

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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Front Cover

WRAC Association Badge

Back Cover

Grand Reunions

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Editorial



This is not the largest edition of *Lioness* I have edited but I believe there are some very interesting items in it. Firstly, an encouraging number of 90th Birthdays have been celebrated in the last six months! Congratulations to each and every one of you. However, all our glasses should be raised in a toast to Miss Charlotte Lawrence whose 101st Birthday photograph appears in the Letters Section

– what an achievement for us all to aspire to!

Secondly, there are three Christmas Puddings in the *Lioness* and I leave you to spot them as you read through the journal.

Audrey Mitchell's memories about winning her Olympic Silver Medal in 1948 are fascinating. Sadly, the article serves as her obituary but I am sure you will be interested in reading about her experiences and in realising how very, very different the world of sport is today.

Will you be in Sydney next February? Check out the invitation from our Australian sisters to their 60th Birthday Party!

Finally, I say "Cheerio" as this is my last *Lioness* as editor. I retire at the end of September and will always regard my editorial duties as the most fascinating, enlightening, entertaining and often humbling part of my time with the Association. Thank you to Noreen who has typed up so much of it, to Jon who has put all the pieces of the jigsaw together into a magazine, to Denise who has filed and recorded all the articles and photographs and made sure the address labels are up-to-date and, of course, a huge Thank You to all of you who have taken the time and trouble to send in articles and photographs. You know my saying, "I can only put into it what you send in!"

Col (Retd) Ali Brown has volunteered to be the new editor and she will introduce herself in the next edition. I know she truly understands the importance of the *Lioness* – show your support by continuing to send in those articles and photographs!

Thank you and best wishes to you all.

Jane Freebairn

Message from the Vice President



Most of you will know by now that Jane Freebairn, our General Secretary and Editor of this journal, will be leaving us at the end of September to enjoy a well earned retirement. There has consequently been much activity within Association HQ during the past few months concerning the future manning of the General Secretary's post exacerbated by the Civil Service's decision not to continue to fund it given

the current economic climate. The Trustees of the Association have been examining ways to ensure that firstly, the normal business of the Association continues as seamlessly as possible and secondly that the Association continues to be properly organised and structured.

To that end, and due to the declining number of Benevolent Fund cases, Major Gabi Shanahan, our Benevolent Fund Case Secretary, has kindly offered to take on much of the day to day Association business at the HQ; she will be ably supported by Denise Jaballah, our Chief Clerk, who many of you know well and who has worked for us for the past 3 years. We have also been very fortunate in that Colonel (Retd) Alison Brown (some of you may remember her as Ali Forster-Knight) has kindly volunteered to edit *Lioness* and Lieutenant Colonel Nicky Murdoch has offered to run the WRAC Officers' Dining Club. In addition, my Deputy, Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Jo Young, has reconstituted the Executive Committee of Council and will be taking forward various projects over the coming months to ensure we keep the Association vibrant and forward looking whilst encouraging younger members to join us. You will be hearing more about the work of Council and the Executive Committee in the next *Lioness* so that is all I intend to say for the moment.

But now I want to return to Jane. She joined HQ WRAC Association in May 2001 as the Ben Fund Case Secretary and moved across to the General Secretary's post 3 years later in May 2004. Over the past 9 years she has held all 3 appointments in the HQ – even Chief Clerk when the post has been gapped or when the incumbent has been on extended sick leave.

Running the Association is a significant challenge because of the diversity in age, service and background of our members. Jane has been Administrator, Counsellor, Confidante and Friend, all rolled into one, to all our Association veterans. Her phone is constantly busy, her postbag and e-mailbox full – yet she always finds time for every one of us. Our twice yearly Journal is superb, thanks to her excellent editorship and I know that all of you appreciate the hard work that has gone into making the *Lioness* such a success story. In addition, Jane has 2 Grand Reunions, 6 AGM's, 8 Officers' Lunches, 8 Officers' Dinners and 12 Council meetings under her belt – I could go on...

On a very personal note, I shall miss Jane's wise counsel and sound advice as I go about my duties as Vice President – I have thoroughly enjoyed working with her and despite the many challenges along the way, we have had great fun too. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank Jane publicly for all she has done for the Association and Benevolent Fund over the past 9 years. The Association has gone from strength to strength thanks to her dedication and exceptional service. It sounds trite to say that we will miss her, but we will! Fortunately, we shall continue to see her and enjoy her company at Association functions in the future. We wish you good health and much happiness in your retirement Jane, and Thank You.

Sue Westlake

Articles of Interest

THE NOT FORGOTTEN ASSOCIATION VISIT

TO THE COLONEL'S REVIEW

Hermé Emary, Secretary of Winchester Branch

Thanks to the Not Forgotten Association my mother and I got tickets to go to the Colonel's Review of Trooping the Colour on Saturday 5 June.

Because we do not get about much these days we decided to go for the weekend doing the whole tourist bit. So on Friday we set off and arrived in London about 1400hrs, it being rather hot Mum took to her cool dark room for a nap and I set off in the heat to the British Library to see the Magnificent Maps exhibition. I had never been to the Library before: it's a very nice air conditioned building. Well worth a visit if you are interested in maps – very illuminating.

Saturday started bright hot and sunny. We got to Horse Guards nice and early – we love to people watch. Managed to bag the two end seats nearest the podium and got chatting to a bobby who had never seen a Trooping and was also looking forward to it.

I have been to a proper Trooping but never to a Colonel's Review. I don't know about the rest of you but watching a full scale rehearsal with all its extra bits like checking timings and worried looking people rushing around checking positions is quite different from the real thing. I would still like to know what the Garrison Sergeant Major was doing standing in front of the band holding his finger in the air each time the three sets of Guards arrived at Horse Guards, behind a part of the Massed Band.

Anyway, the first to arrive were the guardsmen bearing the marker flags, the Officers then arrived and everyone disappeared under the arch. At 10 o'clock on the dot the markers appeared again and took up position, the six Guards on parade arrived: two Guards at a time marching behind a section of the band.



The King's Troop RHA arrived and took up position, then the Sovereign's escort arrived behind the Mounted Band. At 1115 hours HRH Prince Philip arrived in Queen Victoria's 1842 phaeton which is used by Her Majesty the Queen on the actual day. All was set for things to begin.



The Band played, trooped and performed that amazing spin wheel – it makes you wonder how they manage to remember it all. The Guards quick and slow marched and we all stood up as the Colour went past. The King's Troop trotted by, followed by the Cavalry. Then it was all over and they all marched off down the Mall back to Buckingham Palace.



The parade went off very well but I felt for all the Guards on parade in the heat. The day was saved by a rather nice breeze that wafted across the parade ground on the odd occasion. A great morning's entertainment.

We then had to negotiate our way through a "Peace" protest in Whitehall. Nice! In the afternoon we finished off the day with a visit to the theatre to see The 39 Steps, only four people to play all the parts and we found it hilarious. A great ending to a great day.

Editor: Out of curiosity, I tried to find out more about the spin wheel manoeuvre. Any of you who have seen it will remember that it seems to be so intricate that you wonder how they will ever sort themselves out again. Thanks to the wonderful Internet, I discovered the following descriptions: one official one and one from someone in the middle! Be warned – even reading it may make you feel dizzy!

Lieutenant Colonel Rodney Bashford, late Director of Music Grenadier Guards, described it thus:

"A 'wheel' is not an easy manoeuvre with even a small body of troops, and with a block of 400 men the normal wheel is impossible. The massed band therefore pivots on its own centre, so that certain outer ranks and files march long distances in a hurry while the centre and inner ranks loiter for a few seconds. Yet others not only step sideways but backwards as well. This highly complex movement is called a 'spin-wheel', the details of which can be found in no drill book or manual of ceremonial. Its complexity defies description, and if the truth were known, many of the participants know not whither they go or, on arrival, how they got there. The spin-wheel is almost an art form and each performance of it, although similar in essentials, is different in detail. Most of the performers are adjusting their actions to suit the needs of the spin-wheel of the moment, having adjusted their movements quite otherwise on other occasions."

Spin Wheel – the inside view: At this point during the parade the Massed Bands need to turn 90 degrees to the left. The bands are too big and there isn't enough space to perform a normal wheel so we do the spin wheel instead. As soon as we step off, the left half of the band all turn around and then everyone starts moving round to the right trying to keep 2 paces between the person in front of you and to your right. Once the front of the right half and the rear of the left half of the band are round, listen for a double tap from the Bass Drum and the left hand side of the band turn around again. Then you simply pick up your dressing and look in for the "forward" from the Senior Drum Major.

MY MOTHER SERVED IN THE QMAAC

Mrs Sybil Berrecloth
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My mother, Evelyn Victoria Elizabeth Maxwell, joined the WAAC around 1916/1917 when she would have been



Forewoman's Badge and Evelyn Maxwell's ID bracelet – in hallmarked silver

about 19. As far as I know, she served until, as the QMAAC, the Corps disbanded in 1921. I think she served in Edinburgh. She had shorthand and typing skills and was latterly a Forewoman Clerk. I thought that readers of the *Lioness* might be interested in the photographs.

Editor: I certainly enjoyed all the photographs and, as we rarely have the opportunity to see such clear and well-defined photographs of the QMAAC, I hope you don't mind that I have included them all.



Picardy Hostel Staff, August 1919



Evelyn Maxwell is seated second in from the left. Her Forewoman's badge can be seen on her upper right arm. She is also wearing a lighter collar to denote her "rank"



Evelyn is far right holding a cat – she was always "animal daft"



Again, Evelyn is front right. Note the Red Cross badge and headress of the person on the left – she probably was a ward orderly

BLETCHLEY PARK COMMEMORATIVE BADGE

On behalf of Her Majesty's Government, GCHQ is delighted to recognise the vital service of those who worked at Bletchley Park and its outstations during World War II, by presenting surviving veterans with a commemorative badge.

Those who served at Bletchley and are sadly no longer alive are currently listed in a register held and maintained by the Bletchley Park Trust. Although they cannot issue commemorative badges in respect of those who have died, GCHQ will support the Trust by preparing a properly bound copy of this register to be held at Bletchley Park, and by maintaining an on-line copy of it.



Who is eligible?

Surviving veterans on 1 July 2009:

- who were employed by the Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS) at Bletchley Park or its outstations during WWII;
- who served in the Armed Forces at Bletchley Park or its outstations during WWII;
- who served in the "Y" Services of the Armed Forces collecting material which was sent to Bletchley Park during WWII;
- who served in SLUs or SCUs;
- who served in the RSS; or
- who worked for the GPO in the COLOSSUS team at Dollis Hill.

How do I apply?

Download a copy of the Bletchley Park Commemorative Badge form and post it to:

Bletchley Park Commemoration
Room B2g, GCHQ, Hubble Road, Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire GL51 0EX

or

Download a copy of the Bletchley Park Commemorative Badge form and email it to commemoration@gchq.gsi.gov.uk

or

You can also obtain an application form by writing to the above address.

Please use these addresses for any queries regarding this award.

CHARLOTTE WEBB IS PRESENTED WITH HER BLETCHLEY COMMEMORATIVE BADGE AND CERTIFICATE

Charlotte E (Betty) Webb née Vine-Stevens
113 Meadow Road, Wythall, Worcestershire B47 6EQ
Tel: 01564 826958

There were only about 400 members of the ATS who were privileged to serve at the Government Code and Cypher School at Bletchley Park between 1939 and 1945. During that time we were attached to the Intelligence Corps. Obviously, 64 years on, there are but a few of us alive! However, in the autumn of 2009, we were invited to send in our service details to GCHQ in order to qualify for a Commemorative Badge and Certificate organised by 10 Downing Street.

To my surprise – and delight – I was one of 35 Navy, Army and Air Force men and women chosen to attend at Bletchley Park to receive the Badge and Certificate from the then Foreign Secretary, the Rt Hon David Miliband. It is estimated that there are probably only 1,500 of the original 10,000 Bletchley Park workers still alive. GCHQ had laid on an excellent luncheon in the Mansion and some of us were interviewed by members of the Foreign Office and the BBC.



9 October 2009 Betty Webb receives her Bletchley Park Badge from the Rt Hon David Miliband

I served on after the War starting with 321 (Cheshire) Bn TA and moved with them to Southport when 321 (Cheshire), 320 (Manchester) and 319 (Liverpool) battalions merged. From 1963 – 1966, I was a PSO with 71 (Bristol) Coy and my final appointment was as a Captain recruiting for the Women's Services in the West Midlands based in Birmingham. In total, I served for 28 years.

ELIZABETH CROSS

Vee Moore, Tamworth Branch
Email: d.moore28@btinternet.com

My first husband, Ian, died in Northern Ireland in 1972 whilst serving as a Sgt with the Gordon Highlanders so I am eligible to receive the Elizabeth Cross and applied for it in 2009. I received a letter confirming my eligibility and informing me that I was to be presented with the medal sometime at the beginning of 2010 in Staffordshire, the county in which I and my family have lived for the past 28 years.

I was invited to attend a small, understated affair at the Stafford County Building on Monday 8 February to be presented with the medal by the Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire, Colonel Sir James Hawley TD JP MA, Commander of 143 (West Midlands) Brigade. Brigadier Mark Banham MBE also presented medals, together with the Commanding Officer of the 4th Battalion, The Mercian Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Martyn Forgrave QGM.

There were five recipients of the Elizabeth Cross and Memorial Scroll to be presented at the same time: all the other families were linked to the Staffordshire Regiment. Among the guests and hosts were a number of individuals who have formerly served with the Staffordshire Regiment including Major Jim Massey, Capt Austin Miller and Brigadier and Mrs Andrew Williams OBE.

When my family and I arrived at the buildings we were greeted by Watchman II, a lovely black Staffordshire bull terrier, the mascot of the Staffordshire Regiment and his handler who later told us that Watchman has to be starved for 24 hours prior to a public engagement so that he doesn't disgrace either himself or the regiment by

doing anything nasty on the carpet. Poor dog, he kept looking longingly at the buffet table!



Vee with her Elizabeth Cross

After a short while the Lord Lieutenant arrived and the presentations began. It was so tactfully done that I hadn't at first realised he was actually making the presentations as he quietly walked around the room speaking to each recipient in turn, without fuss or ceremony, which suited me down to the ground. He said he was honoured to present the medal and scrolls and thanked me for allowing him to present them to me. He asked questions about my husband; which regiment he had served with, where did he die, how long ago etc. He spotted my Veteran's badge and asked about my service in the WRAC. I then introduced him to my family. He was particularly pleased to speak with my youngest son who had come in uniform and chatted to him about his time in Afghanistan and Cyprus. In fact he got so carried away with talking that he had to be encouraged by his deputy to move on to the next recipient. Well, his deputy was a brigadier and outranked him!

THE LEICESTER SEVEN

W/317140 Mrs Barbara Danter née Miller
30 Blake Road, West Bridgford, Notts NG2 3JL

We are getting through the year a little too fast, but we did start our outings earlier than usual this year. We began with a visit to the Lord Mayor's Parlour in Leicester where we took tea with both the Mayor and his wife. We were shown over the Courthouse and down in the cells which certainly made us all feel glad that we were good girls!

We have also attended a forties day here in Nottingham. We enjoyed ourselves very much although the persistent showers were a right pain – but it did give us a chance to walk through the caves under Nottingham Castle which were used as air raid shelters during the war. We all found it very interesting. During those few weeks up in the Castle, there was a display of the clothes etc, that were used in the filming of the new Robin Hood Film loaned to the City by the film makers so it was a very busy but informative day.



At the entrance to the Royal Hospital

On Monday 12 April we shared a coach with members of a Royal British Legion club to go on a visit to the Royal Hospital Chelsea. The In Pensioner who showed us around the buildings was a jolly little fellow and kept us all in fits of laughter. Apparently he has his father there as well. He looked at Lyn's badge and seeing WRAC, he labelled her Warm, Round And Cuddly – after that, we never dared say, "Well what about ATS."



With Charles II in the Royal Hospital grounds

We have many things throughout the year to look forward to – I just hope the weather is kind to us. Our Secretary and Social Secretary are due to attend a "do", (for want of a better word) shortly to celebrate 150 years of a Cadet Force. Now I don't know about you, (I am talking to the 80 plus now) but when we reached the age of fourteen we had to sign up with one of them. I chose the WJAC – Women's Junior Air Corps – and our uniform was air force blue and grey. We learned aircraft recognition, Morse code, marching (of course) and First Aid. We had to cajole the coupons for our uniform out of our long suffering relatives. I loved every minute of being a member and reached the dizzy heights of Corporal. I was also fortunate to be in the Band and to play the trumpet.



Nottingham WJAC Band 1940s

Now my friend, Joan de Vall, joined the GTC – Girls Training Corps. They wore navy and white, and, sorry Joan, but I have no idea what they did. I only know at the time that it was them and us! We did not seem to mix much but we did have some special times anyway. I feel we should have been invited to the celebrations too, but maybe they do not know that there are some golden oldie cadets left? Are there any more out there? Pray tell as we would love to know. A book has been written about the Girl Cadets of WW2. I have one somewhere, so we are in the history.

When we reached seventeen we were expected to go into one of the services and I just couldn't wait for my turn. As I had two brothers, a sister and sister-in-law in the Air Force, it would have been obvious for me to choose the RAF but there were so many ATS billeted around me. I got to know more about them that it seemed natural for me to join them – a decision that I have never had cause to regret. I was in the Army Post Office and later re-mustered to telephone switchboard operator, both of which I loved. My only regret is that I did not stay in longer, but there you go. I must say that my membership in our Association has kind of made up for that and all that I do with my friends, both for Leics/Notts, and our Normandy Veterans, and others, fill me with a great pride.

AVAILABILITY OF DARK GREEN MATERIAL

W/372658 Gwyneth Stratten née Hayes
13 St Martin's Way, Ancaster, Grantham NG32 3RA
Tel: 01400 230656. E-mail: gwyneth.stratten@yahoo.co.uk

I am the Social Secretary of Lincoln and District Branch and you might be interested to know that I still have some of the green material left which many of us used to have skirts and jackets made. I even made a pair of trousers for myself out of the same material and am very pleased with the result. I half lined the front of them to give them more body....if you see what I mean!



Chris Corker, Secretary of Lincoln and District Branch models a suit made from the material

We have about 24 metres left which sells at £4.50 a metre. I would estimate that, depending on size, a skirt and tunic would need between 3-4 metres and a pair of trousers 1-1.5 metres. Postage would, of course, be according to weight.

If anyone is interested they can e-mail or ring me at the above address.

SUE DONOVAN CELEBRATES A MILESTONE BIRTHDAY

Col NR Robertson MBE



*Back row: Sue Donovan, Fiona Edington, Lynne Davies and Alice Matthews
Front row: Annabelle Massey, Liz Jones, Bobbi Chilton and Nan Robertson*

On a beautiful day in June, Sue Donovan celebrated her 60th birthday in style at the Tylney Hall Hotel in Rotherwick where her family and friends enjoyed a delicious luncheon in superb surroundings. Afterwards, everyone adjourned to her lovely home and garden and carried on the happy festivities over tea and splendid birthday cake made by her sister, Claire. We were all loath to leave the convivial gathering as a third of the guests were WRAC who found the opportunity to chat too good a chance to miss!

THE PEANUT CLUB EXPLAINED

W/410509 Miss Margaret Irvine
96 Dumbuck Road, Dumbarton G82 3NA

Thank you very much for including my query about the Peanut Club in *Lioness* 1/2010. I am delighted to say that I had five letters in response, mainly from ladies who joined up in 1942. One of them suggested that I look it up on the Internet and I was pleased to find out so much more. I had thought that the Peanut Club had something to do with the ATS and WRAC Benevolent Fund but it appears not.



Funding for the Peanut Ward was helped in 1931 when Mrs Gordon Clemetson, writing as "Aunt Agatha", started the Peanut Club through the children's section of a local newspaper. Mrs. Clemetson promised a bag of peanuts to anyone giving 12 new pennies to the Queen Victoria Hospital Fund. In its first year, 1,046 members collected £335 and the money was donated to the Peanut Ward which became the children's ward. It was officially opened by Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother in 1955 and she returned in 1995 to mark the 40th Anniversary of its opening. Princess Anne has taken over as Patron and visited the ward in September 2005 to celebrate its 50th Anniversary. The Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead has long connections with the Guinea Pig Club and many of the children admitted to the Peanut Ward require similar treatment especially plastic surgery for severe burns.

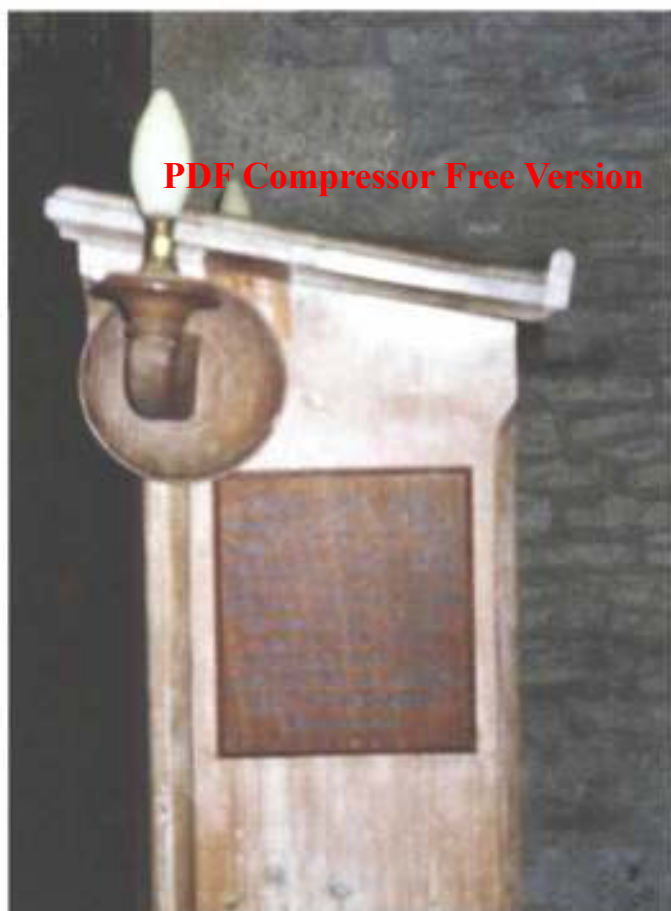
DO YOU HAVE MEMORIES OF CORNWELL MANOR/KINGHAM DEPOT?

Anna Macdonald
9 Cornwell Village, Chipping Norton, Oxon OX7 6TT

I am hoping to hear from anyone with memories of Cornwell Manor during the war years. Having lived here for 30 years, I am trying to gather together the history of the Manor and village about which very little seems to have been written. I understand that the owner of the manor in the 1940s was an American lady, Mrs Gilson, and I have heard that she was in London driving ambulances.

The plaque on the side of the lectern reads:

These lamps were presented by the staff and patients of the Auxiliary Territorial Service convalescent depot at Cornwell Manor. To the glory of God and in grateful remembrance and appreciation of services held in this church 1941-1946.



The lectern in St Peter's Church, Cornwell

One lady did sign and make a comment in the Church's Visitor book but did not leave an address. Please, if anyone can give me more information, I would be grateful and delighted. Thank you.

DID YOU WORK WITH CANADIAN BUILT RADAR?

Brian Mendes
Email: briwilmen@rogers.com

I am trying to complete some research covering the deployment of the WWII Canadian built anti aircraft RADAR GL Mk III.(c) which had two cabins and mobile generators. Several of these radars were deployed on AA



Command gun sites in the UK around 1943/4 and were manned by FC operators, many of whom were ATS personnel. If you were one of these FC operators or if you know of a family member who was, I would like you to contact me by e-mail Briwilmen@rogers.com or write to Brian Mendes, 1002-315 Margaret Avenue, Kitchener, Ontario, CANADA, N2H 6S5.



Attached are photographs of the two cabins I am interested in. They were taken just a few years ago at the Royal Canadian Artillery Museum in Shilo, Manitoba and, as far as we can determine, are the only two that have survived the ravages of time.

MRS MARY ROGAN IS NINETY YEARS YOUNG Col H Powell, Treasurer, York Branch

In the evening of 6 March, the extended family of Mrs Mary Rogan of York celebrated her 90th birthday. Five members of the York Branch joined with the family in what was a most joyful occasion. The family ranged in age from Mary's eldest son to a very small active great, great grandson aged two. He clearly enjoyed himself as did the 80 people who were there.



Mary with her two sons and five daughters. One great grandchild joined in for fun

We were honoured to be invited and were joined at the table with Mary to enjoy an excellent buffet meal prepared by her son in law, a chef, and his wife, Mary's youngest daughter.

In the WRAC Association group was Mrs Gwen Hall, who, with our hostess, joined the Territorial Army in York in 1938; Gwen gave a false age. They were called up when war was declared and served together in Imphal Barracks, York throughout the war. Subsequently they both married, **PDF Compressor Free Version** and lived in the same house throughout the years.

Mary was in fine form and spent a busy time greeting young and older members of her huge family. Following the meal each of her seven children said a few words – a great compliment to a much loved mother and a truly memorable evening.

IN PENSIONER MARJORIE COLE REPORTS IN!

W/411789 (now 226IP) Marjorie Cole
Royal Hospital Chelsea, London SW3 4SR

Another six months have flown by. It's hard to believe how much I've done in those six months and how many wonderful people I've met.

Everyday brings a new experience. I can be attending an anniversary service in Westminster Abbey or up in the North of England taking part in Armed Forces Day to a more unusual event like being driven down the Kings Road and Dorothy and I handing out free bunches of tulips for International Women's Day....or even helping to stir the Christmas Pudding. Well, I was a chef!



My biggest honour was being invited to Guernsey to take part in the 65th Liberation Day anniversary celebrations. I've never visited Guernsey before so it was extra special to me. What a wonderful time we had staying in a first

class hotel and doing various things each day i.e. attending concerts, the yacht club, talking live on BBC Guernsey and visiting the Occupation Museum. The event I treasured most especially during our visit to Guernsey was taking part in the Liberation Day Parade in St Peter Port along the harbour front, then the church service and after the reception lunch in a hotel. We all were given front row seats along the sea front to watch the cavalcade of over 200 war time vehicles drive past, their drivers and families in war time uniforms or civilian clothes of that era. We attended two more events that day so when we eventually returned to our hotel we were all tired but very happy and proud to have taken part. Each day was full. When we came to leave on the 12th May I felt close to tears, saying "Cheerio" to all the wonderful Guernsey people we'd met and made friends with, with their invitation to come back next year.

Unfortunately I ended up in hospital for eight days after I got back, but I'm glad to say I'm back to participating in whatever I can. Some of the events I've attended: Raising the Flag for Armed Forces Day at the City Hall, Armed Forces Day in Scunthorpe, reception given by the Dutch Embassy for the Dutch Queen's Birthday, a tour of the House of Lords, Chelsea Flower Show, a tour of St Paul's Cathedral, a two hour cruise on the Police Commissioner's launch on the Thames, attending the ceremony in the Royal Hospital Chelsea in which President Sarkozy of France came to celebrate General Charles de Gaulle's speech in 1940, Swan Lake at the Royal Albert Hall, also many others. Something different each day nearly – even meeting politicians!



Before the election!

We three lady pensioners moved into new accommodation in May; a (berth) bedroom, wet room and also a study each, still designed on Sir Christopher Wren's style but thankfully modern. We look forward to three more ladies joining us in the near future.

Founder's Day was on 10 June and I'm glad to say I insisted on taking part as a marcher. They thought otherwise because I had been in hospital but I was determined and thoroughly enjoyed it. After the parade was over I was presented to the Duke of Gloucester in the chapel. It was splendid to see Major Jane Freebairn along with some other ladies from the Association.

Editor: And I can report that Marjorie marched extremely smartly – as if she was just passing out from Guildford!

**MY RECOLLECTIONS OF THE 1948
OLYMPIC GAMES
AUDREY MITCHELL NÉE WILLIAMSON**

Editor: Sadly, Audrey Mitchell who won an Olympic Silver Medal in 1948 died on 29 April 2010 aged 84. There can be no better way of remembering her special achievement by letting her tell her own fascinating story.

As an Olympian I have many memories of the London Olympic Games especially so this year, 1998, when unbelievably it is 50 years since I competed at Wembley and won a silver medal in the 200 metres, second to Fanny Blankers-Koen, of Holland.



1948 Olympic Medal

The British Olympic Association plans to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the staging of the 1948 Olympic Games on Wednesday 29th July, 50 years to the day since the 1948 Opening Ceremony. The BOA will host a relaxed buffet style luncheon and include 1948 memorabilia, a screening of the official 1948 Olympic film and re-enactment of the protocol. I will be attending the celebrations. The staging of the Olympic Games in London so soon after the War was in itself a cause for celebration in the economic climate of the time.



Audrey Mitchell (right) with Fanny Blankers-Koen

The London Games were a magnificent testimonial to the British peoples' belief that sport was an integral part of society – both national and international – and that now World War II was out of the way, sporting life should resume as quickly as possible. Consequently, despite all

our problems, the un-held XIII Games allocated to London for 1944 became the XIV Games of 1948.

I had played a lot of games at school but we did not have athletics or a sports day. I joined the ATS immediately on leaving school on 29 September 1944 the day after my 18th birthday. After an initial PT course I was posted to HQ South Midland District in Oxford as a full-time Corporal PTL. I first competed in an athletics meeting in 1945 to set an example as a PT instructor and to encourage other girls to enter the District meeting.

I continued to compete successfully at Command and Army Championships in the 100 yards and relay events. I was first spotted by the Women's Amateur Athletic Association at the Women's Triangular Athletic Meeting (Combined Services v. Combined Universities v. Southern Counties WAAA) in September 1947 as I had beaten an international athlete in the 100 metres. In December 1947, as Supervising Officer PTL/ATS at HQ North Midland District, I was selected as an Olympic Possible for the 100m and 400m relay. Life then became exciting. I was posted in April 1948 to HQ Western Command, Chester, as Staff Officer PI/ATS and promoted to Junior Commander.

Unlike today's professional athletes, I had to fit in my training sometimes before breakfast running round Chester Racecourse which lay just below the ATS Officers' Mess! None of the modern tartan tracks; not even cinder tracks in Western Command. I did manage to win the 100yds on grass in 11.4 seconds (my personal best ever) at Oswestry in the Western Command Athletic Championships.

Barely four weeks before final selections were to be made, I was sent for intensive training to the Army School of PT (ASPT), Aldershot with all its facilities including a six-lane cinder track at the Military Stadium and lots of open green spaces where I could train with other Army athletes. Most important of all, Captain Harry Harbin APTC was asked to coach me; he was an experienced athletics coach, an instructor at the ASPT and a D Day veteran (he parachuted into Normandy). Not only did he give a great deal of his time to my training schedule but he introduced me to – and designed – my own starting blocks, quite an innovation in those days – the alternative was a trowel! To him I owe a deep debt of gratitude and also to the ASPT for the excellent facilities. Looking back I was very single-minded, enthusiastic and focussed but I was not too keen on jogging more than once around the track – 440 yards! The Marathon would not have been for me! Having said that I was an all-round sportswoman and played most games at Army/Command level so I was very fit.

The final selection for the women's team was made after the WAAA Championships at White City on 26 June 1948 when I was chosen for the 200m and 400m relay. Harry had recommended that I should try the 200m although I had never competed in a 200m event until a few weeks before when I had shown promise over the longer distance. I was to report to Team HQ in London for the Olympics on 27 July.



Audrey in her 1948 beret and jacket "several" years later

Once selected we had fittings for the uniform at Bourne & Hollingsworth in Oxford Street i.e. a white dress, navy jacket and white beret. We had to provide our own white shoes (with medium heels), stockings, a white slip etc. etc. out of our coupons entitlement – no extra coupons were allowed. We were sent red and blue ribbon and an extra Union Jack to stitch on a sleeveless white cotton vest which we had to sew ourselves and red and blue ribbon to stitch on black shorts which we had to provide to specific measurements i.e. not too short – a far cry from today's lycra all-in-one leotards. We also had to buy our own spikes. A navy track suit was provided – not waterproof!

There was no Olympic Village for female athletes; the men were at RAF Uxbridge and other national teams were accommodated in Richmond Park (where I was in 1950-51 with 12 Bn). The women of the GB team were quartered with the Australians and New Zealanders at the School of Domestic Science, 53/57 Eccleston Square SW1. We had to make our own transport arrangements to Wembley (on the underground people tended to stare at my starting blocks) except on the day we were competing when we were collected by car. We could also request a special breakfast on those days. We were amazed to see the Australians tucking into steaks which they had brought with them by sea (5-6 week voyage). I chose a boiled egg but it did not stay down! I shared a room with Elspeth Whyte, a London University student, who was in the Discus and Putting the Shot with Bevis Reid (Shergold).

I remember the freebies on my bed – a Ramer Sponge and Ovaltine (or were they Horlicks?) tablets, a far cry from the Olympic hand-outs of today; the sponge was used to good effect at the Opening Ceremony in heat-wave conditions when Boy Scouts holding national banners were passing out!

I was very diet conscious and was lucky to be on heavy duty rations (which included extra milk) whilst attached to the Army School of PT. Drugs? I had never heard of them! I remember collecting food parcels from the Amateur Athletics Association office in Chancery Lane sent from Australia and Canada to supplement our 1948 rations! Mine included evaporated milk, salmon, spiced beef, pure cane cube sugar and chocolate milk concentrate. Nowadays of course elite athletes have dieticians, physiotherapists, coaches, fitness trainers, managers, agents, the lot plus the opportunity to train at altitude and in the sunshine in Australia, South Africa and America etc during the British winter.



The 1948 Olympic Flame is lit

The Opening Ceremony was held at Wembley on Thursday 29 July and all team officials and competitors were invited to take part in the March Past which is a solemn and integral part of the Games and we all had to be dressed in the "official uniform". Greece was by tradition the first team to enter the Stadium, then 57 countries in alphabetical order and last, as the host Nation, Great Britain; 6000 competitors in all. We received a tumultuous reception from the packed Stadium. HM King George VI took the Salute and declared the Games of the XIV Olympiad open.

The Women's 200m Heats were on Thursday 5 August; this event was included in the Olympics for the first time. In the warming up arena outside the Stadium, I

remember seeing Chief Commander Lady Bowyer Smythe, the Commandant at Windsor ATS OCTU when I was commissioned in January 1947 and many other friends, waving and wishing me luck. Later waiting in the tunnel to be called into the arena was a nerve-racking experience; I was told that in the heat of the 200m I heard that Fanny Blankers-Koen had won the first heat in a time I knew I could do; little did I know she had strolled through her heat.



Fanny Blankers-Koen

Heat 7 4pm – my big moment; rain began to fall and we had two false starts. The athlete concerned was disqualified by the starter; she had come from Chile! On the third attempt, when you could have heard a pin drop, I stayed put for what seemed ages but eventually had an easy race, winning in the second fastest time of the seven heats. A Team Official hurriedly took me down into the bowels of the Stadium to lie down in a darkened room before the Semi-finals at 5pm!

Fanny won the first semi-final. In the second semi-final I ran a dead heat with Shirley Strickland timed at 24.9 seconds equalling the British record. The photo-finish camera which was being used for the first time in the Olympics could not separate us. Timings were only to one tenth of a second, not to one hundredth as now. The judges could not believe it and called for a second copy of the photo-finish; this was the first dead heat recorded in the Games.

For the 200m finals the next day, the heavens opened and conditions were atrocious; the track was under water and lanes could not easily be seen. One newspaper reported that the driest place in Wembley on 6 August was inside the Empire Pool. Even so the Stadium was at full capacity with 80,000 spectators as there were on each day of the Athletics. There were six of us in the final and I was in lane 4; we had a good start. Harry Harbin was an Olympic Official, on the wind gauge in the centre of the Stadium whilst I was competing; I was very conscious of his support and encouragement at the time. I well remember waiting to the last possible moment, as instructed by Harry, before making my final burst for the tape and I pulled up from fifth to a mud-bespattered second. It was undoubtedly the timing of that final supreme effort that gave me the silver medal again decided by a photo finish, placing A Paterson USA 3rd, Shirley Strickland Australia 4th, Margaret Walker GB 5th and Daphne Robb South Africa 6th.

After her 200m victory, Fanny said "That was my hardest race and I am terribly happy". I heard later that after the semi-finals and all the media attention, she had just wanted to go home to Holland and see her children. Her husband and coach Jan Blankers managed to calm her down and persuaded her to relax; after good night's sleep she was back to her old self and ready for the Final. She was undoubtedly the star of the Games with three individual gold medals in the 100m, 200m and 80m hurdles and a team gold for Holland in the 400m relay. At this time she held five World records – 100 yards, 100m, 80m hurdles, high jump and long jump! No wonder she was known as the Flying Dutchwoman!



The President of the International Olympic Committee presenting medals (actually to the High Jump medallists!)

It was a very moving experience on the rostrum as I watched the Union flag raised to second place. We stood to attention for the Dutch national anthem with no hugging or signs of emotion! My only regret was that the rain had played havoc with my hair, my track suit was saturated and the Dutch ambassador by a very much wisher was looking decidedly limp. The President of the International Olympic Committee, Mr J Sigfrid Edstrom, presented my medal in a box, not on a ribbon placed over my head as nowadays and no bunch of flowers. I was then hustled away to be interviewed first by Max Robertson in the radio van and later high above the stadium by Jack Grump on television; in those days there were very few who had television to see my very bedraggled state so I need not have worried!



The BBC film crew

My parents who had been a great support throughout and my brother Desmond watched from the stands near the 200m start with A G K Brown, the 400m Gold medallist in the 1936 Berlin Olympics and my brother's housemaster and athletics coach at Cheltenham College. Later Desmond won the Public Schools Mile in 1951, captained the Hare & Hounds at Sandhurst, was a Milocarian and Captain of Army Athletics.

The Closing Ceremony was a formal occasion with the flags of all nations carried into the arena accompanied by the music of the Massed Bands of the Brigade of Guards. The Greek, British and Finnish national anthems were played as their flags were hoist above the main scoreboard. The President of the TOG pronounced the closing of the Games of the XIV Olympiad and then handed the special Olympic Flag of embroidered satin to the Lord Mayor of London for safekeeping until the next Games of the XV Olympiad were celebrated in Helsinki. After a fanfare of trumpets and a salute of five guns, the Choir sang the Olympic Hymn, the flags were lowered and the Olympic Flame was extinguished. The Choir and Massed Bands were conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. The Competitors had marched into the arena and waived to the crowd; it was a happy finale although there was none of the pantomime and razzmatazz of modern closing ceremonies.

The full length technicolour film "XIV Olympiad - The Glory of Sport", the official film of the Games made history in two ways: it was the first Olympic colour film and also the first full length feature film to be produced in so short a time. In September 1948 I was invited to

appear at an early screening of this film in Cheltenham, my home town. In 1992 I was invited by the British Film Institute to a private showing of the refurbished film. The 1948 colour film was fading and also the material of the film was highly inflammable so it had been restored. I met other Olympian guests including of course Fanny Blankers-Koen. It was good to meet her again.

Looking back all that time ago, representing Great Britain was a wonderful experience. Fifty years later I remain in the record books under Best British Medal Performances for my silver medal in the Women's 200m event!

The Opening Ceremony had engendered an exhilarating feeling of national pride with 59 countries represented, such a short time after the War. In the famous words of Baron de Coubertin, founder of the Modern Games: "The important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part. The essential thing is not conquering but fighting well."

Is this true today?



*Audrey and Brian on their Wedding Day in Singapore
1 Feb 1958*

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Branch News

Editor: I feel thanks to all those Branches who were kind enough to include farewell messages to me in their reports. I truly appreciated them but modesty dictated that I left them out! It has been a true privilege to publish all the Branch reports over the last few years and I have certainly enjoyed reading all about your trips, outings and celebrations. Food has always featured greatly! However, the main message which comes through is the joy of sharing these events with other ladies who also understand the true meaning of service, camaraderie and fellowship. Keep up the good work!

ABERDEEN BRANCH

Isn't it grand that the snow has disappeared at last and we have finally cast off one layer of double-knitting and looking forward to some heat that we do not have to pay for? I am afraid that the bad weather did claim one victim. Jean Savage fell and broke her hip. Her recovery is not as quick as she would like but we all wish her well



Lucy Burns with Jean Savage, on the right, smiling through adversity!

The Branch stayed in town for our May lunch and we were happy to welcome our friend Jean Christie to the event as it was the first time we had seen her since her sister, May, also a member of the branch, had died on 28 March. It certainly came as a shock to learn that Jean then died on 28 May. Although she had been unable to attend many meetings, I had kept in touch by phone and represented the Branch at her funeral.



The Christie sisters

26 June 2010 was when Aberdeen celebrated Armed Forces Day and, after the parade, Irene Thomson and Sandra Lemmon represented our branch at tea with the Lord Provost at the Town House.



Sandra Lemmon, Alec Salmond, Scotland's First Minister and Irene Thomson

BAND BRANCH

I am delighted to say that we had a very successful reunion at Skegness. The weather was kind, apart from the wind which Russia sent to us, and the area was noticeably clean and very flat which is useful for a few of us now! We were also entertained by The Band in the Park comprising the Alford and Skegness Bands. They also rendered an arrangement of Lass of Richmond Hill for our benefit – oh how we remembered the days when we did the summer bandstands. They are presently playing a coast to coast marathon from St Bees to Robin Hood Bay to raise funds for the National Children Fund. Well done Shirley Prime and Tuppy. You will also see in the Grimsby Branch report that Carole Tyler has also been busy on the good causes front.



All smiles in Skegness May 2010

There were two more reunions. The first was in Guildford and the second in the Union Jack Club in London. We were hoping that Major Jean Collyer would be there so we could celebrate her 90th Birthday. Most of us remember her as Director of Music, Major Jean MacDowall who arranged the WRAC Quick March, Lass of Richmond Hill/Early One Morning. Unfortunately, she could not be with us as her husband was unwell. However, I am pleased to say that Joyce Fisk, over from Canada on a rare but welcome visit, delivered a small gift and bouquet of flowers on behalf of the Band Branch. I had a telephone call from Major Collyer to say how delighted she was to be remembered on her special birthday and to pass her thanks on to you all.

We are pleased to announce that Betty Clark née Chadwick received a Certificate of Honour for playing with Tewkesbury Town Band and numerous other bands for 55 years as well as being in the WRAC Band for five years. Well Done, Chad!

I do hope that most of you have sorted out your standing orders by now as we are well on the way to becoming solvent at last. I have also managed to complete the Lottery projects and I am reasonably sure that will help our next reunion in London in May 2011. Can I just ask any of you who have difficulties and need a carer to let me know? We would love you to come to reunions which may well be possible with a carer.

I am sorry to say that we have lost two more members recently; Maureen Dyer née Booth in March and Shirley Oldham in May. We send our condolences to both their families.



Mystery photograph

Now I need your help! Does anyone recognise this photograph? I guess it may have been taken in the early 1950s and it looks like a performance of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves. If anyone does have an idea please let me know. *Editor: The photographers stamp on the back is very faint but I think it says East Grinstead so it may have been taken at Huron Camp?*

We have been given two very nice photograph albums so now I can put all the photographs I have in some form of order; one for service and one for reunions. If you do have photographs, would you be willing to let me have them to copy for the albums? I will return them as soon as I can. Photographs are great talking points when we get together so the more the merrier!

If you do have an e-mail address please can you send it to me as it seems easier to keep in touch that way. My email is mrs.ann.jones@gmail.com

BATH BRANCH

The Branch continues to meet twice a month but with diminishing numbers as we are mostly ex-A.T.S. in our late eighties and even nineties. Nevertheless, we average sixteen at the meetings and we attend other social events between meetings. We are joined by two ex-WAAF regularly and we enjoy their company and input.

The highlight of the last six months was a visit to us by the Mayor and Mayoress of Bath. The Mayor told us of his experiences in the RAF whilst serving with Bomber Command. This was the last meeting that our member Brenda Clarkson née Allen, who served in the A.T.S. from April 1939 until December 1941 was able to be with us: she is moving to Devon to be near her family and we wish her much happiness in her new home.

Earlier in the year we had an informative talk by a Crime Prevention Officer who gave us all "Goody Bags" full of items to help us against crimes, such as whistles, gadgets for handbags etc. We are indebted to Lt Col Val Trout, Secretary of Salisbury Branch, who told us at our Area Meeting that we could have these Crime Prevention Officers to our meetings: so many thanks to her!

Members collect old Greetings Cards to donate to a Group who re-furbish the cards for sale in aid of the Goodwill Children Villages in India. Last year through the sale of these "re-made" cards, they raised £3000 so we heard how our very small donation had helped orphans and very sick children to live a better life. By having some education they are able to help their neighbours in their villages. The speaker's mother-in-law had, by coincidence, served in the A.T.S.

The Association's AGM at the Victory Services Club in London was an enjoyable occasion. I was accompanied by one of our WRAC members, Jean Carr née Galvin, who served from April 1950 until October 1952. We both enjoyed the lunch so many thanks to HQ staff for all the arrangements.

I enjoyed the ATS Dinner Club Lunch at the Victory Services Club, although it was rather sad not to have

Margaret Rogers with us. Her death was a great shock to me as she had always phoned and written on a regular basis and I will miss that contact with her very much. The event was very well organised and we had an informative speech by Major Jane Freebairn, General Secretary, about the ATS. **PDF Compressor Free Version** looking forward to the ATS Dinner Club break in Bournemouth in October. Last year it was fantastic, so if you are not a member, I urge you to join.

We endeavour in our Branch to visit our members who cannot attend our meetings through distance. So far this year, we have been to Chipping Sodbury to visit Eileen Spearpoint née Timms. She served from May 1940 until July 1945. After she became a member of the Association she helped to form the Isle of Wight branch and then the one at Wincanton: sadly they are both now closed. Eileen made us most welcome and loaded us up with items for our raffles. We certainly use our Bus passes!

Our next visit will be to see Mary Bazett née Marsden who served from August 1941 until February 1946. She met her husband Bill after the war when she went to work in what was then Rhodesia. Recently they both gave us a talk on their life in that country. We are hoping for a lovely summer's day to drive through Gloucestershire to their home at Coaley, Dursley.

The Area Reunion this year was a most delightful journey through the rolling Downs of Wiltshire and into Hampshire to King's Court Masonic Hall in Chandler's Ford; near Romsey. It was a super Lunch, plus excellent raffle prizes, and it was good to see that all branches from our Area were represented. A record! A big thank you to Southampton Branch as we know they had quite a few problems to organise it.

Sadly, we have just had to say "Farewell" to a long standing member of our Branch. Peggy Seaman was a regular attender and had fulfilled many roles during her membership. She had just celebrated her 90th birthday and died peacefully in her sleep. She is very much missed at our meetings.

Best wishes from all in Bath to our friends in other Branches

BEXHILL BRANCH

For the second year running, we decided not to have a January meeting for which most of our ageing membership was quite grateful; the winter of 2009/10 was an especially cold one throughout the country. So in February, after a two month gap, we had plenty to tell each other over tea and biscuits!

In March we had a visit from Jackie Streeter, a Community Support Officer. She brought with her a selection of headgear worn by officers according to the duties they have to perform; these are being shown by our WRAC audience in the attached photograph taken by PC Bunny Warren who often drops in for a cup of tea and to give us the odd word of advice.



Jackie Streeter at the back of the room. Standing next her, under the policeman's helmet is Jenny Nye, Bexhill Branch Secretary

Jackie is about to go off to college to do a course on becoming a Police Constable. She gave a good and informative lecture and we feel sure that she will pass the course with honours. We enjoy our relationship with the local Police and are happy to exchange greetings with them when we are out shopping.

In April we had Hot Cross buns and showed off our Easter bonnets. Our May meeting coincided with the General Election and on that day our speaker was the District Commissioner for the Rother Fire and Rescue Service, no less, who gave us a brisk and pleasant talk before rushing off to be sure that voting was proceeding smoothly. It was. According to news reports difficulties began later in the evening due to under manning of voting stations.

Our June speaker was Clifford Jones on the subject of "Elements of Chemistry". He has given us three interesting talks on disparate subjects, is a practised speaker and is now a friend.

To come, we have our strawberry cream tea and at least two more talks: one from a Sussex Air Ambulance representative and one from PC Bunny Warren; then the Christmas party in December and the Christmas lunch in the same month at the local golf club which our Secretary has already booked.

We were very pleased to welcome a new member, Pamela Locke, in April but we have lost two one-time Chairmen, Vi Town and Jean Atkins, due to mobility problems. However, both are staying in touch and are very supportive of our branch. We send them our greetings and love and promise to stay in touch by letter or telephone.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

I have just been looking at *Lioness* 2/2009 and I wrote, "We are enjoying our meetings at our new venue, The Newt". Not any more we're not! We are now enjoying our meetings at the Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham. We were given short notice that The Newt was closing

because of the commencement of work on the transformation of New Street Station.

Lesley Wallace and I, Margaret Walkeden, trawled around the city centre before our February meeting – on the actual day! **PDF Compressor Free Version** to find a home. No – we did not have to have a drink at each and every one of them! At the end of the meeting, the rest of the Committee came with us to the Britannia who agreed we could meet there free of charge as long as a certain number of members ate lunch there each month. This has gone well and we were delighted to hold our Birthday Lunch there in May in the company of Lt Col Sue Westlake, Maggie Purkis, Area Chairman and Irene Hall, Area Secretary.

So far this year, we have not been on any outings but have close contact now with Leicester and Tamworth Branches and it was good to see them, and ladies from Wolverhampton, at our Birthday lunch. We have just enjoyed a Quiz and Lunch with Leicester – especially as our table won and we each received a bottle of wine. We look forward to “skittling” with Tamworth in August.

On 26 June, Armed Forces Day, we shall be manning a stand again. It will be our fourth year and we hope it stays dry this time. We are planning to visit Bletchley Park when we can arrange transport. Elsewhere in this edition is a report from Betty Webb, a member of this branch, about her time there and the day she was presented with her Bletchley Park Commemorative Badge.

This year, three members of the branch celebrate their 90th Birthday and will receive the special cards we have had printed. Another visit will be made to Swanshurst School on 5 July when the pupils will be holding their Veterans Day. They seem to really enjoy the opportunity to talk to ex-service men and ladies.

Maureen Deeley and Kath Adams have again raised considerable amounts of money for Troop Aid – this money goes directly to Selly Oak Hospital. Sadly, there is no let up in the need for these funds and we are very proud of Maureen and Kath and their tireless work for the charity.

We still meet on the first Wednesday of each month, except January, and, if you are in the area, you would be most welcome to join us. Lunch is at midday and the official meeting starts at 12.30pm. The Britannia Hotel is next to Primark in New Street and we are usually in the Lichfield Suite. Doesn't it sound grand?

Get well soon, all of you on the sick list.

BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH

The year 2009 ended on a high note for us with an excellent Christmas Lunch laid on at the Premier Inn, our regular meeting place. Major Mack Maskens-McIntyre, our Area Chairman, joined us and we were also pleased to welcome some of our less mobile members to the event.

In 2010, amongst our other meetings, Major Mack returned to enlighten us about Alpacas and their amazing wool. In June, ten of our members were able to enjoy the South and South West Area Reunion hosted by Southampton Branch at the King's Court Masonic Hall in Chandler's Ford. We look forward to seeing the photo of 99 area members taken from an upstairs window. Sorry no photos yet from our branch but we are working on it for a future report. *Editor: I think we would all have liked to see it!*

We are now anticipating our next month's outing on a New Forest Tour with a cream tea. Unfortunately, increasing years and decreasing mobility are affecting the numbers who can get to meetings regularly but it appears that events involving meals feature highly in popularity. All members look forward to receiving their copies of *Lioness* and we wish to thank the Editor for such an interesting magazine.

BRISTOL BRANCH

Our branch has been busy. At Christmas our Hampers were a real treat and those members who were lucky enough to win one (or two) were more than happy. We will probably have them again this year since it is a great way of raising money for the branch.

Our February lunch was once again very well attended and we had as our special guests Lt Col Sue Westlake, Maj Mack Maskens-McIntyre and the Rt Hon the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Bristol.



Top table at the February Birthday Lunch

For our table decoration we were looking for something to signify ten years and as it is a Tin anniversary, we decided our flowers which were in our Corps colours would be arranged in colanders. I must say that they did look good and staff at the Marriott Hotel chose ladies from each table to receive one afterwards.

In February, one of our members Kath Waring died. She was 89 yrs old, and although she had been unable to attend meetings recently, we had kept in touch with her. We attended her funeral and said the Corps Collect which her family greatly appreciated.

Not sure what happened to March, apart from attending a meeting about Armed Forces Day and having a bring and buy sale: the time just flies by. Aha! Bet you thought I had forgotten about our Association AGM which several of us attended. It was a superb meeting, lunch was excellent. **PDF Compressor Free Version** We went around afterwards and chat. I must mention to all members at HQ and on Council who work tirelessly on our behalf – your efforts are much appreciated.

We attended the South and South West Area Reunion hosted by Southampton at King's Court Masonic Hall in Chandler's Ford. There were 17 of us and we went by train. The photograph below is being sent to British Rail. What a brilliant day out we had, our lunch was First Class, thank you to Southampton for arranging it. It was certainly worth going. We must thank Maj Mack also for taking some of our ladies to the station.



Bristol ladies proving that "Life begins Off-Peak"

Here we are again in June, attended the Veterans Week at Weymouth, less and less of us in the march, but we will be there next year, to do it all again. We are now making our plans for Armed Forces Day, we are attending two events; the Flag Raising on the Monday, and then we have a parade and stand on the 26th. Our branch is going to have another day out in August and then we shall be making preparations for our AGM in October and our November and December events.

BURY BRANCH

We are still meeting at the White Lion Hotel, Bury on the second Tuesday of the month at 1.30p.m. Joan, the landlady, always makes us welcome and caters for us beautifully whether it is a buffet or our Christmas celebrations.

We were in danger of having to close the branch but were delighted when Pat Oldham and Yvonne Dunbar offered to take over as Secretary and Treasurer. They are ex-WRAC and it is great to see that volunteers are still coming forward! We wish them all the best and hope that the branch will start to thrive again. We all owe a huge "Thank You" to Mary Gregory who has been

Secretary for many, many years and to Lily Cropper who was the Treasurer. We are really grateful for all they have done over the years. Also, we must thank the members who have supported the branch throughout the years sometimes in spite of personal difficulties.

In the summer, our ladies will meet up with our friends from the Rochdale Branch for afternoon tea at the Midland Hotel in Manchester and we are looking forward already to our Christmas Party. We are hoping for a good turn out.

Unfortunately, I (Joyce Lunn) had a stroke recently and cannot use the typewriter so this was written by my dear husband. Hope you can decipher it! *Editor: No problem at all, Mr Lunn. Good job, well done!*

CAMBRIDGE BRANCH

The year started off with our AGM and the same committee was re-elected. Secretary: Avril Williams and Treasurer: Jean Farrington. We have met monthly through the year with an average of seven attending. Here is what we have been up to!

On 30 August 2009, we had an al fresco lunch in Jean Farrington's garden which turned out to be a surprise 60th Birthday Party for the Secretary! We were delighted to welcome Patricia Stevenson our Area Chairman and Lynn Hatch and Linda Graver from Norfolk Branch.

Jean, Avril and Wendy Hooton attended the WRAC Dinner Club in Solihull in October and some of us were kindly invited to the Not Forgotten Association Christmas Lunch at the Marriott Hotel in Peterborough on 11 December.



Wendy Hooton, Avril Williams, Joan Ellis and Jean Farrington enjoying Christmas Lunch

In January, we lunched with Norfolk Branch in Norwich – thanks to Joan Awbery and Lynn Hatch for the invitation. In March, four of us went to the Association AGM at the Victory Services Club in London and thought that the new format worked very well.

Finally, the branch AGM was held on Monday 12 April and we celebrated our 30th Anniversary with a party.

CANTERBURY BRANCH

The final meeting of 2009 was our Christmas lunch, held at the Dominican Priory in the centre of Canterbury. We welcomed 30 members and guests and were pleased that our friends from ~~Medway Branch were able to join~~ **PDF Compressor** ~~the~~ **False Vision**

The first meeting of 2010 was in February and thirteen members managed to brave the cold weather. At our March meeting the Revd Sue Wing gave us a very enjoyable talk on her life in the WRAC and after she retired and took holy orders. I was able to attend the AGM at the Victory Services Club in London in March and was delighted to be sitting next to Madge Cole, Chelsea Pensioner. We soon worked out that we had both been at Kingston Gate Camp in the 1960s and were soon reminiscing and have continued to correspond. This was possible because of the new format which gave everyone the opportunity to chat.

In April we held our fish and chip lunch together with members of Medway Branch. In May our speaker, Brian Whitehead, was from the Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. Together with Maggie and her hearing dog, Clay, who wowed us all with his good behaviour and soulful expression, we learned how the dogs are trained to become such an asset to their deaf owner. In June we had a social meeting and discussed plans for our July tea party when both Medway and Worthing Branches will be joining us for a get together with plenty of tea, cakes oh and strawberries and cream no doubt! Sadly, two of our members have passed away this year: Joan Ratcliff in December and Norah Wadsworth in March. Both were ex-ATS and were staunch supporters of the Branch, rarely missing a meeting. We will miss them both.

Finally, slowly but surely the number of members attending our meetings is dropping, our friends from Medway Branch join us whenever possible and we are always pleased to see them but it would be nice to welcome our ex-WRAC members too.

CHELMSFORD BRANCH

Our Branch continues to meet regularly on the third Tuesday of the month at the RAFA Club in Chelmsford. Attendance is slightly up and we do seem to enjoy our time together – probably due to the excellent cup of tea provided by Rosemary (the sister of one of our members).

January:- meeting was cancelled due to the bad weather at that time but in

February:- we listened to a very interesting talk by one of our members – Margaret Kliskey who, being a much travelled person, can keep us entertained. This time she spoke on “Holiday Memories.”

March:- this month we had an old friend back to describe further the “History of Music Halls.” Hearing Nellie Wallace and other of her ilk on very old recordings was fun. We found no difficulty in joining in and singing along as we all knew the words! Some of us

attended the AGM at the Victory Services Club and would like to place on record our grateful thanks for such a lovely lunch.

April:- a speaker of a different kind this month. Our knowledge of the local coastline in and around the Rochford area was enhanced as we learnt that seals can be seen at Canvey Island and further up the Thames.

May:- we have been particularly fortunate this year with the speakers we have invited to come and speak to us and it was with a little reservation that we welcomed a speaker who gave an illustrated talk on “Heraldry”. If we had thought we were in for a boring time, we were much mistaken as this was without doubt a fascinating lecture and we hope to hear more at a later date.

June:- Time for tea and a chat this month with a few words from Eileen Mickelborough on “Enjoying Poetry”.

July:- as this report had to be sent in in June, our 20th Anniversary Lunch celebrations will have to be included in next year’s copy but sufficient to say that this is also taking the form of an Area Reunion to which Cambridge, Ipswich and Norwich branches have been invited. We are looking forward to this event – the highlight of our year. We send best wishes to all our members who cannot ever come along to meetings because of various reasons and we particularly remember our Vice-Chairman Joyce Wright who is away from Chelmsford because of illness – thinking of you Joyce.

Please contact the Hon. Secretary if you receive the *Lioness*, live in this area but do not belong to your local branch. We should like to hear from you. Tel: 01245 251088.

CHESTER BRANCH

There have been many changes in the Chester Branch over the past year. Our Secretary Mrs V Hamblet has decided that due to ill health it was time to hand the reigns over to Pat Sanders who is one of our ex-WRAC members. Mrs Hamblet has been the Secretary for many years and will be missed by the ladies of Chester Branch.

Sadly Chris Cowley, a lovely lady that many people will remember for her wonderful sense of humour and of course for her rendering of “Balling the Jack”, passed away just before Christmas. She will be greatly missed by everyone at the branch, especially at our get togethers.

Last year we attended the North West Reunion at the Adelphi in September and had a lovely if somewhat noisy day. We are looking forward to attending the Reunion at the Adelphi on the 7th August this year – minus the music we have been told! Nearly 90 members attended; let’s hope we can beat that this year. If anyone would like tickets please contact Pat Sanders Mobile: 07733 270567 or email: psand444@btinternet.com

The branch has now been meeting at the Chester Military Museum for a year. We have been made very welcome by Major Eddie Pickering and his staff and

would like to especially thank Allan and his wife who make us a delicious lunch. We still hold our meetings on the second Monday of the month and everyone is welcome to pop in.

In May we had an Annual Christmas Party at Les McLellan's house with members from the Chester and Wirral branches both attending. We all had a very pleasant day and for once the sun was shining and we managed to take a photo.



Chester and Wirral Branches enjoying the sun

June saw the members of the Chester and Wirral Branches off to Liverpool for a trip on the Yellow Duck. It was an experience just getting on the Duck for some of the ladies, but they managed it with a push from behind. Afterwards we had a lovely meal then a slow walk around the Albert Dock before setting off back to Chester.

August we will be having our annual trip on the Chester Canal with lunch and will enjoy meeting up with our friends from the Eighth Army.

These are just a few of our outings over the past year and we have a lot more to look forward to especially a tractor ride in August with one of our sister branches. We hope everyone has a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year and don't forget, you are all welcome to attend any of our meetings if you are in Chester. TTFN

FIFE AND TAYSIDE BRANCH

We continue to meet for a monthly lunch at the Memorial Club in Perth, although numbers have dropped somewhat. The death of Martha McGregor in February was a blow, as she was a regular and very popular attender. We have, however, another new member, meaning our membership remains fairly steady.

Six ladies accepted the offer of the Not Forgotten Association to a hotel lunch and day out in Edinburgh. Perhaps a little arm-twisting will produce a report and photograph for the next *Lioness*! Editor: *I do hope so.*

GLASGOW BRANCH

We continue to meet every second Monday of each month. Our members are falling away due to illness – an age related time. We did not have our Christmas lunch in our usual hotel. Lt Col (Retd) Lawson, our President,

arranged an afternoon tea party in our meeting place which was enjoyed by all.

Due to the terrible winter weather we did not meet in January or February but in March we had our general knowledge quiz which resulted in three winners. In April we had a film and talk from a young lady from the Red Cross and then our speaker from the Police Museum in May had to cancel because of illness. In June we finished our session with a strawberry tea which was enjoyed by all. We are now taking a two month holiday break.

Our best wishes to all our members who cannot meet up with us on a regular basis and to other branches.

GRIMSBY BRANCH

The New Year started with deep snow and the January meeting had to be cancelled which meant the proposed party went ahead at the February meeting when we were joined by three members from Lincoln Branch. A jolly afternoon was had by all and the usual donations in lieu of Christmas cards were topped up to £50 for ABF The Soldiers' Charity.

Carole Tyler, our Chairman had been requested to knit and given a pattern for helmet comforters for troops in Afghanistan: by the March meeting 100 hats had been handed in! In April we were photographed and interviewed for the local paper knitting hats and appealing for more knitters and ladies to join the branch. The appeal snowballed and we now have at least 25 knitters and three ex-service ladies who want to join.

Knitters unite in support of British troops



Carole and some of her knitting team

Thanks to Ann Jones, Secretary of the Band Branch of which Carole is also a member, for this newspaper clipping!

On St George's Day members met for a fish and chip lunch armed with flags and banners in celebration of the Day.

Sadly our Branch President, Lois Drury died. The funeral was attended by some of our members and the Branch Standard was paraded. At the April meeting, Audrey Porter was welcomed as the next Branch President.

In June we planned; an outing to Springfields Shopping

Mall at Spalding for 20th July; another fish and chip lunch at the end of June and arrangements for the Standard and members to attend the Flag Raising Day at the Town Hall on 21 June and the Armed Services Day Parade on 26 June. Let's hope it will be a fine day for the parade and the **PDF Compressor Free Version**

Notice of the Northern Area Lunch at Lincoln gave members another excuse to think about their tummies and to look forward to meeting old friends again.

HARROGATE BRANCH

The last six months have sped by – due maybe to the Icelandic winter! Thank goodness the sun has come out. October found us back in our old meeting room at the Wesley Chapel. A very nice note was received from Canon Tony Shepherd of St Peters Church wishing us well in the future.

In November, our speaker was the Head Gardener from Harewood House. *Editor: Many readers will know that Harewood House was the family house of Princess Mary, Princess Royal who enjoyed such close associations with the ATS and WRAC. Her Memorial Rose Garden can still be seen at Worthy Down.* He is a friend of one of our members and his talk, called "The Beauty of the Seasons" was well illustrated with wonderful slides including some lovely close ups of the more exotic flowers.

Our usual contingent attended the Remembrance Service at the Harrogate Memorial. This time, our Chairman was AWOL marching her socks off at the Cenotaph in London. Christmas Lunch was at our usual watering hole and, although the weather was poor, our fighting forces managed to get there using various modes of transport. The meal was top class.

During our January 2010 meeting, we gave a sound rendition of Happy Birthday to the first of our ladies who will be 90 in 2010. A casual afternoon made more enjoyable with tea, extra biscuits and birthday cake.

Our Fish and Chip Lunch had to be delayed because of the cold weather which blew us away trying to turn round the corners in town but when we visited the Mayor's Parlour, we had a really warm welcome. We were welcomed by Madam Mayor, Councillor Pat Jones, and enjoyed more tea and biscuits and a friendly chat.

In May, our meeting was called "Who's Baby was that?" This caused many a laugh with memories galore. Also we had an easy Quiz – so easy that even the Secretary knew some of the answers!

Busy making arrangements for our day out in Lincoln – more food!

HASTINGS BRANCH

The first half of 2010 found the branch busy as usual with a new programme. Our new Secretary, the Revd Barbara Hobbs, is settling in and our previous Secretary,

although "retired", is still an active member. So far, we have had one lecture in March given by Age Concern. The title was "Home from Hospital" – very useful!

In April we celebrated our 30th Birthday so we held a lunch to which we invited our friends. We were delighted that Mrs Kate McGregor, our Area Chairman, was able to attend accompanied by her husband, Hamish.



Happy 30th Birthday

A birthday cake, provided by Wyn Wakelin, was enjoyed at the following meeting. It was decorated in Corps colours and showed the Corps Badge. During May and June, both Monica Ellis and Wyn Wakelin celebrated their 90th Birthdays so many congratulations to them!

The Strawberry Tea this year was held at a café situated within our Country Park at Fairlight. It has wonderful views overlooking the English Channel. Again, we invited our friends and it was a good opportunity to reminisce. For the rest of the year, we will be having further talks and routine meetings, a coach outing in October and will end the year with a Christmas Party.

When possible, we will also continue to support other ex-Service organisations and still lay a wreath and plant Poppy Crosses at the local War Memorial in November.

Our Welfare member keeps in touch with those who cannot join us for meetings. We send our Good Wishes to all members of the Association.

HEREFORD BRANCH

Hereford continues to thrive and this year we have been busy as usual. Our Standard Bearer, Sharon Joyce, has been extremely popular and, since we managed to purchase a light weight pole which has eased the weight overall, there is no stopping her. Sharon was invited to take the Standard to the Standard Dedication Service held by Tamworth Branch. It was a great day and everyone was pleased that we had been invited. There was also a special request that came to us for the Standard to be taken to the funeral of a member – not of our Branch – we were more than happy to attend and the effort was very much appreciated by the family. They thought it was a fitting touch in celebration of a full life.

Sharon has also been invited to take the Standard to the Violette Szabo museum on 26th June as part of the anniversary celebrations. By the way, should any other Branch be in need of a Standard pole (wooden) please get in contact with us and we can sort something out!

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Our Christmas dinner is normally held in January. Well we like to be different but this is nice after the standard Christmas festivities. We had good food, log fire and friends, what more can you ask for.

Hereford would like to apologise for being late at the AGM, through fair wind and foul weather not to mention the traffic jams, they persevered onward and made it in time for the lunch.

Which comes nicely to the yearly gathering celebrating the Veterans Day and we are meeting again this year and there will be over 25 of us attending. We normally get 'asked' to leave the Axe and Cleaver in Hereford as it is such a lovely atmosphere; we do not want to leave. Last year we celebrated our annual picnic in Queen's Wood, just north of Hereford and this will be taking place again this August. Last year we raised enough to donate £100 toward the upkeep of the *Lioness* and this was done with a glad heart. *Editor: It is so much appreciated when branches are good enough to support the journal.*

An invitation to the Hereford Bishop's Palace did not make it quite clear what the objective was but Joyce was game to 'have a go' and stepped in for me. It turned out to be a personal thank you lunch for voluntary groups, given by the wife of the Bishop of Hereford for all their hard work over the years. It was an informal get together and Joyce thoroughly enjoyed it. She now insists that there be no publicity now she frequents places like the Bishop's Palace – oh yes and the Queen's Palace.

As part of our calendar of events, our contingency of ladies in Ross on Wye hold a coffee morning and raise money for the branch. This is also open to others of Bernard Hackett Court and enjoyed by everyone. With monies raised we are taking a coach of people to visit the National Memorial Arboretum in September. It will be a beautiful time of year with the colour of the leaves changing but still some warmth in the air. As it is maturing, like all of us, we see this as a great day out. The younger members are happy to ensure that those of us who may not be able to walk around are conveyed in their personal transport. We are really looking forward to the visit.

Help for Heroes is always in our hearts and to this end, Win Birt decided that she would not have any birthday present but donations towards this great cause. She is a modest lady but I am sure she will not mind me telling you.

Jo Foster completed a cycle ride around the Malvern Hills and Herefordshire to raise money Help for Heroes. If ever there was an advertisement for Lanocaine, this was it. Jo, who says she is not the best cyclist in the world, took this on with gusto. She enlisted the aid of a friend who turned out to be a great cyclist with a very, very fast bike and Jo with her world weary version tried to keep up. Turn your eyes away now if you have a

sensitive stomach but this was all aided by a jelly saddle (I do not know either) Lycra shorts and copious amounts of Vaseline. You could not invent this, could you?

Jo's aim was to raise £400 and would be very happy to get £500. She actually raised over £600 and we are very proud of her. But it does not end there, she has volunteered to complete another adventure next year and, as this is in print, she cannot back out. We will keep you posted and any support would be greatly welcome.

PS: my apologies for no photographs. Jo's were very tiny, trailing behind in the distance and Joyce is still saying no publicity – sorry.

HULL BRANCH

Hello to all the friends we have made over the years of service and fellowship within the Association. A big Thank You is given to all the people involved with the office work and assembling of the Magazine which we all do so look forward to receiving and reading, scanning the photos for faces we knew.

Our Branch still meets on the first Friday of each month except January, at The Royal British Legion Hull HQ, 44 Beverley Road, Hull HU3 1YE. Start time is 1300hrs to 1400hrs, but we assemble any time from 12 noon so that we can do our catching up of personal news etc before the meeting starts, with a cuppa of course! We still try to vary our meeting content as much as possible, sales of books, videos, discs, new to you, etc., Harvest Festival, Quiz, etc., to help boost the branch funds. We look forward to our Christmas Lunch and our Summer Outing though we do not travel so far these days. Of course we will be at our forthcoming North East Area Reunion at Lincoln. We welcomed Lynne Marsh to our branch due to her reading of us in the *Lioness*, and her relocation to the area. We have quite a few members who are having or recovering from hospital treatment. We wish them and all our members a speedy recovery as we miss them all. God Bless and see you soon.

LEEDS BRANCH

Probably like many other branches, we had to cancel our February meeting because of the bad weather. Our few hardy attenders made it to the Bring and Buy Sale we had in March and we were pleased to send the proceeds to the *Lioness* fund. *Editor: And we were delighted to receive it.*

The Secretary attended the North East Area Secretaries' meeting and the Association AGM in London. The new format was a great success. In April, we discussed the travel arrangements needed to get us to Lincoln for the North East Area Reunion and in May, nine of us enjoyed our Spring Lunch but we missed those who were unable to attend through illness.

In June, Pat Harpin told us about the presentation of her Pingat Jasa Malaysia (Malaysian Service Medal) and showed it to us all.

The Secretary of Leeds Branch, Betty France, has been admitted as a member of Huddersfield and District Army Veterans' Association – one of three ladies being the first to join their ranks after 113 years of male domination! Betty is looking forward to celebrating her 90th Birthday in July with as many friends as possible.

Five members will join Leeds Branch of the RA Association for Artillery Day at the National Memorial Arboretum and, in August, we all hope to meet in Wetherby for lunch.

LEICS AND NOTTS BRANCH

It only seems a few weeks ago when we were having our Christmas Lunch on 8 December last year. We had 39 members including guests who all enjoyed a meal provided by Devonshire Place: they did us proud.

Currently the branch is raising money for a new Standard as our old one is looking a little worse for wear. The current one has served us proudly for almost 20 years, both in the UK and abroad and to date, generous donations for the new Standard have been made by members: so many thanks to everyone who has donated.

January 7th around 20 people attended the De Montfort Hall for an excellent production of Scrooge with Tommy Steele in the lead role – what a great performance. Our January 12th Meeting was a "nibble and natter" to catch up with forthcoming events and any other news. February 9th was to have been a talk by a recently retired Army SSGT, but unfortunately he was unable to get time off from his new civilian job. Hopefully we may be able to rearrange this for another time. Also this month one of our members, Joan Thornton, celebrated her 90th birthday. She brought along a special cake for us all to share and we presented her with a bouquet of



Doris White, Branch Chairman, presents Joan Thornton with her 90th Birthday gifts

flowers and a box of Thorntons chocolates (no she is not a shareholder).

On March 1st, thirteen members visited Leicester Town Hall for a private tour accompanied by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress. The tour also included a visit to the courts, cells and finished with tea and biscuits and photographs taken with the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress.

March 9th was our Bring and Buy which raised £68. March 20th Carol and I attended the AGM in London. What an experience that turned out to be; neither of us had been on a train for nearly 30 years! We started to walk from the station and within 15 minutes it was raining heavily and we were lucky to flag down a taxi. Mind you, we still arrived at the Victory Services Club soaking wet. It was interesting to meet ladies from other branches and to exchange views and ideas. Lunch was varied and very enjoyable so a big thank you to all at HQ for your help and hard work over the years.

April 13th our meeting should have included a Beetle Drive but for various reasons this did not get beyond the first card! It was a busy month for our Standard: firstly Lyn and Joan attended the funeral in Derby of Mrs Freda Welsh, ex ATS. Her daughter, Mrs Mellor, was so grateful and proud that we had managed to arrange this for her with only two days notice. She gave us a very generous donation which we will put towards the new Standard and we will invite her and her husband to the Dedication Service.

Our Standard was also paraded by Lyn Wenham on Anzac Day at 0700: well done Lyn for managing to get up so early on Sunday morning! In the afternoon of the same day, the Standard and ten members attended the dedication service of Tamworth Branch's new Standard. Afterwards we were treated to an excellent buffet at the Royal British Legion Club. Many thanks to the Tamworth ladies for making this a most successful and enjoyable afternoon. Nice to see Kath Barron an ex-member of our branch.

On 18 May, twelve members from both Birmingham and Tamworth branches joined us for a buffet lunch, memory lane quiz and a raffle which raised £85. Thanks to our Social Secretary Carol for all her hard work. May 5th, five members attended the 25th birthday lunch of the Birmingham Branch at the Britannia Hotel. And we all really enjoyed the occasion very much.

June 8th, the branch members brought items to be included in "parcels for soldiers" which were all taken to a collection point by one of our members. June 22nd will be our visit to Trentham Gardens.

Still a busy second half of the year to come. Don't forget we meet on the second Tuesday of every month at 1330 hours at Devonshire Place, 78 London Road, Leicester. For further info call Sue on 01162 592743.

LINCOLN & DISTRICT BRANCH

The year did not begin too well as we had to cancel our third anniversary lunch in January and it was held in

February, due to extreme weather conditions dealt to us last winter. No doubt other branches had the same problem. When we finally sat down to lunch with our guests, Dot Ryder and Irene MacLean, our Area Chairman and Area Secretary, a very pleasant time was had by all. The PDF Compressor Free Version and a full programme of events has been put into place.



Veronica, Sue, Joan and Ella waiting for lunch

In March we held a very successful Bring and Buy with the excess items taken by Jackie Walton to sell for us at a car boot sale. The day also included the birthday celebration of one of our members, Kay Medley, who was 90 years young.

April saw three events for the members to attend. The first being a walk and pub lunch organised by Linda Hilton ably assisted by some of our members who are still at work. It was a glorious day and after the walk we retired to the garden of the pub in Metherringham and sat in the sun, needless to say there were several trips to the bar!



Sue L., Marie, Helen, Jan, Mary, Linda & Sue B. Who passed their map reading?

8½ GO WALKING BY SUE BEEVERS

*What a wonderful way
To spend Saturday
Walking with friends
On Metherringham Fens*

*Sue B. had her bonnet
(But no frills upon it)
To guard against sunstroke
It was THAT hot, no joke.*

*Linda studied the map
To find Guinness on tap
We all followed gladly
But would it end badly?*

*When jumping a stile
We all had a smile
As Jan Burchett-Vass
Ended up on her ass!*

*Young Marie Arch
Took off at a march
While James, Mary's son
Thought it quicker to run.*

*So where was Chris Maxwell?
Well, truth to tell
She arrived at the Star
Where we all hit the bar.*

*Helen's new knee
We noted with glee
Withstood it's first test False?
Who'd have guessed?*

*A long lazy lunch
Awaited this bunch
A reward for walking?
Nay, an excuse to get talking.*

*Sue L. strode on gaily
(She practises daily)
And Chris proved a walker
Not merely a Corker!*

The monthly meeting was held in the form of an extraordinary general meeting as various alterations had been made to the programme so that we could meet with the members still at work on a couple of Saturdays throughout the year. At the end of the month we were invited to the Standard dedication service for Tamworth Branch. Another fine day with the branch represented by eleven members plus family and friends. Well done to Tamworth Branch as it was a lovely occasion which we all enjoyed.

The meeting in May was successfully held on a Saturday for the first time and was very well attended. It was lovely to see Sue Beevers, Linda Hilton, Mary Faver and Sylvia Cree. Jean Evans gave a very entertaining and thought provoking talk on her work as volunteer. May also saw a member, Ella Reast and her husband, appearing on Bargain Hunt and looking extremely smart in their red fleeces. Well done for winning and donating your cash to Help for Heroes.

In June we had a trip to the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas. We were blessed with fine weather and were pleasantly surprised to see after our visit three



Jackie Walton among the flowers at the National Memorial Arboretum

years ago the many changes and improvements. A very moving experience to visit the new Armed Forces Memorial standing proudly on its hill. The WRAC Association plot looked the best it has been with some of the shrubs bursting into flower.

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As this account speeds off to Worthy Down we are in final preparations for our stand at the Armed Forces Day event in the grounds of Lincoln Castle. We are then looking forward to the remainder of the year when we are hosting the North East Area Reunion Lunch, taking a trip to Tamworth for skittles and the WRAC Dinner Club in Solihull. A few among the many events planned for the remainder of 2010.

Time again to wish all branches a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. (How strange to be typing that in June). Best wishes from all in Lincoln and District.

LONDON BRANCH

Editor: I have not had a formal report from London Branch but the following ladies all received well-deserved Certificates of Appreciation at the Association AGM in March 2010. Thanks to Alison Schofield for the photographs.



Jean Taylor



Chris Gibbs – not looking heavenwards but up to her son on the balcony!



Janet Reeve

LUTON BRANCH

Although numerically we are getting a bit thin on the ground, we still maintain a faithful nucleus of members. In common with other branches 'Tempus fugit' and we just can't persuade the majority of WRAC to come out of the woodwork. But we soldier on!

Both our December Christmas party and our anniversary lunch in January had to be called off due to the weather – blithering snow. Undaunted we press on with our programme and in February had a very interesting talk by the Samaritans, then, in April, it was 'Treats for Troops'. This is a local organisation, formed by an ex-WAAF and her ex-Army husband. Briefly we fill a shoe box with small items, pens, pencils, toothbrushes and paste, shampoo, shower-gel etc., all things which will be of practical use to the troops on deployment. We told a local cafe owner about the scheme and he came up trumps. Only downside was I had to carry 200 sachets of brown sauce and 200 of tomato ketchup home, and they weren't light. Apparently 'compo' rations have not improved over the years. We also send socks & 'beanie' hats to wear under their helmets. BOGOF offers in the shops are an excellent source.

Things went somewhat awry at our May meeting: we arrived at our venue, and could not gain entry, so our MOCK TRIAL with Alan Painter JP had to be postponed. Afterwards we found out there had been a flood. We take on the WRNS for the annual quiz in June; July 3rd is Veterans Day, and in July someone from the Council is going to tell us what happens after we put the recycling in the bin.

Congratulations to those who arranged the lunch at the Victory Services Club – the Luton girls really enjoyed it, and it was a jolly good AGM all round. It was made special for our Branch because Eleri Pirie, our hardworking Treasurer, was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation.



The Vice President presents Eleri Pirie with her Certificate of Appreciation

MEDWAY BRANCH

The first meeting of the year was in February at Higham and, although the snow was still around, members managed to get through! Our lovely Christmas dinner was still being talked about so we decided to make a second visit to the restaurant.

Members joined the Canterbury branch for the fish and chip lunch and had a good time. Three members went to the AGM in London. We liked the new format – especially the buffet lunch!

We are sorry that we don't see many of our branch members at meetings but of course health and transport are a major set back. Because of that we do not have a formal programme for events but we arrange them around members' availability.

Margaret Gallafent and Janet Cameron enjoyed the WRAC Dinner Club in 2009 and have booked for 2010 so we hope to meet up with friends in Solihull that weekend.

We are sad to report the loss of a member, Grace Hollands, in April. We send best wishes to our members who are in care and wish all members good wishes and take care.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH



Christmas Lunch at the Assembly Rooms

On 9 December, The Prisoners of War Association invited our ladies to the Assembly Rooms in Newcastle for a Christmas Luncheon. As you can imagine the food was superb as was the company.

The very next day we were wined and dined again, this time as guests of the Not Forgotten Association at The Marriot Hotel, Gosforth. The food was wonderful and we thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment as every guest in the room took part in The Twelve Days of Christmas. We do not usually have a meeting in December but decided to have a get together on 17 December with tea, coffee, biscuits and Christmas cake. We also held the Christmas Draw and made £108 towards branch funds.



The New Year started with snow up to our eyelashes but most of our lovely ladies still made it to the January meeting.

In July our ladies are going on a day trip out to Alnwick then onto Boulmer for lunch and return to Newcastle via Morpeth.

Because we did well with the Xmas Draw we are organizing a Summer Draw in August to make a little more money for our branch funds.

NORFOLK BRANCH

WHAT a busy year we are having, starting off in March with several of us attending the Association's AGM and

lunch at the Victory Services Club. The new format of combining the AGM with a lunch seemed to be much appreciated by everyone.

Two weeks later and three of us attended the ATS Dinner Club in aid of the VSC. Although numbers are diminishing we still had an attendance of sixty ladies. On 11 May we had a larger gathering than usual for the service at the Gt Yarmouth memorial through publicity in the local newspaper and on Radio Norfolk that morning.

Last year we had a most enjoyable lunch given by Pepi Simpson at her home in Reepham. She kindly invited us again this year in May and it was even better! A hot sunny day meant a relaxed lunch in the garden. Great hospitality and good company.

Nine of us were able to accept the invitation of the Cromer Branch of the RBL to join them in their grant-aided visit to the National Memorial Arboretum.



L-R: Joan Whittingham, Irene Warren, Peggy Bell, Joan Awbrey, Audrey Told and Lorna Lansdowne

In June, we gathered in our secretary's garden for a coffee morning and sale. We were fortunate that it was in the middle of a mini heat-wave and we raised £220 for Branch funds.

During Armed Forces Week we intend to man a publicity stall in the Forum, make ourselves more widely known and, we hope, recruit some new members. In July, ten of us are due to go to Chelmsford Branch's 20th anniversary lunch and we will join representatives from Cambridge and Suffolk branches so it will be a good Area Reunion.

Beryl has again kindly invited us to another garden party in August. We greatly appreciated last year's event and are sure it will be as good this time – if only we could guarantee the same weather!

We propose to arrange the last outing of the season with a day in Southwold, always a very popular place for visits. It will round off our busy year very nicely.

From July we shall have a new Branch Secretary: Kate Williams who served with the RMP. Kate is one of our

newer members and she has very kindly agreed to take over in spite of having a very busy life in her full-time position with the Royal British Legion. We welcome Kate, who will ensure the Branch continues to thrive well into the future.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH

We started the new year of 2010 with our committee meeting on 23 January. Committee meets at a local pub whose staff don't appear to mind if we have a quiet orderly chat over coffee. We then pile into a couple of cars and go to our President, Doris's flat for tea/coffee and to ask for her approval of all our plans and decisions, that done we are set for at least six months.

We have noticed this year that our monthly attendance numbers have dropped alarmingly, by 20% on average. This is mainly due to our older ladies becoming too frail to attend which is an unfortunate fact of life. Happily, we have two new members this year. Sandra Beeke lives not too far away in Dobwalls so we hope she will enjoy a drive to Plymouth every month. Susan Welham lives further down in Cornwall over an hour's drive each way and she still works as do a lot of our new WRAC members. However, we hope we will see her from time to time. We had the pleasure of meeting them both at our annual mini-reunion in Truro in May, as well as two other ex-WRAC who have not transferred to Plymouth branch yet and who also are still working. This year's reunion in Truro was a great success with our highest number coming from all over Cornwall and the Plymouth area. Major Jane Freebairn set out extremely early to come by train from her home in Reading and Major 'Mack' Maskens-McIntyre drove down to see us all again. This year we weren't able to go to the RBL Club as usual because all their catering equipment had gone 'walk-about'! So Betty Mitchell and I hastily drove to Truro to arrange a meal in a restaurant recommended by Joan Launder and several local ladies, not as good as having a room on our own but it worked very well indeed.

Another shock for us was that our regular meeting place has closed, leaving us not only looking for a new meeting venue but also a venue for our hosting of the South and South West Area Reunion next year. Fortunately, Andrew, the manager of the Royal Fleet Club has worked very hard and has transferred all of his bookings to other venues in and around the city. The majority of them have been taken up by Boringdon Hall near Plympton at more or less the same deal as we had with the Fleet Club. So, ladies of the South and South West please plan to come and see this fantastic medieval mansion in July next year. The room rates are comparable to the Fleet Club!

Also in May, Jane, Mary and Thelma represented our branch at the inauguration of Plymouth's Lord Mayor, Cllr Mary Aspinall and her daughter, Kate, as Lady Mayoress.

June is very close to us as I write and we come to our busy summer schedule. Four of us are going to King's Court Masonic Hall in Chandler's Ford for the South and South West Area Reunion and, at the end of the month, we have the Veterans Weekend with a day in the Guildhall manning an ATS/WRAC display stall. This will

be followed by RAFA's Service of Remembrance on the Hoe on Sunday 27th.

The autumn is gradually getting busier with Atlantic Day, Sea Sunday, the WRAC Dinner Club, the Festival of Remembrance for the Chairman and me, the Area AGM and finally our Christmas lunch, once more.

We have a new venue for our meetings. They are now held at the Abbey Hall behind the Minster Church of St Andrew at the top of Royal Parade on the 4th Tuesday of every month. Timings are 1.30 – 3.30p.m. We would be delighted to see you there. There is no meeting in January. Contact telephone number: Ruth Jennings, Secretary Tel: 01752 363118.

SALISBURY BRANCH

It is strange to start this report with Christmas Lunches but eleven members enjoyed a lovely one with 32 Battery RA and other veterans at Larkhill. They hope to make it an annual event. Our own branch Christmas Lunch, held at the RBL Club, was also a great success and we were pleased to welcome a new member, Pauline Edmund.



Linda Clark, Lesley Trattles and Pauline Edmund at Christmas Lunch

In January, our Bring and Buy/Auction proved as popular as ever and raised £76. Our Secretary, Val Trout, set the Quiz in February and the joint winners were Jean Staal with Jill Trainor and Pauline Edmund with Marilyn Offord.



Quiz winners, Jean, Jill, Pauline and Marilyn

As well as exercising our minds, in March we made sure to exercise our bodies. Fortunately, Trish Cowie's speciality is "armchair exercises" – still quite energetic! Also in March, three of us went to the Association AGM in London. We enjoyed the meal but we did miss the raffle and the space to move around and chat.

We tried out a new venue in April and went for lunch and a little retail therapy at the Wilton Village Shopping Centre. An enjoyable time was had by all. In May, our speaker was Shirley Critchley, an intrepid lady who has accompanied Colonel Blashford-Snell on six expeditions. Her illustrated talk on the search for the 18th century warship, the Wager, in South America was most interesting. They actually found some remains after a torrential storm had caused a torrent of water to rush down the fiord in the Gulf of Misery which washed away a lot of silt: the first known sighting of the vessel for 250 years. What an achievement – clearly reflected on all the smiling faces in the photographs.

In June, seven members attended the South and South West Area Reunion in the prestigious King's Court Masonic Hall in Chandler's Ford. Lovely location and a "5 star" meal was thoroughly enjoyed by all, many thanks to our hosts, Southampton Branch.

We look forward to some belly dancing next month – watch this space! *Editor: Can't wait to see the photographs!*

Unfortunately, due to ill health, our Chairman, Alison Ogden, has been unable to attend our meetings for a while but we look forward to welcoming her back soon as she is making a very good recovery.

SHEFFIELD BRANCH

We send warmest wishes to all readers of the *Lioness*. Since my last report we've had two lunches out at our favourite venue, the Cutlers Hotel in Sheffield, and Christmas this year has already been booked. Last November some of us went to London for Remembrance week-end and went to the Royal Albert Hall on Saturday evening. It seems a more moving experience this past few years with our forces suffering so much in Afghanistan. Dame Vera Lynn was there and acknowledged a standing ovation, although her voice was a recording. Our February meeting was cancelled due to



Spring Lunch April 2010

the icy conditions, but we have averaged ten members each meeting since. We get a number of apologies from those who can't attend due to age and immobility, but two of our regular attendees will be 90 this year. Neither of them misses a meeting, which is just as well as one of them is Margaret Dufty.

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A year ago I reported we'd been invited by the UOTC to their Beating Retreat at Somme Barracks. It was a really super event. We were treated to re-enactments of battles, including one where they were attacked by Native Americans. With bows, and arrows with rubber suckers on them it was quite comical, although I'm sure it wasn't at the time. This year they had a full military band so needed a full size parade ground and it was held at the TA Barracks, Endcliffe Hall. Once again a superb evening and we thoroughly enjoyed it – despite sitting under dripping canvas in the pouring rain.

On 4 June, four of us joined the Normandy Veterans on their visit to Normandy. It was very tiring. After the very long journey, we hit our beds at 0010 hrs and had to be on the coach again at 0730 for the first of our visits to the memorials and cemeteries. On 6 June, the service was in Bayeux Cathedral, a magnificent building and the ceremony afterwards was excellent. The French people were very welcoming and it was heartening to see so many young people attending. A whole class of 14 yr olds from Burmondsey were so smart and well behaved that we felt quite proud of them.



*Normandy June 2010
Standing L-R: Brenda, Megan and Jean
Seated: Margaret Dufty*

We have two more Veterans Day parades to attend, in Wakefield and Sheffield. Our annual trip to the National Memorial Arboretum is on 3 July and our day at Eden Camp for the parade and Remembrance Service is 13 September. Hopefully we will also manage to fit in a day's outing in between. So, still quite a lot to look forward to this year. We still meet at Victoria Hall, Sheffield on the first Thursday of each month at 1.30 pm and would welcome anyone who cares to join us.

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

In December we had our Christmas lunch at the White House Muxton which was very good as it usually is. Nancy presented a cheque for £350 to Lt Col Sue Westlake which we raised from the glider flight.



Vice President receives cheque from Nancy Tipton

Five of our members went to Chester for Christmas lunch and had a great time; the lunch was lovely as was the company. We all found the castle museum very interesting.

Sadly we have lost another member, Ruby Jones who died in January; she was with us for many years.

In March, four of us attended the AGM at the Victory Services Club. We did enjoy the very nice lunch that was laid on and the chance to meet up with members from other branches and new friends made from the Grand Reunion in Blackpool. In April we were very pleased to welcome another new member to our branch meetings; Chris Powell, ex – WRAC. I am sure she will be a great asset to our branch and the association.

What a brilliant day we had at Tamworth when seven of us went for the Dedication of their new Standard. It was a very moving service and afterwards the buffet in the Royal British Legion club was great.

Two of our members went to Liverpool with the RASC Association and had a wonderful day out and two went to the National Memorial Arboretum to hear Kate Adie give a splendid speech. With the end of May came a proud day for Telford with the Freedom of the Borough ceremony for the Rifles. It was a very wet day but enjoyable and interesting; four of us went for the VIP wine and canapés the Council put on. Sandra our Standard Bearer stood with our Standard in all the rain and wind to welcome the regiment into the arena.

The RASC put on another trip in June; five of us went to Llangollen. We had lunch on the barge. The views were just stunning over the valley from the barge on the aqueduct. This was a lovely day out. The sun shone for us all day, I am sure we all found the history of the aqueduct very interesting.



Enjoying the sun in Llangollen

We wish all the best to another of our members, Miss Audrey Merton, who will become an in-pensioner at the Royal Hospital Chelsea in October.

Any of our branch members want to join us on our trips or attend a branch meeting please call our secretary Denise Fuller on Tel: 01952 400118 or email her at: deefuller@live.co.uk

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

Southampton Branch is doing well and we have a new member who is now the youngest to date. Di Gardener is the niece of one of our members, Gail, who does a splendid job hosting an Annual Luncheon for all the members. We have been so lucky with the weather at Gail's lunch, so with good food, a raffle and continuous talk; we all go home very happy and tired.

We have had to cancel some of our trips from earlier in the year so we have decided to pick up the reins again in the next few weeks and some of the members are going to the Open Day at Blandford Camp in June.

Next month we are quite busy, we are going to Bognor Regis and Bennett's Water Gardens and Swannery. August see us going to Suddick Wickham with the Famous Fish and Chips at Mother Kelly's, Boscombe Market with the Eastleigh Carnival thrown in between these trips. This year will be Aileen Derritt's first try at running the WRAC stall at the carnival since Audrey, Hazel and Penny retired from the job. Good luck Aileen.

Four of us went to the Association AGM in March; a very excellent club after its refurbishment. It was all very new to me as I hadn't managed to get to a meeting before this. But everyone was very helpful and friendly and the lunch was lovely. Our very own Margaret Barham was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for her duties as the Branch's Standard Bearer and she went home with one huge smile on her face, well done Margaret.



Margaret Barham receives her certificate from the Vice President

Because we are hosting the Area Reunion this year, we didn't have an Annual Lunch as the Reunion has been taken up most of our time and energy. So we decided to have fish and chips from the same outlet as we went to last November. It is an excellent 'chippy' and they deliver it to us piping hot also.

Well as I type this the hosting of the Area Reunion is over. I'm hoping that everyone who managed to come from all the other branches and our members enjoyed themselves. I would like to thank our Raffle Team for all their hard work in making the raffle go as smoothly as it did. The newspaper photographer was great and did very well not to fall out of the upstairs window to get everyone in the shot. We had the Sheriff and Mrs Terry Mathews of Southampton as our guests and apart from a lovely meal they were over the moon with the raffle prizes that they went home with. We surprised two of the ladies by singing 'Happy Birthday': our very own Florrie Groves was 88 and Marilyn Offord from Salisbury was 65. An extra excitement for Florrie was the Reporter interviewed her about her time in World War II. We were going to have the Reunion at Suddick Wickam which has the 'Map Room' which played the most important part during WWII. Anyway because of different hitches and hiccups we had to change the venue to King's Court Masonic Hall at Chandler's Ford. We had our 60th Anniversary of the Branch there and lovely food, room and atmosphere, we were lucky to get the room on the date we wanted. I would like to thank the other branches for their patience while we sorted things out.

Can I please add a note to friends of mine in Sunderland – a very Happy Birthday to Vinnie and Betty Mitchell, hope you are settled into your new home Betty!

STAFFORD BRANCH

Stafford Branch has survived another year due to the valiant efforts of twelve ladies who continue to support the branch through thick and thin. Despite a shortage of funds we have decided, once again, to continue meeting albeit with a slightly different format to last year. The ladies had opted not to meet during the winter months

because bad weather made their journeys a bit of a problem. How wise they were.

We would like you to join us in welcoming our latest member, Sylvia Colman née Ellison. Sylvia, who lives in Uttoxeter, served WRAC from 1962-1965. We look forward to meeting her sometime soon.



At Holmcroft. Ann Deakin, Pat Pedley, Joan Higgins, Marjorie Powell, Joan Poole, Dorry Newton, Ada Sturland, Betty Wilshaw and Margaret Fuller

21st April we belatedly held our 2009 AGM at Trinity Church, Stafford. The meeting was followed by a buffet and raffle. 16th June we decided to try the menus offered by a recently refurbished pub, the Holmcroft – very good value for money. 21st July a meeting at Trinity Church with the possibility of toasted teacakes. 18th August we dined at the Luck Penny where a wide range of meals are on offer to the extent you are spoilt for choice. 15th September is the AGM again and a time for gathering annual subs. No doubt we will be eating again. 17th November we hope to have an early Christmas Lunch. We start celebrating Christmas early in Stafford. The ladies attend so many parties it is not unusual for some ladies to have two Christmas meals in one day or, as in one case, lunch and dinner one day and lunch again the next. We seem to have a reputation for eating – I don't know why.

Stafford ladies send their very best wishes to you all and look forward to meetings friends, old and new, at the Remembrance Day Parade and Service.

STIRLING BRANCH



On Saturday 24th April our little band of ATS/WRAC celebrated 21 years of the formation of the branch. Two of the founding members – Mrs Agnes Castle (Chair of Stirling Branch) and Lady Martha Bruce (a Life Vice President of the WRAC Association) were in attendance at our celebration. The branch was also honoured with the company of Lt Col Jo Young, Chairman of the Scottish Area. The celebration began with coffee in the conservatory before moving into the dining room for a delicious four course meal. Lady Martha said Grace and we all tucked in. The Loyal Toast was given at the end of the meal by our youngest member, Lynn Crickmore. To make the celebration special we had a cake.



Agnes Castle and Lady Martha Bruce cut the cake

Lady Martha took a piece of our cake to Her Majesty the Queen in honour of the celebration and Her Majesty's birthday. The branch has received a letter from Buckingham Palace sending warm good wishes to all who were present at the event. The members all enjoyed their day and, no doubt, will be chatting about it at the monthly meetings for the next few months.



STOCKPORT BRANCH

Greetings to everyone at home and abroad – do hope all is well with you after the long and very cold winter. We still hold our meetings at The Armoury on the second Thursday of the month. Due to the bad weather and illness of some members our first meeting this year was on 11 March and it brought us a new member – Miss Marion Crabtree from Stalybridge in Cheshire – a most welcome addition to our group. She comes to us from the WRAC and we are delighted as we need new members to keep our meetings going.

Phyllis Warren, who lives in Buxton, celebrated her 90th Birthday in February this year and flowers and a card were sent to her from all the ladies in our group. Mona Hamer, another of our ladies, had a stroke earlier in March and is in a nursing home in Offerton. Mona was 90 on 30 March and we also sent her flowers and a card on her birthday – she is in our thoughts, such a wonderful lady. Last year Lillian Day celebrated her 90th Birthday and we surprised her with a party and flowers at the Pinewood Hotel in Handforth – it was a really lovely occasion and this year Lillian also had a wonderful time on her 91st Birthday! An incredible lady.

Now for the sad news. Mrs Beatrice Tait died on 24 February 2010. She had been ill for a few years and had been our Chairman before she became ill. Eight branch members went to her funeral including Molly from Chester branch who came with her daughter. Beatrice's family asked us to join them after the service and it was so nice to meet them – such warm and lovely people. A donation was made to the British Legion in her memory. Elisabeth Lapham – our Secretary, who was a great friend of Beatrice has written the following about her.

“Beatrice Tait, née Blakemore, was a very active person in her earlier years working for Re-Diffusion for some years and, before that, as a waitress. She liked card games especially whist and bridge and was very active in her local RBL. She joined the ATS at the end of 1940 and was the first ATS girl to be war-wounded. She enjoyed her Army life and made lots of friends – but when hostilities were over she couldn't get back quickly enough and immediately joined the Veterans. She was “straight as a die” and liked everyone to be the same. She did not like prevarication and would say a few ‘hard words’ to anyone she found being guilty of it. She was a nice person to have as a friend and she will be missed by all who knew her.”

Mrs Lilian Edwards, a former member of our branch died on 16 May. Another great lady. Lilian set up the branch in Wilmslow and some of the Stockport ladies joined her and it was very successful. Lillian will be sadly missed by so many people.

On the social side, in April, six of our members and guests had lunch at Heaton Moor Catering College. Wonderful food – the best yet and we all enjoyed it so much. On 27 May, nine members and guests had lunch at the Bridge Hotel in Prestbury. Such a delightful place and we all had a lovely afternoon. The Plaza cinema in Stockport has now re-opened after refurbishments and is

rather nice I believe; we are hoping to meet there for afternoon tea very soon.

In addition to our outings, we also had a collection and were pleased to be able to send £100 to Help for Heroes. We are now starting again to try and raise more funds but with only a small number in our group it takes time!

SUFFOLK BRANCH

We ended 2009 with our Christmas Lunch at the Conservative Club. The meal was enjoyed by all of the fourteen members who attended.

January was a quiet meeting as many of our members had the usual winter sniffles and sneezes but we managed to reminisce about past Christmas times.

Ten of us in February had a “Military Quiz”. The rusty brain cogwheels turned slowly to begin with they soon started to grind away and come up with the right answers. In March, we had a discussion entitled “Who not to be stuck in a Lift with!” We came up with some very interesting and amusing suggestions.

Unfortunately, I missed the April, May and June meetings mainly because I am touring Britain with my sister who is also ex-WRAC. A quick rundown will be in the next issue. *Editor: Perhaps one of the Branch members could also let us know what the Branch got up to in those months?!*

TAMWORTH BRANCH

Tamworth Branch continues to meet at the Royal British Legion, Aldergate on the last Wednesday of the month and we are continuing to get new members albeit slowly. Three of our new members attend the WRAC Dinner Club weekend in Solihull in October and they had a great time; can't wait for this year. On 9 November our members assembled in the Royal British Legion and filled 74 boxes for the girls in Afghanistan. We had a fun evening doing it and had some letters back thanking us. We arranged a Christmas dinner on 2 December in the Castle Hotel; there weren't many of us there but we had a great time. Our coffee morning on 9 December raised some more funds for the branch.

At our January meeting our Treasurer said that we had enough money to order our new Standard so things got under way to organise a dedication service. We weren't getting the Standard until the middle of April so it was decided to have the dedication at the end of that month. On 23 April we organised an inter association skittles night with the RE, R Signals and RASC/RCT Associations and, of course, our members. We had a great time and they wanted to know when we were doing it again.

Then on Sunday, 25 April we had the Dedication Service for our Standard. Beryl Butcher, from Lincoln Branch, took the service and we had 14 Standards; from Birmingham, Hereford, Leicester and Lincoln Branches, Maureen Deeley with the Association Standard and the

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Visit the website www.zazzle.co.uk and search for WRAC items



There you will also find tote bags, insulated coffee mugs, mouse mats and postcards and notelets with the Association Badge. There are also postcards with the Corps Prayer printed on them. PLEASE visit and buy – the WRAC Association is given a small percentage.

www.buy.at/WRAC

Have you tried this yet? If you shop online, visit this website first and connect to your usual favourite shop through this website.

IT IS LEGAL and IT IS NOT A SCAM. Go on – check it out.

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IT IS A VERY SIMPLE WAY TO SUPPORT YOUR OWN CHARITY.

A great number of high street companies use it e.g. NEXT, M and M and Marks and Spencer. If you shop at amazon.co.uk or HMV or hire your films online PLEASE go to www.buy.at/wrac NOW and see how it works. You will be able to buy your normal purchases at the usual online prices AND the Association will receive anything between 4-6% of the amount you spend.

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WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS DINNER CLUB

Application for Membership

Membership No: DC/.....

Present Name:
(Miss Ms Mrs Rank if serving)

Christian Names:

Known as:

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
Miss Maggie Bradshaw
Myrtyle Cottage, Tatworth, Chard, Somerset TA20 2NZ
Tel: (01460) 221617

I wish to join the WRAC Dinner Club and enclose:

5 Years Membership	£13.00	(Includes initial joining fee of £3.00)
Life Membership	£18.00	(Includes initial joining fee of £3.00)
(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

'Sauviter in modo, Fortiter in re'
'Gentle in manner, Resolute in deed'

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

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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 should 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:

PRESENTATION TO GENERAL SECRETARY AT THE AGM IN LONDON ON 20 MARCH 2010

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Lt Col Sue Westlake, on behalf of the whole Association, presented Maj Jane Freebairn with a cheque for £1,000 and a garden bench to say thank you for all her hard work and dedication during her time as Benevolent Fund Case Secretary and General Secretary. The following is Maj Freebairn's thank you letter which was sent to all Branches who had contributed to the farewell presentation.

Dear Everyone,

I'm not really sure how to start. I am simply overwhelmed by your kindness and generosity. The photograph above is on my desk to keep me going over the next few months before I retire at the end of September and spend more time on it than on my office chair! The cheque for £1,000 is simply phenomenal and I am very, very thankful. As Sue said in her speech, I do not like being the centre of attention so it was somewhat embarrassing to listen to her kind words. My response is that I have only been doing my job – but what a rewarding experience it has been!

When I left the Army, after nearly 19 years service in 1992, I went to work at the Open University in Milton Keynes as an assistant registrar in the Examinations and Assignments section. There I had about 40 permanent staff and up to an additional 30 temporary staff at examination time. It was quite a challenge to adjust my ways and methods to work with civilian staff but they were delightful and the work so rewarding that my time there was very enjoyable and I learned a huge amount about civilian life! I also had the honour to be "on parade" (in Academic Dress) on a few occasions when friends from the Army received their Open University degrees.

After 5 years, I had a complete change and went to Horticultural College in Guildford for a year and then became a gardener in Windsor Great Park. This time I was the only woman in a team of five working outside in all weathers so plenty more challenges there! Whilst there, I was

invited to be a Trustee of the Benevolent Fund and started to attend the occasional Grants Committee Meeting and Annual Trustees meeting. So, as you can see, I had always maintained some contact with the WRAC and finally, the elastic snapped, and I was soon back in Army harness. I began working as the Benevolent Fund Case Secretary in May 2001.

Since then, as Case Secretary and then as General Secretary, there have certainly been more challenges. Most of us, if we are honest, never really understood about the work of the Association whilst we were still serving. I certainly do now and what an organisation it is. Dealing daily with members on the telephone, e-mail and "snail mail", I have certainly discovered how important the Association is to each of our members. Most importantly, it allows us still to be proud of our service – the opportunities it gave us, the camaraderie we enjoyed, the experiences we had, the new skills we learned and the lifelong memories we all tucked away. Membership of the Association means that we can still share all these with others who speak the same language.

I am so grateful that I have had the opportunity to understand all that and to play my part in making sure the Association continues to provide the hub for the esprit de corps we all enjoy so much. Thank you, thank you for all your support during my time here and the hard work you all put into keeping the Association going. After September, I still plan to meet up with you at AGMs and Grand Reunions.....but without my General Secretary's paperwork!



Tammy Kirkwood, Standard Bearer with escorts, Belle Jenkinson, left, and Nancy Puckey, right

Standards from the above named associations as well as three Standards from the Royal Naval Association and the Royal Air Force Association and Tamworth Royal British Legion Standard. Our 150 guests including Lt Col Sue Westlake, Maggie Purkis and Irene Hall were entertained afterwards in the Royal British Legion Club by our members who had been responsible for the buffet. Our new Standard Bearer, Tammy Kirkwood, was congratulated by everyone on the day.



Beryl Butcher receives the new Standard



All the Standards on Parade

In May, a number of our members were invited to Leicester Branch for lunch and a quiz; we joined with Birmingham branch members and won the quiz, they may not invite us again. We hope they will as we had such a good time.

Our next skittles will be on 9 July and we will be entertaining Leicester, Birmingham and Stafford branches. It will be good to see everyone again as the skittles days are such fun.

ULSTER BRANCH

It seems no time since I was writing my previous article for the magazine, but the time goes in very quickly these days – dare I say it – as one grows older!

Here in the Ulster Branch, our social calendar seems to be on the up again. Christmas lunch in Beechlaw Hotel, Dunmurry was a great success and was really enjoyed by all. We also had a few guests which added to the festive flavour. And of course no function could be held without the proverbial 'bring and buy' sale and raffle which does a lot to boost funds. I was especially delighted to see Lorna Gulston and guest at the dinner. I knew Lorna better as Captain Gulston from my TA days and I was glad that she was able to attend the dinner as she had previously had some surgery carried out. As you can see from the photograph, our treasurer and some other members and guests were having lots of Christmas cheer.



The pantomime, Aladdin, in the Grand Opera House, Belfast was also a huge success. Indeed, the shows seem to get more spectacular as the years go by and is becoming very popular with our branch members. We spent most of the time laughing while at the same time trying to dodge the 3D characters who were flying all around us. In particular, the 3D genie was a jolly looking sight but numerous snakes and spiders took one's breath away. However, the Bailey's 'tipple' in the interval made up for the scary monsters which were trying to attack us. Mae Milne who is in her 90th year certainly enjoyed the show and the kindness and thoughtfulness of our committee member Florence Logan made sure Mae had everything she needed – even access to a box of chocs. This photograph, together with some others which we took, will find a fitting place in our Branch Album.



Florence Logan and Mae Milne

We have been especially fortunate this year in being able to register for use of a community bus which took us on our May outing. Everything is so expensive that I just felt a bus was completely out of the question, but the little community bus was just a third of the price. We picked up our members in Belfast and we headed off to Newcastle, Co Down where we had a coffee stop. Here we picked up Ruby Agnew who arrived with her little walking aid and the usual wonderful smile. Eddie our driver then took us on to Kilkeel, the gateway to the Mourne Mountains, where we had lunch in the local hotel, the Kilmorey Arms. At lunch, the table was laden with the most appetizing array of food. We were all able to choose our meal, from roast beef, turkey and ham or fish and of course, as usual, the desserts were mouth-watering. Weight problems were cast aside, to be dealt with at another date (?) in the gym.

Dorothea Nicholson, one of our members who lives in the area, had been unable to come to the outing, but came along to the hotel instead to say hello and to share a cuppa with us. It was lovely to see Dorothea again and we greatly appreciated her calling to see us. She certainly lives in a very beautiful and picturesque part of the country.

After we had 'prised' some of our members away from a

plant/flower stall which was just outside the hotel, we headed off to the Quays in Newry, our final stop, for some retail therapy. The Quays Shopping Centre in Newry is huge and is situated alongside Newry canal. Indeed, when our Chairman, Mary Wilson, and I were sitting at one of the top floor cafes having tea, with the beautiful weather and views of the tree-lined canal, the whole scene was reminiscent of the continent.

Eddie, our very patient driver, rounded us up around 5 'ish to head for home. The little community bus was packed with shopping and what seemed like everything off the flower stall in Kilkeel. However, the sea of tired, but smiling faces said it all. We were definitely tired, but we had had a wonderful day.

I am looking forward to spending a couple of weeks in June with my brother and his wife in Wisbech St Mary which is a very beautiful area. However, when I come home, I will be considering any plans for the 2nd half of the year, including Christmas. The role of secretary is undoubtedly a busy role, but when everything goes according to plan, it is also very rewarding.

In summary, I hope everyone had a wonderful summer and in particular, those who work so hard behind the scenes on our behalf.

WINCHESTER BRANCH

Since our last report we have pottered along quietly picking up four new members. With Christmas over and done with for another year (I'm writing this on June 1st and last week I received my first Christmas 2010 catalogue! Ahhhhhh).

Worthy Down Camp where I work is just like any other Army camp and 1st May is officially summer so the jumpers come off for shirt sleeve order and the heating gets turned off – having had a couple of weeks of lovely weather when we over-heated in the office, we were happy about that. Until, 2nd May that is when the usual cold snap happened and we had to wear coats in the office because it was so cold. Can't win.

We held our usual post Christmas meal in January a great turnout (for us) of 12 which, as we had to change the date at short notice because of the terrible weather was very pleasing. We welcomed Jane McCann for the first time; seems she knew Cath from when they both served so she was definitely made welcome. Back to a Chinese restaurant this year and very nice it was as well, except for the service charge which snuck up on us whilst we were not looking.

March saw a visit to the local rifle club of which I am a member. Three ex-WRAC members decided to come and have a go and we managed another three; two from my office and Lynn, our Treasurer, brought her daughter along. Although food was provided most had already eaten but that did not matter as the club helpers (who had not eaten) managed to get something and the rest was taken away to be distributed in two offices the next day. What can I say? Top shot was a civilian from my office – was it luck or the fact that she was a tad younger

than the rest of us? I think though that everyone enjoyed the experience.



May saw us use a new venue, the Community Centre at Worthy Down, the location was quite convenient for most people and easy to find. Again a good turn out with one of our new members joining us as well as a couple of guests. We were given a talk on Aromatherapy by one of our members, Lesley Richardson. Very interesting it was as well especially her top 5 essential oils tips, Lesley has her own Holistic Therapy business in Petersfield, Hampshire. (www.lesleyrichardson.co.uk).

WIRRAL BRANCH

The Wirral Branch has been very active over the last year. We have now moved to Chetwynd Barracks, Prenton, Birkenhead and hold our meetings on the 1st Wednesday of the month.

We have also kept our ties with the Chester Branch, going out with them on their outings. These days out are great fun; these ladies certainly know how to enjoy themselves.



Apart from the trips out with the Chester Branch, we have also attended the Dedication of a tree to all the members of the Armed Forces who have died since WWII. We also attended the ceremony of the raising of the Armed Forces Flag by our local Wirral Council. Even though we are a small Branch we do tend to get around!

If anyone would like to join our Branch we would make you most welcome.

WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH

We are sorry we did not send a report in for the last issue of the *Lioness*.

We are still meeting monthly and have very friendly meetings, but unfortunately do not see as many members as we would like to. However, we are always pleased to hear from members who, for various reasons, are not able to join us. We send them our best wishes; they are not forgotten.

We try to keep the ATS and WRAC remembered in the city by being represented at various events that take place during the year. We thank Birmingham Branch for inviting us to their Birthday Party in May and we also enjoyed our Area Reunion in the autumn.

Our best wishes go to all friends near and far and we hope the winter months will be kind to them.

COPY DEADLINE

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

17 DECEMBER 2010

ATS Reminiscences

MY PERSONAL MEMORIES OF THE EVACUATION OF DUNKIRK IN JUNE 1940

PDF Compressor Free Version

W/21504 Pat Bury

Sudgrove House Cottage, Miserden, Stroud,
Glos GL6 7JD
Tel: 01285 821289

Everybody knows the story of Dunkirk but we felt very close to it, as our house, Kingscroft, was only a field away from the Royal Welch Fusiliers' barracks where the returning soldiers were put in tents. On the day the Dunkirk soldiers were due to arrive in Wrexham, we were detailed to be at the railway station for 3.30am. We had two ambulances and a bus for those who couldn't walk very well. In June, the dawn came early and it was already light when the train pulled into the station. I thought there would be lots of cheering for the returning soldiers but there was absolute silence, not a word, not for ages, and we wondered what could have happened. Eventually they came out of the carriages onto the platform to where we were waiting but they would hardly look at us and I turned to ask someone what was wrong. They replied that the men were worried that they had let us all down, that they would be in disgrace because they had retreated at Dunkirk. I could have cried. And what a sight they were. Hardly any of them would go near the bus or get into the ambulance and we had to force the ones that really couldn't walk into the waiting vehicles. The rest of the men, in their motley uniforms, some with no boots or battle dress, weapons or hats, marched in the dawn through the streets of Wrexham, the mile and a half to the barracks. I will never, ever forget that sight. When they arrived, they simply collapsed on the square, absolutely exhausted. Finally they were put into the waiting tents where they were able to recover.

My mother wondered what she could do for them; the days of rationing hadn't started so she bought a crate of oranges and some cigarettes and gave them to the men in the field. The next day one of them came over to her and said, "Ee ma'am, I can't thank you enough for those oranges. I wasn't half constipated and they did me a power of good!"

Some of the officers came to Kingscroft and we had tea on the lawn one beautiful summer's day; later we went to Chester for the evening. The men were still wearing their battledress which had been soaked in seawater, but had dried out. They mightn't have been very smart, but my goodness, they enjoyed their evening on the town.

I hope the above all makes sense – if not, blame old age as I am nearly 93! I joined up on the first Saturday of the War and was posted to 6th Western Motor Company ATS and after a short spell in Oldham, I moved to Camp Reception Station at Wrexham Barracks and was there at the time of the Dunkirk evacuation. We had two ambulances and three drivers and I realise how lucky I was being able to live at home at that time. I ended up as Sgt (TIFC) with 142M (HAA) Regt RAbut that's too long a story for now!

MY ARMY DAYS AND MUSIC

W/90121 Mrs Joan Hines née Barnes
51 Balmoral Road, Salisbury SP1 3PZ

Editor: The following was sent to me by Lt Col Val Trout, Secretary of Salisbury Branch. She explained that Joan "is now 91 years of age, almost blind but still attends our meetings when she can. I believe that she also still plays the piano."

Stationed near Gloucester as a Radar Operator, I found a piano in the NAAFI and in a quiet moment, I began playing. As I played by ear, I enjoyed playing dance music of the period. When someone suggested I played for dances, I somewhat nervously agreed to join a group.

A saxophone player, named Cocker Miller and a drummer, named Sgt Mobsby, plus an accordionist made up the group. Soon, every Saturday night, the NAAFI Hall was swinging to our music. A glass of beer was placed on the piano which I did not drink but Cocker soon finished it off. We sometimes went to other places and I'm afraid at an Officers' event all I was given was alcohol. There was no food and I became very ill (or drunk!) and had to stay the night and wait to be collected the following day. Back at camp, my Sub came to ask me if I would be well enough to play that night because on Sundays, I had to play in the hut for Church service. After one service, our Battery Commander, Major Ross Collins, 495 HAA Mixed Battery came to thank me for playing but he said, "We won't have the German National Anthem another Sunday!" So much for "Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken"; the hymn which is set to the tune of: Deutschland, Deutschland Uber Alles – the German National Anthem.

When we were moved to St Ives, I played at a hotel for a Light Ack Ack dance and it was the most beautiful place overlooking the sea. How could we feel a war was on as it was so peaceful? However, St Ives was full of young American soldiers soon to leave on D Day. I played in St Ives Town Hall for a concert with two girls who sang and a local violinist. A young American had asked me to write to him as he was due to leave St Ives. I still have his letter in which he described his life in a dugout and wrote that he did not hate the Germans, only what they were shooting at him. Sadly no more letters came, but in recent years, I have discovered he was buried in Cambridge where many American casualties were taken.

Recently, I spent a few days in the Carbis Bay Hotel and, knowing that was where I had played the piano in 1944, I took photographs and letters with me. The owner was writing a book about that era and copied them all. Playing the piano has remained with me and I have played at; Keep Fit classes, Health and Beauty Clubs, WI meetings etc and the U3A choir began in my sitting room.

Maureen Deeley wishes to thank everyone who sent cards, phoned or visited whilst she was in hospital. She really appreciated all your support which cheered her up no end.

Reminiscences of the WRAC

MY CATERING CAREER WITH THE WRAC

Captain Lynne Poole, née Merrin
E-mail: lynnepoole@hotmail.com

Although I was born a 'Service Brat', a daughter of the Royal Navy, I had never had any intention of joining any of the Armed Forces - I wanted to be an artist and in September 1960, following an education at fourteen different schools, I began my first term at Winchester School of Art. It was idyllic.

The world was changing fast and Art School was not the choice of my parents. At the end of the first term at Winchester my time at this wonderful institution came to an abrupt end. My parents maybe had noticed that the 1960s had arrived. A year of study and working 'au pair' in France followed while I was expected to dream up a more suitable career objective. On return to the UK I knew I was at crunch point. No, I did not want to be a nurse. I certainly did not want to join the WRENS. I would never be free of the 'oversight' of my Father. Possibly the WRAF? However, I wasn't at all sure about that as my father was then serving with the Fleet Air Arm and a bit close to the Service in light blue for my taste.



Lynne on Commissioning Day

I was commissioned into the WRAC in April 1964. My first posting was to, Headquarter Company, WRAC Depot and Training Centre, East Grinstead. Captain Anne

Clissitt was my first Company Commander. I was soon to learn that this was only a temporary situation as the entire WRAC Training Centre was due to move to the new 'Powder Puff Barracks' at Guildford. 'That's interesting, dear', said my Mother. 'Guildford was where I did my ATS training during the War.' She then proceeded to regale me with stories of her war time experiences.

After a very short period at East Grinstead whilst I tried to develop confidence and learn about the reality of this world that I had committed to, I was called in by the Adjutant. I did not know why. In some fear and trepidation I turned up suitably tidy and trying to appear confident to be told that there was a plan for me. I was to become the Corps' Temporary Catering Officer for the move to Guildford. A professional Catering Officer was 'in the pipeline' but she had yet to finish all her full civilian training programme before even beginning her comprehensive training at the Army School of Catering at Aldershot. I was terrified. Almost immediately I was dispatched to Aldershot to do a 'crash course' at this eminent establishment to prepare me for this new set of responsibilities. I can still remember in graphic detail watching the master butcher dissect a carcass of a side beef. I didn't faint.

My most powerful memories include ensuring, under the watchful eye of a formidable WRAC WOII, that enough potatoes were peeled and transported from East Grinstead to Guildford in suitable containers (large lined dustbins) in order to ensure that 400+ women would get their first meal there later that day. This was real 'logistics'. I was beginning to understand what the word really meant.



Lynne, the Catering Officer; Commandant Colonel Lucy Davies and DWRAC Brig the Hon Mary Anderson give the Christmas Pud a good stir

The kitchen was furnished with 'state of the art' catering equipment, including the largest and longest automatic dish washer that I have ever encountered. On several occasions when it broke down I found myself crawling inside the long tunnel structure to try and rectify the



It must have been well stirred if they all had a go

problem. Alternatively, frosty engagements with the suppliers sometimes proved more reliable. I felt intrepid but was not sure if it was the type of intrepid experience that I really sought. But, perhaps it bought me some Brownie Points?



The real high point during this period was the official opening of the WRAC Training Centre by Her Majesty the Queen. It was a remarkable and memorable occasion. Then, out of the blue, I was told I was to be posted to 4 Ind Coy WRAC, Singapore. Maybe the world was going

to be kind to me at last. One late evening in November 1965, after a 28 hour flight plus stops en route, I climbed down the steps of a military aircraft flight and stood on the tarmac of Singapore Airport. I felt as though I had walked into hot soggy cotton wool. Fortunately, the tiredness was immediately dispersed by a rush of adrenaline.

There was no room yet available for me at Tanglin Officers' Mess. For the first few weeks in Singapore, I had to live in the Medical Corps Officers' Mess. As Singapore was situated in the middle of a large geographic conflict zone there was an extensive establishment of Military Doctors and Surgeons on the Island. The Military Hospital was working at full blast. Much as I was fascinated with the work of the RAMC, I was relieved when a room became available for me at Tanglin Officers' Mess. It was in Minden Village (otherwise known as Sin City!) opposite the Singapore Botanical Gardens. The monkeys would come over from the gardens and try and steal anything that they could get their hands on in our rooms – a constant challenge.

4 Ind Coy WRAC at Tanglin was a new beginning for me. However, I was soon to discover that my new responsibilities were to include catering – again. However, I was a bit disturbed when I learnt that the large stone slabs that we used in the kitchens to prepare food had originally started life as mortuary slabs used by the Japanese Military during the Second World War – or so I was told.



Stirring the Christmas Pud Singapore style



Christmas celebrations in 4 Ind Coy

The members of 4 Ind Coy WRAC had responsibilities all over the FARELF Headquarters as well as with Royal Signals out at Dover Road. 4 Ind Coy helped various local children's charities and orphanages through fundraising and practical help. One of the high spots of my efforts to find interesting and useful pursuits for 4 Ind Coy was a request by a group of intrepid members of the Corps who wished to try parachute jumping with the Army Team in Singapore. It finally came about after a battle with red tape. I had to write to the parents of the women who wanted to 'have a go' at this sport. I did go up in the helicopter with them but there was no way anyone was going to get me to jump!



Lynne with two Indonesian Officers in Djakarta 1966

I had a very interesting trip to Indonesia in 1966. Although it was a private trip, I had to ask permission from the Headquarters in Singapore to visit. At that time, the British were fighting in Borneo so the Indonesian Army was "the enemy". The British Military Attaché did ask me to take my uniform "just in case." I met President Sukarno at a reception and the Ambassador introduced me by saying, "This is Lynne Merrin. She is the enemy from Singapore." I was not wearing uniform on that occasion!

There is so much more that I could write, not least about the individuals who were involved and played their part so well during this extraordinary period of conflict in South East Asia; a zone on the edge of the Vietnam War, confrontation with Indonesia and concern about Malaysia. It was busy and, at times, frenetic. Those that were there will remember. They are unlikely to forget such a period and I hope that this article and photographs will remind them of happy times.

I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO....

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Tel: 01400 230656. E-mail: gwyneth.stratten@yahoo.co.uk

I wonder what happened to..... A question I am sure you will have asked many times when ex servicewomen get together? This is how I found the answers.

With retirement looming, I decided to try to trace people I had served with between January 1955 and November 1958. A TV programme listing the names of others trying to trace Service friends gave me the information about a combined RMP and WRAC Provost reunion taking place in January 1998. Unfortunately I was unable to attend but my name was passed to Iris Howe with whom I had served at 145 Pro Coy WRAC in Rheindahlen. This resulted in my attending a Provost reunion at March in Cambridgeshire. Apprehensively, I arrived at the hotel where I was given a warm welcome by those assembled and renewed my acquaintance with Iris. Little did I think at the time what this would lead to.



*Sgts Mess 40 Pro Coy, Kingston Gate Camp 1956
Brenda Burbeck, Ellen Moore, Gwyneth, Audrey Purton
and Mary Smith*

Now I am in contact with many of the 'girls' from those halcyon days and we keep in touch via the Internet and meet up at reunions. When we do meet the intervening years disappear and we are all young women again. At a Provost reunion at Hereford there were ten of us around the table and we realised that we had all known one another for over fifty years. Although my Service life was comparatively short, it was eventful and certainly the best move I have ever made. Having served for five years with the TA, I joined as a Regular in January 1955 and went off to Guildford taking with me numerous hang-ups about myself; these were soon dispersed and I found my feet at last. I shall be eternally grateful to all those in authority who saw and fostered the few skills I had; in doing so my confidence grew and I became a different person. I learned to stand on my own two feet and to appreciate the comradeship that community life brought. When on Special Duties, though terrified most of the time, I learned to present a calm, efficient exterior. This

has stood me in good stead all my life. My biggest fear, when in the eye of the public or on parade, was that my knicker elastic might break. A very large safety pin remedied that problem.

Through Iris, PDF Compressor Free Version WRAC Dinner Club and through these two splendid organisations I have widened my circle of friends even more.

At the Grand Reunion in 2006 I was waylaid by Chris Corker as a result of which, with June Booth ex-ATS, we started a Branch in Lincoln; within a short time we went from a membership of three to our current sixty one. Last year we were involved in forty four events and raised over £1800 for Help for Heroes so you can see how busy we have been: hard work but so rewarding.



Gwyneth with wreath at Lincoln Remembrance Service

I feel as though all the links in the chain of my early life have now joined together forming a strong circle which I hope will never be broken. I have many cherished memories and am grateful to all the wonderful people who have made this possible. Thanks to the WRAC Association my question is answered. I now know *what happened to.....*

TELEPRINTER OPERATOR TRAINING AT CATTERICK

W/50016 Shirley a Harris née Wanless
77 Newdykes Road, Prestwick, Ayrshire KA9 1HA
Tel: 01292 474549

The first of these photographs was taken at the WRAC Centre in Guildford in March 1959. We were all in 7 Platoon doing our basic training. I am in the middle but I cannot remember the names of either of the other two girls.



Shirley Wanless in the centre

The second photograph was taken in Catterick in the summer of 1959. I am front left and behind me is Joan Tonepol. The tallest one in the back is Marge Umfreville who became Marge Hoare when she got married. As you can see we were in Hut 28 and were all training to be Teleprinter Operators.



Hut 28 Catterick 1959

Joan and Marge and I were great friends and we used to walk about with me – the shortest – always in the middle. Because I was shorter, I was not always able to keep up with the squad when we marched to the training huts. So, I was made permanent traffic marker and had to march in front of the squad and put up my hand to stop them. I felt very powerful as I stepped out in front of three ton lorries and put up my hand to stop them. Was someone trying to tell me something?

We had a great time at Catterick and all passed out as B3 operators. I was posted to Wilton and then on to York. A few years later, after several different challenges, I ended up in Berlin as a Cypher Operator. Great days and lovely memories.

DO YOU HAVE PLATOON PHOTOGRAPHS FROM 1958?

W/401384 Ms Brenda McNama née Glover
22a Beatty Close, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 4BN
Tel: 01493 853168



Brenda showing off her Good Conduct Stripe

Love the brilliant *Lioness*. Being 69 years of age now I needed to try and get in touch with some of the girls in Lisburn, Northern Ireland. My dream is to go on the Remembrance Day Parade 2010 and to the WRAC Dinner Club in Solihull where I hope to meet some girls I may have served with. I will be taking some of my photographs. The time I served in Northern Ireland was lovely. I worked in the Officers' Mess and then with General Packard and family at Clooner House in Dunmurry. That was a great experience and I met some lovely people.

I had an amazing experience when I was selected to represent Northern Ireland and to go to the Royal Tournament as part of the Combined Services Club

Swinging Display Team. We had so much fun but it was hard work and the hours were long. I especially enjoyed seeing the Gun Crew – well that was impressive! I'm a member of the Norfolk Branch. They are a lovely bunch of girls. I wouldn't change my teenage life in the Army for the world. I'm proud to have been part of the WRAC.



On holiday in Turkey

AND AGAIN! DO YOU HAVE PLATOON PHOTOGRAPHS FROM 1958?

W/401345 Mrs J Pigford née Crossland
75 Station Road, Easington, Peterlee, Co Durham
SR8 3SP

I am wondering if anyone can let me have a copy of my platoon photograph? I enlisted at the back end of 1958 and passed out in late November or early December 1958.

Thank you very much.

75th BIRTHDAY PARTY ETC!

W/375520 Evelyn Norton
10 Dower Close, Darley Abbey, Derby DE22 1DJ
Tel: 01332 557786

The time seems to have flown by since I wrote about my 70th Birthday Bash. The story begins: I started off in uniform as a Girl Guide many years ago and then went on to be an Air Corps Cadet age 14 years. At 16½ years old I joined a Carnival Marching Band which I enjoyed. I left to join the HAA (TA) and cheated on my age. Then I went on to join the Regular Army in the WRAC in 1952 and went to Guildford. I served in the Egypt/Middle East in 1954/5 but as I could not settle, I returned home in December 1955. I didn't realise that I could have signed on after being at home for six months. I then joined the TA once again and served for two years with the Royal Signals. Married and came out; that was the time to have children.

I then joined the WRAC Association, the WRAC Dinner Club and, in 1999, the Suez Veterans Association (SVA). At the time there were only about six members but now we have around 40/50 men and, as is often the case, I am the only ex-WRAC. I'm the Events Officer of the Derby Branch and every year I have to go to the Suez Canal on the eighth time which I enjoyed but it wasn't long enough.

As you can see we lay wreaths at the cemeteries for the lads and lassies we left behind. Also, those who wish have an overnight stay in "Alex" and we go to El Alamein to visit the cemetery where I laid the wreath. All very sad times.



Evelyn in Egypt with the Suez Veterans Association

The members of the SVA have a Spring Weekend in the Midlands and our AGM will be in Harrogate in September. I organised a trip for our Derby SVA to the Remembrance Day Parade in London in 2009. Around 24 members and their wives/partners came along and Iris Howe ex-WRAC/RMP was also on the coach. We all had a good weekend and Iris marched with the WRAC Association contingent. I and our Derby Branch members marched with the SVA although I was pushed in a wheelchair and was embarrassed but that didn't matter as I joined in. And yes, I will be in a wheelchair again this year 2010 – my last one?



75th Birthday cake

This year I turned the grand old age of 75 years and 130 people came to my party including Belle Jenkinson and Nancy Puckey from Tamworth Branch with their husbands, Tom and Paul. Also Audrey Rayner, Evelyn Winsome from Northumberland and ex-service friends and family from as far away as West Sussex and Oxfordshire. We raised £1,500 for our forces. Everyone had a really enjoyable time – watch this space for my 80th Birthday report!



Evelyn and the music maestro

Monday 21 June 2010 was British Armed Forces Day, a flag raising event outside Derby City Council. I was invited to join the Mayor and Mayoress for refreshments prior to this event.

WRAC DRUMS AND BUGLES 1965

Joe MacDonald (husband of former WRAC CPL)

Email: jmlm77@ntlworld.com



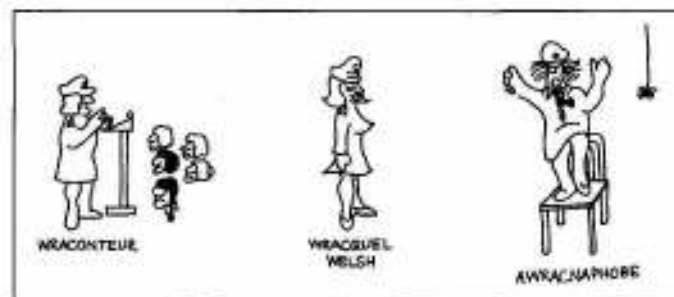
Marching past SMARTS

This photograph was reprinted in the *Southern Daily Echo* dated 1 February 2010. It shows the WRAC Drums and Bugles taking part in Southampton Carnival around 1965.

Hopefully it might bring back some happy memories for some of your members.

MORE CARTOONS

Inspired by the back page of the last edition, Madge Evans from Luton Branch sent in some more excellent ideas. So thanks to Madge and to an anonymous artistic member who "sharpened up" Madge's original sketches. Any more?



Where Are You Now?

DID YOU SERVE WITH MAUREEN CLARK

IN BERLIN?

W/429763 Maureen Clark née Nash

15 Jumpers Road, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 2JR

Tel: 01202 479742

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With regards to the letter from Liz Winter in *Lioness* 2/2009, wondering if any of the girls who were mentioned in the London Evening News on 14 June 1968 were reading her article – well yes I was.

I was stationed in Berlin at HQ British Sector from June 1967 until mid 1969. I met my husband Barry there and we got married in October 1968. I continued in the Army until mid 1969 and we eventually left Berlin in the summer of 1970 with our daughter.



Maureen in Berlin in 1968

We revisited Berlin just a couple of years ago and went up to see what was happening at the old HQ. There is still a guardroom there manned by a German security guard as the place is now a sports village. It was strange walking around the grounds as it was uncannily quiet. Gone was the hustle and bustle that we remembered so well and the grounds were not so well kept either!

I haven't been very successful in finding anyone from my Berlin days other than Sue Byrne (McLeod). We made contact only a few months ago via Forces Reunited. Perhaps there is someone reading this who remembers me?

DO YOU REMEMBER MARGARET (RUSTY) NEWBY AT CHILWELL?

Alan Grimble

alamar.grimble@homecall.co.uk

My wife and I were married in Nottingham on the 14th August 1954 when we were both serving in the Army. I was in REME and my wife in the WRAC and we were stationed in Chilwell, Nottingham. My wife's maiden name was Newby and of course she left the WRAC and we were given a married quarter in Chilwell.

We then travelled together as a married couple and with two children eventually. After service in various countries, and on my retirement in 1972, we were offered a position working for the British Government in Africa. This appointment led to various other positions until 1996 when I reached retirement at age 65 and we returned to UK. By this time my wife had lost all contact with the girls she served with, including her two best friends who attended our wedding, and sadly, after 52 years of marriage Margaret passed away from cancer in November of 2006.

I desperately want to find any of the girls who served with Margaret Newby in the WRAC in Chilwell in the years '52-'54 including her female Sergeant at the time. Her surname was Eagle and she was known as 'Paddy'. I have tried various military sources to find someone who remembers 'Rusty' (because of the colour of her hair!) Newby; but to no avail. I do so want all who knew her to know how happy and successful our marriage turned out to be from such a very simple occasion.

Could you please, please help me to find someone who remembers vivacious, lovely Rusty Newby from those days.

OPENING OF STAFF COLLEGE AT FRIMLEY PARK

W353416 Mrs KB Allan née Kendrick
10 Cadbury Close, Sunbury on Thames, TW16 7NE
Tel: 01932 714715



L-R Joy Miller, Jackie ?, CSM Ellis, Joan ?, Dorothy Rombold, Gwen ?, Kay Kendrick (Me!), Margaret Kerr, Gladys Campbell and Sue Fotheringham

This photograph was taken in 1951 at the opening of the WRAC Officers' Staff College at Frimley Park just down the road from Camberley. I wonder if there is anyone reading this *Lioness* who was there at the time or remembers serving there later on?

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I shall be 80 this year so it would be great to hear from anyone who served there.

WERE YOU IN ROYAL SIGNALS TA IN 1959/1960?

W/396790 Sandy Acathan née Shore
Croaz Min, 22160 Carnoet, Brittany, France
cwrtiasper@aol.com

Enclosed is an old photograph taken in 1959/1960 of me and some of my WRAC chums in South Wales (Newport, Cardiff and Swansea). We were attached to the 53(W) Royal Signals Regiment and this is of us at one of our training camps. Sgt Chris Jennings is the instructor and also in the photograph are Cpl Marion Arkley, Ptes Hazel Williams, Pam Wakefield, Paula Atherton and Maureen Davies. I regret that other surnames are no longer stored in my memory bank!



TA Training Camp in Wales

I was Pte Sandy Shore and I am in the bottom right of the photograph sharing the map with Pam Wakefield. If anyone recognises themselves and would like to get in touch, I would love to hear from you.

WHO REMEMBERS BERRY ABBOTT?

W/306261 Berry Abbott
Flat 1, The Abbeyfield Sanders Court, 4 Manor Road,
St Marychurch, Torquay, Devon TQ1 3JX
Tel: 01803 310347

My name is Bernice Abbott but I have always been known as Berry. I would love to hear from Eileen Farrell, Doreen Davies, Gwyneth Howells and Babby Johnson. Please do publish my contact details so that anyone who remembers me can get in touch easily. Thank you.

ROBERTS HALL 1953

W/376963 Mrs Jean Bradley née Ross
15221 Purdy Street, Westminster, California 92683, USA



Ready to serve dinner

I have enclosed this photograph which was taken of all the waiters and waitresses ready for an Officers' Dinner Night at Roberts Hall, Shrivensham around 1953. Although you cannot see it in the black and white photograph, all the WRAC were wearing green jackets.

Do you recognise yourself? I would love to hear from you. I am in the second row, second from the right.

DO YOU KNOW A CPL V MOZLEY?

Mrs. Kim Keene
28 Kipling Street, Johnsonville, Wellington 6037,
New Zealand
Email: kimkeene@paradise.net.nz

During World War Two, my late father, Arthur May, a New Zealander, served in the Fleet Air Arm. While he was in service in the UK he met a lady named Corporal Mozley from the ATS. I think her first name started with 'V' as she signed her letters with this initial. I understand she corresponded with my father for some time and that she lived in Welldon Crescent in Harrow. I also believe this photograph is of Corporal Mozley. If anyone is able to help me contact her or let me have any more details about her I would be very grateful.



Is this Corporal Mozley at Tintagel?

News from Overseas Members

WRAAC 60th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

IN PDF COMPRESSOR FREE VERSION

Louise Green, President WRAAC Association
(N.S.W.) INC

Abn 23 762 516 238

PO Box 1124, Merrylands

New South Wales 2160

Email: louggreen@bigpond.com.au

It is my pleasure to send you greetings and congratulations on celebrating the 90th birthday of your Association last year.

Many years ago on a working holiday in UK, I joined the 326 (City of London) Bn WRAC and my service number was W/402349. I had an enjoyable time at Finsbury Barracks. I do write to Joan Pearce of Croydon who was in the WRAC when I was and we have corresponded every Christmas since.

My main purpose of writing is to tell you about our 60th Anniversary celebrations next February and to invite anyone who may be in Sydney at the time. We are hoping to have members from around Australia come to Georges Height near Sydney that was the old WRAAC Training School on a very nice piece of real estate which the Government has now claimed back. On Friday 11 February 2011 we are having a meet and greet at Kirribilli Club which was a Return Services Club with lovely views over Sydney Harbour. On Saturday 12 February there will be a march past of all the ladies in front of the Governor of New South Wales and the unveiling of a plaque. That evening, there will be a formal dinner and on the Sunday there will be a Church Parade in the Garrison Church in Sydney followed by a Harbour Cruise for lunch.

If any members of the WRAC Association would like to join us, they would be most welcome.

Editor: I do hope we will get a report and photographs of this celebration for the next Lioness. Maybe this will also encourage some of you who went on Exercise Long Look to write in with your memories of your time in Australia. You might be interested in the story of the first WRAC to be posted there. The following is an extract from the Lioness published in February 1961.

The mere thought of being the first W.R.A.C. to serve in Australia was exciting in itself and as we prepared for our flight out here last October the excitement mounted. We were all either qualified Experimental Assistants in Gunnery or Radar Operators, but we collected together for a further three months special training at the school of Anti-Aircraft Artillery, Manorbier. After some leave we assembled at the Depot, Guildford, and on Tuesday, October 4, we left London Airport.

We had no difficulties on the journey out and were looked after beautifully by Lt Col J. Henderson and 4 Independent Company during a two-day stay in Singapore. We flew from there to Sydney by Qantas

Airways and thought it sheer luxury after the charter flight from London. Several of us were invited up to the flight deck by the captain and were impressed by everything. The aircraft was a Boeing 707 which I believe is almost the latest thing for jet travel. We were met in Sydney by Australian Army Movements Staff, and by Major Peg Tacon, W.R.A.A.C., who saw us on the plane for Adelaide, where we were met by Col. Shaw, Major Barton, Mrs. Shaw and a W.R.A.A.F. Sergeant who looked after the girls. The R.A.A.F. Movements Staff came on board the aircraft and dealt with all our tickets and luggage and we were whisked away to the base at Edinburgh where we live, about 20 miles north of Adelaide. The girls share the W.R.A.A.F. quarters and have fitted in very well from the word go.

The training of the E.A.sG. is being carried out initially by civilian staff in the Weapons Research Establishment, and our pay, etc., by the R.A.F. Support Unit. On November 24 we were visited by Col. Jackson, D.W.R.A.A.C., accompanied by Capt. Joan Melton, W.R.A.A.C., who is A.D.W.R.A.A.C. at Keswick Barracks in Adelaide. Col. Jackson spoke to all the girls, saw some of the quarters and then had tea in the women officers' quarters.



DWRAAC visits WRAC in Woomera

The weather has been very changeable since we arrived. The temperature can rise or fall by 30 degrees in half an hour; one shivers one minute and swelters the next, but it has settled into fine sunny weather now and the temperature has reached 102.5 degrees. No one has suffered from the heat yet, and in fact they all seem to be thriving on it. Bush fires have begun springing up and are likely to be a serious problem as there was so much growth during the abnormally wet winter and spring.

Christmas activities are in full swing. The girls have taken part in the Camp concert, delivered gifts to old people in hospital and arrived by air with Santa Claus at the children's Christmas party. Together with the W.R.A.A.F., they held a Christmas party themselves and dressed up very effectively as the "Ten Little Nigger Boys." The other ranks' Christmas dinner was also a great success. Through the kindness of the Victoria League we had Christmas invitations for everybody. Two

went to a cattle station at Oodnadatta, two for a water skiing holiday at Barmera and two down south to Yaukallilla. The other four had invitations from relatives and friends in Sydney and Adelaide, and I went to stay with some friends up in the hills.

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There are plenty of spare-time activities and sports, and some of the girls play in the W.R.A.A.F. soft-ball team. Tennis, squash, swimming and sailing are all available and we get plenty of invitations to private parties. The real difficulty is transport; except for a somewhat erratic train service to Adelaide, public transport is non-existent and we are very isolated.

However, several of the W.R.A.A.F.s have cars and take the girls to beaches or through the wine-growing valleys at weekends, and there are several boy friends with cars. Altogether it is a wonderful posting and I hope many more members of the Corps will have the chance to follow us.

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.

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 you're 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?

WRAC ASSOCIATION FLEECEES

The WRAC Association now has a stock of dark green Fruit of the Loom fleeces embroidered with the Association badge on the left side. We now have them again in all sizes but if you are unsure, please check first. The ones left from the original batch are very generous but the new ones are more realistic. If you are in any doubt, please ring before placing an order. Each fleece costs £25 which includes postage and packaging.

Cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association and sent to WRAC Association, Gould House, Worthy Down, WINCHESTER SO21 2RG.

If you want to check the actual sizes before placing an order, ring 01962 887478



WRAC Officers' Dining Club

LUNCHEON AT THE STATE APARTMENTS
ROYAL HOSPITAL, CHELSEA 15 MAY 2010
PDF Compressor Free Version
Lt Col Gerry Fahy
Eastwell, 38 Blackmore Road, Malvern, Worcs
WR14 1QT

I enclose a photograph taken at the Officers' Luncheon in May.

It was a grand occasion but what made it really special was meeting up again with Winifred Phillips who is now an In Pensioner. We both served together in 27 Indep Coy WRAC in Episkopi, Cyprus. Winifred was a Platoon Sergeant and I was the RSM.



Col Sue Reynolds, Win Phillips and Lt Col Gerry Fahy in the State Apartments

Editor: Thanks to Alison Schofield for the following photographs:



Alison Schofield and Win Phillips



Dorothy Hughes and Gabi Shanahan



Helen Haynes, Col Vere Fisher and Jackie Walton



Mary Pagan, Penny Spink and Anne Camilleri



Netty Harper, Lynne Davies, Wendy le Gassick and Brig Gael Ramsey



Frances West, Leona Jones and Monica Jones

And thanks to Colonel Nan Robertson for these two:



The three ages of Nan!

These three ladies "span" my career. From right to left: Ann Paget I knew when I was a L/Cpl – Sgt from 1955 – 1958; Barbara Harris and I were Officer Cadets together in 1960 and Lynne Davies was an Officer Cadet when I served at the WRAC College in 1974. Lynne was also present when I retired from the WRAC as Commandant of the WRAC Centre and I was flown away in a hot air balloon!



L-R: Debbie Coupland, Sue Donovan and Vivien Brighton

WRAC OFFICERS' DINNER ON 20 NOVEMBER 2010

The WRAC Officers' Dining Club will meet once again at the Victory Services Club in London on Saturday 20 November 2010. If you are already a member of the Dining Club, you will receive an individual application form.

If you did serve as an officer and you are not a member, please ring the General Secretary on 01962 887570 for more information. **PLEASE** come along – you must know by now that these occasions have been very successful and they are most enjoyable; why else do people keep coming back year after year?

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".



WRAC Dinner Club

WRAC DINNER CLUB 10 OCTOBER 2009

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It all started at the WRAC Association Grand Reunion which was held at the Norbreck Castle Hotel in Blackpool in March 2009. I met up with friends from the past and one in particular suggested that I become a member of the WRAC Dinner Club. The thought had never crossed my mind before so I thought why not give it a go. My friend Leona and I decided to attend the function together. We programmed the Post Code into the ever reliant Tom Tom and hey presto, it took us four miles the wrong side of Solihull. After a quick phone call to the St John's Hotel, Tom Tom was reprogrammed and we arrived around 1pm; not bad considering we set off at 11am and only had a 65 mile trip.

On arrival at the hotel, we were issued with our entertainment pack. We checked into our rooms then set off into Solihull Town Centre to catch the last few hours shopping. Anyway not to bore you with our shopping saga, we eventually got back to the hotel with just enough time left to get ready.

Pre-Dinner drinks were at 6pm in the Brueton Bar and this was where you started to get the feel that a good night was about to unfold. As you can see from this picture, there was obviously a fire sale at a respectable clothing shop somewhere in England because all three ladies are wearing the same blouse.



L-R: WO1 'Fred' Sleightholme, Leona Goffin and Krysia Zywicki née Asher warming up their teeth during the pre-dinner drinks

The call to dinner was sounded and everyone made their way into the Brueton Suite function hall. The tables were beautifully decorated courtesy of the Dinner Club committee – thank you, ladies. The formalities were completed and everyone sat down to dinner. Conversation flowed, jokes were shared and people started to reminisce about the good old days. The food arrived and I think I can speak on behalf of everyone when I say it was well presented, plentiful and very, very tasty. The 'waiting on' staff did a magnificent job and I would like to say a heartfelt thank you for making the evening go by without a hitch.



After dinner entertainment consisted of a disco and a husband and wife singing duo who were absolutely cracking. They played contemporary, golden oldies and the Tina Turner rendition was out of this world. What can I say? I think I danced out of the function room about 0130. I danced my way along the corridor, up the stairs, into my room and into bed and slept for NATO.



The following morning Leona and I made our way to breakfast. Wow! The breakfast room was buzzing with chatty ladies. I knew that if the meal from the previous night was anything to go by, breakfast would be the same and I wasn't disappointed. Help yourself to a full English or for the more health conscious, why not try a selection of fruit, yoghurt or granary bread rolls? Tea, coffee and a variety of fruit juices were also available. I would have gone back for seconds but I was rather full after firsts.

After breakfast, Leona and I said our goodbyes. The car was packed and we set off on our 65 mile journey to good old Derbyshire.

All in all, a rather full on but really fantastic and extremely enjoyable night. I would like to take this opportunity and say a big thank you to the WRAC Dinner Club committee; Lady Val Kemball, Carole Montessori-Gorman, Kathy Ellis, Vee Moore, Jackie Walton, Carole Austin, Jan Greenwood, Bella Jenkins, M. Matron, Deeley, Joyce Nichols and Sue Dolphin.

So come on all you youngies especially those who joined the WRAC in the late 70s/early 80s. Why not fill out the WRAC Dinner Club application form in the middle of this magazine and send it off? Go on, give it a try and if you can't make the WRAC Dinner Club weekend (which is held annually), think about coming to the WRAC Grand Reunion. Held every three years, the next will be in Bristol in March 2012. These functions may not be around for ever – so – go on – give them your support!

DONATIONS

Did you know that you can send a donation to the Association at any time? We are often asked if this is possible and the answer is, "Yes, of course it is." Many branches send us donations in memory of members who have sadly passed away but it is possible to make a donation at any time for whatever reason. You can specify whether you want your donation to go to the main Association account – please make cheques payable to WRAC Association – or, if you want it to go to the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund then make your cheque payable to ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund. It is important that you do make out your cheque to the right account.

Whatever you decide to do, PLEASE make sure that we have a Gift Aid form from you. If you pay tax, the funds can reclaim the tax and it adds to the donation you have made without it costing you any more.

A Gift Aid form has been printed on the back of the carrier sheet which had your name and address on it. If you have made a donation in the past, and you have not sent us one before, please complete it now.

If you have never sent us a donation, perhaps you would be kind enough to think about it now and send it in with the Gift Aid form.

Even if you are not thinking of making a donation now, why not fill in the form anyway and send it back. We will file it and have it to hand if you should be kind enough to make any donations in the future. You will not have to look out the form and we can reclaim the tax!

JUST TO MAKE YOU SMILE

Why does the sun lighten our hair but darken our skin?

Why do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries and then insist on diet Coke?

Why do we leave our cars worth thousands of pounds on the driveway and put our useless junk in the garage?

Why can't women put on mascara with their mouth closed?

Why don't you ever see the headline 'Psychic Wins Lottery'?

Why is 'abbreviated' such a long word?

Why is the time of day with the slowest traffic called the rush hour?

Why isn't there mouse-flavoured cat food?

Why don't sheep shrink when it rains?

You know that indestructible black box that is used on planes? Why don't they make the whole plane out of the same stuff?

HAVE YOU MOVED RECENTLY OR ARE YOU ABOUT TO MOVE?

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

Mrs/Miss Initials.....

Surname

First line and post code of old address

New address:

Post code

Tel. No.

E-mail

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

Reunions

ATS DINNER CLUB LUNCHEON – 19 MAY 2010

W/30733 **PDF Compressor Free Version**
joybalmain@hotmail.com

The ATS Dinner Club Luncheon was held at the Victory Services Club and was attended by 58 members and two guests. The event was a very happy occasion led by Joy Balmain, Chairman, with Lady Mary Crofton, Vice President. We were pleased that our Patron, Brigadier Anne Field was able to join us.



The General Secretary with Joy Balmain and Lady Mary Crofton. Thanks to Jean Taylor for the photograph

The guest speaker was Major Jane Freebairn standing in for Major Gabi Shanahan who was indisposed at the last minute. Major Freebairn spoke about the work of the ATS and WRAC Benevolent Fund which was very interesting.

The raffle was very successful and raised £106 for the club funds. Added to donations previously received, the funds are in good shape for the 50th Anniversary in 2011 and the autumn break in September/October this year. The highlight of the latter will be a visit to the Royal Signals Museum at Blandford where we particularly want to see the Women at War exhibition.

COURSE 51 PLUS REPS FROM 49, 50 AND 51!

Editor: A composite effort from three of those who attended the above reunion! Thanks to Sue-Grenville-Jones for the photograph.

Barbara Crabbe née Rowbottom's story

barbaracrabbe@googlemail.com

April 15th 2010 found me cleaning round bath taps with a toothbrush, taking me back 40 years to the day when Course 51 was commissioned from the WRAC College Camberley. Why was I cleaning round bath taps with a toothbrush? Had I got OCD? No – Sgt Maj Agnes Doig was coming to stay for the reunion weekend!

After commissioning I was posted to Guildford 2 Coy

training recruits. Met my husband, then posted to School of Electrical & Mechanical Engineering, Bordon, Did everything from OIC Football to defending on Courts Martial. Left on pregnancy of first daughter and followed the flag bearing two more daughters in foreign fields, well – not literally! All this time, our course kept in contact and we often managed to meet up. Using all those skills in cleaning etc learnt at Cadet Wing on moving quarters, wives clubs, quarter visiting etc. Sue Hatton and I also pioneered the WRAC retreats at the beginning of the First Gulf War when we found ourselves doing RO Staff jobs at HQ 1st British Corps – even though we were not qualified in years of service to do so. We were called Dependants in Lieu of UK based Civilians. I am afraid that I used power dressing and the Elizabethan mantra of, “I may look like a female civilian but I have the heart and soul of a WRAC Officer”, to hide that the only sort of staff work I had ever done was to compose sick notes for the daughters!

Then back to UK and much to my and my husband's surprise, one of our daughters joined the Army and appeared on “Guns & Roses” about the girls at Sandhurst. Horrible at Sandhurst; all that running and digging trenches and being horribly fit. So much nicer at Camberley – the flower arranging classes have stood me in good stead over the years and saved Messes hundreds of pounds. I have always managed to stay in touch with my course and, with our seniors and juniors, have managed several reunions. I am very proud to be part of an incredible bunch of women some of whom seem to have hardly changed! Certainly if I took my specs off after a couple of glasses of wine we looked exactly the same.

Pippa Jarman adds her comments about “spit and polish”

pippajarman@locallink.co.za

I blame my Officer Cadet Training at the WRAC College for my OCD too! Room Inspection necessitated the following in addition to normal.....(normal????!!) cleaning:

Take out each window louvre (there were MANY!) to clean frames & glass; replace.

Crawl on knees to scrape any polish lumps from lino floor with razor blade before re-polish & buff.

Shine taps, stuff cotton-wool up to prevent drips into basin; dry basin and polish plughole.

Make up bed in military ‘square’ fashion then dust bed springs.

Meticulously lay all above on bed in accordance with Queens Regs.

Wash, Starch, Iron, Fold! Wash, Starch, Iron, Fold! Wash, Starch, Iron, Fold! Wash, Starch, Iron, Fold! Wash, Starch, Iron, Fold!

‘Bull’ shoes to mirror shine (clean and polish under sole too) – (don’t use ‘Seel’ in case it rains.....blue puddles!) Sleep in corridor night before Inspection!

One blessing? Stay-brite buttons!

Sue Grenville-Jones tells about the Reunion weekend itself!

s.hugi@btinternet.com

Carrie Blanch and I, Sue Grenville-Jones, in Rice being fifty per cent of Course 50 were thrilled and honoured to be invited by our juniors, Course 51, to attend their reunion lunch celebrating 40 years since their commissioning in April 1970. We have all been attending re-unions held by senior and junior courses over the years, but this fortieth one was to be very special indeed. Ba Crabbe, née Rowbottom had once again agreed to be our hostess at her lovely home near Winchester. She and her husband Freddie had the house extended a little while ago and we're not sure whether it was to accommodate her increasing family or the influx of WRAC friends who they put up on these occasions! They are famous for their generous hospitality and for Ba's superlative catering. The lunch was superb. That and being surrounded by lifelong friends makes a winning combination. We have a great deal to thank the WRAC for, the most important of which has been the comradeship that we have shared over the past 40 years or more.

Another special reason for attending was the presence of our Cadet Wing CSM, Agnes Doig, who has become a legend in her own life time. She had earned our respect as a firm but kind sergeant major at Cadet Wing and since then we have delighted in her company at a number of reunions over the years. We still hesitate before calling her Agnes, as Miss Doig or Ma'am springs more readily to our lips. Mind you, she still remembers us as Miss... She joins in with all our reminiscing and a reunion would not be the same without her.



Standing L-R: Sue Hatton née Stewart, Cathy Ranford née Lewis, Rosemary Jane née Scoffham, Di Lloyd-Jones née Kinchin, Bobbi Hooker née Barrett, Sue McCulloch née Kavanagh, Bobbi Chilton née Ridley, Sue Grenville-Jones née Rice

Sitting L-R: Mary Thomas née Rosser, Carrie Blanch née Sykes, Ba Crabbe née Rowbottom, Ruth MacCauley née Henderson, Agnes Doig (80 next June!), Maryanne Ritchie née Linklater

GRAND REUNION MARCH 2012

The next Grand Reunion will be held in Bristol at the Marriott City Centre Hotel. It will be held from **Friday 23 to Sunday 25 March 2012.**

The outline format will be:

Friday Afternoon; Arrival

Friday Evening; Buffet Supper

Saturday Afternoon; AGM

Saturday Evening; Gala Dinner

Sunday Morning; Church Service and Parade

As usual, there will be opportunities to buy Grand Draw tickets, memorabilia and to take part in other fund-raising activities. Further details will be published in the next *Lioness* but, in the meantime, put the dates in your forward planner and start saving!

To commemorate her 69th Birthday, actress/vocalist, Julie Andrews made a special appearance at Manhattan's Radio City Music Hall for the benefit of the AARP. One of the musical numbers she performed was 'My Favourite Things' from the legendary movie 'The Sound Of Music'. Here are the lyrics she used:

(Sing It!) If you sing it, it's especially hysterical!

*Botox and nose drops and needles for knitting,
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,
Bundles of magazines tied up in string,
These are a few of my favourite things.*

*Cadillacs and cataracts, hearing aids and glasses,
Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favourite things.*

*When the pipes leak, when the bones creak,
When the knees go bad,
I simply remember my favourite things,
And then I don't feel so bad.*

*Hot tea and crumpets and corn pads for bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions,
Bathrobes and heating pads and hot meals they bring,
These are a few of my favourite things.*

*Back pain, confused brains and no need for sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinnin',
And we won't mention our short shrunken frames,
When we remember our favourite things.*

*When the joints ache, when the hips break,
When the eyes grow dim,
Then I remember the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad.*

Ms. Andrews received a standing ovation from the crowd that lasted over four minutes and had to give repeated encores.

Submitted by Jean Bazeley and Alice Matthews via the Internet!

Letters to the Editor

LIONESS 1/2010 – ANN DICKSON

PDF Compressor Free Version

Lane End House, Meadle, Aylesbury, Bucks HP17 0UD

Dear Editor,

Thank you very much for sending my father the copy of *Lioness* 1/2010 with the article about my mother. He was both touched and delighted to see it and it will remain an important part of my mother's memorabilia.

I thought that you might like to know that I received a letter from Mrs Mavis Ash née Bonnell. Now in her 90th year, she was at Ripon from 1941-1945. She was a Drill Sergeant and in charge of the Officers' Mess at Harper and Deverell Barracks. She says that, although she doesn't remember my mother, she must have known her as she certainly remembers the fire – and she definitely remembers 'Beauty' the Red Setter! I really didn't expect to hear from anyone so her letter was a very pleasant surprise. Thank you once again for giving the time and space to my mother's story.



The well-remembered Beauty!

4 IND COY WRAC, FARELF

W/88327 Mrs Jean S McKenna née Gammie
29 Kenelworth Road, Ashford, Kent TW15 3EP

Dear Editor,

What a joy to see the photograph of 4 Ind Coy WRAC, FARELF. What memories it brought back to me of my time there in the early 1950s. I was a Corporal in the Company Offices for a good couple of years.

I played a lot of netball – yes, in all that heat and I really enjoyed my service out there. I am trying to remember names but sad to say the old brain won't come out with them. But I can sit here and plainly see the young faces of the girls I was with. I do remember Miriam Perrio who was our company driver. She came from the Channel Islands and returned there to get married. I married a sailor out east and came back in late 1954.

AND ANOTHER ABOUT 4 IND COY

W/338386 Mrs Peggy Sorley née Apps
21 Clayponds Road, Bishops Waltham, Southampton
SO32 1BH

With reference to the article and photograph in *Lioness* 1/2010, I am the Peggy Apps who Madge Evans remembers from 4 Ind Coy WRAC, FARELF.

Madge, I think you are the girl who came to my room with an article from an old *Illustrated Weekly* magazine dated 25 April 1953. It contained a double page spread about my home town of Bishops Waltham which dates back to the eleventh century. The article described Bishops Waltham as "The town that is dying – the shops and businesses are closing down and no-one can stop it". Well, I am very happy to say that the town is thriving with excellent shops in the High Street and an ever-growing population. The reporter apparently chose to visit on a Wednesday afternoon: half day closing so there was hardly anyone about.

A year or so ago, I went with Southampton Branch to the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas. We visited the Far East section and were given a talk about the Japanese occupation including Singapore. My legs were killing me as we had walked a long way and I sat down on a seat in a lych gate nearby. Imagine my feelings when the guide told us that the lych gate had been brought all the way from our little church in Tanglin and that some of the wood from which it was made had come from Changi Prison.

I wonder if anyone remembers our old camp dog? I've forgotten his name. He was not over friendly and did not like to be fussed over but he liked to accompany us to Church on Sundays and to the cinema where he would sit, quite content, in the aisle until we had to leave.

My eyesight is not very good so it is difficult to recognise anyone on the photo. It might be me 6th along on the second row because of the hair and tan – I did overdo the sunbathing. On the other hand, I could be the 12th along as that was how I used to wear my hat! Janet Unsted is at the left hand end of the back row and next to her is someone called Mary – we all three went to Singapore on HMT Franconia in 1952. Janet and I are still in touch and Mary married a sailor from HMS Terror.

101ST BIRTHDAY PHOTOGRAPH

Miss Charlotte Lawrence
21 Orchard Gardens, Ipswich Road, Colchester, Essex CO4 0XB

Dear Editor,

In your letter to me of 17 March you kindly mentioned getting a photograph of me for the next issue of the *Lioness*, in respect of my 101st birthday. Herewith, I think it flatters me a bit but my friends say not! Editor: *We all agree!* I had a very pleasant day with lots of nice cards from ex colleagues that I have served with.

I trust all is well with you and I look forward to the next issue of the *Lioness*.

101 today – 18 May 2010



Poems

PDF Compressor Free Version

CATARACTS!

Be glad you could see your face change with age
 As years made a ravage.
 Had you had poor sight
 And dim grew the light
 As both eyes lost lustre
 With cataracts growing in a cluster.
 Then magical day came
 To see was the aim.
 What a terrible shock I received
 To see this old lady, all ravaged and aged.
 Hands wrinkled and brown
 Grey hair hanging down.
 I'd grown old overnight
 On recovering my sight.
 Old age did not come slowly to me,
 But suddenly pounced – and I'm sure I'm not me!

Submitted by W/377020 Deb Horne née Burgoyne
 in response to the poem sent in by Mrs HE
 Forrester which was published on *Lioness* 1/2010
 page 74. Mrs Burgoyne recommends cataract
 operations but be prepared for the initial shock!

WHAT IS A FRIEND?

A friend is such a precious gift
 One who's always there
 When times of tribulation
 Seem impossible to bear.

A friend will always keep in touch
 In any single way
 By telephone or by letter
 Or by visiting some day.

It's often very hard to find
 A genuine true friend
 Who'll always stick right by your side
 Until the very end.

But once they're found, they'll prove to be
 A good and valuable gem
 They'll always strive to be honest
 No matter where or when.

It's true there may be differences
 That arise at times and yet
 Friendship means forgiving
 And trying to forget.

So those with true friends – keep them
 Don't let them drift away.
 Let them know they're cared for
 Each hour, each year, each day

Submitted by Avril Williams, Secretary Cambridge
 Branch

MATILDA – THE VAD WHO WENT TO SEA (and called the ship a boat, thereby bringing disgrace upon her uniform!)

Matilda was a VAD
 Who always longed to go to sea
 And therefore to attain this end
 She begged the Admiralty to send
 Her off in any kind of craft
 "Cruiser, TB or Armed Raft".

At length the First Sea Lord heard her plea
 And so appointed her to sea
 In HMS IMMEDIATE
 A battleship of recent date
 Of nearly thirty thousand tons
 With perfectly enormous guns.

So putting on her smartest frock
 She joined the ship when still in dock.
 That afternoon at half past three
 The ship and crew went off to sea.
 It did not take her long to find
 Her pair of sea l....(never mind).

She had been one hour afloat
 Before she called the Ship a Boat!

The Captain when he overheard
 The use of this distressing word
 Fell fainting on the quarter deck
 And nearly broke his bloody neck.

The bo'sun and the wardroom cat
 Flew shrieking to the after flat
 And so appalling was his fright
 That in the morn his hair was white.

They say a sergeant of Marines
 Gave several really piercing screams
 And never afterwards did he
 Enjoy his full mentality.

The sailors who were make-and-mending
 Behaved in manner quite heartrending
 While several for a fact I know
 Got MCF and MCO*

While one was heard to sob "Oh Lord"
 And gently slithered overboard
 A thing that's seldom done at sea
 Except in grave emergency

At length when order was restored
 They wirelessly to the First Sea Lord
 Who, quite by chance, was at Whitehall
 And promptly ordered her recall.

In future said the Admiralty
 No VAD shall go to sea!

*MCF Morbus Cordis Functionalis and Morbus Cordis
 Organicus are respectively functional and organic
 diseases of the heart!*

Submitted by Carol Ederle who found it amongst her
 mother's possessions. The original was obviously
 created by using a typewriter (remember them?) on a
 very thin sheet of foolscap paper.

Obituaries – their final salute

W/104263 MAY BARBARA WHITEHEAD

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May Whitehead, who served in the ATS from 24 April 1942 to 23 May 1946, passed away on 23 January 2010 aged 87 years. She did her training in Lancaster 'C'2 Coy Manchester Group and was posted to the Royal Army Pay Corps. After her demob she resumed her career in Public Service and also taught shorthand and clerical skills at her local college in Manchester.



May regularly attended the Remembrance Day parades and services held at the Royal Albert Hall and very proudly laid the wreath at the Cenotaph on occasions. She was also a member of the ATS Dinner Club, where she enjoyed meeting up with old friends and making new ones. She loved doing that. May will be sadly missed by her friends in the Rochdale Branch.

**W/447457 CHRISTINE MARSHALL 1952-25
FEBRUARY 2010**



Christine Marshall (Chrissie) was born and grew up in the Halifax area of West Yorkshire. Joining the WRAC in 1974, she trained initially with the R Signals at Catterick but then reallocated to become a driver and served at Guildford before being posted to 68 Sqn RCT, HQ BAOR.

In 1976 Chrissie also met Elaine (Dylan) with whom she set up home in West Yorkshire after leaving the Corps in 1978. They joined the TA in the newly formed 288 Mov Con Sqn RCT(V) based at Preston and Chrissie was a SSgt when she decided to retire from military life. The friendships Chrissie made at both 68 Sqn and in the TA endured and, over the years, there were numerous parties, BBQs and special events to be attended. It was Chrissie who organised a busload of us to attend the final WRAC band concert in Guildford in 1992. We all enjoyed the concert and then managed to round the night off in the Sgts Mess at the WRAC Centre.

As we all started to reach milestone birthdays we took to hiring a large bunk barn in the Yorkshire Dales that could accommodate the whole 'gang' along with the assorted dogs that had become part of peoples lives. At any gathering Chrissie was always in the 'thick' of it clutching either a Tia Maria & Coke or a Gin & Tonic. She always ensured that everyone had a good time and could always be relied upon to drink more than her share in order to spare everyone else's liver.



Su Coultas, Elaine Parkin (Dylan), Lynn Finnamore (Zorro), Karen Greenbank, Mel Southcombe-Tate (Ten Bob Eyes), Jeannie Wilkinson, Carol Southcombe-Tate, Carol Geddes, Chrissie Marshall, Lin Clark (Gravel-head), Dot Lowes, Jackie Morley & Tom Morley. Missing from this picture are Pauline Rimmer (Fred) and Nicki Selwood – who came to the barn but left early on this occasion. They are now living and working in New Zealand.

When Chrissie left the WRAC, she worked for a number of years for Sunblest Bakeries in the transport offices. She then ran her own shop before joining the Ambulance Service in the early 1990s. In the Control Room Chrissie had finally found a job that she really enjoyed and that enabled her to work as part of a team. She worked her way to become first an Emergency Dispatcher and then a Team Leader based initially at Birkenshaw, followed by a move to Wakefield and then on to York.

In 2009, Chrissie was diagnosed with Wegeners Vasculitis – a rare condition but one, which it was hoped, could be controlled with medication. Unfortunately, it was not to be but many of the Barn Gang, other friends and family were able to be with her on the day before she died. A Humanist funeral was held at Elland Crematorium on 5 March and, during the service and at the wake afterwards, many tributes were paid to Chrissie which helped us all to remember and celebrate the huge impact her friendship had had on all of us.

W/447299 Melanie Southcombe-Tate
E mail: melandcarol1@hotmail.com

DOROTHY MAY McFALL JUNE 1944 – JANUARY 2010

One of life's characters, Dorothy May McFall, joined the WRAC from her home city of Liverpool in 1966. After training as a stewardess, she was posted to the WRAC College in Camberley during which time promotion quickly followed before she was promoted to Sgt and posted to Singapore as the Sgts Mess Caterer. After Singapore she transferred to the admin role and served with a variety of units in UK, BAOR and Hong Kong. I briefly met Dorothy in Düsseldorf in 1975. The next time we met was at the WRAC Centre in 1978 when she was posted in as CSM of No 2 Trg Coy and I was a training Sgt with No 1 Coy. Dorothy was extremely competitive and, while she would enjoy lots of friendly banter with all the permanent staff of HQ Coy and H&D Coy, she would only tolerate us mere mortals in 1 Trg Coy as she did not wish to be seen "fraternizing with the

enemy". She would often give the training Sgts in 1 Trg Coy the "cold and grumpy CSM treatment" but her vilification of anything and everything 'Yellow' was accepted by all in the spirit in which it was intended. Quick witted, entertaining and blessed with a delightful sense of humour, Dorothy had this amazing knack of being able to keep a stern and straight face especially after telling a joke or coming out with a cracking 'one liner' which would often get those individuals who just happened to be in her company or within earshot into trouble for not being able to suppress their laughter. There was many an occasion when she would walk into the Sgts Mess wearing a wig, dressed as a nun, or in white tennis kit complete with racquet and impersonating "Billie Jean King." These hilarious antics resulted in much laughter and enjoyment for all mess members. I am confident that I can speak for a large number of people who found this tour in Guildford in the late seventies to be a most enjoyable and memorable experience and where many lifelong friendships were formed.



Dorothy reached the pinnacle of her career in 1984 when she was promoted to WO1 (RSM) and posted first to 29 Coy WRAC in Rheindahlen followed by her penultimate tour as RSM at the WRAC Centre. I know that she enjoyed both these tours immensely. As a fanatical and devout supporter of Liverpool Football Club, she was terribly biased. Whether as PMC or RSM, she would insist that "You'll Never Walk Alone" was played towards the end of each mess function – it became her anthem.

Dorothy left the Army in 1989 and enjoyed a short break from work before resuming her travels once again when she found employment as a Matron in two boarding schools for boys first in Cambridgeshire and then in Worcestershire. A post as the Senior Matron at the Norland College in Berkshire followed; this world famous organisation provides expert training in child care and produces the crème de la crème of British Nannies for the Home and International market. Her next appointment was again as a Senior Matron but this time at an all girls Finishing School in Switzerland; we often joked that this was about 40 years too late! She

eventually retired from full time employment and moved to Blackpool in 2001 to be close to friends and family in the North West.

Dorothy died at her home on 19 Jan 10. Her funeral on 2 Feb 10 was attended by a large number of her friends who had travelled from all over the country to pay their last respects. As some of her friends had been unable to attend her funeral, it was decided that a celebration of Dorothy's life would be held in her adopted home town on the weekend starting 25 Jun 10 which would have been her 64th birthday. It was a glorious and enjoyable three days filled with much laughter as we reminisced about the good times she had shared with everyone.



A kinder or more loyal friend would be hard to imagine. Requiescat in Pace, Dorothy and on behalf of everyone who knew, admired or loved you – thanks for the memories.

Major Kath Kay

NORAH WADSWORTH NÉE TYNAN

Norah Wadsworth, née Tynan sadly died on 10th March 2010. She joined the Canterbury Branch in the late 1990s having moved to Birchington in Kent. She and her husband Graham met Lt Col Angela Cobb, the Vice President of our Branch, and she was very quickly brought along to one of our meetings where she became a most popular member with her fascinating stories of her life and service.

Norah was called up and joined the ATS where her exceptional organising ability and drive gained her rapid promotion. In 1945 she was on Field Marshall Montgomery's staff in Berlin. In the following year she was promoted to Junior Commander and in 1947, at the age of 23, she became a Senior Commander ATS. While serving in Germany she met Graham Wadsworth, a Captain in the special Airborne Reconnaissance Regiment of the Airborne Division.

Graham had fought with great distinction in the Battle of Arnhem, for which he was awarded the American Bronze star by the Supreme Allied Commander, General Eisenhower. Later he added to his wounds with the loss of an eye during the liberation of Norway in 1945. In

Berlin the shy Graham bribed the Officers' Mess bandleader to play a tune called Laura (as near as he could get to Norah) whenever Norah appeared. Having plucked up courage to introduce himself he didn't waste time and that same day he asked her to lunch, a cocktail party and dinner, proposed marriage and was accepted!

Following their marriage and demob in 1947 Graham joined the Colonial Service and became a District Commissioner in the Gold Coast now Ghana in West Africa where they remained until Independence. Later, and back in England, Norah became involved in the London fashion world and in 1964 with Sheila Howes, opened their first fashion shop which eventually became the Sheila Worth chain. There is only a limited opportunity here to sketch a little of Norah's amazing life and of the family whom she adored.



Norah with Canterbury Branch

On the day that the Memorial to Women was unveiled in Whitehall in London, Norah was with the group and proved to be extremely adept at summoning taxis with an elegant wave of her hand and anyway who could make these veterans pay a fare? She was a much loved lady, a great raconteuse and someone whose stoical character was well fitted to the very varied life she led.

Canterbury members will always remember the elegant lady who had time for everyone and was such a generous and loyal friend.

Mrs Kate McGregor, Area Chairman of South East Area and Chairman of Canterbury Branch

MRS EDNA QUINLAN NÉE CHESTER

Edna Quinlan joined the ATS at the start of the Second World War. She was called up for National Service to Guildford and soon became Junior Commander Edna Chester, serving in Liverpool, Maidenhead, Oswestry, Bodmin, and many other places in the UK. She marched in the Victory Parade on 8 June 1946 and I have inherited her programme of the event.

In 1948, Edna was posted to Berlin and commanded the WRAC during the Berlin Blockade. There she met and subsequently married the Reverend Dermot Quinlan, Chaplain to the Forces, originally from Cavan, Ireland. Together they lived in some 20 houses during their

service life including the Chaplain's House at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, Seremban in Malaya and Aldershot. Dermot retired after 22 years service and they settled into a full parish life in Leicestershire; firstly in Barwell and then in Billesdon. They retired to Uppingham in 1980 and in 1989.

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Edna had twin daughters Brigid and Shelagh, who both held Short Service Commissions in the WRAC for 8 and 6 years respectively.

Edna had a huge range of dear and close friends over the years, from all walks of life and consequently a Christmas Card list without equal. She kept in touch with many of her Army friends, particularly those who served in Berlin. She died on 29 April 2009, aged 88, at the Manorhead Care Home in Hindhead, just as Berlin was celebrating 60 years since the Blockade.

Brigid Simmonds OBE
17a Chartfield Avenue, Putney, London SW15 6DX

COLONEL BARBARA LAVERACK MBE 30 SEPTEMBER 1924 - 28 MARCH 2010

Colonel Barbara Laverack was born in Cairo on 30 September 1924 into an Army family: her father served throughout his career with Duke of Wellington's Regiment eventually being commissioned and serving as the regimental Quartermaster. His family invariably accompanied him wherever he was posted and settled in Leeds when he left the Army. Barbara's brother, Robert, served throughout WWII and survived the whole of the Italian campaign only to be killed in Germany dealing with mines in July 1945: a grievous loss to the family.

Although Barbara wanted to join up, her parents deterred her and when "call up" came, none of the three services

could take her. However, in May 1945, she became secretary to the Deputy Controller NAAFI Western Europe and spent two years in Belgium and Germany. Early in the 1950s, she heard through her father's contacts that the WRAC were recruiting specialist Staff Officers. Her previous experience gave her just the right qualifications and she duly applied and was accepted. Barbara joined in June 1954, attended the three month staff course at the WRAC Staff College at Frimley Park and began her career as a Staff Officer in January 1955.

A posting as Staff Captain Q Maint in Port Said coincided with the withdrawal and Barbara was proud to say that she had been the last WRAC Officer to leave Egypt. A happy tour in Cyprus followed and, on returning to UK, she became the SO to General Pyman, the Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Barbara's considerable skills were clearly recognised as General Pyman kept her on his staff when he was posted to Norway as CinC AFNORTH. Barbara was granted local rank of Major to be his MA and was very pleased to be awarded the MBE for her work there.

Two tours in the WRAC Directorate followed and Barbara decided to apply for a Regular Commission to give her a full career and wider range of employment. It must have been somewhat daunting to enter regimental duty at Major level but she faced a roller coaster of regimental postings with resolution and humour. Her appointment as WSLO in her beloved native county of Yorkshire was a welcome introduction to non-staff work. Her next appointment as 2IC to Colonel Jane Rankin at the WRAC Centre in Guildford was more trying and tested her drill and marching expertise! She had to work hard to master the parade movements and words of command required for Passing Out Parades and she was always relieved to return to the Officers' Mess afterwards. Barbara thoroughly enjoyed her responsibilities as President of the WRAC Staff Band and was a strong and reliable supporter of the Band and the bandswomen. They showed their appreciation by being much kinder to her than any other officer at their annual Christmas entertainment!



After promotion to Lt Col and a tour as LO WRAC, Barbara was promoted to Colonel in June 1976 and appointed as DDWRAC when the Directorate was in Lansdowne House in Berkeley Square. Living in Putney, she was well known for her generous hospitality.

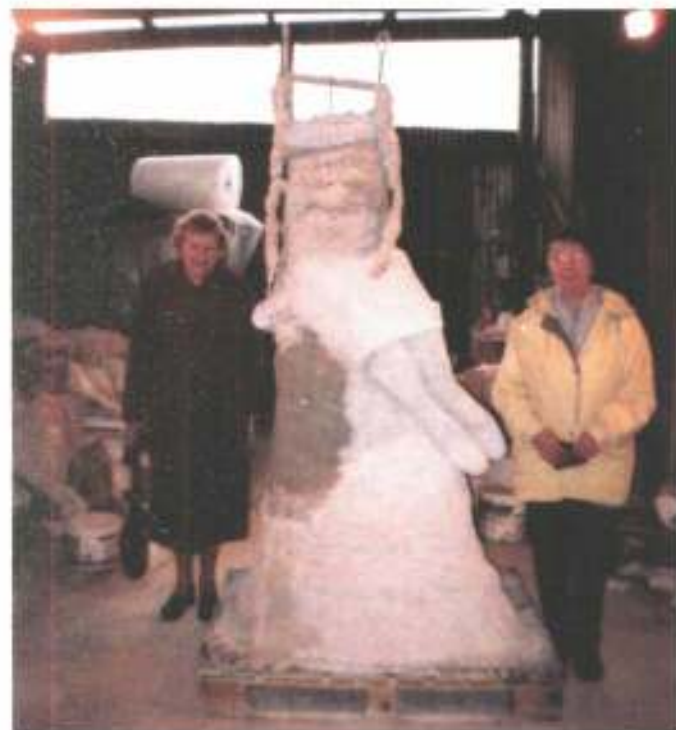
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After retirement in September 1979, Col Laverack took a great interest in and gave a lot of time and energy to service related organisations: President of London Branch of the Association, Deputy Chairman of Council of the Association and a popular and hard working member of the Management Committee of the Victory Services Club. In particular, she took an active interest in the refurbishment planning. She especially enjoyed the WRAC Officers' Luncheons and Dinners until advancing frailty and increasing deafness made it difficult. Her last attendance was at the luncheon at the House of Commons where the above photograph was taken. Who can forget her triumphant arrival being wheeled, at speed, over the cobbled courtyard in a borrowed wheelchair?

Barbara made and, more importantly kept, friends throughout her career and retirement. Her Yorkshire heritage made her robust and self reliant but she was also a warm, generous and cheerful companion. Always immaculate and stylish, she set a standard to which many of us aspired but few of us achieved! Above all, she was a true and honest friend who will indeed be sadly missed.

Brig Shirley Nield
Lt Col Janet Clements

W/52280 MARGARET ROGERS NÉE SMITH



Mary Beeston on the left and Margaret Rogers on the right of the ATS statue in Andy Comyn's Studio

Margaret Rogers served in the ATS throughout the war as a Kine Operator. After the war, when living in Hailsham, she joined the Hastings Branch of the Association and in 1988 was a founder member of

Eastbourne Branch along with Lilian Penfold and Vera Worsell. She still held the post of Chairman/Secretary up until her death in April 2010.

Margaret was also a loyal member of the ATS Dinner Club and was their Ticket Secretary for many years. However, Margaret will also be well remembered as the Liaison Officer of the project resulting in the ATS Statue at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. Mary Beeston was the Fund Raiser and, between them, they commissioned Andy Comyn to be the sculptor and saw the project come to fruition when the Statue was unveiled on 15 July 2006. Margaret's full report was printed in *Lioness* 1/2007.



The ATS Statue at the National Memorial Arboretum

W/85812 CHRISTINE (CHRISSIE) COWLEY NÉE HUGHES

The very sad news of Mrs Christine Cowley's (our Chrissie) death in November 2009 came as a shock to all her "Club" friends: especially those who were with her over Armistice weekend. She was very much her usual happy self and soon had the downstairs bar rocking and rolling with her singing and dancing. Always thinking of other people, she raised a considerable amount of money during the weekend, both for the Victory Services Club and the Ghurkha Welfare Fund which was a special cause to her. Indeed, over the years, she must have raised many thousands for charities too numerous to mention.

Chrissie saved the Chester Branch of the Association in the early 1970s when she acted as the Chairman and Secretary and was an inspiration to us all. She was

known to us as the Raffle Queen! She was also involved with the Cheshire Yeomanry, the Chester RN Association and the local Conservative Association. Chrissie was the Secretary of the Chester RA Association for many years as she had served as a Plotter with several anti-aircraft groups during her service in the ATS.

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Chrissie was a loveable and selfless person and all her friends in this area and Wales miss her so very much.

Mrs Joan McLellan, Chairman of Chester Branch

JANE KNIGHT NÉE SANDY 10 NOVEMBER 1921 - 30 DECEMBER 2009

Jane Knight Sandy was born at Woolwich on 10th November 1921 and arrived into a military family. Her father eventually served 29 years with the colours,



initially in the Royal East Kent Regiment, the Buffs, during which he had the unusual distinction of three tours of duty in Sierra Leone. His daughter, christened Joan Constance Sandy, was universally known as Jane and after her marriage in 1969 became Jane Knight. In her last years she added her maiden name to her surname to become Knight Sandy.

On 27th September 1938 she heard the announcement of the formation of the ATS and immediately cycled into Aldershot to enlist at the drill hall and was somewhat economical with the truth about her age. Her skills as a Pitman trained shorthand-typist were of great value to the ATS and she became a teleprinter operator and served in a number of small communication centres across the UK. Following several promotions, she went to OCTU in Edinburgh and was commissioned in October 1942.

On Sunday 8th June 1944, while serving in London District, she attended morning service at the Guards Chapel at Wellington Barracks. A few minutes after the service commenced, the chapel was struck by a V1 Flying Bomb. Londoners had come to know that when the V1 engine suddenly became silent they had about 15 seconds to take cover. There was no chance of that in the chapel which suffered a direct hit, killing 121 military personnel and civilians and injuring 141. Jane was posted as missing but had in fact been injured, dug out of the rubble and taken home. Many years later, Jane was to write movingly of her thoughts and fears while trapped under the debris and of the eventual appearance of a guardsman above her, pulling her out.

A few months later she took up new duties in Southern Italy as part of the 8th Army. Jane became one of the first female Signalmasters and served in a number of Royal Signals units throughout the remainder of the Italian campaign. During this time she saw the ruins of Monte Cassino which left a lasting impression on her and also came into contact with the signallers of the 8th Indian Division with whom she formed a lasting bond.

In 1946 she resigned her commission, but continued in public service as a member of the little known United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) which pre-dated the UN proper. She travelled widely in former Axis-occupied countries assisting with the repatriation of refugees. After three years she joined the P&O Steam Navigation Company with whom she sailed the world many times on ships such as the Strathaird and Himalaya, working her way up to become the first female assistant purser in the company.

Jane never forgot her experience of eight years service and in later years, she threw herself wholeheartedly into the Associations of many regiments she had served with including the ATS & WRAC, Royal Signals, Indian Signals and several of the regiments of Foot Guards. She marched at the Cenotaph for many years right up until 2008. She was especially well known throughout the Royal Signals Association and granted Honorary Membership. In particular Jane supported the three branches local to her home: Aldershot, Reading and West London. She served on the committee of the Aldershot Branch for almost 20 years, latterly holding the appointment of Vice President.

Jane Knight was very much an individual from a hardy and resolute generation who lived life to the full. She was a unique blend of humour, compassion and generosity but beneath these softer qualities was a steel core of courage, toughness and resilience. Above all she was guided by her sense of service to motherland and country, and intense dedication and loyalty to all of the organisations to which she belonged over the years. Her distinctive figure and her spirit are greatly missed by all who knew her.

Brigadier Noel Moss

W/320966 PATRICIA VIOLA WINSOME DAVIES NÉE MORTON

My wife, Pat Davies, died on 5 March 2010 following a series of strokes, aged 82.



Guildford 1947. Pat is seated third from the right on the front row

Pat, who was born in South Wales, joined the ATS in Pontefract in 1945 and I met her when she was stationed at the Chief Engineer's Office, North West District, Preston in the September. This was my first posting in UK after 3 ¼ years overseas. In the November, I was posted to Germany despite the fact that my Demob Number was up prior to my return to the UK! I was demobbed in July 1946 and we were married when Pat got a 48 hour pass in 1948.

Pat had been in Selection Testing since the beginning of 1946 and had been stationed at Chester, Cardiff and Guildford. At Cardiff she innocently introduced me to her boss, Major Jack Peterson. She was unaware that before the war he had fought for the Heavyweight Boxing Championship of the World. What a sheltered life all you girls must have led!

Pat was demobbed in 1949 having enjoyed every minute of her service in the ATS as well as making a number of life-long friends. Unfortunately, she was a victim of the post-war TB outbreak and spent three years in hospital but, like all hardy ATS girls, she never complained and bounced back to enjoy a very full life. She qualified as a teacher, brought up our daughter, travelled abroad extensively, was Secretary of the local WI, helped out with Meals on Wheels, did Reading for the Blind, was a member of the British Legion and the Chester Branch of your Association.



Although I wasn't too pleased at being posted to Chester, meeting Pat there was the best piece of luck I have ever had.

Mr Laurie Davies
19 Riddings Lane, Flat 3, Hartford, Northwich CW8 1NB

HISTORY OF THE WRAC

This booklet was written just as the WRAC was disbanded in 1992 and it was revised in 2009. It has 37 pages and contains all the essential history of the Corps and useful information about uniform, employments, postings and training units. It also gives all the details about the Royal connections the Corps had.



Copies are available from the WRAC Association, Gould House, Worthy Down, Winchester SO21 2RG and cost just £2.50 incl p&p. Cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association.

ASSOCIATION DIARY



Association diaries have, until now, only been available through Branches. This year, they are available to the whole membership. The diaries measure 6 inches by 3.5 inches and cost £3.50 including p&p.

Diaries are available from the WRAC Association, Gould House, Worthy Down, Winchester SO21 2RG. Cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association.



ANTHONY Mrs Pauline Hazel, of Weymouth on 26 Feb 2010, WRAC

BEARDSMORE Mrs Phylis M, née Pearce, of Rudeley on 27 Feb 2010, ATS

BOWDEN Mrs Eleanor, née McAll, of North Shields on 20 Oct 2009, ATS

BOWDEN Maj Sylvia, of Taunton on 25 Jun 2010, WRAC

BRIDGE Mrs Margaret, née Peterson, of Liverpool on 28 Jun 2010, ATS

CALDOW Miss Ruby, of Dalbeattie on 26 Feb 2010, WRAC

CHRISTIE Miss Jane McLean (Jean), of Aberdeen on 28 May 2010, ATS

CHRISTIE Miss Mary Jane (May), of Aberdeen on 28 Mar 2010, ATS

DAVIES Mrs Patricia, née Morton, of Hartford on 5 Mar 2010, ATS

DEAN Ms Betty, née Sykes, of Worcestershire, ATS

DRURY Mrs Lois, née Smith, of Gainsborough, in Mar 2010, ATS

DYER Mrs Maureen Susan, née Booth, of Exeter on 10 Mar 2010, WRAC

EDWARDS Mrs Lilian, née Staig, of Wilmslow on 16 May 2010, ATS

GOODMAN Miss Patricia, of Eastbourne on 12 Feb 2010, ATS

HARTLEY Mrs Kathleen Eleanor, née Blanford of Chesham on 29 Jun 2010, ATS

HAYLER Mrs Doris, née Stow, of Liss on 6 Jan 2010, ATS

HILL Miss Pathenia J, of Fareham on 14 Dec 2009, WRAC

HOLLAND Mrs Anne Mary, of Weymouth on 25 Apr 2010, ATS

HOLLANDS Mrs Grace May, née Wilson, of Rochester on 6 Apr 2010, ATS

HUNTBACH Mrs Doris, of Rochdale in Dec 2009, ATS

JEPSON Mrs Doris May, née Binns, of Sheffield on 07 Dec 2009, ATS

JONES Mrs Mora, née Cameron, of Ashby De La Zouch on 23 Feb 2010, ATS

LAVERACK MBE Colonel Barbara May, of London on 28 Mar 2010, WRAC

LOVELL Mrs VB, née Cooper, of Bournemouth in Jul 2010, ATS

MATTHEWS Mrs Margaret, of Hereford on 24 Jun 2010, ATS

MCGREGOR Mrs Martha, née Watson, of Arbroath on 20 Jan 2010, ATS

MITCHELL Mrs Audrey Doreen, née Williamson, of Colwyn Bay on 29 Apr 2010, ATS

MORRIS Mrs Margaret Jane, née Dodds, of Halesowen on 3 Feb 2010, ATS

PARSONS Lt Col CG (Kate), of Portscatho on 3 Jun 2010, WRAC

PAYNE Mrs Joan Ann, née Paxton, of Buckinghamshire on 20 Sep 2009, ATS

POOLE-HUGHES Miss Esther Elizabeth, of Hereford on 24 Feb 2010, ATS

RATCLIFF Miss Nellie Joan, of Eastry on 28 Dec 2009, ATS

REID Mrs Doreen McCallum, née Holmes, of Crawley on 12 Mar 2010, ATS

REID Mrs Brigid, née Dunne, of South Australia on 7 Jan 2010, ATS

RICHARDSON Mrs Jean, née Peters, of Maidstone in Jan 2010, ATS

RIDDELL SHORT Mrs Lee, née Levay, of Chester on 7 May 2010, ATS

ROGERS Mrs Margaret Dumma, née Smith, of Hailsham on 8 Apr 2010, ATS

ROOK Mrs Ada Emily, née Wing, of Biggleswade, ATS

SACRE Miss Marjorie, of King's Lynn on 21 Feb 2010, ATS

SADD Mrs Doris, of Salterton on 5 Jan 2010, ATS

SANDERSON Mrs Isabel, née Bray, of Doncaster on 14 Sep 2009, ATS

SAWTER Mrs Doris, née Johnson, of Loughborough on 4 Feb 2010, ATS

SEAMAN Mrs Peggie, née Hemsley, of Bath in May 2010, ATS

SHIELS Mrs Agnes, of Clackmannanshire on 8 Jul 2010, ATS

TAIT Mrs Beatrice, née Blakemore, of Stockport on 24 Feb 2010, ATS

TAYLOR Mrs Eva, née Turvey, of Sittingbourne in Mar 2010, ATS

WADSWORTH Mrs Norah, née Tynan, of Bristol on 10 Mar 2010, ATS

WALKER Mrs Winifred Alice, née Field/Fitzgerald, of Hereford, ATS

WARING Mrs Ellen (Kath) née Mitchell, of Bristol on 19 Feb 2010, ATS

WEARING Mrs Emmie, née Rhodes, of Macclesfield in Apr 2010, ATS

WHITEHEAD Miss May, of Prestwich on 23 Jan 2010, ATS

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD AT THE VICTORY SERVICES CLUB

PDF Compressor File Version SATURDAY 20 MARCH 2010

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all those attending and hoping that they would enjoy the new format: the AGM at 1200 hours followed by a Buffet Lunch at 1330 hours. This would give a further opportunity for a "mini-reunion" between Grand Reunions. She continued by introducing her support team:

● Lt Col Jo Young	Chairman of the Executive Committee
● Colonel Audrey Smith	Chairman of the Grants Committee
● Major Jane Freebairn	General Secretary
● Major Gabi Shanahan	Benevolent Fund Case Secretary
● Mrs Denise Jaballah	Chief Clerk
● Hermé Emary	Webmaster

The Chairman thanked the ladies from London and Greater London Branches who had provided all the "front of house" support. She then paid tribute to all the Branch Secretaries and said how much their hard work and support was appreciated not just by Association HQ but by each one of their members. Every Secretary was part of a significant team which included their Chairman and Treasurer and together they underpinned the Branch network.

The Chairman outlined her programme of visits to individual Branches and Area Reunions and emphasised how important this contact was.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from many individuals, several Branch Secretaries and the following members of Council: Brig Dame Joanna Kelleher, Lt Col Lady Martha Bruce, Col EJ Bowles, Lt Col MW Soames, Lt Col S Donovan, Lt Col MG Fahy and Maj LI Jones.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated in *Lioness* 2/2009. No comments had been received. It was proposed that the Chairman sign them as a true record.

Proposed: Bristol Seconded: Harrogate 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 2009 at Worthy Down and secondly in London at the Victory Services Club in January 2010. The main items of interest had been:

a. Changes to membership of Council:

- Lt Col Jo Young had been elected as Vice Chairman of Council and Chairman of the Executive Committee in July

2009. She had already begun planning the next Grand Reunion in late March 2012. Lt Col Young would also continue as Chairman of the Scottish Area.

- Mrs Eileen Carter, previously Area Chairman of London, had been appointed as a Life Vice President in January 2010.
- Mrs Marie Hemmings had handed over as Chairman of North West Area to Ms Carrole Montessori-Gorman in March 2010. Mrs Hemmings would continue as Secretary of Blackpool Branch.
- Sadly, one of the Life Vice Presidents of the Association had died on 28 June 2009. Miss Muriel Thomson had been a member of the Association for over 60 years and a Chairman of the Scottish Area and member of Council for many of them.

b. Branches. Barnsley had closed.

c. **Appointment of Auditors.** Baker Tilly UK Audit LLP had again been appointed as Auditors.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

The General Secretary presented the financial report in the absence of an Honorary Treasurer. The Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year ending 31 October 2009 had been published in *Lioness* 1/2010 and no comments had been received. Copies of the Annual Report were available for members to refer to and the General Secretary reminded them that the Unrestricted General Funds referred to the Association funds and that the Restricted Funds were the Benevolent Funds.

The Association Funds showed a net incoming resource of £44,730 compared to a net incoming sum of £45,770 last year. There had been a reduction of some 50% in voluntary income directly attributable to a decrease in legacies. However, Activities for generating funds brought in £33,966 compared to no income under that heading the previous year. This amount was the Grand Reunion gross income – before expenses had been paid. The Association Funds had unrealised gains on the investments of £41,172 rather than the unrealised loss of £113,556 in the financial year ending on 31 October 2008. Finally, the General Secretary highlighted that the carried forward fund balance had been £518,026 – an improvement on the £432,124 carried forward the previous year.

The Restricted Funds, i.e. the Benevolent Funds, showed net outgoing resources of £30,240 in comparison with £25,731 the previous year. In other words, the excess of expenditure of income had increased by £4,509. The performance of the stock market had obviously had a major impact on the investment income but the situation had begun to improve and there had been an unrealised gain in the Benevolent Fund investments of £551,218 rather than the previous dramatic unrealised loss of £1,237,846.

The total funds were worth £5,197,633 in comparison to £4,587,253 at the end of the previous financial year. This was a good sign and further improvement was anticipated.

In summary, the General Secretary reported that the Funds were as sound as could be expected in the current financial climate and that they should be sufficient to meet commitments in the financial year Nov 09 – Oct 10. She had no hesitation in recommending that the financial statements should be accepted and that the audited accounts should be ratified.

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Proposed: Wirral Seconded: Lincoln & District
Unanimously agreed

7. REPORT OF THE EDITOR OF THE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

The *Lioness* magazines produced in the financial year Nov 08 to Oct 09 had been 72 and 96 pages respectively. Edition 2/2009 which had highlighted the Grand Reunion had contained many more photographs than previous issues. The Editor had felt that it had been especially important to portray the fun and the esprit de corps which all those who had attended had enjoyed. The reports and photographs had also allowed those who had been unable to attend for whatever reason to share the camaraderie. Members had continued to write and call to say how much the *Lioness* had been appreciated as a lifeline particularly for those who had been unable to share directly in any of the social activities. It had played a significant part in keeping their memories alive. The Editor asked members to bear that in mind when they thought about submitting an article. The *Lioness* was not only an historical archive but also a catalyst which triggered memories.

Unfortunately, the Gift Aid form, which the Editor had referred to in an article in the main part of the *Lioness*, had not been printed on the reverse of the carrier sheet. It would be printed with Edition 2/2010. Gift Aid forms were available to members at the AGM.

Yet again, it had cost more to produce the *Lioness* than the income received to support it. The Trustees were still insistent that the main funds would subsidise the *Lioness* and that there would not any increase to the subscription rates – £5 for an annual member and £50 for a life member. During the last financial year the *Lioness* had been subsidised by £5,280 – about £700 less than the previous year. Production costs had increased by around £2,000 but, fortunately, donations had increased by about the same amount. The Association had been very grateful to each member who had made a donation but the Editor reminded the branch secretaries that it would be appreciated if branches would consider making a donation and drew their attention to the lists of branch donations at the back of the Annual Report: a donation of £50 from each branch would eliminate the excess of expenditure over income in the *Lioness* account.

The Editor concluded by encouraging everyone to consider submitting a short article – one A4 page of text with an accompanying photograph would be suitable.

8. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

a. Executive Committee

Lt Col Young, Chairman of the Executive Committee, reported that she had begun to plan the Grand Reunion which would be held in March 2012. She had considered three locations: Bristol, Birmingham and Manchester, had received initial costings and looked forward to visiting the locations with the Chairman and General Secretary in the

near future. Information about the Grand Reunion would be published in the Secretaries' Newsletter and the *Lioness* as soon as possible.

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. 538 cases had been considered: a decrease of 76 on the previous year. The ratio of cases was 227 ATS to 311 WRAC so approximately 42% of the cases had been ATS and 58% WRAC. The number of WRAC cases had remained fairly constant over the previous three years and there had been a 10% decrease in the number of ATS cases in the same period.

The total amount spent on one-off grants had been £145,463.22: an average of £270 per case. 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, ABF the Soldiers' Charity, 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 22 annuities to those who were elderly, in poor health and who lived alone on minimal income. The annuity was £14 a week plus a Christmas Bonus of £60. ABF the Soldiers' Charity had granted annuities of £60 per month and 43 ladies had received such a payment: 11 fewer than the previous year. The PRMF had also contributed towards the shortfall of Nursing Home Fees for 18 beneficiaries with payments between £6 and £25 a week. ABF the Soldiers' Charity had very often also contributed to these cases because of the amounts involved.

The Chairman of Grants then described three cases.

Mrs J, aged 85, ex-ATS and a widow, lived in sheltered housing and, although in reasonable health, had been registered blind. She could only read with the aid of a powerful magnifier. SSAFA had asked the Fund to provide an electronic visual aid to adapt her television screen for reading. An electronic video magnifier had been purchased with contributions from Poppy Scotland and the Airborne Forces Security Fund. Mrs J's daughter had written to thank us on her mother's behalf. *'I would like to thank you for the generous gift you sent my mother. As she has now nearly lost her sight this machine has been a real help to her. She can now read labels, write a shopping list and even do the crossword! It continues to give her great pleasure as it has enabled her to do so much more.'*

Mrs X aged 59, had served in the WRAC and was divorced. Her full-time employment only paid the minimum wage. SSAFA had asked for assistance to purchase a new washer-drier but a review of her application form had identified that she also had rent and water arrears. With assistance from both the Royal Logistics Corps and ABF the Soldiers' Charity, the Fund had bought the washer-drier and had cleared her priority debts. Mrs X's letter of thanks had ended with: *'I was speechless. I cried then laughed. I didn't*

dare hope that any of it would be paid, far less all of it. I am so grateful; I don't know how to thank you enough. A great weight has been lifted from me. I feel I can face my future with optimism, something I haven't felt for such a long time. Thank you so much for what you have done for me.'

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Mrs Y aged 54 and a divorcee had served in the WRAC. After 8 years full-time employment her employer had reduced her hours to 6 per week but had refused to make her redundant which would have been to her advantage. Struggling to meet the financial commitments she had taken out whilst in full-time employment, she had eventually found another full-time job, paid monthly in arrears. She had approached the Royal British Legion for assistance to cover her priority direct debits until she received her salary. In conjunction with the Royal British Legion, the Fund had made an immediate grant for day-to-day living expenses and had contributed towards clearing her priority debts. In her letter of thanks Mrs Y had written, *'I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude for the assistance you provided...I found myself on 6 hours a week from full-time work within the space of 6 weeks and was devastated that I couldn't cope with the financial repercussions. I was so fortunate to find alternative full-time employment 4 months later but had fallen behind with the large priority debts due to the unexpected job loss. Without your kind and very generous help I honestly do not know how I could have managed to keep my home and family safe.'*

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 Proposals

There were no Branch Resolutions.

d. Election of Honorary Treasurer

Post is vacant.

10. CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

The Chairman presented a Certificate of Appreciation to each of the following members:

Mrs Margaret Barham	Southampton
Mrs Eleri Pirie	Luton
Mrs Janet Reeve	London
Mrs Jean Taylor	London
Miss Christine Gibbs	London

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a. National Memorial Arboretum. The General Secretary read the following extract from the latest National Memorial Arboretum's report to the Association:

The visitor numbers for last year – 274,000 – were slightly down on the previous years – 300,000 but given the poor summer we had

and the onset of the recession, this is not unexpected. The arboretum did not suffer from the usual bouts of flooding and was only flooded for 3 days in November 2009 and 3 days in January 2010. However, the weather has been exceptionally cold with night time temperatures below freezing since November 2009 and it has snowed on 28 days since the start of the year. The trees on your plot are becoming well established and none have died. However, 4 of the Lilac bushes have died along with 14 of the boundary hedging plants. This is an improvement on last year with the downward trend in losses continuing. All of the failures have been replaced. The three benches will need to be cleaned and treated this year

The General Secretary said that the National Memorial Arboretum had asked for a donation of £870 towards the upkeep of the Association Plot.

b. Rededication of AGC Memorial. The AGC had significantly enhanced its memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum and would be holding a rededication service on Friday 16 July. The WRAC Association had been invited to send 5 representatives to include the Association Standard Bearer, Mrs Maureen Deeley.

c. Memorial Chapel. The Chairman had met with the Revd Bob Cotton, St Mary's Church in Guildford and he had confirmed that his trustees were very keen to take the project forward. It was likely that the Lady Chapel, one of the side chapels, would be the site of the Association Memorial Chapel. It had been difficult to identify specific time scales but it was hoped that a dedication service would be held within twelve months – possibly linked with the next AGM. The Secretary of Harrogate Branch asked for as much notice as possible so that members could organise suitable accommodation in a reasonable timescale.

d. APTC Museum. Significant progress had been made and a permanent display to highlight the significant contribution made by female PTIs over the years would be opened at 12 noon on Saturday 18 September 2010.

e. General Secretary. The Chairman announced that Maj Jane Freebairn would be retiring at the end of September 2010. The process to find a replacement had begun and would be subject to MOD Civilian Manpower rules and regulations. The Chairman thanked Major Freebairn for her significant contribution to the Association over the past nine years both as ATS/WRAC Benevolent Fund Case Secretary and as the Regimental Secretary. She stated that the Association had gone from strength to strength during her tenure in office and that she had given exceptional service – her dedication and commitment had been second to none and she would be greatly missed. The Chairman then formally presented Major Freebairn with a £1,000 cheque and a teak garden bench on behalf of all members of the Association.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next AGM would be held at the Victory Services Club in London on Saturday 2 April 2011 or possibly in conjunction with the dedication of the Association Memorial Chapel.

GRAND REUNIONS

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Were you at
WARWICK
in 2006?



Were you at
BLACKPOOL
in 2009?



WILL YOU BE AT
BRISTOL?
23-25 March 2012

