

LIONESS

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THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

(Incorporating the QMAAC & ATS Comrades Association)

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 206184

Founded in 1919

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Cover Photographs

Front Cover

*The Queen reviews King's Troop RHA**Photograph by Sgt M Howard RLC*

Back Cover

*Staff College (ATS) Course 10**14 Jun – 5 Sep 1945*

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CONTENTS

Message from the Vice President	1
Articles of Interest	2
Branch News	12
ATS Reminiscences	36
Reminiscences of the WRAC	43
Where Are You Now?	45
Reunions	50
Weddings	56
Letters to the Editor	58
Poems	60
Obituaries – their Final Salute	62
Minutes of the WRAC AGM	71

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Editorial



I do hope you like the photograph on the front cover. Of course, our Patron, Her Majesty the Queen is the main focus but those who are sharp eyed will have noticed that she is being accompanied on the right by the Commanding Officer, Major Erica Bridge. I thought you would appreciate the juxtaposition of our Patron, who served in the ATS, with an excellent example of the opportunities available to women in the Army today.

Many of the Branch reports urge WRAC members to take a more active part in their activities. We all understand that many members have other demands on their time but we have relied a huge amount on the enthusiasm and commitment of the ATS who are filling Branch appointments. PLEASE, if you can support your Branch, please do. There is no use sitting back and thinking you will do it in a few years time – by then the Branch may have had to close! You will see that we are also trying to encourage more ATS and WRAC to join us. To that end, the central pull out this time consists only of two application forms. There is an incentive to persuade your ex-colleagues to join – turn to the middle pages and find out more.

Many of you may remember Maurice Mager who not only was the Dental Officer at the WRAC Centre, Guildford for several years but he was also a very active member of the *Lioness* editorial committee. For his great support and willingness to help us, Maurice was made an honorary member of our Association. Sadly, he died on 15 May and we send our condolences to Anne.

I would like to thank Kath Barker for the time she spent as our Chief Clerk. Kath certainly enjoyed all her contacts with you, mainly on the telephone and appreciated learning about your experiences in the Army. Kath went to work in the AGC Museum and we wish her well. I hope that by the time you are reading this, our new Chief Clerk, Denise Jaballah will have settled in. She started in mid-August and I know you will welcome her as and when you have the opportunity to speak to her.

Thank you to everybody who has been kind enough to submit material. Could I just ask that you try to send a photograph as well...it does help to liven up the page and often adds another dimension to the article. There are nearly 150 photographs in this

edition already, but I can always squeeze in another one! Talking about that, I would like to introduce you to Jon Clucas. Many of you make such complimentary remarks about the magazine and it simply would not be possible without Jon at Warwick Printing. He is always supportive and interested in this journal. It is Jon who sets up the magazine, puts in the colour backgrounds and generally presents the material in the most attractive way possible. I know you will agree that he does a wonderful job and I would like to take this opportunity to say "Thank You" from all of us and let him know how much we appreciate his efforts.



Jon

Jane Freebairn

Message from the Vice President



In the last *Lioness*, I said that I would be retiring from the Army later on in the year – well, I am actually there and, as I write this towards the end of July, I have six working days left. I can't believe it! I don't know where the last 36 years have gone but I do know that I would do the same if I had my time over again. I have some wonderful memories of my time in the Service but the best part has been the camaraderie and friendships struck up along the way and, thanks to the

WRAC Association, I shall still be able to continue to enjoy these particular benefits.

As well as being excited about this new phase in my life, I feel that the Association is also about to venture into pastures new as we take forward initiatives to attract new members. To this end, a Recruiting and Advertising Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Colonel Nicky Murdoch to increase membership and broaden the appeal of the Association. As you know, the Association is managed by a Council of Trustees responsible for the funds of both the Benevolent Fund and the Association Funds. The Benevolent Fund is very healthy which is just as well because the calls upon it are increasing; however, the Association fund is less so. Increased membership and awareness will hopefully result in an overall improved financial state and will help towards financing things such as the *Lioness*, which barely breaks even, and Grand Reunions. Those of you who joined years ago as a Life Member may only have paid £20. (This equals four years membership for annual members paying £5 each year). However, you are still receiving two editions of the *Lioness* each year. Of course, there is no question whatsoever of you not receiving the journal, but I wonder if you might consider making a donation or even setting up a standing order for a regular payment? I would also like to make a plea that, if you are kindly thinking of leaving a legacy, please would you consider the Association Fund? Similarly, Branches and Areas are encouraged to make donations from the proceeds of raffles and other money raising activities. Please do not think that the Association Fund is in desperate straits because it is not, but I just wanted to raise your awareness and to ask you to encourage your ATS and WRAC friends who do not belong to the Association to join us.

My appointment as Vice President was due to finish in July. However, I was asked by Council to stand again. This I have done and have been reappointed for a further four year tenure. As I have said before, it is a great privilege to hold this appointment and I will endeavour to do the best I can for the Association and to live up to your expectations. In the meantime, I look forward to meeting up with many of you either in your Branches or at your Area Reunions.

Keep the flag flying!

Sue Westlake

Articles of Interest

PINGAT JASA MALAYAN MEDAL -

WIN PHILLIPS
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Ms W M Phillips
Flat 3, Gerald Palmby Court, Western Road, Deal,
Kent CT14 6RP
Tel: 01304 373976

Enclosed is a photograph of "yours truly" taken at Folkestone on 1st March having received my Malayan Medal from Colonel Tajiri Alwi from the Malaysia High Commission. There were 200 to 300 men but no servicewoman except myself there - not mentioned of course!!



Win Phillips with her medal - the very Win Phillips who is to be our first in-pensioner at the Royal Hospital Chelsea!

PINGAT JASA MALAYSIAN MEDAL - GLADYS POPE

W/389156 Gladys W Pope née Jones
11 Lynch Close, Mere, Wiltshire BA12 6EL
Tel: 01747 860887

My friend Barbara Stinton wanted to join the WRAC to become a driver and to see the world. "Not for me" I said as I was quite happy as an accounts clerk with the National Coal Board and certainly did not want to go abroad.

Barbara duly signed on in Birmingham, came back and said, "They do have clerks and if you sign on within a week we could go in together".

Well, what are friends for? So in April 1955 we arrived at Guildford to quite a culture shock!

We both then went to Yeovil, but drivers could not talk to clerks there. Barbara passed, spent a short time at Hounslow and was then posted to a TA unit at Lichfield (about an hour's drive from our home town). She even lived in civilian digs. After my training as a clerk and shorthand writer, my first posting was Singapore - I was mortified.

So, some 50 years later - where did those years go to? - I went to Swindon to receive my Pingat Jasa Malaysian

Medal, presented by Colonel Tajiri Alwi from the Malaysian High Commission. The Malaysian government decided to present the medal to all service personnel in that theatre during the Emergency, 1957-66.



Gladys Pope (nee Jones) receiving the Pingat Jasa Malaysian Medal from Colonel Tajiri Alwi

PS. Barbara and I are still good friends!

STEP BACK 60 YEARS - A TRIBUTE TO BRISTOL BRANCH

W/89104 Mrs Elsie M Plummer (née Crossley)
44 Windmill Court, William Booth Road, King's Lynn
PE30 4XP

Where do you begin - when you have just spent a fabulous weekend with very special people? It all began when I read in my *Lioness* of the Cathedral Service organised by the Secretary (Mrs Jackie Naysmith) of the Bristol Branch.

I spent the last half of my WWII service in charge of the ATS Company at 31st AFV(TANKS) on Clifton Downs. A more hard working company of ATS would be hard to find. More of this in my book 'SERGEANT'. I read in the Bristol Branch report by their very hard working Secretary that she was arranging another Service to commemorate women who had served their country. I had so longed to visit Bristol again so I wrote to Mrs Naysmith (via Major Freebairn) to ask about this service. Immediately I was invited there to stay with their Chairman (Mrs Esmé Davidson) and to be met (and driven about all weekend!) by Jackie. Oh! What kindness.

I made my plans. Travel by train from King's Lynn (nothing goes past here!) to Ely. From there to Birmingham and then to Bristol. Quite a long 6½ hour journey. My very caring son David who saw me off - urged me - that if I needed help I was to ask "someone in uniform" only! OK!

4th May 2007 - journey begins - reached Ely safely. I tugged my case under the underpass to the correct platform and eventually boarded my train to Birmingham. Imagine my heart stopping consternation

when, after about 25 miles travelling North West, across the door screen flashed a message 'next stop – Stanstead airport'. Heart stop! I tapped the lady sitting in front of me – “I think I am on the wrong train”. “Why?” she asked. I explained. “It’s OK” she said – “You are alright – there is a fault in the information service”. Next from Birmingham to Bristol on the luxurious Virgin train. What comfort.

Arrived at Temple Meads, Bristol – through the underpass – towards the barrier and there – waiting for me – two ladies holding in front of them a *Lioness* (very clever). I pointed to my WRAC badge on my lapel and we met. Big smiles. Esmé took my arm and Jackie took my case. Such a warm welcome. Jackie drove us through the centre of Bristol to give me a good look at the new City. I could only visualise bomb damage from the past!

On then to Esme’s house at Knowle where I was urged to ‘make myself at home’. Given a lovely room – changed into casuals and then given tea and cream cakes (never mind the waistline)!



Elsie outside her old billet at Sea Walls, Clifton

I was keen to see my old billet on the Downs and the area where our TANK depot stood – also once again Clifton Suspension Bridge, both near the Downs. We did the Bridge first, walked along one side and back along the other, with numerous photos on the way. Then on to the Downs. I knew exactly where the Sergeants’ Mess had been (I stood on the spot) and the billet – an old house but still standing and in good order. I was choked with feeling, but after more photos I was pleased to smile with happiness and gratefulness to my two new friends who were making all this possible. It was now early evening, so we made our way back to the centre of Bristol to have an evening meal. Jackie took us to the right place where we all enjoyed a delicious carvery (and my glass of Chardonnay). Completely worn out after my exciting day, we returned to Esmé’s house and bed. I slept like a log.

A bit late up next morning, we sat in the back garden under a sunshade. The sun shone all weekend and Jackie came to pick us up early as she needed to be at the Cathedral to ensure that all was in order. So green suits for the ‘girls’ – best suit brought with me for myself and complete with medals we were off again.



Elsie in the same choir stall where she had sung Jerusalem in 1945

I mention now that pre-War I was a trained singer and at the original celebration Service, at the end of hostilities WWII, I sang solo – Jerusalem from the choir stalls in the Cathedral. I was very proud of this event and Jackie kindly took photos of me where I had stood to sing. The Branch all arrived and welcomed me most warmly and we were able to swap notes before the Service began at 3.30pm. We then took our places at the front, and I was very kindly given the seat directly behind the Lord Mayor and who welcomed ME with a lovely bow. What a generous man.

Jackie’s service was really lovely. The choir sang beautifully. Jackie read the lesson from Ezekiel “There is a time for ...” in her clear voice, so that all could hear and understand; an afternoon to remember for ever. More photos followed and I was photographed with the Lord Mayor and his lady. That was an honour.



With the Lord Mayor and his wife outside Bristol Cathedral on 5 May 2007

Evening was upon us again and after a quick drive and look at the docks at the Centre we found a restaurant and enjoyed the inevitable fish and chips! Back to billet, Jackie’s home, to develop the photos.

Morning came and it was time to go for my train at Temple Meads. Jackie arrived with her car. My case was put aboard and we were off down to the station. On the platform someone sang quietly, ‘Wish me luck as you

wave me goodbye' – Jackie – I was too overcome to join in. I could never thank both these ladies enough for their care, kindness and warm welcome. A carrier bag was thrust into my hand and I opened it at about 11.30 to find ham and salad sandwiches, sponge cake, a choc bar and serviettes. Good ladies like that are hard to find. Many thanks girls!

After a couple of changes (Birmingham is a nightmare!), I eventually found myself on the last train to King's Lynn. Plenty of room this time, the train's guard sat at the opposite side and asked me if I would be met at King's Lynn. Oh yes – there was David on King's Lynn platform – "Glad to see you took my advice, Mum" he said – glancing at the smiling guard.

'All's well' – as they say.

SIGN OF THE TIMES

Kathleen McBurney,

53 Salisbury Place, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX3 6ND

We had lived in the house for several years and couldn't afford a stair carpet. Dockets and coupons were still apart of the transaction for goods long after the War finished and we had none left.

I always switched on the radio to lighten the chore of ironing. I liked to tune into Women's Hour, when one day I realised that someone was reading out a knitting pattern for a stair carpet. Silly me, I carried on ironing and listening, while hanging on to every instruction given and later made notes of the pattern from memory. It didn't occur to me to write and ask for it, besides that would have taken far too long for me. I knew where I could obtain damaged wool and the sooner the better. In one bag there was a dark brown and tan jumble of wool to sort, which I used to knit the stair carpet on thick



Kathleen in London on the day of the Unveiling of the Memorial to the Women of WW2

knitting needles. My zig-zag pattern must have been very different from the Women's Hour pattern, but it zigged and zagged to my great satisfaction. I was pregnant with our second child at that time and had to sit upright on a dining chair to knit. As the stair carpet grew so did my tummy and the roll of carpet rested on another chair directly in front of me. The carpet took 4½ months to knit, every evening after our 4 year old daughter was in bed and on wet afternoons when I couldn't take her to the Bankfield playground and then into Bankfield Museum. The carpet measured 8½ yards when completed.

After pressing it with a damp cloth I backed it with a good quality, smooth, strong Hessian which I bought by the yard and was nothing like the rough potato sack Hessian. The carpet lasted 10½ years. When the treads wore a bit thin, I darned them with wool left over, to reinforce the wearing. My mother-in-law would stand at the foot of the stairs on many of her visits to say, "It's amazing!" She herself didn't knit but she pegged rugs from old coats of many colours, cut into suitable strips. She also made crochet mats and tatted round the edges of hankies for presents. I bought a tool from a craft shop and by following a few instructions on the card it was on, I made woollen half moon and oblong mats for in front of the hearth and around the beds on the linoleum. The tool was threaded with first the fawn wool for the middle and the green for the border. The tool, when prodded in and out of the Hessian formed a loopy woollen thickness overall. The mats were also pressed and backed with Hessian and I still have the original tool.

When I first set eyes on the stone built terraced house I knew instinctively that it was the home my husband and I had longed for when we lived in separate Nissan huts while serving our King and country during WWII. A dream had come true for us and we were truly thankful. The house was a dirty old shell, but I knew I could transform it into a home given time, lots of time. To this day, 60 years later, it is a peaceful dwelling place and a home.

CLUB – ATS – COLCHESTER

Mrs Beryl Newell

Jodes Holly, St Mary's Road, Aingers Green,
Great Bentley, Colchester C07 8NG

Tel: 01206 250029

Club ATS are still carrying on, despite increasing age and disabilities. However, those members who are unable to come every month remain members and have a monthly newsletter. We still meet in an upstairs sitting-room in Colchester Conservative Club and now have an ATS shield on the wall. The staff are very kind and look after us well.

We had our Christmas lunch there at a very reasonable price – it is amazing how the price of a roast dinner doubles in the run-up to Christmas. The lunch was very good and we were joined by our first Chairman, Elizabeth Tinker. We also invited Val Kemball, but she was already double-booked, so suggested coming to a meeting in the New Year. We were very pleased to see her in February.

It has not been a good year. Two members have lost their husbands and many members have had many hospital appointments. Since March, three of us have had falls, two head injuries and I broke my arm. It's surprising what you can do left-handed! I am very lucky to have a daughter who is a nurse. I am happy to say that Charlotte Lawrence, our oldest member at 98, is still going strong and comes when she feels able.

We are going out to lunch on Veterans Day to a local pub. I know it and it is good, cheap and saves on transport costs. Great Bentley RBL are hoping to arrange a visit to the Poppy Factory at Aylesford, Kent in July and I am hoping to arrange seats for any members who wish to go.

A VERY SAD FAREWELL

W/16536 Betty France, Secretary, Leeds Branch

Saturday 31 March 2007 was one of the saddest days of my life. I was in Halifax, West Yorkshire to witness the end of a large piece of History.

The Duke of Wellington's Regiment, the 33rd of Foot, over 300 years old, one of the finest Regiments of the British Army is now no more. Consigned, under the Banner of modernisation to oblivion. Push buttons will, in future, replace foot soldiers. It was a crisp day with a sneaky North West wind for the last act - the laying up of The Standards in the Local Parish Church which had witnessed the glory and the sadness of the Regiment over many years.

As a large crowd awaited the arrival of the VIPs, the Band entertained us with ever remembered marching tunes. The Corps of Drums performed their usual showpiece much enjoyed by the children. The escort of very smart very young soldiers were inspected and the Standards trooped along the ranks. As I watched, the ritual tears were in my eyes as I remembered my first day as a member of this family, which is what these old famous Regiments were.

It was an evening in May 1939 when, as a newly enlisted volunteer in 3rd West Riding Platoon ATS, I was on parade in the Drill Hall Huddersfield, the Regimental Headquarters of the 5th Duke of Wellington's Regiment TA. I remembered being called up on 1st September how the girls quickly integrated with the men and how pride in the regiment rubbed off on to us. We were allowed to wear the Cap Badge above our left pockets as a mark of being one of them. We continued to serve with the Regiment throughout the War, some of us being promoted and moving on to higher positions but we shall always be "DUKES".

Tears ran down my cheeks as the Standards processed down the aisle to be consigned to the past along with a large chunk of my life. I shall be forever an "Old Duke". Memories cannot be obliterated in the name of modernisation.

LONG LIVE THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S REGIMENT.

ST GEORGE'S DAY

Pat Smith

On 23 April 2007, five old friends met up in Central London, some of us meeting for the first time in 30 years.



Jill Trainor, Mary Roberts, Pat Smith & Lin Thornton

We met at the London Eye and had a picnic nearby before walking along the South Bank to the Tate Modern and Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. There we crossed the Thames using the new Millennium Bridge, with its great view of St Paul's Cathedral and walked back the North Bank. A couple of miles later ... and non-stop talking all the way, we parted at Waterloo Station for home.

Many thanks to Jill Trainor for suggesting and arranging the meeting.



Jill Trainor, Mary Roberts, Lin Thornton & Pauline Hobill

W/454512 PTE FINNAMORE MBE

Christine Marshall

core@drumhill.fsnet.co.uk

Lyn, known affectionately as Zorro to many of her friends, joined the WRAC in September 1974. After her basic training at Guildford she was posted as a driver to 22 Sqn HQ UKLF Wilton, before moving to Catterick. Her last tour of duty was at 68 Sqn RCT in Rheindahlen at HQ BAOR. After her discharge in 1978 Lyn drove buses in Scotland but soon realised this was not for her so she followed in her father's footsteps and joined the prison service. She worked first at Holloway and later at Newhall in Wakefield.

It was for these services that Lyn was awarded the MBE. The Queen presented this to her on 7 March 2007. Congratulations Lyn from all your friends at home and abroad, it is well deserved.

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Lyn Fennamore MBE

DEDICATION OF BRANCH STANDARD

Margaret Grant MBE

The Dedication of the Postal & Courier Services Branch of the Royal Engineers Association Standard was held at Christchurch, Eastbourne on 28 October 2006. The Rev Howard John, a former RAF Chaplain to the Forces took the Service of Dedication. Many other Standard Bearers supported this occasion and they were inspected by Chris Connaughton.

The Standard carries the badge of the WRAC in recognition of the many years in which they supported the Royal Engineers Postal Courier Services throughout all theatres worldwide. Special thanks go to ex WRAC



*L-R Margaret Grant MBE, Jim Steer RE (PCS) Secretary
Rev Howard John and Standard Bearer Ray Fenn*

Margaret Grant MBE who donated the badge and thanks to the contingent of former WRAC members who attended the Dedication Service.

Afterwards an enjoyable sociable evening was held at the RE Club which was located a short distance away.



*L-R: Brenda Daley, Maggie Watt, Chris Fretwell,
Margaret Grant MBE, Pam Sussex, Jean Legg and Beryl
Sandy*

STORY OF THE WRAC BAND IN THE LATE 50s OR WAS IT THE EARLY 60s

Jean Collyer née MacDowall

194 The Street, Boughton, Faversham, Kent ME13 9AL



*Jean MacDowall, Director of Music and arranger of the
WRAC Quick March, conducting on a hot afternoon*

On an extremely hot day in summer, the Band was booked to play at the Annual Garden Party of the Women's Institute. We played in a small courtyard and the guests were wandering around the gardens of the beautiful house on the South Downs, hearing our music relayed to them. This is the only photo I know of in shirt sleeve order because the temperatures were in the high 90s.

After tea we were to Beat Retreat on the lower lawn separated from a field by barbed wire. As we marched on, correctly dressed of course, a herd of cows came running across to join us. As we counter marched so did the cows. As we wheeled to left and right, so did the cows. When we played the Evening Hymn and Sunset, the herd stood to attention, and when we marched off, they turned round and left!

This is not the end of the story. Next morning, as I had breakfast, I read the *Times* newspaper and on turning to the back page, there was a large photo of us marching with the cows – we had hit the headlines! Has anyone kept this photo? I would dearly love to have a copy.

AGM – VICTORY SERVICES CLUB, LONDON – MARCH 2007

Mrs Chris Corker,
5 The Orchards Park, Priory Road, Ruskington,
Lincs. NG34 9DH

Firstly, thank you for the lovely lunch on Saturday at the AGM. I think I shall enjoy being Secretary of the Lincoln & District branch! I am enclosing a few photos (which may or may not make it into the *Lioness*) showing a few of us relaxing in the bar after the AGM. Nicky Murdoch said that it was our 'Motion of Urgency'.



Nicky Murdoch, Irene Hall, Sue Westlake and Maggie Purkis

Secondly, in June the Lincolnshire County show is having its annual airing and we are in the process of contacting the organisers with the view of having a small stand to advertise the Association. By the way, I sent a form to a lady I saw looking for WRAC she had served with as she had put the request in a magazine I was reading. She has written me a lovely letter to say she has joined – her name is Renee Vincett from Swaffham.



Chris Corker, Doreen Peggie, Edna Lee and Wendy Hooton

Editor: You see – AGMs can be fun!

I JOINED BRADFORD BRANCH IN 1948

W/93849 Miss M Brett
3 Pilots Avenue, Mill Hill, Deal, Kent CT14 9HG
Tel: 01304 381298

I joined the ATS on 30 November 1941 and was demobbed on 23 February 1947 and joined Bradford Branch in 1948. In fact, the branch had been founded in 1933 as part of the QMAAC Old Comrades Association.



AND AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL SERVICE *Comrades Association Gazette*

General Secretary: Mrs. Parkinson, QMAAC and A.T.S. Comrade Association, Duke of York's Headquarters, King's Road, London, S.W.
Telephone: SL044 4145
Editor: Same Address

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A copy of the photograph which appeared in the QMAAC & ATS Comrades Association Gazette in early 1949. Note the badge – the 'Lioness' existed before the WRAC!

It was opened up to ex-ATS in 1945 and then to ex-WRAC in 1950.

I attended my first Grand Reunion at The Royal Albert Hall, London in the spring of 1949. Also present was Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother with her aunt, The Princess Royal. It was a great event and the hall was full. I attended many more reunions. My last one was 18-20th April 1997 at Blackpool.



Majors Ishbel Thomson and Jo Young flank WO2 Andrea Denham at the Grand Reunion in Blackpool

Another memorable day I enjoyed was 25 March 1992 when the farewell parade to the WRAC was held at Queen Elizabeth Park, Guildford. The Queen Mother and The Duchess of Kent attended most of the day. I have some nice photos and one of a Guard of Honour of WRAC girls stood as The Queen Mother was leaving the parade ground. Later I visited the marquee to chat to the ex ATS members. On 16 April 1994 I was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation, by Brigadier Anne Field.

In July 1994, the RBL Women's Section Bradford Central Branch presented me with a Golden Award for service as Branch Treasurer for 22 years. I became a member in 1954. Then, in 1998, I transferred my WRAC membership to Canterbury Branch as I moved to Deal, Kent.

So as I got my first WRAC badge for one shilling & six pence, I think I would like one for all these years of service! I'm now a member of St Dunstons, due to loss of sight, but I have managed to write this letter with the help of a strong magnifying glass. I see Lincoln have started a Branch: that is where I was from 1942-1947 in Burton Road Barracks, now a TA Unit.

WRAC CHARITY SHOP Jane Freebairn

On Page 4 of the last edition, ex-Pte Knight from Malvern said that she had come across a WRAC Charity Shop in Welshpool. It was closed so she was unable to find out any more and wondered if there were any more "WRAC Charity Shops" in the country.

Well! I knew it would not take long before we had the answer. The prize goes to Irene Hall, Area Secretary for

Wales and the West. On the very day that the *Lioness* was delivered, she rang to say that the shop was the Women's Refuge Aid Centre Charity Shop. Mrs Lewis from Powys kindly send a leaflet within the week and several more of you phoned. Thank you all for taking the time to solve the riddle.

PS. Don't forget that our one and only charity shop is at Worthy Down and we sell a small range of memorabiliadetails on the memorabilia page elsewhere in this edition. All orders however small are gratefully received!

MRS MARGARET KLISKEY - EX LEADING WREN (SHORTHAND WRITER)

26 Nalla Gardens, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 4AX
Tel: 01245 265987

In the last *Lioness*, on Page 50, a photograph of 3 women of each of the Services appeared. One of them was of my friend Margot who was serving with NATO in Germany when the photograph was taken. I sent her the *Lioness* and she was able to contact her 'old' friend who was in the WRAP.

Editor: Success! I said we could do it...not only can we arrange for ex-ATS to meet up again, we can even manage it on a tri-service basis.

My mother (Caroline Newson) joined up in 1917, first of all in the WAAC and was then transferred to the Women's Air Force. She was a Pay Writer, based at Martlesham Heath in Suffolk. Needless to say there was plenty of activity on the airfield and she enjoyed her short term of service very much making good friends.

I was keen to join the Wrens and was recruited in October 1953 training at HMS Dauntless at Burghfield, near Reading. As a shorthand writer I did the necessary course at HMS Ceres at Wetherby, Yorkshire and was then kept on the ship's company for a year. We enjoyed the Army dances in Ripon!

After that I worked in the NATO Plans office in Portsmouth Dockyard - HMS Victory. The work was all Top Secret - we did a lot of typing for NATO ships exercises. By this time I became a Leading Wren (equivalent to a Corporal) and was in charge of the office. My two years in "Pompey" were most enjoyable, particularly the dances at the NAAFI Club. All the Services met there, quite a lot of soldiers. My boyfriend was sent to Malaya - he was in the REME.



Margaret in WRNS uniform

At the time of the Suez crisis in 1956, I was sent to the Chiefs of Staff Secretariat in the Ministry of Defence. I was working for the Army, RAF and Naval officers under Air Commodore David Lee, a great group of people to work for. We had our hectic moments and worked in shifts. My qual

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I met my husband in Chelmsford and he had worked for NATO in the RAF. I look back at my time with the Wrens with happy memories and meet up with friends at various reunions. I always enjoy the fund of stories in the *Lioness* and it's an excellent magazine.

Editor: And to continue the Naval theme.....

UNDESIRABLE WOMEN??

Joan Awbery, Secretary Norfolk Branch

You may have come across this before. I read it out at a recent meeting and it was greeted with hilarity. Some of us are going with the WRENS on a boating day in Cambridge on Monday. I shall read it out to them. I didn't know when I joined up that I was an "undesirable woman". Neither, no doubt, did Her Majesty The Queen or indeed Mary Churchill.

"The acronym WRNS was a fortunate choice in 1917 and it was soon translated into WRENS. In 1939 a civil servant first suggested that it might also be used as a rating title – producing WREN, Leading WREN and eventually Chief WREN. It was a far stronger title than the Army's ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Service) which was weak and meaningless, or even the Royal Air Force's WAAF's (Women's Auxiliary Air Force). In fact the WRNS scored over the Army in several ways. The khaki ATS uniform was unattractive and the Service had a reputation for attracting undesirable women – while the Army's prestige was low for most of the War – in any case in contrast the WRNS had quite a high status and a good calibre of entry.

The Army and Air Force worried about women deserting and brought their own Service under their respective discipline acts. The Navy found there was no real problem with the WRENS and they remained outside the act – for discipline purposes. They could be dismissed, fined or even given extra duty but they could only be imprisoned by the Civil Authorities for normal offences."

This extract was taken from Page 155 of the book "Churchill's Navy" by Brian Lavery.

BACK COVER PHOTOGRAPH

LAST ATS STAFF COURSE AT BAGSHOT PARK

Jane Freebairn

The photograph on the back cover was kindly sent to me by Mrs Alison Coleman, Mont View, North Road, Carnwath, Lanark ML11 8HW. Mrs Coleman is on the photograph on the far right of the second row – M A R Clark. She was a long-time member of Edinburgh Branch before it disbanded.

Bagshot Park has an interesting history. Queen Victoria had it built for her son, the Duke of Connaught. After the ATS moved out, it became the HQ of the Royal Army

Chaplains Department and some of you may have attended courses there. Bagshot Park is now home to the Earl and Countess of Wessex.

A WELCOME BREAK IN BAOR

W/324614 Mrs Brenda Chappell née Bagshaw
Hawthorns, Harmby, Wensleydale DL8 5PH

Does anyone remember the Windmill? A welcome YMCA break if you were travelling in BAOR. It was the only British YMCA Canteen on the Autobahn. I was in Bad Oeynhausen with 721 Company in 1947 and was always glad if my driving assignments took me past the Windmill so that I could call in for some delicious refreshments.



The YMCA Windmill

There were cartoon-type drawings on the walls inside which depicted various situations, but the only one I can remember was of people on a balcony trying to pull up a cow with the rope round its neck! Perhaps it was a German saying or proverb. I would love to know exactly what it was. Unfortunately after all this time I can't remember just where the Windmill was situated, but I do wonder if it is still there – does anyone know? If you do, please let me know if you can recall anything at all. Maybe it has been demolished and a new Autobahn Service Station is in its place with hamburgers on sale!

ATS STATUE

Mrs Mary Beeston
Flat 77, Campion House, Hobgate Road,
Wolverhampton WV10 0PX

Editor: Although there was a major article about the ATS Statue in the last edition, I thought you would be interested in more of the background story. Mary Beeston, along with Margaret Rogers, Secretary Eastbourne Branch, were the instigators and this is the story from Mary's perspective.

To get a Fund started we needed a Treasurer, so I asked around but nobody wanted the job. So ever the volunteer, I said to Margaret Rogers I would do it. My niece travelled from London to show me what a treasurer had to do and how to get the fund started. I chose the Alliance & Leicester which helped in my way, and having a typewriter, I became Secretary too! I never realised how many late nights and early mornings I would have sending letters to relations and friends, and the many long-standing friends from the ATS. Money started to arrive. Thank you to everyone including the men who had married an ATS. Then there was a big surprise. We had two benefactors – the first asked not to be named but I feel you should know. It was Norah Fallon. Her donation boosted the fund and I paid for the first item, which was the plot. This is quite a size but I am sure if we have flowers and shrubs with a pathway, it will be a wonderful sight for all to see. Not long after, the second donation arrived from a dear friend, Madge Hill, a member of Birmingham Branch. She suffered from arthritis so her sister Norah Crossland sent the donation which I understand is what Madge wanted.



ATS Statue at the National Memorial Arboretum

I asked Andy De Comyn to be the sculptor as I had seen his Shot at Dawn Memorial and had heard of another, the Piper. He was very pleased to take on the commission of an ATS statue. I recommend him for his work and also the advice and help he can give. Andy was the one who told me he played in a Pipes and Drums Band. I love the music and asked if he would play the pipes for me which he did bringing the entire band with him. This had the old soldiers marching and they upheld the smart

tradition of the ATS. I then wondered about a Fly Past!!! One voice said, "No, only the men could have that", but another voice said, "Go on Mary, try". I asked MOD but I couldn't answer any of their questions. However, another friend spoke to Ian Price former Chairman of the RAFA at Cosford who answered the questions for me, so many thanks go to Ian and his wife Eileen. I was delighted that they were both able to be at the unveiling ceremony.

I had sent a letter to Her Majesty The Queen's secretary inviting our Patron to the Unveiling. However, it was the Queen's 80th Birthday, and 15 July was fully booked. The Spitfire came over quite a few times and it reminded me of the dogfights which were seen in the skies during the War. There was also a Searchlight – and my prayers were answered for a sunny warm day.

My grateful thanks to all who made the journey and to everyone who made our ATS Memorial possible with all your donations. Being Treasurer wasn't so bad after all. I informed Margaret that I had paid off all the debts and here I must thank my husband Fred (ex RAF) who had a great deal of patience with the post arriving every day, paper work strewn all over the place – he never complained.

The upkeep of the Memorial is £25 to £50 a year. I passed the remains of the Fund to the National Memorial Arboretum, but we do need to have donations to continue. Judith Thorpe, Company Secretary at the NMA, suggested that I ask anyone who sends donations to send an accompanying letter explaining that the money is for the ATS Memorial. Cheques should be made payable to the National Memorial Arboretum NOT to the Royal British Legion or else they will not reach the correct fund. There is a Book of Remembrance at the Arboretum should you wish to sign it.

MEMORIES OF BLACK LANE MILL Maj (Retd) Fred Smith RAPC

Editor: The RAPC Association in the next-door office very kindly gave me this article in the hope that it would bring back memories for some of you.

I was interested to read the article in Primrose and Blue about the Royal Engineers Pay Office at Black Mill Lane, Radcliffe. I was a member of the staff which moved there from Brighton in July 1940. I have many recollections, the first being the marked contrast between the popular coastal resort and the grim environs of Black Lane Mill.

The huge old former cotton mill, comprising five floors, had only one staircase. With a large staff of military ATS and civilians, it was obvious that it would be impossible to get all of the staff to work at the same time so starting times were staggered at 10 minute intervals by floor. Another problem was the lack of toilets. A number of structures were hastily built in the mill grounds, popularly known as 'Canvas City' – not very convenient if you were working on the top floors! The mill had no heating system so, in the winter, a temporary solution was provided by a number of Aladdin paraffin heaters. With only one staircase it was fortunate that we never had a fire. Later a warm air system was installed and this

worked to a point but to get heat to the top floors, the lower floors ended up like the Tropics.

The problems were not without compensation as there were many talented people on the staff: musicians, actors etc. A small orchestra under the conductorship of Lt John Ainslie Murray. Lt John Barry produced a number of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, performed I believe in Radcliffe Town Hall which were always very popular with the local population. I was a member of the orchestra and my wife helped backstage with the making of the costumes. I am pleased to say that we celebrated 63 years of marriage last year – and I am in my 93rd year so I am no longer able to attend any Association functions but appreciate being kept in touch through the Regimental journal.

MORE HELL'S ANGELS IN AUSTRALIA!

Bunty Jones

This is a rerun arranged by Elizabeth Leen ex QARANC, a person I was meant to catch up with. She lived with her grandmother in Sheringham when I was stationed there. We also travelled together to Australia on the same liner in 1969 and we both worked for the Illawarra community health commission here in Wollongong New South Wales. Then five years ago I joined the Returned Services League where we met up again and have been very close



friends since. The photographs were taken at Wollongong Harbour, New South Wales not too far from Sydney.



MESSAGE TO ALL OVERSEAS MEMBERS

The Editor

This is an apt opportunity for me to thank all of the overseas members who very generously made additional contributions towards the cost of sending the *Lioness* to them throughout the world. Our UK membership may not realise that we have nearly 300 members in Europe, America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa....sorry if I have left any one out. Last year we had distribution problems and our overseas members were very patient and understanding while those were resolved. They then showed great support to the Association by sending additional monies towards the postage which is truly appreciated. I am also pleased to say that the company which prints this journal also now distributes it and there was no problem with getting *Lioness* 1/2007 delivered to each and every country.

I know that all the overseas members enjoy the *Lioness* and many of them belong to ex-Service organisations in their own country. It is always a pleasure to publish articles from them and to know that our friends are still active "in the foreign". Perhaps, if I received even more articles telling us about the way of life in these other countries and how they keep up with their ex-Service colleagues along with some exotic photographs, the *Lioness* could have an entire "International Section"?

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.

Branch News

ABERDEEN BRANCH

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The Aberdeen Branch is still soldiering on. In March four of us went to the Town House for a presentation by Erskine House, a home for ex-Servicemen. It was enjoyable and informative. We went to Banchory for lunch in May and we all enjoyed ourselves. June saw us saying goodbye to our member Elma McGrath who is moving to Wales. She brought in LARGE sticky buns for us all. Wales will be gaining another piano playing singer and the Branch and I will be missing a friend.

We had two deaths in the Branch this year. We sent our regards and regrets to their families. As a President of a Bowling Club, I thank the *Lioness* for the puns etc. They came in very handy as speech fillers. All good wishes to all Branches.

BATH BRANCH

Submitted by Betty Keating, Chairman

It was a gloriously sunny day on 26 March 2007 when Bath Branch hosted a Civic Reception to celebrate the 60th anniversary of our formation. Over 60 members and guests sat down to a luncheon at the Rugby Club. Our honoured guests included the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, the Mayor of Bath and MP of Bath, Lt Col Sue Westlake, Major Freebairn and Major Maskens-McIntyre. The only surviving founder member, who is now our Secretary, Mrs Sylvia Musgrave was presented with a bouquet of flowers in the Corps colours.



Don Foster, MP for Bath, the Mayor, Councillor Carol Paradise and Lt Col Sue Westlake, Association Vice-President

Lt Col Sue Westlake gave a most interesting address of the role of the modern female soldier in today's Army – so very different from the role of the ATS.

All agreed it was a truly memorable and happy day and our grateful thanks for all those that supported us in so many ways to make the occasion a very happy one.

The following history of Bath Branch has been submitted by Sylvia Musgrave – one of the founding members and still the Branch Secretary. Sylvia had been such a mainstay of the Bath Branch since its formation and everyone is so grateful to her for all her efforts and hard work.

HISTORY OF BATH BRANCH

Submitted by Sylvia Musgrave

On a very cold, wet and windy night in February 1947, five former members of the ATS and one former QMAAC met in the Headquarters of the Bath British Legion. This was in response to a letter which had appeared in the local paper from the late Mrs Mollie Kennard, former Senior Commander ATS. She had suggested that maybe former members of the ATS might like to form a group to keep in touch. The late Miss Betty Mould MBE was already a member of the QMAAC & ATS Comrades' Association which met in Bristol. It was decided that the low response was due no doubt to the awful weather so arrangements were made to meet on a Saturday afternoon in a central café. This was a great success and the Bath Branch of the then QMAAC & ATS Comrades' Association was born and from November 1947, regular meetings were held. We think this may be a record? *[Canterbury Branch – what do you think?]* Members opened up their homes to hold the meetings as funds were, of course, very low in those days.

Sadly, out of the original five, the present Secretary is the only survivor but Mollie Kennard and Betty Mould did yeoman service to get the Branch up and running. Over the years we have had some very dedicated members: the late Doris Sayers served for many years as the Treasurer – in fact we have only ever had two because Pam Finney, our current Treasurer has held the post for many years! We were fortunate to have as our Secretary at one time the late Olive Rutter MVO who had served as Secretary to Major General Gerald Templar in Malaya and subsequently to the late Princess Royal.

We still have around sixty members. Some we have never seen and some we do not know but there is a hard core of dedicated attenders and we average around twenty at meetings and the rest support us at major events. We try to have a varied programme with the occasional speaker but they are getting quite expensive! We have sales tables, quizzes, beetle drives and open meetings when we can have a general moan if necessary! To meet up with members who live in surrounding towns, we often have shopping trips so we can see them. It is a chance for them to feel that they are still a part of our Branch and a trip out for our members – especially if there is free transport on the local buses.

Members also receive a regular newsletter and we charge £2 a year to help out with telephone calls and postage. We do make every effort to keep in touch and we also have welfare members who visit local hospitals. We also have strong links with other local ex-Service organisations **PDF Compressor Free Version** support our events such as coffee mornings and tea parties.



Betty Keating, Chairman, Mayor Carol Paradise, Jane Freebairn and Major 'Mack' help to celebrate Bath Branch's 60th Birthday

Sixty years seem to have flown by but we are still vibrant and think we have excellent officers in Lt Col Westlake, Maj Freebairn and Major 'Mack'. We do thank them for the interest they show in us. We are very proud of our Association and try to promote it at every opportunity.

Editor: It is a pleasure to work with such an active and enthusiastic Branch.

BEXHILL BRANCH

Since we last wrote, our numbers have increased. Two lovely WW2 ATS came and joined us, and three WRAC ladies breezed in one day; they tried us out, liked what they saw, and are now active and willing members. The rest of us are so pleased to welcome them to our fold.

Speakers are not easy to find and are difficult to afford since their fees are rising so much but we have been lucky enough to find an interesting one for most of our meetings, coupled with demonstrations. We have a cookery demonstrator returning to us next month. Yes, we know how to cook and no, we'd rather not bother to do so, but this lady is so enthusiastic and amusing when she shows us how to put together quick and delectable meals in such an innovative way that our tolerance and innate greed break through and she is welcomed as a favourite friend.

Apart from the above, we have lunches out, teas out (and in on the slightest pretext), competitions and bring and buy sales.

Speaking of which, we celebrated our 10th anniversary in March with a beautiful cake bearing the WRAC emblem

and made by Jenny Nye, our Secretary/Treasurer. A recent photograph is below showing Jenny standing at the back on the right. Jean Atkins, our Chairman, is seated centre front. Standing on the far right at the back is Clifford Jones who came to give us an illustrated talk about his years as a pupil at the Bluecoat school known as Christ's Hospital, Horsham. Most of the ladies pictured help the club in some way or another.



Studying the photograph, and others that appear in the *Lioness*, brings memories of rallying talks given to us on our initial training when much used words and phrases such as "camaraderie" and "esprit de corps" were often repeated. Although less used today their meaning is very apparent to us at our monthly meetings or when we meet casually in the street. We are there for each other, with pride.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

We have had a busy and fulfilling time since our last report. We held our Christmas Lunch at our usual meeting place (Birmingham United Services Club) and also our Birthday Lunch with our usual guests, Maggie Purkis and Irene Hall – Area Chairman and Area Secretary. We were also pleased to welcome six members from Wolverhampton Branch: triple the usual number!

During the year we had a local radio link up with Ed Doolan on his lunchtime programme and several members spoke about their service experiences. Dr Carl Chinn, the Birmingham historian, came to our meeting with the radio car to provide the link. Our thanks go to Chris Fretwell, our Assistant Treasurer, for arranging this at short notice.

At another meeting, we were given extremely good information about the Veterans Agency by Linda Stokes. She also brought along badges for members who had not yet obtained them.

Eleven of us attended a Passing Out Parade at Whittington Barracks, Lichfield. Didn't those young recruits look young! Maureen Deeley, our National Association Standard Bearer and member of this Branch, spent thirteen years of her life at the Barracks. Two of her sisters were married there and tragically, her father

died there. Incidentally, Maureen has recently travelled over 3,000 miles carrying the Standard with a Royal British Legion trip to various War Grave sites in Europe.

Editor: The Association is very grateful to all the parading which Maureen has done for herself. We are trying to persuade her to let us have a programme so we can let you know the full extent of her work on our behalf. Thanks, Maureen.

Several of us visited the National Memorial Arboretum on National Serviceman's Day. We marched with the men and it was gratifying to hear the applause get louder as the women marched by. There were several familiar faces from other branches as well.

On 17 June, 22 members were able to attend a Veterans and Falklands Anniversary Lunch at the Burlington Hotel in Birmingham. Each table had a candle for us to light in memory of the fallen.



Sheila Andrews, Chris Fretwell, Margaret Walkeden (Secretary) and Frances Jenkinson

Birmingham was chosen to host the National events for Veterans Day on 27 June except it lasted for five days! On 27 June there was a Parade of Standards and Service in the Hall of Memory. Names of the recently fallen were added to the Book of Remembrance held there. This was followed by a Tea Dance (with wine!) in the afternoon.



Twenty-two members of Birmingham Branch with the Lady Mayoress



Ladies from Birmingham – not dancing at the Tea Dance!

For the rest of the week, there were lots of events to cater for the public. We manned a stall on which we displayed an ATS uniform with cap and a WRAC uniform with cap along with lots of photographs...we did manage to recruit ONE new member. Unfortunately, the publicity and reporting during Veterans Week failed to mention the ATS or WRAC. Lesley Wallace, an enthusiastic Branch member, was so incensed that she contacted the Birmingham Post and a reporter is going to attend our August meeting. Does he/she know what they are in for?!



Nora and Mary in Weymouth

Mary Gunning and Nora Jeffries were at Weymouth for their Veterans Parade and said that the ATS/WRAC were outnumbered by the WAAF and WRNS. We plan to try to correct this and we are thinking of encouraging some of our members to have a short break there next year so we can all join in.

One of our members told us about green blazers complete with badge obtainable from a market stall in Walsall. She hopes to bring one along to our next meeting and I will let the General Secretary know when I have more information about them. *Editor (also General Secretary): I would be delighted to pass on this information. I get many phone calls asking about the availability of blazers.*

We look forward to the Wales and West Area Reunion on 27 October in Shrewsbury. Stay well, everyone!

BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH

As I write this on a chilly May day it is hard to realise how beautiful the month of April was – we hope that glorious weather will soon return.

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Reading my newspaper this morning, all gloom and doom, I can't help wondering why editors cannot write a "happy news" page at least once a week to cheer everyone up. Thank goodness for the *Lioness* which we all look forward to. Everything – hoovering, housework, gardening etc goes on hold when that arrives and we avidly read, cover to cover, our great publication.

Here in Bournemouth we are having a quieter time in the Branch in that we have, for at least this year, decided to cut our formal meetings down to 3 a year, plus the Christmas lunch. In the months in-between we are meeting informally in the lounge bar of a local hotel – so far this appears to be working well.

Last autumn we said farewell to Betty Hulse, who had been our Social Secretary. Betty and her husband Les have moved to Lincolnshire to be near their family. We wish her well and thank her for her contribution to the life of our Branch.

It was sad to hear of the death of Irene Mills. Irene lived a way out of Bournemouth but was at meetings regularly until the journey became too much for her. Irene died in November but her family did not notify me until just before Christmas so, unfortunately, we were unable to attend her funeral. In April, E Nickless died: she was known to us all as Nessie. Nessie moved to Kent several years ago when first diagnosed with lung cancer and she was able to enjoy that time being cared for by her family. She was most cheerful when I last spoke to her 3 months ago. She had been our Branch Treasurer for some years.

At our March meeting we welcomed Major Maskens-McIntyre, our South and South West Area Chairman who gave us a most interesting talk about her herd of Alpacas and displayed some beautiful articles made from their gloriously soft wool.

Thirteen of us went to the South & South West Area Reunion in April hosted by the Salisbury Branch which was good fun – thank you Salisbury. (On reaching the outskirts of Bournemouth on our homeward journey the bus broke down, which added to the fun!)

Some members have attended the ATS Dinner Club, two have been to Blackpool for the Royal Artillery reunion, others will attend Blandford Camp for the Royal Signals Association Annual Parade and in September there is an ENIGMA reunion at Bletchley Park – all occasions to renew old friendships.

We have bought our Branch AGM forward from November to September when we shall again discuss the future of the branch.

I trust that by the time this is printed you all will have enjoyed a pleasant summer – maybe some of you will have visited us here in Bournemouth.

BRADFORD BRANCH

It is with deep regret that I report the closure of the Bradford Branch in March of this year. Numbers have dwindled recently owing to age and transport difficulties.

May I also convey my thanks also to those of my fellow members of the *Lioness* and all concerned – a great magazine with lots of good reading.

Editor. Here's hoping that the 'Lioness' will continue to keep the ex-Bradford ladies within our larger family even if they do not meet as a Branch.

BRISTOL BRANCH

Here we are into summer already – how the time flies.

We ended last year with a Bring and Buy sale at our meeting, which was very good, lots of bargains to be had just in time for Christmas.

In February we held our lunch at the Bristol City Marriott Hotel, our special guests were Maj Maskens-McIntyre and Lt Col Val Trout. Unfortunately, due to the inclement weather on the day, our Vice President, Lt Col Sue Westlake was unable to attend. We had a wonderful meal, staff are very attentive to all our members and they look forward to seeing us each year. One of our members, Sandra Steadman, had made a 'special gift' for our guests which was a brooch. Our guests wore them during lunch.

In April the Secretary went to London for the AGM, again this was so worthwhile. It is nice to meet the Secretaries from other parts of the country and 'swap' ideas and news.



The Secretary presented Lt Col Sue Westlake with her brooch, which she was delighted to receive.

On the Monday following the AGM the Secretary joined Bath Branch for a Dinner at Bath Rugby Club to celebrate their 60th Anniversary. It was a superb lunch, good food and good company – a special thank you to Bath Branch for inviting me.

Sadly in April two of our members died – Peggy Little who had been a member of Bath Branch before transferring to Bristol when the Bristol Branch was

started. Peggy will be missed as she had a wonderful sense of humour. Mrs Lowe-Willeys joined us in 2005 but was unable to attend meetings due to ill health. However, I know that she enjoyed receiving the *Lioness*.

In April we attended the 8th West of England Reunion hosted by Salisbury Branch. We had a wonderful day, and had travelled to Salisbury by train which was good. Our thanks to them for the work entailed in organising the event. Bristol was extremely lucky with the Raffle, won lots of prizes. We enjoyed the music and sing-a-long.



The Secretary received a letter from Mrs Elsie Plummer (Crossley) ex-ATS, who had served in Bristol during the War. In her letter she mentioned that she had sang in Bristol Cathedral in 1945. The Secretary wrote to her informing her that we were organising another service in the Cathedral on 5 May to which she was invited. As she lived in Norfolk we did think it a long way for her to travel. Elsie responded that she would love to come and

stay for a few days, to which our Chairman, Esmé Davidson wrote to her and told her that she could stay with her. What a wonderful few days it was, a few tears, lots of emotion, but enjoyable. I know Elsie is writing her own account of her visit, but we would like to thank Elsie for coming and also for giving us information which we did not know about. *Elsie's report is in the Articles of Interest section – she obviously enjoyed herself in Bristol.*

Our service at the Cathedral went very well considering we could not get the advertising from the Media which we hoped to have. Our special guests were the Lord Lieutenant Mr Jay Tidmarsh and Mrs Tidmarsh and the Lord Mayor Peter Abrahams and Lady Mayoress Pearl Abrahams. There were about 100 attendees including the WRNS and the War Widows, St Johns Ambulance and various other organisations. It was nice also to see the families come along and support us. A bouquet was presented to Mrs Tidmarsh and Lady Mayoress.



Bristol Branch outside the Cathedral

We have had two special Wedding anniversaries in the Branch, one in March – a 60th Diamond Wedding Anniversary for Phyllis Gage and in May a Golden Wedding Anniversary for Stella Fogg who is our Vice Chairman, both of them received our congratulations and flowers from the Branch.

In June the Secretary joined Weymouth branch at the Veterans Parade on Sunday 10 June. There didn't seem as many veterans marching as there usually are, but nevertheless it was a good day and the weather was kind to us.



Birmingham Branch sent this photograph in not knowing who the lady in uniform was. It is Jackie Naysmith, Bristol Branch Secretary!

We have trips planned for the summer so we are looking forward to them. Have a good summer, just hope the weather is kind to us all.

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Wendy Stevens attended the Annual General Meeting in London and gave us a comprehensive report. We note that the next reunion will be held in Blackpool in 2009.

At our May meeting we had an enjoyable buffet at the White Lion Hotel, Bolton Street, Bury. At this meeting we welcomed the North West Area Chairman Marie Hemmings, who presented Certificates of Appreciation to Lily Cropper and Mary Howarth. Marie travelled from Blackpool to be with us and it was a pleasure to meet her and enjoy her company.



Mary Howarth, Marie Hemmings and Lily Cropper

Blackpool appears to be prominent in this report as two of our members attended the Royal Artillery Assembly there in May and will also be going there to the ATS Dinner Club in September.

Unfortunately we have to delay future social events and meetings for the time being because the Metrolink from Manchester is being updated and some of our members will not be able to travel to Bury until October.

Our Secretary, Mary Gregory, had a major heart operation earlier this year and has made remarkable progress and we thank her and Lily Cropper, our Treasurer, who recently suffered a broken hand, for all the hard work they put in and keep this Branch going. We do appreciate them.

Congratulations to you at Headquarters for the excellent quality of the *Lioness*.

CAMBRIDGE BRANCH

The Branch has sixty-three members, although only six stalwart members meet on the first Monday of the month, in the evening, at the Sergeants' Mess, Waterbeach Barracks, near Cambridge. We are lucky to have the use of the Mess as it is free, but it does have its

disadvantages, like having to book in at the Guardroom. Our meetings clash with the village band which practises on the Camp – this results in a long queue for the issue of passes. The meetings are held in the dining room, so we usually have to make space at a table which has been set for breakfast and re-set on leaving. We hold a raffle and buffet supplied by members.

Here are some of the activities we have participated in since our last report:

- A dinner was held in Cambridge in lieu of our August meeting
- Three members attended the WRAC Dinner in October
- Wendy Hooton attended the Remembrance Service at Westminster Abbey
- A Christmas Dinner was held at the University Centre in Cambridge
- Our 27th Branch AGM was held on Tuesday 2nd of April.

CANTERBURY BRANCH

Our first meeting of 2007 was held in February when we discussed our programme for the year and racked our brains for the answers to a quiz put together by our President, Jenny Wells.

At our March meeting Liz Cork gave us a very informative and amusing talk on the work carried out by the Donkey Sanctuary in Devon and the escapades of her own two donkeys whose docile looks hide very mischievous natures. In April our members enjoyed a fish and chip lunch and in May our speaker was from the Guide Dogs for the Blind. Lorraine Wright, accompanied by her retired guide dog Simon, told us how she copes day-to-day as a blind person and what a difference having a guide dog makes to her life. She is eagerly awaiting her new guide dog as, sadly, Simon has been retired on health grounds.



Kate McGregor, Branch Chairman with one of the birthday cakes

June saw us celebrating 60 years since the formation of Canterbury branch. We were honoured that Lt Col Sue Westlake, Jane Freebairn and the Rev Sue Wing all agreed to be our guests. Over 60 friends from Medway, Hastings and Eastbourne Branches, the East Kent Association of Friends of the West of Kent Area joined us and we all enjoyed a celebratory tea party. There was plenty to eat and drink with music and lots of chat and laughter. Our grateful thanks to everyone who made the journey to Canterbury – you made our day complete.



Rosina Lock, Kay Perfect and Marge Dagless in charge of the vital equipment



One of the four tables enjoying the party

Next month, July, 10 members both Canterbury and Medway Branches, will be travelling to Buckingham Palace as guests of the "Not Forgotten" Association at a Royal Garden Party. More about our day in the next issue of the *Lioness*.

CHELMSFORD BRANCH

Thankfully with this report we do not have to record the death of a member during the last 6 six months. Generally the Branch is ticking over with regular monthly meetings at the RAFA Club in Hall Street, Chelmsford, usually on the third Tuesday afternoons.

Since Christmas we have had some interesting and varied speakers which included a slide talk on a holiday in Scotland, another on the training of Search dogs and also a talk from one of our members – Eileen Mickelborough,

who gave us an account of her experiences as a former magistrate. We also enjoyed a quiz "Who wants to be a Millionaire?" led by Joyce Wright.

In June we had a plant identification competition which hopefully interested the gardeners amongst us!

Some of us were able to attend the AGM of the Association at the Victory Services Club in March and able to witness the presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation to Sheila Wakelin. Two further Certificates will be presented to Eileen Green and Edith Youell later in the year at our Anniversary Lunch.

We are always pleased to hear from members who no longer can attend meetings for whatever reason and ask that they keep in touch, particularly if they change address or need help.

As ever, our thanks to all those at Worthy Down who look after us so well.

CHESTER AND DISTRICT BRANCH

Chester, during the summer months in particular, is full of tourists from all over the world mainly because of the Roman history of the town. I feel that it would be more appropriate to report from "A Cohort" instead of a Branch. The Amphitheatre is being "restored" – some citizens say ruined – and there are many tall gentlemen striding around the City dressed as Centurions – they look very hot and sticky and not a patch on the Army, Navy and RAF lads we used to eye up and down and chat up 60 years ago.

Our Branch at the moment is flourishing under and with the care of our few WRAC members. We now have a lunch, courtesy of The Belgrave Hotel where we meet and follow this up with an official meeting which often turns into hectic chatter sessions with bits of meeting in-between.

We had a get together at the Chairman's house in North Wales. The weather had one of its off days – in spite of all the sunshine we have enjoyed, but an enjoyable afternoon was had by all – certainly the members appreciated the At Home and presented the Chairman with a lovely bouquet of flowers. Very much appreciated.



At Home at the Chairman's on 16 May 2007

We are attending a Welsh Guards Parade and concert in Llandudno on 14 July in remembrance of the Falklands War and especially the sacrifice of those Welsh guardsmen who lost their lives or were so badly wounded on Sir Galahad. A well named boat for the bravery show.

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In August it is time for our Annual Trip on Chester Canal – a lovely luncheon and a very pleasant afternoon shared with other veterans of several organisations. We stop at The Top Lock and distribute poppy leaves in remembrance and one of our veterans speaks the exhortation. Very moving.

Several of our members are attending the ATS Dinner Club's event in Blackpool in September. No doubt the Blackpool Lights will shine even brighter after an evening out. We are also honoured that two of our ATS members have received an invitation to the WRAC Dinner Club function and get together at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool. We are looking forward to a good Liverpool "Do". After all we can help the City in its City of Culture Future.

We wish we could attract more ex-WRAC ladies. We do need you. Two of our WRAC Members have now a sub-Branch of Chester held in Birkenhead in the hope that we will attract ex-members who live on the Wirral. We know there must be many ladies on the Wirral who would gain in friendship and comradeship and have good remembrance sessions just as the ATS have. We also know that we must keep a good membership active in order to help with funds which go towards helping ex-Service women in sad and unfavourable circumstances. Contact: Pat Sanders on 0151 606 9053, or the Secretary of Chester Branch, Mrs Vera Hamblett.

Dare I wish everyone a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year. Time flies by I am sure when one retires, they also cut your hours and days down!

Very Best Wishes from all at Chester.

CLEVELAND BRANCH

Not too much seemed to have happened until I started putting pen to paper – so here we go. We are saving up for a new standard. Ours is getting a bit tired as it is out almost every week of the year (and our Bearer – Ann Mahony is always with it!)

At present we are preparing for our Veterans Party in June – red, white and blue will be the colours of the day I think along with plenty of good food. Then in July we are hopefully all ready for a coach trip to Raby Castle. ATS ladies served there during the War (and a lot of men I am reliably informed!). After a few hours looking round the gardens and Castle we hope to splash out on what we ladies do best – afternoon tea. Cleveland Branch seems to do an awful lot of eating!

How proud we were to see on TV about the ladies having a look around the Chelsea Hospital and maybe soon moving in. One of the last bastions of male territory is about to be invaded by us. Our Secretary, Gwyn Friday,

is talking about the Branch taking a trip down to London to meet the FIRST Lady Beefeater, then going to have tea with the Old Boys at Chelsea before the ladies in scarlet tunics arrive. So very well done ladies!



September sees the Northern Area reunion – this year to be held in Middlesbrough – look forward to seeing all Northern ladies there enjoying the food (here I go again talking about food) and good company! Since I stopped smoking, four months and seven days ago, food is almost my only thought – well almost!

To the WRAC Dinner Club girls – see you all in Liverpool for our 10th Birthday Party.

CREWE BRANCH

Good News! Here we are still ticking over.

Since changing our meeting to Saturday mornings, it has proved more of an **PDF Compressor Free Version** Out for those members attending, also as a result, we have two new members. We held our Branch Lunch on 17 February and a successful dance on 5 April.



L-R: Joan Berry (Chairman), Betty Cooke, Margery Timmis, Louise Rhodes, Elsie Walton, Milly Pover, Jeannie Jones, Edith Francis (Secretary/Treasurer)

For our Summer Outing on 11 July we shall be visiting Southport. Two members attended the Veterans Day Service and Parade at the National Arboretum on 24 June. Edith Francis (Secretary) also attended the Victoria Cross Memorial Service at Lichfield Cathedral on 10 June.

We are looking forward to seeing our friends at the Wales and West Area Reunion in Shrewsbury on 27 October. Our Autumn Dance will be on 11 October, so we are still busy working for our Association.

DUMFRIES BRANCH

In March, Dumfries Branch enjoyed a successful Spring Lunch with many members attending. We still have an afternoon drive in June, afternoon tea in September, a Bring and Buy in October and not forgetting a Christmas Lunch in December to finish off the year.

It is hoped that like our Spring Lunch, many members will support us during the rest of the year. So ladies, if you would like to join us, do contact our Branch Secretary Dorah Mundell for details. We would love you to be at our functions.

Unfortunately, some of our stalwart members have not been enjoying the best of health recently! Just to let you know, we are thinking of you, wishing you well and look forward to seeing you soon at one or some of the future events.

EASTBOURNE BRANCH

On 26 May 2007, some of our members attended the Farewell Garden Party of the Royal Regiment of Artillery at Woolwich. After 291 years at that location, they were moving to Larkhill. We enjoyed the displays, horses and gun carriages, parachutists and, very daring, single

motorcycles jumping over five cars with only a very short landing distance. We were Blue Badge holders so were allowed to obtain our doggy bag teas from 3pm.



Margaret Rogers, Bobbie Grinyer née Rawling and Phyllis Collins née Gravestock watching the displays

The Ceremony started at 4pm and was very impressive with the Band joining in towards the end. The non-stop rain started at 4.30pm! Everything was very well organised including our coach and we thoroughly enjoyed the whole event.



Moir Gray, on our behalf, attended Canterbury Branch's 60th Birthday party. She was very impressed when her raffle ticket was drawn out first and she returned with a bottle of claret. Three of us were able to go along to the Veterans Day Service on 27 June at Hailsham. The War Memorial has recently been refurbished and looks very nice indeed.

EXETER BRANCH

Yes! We are still here, even if reduced in numbers. We meet nine times a year with a varied programme of talks and events.

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This year, Margaret Cranmer, our Secretary of the last 15 years, resigned because of ill health, but still attends meetings when she can. Our Chairman, Eve Tichy and Treasurer, Pat Hearn have produced a very interesting programme for the year.

On an exceedingly hot day, seven of us had a most enjoyable lunch at the Bristol Southern Reunion which was the highlight of 2006. Previous to this, in June, Maj Maskens-McIntyre gave us a most interesting talk on alpacas – what lovely faces they have and oh what gorgeous garments are produced from their wool.

July was a cuppa and a chat. August being holiday time, there was no get together. September was a discussion as to whether we carried on or not. It was unanimous we carried on. Our Birthday lunch was held in October at The Lord Nelson Inn, Topsham and despite appalling weather, eighteen members managed to attend and had a happy time.

We had no meeting in November, as our Christmas Buffet Lunch held in early December was at The White Ensign Club where we hold all our meetings and they put on a wonderful lunch for us every year, when we invite the WRENS to join us.

2007 started with a quiz to rattle our brains by Peter Easton in February. In March Pat Lambert told us about her Life in Bangalore, India, which was very interesting.

Our AGM in April was followed by "ATS Remembrance" by Beryl Furey-King. What memories it revived and all ex ATS should at least fill in the form Mrs Furey-King gives out and also try and write a small account of their Service life.

Editor: Yes please and let us have copies for the 'Lioness' as well!

FIFE & TAYSIDE BRANCH

Since our last report we have had our Christmas Lunch at the Royal George Hotel, Perth. It was booked for about twenty-five members but the weather was awful and due to torrential rain and flooding only nineteen of us managed to get through to Perth. However, a good time was had by all who made it.

The New Year started off quietly. Our Secretary attended the AGM in London at the end of March. On 26 April 2007, we held our Branch AGM which was attended by only eighteen members, due to illness and other setbacks. Some of our members are now very frail and unable to attend our monthly meetings. We miss them very much.

The Branch itself remains very stable and the numbers are steady. We are hoping to get something in the local paper to try and boost our numbers.

The Scottish AGM will be on 20 October 2007 in Glasgow and several of us hope to go to that. Perhaps we will see you there.

Some of us are going to make our way down to Liverpool to attend the WRAC Dinner Club. Our members have been informed about the Grand Reunion in 2009 so let's hope we get a good response. We all enjoy the *Lioness* and look forward to the next edition. Best wishes to all members of the Association.

GLASGOW BRANCH

Greetings from Glasgow Branch.

Since my last report we enjoyed our Christmas lunch at the Hilton Grosvenor Hotel. As usual we had an enjoyable day with a delicious meal and we were also entertained with music by a husband and wife on piano.

We had no speaker arranged for our next meeting in January as our weather can sometimes be very severe at that time of year and not everyone is able to attend.

In February our speaker was Major Jim McColl. He showed us a film and told us about his service with the Household Cavalry. He was so proud of heading the band at the Trooping the Colour Parade with such beautiful horses and personnel so well trained.

Our March speaker was Mr Phillips who told us that the happiest days of his life were when he became a school teacher. He then treated us like a class of teenagers which was very different from our school days!

At our April meeting, we were joined by our friends from the WRNS Association. We were entertained by a very fine violinist. He had us singing and foot tapping. A very enjoyable afternoon was had by all.

At our May meeting, Mrs Eleanor Curr told us of her time working for the Royal Family at Buckingham Palace. She worked in the office where the thousands of letters arrive for requests for anniversaries, birthdays etc to be rewarded by letters from The Queen.



Glasgow Branch at Sandyholme Garden Centre

Our last meeting for this session was an outing to the Garden Centres in Lanark. We enjoyed a lovely warm sunny day and found the displays of flowers, plants and other goods very tempting and just had to buy some to take home.

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We are now having our summer break for the holidays and will resume in September.

Lastly, on a sad note, our long time member Chris (Cooke) Harold passed away during this session after a short illness. Her funeral was attended by three of our ladies.

With best wishes to all,

GRIMSBY BRANCH

The Grimsby Ladies had another retail therapy outing in July 2006 to Batley Retail outlet with a nice lunch at the Foxy Inn near Selby. Lilly Quickfall raised almost £1,000 in the "Race for Life" in June.

In September twenty-one members attended the Northern Area Reunion lunch at Harrogate. A lot of gossip and a good time was had by all. Our members really enjoy meeting up with old friends at the area reunion.

The October meeting was the AGM. All officers were re-elected, so we must be doing something right. Prior to the meeting we had a representative from the local police to talk about Policing in the Community. He talked about crime preventative measures and the local community warden system.

In November the ladies once again manned a table in Asda for the Poppy Appeal and collected a record amount of £2,344.66.

December meeting was a Christmas Party and we raised £24 for the WRAC Benevolent Fund in lieu of sending each other Christmas cards. We had a good Christmas Lunch this year at the Hotel Elizabeth with music and entertainment throughout the afternoon.

Due to problems at our usual meeting place in February we moved our venue to the Royal British Legion Club and we have been made very welcome.

The early months of 2007 have been quiet, but in July some of our members are going on a trip to Althorpe Hall, family home of Princess Diana and the Spencer family. A few members are going to Bournemouth at the end of May to the RBL National Conference and we are hoping for good weather.

Our excellent Treasurer, Ruth Jenner has had a hip replacement operation and is due to have the other hip done in September. She will no doubt be back in harness after that and keeping us all in order once more.

Unfortunately we have lost four of our members this year - Joan Carpenter, Joyce Leverton, Marjorie Seal and Kitty Scruton. "We Will Remember Them".

HASTINGS BRANCH

Yesterday afternoon we enjoyed our annual Strawberry Tea. For many years we have been most grateful to our Vice Chairman for permitting this to be held in her garden but as this is no longer possible it was held at the Coastguards Restaurant in Pett, a lovely setting in a quite village where all windows look out over the sea. The weather forecast was not good but we arrived in sunshine and left in sunshine. However we have been thinking of our members in Northern Branches where the weather has been so dreadful this last week.

A member who died recently requested that in lieu of flowers, donations should be sent to our Branch, so a lunch was arranged to mark our 27th Anniversary at which the Mayor presented Certificates of Appreciation to three of our members. It was a most enjoyable occasion and knowing Vi Greathurst as well as we do, we feel she would have been delighted at the way the money was spent.



The Mayor with Margery Lucas, Treasurer, Jean Pashley, Catering and Win Wakelin, Bring and Buy organiser

Unfortunately the 60th Birthday Lunch of Canterbury branch coincided with our annual trip to France with the RNA. However, three of our members attended and all had a very enjoyable day. It is certainly an achievement for a Branch to be active for 60 years and we do congratulate them. Perhaps the *Lioness* could print the names of all Branches which have achieved such an anniversary?

The trip to France was a success and enjoyed by those who attended but three of the 'regulars' were unable to go due to various reasons. However, those who were able to go came back tired having had a lovely day when again the RNA made them so welcome.

Other than the above, the branch has followed its usual routine but we desperately need new (younger) members if we are to survive. So again we send best wishes to all members wherever they may be.

LEEDS BRANCH

Having had the mildest winter for many years, most members were fit and ready to start 2007. Our February

meeting was our usual Bring and Buy sale which resulted in £20 raised for the *Lioness* appeal. Arrangements were made for our forthcoming 40th Birthday Party.

In March we had our 40th Birthday Party with all members helping as they were able. As we are such a small Branch, all getting older, everyone has to help with the smooth running of activities. In April, full details of the Northern Area lunch were circulated. All members were to provide choice of food and money at the July meeting. Two members joined other RAAA and Searchlight members for a most enjoyable week's holiday at Alvaston Hall. Our May meeting was our 40th Birthday Party – a celebration of 40 years continuous service of the WRAC Association in Leeds. The table was decorated with Union Flags and green and gold serviettes setting the scene for a most enjoyable and memorable get together.

We were honoured by the presence of: The Deputy Lady Mayoress of Leeds who gave a short speech of admiration for our success from Leeds City: Lt Col Westlake who gave a short talk on the future of the Association and Col Cook, our recently retired Area Chairman. Our only remaining founder member, Lily Burke, was presented with her Gold Badge by Lt Col Westlake along with Pat Carter who has transferred to Leeds Branch from London and is now "one of us".

Also in May, five members attended the Royal Artillery Assembly in Blackpool and three members joined the crowds at Woolwich for the last chapter of the Regiment in that location. This was spoiled by very cold wet weather but the entertainment and organisation lived up to the high standards we expect from the Royal Regiment.

In June, the members had a day out in Skipton. The weather was good and a good time was had by all. In July final arrangements must be made for our participation in the Northern Area Lunch in Middlesbrough in September. We continue to have friendly meetings of fourteen regular members, but we would welcome new members from the WRAC as age is catching up with many of us.

LEICESTER AND NOTTINGHAM BRANCH **From Lilian Hollis the Secretary of the Branch**

First my apologies for missing the deadline for the *Lioness* 1, 2007. Second a warm welcome to the members of Ashby De La Zouch Branch which has sadly had to close. We hope to see you when possible at some of our meetings, and last but not least our congratulations to Chris Corker for successfully starting a Branch at Lincoln which will mean that some of our Leicester members will now hopefully be able to attend some of their meetings.

We ended 2006 with our Christmas Lunch held at a local Garden Centre and for some of our ladies the food was very disappointing. We hope to do better this year.

January 2007 saw us at the theatre for a performance of *Starlight Express* – something completely different from our usual musical, very noisy but enjoyable.

Our usual Bring and Buy to boost our funds in February and in March a talk from a Magistrate giving an insight to his work in the courts. This was very interesting and we hope to have him back next year to talk about family courts, mostly involving children.

We have a charity in Leicester named the Shuttlewood Clarke Foundation who own two houses – Ulverscroft Grange and Ulverscroft Manor and in May a gentleman gave us a talk on the beginnings and work of the charity. They invite various groups to spend the day with them, arriving at 10.30am for tea/coffee. Then you can if you wish walk in the grounds along the lovely pathways and gardens. Lunch is served at 12.30 for a small charge and then, energy permitting, walk again. Tea and cakes are served before leaving at 3pm. If the weather is poor there is the comfortable lounge where you are entertained with some popular piano music. In June we are invited to visit, some to the Grange and the rest to the Manor. We hope the weather is kind to us.



R-L: Vi Rawlins, Joan Devall, Lilian Hollis, Brigadier AF Gordon CBE, Sheila Grewcock, Barbara Danter and Pat Waite at the RA Association weekend in Blackpool, May 2007

We are having a fun afternoon in July with a Beetle Drive or Quiz. This gets us moving around and mixing well and the room is always alive with laughter. August at the Sailing Club this year will be a special day. Our Vice President Lt Col Sue Westlake, Area Chairman, Maggie Purkis, General Secretary, Jane Freebairn and Wales and West Secretary, Irene Hall, will we hope be joining us for a buffet lunch. We have six members who have been members for over 40 years and we shall be presenting them with the gold 40 year association badge. We always have a lovely day thanks to members Doris Doswell, Irene Bell, Sandra Smith, Joyce Freer and her husband Maurice who do so much to make the day a success whatever the weather.

Sadly, since our last report four members have died – Joan Barnacle née Birch, Mavis Bowring née Cooper, Kay Anderson and our Social Secretary Barbara Castell née Squire who had organised our social programme for the past four years.

We have some members who are not too well, one is Ellen Ward who had a bad fall and broke the upper part of her arm. We hope she will be able to join us again soon.

On a lighter note our Chairman, Doris White is now fully recovered from a cold and is back at our meetings.

LEICESTER AND NOTTINGHAM BRANCH Submitted by Barbara Danter

Nottingham City Council is giving Veterans Day this year the full treatment, with several weeks of entertainment planned. Thinking that some members of our Branch in Leicester might be interested in attending some of them, I asked my daughter to download a copy of the list of events taking place, so that I could take it along to our next meeting. What a surprise I had when I took a look at it, for there on the top of the page was a photo of five of us in our green uniforms and a lady in a forties outfit. It was taken at the London Veterans Day last year. The marketing organiser thought it was just right for the events calendar and it was picked out as being an ideal snap for this year. I did speak to her and she was very thrilled to learn that we were not just dressed up for the occasion, but were indeed ex ATS who had been in WWII.



The usual Leicester ladies!

I would also like to mention that our hard working Secretary, Mrs Lilian Hollis, had a special birthday last January and I know that the members of Leicester & Nottingham Branch, especially the six of us who accompany her on so many occasions throughout the year, would like to give her a vote of thanks for all the time and effort she puts in for us. It is very much appreciated, Lilian and we enjoy every moment of time spent in your company. Thanks also to all you hard workers at Worthy Down. The *Lioness* is great and very much enjoyed by all who read it. I have just passed mine on to an interested party and, though they are not ex Services, I know they are finding it of great interest.

LINCOLN & DISTRICT BRANCH

We are very pleased to report that our Branch is now up and running. We have had a very good response from members and are looking forward to a bright and

interesting future. This year we are going out for lunch in June, a boat trip on the River Witham in July and an outing to The National Memorial Arboretum in September.

The highlight of our year will be the Dedication Service of our Standard on 30 September at St Mary-le-Wigford Church, Lincoln at 1500 hrs. Please, if anyone is visiting in the area at that time come along – we would love to see you.



Some of the Lincoln & District Branch members

LUTON BRANCH

2007 kicked off in the usual fashion – our anniversary lunch, this year at the Red Lion, the oldest hostelry in Luton, and a former coaching inn. "Kicked off" was quite appropriate, as in the TV bar, adjacent to the dining room, a cup match was being shown. It didn't deter us from enjoying ourselves – and the good food. January 13th marked our 10th anniversary – times flies when you're having fun!



Luton Branch with Yasmin Akthar

February was a general get-together, then in March we welcomed a speaker from the Luton Council of Faiths, Yasmin Akthar. It was intriguing discussing the many similarities, and surprisingly few differences between Christianity and Islam. During our discussions afterwards, one member who hails from the Emerald Isle, made the point that her father had taken up arms against the British Army, just after World War I, at which

our Chair piped up, "Oh, so it was your Dad shooting at my Dad, was it?", resulting in gales of laughter from the rest of the Branch and our visitors.

Eleri Pirie, in addition to being a very efficient Treasurer, is the designer and printer of our quarterly newsletter, which continues to be a great success. Those members who cannot attend are really appreciative of being kept up to date with events.

In April we had a speaker from the East Anglian Air Ambulance Service, very informative and topical, as they are endeavouring to extend the service to cover our area. Until now, we have been reliant upon the Police helicopter, which is not fully equipped for medical emergencies. Also in April we had a return quiz match with the Far East Vets and regained the shield by a margin of 3 points. It now bears 6 small plaques saying 'WRACA' and just one with 'FEVA' – we have to let them win sometimes!

Forthcoming events – most of which will be over by the time the *Lioness* goes to print:

- Return match with the Association of Wrens (quiz).
- Talk by Evacuees Association representative.
- Speaker from St Dunstons.
- AGM, Christmas party et seq!

Luton Branch of the Combined Ex-Service Association has just been revitalised after 20 years, so we have a central organisation to co-ordinate the Veterans Day events. Our Veterans Day is on 7 July on the newly refurbished St Georges Square in Luton town centre. Each of sixteen organisations will have a table to display our role and perhaps attract some new members. There will be a drumhead service, parade of standards, and other service related events. We are praying for fine weather – there's no Scout Hut nearby.

Any branch wishing for details of our activities is welcome to phone Madge Evans on 01582 617313.

Finally we mourn the passing of Edith Holman (ATS), one of our longest serving members – she will be sadly missed.

MEDWAY BRANCH

There are only seven members who regularly get together so we meet up in each other's houses. It's better for us as the hall was far too big for so few. We have been back in action since October 2006 after a lull of six months due to illness.

In June we will meet up with Canterbury for their Branch 60th Birthday celebrations. We are made very welcome there. An invitation has been received from the "Not Forgotten Association" for four members to attend the garden party being held at Buckingham Palace on 16 July. Our Chairwoman Margaret Gallafent will be 60 in June and Helen Dodd has made her home and garden available for members and family to help her celebrate.

Strawberry tea will be in Maidstone this year but we

hope to have a cream tea later on in the year. The Veterans Day will be held at the Chatham historic dockyard on 7 July and members have got their forms for tickets.

We still have a bring and buy and raffles and hope to have a boot fair in the future raising money for Branch funds.

Janet Cameron would like to thank all those who sent cards, messages, flowers and telephone calls when she became seriously ill. She is improving slowly but surely.

Regards to all the Branch members that are unable to attend the meetings – we hope to keep you all informed every 3 months.

Best wishes to all members of the Association.

Editor: And to you too, Janet. It was good to see you looking so much better at the Canterbury 60th Birthday party!

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

Our last report showed what had seemed to have been a quite exhausting year and we ended in December with our usual enjoyable Christmas lunch. Our first meeting in 2007 was marred by atrocious weather but seven diehards turned up and had themselves an enjoyable informal get together! Ever on the lookout for funds they raised on that day £4.20p from limited sources!

Everyone who came to the February meeting pitched in with £1 each instead of the usual 50p! In March I attended the NE Secretaries meeting and our members were given details of our September Reunion which this year is to be in Middlesbrough. All is on going for this.

Due to distance, age and expense, we sent our apologies for non-attendance at the AGM in London. We have two regular members from the now closed Sunderland Branch and they have asked us to record their appreciation of the friendly atmosphere at our meetings.

I was recently reminded by a gentleman member of the public that one of the grave stones in an old church in South Gosforth bears the name of Pte Louisa Maxwell and the age and date led me to believe that she was one of the victims of the Great Yarmouth disaster. I remembered that Joan Awbery, Secretary Norfolk Branch had these details and she sent them to me. From my research here, I found that Louisa had no known relatives here and as that very weekend was when a service was to be held at the site of the Plaque, Joan kindly arranged for flowers to be at the site from the Newcastle Branch. We were grateful for her help. We have received a photo of the plaque and the flowers thereon. The gentleman puts poppies on these graves and we have told him that we have all this extra information.

On behalf of our Branch I attended a church service in St Thomas' Church which was held on Saturday 2 June specifically for the 25th year of the Falklands conflict. Another of our members, Vi Waters, joined the limited

numbers of veterans who joined the latter end of what had been a very magnificent and very lengthy parade. She is an ardent Signals member. There was a reception hosted by the new Lord Mayor after the parade.

Our Branch will celebrate its 28th Anniversary on 28 June. The Keelmans Lodge in Newburn – a short bus ride from Newcastle. They have a good menu!

Our attendances vary but our Branch shows no sign of closing! We do our best to keep in touch and one of our members, Peggy Binns, sends cards and letters when she learns of illness etc.

At what we call “The top end” of the room where we hold our meetings, Ann Palionis and Joyce Stephenson are always there with teas etc, donated raffle prizes and sales at reasonable prices. Others, when called on, willingly go around with anything requiring circulation. We end up with a sharp happy game of Bingo just for laughs as a good atmosphere prevails!

And finally, I am sad to report that two of our regular members have died. Joy Fennell, on 21 March, was one of our good long serving members. She was, I think, one of our founder members and she was also our Treasurer for many years. Failing health had prevented her from attending meetings and she was very much missed. A small group of our members attended the funeral and her husband was very appreciative. Secondly, just as I write this, I have been told that Vera Ellis née Tait has died. A long-standing life member and regular attendee, she always brought Mary Dowson with her as Mary is disabled and cannot get out and about on her own. Vera had also been a voluntary worker for Oxfam for many years and will be sadly missed by the many people who knew her.

Best wishes to all from Newcastle.

NORFOLK BRANCH

June – and we’re already planning our next Christmas lunch. A Branch of Optimists. We, in common with most Branches are experiencing falling numbers at meetings but are happy to say absentees from meetings do try to make a very special effort to join at least one get together throughout the year.

We were very saddened by the death of Mrs Joan Shreeve who had been one of the instigators of the re-forming of the Norfolk and Suffolk Branch in 1982. Joan’s loss of sight and general disabilities meant that she had been with the RNIB home for several months and was very disappointed not to be able to attend meetings.

In March our Speaker was billed to talk about the “Berlin Wall”. We didn’t know the treat that we were going to get! He had been with BRIXMIS in its foundation years and gave us an insight into what actually “went on” behind the Berlin Wall. This was a great eye-opener and we were thoroughly mesmerised by his story and pictures. This coincided with an article on BRIXMIS in the *Lioness* which we then found to be of greater interest as we had “been there”!

The following month we were treated to a talk by the owner of a private WW1 and WW11 Museum who has amassed his own collection of memorabilia relating to both Wars and he has kindly invited us all to visit his museum – and take tea – with him there in place of our September meeting.

In July we shall hear about walking the Great Wall of China and in August another talk entitled “The Royal Air Force”. We wonder what stories and history will lie behind that bland title – nothing straightforward, no doubt! This will be on 4 August when we very much hope we shall be joined by the Chairman of the Eastern Region, Mrs Patricia Stevenson. Unfortunately we haven’t been able to plan an Area reunion this year.

We attended our usual informal service at the Plaque in Yarmouth on 11 May. This year flowers were sent from the Newcastle Branch who have been tending the grave of one of the victims of this tragedy, Private Louisa Maxwell, buried in South Gosforth Cemetery. This plot, in spite of being a War Grave, had been sadly neglected, and it occurs to me that other Branches may know of ATS graves in their area similarly uncared-for. I, Joan Awbery, the Branch Secretary on 01603 455070, have a list of such ATS burials, County by County – if you are uncertain. The War Graves Commission gives grants to local Councils to maintain War Graves, so it is the Council’s responsibility to see they are in good order.

A garden party was held in the Secretary’s garden last Saturday. A day of solid rain preceded it, but all was well on the day and we raised a very healthy sum for funds, donating half to the *Lioness* Fund. We shall no doubt find good use for the rest – we are planning on a day out to Southwold in July.

Good wishes to all Branches.

Editor: Many thanks for the generous £100 donation.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH

We seem to have been quite busy again these past six months. October brings us to the AGM and all officers were returned to office on a unanimous vote. November’s big date is the annual Festival of Remembrance at the Pavilions, Plymouth. Another grand concert from the Band of the Royal Marines followed by a brief service of remembrance: twenty-one members and friends were able to attend. There was also a service at St Andrew’s church on 11 November and Armistice celebrations on the Hoe on 12 November. We were saddened to hear that Margaret Ellison had died. She had lived on the Isle of Wight since she left Plymouth but always kept in touch with us.

In December, we had our Christmas lunch at St Aubyn’s Masonic Hall, again a very enjoyable meal. Major Maskens-McIntyre joined us and told us all about her service years. We were invited to a 4 choir concert in St James Church, Torpoint – a most delightful evening. Several members were able to go to the Officers’ Mess, HMS Drake, for a Christmas Food and Craft Fayre and had a great time buying from the stalls. The Merchant Navy’s Christmas party at Stonehouse gave us all a very

good time and an excellent buffet. By now you must be thinking that our lives are one big round of pleasure; it often is and we very much appreciate the invitations sent to us from other associations.

Our first meeting of the year was in February and sadly, Pam Serpell died on the 4th following a short illness. She had come with her daughter to our Christmas lunch and we miss her at the meetings. March saw us at the Victory Services Club for the AGM: it was very pleasant to meet old friends. Betty Mitchell was our sole representative at the South and SW Area reunion in Salisbury on 29 April.



In May, Eileen, Joan and Ruth went to Lourdes for the 49th International Military Pilgrimage with the Joint Services Group. There were over 40 of us in our group, 18 VIPs each with a helper, of whom several are serving cadets and regular Service personnel. There were also 2 nurses, a doctor, our group leader and a serving padre. What a fantastic week that was and having the military there was quite a unique experience. Many bands from different Regiments and Services performed a grand concert on the Sunday in the Domain on a lovely sunny day. This was followed in the evening by a barbecue in the grounds of Hosanna House where we were staying. 100 Service men and women from the UK Military Contingent and The Band of the Light Cavalry, who kindly agreed to entertain us while we ate, were invited as our guests and we all had a wonderful time. A couple of days later our group went to the Cenotaph in Lourdes to lay a wreath and Eileen was honoured and thrilled to be asked if she would lay the wreath with the serving cadets in attendance.

Our next big event, on 23 May, was our reunion in Truro with our ladies who live in Cornwall. We were very privileged to have Lt Col Sue Westlake, Major Jane

Freebairn and Major Maskens-McIntyre as our guests at the Royal British Legion for a very good roast lunch. Lt Col Westlake was able to present Certificates of Appreciation to Mrs Enith Pentecost, Mrs Queenie Bridle and Mrs Ivy Seabrook. Mrs Ethel England was not well enough to come to Truro so her certificate was presented to her at her home a short while later.



Plymouth Branch lunches in Truro



Ivy Seabrook



Enith Pentecost



Queenie Bridle

Meanwhile back in Plymouth, (while we were in Lourdes enjoying our parades and concerts in 29°C) seven of our ladies were planning to attend the MNA's Atlantic Day Parade from Plymouth Civic Centre to the Barbican. Unfortunately the day was spoiled by a deluge and the parade was cancelled. The ladies were disappointed but they had a small wreath laying ceremony a few days later when the weather improved.

As I write, June promises to be fairly quiet, a small contingent have volunteered to collect in the city for the ABF fund day and hopefully to rest up to gain new stamina in time for the Falkland Veteran's Celebrations on 14 and 15 July. Our ATS ladies are having a stand on the Hoe so as to spread the word and to, hopefully, recruit new members for our Branch.

This year we have one new ATS and two new WRAC members, so our numbers are holding steady at the moment.

We have booked our seats for the Festival of Remembrance at the Pavilions in November and our Christmas lunch is on 14 December.

ROCHDALE BRANCH

We still hold our meetings on the last Tuesday in each month at 1.30pm in our beautiful Town Hall. Some of us have our lunch first in the dining room to keep up our strength.

Last September ten of us made our way to Eden Camp for the Memorial Parade and Service, usually on the first Sunday in the month. It was a great day out and the Parade of Standards is very impressive. The minibus we hired broke down just inside the gate as we arrived! How's that for good timing and good luck.

Christmas and we enjoyed our turkey and Christmas pudding at our favourite venue – the Masonic Rooms.



In May the Royal British Legion presented the Branch with a Poppy Certificate of Appreciation for all the work we do each year on behalf of the Poppy Appeal. The enclosed photograph was taken at our meeting for the members to see the Certificate.



Three of us went to Blackpool to attend the Royal Artillery Association gathering. It was great to see so many ATS there, having travelled from many different parts of the country. We are hoping to go again next year.

We send our good wishes to friends in other Branches and to all at Headquarters.

SALISBURY BRANCH

Writing this report less than a week after hosting the South & South West Area Reunion (full report elsewhere), forgive me for starting with our last event. We were so pleased to see so many happy ladies. It really was a pleasure to welcome you all and know that you enjoyed the day.

It isn't every day one meets a Tudor Sailor, but, in November, Bill Moore came to our meeting to give an illustrated talk about the Mary Rose. Bill, a volunteer presenter from the Mary Rose Trust, brought a number of artefacts that had been retrieved and carefully restored and certainly he dressed for the part! He also gave a vivid account of life in that era.



Kay Cassey, Gladys Webb, Thirza Sillick, Bill Moore, May Brown and Maureen Robertson.

We all enjoyed our Christmas lunch at the Royal British Legion, the meal was excellent.



Gwen Coombes clutches her raffle prize surrounded by Val Trout, Joan Hine, Carol Ederle, Dorrie Rose and Jill Trainor

Our Bring & Buy auction in January raised £63.50 for Branch funds.

In February, our Secretary booked a team to demonstrate chair-based exercises. All this exercise to music is very good for you – I am sure she wants to get us all a lot fitter and we did enjoy trying to keep up with them. Some of us have even joined their classes.

Three members attended the AGM in London and it was very nice to see so many familiar faces.

There was a warm welcome for the return of Sue & Larry Skeats and David Harris in March. Their collection of old instruments is fascinating and it is very difficult to choose which of the three is giving the true definition of what the instruments were used for. They are each very plausible. We scored a little better this time (no zeros) and the winner was Clare Edwards.

Our coming events include a visit to the Royal Signals Museum at Blandford and a pub lunch, so we are all enjoying our meetings.

We send our congratulations to the new Lincoln Branch. Hope you can cope with Bimbo Coleman – as we did before she moved to your area! *See her in the photograph of Lincoln Branch.*

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

Doesn't time fly when you are having fun? Which we hope you all are, but for those who are not so well, please get well soon.

Following on from our last report, in December we enjoyed our Christmas meal out at the White House Hotel, Muxton and were pleased to have our Area Chairman, Maggie Purkis and the Area Secretary, Irene Hall, to join us.

We had no meeting in January, also this year no meeting in February as the decorators were in.

At our March meeting Terri made a cake to celebrate Terri and Beryl's 80th birthdays. Later we sent congratulations to Flo and Stan Poulter for their special Diamond Wedding Anniversary, a great achievement – our very best wishes to you both.

Six of us went to the AGM at the Victory Club and Brenda, our Treasurer, received a Certificate of Appreciation. She has worked hard for us for years, as has her handsome husband Bill – grateful thanks to you both.



Brenda Adams receives her Certificate

This year we sent £43 to Shropshire Air Ambulance, in lieu of Christmas cards to each other. Two of our members went to the ATS Dinner Club lunch at the Victory Services Club and had a very good day.

In May, Lucy, Chas and Hilda went with the Royal Artillery Association to the sad but memorable occasion of the closure of Woolwich Arsenal, home of the Royal Artillery for 291 years. The ceremony was performed with impeccable precision in spite of everyone being drenched with pouring rain. Their new home will be at Larkhill.



We are proud of the fact that one of the first ladies who will join the Royal Chelsea Hospital, was one of our Branch members – she is Win Phillips – have a happy time there Win.

Lucy Bowyer and Beryl Lane will be going to London for Veterans Week, staying at the Union Jack Club, courtesy

of the "Not Forgotten Association", while we will be at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas on 27 June.

The REME Association has invited us to join them on their trip to Llangollen in July to enjoy the delights of steam railway. The purpose of this is to ensure that we don't end up shovelling coal!

That's all for this time friends, half the year has gone already. This stuff called time – does it go quicker, or still the same? Maybe as we get older, it takes us longer to do our jobs!

Visitors are always welcome at our meetings, including men (which we do have sometimes).

Best wishes to everyone everywhere.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

Hello to all the members far and wide.

October brought our AGM with one change on the committee; Margaret Woodhead, our Treasurer, had to resign because of ill health. But Stephanie Caws volunteered and is doing a sterling job, keeping us all in line.

November we had a demonstration by Florrie Groves' daughter, Sue. Do you know the things that you can do with silver foil, baking paper, special paper an iron and glittery bits? It was very entertaining. December we had our Christmas 'DO'. It was a different venue this time and although the numbers were down from the year before we had a great time.

January was our Bring and Buy sale, proceeds from this are very welcome for our funds. I know a great majority enjoy our February meetings which is where we have memory lane. It's surprising how members had different types of wars to others. March was a general chat as we were finalising details for our Annual Dinner. April was our Annual Dinner at Romsey RBL. There were one or two hiccups with the kitchen side of things, but we made the best of it and I think we went home happy.

In May we had an extra special speaker, the niece of Sgt Bessie Hill. If the readers of the *Lioness* can remember page 47 of the last issue, Sgt Bessie Hill was mentioned by her niece who wanted to know if anyone from the ATS knew of her. Jean Doe, our Chairman managed to get in touch with Bessie's niece who gave us a better insight to Bessie. What a fantastic lady Bessie was and it was such a shame we didn't get the chance to meet her in person.

June we are going to have an 'anything goes' evening, where members can have a chance to say what they feel and if they want to change anything about their branch – it makes a change from the committee talking all the time.

We have had a few trips and more to come this year. We went to Burley which is renowned for supplying numerous gifts concerning witches (joking I hope). We

had lunch in a fantastic pub/restaurant. There were about 18 of us and the service was really good with the food especially as everybody arrived just about at the same time. We also found out at lunch that our driver and his wife are in a local amateur dramatics society so we will be getting information about up and coming shows which I'm sure our members would like to go to. Following lunch it was off to see The Olde Thyme Music Hall Show. What a wonderful afternoon we spent there. 'The Tweenies' (Florrie and Vera) sang their hearts out. I'm sure they slept well that night.

On April 29th, we accepted an invitation to the South and South West Area reunion hosted by the Salisbury Branch. What a fantastic day, the organising and hard work that must have gone into making the day the success that it was. I tried to help by running (well slow walk really with my aches and pains) with raffle prizes; I just hope we can manage our organising of the reunion as well as they did theirs.

We have also been to Wilton shopping complex. Ten ladies let loose with cards and cheque books. Before arriving at Wilton, we went to the café for breakfast. This small but very clean and friendly eatery was found by chance when we were going to the Bristol reunion last year. What a find it is, I'm sure we will be using it again. We have trips booked for Mother Kelly's for Fish and Chips in Porchester, Gail's Luncheon, Betty Rush's Tea Party, Bletchley Park and Dorchester Market. I think that will keep us going for awhile.

Our branch has been very fortunate in having four new ladies join us in the past few months. We hope they all enjoy our happy, noisy mad gang. Here they are:



Penny Bailey



Carolyn Forward



Ella Dodds



Jessica Denby

We do have a fifth new member Yvonne Smith but unfortunately due to a brief hospital stay, we couldn't get Yvonne's photograph in time for this issue.

Note of Appreciation from Pam Nesbitt née Zanellotti.
May I take this opportunity of thanking Lyn Jenkins, Secretary of Southampton Branch for welcoming my sister, Yvonne Smith née Zanellotti, into their branch? On Page 48 of the last edition, Yvonne was seeking old friends. To date, no luck, but the ladies from Southampton have made her most welcome and turned her life around. Thank you all once again.

STAFFORD BRANCH

As always our meetings, or outings, are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at Trinity Church, Stafford. The number of active members is dwindling, due to ill health and/or mobility problems. Sadly our Branch news reflects this but we endeavour to keep in touch with absent members via a Branch letter.

We had no meeting in January as everyone needed to recover from the festive season and gird their loins for bargain hunting in the January sales. What a start to the year. In February we had a very chatty meeting plus tea and cream cakes courtesy of Joan Higgins. Start as you mean to go on, that's what we always say.

In March, the members enjoyed a Beetle Drive organised by Muriel Lakin. Beetle Drives at Stafford involve an awful lot of laughing for some reason. Due to holidays and personal commitments no-one was able to attend the AGM in London.

April was our 43rd anniversary and was celebrated with lunch at the Vine Hotel. Sadly due to ill health/mobility problems and a family bereavement only five members were able to attend. Lasagne and salmon were the most popular choices and we didn't have a pudding – weren't we good?

In May we had an opportunity for six members to hear all the latest news from Headquarters. It was also a chance to catch up on gossip, followed by the inevitable tea and biscuits.

In June, Jeannie, Edie Rayner's daughter-in-law gave us another lesson in sign language. Thanks to Jeannie for making these lessons so informative and enjoyable. Edie, Jeannie and her Mum travelled to Stafford from Burton on Trent just to attend this meeting. No only that but Jeannie also had to swap her day off so she could make it. Thanks a lot Jeannie – we do appreciate it.

May we wish everyone a glorious summer with lots of opportunities to enjoy the garden or the local park. Victoria Park in Stafford is looking beautiful if anyone would like to visit us.

ULSTER BRANCH

We in Northern Ireland seem to be having a reversal of seasons. We experienced some very hot spring weather

and now in June we are having an abnormal amount of heavy rain and subsequent flooding which has brought miserable conditions for many.

However, on a bright note, just before Christmas a number of us went to the pantomime in Belfast Opera House and we had a wonderful time (with the help of miniature Baileys and some very nice chocolates!) This was a new venture for us and we enjoyed it so much that we all agreed, if possible, to continue to do something similar next year.

We were all delighted to learn that our hard-working Treasurer Rae Halley was presented with the Pingat Jasa Malaysia medal for service in Malaysia during the period 1957 to 1966. The ceremony was in Lisburn Civic Centre followed by a reception and was attended by dignitaries from that part of the world. It must have been especially poignant for Rae as her husband Robert had been awarded the medal posthumously and this was received by her son Darren.

Beechlawn Hotel in Dunmurry was again the venue for our Grand Reunion Lunch in February. Once again the meal was superb. Just prior to the meal we had our usual Bring & Buy sale, raffle etc which always adds that extra bit of interest and excitement. The hotel was very busy that day with two weddings but they still managed to look after us very well.

We had planned our summer outing to Enniskillen, but unfortunately due to illness etc this had to be cancelled. Another problem has been the rising cost of transport for our outings as in some cases this seems to have doubled since last summer. Obviously we need to have sufficient members supporting our outings in order to cope with this increased cost. However, the most important thing is that those members who had been ill earlier in the year are now back to good health and we look forward to having them back with us at our AGM later in the year.

During the coming months we look forward to selecting a suitable venue for our AGM and also our Christmas treat.

Best wishes to all and I trust that everyone, including our hard-working Headquarters Staff, have a great summer and that the weather will be kind to us.

WILMSLOW BRANCH

The members of Wilmslow Branch send good wishes to you all and hope you have an enjoyable summer which will be just a memory by the time you are reading this.

The Lyons Club have invited us to share in a coach that will take us to the National Memorial Arboretum during Veteran's Week – we are indebted to them for their kindness. This means we have no planning to do, we just have to meet at our Secretary's house where the coach will be waiting. We are very pleased to hear that Betty, our member who lives in Wales, will be visiting a friend near Wilmslow so will be able to join us. We are always pleased to see her and still miss her at our meetings.

It promises to be a busy day so we hope the weather is kind to us again, but not so hot as it was when we went for the dedication of the ATS statue, which was scorching. 'Wear strong shoes' our Secretary said. Strong shoes? Is she proposing to march us about the place? Sorry, **PDF Compressor Free Version**

One of our members, Gwen Johnson née Maidment (Taffy to any who knows her) tells us she has now been a volunteer worker in her local Cancer Research shop for 25 years. Well done, Gwen!

Our congratulations and best wishes go to Joan Scholar and her husband Harry who celebrate 60 years of marriage in June. We hope they have a wonderful time when friends and relations from home and abroad arrive to join them and make it a day to remember.

Our July meeting will be at our favourite hotel where we will enjoy our birthday lunch. The staff always look after us well and make it an enjoyable time.

A word of warning from our Secretary who received a phone call from an unknown person who tried to find out details of her bank account. Wisely she told them nothing and hung up. There are some very nasty people out there whose aim in life is to part unsuspecting people from their money so it behoves us all to be on our guard. Listen to no-one who promises you wealth when all they want to do is transfer your money into their pockets.

We send our good wishes to Joan, our Australian member, and think how nice it would be if she could join us in our meetings and outings.

WINCHESTER BRANCH

2007 started well with our usual Post Christmas meal. This year it was held at the Winchester Hotel, which was a new venue for the Branch and they did us proud! We even had one side of the restaurant to ourselves for the meal and the staff were all slightly bemused by the fact that we swapped chairs halfway through the meal so that we got the chance to speak to other members. Although we only had eleven members attending, we welcomed Lynn Blowes and Lesley Annable both of whom had recently joined the Branch.



Lynn Blowes, Sue Westlake and Maggie Gardiner



Rowena Griffiths, Lesley Annable and Jane Freebairn



Cath Cox

In February we received the sad news that Doreen Feltham, one of our ex ATS members, had died at the age of 82. Doreen had only been a member of the Branch for a couple of years but in that time she had made her presence felt with her enthusiasm to try anything. Although having poor sight and being frail, she managed to go to the Cenotaph and Westminster Abbey and join us at most meetings. She was also a demon on the skittles alley. As long as she was pointed in the right direction, she invariably scored better than most of the rest of us! She will certainly be missed.



Doreen Feltham

The film night in March went well for the few who managed to get there. We watched the Legend of Zorro, an excellent film that everyone enjoyed. Tea and coffee and nibbles were provided. Also in March quite a few of

the Branch attended the AGM in London, most being involved either at Headquarters or on Council. Originally we were going to have a meal afterwards but most people seemed to want to get home after a long day so that fell by the wayside.

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As the May meeting was moved to June, we decided to have a retail therapy day in Guildford. Only two of us went in the end but we had a good day and definitely spent too much.

17 May – Shock News – The *Lioness* quiz team came 4th in the Royal Signals Association Annual Quiz held in Aldershot. *Editor and quiz team member – the shame of it! I think we were maybe too confident after last year's victory and rushed into some answers too quickly. Although we absolutely knew that the last British Prime Minister not to have a wife was Margaret Thatcher and not Edward Heath as most people decided, we could not think of the name of the football team in America which David Beckham was going to join! We promise to do better next year.*

The delayed May meeting held in June was the annual Party in the garden – this year hosted by Alison Schofield in her home in Farnham.



What a night – 11 mm of rain fell in a couple of hours (thanks to John, Alison's husband, for that bit of information). Looking out of the window at home before leaving I thought to myself, "We are going to get wet!" Those of us leaving from Winchester met at the Winchester Hotel car park where we caught the Community Transport. We had a very smooth ride to pick up Lt Col Sue Westlake and Sue Taylor on the way and then onward to Alison's. When we arrived the rain, although still threatening, stayed away, so having had a wander around Alison's beautiful Rose Garden we all got very cosy in the gazebo. Lucky there were not more of us or we would have been sitting on each others knees. We welcomed Brenda Killick, ex-Aldershot Branch, as Alison's guest with the hope that she might like to join our Branch in the future. Our driver and his wife also joined us – now what are the odds of two people meeting in a garden in Hampshire finding out that they once lived within two miles of each other in Scotland? Not high, but that's what happened to our driver's wife and Jane Freebairn. The food kept coming as did the drink, the

rain stayed away and the time flew by. We managed to have our usual raffle – lots of prizes and everyone went away with something. Unfortunately came the time to leave, many thanks to Alison and John for entertaining us – did you know that mayonnaise is named after a French General?



WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH

Meetings have been held each month this year as usual, and although the "Apology List" has sometimes been longer than we would like it to be, we have still had a good number of members present.



Our highlight so far has been our visit to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas on 23 May. It is only a short journey from Wolverhampton by coach, but impossible on public transport. We were favoured with a very warm sunny day which appeared unexpectedly in the middle of ~~PDF Compressor Free Version~~ the month. We saw the Ack-Ack ATS Statue, the Ack-Ack ATS Plinth and our own Association Grove. Although the warm weather in April has brought the blossom out early, and some of it was over, there was still plenty to show how beautiful the Grove is. We made use of the three benches to rest before exploring other nearby sites. We had pre-booked lunch in the Restaurant and can well recommend this to any parties visiting the Arboretum.

Before this *Lioness* is published our Branch will have been represented at the Civic Sunday Service and have also been invited to the Mayor's Reception on Veterans' Day.

We send our best wishes to all friends near and far and to Life Members of our Branch who live too far away to join us at our meetings. We were pleased to hear from Elsie Plummer, a member of our Branch in the 1950's, who is now a member of the Norfolk Branch.

YORK BRANCH

Greetings once again from a lovely summer's day in York – couldn't believe it was time to put pen to paper and write our short report for the *Lioness*. So with help from our Secretary here goes.

As we reported in the previous *Lioness*, six of our members were invited to a Christmas lunch hosted by the "Not Forgotten Association". The lunch and entertainment were excellent. The photo shows two of our members – Betty Hudson and Joan Holden enjoying their day out. By the time this goes to print, Joan will have celebrated her 90th birthday, so congratulations to Joan who was our Standard bearer for many years.



Joan Holden and Betty Hudson

In February, thirteen ladies accompanied by four gentlemen met for lunch at the Dormouse Restaurant in York. The lunch for the ladies was provided by the late Mrs Joan Armitage who left a donation to the Branch members. A great lady who will be sadly missed for her chatter and laughter.

Our March meeting saw the welcome return of Irene Quarrie looking fit and well after her stay in hospital. Volunteers are now required to talk about their interesting posts and so far 2 members have come forward – Phyl Lindsell and Irene. We have one new member – Mrs Findlay who lives in Fulford. Our Secretary had sent her a welcoming letter.

On a sadder note, we have to report the death in March of Mrs Nell White. Nell was a founder member when the Branch reformed in November 1982. She had suffered ill health for the past four years and sadly her husband Neville died suddenly in November 2006. Four members attended her funeral at the crematorium.

On Saturday 24 March I had a call from Connie Beat, one of our Scarborough members who was expecting to go into hospital for a knee replacement to say that she had badly burnt the said leg and the operation would be postponed. I visited Connie 2 weeks ago having had the knee replaced and was now convalescing. She was in fine spirits and raring to go. Well done Connie.

Also on Saturday 24 March, Feona our Secretary attended the AGM and Secretaries' meeting at the Victory Services Club in London, reporting the outcome to our members at the April meeting. We are now saving madly to attend the Grand Reunion in March 2009.

Colonel Hazel Powell gave an interesting talk describing a fascinating time in Kenya whilst a serving officer in the WRAC, setting up an equivalent service for the women of Kenya.

Mary Robinson, our very valued member who always makes the tea and coffee, sells raffle tickets and clears up after us all was sadly missed from the April meeting due to illness. I have visited Mary on behalf of us all and took her flowers and a card which she greatly appreciated. I am pleased to say Mary is now well on her way to recovery.

May meeting was a quiet meeting with only ten members but we had a discussion regarding the North East Reunion and our outing in June which was once again a trip to the Dormouse in York where thirteen ladies and three gentlemen enjoyed lunch. As you can see by the photo – what a happy crowd we are.



York Branch at the Dormouse Restaurant

We are looking forward to our outing in Scarborough in August when we join up with our members who live

there and have a really good lunch, followed by a visit to the beach to look at the sea and then on to our little restaurant for our cream tea before saying our good-byes and catch the bus back to York. Lets hope for better weather this year as last year the heavens opened.

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Saturday 14 July is the open day at Imphal Barracks in York from 11am to 4pm, and the 12/13/14 October is the Wartime Weekend in Pickering. This weekend is well worth attending with re-enactment scenes, plenty of vehicles on display and the usual wartime singing and dancing.



The above photo is of our Secretary, Feona Dixon leading the parade at last year's Thanksgiving and Remembrance Service at Eden Camp in Malton, North Yorkshire. This year's service will be on 9 September. The parade will march off at 1400 hrs.

May I take this opportunity of wishing all members of the WRAC Association a very happy Christmas and all the best for 2008.

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 Secretary or Treasurer your subscription renewal in good time. If you belong to Headquarters Branch then you must send your subscription directly 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

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

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.

ATS Reminiscences

MONTGOMERY CLUB, BRUSSELS

W/200007 Mrs N McKenzie (née Flynn)
14/60 Torquay Road, Belmont 3260, Victoria

Thank you so much for *Lioness* 2/2006. I was most interested in the ATS in Belgium on VE Day 1945. I was there too in Brussels and this photograph was taken during Johnnie's demob party on 8 January 1946.



*Montgomery Club Brussels
Mary (Hank) Harding, Molly Dwyer, N Flynn, Johnny, (de-mob girl), Elsie, Rene Longman, Hattie & Mary?*

I served in 602 MH AA Bty, Hayling Island 1943-1944, then 485 MH AA Bty in 1944. Our M H AA Bty disbanded in April 1945 and 8 of us were attached to 2nd Echelon in Brussels.

ATS - CAMERON BARRACKS, 1939

Joe MacDonald jmlm77@ntlworld.com



Looking through the regimental history of the Queens Own Highlanders (Seaforth Camerons) I came across the attached photograph taken in Cameron Barracks in 1939. Some of your members may be interested in seeing it and of course may be in the photograph.

My wife is a former member of the WRAC and a member of the Southampton branch and I was a Queens Own Highlander. We met at the Edinburgh Tattoo in 1964.

WHERE ARE YOU ALL GIRLS?

Hazel Dann (née Tyler) Middlesbrough Branch

The Secretary of Cleveland Branch submitted this article on behalf of Hazel Dann who was amongst 36 girls who took over from men on Radar and who were the first girls to wear Barrack Dress.



455 MHAA Battery - Devizes 1940

Back Row - Irene Clayton, Judy Stocks, Rennee Wood, Dot Green?

Front Row - Bella Gault, Margaret Allen, Elizabeth Dann, Hazel Tyler, LCpl Jessie Lee, Edith Thompson, Marjorie Smith, Joan Sexton

In September 1940 they were posted to Scotland from Devizes and it took two days to get there by train. A brief stopover in London and they saw The Queen, later the Queen Mother, inspecting war damage. Apparently she asked why these girls were wearing trousers!! On arrival at camp in Scotland, they were fed cocoa and rice pudding - in tin mugs! This camp was so cold that these young girls resorted to burning the straw from their palliasses to keep warm! Hazel has said that they were the happiest years - don't we all say the same.



Hazel Dann (née Tyler)

HELP US TO INCREASE OUR MEMBERSHIP

Over the last two years, our membership has fallen by about 1,000. Although new members are joining, we need to encourage as many as possible to keep the Association going over the next few years.

There is no doubt that we have come to rely heavily on the contribution made by our ATS members and it is time for the WRAC to support their Association to help preserve its future. The next Grand Reunion will be in 2009 – the 90th Anniversary of the Association itself and the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the WRAC. Only members of the Association will be able to apply for tickets.

We would be very grateful if you could pass on this application form to a friend and encourage them to join – £5 a year is not expensive and is subsidised to ensure that everyone should be able to afford to join. You can photocopy the form as many times as you like or tell your friends that they can download a form from the website www.wracassociation.co.uk

Perhaps you already pass on your copy of the *Lioness* to someone else to read. PLEASE ask them to join and they can be reading their own copy at the same time as you are reading yours.

THERE IS AN INCENTIVE!

A £50 Marks and Spencer voucher will be sent to the person who can introduce the most new members by Christmas so make sure they tell us who persuaded them to join!

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:

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ANNE NIGHTINGALE

Mr & Mrs G Evans

5 Gilpin Close, Fishbourne, West Sussex PO19 3QW

Tel: 01243 784769

In response to **PDF Compressor Free Version** Nightingale on Page 49 of *Lioness* 1/2007. My name is Glynn Evans I am sending this on behalf of my wife, Muriel née Wheeler, W/56708, who unfortunately suffers from dementia and has problems with speech and writing after a stroke.

We know Anne very well and also her late husband Bill as they have joined us on many of our veterans trips to Normandy and Holland. All of us have a great many things in common as Bill, his war time mate Andy and I are all JUNO veterans. Muriel and Anne were in SHAEF.



Anne (centre), Muriel (right) with Normandy Veterans Association Standard Bearer, September 2004

Muriel served as a teleprinter operator in the ATS from the age of 17, saying she was 18, and was demobbed in 1946. She served in Hastings, Haywards Heath, Goodge Street, Bushy Park, volunteered for overseas and landed on Omaha in the autumn of 1944. This was an unforgettable experience as she had to climb down a landing net into the assault craft wearing a skirt. After spending the night in tents next to a POW camp, she was transported to SHAEF in Versailles. She then joined SHAEF FORWARD with General Eisenhower in Rheims. She says everyone liked Ike. She happened to be on duty the night the armistice was signed and had to send 2 secret messages to Moscow given the terms of surrender for agreement before they were released to the general public. Against all regulations she kept the original copies which we sold at Christies in 2004. We met in 1946 in Nuremburg, Germany, married in 1947 and have just celebrated our Diamond Wedding.

Editor: Thank you so much for taking the time to write this article on behalf of your wife. I am glad that she still enjoys the 'Lioness'.

MEMORIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Dorothy (Dot) G Foster née Court

2 The Green, Radcliffe-on-Trent,

Notts NG12 2LA Tel: 0115 933 2228

At the outbreak of war I was a shop assistant in Brighton and did my share of fire-watching on the roof top over the shop. With a friend we decided to join the Forces if we could be kept together. We joined the ATS having first tried the WAAF, but they would not guarantee we would be kept together. We were attached to the Royal Corps of Signals and were very proud of our badge.

We were trained at Chester for six weeks learning about electricity and magnetism, how to repair Field Telephones and work the current type of telephone switchboard. After training our first employment was in the gun operations room doing plotting with 34 AA Brigade at Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham from 1941 to mid 1944.



Dorothy in 1941 just after enlisting

Returning from sick leave I was informed that I was fit enough to be conscripted to be posted overseas which was quite a shock. I spent a few weeks in the camp awaiting further instructions and eventually one morning on the Notice Board we were all informed of our destination – Palestine, The Holy Land. One group was bound for Haifa and I was delighted to find myself in the other group bound for Jerusalem. To a girl who had always had a connection with the local Church in Brighton to find myself going to such a Holy place was a relief and overcame the original disappointment of having been conscripted to go overseas. I remained in Jerusalem until coming home for demobilisation around Easter time in 1946 – just a few months prior to the bomb which caused havoc at the King David Hotel where I had been working and I believe which was placed very close to the switchboard room. I often wondered whether it had been "my girls" on duty when it happened. How I would like to hear from any of them who remembers Cpl "Dot" Court.

By this time I had been promoted to Corporal, was a

Supervisor at the GHQ switchboard in the King David Hotel and was billeted at Allenby Barracks on the Bethlehem Road. As we were in a relatively hot country, we were issued with KD uniforms (which needed considerable starching and pressing), decent underwear and socks, ~~sa~~ **PDF Compressor Free Version** from the UK khaki uniforms!

So started a quite amazing couple of years. Within a few days of arriving at Allenby Barracks the Sergeants invited "us girls" to a party and some eight or ten of us sat around a table in the corner wondering what the evening would bring. At another table was a group of "civilians" and the Sergeant Major introduced us. It transpired that the "civilian" who invited me to dance was a Palestine Policeman but because he was in CID HQ in Jerusalem, he always wore civilian clothes. My "civilian" named John took me around and about so that I saw so many exciting places and "happenings". The Holy Sepulchre, the Stations of the Cross and a multitude of interesting things and places in the Old City; dancing under the stars and within trellised gardens of tavernas. The Church of Nativity in Bethlehem and the local shops selling all sorts of mother-of-pearl covered bibles/prayer books etc. Also further afield with a late night visit to the Dead Sea and waiting to see the sun rise over the Jordanian mountains across the Dead Sea. Even floating in that saltiest of water which in those days was much higher than nowadays.

Within six weeks I became engaged to John – something which the ATS Officer confronted me with and wanted assurance that this was "genuine" – it certainly was and we have since enjoyed and celebrated our golden and diamond wedding ceremonies!



Dorothy in Eastbourne before going to Palestine

I am often asked to tell about some of the more bizarre happenings and one in particular seems to hold the attention no matter how often it is heard. Allenby Barracks was situated on the road from Bethlehem to Jerusalem and if I was travelling into Jerusalem to meet with John I would catch the Bus (No ? I believe) – an

Egged Bus, with a Jewish driver. These buses had a long seat beside the window just inside the door and opposite the drivers position and it was always my intention to sit on this seat as near to the door as possible just in case I wanted a quick exit for any reason. On one occasion on the seat immediately inside the door were two Arabs, nothing unusual thought I, and sat down. The one next to me was quiet but the other was arguing furiously with the driver in Arabic so I was quite ignorant of the subject of the conversation. Two or three stops after I had boarded, the Arab who had been speaking so forcibly stood up, caught hold of his friend and carried him off the bus and carefully laid him down on the pavement, still berating the bus driver. Now I understood – his friend was quite dead! I had been sitting next to a dead Arab man, for about ten minutes! When I arrived at my stop and got off John said, "Whatever is the matter? You look quite scared". When I told him, he almost collapsed with laughter and then explained that probably the reason for the argument was that the live Arab was not going to pay a fare for his friend as he considered him not to be a passenger but luggage!

It was not all fun and laughter however. There were some hair raising times. You never knew from day to day what might happen, a bombing, a shooting and one day I recall counting up to 20 coffins, all of Palestine Policemen being carried to the Cemetery on Mount Zion. Another day John and I were in the cinema in the German Colony, Jerusalem and the film (a Western, I think) included a lot of shooting. As usual in such circumstances we sat at the rear of the cinema, often with other friends, but it was not until we left the cinema that we realised that there was actual shooting going on outside. With bullets ricocheting around us we literally laid down in the gutter, crawled along to the end of the road and quickly entered another friend's premises which were above the local Police Station.

One other memory will always remain. A comparatively small, though elderly, Arab walking down the street carrying a grand piano on his back – true. From time to time one witnessed similar strange and interesting things and looking back 60 years what one remembers most vividly are the good and happy times even the celebrations on VE day when nearly everybody had rather more to drink than usual!

My time came to go home to the UK and John's contract had also expired but he had no knowledge of how long it might be before he was able to go on UK leave. I travelled to Ismailia only to find that no troopship was waiting for me and that it might be some weeks before a sailing date was available. I considered that being in Egypt and John in Jerusalem was not ideal so requested to go back to Jerusalem. I was told that I could only have a rail warrant for one way and opted for the return from Jerusalem to Egypt. The only way back to Jerusalem was to go to the entry/exit point where the Military Police inspected everyone's "papers". I asked if I could wait for transport to Jerusalem and given the OK and waited. A Lieutenant in the Royal Signals came in for clearance to Jerusalem and I asked him if he would be good enough to let me accompany his convoy. He agreed and so I crossed over the Sinai desert in an Army convoy. As soon as I arrived in Allenby Barracks in Jerusalem, I

telephoned John who was amazed that I was back. That trip was an experience, crossing the desert at night needs to have been done to understand the thrill but anxiousness which it carried with it.

Eventually we returned to the UK. I went home first and, as agreed, visited John's parents in Oxford. Whilst I was there a radio announcement informed us that a ship had docked carrying a mixture of personnel for the end of the War celebrations and a number of Palestine Policemen. John's father was sure that he would be home in a day or so and, sure enough two days later – a knock on the door. I was ushered into the pantry and after John's parents welcomed him back I came out and completed the ideal homecoming. A marriage was arranged in Brighton very quickly and "That's that".

ENCOUNTERS OF AN UNEXPECTED KIND

W/183031 Mrs Eve Y Fraser
55 Astor Drive, Geilston Bay, Tasmania 7015, Australia.
Email: nandy@iinet.net.au

In February 1944 I was on leave in Alexandria staying at Hibbert House (Toc H). At that time the QM Stores in Cairo had run out of sanitary towels and we were supplied with a roll of cotton wool and a length of net to make our own. One morning, when my friend had gone out, I was sitting on my bed making some of these bunnies, as we called them. There was a rap on the door and, seemingly expecting the room to be empty, in marched the GOC MEF, General Sir Bernard Paget, with several officers and the Toc H manager.

I jumped to my feet and crimson with shock and embarrassment thrust my sewing materials under my pillow. The great man barked questions at me, was I



*Eve and John with Archdeacon Johnstone
All Saints Cathedral June 1944*

enjoying my leave, were the beds comfortable, was the food good, the facilities adequate, sort of things and all I could do was stutter, "Y....yes.sir" to everything. He then said, "Very good. Carry on." and barged – the only word for it – through his retinue and out of the door. The last officer winked at me as he closed the door. I collapsed in a heap on the bed. Of course with hindsight I realised they could not have known what I was doing but in my nervous state I was sure they had.

Four months later I was on honeymoon at Camberley Cottage, the WMCA married quarters, standing on stilts beside Lake Timsah at Ismailia. I was recovering from a bad dose of sunstroke so one day, not feeling like the walk to the lido, we were in our room reading. I was wearing a dress but my husband, although destined for higher rank, was then a sapper and was wearing KD uniform as the troops were not allowed to wear mufti.

Our peace was suddenly shattered by the noise of motor cycles and peeping out of the front door we saw several staff cars and motor cycle outriders. We fled out of the back door and went under the house to the vegetable garden cultivated by the wonderful Sudanese servant, Sayed – the best cook I have ever met in all my travels. A few minutes later Sayed appeared looking flustered with behind him who but Sir Bernard Paget GOC MEF. He said "How do you do Mrs Er.er, the servant tells me the hostess is not at home, would you show me around please". It was not a question of course. He ignored my husband and also ignored my whispered, "Fraser".

Crimson and agitated, I showed him the spotless kitchen, lounges upstairs and down and our room and he barked the usual questions regarding conditions, food etc and again I was a stuttering wreck, "Y....yes,Sir" to everything. He then said, "Very nice, very nice. Thank you Mrs Er.er. Carry on." He swept pass my husband without a look and out of the front door held open by Sayed. The vehicles went roaring back up the lane and I collapsed onto the bed complaining. "Can't I go anywhere without that man following me?" My husband said, "I am going to look in the bathroom mirror", and when I asked why he said "I think I have become invisible". I said "Well Mrs Er.er can see you and that is all that matters".

Next morning the hostess came to our room while we were having breakfast. She said "The servant tells me there were visitors yesterday. Was it anyone important?"



Eve and John July 1944

I said "I suppose you could say so" and told her who it was and we thought she would have apoplexy. For the next half-hour we could hear her ranting on the telephone, "Why had she not been advised of the inspection?" etc. When we passed her on our way out she glowered at us. **PDF Compressor Free Version**
 days later an officer from Moascar came to tell us it was D Day. We felt excited but rather guilty that we were having a wonderful holiday while there would be so much more bloodshed in Europe.

Between these two encounters was a different one. My friend Evelyn Pleasants and I used to attend the Friday night dances in Cairo Cathedral Hall. There were very few British girls there most Syrian and Greek civilians and hundreds of men, so we girls had several would-be partners for every dance. It was of course very hot so in the intervals we went out onto the terrace in front of the cathedral and bought lemonade. On this occasion out of the bishop's house came old Bishop Gwynne, Archdeacon Johnstone and a familiar figure in battledress with a black beret adorned with 2 badges. It was of course the then General Montgomery, another Sir Bernard.



Eve, left and Evelyn, right. Kasr el Nil Barracks, May 1945

As it happened Evelyn and I were the only British girls out there and he came straight to us and smiled. He said "Good evening" and asked all the usual questions. Evelyn white as a sheet, was struck dumb, so again it was up to me, crimson-faced and flustered to blurt, "Y. yes Sir" to every question. He said that coming back to Cairo was like coming home to him, and then went into the hall to address the hordes and we followed. By the way I had not known before that he could not pronounce his rs.

At that time he was not popular with many of the troops who thought General Wavell had been very badly treated having nothing near the amount of troops and ammunition Monty now had. When he spoke, however, his eloquence was such everyone was completely spellbound and he received a long-lasting ovation.

He read the lessons in the cathedral on Sunday and also a very moving poem found on the body of a soldier in the desert. It was believed at first the soldier had written it but some years later the name of the poet was revealed. Monty came back to Cairo once again before the War left Africa but I managed to remain concealed. I had no idea then that one day I would come to live in Hobart and discover that Monty had lived here for several years while his father was Bishop of Tasmania.

By the way, I would be very grateful if anyone could let me have a copy of a photograph of the gates of Kasr el Nil Barracks? I would happily pay for any costs/postage involved.

Editor: Another wonderful coincidence. I wonder if this next contributor can help?

RECOLLECTIONS - OR BEING WISE AFTER THE EVENT!

W/112168 Winifred Garner née Legg
 27 Tennyson Avenue, Wanstead, London E11 2QN

I have much enjoyed reading the *Lioness* over the years and suddenly decided to put a few of my own recollections on paper!

On a bitterly cold January day in 1942, in Honiton, South Devon, I became W/112168 Pte Legg W. How I remember that icy cold Nissan hut! Fortunately one of our number had had the foresight to bring a hot water bottle and that bottle was passed from bed to bed until it reached the owner. I now began to absorb useful information, beginning with the fact that it was not appropriate to ask the CO on his rounds for a match with which to light the stove (to heat the pan of hot water).

On being in a transit camp en route to my first posting, I discovered it was unwise to admit to the ability to type - the CO at Abergavenny wanted someone who could use a typewriter! This was the headquarters of Movement Control, Abergavenny District, part of Western Command. I have to admit I enjoyed Abergavenny (troop movements and Overlord), but here again it was unwise to ride out from the local stables on Sunday morning having dodged Church Parade on the excuse of being on duty, only to meet the Church Parade coming the other way whilst trotting along the High Street. Again it was unwise to go to the cinema and be seen sitting in the front row of the circle with the CO of the local American unit, when the lights went up in the interval.

Some time after D Day, I foolishly volunteered for service in Germany (my schoolgirl German was not too bad) and found myself in a transit camp in Bristol known as Mullers Orphanage, awaiting posting to GHQ Cairo! It was not wise to be caught reading a book (Chicot the Jester) tucked in a remote corner of the hall instead of

listening avidly to a lecture on "Sea Power" for the third time. I was detailed to take part in a quiz and was stupid enough to win it. My response when told I must have read the answers in a book from the library, because I was always reading, was not polite!

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Then came Cairo and Kasr el Nil Barracks! That awful mess with swarms of cockroaches. Then Suez. At night to visit the latrines we would form a queue, one person leading with a hurricane lamp and one bringing up the rear, also with a hurricane lamp. The green eyes of the numerous rats looked down at you from the overhead metal bars.

Finally, I helped kit out the British ex Prisoners of War from the Far East. I can see those walking skeletons now and will not forget..... Enough of my rambling!

NOTES OF SERVICE LIFE AT BURROWHEAD AND AT MANORBIER

W/31805 Anne Dickinson née Smith

3rd September sirens. My Aunt saying she would leave London. February 1940 Brighton-Ocean Hotel-intake ATS. After September to February dilly-dally I arrived at Manorbier School of Gunnery and a month later went to Burrowhead, Scotland with the 5th Kine Theodolite Detachment, as Operator and Darkroom Technician. Miss E Clerk-Rattery our CO and very much aware of her 'charges' (and a relative of the Queen). Half of the 25 were young and the rest were expensively educated, from good family backgrounds. Sgt Cook and Cpl Pittock had joined before War was declared and LCpl Loring wished to return to Canada afterwards to resume teaching in the backwoods, travelling by canoe and her darned lisle stockings showed thrift to save the fare. Some later moved on but most who loved the work realised that Volunteer(private) was going to be a long term rank. The Detachment included cook, orderly and clerk and some spare operators in training. We all had to be interchangeable on all positions, including general duties.

When we were not filming we were recording behind every position on the Gun park and able to assess the suitability for each man in best team position. The male permanent staff recorded our performance frequently. When the order 'Fire' was expected, some apprehension caused temporary loss of attention and we would lean over and take over 'following the clock' hands over hands to assure new gunners that the shellburst was going to be correct. It is often stated the ATS didn't fire the guns but to stand daily under the gun barrel – to left or right – left not only an oily shoulder, but a heck of a numb head. The weather was 'The Boss' and the evaluators expected additional help from some operators at the end of a session. Correcting the 7 pages of computing the shellburst distance from the target took time and the chief complaint was 'Cold Suppers', so the routine was dictated by the evaluators and as the weather dictated 'When!', we stood around and revised and practised waiting endlessly.

Manorbier was a shock, when in February, Wales was icebound for weeks. We were given the Mae West huts just as the Territorials had left them weeks ago. A new

ablution hut had been built, but the toilets, sinks, showers, had no fittings in situ, and minus doors – was 'open house' for everything. Plus no running water, in or out. Problem solved. A coke fired boiler and a cold water tank – soon ice. An old soldier to keep up the fire (outside) and break the ice. Chamberpots to fill and take to the sink. A very public wash up and down, save the water and use the toilet and flush with washing water – lucky to have a sack as a door, and better than the daytime 'arrangement' when the workmen were trying to beat the weather and do what they could. We had night time relays for a good wash, and even though NO workman ever clocked on 'late' – we were out of the hut before 7.45am and using the old toilets, which was a bar across and in front of a ditch, and a half door to view the Camp from. A weekly bath in Tenby – truck provided by gunners anxious to be off duty – cost a shilling and a grumble! From hotelier, BUT we were clean girls. Never were so many chamberpots given back so readily, by so grateful females, in long history. But we managed thanks to our CO – gentry bred – to face up to life and stand alone – as I learned at THAT school. Vol Smith/Dickinson W31805 Manorbier 1940. The unreadiness of War in 1940 and after Dunkirk when Manorbier was the base for those who needed to form up with Regiments and be kitted out again and the lull before the conscripting of women to replace men, was a time some choose to forget or are not aware of.

ORDNANCE DEPOT AT CHILWELL

W/145732 Mrs Betty M Sherriff, née Rothery
26 Blenheim Court, Back Lane, Winchcombe,
Glos. GL54 5PW. Tel: 01242 603800

Over the years I had never seen any mention of the Ordnance Depot at Chilwell until an article in the *Lioness* 2/2006 contributed by Mrs Maisie Waggott. I also slept in the replica of the "Queen Mary" as we called it.



W/145732 Cpl Betty Rothery

I was employed in the Civilian Cash Office 'up the hill' dealing with post for civilians employed in the Depot and outposts as far as the Orkneys. We had a mixed office of male and female civilians, a few ATS and Army personnel. We all worked to a very tight timetable to ensure that civilians were paid on Friday after tea, even in the Orkneys! Although the civilians in the office had the statutory holidays, we - ATS - always worked - even on Christmas Day! Sometimes we worked until 11pm and I remember taking Roll Call when I went back to the accommodation block.

To obtain a pay increase I took a course involving tanks and spare parts etc. My class had a wonderful teacher and as I gained a high mark I didn't have to take the second year exam - thank goodness! My civilian boss and I worked out a mechanised pay system which saved a great deal of time. He received an OBE and I had a mention in dispatches. We had many officers from the War Office who came to see our system. I'm sure half of them had no idea what we were explaining to them!

Sometimes, I would do the civilian pay rounds with an Army officer. One Friday I was taken to see the trial of a Churchill tank - quite interesting. I had a friend who was in Signals and worked on the Exchange attached to our office. We both had German measles and had to go to an Isolation Hospital somewhere in the wilds. We were horrified to learn it was a VD hospital.

Although we were never popular with our Company office, as we always had to be let off Church Parade and

drill, our overall 'Boss' was Mr Frogbrook the Service Establishment Officer and he could pull strings!

I must admit that I quite enjoyed my four years at Chilwell and it ended on a very pleasant note. A civilian friend received a memo to say that her husband was a Japanese prisoner of war. It was quite a relief at the time because she had heard nothing from him for five years.



Betty on holiday in Texas last year

WRAC Officers' Dining Club

**WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB
DINNER TO BE HELD AT THE VICTORY SERVICES CLUB
SATURDAY 1 DECEMBER 2007
Jane Freebairn, General Secretary**

A very successful Dinner was held last November and at last, we managed to break the 100 barrier as 109 members and guests came along. A significant number of serving and recently retired "young" officers attended for the first time and hopefully, as the word spreads, more and more of the younger generation will start to support this annual opportunity for officers to "reune".

For further confirmation, have a look again at the photographs published in the last *Lioness*! If you are a member of the WRAC Officers' Dining Club, you will have received personal notification. PLEASE take action now if you have not already sent in the form....photocopy it too and try to persuade some more of your contemporaries to come along. It truly is a case of "The more the merrier." If you are not a member, please ring me on 01962 887570 - you will very quickly receive an application form!

**SATURDAY 1 DECEMBER -
VICTORY SERVICES CLUB - SEE YOU THERE**

Reminiscences of the WRAC

PRESENTATION OF VETERAN'S BADGE

Mr Mary Clements (née Fox)
15 Orchard Avenue, Stanley, Wakefield,
West Yorkshire WF3 4PB

I am a member of Leeds Branch and the photograph is of me being presented with my Veteran's Badge by Ed Balls MP, along with other Veterans from the area at St Peter's Church Centre, Stanley on 3 March 2007.



Ed Balls presents Mary with her veteran's badge

Prior to joining the WRAC in 1949, I served in the Women's Land Army. After basic training at Guildford, I was posted to a Clerk's Course at Wrexham then on to 46(M) HAA Regiment, Bulford Camp, Salisbury, later moving to Lingfield, Surrey. In June 1951 I was posted to HQ Field Records in Bad Oeynhausen, Germany until September 1952. I thoroughly enjoyed my Army Life.

As I was one of the first members of WRAC, I wore Khaki uniform of the ATS throughout my service. The bottle green uniform was not available. Could someone please tell me when bottle green uniforms were first issued?

Editor: Bottle green No 1 Dress Uniform was first worn at the first WRAC Officer Commissioning ceremony at Hindhead in August 1950. The lovat green No 2 Dress uniform replaced khaki battledress in 1962.

JENNY PAYNE

Chris Corker

At the beginning of May, Belle Jenkinson and I with a few family and friends met at the Lumbertubs in Moulton, Northampton. We had arranged a lunch with Jenny Payne who has MS and was looking forward to seeing a few old faces. Unfortunately, only a few were able to attend; but even so we had a very enjoyable few hours. As Jenny can only communicate by telephone,

perhaps anyone who knows her could give her a ring on: 01604 648164.



Belle, Jenny & Chris

ASK A SILLY QUESTION.....

Lt Edna Dawes, née Street
2 Penrith Road, Boscombe Manor, Bournemouth,
Dorset BH5 1LT

I was a training officer at our Depot at Guildford during Coronation Year. Contingents of Commonwealth troops were in Britain for the occasion and we entertained them whenever possible. We invited some South African officers, temporarily quartered in nearby Aldershot, to a Regimental Dinner Night. They were highly intrigued by an all-female unit.

I was Orderly Officer that night and arrived late in the Mess ante-room, where I was immediately cornered by a major who had been emptying his glass too frequently and whom my colleagues were deftly avoiding. After enduring the, 'What's a lovely girl like you doing in an outfit like this?' routine, followed by the alcoholic comment, 'I imagine girls join the Army to forget a man or to find one', I was longing for dinner to be announced. Then he looked with bleary eyes at the Orderly Officer's lanyard and said, 'None of the others has a red cord round her shoulder. What's it for?'

I replied, straight-faced, that it was to signify that I was best in the entire camp at marching. To my astonishment, he believed me and asked me to elaborate. I spun a wild tale about a marching competition we held every month; the girl with the most points at the end of Coronation Year would have an audience with the Queen. He took in every word!

A month later, I was in the waiting room of the X-ray department of the Military Hospital in Aldershot when a REME subaltern came in and sat on the facing bench. He began a conversation that led to my telling him where I was stationed.

'Guildford!' he exclaimed. 'You've got some cranky ideas over there, haven't you?'

'Why do you say that?' I asked.

'We entertained some South African officers in our Mess last night, and one of their majors told us you hold a marching competition every month to get some kind of recognition from the Queen. You take soldiering seriously, don't you? I thought girls joined the Army to forget a man'

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CYPRUS 1962

Sheila Wilkins (née Flitton)
3 Butterfield Park, Clevedon BS21 5ED



Sheila shaking hands with the Princess

The then Princess Royal (Princess Mary and Countess of Harewood), was visiting the base at Akrotiri and asked to meet some of the military wives and ex-WRAC, as well as the serving members. The Princess Royal was Controller Commandant of the WRAC at that time.

Do any of the *Lioness* readers recognise themselves in the photograph?

We had been sent a letter about the dress code we should follow. It originally specified the wearing of a hat but this was subsequently amended. Although I opted not to wear a hat, I wore a veil on a comb, which does not show in the photograph! At the time I was expecting my second child.

EXTRACTS FROM THE NEWSLETTER OF 5TH INDEP COY WRAC, JAMAICA

Avril Williams
3 Pippin Walk, The Limes, Hardwick,
Cambridge CB23 7QD
Tel: 01954 210859

April-June 1961 Editorial

Through the medium of this Newsletter we welcome SSgt Doris Brook who arrived from the UK in March, taking over from Doreen Jones who has been posted to Aldershot. We would like to wish SSgt Brook a happy stay in the Caribbean.

As Editor (WO2 M Doherty), I would like to thank all our many readers of Staff and Services who came along to our 'Corps Day' and helped to make it a success.

We have had the Independence Conference in London, but still the future of the Company is undecided. We intend to press on with 'business as usual'.

WRAC News

Our Corps Day was celebrated this year on 23 April, taking the form of a re-union of all our ex-Service members of the ATS and WRAC.

The day began with a Church Service at the Garrison Church along with members of the 1st Bn The Royal Hampshire Regiment who also celebrated Gallipoli Day. The Service was conducted by the Rev R Edwards. Our Collect was said by the Congregation with special emphasis on our Motto – "Suaviter in Modo, Fortiter in Re". Following the Church Service, members of the Company were hosts to a large number of Ex-Service members, along with Employing Officers, Chief Clerks and their wives.

WRAC Headquarters

It has been decided that, in view of the possible disbandment of the WRAC Company, our Corps Badge should be installed at Newcastle, alongside the badges of the various Regiments who have served in Jamaica. This has been estimated at a cost of £25 to which all members have agreed to contribute.



Photographs of Badge taken whilst on holiday in Jamaica in 1992

News from Home

The Dedication of the Corps Window in Guildford Cathedral took place on Saturday 12 September. This window, and the Statue of Faith which stand outside the south wall, were presented by the Women's Royal Army Corps to the new Guildford Cathedral. The sum collected by the WRAC was £2,537, 2.6d. One of the main coloured glass panels in the window shows the Corps Badge, and in the second the collar badge surrounded by the Corps Motto. The Address was delivered by the Bishop of Guildford, and the WRAC Staff Band played throughout the service. As members of 5th Indep Company WRAC, we are proud to say we have a share in these beautiful memories.

Where Are You Now?

DOROTHY EDNA GILBERT -

1st ATS (OTC COURSE)

Verity Mundy, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

I have only recently come across your magazine, the *Lioness*, and wonder if any of your readers can help me. My mother who is going to turn 90 this year served in the Second World War in England. When I was younger I wasn't interested and now that I am, she has forgotten it all.

She was born Dorothy Edna Gilbert in Bath, 1917. She was also known as Poppy and Susan. As a very young woman she went to London where she married Bill Wheeler, presumably just before the war. They divorced after the war and my mother then married Elmer Cubitt, my father. Soon after the end of the war my parents went to Kenya then to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

As far as I know Mum was an Ack Ack girl, a radar operator in London during the war. I have one photograph of her in a formal group of women in uniform; on the back it reads "Brayton 6.42. 1st ATS (OTC course)". She used to talk about Violet Szabo as though they had been friends or at least colleagues.

Is there anyone out there who might remember Dorothy, Poppy, Susan?

HURON CAMP SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION

Mrs Celia M Bass (née Mickey Rooney)

18 Beechwood Court, Skelmersdale, Lancs WN8 9HT

Tel: 01695 727450

I have recently settled into sheltered accommodation and have just finished reading the *Lioness* which I got this morning. I enjoy all the stories worldwide. Although Liverpool is the nearest Branch, it's too far away for me to attend so now I just depend on my *Lioness* for a good read.



Huron Camp

It is such a pity no-one writes in from where I was stationed at Huron Camp School of Instruction. I see my close friend Ann Mahony is one of the Cleveland Branch

– she often rings me. A couple of years ago some of the girls at camp talked about a film that was made in Guildford in about 1953 called "Greensleeves". I went into Huron Camp from Guildford 1952 until 1955 where I met Bill in the summer and got married in the October. He became ill just after our Golden Wedding Anniversary: photos were in the *Lioness* and he passed away in February 2006. These photos are from Mary Barnes who found me at Christmas 2005. She is the one in PJs in the little photo – I'm the little one in uniform.



LOOKING FOR LOST FRIENDS

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

A very interesting postcard arrived here through the post a week ago. It was from Gladys Slocombe (née Morgan) in Western Australia.

She had seen my article in the *Lioness* and wondered if I could be one of her friends. Sadly, I wasn't. I thought I would send you her details in the hope she may find her lost friends. I shall write to her to check the *Lioness* to see if her details are fortunate enough to be published.

Her details are as follows: Gladys Slocombe, 16 Lalor Place, Kalamunda, Western Australia and she is looking for: Alice Stuart, Jean McKintosh, Mary Cathcart, Kit Douglas. Gladys was in 1st Coy stationed in Ilfracombe then Taunton.

SEARCHING FOR ROYAL ARMY PAY CORPS FRIENDS

David M Griffiths,
8 Crompton Hall, 12 South Park, Gerrards Cross,
Buckinghamshire SL9 8HE. Tel: 01753 481596

I am seeking a lady who was a friend of mine during 1950 and 1951; her name was Sylvia Lamb. We were stationed

at the Royal Army Pay Corps (33rd Battalion) Camp at Piddle Hinton near Dorchester, Dorset. There was a fairly large contingent of WRAC in the Camp – 2 or 3 Officers, 6 to 9 Sergeants, Staff Sergeants and Warrant Officers and perhaps 20 to 30 Corporals, Lance Corporals and Privates. **PDF Compressor Free Version** Lamb must have joined the ATS perhaps in 1946/47 and by 1950 she was a Sergeant. She was a very good looking girl with fair hair, blue eyes and a delightful personality.

I have carried out a considerable amount of research to locate her already, but all I have been able to discover is that her married name may now be Massey and that she probably lives in the south west of England. I think she would be about 78.



Sylvia Lamb

There was another WRAC Sergeant friend of mine also at Piddle Hinton Camp and her name was Margaret Dodds. I have not done detailed research on Margaret, so I am not aware of her married name or where she may live. If anyone remembers Margaret Dodds, do please get in touch with me.

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

W/163515 Pte Margaret (Peggy) Binns née Bell
22 Denbeigh Place, Benton, Newcastle upon Tyne
NE12 8DE. Tel: 0191 2802820
Email: jb002e8097@blueyonder.co.uk

My name is Peggy Binns née Bell, a friend of Doris Robinson who was billeted in Aldershot from 1942 till discharged in 1945. I was attached to A Coy and worked in ATS Sick Bay, in Macadam Square, which later then moved to "The White House" in Heathend, a village close to Aldershot, until discharged from there when my service days ended. I would appreciate hearing from anyone who remembers the sick bay, especially a friend named Jackie Paton, from Glasgow, who worked with me in Heathend.



W/163515 Peggy Binns née Bell

I'm also helping my friend, Doris Robinson née Blake of Ontario, Canada to try to trace two friends of hers, namely Joan Lesley and Peggy Lyle. Doris is unable at present to do this herself. Joan Lesley served with Doris in No 12 Training Bn "F" Coy, Macadam Square, Aldershot in 1942-45. Joan came from Lewisham originally and married a French Canadian named Vincent (sorry can't remember his surname) and moved to Quebec in 1946 when Doris lost contact with her due to unfortunate circumstances. She is also seeking Peggy Lyle who came from Southampton.

Doris married Bud Pendlebury in September 1945 after he returned from action in Holland in May of that year. He went to Canada in 1945 and Doris followed in April 1946. Sadly, Bud was killed in an accident in July 1946 and Doris returned to England with their baby and lost touch with Joan. She couldn't settle in England, returned to Canada and eventually met and married a friend of Bud. They were happily married for 50 years until he passed away. Up until now Doris has been unsuccessful in trying to trace Joan, who she has thought about so many times.

STATIONED AT BARROW-ON-SOAR

Mrs Pamela Fischer née Plumpton
7/21 Burke Road, Cronulla 2230, NSW Australia

I would very much like to contact anyone who was stationed at Barrow-on-Soar, Nr Loughborough, Leics and worked at Beaumanor Park in the TP Room from the end of 1942 to 1945 and was billeted at Southfields.

My name was Pamela Plumpton and my friend was Hazel Long who now lives in Canada. I now live in Australia and have been here for nine years. After losing my first husband, I married my RAAF sweetheart whom I met at the Loughborough Corn Exchange during my Army days. We went out together for two years but after the War he returned to Australia as he got cold feet. We

always kept in touch and when our spouses died, he came and looked me up and we have been married nine years. We never forgot each other so at the age of 73 I took the plunge – a fairy tale.

I would love to **PDF Compressor Free Version** if they live



Pam Plumpton and Hazel Long in the garden at Southfields 1943

ANY TRUE TERRITORIALS LEFT?

Mrs Betty France, Secretary Leeds Branch,
11 Warwick Avenue, Golcar, Huddersfield HD7 4BX

I would very much like to get in touch with any of the few true Territorials who are left i.e. those who joined the ATS as volunteers before the outbreak of World War 2 and were attached to a TA Unit.

It will be the 70th Birthday of the ATS next year which I hope can be marked by a re-union of some kind.

ANNE DICKINSON

Telephone: 01179 359 910

Seeking Vol Isabella Coleman (about 85 years old) enlisted February 1940 Ocean Hotel, Brighton School of Gunnery. Manorbier March 1940, 5th Kine Theodolite Detachment, Burrowhead, Scotland (1st Kine Theodolite Detachment) Home area Norfolk (Great Yarmouth), married twice, names unknown. I would also like to contact any of the original '5th' with E. Clerk-Battery as CO billeted in the Isle-of-Whithorn, April 1940.

Editor: Anne is kindly offering £5 to the Lioness for each contact made so I have my fingers crossed!

W/229656 LCPL MABEL MORT

Mrs Mabel Lovatt née Mort
54A Higher Shady Lane, Bromley Cross,
Bolton BL7 9AQ

I was stationed at Normanton Barracks, Derby attached to 'E' Coy mainly billeted in Alma Block from March 1943 – April/March 1946 when I was then transferred to Chilwell. During my time at Derby I worked mainly in "L" shed COD along with SQMS Kerr (née Forsyth) known to all as Peggy. We had a hard working team and created a wonderful friendship which lasted for 63 years. I was so sad to hear of Peggy's death in October 2006. I am sure she will be sadly missed at the Glasgow Branch. I certainly will miss our phone calls and the occasional visit which we shared.



W/229656 LCpl Mabel Mort

I would just like to say if there is anyone who may remember me, I would be delighted to hear from them. A few names I can remember from "E" Coy – Ethel Robinson (Robbie), Margaret Greig, Minnie Bodger, Flo Fairley, Mary Conroy and Daisy Ryder.

RPO BRIGHTON

Email: mrsbloff@aol.com

I am W/437555 Lynn Davey (now Lynn Blowes) sitting front row far left as I was the shortest. After training, I was posted to RPO Brighton and I have only just made contact again with Rosemary Williams who went with me to Brighton. Her husband, Rod Truelove, ex-RAPC, is a Yeoman Warder at the Tower of London and I found them again on the RAPC Association website. At RPO Brighton,

I met and married Ken Blowes and we were married for 27 years before sadly he died in 2000. I am now living in Southampton but working at Worthy Down for the RAPC Association, next door to the WRAC Association.

I would really like to contribute to the magazine with.



Guildford intake January 1970

WRAC LADIES WHO SERVED IN 16 JSTU AND 21 JSTU

Mrs Deanna Williams
167 Garth Owen, Newtown, Powys SY16 1JR
Email: Deanna@deannas.fsnet.co.uk

I live in Newtown, Powys. I am an Associate member of The Marches & Mid Wales Branch. I do enjoy the magazine even though I don't know the contributors!

I served in the Royal Australian Air Force (LACW LODGE) in Base Squadron from 1961/1963 before I left to marry a Gunner in the RA (Taff Williams) who was stationed at Woomera and RAAF Edinburgh in South Australia.

We do wonder what happened to the WRAC ladies who served with him in 16 JSTU and 21 JSTU. Some of the names we remember are: Major Latham, Sgt James, Mary Snodgrass, Madge Kennedy and a Frankie?



ATS GIRLS

Belle Stark
899 King George's Road, Blakehurst NSW 2221,
Australia

We are two ATS girls (of days gone by) both in our 80s, but we never tell anybody except under torture. We both live in the southern suburbs of Sydney and are travelling together to Britain, this coming July (for what has turned out to be an almost annual event). We are friends who play bowls every week and are avid readers of *Lioness*. We need to know what everybody else is "getting up to"....



Left: Pamela Plumpton (now Fischer). Served in War Office Y Group (Signals) Beaumanor Park, Leicester
Right: Belle Coates (now Stark). A Gunner who served all over the place (Ubique) in 510 HAA Bty, 151 Regt Royal Artillery

We would love to hear from ANYBODY!

DO YOU RECOGNIZE YOURSELF?

W/376129 Pte Crissie Liddiard (née Power)
1A Nelson Road, Daybrook, Nottingham NG5 6JE



3 Pln, 1 Coy May 1952

Does anybody recognise themselves in the above photograph? If so, it would be nice to hear from you. If you do not recognise yourself from the front, you might recognise your signature or comments from the back?



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REQUEST FROM AGC MUSEUM

The Curator of the AGC Museum has asked if anyone has details of Phyllis Margaret Kleyn who later dropped the Phyllis.

She enlisted into the ATS on 11 June 1940 (though she may have been a member of FANY). She became a driver, serving with No 1 Motor Company in London (possibly Chilwell). On 5 November 1941 she was posted to No 2 ATS OCTU in Egham and was commissioned on 12 November 1941. In May 1943 she was at HQ London District and was discharged on 11 November 1943.

However, she is gazetted as having been promoted Junior Commander on 11 October 1944 – hence the intriguing question of SOE Association. Family history suggests that she was serving in intelligence (she could speak German, French, Italian and some Dutch) and was landed by submarine into occupied Europe and served in Holland prior to Operation Market Garden.

Her daughter Jane was put forward for adoption in 1947 and only found her younger brother in 2005. She now lives in Australia and is keen to have any additional information on her mother's wartime career.

If you have any information about Margaret Kleyn, please contact Jane Freebairn, General Secretary on 01962 887570.

WHO REMEMBERS JOAN RATCLIFF?

W/58717 Joan Ratcliff
3 Hillcrest Gardens, Lower Street, Eastry,
nr Sandwich, Kent CT13 0HX

I'm endeavouring to put together my small part in the ATS and am wondering if anyone out there remembers me – it sure was many moons ago!

I was a volunteer and joined on 6 June 1941. I trained for six weeks at Norton Barracks, Worcester and from there I was posted to Leatherhead, Surrey as a Mess Orderly in the Sergeants Mess (RAOC). From there I went to the 2nd/3rd Herts Platoon in Dorking working as a batwoman to three officers: Miss Taylor-Jones, Miss Goodenday and Miss Wadilove.



Cpl Joan Ratcliff

Next, I was posted to the 4th Wireless Group, Royal Signals. When the lads were all drafted abroad, us ATS were posted to Newport on the Isle of Wight with the Airborne. From there, a War Office posting to the Dispersal Unit in Taunton where I stayed until my own demob in January 1946. I would be happy to find anyone who remembers me!

I belong to the Canterbury Branch and we celebrated our 60th Birthday on 6 June – sixty-six years since I had joined up!



Joan with her three officers

Reunions

AGM – SCOTLAND

Sue Marcroft, Secretary, Dumfries Branch
susan@marcroft.fsworld.co.uk

Saturday 20 October 2007 is the date when Scotland is to hold their AGM in Glasgow for members of the Association. Tickets can be obtained from Branch Secretaries. Those members who would like to attend and no longer have a Branch, please contact the Secretary, Susan Marcroft on 01556 611944 for further information – we would love to see you there!

THE 60s 16ers REUNION CLUB ASSOCIATION

Chairman: Gordon (Reme) Harper

Secretary: Ken O'Hagan

Membership Sec: Laurie (Torrle) Moore

In 1996 Chris Bartlett started a Reunion Club for the ex-members of 16 Sig Regt who served in the 1960s. The first reunion was held in Southend-on-Sea and was attended by 35 of the 57 contacts he had made from the various methods of advertising. In 1997, 25 members returned to Germany for a reunion at Bradbury Barracks. 1998 and 1999 our reunions were held in Alton and our membership was beginning to grow and in 2000 we returned to Germany but this time to Reindahlen, then the home of 16 Sig Regt. Sadly that weekend our founder member Chris died and we decided to soldier on and a committee was formed to take on the responsibility of running the Club. Over the next few years the membership grew and grew until in 2005 we had a total of 107 paid up members – the £5 membership fee in 1996 has risen to just £10 which is not a bad rate of inflation.

Our reunion is usually held in October, at a different venue each year and we have an average attendance of 100 members and their partners. The committee has also grown to include all the usual officers plus a very lively entertainment committee to make sure the weekend is enjoyable to everyone and still leaves time to meet and talk to each other and share our memories and photos. At the AGM in 2004 it was suggested we became affiliated to the RSA. We were accepted as an Affiliate at the RSA AGM on 1 April 2006. Anyone out there who served with the Regt in the 1960s and is interested in finding out more, go to our web page at www.the-60s-16ers.org or tel. Membership Secretary on 01209 719897.

From: "The Wire"
February 2007

REUNION IN SOUTH EAST AREA

For various reasons the five Branches in South East Area have not had an Area Reunion, so from Medway to Canterbury and round the coast to Hastings, Bexhill on Sea and Eastbourne members only meet occasionally at the AGM in London or at Grand Reunions. One problem in SE England is the time it takes to drive from town to town and what to do with the car on arrival as many of

the Branches are situated in holiday resorts. The use of public transport at weekends can be very frustrating too.

In 2003 the Hastings Branch organised a very successful Service and tea party to mark the 65th Anniversary of the formation of the ATS. The Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex attended accompanied by her husband and the local MP with other dignitaries helped to make it a most memorable occasion.

With our own 60th Birthday year looming in 2007, Canterbury branch decided to host a special tea party and invite the other Branches to join in the fun. We meet at the amazing Dominican Priory, which with 2 floors, outside area by the river and excellent catering facilities plus a lift, we felt confident that we would be able to cope with anything. When outline plans had been made and many guests invited, there was a disaster – a large beam fell onto the stage upstairs. Fingers were crossed that the extensive repairs would be finished in time but it wasn't to be and we had to make do with the ground floor only. How relieved we were that we had limited our distinguished guests to family!



The other birthday cake

We welcomed members from all our Branches except Bexhill, and included our own associate members from the WAAF and friends from the local Association of Wrens. Our guests of honour were Lt Col Sue Westlake, Maj (Retd) Jane Freebairn and Col the Rev'd Sue Wing whose mother had been a member of Canterbury Branch. We thank them for travelling quite a distance to join us on the day and for their kind and stirring words of encouragement. We all need to find younger members to

help keep our Branches active, but our ladies are often quite inspirational. Congratulations to the lady who travelled on her own from Eastbourne and thank you to all who made this such a happy day.

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WRAC POSTAL ASSOCIATION WEEKEND REUNION IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

Miss M H Grant MBE
Forth Cottage, 254 Church Street, Tranent,
East Lothian EH33 1SW



*Kneeling: Chris Fretwell
1st Row L-R: Brenda Griffiths, Margaret Grant MBE,
Pam Sussex, Dorron Phillipson
Middle Row L-R: Pat Carter, Margaret Moule, Val Sanders,
Pat Holman, Joan Smith, Isobel Duffy
Rear Row L-R: Pat Wookey, Margaret Smith,
Josie Steunenberg, Sylvia Knowles, Maggie Watt*



Three members who have attended every one of our 18 reunions. L-R: Sylvia Knowles, Margaret Grant MBE, Margaret Smith

The Hotel at Kendal was great except for the food but we did not let that stop us from enjoying ourselves. We made our own entertainment over the weekend and many of the games were played for charity which resulted in £126.00 being collected for the Great Ormond Street Hospital for the kids.

We had one new member this year that I had not seen for 38 years. A most enjoyable weekend was had by all. Our members have served from 1952 to 1982. Any ex posties who are interested in joining, please contact Margaret at the above address for more information.

A FINAL RECONCILIATION

Eva Hughes

48 Norea, St Urban, 9560 Feldkirchen, Austria

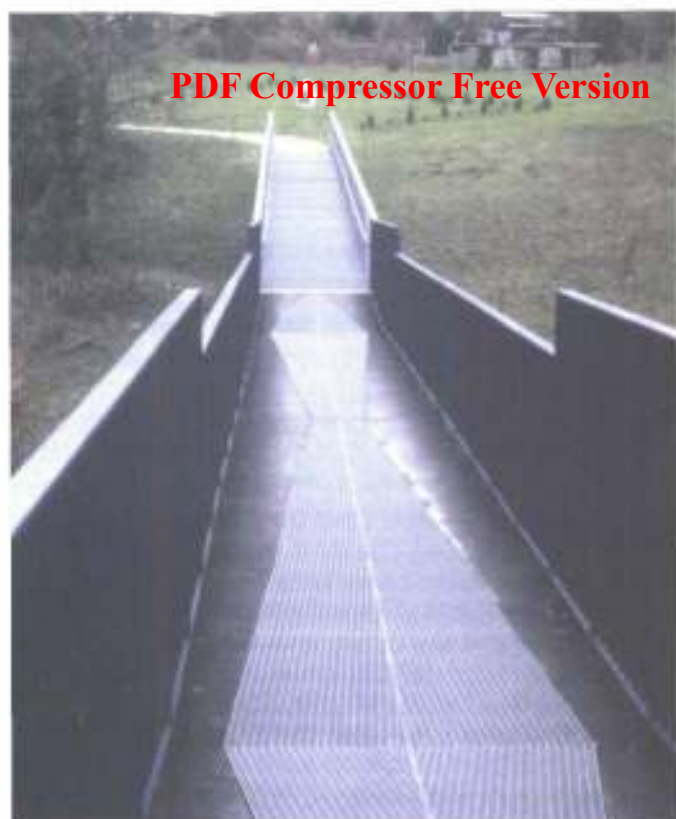
I read the article by Roy Lewis "The ATS and the Welsh Guards" with great interest and felt that it may be of interest to your readers that there is still a faint connection even today. I have been sent the attached article by Brigadier M C Thursby Pelham, formerly Welsh Guards who was deeply involved in the reconstitution. He wrote this synopsis, stretching over six years, for The Guards Magazine but I have his permission to send it to you for the *Lioness*.

Some years ago a representative of the Old Comrades Association of the German 305 Bodensee (Lake Constance) Division, which had bitterly contested the possession of Monte Battaglia with 1st Guards Brigade for several weeks in the autumn of 1944, approached Regimental Headquarters Welsh Guards to suggest a meeting between the survivors of former enemies who took part in the action. The suggestion was approved and a meeting subsequently took place on the summit of Battaglia in Oct 2001. In brief, the meeting was successful. Following a lunch in Valsenio, Monte Battaglia was scaled once more, a bronze plaque set in the wall of the old castle at the summit was unveiled, a short Service of Reconciliation was held, a German trumpeter sounded the Last Post (music kindly supplied by the Band office) and the haunting German Lament "Ich hatt einen Kameraden". We then went our separate ways, the Germans back to Schwabia and ourselves to Florence where we were staying.

We remained in correspondence and learned more about the history of the Bodensee Division. They had fought at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942-43 and the survivors, who were lucky to escape and were very few in number, reformed and were sent to Italy. When it was suggested that they must have found it a bit of a rest cure after Russia, they agreed that it was different but that it had its moments. The action on Battaglia was no doubt one of these.

A further suggestion was made that a Grove of Peace should be planned at Salem on the shore of Lake Constance to commemorate our reconciliation and this again was approved. A Welsh Mountain Ash was offered as our contribution and the Germans supplied an Oak. These were planted in the autumn of 2005. In the centre of the grove a bronze plaque was set in a larger boulder commemorating the reconciliation between the two

former adversaries. The whole was surrounded by a triangle of Yew trees.



29 Oct 2006 was the day on which the final reconciliation was to take place. The Welsh Guards were represented by Frank Hughes who had been a platoon commander on Battaglia and myself who had been adjutant of the battalion.

I flew out the night before to Friedrichshafen and found the hotel in Überlingen where the Hughes and some of the representatives of the Bodensee Division were staying. I arrived late and did not meet the rest of the party until breakfast the following morning. I then learned something of the plans for the day. First there was to be a church service followed by lunch at a restaurant within walking distance, then the unveiling of the memorial itself in the Grove of Peace.



Eva Hughes, Frank Hughes and Brig Thursby-Pelham

The Service of Reconciliation turned out to be a High Mass celebrated by Bishop Bernhard Rieger in the magnificent basilica of Sankt Bernhard at Birna. The church was packed with former members of the 305 Infantry Division and their friends and relations. The music from the choir and organ was quite beautiful and I was deeply impressed. I found it emotionally and intellectually satisfying. It was one of the few occasions, with the exception of the Guards Chapel, when I wished the service could have lasted longer. Eva Hughes read the first lesson and kindly acted as interpreter for me later in the day.

From there we moved to Salem where the Grove of Peace had been planted. We had provided the Welsh Mountain Ash which I was delighted to note had put on nearly a metre in the previous 12 months. The Memorial to our Final Reconciliation was engraved on a bronze plate set in a boulder. When the moment for unveiling came, it was noticed that it had not been veiled. This was speedily put right when one of Herr Nagler's attractive daughters took off her pashmina and draped it over the stone. I whisked it off, the German trumpeter sounded "Ich hatt einen kameraden" and the Last Post and the ceremony was over.



At the end of the day I felt that the whole exercise had been worthwhile. Former enemies had been reconciled and I was conscious of a genuine feeling of friendship on their part. There was no evidence of the sentiment expressed by a German officer shortly after the cease-fire in Italy in 1945 that 'losing the war was bad enough

but being beaten by a bunch of amateurs like the British was beyond a joke'.

Editor: I am very grateful to Herr Paul Nagler who kindly sent me the photographs directly from Germany.

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SOUTH AND SOUTH WEST AREA REUNION, SUNDAY 29 APR 2007

Gladys W Pope, Press Officer, Salisbury Branch,
11 Lynch Close, Mere, Warminster,
Wilts BA12 6EL. Tel: 01747 860887

"What an enjoyable day". Salisbury Branch members were delighted to hear this comment as over 100 ladies left to travel back to Portsmouth, Plymouth, Exeter, Bristol, Southampton, Weymouth and Portland. Our Secretary Lt Col Val Trout had carefully planned the day, held at the Royal British Legion Club in Salisbury.



Val Trout, Mack, Mayor of Salisbury, Alison Ogden and Michael Warrander

Chairman Alison Ogden welcomed the Mayor of Salisbury, Mrs Sheila Warrander, her husband Michael and our Area Chairman, Major 'Mack' Maskens-McIntyre. She also thanked the members of Salisbury Branch for their hard work in hosting this occasion.

Major 'Mack' passed on Lt Col Sue Westlake's apologies as she was very sorry she could not be with us. To enlighten the Mayor she went on to explain what reunions were all about with a brief history of the Association and how we all liked to meet up to remember and talk to friends.



Portsmouth Branch



Bristol Branch

An appetising buffet lunch was served, followed by musical entertainment. Mrs Jill Martin on accordion with husband Bernie on banjo played many songs we could all join in and some ladies could not resist the dance floor! I do believe it was a genuine 'Lambeth Walk' we saw. Lots of prizes in the raffle were quickly distributed and the money raised will be sent to Headquarters. *Editor: £350 for the 'Lioness'. Thank you to all who contributed towards such a splendid donation.*



Bernie and Jill Martin



Southampton Branch

Maj Mack, Alison and Val then cut a celebration cake. I do apologise to the few people who did not get a piece but I must have been too generous with the first pieces (another senior moment).

On behalf of all those attending, Major Mack thanked Salisbury Branch for their hard work resulting in a most enjoyable day. The request "same again next MONTH" was suitably rebuffed!!

STILL GOOD FRIENDS AFTER 64 YEARS

W/203122 Mrs Betty Tucker nee Oates
152 Lymington Road, Highcliffe, Dorset BH23 4JY

Lola Goodyear nee Hayes is in the middle, Beryl Wylie nee Cates is on the right and I am on the left. We all met when serving in the Army Pay Office, East Cliff, Bournemouth. Beryl lives in Seattle USA. We have been meeting every year when Beryl visits. Lola lives in Surrey so we meet quite often.



ATS DINNER CLUB

Mrs Audrey Juby, Chairman and Treasurer

On Saturday 14 April we were delighted to meet members at the Victory Services Club for our annual luncheon.



Sue Westlake and Audrey Juby

It was a great pleasure to have our guest Lt Col Sue Westlake who, in an after-lunch speech, said that she was delighted to know that the ATS Dinner Club flourished so successfully and that some 77 members had been able to be present at the luncheon.

We were very grateful to all those members of the Committee who had made the arrangements, to Mrs Marjorie Powell and Mrs Joan Higgins who ran the very successful raffle – we appreciated particularly the efforts of Mrs Joan Higgins who was at the time under considerable stress with a family bereavement.



Marjorie Powell and Joan Higgins with their raffle books

As Chairman and Treasurer of the Dinner Club I would like to acknowledge the help I have from the newly-formed Committee – BUT I would dearly like an offer from a volunteer to take over the post of Treasurer! It is not a onerous job – only 12 members have to be contacted to pay their Annual Subscription – the remaining (nearly 400) are Life Members. So, even with paying office expenses, the Accounting is simple!

GERRY FAHY FIXES TWO REUNIONS

Lt Col (Retd) M G Fahy Eastwell
38 Blackmore Road, Malvern, Worcs WR14 1QT
Tel: 01684 561868

I was very happy to be instrumental in reuniting 2 ex-Service friends, Cpl Doreen Bridle and Cpl Barbara Johnson (now Innes), ex WRAC. The pair served together during the 1950s at the Anti-Aircraft Command HQ at Stanmore in Middlesex. They were both clerks but when Barbara was posted to Tripoli and Doreen to Cyprus, they lost contact. I was at a Remembrance Day service in Malvern with Barbara. I had a book with me that had a piece of paper in it with Doreen's name on it and Barbara said she had once known a Doreen Bridle. After a discussion, we realised that it was the same person!



L-R: Doreen Bridle, Barbara Innes née Johnson and Gerry Fahy



Barbara and Doreen

I knew Doreen from service in Cyprus and met Barbara as a member of my local church. We all had a very memorable reunion at my home and later enjoyed a celebratory luncheon party.

Then there was another reunion – via *Lioness* article and subsequent exchange of e-mails. This was apropos the letter and photograph from Gloria Ireland née Reynolds published on Page 42 of the last *Lioness*. We were both on that V Day parade in Nairobi, commanded by Senior Commander Sheila Heaney (ATS) – (later to be Brigadier and Director of the WRAC). We indeed marched 9 abreast and were kept in step by the band of the Kings African Rifles. On the same evening I attended a celebratory party, but had forgotten to ask for a late pass (ie to be out of camp after 2200 hours). I was placed on a charge and Sheila awarded me 3 nights extra duty on the guardroom switchboard. An offence not to be repeated, but an occasion to be remembered!

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

Weddings

GOLDEN WEDDING

RONALD HART and ELSIE SHAW

The Gables, Bury Road, Chedburgh, Bury St Edmunds
IP29 4HQ



Elsie and Ronnie's Golden Wedding

On 11 May 1957 the wedding of Sgt Elsie Shaw WRAC and Sgt Ronald Hart RAMC took place in the Garrison Church, Rheindahlen. 50 years later Elsie and Ronnie celebrated their Golden Wedding surrounded by family and friends.



Kathleen, Elsie and Pam

Among the gathering were Kathleen Hughes and Pam Nesbitt (née Zanellotti) who were all in Rheindahlen together in 1957. Pam was accompanied by her husband Robert (ex SSgt RAOC and nicknamed Geordie) who was a frequent visitor to the Sgts' Mess.

DIAMOND WEDDING - FRED BALLS and MOLLY GUEST

32 Braids Walk, Kirkella HU10 7PD
Tel: (Mobile) 04107 35020

Fred and Molly celebrated 60 years of happy marriage on 3 May 2007 with a luncheon for 84 family and friends, including 2 daughters and 2 grandsons, at a local hotel.



Wedding Day in 1947

They met in Morpeth, Northumberland where Molly was in the ATS Signals at 48 Div Headquarters and Fred was a W.O. in the RA. He had been badly wounded in North Africa whilst in the 1st Army. He was 19 and spent a year in hospital before being downgraded and posted to Morpeth. Fred still belongs to the 1st Army Association and they both attend their reunion every year.

They married in Withernsea where Molly lived and then settled in Hull where they have lived ever since. They also own a bungalow in Scarborough where they spend most weekends.

They were lucky to be invited to Buckingham Palace to celebrate their Golden Wedding and they received a beautiful card this year from Her Majesty The Queen for their 60th Anniversary.



Diamond Day

**DIAMOND WEDDING –
RONALD GIBBS and GWEN SIDWELL**
8 Freshwood Way, Wallington, Surrey SM6 0RL



PDF Compressor Free Version

60 years on

Gwen and Ronald Gibbs celebrated their Diamond Wedding on 17 May 2007. Gwen served in the ATS at Beaumanor and Ronald was in the Royal Artillery. The following is an extract from the local newspaper:

Gwen says Ronald only married her to ensure a steady supply of beer at a time when ale was in short supply after the Second World War – her father was the owner of the Queen Vic pub in North Cheam! Gwen met Ronald when he walked into the establishment in 1946 and they wasted no time in tying the knot getting married at St Dunstan's Church, Cheam in May 1947.

On 12 May 2007, they celebrated their 60th Anniversary with a party for friends and family at their daughter, Judith's home. Gwen was especially delighted that one of her bridesmaids travelled from Dorset and another ATS friend came from Redhill. However, their surprise present was their grandson arriving from New Zealand.

**GOLDEN WEDDING –
JOHN SCHOFIELD AND ALISON SENIOR**



Lieutenant John Schofield, Royal Signals, of Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment (Phantom Signals) married Lieutenant Alison Senior WRAC of 19 Army Group Signal Regiment at the Garrison Church of St Boniface in Rheindahlen on 27 July 1957. They celebrated their Golden Wedding with a luncheon at The Bridge at Pierrepont just outside Frensham on Saturday 28 July 2007 with family and friends and ex-Army colleagues. The guests included their bridesmaid and Lt Col Mary Soames who also had been at the wedding 50 years previously.



Golden Wedding Luncheon

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

**THE DELIGHTS OF THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE – 1**

In democracy your vote counts. In feudalism your count votes

A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion

When a clock is hungry, it goes back four seconds

A lot of money is tainted: it taint yours, it taint mine

A midget fortune teller who escapes from prison is a small medium at large

Once you've seen one shopping centre, you've seen a mall

Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses

Acupuncture is a jab well done

Letters to the Editor

PDF Compressor Free Version

VOLUNTEERS AND CONSCRIPTS
W/254505 Joan Hodsdon née Aiken
59 Morley Drive, Balcatta, Australia 6021

Dear Editor

In recent issues of *Lioness* I have read about Volunteers and Conscripts but no-one has mentioned those who volunteered to be conscripted! Academics will tell you they do not exist because the terms are mutually exclusive.

In late 1942 or early 1943, regulations were introduced to conscript 10% of women in reserved occupations and in certain age groups. When this regulation was announced I went along with two friends to the authority in Red Lion Square to volunteer only to be told, "We will be writing to all involved employers asking them for a list of personnel to be conscripted." After hearing nothing for a few weeks we went back to Red Lion Square where a check was made for our employer's return which, of course, had not been received. So they said they would send a reminder and suggest the employer put our three names at the top of the list.

Shortly an office memo came around telling us that the rules had been changed and they would prefer the number being conscripted be made up of volunteers and that they volunteer for the WRNS. Our employer was the Admiralty. We three soon had our names in: two for the ATS and one for the WAAF. As we were called up in alphabetical order, we were the first to go being Abbott, Aiken and Bagster in that order. Most of the rest did volunteer for the WRNS. I wonder how many other employers used this system and how many other ATS volunteered to be conscripted?

I am a new member and really enjoy getting my own copy of *Lioness* as it is wonderful reading. In Australia, if you receive your benefits from The Department of Veteran Affairs, you receive a paper every 3 months called "Vetaffairs". In December the Editor printed a letter from me about the "Y" Group. I have been amazed at the letters I have received from ladies in my own age group thanking me for the memories, from men who have been connected with Beaumanor since the War and from a very proud granddaughter of a late member of the ATS.

Thank you for a beautiful well presented magazine.

THE CANADIAN CONNECTION

Joan F Brownson
214-470 George St S, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada K9J 3E4

Dear Editor

Thank you for sending my *Lioness*. I am enclosing a copy of a picture of me cutting the cake at a Veterans show case in our Armouries where different service clubs had a table to show their military equipment.

We ex-Servicewomen here in Peterborough have our own Branch – BR452 – Elizabeth Smellie Branch. We had a table with pictures and memorabilia. I was wearing my original uniform (it still fits me) and the school children who came in to see what we were showing were most interested in me wearing a uniform I had when I was 18. I am now 80.



Joan cutting the cake

MEMORIES OF GWEN LEARMOUTH

Mary Beeston
77 Campion House, Hobgate Road, Heath Town, Wolverhampton WV10 OPX

Dear Editor

It was with great sadness I learned of the death of Gwen Learmouth. She was a wonderful friend especially during my term as Secretary of the Wolverhampton Branch. She was always there with help and advice when we met at Wolverhampton Branch Reunions. My husband would carry the prizes for the raffle. She would immediately say, "What would you like to drink Fred?" – she is often thought of and missed very much.

W/389460 IRIS HOWE

133 Corn Close, South Normanton, Alfreton,
Derbyshire DE55 2JE



*Iris raises a glass
to us all*

Dear Editor

This letter is an apology for not attending last year's WRAC Dinner Club weekend in Birmingham! Let me explain why.

I joined the WRAC in August 1955 after my mother died. I was 17½. Eighteen months later I met my future husband. After 45 years of marriage, and then being a widow for 3½ years, I met another lovely man.

My life has completely changed. John and I met on a coach tour to Scotland in March 2006. I have joined him in entertaining at care homes and nursing homes, which he has been doing for the past 8 years. I sing a little, but basically "prat" about and make the old 'uns laugh. "Takes one to know one" as those who know me will agree, I'm sure.

Having just seen the latest *Lioness* I feel somewhat left out of the family and look forward to attending this year at Liverpool.

*Editor: And we all look forward to seeing you there.
We missed you!*

OLD AUTOGRAPH BOOK

W/105752 Mrs E L Scott née Campbell
Tudor House, 11 Shore Street, Drummole,
Stranraer DG9 9PU. Tel: 01776 840244

Dear Editor

On looking through one of my old autograph books, I came upon the enclosed poems that I thought you might like to publish. It brought back so many memories of days gone by.

We were a small Coy, made up of instructors from the 25th MT and 19th MT (Wales) to finish off, if you like to put it that way, girls who had no experience of previous driving, had done their training at driving schools but when sent to Coys they were not accepted and so were sent to us. They never wanted to leave us as they so liked the area etc and we had a job getting them sorted out, as it were. Anyway, I thought that some of the readers might find the following amusing.

ARE THEY REALLY ATS?

W/296829 Mrs Bea Thomson née Bryce
ATS and WRAC
5 Newcombe Court, Beech Grove, Sale,
Cheshire M33 6RU

Dear Editor

I received the enclosed card at Christmas from a neighbour. With it were three spare ones. I sent one to an ex-WRAC colleague in Vancouver after the holiday and one to an ex-ATS colleague.

I am sending the third to you. I thought it might be worthwhile showing it in the *Lioness* some time. Are they really ATS? Certainly they look genuine; perhaps a reader of the magazine might know the story behind the photograph.



*The caption on the back reads: 'ATS Toboggan
by Keystone. Courtesy of Getty Images'*

*Editor: This card was on sale for Cancer Research
UK. If any reader can give us any additional
information, I will publish it in the next edition.*

We are the girls of the 19th MT

But we can't drive for nuts

*You'll hear the instructors all yelling at us
"For heavens sake, let in your clutch".*

We live in the manor on top of the hill

And we like it there to be sure

*They call it the Army, but we'll tell the truth
You'd think we were on a rest cure.*

Oh it's grand, yes it's grand

There's Campbell and Haigh and Purnell

There's Kitchen and Gordon

And we think they're swell

But when they're in bad moods

They all give us hell.

Oh we like them a lot

And we know that they're in a tough spot

But they're going to teach us to drive, even me!

We're the girls of the 19th MT.

Betty Garnet, Keswick - 14 Oct 1942)

Poems

ODE TO 'DURDLE DOOR' (IN LULWORTH, DORSET)

If the weather's fine and dandy
I know a place that's green and sandy
Where horses leap in through the door
And scuff the pebbles on the floor

No need to book awhile ahead
Or find the cat and dog a bed
One hour to pack – and three to ride
Emotions turning with the tide

We'll dine on steak and frozen fare
And sleep upon six inches of air
Snug in feathers, douse the beam of
Fluorescent light and dream....

And wake up to a glorious sight
Of sea and sky and Portland light
Watch busy lanes into the harbour
Relaxed in mind from daily labour

Don't regret oft – said rejoinders –
Get a tent, and come and join us
And when we've had enough of sea
We'll be back in time for tea
(The fifteenth association park 'do'
When our outside tap did the water job).

AD 1968 Orpington, Kent

*Editor – Sadly this arrived without a covering letter, so
I do not know who sent it but any of you who served in
the area will remember how picturesque it is.*

ODE TO A LOST MEMORY

My forgetter's getting better
But my rememberer is broke
To you that may seem funny
But, to me, that is no joke

For when I'm "here" I'm wondering
If I really should be "there"
And, when I try to think it through
I haven't got a prayer!

Oft times I walk into a room
Say, "What am I here for?"
I wrack my brain, but all in vain
A zero is my score

At times I put something away
Where it is safe but Gee!
The person it is safest from
Is, generally, me!

When shopping I may see someone
Say "Hi" and have a chat
Then, when the person walks away
I ask myself, "Who was that?"

Yes, my forgetter's getting better
While my rememberer is broke
And it's driving me plumb crazy
And that isn't any joke.

Doreen Peggie of Fife and Tayside Branch
"borrowed" this from her Mother's Union magazine
and she thought that many of us would
understand.....

WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB

ANNUAL DINNER 2007

Following another successful Dinner at the
Victory Services Club, the WRAC Officers'
Dining Club will meet there again on

Saturday 1 December 2007

**Please put this date in your
Diary now!**

If you have not already received personal
notification of this Dinner and would like to
come along, contact the General Secretary
on 01962 887570.

SWEET CHOICES

It was hard to make a choice with our weekly penny
For in the local sweet shop the choices were so many
Boiled sweets in tall glass jars like soldiers on parade
While on the wooden counter temptingly displayed
Were sherbet dabs, gobstoppers, licorice shoe laces
Tiger nuts and locust beans from foreign far off places
Slabs of golden toffee and flavoured coconut ice
Honeycomb and love hearts, long-tailed pink-eyed mice.
The ha'penny cherry Vantas was a tempting fizzy drink
That left the area round the mouth a shocking shade of pink
Imps would make the tongue turn black like the Black Jack slab
Sweet cigarettes in packets, a mysterious "lucky" bag.
The owner knew the selecting would probably take a while
So she waited close at hand with a patient smile
She knew the visit to her shop was our Saturday treat
And watched two happy children scamper down the street.

CAN YOU REMEMBER?

Can you remember the cat's meat man?
slithers of meat on wooden skewers
When we sold from a spring trolley
Measured in pints into waiting ewers

And say, can you remember Empire Day?
An annual event in the month of May
The girls then dressed in starched white frocks
Boys in short trousers and long woollen socks
Assembled together to honour and sing
Praising Empire, England and King

Blue paper cones were rolled for the sweets
Tiger nuts, gobstoppers, those were our treats
When the bell tolled, my! How we ran
In case we got caught by the School Board man

We skipped, bowled hoops, whipped up our tops
Gas mantles, black-leading sold in the shops
Combinations or bodices in winter we wore
Rag rugs and linoleum covered the floor

To earn just a ha'penny errands we'd run
'Our Gang' with Alfalfa our celluloid fun
Parish's food we drank to keep well
Crumpets and winkles on Sundays they'd sell

Sunday School outings the summer highlight
Barrel organs by day, lamplighters by night
Black patent pumps, bobbies on bikes
'Stop Me and buy one' vendors on trikes

If this was your childhood, then it's quite plain
That we are contemporaries down Memory Lane.

Both these poems were submitted by
Madeleine Croll née Rees (W/128587)
2 Grand Pavilion, Marine Parade, Tankerton
CT5 2BE

MATURITY BRINGS WISDOM & HUMOUR

Today at the chemist the assistant was great
From my purchase he took off 10 per cent
Asked for the cause of the lesser amount
He answered 'Because of the seniors' discount'

I went to McDonalds for a burger and fries
And there once again got quite a surprise
The chap poured some coffee which he handed to me
He said 'For you seniors, the coffee is free'

Understand I'm not old, I'm merely mature
But some things are changing, temporarily I'm sure
The newspaper print gets smaller each day
And people speak softer – can't hear what they say

My teeth are my own (I have the receipt)
And my glasses identify the people I meet
Oh, I've slowed down a bit – not a lot I'm sure
You see, I'm not old, I'm only mature

The gold in my hair has been bleached by the sun
You should see all the damage the chlorine has done
Washing my hair has turned it all white
But don't call it grey – saying blonde is just right

My car is all paid for – not a nickel is owed
Yet a kid yells 'Old duffer, get off the road!'
My car has no scratches, not even a dent
Still I get all that guff from a punk who's hell bent

My friends all get older – much faster than me
They seem much more wrinkled from what I can see
I've got character lines, not wrinkles for sure
But don't call me old, I'm only mature

The steps in the houses they build today
Are so high that they take all your breath away
And the streets are much steeper than 10 years ago
And that explains why my walking is slow

But I'm keeping up with what's hip and what's new
And I think I can still dance a mean boogaloo
I'm still in the running – in this I'm secure
I'm not really old, I'm only mature.

Submitted by Avril Williams, Secretary Cambridge
Branch

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".



Obituaries – their final salute

ELIZABETH HELEN (Liz) MACLEAN
24 December 1954 – 2 December 2006

Liz was born and brought up in Scotland and one of her proud achievements was that she climbed Ben Nevis at the age of 12. She joined the WRAC on 22 August 1972 and served in Germany, UK, Cyprus and Northern Ireland where she was awarded the GSM. Always cheerful, loyal and dedicated, Liz was permanently employed Royal Signals. She was good at all sports: especially badminton and hockey. Although always competitive, Liz was always a very good sport. At times, she displayed a very enthusiastic sense of humour!

In 1987, having reached the rank of Staff Sergeant, Liz left the Army and settled in Kent. Her love of music and animals was infectious and she put them to good use in the local community. She helped to set up a youth club called Teen Spirit with the goal of encouraging young people to help each other and to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. The group were awarded five gold as well as silver and bronze awards.

Liz will be sorely missed by family and Army and civilian friends alike. WE WILL NOT FORGET

Jan Hagon

MAJ (Retd) DAPHNE HILL
6 July 1919 – 30 January 2007

Born into a military family, Daphne was brought up surrounded by the Army and its traditions. Her father, General Phillips, R Signals, was a major influence on her and so it was no surprise when she joined the ATS on 22 May 1942 and was commissioned in March 1943 in Edinburgh.

After commissioning, Junior Commander Daphne Phillips became attached to the ATS Provost and took up



Daphne in WRAC uniform when she was with 310 East Anglia Battalion

her appointment as DAPM, British Troops Egypt. She was one of the first ATS officers to be attached to the Military Police and had sections of ATS Provost NCOs in Cairo, Alexandria and the Suez area. She was responsible for visiting them at each location and to get there often had a hazardous journey by jeep across the desert from Cairo to Alexandria trying to avoid camels straying across the road. The Provost also carried out custom control duties on the nightly Cairo-Haifa train and on one occasion she recalled seeing dawn through the train window describing a real biblical scene – the moon, a palm tree and the dome of a mosque. Daphne's NCOs were a mixed crowd – mostly from UK but also Palestinians, Indians, Cypriots and Europeans. The Palestinians gossiped away in their accommodation in Hebrew – Daphne would hear the Sergeant Major telling them "Get moving – I don't know what you are saying – but whatever it is, get on and DO IT!"

Daphne left the ATS in 1946 after the War ended but her Army blood was too strong and she returned to duty in 1953 by joining the Woman's Royal Army Corps (WRAC(TA)). She joined 301 East Anglia Battalion to Colchester in 1954 as 2IC to Colonel Naomi Christie. One annual camp at Plaisterdown included training for the Nijmegen Marches in Holland because WRAC TA were entering for the first time – again thanks to Daphne's enthusiasm. She was promoted Major in 1954 and served for another 11 years. In this time, she was awarded a TA Certificate of Meritorious Service by the Lord Lieutenant of Essex for her work and the TA Colonel wrote to her saying, "I congratulate you most warmly on your success. The TV and press coverage you secured was truly remarkable."



Daphne outside the Officers' Mess Worthy Down on AGC Corps Day

Driving was a major function of the battalion so it was particularly appropriate that Daphne should be the 10,000th recipient of The Institute of Advanced Motoring Certificate. The photographs of the presentation in The Garden Room of the Savoy show a very elegant and smart Daphne sitting with Stirling Moss and Sheila Van Damm. However, she notes in her scrapbook that shortly afterwards, she changed into Khaki battledress and drove her Champ around Hyde Park Corner for Movietone News!

Daphne left the TA in 1965 but retained her links with the WRAC Association. She never missed an Officers' Lunch or Dinner and was often in communication either by phone or letter with Association HQ. She left us a large number of photographs, scrapbooks and papers: a significant contribution to the historical archives. Daphne was also instrumental in organising several ladies to make the ATS kneelers which are in the garrison church at Worthy Down.

For the last few years Daphne resided in the Star & Garter Home and it always amused her that we referred to her as the Officer in Charge of the Star and Garter Detachment!

She had tremendous energy and was a great contributor. She will be remembered with great affection by us all in the WRAC Association.

W/380596 WO2 N M MILLER
31 March 1931- 15 March 2007



Nancy Miller first enlisted into the WRAC in February 1953 for three years and after a short break she re-enlisted in November 1956 and continued to serve in the Corps at home and abroad until her discharge in 1986. By then she had completed almost 33 years service.

I first met Nancy in 1971 when we were both waiting to see if we had been selected for secondment to the Kenyan Government. Nancy served in Kenya for 18 months after which she returned to the UK and postings followed to Chatham, Hong Kong, Guildford and Dusseldorf. At one point she thought that she would be the only member of the Corps never to be posted to Germany!

After her discharge she took a year off to enjoy civilian life in her home county of Lincolnshire and in her holiday home on the edge of the New Forest. After her R&R she took up some part time employment which she enjoyed very much.

Sadly in 1988 Nancy suffered a stroke and although there was no physical damage it did leave its mark. However, Nancy as always was a fighter and with great determination her health improved. But recently her health started to deteriorate, and she suffered a series of mini strokes and heart problems. Unexpectedly, Nancy had a massive heart attack which was to lead to her passing on 15 March 2007.

Nancy is very much missed not only by Dusty and all their dog walking friends but also those friends for whom there is now a great void in their lives.

Helen Haynes
 47 Langford Gardens, Grantham, Lincolnshire
 NG31 8DW

ELIZABETH A (GERRY) GERMAIN
3 April 1926 - 4 April 2007



Born in Wallsend, Northumberland, Gerry began her service career in 1947 with the ATS(TA) and then the WRAC(TA). She served for 3 years before enlisting in the Regular Army in 1950. Her postings were Guildford, Chilwell, PSI at Birmingham WRAC(TA), Shoeburyness, H&D Coy at the WRAC, 6th Airborne Division, Highways in Malaysia, Bovington, Camberley and Larkhill, where she completed her 22 years service as WO2 BSM.

She returned to her home in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and began a type "R" engagement as Army Careers Advisor, first in Newcastle and then in South Shields, where she made her home after serving a total of 31 years.

Gerry became severely visually impaired in 2000 but she soldiered on and her favourite saying was, "I can do that". For the last 18 months she fought bravely and with dignity against cancer. On her last visit to the oncologist she replied to his grave prognosis "I know, but I will be content to reach my 81st birthday".

Sadly on 4 April, the day after her birthday, Gerry passed away in hospital with those she loved by her side. She was given a fitting send off by the local vicar who is also an Army Chaplain. Gerry will be sadly missed by her many friends and family and will be remembered not only by "She can do that" but "She did that" – a soldier to the end.

J Hunter

17 Lindsay Court, Whitburn, Tyne & Wear SR6 7LN

KATHLEEN MAY PRIOR MSM
11 February 1920 – 11 April 2007



Kate was called up to join the ATS in 1942. She did not think that she would stay long in the Army but she enjoyed it so much that she stayed until she retired as WO2 CSM in 1975. She served throughout UK in many WRAC units including several appointments at the WRAC Centre, Guildford. She particularly enjoyed her tour with 10 Coy WRAC at the Duchess of Kent Barracks in Aldershot and her final tour at Blackdown Barracks, Deepcut. In her time, she was responsible for looking after the welfare and discipline of many servicewomen. This she always did conscientiously and selflessly but always with a good sense of humour and fun and she remained in contact with several of them all her life. Kate was often regarded as a "mother figure" – they felt they could discuss any problem with her and were assured of sensible advice in return. It was therefore no surprise that in 1970 Kate was presented with the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) after 27 years exemplary service – a rare honour. The citation included the following, "She has the happy ability to combine good humour with a strong sense of duty. Throughout her career, Sergeant Major Prior has always given of her very best and put duty before personal interests". During her service, Kate was a very keen sportswoman playing cricket, rounders and table tennis to a very high standard. Cricket remained a passion and she always listened to Test Match commentaries on the radio. Nothing would tear her away from Brian Johnston and his colleagues! Latterly, since her stroke, she enjoyed watching the game on TV from the comfort of her chair.

Kate was a gentle, caring person with a great love of life and a tremendous sense of fun. Despite being disabled by a stroke for over 12 years, she made the best of it and brought laughter and happiness to anyone who visited her – you could never be sad for long with Kate around. Nothing ever got her down, she was always bright and cheerful, with a lovely sense of humour and a great sense of fun. Above all, she loved the WRAC and her life in the Army – she never stopped reminiscing. Her indomitable spirit was evident right up to the end and she will be remembered with the greatest affection.

MAJ (Retd) R M (Becky) PARK née LAWRENCE
20 June 1949 – 26 May 2007

Becky Lawrence was commissioned into the WRAC in 1971. Her first tour was with the Royal Signals in Catterick followed by a warmer posting to Cyprus. After undertaking Arabic language training she returned to Cyprus and continued to enjoy the Mediterranean way of life interspersed with regular parties! From Cyprus she was posted to the WRAC College Camberley, training Officer Cadets and NCOS in the WRAC. One of her courses thought it would be funny to turn out for their uniform inspection parade wearing their shoes on opposite feet – Becky saw the funny side of this but called their bluff by marching them around the parade square! She was highly respected by staff and students alike and brought just the right touch of professionalism and humour into the training environment. The bane of the PT staff, Becky was able to pass her bi-annual fitness test with no preparation – she would complete and pass her test, light a cigarette and say to the PT staff "See you in 6 months".



She was promoted to Major and moved to Beaconsfield (Army School of Languages) where she commanded the WRAC Company and shortly afterwards attended the Army Staff Course first at Shrivenham then at the Camberley Staff College – the main thing she learned there was what good fun the Royal Navy were. It was there that she met and married Lt Cdr Mike Park RN – a fellow student. A London MOD job followed working in the ever important area of pay and conditions of service for all ranks. Commuting was no fun and her next posting was closer to their Headley home as OC HQ & Holding Company, WRAC Centre, Guildford. Her inspection of the recruits at the December Passing Out Parade Dress rehearsal was legendary – she appeared fully disguised as Father Christmas in front of the unsuspecting officers and recruits and proceeded to inspect them and take the salute, “Ho Ho Ho-ing” all the time. Only when the video was viewed later was her identity guessed – her distinctive marching gait gave her away!

Becky left the Army in 1987 after 16 years excellent service. As an officer, she had the highest sense of integrity, was loyal and supportive of her staff and had a quick mind which saw right to the nub of the problem. As a friend, she was fun, humorous, determined, intelligent, honest and loyal. Anyone who knew her will have their own individual special memories of her and will be the richer for knowing her. None can have failed to be touched by her zest for life and by her courage in the last few years.

Penny Gold

MARY KATHLEEN (MOLLY) CAVANAGH

Molly Cavanagh was born on 28 January 1920 at Ealing, London. She had an elder sister, Eileen and a younger brother, Brian. Her father, Alfred Cavanagh was Chief

Clerk of the Sudan Government Railways from 1913-1932 and was awarded the MBE for his services. Molly started work for the Bank of England in 1938 at the age of 18 and in 1942 was called up into the ATS.



She was commissioned in 1949 and was promoted to Lieutenant in 1952 and to Major in 62nd Signal Regiment in 1959. She had several tours of duty in Cyprus during the troubles there and also to the Far East – Hong Kong and Singapore.

She retired from the Army, and in 1970 was awarded Students Vocational Certificate for Spoken English and subsequently taught at South Wiltshire Grammar School. It was about this time that she bought Roundabout Cottage, Little Durnford, moving from Wilsford where she rented a cottage – shared with her beloved cats. She made many friends in the Woodford Valley and organised the Meals on Wheels rota for a number of years.

Sadly, she was diagnosed with leukaemia. After some traumatic months she moved to Stratford Court, where she was content and so well looked after.

Mrs M H S Gordon
15 St Lawrence Close, Stratford-Sub-Castle, Salisbury
SP1 3LW

W/398833 MARGARET ANN PROTHEROE née JOHN

15 MARCH 1940 – 14 JUNE 2007

It is with much sadness that I am reporting the death of Mrs Ann Protheroe who became a member of Marches & Mid Wales Branch last year. Prior to that she had been a member of Bristol and Cardiff Branches. I am sure her loss will be felt by many.



Exactly 48 years ago Ann and I were looking forward to our 6th and final week of basic training at the Guildford Depot. Ann was 19 and had already served 2 years with the TA in South Wales before joining (against her father's wishes) the regular Army. In contrast I was a shy naïve 17½ year old. **PDF Compressor Free Version** because my ex-Army father ordered me to. So our individual concept of Army life couldn't have been more different.

Age wise, I was the baby of the billet and at first everything was a struggle; no one would call me Marianne but instead they wanted to dub me 'Ginger'. I was having none of this and refused to respond. Ann soon intervened by looking at my name card, "I see you have 2 initials, what does the C stand for?" I told her "Christina". "Right, that settles it, she announced to everyone present, "In future we will all call Marianne – Chris". Everyone including me complied with this very assertive Welsh red head and 'Chris' Heath stuck. I guessed she'd had 'Ginger' thrown at her a few times and understood my strong objection. It didn't occur to me then that she was also using her second name.

Ann was a feisty, self assured young woman who quickly became the billet 'cheer leader' and how we needed one of those at Yeovil! It was always Ann who'd say, "Let's go to the NAAFT". She would march off knowing that the whole of Course 229 would follow her. We fed sixpences into the juke box and settled with our coffees and cokes. Then Ann would lead us into laughter over the day's adversities by turning everything on its head. She could be very funny, which was a great morale booster.

Ann already held a driving licence but she still had to have training like the rest of us. She and her instructor used to buy a paper and park up in a quiet lay-by to read it, while the rest of us were under instruction. Despite this she was always the first to help and encourage the rest of us; no one went off to take their driving test without a few words of encouragement from Ann.

As often happens, we lost touch after training until Ann contacted me in 2004. Then, in the summer of 2005, I had lunch with her and another Welsh girl we'd trained with, namely Elizabeth McConnell. It transpired that they had lived just a few miles from each other for many years and had maintained contact with yet 2 more members of Course 229. Ann, Betty and I were able to pick up our conversation just where we left it back in 1959. The years just fell away and our comradeship was as strong as ever and, although I had left the Association, Ann's cajoling got me back in.

Ann certainly enjoyed attending last year's WRAC Dinner as the photograph shows. After that she went off to Spain for a month. Sadly she was already very ill although no one would have known – she was always so positive.

Marianne Hooker
Secretary, Marches & Mid Wales Branch
The Briars, Church Road, Newcastle, Craven Arms,
Shropshire SY7 8QL
Tel: 01588 640553 email: mch.526@tiscali.co.uk

MAJ (Retd) DORA EDITH NIGHTINGALE MBE

In 1942 at the age of 20, Dora enlisted into the ATS and trained at Wrexham Training Centre. Her potential was quickly recognised and 'Nightie' as she was known, was soon promoted to be a LCpl PTL. In 1944 she was posted to King Alfred College in Winchester where she had no leave for 9 months. When she was off duty, she helped at the local hospital and knocked on the doors in the affluent neighbourhood, to acquire luxuries such as soap, tobacco and sweets for the injured soldiers.

When War ended, Nightie and her friend Kay Oakley decided to break the rules by celebrating in London and hitched lifts from their unit in Leicestershire. They had a problem getting back until they persuaded a reluctant lorry driver to give them a lift. As a punishment for being late they spent the night in the guardroom and were charged the next day. On VE Day they went again to London where they sang and danced all night in preparation for the parade the following day.

In 1948 and 1950 Dora was selected to represent the Army in the PT Display at the Royal Tournament: a great honour for a woman in those days. Dora's abilities and qualities were recognised and she was commissioned in 1954.

She served in a variety of theatres, including Yeovil (where she learned to drive a 3 ton truck), Catterick, Northern Ireland, Cyprus and Salisbury and was promoted to Major in 1966. She was Secretary to many Army sports including netball, swimming and diving. She took her responsibilities very seriously and with great enthusiasm. The welfare of 'her girls' always came first and stories of her mothering, friendliness and humour have become legendary.



Leslie Scott, Dora Nightingale and Vera Fisher at the PTIs' Reunion in September 2006

Pat Rosewell recalls the Army swimming and diving team winning the Inter Services and the custom was for the coach to be thrown into the pool afterwards. Not wishing to take advantage of Major Nightingale, Dora was led into the pool like a goddess and when she emerged in a drenched state was immediately given an Army tracksuit to wear back to the Mess. She insisted however on wearing her court shoes!

In 1975, when Dora was serving at HQ UKLF, International Women's Year was celebrated and the WRNS hosted a week of sports events at Portsmouth. Dora was the Army coordinator. At the end of the week the Army were in pole position but needed to win the swimming to win the Women's MBE. Dora recalls Dora shouting so loudly that she lost her voice, but it was worth it because the Army won!

Before Dora left the Army in 1976, after 34½ service, her PTIs surprised her with a 'This is Your Life'. Kate Bettison's mother came from Plymouth to be the pianist and played 'A Nightingale sang in Berkeley Square'. It was a memorable evening and gave a much respected lady a good send off to civvie street. Later in the year Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother presented Dora with her MBE at Buckingham Palace.

Dora never missed a PT reunion since they began in 1995 and looked forward to each one with great enthusiasm. She was always thrilled to be back among 'her girls' who were equally delighted to see her. Dora was the PT's Matriarch and she will always be remembered by them with the greatest affection and respect.

MRS BARBARA ALEXANDER née RICHARDS



Barbara, far right corner, with members of London Branch in 1985 at the Grand Reunion in Harrogate

Mrs Barbara Alexander served in the ATS from 1938 until 1945 and reached the rank of WO1 (RSM). She was the proud holder of five medals including the Africa Star and was mentioned in despatches in 1944. Barbara served in Palestine and Cairo and had the distinction of being the only female WO1 on a training course in the Middle East with 99 male colleagues. She often said that her most vivid wartime memory was on the evacuation of Dunkirk. "The boys coming back hungry and tired and wearing whatever clothing they could get hold off. The other men had to lend them shaving equipment and knives and forks while they waited to receive their own replacement equipment from stores".

Barbara also believed that one of the best thing to come out of the War was the comradeship. Consequently, she was a great supporter of the London Branch for many years and was its Chairman from 1993 until a few years ago. Barbara died on 10 January 2007 at the age of 96.

WRAC Dinner Club

10th Anniversary Dinner
5-7 October 2007

The 10th Anniversary dinner will be held on Saturday 6 October at the Adelphi Hotel, Ranelagh Place, Liverpool

As in previous years a booking form will be sent with the Newsletter to all current members in February 2007. If your membership has lapsed please contact the membership secretary, Carol Austin, on 01253 352259.

An application for membership of the Dinner Club can be found elsewhere in this *Lioness*.

Please note: due to the Adelphi Hotel being fully booked up in the 2nd week of October, the dinner is being held on the FIRST weekend in October.

COPY DEADLINE

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

10 December 2007

THE DELIGHTS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE – 2

Those who jump off a bridge in Paris are in Seine

Dijon vu – the same mustard as before

Practice safe eating – always use condiments

A hangover is the wrath of grapes

Does the name Pavlov ring a bell?

Reading while sunbathing makes you well read

A bicycle cannot stand on its own because it is too tired

Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana

ALEXANDER Mrs Barbara Mary, née Richards, of Hillingdon on 10 Jan 2007, ATS

ANDERSON Mrs Kathleen Harriat, née Karney, of Lincs in Mar 2007, ATS

ASPDEN Mrs Bertha, née Street, of Blackpool on 21 Nov 2006, ATS

ATAK Mrs Clifford E. Williams, née Jones, of Northampton on Oct 2006, WRAC

BADCOCK Miss Dorothy Anne, of Croydon on 18 Jan 2006, ATS

BISHOP Mrs Vera, of Norwich in Jun 2007, WAAF – Associate Member

BOWKER Mrs Helen Hilda Emily, née Holden, of St Leonards-on-Sea on 24 Nov 2006, ATS

BOOTH Miss Gladys, of Huddersfield early 2006, ATS

BRAIN Miss Audrey, of Bristol, ATS

BRESLIN Mrs Constance (Connie), née Ewan, of Ellon on 28 Mar 2007, ATS

BRISTOW Mrs Cicely Frances, née Barden, of Hastings on 23 Feb 2007, ATS

BRODERICK Mrs Enid Margaret, née Sharp, of Leamington Spa, ATS

BROUGHTON Mrs Gladys Ellen, née Whittaker, of Bradford on 26 Oct 2006, ATS

BROWN Mrs Margaret, née Fox, of Sheffield on 21 Dec 2006, ATS

BRYANT Miss Beatrice, of Slough in Jan 2007, ATS

CALLOW Mrs Elizabeth May, née Morris, of Leigh-on-Sea, ATS

CARPENTER Mrs Joan, née Cook, of Grimsby in Mar 2007, ATS

CARR Miss Grace Rose, of Essex, ATS

COLE Mrs Lilian (Pat), née Cummings, of Leamington Spa on 7 Jun 2007, ATS/WRAC

COLEMAN Mrs M A, née Mullen, of Wilmington, ATS

COOPER Miss Audrey, of Stourport-on-Severn on 6 Apr 2007, ATS

COPNALL Mrs Peggy of Aberaeron, July 2007, ATS

CRANE Mrs Eileen Marian, née Harvey, of Bath on 5 Feb 2007, ATS

CRUMP Ms Edith, of London in Mar 2006, ATS

CUDMORE Mrs Violet May, née Lee, of London on 2 Jul 2007, ATS

DAVIDSON Miss E I, of Manchester, ATS

DRUMMOND Mrs Irene, née Wilson, of Kirkbymoorside on 26 Apr 2007, ATS

DUGMORE Mrs Elsie, née Stainfield, of Manchester on 30 Jan 2007, ATS

DYER Mrs Beryl, née Millican/Pollard, of Bristol, ATS

ELLIS Mrs Vera, née Tait, of Monkseaton on 23 Jun 2007, ATS

FARREN Mrs Vera, of Coventry, on 13 Jul 2007, ATS

FELTHAM Mrs Doreen, née Bayne, of Winchester on 13 Feb 2007, ATS

FENNELL Mrs Joy, née McRobert, of Ponteland on 21 Mar 2007, ATS/WRAC

GERMAIN Miss Elizabeth (Gerry), of Sunderland on 4 Apr 2007, ATS/WRAC

GODSON Mrs Mary, née Airlie, of London, ATS

HALL Mrs Dorothy J, of Waltham Abbey in July 2007, ATS

HAMMOND Mrs Edna, née Appleyard, of Kent in Jun 2007, ATS

HAROLD Mrs Chris, née Cook, of Glasgow on 7 May 2007, ATS

HART Mrs Elsie Louisa, née Shaw, of Bury St Edmunds, WRAC

HARTNELL Mrs D, née Clark, of Sidmouth, ATS

HARVEY Mrs D A, née Patterson, of Nuneaton in Sep 2006, ATS

HENDERSON Mrs Edith, of Eastbourne, ATS

HILL Mrs J W H, née Hewitt, of West Sussex, ATS

HILL Mrs Daphne Gordon, née Phillips, of Richmond on 30 Jan 2007, ATS/WRAC

HOLMAN Mrs Edith, née Buckingham, of Luton on 5 Apr 2007, ATS

HOOD Mrs Joyce Evelyn, née Dedman, of Manchester, ATS

HOYLE Mrs Betty, née Ray, of Hull on 3 Dec 2006, WAAF (Associate Member)

JACK Mrs Agnes C, of Stirling on 15 Dec 2006, ATS

JACKSON Miss Vera, of Leeds on 11 Jun 2007, ATS

JAY Mrs Marjorie, née Hunter, of Bradford on 8 Feb 2007, ATS

KENNEDY Mrs Mina, née Pearson, of Canada, ATS

KINROSS Miss Margaret, of Erskine Home, Edinburgh on 8 Feb 2007, ATS

LANGHAM Miss Gladys Mary, of York on 20 Jun 2007, ATS

LAWTON Mrs Kathie, née Kelly, of Bolton in Apr 2007, ATS/WRAC

LEVERTON Mrs Joyce Mary, of Cleethorpes in Mar 2007, ATS

LITTLE Mrs Peggie Pauline, née Mitchell, of Bristol in Apr 2007, ATS

LOWE-WILLETTS Mrs Clarice, née Bollinger, of Bristol in Apr 2007, ATS

MAGER Maurice on 15 May 2007. Formerly Dental Officer at WRAC Centre and member of the *Lioness* Editorial Committee

MANSELL Mrs Florence, née Latuske, of Kent on 10 Feb 2007, ATS

MASON Mrs Pamela, née Thornton, of Knaresborough in late 2006, WRAC

MILLER Miss Nancy, of Grantham on 15 Mar 2007, WRAC

MOODY Miss May, of Helston, WRAC

NEVE Mrs Shirley, née Hartshorn, of Chard on 17 Jun 2007, WRAC

NICKLESS Mrs E (Nessie), née Nesbit, of Kent on 9 Apr 2007, ATS

NIGHTINGALE MBE Maj (Retd) Dora, of Hailsham on 22 Jun 2007, ATS/WRAC

NIXON Mrs Dorothy, née Vernon, of Ormskirk on 8 Feb 2007, ATS

PARK Maj(Retd) Becky, née Lawrence, of Portsmouth on 26 May 2007, WRAC

PINKNEY Mrs Dorothy (Dot), née Barrett, of Aldershot in Mar 2007, WRAC

PLANT Mrs Winifred, née Kennedy, of Stafford on 12 Feb 2007, ATS

PLUCK Mrs Sheila, née Dunlop, of Norfolk on 8 Dec 2006, ATS

POTTS Mrs Mary, née Hatcher, of Cardiff on 3 Apr 2007, ATS

PRIOR MSM Miss Kate, of Bognor Regis on 11 Apr 2007, ATS/WRAC

PROTHEROE Mrs Margaret Ann, née John, of Newport on 14 Jun 2007, WRAC

PUCKLE OBE TD Lt Col (Retd) Sheila, of London on 24 May 2007, ATS/WRAC

PYTLAK Mrs Esme (Joyce), née Bearcroft, of Evesham on 13 Feb 2007, ATS

RAINE Mrs Annie, née Holdsworth, of Halifax on 20 Jan 2007, ATS

REIFF Mrs Marie Theresa, née Parsons, of Kent, ATS

RICHARDSON Miss Mary, of Kent on 12 Jan 2007, ATS

RICHMOND Mrs Joan, of Manchester on 22 Feb 2007, ATS

RIVERS-BULKELEY Mrs Elizabeth Charlotte Marie, née Neustadt, of London on 19 Dec 2006, ATS

ROBINSON Mrs Joan, of Aylesbury on 1 Mar 2007, ATS

ROBSON Mrs Mary Ellen, née Mercer, of Fareham on 30 Jan 2007, ATS

SARTAIN Miss Dorothy, of Bath, Affiliated-WAAF

SCRUTON Mrs Kitty, of Grimsby in May 2007, ATS

SEAL Mrs Marjorie Ivy, née Ridley, of Grimsby in May 2007, ATS

SERPELL Mrs Pamela Anita Ursula, née Coles, of Ivybridge on 4 Feb 2007, ATS

SHREEVE Mrs Joan, née Chapman, of Norwich on 10 Mar 2007, ATS

SIMMONDS Mrs Irene, née Barnett, of Reading on 19 Jun 2007, ATS

SMITH Mrs Elizabeth, of Dumfries on 26 Feb 2007, ATS

SPARKES Mrs Nancy, née Bridgwood, of Houghton Regis on 1 Jun 2007, ATS

STOTT Mrs Flora Stewart, née McDonald, of Portsoy on 13 Jun 2007, ATS

STRINGER Mrs Hilda, née Waltow, of Cheshire, on 5 Oct 2006. *With apologies for incorrect surname in previous Lioness*

SWALES Mrs E, of York on 19 Nov 2006, ATS

THOMAS Mrs Margaret, née Davis, of Seaford on 1 May 2006, ATS

THOMPSON Mrs Doris, née Flower, of Canada on 6 Oct 2006, ATS

WALTERS Mrs Janet, of Erskine Home, Glasgow on 25 Jan 2007, ATS

WARKE MM Miss Sarah Jane, of Swindon on 1 March 2007, WRAC

WATTS Mrs Marjorie, née Nattan, of Knutsford on 1 Jan 2007, ATS

WHELAN Mrs Olive, née Burn, of Harrogate on 13 Jul 2007, ATS

WHITE Mrs Nell, née Steele, of York on 14 Mar 2007, ATS

WHITTAKER Mrs Jenny (Bunny), née Moss, of Hatfield on 25 Jun 2007, ATS

WOOD Mrs Hilda Gwendoline, née Rainbow, of Poole in early 2007, ATS

YEOMAN Mrs Lilian, née Read, of Portishead on 12 Feb 2007, WAAF

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS DINNER CLUB

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Application for Membership

Membership No: DC/.....

Present Name:
(Miss Ms Mrs Rank if serving)

Christian Names:

Address:

.....

.....

Postcode: Tel No:

Email:

Mobile:

Army No: P/ W/ WO/

Surname when serving:

WRAC Service From: To:

TA Service From: To:

Last Rank held/still holding:

Trade/Job whilst serving:

Decorations:

.....

Please return to:

WRAC Dinner Club – Membership Secretary
Carole Austin, 'The Gables', 20 Redcar Road, Blackpool, Lancashire, FY1 2LR
Tel: (01253) 352259

I wish to join the WRAC Dinner Club and enclose:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------|---|
| * 1 Years Membership | £ 4.00 | £ |
| * 3 Years Membership | £ 7.00 | £ |
| * Life Membership | £12.00 | £ |
| * delete as appropriate | | |

Cheque/Postal Order should be made payable to: WRAC Dinner Club

Signature: Date:

A 2nd class postage stamp would be much appreciated. Thank you

'Suaviter in modo, Fortiter in re'
'Gentle in manner, Resolute in deed'



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WRAC Association Memorabilia

All items of memorabilia can be obtained from the Association Headquarters.
Please make cheques or postal orders payable to WRAC Association and forward with your order to:
WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester, Hants. SO21 2RG.

All prices include postage and packing



**Association
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

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT VICTORY SERVICES CLUB ON SATURDAY 24 MARCH 2007

PDF Compressor Free Version

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all those attending and introducing her support team: Mrs Maggie Purkis, Chairman of the Executive Committee; Colonel Audrey Smith, Chairman of the Grants Committee; Major Jane Freebairn, General Secretary; Mrs Margaret Wroot, the Benevolent Fund Case Secretary and Ms Kathryn Barker the Chief Clerk.

The Chairman then thanked the Chairman of London Area and members of London and Greater London Branches who had been responsible for all the front of house activities including the Raffle. She then paid tribute to all the Branch Secretaries whose dedication and hard work ensure the continuation of the vital branch network.

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 Shadow Defence Veterans Forum at the House of Commons, the service for VC and GC holders at Westminster Abbey and at the Remembrance Ceremony at the Field of Remembrance outside Westminster Abbey.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from many individuals, several Branch Secretaries and the following members of Council: Brig Dame Joanna Kelleher, Brig A Field, Miss M Thomson, Lady Martha Bruce, Lt Col M Soames, Col H McMahon, Lt Col M Woollard, Lt Col J Young, Mrs K McGregor and Mrs P Stevenson.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated in *Lioness* 2/2006. No comments had been received. It was proposed that the Chairman sign them as a true record.

Proposed: Cambridge Seconded: Plymouth
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 2006 at Worthy Down and secondly in London at the Victory Services Club in January 2007. The main items of interest were:

a. Changes to Council Membership. Col EJ Bowles had been elected as a Life Vice President of the Association. Mrs M Purkis, Chairman of the Executive Committee had been re-elected as had Lt Col N Murdoch. Lt Col J Young had been appointed as Area Chairman of Scotland so her previous appointment had been filled by Maj R Griffiths. Maj L Jones had been appointed to replace Mrs A Deakin who had completed her four-year tour. The Chairman said she hoped that having more serving members on Council would provide the network to encourage more, younger members to join the Association.

b. National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) – The NMA had confirmed that all organizations had been asked to contribute towards the maintenance of their individual plots and they had estimated the upkeep of the WRAC Association plot at £850.

The members of Council had been concerned that this would be a continuing undertaking and felt that they could not support the full amount. After discussion, it had been agreed that £500 would be sent as a donation towards maintenance. The NMA had acknowledged the donation with grateful thanks. The Chairman encouraged everyone to visit.

c. Branches – The Chairman was pleased to announce that a Branch had opened in Lincoln and that Worthing Branch would be re-opened. She thanked Mrs C Corker and Mrs J Goldsbrough-Jones for their enthusiasm and hard work. Sadly, Guernsey, Shipley, Wincanton, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Swansea and Sunderland had closed.

d. Recruiting and Advertising – The Chairman reported that a sub committee of the Executive Committee, under the Chairmanship of Lt Col Murdoch, had been formed to raise the profile of the Association and to increase the number of members.

e. Appointment of Auditors – The Trustees had re-appointed Baker Tilly as the Auditors.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

The General Secretary read the report in the absence of the Honorary Treasurer. The Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year ending 31 October 2006 had been published in *Lioness* 1/2007 and no comments had been received.

Overall, the investments had performed well and showed an increase of 12% which had been in excess of the FTSE 100 over the same period. M&G had performed best with an increase of 19% whilst both Schroders Charifund and the UST Capital Fund had achieved 16% increases. The UST Income Fund had increased by 6%: a good result for an income fund. The combined funds were worth a total of £5,662,226: £600,000 more than the previous year.

However, the Unrestricted fund, showed an excess of expenditure over income of £29,634. There had been three contributing factors. Branch funds were worth £8,000 less than the previous year; secondly, the *Lioness* showed a net loss of £6,000 and lastly, the Grand Reunion with an expenditure of £111,000 and income of £78,000 showed a net cost of £32,000. However, there had been a donation of £40,000 towards the cost of the Grand Reunion received in the previous financial year. This excess of expenditure was sustainable as the income from investments had resulted in a plus of £15,807 in the net movement of funds – a result seldom achieved in Grand Reunion years.

The Restricted Funds, i.e. the Benevolent Funds, showed a small excess of expenditure of £2,269. The Trustees had stated in their annual report that the maximum amount of income would be spent on benevolence and, in fact, this small excess of expenditure over income was not significant considering the large increase in the overall value of the funds. The investments had increased by £161,733 so, overall, the Benevolent Funds could support such an excess.

In summary, the Honorary Treasurer reported that the Funds were sound and would be sufficient to meet future known commitments. She had no hesitation in recommending that the financial statements should be accepted and that the audited accounts should be ratified.

Proposed: Hereford Seconded: Crewe Unanimously agreed

7. REPORT OF THE EDITOR OF THE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

The Editor began by reporting that *Lioness* 1/2007 had been safely delivered in UK and overseas. A new distribution company had been employed following previous difficulties especially with overseas addresses. She reminded members that the publication dates were March and September. Edition 1/2007 had been 76 pages long so the Editor was pleased to note that the membership had contributed enough material and photographs to produce a journal of this length for the second time running.

The journal provided an excellent way of finding previous colleagues and the Editor had appreciated feedback from those who had made contact with someone they had served with. Such responses were likely to be published as they would encourage more and more members to use the 'Where are you now?' section.

Lioness 1/2007 had cost £8,837.03 to print and distribute and the account was £6,000 in deficit. Some costs had risen but Council had agreed not to increase the membership fee but to continue to subsidise the cost of the *Lioness* so that no-one would feel they could not afford to renew their subscription. At the same time, the Trustees agreed that members should be made aware of the costs of producing the *Lioness* and be encouraged to make donations whenever possible. Branches had donated a total of £1,780 to the *Lioness* in the previous financial year: a good increase from the year before. The Editor hoped that Branches would continue to support the *Lioness* as much as they could. She was also grateful to those life members who made an annual donation through standing orders and would encourage all life members to consider this option of supporting the journal.

The Editor thanked all those who showed their appreciation of the journal but reiterated her dependence on the whole membership to submit articles and photographs. She encouraged everybody to consider sending an article: one side of A4 with a good photograph would be ideal. The Editor was looking forward to the next edition and hoped that it would also be 76 pages long.

8. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Executive Committee

The Chairman of the Executive Committee reported that they had met twice since the last AGM and on each occasion had discussed advertising, recruiting and the next Grand Reunion which would be held in 2009. She was pleased to confirm that a sub-committee under the chairmanship of Lt Col Murdoch had been formed and looked forward to supporting them in their efforts to increase the membership.

The Chairman of the Executive Committee also explained how difficult it had been to find a suitable venue for the Grand Reunion in 2009. Whilst Warwick University had been excellent in every respect, it was felt that it would be better to have all the facilities under one roof. After due consideration and several visits, it had been decided to hold the next Grand Reunion at the Norbreck Castle Hotel in Blackpool. The hotel had recently undergone major refurbishment and would be able to provide a three-day event for much the same price as the two-day reunion at Warwick University. It also had great experience in hosting functions for Veterans and could supply the necessary support and facilities for those with mobility difficulties.

b. Benevolent Fund Grants Committee

The Chairman of the Grants Committee gave 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. 624 cases had been considered: a decrease of just 1.3% on the previous year. The

ratio of cases was 352 ATS to 272 WRAC so approximately 56% of the cases had been ATS and 44% WRAC. Until recently the ratio had been three quarters ATS to one quarter WRAC.

The total spent on one-off grants had been £150,147, nearly half of which had been paid in grants for mobility, disability aids, house repairs and adaptations. The Chairman explained that other military and civilian funds had often contributed and thanked the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, the Army Benevolent Fund, other Army Regiments and Corps, as well as the Royal British Legion for all their support throughout the year.

The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund (PRMF) had provided 24 annuities to those who were elderly, in poor health and who lived alone on minimal income. The annuity was £13 a week plus a Christmas Bonus of £60. The Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) had granted annuities of £60 per month and 72 ladies had received such a payment. The PRMF had also contributed towards the shortfall of Nursing Home Fees for 21 ex-ATS with payments between £5 and £20 a week. The ABF had very often also contributed to these cases because of the amounts involved.

In conjunction with the ABF, Pontins had provided holidays for beneficiaries with children under 16. In 2006 a total of 3 families had had a holiday. The Chairman thanked Mrs Babs Mitcheson who had co-ordinated the Pontins holidays for many years. The ABF could also support a Warner's Holidays for the more mature person and the Case Secretary would identify any potential recipient.

The Chairman of the Grants Committee then described two cases. Mrs T, 36 years of age, had served with the WRAC for 7 months. Her medical condition prevented her from being able to lie flat in bed. In the morning, Mrs T has to exercise and stretch her muscles to release the spasm that is extremely painful. Even then, she is unable to raise herself from this semi prone position to get out of bed. Her GP and Occupational Therapist both recommended an electrically operated profiling bed. The fund contributed towards the bed as well as her husband's former Regiment, The Royal British Legion and two local charities. Mrs T wrote: 'Thank you, thank you. I cannot tell you how much this bed means to me. It has certainly made life so much easier and getting up in the morning is no longer the ordeal it used to be. You certainly have turned my whole life around. Thank you so much.'

Mrs M, aged 75, ex WRAC and a widow living on a very limited income, suddenly had to be responsible for caring for her grandson. Mrs M suffers with back pain and found it extremely difficult looking after a 14 year old who had to receive counselling because of previous childhood experiences. He had arrived at her house with only the clothes he had been wearing and his beloved bicycle, which was beyond repair. The ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund, raised sufficient funds to be able to help. Mrs M thanked us most sincerely and wrote how grateful she had been for the grant which had enabled her to buy much needed clothing and a bicycle for Tom. She also wrote: 'Having to suddenly start to care for another person after living alone for 15 years is proving a steep learning curve – for both of us. The extra funds were life saving and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.'

Lastly, the Chairman of the Grants Committee encouraged all the branches to continue to raise money for the Benevolent Fund. Branches had donated £1,923 in comparison with £1,799 the year before. These donations had been much appreciated: otherwise the fund would be reliant only on the income from investments and legacies.

The Chairman of Council thanked Col 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 M Woollard in her appointment as Honorary Treasurer.

Proposed: York Seconded: Bury Unanimously agreed

10. CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

The Chairman explained that, since the last AGM, Council had approved the award of a Certificate of Appreciation to the following members:

Mrs Emily Bristow	Chelmsford
Mrs Joan Scrivener	Chelmsford
Miss Helen Donaldson	Aberdeen
Mrs Enith V Pentecost	Plymouth
Mrs Queenie Bridle	Plymouth
Mrs Ethel England	Plymouth
Mrs Ivy Seabrook	Plymouth
Mrs Lily Cropper	Bury
Mrs Mary Howarth	Bury
Mrs Edith Youell	Chelmsford
Mrs Sheila Wakelin	Chelmsford
Mrs Eileen Green	Chelmsford
Mrs Joan Higgins	Stafford
Mrs Doris Clifford	Cardiff
Mrs Margaret (Molly) Acton	Cardiff
Mrs Agnes Meredith	Shropshire
Mrs Brenda Adams	Shropshire
Mrs Jean Houghton	Southampton
Mrs Jean Kingdon	Southampton
Miss Margery Lucas	Hastings
Miss Winifred (Win) Wakelin	Hastings
Miss Audrey Pashley	Hastings

The Chairman then presented the certificates to those recipients who were at the AGM. Alternative arrangements for presentation by the Vice-President or by a member of Council had been made for those unable to attend.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman said there were two items she wished to brief the meeting on:

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 1984. The Badge can be obtained from The Veterans' Agency – 0800 169 2277.

70th Anniversary of formation of ATS. The Chairman said some branches had been asking whether any commemorative event had been planned. Since the WRAC had disbanded in 1992, the manpower and finances had not been available to recognise such anniversaries on a large national scale. In 1988, the Golden Jubilee of the ATS had been acknowledged at the Grand Reunion and in April 1999, the 50th birthday of the WRAC was acknowledged during the morning service in Guildford Cathedral as part of the AGM. The Chairman said that the matter would be discussed at the July meeting of Council and that any commemorative event arranged centrally would likely be connected to the AGM in April 2008. Further information would be published in the September issue of the *Lioness*.

Other points raised were:

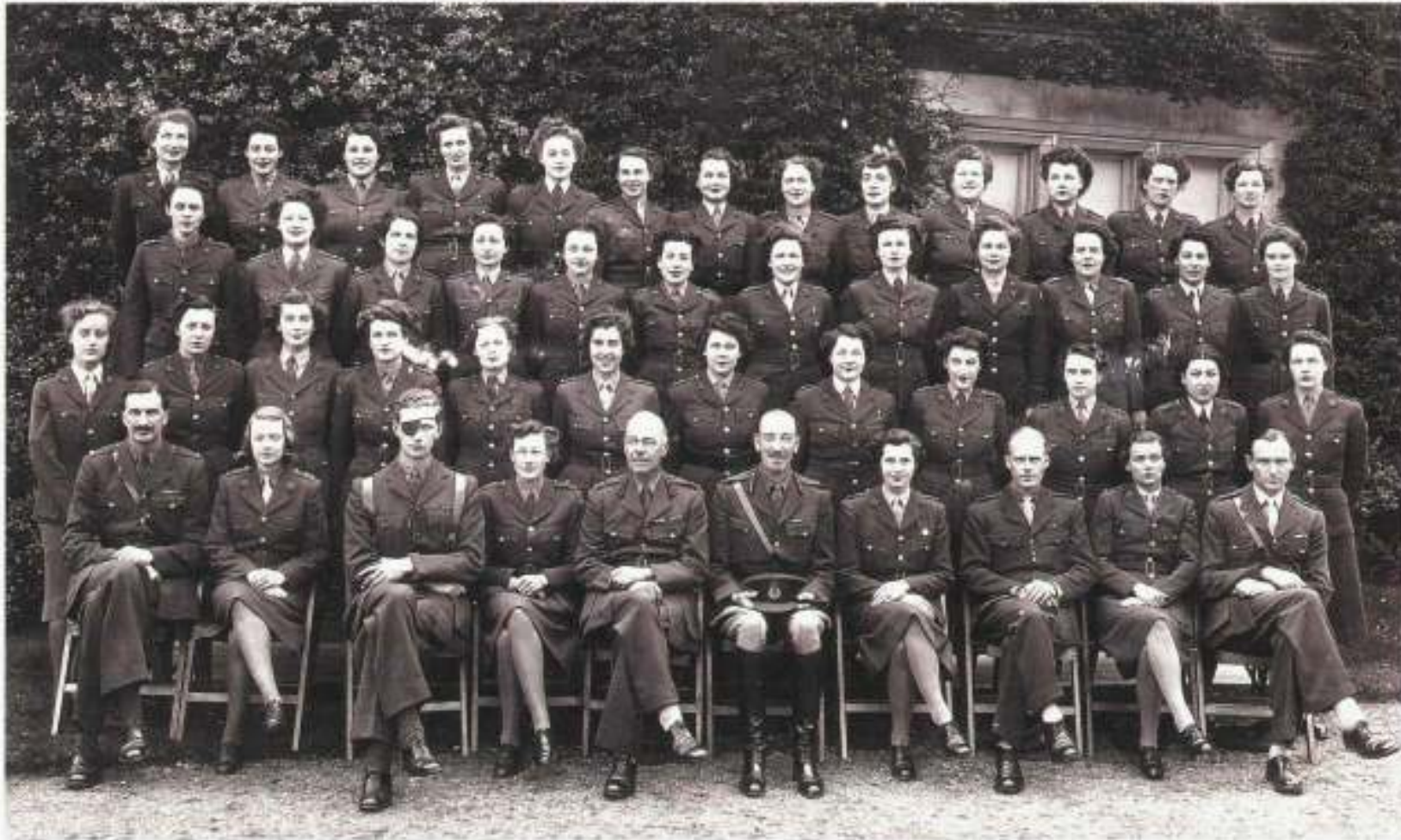
Title of the Association. Weymouth asked for confirmation of the title. The Chairman responded that, although usually shortened to the WRAC Association, the full title was the WRAC Association (incorporating the QMAAC and ATS Comrades' Association). This was the title agreed at the AGM on 18 March 1950. However, the title should not get in the way of the camaraderie of the members and the facility to meet together and enjoy shared experiences. **[AFTER NOTE:** Brigadier Mary Tyrwhitt, then Director WRAC, wrote the following in the first *Lioness* produced in the summer of 1950: "Regimental Associations have several functions. One is to provide opportunities for those who have belonged to a Corps to get together and thus keep alive the spirit of comradeship which we all value so much. Another function is for old comrades to help each other in adversity. But these functions alone are not enough and, if the spirit of comradeship is to live on, a Regimental Association must walk forward and make sure that it provides opportunities for all ranks of the Corps, past and present, to help build for the future. The younger members of a family should derive strength from the example, traditions and experiences of their elders. In just the same way we serving members of a Corps require the blessing of our predecessors since we are all members of the same family."]

A few branches commented on the remit of the advertising and recruiting sub-committee. Both the Chairman and Lt Col Murdoch assured the AGM that all forms of media were being considered on a national basis. Also, they appreciated how much work some branches were already putting into recruiting and encouraged every branch to use every opportunity they could at a local level.

Finally, the Chairman reminded the AGM that her current appointment as Vice-President would finish in July 2007. She said that she had been willing to serve a further term as allowed by the rules and that Council had agreed. Therefore, she would begin another four-year term as Vice-President of the WRAC Association and Chairman of Council with effect from the Council meeting in July 2007 which would be held at Worthy Down.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next AGM would be held at The Victory Services Club, London on Saturday 5 April 2008.



STAFF COLLEGE (A.T.S.) COURSE NO. 10. 14 JUN. - 5 SEP., 45.

Capt E.F. Roberts (W.A.C.), Sub P.H. Incey, Sub B.J. Nicks, J. Comd A.G. Wilson, Sub B.E. Johnson, J. Comd G.N. Trill, J. Comd P.L.M. Conger, Sub A.G. Clippendale, Sub E.C. Summerfield, Sub M.T. Vernon, Sub K.C.T. Simpson, Sub J. Russell, Sub M.S. Young
Sub E.M. Hollick, Sub M.E. Bond, J. Comd M.C. Pinder, Sub E. Carnan, Sub M.E. Radloff, Sub J.H. Clunney, Sub L.M. Watson, Sub P.E. Miller, 1st J. Andrews (W.A.C.), J. Comd G.M.A. Wardlaw, Sub A.C. Wilson, Sub M.A.B. Clark
J. Comd X.W. Richmond-Paton, Sub M.J. LaRose, Sub D. Smith, J. Comd M.A. Wynne-Sayer, Sub J.R. Butler, J. Comd M.E. Munro, Sub L.R. Conder, Sub E.M. Tomkins, Sub R.L. Buckley, Sub D.J.M. Patrick, J. Comd B. Hayes, Sub R.L.H. Dore
Maj A.G. Howland Jackson MBE, OBE, CBE, Sub The Hon V. Sumner, Maj G.P. Elliot, OBE, CBE, S. Comd The Hon A. Lawson, Col R.J. Brett, DSO, ADC, Maj Gen P.T.S. Ungew-Bell, CB, CBE, S. Comd A.J. Hebert, Maj R.G. Britton, CBE, CBE, J. Comd C. Guest, Maj E.F. Treloar, MC, BA