum' in the next issue of *Lioness*. Monty was, as you know, Chief of the Imperial General Staff. He took up this appointment in June of 1946 and left in October 1949, when he transferred to NATO.

He was a truly great man. I enclose a copy of the final paragraph of his Memoirs, which shows his pride and his humility, in his tribute to – the British Soldier. We are on the brink of another conflict and once more the men and women of our armed forces must prepare for battle. I am quite sure they will come up to Monty's standards.

"I will conclude my military service by paying homage to the British soldier, my friend and comrade-in-arms during all those years. The British soldier is second to none in the communities of fighting men. Some may possess more *élan*, others may be better disciplined; but none excels him in all-round character. We require no training in bravery in Britain; we can trust to our own native manliness to see us through. So it is with the soldier. It is his natural pride which gives him his fighting qualities. How often he has stood firm before tyranny and oppression, the last hope of the free world! In the midst of the noise and confusion of the battlefield, the simple homely figure of the British soldier stands out calm and resolute – dominating all around him with his quiet courage, his humour and his cheerfulness, his unflinching acceptance of the situation. May the ideals for which he has struggled never vanish from the world! May he never be forgotten by the nation for which he has fought so nobly! I know better than most of what heights the British soldier can aspire. His greatness is a measure of the greatness of the British character, and I have seen the quality of our race proved again and again on the battlefield. I shall take away many impressions into the evening of life. But the one which I shall treasure above all is the picture of the British soldier – staunch and tenacious in adversity, kind and gentle in victory – the man to whom the nation has again and again, in the hour of adversity, owed its safety and its honour."

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

Dear Editor

So Lionesses do it with Pride do they – well did you know that:

Paratroopers do it on the way down and Signallers do it in Code?

Maybe you have opened a can of daft sayings.

J Bartlett, 15 Abergeldie Road, Aberdeen,
AB10 6ED

(Oh, I do hope so!! Ed)

MEMORIES OF QUEEN'S CAMP

Dear Editor

It is gratifying to find one's happy memories of No. 7 ATS Training Camp, Guildford shared ("More Memories of Queen's Camp") by Mrs Whitehead – and intriguing to reflect that we rank among the ghostly marching horde heard a decade later by Regimental Policewoman Mosley ("The Haunting Memories of Queen Elizabeth Training Camp").

But it is unbelievable that the corporeal, Lance Corporal Lawson ever got past the guardroom looking as glamorous as in her photograph (page 5). She would have had to wear her regulation ATS cap and her hair must be off the collar, so it would have been pushed up under the rim until she reached the telephone kiosk a short distance down the road from the camp gates. I don't recall if the kiosk had a mirror. I went there to peel off my khaki-issue stockings before going down into town in my American nylons.

Elizabeth de Bourbel MBE, 14 Radbourne Lane,
Mackworth, Derby DE22 4LU

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.

THERE IS SOMEONE WHO CARES

Dear Editor,

I was very pleased to see my name in the January issue of *The Lioness* by Alice R Alexander and Mrs May Andrews. They, and the rest of our members, may like to know that Kate Adie has not let us down. Her book, "Corsets to Camouflage" is well worth reading. Sunderland members please note.

Correct titles could have been checked by contacting the "Imperial War Museum", where a major exhibition ("Women and War") takes place between 15 October 2003 and 18 April 2004.

Miss Audrey Kent, 24 Broughton Park, Belfast BT6 0BD

Dear Editor,

I would like to thank you for publishing my article "Behind the Wire" in the January issue of the "Lioness" regarding Palestine Coy, ATS, Jerusalem.

I am pleased to report that I have been contacted by several members, and many letters and phone calls have been exchanged so far. I feel it may be helpful if I could list the names of those who have written or phoned, and the Counties wherein they dwell, which may help in uniting old friends.

Dorothy Foster (née Corporal Court) Middlesex
Sandy Leswell (née Webb) Kent
Grace Ramsay (née Williamson) Wiltshire
Gwen Johnson (née Maidment) Cheshire
Doreen Walker (née Wardlaw) Norfolk
Bobbie May (née Jones) Berkshire
Joy Grant (née Avery) Hampshire
Frances Taylor (née Brown) Cheshire

All have happy memories of the time they spent in Jerusalem, and hopefully some may be able to meet up again to "swing the lamp". Should anyone wish further information (addresses etc) of those listed above, I can be contacted at my home address.

This past weekend (October 24th - 27th) I have met up with Joy Grant and Dorothy Foster, the latter having married a member of the Palestine Police Force who is now the General Secretary of that Association. The occasion was their Annual Dinner/Dance held near Swindon, followed by a parade and wreath laying ceremony the following morning, in which we three members of Palestine Coy ATS took part. Thanks again to the "Lioness" for helping to bring about this re-union, which was most enjoyable for all.

Doreen Walden, 27 The Beeches, Ponteland, Northumberland NE20 9SZ
Telephone Number 01661 822559

Dear Editor,

I am the RSM Hedges referred to by Mrs Williams and Mrs Plummer in recent issues of *The Lioness*.



This photograph is of the very first ATS WO's Course held in May 1941 at Brockenhurst. Prior to this Course the highest ATS non-commissioned rank was WOII (Senior Leader). I had served with the Lichfield/Tamworth Platoon for nearly two years at Whittington Barracks working with the South/North Staffords (we were mobilised in August 1939) and from there I was sent on the Course for potential WOI. Thanks to the excellent training I had already received I did very well. At the end of the Course I was posted as RSM to No 17 Training Centre at Lancaster which later merged with No 4 TC, to become No4/17 TC with HQ at Ripley Hospital. I remained there until March 1943 when I was posted to Y Signals ATS working with WOYG at Beaumanor Park.

I believe that prior to May 1941 there were WOII's referred to as RSM at Training Centres, but a true RSM must be a WOI. RSM is an appointment, WOI is a rank!

Perhaps Mrs Plummer would please let me know if her ex-RSM is on the photograph. I do not remember the names but it is very long time ago.

Mrs DM Hedges,
114 Amington Road, Bolehall, Tamworth,
Staffordshire B77 3PZ

Dear Editor,

I have recently been sent some photographs, one a particularly good one of the whole of B Troop, 618 Bty (M) HAA RA stationed in Belfast. If anyone is interested, I will send them on. If you were stationed in Belfast with 618 Bty RA, it may well have been at the time the photos were taken. Do please contact me.

Mrs E Wearing
122 Dixon Drive, Chelford, Macclesfield, Cheshire
SK11 9BX

Jay's Letters

March 1945 **PDF Compressor Free Version**

Squad 7, No 1 Draft, War Office Holding Unit,
Ashley Down Road, Bristol.

Thank you very much for your two lovely letters – you don't know how much I had been looking forward to hearing from you. I was so disappointed to read that you had waited to see us depart from the platform at Ely station. I intended to get up and look out of the window, just in case you were still there, but we were so crowded and the train had to back up a long way and when it stopped again we were too far from the platform to see anything, so I buried my red nose in my newspaper and wished the train would start.

We have got the weekend free but must report in every two hours. I still have no idea where we are bound for but I don't think, if the issue of clothing is anything to go by, that we are destined for anywhere hot. We are getting battledress, slacks, wellington boots – and a blanket. We hope the blanket is just to wrap round our knees while lolling in deck chairs aboard the ship.

We have had a dental examination, an X-ray and a uniform inspection. Nothing more exciting than that and I think we may be here another week. In all probability we won't be shipping from here at all.

After lunch a friend and I caught a bus into town and walked around. I've never seen such terrible bomb damage, even worse than any part of London I've seen. We walked through streets with not a building left standing and practically every church has been badly hit. It must have been a lovely city before the raids, the parts left intact are very ancient and there are beautiful shops.

We found the river and the docks. The whole town is built on a series of hills and the views are magnificent. We missed the ferry boat back so we walked across a bridge and then round countless back streets with the quaintest old houses, very hilly indeed, and then found somewhere to have tea. We intended going straight back to camp to report at 5.30 but outside the café was a bus marked "Suspension Bridge". Having seen this from a distance we felt we couldn't pass up the opportunity of viewing it at close quarters. The scenery took our breath away, hills in the distance and the river in a deep gorge. We climbed a hill and viewed the bridge, a magnificent sight looking quite fragile like a rope thrown across the gorge from hill to hill. We could see almost all of Bristol but unfortunately could only spend a little time there as we had to report back. Tomorrow we intend to go and find the cathedral. I hope my dreams tonight are not affected by my fright of the view of the deep gorge while I am on my top bunk.

This place was once an orphanage; four massive buildings, huge rooms, high ceilings, long stone corridors and as cold as charity. Poor little orphans.

2 Mar 45

Still alive and kicking. It's not the hectic life that gets us down, we get an awful lot of time for reflection but if something doesn't happen soon we shall be changing our minds. Fortunately the weather is calm – just right for a boat trip. No doubt it will change when we get our travelling instructions. I wonder if I am a Good Sailor?

We are free for most of the weekend but can't go far because of constant roll-calls. I expect they fear some may desert.

How glad I am I kept the plastic buttons on my tunic. Saved me quite a bit of cleaning. Some people obviously didn't do any preparation while they were on embarkation leave and are now frantically sewing and mending and even doing their washing and as we don't have an iron they are going to be in the cart when it comes to kit inspection. Some of them turned up with possessions in bags and suitcases in addition to the one kitbag we were instructed to use. How they managed to travel I can't think. I felt overburdened on crowded trains with just my kitbag. They have got to send all their surplus baggage home, after suitable chastisement.

Hefty meals; starting the day with fried bread and bacon – but I do miss my early morning cup of tea. The bed is fairly comfortable in spite of a lumpy mattress precariously perched on a top bunk. It wouldn't have been so much of a shock had I come direct from Harpenden, but after fourteen days' luxury at home it's pretty hard.

Sunday

Only time for a short note; we have been shown round the Cathedral and went up for a walk on the Downs. Just come back to report in then its back to the Cathedral for a service. It's warmer in the Cathedral, can you believe it, than in our Orphanage.

Tomorrow and Tuesday's programme are displayed; kit inspection and typhus inoculations by way of entertainment. Pay parade has been fixed for Wednesday so another few days here are indicated.

We have no wireless, so don't know what's going on in the outside world. Must try and get a newspaper tomorrow.

One morning when we were sitting round in the MO's room waiting for a medical, practically nothing on under our greatcoats – the PRESS came round. Most disconcerting except that fortunately it was a woman Press. Some pictures were taken, how embarrassing if they're published. I should hate to see my photograph in a daily newspaper and readers treated to the sight of a skeletal corporal draped in a greatcoat with knickers showing.

? Mar 45

I think there is a possibility we might be getting a move on. Tonight we are being issued with our kit, battledress, water bottle, haversack, rubber boots etc. Rumours abound. Our names have been posted up as being on either Draft A or Draft B – one lot is destined for France because a certain set of girls came here with the express purpose of joining their HQ there. Their names are on one list and mine on the other, so we have no idea where we are bound for. If we get issued with loin cloths, sandals and mosquito nets we shall get an inkling.

The typhus inoculation had played Old Harry with my arm. I was under the impression that this one had no effect. Two more to come. Nobody will take pity on me when I am weighed down under my kit trying to defend myself with a gammy arm against the enemy. They didn't think of that, did they?

Monday

We have had a busy day and unless I am mistaken we shall be moving very early in the morning. We have had to practice parading and marching with full equipment – it weighs half a ton and I shall need a crane to hoist me aboard. My battledress is too big and as we have got to travel in them I have been very busy throughout the day chopping bits off. Wellington boots seem to be all the same size – mine are Sixes. Just one would be sufficient. We are CB tonight to do our packing.

While we were being issued with our kit I squinted upside down at the list on the table and saw it was headed "B.L.A." so it looks like being France. We hear so many contradictory rumours – no doubt put about to worry the enemy of our forthcoming threatening presence.

Think of me, if you are awake at 4 a.m. tomorrow, starting off on a very long journey. On the other hand – it might be a false alarm! Anyway, don't write to me at this address any more. I'll get in touch with you as soon as I'm allowed to do so.

In the event, and unable to be reported in letters home, there was an all-day journey with fits and starts and innumerable delays and diversions, from Bristol to Paddington then by army transport to Tilbury Docks. A long night was spent rocking about on the North Sea trying to sleep clad in full kit and lifejacket, finally arriving in Ostende early next morning. Much wandering about, when friends were separated from friends, some to France, some to Antwerp. Jay, after an unspeakably awful train journey through war-ravaged countryside, found herself in the Prinz Albert Barracks in Brussels, together, to her delight and relief, with some of the friends made in the Holding Unit at Bristol.

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THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES for the year ended 31 October 2003

	General Notes	<u>Unrestricted</u>		Total Funds	Total 2003	2002
		Designated Funds	Restricted Funds			
INCOME & EXPENDITURE						
Incoming resources:						
Subscriptions	1	2,151	1,145	–	3,296	4,853
Income from branches		74,918	–	–	74,918	80,654
Lioness publication income	2	4,958	–	–	4,958	17,242
Investment income	3	12,137	–	155,011	164,148	164,477
Donations	4	3,611	–	11,077	14,688	127,314
Other income	5	23,166	–	–	23,166	3,176
Total incoming resources		120,941	1,145	166,088	288,174	397,716
Resources expended:						
Direct charitable expenditure:						
Grants & donations	6	–	–	158,466	158,466	199,053
Expenditure by branches		77,061	–	–	77,061	79,330
Lioness publication costs		4,048	–	–	4,048	17,077
Other expenditure:						
Management & administration	7	5,060	–	23,448	28,508	33,082
Grand Reunion		27,583	–	–	27,583	–
Total resources expended		113,752	–	181,914	295,666	328,542
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS						
		7,189	1,145	(15,826)	(7,492)	69,174
Transfers between funds		3,176	(3,169)	–	–	–
NET INCOMING RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR		10,358	(2,024)	(15,826)	(7,492)	69,174
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS & LOSSES						
Losses on investments:						
Unrealised		19,708	–	188,921	208,629	(535,619)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	17	30,066	(2,024)	173,095	201,137	(466,448)
Fund balances brought forward at 1 November 2002		312,426	33,147	3,596,841	3,942,414	4,408,859
Fund balances carried forward at 31 October 2003		£ 342,492	£ 31,123	£ 3,769,936	£ 4,143,551	£3,942,414

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.

THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

BALANCE SHEET

31 October 2003

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	Notes	2003	2002
FIXED ASSETS			
Investments	10	3,630,206	3,421,622
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stock of badges & souvenirs		1,841	1,760
Association standard		199	199
Debtors	11	287	320
Cash at bank & in hand	12	521,343	549,497
		<u>523,670</u>	<u>551,776</u>
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	13	10,325	30,984
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>513,345</u>	<u>520,792</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>£ 4,143,551</u> =====	<u>£ 3,942,414</u> =====
FUNDS OF THE ASSOCIATION			
Unrestricted funds:			
General funds		342,492	312,426
Designated funds:			
Membership life subscription fund	14	8,020	8,746
Lioness life subscription fund	14	23,103	24,401
Restricted funds:			
The Benevolent Funds	15	3,175,501	3,028,155
The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund	16	594,435	568,686
TOTAL FUNDS	17	<u>£ 4,143,551</u> =====	<u>£ 3,942,414</u> =====

