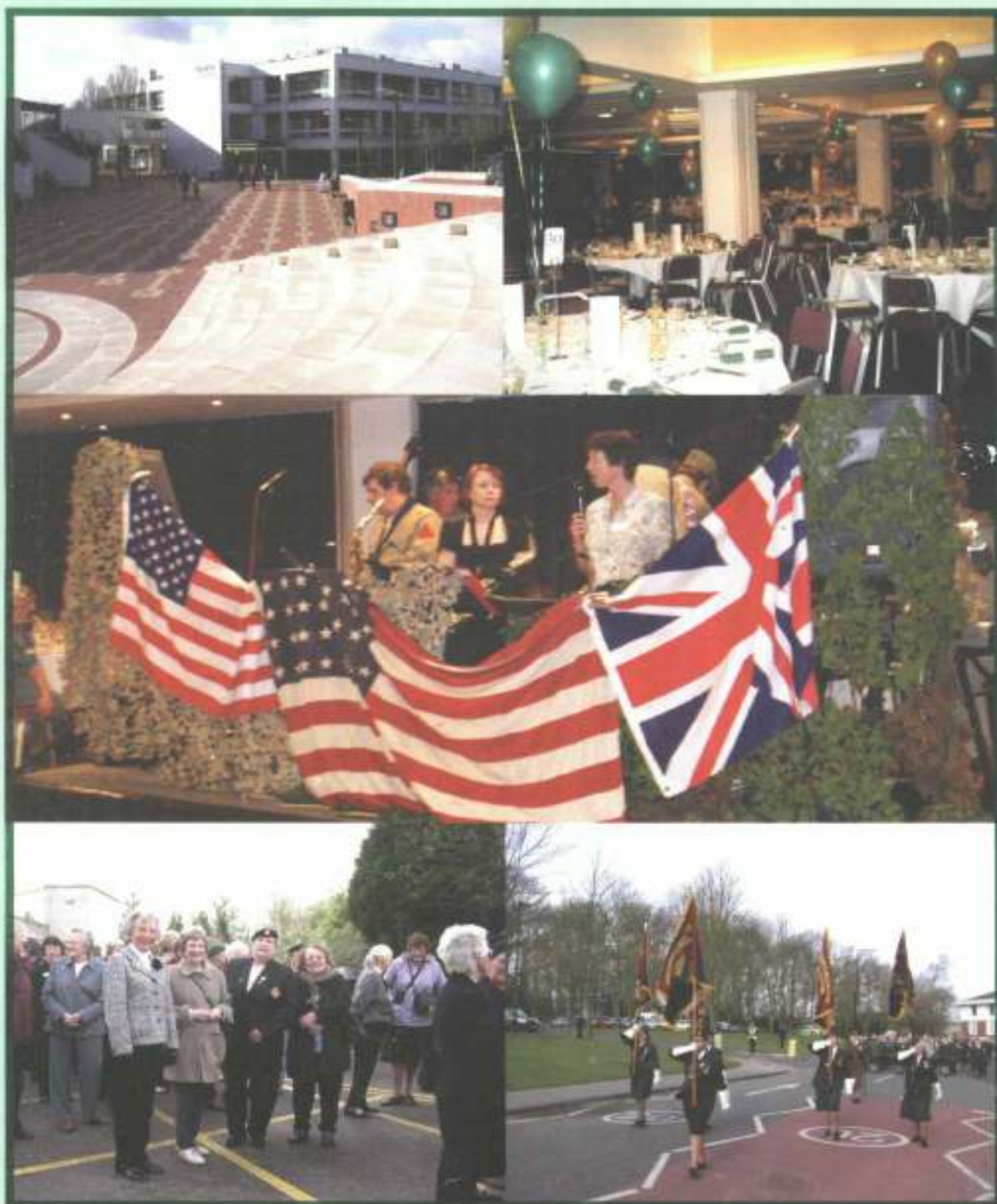


PDF Compressor Free Version

LIONESS



GRAND REUNION 2006

PDF Compressor Free Version



THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 206184

Founded in 1919

PATRON

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

PRESIDENT

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT GCVO

VICE-PRESIDENT

Lieutenant Colonel S J Westlake AGC(SPS)

Chairman:

Vice-Chairman:

Life Vice-Presidents of Council:

Lieutenant Colonel S J Westlake AGC(SPS)

Mrs M B S Purkis

Miss M M Thomson TD

Brigadier A Field CB CBE

Lieutenant Colonel The Lady Martha Bruce OBE TD DL

Lieutenant Colonel M W Soames OBE

Brigadier Dame Joanna Kelleher DBE

Brigadier G K Ramsey CBE

Brigadier S P Nield CBE

Colonel F M Cook

Colonel E J Bowles

General Secretary:

Honorary Treasurer:

Editor of Association Magazine:

Assistant Editor:

Major J A Freebairn

Lieutenant Colonel M Woollard MBE AGC(SPS)

Major J A Freebairn

Mrs A Schofield

ATS and WRAC Benevolent Funds

Chairman of Trustees:

Chairman of Grants Committee:

Case Secretary:

Lieutenant Colonel S J Westlake AGC(SPS)

Colonel A J Smith

Mrs M E Wroot

Headquarters, WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester SO21 2RG

General Secretary: Direct (01962) 887570 or ATN (94271) 2570

Chief Clerk: Direct (01962) 887478 or ATN (94271) 2478

Fax: (01962) 887478

Benevolent Funds: (01962) 887612 or ATN (94271) 2612

E-mail: wracassociation@milnet.uk.net

Website: www.wracassociation.co.uk

Cover Photographs

Front Cover

Grand Reunion 2006

Back Cover

Leics & Notts Branch at the Grand Reunion

Photograph by Mr P Schofield

Contributions for next issue by 30 November 2006

Published by the WRAC Association, Worthy Down, Winchester, SO21 2RG.

Printed in Great Britain by Warwick Printing Company Ltd, Caswell Road, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV31 1QD.

Distributed by SK Direct Ltd, 2 Richmond Farm, Brickworth Road, Whiteparish, Salisbury SP5 2QG.

CONTENTS

Message from the Vice President.....	2
ATS Reminiscences.....	3
Reminiscences of the WRAC.....	12
Where Are You Now?.....	15
Branch News.....	20
WRAC Association Grand Reunion 2006.....	41
Reunions.....	52
Articles of Interest.....	53
Weddings.....	63
Letters to the Editor.....	65
Poems.....	68
Obituaries – their Final Salute.....	70
Minutes of the WRAC AGM.....	74

PDF Compressor Free Version

EDITORIAL



It hardly seems six months since I was writing the editorial for the last edition. Needless to say, the last six months have simply flown by because of all the work involved with the Grand Reunion. I start by thanking all of you who purchased the book of Draw tickets included in *Lioness* 2/2005. It was the first time this had been done and it was a great success. Nearly £7,000 was raised this way – over double the amount for the previous

Grand Reunion. So "Well Done" to all of you and particular thanks to so many of you who were kind enough to send in additional donations with your ticket money. This amounted to £300 and was much appreciated. I am sure we will do the same again for the Grand Reunion in 2009 as it means all of you have the opportunity to buy tickets in advance, not just those who belong to geographical branches.

I always leave writing this piece until I have seen the journal in total so that I can see if any trends are noticeable. This time, the Isle of Man features a few times so I hope some of you may make contact with colleagues from there. It seems that several Branches were represented at the RA Association reunion at the Norbreck Castle Hotel in Blackpool. It is good to know that the Ack Ack ladies can still "re-une" even although they no longer have their own annual get together at York.

Several of you have written books! It is so important that we can all share your memories and experiences. If you do not feel up to the challenge of an entire book, perhaps you could write an article for *Lioness*. It does not have to be very long – one side of A4 would do. Send in a photograph as well and see your name in the next edition!

I finish by hoping that you all enjoy this edition – especially the Grand Reunion section. It was great fun putting it together and I hope that those who did not manage to attend might be encouraged to put the date in their diary for the next one!

Jane Freebairn

BRIGADIER THE HONOURABLE DAME MARY PIHL DBE

DIRECTOR WRAC 1967-1970
LIFE VICE-PRESIDENT
WRAC ASSOCIATION
3 February 1916 – 18 June 2006



Mary Mackenzie Anderson was born in Sutton, Surrey. Her father, Sir John Anderson, introduced Anderson Shelters when he was Home Secretary and Minister for Home Security during the Second World War; he was created the 1st Viscount Waverley of Westdean in the 1952 New Year's Honours. Educated at Sutton High School and Villa Brillamont in Lausanne, Mary had travelled widely even before going to school in Switzerland. Her father had been Governor of Bengal and, because her mother had died when Mary was only 4, she carried out many representational duties although she was only in her late teens at the time.

Mary Anderson joined the ATS in 1941 and was commissioned in 1942. Several postings in Scottish Command followed leading up to her appointment as ATS Group Commander for Highland District based in the Headquarters in Perth. In 1949, she became APM WRAC and had responsibilities in UK and BAOR. After a tour as DADWRAC Lowland District based in Glasgow, Major Anderson was posted to the War Office in January 1953 as a GSO2 in the TA Directorate.

Major Anderson's next posting was especially significant. Her post with the Signal Division in HQ Allied Forces Northern Europe, Oslo, from June 1955 until February 1958 included responsibilities as the custodian of the encryption codes used by that NATO Headquarters. During this time, her appointment also encouraged her great interest in travel and allowed her to become an expert skier: a skill she retained well into her seventies. She began a lifelong affinity with Norway and met Frithjof Pihl whom she would later marry after leaving the WRAC.

After Oslo, Major Anderson returned to the UK and was appointed as OC Officer Cadet Wing at the WRAC School of Instruction. She served there until June 1960 and her contemporaries remember her as a very fair OC who was an accurate and shrewd judge of character. She showed great interest in the welfare of the Cadets and ensured that they were given as much advice and support as possible at the start of their careers.

On promotion, Lt Col Anderson went to Chester as ADWRAC Western Command and then to Cyprus until 1963. On return from Cyprus, she was promoted again and became DDWRAC at MOD until December 1964. During this tour, she ensured that the WRAC took over more roles to alleviate manpower shortages following the end of National Service. A tour as Commandant of the WRAC Centre followed until August 1967 when she was promoted and appointed DWRAC. Brigadier Anderson retired in 1970 and was advanced to DBE. Dame Mary

became a Life-Vice President of the WRAC Association in July 2000.

Those who served with Brigadier Anderson remember a very able and intelligent officer who took her responsibilities very seriously. An exacting staff officer who expected others to share her high standards, she was also very concerned for the welfare and conditions of those under her command. Her junior officers especially remember her as someone who encouraged them to express their views and enjoyed lively discussion with them.

In July 1973, Dame Mary married Frithjof Pihl who had been an active member of the Norwegian Resistance in Nazi occupied Norway during World War 2. For several years, they spent six months of each year in Norway and the other six months in UK. Dame Mary became a fluent Norwegian speaker: a skill she never lost although she used to complain that it spoiled her ability to speak French! Sadly, Frithjof died in 1990.

Dame Mary's father had been Chairman of the Royal Opera House after the War and she was an enthusiastic fan of opera and ballet. In retirement, she travelled widely to pursue this interest and was a frequent visitor to Covent Garden. Indeed, on her 90th Birthday, on the 3rd of February this year, she was there enjoying a performance of Giselle. She died at Odiham Cottage Hospital on 18 June following a bad fall at her home in Hartley Witney.

* * * * *

Message from the Vice President



I would like to start this message with sincere thanks to everyone involved with the Grand Reunion – in particular, to Maggie Purkis and her Grand Reunion Organising Team (The GROTS!) and to Jane Freebairn and Kath Barker from Association HQ who all did a superb job in producing and stage managing such a fantastic weekend. A huge 'thank you' to

'the TEAM' from all of us! I know from all the letters and phone calls that we have had at Worthy Down that you all had a great time too. I hope you will enjoy reading all about Coventry in this edition and I trust the photos will bring back happy reminiscences of a very memorable weekend. For those of you who were unable to join us for the Reunion – we missed you!

You will already have seen that we have sadly lost another of our former Directors, Brigadier the Honourable Dame Mary Pihl – most of you will remember her as Brigadier Mary Anderson; her father Sir John Anderson, later the First Viscount Waverley, was Minister for Home Security at the outbreak of war and was responsible for the nationwide distribution of the corrugated-iron Anderson shelters. Dame Mary was DWRAC from 1967–1970. You will see from her obituary that she married Frithjof Pihl, a Norwegian who had served in his country's resistance movement during the Second World War, after she had left the WRAC in 1973. Dame Mary was a life Vice President of the Association and attended Council meetings until relatively recently. Turning now to all Branches and Areas that I have visited in the last six months – thank you all for your warm welcomes and generous hospitality. This to me is the best part of being in this appointment, actually coming to see you 'at home'; I applaud all the Branch and Area officers and committees for their vitality, enthusiasm and commitment to the Association – it is a real privilege to be your Vice President.

Sue Westlake

ATS Reminiscences

REMINISCENCES

PDF Compressor Free Version
Mrs Gwen Johns (Gwen)
26 Cranwells Park, Bath BA1 2YD

In 1942 I was working in a bank, a reserved occupation, but as many of my friends were joining the Forces I decided to join the ATS. My initial training was at Guildford, then a short time at Chelmsford before being posted to Edinburgh as a clerk with the Pay Corps. Although the work was tedious my friends and I enjoyed lovely walks on the Pentland Hills in our spare time. The local people were very kind, especially the "Sally Ann" helpers. We were able to travel on the buses as far as we liked in Edinburgh for one penny! The Medical Officer, Army Dentist etc were located in Edinburgh Castle. We were billeted in a huge Georgian house before a friend and I went into digs with a very kind landlady.

I volunteered to train as a PT Instructor and was posted to Gleneagles where we were billeted, I think, in the famous hotel. The country around about is very beautiful and I remember being thrilled to see a red squirrel in the pine forest. I was not there long before my overseas posting came through. I was sent to Bristol to the War Office Holding Unit which was in the Old Mullers Orphanage. We had kit inspections, injections, medicals etc. One day we were confined to barracks and got up at 2.30 am and in a single file walked out to a dimly lit lorry which in a convoy went to Temple Meads Station to catch a train to Tilbury. There we embarked on the "Lady of Mann" and sailed up the mouth of the Thames. We went to bed at 9.30 pm dressed only in slacks etc and a lit life belt. Up again at 5 am, lined up and disembarked at Ostend (at the time we did not know where we had landed). We went to the ATS transit camp for a wash and breakfast, then boarded two rather dilapidated buses which rattled along the cobble stoned roads heading for where we knew not where. We passed a plough being pulled by a cow and a horse and a dog pulling a small cart, a few windmills and miles and miles of flat country. At last we drew up behind an army lorry and a soldier with blue and yellow flashes. We had arrived at the little town of Ruyen, not far from Lessines, where the officers and men of 2 BCH made us very welcome.

Our billet was at the top of about the only hill in Belgium near a site where there had been a V2 launch pad. Quite near was a little café where we could buy delicious cream cakes! We were given cigarettes or chocolate and as the men usually smoked, I used to swap my cigarettes for their chocolate.

VE Day was unforgettable as we celebrated with plenty of champagne – I don't know where it came from!

I was posted to Brussels where I met my future husband and I well remember watching great celebrations when Churchill was driven down the main street and the crowds clapping and cheering him. I can't remember when I was made Corporal and then Sergeant but it was about this time. For a short time I was stationed in Antwerp and while in Belgium had several 72 hour leaves in Paris.



Cash office Section (I am the girl on the far right)

I suppose to help prepare us for going back to civvy street, we were given the opportunity of going to Gottingen University where we had lectures, discussions and debates on various subjects. I learnt about secretarial work and studied Modern Art. The University was quite near the Hartz Mountains and when we were not working, we explored the country round about.

I was demobbed on 3 June 1946 and still keep in touch with two ATS friends, Jessie Turner née Craig and Mollie Adams née Blythe. The latter was one of my bridesmaids at my wedding in October 1947. I often look at my old autograph book and wonder whether many old friends are still alive. I enjoyed my time in the ATS especially the wonderful comradeship and support from friends.

PENELOPE EMBROIDERY KITS AND OTHER MEMORIES

W/293538 Mrs Joan Whittingham née Ball
58 Keswick Road, Cringleford, Norwich NR4 6UQ

I was very interested to read Pauline Meakin's letter in the *Lioness* about Penelope Embroidery Kits. It transported me back to 1944/5 when I was stationed at Crawley, Sussex. It really brought happy memories and dreams as I embroidered a lot especially when my fiancée had just been posted to Kowloon, Hong Kong. He spent two years there so a lot of my time was spent working on my embroidery. They are very pretty and are in marvellous condition still. Now, at my age, I have



Joan's ATS friends

wrapped them up in tissue paper in the hope that maybe my grandchildren will use them. Though I do wonder sometimes if they will. Today's youngsters are more interested in tea out of mugs and no tablecloths at all, I guess they won't want all my lovely tea sets and Penelope cloths. Sad isn't it?

PDF Compressor Free Version

I trained at Pontefract in 1943 before being posted to Chilwell Ordnance Camp as a clerical officer. Later on sent to Crawley, Sussex where I was one of a group checking the hundreds of tanks that were congregating along the new bypass there. After a while I was promoted to Lance Corporal where I prepared a weekly audit stock record of all the tanks for the officer-in-charge. Little did we know at the time that D Day (6th June) was imminent. That morning we went to work as usual only to find there wasn't a tank to be seen anywhere. It was quite eerie even though it had been expected sometime soon.



Joan Whittingham née Ball in 1944

We were billeted in Nissen huts on the golf course at Crawley though some girls were stationed in Handforth House, a lovely mansion at the end of the bypass. Later I was posted to Gateshead Trading Estate for a time, then to Slough, where I was in the VE parade on the 6th June 1946. If anyone was stationed at any of those places I would be pleased to hear from them and Sgt Chadwick from Chadwell Heath, Essex. Sadly, my husband died suddenly, aged 37, of a brain tumour after 15 years together.

60 YEARS AGO IN BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

W/88089 Dorothy Maddox, Cpl
112 Ellicks Close, Bradley Stoke, Bristol BS32 0EU

When I have read the *Lioness*, I always send them to my very long time friend and colleague of my ATS days, who

has lived for many years in Vancouver, Canada, Sylvia Underwood née Fenn. Sylvia is the only one I am still in touch with and it is through her I am enclosing these photographs.

Would it be possible to show them in a forthcoming *Lioness* magazine? It would be really lovely for us both, and bring back so many treasured memories of our service days.



V.E. Day 1945

Celebrating V.E. Day in the centre of Brussels, The Adolphe Max car park, sitting on a Guards Brigade Jeep, Gilda Levey, me Dorothy Maddox, Sylvia Fenn (now Underwood) and Della Delaney.



Brussels, Christmas Day 1945

Sitting on Residence Palace underground garage roof top (where billeted) after Christmas Dinner 1945 – note the paper hats. It was a lovely sunny day. Gilda Levey, Sylvia Fenn (now Underwood), Dorothy Maddox, other names not known.

PDF Compressor Free Version

Editor: A recent Dorothy Maddox can be seen in the photograph of Bath Branch in the Grand Reunion section.

Mrs Barbara Mottershead née Rugg
19 Charts Close, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 8BH

As Barbara (Ginger) Rugg I served with the ATS from 1939 to 1945. My first three years were spent on Salisbury Plain with the Royal Artillery – in 1943 I retrained as an Air Survey Cartographer with the Royal Engineers. After basic training in North Wales I had various postings and early in 1945 was sent to RAF (photo Neg Library) in Keerbergen in Belgium.

Here is a group photo of ATS, WAAF, RAF and Soldiers at a Victory and Farewell party held at Keerbergen at the end of May 1945.



Farewell party in Belgium, 1945

The party was held in a café on the edge of the camp which had been used as a rest room and canteen for the ATS Section.



Homeward Bound from Belgium, 1945

This photograph was taken a week or two later as our ATS Section were leaving Belgium from Nivelles Aerodrome on the Dakota which was to bring us back to England (I am centre front).

42 Bn RAPC

W/202992 Mrs Winifred Williams, née Boehmert
183 Park Street Lane, Park Street, St Albans,
Herts AL2 2BA



I read the article in the *Lioness*, by Maureen Walsh, and thought there should be a record of, I believe, the unusual unit in London – ATS att 42 Bn RAPC, which I joined in 1941/2.

I obtained release from my reserved occupation as a statistical clerk on war work at the factory of Claude General Neon Lights, Wembley to join the ATS.

I cannot recall having a medical when I enlisted and certainly did not have any training such as drill. But I was told that if I would take a test in London, I would be posted to a unit in London. This I did and joined 42 Bn RAPC which was based in various buildings in Marylebone Road, Baker Street and Dorset Square. The whole unit lived at home, all over London and just outside.

We had no mess, and worked from 8.30 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Friday. We had an additional allowance for meals as we had to go out for lunch and, when on fire watch, for evening meal and breakfast.

My work was maintaining soldiers' accounts and later I transferred to another section where my work came under Inland Revenue – Income Tax assessing. I took

myself to evening classes at a local school and gained a good book keeping qualification with Honours. For the first 3 or 4 months we were in civvies and whilst awaiting uniforms were taken to Wormwood Scrubs Prison to experience tear and mustard gas – it was a foggy day! When 2 or 3 of us collected for the first time at Baker Street Station the other passengers wondered why their eyes began to irritate – they did not realise we were in the ATS! Our gas drill with masks was running around Baker Street and PT was in Regents Park – we used to get quite good audiences! Later we had to do fire watch duty, with bunk beds in the basement, I think about once a month.

On one occasion it was my 21st birthday and one week later that of one of our “gang of six”. Her name was also Winifred – so we went for our meal at Lyons Corner House, Marble Arch. There was still a small orchestra and the players held up keys and played ‘21 today’ – the other diners joined in.



Vera Davies, Peggy Batchelor, Madge Marshall, Eileen Bicknell and Winifred Blundell

In fact, when not working on accounts it was rather like boarding school with the Officer on fire watch duty having to accept apple pie beds – complete with potato crisps! The soldier who was in the office of the Captain in charge of the accounts etc would often return to his office with a label attached to his uniform – all taken in a friendly way.

One day my friend and I went to lunch, and when coming out of the “Church Army” saw a few people standing around in Portman Square. We wanted to see why and a few minutes later The Queen Mother (then the Queen) stepped out of a car to visit a Red Cross office. We were late reporting back to the office and not believed when we said we had seen the Queen until the “News” later.

Before the Unit went to Hampshire in 1944, we had the opportunity to attend Communion Classes in the Marylebone Station Hotel which was opposite our offices. It was a transit camp for troops going overseas. I took the opportunity offered and was fortunate to be confirmed in the Chapel Royal in the White Tower of the Tower of London. We had tea afterwards with the Bishop and saw the ravens on the lawn.

When the Unit moved to Hampshire it occupied the house and grounds of the Earl of Portsmouth (except for one room, which the Earl would visit from time to time). We lived in the House and also in the annexe which the Bank had attached to the House. There we had several bathrooms and toilets and were two to a room.

Here we were allowed to have the men in during the evenings to play table tennis etc – the landings were large enough to hold a dance and had two large fireplaces. The rooms also had large fireplaces and Italian Prisoners of War lit fires in all the rooms with large logs by 5pm. The men left at about 8.30 pm and a van would come from the mess with hot drinks and sandwiches etc and we were allowed to come down in our dressing-gowns and have these by the fire. We had no drills but had a tennis court by the mess where my friend and I used to arrange to meet two of our male colleagues at about 6.30 am for a game before breakfast.

At weekends we had a bus to collect us from the house and took the train from Basingstoke – I think the whole train – to London and the same to return on Sunday evening. I think the camp was left fairly empty!

One thing I did not explain, was about kit inspection, when in London – we had a “Family Officer” go round to each of our homes – I think she enjoyed tea and biscuits with our mothers!

I was sorry when my discharge date came, I was waiting to go for Officer Training and Selection, but at that time it was undecided if a women's army would continue, so I felt I had to take my discharge, when I would have preferred to have stayed in the service.

MORE ‘Y’ GIRLS

W/265180 Miss J MacDonald
The School House, Barcaldine, By Oban,
Argyll PA37 1SG



Squad 66, Palace Camp, Isle of Man July – Oct 1943

I enclose a photo of Squad 66. The Sergeant, middle front row, came from Luxemburg. Her grasp of English was limited and when excited she was known to give the command “Advance Forward – Retire”.

I enclose a poem written at the time which shows

that..... Well let other readers tell us what. This is sung to the tune of "Thanks for the Memory".

Thanks for the memory of E and M and Morse
We've quite enjoyed the course,
FP, GP BP and the other courses.
How lovely it was!

Thanks for the memory of doors that wouldn't shut
Showers in a hut
Creaky beds, lousy heads
And knives that wouldn't cut.
How lovely it was!

Many's the time we have listened
Many's the time we have run
Many's the time we have halted
By a man with a gun who says "pass friend one".

Thanks for the memory of "Outside 66"
But we're only in our knicks.
Old Jean and me sit and sigh
And on the old clock ticks.
How lovely it was!

Thanks for the memories of PT on the shore
Stiff legs for evermore.
Potato peeling! Are we squealing
No, we ask for more.
How lovely it was!

Thanks for the memories of Derby Castle Dances
And Douglas Prom Romances,
And "Roger, Roger" doesn't mean
What everybody fancies.
Oh thank you so much.

Many's the time we have feasted
And many's the time we have fasted
If only our money had lasted
From the first lemonade to the next pay Parade.

Oh thanks for the memories
Of curlers in the dark
Many a blackout lark
When creeping in at 10.15
"Lights Out" the Sergeant barks.

It's always "B" well raining
So we're going to buy an ark.
Oh thank you so much.

Continued success to all responsible for producing the
Lioness and to all ex "Y" Signals everywhere.

W231450 Amabel Ivy Greenway
226 N Lincoln Avenue, Newtown, PA 18950-2216 USA

I became a Life Member in 2001, until now I haven't seen anything, except a letter from New Zealand telling you about the reunion of the 50 years celebration of the 99ER who joined up with the Royal New Zealand Air Force. I was one of the 99ER. My service started 12th December 1942 at Lancaster. There were two Training Centres in Lancaster, Mrs Ruth Taylor wrote about Ripley Barracks.

I was in the other barracks.

Mrs Eileen Smith W/231473, her number is close to mine, I wonder if she was in Lancaster the same time as me. From Lancaster I went to Oswestry and was at 7th and 210th MHAA and trained as a Predictor Operator. From there I went to 665 and 584 HAA. While with 584 I was stationed in the showplace - Windsor Great Park. I was one of the lucky ones and didn't see any action.

In January 1941, 584 disbanded. I went to the Green Dragon, in Hereford, and was told to report to RAOC Depot 42 OSD at Morton-on-Lugg. I understand the depot was set on fire. There were about twelve of us to begin with. As there was no accommodation for women, we were billeted at the Green Dragon until they sent us to the Race Course and finally to Morton-on-Lugg. From there we were attached to Bicester for a month and from there to Chilwell.

I was demobbed October 1949 and went back to 42 OSD as a civil servant. In Hereford I was the first woman to sign up for the Territorial Army in 1950. I joined the RNZAF in 1951 and later moved from New Zealand to the USA.



Enjoying Christmas

I couldn't get work other than a file clerk, so went to night school to study to be a Comptometer Operator. My second job, I just went for the experience and got the job, was with Eastman Kodak Co. After about 8 years with Eastman Kodak Co my previous experience came in handy, I was promoted to work on a Journal. I worked for Kodak 26 years and took early retirement in 1983. I am 84 now.

A WELSH GIRL SINGS ON THE ISLE OF MAN

Mrs E N Bardsley née Harries W/270006
43 Stradey Hill, Pwll, Llanelli, Carmarthen SA15 4AB

How could anyone forget the bewildering and life changing experience of being conscripted into the army during war time? My turn came in February 1943. My regular daily routine of commuting to my clerical job in

the TM's Office, Swansea was now going to be rudely interrupted.

First came the usual tests and medicals etc. Before long I was waving goodbye to family and friends on the station platform – despatched for the **PDF Compressor Free Version** Wrexham Training Camp. This was the new world, Barrack rooms, two-tier bunks, sergeant majors and drill parades!! The never to be forgotten fitting of uniforms for the first time – absolutely hilarious – including those lovely blue and white striped pyjamas and khaki bloomers.

Now came the serious part – assessing our suitability by tests for the various jobs and destinations. I was chosen to serve with Royal Signals as a 'Special Wireless Operator'. A large number of us were transported to Liverpool one evening and told we would be going by ship the following day – we had no idea where!! The following day we were delighted to learn we were going to Douglas, Isle of Man. We were sorted into squads and shown to our billets. All the hotels along the sea front had been taken over for this purpose. I was assigned to Corporal McKinlay's squad – a very knowledgeable fellow and excellent teacher of the Morse Code and German Q code. We had various lectures on other subjects including Electricity and Magnetism.

However, after reaching the standard required we soon found out the purpose of all the training. We were to become "Intercept" operators – on no account were we to mention this to a single soul – we had to eliminate the word from our vocabulary! Our work consisted of sitting in front of large sets and each of us was given a frequency to listen for. Once we locked on to it we had to hold on to it at all costs and take down all the German messages and codes we could. This was then sent "Top Secret" to decoding stations.

This work could become stressful at times so it helped a great deal to be stationed in a place like Douglas. Even marching down to PE at the other end of the bay was enjoyable. The people of Douglas were very kind to us. We had many invites to private homes. One stands out in my memory, Dorothy and Arthur Quirk, very prominent local business people invited our squad to their lovely home for a musical evening and sing song and of course a splendid buffet! I was the only Welsh girl in the squad so they asked me to sing something in Welsh – there wasn't a dry eye in the house!!

Well months passed and time came to be posted to the mainland. Sadly at this time I had bad news from home, my mother was seriously ill and had to have major surgery. I was therefore held back on the island while decisions had to be made. It was heartbreaking saying goodbye to my squad at the quayside.

I was granted compassionate leave and eventually a posting nearer home in South Wales. I opened my orders and found instructions to report to Craigmillar, Edinburgh! I was bewildered. However, this was part of the plan to get to Signals Office at Movement Control Swansea. Again, I thoroughly enjoyed the course at Edinburgh and made some good ATS friends – one especially – she was Celia Wolfson from Glasgow. She and I met on the train to Edinburgh. We had to find our

way to the bus stop for Craigmillar. Unfortunately we were misdirected and found ourselves trudging the length of Princes Street, dragging our kit bags behind us. We heard some shouting behind us and two sailors running towards us with items of clothing – Celia's kitbag had a hole in the bottom!

I finally got to Swansea and because the work involved doing night shifts, I was for a while allowed to live at home. I felt grateful to the army for the efforts made on my behalf.

PS I thoroughly enjoy reading the *Lioness*. I'm lucky to have it regularly passed on to me by a friend. The great hope is of course that I may one day spot a familiar name or face! Serving with someone in the Forces makes a reunion very special.

Here's hoping!

MY MEMORIES OF SERVICE IN THE ATS/WRAC

Mrs Maisie Waggott ex Newbery née Robinson
15 Parkside, Greenways Estate, Spennymoor,
Co Durham DL16 6SA

I was aged 23 when I volunteered to join the ATS at the Recruiting Office in Trinity Square Nottingham on 12 September 1940. A week later I was embodied at Neville's Cross Reception Depot Co Durham on 20 September 1940. After 3 weeks training, and kitted out in uniform, I was posted to COD (Central Ordnance Depot) Chilwell Notts as a Store woman, on 11 October 1940.

My work was in the huge building No 157 MT Stores (Mechanical Transport) for the RAOC (Royal Army Ordnance Stores). The stores arrived by rail and road from supplier's country wide and we were responsible for packing the stores destined for the War Zones world wide.

During 1942/43 I was fortunate to have several promotions given me, first of all Lance Corporal, followed by Corporal, Sergeant and Staff Sergeant. Then finally Warrant Officer Class II in 1945.



Taken while at lectures February 1948 at OCTU Windsor, Berks. Cadet Newbery first one on front row

Trade Testing gave us a foresight into the stores we would be handling in the course of our work, particularly the areas due to receive them in all parts of the world, such as the North African Campaign, the North Atlantic (Murmansk) and Japanese Far East, where stores were specially treated to the conditions of the climate. Tank Sealing (Arcticisation) for Russia, and Wax Dipping for South East Asia Command, for the humidity. We had a Russian representative stationed in the Depot to oversee the Arcticisation of tanks and vehicle spares going to Russia.

Night shift was introduced as the War intensified, and so bunk beds were introduced to accommodate more ATS girls, with up to 5,000 in the camp at Chilwell, from all over the Country and British Empire. A new accommodation block was built half way up the hill called 'Sandhurst' building, later renamed William's Barracks, after Major General Leslie Williams, Controller of Ordnance Services. It housed several hundred girls with its own cookhouse, NAAFI (Navy, Army, Air Force Institute) baths, showers and lecture rooms, and it was centrally heated. The building was likened to a modern liner of the day in the Queen Mary class when lit up. I well remember this building being cause for concern for the Duty Officer and NCO at the time of 'blackout' days on account of the large windows.

Once a week we had early morning drill or a route march and we were allowed to start work half an hour later than usual on those days. We carried hurricane lamps at front and rear as we paraded up and down the hill on night shift and as we marched to and from work.

Discipline in Camp was extremely strict with rotas made for all the work round the huts, both inside and outside, for cleanliness. Points would be awarded in competition against each company and published at the Coy Office. We were confined to barracks one night each week (CB night). This was the time we had kit inspections, current affairs talks, changing worn clothes at the Quartermaster Stores and other various duties in keeping the camp tidy.



*Taken at Imperial Service College, Windsor
40th Course ATS, OCTU January 1948
Maisie Newbery is shown 2nd row from top, 5th from left*

Military Law was authorised for the ATS by the Army Council in 1941, and during that year (HRH) Her Royal Highness Princess Mary visited Chilwell as Commandant in Chief. The Guard of Honour was inspected and I was

proud to be chosen and photographed. Our second Royal visit to the Depot was by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth (the late Queen Mother) in 1943. They toured various departments, including Central Packing, my Department. Our Camp was officially named Queen Elizabeth Camp that day by the Queen.

Comfort Fund parcels arrived at various times from schools, and local authorities, they would contain hand knitted articles and toiletries. I remember my parcel contained a Khaki woollen scarf and grey mittens which I still have in my collection of memorabilia. The name and address of the school girl was enclosed and I wrote to thank her.

We also received a consignment of patchwork quilts from the Canadian Red Cross which when opened were for double beds. This meant we had to cut them and divide between 2 girls. I have since gifted mine to the AGC Museum in Winchester which has a section about women in the Army.

Entertainment in Chilwell Garrison was extremely good with Dances and Concerts, Christmas pantomimes as well as the famous Blue Rockets Dance Band. Church parades were held regularly in Chilwell Garrison. 'D' Day landings in Normandy 6 June 1944 will live in my memory as I remember parading 'Up the Hill' after our night shift working in the Depot. We could hear the drone of aeroplanes returning to their air bases and then hearing the news over the wireless as we had breakfast. VE Day was to follow as we continued with our pressure of work on reaching VJ Day finally. After hostilities ceased we still had much work to do in dealing with returned vehicles and spares.

On 15 August 1945, I attended a presentation at the Officers' Mess, Headquarters, Highfield House, and was awarded a Certificate of Good Service on behalf of the Quarter Master General of the Forces. This certificate is proudly kept in my album of ATS memorabilia. I had been approached several times by Heads of Department – Military and Civilian, to have my name put forward to Officer Training but declined.



*Commandant Joan Bowyer Smythe. The Commandant
Windsor Imperial Services Colleges Feb 1948*

Eventually the subject of de-mobilisation became uppermost in our minds as we awaited our Group number. During this time I applied to attend a Respite Rehabilitation Course at Welbeck Abbey, near Nottingham, which was partly annexed for Military use.

(The Abbey being the home of the Duke of Portland). I was there for 2 months in 1946, and this gave me time to decide that I wanted to stay in the ATS and extend my service by applying for a Commission.

After attending the Officers' Course at the Royal Military School, Sandhurst, I was appointed to the ATS, Windsor in December 1947 and was appointed as a Second Subaltern in March 1948. I resigned on marriage in March 1951.

Editor: Maisie also enclosed her own copy of the following speech given by our first Controller Commandant. It bears an original signature and I am sure that you will all appreciate, even now, the excellent advice and sentiments expressed in the Princess Royal's address.

**ADDRESS BY HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL
TO CADETS AT THE PASSING-OUT
PARADE
AT THE
ATS OCTU WINDSOR
ON
16TH MARCH 1948
—ooOoo—**

I will start my address to you this afternoon by congratulating you on having been selected as Officers in the ATS and on successful completion of your training. As your Controller-Commandant I have noted with pleasure your bearing to-day, and commend you for your good turnout and smartness at this Passing Out Parade. You will shortly receive The King's commission. Always remember that it is an honour to hold this Commission, and that it is the responsibility of every officer to remain worthy of this honour.

A period of specialised training is behind you, to fit you as Officers in the ATS, but this training can only give you a framework of knowledge on which to start your careers. It is for you to supplement and enrich this background from your own experience. It is the shared privilege of everyone, whether in the home, in civil or military employment, or in high office, to give service to the community.

For those who serve with the armed forces in peace or in war the opportunity and responsibility for accepting this privilege greatly increases with commissioned rank. It should call forth the best we have to give, and this brings its own reward in the satisfaction of a job well done.

It is well to look back as well as forward when you are on the brink of a new step in your life, and to consider not only what you have learnt through your own experience, but also to what you can learn from those who have gone before you. By this I mean giving thought to the traditions of the British Army throughout our history, remembering the courage, loyalty, and devotion to his men, for which the British Officer is renowned.

This Service to which you and I belong – the ATS – has already gained a worthy place in these traditions, and you who may be looking forward to obtaining a regular commission in the WRAC when it is formed, may be among those called upon to

prove women's ability to maintain the traditions of the Regular Army Service.

A new title has lately been granted to our Service; that of Women's Royal Army Corps. A great deal of thought has been given to the name to be held by our new regular Service, and this seems to me to be a sensible title, which describes the status of the Women's Service in the Regular Army. It is, I would remind you, a very special honour to be granted the prefix "royal"; I think I may say that it is due to the good name won by the ATS during the war years that The King has been graciously pleased to grant the Service this privilege. It behoves you to see that this good tradition is carried into the future.

It is sad when I speak of peace to contemplate at the same time the unsettled and unhappy state of many nations. As Officers, some of you may perhaps serve overseas, where you will have the opportunity of seeing the world and of widening your horizons. There are units of the ATS serving at present in Germany, Austria, Egypt, Palestine, Singapore, Hong Kong and the Caribbean Area. I would say to you that the prestige of the British Army abroad has depended always on the honesty, integrity, devotion to duty, and example of each individual in his own sphere, and rests equally on women as on men.

On this point I wish to say still more. Not only is the prestige of the British Army and of the British people always before the eyes of the world, but so also are the fundamentals of the British way of life, and that of the British Commonwealth, equally open to criticism. It is probable that more can be done to avert war by proving to others the genuine value of our way of life, linked to a true and live Christianity, than by any other means.

The glory of life is to give,
Not so much, to be given;
To serve
Not so much, to be served;
To be a strong hand to another in the time of need.
To be a cup of strength to a soul in the crisis of
weakness;
This is to know the glory of life, and the joy of living.

Now with honourable service in the ranks behind you, your heads full of untried knowledge, and your eyes set on the future, I wish you every happiness and the best of luck in your new units.

Signed Mary
Controller Commandant

ATS VOLUNTEERS

Mabel Bolton née Dee W/31029
17 Broadway Court, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 2NZ

I have noticed that recently among the ATS Reminiscences there have been contributions from members who joined as Volunteers in the earlier years and I'm pleased to note that there are still some around!

Having been interviewed in late 1939 I was told to report to Neville's Cross College on 9th Feb 1940 where I became Volunteer Dee. In that short time the W numbers had shot up from three and four figures to mine of five figures!

PDF Compressor Free Version

My first posting was to Newcastle – I was not then a resident there at that time! I joined the 40th Northumberland Company ATS. The Company there was made up of about 25 members who were all local people who reported daily for duty to Fenham Barracks doing various jobs and they went home each evening!

A small group of 8 or 10 of us reported to the barracks where we were met by 2 ladies in smart uniforms: the senior was Mrs Ramsden and Mrs Hardy. I think they were ranks equivalent to Captain and Lieutenant. We had also Miss Robinson who was called Senior Leader. Fenham Barracks was totally occupied by The Royal Northumberland Fusiliers. There were no resident ATS and we had no homes to go to! We were taken in two's and three's to civvy billets and, like the locals, reported to the barracks daily. We integrated with all these nice people and did various jobs – just anything and everything – cleaning, cookhouse etc. Most of the better jobs were already taken!

During the next eighteen months or so we experienced the sorry sight of the internment into the barracks of German and Italian local residents and business people and some who were already known to have sons and relatives in our Army! Later we helped to feed some of the escapees from the Dunkirk beaches who were so tired and weary having also had the extra truck journey up to Newcastle to find food and shelter.

All this was a good grounding and certainly "knocked the corners off us" as it were! I later got one stripe and became a Chief Volunteer! I left the 40th Coy as a Corporal – can't remember whether there was any other name for that rank! I then went off on a long journey to the 236 Wireless Wing, Royal Artillery at Oswestry. Stayed there and re-earned my stripes as a GL operator and also was made Sgt there and taken on the staff. However some short while after I was introduced to a Captain and a Junior Commander and given the opportunity of becoming a GL Sgt of a new battery being formed. The rest is history as I was with 525/155 (M) Bty RA from its inception in the London area to Antwerp in 1945. My service lasted 6 years as my last day was 9 February 1946 and on that day I became a Civil Servant.

I send my best wishes to all the Elders. I had a very good friend with a 4 figure number who recently ended her days in Vancouver – Mary Selley and she served in the Middle East. She joined up in 1938 in one of the London companies and looked after Palestinian ATS. Happy Days!

MORE MEMORIES OF THE ISLE OF MAN

Helen E Forrester (nee Betty Ross W/21291)
The Riggs, Courthill Road, Rosemarkie,
Fortrose IV10 8UE

I enlisted in September 1939 in Kirkcaldy, Fife and shortly afterwards reported to Sharp's School in Perth, an Army Pay Office. We were responsible for updating the large binders containing all the pay records for each

soldier in the Scottish Regiments. Our drill practices took place in the playground right next to a busy main road and caused much amusement to the passers-by. To make matters worse, full uniforms were not yet available and we had to make do with odd assortments.

The Pay Offices amalgamated and the Perth Group moved to the McLellan Art Galleries in Glasgow. Whilst there, my friend, Margaret Sellars, and I went to evening classes to learn Morse Code. One day in 1940, a notice appeared saying that girls were needed for the gun sites. We applied, did numerous tests at Glencorse Barracks in Edinburgh and passed for Radar. However, on our forms they had added "5 Words per minute Morse" under "Any Other Ability" and we were sent to Special Operators Training Unit in Trowbridge, Wiltshire. I was the very first to arrive followed by Margaret and then Frankie Fawcett. Frankie and I stayed on as the first two female instructors. I enjoyed the job and moved with the Battalion to Douglas, Isle of Man. I was the marker (carrying the lamp) in the first contingent and as we marched out of our old Barracks at night to the station – supposed to be in secret – people were lining the streets and hanging out of their windows!

I disliked Douglas, much preferring our accommodation at Trowbridge even although it could be very cold. In Douglas we worked and slept in a terrace of hotels which seemed very alien to me. However, fate intervened and I fractured my femur and spent 8 months in Morton Hall Hospital in Chester. I returned to the unit in 1944 but I did not feel part of it any more – they had even begun to teach Japanese Morse!

Having completed 4 years and 5 months and believing that the War would soon be over – by Christmas 1944 – I left the ATS and got a job with the railways as a telegraph operator in a "message" distribution office. At first I could not read the Morse since it was not dots and dashes but a series of metallic clicks of different tones.

Only recently did I hear of Bletchley Park and found out how the coded messages the SOTB operators received were processed. I would like to know more about what the male operators actually did out in the field.

WRAC SWEATSHIRTS FOR SALE

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

Sizes 36 – 46

Other colours available

Also
Knitted WRAC Dolls

Price list and further information from:
Miss B P Butcher,
15 Westwood Drive, Swanpool, Lincoln
Tel: 01522 878413

Reminiscences of the WRAC

I WAS ALSO IN CYPRUS IN JULY 1974

W/420849 Anne Lloyd née Condliffe
c/o 26 Sallow Close, St Mary's Island, Chatham,
Kent ME4 3HG

In the last issue of *Lioness*, Herme Emary asked "Where were you when the Turks invaded Cyprus in July 1974?"

I had left the WRAC some 7 years earlier to marry and have a family. My husband, Jeff Lloyd RCT, was still serving and was the GOC's Driver in Cyprus. We had a Quarter in Episkopi and once we heard of the attempt on Archbishop Makarios' life, we became glued to BFBS radio for news of further developments. Any suggestion by the Greek Government to bring their Army onto the island was fiercely countermanded by the Turkish Government threatening to send in their troops. However, when some of the more militant Greek Cypriots began to attack the Turkish Cypriot enclaves (stirred up by mainland Greece), that became too much for Turkey and their troops arrived on the island in force.

The first I knew of their arrival was hearing the sound of the Turkish jets bombing (probably Nicosia airport?). On going out into the garden I could see the plumes of smoke rising over the mountains after each burst and the jets screaming away into the sky.

By now the men were on operational duties and families living in the Hirings out in Limassol and Larnaca etc were hurriedly evacuated into the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) and allocated to those of us living in the Quarters. At its height we had 27 wives and children living in our 3-bedroomed quarter. My own 2 children moved into our main bedroom with me and the other mums and children slept wherever we could make up beds around the house. Such crowded conditions brought its own problems, not least the desire to escape from such a large household. On one such occasion, when my husband managed to snatch an hour off, we decided to drive to a favourite spot of ours – a restaurant perched high on the cliffs overlooking Curium Beach. Although still located in the SBA, it was near the perimeter and no sooner had we stepped out of our car to walk towards the restaurant door when we heard rifle fire, very close by. We didn't wait around to discover whether it was friendly or not, but hurried the children back into the car and sped off deciding that a return visit to the restaurant might take a little while!

This way of living couldn't go on indefinitely and after about a week the evacuated families began to be flown back to the UK. It was a hard time for them; suddenly having to say goodbye to their husbands, not knowing what the immediate future held. They had just the few bits and pieces they were carrying when they were told to leave their Hirings. Although these events took place during the summer of '74, some of the flight times meant these young mums with their families would be arriving in UK during the night, so it was necessary to send them off with some of our sweaters and cardigans to keep them warm.

Just as an aside to all this, before the attempted coup I employed a Turkish Cypriot lady to clean for me each week. Once these events began to unfold she was unable to come into the Quarter area. However, we did manage to make contact with her. She and her family had been driven from their village and were living, along with many hundreds of other Turkish Cypriots in tents, in what is still known as Happy Valley – the SBA's sports and recreation area. They had been forced to leave their homes in fear of their lives once the attacks had started between the two communities and had been given refuge by the British. On finding Aiysa we discovered she hadn't any pots or plates from which to feed her family, so some were re-located from our Quarter for her. Many weeks later it was decided that the Turkish Cypriot refugees should be moved to the north side of the island, to come under the protection of the Turkish troops. Convoys made up of tractors, farm trailers, buses and elderly motorcars were lined up ready to be escorted north. It was quite a sight. But Aiysa didn't leave without returning all the pots and pans I had given her.

But that is not the end of the story. Jeff and I have been back to Cyprus over the intervening years. Three years ago we decided to buy a property in the north. For various reasons the building of the bungalow has taken a while to complete but while it was taking place we took the decision to take early retirement and move out to Cyprus. So, I am writing this reminiscence, sitting on the patio of our lovely new bungalow in Karsiyaka, some 15 miles west of Girne (Kyrenia).

During our various trips to the island we have made many new friends. Amazingly, one of the couples we have met is also ex WRAC and RCT. Michelle née Simpson – W/457701 and Jim McGill have been living in N Cyprus for about 18 months and have been a great source of information and friendship to us. They drove out to Cyprus from their hometown of Dumfries and their adventure has inspired us to do the same.

And work? Well I have been a Welfare officer at the Army Benevolent Fund in London for the past 12 years, but that is another story.

Editor: Anne has been involved in many of our benevolent cases over the years and we are very grateful for her support and advice.

MADGE EVANS' STORY

W/369015 Madge D Evans née Grundy
5 Laburnum Grove, Luton, Beds LU3 2DW

After a failed attempt to join the WRNS when I was 18, I wrote off to both the WRAF and the WRAC. For once the Army was first off the mark, so on a crisp October day in 1950, I arrived at Guildford Station. I was greeted by a smart LCpl, who enquired if I was reporting to the WRACTC, and if so, what was my name, to which I replied 'Madge' – not the most auspicious start to my service career.

Several of us piled into an Austin 1 tonner and sped off to Queen Elizabeth Camp. In those days it was a collection of 'E' type hutments, the only brick-built buildings were the Guardroom, Company Offices and the Gym. The next few days were both hectic and hazy. We were very busy drawing PDF Compressor Free Version to 'barrack' our beds, and 'bulling' the billets, especially the floors.

Our training NCOs were Sgt Ann Trodd, Cpl Pam Williams and LCpl Betty Sloan – the LCpl at the station. She took us for drill and marched us everywhere, Cookhouse, Gym, the Q Stores and Education Block, clad in our very fetching wrap-around overalls of various military shades, beige, brown, green and khaki. Eventually we were issued with our uniforms, battledress blouses, gored skirts, cotton shirts with separate stiff collars, braid ties, and ATS style caps. The undies were hilarious, particularly the "passion-killers" – 3 pairs of large voluminous rayon bloomers. The SQMS was appalled when our Company commander was adamant she was not having 3 Company oddly badged and insisted we were all issued with WRAC badges and buttons. Some of the girls had never sewn on a button in their lives and we were told to start with our greatcoats. Before long I had a 'nice little earner' going, being paid 1/- for greatcoats and 9d for service dress + cap. My grandmother had been a court dressmaker and I had learned to sew at an early age!

When we had our first pay-parade, Cpl Sloan got me again! Before joining up, I had been in the Girls Nautical Training Corps for 4 years, so what did I do? I threw up a naval salute! She nearly had apoplexy.

The Korean War had just started and we were told we would not be allowed to leave after basic training, but had to serve out our engagement – in my case 3 years. I went from Guildford to the Drivers and Clerks Training Centre at Horseley Hall, in Gresford, North Wales. I could already type (?) but there we learned how to lay out letters army style, send signals and use the correct modes of address etc.

Passing out as a Clerk GD Gp B Class III, I was then posted to HQ Eastern Command, G Intelligence branch, where I worked for a darling RASC WOII, named Jimmy Vance. Our GOC was General Sir Gerald Templar, who, discovering G Branch ran a tea club, demanded to join. We girls took turns to take his tea down the back stairs to his office. One morning I was a bit late in taking it, and going down the stairs, heard a tirade from him – "Where's my blankety-blank tea"? I marched into his inner sanctum, plonked it down on the desk before him, saying "I am not used to that kind of language, Sir", and flounced out. I had hardly finished my own tea, when he appeared at the office door to apologise.

After a while I succeeded in getting an overseas posting. I had put my preference as British Troops Austria (I don't know why, I hate cold weather), but my posting came through for GHQ FarELF. When I told my mother, she said I must have put Australia and they'd sent me to the nearest place.

A short while after I arrived in Singapore, we had to go

on a parade. I cannot recall the occasion, but we were inspected by the new GOC FarELF, Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templar. Our Company Commander, Captain Hodgson, (now Brigadier Anne Field) looked daggers at me when Sir Gerald said "Are you following me, Private Grundy, or am I following you?"

I met my husband to be whilst in Singapore (the ratio of British men to British girls was 11 to 1 without counting the Aussies, New Zealanders etc), came home and married him, and was a 'married pad' for the next 20 years.

I have no inkling what happened to the rest of my intake, with one exception – W/369027, Pte K Hughes, who later swapped that number for a P number and retired as a Major. Renee Shirley, Angie, Dot, Lily and Marian Graffham were all in the same room as Kathleen and me. Lucy Dakin was in the adjacent room – have you got the bucket yet, Lucy? I would love to hear from any of you. Also, I would like to contact a GNTC pal who married a lad from Guildford, June Woodward; also Jean Haynes (married name) with whom I worked at Hounslow.

TOGETHER AGAIN AFTER 51 YEARS

Mrs Hazel Roberts née Meads W/383132
24A Priory Road, Wombridge, Oakengates,
Telford, Shropshire TF2 6HU

Mrs Peggy Norin, née Wride lives near Harvey Bay, Queensland, Australia. It was because Peggy read the *Lioness* magazine and recognised my name when I wrote about Nairobi, Kenya, in about 2001, she said to her husband Val that she thought she had served with me. Peggy wrote and asked me if I remembered her, which of course I did. We have written and phoned each other ever since but I never thought that we would ever meet again.

We recalled that we had worked together at the War Office in Nuffield House, Piccadilly. At dinner hour we used to look around the shops in Oxford Street for bargains or go for a walk in Green Park or Hyde Park. While we were working in London, we were stationed in Richmond Park, Kingston, Surrey and were part of 12 Battalion WRAC. We were Clerk Typists attached to the RASC. In the evenings back at camp we used to play table tennis together. We also had free tickets to some of the best shows in London.



Peggy and Hazel together again after 51 years

We never know what will happen in this life. I had a call from Peggy saying she was coming to Telford, Shropshire especially to see me. It would be an unforgettable experience after fifty-one years. It is true to say that a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step; the first step was my wife coming to Telford. It was a long time ago. On 18 May 2006 Peggy came to Telford and stayed for three days. She said it might be the last time she travelled a long way but I hope she can visit again one day.

When Peggy and her husband Val stepped out of the taxi, all those years between seemed to disappear. We all had so much to say. We went out to see the places of interest around Telford, such as the Ironbridge, The Roman City of Wroxeter (Uriconium), The Long Mynd and Stiperstones.

We would also like to hear from anyone who might have served in the WRAC with us in the 1950s.

HONG KONG MEMORIES

W/429115 Chris Wilkes née Walsh
96 Queens Road, Radcliffe on Trent, Nottingham
NG12 1DJ

Are there any ex-WRAC out there who have fond memories of Colvin House, Victoria Barracks, Hong Kong? Any one who remembers dancing at the 'Happening', swimming parties in Repulse Bay, Prince, USS ships arriving, China Fleet Club, San Miguel and Tiger Beer??

I served from January 1968 – April 1969. I left on marriage but stayed in Hong Kong until 1970 working in the Medical Centre.

Editor: I surely do but it was a bit later – Apr 76- Feb 78

WRAC PHOTOGRAPHS

Avril Williams
3 Pippin Walk, The Limes, Hardwick, Cambridge
CB3 7QD

These photographs were sent in by Avril Williams who is the Secretary of the Cambridge Branch. She thought that they might bring back some happy memories. They are



Who ever had the time during training to read magazines?

obviously quite different – probably everyone will recognise the room at Guildford but not everyone would have had the opportunity to serve in Berlin!



The WRAC Band marching past the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in Berlin

THE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION'S RESIDENTIAL HOME 'HUNTLY'

Are you looking for a comfortable retirement home in beautiful surroundings at an affordable fee? Did you hold a commission in HM Armed Forces or are you a widow/widower of an ex-officer?

Huntly is the Association's retirement home for elderly single ex-officers, male or female, of all three Services, and widows and widowers of ex-officers who wish to enjoy an active retirement in a peaceful and tranquil environment. Located in the village of Bishopsteignton in south Devon and situated in its own extensive landscaped grounds, Huntly offers the comfort, security and peace of mind of a community while preserving the independence and privacy of its individual residents. All residents have a single room with en-suite facilities and the spacious public rooms include a Dining-Room, Drawing-Room, Library, Snooker Room, Ante Room and two TV Rooms. The climate is notably mild and dry, being on the English Riviera. Fast communications by both road and rail are conveniently close. Applicants must be mobile, able to look after themselves and attend meals. There are no medical facilities at Huntly, although the local doctor visits each week and welfare officers are employed to provide support for the residents. All residents pay a standard fee that covers their accommodation, meals and welfare support.

Further details and a brochure/application form can be obtained from:

The Assistant General Secretary
The Officers' Association
48 Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5JY

Tel: 020 7389 5203/4 Fax 020 7930 9053

Where Are You Now?

ALEXANDRA HOUSE, KENNINGTON GORE 1942

Mrs. P F Schofield, "Jackie" Thompson
84 Estcourt Road, Gloucester GL1 3LQ



Alexandra House

This picture of 'A' Company, Alexandra House, Kennington Gore was taken in 1942. I am in the top row - 6th from the right (facing). I worked at Leconfield House, Curzon Street which was then HQ London District and Miss Lloyd was the Company Commander.

If anyone in this picture would like a copy, please get in touch and I will send one.

I WOULD LIKE TO CONTACT THOSE WHO KNEW MY MOTHER OR MY WIFE

Mr P F Schofield
4 Westland Close, Lubenham, Market Harborough,
Leics LE16 9UN

My mother was Sgt Isabella Selina Francis Schofield, she was called up in Hitchin, Herts, on 2nd September 1939 as a member of the ATS, and joined the 13th Herts Coy. As far as we know she served with another Sgt, a Sgt Betty Writer also of Hitchin.



Sgt Schofield

It would appear that their main function was to set up kitchens and quarters by fitting out kitchens with equipment and rations and quarters with beds and bedding, to enable instant occupation, in requisitioned buildings in London. It was while operating in this capacity during the London Blitz, that they (with other girls) were buried in the cellar of a building, up to their waists in water before they were rescued, it is not known how long they were buried, but it was some time. As a result of this, my mother was invalided out of the ATS, due to very acute Rheumatism as a direct result of the time in the water. This would have been around 1941/42, as far as can be established.

My second enquiry concerns my wife, Sylvia May Schofield. She enlisted in London on 2nd July 1942 and would have been known as Private Sylvia May Jones which later became Private Sylvia Jemmett on her first marriage. She served until 30th March 1945. My wife did her training at Oswestry and did stints at Lanarkshire and Colchester. For a time, she was attached to searchlight units in London and Kent as a switchboard operator, and at the time of discharge, was stationed at Ashford, Kent. Her service number was W/192043. Sylvia would like to make contact with anyone who remembers her.



*Mr and Mrs Schofield after lunch at Buckingham Palace,
10 July 2005*

WHO REMEMBERS DOREEN PARTRIDGE NÉE BOWKER?

Betty Mitchell (Assistant Secretary), Plymouth Branch

The Falmouth member of Plymouth Branch, Mrs Doreen Partridge, née Bowker, is planning to visit West Germany in 2005 to celebrate VE/VJ 60 year anniversary.

Doreen had been stationed in Bad Oeyenhausen, Westphalia from 1945-47, as one of General Montgomery's unit, 21 Army Group Signals. During her week there she revisited old haunts, but, sadly, she found everything changed and no one wanted to talk about the war. She had taken some old photographs which she found in a bombed house in 1945. She handed them in at the Town Hall, where she was thanked and promises made to let her know if they were recognised. To date she has heard nothing. Just one old man spoke to her, in English, about the bombings of the Möhne Dam. He remembered the great wall of water cascading down. Otherwise, she found the war was a closed book in this part of Germany.

She would love to hear from any ATS who were stationed there in the same army camp at the same time.

Doreen Partridge can be contacted on 01326 312555 or Betty Mitchell on 01752 348632.

JUNE BRADLEY TRIES AGAIN

W/376963 Mrs June Bradley née Ross (known as Jean)
15221 Purdy Street, Westminster, California 92683 USA

I want to thank you for the photo you entered in your last issue of *Lioness* 2/05. To my disappointment, I only had contact with one lady from New Zealand. However, we have been in contact ever since. I will not give up the ship (as the Navy says) so I am enclosing another photo taken in Shrivenham, Wiltshire, with a good bunch of girls I worked with as a Mess Orderly at Roberts Hall/Officers Science College.



l-r: Me (Jean Ross)/Gwen Britnell/Irish Kelly Pat Smy & Phyllis. Taken about 1952 or 1953

This time I am in my khaki uniform, and not my greens taken outside Buckingham palace (Queen's Coronation). My husband took this picture and sadly he passed away of Alzheimer's on 1st August 2005. I hope someone out there will drop me a note. Good luck to all the WRAC. I will keep reading about you all in the *Lioness*.

WHERE IS PTE FRAN MEREDITH?

W/418425 Frances J Turnbull née Carlisle
2 Lowleam Court, West Denton, Newcastle upon Tyne
NE5 2YU

I am searching for Pte Fran Meredith and wonder if any members know of her whereabouts. Fran and I were both Comcen Ops with Royal Signals during the mid-1960s. After training at Catterick she was posted to Boddington and then York, where I met her in 1965. We had some great times together. In fact we seemed to be always laughing. Fran was posted overseas, I think to Cyprus, after my demob in 1966. I would love to know how she's getting along.

WERE YOU AT MY WEDDING?

W/416824 Mrs Christina Thomas née Rowlands
7 Fieldview Drive, Orford, Warrington, Cheshire
WA2 9BD

Where are the girls who acted as a guard of honour when my husband David and I got married on the 27th February 1965 at the Garrison Church, Brompton, Kent? I can recognise some faces but not all: Sgt Ness, LCpl Cindy Gault and Pte Brenda Keillar.



Wedding of Pte Rowlands and Cpl Thomas

We were all stationed with 12 RSME in Chatham, Kent and all lived at Gordon Barracks, Gillingham. I really would love to hear from any of the girls.

WHERE ARE YOU W/408051 PTE TERRY SO(U)GHTON

23022795 Ivor Worth
23 Laughton Way, Ermine East, Lincoln HE2 2RD

I knew Pte Soughton and her friend, Joyce, in the late 1950s. She came from Wimbledon but served in 8 Ind Coy in Bicester. I met her in the NAAFI with some of my RAOC friends: Sid Bolton, Roy Round, Ted Sayers and Alf Baglea.

It would be so nice if we could meet up again for a reunion.

W/386241 MARY McGREGOR NÉE McMENEMY
Mrs Mary McGregor
26 Hill Road, Seafar, Cumbernauld G67 1L3

PDF Compressor Free Version



Taken at Guildford

I served from March 1954 until November 1955 and would love to hear from any body who remembers me. I am in the Glasgow branch and a regular attender at all the reunions and the WRAC Dinner Club.



Taken at Dreghorn. Mary has the shovel

LENA PRICE - NICKNAME "BUTTON"
Mrs Mary Bazett née Marsden W/75850
Hobbs Orchard, Silver Street, Coaley, Dursley,
Glos. GL11 5AX

I would love to be able to trace the whereabouts of a very dear friend of mine. Her name was Lena Price and we first met in late 1941 or early 1942 when we shared a room in a house in Christchurch Road, Winchester. We were billeted there whilst working as clerks at the ATS Record Office in The Rifle Depot. Her nickname was "Button" for some reason. We became great friends, and as her home was in Liverpool and I then lived in Longparish, very near to Winchester, she often stayed with us there for short leaves. At some time in 1943, after completing our initial AA Training - I think at Blackdown Barracks - we joined B Troop, 564 Battery, 183(M) HAA Regt, RA. We were stationed mainly in the Woking, Reading and Ashford areas before going to a site near Antwerp in, I think, January 1945. At some stage during this time I think she must have been posted elsewhere and we subsequently lost touch.



Lena "Button" Price

I have moved about a great deal in my lifetime, in this country and overseas, and never knew where to start my search till I joined the Bath Branch of the WRAC Association and began to read *Lioness*.

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.

2 COMPANY 6 PLATOON - JANUARY 1966

W/428116 Marie Roberts

109 Scorton Avenue, Layton, Blackpool, Lancs FY3 7HD

Where are you now? 40 years this year only 2 found.

PDF Compressor Free Version



6 Platoon, 2 Company, Guildford January 1966

Linda Beckett (Becky) Middlesborough (found), Lynn Briercliffe, Eileen Bryant, Maureen Casey, Jane Clapham, Patricia and Margaret Glen (Twins from Gorbals Glasgow), Christine Hanham, Vicky Hurbert, Hazel Laird (found Aberdeen), Edwena Male, Notty? (from Nottingham), Dingle (Nickname), Rosemary?, Jenny?, Bridie Mulloy, Denise?, Betty Peace, Lyn Rudd, Pauline Rutherford, Joan Ryan, Marie Roberts, Jackie Savage, Margaret Spencer, Jolie Stevenson, E H Thompson, Pauline Shaw, Joyce Wagstaff, Elizabeth J Welsh, Valeria Wilson, Christine Wenysa.



Myself and Jackie Low who was posted to Singapore



Myself with Madge Lozer who came from London and was a clerk at F.V.R.D.E. Chertsey, Surrey 1966-1968

I would love to see some of my Platoon 40 Years on - what a reunion we could all have! I have been trying very hard to trace the Glen twins and Christine Hanham who were my roommates. Please get in touch. My e-mail address is marieroberts45@yahoo.co.uk and my mobile number is 07842 577722.

JOAN OLGIVY ATS 1942-46

Miss P M B Finney

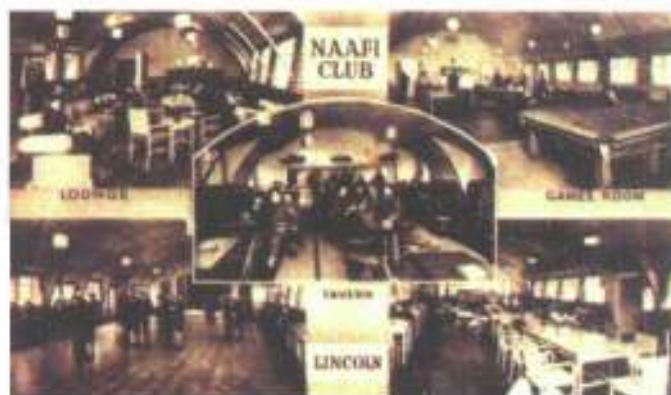
Flat 15 Fitzroy House, Great Pulteney Street,
Bath BA2 4DW

Joan Olgivy is sought by Alan Burghan known as 'Al' while in Fleet Air Arm somewhere in Lincolnshire. Al is now residing in Canada. If anyone knows where Joan is please contact Miss P M B Finney at the above address.

NANCY TIPTON

91 Dawley Road, Wellington, Shropshire TF1 2HT

I would like to hear from anyone who remembers meeting me - Nancy Tipton (nee Scott) in the Lincoln NAAFI Club. I was in G Coy ATS attached to the RASC in 1945/1946.



Lincoln NAAFI Club

MARY RODGER

Mrs Meg Watson, 31 Mariners Close, Gorleston-on-Sea,
Norfolk NR31 6TU

I am sending this photograph on behalf of a lady who is trying very hard to find out more about her mother who was born in 1920. Called Mary Rodger, she enlisted in



Mary Rodger is on the front row, second from left

1940 and was a LCPL in Ack-Ack. It is thought that this photograph was taken in Felixstowe, Suffolk.

If anyone remembers Mary Rodger, please contact her daughter: Mrs Ellaline Wilson, 13 Pinkerton Road, Glenrothes, Fife KY3 7HH. Tel: 01599 558592.

83 SQUAD ISLE OF MAN 1943

Mrs B Hawkins, nee Cook, 47 Newway Road,
Leicester LE5 5UA

Mrs Hawkins would be delighted to hear from anyone who recognises themselves on the following photograph. Perhaps if you do not spot yourself right away, you might recognise your signature!



83 Squad Isle of Man



Signatures on the back of the above photograph

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 Pitt
Stafford ST17 9HE
Tel: 01785 249992

GEORGE CARLIN'S VIEW ON AGEING

Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions.

"How old are you?" "I'm four and a half!" You're never thirty-six and a half. You're four and a half, going on five! That's the key.

You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump into the next number, or even a few ahead.

"How old are you?" "I'm gonna be 16!" You could be 13, but hey, you're gonna be 16! And then the greatest day of your life.... You become 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony..... YOU BECOME 21. YESSS!!!

But then you turn 30. Oooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk! He TURNED; we had to throw him out. There's no fund now, you're just a sour-dumpling. What's wrong? What's changed?

You BECOME 21, you TURN 30, then you're PUSHING 40. Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you REACH 50.

And your dreams are gone.

But wait!!! You MAKE it to 60. You didn't think you would!

So you BECOME 21, TURN 30, PUSH 40, REACH 50 and MAKE it to 60.

You've built up so much speed that you HIT 70! After that it's a day-by-day thing; you HIT Wednesday!

You get into your 80's and every day is a complete cycle; you HIT lunch; you TURN 4:30; you REACH bedtime. And it doesn't end there. Into the 90's, you start going backwards; "I WAS just 92".

Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. "I'm 100 and a half!"

May you all make it to a healthy 100 and a half!!

Branch News

Editor: Many of the Branches very kindly included lovely words about how they had enjoyed the Grand Reunion. I have taken the liberty to edit most of them out to save space here and to give maximum space to the section about the Grand Reunion. After all, those who were there all know about the various functions – including the Fire Alarm on the Friday night during dinner! Hopefully, those who were not able to be with us will enjoy the photographs.

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH BRANCH

Sadly, this is the last report I shall be making because this branch closed at the end of April. Time catches up with all of us and since the Chairman was doing Secretary and (latterly) Treasurer, she wished to retire. No substitutes were forthcoming, so that brought us to the regrettable conclusion that closure was inevitable.

In the 15 years of our existence we have formed a close friendship together and we are determined to continue this with informal meetings. The regular attenders will continue to meet in some way or the other and we will find some means of attending Area and Grand Reunions.

Inevitably, in looking back, we think of the members we have lost. We wonder how those members who have never been able to attend a meeting will continue membership. I think that the pleasure of receiving *Lioness* will decide them to continue – I hope so.

Ten members joined 80 guests to help Anne Bradshaw celebrate her 80th Birthday seen here cutting the cake at a party hosted by Anne's son at the Priest House Hotel, Castle Donnington, East Midlands.



Anne cutting her cake

Many guests commented on the camaraderie shared by the group after so many years. The younger guests were so interested in their war time exploits especially the Ack Ack and ammunition drivers. They were quite taken aback when they offered to help Lydia Dolman to descend a flight of stairs. "Oh, don't worry" said Lydia. "I will just slide down the banister." They were astounded because Lydia is also 80. But what is an age when we are all so young at heart.

Attending the Grand Reunion was a lovely way to finish. What a fantastic weekend and how wonderfully it had been organised. I suspect that it was probably a bit like the description of Harrods – all, like a duck, smooth on the surface and paddling like Hell underneath.

Adieu!

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

The Birmingham Group celebrated its 18th Birthday in May. We invited Lt Col Sue Westlake, Maggie Purkis and Irene Hall, Wales and West Area Secretary. They all enjoyed themselves very much. The lunch was most enjoyable and tasty and it was followed by Chris Kemey the entertainer. He was superb and everybody enjoyed his music and dancing.

On Sunday 14th May we were invited to the Normandy Veterans Association Service and Parade at St Paul's Church in the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter. The Lord Mayor of Birmingham and Arlette from the Pegasus café in Normandy were there. The Lord Mayor laid a wreath. Standards were presented and the "Last Post" played. This was a most moving occasion for all present.



Standing: Sue Dolphin, Maureen Deeley, and Frances Jenkinson. Seated: Nora Jefferies, Violet Horsley, Flo Banner and Lesley Wallace

After the service, there was a Buffet Lunch at the United Services Club which we all thoroughly enjoyed.

We have lost a few of our members this year which is always very sad. However, we still keep the group going and have arranged trips out to the Botanical Gardens and the Theatre. Our May and Christmas Lunches are always well attended and visitors are very welcome.

BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH

We have had another busy few months here in Bournemouth. At our AGM in November all existing committee members were re-elected en bloc, although it was made clear that several members would stand down at the 2006 AGM.

In December we were delighted to welcome our Association Vice-President Lt Col Sue Westlake to our Christmas Lunch at the East Anglia Hotel – a very happy and enjoyable occasion. We do not meet in January but in February we held a most successful Bring & Buy sale to boost Branch funds.

PDF Compressor Free Version

In March, one of our members, Mrs Dawes (ex-WRAC) who writes books – fictional but based on actual military campaigns and facts, gave us a most interesting talk on how she researches material for her books and the people and places she has visited in this pursuit. In April, Mrs Cox entertained us by explaining the history and art of making corn dollies. Her demonstration made it appear far simpler than any of us thought – it was amazing how many shapes could be made.

Five of us attended the Grand Reunion at Warwick University, which was superb. The fire alarm going off at the beginning of dinner on our first night was quite an experience! But the fact that 450 of us (many over 80 years of age) evacuated the 1st floor dining room in an orderly manner had to be seen to be believed. Apparently, the alarm was set off by steam cooking the vegetables. Three branch members were awarded Certificates of Appreciation during the AGM.

Some members attended other reunions – Searchlight battery members met on the Isle of Wight, Gunners were in Blackpool; all enjoyed meeting up yet again with old comrades and friends.

At our May meeting two young people from the Dorset Heathland Trust gave us an illustrated talk on the insects, birds, flowers and small animals that inhabit heathland. We have large areas of heathland here in Dorset, which sadly often suffers from fire, sometimes caused by young arsonists, people's carelessness or, rarely, natural causes.

Our June meeting is a "Mystery" coach trip into the New Forest, followed by a cream tea at Holmesley tearooms, which is a most pleasant venue. This was once a station (before the Beeching cuts). We are hoping that the weather will be kind to us. One or two members hope to attend the Veterans' Parade in Weymouth but are unlikely to be able to join the march past. On 1 July some of us will be going to the Southern Area Reunion which is being hosted by Bristol Branch – more about that in our next bulletin.

Sadly I have received news of the death of one of our life members – Beryl White née Broadfoot on 23 May. Beryl served in the ATS from 1939 – 45 and reached the rank of WO1. Ill health had prevented her from attending meetings for some years.

We will be re-thinking the structure of our branch for the forthcoming year and, unless some of the younger members come forward to help soon, meetings and general activities of the Branch may have to be curtailed. This has always been a happy and thriving Branch and we would hate to see its complete closure.

BRADFORD BRANCH

Greetings to all members at Home and Abroad. We hold

our meetings on the second Monday of the month at RBL HQ Claremont, Bradford. This item of information is in case any ex-WRAC happen to read this and would like to join us.

We number 47 members on our books of which 12 are life members. I know this sounds a lot but sadly not many live close enough to attend and in recent months has sadly depleted to 12 or 13. There are various reasons for this, mainly transport – having to catch two buses and fitting in with the timetables doesn't help. Also the fact that as our members are getting older (all now over 80), travelling can be difficult. Also we have had members in hospital with various illnesses. To all those friends we send our good wishes for health and recovery and hope to see you very soon.

I am sad to report the demise of 2 members. Nora Houldsworth was Treasurer for many years and after she was taken ill I (Norah Kendall) took over. I'm afraid I shall never attain her high standard but will do my best. It was at Nora's instigation that I became Branch Standard Bearer in 1982 and continued thus for 22 years so it was fitting that the last time I carried the Standard having retired was at Nora's funeral.

Sylvia Yates died in November. She lived in Essex – a long way from here but it was through me she joined. We served together from 1943 at Haywards Heath in Sussex. Posted to Brussels then to Herford in Germany. We always kept in touch first by post then through weekly phone calls.

We are now looking forward to the Northern Area Reunion in September when we will return to Millstones in Harrogate. We hope it will be as good as it was last year.

BRISTOL BRANCH

As always, Bristol has had a busy time. We started in December with a Bring and Buy. The church where we hold our meetings held a Christmas Tree Festival. This means that you choose a carol and decorate the tree accordingly. As we were one of the first to put our name forward, we were able to pick our own carol. We chose 'Angels from the Realms of Glory' and it was decorated by three of our members. It was shown on television.

In January we had a plaque dedicated to all women who have served in the Armed Forces; it was a tri-service event.



The Plaque in Bristol Council House



The Lord Mayor, Esme Davidson, Chairman, Bristol Branch is on his left

The Lord Mayor unveiled the plaque and the service was led by the Canon Presenter, Brendan Clover, of Bristol Cathedral. We were also fortunate to have Anthony Stuart Lloyd a Baritone (what a fantastic voice) to sing 'I vow to thee my Country' which was most appropriate. Anthony was appearing in Scrooge, playing the part of Christmas Present, and when he found out what we were doing he offered to come and sing. We were pleased that Maj Jane Freebairn was able to join us. *Editor: It was a very special occasion.* We have been told that our plaque is unique. Rosemary Rigby MBE, who provided the Violette Szabo GC display during the Grand Reunion, has requested a copy of our plaque to hang in her Museum near Hereford. We are very honoured.



Anthony Stuart Lloyd is the one in the middle!

In February we held our Christmas Lunch! This was attended by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress and we were so pleased that our Vice President, Lt Col Sue Westlake was able to join us. Our previous Area Chairman, Lt Col Val Trout also joined us but, unfortunately our current one, Maj Maskens-McIntyre, was unable to attend. Sandra Steadman made our table decorations in the Corps colours- The flowers looked so real people were trying to smell them.

March saw us making the final preparations for the Grand Reunion. It was so good that the Bristol ladies would have liked a repeat the following week! [OK we compromised and had cakes at our next meeting made by one of our members.] Unfortunately, one of our

members fell in Coventry and hurt her arm and badly bruised her ribs. However, she was determined that she was going to attend the dinner on the Saturday night. She did enjoy herself although she was in a lot of pain – and in a wheelchair

In May I was honoured to receive the Lord Mayor's Medal which was presented at the Mansion House. Part of the citation read, 'It took 60 years and Jackie Naysmith to get the role of women in the war officially recognised by Bristol City Council and the rest of the city'. It was also for my work in the community and the War Widows. My two daughters attended the Ceremony and were very proud. I feel that it was not just for me, but for all the ladies.



Jackie Naysmith receiving her medal from the Lord Mayor



The Lord Mayor's Medal

At our meeting in June I was able to take the Medal and show the members. In June I was at the Veterans parade in Weymouth. The weather was kind to us and it was nice to meet up with familiar faces. Also in June, two of our members have been invited to join the Not Forgotten Association for 5 days in London based at the Union Jack Club.

Bristol is hosting the South and South West Area Reunion on 1 July. We have 120 attending including those branches from the South West who are joining us for the first time. Our Venue is at Cadburys Chocolate Factory – unfortunately the shop will be closed – but we hope to have a good day. It is also the first Area Reunion for our

Chairman, Maj Maskens-McIntyre since the two areas have been combined. I hope all the branches have a good day. I would like to thank them for their support. *Editor: I would also like to thank everyone who attended and contributed to the huge sum of £300 made by the Raffle which has been donated to the Liggers and the £175 made at the Memorabilia sales table.*

BURY BRANCH

First, we must congratulate the organisers of the Grand Reunion for such a splendid weekend. Everyone agreed it had been a great success. We would particularly like to pay tribute to our youngest member, Wendy, for all her help, not only to us but to many others, especially during the Fire Alarm. We are already looking forward to the next Grand Reunion in 2009!

In May we met in Manchester and enjoyed lunch at the Cathedral Refectory. Later that month there was a Royal Artillery (Ack Ack) Reunion in Blackpool at the Norbreck Castle Hotel. About 500 people attended and the Royal Artillery Band entertained and performed Beating Retreat.

We sent a card to Her Majesty The Queen for her 80th Birthday and 3 of us have tickets to attend Trooping the Colour. The following weekend our Secretary, Mary, and our Treasurer, Lily, will attend the ATS Annual Dinner at the Victory Services Club, London.

We are already making plans for our Christmas lunch at our meeting place, the White Lion Hotel, Bury. This photograph was taken at our last Christmas celebration.



Bury Branch at Christmas Lunch

CAMBRIDGE BRANCH

Hello all, this is what the Cambridge Branch has been up to since its AGM in 2005. Sadly, I begin with the news that the branch lost a dear friend – Pat Ruston MBE in November. She was one of our founder members and had served for many years with the Royal Signals TA. I am pleased to say that Fay Warne is recovering well after a spell in hospital.

Two members attended the WRAC Dinner at

Birmingham in October and really enjoyed meeting up with familiar faces! On 5 November, five members attended the Eastern Reunion at Colchester. We were very pleased to have Maj Jane Freebairn as our guest.

Our Christmas Dinner was held at the Grafton Hotel in Cambridge in December.



*Back Row L-R: Doris Dockerill, Fay Warne
Front Row: Wendy Wooton, Avril Williams, Jean Farrington, Janet Herdman, Vera Martin*

Three members had a most memorable time at the Grand Reunion in Coventry.

CANTERBURY BRANCH

In December we had our Christmas Lunch with 40 members and guests sitting down to a festive meal followed by an excellent raffle. Our January meeting is always quiet but 23 members braved the cold and we discussed our plans for the rest of the year. In February our President, Jenny Wells, tested us with a quiz and in March our speaker was the Rev John King who gave us an interesting talk about his work as chaplain to a women's prison.

Our April meeting started earlier than usual as we enjoyed a fish and chip lunch, followed by a competition for a decorated hard-boiled egg. After much deliberation it was decided that Maisie Halladay was the winner.



*Mavis Middleton, Sue Foulks and Nan Waters
enjoying a pre-dinner drink*

Three of our members, Kate McGregor, Sue Foulks and Mavis Middleton travelled to Coventry for the Grand Reunion. All three of us were pleased to meet up with old friends, including an ex-member of our Branch, Nan Waters, who now lives in Spalding. We all agreed that we had experienced a fantastic reunion and will be celebrating 60 years since the inception of the WRAC and 90 years since the Association started – now that really will be some reunion!

In May, Avril Woolf entertained us by talking about her experiences as a member of her local amateur dramatic society. In June, we hold our summer tea party and enjoy meeting up with old friends from the local branch of the WRENS Association and our Medway Branch.

Sadly we have lost two of our longest serving members. In February, Mercy Jordan died and in May, Bella Mephram. Both were staunch supporters of the branch and acted as escorts when Jenny Wells carried our standard on parade. We will miss them at our meetings.

CARDIFF BRANCH

Mollie Acton

Last year was a quiet one for our members. One highlight was the Celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the end of the War. It was a very enjoyable occasion – perfect weather, wonderful entertainment. The event took place in the grounds of Cardiff Castle – maybe some readers will be familiar with the beautiful and historic centrepiece of our city. This photograph shows us at one of our regular meetings.



Standing: Doris Clifford (Treasurer), Gwyneth Thompson, Margaret Crook, Josie Hill, Kath Hughes (Chairman) and Joan Straiten

Seated: Marie Byrne, Doreen Michael and Margaret Beckett. Kneeling: Mollie Acton (Secretary)

Some of our members were unable to climb the flight of stairs to our meeting place at United Services Mess. We have gathered informally at the West Bute Dock Hotel situated in Cardiff Bay, formerly the old Dock area of the City. The manager and staff have been so kind and caring – and the food is superb! We decided to show our appreciation and presented the Hotel with a plaque to say 'Thank You'. We all travelled by bus!



Behind the bar after presenting the plaque

CHELMSFORD BRANCH

January – was to be our first meeting of the New Year but it was not to be. The floor of the hall we use had to be restored so we cancelled and met in **February** – when we listened to a talk by the owner of a large coach company who we have often used. We enjoyed this talk with a slide presentation and wonderful descriptions of the early days of "charabancs".

March – all set to hear a talk by a BBC writer of plays who didn't turn up – our first real let down. We had no cause to worry as Emily (Bristow) rallied round and provided us with an equally entertaining programme of funny sayings and poems. Emily has always been good at this and we were so glad she was able to step in at short notice.

March 31 – 1 April. The Hon. Secretary and Treasurer headed for Warwick University in Coventry to take part in the Grand Reunion. Daphne Attridge also attended and we met up with Audrey Raynor, a former member of our Branch. The accommodation and food were really first-class and contributed to a happy and successful weekend.

April – this time our meeting was well attended and our speaker was Chris Page who was a former prison visitor. Judging by the questions she received, it seemed this talk was much enjoyed.

May – we met at the home of our Vice Chairman, Joyce Wright. The invitation and the opportunity to sample strawberries and cream for tea were all much appreciated by those who were able to go. We do thank Joyce for the kind thought as she retires from her post as Social Secretary.

June – we met at the RAFA Club as usual and had a game of "Call my Bluff". Is there no end to what members will produce for these games!

Our general attendance since January has fallen slightly for all sorts of reason but it is important that we maintain our contact with each other so do please come if you can. New members.....meetings in Chelmsford at the RAFA Club every 3rd Tuesday, 1.30 pm. You are very welcome.

In Memoriam

It is with regret we have to report the death of Sister (Miss) Joyce Wakely. Joyce died on 31 May 2006 in a nursing home in Southend and her funeral service was at Southend Crematorium. Sister was a former Member of the Association and, until failing health overcame her, kept in touch though she was not able to come to meetings. When she lived at Woodham Ferrers she was always present, and as a former Chaplain's Assistant, was able to lead us in prayer before our meetings. She was a much liked and respected member of the branch who we are sorry to lose.

CHESTER & DISTRICT BRANCH

It has been a considerable time since news from our Branch has appeared. We are all growing older very gracefully and keep on doing our best to keep on enjoying ourselves.

We have been able to meet as usual every month due to the hospitality shown to us by the owner of a Chester Hotel who welcomes us without charge and even rustles up tea – we supply the biscuits.

The highlight of several summers has been our canal boat trip which includes lunch on a narrow boat on Chester/Shropshire Canal and includes many members of other Service groups in the area. The boat stops at "The Top Lock" and we disembark and gather by the canal side to speak the Exhortation and scatter Poppy leaves on the canal waters in memory of all Servicemen and women who made the final sacrifice.

We visited the Arboretum in Spring 2005, and are thrilled to learn that the ATS now have a special plot – thanks to the ATS Dinner Club and The Wolverhampton Branch especially Mrs Mary Beeston. It has been arranged for a statue of an ATS Private in Full Dress Uniform in a sitting position to be placed on the plot. The statue is very attractive and impressive. It makes one realise the opportunity missed by subscribing to the "Women's Memorial" situated in Whitehall. Two of our members Doris Wallington and Rosa Minks represented our Branch at the unveiling of the Memorial to the Women of World War II and attended the reception at the invitation of The Queen. They had a wonderful time and still have stars in their eyes. As with most of us who have ever had the honour of meeting Her Majesty they were overwhelmed by the experience and impressed by her never failing courtesy and friendliness.

The two sad items in our area were the closure of Branches – our nearest neighbours Rhyl and Wrexham. We attended the Service at Rhyl for the laying up of their Standard and the official closure of the branch. Rhyl was a daughter branch of Chester and many of our members at the time of their starting had been very faithful Chester Branch members. At the time we gave them our blessing and £50 to help them start up. They were an excellent Branch contributing many hundreds of pounds to the benevolent fund and the socials they ran were an item on everyone's calendar. We send an invitation to anyone from both the Rhyl and Wrexham area who does

not wish to lose touch to come to our meetings at any time – second Monday in every month – except January.



We recently had an "At Home" at the Chairman's house and a photograph of the happy group of members taken in the garden is enclosed. Beautiful weather plenty of refreshments and wine with tea for the Drivers. Thank you Joan from all of us. We held a raffle and were able to send £30 to Mary Beeston towards the ATS Statue. We now have several invaluable WRAC members especially Pat Sanders who very generously gives four of our members much appreciated lifts to the meeting. Pat and others are wonderful addition to our Branch and give fresh hope of passing on our Standard and tradition. Thank you all, especially, Pat.

The Chairman and several members attended the reunion at Warwick. It was truly an excellent weekend – even the Fire Alarm added to the memories.

CLEVELAND BRANCH

Hello *Lioness* readers – Cleveland branch reporting again. First thing I have to say, is that our Secretary, Gwyn Friday has been in hospital but she is now ordering poor husband Bill about something chronic – good sign I reckon! So that's good news.

Our AGM went well in October and, as we have some spare cash in the funds, we will take our members out to Christmas Lunch. November was fairly quiet, so we decided to have a game of Bingo. We sold books, and everyone got settled – then realised that we had no balls!! So it had to be scrapped until next time. We had no meeting in December so our first meeting in 2006 was our belated Christmas Lunch. Thirty one ladies sat down, and it was very nice.

In December, some of our ladies were invited to the Mayor's Parlour, and they thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Olive Kinghorn writes:

In December 2005, our local Mayor, Mr Ray Mallon invited Veterans of WW2 to a buffet lunch – and 12 of our Ladies were present. On arrival, we were served tea and biscuits, after which we were taken to the Mayor's Parlour to meet the Mayor.

He gave a very interesting talk, and said that he felt we were never really thanked for a job well done. Having this event gave him the opportunity to do so. He asked all of us the different jobs we had to face. Then we were presented with a plaque and had a group picture taken with the Mayor.

PDF Compressor Free Version



Cleveland ladies with the Mayor

The buffet lunch was excellent. It had all been prepared by a local Catering College and we finished off the afternoon with lovely champagne. It was a memorable occasion, which they hope to repeat next year.

February was our first Branch Meeting of 2006. We were very saddened to hear that one of our members Pat (Phoebe) Smith had died. Some of our members, and our Standard, went to her funeral to pay our last respects.

At our March meeting, one of our members suggested inviting her niece to speak to us about her work in Social Services. One could hear a pin drop, as the ladies were enthralled and dismayed by some of the things that go on in today's society.

On a lighter note, 7 ladies went to the Grand Reunion in Warwick – FABULOUS weekend! At our May meeting, after the business side was completed, we had our usual cuppa and chat and then settled down, pencil poised, for a Quiz. The quizmaster, Dot Ryder, kept good order and we all had a good laugh. Congrats to the winning team who were last seen sharing out a big bag of chocolate goodies. We have decided to have a day trip to York, so watch out for Ladies in Blazers climbing on the latest attraction – the equivalent of the London Eye. Should be fun!! We look forward to meeting all Northern Ladies at Harrogate in September for our Area Reunion.

EASTBOURNE BRANCH

The year started with the news that we would have to change our meeting place as the Royal British Legion building was to be sold. Until November, we will be holding our meetings in a room in the Chatsworth Hotel, Eastbourne, courtesy of the owner. Three members attended the Grand Reunion in Warwick University – rather different from the previous one in Birmingham University.

In May, our Kine member joined other Kines visiting the National Memorial Arboretum to see our tree and bench in place there. We are very pleased with their position. The NMA has more plots filled, so more to be seen and appreciated. A message was sent by the General Post Office there to our Branch.

In June, ATS members attended their annual Lunch in the Victory Services Club, London. In July, we will again be visiting the Llama Park just north of Hailsham. The Cuckmere Community Bus which takes us on our outings has just received the Queen's Award for voluntary service. The group has six Mercedes busses and forty volunteer drivers.

Best wishes to all.

FIFE & TAYSIDE BRANCH

Our Branch continues to thrive with 41 Annual members and 41 Life Members. Unfortunately this year we have lost four of our members: Mrs Elsie Elliott who died on 2nd February, Mrs Sheila Davison died on 17th March, Mrs Isabella Duff died on 22nd March and Mrs Ann LeHer who died on 1st May. We have gained four new members who are Frances Wilkie, Catherine McCombie, Sheena Muir and Mary Henderson. We continue to meet on the last Thursday of every month for lunch and to catch up with any news etc.

On 27 April 2006 we held our AGM which was well supported by 22 members. It went very well and all office bearers were re-instated. We held a raffle and the meeting finished with a very nice High Tea. Mrs Mary Trueland was presented with her Certificate of Appreciation.

We now look forward to the Scottish AGM which is being held in the Quality Station Hotel, Perth on 14 October 2006. For the first time it is being organised by the Committee for the Scottish Area rather than a single Branch having all the responsibility.

GLASGOW BRANCH

After all the activities that were held last year, this year has seemed particularly quiet. We have been entertained with music and people coming to give talks on various topics. One gentleman came with a bag full of hats and he had a story to tell about each hat he brought out of the bag. We did enjoy that. Also another gentleman came to talk about Tram Cars which brought back a lot of happy memories to those of us who had the pleasure of travelling on them – especially the Glasgow Trams which were hugely entertaining – especially on a Saturday night!

Some of our ladies went to the reunion in Warwick this year and had a great time. It was mostly our WRAC members who attended as some of our older members are finding it more difficult to cope with the travelling. Our latest meeting was held in June, and we decided to finish off with a bus run to Callander and Pitlochry which are beautiful parts of the country.

Mae Lang who has been our Secretary for many years has decided to give up the job as she would like to spend more time with her family. All the jobs she did have been split up amongst the committee. She really is a hard act to follow as she is so organised that we can only hope that we can do the job as well as she did.

PDF Compressor Free Version

Thanks again Mae for all your hard work as we really appreciate all you did for us. We hope to still see you at our meetings and look forward to seeing everyone again at the start of our new session in September.

.....

Would Beryl Allinson of the Portsmouth Branch phone Susan Sinclair on 0141 558 1405 as I believe she tried to make contact at the Warwick reunion.

GRIMSBY BRANCH

Our week collecting for the Poppy Appeal was very successful raising a record amount of £2,594.56. In November we held a Jumble Sale and raised funds for the branch Christmas festivities.

The Branch Christmas Lunch was held this year at a local hotel. The meal was not as good as the usual meals served there, but the camaraderie and socialising more than made up for the disappointment. Instead of sending numerous Christmas cards between members we collected money for the Army Benevolent Fund. We raised £50 and received a nice thank you letter and Certificate of Appreciation from them.

In January this year we held a New Year party with catering by our favourite chef, Ted. The party went with a swing with music, bingo, crackers, party poppers and balloons and plenty of good food and wine. Afterwards we wended our way home clutching a "doggy bag" of surplus food to feed our spouses or for supper in front of the TV.

After an uneventful February, March brought a few surprises. The secretary was absolutely thrilled to receive flowers from headquarters in appreciation of the work that secretaries do for the organisation. At the Branch meeting, we were presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. It was presented by our friend Ted with his Poppy Appeal Organiser "Hat" on this time. We were sorry to lose one of our supportive members Flo Beedie who has moved back to be near her family in Scotland. Our loss is your gain, Aberdeen. Our secretary, Gail was presented with a card signed by all the members present at the branch meeting which happened to be her 60th birthday. No doubt she was first in the queue for a bus pass next day.

We had our first outing of the year on Easter Monday – a coach tour to Chesterfield Easter Market. After a few hours retail therapy, we continued to see the sights of Derbyshire, and ended with Afternoon Tea. A very enjoyable day for all.

Another surprise at the May meeting. Long time member Kath Skelthorne received her Veterans badge. She had

been too ill to attend the official presentation we had last year so it was good to see her in better health back at meetings. The secretary, Gail Davy, was presented with a Silver Association Badge for more than 25 years with the Association.

In June Lily Quickfall at 80 plus years of age is to take part again in the "Race for Life" held in Cleethorpes. We had a collection at the meeting towards the event and look forward to hearing how Lily gets on.

Unfortunately over the last few months we have lost 3 members: Dolly Thompson, Min Parrott and Margaret Sandham. "We Will Remember Them".

HASTINGS BRANCH

A fairly regular pattern of Branch activities has emerged over the years and, although we cannot please everyone, we seem to satisfy most of our members. Our Christmas Party last year was well attended and again successful. However, we have been asked for fewer quizzes and more carols!

We were extremely sad to hear of the death of Brigadier Nolan who visited our Branch on several occasions and showed an interest in our activities. What a wonderful photograph of her on the front of the last issue of *Lioness*.

Our Luncheon club continues to be popular and following the winter months when we met in Hastings, we now go farther afield. In March we went to Brede, in April to Winchelsea and in May to Westfield. To celebrate our 26th Birthday on 21 April we had tea at the Coastguards Restaurant overlooking the sea and, as the date coincided with the Queen's Birthday we drank to her health and not in tea. We are indeed fortunate to have a Branch surrounded by such lovely countryside. Again our Strawberry Tea was a great success with 20 members and friends attending. We are grateful to our Vice Chairman for permitting us to meet in her lovely garden and we are most appreciative of all the help provided and to those who supplied such a wonderful raffle.

Unfortunately, we had to change our meeting place due to the increased cost of St Matthews Church Hall and our dwindling membership. We have had one speaker since moving and that was a most interesting talk on Pearly Kings and Queens. However, we were all rather startled when the speaker removed her skirt! This revealed a wonderful underskirt covered with patterns all displayed by pearl buttons.

We are invited by the local Branch of the Royal Naval Association to join them in their annual visits to France. This year we had a day at Le Touquet. It was a fine day and the sea was calm; we ate our lunches overlooking those beautiful beaches and then wandered through the town until we found a very promising Patisserie where we lingered for some time before the homeward journey.

Six of our members qualified for the Silver Association Badges and these were presented at our last meeting.

HULL BRANCH

Dorothy Mirfin

We still hold our meetings on the first Friday of each month from February to December. Not so many of us can get together with no problems for a long time. A lot of the time was taken up by deciding which of the many and varied 60th commemorative events during 2005 we could attend. Sixteen applications were made for the Veterans badge and all were received in time to be worn. Several more have been obtained since and are being worn with pride. The main celebration was on Veterans Day to coincide in Hull with the London events and the 'Silence' with the Queen while we were in the Hull City Square in front of the 'Big Screen'. It was a brilliant day, service at the Hull cenotaph and even the TA set up a Field Kitchen in the Queens Gardens serving bangers and mash. So many people attended, lots of questions from younger people and the children. May Kirby and Sheila Lawn attended the unveiling of the Memorial to the Women of World War II but sadly Sheila died shortly afterwards. We had a good Christmas lunch and are averaging around 10 – 12 members at meetings but varying health problems are making attendance more irregular. Welcome to 2 new members: Jean Robinson WRAF and Betty Deller WAAF. We welcome too our new Area Chairman Maj Dot Ryder and wish Col Cook a very well earned retirement. Already we are anticipating our Summer Outing to the local seaside and the N E Area Reunion in September.

Best wishes to all our members everywhere.

LEEDS BRANCH

Our year so far has been dominated by the deaths of four very loyal members including our Chairman, May Conley. Our first meeting in February opened with silence to remember May Walker who had died in January. Eight members attended her cremation in bitter weather and a donation was sent to the Benevolent Fund in her memory.

Christmas Lunch was declared the usual success and further dates have been booked. Now that we have free journeys on the buses it was decided that we have a day out in the countryside in the summer.

In March we had further sadness at the death of Trudy Jamieson. Five members attended the Church in Morley after which Rosa Blewitt kindly gave us a much appreciated afternoon tea. We sent our usual donation to the Benevolent Fund. The gift of flowers to Secretaries in recognition of the work they do was voted a wonderful idea. Thank you to whoever had the idea.

In April we were truly saddened when our Branch Founder, May Conley, lost her very brave fight against cancer. May had been the mainstay of the Branch for almost 40 years so it will be some time before we recover from her loss. Miss Emily Newbould was unanimously elected as our new Chairman- a well deserved honour.

In June, the death of another member dampened our spirits. Elsie Hardy had come to us from Leicester, had

integrated very quickly and helped to boost Branch Funds by taking over the Sales Table. Our new Chairman attended the Church Service and a collection was taken for the Benevolent Fund.

In spite of all this sadness we have managed to take part in the usual WRAC activities. Four members attended the Grand Reunion in Coventry. Thank you helpers for making it so enjoyable. Two members joined other AA and S/L Ladies for a holiday on the Isle of Wight. The weather could have been kinder but the trip round the island was very good.

Four members attended the Royal British Legion Women's Section Conference in Blackpool. On a beautiful summer's day, 12 members enjoyed a wonderful lunch at the Catering College. Four members took part in the RA Association General Assembly in Blackpool where we celebrated the award to Vee Robinson of a Certificate of Commendation for her work with former members of the ATS who served in AA Command during WW II. We enjoyed our usual Tram Rides.

10 members were eligible for the silver 25 Years Service Badge. These were presented by the Chairman. Our Chairman will represent the Branch at Veterans Day in London in June.

We hope to have an outing and lunch in some of the beautiful Yorkshire countryside in August. Two members and friends will join an expedition to Arnhem and The Rhine Crossing in September. Twelve members will hopefully be at Northern Area Lunch in Harrogate. Even though we are all over 80 it still comes as a shock to lose so many loyal members in such a short period. We are just hoping for better times to come.

LEICESTER & NOTTINGHAM BRANCH

The year is rapidly moving on and our Christmas meal and January theatre visit now enjoyable memories. Into February for a talk about Tea and then in March we held our annual Bring and Buy. This meeting was held at another venue to see where we wanted to move. However the outcome was that members decided that they would prefer to stay where we have been meeting for several years.

Then at the end of March the main event we had been waiting for – The Grand Reunion. Twenty two members out of the original 30 were able to attend courtesy of the Lottery 'Awards For All' and what an enjoyable weekend it was. The accommodation was excellent, the food good, varied and plentiful and the help from the WRAC team and the kindness shown by the University staff and the young student helpers couldn't be faulted. A fire alarm interrupted our meal on Friday evening and we all had to leave the building for a while but this didn't spoil the enjoyment of the evening.

Editor: see the back cover for the large photograph of Leicester & Nottingham Branch at the Grand Reunion Gala Dinner.

In April we had a talk and demonstration, in which we

could join, of 'Yoga for the not so Young'. Hopefully we will continue with the exercises to keep us supple and in May we had a fun afternoon with a Beetle Drive.

We had no meeting planned for June but the Lottery people gave up on us so we had the money remaining from the Grand Reunion cancellations. We booked a coach to take us to London having applied for tickets for the Founders Day at Chelsea Hospital. The day dawned bright and sunny and 33 members set off for London. There were many hold ups on the M1 but our driver Martin managed to get us to Chelsea in time for us to take our seats at 10.30 am. To see all the Chelsea Pensioners in their red uniforms is a wonderful sight so smart and upright and to show that they are in the 21st century a number who weren't so mobile were seated on scooters. The Guards band played before the ceremony began and during the inspection, after which the pensioners marched by Lady Mackenzie acting as the Reviewing Officer together with her husband the Governor, General Sir Jeremy Mackenzie GCB OBE.

After the end of the parade our members made their way into the National Army Museum next door for some light refreshment and a look around the museum and then it was back onto the coach for the short trip to Westminster Pier where we boarded the boat for Greenwich. A short time was spent there and then we had a very nice tea on the boat while it took us back to Westminster Pier. Our coach was waiting for us for the journey back to Leicester, thankfully this time with no hold-ups!

We continue to support other Associations attending some of their functions and have attended this month a special dedication of a stone set in a specially planted group of trees in memory of Normandy Veterans; those who died and those surviving. This is a village named Packington in Leicestershire.

On a sad note, we have lost another member, Vere Hyde, who hadn't been very well but managed to get to the Grand Reunion. She had a fall and was taken into hospital but eventually died. We shall miss her. Also several members are suffering either illness or have had falls including our Chairman Doris White. We wish them all a good recovery and look forward to seeing them at meetings before too long.

Our AGM is October 10 and may I remind Annual members subscriptions are due 1st October.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH

Three of our members attended the Grand Reunion at Warwick University which was most enjoyable, not to mention an adventure when we had to leave that big dining room. We were happily listening to the band of the AGC, playing the songs of yesteryear, and laughing about the strange noise flooding the room, thinking it was meant to be a wartime air-raid siren - and then discovered it was a fire alarm!

The Liverpool gang are still meeting monthly and are glad to welcome back members who have been absent

through illness. We recently had a visit from one of the visitors from the Department of Works and Pensions. It was very informative about which benefits were there for claiming and stressing that there are so many available but not claimed.

In the meanwhile, we are pleased to meet up monthly and keep up our friendship and support for each other.

LONDON BRANCH

We welcomed the New Year with a glass of wine and a few nibbles at our January meeting. It was also our Chairman's birthday which added to the celebration.

In February, we had a very enjoyable talk from Mr Keith Galley about Paul Robeson with recordings of his voice giving interviews and singing. In March we had to cancel our advertised talk 'Knickers & Things' which sounded promising. But Jean Taylor came up trumps and brought along two very nice Chelsea pensioners who gave us an insight on their day to day life. They very kindly donated two tickets for their Founder's Day on 8 June which we raffled and the winners had a great time.



Jean Taylor enjoys her Birthday at the Grand Reunion. Jean thanks all those who arranged the surprise

Our April meeting had to be cancelled but in May we were back with our Bring & Buy which went very well.



Iris Patterson, Dorothy Foster (Chairman until 2005 when she moved to Leics & Notts Branch), Stella Keough and Mary Santer

But there is, I am sure, no doubt whatsoever that the greatest event has been the Grand Reunion. We were well represented as a Branch. I did not go myself but eagerly asked for reaction. 'It was fantastic'. 'the music', 'the food', 'you should have been there'. Not one but...not one PDF Compressor Free Version were all too busy enjoying themselves. I must wait for the *Lioness* to tell me the full story. I bet they will still be talking about it at the AGM in the Victory Services Club in April 2007. And I will kick myself for ever more for not going. That's life.

LUTON BRANCH

We started 2006 on a high after our successful reunion in September. This continued with a very good anniversary lunch at the Thistle once again in January. February's meeting saw us defeating the Association of Wrens (again!) in our annual quiz tournament. It was only by two points but very satisfying nonetheless.

In March we had a talk about "Tax for Recycled Teenagers" which was interesting and informative. April was a general meeting with a quiz (must do our homework) and in May, Rebekah Hillman of National Legal Services gave us some good general advice about wills, release of equity on property, etc. Several of us went to the Grand Reunion and we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. Our June meeting consisted of a talk by Dr Elizabeth Adey, from Luton Museum, about "Luton at War": again very interesting.

Forthcoming events include a local lady who runs a hedgehog rescue and is bringing some of her inpatients to meet us and our second annual quiz game versus the Far East Veterans Association.

So far as is possible, we try to get speakers for free – being a small branch. Eleri Pirie, our Treasurer, has instigated a quarterly newsletter. This has been greatly welcomed and has helped to establish contact with several members who are unable to get to meetings because of age or distance.

MARCHES & MID WALES BRANCH

In the last Newsletter I was telling you how difficult it was to keep the Wrexham Branch running and we were just about down to single figures with no one wanting to take on any Branch duties. After much deliberation with the Area Chairman and the Area Secretary, and not wanting to lose a branch completely, the Association HQ in Worthy Down was contacted. They sent us a list of all members with the local postcode. Everyone received a letter, including the Wrexham Branch ladies. Slowly the replies came in and it became clear that there were more members slightly further south along the Welsh border.

We found a venue in Newtown which has good road and rail connections and held an informal meeting. This was well supported and it was agreed that we should continue the branch, rename it and move the meeting place to the new venue. Marches and Mid Wales branch was duly formed. To clarify where the Marches is, it's the English

border counties of Herefordshire and Shropshire with Wales. We also found that quite a number of the members were still in fulltime employment which precluded them from weekday afternoon meetings and was the main reason they had not become involved before. Our first meeting was duly arranged for the first Saturday in March when the weather was expected to be a bit better! However, it was freezing and it snowed quite heavily on the Friday which meant that a couple of members were unable to make the meeting. Nonetheless, a successful inaugural meeting was held, officers were appointed and 22 members signed up. Summer events have been arranged which I hope to be able to tell you about in the next *Lioness*.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

As *Lioness* 1/2006 was being delivered to us, we had the very sad news of the passing on 6 March of our much respected Secretary, Evelyn O'Neill. She was extremely devoted to the Association and to our Branch. She had been ill for some months and had come only occasionally to meetings in the past year. She is much missed by all members. However, in all these inevitably sad happenings we still get at least 20 members every 3rd Thursday of each month to meetings at the Companions Club Newcastle. Although we hear of branches closing, we are determined that ours will go on for as long as possible. I have been Chairman for more than 15 years and am presently Chairman/Secretary with a great Treasurer, Molly. So with others who are willing helpers on the day we shall cope!

Kath Smith who was mentioned in Evelyn's last report as having been to Edinburgh courtesy of the Not Forgotten Association, raised £135 to sponsor Rosie Thompson in the London Marathon. The money was raised from her family and friends, from a collection at our last meeting and from the male members of the Companions Club. *Editor: Rosie Thompson is the Events Organiser of the Not Forgotten Association and always invites the WRAC Association to their events.*

Our small contingent who went to the Grand Reunion enjoyed themselves. There were problems with train tickets and timings etc which were overcome. Friday to Sunday appears to be rather an awkward time to travel by rail. We must try to avoid this in future!

By the time we have the next issue we shall hopefully have had some sunny weather as we hope to have an interesting branch outing and two of us are going to the ATS Dinner Club Lunch in London. The North East Reunion will be underway in September also! This has always been so ably taken care of over the years by Col Cook and Gwyn Friday. Our grateful thanks for all their past efforts!

Best wishes to all members and friends everywhere.

NORFOLK BRANCH

It is splendid that we are still recruiting new members, mainly by word-of-mouth which does mean that the

newcomer already knows someone at the meetings to help them mix with us old-stagers and they very quickly become integrated. We are always interested to hear details of their own service life and compare notes.

One of our members, Mrs Elsie Plummer has written a book on her own ATS activities – which included, while she was with 31 AFV (Tanks) at Bristol – ferrying tanks across the Channel before D-Day. Her book is called "Sergeant" and she would be very happy to supply copies. Her address is 44 Windmill Court, William Booth Road, King's Lynn PE36 4XP.

Another of our members, Mrs Maisie Harradine, visiting her daughter in Canada had been asked to speak to a local school about her experiences of "Wartime in England". Unknown to Maisie the girls had taped her story, printed it and sent her a copy which she read to us at a meeting, to our pleasure.

At another meeting an historian gave a graphic account of 'off-the-record' details about the WW I Battle of the Somme. Several members had fathers, uncles, involved in that terrible time and he answered many questions from them.



*Norfolk and Suffolk re-unite at the Grand Reunion.
Linda Graver, Chairman, Norfolk Branch and Liz Ives,
Secretary, Suffolk Branch*



*Linda Graver, Joan Whittingham, Irene Warren,
Val Kemball, Joan Awbery, Helen Green, Mage Freeman,
Marjorie Spears and Audrey Juby*

Of course the Grand Reunion was enjoyed to the limit by the members who attended and voted it the "best ever". Others were fortunate to have places at the rehearsal for Founder's Day at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea where we had our own captive Chelsea Pensioner – a gentleman from Cromer who had only been there two months. He was delighted to see an old friend among us – Audrey Todd also from Cromer – and to hear that Norfolk accent again from us all. We rallied sufficiently from that to, four very hot days later, attend the Colonel's Review of Trooping the Colour on Horse Guards, where we were very impressed by the ceremonial.



*Norfolk branch with their own Chelsea Pensioner – and
Charles II!*

Our next outing is to Sheringham and Cromer to have lunch with those of our members living in the area who cannot get into Norwich for meetings and whom we have never met.

When we held our usual ceremony on May 11th at the commemorative Plaque in Yarmouth we were very pleased to find that the Wolverhampton Branch had at sometime visited and placed flowers there in memory of the girls. Also, Grimsby Branch has recently placed a wreath. Many thanks to both these branches.

We send greetings to all Branches and hope that the summer has been a memorable one for them and send our thanks to all the staff at Headquarters who have given us the opportunity to enjoy so many of the year's activities. We look forward to the next!

PLYMOUTH BRANCH

Earlier this year we were saddened by the death of our oldest attending member, Mrs Jessie Johns. A grand old

lady sorely missed. We miss, too, the distant presence of our Area chairman, Margaret Cranmer, who has had to resign due to ill health. In her place, we welcome Maj Maskens-McIntyre who chairs Southern Area with whom we have been amalgamated.

PDF Compressor Free Version

We all seem to have recovered from last year's hectic programme for the 60th anniversary of VE/VJ celebrations. We had a trip to Badger's Holt in September, using 4 cars, a glorious spot on Dartmoor and the food and weather were gorgeous. Our Treasurer, Mary Davis, attended the service in Westminster Abbey on Remembrance Sunday with Marion and Debbie, formerly of Plymouth but living in Felixstowe now. In previous years Mary has marched to the Cenotaph, always looking superbly smart in uniform but she decided in 2005 that prudence was the better part of valour when contemplating the long march in possibly dubious weather. Well done, Mary for your many years of attendance and congratulations to you and Eileen Morgan for being presented with a Certificate of Appreciation at the AGM of the Grand Reunion in Coventry.

The local Festival of Remembrance at the Pavilions was well attended and the evening concert of entertainment from the Royal Marines, the Plymouth Pipes and Drums and St Boniface Boys School Choir followed by a short service of remembrance was a great success. Our Christmas luncheon at St Aubyn's Masonic Hall, Stoke, was, as usual, excellent and our raffle was very popular. We were very pleased that our oldest attending member,



Ruth Jennings, Eileen Morgan, Mary Davis



Jennie Stimpson, Margaret Smith, Betty Freak, Evon Roberts

Jessie Johns, was able to come, despite being quite ill. Maureen, her daughter, brought her, cheerily sitting in her wheelchair. She had been determined that she would attend and she had a lovely time. Sadly, that was our last date with her as she died in January. Ten of us attended her funeral and her family made us very welcome at the reception held at the Royal Fleet Club. They also donated very generously towards the Benevolent Fund and to our own funds too so that we can have a bit of a knees up in Jessie's memory in the summer. We plan to go to Truro in September to see some of our members in Cornwall.

We had a lovely time at the Grand Reunion. We went to Coventry by coach, door to door. We didn't put our trust in 'letting the train take the strain' though we hear that they were actually running well! Thank you all and also many thanks to our kind benefactor who enabled the committee to give us a very generous subsidy on the whole package. As a bonus our Chairman, Jennie, was able to see her son, Peter, and his family who live near the campus.

We welcome 4 new members; Mrs Margaret Bennetts, ex-ATS; Ms Maureen McLean, ex-WRAC, Miss Gill Meager, ex-WRAC and Mrs Edna Shone, ex-ATS. Happily, Margaret is able to see us regularly but Edna lives too far away to come to meetings and Maureen and Gill are working girls and will come to meetings when possible.

Our honorary member, Cpl Kelly Newbound has received a Commendation for the excellent job she did while serving in Iraq recently, procuring vital supplies from depots around the world to keep the army's fleet of anti-smuggling patrol boats in operational order. We are very proud of her and the following was taken from a local newspaper:

HEROICS EARN KELLY AN HONOUR

Award for
soldier who
braved snipers



Kelly Newbound is a Corporal in the Royal Logistics Corps and recently has been serving in Iraq with 26 Engineer Regt as supply controller. She was responsible for making sure that the Army's fleet of patrol boats was fully equipped and ready for patrol duties in order to combat the smuggling of oil, fuel and weapons. Kelly was in charge of the whole boat account which is usually a job for 2 ranks higher. Daily, Kelly and her fellow soldiers faced snipers and the risk of car bombs.

Kelly lives in Plymstock, a neighbour of Mary, our Treasurer, and Kelly comes to our meetings when she can spare the time when on leave. She has told us all

about service in Kosovo, Croatia, Bosnia, Canada, Austria as well as Iraq. Kelly plays Hockey for the National Army Team as a goal keeper and enjoys many other sports.

We have been invited to Bristol for the Southern and South West Area reunion in July. Our members are looking forward to meeting old and new friends.

Contact telephone numbers are:

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

ROCHDALE BRANCH

We still have a thriving branch even if some of the members are no longer able to get to meetings. Three members made it to the Grand Reunion and had a super time!

The bombing tragedy in London last July meant that only one member attended the unveiling of the Memorial to the Women of World War II. However, she had a marvellous time. The Royal Artillery Association reunion in Blackpool was enjoyed by two of our "Lady Gunners" and more of us hope to go next year.

On 30 May, ten members and friends travelled to London in a mini-coach primarily to see the Memorial to the Women of World War II. Also, we had been invited to the Houses of Parliament by the MP for Rochdale, Mr Paul Rowan, so we decided to combine the two. Parliament was not sitting so our guide was able to take us into the House of Lords as well as the House of Commons – a real treat.



*On the Terrace of the Palace of Westminster
L-R: D Huntbach, L Landers, M Whitham, E Finnegan,
Mavis, S Lewis, E Brooks (hidden), J Goddard,
M Schofield (seated). Paul Rowan MP at rear.*

After a delicious lunch, Paul took us to Whitehall and we were quite awe-struck by the first sight of the Memorial. However, we struggled to take photographs because the trees on the near side were casting such a heavy shadow.

I regret to say that we have recently lost two of our members. Margaret Bottley was in her nineties when she died in May and was a Life Member. She reached Sgt in

the ATS. Also a Sgt was Miss Marjorie Reynolds who died in June and was an Annual member.

SALISBURY BRANCH

Another half year report from a very happy Branch!! We enjoyed the Christmas Lunch at the Royal British Legion and also the Bring and Buy which became an Auction in January.

The February meeting was "Call My Bluff" when Sue and Larry Skeats and David Harris brought a number of old implements with them and they each gave a different definition of the object and what it was used for. We had to guess who was telling the truth! Thirza Sillick and Veronica Dodkins won a most enjoyable quiz.



Jill Trainor, Alyson Ogden, with Sue & Larry Skeats and David Harris

In March, our visitor was the 745th Mayor of the City of New Sarum, Patrick Paisey. Being an ex-RAF man he was delighted to be at our meeting. He brought his robes with him and duly made Suzanne Gordon a Lady Mayoress for the morning!! We learnt a lot about the history of the city and the traditions still carried on today.



New "Lady Mayoress" Suzanne Gordon with Patrick Paisey

Our next event was a visit to "Milestones", Hampshire's Living History Museum at Basingstoke. A most interesting day. Two of our members attended the Grand Reunion in Coventry and according to Jill Trainor it was the best ever!!

For our May meeting we had lunch at a Chinese Restaurant in Salisbury. A 'first' for our branch but a good time was had by all. Let us hope for a good summer with better weather for our garden party this year.

We were all sad to see the **PDF Compressor Free Version** members, Barbara Taunton towards the end of last year. Barbara had been President for many years and will be greatly missed.

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

Greetings to all our friends and association members everywhere.

We start our report on a sad note this time. Since last December, 4 of our members have passed away, Isobel Scot Mills, Irene Beecham, Chris Grigg and Joan Purcell. Chris and Joan were two of the founder members of our branch and stalwart workers for years. We do miss them all.

We had our Christmas Party in December with Graham Jones providing music on the organ. Because we don't send Christmas cards to each other, we sent a donation of £25 to "The Severn Hospice" instead.

In February we attended 'The Royal Army Service Corps Association's Church Service in Shrewsbury for the "laying up" of their old Standard. Afterwards we enjoyed a very appetizing buffet at the Perkins Club and recruited a new member to our Branch at the same time.



l-r: Nancy, Hilda, Joan, Beryl

Thanks to 'Awards For All', we had another very pleasant day out in March. We went by coach to London, to see the 'Memorial to all Women of WW II'. After lunch together, we went our separate ways to see the sights of London including the London Eye.

We had mixed feelings about the Memorial. I would be interested to know which people are represented by each item of uniform/clothing depicted on the Memorial.

Still in March, we invited members of the local REME Association branch to an evening out at Horsehay Golf Centre. We had a buffet, horse racing and entertainment by "Jeans Girls" who were dressed in RAF 40's style

uniform. They performed sketches and sang WW II songs. We all enjoyed a very happy evening. Our Attic Sale in April raised £20.

What can we say about the "Grand Reunion"? It was fantastic, everything, and everyone there, made it a memorable, exceptional, and sometimes quite moving occasion. We knew we were on to a winner when we had a date with "Jack Martin" every night! (The name of our accommodation block).



Shropshire Branch at the Wales and West Reunion

In May, we had a coach outing to "The March Hare" in Worcs - no, we weren't mad - the Carvery Lunch was good and the journey through the Cotswolds was very scenic. We called at a very large Garden Centre on the way back where you could obtain anything, even black onion marmalade!

Also in May, we braved the elements, donned our fluorescent jackets, and became 'marshals' for a day to help pupils from 'Orleton Park School' to do their final "Run up the Wrekin", (our lovely local hill). It was a bit like being on manoeuvres in a very strong wind. The Hog Roast after was very tasty. All in aid of Charity - 'Hope House'.

Some of our members will be going to the Victory Services Club, for the ATS Dinner Club Lunch in June.

We are very pleased to welcome 2 new members to our branch. They are; Mrs Hilda Clements née Letch from Shrewsbury, (recruited at the RASC Church Service). Hilda was in ATS Provost, with 21st Army Group, France, Belgium and Germany during WW II. Also we welcome young(!) Miss Sandra Davies, ex-WRAC from Dawley. Sandra was in 68 Sqn, Rheindahlen, Germany.

We wish everyone a happy and healthy future. If you are in our area, do call and see us. We meet on the 1st Wednesday of each month at Haywood/Lonsdale Court, Community Room, Glebe Street, Wellington, between 2 and 4 pm.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

Hello to all our friends far and wide. January started off with a Bring and Buy sale which was very busy and noisy but good fun. In February we decided a trip down

memory lane might be interesting and members gave a five minute chat on some of their wartime exploits. Some were funny and all were very entertaining, even if poor Vera Welam had to celebrate the end of the war by drinking her champagne out of a jam jar! The evening was so popular we had to have a 15 minute break at the March meeting as there were so many who wanted to take part.



Lynn Jenkins, Secretary, Jean Doe, Chairman and Margaret Woodhead, Treasurer at the Victory celebrations

We are thinking of changing our branch name to the Hip/Knee Op Branch as we have had so many of them lately. Jean Doe our illustrious Chairwoman and Florrie Groves both had Hip replacements on the same day. Audrey Boyce had hers done a few weeks earlier with Pauline Keane chipping in with a knee op just after them. All of them are almost fully recovered now and we expect them all to run a marathon in the near future.

April was our Annual Dinner and our guests were Col and Mrs Brown, Regimental Colonel of the AGC, Maj Jane Freebairn and Maj Mack. The General Secretary presented Certificates of Appreciation to some of our members, so guests do come in handy don't they! *Editor: A very pleasurable duty to perform!* Hazel Hutchins, Audrey Boyce, Peggy Sorley and Gail Langton were the recipients of the certificates and well deserved too. They work in the background getting on with things, so it's nice to give some recognition to these generally unsung heroes. The evening was a fantastic success and everyone had a great time. I wasn't even on a charge for spilling Jane's glass of wine in the excitement of winning the raffle prize. On 19 April we visited the Royal Hospital at Chelsea and combined that with a look in on the National Army Museum next door. It was a most memorable day with a full coach thanks to a co-ordinated venture with Beryl Allinson who is also a member of the Southampton branch of The Royal Signals Association. The memories of the visit to the National Army Museum and the conducted tour of the Royal Hospital by Paddy Fox (an old friend of John's (him indoors)) is something which will stay with us for quite some time. If you haven't yet thought of a visit I can definitely say that it is worth the effort of making the time to go there and girls they are starting to let ladies live in the Royal Hospital once they have enough applicants. Just think of it -12 ladies amongst all those Chelsea Pensioners.

In May, Joan Holloway's 63rd Wedding Anniversary coincided with the actual evening of our meeting. Peggy Sorley's 80th Birthday was later in the month, but we celebrated both occasions at the meeting. Everyone brought a plate of nibbles and Gail had baked a beautiful celebration cake.

At our June meeting we had Pat Cally from the Veterans Agency to give us a talk on the work they carry out. It was very informative and it's good to know who to get in touch with if anyone needs help or advice.



Margaret Barham carrying Southampton Branch Standard at Weymouth Veterans Day

During July we are sending a mini bus full of our finest to attend the Southern Area Reunion. We are also organising a trip to Portsmouth for those who feel like braving the area's latest attraction 'The Spinnaker Tower'. We are playing the deciding match of skittles against the Royal Signals in August and we have a visit in September from the local Fire Rescue Service. Some of our ladies are quite looking forward to that wondering how many young firemen are coming to visit.

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of one of our founding Branch members, Sadie Nias on the 12th June. Sadie was a great contributor all the way through her time at the Branch and was very proud of the Certificate of Appreciation that she received for her past services to the branch. She will be sorely missed.

More of the Southampton Branch adventures in the next edition. Look after yourselves and each other. All the best,

STAFFORD BRANCH

Our meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month and we continue to alternate our meetings between a social outing one month and a more formal meeting the next. A diary of our monthly activities can be found on the Association website. Sadly we have recently lost two of our members, Mrs Doris Mee and Miss Marion Henshall. Doris served in the ATS as a clerk during 1942-1945 her maiden name was Talbot. Marion served in the WRAC as a waitress during 1950-1952. They will be sadly missed.

The Stafford Branch was started in April 1965 – 41 years ago. Many of the original ladies are still members of the branch and in recognition of their contribution to the branch/association the committee decided to present each of the following members with a long service badge.

PDF Compressor Free Version

Gold Badge 40+ years	Daphne Jervis Linda Ball	Grace Hutchinson Dulcie Lewis	Muriel Lakin Win Plant
Silver Badge 25+ years	Gwen Bardell Kath McCabe Mary Wilkinson	Phyllis Beardsmore Edie Rayner Pearl York	Vera Faulkner Betty Wilshaw

I don't have a current photograph of all of our members but I thought you might like to know a little about our ATS ladies – army style. Many of these ladies helped to establish the Stafford Branch way back in 1965. All have supported the branch, and the Association, throughout the last 41 years. Please note that the combined ages of these 35 wonderful ladies is a staggering 2,829 years. Can your branch beat that?

Army No.	Rank	Maiden Name	Trade	Service	Present Name
P/409317	Capt	Gwen Stead	Adjutant	1938-1962	Mrs Bardell
W/38529	Cpl	Kathleen Keye	Clerk	1940-1945	Mrs Brookman
W/65437	Pte	Pearl Hughes	?	1941-1946	Mrs York
W/68877	Sgt	Glendes Getrych	Radar OFC	1941-1945	Mrs Lorenz
W/82119	Cpl	Joan Shaw/Cornish	Clerk/PTI	1941-1946	Mrs Higgins
W/88466	Pte	Monica Byrne	Predictor	1941-1946	Mrs Baker
W/90270	LCpl	Phyllis Pearce	Predictor	1941-1945	Mrs Beardsmore
W/90270	Sgt	Mary Finch	GL Radar	1941-1946	Mrs Wilkinson
W/93290	Cpl	Betty Tyson	Plotter RA	1941-1945	Mrs Wilshaw
W/111161	Sgt	Nora Hunkford	Radar Ack Ack	1941-1945	Mrs Evans
W/112675	WOII	Kathleen Keeney	Plotting Officer	1941-1952	Mrs McCabe
W/119345	Pte	Edie Mayne	Cook	1942-1945	Mrs Rayner
W/140026	Pte	Joan Sullivan	Predictor	1942-1945	Mrs Poole
W/149424	Pte	Doris Talbot	Clerk	1942-1945	Mrs Mee
W/198333	Sgt	Ada Eccles	Bright Finder/ Ploter	1942-1945	Mrs Sturland
W/200940	Cpl	Sybil Bray	Cipher Operator	1942-1946	Mrs Hambrow
W/209990	Cpl	Doris Elkin	Shorthand Typist	1942-1945	Mrs Sillito
W/201583	LCpl	Marjorie Watson	Ration Clerk	1942-1947	Mrs Powell
W/222564	Sgt	Joan Bilton	Radar	1942-1946	Mrs Dutton
W/223238	Cpl	Margaret Moon	Typist	1942-1946	Mrs Acaster
W/225202	Sgt	Winifred Kennedy	Scorewoman	1942-1946	Mrs Plant
W/227019	Pte	Dulcie Brandon	Radar Op/Diner	1942-1946	Mrs Lewis
W/236255	Cpl	Marjorie Brookes	Records Clerk	1942-1945	Mrs Seaton
W/239622	Pte	Rhoda Doonan	OFC	1943-1946	Mrs Taylor
W/236864	Pte	Vera Pegden	Batwoman/ Ration Stores	1942-1945	Mrs Faulkner
W/244646	Pte	Linda Chichester	RAOC/Driver	1942-1945	Mrs Ball
W/249628	Sgt	Daphne Prior	Wireless Op	1943-1967	Mrs Jervis TD
P/400315	Maj	Daphne Jervis TD	TA	1943-1967	
W/293598	Pte	Nancy Milward	Clerk	1944-1945	Mrs Rattier
W/301188	Cpl	Muriel Parker	RAOC Clerk	1944-1947	Mrs Lakin
W/307627	Pte	Margaret Newlands	Clerk	1944-1947	Mrs Molloy
W/319972	LCpl	Dorothy Kilian	PTI/Clerk	1944-1947	Mrs Newton
W/350463	Pte	Grace Exley	Clerk GD	1948-1950	Mrs Hutchinson
W/352530	Pte	Jean Thursby	Offs Mess Waitress	1948-1950	Mrs Bird
W/353475	LCpl	Elsie Ballard	Telephonist	1948-1951	Mrs Howard

Editor: I was sent this list last year but could not fit it into the last Lioness. I apologise if there are still ladies named above who sadly are no longer with us. However, I thought that I would leave the list intact and set it as a challenge to other Branches!

On behalf of the Stafford branch I would like to say what a GRAND Grand Reunion it was. Despite the fire alarm and the mass evacuation we had a really great time as you can see as we posed for the camera. The location – the car park.

On 27 April 2006 we celebrated our 41st anniversary with a 3-course lunch at the local college. (We always seem to be eating, it must be the weather.) With us was Rossita, the daughter of Doris Mee who often brought Doris to the Christmas or anniversary lunch and has become a

friend to us all. You can see from the photograph how much we enjoyed the lunch.



*Back: Marjorie Powell and Muriel Lakin
Front: Joan Higgins, Dotty Hayden, Ann Deakin and Edith Seabrook*



From l-r: Muriel Lakin, Joan Poole, Vera Faulkner, Ann Deakin, Betty Wilshaw, Ada Sturland, Joan Higgins, Marjorie Powell, Glen Lorenz, Rossita, Grace Hutchinson and Elsie Howard

ULSTER BRANCH

The Ulster Branch held its AGM in Lisburn Royal British Legion building in September following a most enjoyable lunch in Pizarelli's Restaurant. However, the occasion was tinged with sadness as Bell Hannon, a dearly loved member, had recently passed away. During the meeting, the committee were re-elected, but we had 2 new appointments – Mrs Rae Halley was elected as Hon Treasurer and Mrs Jean Hopper as Hon Secretary. The members thanked the outgoing Treasurer and Secretary for their dedicated work during previous years.

On Remembrance Day, Mrs Dorothy Wraight, the Assistant Secretary laid the branch wreath on the War Memorial. Dorothy's work behind the scenes is also always greatly appreciated.

As numbers dwindle, it was decided to find a new, less expensive venue for the February Reunion Lunch. We finally decided on Beechlawn House Hotel in Dunmurry and the meal was absolutely wonderful. Diets were soon forgotten, particularly when the tempting desserts were produced. The hotel staff was able to facilitate our little 'Bring and Buy sale' prior to the meal and the members

were unanimous that Beechlawn should be the venue for future reunion lunches.

With regard to our summer outing in May, we again decided to opt for a less expensive coach company and we were very **PDF Compressor Free Version** pleased. We saved over £100 by simply 'shopping around'. Our outing was to the breathtaking Kingdom of Mourne, one of the most picturesque areas in our beautiful country. Our first stop was in Newcastle where we had coffee, then on round the coast to Kilkeel where we had a sumptuous lunch in the Kilmorey Arms Hotel. As we had some time on hand, we travelled to the Quays Shopping Centre in Newry where we enjoyed some 'retail therapy'. The weather was kind to us and it certainly was a day to remember. There was simply a sea of smiling contented faces when boarding the bus for home.

For our AGM in September 2006 we are again planning a new and exciting venue and we also hope to discuss some entertainment prior to Christmas which would probably take the form of a meal and theatre show in Belfast. Although our numbers are low it would be really nice to have a 'get together' in the joyful festive season.

WILMSLOW BRANCH

The members of Wilmslow Branch send you greetings and good wishes. We continue to hold our meetings at the British Legion on the first Thursday of the month at one o'clock and welcome anyone who wishes to join us.

We are glad to welcome back Kath Owen after a long absence. She was taken ill last year while on holiday in Europe and has been very poorly but her husband has brought her to our last two meetings.

Four of us went to the Grand Reunion at Coventry and had a marvellous time, it was all wonderful. Saturday night especially was a night to remember. We must have surprised the young people when they saw these mature ladies having a jolly good time singing and dancing to tuneful music.

We travelled to Coventry by National Express and on the way called at Wolverhampton to allow some people to alight. While the driver was getting their luggage out, one of our members went in search of a loo. We thought the coach would be stopping there for a short time but the driver boarded the coach again and set off. We said one of our friends would be back in a few minutes but he would not wait. Now what was going to happen? Meanwhile our friend decided it would take too long to find the loo, made her way back to the coach to find it gone. However, being a well travelled lady, she didn't panic but went to the office, told the tale and said we were all on one ticket which she didn't have! She was soon on another coach which was calling at Birmingham where we were to change to the coach which would take us to Coventry. The National Express lady at Birmingham listened to our tale and was most kind and helpful. She found out what was happening, told us where to wait and before long we were reunited with our friend. All's well that ends well and we were soon on our way to Coventry and a very happy weekend.

July will see us at our 12th Birthday lunch back at our usual hotel. It had been decided to have our Christmas Lunch nearer home as transport had become somewhat of a problem. But we much prefer our original hotel so we will find some way of getting there – we weren't in the army all those years for nothing.

We are making plans to visit the National Memorial Arboretum in July for the unveiling of the ATS statue. The Wilmslow and District Lions Club have very kindly promised us the use of a coach with driver. While there we hope to visit other sites which are of interest to us such as the Ack Ack site and to meet up with our member who now lives in Wales.

How lovely it is to see photographs of wartime weddings and then later photographs of Golden and Diamond anniversaries. We wish all these couples much happiness.

Sadly, in January, we lost one of our faithful members, Ellen Trimble née Johnston. We miss her very much as she was a lovely lady, always saw the best in people, never complained although she had been through quite a few operations and was a truly Christian person. We all went to her funeral service and felt very sad indeed to say Goodbye to a true friend.

We send our good wishes to all our friends and especially to our friend in Australia.

WINCHESTER BRANCH

The first event of the year for the branch is our post Christmas meal in a local Chinese Restaurant. It is always well attended and we managed 15 members and our new Area Chairman Maj Maskens-MacIntyre. Parking was a bit fraught but everyone got there in the end – the long walk from the car park quite stimulating.

Because of the Grand Reunion, we decided not to have a meeting in March but a request to have a pub meal was taken up at the end of February. Unfortunately being a lunch time most members were unable to attend, also



Maggie Gardiner and Beth Todd

unfortunately Elaine who had requested the meal had to cancel at the last moment because of a problem at home. Still there were 10 of us at the meal 6 of whom were branch members.

The end of May saw a trip to Coventry. Having taken the trouble to get a mini bus organised it had to be cancelled because people decided to go by car. Luckily we were not charged for the cancellation and Beth kindly agreed to drive the 3 of us to Coventry. It was an eventful trip because we missed the exit and ended up on the outskirts of Birmingham – nothing to do with my map reading more of a junction that did not exist!! We all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and we even managed to recruit a new Branch member at the event.



Rowena Griffiths – Parade Comd runs out of space!

How can I finish without mentioning the illustrious *Lioness* Quiz Team? After several years of being very close, this year they actually won the Aldershot branch of the Royal Signals Association Annual Quiz. Well done to Sue Westlake, Jane Freebairn, Alison Schofield and Lynne Marsh.



WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND BRANCH

Sadly, we have lost two of our long-standing members during the past year: Barbara Collison who had recently moved home to Tarrant Keyneston and although unable

to attend meetings she kept in touch and joined us for our annual lunch and other social functions. She is sorrowfully missed by all. Doreen Kelly attended most meetings and functions and had been booked to go the Grand Reunion. She was a great traveller and accompanied her great friend, Doreen Swann. As they shared a Christian name they were known as "Kelly" and "Swannie". Kelly's infectious laughter will be sadly missed at our meetings.

Another of our long standing members, Jane Wicks, has moved away from our area and now lives in Warminster where she and her husband hope to settle for some time to come. He is in the Army.

However, we have welcomed Jan Duffil a new member of the Association and Nora Carr who transferred from Bolton in July 2005. Unfortunately, Nora had a bad fall and is unable to travel about at the moment, but hopes to join us at one of our meetings shortly.

Branch Treasurer, Edna Moore, told us about her days in the "93rd" on the searchlights "Lighting up the Sky". It always seemed to be cold when on duty and break times with a cup of tea were very much looked forward to. Edna attended the Ack Ack Reunion in July 2004 about which many of you will have read in a previous *Lioness*.

Mr John Townsend gave us a very interesting and informative talk entitled "Walking Sticks" (some of our ladies already use these). He explained that he walks the hedgerows and collects the branches after which he treats them with water and heat before straightening them out. He then adds the handle which can take the form of an animal or a plain crook. He brought with him a variety of sticks which the ladies tried out for size.

Councillor Brian Ellis talked to us about "The Meaning of Service", both military and civilian. He covered most aspects, including not only paid work, but volunteer work as well. It seems that our whole life is made up of "service" of one kind or another.

Joan Young told us about her exciting and enjoyable tour of duty in Aden. It was here that she met her husband, so she has fond memories of that time. Sylvia Prior brought along some more of her musical boxes to the amusement of all members. As usual, they provided a lot of fun especially the clowns.



Viewing the Goodies

WRAC SNCOs DINNER

PDF Compressor Free Version

It is intended that a WRAC ex-SNCOs' dinner be held in the WOs' and Sgts' Mess at Royal Marine Barracks, Chivenor, Barnstaple, North Devon on Saturday 28 October 2006 at 1930 hrs for 2000 hrs. Cost of the evening will be £35 which will include a four course meal as listed with a vegetarian option, port, disco and wine. There will be a limited amount of accommodation (if you are prepared to double up) in the Mess and there is the Barnstaple Hotel which is 4 miles away with leisure facilities, call them direct on 01271 376221.

Bookings and queries to Maria Power on 01237 477616. The earlier you make your intention to attend known the better, but the cut off date is Thursday 28 September 2006.

MENU

STARTER

*SEA FOOD TERRINE WITH LIME DRESSING
SERVED ON A BED OF MIXED LEAVES*

MAIN COURSE

*CHICKEN SUPREME FILLED WITH FRESH
HERB SEASONING SERVED WITH PORT
AND REDUCED RANT SAUCE*

MIXED ROOT VEGETABLES

*ROAST POTATOES
NEW POTATOES*

DESSERT

*PAVLOVA
SERVED WITH FRESH DOUBLE CREAM*

CHEESEBOARD

*STILTON BRIE AND MATURE CHEDDAR
CHEESE
SERVED WITH CHEESE BISCUITS*

COFFEE AND MINIS

To: Maria Power
The Hollies
Mines Road
Bideford
North Devon EX39 4BZ

WRAC SNCO DINNER RETURN

I would like to attend the WRAC SNCO Dinner on Saturday 28 October 2006 and enclose a cheque to the value of £35.00.

* I do/do not require a vegetarian meal.

Name

Address

.....

.....

.....

* I will/will not be travelling by car

My car details are:

Make and model

Colour

Registration No.

* I would like accommodation and am willing to share/
I will make my own accommodation arrangements

* Delete as appropriate

THE VETERANS AGENCY

PDF Compressor Free Version WHO IS A VETERAN?

The word 'Veteran' often conjures up a particular image – that of our older generation who served so magnificently in WWII. However, *anyone who served in HM Forces, regardless of when, how long for and whether in conflict or peacetime is by definition a veteran.* If you were in the navy, army or air force, even for one day, you are a veteran and as such can access a vast network of support and guidance.

HOW CAN THE VETERANS AGENCY HELP YOU?

Veterans Agency is the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for providing free information and advice on issues of concern to all veterans and their families. Whatever your enquiry, whether it be accessing service records, finding out about entitlement to a War Pension, health concerns or any other issue, the Veterans Agency is here to help. If we can't help on the spot, we are positioned at the heart of a wide network of support dedicated to helping ex-Servicemen and women and their families. By working in close partnership with ex-Service organisations, War Pensions Committees and other voluntary groups and statutory bodies we can point you in the right direction for sound practical assistance. To access the wealth of support on offer simply call the Veterans Agency Helpline on:

FREEPHONE: 0800 169 2277

Veterans Agency also administers the War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Schemes and manages a welfare service through a network of 25 regional offices.

War Pensions

You may be entitled to a pension or compensation payment. Call the Helpline now if you think you have a medical condition caused or made worse by your service in HM Armed Forces.

The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

Since 6 April 2005, the new Armed Forces Compensation Scheme provides a simple and quick means of compensating Service (and Ex-Service) personnel for illness or injury sustained as a result of their Service life.

A HOME VISIT

Wherever you live in the UK, one of our dedicated welfare managers can visit you in your home on request. They can provide face-to-face help on issues such as statutory benefits, health, training, employment and housing.

FIND US ON THE INTERNET

For further information on Veterans Agency, visit our website www.veteransagency.mod.uk

GIFT AID DONATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE WRAC ASSOCIATION

(Reg No 206184)

including

THE ATS AND WRAC BENEVOLENT FUND

Since 6 April 2000, Deeds of Covenant have been replaced by Gift Aid as means of giving to charity.

- If you are a UK Taxpayer, you can make a Gift Aid Declaration when you make a donation to charity. By making such a declaration, the receiving charity can reclaim any tax you have paid on your donation. This will give the Association or the Benevolent Fund an extra 28p for every £1 you donate.
- Gift Aid Declarations may be written or given orally over the telephone.
- If your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and/or capital gains at least equal in amount to the tax that the charity reclaims, you should cancel your declaration.
- You can cancel the declaration at any time simply by notifying us that you wish to do so. If an oral declaration is cancelled within 30 days from the date on which written confirmation is sent, it will be as if the oral declaration had never been made.
- If you are a high rate taxpayer, you can claim further tax relief in your Self-Assessment Tax Return.
- If you are unsure whether or not your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, please contact the Association HQ on 01962 887570 or ask your local tax office for leaflet IR 113 Gift Aid.
- Please notify the Association HQ of any change of address.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION REMINDERS

Are you an annual member? If so, your membership runs out at the end of September. If you belong to a geographical Branch, please give your subscription renewal to your Secretary or Treasurer in good time. If you belong to Headquarters Branch, send your subscription direct to: WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester SO21 2RG.

Cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association and arrive as soon as possible after 1 October.

It is very important that you renew your membership in good time. If you leave it too late, you will not receive your *Lioness* at the right time and it will cost more in money and time to update your membership records accordingly and to post out your *Lioness*.

PLEASE HELP US TO ENSURE YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS KEPT UP TO DATE

P.S. Why not become a Life Member and then you will not need to worry about renewing your subscription each year? A bargain at £50. You could ask your family and friends to club together and buy it for your Christmas or Birthday.

WANTED - LADIES

SSAFA FORCES HELP NEEDS YOU!

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association - Forces Help (SSAFA Forces Help) need you.

The Charity exists to serve anyone who is, or has been in the Armed Forces, Reserves and TA. They and their families can call on us for the rest of their lives. More than 14 million people in the UK today are eligible for our help, good advice and friendship.

More than 80,000 call on us each year and a much greater demand is anticipated in the future. Our army of 7,500 volunteers cover every village, town and city.

If you like being part of a very important team, please volunteer. Training is given and all out-of-pocket expenses are paid. You tell us how much time you can spare.

Your help could provide many of your comrades with a much better quality of life. The work is immensely rewarding.

Please contact: Ann Needle
Branch Recruitment Officer
19 Queen Elizabeth Street
LONDON SE1 2LP
Telephone: 020 7463 9223

HAVE YOU MOVED RECENTLY OR ARE YOU ABOUT TO MOVE?

PLEASE let us have your new address as soon as you can and help us to reduce the number of *Lioness* magazines which are returned undelivered.

Mrs/Miss..... Initials

Surname

FIRST LINE AND POST CODE OF OLD ADDRESS

.....
.....

NEW ADDRESS

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Post code

Tel. No.

E-mail

Send to: WRAC Association, AGC Centre,
Worthy Down, WINCHESTER SO21 2RG.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

PDF Compressor Free Version

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 31 October

Date: Signature:

All cheques must be in **sterling** and made payable to "**The WRAC Association**"

Subscriptions include *Lioness*

Overseas members are asked to contribute an extra £3.50 a year to cover postage of *Lioness*

Please complete this form in **BLOCK LETTERS**

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: E-mail: Telephone No:

Units during service:

Date of Enrolment: Date of Release:

Decorations:

We had our Christmas Party at which members brought along food and presents. Our photograph shows Peg McElwaine, Diane Lawrence, Necia Trent and Edna Moore viewing the goodies before the feast. A glass of wine was on hand to wash down the food, with coffee and soft drinks also available. The Comm. Team provided the raffle prizes at this function and all members received at least one item to add to their Christmas Stocking.

Our Secretary has been kept busy since her return from working away. Firstly, we applied for a Lottery Grant to take ten of our members to the Grand Reunion. A lot of palaver, but worth it in the end as we were granted monies for the accommodation and the transport to and from Weymouth.

Our Annual Lunch was held at the same venue, The Crown Hotel in Weymouth, and as usual we were well looked after. All members enjoyed the food and the company and it was good to see some members who find it difficult to attend normal Branch meetings but were able to travel into town on the occasion.

Esther Pring had organised a successful Coffee Morning in aid of Branch funds for members and their friends for the last few years and this year was no exception. She was able to raise £107 for Branch funds. Well done Esther.

It was decided that we would like to present a WRAC Association plaque to Weymouth Council. Unfortunately our search for a bespoke plaque proved unsuccessful, so



Diane Lawrence is not the only one showing off a trim ankle!



Weymouth Branch on Parade

we had one made up with a blazer badge and a brass plate showing the Association's name. This was presented to the Mayor and his Lady and several of our members were in attendance. The current Mayor, Les Ames, is due to relinquish his tenure this year and it was fitting that we were able to have the presentation before he handed over.

So you can see from the above that we have had quite a busy and interesting year and we now look forward to the Veterans Parade in June and will report on this in our next article for *Lioness*. **Editor:** *Actually, Jackie Naysmith, Secretary Bristol Branch, sent me these photos of the Parade so perhaps you will not need to include it next time?*

WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH

We are pleased to say that in spite of the cold and wet weather in the early part of the year, a hip replacement and various other health problems amongst our members, it has been encouraging to see a good attendance at our meetings.

Before our March meeting we held a special Service for the laying-up of our Standard as regrettably we are no longer to take it on parade. It is now at rest in the Memorial Chapel of the Collegiate Church of St Peter, in the centre of Wolverhampton. The Service had been prepared by our Treasurer, Joan Nicholas and the Rector. During the Service our Chairman, Betty Clyne, asked the Rector to accept the Standard, and the Standard Bearer, Mary Davies, handed it to the Rector for safekeeping in the Church. A sad occasion in some respects, but it is good to know that it is with the Standards of other well known Associations.



Dorothy Haydon, Wolverhampton Branch and Muriel Lakin, Stafford Branch enjoying the Grand Reunion

We have had an interesting speaker telling us of the many overseas students who had stayed with him and his wife while they were attending the local Technical College, which later became the Wolverhampton University. Everyone enjoyed his visit.

Before this *Lioness* reaches you we shall have had our annual outing, this year to Amerton Farm & Craft Centre, near Stafford.

We hope all our friends near and far have had a good Summer, and although a little early, we send our best wishes for the Christmas Season, and a Happy New Year.



PDF Compressor Free Version

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
Badge £3.50**



**ATS Badge
£2.75**



**WRAC Badge
£2.75**



**Calculator
£3.75**



**Fridge Magnet
£2.00**



**Note Book
£1.00**



****Special Offer****
Square Tray
Sandwich Tray
Teapot Stand
All £2.50 each
****Special Offer****



**Trolley Coin
£2.00**



**PVC Coaster
£2.00**

Other Items For Sale:-

Pens	£ 2.50
Paperweights (Boxed)	£12.00
Bookmarks	£ 1.50
Bells	£ 1.50
Table Mats	£ 6.50

WRAC ASSOCIATION GRAND REUNION 2006

University of Warwick (Coventry Campus)
30 March – 2 April 2006

MESSAGE FROM OUR PATRON HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH

I was pleased to receive your kind message of loyal greetings sent on behalf of the Vice-President, Council and Members of the Women's Royal Army Corps Association (which incorporates the Queen Mary's Auxiliary Army Corps and Auxiliary Territorial Service Comrades' Association) on the occasion of their Annual General Meeting which is being held today in Coventry during the Triennial Grand Reunion.

As your Patron, I was grateful for your kind eightieth Birthday greetings and send my warm good wishes to you all for a successful and enjoyable gathering.

ELIZABETH R.

LETTER TO THE GENERAL SECRETARY FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Dear Jane,

I have received several very kind letters of appreciation from ladies who attended the recent Grand Reunion at the University of Warwick and I am aware that several more letters have been received at Association HQ. I am so glad that our ladies enjoyed it as much as I.

I would like to thank the members of the Grand Reunion Organising Team for their support, hard work and unfailing cheerfulness throughout the planning process and during the Reunion weekend. I am very proud and pleased to name the team in alphabetical order: Carole Austin, Chris Corker, Lesley Goff, Irene Hall, Wendy Hooton, Jenny Jackson, Belle Jenkinson, Ann Jones, Val Kemball, Diane Lawrence, Lizzie Lawrence, Karen Loftus, "Mack" Maskens-McIntyre, Dot McFall, Kate McGregor, Nicky Murdoch, Elaine O'Sullivan, Dot Ryder, Alison Schofield, Julie Silver, June Skelton, Sandie Smyth and Sue Taylor.

A couple of the team had to pull out due to family and/or work commitments but remained with us "in spirit". Of course, the hub of the team consisted of Association HQ Staff – yourself and Kath, and the members of the Executive Committee of Council.

I have written to Sara Auckland at Warwick University to thank her and the team at Warwick Conferences for their help, support and hospitality before and during our Reunion and to point out how very helpful and pleasant the students were – I think several of our ladies came quite close to kidnapping a few of them!

I have had a few letters from our GROTS volunteering for 2009. How wonderful! They would all be very welcome.

Maggie Purkis

Editor: We all must thank Maggie as well for her enthusiasm and determination to ensure that the whole occasion was as successful as it surely was!

FINDING FRIENDS AT THE GRAND REUNION Alison Schofield

The "Finding Friends" idea was born after we noticed at previous Grand Reunions that messages seeking lost comrades had appeared in various places and had not been seen by those for whom they were intended. Indeed, those looked for may not even have been present.

How did it work? The first thing members needed to know was if their "lost" friend was there at all. A general list was prepared from the application forms; regimental numbers are important here; no two numbers are the same and also a number near your own often jogs a memory which has forgotten names! To make personal searches easier, the list was then broken down into employing Arms and, in the case of overseas stations, into theatres.



The Finding Friends Board at the start of the Grand Reunion – it had spread to three boards by the end!

Judging by the numbers looking at the lists, the idea was popular and is likely to be repeated at the next Grand Reunion. *Editor: I will try to remember to include a space on the application form for Maiden Names which might make "Finding Friends" even more successful! The*

messages that were found giving room and table numbers suggested that many members did find each other but there were two (not bad out of 420) which seemed unanswered. They are repeated here in case any readers can help:

PDF Compressor Free Version

Brenda Chappell (served as Bagshaw) wanted to find friends from 721 Coy BAOR, 1947 and **Janet Reeve** (served as McBeath in Orkney) would like to know if anybody knew her.

Finally, this is about making as well as finding friends. Two members had been in the same recruit company at Guildford, but different platoons, and later in the same large unit but had never met. They found each other, discovered other mutual friends and have recently exchanged recruit photographs by post. Have YOU a story like this? We would like to hear about it.

* * * * *

Editor: I am sure that everyone who attended the Grand Reunion enjoyed themselves! It was great fun and the University looked after us so well. In this section, I plan just to share with you some of the photographs and extracts from many of the lovely Thank You letters we have received. There were so many that I cannot thank and acknowledge you all individually. However, I would particularly thank Sue Westlake, Hermé Emary, Elaine Smith, Jackie Naysmith, Alison Schofield and Colonel Nan Robertson who sent lots of photographs for me to choose from – a pleasurable task indeed! Many thanks to everyone who made it such a memorable occasion and, most of all, thanks to all of you who came along and shared in the reunion.

To start with, I would just like you to see a couple of photographs of DABS Brook. It was because of Avril William's extremely generous donation in DABS' memory that the Association could afford to subsidise the whole event to the extent that it did.



Sgt DABS Brook with her RP staff at Guildford in 1959



DABS, second row fifth from the left, on WOs course 161 at Liphook from 24 Aug-16 Sep 1960

It was lovely to meet so many friendly people in what seemed like a big landscaped Army Camp.
(Jean Tyler, Uckfield)

You thought of everything to make our weekend run smoothly and we were all sorry when it came to an end.
(Barbara Danter, Nottingham)



Bath Branch on its way. L-R Joan Law, Betty Keating, Patricia Edridge, Sylvia Musgrave, Barbara Platt, Kay Guest, Dorothy Maddox. Behind: Joyce Durnford



Booking in has finished! Standing: Val Kemball, Margaret Barham, Mary Gregory. Seated: Kate McGregor, Sue Taylor, Maggie Purkis, Sue Westlake and Jane Freebairn



Elaine Smith and Gill Turner

This was possibly the best Reunion ever and we are already saving towards the next one in 2009.
(Gwyneth Stratten, Grantham)

We must not forget the young students who were so helpful and kind and did everything with a smile.
(Peg McElwaine, Weymouth)

I had been quite ill during the previous six months and was not sure about going. I am so glad I went.
(Nan Waters, Holbeach)



Norma Kinson and her daughter, Alison with Gwyn Friday



Beryl Lane, Nancy Tipton and Lucy Bowyer



Avril Williams and Wendy Hooton

Good accommodation, good food, super entertainment and great friends – what more could you ask for?
(Diane Lawrence, Weymouth)

Adding to the excitement and interest was the evacuation because of the Fire Alarm during Friday night's dinner!
(Joan Young, Weymouth)

Having the Band for dancing and the March Past and Service was an added bonus.
(Feona Dixon, York)



Janet Cox and Diane Lawrence



Ann Deakin and friends enjoy being outside after the Fire Alarm!

I must admit that I was feeling a bit apprehensive at the thought of so many people and not knowing many of them. But it was so good to see familiar faces from my service days and to catch up with all their news.

(Anon)



The Flowerpot Men and Little Weed. AKA Elaine Boden, Nicky Rochelle and Paula Thorne



Marjorie Powell, Mary McGregor and Iris Howe – winners in the Fancy Dress Competition

There was such a friendly atmosphere from arriving right up until the end and the amount and choice of food was wonderful.

(Mary Davies, Wolverhampton)



Rowena Griffiths and Leona Jones do not believe Beth Todd's flying stories



Irene "Baby Doll" Hall

It was indeed a GRAND Reunion – hope you have all recovered!

(Christine Gibbs, London)

I met an old friend who I had not seen since Northern Ireland in 1963 – a real bonus.

(Jill Trainor, Mere)

Get thinking about the next one now!

(Jackie Whitehead, Lincoln)



Irene McLean and friends settle in the Bar. Standing: Jennie and Irene. Seated: Carol, Ann, Maggie, Rose, Edith and Taff



Mack and Belle Jenkinson running the Chocolate Tombola



*Standing: Dawn, Elaine, Donna, Val, Lizzie, Viv
Kneeling: ??? Gill, Heather*



Diane Lawrence and Ann Jones on the Memorabilia Stall

It was my first reunion and hopefully not the last!

(Hetty Eames, St Albans)



*Sue Westlake, Nicky Murdoch and Leona Jones:
No worries there ABBA!*

The gift of a pen was a nice gesture and I am sure that each time one uses it, the happy memories will come flooding in.

(Jennie Stimpson, Plymouth)



PDF Compressor Free Version

Kathleen Hughes with Colonels Hazel Powell and Frankie Cook



Dot McFall, Mack, Sue Westlake, Colonel Nan Robertson, Kate Bettison, Sue Taylor and Sue Donovan try to keep Paula Thorne under control



Wilma Armstrong, Terry Simpson, Jan Brodie-Murphy and Carol Wells

I know this reunion was only possible because of the large donation in memory of Dabs Brook. Perhaps a lot of small donations over the next three years could add up to something similar – anyway here is a donation to the one in 2009!

(Anon)



A "Swift and Sure" band of Signallers!



Gwenneth Stratten, Iris Howe, Joan ? and Janet Lawson

There was a real buzz about the whole event and a "reuning" feel that I have not really experienced before.

(Jo Young, Perth)



Vice-President and General Secretary – startled but in command – or – what do you mean we have to do it all again in 2009?

What a lovely surprise! I phoned all my friends to tell them that I had won a prize in the Grand Draw. Having done work for SSAFA for many years, I do know how many ex-ATS need help so I am enclosing a donation for the Benevolent Fund in appreciation of my win.

(Anon)



Staff Sergeant Kath Day calls us to the Gala Dinner



Sheila Johncey, Val Kemball, Maggie Purkis, Alison Schofield and Dot Ryder



Fife and Tayside Branch and Janet Lawson ready for Dinner

The time went far too quickly

(Gwenda Easton, Axminster)



Margaret and Irene in their 40's frocks

Our lady who fell went to the hospital on Monday – apparently she had cracked a bone but it didn't spoil her weekend too much.

(Anon)



Edna Lee



Ready for the off

P.S. I am writing this Thank You letter with the pen given to us.

(Margaret Walkeden, Worcester)

PDF Compressor Free Version

Although there were heavy showers at times, it never seemed to be when we were walking from A to B so someone must have been looking after us.

(Susan Marcroft, Dalbeattie)

It was a riot. We loved every minute.

(Joan Awbery, Norwich)



Rowena Griffiths, Parade Commander, settles the troops



A clutch (?) of Commandants: Colonels Vere Fisher, Frankie Cook, Anne Clissitt and Nan Robertson remembering all their days on parade at the WRAC Centre, Guildford



Lt Col Westlake AGC (SPS) takes the salute as the AGC Band marches past



Reverend Susan Wing laughing at her own joke before the Service



The General Secretary does not even go on parade without her Black Book!



The AGC Band leads the way



Maj RC Griffiths AGC (SPS) clearly in command



Sue and Maggie cannot believe it's Sunday at last



Our Honorary Padre reminding us how important it is to keep on "re-uning"



The Association Standard is returned to Maureen Deeley after the service

OH WHAT A NIGHT - WELL - WEEKEND REALLY!

**Lt Col Nicky Murdoch, Lt Col Mary Woollard
and Maj Leona Jones**

Everyone who was at the Grand Reunion at Warwick University seemed to make this exclamation at least once. Although Leona had been to more Reunions, this was the first one that Nicky and Mary attended and we are not sure why. If we are honest it is because life in the Army has moved on, the pace of life is ever increasing and there are other demands on time at weekends. However, this reunion has made us think and we have written this to persuade other former members of the WRAC to think about it as well. Since the demise of the WRAC in 1992, the Council of the WRAC Association and the staff at Worthy Down have continued to work tirelessly to keep it as a thriving organisation in support of former members of the ATS and WRAC. In 2003, Sue Westlake asked Mary to become Honorary Treasurer and Nicky to serve as a member of Council and we both agreed.

From that time on Council, we have been involved with the organisation of the Grand Reunion and Maggie Purkis' team of GROTS. This was a large and high-powered team of excellent administrators who were responsible for the execution of all the instructions which put the Reunion together. The location was

brilliant, the accommodation was excellent and the facilities first class. But what stole the show was the meeting up with old friends from the WRAC and catching up with what they had been doing.

PDF Compressor Free Version



Nicky with some of her previous Sgt Majors: Carole Austin, Dot McFall, Val Laycock and Carol Wells.

The range of social facilities available at Warwick meant that we could have a coffee or tea or, for those with a stronger constitution, a drink from the bar – and you know who you are! Either way, what made the event special was meeting up with people we had not seen in years and recounting events from those days. The spirit shown by our sisters in the ATS is incredible and the camaraderie is amazing. The WRAC have some way to go to reach their standard but that is because they are in the minority in terms of numbers attending these reunions.

One thousand members attended the first reunion Leona went to: 900 ATS and 100 WRAC – still serving. This time there were just less than 400 as many ATS could not make it or sadly are no longer with us. But the ATS are firmly handing over the baton for the WRAC to grasp and to keep the flame of the Association and the Grand Reunion alight. This year only 6 WRAC who are still serving were present and they were all officers. Where were the WOs and SNCOs? We had a beautiful parade but without an RSM or CSM in uniform. Thanks to Maj Maskens-McIntyre who stood in as RSM and Sue



The serving Officers: Maj Rowena Griffiths, Colonel Helen McMahon, Lt Cols Sue Westlake, Mary Woollard, Nicky Murdoch and Maj Leona Jones.

Taylor who got the girls "fell in". Apart from Sue Westlake, who took the salute, there were only 2 of us in uniform but we still had great fun.

But – Oh What a night! We partied until the small hours two nights running and topped up in the afternoon – just like the old days. There was a 40s/50s Band on the Friday evening and the Band of the Adjutant General's Corps (it helps that Nicky is the Chief of Staff at Kneller Hall) played in the evening. The Big Band section which played was excellent and Staff Sergeants Kathryn Day and Hilary Grieg, both ex-members of the WRAC Staff Band but still in the AGC Band, contributed in a big way. There are many of you who may only have been young soldiers or officers when the WRAC disbanded in 1992 but do not forget your roots. Don't you fancy meeting up with your old pals from training? So come along to the next Reunion. Ring your old Platoon or intake and organise a wonderful opportunity to catch up with their news.

What we all have in common from those days are bonds which cannot be broken. We all have friends who we would really enjoy seeing again to share the tales of training and the hysterical stories from work which made us all laugh. The Grand Reunions, the WRAC Dinner and the WRAC Officers' Dining Club give us the chance to do all of that. From recent experience, it seems that the key to enjoying them to the full is to make sure that some of the people you know will definitely be there. This requires effort from all of us to cajole, encourage and persuade our friends to make the effort to go along. Let's make the next Grand Reunion a party to remember and show the ATS girls that we, the WRAC, are worthy of the flame they have entrusted to us. We can get into practice at the WRAC Dinner or the WRAC Officers' Dining Club dinner this autumn. **SEE YOU THERE!**

PRIZE WINNERS 2006 GRAND DRAW

Prize	Ticket No.	Name of Prizewinner
1 £1000 (D)	25171	IJ O'SULLIVAN
2 Weekend in Lincoln (D)	24113	A SMITH
3 Self Catering week (D)	24732	JACKIE COOK
4 M&S £100	4740	M OTTY
5 M&S £50	24512	JOHN WIGHT
6 M&S £50	23332	DOREEN BRIDLE
7 M&S £25(D)	23428	DEV YVAS
8 M&S £25(D)	09355	B MIDDLETON
9 WH Smith £25(D)	25800	EILEEN MICKELBOROUGH
10 WH Smith £20	16186	C LAWRENCE
11 WH Smith £20	0195	J LEVERTON
12 WH Smith £20	3159	J LLOYD
13 WH Smith £20	07874	M NICHOLLS
14 WH Smith £20	13476	ENA FORSTER
15 WH Smith £20	13530	BETH TODD
16 Boots £20	14627	DAPHNE HILL
17 Boots £20	19551	P HARPIN
18 Boots £20	24616	EVELYN NORTON
19 Boots £20	10222	D KIRTON
20 Boots £20	24062	M WHITEHOUSE
21 Boots £20	15721	M ROYLE
22 Dixons £20	16046	KV JACKSON
23 Dixons £20	16334	DAVID & JULIA DUNN
24 Dixons £20	14386	J PUXLEY
25 Dixons £20	12589	D CHIVERS
26 Dixons £20	08214	R WEBB
27 Dixons £20	16176	S BUSSEY
28 Tesco £10	08373	T CORKE
29 Tesco £10	07041	T WATSON
30 Tesco £10	13033	E & B STRATFORD

All prizewinners have been notified and have received their prize. In addition, Mary Davies, Wolverhampton Branch won the £50 note for correctly guessing its last three serial numbers and Pam Nesbitt, York Branch won a bottle of champagne for guessing the height of the new Freedom Tower in New York City for the 175th year of American Independence.

THE IMMEDIATE DE-BRIEF – JUST AFTER LUNCH ON THE SUNDAY!

(This story is true – the names have been changed to protect the...er...well, the people in the story!)

Three ladies, officers of the WRAC Association, were sitting in a small room at Warwick University just after lunch on 2 April 2006 discussing the recent Grand Reunion. All three ladies showed signs of exhaustion, they had obviously spent the weekend enjoying themselves and perhaps getting less sleep than they had been used to. Jean, Sally and Peggy were aware that they all had fairly long journeys ahead of them that afternoon and were not able, yet, to relax fully. They each nursed a last cup of coffee before climbing into their cars for their drive home, none of them wanting to spoil the feeling of euphoria which hung palpably in the air.

Sally, the first to break the silence uttered the classic understatement, "Well, that went well! The ladies all seemed to enjoy themselves". Jean and Peggy nodded in agreement. "Considering the fact that many of them were well into their eighties, they managed the distance between the accommodation and the Rootes Building very well", commented Jean, "I had real concerns about that".

Peggy added, "The fire alarm going off in the middle of dinner on Friday night could have spoiled the weekend but everyone seemed to take it in their stride, filed calmly outside and sang songs at the tops of their voices!"

"This venue really was a superb choice", added Sally. "The staff at the University couldn't have been more helpful, both before and during the Reunion. Warwick Conferences are obviously masters of their profession and the students who supported them during the weekend were first class".

"Having the Band of the AG Corps to play for us on Saturday evening and again today at the parade and Drumhead Service was great", said Jean. "And how special was it to have our own Reverend to conduct the service?"

The three ladies sipped their coffee, obviously reliving the events of the previous three days in their minds. Jean put her cup down and looked at the other two. "So," she said, her voice taking on an air of positive anticipation, "What are we going to do for 2009? It will be the 60th anniversary of formation of the WRAC and will follow on close behind the 80th anniversary of the formation of the ATS: a pretty special year for all of us".

Sally and Peggy looked at her in disbelief – but realised that of course she was quite right. There was little time to rest on laurels; plans would have to be put in place and decisions made. Sally suggested that we could return to Warwick – why try to re-invent the wheel? The other two nodded.

"Don't forget that we will be three years older by 2009", commented Peggy. "Perhaps a venue where we wouldn't have to travel between the accommodation and the dining room would be more suitable". "Yes", agreed Jean, "and accommodation which included lifts to the upper floors would be more popular". "The informal party on Friday night was good", said Sally. "We ought to build on that".

"The fact that Warwick University is situated in the middle of the country, easily accessible to those from all over catchment area helped", added Jean, "and don't forget that thanks to Avril and indirectly DABS, the ladies only had to pay £150 for really first class accommodation and superb meals, not to mention entertainment on both Friday and Saturday nights".

"We would need the GROTs to volunteer again." said Peggy. "They really were superb, right from the start of the planning process; nothing too much trouble, everything tackled with enthusiasm and humour". "And we need to offer the ladies the option to stay an extra night to avoid travelling on the Sunday", added Sally.

"So", said Jean. "We need a venue which would give us all we had here at Warwick, plus everything under one roof, the option of an extra night for those who don't want to travel on Sunday and interest for those who don't want to stay in on the Saturday morning, at no extra cost".

Sally looked disbelievingly at Jean. "Get real!" she said, "Where could we find somewhere like that? If such a venue existed, it would be bound to cost a lot more than the £150 we were charged this weekend". "Well", said Peggy. "As it happens, I think I know the very place! Leave it with me, and I'll make a few enquiries".

The conversation continued for a few more moments. The three ladies finished their coffee, collected up the cups and their luggage. They left the small room off the foyer of the Rootes Building, Warwick University and locked the door behind them. They said their fond farewells before driving away in different directions. Jean had a dinner party to organise that evening, Sally was returning home where her mother was recovering from a particularly nasty bout of ill health and Peggy had a family crisis to attend to. At the back of their minds, 2009 was looming and all three of them were determined that the next WRAC Association Grand Reunion would eclipse even that of 2006.

WATCH THIS SPACE!!

Reunions

WRAC WARRANT OFFICERS AND SENIOR NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS' REUNION DINNER.....IN CYPRUS!

Hello from Cyprus! It is over 3 years since the WRAC WOs and SNCOs held a reunion dinner. I organised one in York in 2002 and since then I have moved to sunny Cyprus. I am an honorary member of the Garrison Mess in Episkopi.

I have had permission from the GSM to hold a reunion dinner in mid-February here in Cyprus if anyone is interested. There will be limited accommodation in the mess but package tours are quite cheap at that time of the year and I am willing to organise a few nice trips to make your stay enjoyable.

Are you interested in having a nice week or two in sunny Cyprus and attending a dinner? Limassol is the nearest town. Paphos the closest airport and Larnaca is the other option. Please contact me by E-mail at maljohn@cytanet.com or you can fax or phone me on 00 35725 634839.

If there are enough takers, the relevant information will be forwarded accordingly. Look forward to hearing from you.

Mal Fulton née Quinney

ADEN VETERANS ASSOCIATION Patron: Brigadier Anne Field CB CBE

The Aden Veterans will be holding a Parade and Memorial Service to mark the 40th Anniversary of when British Troops left Aden on 27 November 1967. The service will take place on **Sunday 25 November 2007** in Stirling, Scotland.

For enquiries about the service please contact:
Brian Bryson, 'Jeabri', 6 Preston Avenue, Linlithgow,
West Lothian EH49 6HT. Tel:0150 684 2022.
E-mail: brianbryson@homecall.co.uk

For membership of the Aden Veterans Association, please contact the Membership Secretary: Terry Fowler, 2 Waldersea, Fridaybridge, Wisbech, Cambs PE14 0NR

WRAC OFFICER'S DINING CLUB ANNUAL DINNER 2006

Following another successful Dinner at the Victory Services Club, the WRAC Officers' Dining Club will meet there again on Saturday 25 November.
Please put this date in your Diary now!

A separate letter was sent to Dining Club members in July. If you are not a member and wish to join, please contact the General Secretary on 01962 887570.

NEW WORDS FROM OLD

Here is the Washington Post's Mensa Invitational which once again asked readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition.

Here are the 2005 winners:

1. Cashtration (n.): The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period of time.
2. Intaxication: Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realise it was your money to start with.
3. Bozone (n.): The substance surrounding a stupid person that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.
4. Giraffiti: Vandalism spray-painted very, very high.
5. Sarchasm: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.
6. Inoculatee: To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.
7. Hipatitis: Terminal coolness.
8. Osteopornosis: A degenerate disease. (This one got extra credit).
9. Karmageddon: It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's like, a serious bummer.
10. Glibido: All talk and no action.
11. Arachnoleptic fit (n.): The frantic dance performed just after you've accidentally walked through a spider web.
12. Beelzebug (n.): Satan in the form of a mosquito, that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning and cannot be cast out.

Articles of Interest

WORKING FOR RETURNED & SERVICES

LEAGUE AUSTRALIA

Mrs Patricia E Jones nee Parker

PO Box 66, Redlynch, Qld 4870, Australia

I joined the ATS in January 1941 and served for 7½ years at HQ Salisbury Plain District and GHQ 2nd Echelon BAOR. Joining at 17 years I grew up in the ATS and my experiences have made me what I am today.

At the beginning of 1951 I sailed with 99 ex-servicewomen to New Zealand in the RNZAF. After six months three of us were sent to OCTU and signed on for another 18 months. We served for 3½ years and I enjoyed every minute. Most of the women married Kiwis or men they had met on the boat going over. I returned to the UK but could not settle and five months later joined the Colonial Service and went to Kenya during the Mau Mau Emergency. I married in Nairobi and we have recently celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary. We have been living in Cairns for 40 years and think it is Paradise.

I am very involved with the Returned & Services League of Australia and received my Gold Badge of Life Membership 5 years ago for services rendered. I am President of the Cairns Ex-Servicewomen's RSL Sub-branch and District Secretary of the far Northern District Branch RSL. We administer 20 Sub-Branches in the Far North of Queensland. I am also a Queensland State Councillor for the RSL and fly to Brisbane (1,000 miles down the road) for meetings every 2 months.

I love my activities, working five mornings a week for war veterans. My life has certainly been most interesting.

GIBRALTAR MEMORIAL PEW

Mrs Christina Thomas nee Rowlands

7 Fieldview Drive, Orford, Warrington,
Cheshire WA2 9BP

I am sending this photograph taken by my son in the King's Chapel when he was in Gibraltar for New Year. I wonder how many of your readers were stationed out there.



I thought these would be a reminder of them. I hope they can be published in the next edition of the *Lioness*.

"BOW AND ARROW WAR" BY

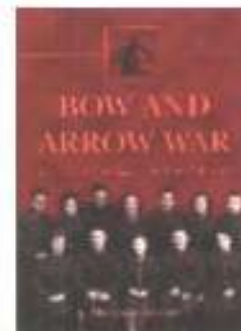
Marjorie Inkster

Grove Cottage, Broad Street, Bampton OX18 2LY

I was particularly interested in one article and one of the letters to you in the last edition of the *Lioness*. The first was Pat Goodman's description of her career with 70th Searchlight Regt 459 Battery. In the photograph on Page 5 (right hand side) there is a clear picture of the AA Command Sign which was a large scarlet square with a black bow and arrow on it.

Lucy Bowyer's letter to you on Page 72 speaks with affection of 487(M) HAA Battery during their time in Brussels towards the end of the war. I worked for a long time, from mid-43 with 476 Battery in Hampstead and they were posted to Brussels in 44 to help deal with the V1s. I was attached to REME and had not yet been trained in the new American 584 equipment which they used there, so I was left behind.

I have written a book entitled "Bow and Arrow War" about working on radar on anti-aircraft sites, particularly as a radar maintenance officer in REME from 1943 onwards, on London gunsites including Hampstead, Primrose Hill and Mill Hill. The book also contains a detailed account of the life during the Little Blitz between late 1943 and May 1944.



Lioness 1/2006 was the first I have seen and I greatly regret not having joined the Association long ago!

SLOW BOAT TO SINGAPORE

W/277292 Mrs L M White nee Aston

42 Eckington Close, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 7SA

How many of you have been to Singapore, how many of you have been on a cruise? Well the only thing a cruise and a voyage on a troopship have in common is the sea! Way back in October 1951 I set off on the adventure of a life time. The Army had posted me for 3 years to Singapore. We set sail from Liverpool on a wet and misty day a band on the quayside and the Liver buildings slowing faded from our view.

My cabin was below the water line and I had to share with a naval wife and her two children. They offered me a bottom bunk but I soon found out that was a mistake as every time the little boy went up top for something, he stood on my face. There was of course no privacy so I had to retreat. **PDF Compressor Free Version** have one big advantage. I was allocated a Lascar steward who ran my bath, washed and ironed my clothes and generally made my life a little more comfortable. The male NCOs slept in 3 tier bunks on the troop deck and their food was awful. I dined in the 3rd class dining room which was quite good.

For the next week we saw little but water both above and below and it was somewhat depressing ploughing through the Atlantic but fortunately the Bay of Biscay was relatively calm. To relieve the boredom each morning an officer would give us a travel talk about the countries which lay off our starboard side – not that we could see them. The other diversion was fire drill – when the alarm sounded you collected your lifebelt from under your bunk and then proceeded to your boat station. The result was pandemonium as people tore down the stairs meeting people struggling up with babes in arms, cuddly toys and four or five lifejackets and of course when you tried to get back up folk were still passing on the narrow stairways and corridors. Had there been a real fire I don't think many would have got off. Once at boat stations I was detailed off to climb in the boat and be lowered over the side, a terrifying experience swinging above the waves on two slim ropes. Thank heavens we never had to do it for real!

On our 8th day we saw our first sign of life – Portuguese sardine boats and a few porpoises. Day 9, turn left into the Med and now we are in the tropics - change into KD. I looked fairly respectable – that is if you discount the khaki ankle socks and Clark's sandals. White knees soon turned blue and it was jolly cold for the first couple of days.



Final Destination: WRAC WOs and Sgts Mess, Tanglin.

Back Row: Betty Simpson, Nancy Hunter, Margaret Garner, Education Sgt, Mary Freckleton, ??, Eileen Chivers, ??, Poppleton, Chalky White.

Middle Row: Pat Gaiger, Mary Scan..., ??, Connie Bradshaw, Lorna White, Dorothy Bryant, Pat McCaffrey, Jessie Forbes, Robin Moulder, Mary Adams.

Seated: Jenny Waddell, Val Attwood, Dorothy Walker, ? Mordecai, CSM Johnson, Hopgood, Beccy Coulthard, ??, Betty Clark, Elaine Anton.

It was now getting warmer and, after 10 days at sea, we tied up in Port Said where we were due to go ashore the

following morning. Boots blacked, we lined up at 8 am only to be told that due to an attack on the American Embassy all shore leave was cancelled. We had a bird's eye view of the rumpus at the other side of the quay and some of our men wanted the armoury opened and to draw guns to so that they could go ashore to help. In an act of defiance a Flt Sgt in the RAF got out his bagpipes and played rude songs to annoy the rioters.

We set off down the Suez Canal and I was intrigued by the up and down "convoy" system. I at first thought the ships waiting in the Bitter Lakes were in fact sailing through the desert! Then it was Aden; what an awful place. Hot and dusty with camels roaming the streets – and no signs telling their owners to "pick it up". My two companions decided to show me the sights so we took a taxi to Crater City – which is just what it was – a village of poor houses and market stalls at the bottom of a crater and not a friendly face to be seen. We learnt afterwards that it was out of bounds to all Brits so we shouldn't have been there at all. My escorts were starving so we went to a café for lunch. We were served with the biggest mixed grill I have ever seen, eight types of meat (not all identifiable) and six different vegs. The chaps cleared their plates and finished off mine as well.

The next 3 days were very quiet as we sailed across the Indian Ocean. It was very calm and all we saw was a group of islands in the distance and a few flying fish. To relieve the boredom we played Bingo and had the odd sing along but we were very pleased to reach Colombo the morning after my 26th birthday. Being the morning after I was slightly "hung over" so I did not relish the thought of being ferried ashore in a steel decked lighter which had been standing in the sun all morning. However, it was that or nothing and I survived the trip. Once on land my companions asked what would I like to do? First off I would like a decent cup of tea! Where better to find one than in the Seaman's Mission and – an added bonus – they were packing boxes of tea for gifts so my Mum was delighted to receive 2lbs of tea from Ceylon, especially as tea was still rationed in UK at that time. Our next move was to explore Colombo, not for us the brightly decorated UK shops with lovely clothes, perfume, and jewellery, all gift wrapped ready to send home. NO, we went to the Bazaar, dirty, smelly, heaving with people and mangy looking dogs underfoot and piles of rotting vegetation round every corner just to add to the atmosphere! I enjoyed the day, especially as it was rounded off with afternoon tea in a very posh hotel where



Cameron Highlands

a "punka wallah" fanned us while we ate. Incidentally, the hotel was the Mount Lavinia, featured in the film Bridge over the River Kwai. I was also able to "dig" for an opal here which I later had set in a ring to remind me of this trip. During the night we set sail once more on the last leg of the journey. **PDF Compressor Free Version**, just a glimpse of the Nicobar Islands and the top of Sumatra before we turned right into the Straits of Malacca and made our way down the coast of Malaya.

After 27 days we entered Singapore Harbour, a very busy port with ships from all over the world unloading into the godowns, no cruise ships in those days. Singapore to me was everything I had ever dreamed of or imagined from the books I had read. It was bustling with life and colours and a spicy smell was in the air. There were Chinese coolies (all women) dressed in navy blue "pyjamas" carrying a yoke with a basket either side loaded with all sorts of commodities, trishaws spinning round the streets and noise was all around us.



Local transport system

It was hot and sticky and exotic flowers grew everywhere. There were palm trees with dates, coconut palms and banana trees lining the streets and some beautiful colonial style buildings. I knew I was going to enjoy my stay on the wonderful island and I did. What's more, that very first night in the Mess I was introduced to the man who eight years on became my husband!! From the films I've seen of Singapore recently I'm glad I went way back in the 50s when it was truly Oriental.



WRAC WOs & Sgts Mess Tanglin

CLUB ATS COLCHESTER

Secretary, Mrs Beryl Newell

Jodes Holly, St Mary's Road, Aingers Green,
Great Bentley, Colchester CO7 8NG

We are still carrying on despite reduced numbers. Connie Kirby and Sheila Eve have gone to the Parade Ground in the sky. Two members have resigned and some original members of the branch find themselves unable to attend. However, we still have a monthly Newsletter and everyone now has a nominal roll complete with telephone numbers.

We changed our meeting place as the rental was not covered by numbers attending, and it is not good house-keeping to pay for unnecessary space. We now meet in a cosy sitting room in the Conservative Club in Colchester, where they are very kind and helpful and members can have lunch before the meeting.

The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer discuss any ideas for activities and they are then put to the members and voted on by show of hands. We spent our "Awards for All" grant on a trip to Bury St Edmunds – the Cathedral and Gardens and shopping are always popular, and it is helpful for members living in Suffolk, though most of them have now joined Suffolk Branch.

Members Jean and Dorothy, who live in Dovercourt, invited us to their Annual Buffet Lunch in May. Each year gets better. Our oldest member, Charlotte Lawrence was 97 in May. She was formerly with London Branch but settled into Colchester very well. We don't always see her at meetings but always enjoy her company when she does. She was fit enough to come to the Buffet Lunch and really enjoyed it. Jean Blackburn, recovering from a stroke also managed to attend. Eileen Barclay is our Chairman and Vi Nuttall the Treasurer. They live in Suffolk, but have been Colchester members for many years and are now doing a great job in taking some of the workload from the Secretary.

A number of members attended the Area Re-Union Lunch in Colchester in November – congratulations to Pat Stevenson for her work in organising this event. Lovely to see Val Kemball, who was originally a Colchester member and to meet Maj Jane Freebairn.

We will always be glad to see any WRAC Association members visiting Colchester. Meetings are the second Wednesday in the month, but best to check with the Secretary on 01206 250029 first.

ROYAL ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION REUNION – MAY 2006

Barbara, Lillian, Vi, Joan and Sheila Leics/Notts Branch

Several months ago, the Leics/Notts five who enjoy travelling to places new, booked in with the Royal Artillery Association to attend their yearly reunion which they held at Blackpool. It was, I believe, the first time they had invited ex members of the ATS Ack-Ack to join them, and so four of us went as guests of two of our members who had been attached to the Royal Artillery. When we arrived at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, it all

looked very exciting – on the forecourt were two rather large guns and a tank. We booked in and settled in our rooms, and so started a really nice weekend filled with quite a few military moments! We were made very welcome by all.

PDF Compressor Free Version

On Saturday evening we attended "Sunset". The military band, with their formation marching was first class. This was followed by a wine reception with the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress. The meal that followed was really special and we made many new friends that evening.

On Sunday morning we attended a competition of Standard Bearers to find the best out of the area and to choose one of them to carry the Queen's Standard for the next two years. I might add that they were all very good, and it must have been hard for the judges to choose two out of the eight that were competing.



Barbara Danter, Lillian Hollis, Vi Rawlins, Sheila Grewcock, Joan de Vall

Following that, we had a church service which was held in the ballroom and on entering the Officer in Charge invited us to sit in the front row alongside him. I think it was because we were the only ones in our green uniforms and we provided a bit of interest. There was just over one hundred ATS there, and though the weather left a lot to be desired, I can honestly say that we all had a super time. When asked by the organiser if we would like to be invited again next year, the answer was a resounding yes.

On Monday we said farewell to our new friends and set off back home. It was still raining! But the memories of another wonderful weekend will stay with us for a long time to come.

MY WONDERFUL VISIT TO INDIA

Elizabeth M Bustard

10 Lyndon Square, Bramham, Wetherby, West Yorkshire

Friday 8th April 2005

I left behind a very rainy London with my eldest son, Maj (Retd) Kenneth Bustard MBE, for a memorable trip to India at 7.30 pm. We were joined at Heathrow Airport by two more couples and a nurse. So the seven of us set off on the flight to Mumbai (Bombay). We touched down on the coast line of India for 1 hour whilst the plane was being cleaned; we remained on the plane. We then

carried on to Chennai (Madras). A quick move off the plane through customs saw us on the waiting coach and we were off to our hotel.

Saturday 9th April 2005

At the hotel, the High Commissioner for the region was waiting to greet us. After a nice chat and refreshing drink, we retired to our rooms to change for Dinner.

Sunday 10th April 2005

In the morning we left the hotel and had an interesting coach tour of Madras. On the drive round the city, we saw many monkeys and cattle on the roads. We visited two war cemeteries, the Catholic and Protestant Cathedral's, a Temple, Indian Carpet Warehouse and local market; quite a busy day. On returning to the hotel, we enjoyed a cooling swim in the hotel pool. Prior to Dinner, we enjoyed a short walk in the hotel gardens. After dinner, our evening entertainment started with watching a pipe and drum band, culminating in a very lively performance from lady belly dancer! – Late to bed.

Monday 11th April 2005

Early on Monday we left for New Delhi. Unfortunately there was no one waiting to meet us. Kenneth (my son) and the nurse bartered with waiting mini bus drivers and arranged for transportation to take us to our hotel. It helped break the ice; we all ended up sitting amongst our luggage, laughing and joking. On the road, all competing for the same space were cows (considered holy in India), goats, sheep, monkeys, motor bikes, 3-wheeler cars and taxis.

On arriving at the hotel and once we had settled into our rooms, I visited the hotel hair salon and had my hair washed and set. On going down to Dinner, our group met up with the other tour groups who were visiting different areas to ours. Amongst the guests were the Royal British Legion Chairman and National Standard Bearer.

Tuesday 12th April 2005

There are now four coaches of passengers!

Up and away early to visit the Delhi War Cemetery for a War Graves Pilgrimage. After the Royal British Legion Chairman laid the wreath, I laid a wreath on behalf of the Women's Section, Royal British Legion. Two ladies who were with our party then laid red roses on the memorial. We had all been given posies of poppies, the ladies laid



Elizabeth, centre, with RBL (Women's Section) Wreath

theirs on their father's grave. Kenneth and I laid ours on the two First Royal Norfolk Graves we found in the El Madras and Delhi cemeteries.

After the pilgrimages, we returned to our coaches for a tour of New Delhi. The tour was very well organised, with everyone busy working away, even the children were at work cleaning old bricks ready to be reused. They seemed to reclaim nearly all of their rubbish for use in one way or another. Very industrious!

After a very busy day, we returned to our hotel, The Grand International. I should just mention that our bedrooms were on the 25th floor, but this did afford us a magnificent view of the city. We were able to see kites and birds of every description. We also saw, within the space of a couple of hours, a wedding and a funeral.

Wednesday 13th April 2005

It was an extremely early start to the day – 2.30 am, to enable us to catch the Sharababi Express train to Agra. On our arrival we boarded coaches and set off for one of the most beautiful sights in India; the Taj Mahal. We saw beautiful birds, butterflies and chipmunks. For once, the reality lived up to expectation; simply stunning and a sight I will never forget. After the Taj Mahal, most of the men in the party visited the Agra Fort.



Thursday 14th April 2005

On our return to New Delhi, we had another tour to the cities, old and new, visited the Red Fort and took a ride in a Rickshaw to Jarma.

Friday 15th April 2005

Sadly this was to prove our last day in India. We had some free time to explore on our own, sightseeing and last minute shopping. Depart for UK.

Saturday 16th April 2005

We arrived back at Heathrow, and after waiting nearly 1½ hours for our luggage, nearly missed our coach home. We alighted from the coach in Leeds late at night, shivering, after being used to temperatures in India of 30°+.

So as you can see, it was a very busy eight days; I only wish my dear husband Reg, who had fought in India during the 2nd World War, and had always wanted to take me to revisit the places he remembered so vividly, could have been with me. Sadly it was not to be, Reg died five years ago. However, my son Kenneth was a welcome companion.

Finally, I would like to thank the Heroes Return Grant which made my visit possible. A journey never to be forgotten.

KINE THEODOLITE OPERATORS VIST THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

Mrs G K Stapylton née Tulett
98 Paignton Avenue, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear
NE25 8SZ

In mid-May a small group of former Kine Theodolite Operators went to the National Arboretum, near Lichfield, to see a tree and bench which had been installed as a tribute to the wartime Kine Detachments.



The plaque on the tree to the left of the bench reads "In tribute to the KINE THEODOLITE OPERATORS who assisted in the training and experimental work of Anti-Aircraft Batteries."

Kines enjoy regular reunions, sometimes spending a weekend together and sometimes meeting for lunch. Our gatherings usually include some from overseas as kines have found their way across the globe. Recently we have returned to Tenby for our weekend reunions as we all have fond memories of training at Manorbier; last time we were invited to visit the School of AA Artillery which was nostalgic indeed.

Nowadays we produce an occasional newsletter because many ex-kines are no longer able to travel far-a-field and we receive many enthusiastic contributions. In 1989, on our first return to Tenby, we planted a tree at Manorbier which still thrives but we felt we should also be represented at the National Memorial Arboretum. There was no room for us in the Royal Artillery plot but we are not far away and we would recommend anyone who gets the opportunity to visit this remarkable project.

THE AIRBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

June Booth
Cedar Drive, Holbeach, Lincs PE12 7JP

The Airbridge Association was founded after the fall of communism by a Lincolnshire businessman Mr Jim Auton, a former RAF pilot, supported by Mr Peter Green, a former RAF navigator.

After the war and demob, Jim travelled in Eastern Europe as and when permissible. He heard distressing stories how men and women were either being arrested on trumped up charges or were being beaten or tortured during interrogation. Their crime was 'they had taken allegiance to a capitalist King - King George VI. These gallant people had fled from the Nazis and headed for Palestine or anywhere else where they could meet up with British Bases. Within a very short time they had made up their minds this is where they wanted to be, serving side by side with British troops of all services. They nor anyone else knew at that time that because they had been under British command it was to prove a lifeline to many of them many years later!

I first heard about Airbridge from the Yorkshire television news. Jim was being interviewed about his work and asking for volunteers. I was looking for something to do, having been widowed a couple of years previously, so I telephoned and asked how I could help. I explained I was ex-service and in my 70s. If you are still breathing and standing you are in came the reply. I went out to meet Jim the next day and indeed I was in. Two weeks later I was appointed Vice Chairman and three weeks later I was on my way to the Ukraine. We actually operated in four countries, Poland, Ukraine, Czech and Slovak Republics. Ukraine was by far the worse and seemed to have received more severe treatment than the other countries. Some of the tortures inflicted are still causing suffering today. In Poland, there was an old lady, widow of a man in the RAF, she was so poor and looked so dirty. After we had paid out all the money, which was over a years pay would have been from their own government, I went into the room to talk to some of the beneficiaries.

When I got to her she said again through an interpreter 'thank you, now I can buy some soap'. She could not afford soap and bread and naturally bread won, she then gave me a kiss and a very sad flower. It took all my willpower to prevent myself from crying. One of our beneficiaries put his identity papers on the table, "That looks like an AB64, said I to Jim. "It is" he replied, "but how do you know?" "Because" I replied, "I have one



June with grateful lady

exactly like it." I don't think these RAF types know much about the Army!

It was hard work because every thing we took out to these countries had to be begged for. We had no help from Government and we had to have coffee mornings and various other fund raising functions. Apart from writing letters, we had a Who's Who broken into three parts, one each and we wrote letters to masses of people. Lots of people were very generous. I remember a hospital in Northampton telephoned to ask if we could use 600 nurses uniforms - the Ukrainian Matron and Doctors cried when they saw what we had bought for them. All clothes and money went to the beneficiaries and the equipment and blankets went to the hospital we were supporting.



Washing facilities in a children's hospital ward

To qualify for aid the ex-servicemen and women and widows of men who would have been eligible had to have served with a British force and been only under British Command - hence my remark in the first paragraph about the lifeline.

I could go on for much longer but enough is enough, but just one last escapade. Jim, Peter and I were travelling from Prague to Bratislava on a train, a very uncomfortable train at that. The journey was to take several hours and all went well until we were about to cross the border between the Czech and Slovak Republics. Aboard came a border official, 'Passports please'. I handed mine over and went on reading, Jim and Peter did likewise and went on talking. After a very long wait, it seemed like all day, we were on our way and we all breathed freely again. We were carrying £47,000 in US dollars which was illegal currency! Imagine what would have happened if the bag had been found. We would all still be in one of their notorious prisons and I would not have been able to tell you about my experiences with Airbridge.

LADIES WHO LUNCH IN LINCOLNSHIRE

Mrs Chris Corker née Appleby W/425889
5 The Orchards Park, Priory Road, Ruskington,
Lincs NG34 9DH

I moved to Lincolnshire in August 2005 and at the WRAC Dinner Club that year in Birmingham I discovered that there are quite a few ladies who lived in the county. After returning home I thought it might be a rather nice idea to meet for lunch once a month or so as it seemed that very few were able to get to a branch meeting.



The original three! Chris Corker (WRAC), Gwyneth Stratten (WRAC), June Booth (ATS) (also authoress of the above article about Airbridge)

At the Grand Reunion in Coventry, I placed a form on the Information Board for anyone who would be interested in lunching. Sadly, there was a limited response and at the inaugural lunch on 26th April at the Drill Hall, Lincoln there were just 3 of us. Subsequently, we arranged to meet again on 12 June and our number had swelled to 7! We have another lunch planned for 19 July and are looking forward to meeting again.



*Standing l-r: Nora Jones (WRAC), Chris Corker (WRAC), Averil Ward (WRAC), June Booth (ATS)
Sitting l-r: Gwyneth Stratten (WRAC), Jean Sperry (ATS), Beryl Butcher (WRAC)*

If any ladies in Lincolnshire would care to join us at a future date we would be delighted to see you.
Please contact: Chris Corker on 01526 830483
email: Corker3@aol.com or Gwyneth Stratten née Hayes on 01400 230656 email: g.stratten@btinternet.com

Alternatively, I shall be at the WRAC Dinner Club in Birmingham in October.

VEE ROBINSON - MEMBER OF LEEDS BRANCH RECOGNITION FROM ROYAL ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION

Article submitted by Betty France, Secretary,
Leeds Branch

At the General Assembly of the RA Association held in Blackpool in May, Vee Robinson was awarded a truly deserved Certificate of Commendation. What a pity she

was too ill to be there to accept it because she would have received a standing ovation. Vee has worked tirelessly for more than 12 years to get due recognition for the part played by the members of the ATS in AA command in WW II. She felt that the hardships and death endured by these girls on the gun sites had largely been pushed into the background and she determined to do something about it. She wrote a book, got an interview on TV and set about organising reunions. She played a huge part in raising the money for a plot at The Arboretum and arranged several visits and services of memorial there.



Ex AA ATS celebrating Vee's award. Braving the wind and rain

Due to her contact with Earl Kitchener all AA ATS were allowed to become Life Members of the RA Association. ATS in AA Command branch is the largest branch of the Association with almost 700 members.

All ex-AA ATS will be forever grateful to Vee for the friendships renewed through her efforts and all send her our very best wishes for improving health.

MRS DAPHNE HILL (JUNIOR COMMANDER D G PHILLIPS) SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ATS PROVOST (RED CAPS) MIDDLE EAST LAND FORCE 1941-1945

Editor: I have taken the liberty to reprint this from the entry Daphne Hill entered onto the BBC WW2 Peoples' War website. It is a fascinating website and worth a visit if you have not done so already.

About 1941-42 the war was in full swing in the Western Desert. The General Staff had insufficient drivers to take the replacement vehicles up to the Front. His Majesty's Government gave permission to recruit Palestinians, and with the few ATS that had arrived in Cairo, via the Cape, a recruiting and training centre was opened in Sarafand. The basic training was the same as that given in the UK. Their army number was prefixed with the letter 'P'. Four thousand Palestinian women joined the British Army during World War II. Those suitable as drivers joined the Driver Training Company at Mena near the Pyramids, outside Cairo, and were soon taking convoys of new vehicles round the clock up to the Front in the Desert.

Meantime many women were employed in the offices

and stores in the Command and in Palestine. I took up my appointment as DAPM (Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal) British Troops Egypt in 1945. We had sections, a Sergeant and so many NCOs in Cairo (HQ with CSM), Alexandria and Moascar (the Suez Canal area) to carry out police duties. We had to make the long trips across the desert from Cairo to Alexandria avoiding camels straying across the road, were trying in the summer. We wore KD (Khaki Drill) uniform jackets with skirts and ankle socks and our legs soon got brown. In the winter the normal Khaki serge battle dress was worn.



Junior Commander D G Phillips

In Alexandria, among other duties, the girls accompanied the Anti-Vice Squad, picking up prostitutes and taking them for medical checks. Soldiers were also picked up for being in a Red light district. The GOC thought that the shock of men coming into contact with girls similar to their wives and sisters was an added punishment. The street was internationally known as Sister Street.



Wedding reception in ATS billets in Moascar

Among their normal duties, the Cairo Section was responsible for custom control duties on the nightly Cairo-Haifa train, which left every evening, reaching Haifa am, and leaving the next evening to return to Egypt. Egypt was a 'foreign country' and the customs check was at Kantara on the Suez Canal where the train crossed the bridge into Sinai. The number of service personnel and civilian 'natives' was so great that the train was held up for hours, so in the end the Egyptian authorities asked the British to check our personnel plus the Polish forces for contraband, which was done while the train was on the move. The train was very long, with long corridors. Every carriage was full of people and their baggage. The NCO opened the door and asked if they had goods to declare. If someone looked guilty, you had to check their baggage, and most had a lot! We joked that we were looking for Baksheesh, Hashish and Mahleesh (couldn't care less) – a joke on Arabic words. We confiscated the booze, cigs and the normal goods.

A memory that is still with me – seeing down through the train window – the moon, a palm tree and the dome of a mosque – a real Biblical scene, and then we slowed down for Gaza.

Two girls went up and down every night. The women I commanded, the senior NCOs, were from the UK mostly. We were a mixed crowd – Palestinians, girls from India, Cyprus, various European countries. They gossiped away in their rooms (in a house) in Hebrew. I would hear the CSM telling them "Get moving. I do not know what you are saying, but get on and DO IT". The girls got on well together and we were a happy unit. One L/Cpl, a Greek, I am sure could not read orders, but the girls covered for her!



Cairo section on parade and waiting for the Inspecting Officer, the Provost Marshal

The Palestine Command had their own ATS Provost unit, but the train duties were run from Cairo. In 2005 I am still in touch with L/Cpl M Nissim from Jerusalem, now Mrs Robins in Florida.

On reflection, it was a privilege to have seen the Holy Land before the tourists, been inside the Pyramid, and watched the belly dancers in the night clubs of Cairo, and generally to have been there.

THE VIOLETTE SZABO MUSEUM

Gina Shadrack, Secretary, Chelmsford Branch

It was a pleasant surprise to see the Founder and owner of the museum, Miss Rosemary Rigby MBE, present at the Grand Reception. She presented information and commemorative gifts which she had available to those wishing to support the museum; opened to keep us aware of the tremendous sacrifice Violette made for her country during the Second World War and for which she received the GC. As she first served in the ATS we have a special reason to be grateful to her.

For those of us who do not know the whole story, Violette became a Special Agent and was parachuted into France several times on special missions. She spoke fluent French and was a particularly skilled agent. At the time of the last mission she had married and had a small daughter. In June 1944 it was with reluctance she was asked to do one more drop. It was vital to the war that she did. Unfortunately she was captured by the Germans, taken out and shot. Her body was then burned.

The museum is in the grounds of a house called "Cartref" once the home of Violette's aunt and where she often stayed during the school holidays. Recently Miss Rigby was able to buy the house and has erected a small brick building containing vast quantities of memorabilia which is open to the public. It was officially opened in June 2000 by Virginia McKenna who played the part of Violette in the film 'Carve her name with Pride' and her daughter Tania, together with people from all over the world who flocked to join the celebration.

At the time Chelmsford Branch was on holiday and only 8 miles "up the road". We visited one morning and Miss Rigby opened up especially for us. We are proud to say we were the first branch of the Association to do so. We have since become "Friends of the Museum" and gladly given an annual donation of £6 towards its upkeep. Other branches may feel they might like to do likewise and donations would be much appreciated. Write to Miss Rosemary Rigby MBE at The Violette Szabo Museum, "Cartref", Trump Lane, Wormelow, Herefordshire
Tel: 011981 540477

Our visit was a memorable occasion. It left its mark on us for the rest of the day as we quietly remembered how much was given to us by one person.....who began as a member of ATS.



Chelmsford Branch outside the museum. The Curator, Miss Rigby is the lady in blue holding the leaflets.

MAUNDY SERVICE GUILDHALL CATHEDRAL

Beryl Montague-Butlin

(Photographs courtesy of Eric Morgan and Beryl's son)

Beryl Montague-Butlin is one of the recipients and she lives with her dog in Cranleigh. She served in the WRAC, has been active on Cranleigh Council and now is a volunteer at the Cathedral as a guide, flower arranger and assists with brass rubbing. Here is her story.

The Sunday before, a large gentleman came into the Cathedral as a visitor with his wife and turned out to be the senior NCO of Yeoman of the Guard – he came to "pace" the Cathedral. He explained that every slope and step had to be negotiated while holding huge and very heavy Maundy trays on their heads holding all the purses and they were never to look down! What a privilege. I felt I had acquired inside information.



The Yeoman carrying the dishes of alms

When the Thursday morning arrived, my youngest RAF son arrived to be my "companion". We drove in from Cranleigh very early to find the whole hill swarming with police and mobile HQs. The daffodils on the roundabout and Cathedral hill were just out in full bloom and we got through each identify check. 1st hurdle – the wind was blowing hard – the fabulous hats had to be held onto heads as we went to the large marquee to be checked in by the Almoners Staff. Companions were accompanied by the Royal Wandsmen (10 foot high staff which could be seen overheads while the recipients sat to hear information from the Lord High Almoner and the Dean who wished us a wonderful day. The Cathedral was filling and humming with anticipation. Then the processions started, seven of them, very stately and stepping together led by our Vergers. The last great procession surrounds The Queen who was in a beautiful cream outfit. I don't know how others felt – I had butterflies. The choirs were superb and the congregation sang with great voice. The Duke of Edinburgh read the first lesson beautifully and the ceremony began. Her Majesty came down the Chancel steps followed by the Royal Almoners and the

Yeomen carrying the huge loaded trays. Each recipient thanked The Queen giving a little bow or curtsy.



The Queen distributes the purses

After a circuit of the South aisle with the choir still singing she returned to the Chancel, then the 2nd lesson was read and the procession headed for us on the North side. She came towards me and stopped in front of me saying "What wonderful badges", and asked what they were. I answered 'The WRAC Ma'am and the recently issued Veterans one'. It was most exciting to speak to her and my son behind had an enormous grin on his face. My other fantastic memory is of the Yeoman of the Guard. Those not carrying the Maundy were holding very long staffs. As they processed, every time their right feet hit the marble flooring all the staffs hit the floor exactly



Beryl Montague-Butlin with her Maundy purse

together. The bang was incredible and the precision fantastic. What a wonderful morning. Superb pageantry linking precious traditions stretching back through the ages – only the British can boast such wonderful history carrying on since Christ's washing of the feet of his disciples. We have those incredible breathtaking memories of the service in the Cathedral to treasure. All of us recipients were more or less the same age as Her Majesty and were hoping she will be our Monarch till her life ends and her crown will be handed on.



The actual Maundy Money
Photograph courtesy of *The Surrey Herald*

ATS KNEELER FOR HM THE QUEEN'S 80TH BIRTHDAY

Mary Beeston
77 Campion House, Holgate Road, Heath Town,
Wolverhampton WY10 0PX

I thought you would be interested to see this photograph of an ATS kneeler which was handed in to Buckingham Palace as a birthday present to HM The Queen. The kneeler was worked by Mrs Louise Rhodes who was one of the ladies who helped to produce all the ATS kneelers now in St Andrew's Church, Worthy Down.

I understand that the kneeler is likely to go to St George's Chapel at Windsor where it should bring back happy memories for The Queen of her time in the ATS.



The ATS kneeler made for The Queen's 80th Birthday

Weddings

DIAMOND WEDDING - PRIOR

Mrs S Prior
Flat 3 Bincleaves Court, 28 Bincleaves Road,
Weymouth DT4 8RL



Brian and Sylvia on their Wedding Day

A chance meeting has led to 60 happy years for Sylvia and the Rev Brian Prior. The couple married on January 12, 1946 in Torquay after meeting at a church service at Trinity Congregational Church, Reading. Brian was on leave serving with the Royal Berkshire Regiment and Sylvia serving with the ATS was off-duty.

Having been accepted for full time ministry Brian took on his first pastorate in Somerset in 1955 and later at Hope United Reformed Church in Weymouth from 1959-1971. He has also worked in Birmingham and Harwich, Essex, before retiring in 1987.



The happy couple 60 years on

A private reception and a celebration service at the Hope United Reformed Church on Sunday, January 15 were enjoyed with their two sons and daughter and four grandchildren along with many renewed acquaintances from the area.

DIAMOND WEDDING - DAVIES - TAYLOR



Private Lilian Taylor ATS from London and Sergeant Gerald Davies from Carmarthen met at the Café de Paris (Nuffield Centre) near Piccadilly Circus in January 1944.

In March 1946 they married and on 30 March 2006 they celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary with friends and family in Carmarthen.



60th Anniversary

Lioness reader Lilian would love to hear from any ATS pals and can be contacted on 01267 232090.



Wedding Day

On 20th April 1946 at Norton Church, Norton-on-Tees, Corporal Olive Helyer (MHAA) married Private Joseph Kinghorn, Border Regt home from Burma after being wounded. Joe got leave from Preston Hospital to get married.



Diamond Wedding

**GIFT AID DONATIONS IN RESPECT OF
THE WRAC ASSOCIATION
(Reg No 206184)
including
THE ATS AND WRAC BENEVOLENT
FUND**

Since 6 April 2000, Deeds of Covenant have been replaced by Gift Aid as means of giving to charity.

- If you are a UK Taxpayer, you can make a Gift Aid Declaration when you make a donation to charity. By making such a declaration, the receiving charity can reclaim any tax you have paid on your donation. This will give the Association or the Benevolent Fund an extra 28p for every £1 you donate.
- Gift Aid Declarations may be written or given orally over the telephone.
- If your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and/or capital gains at least equal in amount to the tax that the charity reclaims, you should cancel your declaration.
- You can cancel the declaration at any time simply by notifying us that you wish to do so. If an oral declaration is cancelled within 30 days from the date on which written confirmation is sent, it will be as if the oral declaration had never been made.
- If you are a high rate taxpayer, you can claim further tax relief in your Self-Assessment Tax Return.
- If you are unsure whether or not your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, please contact the Association HQ on 01962 887570 or ask your local tax office for leaflet IR 113 Gift Aid.
- Please notify the Association HQ of any change of address.

Letters to the Editor

PDF Compressor Free Version

COULD SOMEBODY HELP ME?

Mrs Mavis Middleton
88 Spenser Road, Herme Bay, Kent CT6 5QP

Dear Editor

What a wonderful weekend we all had at our re-union in Coventry. It was the best ever. Many thanks to all the good folk who organised such an A1 event.

Please, please, can some kind soul help me? I took lots of photos mainly for my dear friend who couldn't make it at the last moment. Then alas, I did a really stupid thing. I opened my camera before the film had finished re-winding! I was devastated when I realised what I'd done. Have taken hundreds of photos, and never done such a stupid thing before. Must be my age – well that's my story, and I'm sticking to it.

Would some kind person please let me have their negatives when they have finished with them; or let me borrow them. I would be so grateful.

WERE YOU AT WARWICK CONFERENCE CENTRE?

Mary Santor
74 Walkern Road, Benington, Herts SG2 7LS

Dear Editor

Whilst attending our wonderful reunion at Warwick University I brushed shoulders briefly with a lady who said to me "You were at Camberley were you not?" My response was "Yes, I was the intake before 'The Queen'". This lady then told me that she was an instructor at Camberley – but because of the melee of people surging about at the time we became separated.

Is it possible that you could find out who this lady is for me? I would so much like to get in touch with her.

THE ROUTE OF THE VICTORY PARADE

Miss R Puxley
Flat 14 Grosvenor Court, 99 Sloane Street,
London SW1X 9PF

Dear Editor

I was interested to see the photograph of the Victory March in *Lioness* 2/2005. Is there anyone who can remember the route of the march?

I can remember Hyde Park, Oxford Street, Whitehall, The Mall, Constitution Hill, but how did we get from Oxford Circus to Whitehall? I would so like to know.

NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA

W/353908 Mrs Joyce Seward née Winter
Unit 32 – 6 Sepia Court, Rockingham,
Western Australia 6168
Tel: (08) 9527 8825

Dear Editor

It is a long time since I wrote to you with news of our little group in Perth, Western Australia. I am pleased to say we are still meeting every three months for our session of Coffee and Chat followed by luncheon at the ANZAC Club in Perth.

Unfortunately, several have had their names taken off our membership roll simply because age, sickness, inability to use public transport has caught up with them, but we still manage to have an attendance of about 20.

For the third year running we were able to enjoy the company of Nina Garnham (from the London branch) at our February luncheon. We would be so pleased to welcome any ex ATS/WRAC who should be visiting Western Australia and have them join us when we meet every first Wednesday of February, May, August and November. I can be contacted on the above telephone number.

We had hoped someone would have won Lotto to enable some of us to join you at the Grand Reunion – alas it did not happen, but our thoughts were with you and I am sure it was a roaring success.

I would welcome any news or information on the whereabouts of Nan Kirkwood (from Scotland who married Sgt Bryn Griffiths about 1955), or Jackie Broadie who were stationed with me in Nairobi 1953-55.

WERE YOU WITH "TYNE ORANGE?"

Mrs Barbara Fosdick née Mason
304 - 1217 Pandora Avenue, Victoria B.C.
(604) 484-2822

PDF Compressor Free Version

Dear Editor

Your "Bumper" edition of *Lioness* has just arrived here in Canada. Though I have lived here for almost 60 years, it is still always like a joyful letter from "home".

I was 17 and joined the ATS in August 1941. I had only been in Ack Ack (473 Battery) for two months the night our section "Tyne Orange" brought down a "hostile" plane as it attacked ships around Newcastle. On 8 December 1941, I was the spotter on duty with Cpl Lorna Venning and it was the first time ever that women were given credit for assisting in a successful action. I wonder if anyone remembers that night and the fuss that the visiting "brass", the news media and the politicians made of us next day.

There were terrible times and there were good times. We made lasting friendships that continue to this day. I was lucky enough to spend a month in Australia visiting Buntie (Jones) Beattie and I found a gracious and welcoming hostess in Freddie Weatherly when I attended the last ATS Ack Ack Reunion in York. It was great to see Bats Hall again. I was also in 463 and 670 Batteries and wonder if anyone remembers "Tanky" Mason?

YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW WHAT THE WORDS MEANT?

The Washington Post has published the winning submissions to its yearly contest, in which readers are asked to supply alternate meanings for common words.

And the winners are:

1. Coffee, (n) The person upon whom one coughs.
2. Flabbergasted, adj. Appalled by discovering how much weight one has gained.
3. Esplandade, (v) To attempt an explanation while drunk.
4. Negligent, adj. Absentmindedly answering the door when wearing only a nightgown.
5. Lymph, (v) To walk with a lisp.
6. Flatulence, (n) Emergency vehicle that picks up someone who has been run over by a steamroller.
7. Testicle, (n) A humorous question on an exam.
8. Oyster, (n) A person who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddishisms.
9. Frisbeetarianism, (n) The belief that, after death, the soul flies up onto the roof and gets stuck there.

YOU NEVER KNOW WHO YOU WILL MEET

W/22275 Mrs Joan McLean née Poitdin
6 Cliff View Court, Kings Parade, Holland-on-Sea,
Clacton, Essex CO15 5HL

Dear Editor

I was fortunate to be invited to the Unveiling of the Memorial to the Women of World War II and what a wonderful occasion it was. I was sitting near the entrance to Downing Street and who should come out of there when the occasion was over - Mrs Cherie Blair. She had not been invited as she was much too young to be a Veteran. She said she wished to shake hands and thank us.

My daughter took a photograph of us and Mrs Blair said, "If you wish me to autograph it, please send it to me - you know my address!" I found her very gracious.



Mrs McLean with
Mrs Cherie Blair

WE MET AGAIN

Mrs Peggy Wiggett née Riddall
23 Carisbrooke Avenue, Clacton-on-Sea,
Essex CO15 4SB

Dear Editor

Mrs J Booth (née Beckett) had a letter and photographs printed in the last issue of *Lioness*. I immediately thought there cannot be two persons with the same name at Pirbright in 1943. When I arrived at the camp in 1943 June took me under her wing. We slept in adjoining beds and Sheila Tooley who was in the next bed now lives in Clacton. Mrs Tooley had her 50th Wedding Anniversary pictures in the *Lioness* and 22 June 2006 is her Diamond Wedding.

I wrote to June and asked her to visit. She did and stayed with me for three days. We spent an evening with Sheila and her husband so you can imagine we had plenty to talk about after 63 years. I hope to be paying a visit to Spalding in the next few weeks so we will have another opportunity to chat about our service days.

We have to thank the *Lioness* for getting us back together and I really hope it helps other friends to meet up.

Editor: Excellent news. This kind of letter makes my day!

40 YEARS REUNION

Miss Joyce Nicholls

54 Mayberry Avenue, Redhill, Hereford HR2 7QT

Dear Editor **PDF Compressor Free Version**

It was with great pleasure that today I was reunited with the girl who joined the WRAC with me. Although we did not know each other before meeting in the Army Careers Office, we thoroughly enjoyed the time spent travelling from Hereford to Shrewsbury on 23 March 1966 when we took the Queen's shilling and signed up. On 4 April 1966, we headed off to Guildford, Queen Elizabeth Barracks.

My new friend was Jenny Jukes who came from Ross-on-Wye. We were never stationed at the same unit but we followed each other on posting. When Jenny came out of the army she went to live in Australia and we lost touch for a while. When the Hereford Branch of the WRAC Association was formed, one of our members, Mrs Mary Davis, told me that her goddaughter had joined in 1966; her goddaughter was Jenny! We did enjoy a good laugh at the coincidence and to cut a long story short, Mary reunited me with Jenny.



Jenny and Joyce – 40 years later!

Since then, Jenny and I have met up several times. We actually met up 40 years to the week we joined up together and had a lovely lunch together (Thank You, Jenny) reminiscing about our time in the forces. We also managed to find out how many people we had in common. This was amazing and only goes to prove what a small world it is.

FIVE GENERATIONS ON ONE SOFA

Mrs Doreen Lane née Howland

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

Dear Editor

When I was in the ATS from 1941-1945 I never, in my wildest dreams, thought I would become a great-great-grandmother!

I'm enclosing a photograph of our five generations taken at Christmas 2005. From right to left are – myself, my daughter, Pat Goodwin, her daughter Pauline, her son Luke and his daughter Shyia Lara. I wonder if any of my ex-colleagues who were High Speed Wireless Ops at the War Office between 1941 and 1945 remember me?



Mrs Lane and her family

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER?



The WRAC Association now has badges to denote how long you have been a member of the Association. The badges are based on a plain version of the Association badge and the silver one is for 25 years membership and the gold coloured one is for 40 years membership.

You can buy the badges from WRAC Association HQ at Worthy Down. The silver coloured ones are £3 and the gold coloured ones are £4. Cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association.



Poems

PDF Compressor Free Version

BARRAGE

When the barrage opens out to greet the raiding
Huns

Don't forget the girls out there
The girls behind the guns
When you hear the boom of fire
And see the sky alight
Remember they're on duty
In the front line of the fight.

When the barrage has subsided
and the raiders passed
When the All Clear sounds
And you can get to bed at last
More than grateful you should feel
For all that they have done to keep you safe
So don't forget the girls behind the guns.

Patience Strong
Sent in by Jackie Naysmith
Secretary, Bristol Branch

SPELL CHECK

What a wilful thing is a Spell-Check
Smug in its omniscience
In its Divine Might
It assumes the right
To rule on grammar and tense

What an obstinate thing is a Spell-Check
Secure in its immutability
It juggles with words
And substitutes verbs
Makes mock of lucidity

What an obdurate thing is a Spell-Check
With bigotry fuelled by zest
Sentence construction
Becomes sense destruction
When Spell-check Knows It Knows Best

Joan Awbery
Secretary, Norwich Branch

PREPARING FOR WINTER

If you wish to stay warm in the cold winter snow,
Here are one or two facts that you really should
know.

Keep a hat on your head and thick socks on your
toes,
Wear boots if you have them, they're warmer than
shoes.

Wear your hat well pulled down till it covers your
ears,
(If Jack Frost nips those they'll reduce you to tears).
It goes without saying you'll wear gloves or mittens,
Wear both, and your fingers will be warm as kittens.

With all these extremities well under cover,
It just leaves your nose which may give you some
bother.

So wrap a thick scarf round to cover it well,
You'll feel really warm by now, truth to tell.

A belt round your middle will keep your rear warm,
When dressed up like this you will come to no
harm.

Your fingers will tingle, you'll feel all a-glowing,
By the time you are ready you'll find it's stopped
snowing!

Elizabeth Lapham
Secretary, Stockport Branch
September 2005

WRAC INTERNATIONAL REGISTER

I must apologise for the lack of newsletters/
updates to the Register during the last 12
months. This has been mainly due to family
commitments and the demise of my
computer. My faithful computer has gone to
the IT graveyard at the dump and with it any
opportunity to reproduce a Register. I have a
new computer and am in the unenviable
position of re-typing the Register all over
again. Despite the long slow process I have
taken the opportunity to revamp the Register
BUT the changes will take me much longer
to complete. Hopefully you will, eventually,
find the Register much improved.

An update of the Registrar will be completed
and dispatched as soon as possible. Thank
you for bearing with me during this difficult
time but I sincerely hope that the new
Register will be worth the wait.

E Ann Butler-Deakin
14 Ash Rise
Moss Pitt
Stafford
ST17 9HE

Tel: 01785 249992

HOME ALONE

I'm a manager, or at least I was,
I'd hurry here and bustle there, oh yes, I was the boss.
Now I am retired, I read, I write, I watch TV.
The wife – she keeps busy, looking after me.

Well, up to about three weeks ago, until she fell off a
chair,
Painting the kitchen ceiling, not taking enough care.
She's resting now in hospital, she's going to be all right,
But I hope she comes home pretty soon because things
aren't going right.

I thought it would be a doddle, it's only housework after
all,
A bit of cooking and washing, and cleaning the lounge
and hall.
The Hoover was the first to go, it sticks to the floor like
glue,
I've tried lifting it up, you know, but the carpet comes up,
too.

She won't mind about the Hoover much, but she'll miss
the microwave,
I tried to heat a tin of soup, now it's gone too far to save.
Gawd! It sparkled and it rattled, now the inside's all muck
and fat,
Well! I've never used the microwave, she always does all
that.

The central heating is on the blink, it does that now and
then,
She fiddles with the buttons and it all comes right again.
I've tried, I've pressed and twisted, I've screwed it all up
tight,
Now it's freezing cold in the daytime; and boiling hot at
night.

I've had to change my duvet, crikey, what a job,
And all I ended up with was a great big lumpy blob.
I had to get right inside to get it to lay flat,
Well! I've never changed a duvet – she always does all
that.

I've given up on the washing machine, that's another
issue.
My whites are pink, my pants are green, and everything's
covered in tissue.
I'm missing all my programmes, that video is a mystery,
I have read all the instructions but you need a science
degree.
Yet, she seems to make it work, it's a wonder, that's a fact,
I don't know how she manages to make it do all that.

I miss her most at bedtime; when she holds me close, and
that
She builds me up and calms me down and pats me on the
back,
As if I sort the problems out and keep us right on track.
But, here, alone, I can't pretend – she mostly does all
that.

Submitted by Beryl Newell
Colchester

Written by John Howlett,
Daventry, Northants

'LIPSTICK WARRIORS' BY PATRICIA DOORNBOSCH

Sue Kingsbury

Ousel Nest Gatehouse, Grange Road,
Bromley Cross, Bolton BL7 9AX

Last summer I met up with my mother's old
war-time friend, Pat Doornbosch (nee Clark)
who now lives in Canada. Pat was a staff car
drive in the ATS and attached to General
Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters Allied
Expeditionary Force in England, France and
Germany. At the end of the War, she drove for
the British Control Commission in Berlin.



Pat in Berlin

When the War was over, Pat wrote a novel
based on her time in the ATS called *Lipstick
Warriors*. Many of the exploits Pat and my
mother shared in the ATS can be recognised
in the book. Pat used to visit us when I was a
child but I was never allowed to read the
manuscript as there are some risqué
passages! However, when I met Pat last
summer, she finally let me read it. She had
always hoped to publish the book and I
brought it back to England to try to find a
publisher. Traditional publishing did seem a
possibility but, given Pat's age, it was going
to take too long. In the end, we published it
ourselves with Diggory Press, 50+ years after
it was written!

'*Lipstick Warriors*'
follows the adventures
and romances of three
young women as they
drive their staff
officers though
England, France and
Germany. It is set
against the
background of actual
historical events. It
describes day-to-day
routine in the ATS but
the experiences are based entirely on Pat's
life at the time.



Published in paperback, the book retails at
£8.99 and can be bought from independent
bookshops, amazon.com, play.com or post
free from the above address.

Obituaries – their final salute

MAJOR BARBARA TAUNTON NÉE CUNLIFFE

PDF Compressor Free Version

Enlisted Feb 1939 served to 1944
Re-Enlisted 1947 served to 1950
Postings: 6 Western MT Coy (FANY)
27 Lancaster MT Coy
MT RASC Trg Regt Edinburgh
Coventry Coy Att VRD
12 Bn WRAC LonDist

Barbara Taunton together with Col Betty McFie was instrumental in starting the Salisbury Branch in 1950. Barbara served as Chairman to 1958. Col McFie took over in 1959 and served until 1963. Barbara Taunton took over again in 1966 to 1968. In September 1993 she was appointed President of Salisbury Branch and served until 1998.

Sadly in 2000, her health started to deteriorate, and whilst she would always try to attend the branch Christmas Lunch, she was unable to attend meetings. Twelve members of the Salisbury Branch attended her funeral on 24 November 2005.

MAJOR EDWINA COVEN CBE DL JP 21 OCTOBER 1921 – 15 DECEMBER 2005



Edwina Coven with Colonels Frances Hutley, Nan Robertson, Shirley Nield and Audrey Smith after they had received the Freedom of the City of London

This address was given by Colonel Audrey Smith at the Memorial Service held in The Church of St Lawrence Jewry-next-Guildhall on 11 May 2006.

I first met Major Edwina Coven some 40 years ago and, whilst she was slightly awe inspiring to a young officer, it was fascinating to listen to her stories about the City of London and its history and traditions. To us she was a larger than life character who was always doing exciting things but many of us can thank her for her support in different ways throughout the years.

Edwina Instone enrolled into the ATS on 19 January 1942 a few months after her 21st birthday. After completing her regular service she remained on the Reserve of Officers until she reached the age limit in 1972. Having completed her basic training in Halifax her potential was recognised unusually quickly and she was sent to No 2 Officer Cadet Training Unit at Windsor from where she was appointed to a Commission just before the end of August 1942.

She was commissioned as a Second Subaltern and her first posting was to Huddersfield. After that she spent the rest of the War years in regimental duty appointments or as a junior staff officer in five different units in areas of the United Kingdom stretching from Leeds to Kent. She is remembered during that time as an able officer, admired for her individual and forthright views, who was an amusing companion with a fund of fascinating stories.

Shortly after the war ended she was posted near Northampton for a year before leaving for the British Army of the Rhine, where she served in Cuxhaven and then moved to the Hook of Holland. Fluent in French, she qualified as an Interpreter and was recommended for an appointment as a Liaison Officer. On returning to the United Kingdom, she spent a short time as OC of the ATS in 5 Anti Aircraft Group. One of her fellow officers found her a formidable tennis opponent and a generous and hospitable hostess. Later in 1949, her language ability was recognised and she was posted to the War Office for duties with the Western Union Defence Organisation which was responsible for the planning for the formation of NATO. She was a Staff Officer in the Policy and Plans Division and remained in that post for three years. Thirty five years later she was delighted to hear that I was to be the first British female Army Officer to attend the NATO Defence College in Rome, which was to be followed by a Joint Service rotational post on the International Military Staff of NATO Headquarters in Brussels.

She married Frank Coven in 1951 but remained in the service until 1956 which was unusual then and was indicative that her ability and experience were greatly valued.

Throughout her service she always displayed an excellent sense of duty, and set a first rate example. While insisting on high standards in others she also achieved high standards herself. Possessing excellent powers of written and oral expression, she was intensely loyal, could think on her feet and was never afraid to use her own initiative.

At Dinner Nights and other Association occasions at the WRAC Centre at Guildford, she had generations of young officers spellbound by her stories about the City of London and her experiences in Television. There is no doubt that her achievements in those early days of women in the Regular Army forged a path for her successors to follow.

After leaving the WRAC, she continued her involvement

with the Association. For well over thirty years she was responsible for providing the advertising for the Corps magazine *Lioness* which was an unsung but vital task. She was a member of the Council of the WRAC Association from 1973 – 1990 was a Vice President from 1984 – 1988, and then Chairman from 1989 – 1990. I am a member of Council and Chairman of the Grants Committee, but I am also a Liveryman, which is largely due to Edwina supporting me to become a Freeman of the City of London while still serving and then constantly encouraging me to become a Liveryman when I left the Army.

Everyone in the Corps was always grateful to her that we were able to have several magical and unforgettable dinners at the Guildhall and we were always so proud of the fact that the Band of the Women's Royal Army Corps participated in the Lord Mayor's show for many years. Edwina Coven was justifiably proud of her service in the Army as we are proud of her many achievements in the city and elsewhere.

W/155241 MARGARET GRACE ERSKINE

Margaret Erskine died on 7 April 2006 after a very long bravely fought battle against cancer. The last few months were spent in a Residential Home, something she delayed doing, being such an independent Scots woman.

Margaret enlisted in 1942 and was finally demobbed in 1962, having spent those years during the War on Ack-Ack Sites in Devon (1942 – 1946). In 1948 – 1952 she served in the ATS/WRAC Provost, mainly in London and South East England. Her final ten years of service were spent in her beloved Scotland as a WRAC/Sgt Recruiter in Glasgow. She then emigrated to Perth, Western Australia.

She will be missed for her humour, wit and friendship, as well as the pleasure she gave to so many with her lovely soft Scots voice.

Joyce Seward
32-36 Sepia Court, Rockingham, Western Australia 6168

W/50646 MRS GRACE MATHERS

Mrs Mathers joined the ATS in September 1939 and served throughout her service at ATS records in Winchester. She left in March 1944 for family reasons.

In 1947 she became a founder member of the Wimbledon Branch of the WRAC Association. She saw the branch rise from a handful of members to over 100 who met for varying meetings once a month. In 1999 she was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation, presented at Guildford, in recognition of her devoted service to the branch.

Unfortunately in August 2005, she suffered a heavy fall which finally left her wheel chair bound. She entered Downlands Park Nursing Home, Haywards Heath and passed away on 8th March 2006 at the age of 89 years.

We had just celebrated our 68th Wedding Anniversary.



Grace and her husband Charles

She will be greatly missed by family and friends. She had many friends, including some from overseas who regularly kept in touch with each other.

Mr Charles Mathers
1 Tower House Close, Cuckfield, West Sussex RH17 5EQ

WINIFRED MAUD MURRAY (W/6487 SGT GAITT ATS)

Winifred Murray who died on 12th February 2006 at the age of 89, joined the ATS in January 1939. She served in a number of locations in the UK and was promoted Sergeant in 1942. Then in March 1944 she was posted to No. 1 ATS Clerical Company in East Africa Command where she served with No. 1 Sub Depot East African Army Ordnance Corps.

She is survived, and sorely missed, by her husband, her two sons and three daughters.



East Africa ATS Reunion 1968



Winifred and Ian's Wedding

CAPTAIN MAY CONLEY TD

After serving for many years with Royal Signals TA, May Conley became a Driving Test Examiner and was posted to the Recruiting Office in Leeds where she did great service.

In 1967 she was persuaded to form a Branch of the WRAC Association which first started meetings at Leeds University. The Branch flourished under Capt Conley as Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman and is still functioning even with sadly diminishing numbers. May Conley fervently believed in the objects of the Association which are to bring together with friendship and support all ladies who have served in any branch of the Army. To this end she devoted much of her life even when she became seriously ill.

We often forget people who are the workers in the background but May Conley will never be forgotten by those who have known her and been influenced by her example.

COPY DEADLINE

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

30 November 2006



ARMSTRONG Mrs Joyce Armstrong, née Tring, of Canada, on 13 April 2006. ATS

ASHCROFT Mrs Joyce Ashcroft, née Powrie, of Perth, on 14 January 2006. ATS

ASHLEY Mrs Joan Ashley, née Crouch, of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in December 2005. ATS

BALL Mrs Joyce Ball, née Tring, of Toronto, on 13 April 2006. ATS

BANN Mrs Sybil Bann, née Tring, of Toronto, on 13 April 2006. ATS

BEECHAM Mrs Irene Joan Beecham, née Bonner, of Market Drayton, on 29 March 2006. ATS

BELLINGHAM Miss M J (Joan) Bellingham of Bath, in January 2006. ATS

BORRILL Mrs Mavis Mary Borrill, née Nash, of Sleaford, Lincs, on 18 June 2006. ATS

BOSSARD Mrs Janet Elizabeth Bossard, née Walker of Cambridgeshire, on 7 March 2006. WRAC

BOTTLEY Mrs Margaret Bottley of Littlebrough, in May 2006. ATS

BREEDS Miss Grace Florence Eliza Breeds of St Leonards-on-Sea, on 16 April 2006. ATS

BURGE Mrs Pamela Burge, née Cooley, of Paisley, on 17 June 2006. ATS/WRAC

BURNETT Miss Annie Jane (known as Nancy) Burnett of Portsmouth, on 22 May 2006. WRAC

BUTLER Mrs May Butler formerly Stevens/King of South Shields, date not known. ATS

CAWLEY Mrs Sylvia Cawley of Newport, on 12 October 2005. ATS

CHAMBERS Mrs F A J Chambers, née Bean, of Worthing, on 9 January 2006. ATS

CHESTER Mrs Edna Chester, née Pilcher, of Guernsey, on 24 December 2005. ATS

CLARK Mrs Grace Clark, née Smith, of Offley, on 23 April 2006. ATS

COLES Mary Georgiana (known as Georgie) Coles of Tiverton, on 9 May 2006. ATS/WRAC

COLLEY Mrs Kathryn Colley, née Hughes, of Boldre, in January 2005. WRAC

CONLEY Mrs May Conley, née Harrison, of Leeds, on 23 March 2006. WRAC

DAVIS Mrs Kathleen Mary Davis of Ross-on-Wye, date not known. ATS

DAVISON Mrs Sheila Davison, née Jackson, of Dunfermline, on 17 March 2006. ATS

DORAN Mrs Theresa Doran, née Caudy, of Merseyside, on 7 May 2006. WRAC

DUFF Mrs Isabella Duff of Perth, on 22 March 2006. Affiliated Member

DUMMER Miss Nancy Dummer of Kings Lynn, June 2006. ATS

DUNCALF Mrs Ruby Victoria (known as Vicky) Duncalf, née Rigby, of Southport, on 7 January 2006. ATS

ELLIOTT Mrs Elsie Elliott, née Williams, of Fife, on 2 February 2006. ATS

EMMENS Mrs Olive Mary Emmens, née McGovern, of Wolverhampton, in January 2006. ATS

FORD Mrs Joyce (known as Judy) Irene Ford, of Bicester, date not known. ATS

FOWLER Mrs Joan Fowler, née Kellett, of Preston, on 5 February 2006. ATS

FROST Mrs Joan Winifred Frost, née Doyle, of Cambridge, on 17 June 2006. ATS

GIBSON-HILL Mrs Ella Gibson-Hill, née Hill, of Edinburgh, on 18 April 2006. WRAC

GILES Miss Doris May Giles of Martock, on 2 April 2006. ATS

GUY Mrs Patricia Guy, née Pennell, of Downham Market, Norfolk, on 17 March 2006. ATS

HARDY Mrs Elsie Hardy, of Ossett, in June 2006. ATS

HARFORD Mrs Margaret Harford, née Midwinter, of Caernarfon, on 18 December 2005. ATS

HARRIES Mrs Pat Harries, of Cardiff, in February 2006. ATS

HARRIS Miss Odette Harris of Englefield Green, on 15 March 2006. ATS/WRAC

HAY Miss Margaret Hay of Melrose, in March 2006. ATS

HELLICAR Mrs Rachael Edna Hellicar, née Harrap, of Farnborough, on 18 March 2006. ATS

HENNINGS Miss Joan Hennings of Lewisham, on 27 March 2006. ATS

HENSHALL Miss Marion Henshall of Stoke-on-Trent, on 24 May 2006. WRAC

HILL Mrs Madge Hill, née Lanford, of Coles Hill, on 6 December 2005. ATS

HOGARTH Miss Margaret Hogarth of Edinburgh, in February 2006. ATS/WRAC

HOLLAND Miss Margaret Joan Holland of Shropshire, date not known. ATS

HOOPER Mrs Lilian Hooper, née Beebee, of Wolverhampton, in January 2006. ATS

HYDE Mrs Vera Hyde, née Thorpe of Aylestone in May 2006. ATS

JAMIESON Mrs Trudy Jamieson, née Howden, of Morley, Leeds, on 21 February 2006. ATS

JESTY Mrs Annie (known as Nancy) Jesty, née Graham, of Peacehaven, on 20 June 2005. ATS

JOHNS Mrs Jessica Mary Johns, née Graham, of Plymouth, on 13 January 2006. ATS

JOHNSON Mrs Betty Johnson of Bradford, on 26 December 2005. ATS

JORDAN Mrs Mercy F Jordan, née Battle, of Canterbury, on 28 February 2006. ATS

KEMP Mrs Barbara Kemp, née Plunkett, of New Zealand, on 20 December 2005. ATS

KERRISON Mrs Ennis Barbara Kerrison, née Jeffs, of Daventry, on 22 January 2006. ATS

KNOTMAN Mrs Vida Knotman, née Crossley, of Stockport, on 24 December 2005. WRAC

LANDFORD-LEWIS Mrs M Landford-Lewis, née Roberts, of Wrexham, on 23 February 2006. ATS

LAWN Mrs Sheila May Lawn of Hull, on 17 March 2006. ATS

LEHER Mrs Johann (known as Ann) Leher, née Burke, of Dundee, on 1 May 2006. WRAC

MAIN Mrs Evelyn Main of Aberdeen, on 16 November 2005. ATS

MARYAN Mrs Joan Esther Maryan, of Northampton, date not known. ATS

MATHERS Ms Grace B Mathers of Surrey, on 8 March 2006. ATS

MEE Mrs Doris Annie Mee, née Talbot, of Lichfield, on 17 February 2006. ATS

MEPHAM Mrs Bella Mephram, née Hoile, of Canterbury, on 1 May 2006. ATS

MILLS Miss Eunace Mills of Chester, date not known. ATS

MILLS Mrs Ivy Mills of Cardiff, on 11 October 2005. ATS

MOORE Miss Dorothy M Moore of County Down, date not known. WRAC

MORGAN Miss Elizabeth Jane (known as Di) of Ramsbury, on 18 June 2006. ATS/WRAC

MUNRO Ms M E (known as Betty) Munro of Harrogate, on 27 January 2006. ATS

NIAS Mrs Sadie Nias, née Thompson, of Southampton, on 12 June 2006. ATS

O'NEILL Mrs Evelyn O'Neill, née Thompson, of Jarrow, on 6 March 2006. ATS

PARROTT Mrs M J (known as Mimmie) Parrott, née Ellis, of Grimsby, on 20 January 2006. ATS

PICKUP Mrs Anne Muriel Pickup, née Mellor, of Oldham, in January/February 2006 ? ATS

POTTER Mrs Kathleen Potter (known as Joan) of Bridgwater, on 26 March 2006

PURCELL Mrs Joan Purcell, née Harries, of Wellington, on 21 April 2006. ATS

RANKINE Mrs M A Rankine, of Perth, on 14 June 2006. ATS

RASHBROOKE Mrs Edith Muriel Rashbrooke, née Thurlby, of Dagenham, on 2 May 2006. ATS

RENSHAW Mrs Agnes Mary Renshaw, née Drinkwater, of Manchester, in January/February 2006 ? ATS

REYNOLDS Miss Marjorie Reynolds of Rochdale, on 9 June 2006. ATS

RILEY Miss Margaret Riley of Burnley, on 3 March 2006. WRAC

RISIEN Mrs Agnes Risien of Dumfries, on 3 March 2006. ATS

ROBERTSON Miss Agnetta (known as Neta) Robertson of Christchurch, on 31 March 2006. ATS/WRAC

ROBERTSON-SMITH Mrs Eileen Roseberry Robertson-Smith of Malvern, on 27 February 2006. WRAC

ROSE Mrs Shirley Rose, née Fortag, of Vancouver, date not known, WRAC

SADLER Mrs Vivienne Sadler, née Farrington, of Norwich, on 17 April 2006. ATS

SANDHAM Mrs Margaret Sandham, née Priest, of Grimsby, in April 2005. ATS

SINCLAIR Mrs Judith Sinclair, née Levi, of Exeter on 2 January 2006. ATS

SLOCOMBE Miss Mary Slocombe of Salisbury, on 29 April 2006. ATS

SMITH Mrs Catherine Mary Smith, née Marshall, of Sunderland, on 21 May 2006. ATS/WRAC

SMITH Miss Edna Margaret Smith of Chester, date not known. ATS

SMITH Mrs Phoebe Smith, née Long, of Cleveland, in February 2006. ATS

SMITH Miss Violet Ester Smith of Hastings, on 21 May 2006. ATS

SPEIGHT Mrs Margaret (known as Peggy) Speight, née Hall, on 6 March 2006. ATS

TATE Mrs M E (known as Mary) Tate, née Reeves, of Kent on 10 January 2006. ATS

THOMPSON Mrs Doris May (known as Dolly) Thompson, née Fox, of Grimsby, in June 2005. ATS

TIERNEY Mrs Phyllis Trennum Tierney, née Wood, of Malton, North Yorkshire on 26 March 2006. ATS

TIZZARD Mrs Doris Mabel Tizzard, née Pimm, of Romsey, on 3 March 2006. ATS

TRIMBLE Mrs Ellen Trimble, née Johnson, of Cheshire, on 13 January 2006. ATS

WAKELY Sister Joyce Wakely of Southend-on-Sea, on 31 May 2006. NAAFI/EFI and Chaplain's Assistant

WALKER Mrs Blanche May Walker, née Gilligan, of Leeds, in January 2006. ATS

WALLER Mrs Nora Waller, née Stansfield, of Torquay, on 2 March 2006. ATS

WEATHERILL Miss Sheila Weatherill of Peterborough, in March 2006. WRAC

WHITE Mrs Beryl White, née Broadfoot, of Poole, on 23 May 2006. ATS

WILLOUGHBY Miss Muriel (known as Paddy) Willoughby of Bunclyd, on 18 February 2006. WRAC/RLC

WRIGHT Mrs Lilian Edith Wright, née Munnelly, of Maidstone, date not known. ATS/WRAC

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT WARWICK ARTS CENTRE ON SATURDAY 1 APRIL 2006

PDF Compressor Free Version

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all those attending and hoping that they were enjoying the Grand Reunion. She particularly welcomed Kath Barker the new Chief Clerk to her first AGM. The Chairman continued by reminding the meeting of the sad, but not unexpected, news of the death of Brigadier Nolan who had been a staunch supporter of the Association for many years. A full obituary had been published in *Lioness* 1/2006 and a memorial service had been held in the Royal Memorial Chapel, Sandhurst on Friday 24 March.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Purkis, Major Freebairn, Kath Barker, Alison Schofield and all the Grand Reunion Organisational Team for their hard work. The event had proved to be a great success already and there were still the Gala Dinner and Parade and Church Service to look forward to.

The Chairman outlined her programme of visits to individual Branches and Area Reunions and emphasised how important this contact was. The Chairman had also represented the Association at the International Drumhead Service on Southsea Common as part of the Trafalgar 200 celebrations in June and the Unveiling of the Memorial to the Women of World War II in Whitehall on 9 July. The Chairman had also visited the Star and Garter Home in Richmond and had spoken to all the ex-service ladies.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from many individuals, several Branch Secretaries and the following members of Council:

Brig Dame Mary Pihl, Brig Dame Joanna Kelleher, Brig SP Nield, Brig GK Ramsey, Miss M Thomson and Lt Col MW Soames.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated in *Lioness* 2/2005. No comments had been received. It was proposed that the Chairman sign them as a true record.

Proposed: Crewe Seconded: Eastbourne Unanimously agreed

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

There was no business arising which would not be covered by other Agenda items.

5. REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

The Chairman said that Council had met twice since the last AGM: firstly in July at Worthy Down and secondly in London at the Victory Services Club in January. The main items of interest were:

a. Changes to Council Membership. Col FM Cook had been elected as a Life Vice President of the Association. She had recently stood down as North East Area Chairman and Maj D Ryder had succeeded her.

Mrs Cranmer had stood down as South West Area Chairman on grounds of ill-health and Maj Maskens-McIntyre, Chairman of Southern Area, had agreed to increase her responsibilities to include South West Area. Col HE McMahon MBE had been re-elected for another four-year term and Mrs W Hooton had been elected to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Mrs A Denham.

b. National Memorial Arboretum. The plaque and memorial benches had been ordered at a cost of £2519 and the building of the plinth would cost another £1200 approximately. The General Secretary would update Council at their July meeting.

c. Branches. The Chairman was pleased to announce the opening of two Branches: one in Suffolk out of the previous Norfolk and Suffolk Branch and one called Marches and Mid Wales based on the previous Wrexham Branch. Although other branches had to close, it was promising to see that progress was being made in other areas. The WRAC Dinner Club and the Officers' Dining Club were increasing in numbers and new applications to join the Association were received on a daily basis.

d. Branch Officers. The Chairman passed on her personal thanks to all those who held office in the Branches and who did so much to keep the Branches active. In particular, she thanked the Secretaries and explained to the AGM that the Secretaries, in this special Grand Reunion year, had each been sent a bouquet of flowers in appreciation of their hard work.

e. Auditors. Council had agreed to re-appoint Baker Tilly as Auditors.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Honorary Treasurer began by explaining that the Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year ending 31 October 2005 had been published in *Lioness* 1/2006. She also referred to the Annual Report for 2005 which had been made available at the start of the meeting.

The Stock Market had continued to improve and that had had a beneficial effect on the investments. Page 11 of the Annual Report showed that the combined funds were worth £5,062,167: an increase of £471,131. However, that had to be balanced against a significant reduction in donations from £229,678 to just £23,229. This figure included legacies which cannot be relied upon or predicted but which have a profound effect on the income of both Funds.

The Association, excluding the Benevolent Funds, had an income over expenditure of £20,426: much less than last year's figure which had included nearly £41,000 of donations. This year, the Association had only received £1,505 in donations. However, the investments had increased by £31,801 compared with £18,285 the previous year.

The Honorary Treasurer then spoke about the Benevolent Fund which is described as the Restricted Funds because these funds can only be used for benevolent purposes. The Trustees had confirmed in their Annual Report that the maximum amount of income would be spent on benevolence. The Fund had no excess for pensions over income this year of £5,891. Nearly £20,000 more had been spent on cases than the previous year. However, the investments had increased by £425,958 so, overall, the Benevolent Funds had been able to support the excess of expenditure.

The Annual Report, Page 12, showed that some £685,000 was held in cash – mostly on deposit. Council, at their last meeting in January, had agreed that up to £200,000 should be invested and this would be arranged prior to the next Council meeting in July.

In conclusion, the Honorary Treasurer reported that the Funds were sound and should be able to meet predicted commitments over the next few years. She recommended that the financial statements be accepted and the audited accounts ratified.

Proposed: Ashby de la Zouche Seconded: Bury
Unanimously agreed

7. REPORT OF THE EDITOR OF THE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

The Editor began by saying how delighted she had been that *Lioness* 1/2006, at 80 pages, had been the longest ever edition. The extra 16 pages had been taken up entirely by articles about the Unveiling of the Memorial to the Women of World War II and the 60th Anniversary of the end of WWII. The Editor thanked all those who had contributed so much worthy material and photographs.

The Editor described herself as “the person who puts the jigsaw together”. She encouraged everyone to continue to send in as much material as possible. Preferably it would be accompanied by a good quality and well-captioned photograph! The publication dates were March and September and she reminded everyone that it does take two months to print, distribute and deliver so the cut-off dates for input were realistic even although they appeared to be so far in advance of the publication dates.

The financial situation for the *Lioness* is not good. This edition cost £7159 to print and £2673.39 to distribute. Over the last two years, costs had risen through inflation. Also, Council had agreed some significant changes which had increased the cost: firstly, a central pullout would be used for applications and returns and secondly, colour would be used throughout. Also, the recent 80-page edition cost an extra £500 plus VAT. Council had always acknowledged the importance of the journal and wished to encourage any improvements. However, at the same time, it would appear that the membership had decreased its financial support of the *Lioness*. Branches had only donated £420 compared to £1790 three years ago. The Editor also drew attention to Page 11 of the Annual Report. The combined worth of the Branches had risen from nearly £62,000 to over £76,000 within one year. Branches were asked to bear this in mind and to remember the *Lioness* if they were thinking about making any donations.

The Editor commented on the successful outcome of including a book of Grand Reunion Draw tickets with *Lioness* 2/2005. It had been the first time this had been done and the response had been very good. Some 7,000 tickets had been sold at £1 each: about a quarter of those distributed. This compared with 4,800 tickets at 50p each sold for the last Grand Reunion in 2003. Hopefully the response would be even better next time. The Editor also thanked those who had been kind enough to enclose further donations with their tickets: nearly £300 had been received.

The Editor concluded her report by further encouraging as many contributions as possible for the next edition which would be published in September 2006.

8. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

a. Executive Committee

The Chairman of the Executive Committee reported that the main emphasis of their work had been the planning and preparation of the Grand Reunion. In particular, she wished to thank the Grand Reunion Organisational Team for all their enthusiasm and input and Warwick Conferences who had been so supportive and helpful throughout the whole planning period. The event itself had been extremely successful so far and it was hoped that the rest of the weekend would be as enjoyable.

The Chairman of the Executive Committee also reported that they had agreed to introduce length of membership badges which were on sale at the Grand Reunion for the first time. The silver coloured ones denoted 25 years of membership and the gold ones, 40 years. The General Secretary would investigate the introduction of one for 50 years membership. It would likely be based on the current Association badge but with an additional banner to denote 50 years and they would be presented to eligible members.

The Chairman of Council thanked Mrs Purkis for all her hard work in planning and creating such an enjoyable and successful Grand Reunion.

b. Benevolent Fund Grants Committee

The Chairman of the Grants Committee updated the AGM with a summary of the work of the Benevolent Fund in the previous financial year. The Major Grants Committee had met once a month and minor cases had been dealt with on a daily basis. 632 cases had been considered: an increase of 5.3% on the previous year. The ratio of cases was 361 ATS to 271 WRAC so approximately three-fifths of the cases had been ATS and two-fifths WRAC. Until recently the ratio had been three quarters ATS to one quarter WRAC.

The total amount spent was £150,100. Nearly half of this money had been paid towards grants for mobility, disability aids and house repairs and adaptations. The Benevolent Fund had relied a great deal on the generosity of other service and civilian funds which very often shared the costs of an application. The Chairman thanked the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, the Army Benevolent Fund and most other Army Regiments and Corps, as well as the Royal British Legion.

The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund provided 20 annuities to those who were elderly, in poor health and living alone with minimal income. The annuity was £12 a week with a Christmas Bonus of £60. The Army Benevolent Fund also granted annuities set at £55 per month and 76 ex ATS received these awards. The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund also helped towards topping up shortfalls in Nursing Home Fees. Currently, 19 ex ATS and WRAC received assistance with amounts ranging from £5 to £15 a week. The Army Benevolent Fund very often shared these cases because of the amounts involved.

In conjunction with the Army Benevolent Fund, Pontins holidays were provided for worthy cases with children under 16. In 2005 a total of 10 families had been given a holiday. Mrs Babs Mitcheson had co-ordinated the Pontins holidays for many years and the Chairman thanked her for her contribution. The Army Benevolent Fund had recently introduced Warners Holidays for the more mature person and the fund hoped to make more use of this facility in the future.

The Chairman of the Grants Committee then described two cases. Mrs J, ex ATS, a widow aged 85 was in poor health due to a heart condition that had prevented her from working most of her life. She now had cancer and was cared for by her daughter. When their roof started to leak recently Mrs J had been extremely worried as she had realised that their low income would not stretch to paying for repairs. The Royal British Legion, the Royal Army Service Corps and the ATS/WRAC Benevolent Fund shared the costs of repairs. Mrs J's daughter had written on behalf of her mother, conveying their sincerest thanks: 'My mother is so touched by your kindness and generosity towards her. Thank you for such a generous contribution especially at a time when we did not know what to do or who to turn to.'

Mrs P, ex ATS, is a widow in her 80's. She suffered from arthritis and asthma and her daughter helped with her daily care. Mrs P's bed was broken and her mattress most uncomfortable resulting in many sleepless nights. Together with The Royal British Legion, the Benevolent Fund bought her a new bed. Mrs P wrote: 'I wanted to let you know how wonderful the new bed has proved to be. I have missed out all these years. I am, purely out of habit, still careful about broken springs piercing my hot water bottle and causing havoc. But this bed is a dream. I am sure that I will get used to the luxury of it in time.'

Lastly, the Chairman of the Grants Committee encouraged all Branches to continue to raise money for the Benevolent Fund. This year, branches had donated £1798.73 in comparison with £2990 the year before. All donations were greatly appreciated especially as the Funds could rely only on the income from investments, legacies and donations.

The Chairman of Council thanked Colonel Smith for all her support and commitment as the Chairman of the Grants Committee.

9. RESOLUTIONS

a. Motions of Urgency

There were no motions of urgency.

b. Council Resolutions

There were no Resolutions which Council wished to raise.

c. Branch Resolutions

There were no Branch Resolutions.

d. Election of Honorary Treasurer

The Chairman asked the meeting to ratify Lt Col Woollard in her appointment as Honorary Treasurer.

Proposed: Norfolk

Seconded: Plymouth

Unanimously agreed

10. CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

The Chairman explained that since the last AGM, Council had approved 24 Certificates of Appreciation. Eight had already been presented; two would be presented the following week by the General Secretary at the Southampton Branch Annual Dinner. The Chairman presented Certificates to the following:

Mrs Margery Grant-Smart	Medway
Mrs Daphne Brookes	Bournemouth
Mrs Pearl Penny	Bournemouth
Mrs Beryl Smith	Bournemouth
Mrs Madge Evans	Luton
Mrs Eileen Morgan	Plymouth
Mrs Mary Davis	Plymouth
Mrs Ann Deakin	Stafford
Mrs Rosemary Jones	Hereford
Mrs Lilian Hollis	Leics & Notts
Mrs Violet Rawlins	Leics & Notts
Mrs Vera Waddington	Leics & Notts
Mrs Barbara Danter	Leics & Notts
Miss Frances Green	Salisbury

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman said there were two items she wished to brief the meeting on:

a. Veterans' Day. This would now be an annual event and, this year, would be held on 27 June 2006. Maj Warne, Secretary of COBSEO, explained that the event would take place adjacent to the Imperial War Museum. It would be similar to last year's events in St James' Park but on a much smaller scale. All veterans were invited.

b. Armed Forces Veterans' Lapel Badge. Initially, this had been issued to WWII veterans. The eligibility had been extended to those serving up until 31 December 1954. On 27 June 2006, there would be a further extension to include those serving up until 31 December 1959. The Badge can be obtained from The Veterans' Agency - 0800 169 2277.

c. Grand Reunion Prize Draw.

The Chairman announced the names of the 30 prizewinners.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next AGM would be held at The Victory Services Club, London on Saturday 24 March 2007.

PDF Compressor Free Version



Leicestershire & Nottinghamshire Branch at the Gala Dinner - Saturday 1 April 2006