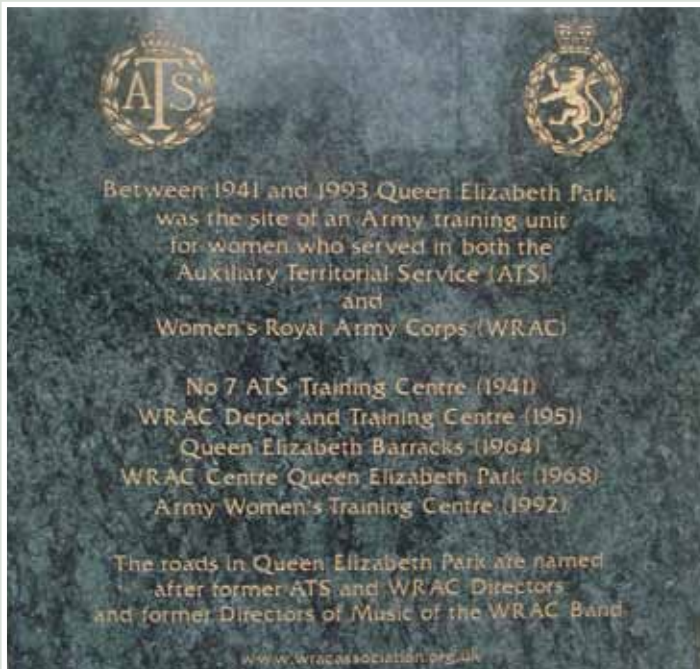


LIONESS





WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

(Incorporating the QMAAC & ATS Comrades Association)

Registered Charity No. 206184, founded in 1919

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Message from the Vice President

I am thrilled to be writing my first Vice President's Foreword for this edition of Lioness. I want to start by expressing my heartfelt thanks to Sue Westlake for her service to the Association which was recognised by the award of an MBE in HM The Queen's Birthday Honours. So well deserved.



My first task as VP is to meet as many members of the Association as I can and I have written to all of the Area Chairmen to reinforce this message. It is only by doing this that I will start to match names to faces and I look forward to getting to know the Branches and their various activities across the United Kingdom.

I must make special mention of 3 fund raising events that have taken place in the last 6 months. In April of this year the gathering at Fort William raised £1525 for the Association and I would like to pass my thanks to the organisers CJ Johnson and Jeanette Cowie. In June Margaret Davies completed her epic 100 mile Walk Right Against Cancer (WRAC) and raised over £3,000 (including gift aid) which will be split between the WRAC Association and Cancer Research UK. I know that Margaret was extremely grateful to all those who turned out to support her along the way and it was great to follow her daily log on Facebook. The third fundraising event took place on 13th July in London. On this day Wendy Hooton and her team of Lionesses completed the British 10K run in brilliant order and, judging by the photographs, with smiles of their faces. They have raised the sum of £8K (including gift aid) which will be split between the WRAC Association and Help for Heroes. My thanks go to all those who participated in these events and to all of you who continue to support the Association in whatever way you can.

Moving on to looking into the future. The Association is already planning ahead to celebrate two important anniversaries. The first of these is in 2017 and is the 100th anniversary of the formation of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) which then became the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (QMAAC) in 1918. The year will also mark the 70th anniversary of the formation of the WRAC on 1st February 1949. We are looking at holding an event to mark this and hope to raise the profile of the WRAC Association through representation of the National Standard at the Festival of Remembrance. The second anniversary is in 2019 which marks the 100th anniversary of the Association and the 70th anniversary of the formation of the WRAC. We are planning to hold a celebratory function in the nave of Guildford Cathedral and have already provisionally invited our Patron and President. All of the details will be publicised to you as they become clearer.

You will see from the article on page 41 that the Council voted to make changes to the Certificate of Appreciation process. This will be replaced by a 'Mentioned in Dispatches' published in Lioness for all to see, the first of these is within this edition. We felt that this was a more fitting way to reflect those individuals' contribution to the Association and made appropriate use of our excellent communication tool, Lioness.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as I can in the next few months.

Suaviter in Modo, Fortiter in Re

Ali

Editorial



Welcome to another busy edition of Lioness, I'd like to draw your attention to a number of enclosures which require a little input from yourself. Loose within the magazine you should have found a book of ten Grand Reunion 2015 Draw Tickets and a pre addressed return envelope. In addition, if you turn to the centre, you will find a pull-out section which includes a

Grand Reunion 2015 application form and a Questionnaire for all members to complete. Please feel free to use the return envelope (you will need to provide the stamp!) for both the completed Questionnaire, Grand Reunion application form and the Draw Ticket counterfoils and payment. All completed Questionnaires will be entered into a Prize Draw.

Lioness continues to evolve and in this edition I have tried to draw together the majority of the 'Notices' in one section for easy reference. Within the enclosed Questionnaire you have the opportunity to comment on any improvements or additions you would like to see in Lioness. I'd really appreciate it if you'd take a few moments to complete this.

Plans for the Grand Reunion 2015 are progressing well and I look forward to meeting many of you in Harrogate

Sue Hatton

Editor: See page 44 for information on the 40th Anniversary of the Guildford pub bombings

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Dear Editor,

I'm hoping one of your former ATS readers might be able to help me find out more information about my late mother, Kathleen Mary Maggs (nee Callow). She served in the ATS but worked for the Royal Army Pay Corps. During this time she was billeted at the Suncliff Hotel, East Cliff, Bournemouth. She was always known as Kath and lived in North Somerset all of her life. My mother passed away seven years ago and I would dearly love to piece together more information about this time in her life.

Lyn Bettridge
lynbet@gmail.com

Dear Editor,

I have recently been fortunate to acquire for my collection a pair of medals which belonged to W330742 Pte E A Shaw ATS. They are the War Medal 1939-45 and the General Service Medal, with a bar for Palestine 1945-48. I am writing to see if there is an ATS historian amongst your readers who can provide me with more detailed information on ATS service in Palestine 1949-48. I am aware that the majority of ATS servicewomen in Palestine were locally recruited.

Allan Stanistreet
allan@stanistreet.plus.com
Tel: 01984 631700

Dear Editor,

My name is Helen J Watt, I served in the WRAC from 1957 - 1967, initially as a PTI (my number was 399737). I was stationed in many units from Guilford to Aldershot and had a wonderful 2 years in Singapore & Hong Kong.

I now live in the State of New Jersey in the USA. Each time I receive the Lioness I eagerly look through all the photos first then the articles, hoping to find info from someone this side of the "pond". I am hoping that I may be able to make contact with any ex members who live over here OR anyone who remembers me from my serving days?

Those of you responsible for getting the Lioness to press are doing a wonderful job. Thank you.

Helen Watt
helenjwatt@aol.com

Dear ATS Veterans (1941-1945),

I am the daughter of Abram Games who was considered to be one of Britain's foremost designers. He designed nearly 300 posters, (Guinness, Financial Times, British Airways, London Transport, Jersey Tourism etc) numerous stamps, emblems (Festival of Britain, BBC, Queen's Award), book jackets, medals and the Cona coffee machine. He was the UK's only Official War Poster Artist, designing 100 posters during the Second World War.

I look after my father's archive and have had several books published on all aspects of his work. I am writing a small book on the history of Abram's most famous poster, the 'Blonde Bombshell'. It was designed in 1941 but was banned by Parliament after being displayed to the public for only 5 weeks. Despite that, it was one of the most successful recruiting posters of the War. I would like to include some of your memories of this poster. Perhaps you recruited because you saw it? I would very much appreciate your help please.

Many thanks.

Naomi Games
n.games1@virginmedia.com



Dear ATS Members,

Did you wear a Lord Nuffield Wedding Dress during the Second World War?

I am the House Steward at the National Trust property Nuffield Place, which is the former home of motor manufacturer and philanthropist William Morris, Lord Nuffield.

During the Second World War Lord Nuffield had around 200 dresses made in America for the use of women in the British armed forces. He was aware that because they were issued with uniforms they had no clothing rations and would be unable to purchase a special dress to be married in. The dresses were stored in a warehouse somewhere in London. With 24 hours notice, a woman could borrow one to wear at their wedding. We have a photograph of one of these being worn, and letters referring to them. However, we do not know what became of the dresses and we are attempting to trace their whereabouts if they still exist and to find out any more information we can about them.

We would like to find other photographs of them being worn and other stories about them. Do you happen to know anything which could help us in our research?

Joanna Gamester
House Steward
Nuffield Place
Huntercombe
Henley-on-Thames
RG9 5RX
Email joanna.gamester@nationaltrust.org.uk

Dear Editor,

I am trying to find a friend called Ann Whatmore who joined the WRAC in 1957 or 58. In 1956 she worked at the Cadbury Bournville factory where she met a Tony Wallin and went to his 21st birthday party. Tony lived in Gorleston Road, Birmingham and I believe Ann lived in Harborne. I would love to hear what became of her.

Pat Wallin
16 Aqueduct Road
Shirley
Solihull
B90 1BT
Tel: 0121 430 7063 (evenings, please leave a message)

Dear Editor,

Volunteers Required - Oral History Project

I am partnering a Heritage Lottery Funded project called 'Our Stories' which is an 18 month project collecting the valuable and unique stories of women who have served in the British military. We hope to interview 60 women across all three services (oldest 100, youngest 18) between now and September 2015. All of the data will go into a book, an educational website and a small touring exhibition. Also, once complete the Imperial War Museum have expressed an interest in the archive.

As a former Wren, Royal Navy Education specialist (24 years) and currently a Royal Naval Reservist (2 years); I am very excited to be involved in this project because I can see potential growth and development that will make this into a really useful and personable educational and social resource.

Should you wish to get involved, like more information or want to discuss further please contact:

Ann Jones
07939 097816
purpltie@gmail.com
www.purpletiepromotions.com

Dear WRAC Association Member

Did you serve in Colchester Garrison?

With permission from the Garrison Commander I am writing the story of Colchester Garrison and, as with Military Detention Colchester from 1947, Voices from the Glasshouse, I would like to make this a living history, written in the words of those who were there. Perhaps you or your family were based in Colchester Garrison, you passed through on your way somewhere else or you have some other connection? Whether you have a story that is recent or dates back to the Second World War, I would love to hear your memories and experiences. As with all my military history books, author royalties will go to a military charity, yet to be decided.

Please contact me, Carole McEntee-Taylor MA Phil, BSc (Hons), on 01621 869567 or email carolemct@talktalk.net

AGM 2015. The 2015 AGM will be held at 11.00 on Saturday 21 March 2015 (as part of the Grand Reunion) at The Majestic Hotel, Ripon Road, Harrogate, HG1 2HU.

Change of Address. Please don't forget to notify us of any change of address. Every time Lioness is distributed a number of copies are unnecessarily returned as members have failed to inform us that they have moved.

Donations. Did you know that you can send a donation to the Association at any time? 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. Donations can also be made on line via the Association website or by phone 01962 887570. Whatever you decide to do, PLEASE make sure that we have a Gift Aid form (see centre pullout) 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.

easyfundraising.org.uk. If you ever shop online easyfundraising.org.uk provides an easy way for you to raise funds for the WRAC Association with no effort and without having to put your hand in your pocket. Simply sign up at <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/wrac>, download the find and remind toolbar <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/raise-more/find-and-remind/> and carry on shopping. easyfundraising work with over 2000 of the UK's best-known retailers including many popular names such as Amazon, M&S, Argos, John Lewis and Vodafone. Just use the links on the site (or download the find-and-remind toolbar) to visit the retailer you want to shop with and when you buy something, up to 15% of the purchase price is donated to your good cause – at no additional cost or effort to you!

Event Tickets. We occasionally receive free tickets for events, or invitations to attend functions organised by The Not Forgotten Association. Historically, for ease of administration due to tight deadlines, these have primarily been offered to regional Branch members. We are aware that there are many HQ Branch members who might like to be considered for future events. If you are an HQ Branch member and would like to register your interest in being sent information about these events please email office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk and type EVENT TICKET REGISTER as the subject heading. Please note that the vast majority of these events take place in London or the South.

Lioness (audio version). Lioness is available as an audio magazine on CD. If you suffer from failing eyesight and would like to receive an audio version of Lioness please email officemanager@wracassociation.org.uk or phone HQ WRAC Association on 0300 400 1992

Lioness. Articles for inclusion in the next edition of Lioness must be received by Friday 12 December 2014. Please email to editor@wracassociation.org.uk. Please type the text into the body of the email, not as an attached document. Please only send a maximum of 3 or 4 good quality photos (jpg format only).

Medals and Badges Etiquette. Etiquette rules for wearing medals only allow the wearing of official awards. Unofficial purchased medals and foreign medals which do not have the

Sovereign's permission to be worn are not allowed. The medals awarded to a deceased Service/ex-Service person may be worn on the right breast by a near relative (no more than one group should be worn by any individual). The WRAC Association badge and the Veterans badge may be worn on the left lapel by the position of the button hole. Unofficial medals, or badges other than the WRAC Association badge/pin and Veterans badge, should not be worn when representing the WRAC Association.

Memorabilia. The following items are available to purchase on-line via the website, by post (prices include P&P) or by phone. 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 stock availability before ordering please call 0300 400 1992.

WRAC Association 2015 Diary	£5
WRAC Association Brooch	£4
ATS pin badge	£3
WRAC pin badge	£3
WRAC Association Trolley Token	£2
WRAC Association Wristband	£1.50
WRAC Association Tea Towel	£7
WRAC Association Paperweight	£15
History of the WRAC (booklet)	£2.50
WRAC Association Fleece	£25
WRAC Association Polo Shirt	£19.50

Overseas Members. Overseas Members are requested to pay an additional £3.50 per year to cover additional Lioness postage costs. Only sterling payments can be accepted.

Subscriptions. Annual Members are reminded that subscriptions (£5) are due as at 01 October. Subscriptions can be paid via your Branch, online, by phone (0300 400 1992) or by post with a cheque/postal order (sterling only) payable to WRAC Association.

Veterans UK. Veterans UK is your one stop shop for all queries about Service Records, Medals, Pensions and much more. Go to www.veterans-uk.info or phone 0808 1914 2 18.

Westminster Abbey Field of Remembrance Thu 06 Nov 14. Due to space restrictions we only receive a limited number of tickets for this event, however we would really love some more support. If you work or live in central London and can spare an hour on the morning of Thu 06 Nov 14 it would be lovely if you could join us. Ticket applications by email to office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk.

WRAC Dinner Club. The WRAC Dinner Club meets every year on the second Saturday in October, full details can be found at www.wracdinnerclub.co.uk or by contacting the Membership Secretary, Miss Maggie Bradshaw, Myrtle Cottage, Tatworth, Chard, Somerset, TA20 2NZ. Tel: 01460 221617

WRAC Officers' Dining Club. The next WRAC Officer's Dining Club Dinner will take place at the Victory Services Club on Saturday 22 November 2014. For further details contact Debbie Coupland, The Chimes, 1a Ranworth Avenue, Bragbury End, Stevenage, SG2 8SL. Email: debbiecoulpland14@gmail.com Phone: 01438 222851

facebook



Winifred Phillips gracing the cover of the Royal Hospital Chelsea Facebook page



Charmaine (Bimbo) Coleman completed a tandem skydive on 20 June 2014 to raise money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity



Dorothy Hughes and Marjorie Cole at the Westminster Abbey Commemoration of the Centenary of the outbreak of the First World War

New In-Pensioner Pauline Franklin joined the Royal Hospital Chelsea on 14 June 2014. Pauline enlisted in the ATS at Bulford on 08 January 1940 and was posted to the 11th Wiltshire Company (ATS) for her training as a Clerk. In October 1941 she moved to the Central Ordnance Depot, Didcot where she remained until her discharge on 06 January 1944 in the rank of Corporal.

Eligibility. To be eligible for admission as a Chelsea Pensioner you must be a former NCO or soldier of the British Army (including National Service) who is:
Over 65 years of age.

- Either in receipt of an Army Service Pension or War Disability Pension, which you surrender upon entry to the Royal Hospital. If you do not receive an Army Pension you would be required to pay a £175 per week contribution towards your living costs. If your Army Service Pension and/or War Disability Pension is less than £175 per week you would be required to top-up to that amount, provided it does not place you in financial difficulty.
- Free of any financial obligation to support a spouse or family.
- Be self-caring and able to live independently on the Long Wards – the Royal Hospital Chelsea is unable to accept direct entries to the Infirmary.
- Former officers of the British Army are eligible provided they served for at least 12 years in the ranks before obtaining a commission or if they were awarded a disablement pension while serving in the ranks.

How To Apply. The Royal Hospital is in the final phases of its refurbishment programme upgrading all our accommodation to en-suite. As a consequence we have had to put in place a temporary freeze on applications for the foreseeable future.

Write to:

Royal Hospital Chelsea
Royal Hospital Road
London
SW3 4SR

Phone: 020 7881 5204



Barbara Wilds (ex QARANC) and Audrey Merton BEM

THE CHALLENGES OF MARCHING IN SKIRTS

Early female officer cadets grappled with impractical attire

Editor: This letter was published in the Daily Telegraph on 27 November 2013.

SIR – My daughter was among the first intake of female officer cadets to be commissioned into the Army after the integration of the WRAC College with the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 1985.

At that time, the issue green WRAC uniform skirt had a knee-level circumference that permitted a stride of only 28 inches, whereas the regulation march step by men, measured strictly by the drill sergeant's pace stick, was 30 inches. Thus, when marching together on parade, the women would inevitably fall two inches behind the men for every beat of the drum, causing chaos in the ranks.

Thus, for the first joint Commissioning Parade, taken by the Queen, it was ordained that the women officer cadets should remain at attention during the ceremonial slow and quick march-pasts.

The Queen, who had herself marched on the Sandhurst parade ground when training for the Auxiliary Territorial Service in the Second World War, was not amused. She ordered that steps be taken to ensure full participation by all cadets in the next Sovereign's Parade. And so it was, and is.

Lt Gen Sir Richard Vickers

NEWS FROM NEW ZEALAND W18579 CPL JO CRAMPTON (now SMALL) Diana Small (née Lobban)



Jo (christened Gladys Lucy) celebrated her 94th birthday (14th March 2014) a few days early at a family gathering in Wellington when one of her 13 grandchildren was married.

Jo was surprised with a fabulous cake organised by her daughters which had a picture of her younger self in ATS uniform on the top. A smaller group celebrated closer to her birthday but this had to be fitted in around her thrice weekly bridge dates! Jo still drives her own car, holding her own in any discussion and, with her lively wit and young outlook, she puts many younger individuals to shame.

Jo was born and brought up in Reading and enlisted in 1939. Her ATS career included working as a signals operator plotting movements, in an ATS recruitment team and as a PBX operator. In 1942 she met Colin Small, a dashing New Zealand Navy Officer. He was then posted to Africa, continuing to Italy and returned safely. Jo and Colin got engaged in March 1944 and were married later that year in May. Jo recalls hearing the rumble of engines as vehicles and men moved closer towards the coast on the night of D-Day and she correctly assumed that Colin must be involved. Lieutenant Colin Small RNVR (later RNZVR) captained a flotilla delivering troops and tanks to the Normandy Beaches.

Jo travelled to New Zealand in a troop ship along with other war brides in 1945. On arrival by train at the small country town of Geraldine in South Island she was welcomed by the local Mayor and many of the town's population. Colin and Jo later set up home in Christchurch where they brought up their five children. The military link continued when eldest son Brian joined the NZ Defence Force after qualifying as a dentist. Brian now has a practice in Guildford and is married to Diana (formerly Lobban) an ex WRAC officer.

WORLD'S FIRST PARA POLO MATCH Kate Ellis - Help for Heroes



On 01 June this year, four inspirational heroes who have fought back from life-changing injuries, saddled up to compete in the world's first ever Para-Polo – 'The Heroes Cup' which was part of the Best of British Polo event, raising money for Help for Heroes.

Veteran Electronics Technician, and WRAC Association member, Elaine Corner was among them. Having served for over 25 years in the Army including tours of Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq, she was involved in a motorbike accident that resulted in back injuries and having her left leg amputated below the knee in March 2011. During her recovery, the Help for Heroes Sports Recovery Programme provided Elaine with the opportunity and safe environment to try different activities and sports, including Polo, which Elaine first heard about through the Help for Heroes

Band of Brothers. She thought it sounded interesting and, having ridden before her injury, decided to give it a go and has fallen in love with the sport.

The thrilling opportunity to take part in the Best of British Polo event came about due to the passion of David Cowley, the event organiser, who saw, first hand, the assistance and support Help for Heroes provided his son Nick, and his family, when Nick was injured in Service, and was moved to give something back.



The day kicked off with Tidworth Polo Club's Duke of York's Cup (Royal Navy v Royal Air Force) followed by the Heroes' Cup, and finally the Best of British U25 match, featuring eight of the top young names in British Polo, who battled to win the Hattingley Valley Trophy.

Commenting on the event Elaine said, *"I was stiff afterwards, but it was absolutely brilliant! I want to do it all over again please! I can't believe the support we got from the crowd. It really helped make it a truly amazing experience. It was something I would never had chance to do if it hadn't been for Help for Heroes Sports Recovery Program and the generosity of Cool Hooves Polo. I would love to see more people giving it a try and experiencing the excitement of playing polo for themselves!"*

Polo is part of the extensive Help for Heroes Sports Recovery programme, which uses the rehabilitative nature of sport to enable the wounded, injured and sick to return to a happy, active life. Help for Heroes is passionate about introducing beneficiaries to adaptive sports of all kinds; Polo is a great example of this and something that Help for Heroes is committed to continuing.

Louise Watson, Help for Heroes Sports Recovery Manager, said: *"The freedom and exhilaration the Help for Heroes Para-Polo Players have gained from playing polo is fantastic to see. The influence the sport has on the mental and physical health of someone who has suffered life-changing injury or illness makes this - and all adaptive sport - incredibly valuable."*

MY HEART OF ENGLAND WALKING CHALLENGE

Marg Davies

After nearly six years, in April 2013, I finished my course of treatment and medication for Breast Cancer. Everyone said that the weight I had piled on would drop off, 'ha ha' some hope! In Autumn 2013 I was given the "All Clear" by my oncologist. I then discovered that the Facebook Group "Soldiers Formerly Known as WRAC" had decided to keep fit by walking (virtually) across Britain and then round the world! That set me thinking

I decided to set myself a challenge to do a Long Distance Walk,

something I had been putting off for years. It seemed a good idea to raise a little money for charity whilst I was at it, and so the challenge began! In early 2014 I decided upon The Heart of England Way. I chose it partly because it was fairly close to home in Worcester, but mainly because it seemed to be the most manageable and least hilly of all the walks. I divided the distance into manageable portions and then had to find suitable accommodation and lunch and evening meal stops. Each of these points had to be reced and checked for suitability of access to the path, ease of wayfinding along the path, suitability for food (and, where possible, Real Ale!). I visited hostelrys on several occasions to check & then re-check their wares!

Next I had to work out how to raise money for my two chosen charities, Cancer Research UK and the WRAC Association, and get it to them. I chose the online site Virgin Money Giving after looking at other sites and deciding this was most user-friendly (for me!). One of the first things the site asked was how much I wanted to set as my target amount. Initially I thought about £500 but then decided that £250 for each charity was a bit low. I eventually set it, with great doubt, at a seemingly huge £1,000 (£500 each). Much to my partner's consternation the expense began! There was kit to purchase. The latest, and of course "top of the range", GPS device to try and avoid me getting lost in the wilds of Central England, (those of you who were my Training NCO's in Guildford will remember how good my orienteering was!). OS maps of the whole path (all 5 of them!) in case the GPS didn't work (or, more likely, I couldn't work it!) Meals and ales to sample along the route during "practice", the list was endless.



Day 1 at the start near Chipping Camden

As the year progressed so did the planning. Emails sent out to all my contacts, Facebook Friends and Groups to "post", WRAC Association meetings to attend and annoy. The money started to come in; cash donations during Association meetings and whilst out and about with friends and family; on-line donations started, firstly at a gentle trickle and then it grew apace. As I watched my "Totaliser" I realised I'd need to up the ante! I raised it to £1,500 and finally (more in hope than certainty) to £2,000. I started my walk on Tuesday 10 June 2014 in Chipping Camden, Gloucestershire with my on-line "Totaliser" reaching about £1,800. Nearly there. And so, I walked/ambled/lost/fought my way north and eastwards. I walked on my own except for the final day when I was joined by my slightly shorter legged pal, Babs Blay, from Birmingham Branch. The weather was kind and the scenery surprisingly beautiful despite walking between the massive conurbations of Birmingham, Coventry, Sutton Coldfield, Tamworth, Cannock and Stafford.

Day 1 I went via Barton where Jules Calder & Pam Murray from Birmingham Branch joined me for lunch. Also there were my friends Dawn and Betty Hay. The Cottage of Content where we lunched deserves a mention as they gave me my food & drink for free! I then walked from Bidford-on-Avon to Alcester.

Day 2 was from Alcester through Henley-in-Arden (where my friend Robert Griffiths bought me my lunch) to Kingswood near Lapworth. I was met there, dined with and taken back to my home in Worcester by Sharon Joyce, Melody Baker & Sue Wilson from Hereford Branch.

Day 3 was another fine, sunny day as I went from Lapworth through Balsall Common (where I had lunch with my partner and a friend, Pat Jenkins) and then continued through Berkswell to Meriden where Chris Fretwell dined with me at The Bulls Head (they gave us a massive 40% discount on everything!) before she put me up for the night at her apartment.



Day 3 "does my bum look big in this?"

Day 4 was Friday 13th June (I should have known better!). I left from Meriden, went through Hell (formerly known as Warwickshire farmland) to Shustoke for lunch, and then through Hell 2 (still in Warwickshire), through Kingsbury Water Park, up the canal path to Fazeley. It was a gruelling 22 miles; the longest, most exhausting day of the trip.

Day 5 was from Fazeley through Hints to Hopwas where I had a hugely entertaining lunch with Tamworth Branch members Vee Moore, Tammy Kirkwood and Nicola Scott, plus their husbands and Tammy's son Tom. I left them and headed towards some very black clouds as I plodded on to Lichfield, fortunately the weather held.

Day 6 was Sunday 15th June. I walked with Babs Blay (and Lynn Anderson & Rusty the dog for the first few miles) from Lichfield, via Gentleshaw, to The Park Gate Inn at Cannock Wood where we were wine-d (or Tea-ed in Babs case) and dined by my nephew, niece and great nephew. Thank you Huw, Rachel and James. The final leg was from Castle Ring where Janet Bourke (Tamworth Branch) and her husband Bill saw us off past Hednesford to Milford Common in Staffordshire. There were six of us at the celebratory end of walk meal; Babs Blay, Lynn Anderson, Denise Clarke, Dawn and Betty Hay and myself.

We had another excellent meal before heading for home our separate ways.



Lunch on the last day with Babs Blay and great nephew James



End of the walk

The best part of my walk had to be communing with nature in very rural England, enjoying the sights and scents of the rolling English countryside. I saw deer bouncing through the early morning meadows, hundreds of rabbits sunbathing then bounding away as I approached, hawks patrolling the skies and deep yellow flutters of goldfinches. I was also joined briefly by a stoat at one memorable water break. He stuck his head and shoulders out of a hole not four feet away from me, sniffed the air cautiously for a while and then shot back down as he caught my scent. On a glorious summer's day why would one want to go abroad?

The worst bit was fighting with the crops in the Warwickshire farmland. How can farmers do things so differently in the counties and boroughs that I passed through? Elsewhere the paths were generally broad and well marked. In Warwickshire they were virtually obliterated. On Friday 13th I fought through field after field of head height rapeseed that was like a jungle. It tripped me up three times and stopped me dead in my tracks umpteen times meaning that I had to hack away at the barrier. It also undid my

double-knotted bootlaces twice! How? That was also the longest distance day (22 miles). It was just as well that I was walking on my own as the air was blue with my curses at the crops and the Warwickshire farmers in particular!

The most amusing bit, in hindsight, was when I decided I needed a "comfort" stop. I shuffled off the track into some longer grass only to end up flat on my backside with my left leg up to the knee in a rabbit hole! Luckily the only thing that was damaged was my dignity. I finally extricated my leg (not the easiest manoeuvre with your left foot still dangling in rabbit fumes!) and thoughtfully made use of the hole I'd discovered. Yes, unluckily for Mr Bunny, this also happened on Friday 13th

The most amazing thing has been the huge support that my charities and I have received from the hundreds of friends, ex-colleagues, ex-WRAC members, friends of friends and total strangers every step of the way. Cathy Munro, Babs Blay, Wendy Hooton, Denise Clarke and Pat Jenkins kept re-posting my stuff on Facebook and encouraged folks to get behind me. The response was fantastic. As this went to The Editor in June my fund had reached £2,551 after Gift Aid is added. A huge percentage of this amount has been from you members of the Association and for this I thank you with all my heart.

If I can leave you with a plea? Be aware of changes in your body and never be afraid to ask a second opinion. . . .and keep asking until you're satisfied with the answer. Accept every test and check that you are offered. Cancer is beatable, we can kick it's butt, if we are aware and act soon enough. Thank you all so much for your support. You truly are amazing.

My Fund remains open until the end of December if anyone else would care to donate. The address is <http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/MargaretDaviesWRAC>

ROYAL GARDEN PARTY BUCKINGHAM PALACE 26 JUNE 2014 Yvonne McCarthy



The Garden Party was hosted by the Not Forgotten Association and 11 lucky ladies from Leicester and Nottingham Branch were selected by having their names picked out of a hat at our April meeting. There was much excitement and for the following two meetings, the selected ladies were comparing notes on their outfits.

The day duly arrived and we set out from Leicester at 10.00 wearing all our beautiful outfits, arriving at the Palace in good time for the start of the party. We were lucky enough to be parked inside the Palace gates, so not too much walking. Sue Slattery managed to acquire a table in the marquee and so we were in prime position to see everything.

It wasn't too long before famous faces were recognised and the ladies had a great deal of fun talking to and being photographed with some of their favourite actors and celebrities. Her Majesty looked splendid in canary yellow and was easily spotted, incidentally, we have been informed that it was the first time in ten years that Her Majesty had been in attendance at this particular party (weren't we privileged?). We didn't get to speak to her, but being in her presence was enough. Tea was delightful and plentiful. We arrived back in Leicester at 20.30, tired, proud and extremely happy. It was truly a day never to be forgotten.

GREAT YARMOUTH MEMORIAL Joan Awbery



L to R: Doris Galbraith, Brenda McNama, Maisie Capes, Joan Awbery, Meg Watson, Lorna Lansdowne, Marjorie Spears, Liz Winter, Beryl Manthorp

For many years my account in Lioness of our annual visit to the commemorative Plaque in Great Yarmouth has been unvarying. Every year on 11 May a few of us hold a short informal service and lay a wreath or flowers, this year however was rather different. We recently made the acquaintance of Norwich based Reverend Rosemary Houghton, whose mother Anne Hession had been in the A.T.S (a plotter, who trained at Oswestry). She was stationed on North Denes in Yarmouth at the time of the raid, she had been on home leave at the time but was immediately recalled to duty. Rosemary told us "my mother had not spoken a great deal about this fateful time in her life but it must have affected her deeply". So this year the Revd Rosemary conducted the service in memory of her mother. We had a very good attendance with the Chairman and several members of the Gt Yarmouth British Legion with their Standard and, for the first time, Mr and Mrs Wragg from London who came to honour the memory of Mrs Wragg's uncle, Lance Corporal Frederick King. He was one of the twelve young soldiers killed in the same raid in their hostel next door to the girls'. Flowers were sent, as they have been every year since 1994, from Mrs Marjorie Thomson in Surrey, sister of Corporal Enid Line "In memory of my dear sister and all her comrades".



Revd Rosemary Houghton proudly wearing her late mother's medal

40th ANNIVERSARY M62 COACH BOMB Jenny McMahon



In February 2014 I had the opportunity of attending a Memorial Service marking the 40th Anniversary of the M62 Coach Bomb in Yorkshire. This was the second Anniversary I was able to attend, the first being in 2009. The service was held at Hartshead Moor Service Station on Sunday 2nd February. The actual bombing occurred in the early hours of Monday 4th February in 1974 when 12 servicemen died including a family with two young children aged 3 and 5. Over 200 people were in attendance at the Memorial Service including bereaved families; representatives of the Regiments of the soldiers who were killed; Royal British Legion Standard bearers; Pipe band; local dignitaries; survivors and several people who witnessed the carnage on that fateful night.

On this occasion my niece and nephew came with me, neither were born at the time of the tragedy although my twin sister was heavily pregnant then and delivered a healthy boy three weeks after the tragic event. He arrived early as my sister was obviously in shock hearing of the major atrocity. My best friend Ivy (née Scrivener) whom I was staying with at the time of the incident,

her present husband and her sister Jean (née Scrivener) were also able to attend the memorial service. Both Ivy and Jean are ex WRAC. All found it very emotional and were very moved by the sad occasion.



40th Anniversary Memorial Service

I went to pay my respects to those who died and to support the bereaved families whom I know very much appreciated survivors being there on this very special occasion. I also again met the policeman who came with me in the ambulance back in 1974, and for the first time met Frank who was a serving soldier at the time and travelling in the opposite direction when he witnessed the bombed coach. He stopped to help and found one of the young children who was killed.

There is a 'natural and emotional special bond' when meeting other people affected by the same event, you just want to hug them. Forty years on I still have vivid memories of getting on the coach, where I sat, the lads at the back whistling wolf whistles, snoozing and the loud bang that woke me up, falling through the bottom of the coach and my legs being tangled - that's what it felt like! I was knocked out and when I came round realised I was in the middle of the motorway and thought that was it, I was a gonner (dead). My legs were burning and covered in blood. I could see the coach about fifty yards away, well half a coach actually, and started shouting for help. Two soldiers came running over and covered me with their coats (it was February and very cold). To this day I still do not know who the two young lads were. The police were soon on the scene, apparently they were 4 minutes away on the motorway. I remember asking them 'what happened' and they said they thought it was a bomb! Well I couldn't comprehend that at the time and didn't realise the extent of the massacre until some time later in hospital. One of the police officers who came with me in the ambulance I now know as Dave.



It was the twelve people sitting behind me who were killed. I have always felt I had a very lucky escape and survived to tell the tale however horrific it was. It took a long time for me to travel on a

coach or bus and I never sit at the back. I was fortunate to make a good recovery and eventually qualified as a Remedial Gymnast. I spent 2 years at the Joint Services Medical Rehabilitation Unit at RAF Chessington where I was involved in the treatment of other bomb victims in the UK & NI and those traumatised in the Falklands War. I then qualified as a Physiotherapist and spent another 2 years at Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital (QEMH) Woolwich, again treating more bomb victims. I completed 22 years service. As a civilian Physiotherapist I was employed at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Center Headley Court where I was involved in the rehabilitation of servicemen and women severely injured in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many had lost limbs, double and triple amputees, had complex trauma, complicated fractures, extensive abdominal, perineal and buttock wounds. My injuries were a scratch compared to theirs.

The Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace. Many people who have been affected by war and terrorist activity have been greatly helped by the 'Foundation for Peace' (F4P) in Warrington. This is a charity set up by Colin and Wendy Parry who lost their 12 year old son in the Warrington Bomb of 1993. The Peace Centre holds various events and workshops for anyone who has been affected by conflict, war or terrorism, that is bereaved family members, colleagues, friend, survivor, bystander or witness, members of the emergency services. You can find more information on their website: www.foundation4peace.org or telephone 01925 581231 or write to The Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace, Peace Centre, Great Sankey, Warrington, Cheshire WA5 1HQ. This is a unique organisation where you can meet other people who have been through similar circumstances, tell your own story if you wish, listen to others tell their story. It is non-threatening in peaceful surroundings, the professional staff have a very caring attitude and aware of personal needs. I can wholeheartedly endorse the work they do.

BRITISH 10K LONDON RUN 2014 WRAC LIONESSES Wendy Hooton



The night before the run!

After last years BUPA Great Manchester Run, with everyone having such a fabulous time, I decided to do it all again.....only this time in London. The British 10k London Run was one of the events which marked the centenary of World War 1 and would be close to our hearts. It was hosted by Help for Heroes so I decided we could fundraise for the WRAC Association (of course) and H4H.

It was the same routine, an announcement at the WRAC Dinner Club in October, and collecting names, email addresses and phone numbers while people were under the influence.....well not all! On my return home I contacted all those who showed an interest and then played the waiting game. In the meantime I advertised on a number of Facebook Groups; The Soldiers Formerly Known as WRAC; WRAC Dinner Club; WRAC/ATS; WRAC and ATS (Women who have served or serve in the Army).

To my absolute delight confirmation of entries came in thick and fast and we had 27 runners, including Mal Fulton from France and Samantha Stretch from Spain! On the day, due to injuries, we had 24 runners and 45 supporters. The Pride of Lionesses and one Lion (Scotty Lynch) had grown from a total of 15 last year. To show our respect to the fallen soldiers of WW1 I had black armbands made with our Corps badge, a poppy and WRAC LIONESSES LONDON 2014 printed on them. These were for all the WRAC LIONESSES, runners and supporters.

Everyone entered as an individual and booked their own accommodation. We had people at the Victory Services Club, Premier Inns, Apartments, and I was fortunate enough to find a wonderful narrowboat in Little Venice near Paddington (for some quirky accommodation worldwide check out www.airnb.co.uk).

I set up a fundraising page www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/wraclionesses2 and also a Facebook page WRAC LIONESSES FUNDRAISING GROUP. The Facebook page was for runners, supporters and our sponsors if they wished to join. Communication was through this page where we encouraged each other with training and I could pass on any admin details. As the months passed the excitement (and fear!) grew as the date got closer.

The weekend had arrived and mobiles phones were on overdrive as we all confirmed our arrival with each other. Our first meeting was on Saturday evening at the Silver Cross Pub in Whitehall. I arrived wearing my WRAC polo shirt and black armband and proceeded to check the establishment for our Lionesses. I waited with a light refreshment as slowly and surely the WRAC LIONESSES arrived. We managed to commandeer a corner of the pub where I was able to give out the black armbands and brief everyone. To my horror I had left 4 armbands in a gold envelope at home! A quick call to my daughter Hannah and the problem was solved for Chris Powell, Sandra Davies, Sheila Johnson and Debbie Wilson. Crisis over and everyone suitably refreshed we awaited the arrival of Heather Gaughran who had volunteered to be our photographer and was travelling from the Hereford Branch 25th Anniversary Lunch. To our delight Heather arrived and without pausing for breath we went to the Women at War Memorial for some photos. Thank you Heather.



Pre Race at the Victory Services Club

On Sunday morning all H4H runners had to gather at Marble Arch underground. We met at the Victory Services Club for a photoshoot by Heather then made our way to the meeting point. We then had to walk down Park Lane to the Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park which was the Start Line. At 9am the Ceremony commenced, songs by Vera Lynn with Julie White leading the singsong. There was a parade of Mounted WW1 Cavalry Officers, Tommys and current Servicemen, followed by WW1 readings. These included poems by Wilfred Owen and

and Siegfried Sassoon and "They shall grow not old" from "For The Fallen" by Robert Laurence Binyon. The Salisbury Plain Military Wives Choir performed "Wherever you are" followed by all 3 verses of the National Anthem. It was extremely emotional and as the race began they played "I vow to thee my Country".



Jo Foster, Julie White, Lynne Greer, Andrea Mills, Phyl Mattison

We ran past several London landmarks; St James' Palace, Trafalgar Square, Somerset House, St Pauls, Tate Modern, London Eye, Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, 10 Downing Street, The Cenotaph and the Women at War Memorial, finishing in Whitehall at Horse Guards Arch. It was very poignant passing the Cenotaph and the Women at War Memorial and was brilliant having the supporters there to cheer us on.

After we had received our medals we made our way to Scotland Yard Civil Service Club which I had managed to arrange by becoming a member! The staff were absolutely superb and the food excellent, especially the free buffet another charity invited us to, as their runners had left. It was a perfect location to rest our weary bodies and meet up with all our supporters. We laughed and talked and enjoyed each others company, meeting old friends and making new ones. It was a great show of Esprit de Corps, and super to meet up with friends we hadn't seen for many years. The years just rolled away.....



Runners and Supporters at Scotland Yard Civil Service Club

Wendy Hooton, Babs Blay, Danni Collier



I felt very privileged to run with such a wonderful group of women whose dedication was second to none. I would like to thank you all for your outstanding commitment to running and fundraising, we have raised over £7500 for our 2 charities (not including Gift Aid). You have exceeded our target and can be very proud of your achievements. A massive thankyou to all our wonderful supporters who didn't let us down and were just great cheering us along en route. Our sponsors, be it friends, family, work colleagues, WRAC Branches, your individual efforts, you have been amazing with your generosity, I can't thank you enough. You have all made a difference, thank you so much.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Nicky Murdoch

Defence Medical Services



A charity that has been providing specialist welfare support to the Armed Forces community for over 70 years has a former member of the WRAC at the helm. Lt Col (Retired) Nicky Murdoch has been Chief Executive at the St John and Red Cross Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS) for the last three years and has been successful in rejuvenating this understated military charity which provides much needed support to over 10,000 service patients and their families each year when they are in hospital, rehabilitation at Headley Court or in Recovery Centres. Nicky was Adjutant at the WRAC Centre and an Instructor at WONCO wing before going to the MOD to work for Brigadier Helen Meechie. Nicky served for 15 years in the AGC (SPS) as the CO at Worthy Down Support Unit and Chief of Staff at The Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall before she ran a programme for Wounded, Injured and Sick service personnel with a charity called SkillForce. She joined DMWS in 2011.

DMWS formed from the Joint War Organisation of the British Red Cross and the Order of St John in 1943, DMWS was originally known as the Service Hospitals Welfare Department (SHWD) until it changed its name to DMWS when it became an independent charity in 2001. Retaining the humanitarian ethos of both its parent charities, DMWS has continued to adapt to the changing requirements of the MOD.

Today its team of Welfare Officers provide 24/7 support to injured Armed Forces personnel (both full-time and Reservists), veterans and their families when they're in hospital, rehabilitation or recovery centres across various locations in the UK, Germany and Cyprus. During times of crisis they're on hand to provide a person centred service you can depend on that is independent, impartial and confidential. They also deploy with the Armed forces in times of conflict and currently have Welfare Officers based in the Field Hospital at Camp Bastion Afghanistan. Previous to this

they were in Iraq, Kosovo, Falklands and World War II to name but a few.

Nicky says, "Having a loved one in hospital is a stressful experience for any family; however Army life brings its own unique set of challenges. Such as your partner being away or relatives not living close by. The support provided is wide ranging and can be anything from arranging travel and accommodation to being a listening ear and signposting to other agencies and organisations. The feedback we get from patients and their families is that it's an essential service that they couldn't do without. It makes a real difference".

One of the people supported by DMWS is former REME Soldier and patron of DMWS, Simon Brown, who was shot in the face by a sniper in Basra in 2006 which resulted in him losing his left eye and severely damaging his right. Placed in a drug induced coma he was flown back to the UK where he spent the next 17 days in a coma. During this time he was visited by DMWS Welfare Officers who spent time at his bedside talking to him. Simon heard every word, despite the fact he was unconscious.

Simon says, "When I woke up in hospital it was not just me that was facing a worrying and uncertain future but my family too. Having someone there that could be an ear to bend or a shoulder to cry on, as well as someone in a uniform, gave me some comfort. The DMWS Welfare Officers let us air our fears without unnecessarily worrying those around us and helped me see past made-up fears by discussing them without patronisation. My family and I will always remain grateful for the support given by the DMWS in those dark days"

As well as Nicky, DMWS also has two other former serving WRAC members working for the organisation. Anne Marie Mitchell who served in the WRAC for 28 years has been working for DMWS as a Welfare Officer since 2012, while Col (Retired) Ali Brown, Vice President of the WRAC Association, has been working with DMWS on a consultancy basis to develop their Level 3 Diploma in Welfare Studies. This is the only national welfare qualification and is open to anyone.

You can find out more about DMWS on their website www.dmws.org.uk or by contacting info@dmws.org.uk

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

If you are an Annual Member your subscription expires on 30 Sep 14! If you are a member of a geographic Branch please send your Secretary/Treasurer your £5 subscription renewal in good time. Alternatively, or if you are an HQ Branch member please renew online or send your subscription to WRAC Association, Gould House, Worthy Down, Winchester, SO21 2RG.

Cheques payable to WRAC Association.

It is essential that you renew your membership promptly to ensure that you receive the next edition of Lioness (and further details of the Grand Reunion 2015!).

THE LORD KITCHENER MEMORIAL HOLIDAY CENTRE

www.lordkitchenersmemorialholidaycentre.co.uk

Kitchener's is a unique Suffolk charity overlooking the sea in south Lowestoft, offering hotel style holiday accommodation to ex-service men and woman and their spouses or partners. Kitchener's is open from April through to October and holidays are taken Tuesday to Tuesday.

Accommodation

We offer ten twin-bedded rooms with en-suite bathrooms two of which have walk-in showers. The remainder have all the usual bathroom facilities with an over-bath shower and all the rooms are on the first or second floor.

Half board is provided with a full English breakfast and a three course evening meal in our air-conditioned dining room. At other times guests can help themselves to tea, coffee and biscuits from a small servery area off the dining room.

There are two television lounges and one quieter reading lounge which has a small library. A compact lift serves the ground, first and second floors and it will accept a folded wheelchair but it is too narrow for a wheelchair in use.

There are several steps up to the front door of the building and also some up to the dining room. Guests should be reasonably mobile and able to cope with a few steps but there is ramped access at the rear of the building. Two mobility scooters are available to hire and a folding wheelchair is available free of charge but all must be pre-booked.

Rates for 2014

Ex-service £155.00 (per week half board)
Non ex-service partners £195.00 (per week half board)
Single supplement £20.00

Lord Kitchener Memorial Holiday Centre
10 Kirkley Cliff Rd,
Lowestoft, Suffolk,
NR33 0BY

Tel: 01502 573564

Email: enquiries@lkitchenerslowestoft.co.uk

WRAC ASSOCIATION BENEVOLENT FUND - MAKING A DIFFERENCE

'...Many, many thanks for all your help with my boiler problem. I have not stopped smiling and how nice it was this morning to wake up to a house that is warm in every room. To not have to boil a kettle to take upstairs to have a wash, or to have to boil a kettle to wash my dishes. It was heaven and makes you appreciate the things we take for granted in life...' Mrs U, WRAC, awarded £784 towards a replacement central heating boiler.

Since the beginning of November 2013 your Benevolent Fund has received 235 applications for assistance from former ATS and WRAC servicewomen and has awarded nearly £150,000. Your oldest beneficiary is 97 and your youngest 41, and applications have been received from as far afield as the USA, Canada, Zimbabwe, Jamaica and France.

Who is eligible for help?

Any former servicewoman, including TA, with one day's paid service or more is eligible for assistance.

'...Miss V is literally 'over the moon'. It will enable her to maintain her independence and having just a bit more cash flow makes such a difference should a wee crisis occur - she now has peace of mind that she can cope. Miss V prides herself on keeping out of debt and this will ease what has been quite a struggle...' Miss V, WRAC, awarded £169 for a new mattress and a maintenance grant. SSAFA Caseworker's email.

Are there any other criteria?

Yes, you must be in need of financial help.

There's also a limit on the amount of savings that you can have above which the Benevolent Fund is unable to make an award. To qualify for a maintenance grant you must be living alone on a basic state pension and in poor health.

How your Benevolent Fund can help

Since the start of this financial year your fund has helped with grants in a wide range of categories including:

bathroom adaptations	central heating/boilers
house repairs and adaptations	carpets
EPVs and electric wheelchairs	clothing
riser-recliner chairs	furniture
stairlifts	tv's and tv licences
funeral expences	white goods
priority debt	removal expenses
food vouchers	rent, deposits and bonds
respite breaks	maintenance grants
travel and transport	care home fee top-ups

Is there anything with which your Benevolent Fund cannot help?

Your Benevolent Fund is unable to assist with clearing non-priority debt such as overdrafts, bank loans, credit card bills, HP payments; legal fees; or medical and dental procedures available via the NHS.

'...I visited Mrs --- today and saw her new cooker installed. She is delighted and asked me to pass on her grateful thanks. Without your help she would never have been able to afford a new cooker and if you saw the state of the old one you would be amazed that it ever worked...' Mrs W, ATS, awarded £390 for a new cooker. SSAFA caseworker's email.

So how do you apply for help?

If you are a former ATS or WRAC regular or TA servicewoman who needs assistance, or if you know someone who is, then your first port of call is your local branch of SSAFA or regional RBL office. SSAFA or the RBL will arrange for a trained caseworker to interview you in your home to establish the full range of assistance that you need. The caseworker will complete a report that includes details of your household income. This is called means-testing and ensures that your Benevolent Fund's charitable money goes to those in real need. When the report is complete it is sent to the Benevolent Fund Secretary. Once received, applications are considered at the appropriate grants committee meeting and a decision is taken.

'...We would like to thank you for the help given to my mother towards a stair-lift. At 95 years of age I am sure you can appreciate that this has been a considerable help to her, helping her greatly in being able to look after herself. Also for myself and other members of her family as we no longer have to worry so much about her going upstairs...' Mrs X, ATS, awarded £500 towards a stair-lift.

How often do the grants committee meetings meet?

There are 2 types of grants committee meetings:

Minor grants committee meetings are held daily as required and can award immediate grants up to £1,000

Major grants committee meetings (MGCM) are held at least once a month and can award grants up to the annual maximum of £3,000. The MGCMs also consider applications for care home fee top-up fees and maintenance grants, and for applicants with fewer than 6 months service.

'...On behalf of my mother I would like to thank you very much for the financial support that you have given her in the past and for increasing this amount recently. Thanks to you and other organizations my mother, 92, is extremely well looked after by caring staff in very pleasant and comfortable surroundings...' Mrs Y, ATS, £32.70 per week towards her care home fee top-up.

What happens next?

When a grant is awarded it is paid by digital bank transfer to either SSAFA or the RBL rather than direct to an applicant. This means that SSAFA or the RBL receive the grant immediately and are able to ensure that it is used for the specific purpose for which it was awarded as soon as possible.

'...I am writing to say a huge 'Thank you' on behalf of my husband and myself. My husband strives on a daily basis to overcome many difficulties. I have to tell you, £2,000 is a very sizeable donation and we feel extremely humbled by its generosity. I ask you to pass on our thanks to all concerned...' Mrs Z, WRAC, awarded £2,000 towards house adaptations following her husband's stroke.

THE LASS OF RICHMOND HILL Hazel Ross née Johnson

Greetings to all former WRAC Band members, my name is Hazel Ross (ex Sgt Johnson) and I was a 1949er (serving 5 years). In December 2013, during the chaos of the winter storms, I attended my Grandson David's Passing Out Parade with the Essex Police force, the 4th generation to do so. He had already served as a Police Community Support Officer for 6 years. As the music started for the parade they marched on to 'our' Regimental march, 'The Lass of Richmond Hill'! I cried, I just couldn't believe that of all the marches available they played ours, I was so proud.

I still have the 78rpm record of the march recorded at the Duke of York's Barracks before our debut at the Albert Hall. I remember clearly so many incidents that caused us much merriment and fun in those early years, remember the NAAFI in Aldershot ('No Jitterbug Here')? I went on a blind date along with Jean (Apps) and met Jim who I later married; he was gentlemanly and kind all his life, sadly he died in 1970. I am now 84 and have just given up my job a pianist at Church, but I now sing instead and have a wonderful full life in spite of the fact I can only walk with the aid of a 3 wheel walker.

MORE REMINISCENCES OF BAOR IN THE 1960s Jane Smith (Former W/425499 Sgt Stark P J)

The excellent article by Lin Thornton and Carol Traynor (Lioness 2014/1) on their reminiscences of Rheindahlen Camp in the 1960s brought back many memories of the tour of BAOR by the WRAC Staff Band from 8 - 22 October 1965. We visited West Berlin, Hannover, Sennelager, Dortmund and Munster giving concerts in town centres and hospital grounds. The tour ended at Rheindahlen Camp where we gave a concert and performed our display and Beating Retreat.



WRAC Staff Band Beat Retreat at Rheindahlen Camp on 21 October 1965. Director of Music Captain Edward Crowcroft, LRAM, ARCM, psm

During the tour I sent a number of letters and postcards to my parents back home which my mother saved for me. So, as a personal way of marking the closure of BAOR and the end of an era, I'd like to share a few quotes from my correspondence as follows:

Dear Mum and Dad,

West Berlin, 9/10 October 1965

"...this morning we had a coach trip round East Berlin, an M.P. gave us a lecture on DO's and DON'T's. Most of the buildings are being pulled down and it's very bleak. We saw Hitler's Bunker and the big Russian Cemetery. On the houses opposite (the Berlin Wall) you can see loads of bullet holes. Besides German money we use special English notes in the NAAFI and they even have notes for 6d and 3d etc! There are only 16 girls on this camp so we're guests of honour really. The food is OK. The camp here is very big and our rooms are OK but a bit bare as they're men's. There's no drying room. Shirley only brought the top half of her pyjamas, ie: a pyjama."

(Note: The Cold War was in full swing at this time of course, and even food played its part in the propaganda battle. We travelled through East Berlin on a British Berlin Military Train and were served lunch on the way. We were told that the meals on these trains were very good in order to impress the East German guards who stared through the windows at us at every opportunity. The menu for lunch on 12 October 1965 was soup, fried sausages, mixed vegetables, fried potatoes, fruit and custard and coffee).

Hannover, 13 October 1965.

"...we're staying in a small camp this time and we've got bunk beds. There are 26 of us in our room! Tonie fell and fractured her arm and she's got to wear a sling for 3 weeks. We went to a dance and I met this bloke called Pete. He's funny looking but a right laugh."

Munster, 17 October 1965.

"...we're having a smashing time so far. We went to Dortmund and did our display in front of the town hall in the pouring rain. We did it all wrong but the Brigadier watching said it was marvellous! Someone suggested we have a collection for his glasses. Afterwards we went to a social in the NAAFI. Nobody seems to mind what we do and the Drum Major said we could stay out all night for all she cared. Shirley and I got to bed at 2.00am. The camps we've stayed at are usually crummy and often with nearly no hot water or baths. We get dumped in disused men's quarters so it's usually freezing as well. There's nothing to do so it's not surprising the men spend their time drinking and smoking. In this block, the water besides being cold is also yellow."

Munster, 18 October 1965.

"...yesterday a drunken soldier tried to get in our block. We fled down the corridor screaming like banshees and it took 3 men to drag him downstairs! The heating's come on but I tried putting newspaper on the bed and it worked wonders."

Rheindahlen, 19 October 1965.

"...the camp is a small town and there's RAF here too. The accommodation is like Guildford (the Depot and Training Centre). We're doing a concert tomorrow, the display on Thursday and that's all. Hope you're OK. Lots of love, Jane, xxxx"

WRAC 1977

Editor: These photos were published in *The Sunday Times Magazine* 27 February 1977, do you recognise yourself or any of your friends?



Drum Major Mary Burgess

Column I: Front to Rear

Jan (Taffy) Pitten - tenor sax
Ann (Rusty) Rustad - clarinet
Joan Hancock - solo cornet
Ena Barrett - side drum
Anna Crook - cymbals
Cathy Southwell - solo cornet
Bron Pritchard - sousaphone

Column II: Front to Rear

Zara Bowness - French horn
Brenda O'Rourke - clarinet
Doreen Watson - clarinet
Maisie O'Sullivan - piccolo
Pam State - bass
Shirley Wilks - solo cornet
Rita Thurman - trombone

Column III: Front to Rear

Pat Jefferson - alto sax
Maureen Lloyd - clarinet
Pauline Young - glockenspiel
Carol Holland - bass drum
 Sylvia Nelson - solo cornet
Ann (Snowy) Snowden - euphonium

Column IV: Front to Rear

Jackie Cowdrey - French horn
Jane Stark - clarinet
Ann Robertson - clarinet
Sheila Huxley - piccolo
Beryl Coggles - trombone
Judy Morhen - cornet
Jenny Smythe - trombone

Column V: Front to Rear

Dorothy (Tewey) Tew - tenor sax
Sue Smith - clarinet
Helen Goode - clarinet
Kath Corrigan - side drum
Angie Simmonds - cymbals
Jan Wade - cornet
Lynn Grey - Sousaphone

DRILL CUP WINNERS 1960/61 Jennifer Shepherd née Towne



Passing Out party after winning the Drill Cup 1960/61
L-R: Jean Whitely, Pat Truelove, Sgt Ingram, Dorris ?,
Pat Nichols, Wendy Morgan, Glynis Pask,
Jennifer Towne



Officer Cadet Lottie Arnold with her parents after the Commissioning ceremony at the WRAC College, Camberley



MPs at Aldershot prepare to go on patrol.



Maps help junior leaders to understand the role of NATO.



Captain Kate Howie.



Cooks in the WRAC canteen, Aldershot.



Corporals at play at a WRAC college.



Sergeant clerk Chris Moroney at Aldershot.



30 Driver at 22 Squadron Royal Corps. of Transport.



Sergeant and Warrant Officer 1 in a Shoeburyness radar hut.



Major Roulstone (left) with Esmie Pritchard-Davies after commissioning ceremony at WRAC college.



General Gow (right), guest of honour, with Sally Collins - one of 'The Famous Five' - at a regimental dinner.



Above: Brigadier Nolan taking sherry in the officer cadets' mess after commissioning ceremony. Right: Capt. Helen Erskine at regimental dinner in officer cadets' mess after passing of port. The silver brocade dress is WRAC formal evening wear for officers. Far right: Truckdriver Pte. Kathleen Farkas at 22 Squadron RCT near Salisbury.



ONWARD VIRGIN SOLDIERS

It is already something of a man's life in the Women's Royal Army Corps, but one last barrier to sexual equality remains to be crossed. Our soldiers in skirts are military virgins: they are not allowed to carry guns and would be left behind if the balloon went up. Now it seems that all that might change as a result of a confidential report to Ministry of Defence Chiefs. A working party of senior Army officers which has been looking into the role and status of the WRAC is believed to have come down heavily in favour of greater integration by women into the men's Army. Thus Sandhurst may be obliged to open its doors to girl cadets in the near future. And, for the first time in 60 years, women soldiers may be armed. On page 34 Russell Miller visits the WRAC; photographs by Roger Perry

Top: ages right at the passing out parade at the WRAC, Camberley, after six weeks' basic training. Right: mastering the art of the amaretto on the Army Catering Corps kitchen at Aldershot under the eye of Women Officer 1 (right). Far right: officer cadet Lavinia Arnold with her parents after the commissioning ceremony at the WRAC College, Camberley. "We were amazed when Lavinia announced she was going to join the Army."



Pte Kathleen Farkas 22 Sqn RCT (Bulford?)

ABERDEEN Joan Bartlett

Aberdeen Branch are settling in nicely to our new meeting place. It suits us fine and we are treated well by the staff. We went to Stonehaven, a coastal town 15 or so miles from Aberdeen, for our May outing and had a very nice lunch at The Ship Inn which is right on the harbour. The weather was superb and Mhairi Irving, our 'official' photographer, had us out in the sunshine taking a group photo with her new camera which gave the al fresco drinkers something to look at apart from the seagulls.



Mhairi Irving, Helen Thomson, Moira Thom, Sandra Lemmon, Moyra Brodie, Sylvia Harris, Joan Bartlett, Irene Thomson

Moira Thom, Helen Thomson and I took a walk round the harbour to look at the boats and though they were neat and tidy they were small. We decided that we were not going to sea in any of them until they had grown up, it was a very enjoyable day.

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Helen Thomson and Lucy Burns. Mary Macleod's one has still to be presented to her.



Helen Thomson



Lucy Burns

Sadly I have to report that two of our long standing members have died this year; Pat Valentine who was 90 and Jean Savage who was 91. They were both good supporters of the Branch and both regretted that ill health kept them from the meetings. They left behind many happy memories.

The Aberdeen Branch send good wishes to the Association staff and all sister Branches.

BAND Ann Jones

It is wonderful to say hello to you all and bring you up to date with the Band news over the past few months. I do hope you are all keeping well and enjoyed the summer sunshine after 18 months of dreadful weather.

On May 14th twelve of us made the journey to Guilford to have lunch and to enjoy the company of two former Directors of Music, Major Jean McDowell (now Mrs Collyer) and Major Lyn Hopkins, it was remarkable to see them again. Many of us found it quite difficult to make the journey to Guilford but it was well worth the effort and you can see how good the Directors look in the photo taken by Margaret Kent's husband David. It was another pleasant memory to place in our photo albums. Another long lasting memory is that our Directors of Music names have been used as street names on the now Queen Elizabeth Park housing estate, which was built on the site of our Barracks, quite moving I feel.



Enjoying lunch in Guildford

Betty (Chad) Clark will be moving to Tewkesbury soon to enable her to keep playing with the Town Band who are performing in Ireland this year in addition to all their local engagements. We are also very pleased to welcome two new ladies to our branch and hope we will all have the chance to meet them at Harrogate next year.

Please keep me informed of any new goings on you may wish us to know about. I do hope we will be seeing many more of you at Harrogate in 2015, we see each other so rarely and it will be a great treat, especially if we make a visit to Betty's Tea shop. As always I love to hear from any of you, take great care.

BATH **Sylvia Musgrave**

Bath Branch continues to meet twice a month, but with reduced number now attending. The ATS, because of their age, have mobility problems and our WRAC members are mostly still working. Smaller numbers mean we cannot organise fundraising events so easily, but between meetings we do meet up for a coffee or lunch. We use our Bus Pass to visit neighbourhood places, and we certainly know where to find 'Pensioner' lunches! We are also fortunate that some members still drive so give the rest of us lifts.

We are indebted to Waitrose supermarket who, through their 'Green Disc' fundraising scheme, were able to donate a sum of money to us. This has helped pay the rent for the hiring of our meeting room. In July we attended the Area Reunion hosted by Southampton Branch and hopefully some of us will be in Harrogate next March. We send best wishes to all, and as Bath is one of the UK's tourist attractions let me know if you are planning to visit the city and we would be pleased to meet you.

BIRMINGHAM **Babs Blay**

We are finding that life in Birmingham is wall to wall activity and excitement. Barely a week goes by when there isn't something happening in the Branch. It isn't always happy though, as we realised when one of our stalwart members passed out to the big parade square in the sky after a struggle with heart problems. Mary Gunning had served in the ATS as a Pay Clerk and used her skills to good effect when she managed the Branch funds as Treasurer for more than 11 years. Several of us attended her funeral and her family expressed their gratitude for our support.

We will miss Mary's pained expression as she observed the younger branch members doing something else rather silly. RIP Mary.

Although we don't officially have a meeting in January, to allow the turkey to settle, we still gather at The Irish Centre for a seasonal drink. There was a good turnout this year so that we could compare our interesting Christmas presents and horror cooking stories.

February is always a quiet month for us. It is an opportunity to regroup and decide what antics we will get up to in the coming months. The rest did us good so that we were in fine fettle for our quarterly Pizza Night in March. The staff in Pizza Hut are used to us now and really look forward to our visits. We try to keep it down to a dull roar but you know what it's like? Also in March, several members of Birmingham Branch were able to attend the WRAC Association AGM at Guildford. They were more than a bit impressed with the Memorial Cabinet and Books in the Cathedral and the Obelisks at Queen Elizabeth Park. A bit of light relief in the month took the form of skittles at Tamworth Branch. Although we only managed runner up in the individual and the team events we had a brilliant time as usual. Thank you Belle Jenkinson and her team for a delicious buffet lunch and a fabulous fun time.

By the time May arrived we were in the mood to celebrate our birthday in style. Sue Westlake was able to join us and say a few parting words as she stepped down from the dizzy heights of Vice President. We tried to hold our tears back as she regaled us with a few anecdotes and made us laugh. We will miss her as our VP but look forward to having her visit us often in the future. We also wish Ali Brown all the very best as she assumes the role vacated by Sue. This year at our birthday lunch we presented everyone present with a birthday gift of a scratch card. It's hard to believe that a few ladies weren't sure how to do it but they were ably assisted by other members. Interestingly, we made a profit overall with the winnings. The Brum Branch Choir, otherwise known as the noisy table regaled us with a few songs to chivvy the party along. Thank you girls. Is it time to remove the earplugs?



Birmingham Branch and visitors prepare for their birthday lunch

In June we found ourselves back in Pizza Hut. There were a few more people attending this time and the staff are already talking about how many tables we will need pushed together in September. At the end of June we were once again parading with other veterans through Birmingham at Armed Forces Day. Apart from giving us duff information about the forming up venue and time it all went very well. Interestingly, 7 youngsters collapsed in the heat whilst on parade, but not a single veteran. It seems that nobody has told them about wiggling their toes. During the course of the day we met 3 ladies who had served and subsequently

expressed their intention to join the WRAC Association. The following Wednesday one of them actually arrived for our meeting and is already settled on the noisy table. Brenda and her husband had joined us on the parade on the Saturday.



Manning the stand at Armed Forces Day

One of our regular visitors to meetings is Marg Davies of Hereford Branch. She took on the epic task of walking 100 miles in aid of Cancer Research and the WRAC Association. We were happy to support her whenever we could and were proud of her achievement. Well done Marg, a true survivor.

Shropshire Branch were kind enough to invite us to attend their Race Day. It was a great event with betting on horses, a fabulous buffet and a hat competition. What more could a girl ask for? Thank you Shropshire. We'll be there again next year.

Three members of Birmingham Branch donned their trusty trainers and pounded the streets of London in the British 10k run in aid of Help for Heroes and the WRAC Association. At the time of writing overall sponsorship had topped the £6000 mark (before Gift Aid) and it was still coming in. The whole event was a joyous occasion with some ladies (and a couple of men) running and a massive support team from up and down the country cheering on every pace taken. We are ready to take on a new challenge next year. Bring it on.



Preparing for the London 10K

Birmingham Branch is happy to see visitors at its meetings so please feel free to join us if you are in the area. Even if we haven't got a meeting we will turn out for a coffee and a chat. We will also take you on a guided tour of the city. Just contact us via our Facebook page to make arrangements. Remember - You can count on Brum Branch, we've got an abacus.

BRISTOL **Jackie Naysmith**

How nice that for the past couple of weeks we have been able to enjoy the sunshine. Bristol have been very busy, we started with our lunch in February, which due to the severe flooding in our area, Maj Mack was unable to attend. Our theme was 'Red Hats' and purple. Members entered into the spirit of the theme and wore various variations on hats (even a tea cosy), and the Marriott staff even entered into the theme and wore hats. Our menus and place names also featured the red and purple theme.



Red Hat Lunch

In April we organised a service in the Lord Mayor's Chapel followed by refreshments at the City Hall, the event was funded by generous donations for which we were grateful. Our service was honouring women, and we had invited the WRNS, St John Ambulance, Salvation Army, Nursing and representation from Burma Star and Normandy Veterans. Local Councillors were also invited and we were pleased that the Deputy Lord Mayor was able to join us. The service was taken by the Rev'd Harold Clark who reflected our role in his sermon. Alison Smith, who is one of our members, also took part in service and the Deputy Lord Mayor gave a reading. We were pleased that Maj Mack was able to join us. In May the Lord Mayor's Chapel held a Festival of Flowers, the Branch was represented and the Flower arrangers did us proud. To symbolise some of the work of the ladies, a fender from a lorry was used along with a steering wheel. A huge flower display sat in tyres and on a side table there was a portable typewriter, below that a WRAC plaque and there was an Association Flag in the background. We were in a prominent spot just inside the door.



Lord Mayor's Chapel

June involved preparations for Armed Forces Day. Our Secretary attended a Drumhead Service at Weston-super-Mare on 21 June, what a tiring day that was. 40 Commando Royal Marines were being given the freedom of the town and there was a parade and a display by the Red Arrows. It was hot, hot, hot that day

On 23 June the Chairman and Secretary attended a Flag Raising Ceremony and signing of an Armed Forces Community Covenant in Bristol, the Secretary then attended another Flag Raising Ceremony with Branch members in South Gloucestershire. Our stand on Armed Forces Day was not in the best of places to be noticed, however we did generate some interest. On display we had photos of the late 'Guy Gibson' donating blood at the Colston Hall in Bristol in 1944, the Dr was Capt Lady Whitby of the Medical Corp. For our display we had purchased artist easels from the internet very cheaply and they were ideal for our display boards. We had display showing our Association the WRAC and the ATS and one of photos taken at Bletchley Park. We joined in the Drumhead Service and one of our members, Jean James, had taken part in the parade. We were very fortunate that the weather was kind to us.



Flag Raising Ceremony South Gloucestershire

We travelled to Southampton for the Area Reunion on 12 July. Many of us have booked to go to the Grand Reunion, some have booked to stay extra days so we are really looking forward to it. We have members who unfortunately, due to ongoing health problems, are unable to attend meetings. They are not forgotten and we try and keep in touch with them. Our next little outing is to Weston-super-Mare for our traditional Fish and Chips day out. We hope you enjoyed the Summer and we look forward to seeing many of you in the New Year.

BURY & ROCHDALE Susan Feeney née Reeves

2013/2014 has been a good year for us as we have a number of new members, boosting our Branch to over 20. We had a memorable day on 13 August 2013 at the National Memorial Arboretum, the weather held making it a special day. The day found our members walking miles in between tea & cake breaks. Dave our mini bus driver managed to talk all the way there and back, we now feel we know his family inside and out.



Visiting the National Memorial Arboretum

In September we went to the Fusilier Museum in Bury for Afternoon Tea. This was, as usual, a noisy affair with plenty of tea and cakes just as we like it. October saw a number of our Members going to the Dinner Club, in our Police Helmets in honor of Robert Peel who was from Bury (along with Black Puddings).



Tea at The Fusilier Museum

Remembrance Sunday saw a five of our Members making the trip south for the Cenotaph Parade this was an emotional day for all. In December we had our annual Christmas Dinner at the 'Old White Lion' where we have meetings. The food and company was exceptional with a lot of wine being consumed, no names mentioned.

So far 2014 has been a quiet year, the Branch had its annual trip, this time to Southport where the weather held until the Minibus was on its way home. Lunch was Fish and Chips as you can't go to Southport without indulging. In August we have a number of things planned with the Lancashire Fusiliers for the WW1 centenary.

We still have our Informal Evening on the third Wednesday of the month at the Toby Carvery in Oldham for Branch Members who work. This evening is a popular meeting which has also seen the numbers grow, all are welcome.

CANTERBURY Sue Foulks

At the end of the last year we were unsure whether the Branch would be able to continue as the Dominican Priory we had used for many years was no longer available to us. However, by the time our first meeting in April came round our chairman, Susan Wing, had sourced a suitable room. We welcomed 14 members including WRNS and WAAF to our new venue at Housing 21, Cowdray Place, Canterbury, CT1 3PB. With the added advantage of being on a bus route, car parking available nearby and a small kitchen to make those essential cups of tea, it is just perfect for our monthly meetings.

Susan Wing gave us the sad news that earlier in the year we had lost two ex-ATS members; Mavis Middleton and Eileen Powles had passed away. Both ladies were very keen branch members. Mavis, along with her great friend, Doreen Dennis, was a familiar figure at the many reunions and events they both attended over the years.

At our May meeting numbers dropped slightly, and in June only seven of us made it to the meeting, which was a pity as we had a speaker. Liz Gregory, ex-QARANC, talked about her life serving in both Regulars and TA and in the NHS as a nursing sister and midwife. However the low attendance was partly due to the fact that it was the week of events commemorating D-Day and some

members had travelled to Belgium and France to take part.

Our next meeting, a strawberry tea party, will have been held on the 2nd July and if the weather was anything like today with the sun shining, we will have enjoyed a lovely Kentish cream tea, what could be nicer on a warm summer's day?

Our Branch meetings will continue through the rest of 2014. If you would like to join us we will be more than happy to welcome you on the 1st Wednesday of the month at 13.00 at Cowdray Place (as above). Further details can be obtained by contacting Sue Foulks, Branch Secretary.

CHELMSFORD

Gina Shadrack

February. Following the Christmas break, and despite a cold winter's day, our Branch met. Looking forward to seeing one another again and get up to date with news over a cup of tea. We also had a quiz which involved identifying plants and shrubs from Dorothy Turner's garden. This got us all thinking, though most people seemed to know the answers. Unfortunately later in the year Dorothy had a fall, injuring her neck, we continue to hope she fully recovers.

March. We are fortunate to have at least two members who are able to recount an interesting experience, recite poetry, speak on their holiday etc at short notice. We were grateful for them at this meeting and wished we had more time, some people have visited the most interesting places!

May. A social afternoon where we had the opportunity to discuss future events of the Branch and enjoy each others company.
June. We were pleased to welcome Shirley, a professional flower arranger who had travelled from the Southend area to be with us. Shirley produced 5 arrangements which were raffled afterwards, to the delight of those who won them. This meeting is always enjoyed by everyone and we look forward to welcoming her back.

July. On 15 July we held our Anniversary Lunch at Glades Restaurant in Chelmsford and were delighted to welcome our Area Chairman Wendy Hooton. We cannot possibly complete this report without giving our heartfelt thanks from Chelmsford Branch to retiring Vice President Sue Westlake MBE. We wish her every possible happiness in her 'retirement', many thanks indeed Sue.

CLEVELAND BRANCH

Audrey Grainge

In December 2013 we had our Christmas Meal at Middlesbrough College. We had a lovely meal all cooked and served by the students and I must say they did a brilliant job.



June was very busy with Armed Forces Day(s). Jan Landess and Kath Steel really looked the part and a lot of hard work was done by them in preparation for three venues; Middlesbrough, Stockton and Redcar. We held a Tombola at all three events (although at this moment I do not know how much was raised or what charities it was for). We had very good weather with a good turnout of members to help out, including our special expat from France, Sylvia Cree.



Our Standard Bearer has had a busy time over the last 6 months including Blackpool, Chelsea and, as usual, a number of funerals. This included the funeral of a female soldier who was tragically killed in a road accident at Catterick. Finally she paraded the Standard at Middlesbrough and at Hartlepool for Armed Forces Day Parades.



DONCASTER

Pam Morgan



Babs Thorpe (WO2 WRAC) at Doncaster War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday 2013, the Doncaster Branch wreath was laid by Pam Morgan (WRAC)

DUMFRIES Susan Marcroft

It was a happy afternoon tea that was enjoyed by some of the Dumfries Branch members in May. Regretfully we were also saying farewell to Rosemary Cochrane-Dyet, our Chairperson, who after much anguish and a considerable wait has managed to sell her Dumfries home. She and her husband are moving to be nearer their family. All of the Dumfries Branch members and friends thank Rosemary for her leadership and friendship that she has given us over the many years. However, we also wish them both a very happy time in this new and exciting chapter of their lives.



Dumfries Branch will continue! We shall enjoy all the lunches and High Tea's that are planned and look forward to future years of the same. We started our year with a wonderful Spring Lunch at an Italian Restaurant in Dumfries, and we were delighted that Janet Lawson was able to join us. We still have High Tea in June, lunches in September and October, with enough time to work up an appetite for our Christmas gathering. Apart from the foody stuff some of us will be marching on Armed Forces Day in Dumfries, and Remembrance Sunday. Any members who wish to join us please do, you would be very welcome. So from a very healthy (or not) Dumfries Branch, we wish everyone in the Association, Health and Happiness.

GRIMSBY Gail Davy

The first big event of the year Grimsby Branch members attended was in April. It was a 1940's style Dance and Sausage and Mash Supper, organised by Grimsby Branch of the RBL to celebrate their 80th Anniversary, also to commemorate 100 years since the start of WW1.



Enjoying the 40's dance

In June eleven members were taken in limousines, courtesy of Kettles (Co-op) Funeral Care Community projects, to visit RAF Scampton Forces Firefighting Museum and the RAF Museum.

We were given an escorted tour of the Fire museum and learned about the history of firefighting from hand carts and leather buckets to the latest modern equipment. There was one room full of model fire engines, nearly 2,000 different models. After lunch in the Junior Ranks Mess we were shown round the RAF Museum, including the office of Guy Gibson, with the grave of his famous dog Nigger outside his office. We were given a short talk on the Bouncing Bomb and the planes used to bomb the dams in the famous "Dambusters Raid." We were then shown an impressive collection of Fire Engines from 1936 to modern day.



Visiting RAF Scampton



Gail Davy

At our June meeting we welcomed ladies from Hull Branch. Some of the Grimsby members joined them for lunch in our favourite fish restaurant, always looking after our tummies as usual. After lunch we all attended the monthly meeting at RBL headquarters where tea and cakes were served. We all enjoyed the afternoon and were invited to Hull Branch.

Representatives from the Branch were present at the Armed Forces week Flag Raising Ceremony at the Town Hall and afterwards invited for tea and cream cakes in the Town Hall. Some members attended the Armed Forces Day Parade at Cleethorpes. July started with a very enjoyable visit by 4 of our members to Hull Branch meeting. We were entertained by a lady called Dot Perkins, talking about old Yorkshire and her life on a farm near Withernsea, we almost needed an interpreter as she spoke with a traditional Yorkshire dialect. A happy afternoon was had by all and we promised to visit again soon. we are looking forward to our next excursions to Skipton and Thorpe Camp, and of course to the fish and chip restaurant.

HULL & EAST RIDING Lynne Marsh

Greetings from the newly re-named Hull & East Riding Branch, changed to reflect our very large catchment area. We are pleased to say we have found a permanent home at Wenlock Barracks, Anlaby Road, Hull for our monthly meetings. It's home to a working unit of medics, as well as Service Careers offices, and they couldn't be more welcoming to us. On one occasion they had to change our meeting place from a ground floor mess room to the 1st floor Officers' Mess. We were a little perturbed as we do

use the occasional wheelchair, but the answer to that tiny problem was 4 lovely servicemen and women just picking up the chair plus Aylene Sutherland, the occupant, and manoeuvring both up the curved stairs to the amazement of us all. My one regret was that I was so impressed I forgot to get my camera out because Aylene's face was a joy !

We have been very fortunate in many ways this year; we are all well, Carina (our Standard Bearer) has made very good progress after a chapter of illnesses and hospital stays and the weather has been kind to us over the Winter and Spring and not dampened our many outings.

We started off the year with tea with the Lord Mayor in her Parlour, including a very special tour led by our own Association member, Nadine Fudge, now sadly having just finished her extended year of duty as Lord Mayor. When she told us that any food not eaten by us had to be thrown away (blessed 'elf and safety rules!) I did feel it was our civic duty to not waste our taxes. Believe me, you would have been proud of us, there was not a crumb left!



Please witness hands forcing down the secretary to her knees, it's a hard life as a Branch Secretary but I am getting used to it !

We had a wonderful trip to Burnby Hall Gardens in Pocklington for the Tulip Festival in May, but for once, with the clement weather, we had left it a little past their best. Still, not deterred, our hardy group enjoyed the day out, and had a very enjoyable lunch with our 2 guests, the Lord Mayor of Hull and the Mayor of Pocklington, Cllr Ann Cox.



Visiting Burnby Hall

At the time of writing this we are all recovering from a night out at the local Bowling Rink. A dozen of us got kitted out in those beautiful comfortable two-tone shoes they provide. I jest of course, nobody wanted to have their photo taken with them showing! We divided ourselves into 2 teams and got stuck in, literally unfortunately. Whilst hunting for a suitable ball one of our party got her thumb stuck, and despite soap and water being offered, it was only the application of WD40 that encouraged the ball to plop off (and yes, I was too slow with the camera again!).

We did do very well, for most of us it was the first attempt or at least first go this year. OK I admit it, we did have the sides up and we sometimes resorted to those wheelie contraptions, but none of us disgraced ourselves and we all had a good laugh.

Over the last 6 months we have been invited by other local Service Associations to a number of Dinners, which are always thoroughly enjoyed by those attending. We have also recently ventured out to the Grimsby Branch and a lovely time was had by all. We hope to do more visiting out and about, thanks to bus passes and glucosamine.

All events and outings are well attended and, as one of the "younger " members, I am always impressed by how our members take on everything with enthusiasm and good humour. To quote part of the well known verse used on Remembrance Day "Age shall not weary them". I think our Branch, probably like all of yours, embodies that spirit. To name just one woman as an example, Irene "Rene" Morris, who has attended all our social events and meetings for the last couple of years and is one of our regular nonagenarian trio. Rene is in the front row in a red coat in the photo at Lord Mayor's Parlour. I wonder where I will be and what will I be doing when I reach that select band?

Plenty to look forward to but plenty to look back on with fond memories for us. Best wishes to all of you from the future City of Culture (2017) Branch (sorry,but I can't miss an opportunity to mention that!).

LEEDS Pat Harpin

We have had a good year with our 14 stalwarts attending most meetings. Our meetings are always informal with the ladies talking about events since the last meeting and making arrangements for forthcoming events. During the year we have taken part in the Dinner Club weekend, Festival of Remembrance and various other events within the Association. Our Chairman enjoys her association with the Facebook ladies who have served and attends various activities with them.

In March several ladies enjoyed a City Varieties Matinee show, entitled 'The Good Old Days' they had a good sing-along. Our May Lunch was in the new venue for the Thomas Danby College, this was very enjoyable, so we will have our Christmas Lunch there in December.

We had a very interesting speaker at our July meeting. Growing up in Germany in a Jewish family was a very harrowing experience. It made us think again about the inhuman way thousands of people had been treated. We are looking forward to our Fish & Chip lunch and visit to Wetherby Market. Our visit to York and the Northern Eastern Area Annual Lunch is always eagerly anticipated. It is good to meet up with our friends. We have had several ladies inquiring about joining the WRAC Association, Facebook seems to be proving a good way to attract members.

LEICESTER & NOTTINGHAM BRANCH Sue Slattery

By the time you are reading this report 2013 will be a distant memory for most of us, but I would like to mention our last event of the year which was enjoyed by 35 members and 15 guests, including 3 ladies from Shropshire Branch. Our monthly meetings continue to be well supported with around 30 members

attending on a regular basis. We have welcomed 3 new ladies this year; Margaret Paterson and her sister Audrey Cross, both from Nottingham, also Rose Barbour who has relocated to our county from London. We continue to receive invites from various other branches which a few of us love to attend, to chat and catch up on all the gossip which we may have missed. A few of our ladies have suffered poor health during the last two or three months but as usual Pam Richards (our Welfare Officer) has risen to the occasion by sending cards and visiting.



Enjoying Rutland Water



The Branch Standard in Normandy



Enjoying Phoenix Branch lunch at the NMA

January. SSgt Christina Jones, as she was then, gave us a talk about her time spent in Afghanistan. Thirty ladies enjoyed the slide show and the stories of this country. We have since heard that Christina has been promoted to WO2, so many congratulations to her. The Branch also presented Teresa Neal with a card and chocolates on her 90th birthday. Also this month 4 branch members attended Shropshire Branch post Christmas lunch, once again a great meal, especially the sticky toffee pudding, many thanks to Chris and her team.

February. Our Nibble and Natter meeting, as usual very noisy apart from when they were eating, cakes, sweets and chocolates provided by Sandra, Lilian, Barbara and Jo. Pam gave us an update on the ladies who are currently not very well and she also thanked those ladies who had sent her postage stamps to help towards the cost of cards she sends out. Joan Thornton was unable to join us so Pam and Sandra delivered a card and gift to her on the occasion of her 94th birthday.

March. Our Bring and Buy raised £116 which helps boost our funds. Six ladies travelled to Shrewsbury for the Phoenix Branch lunch, 13 of us went to Tamworth Branch for their annual Skittle Challenge, but guess what, we lost again. We obviously need to practice more, thanks to Belle and her team for another great afternoon. Then, for a change, instead of Pam Richards sending out cards and gifts to members, on this occasion presentations were made to her by our Chairman Doris White to mark her birthday.

April. This month our annual quiz was organised by Pam Richards. Four branch members travelled to Fort William where we met up with Chris Smith and her husband Ian. Chris is a member of our branch but left our area to go and live in Scotland to be close to her family. After leaving Fort William Carol and I spent a few days with Chris and Ian near the Kyle of Lochalsh, where we joined up with Jackie and Jessie. An enjoyable few days spent in the Scottish highlands, I am sure reports and photographs about this weekend will be covered in a separate article.

May. Members decided it would be a good opportunity for individuals to talk about their service years, which turned out to be very interesting, especially Vera Waddington who had us in stitches with head lice and toilet tales! A visit to our local Wetherspoons attended by 22 ladies proved once again to be popular. Five of us went to Birmingham Branch to join them for their Birthday Lunch, once again good food and company, thanks to Babs and her team. Five ladies visited the NMA for the Phoenix Branch lunch. Our standard and 6 ladies attended the service for the Normandy Veterans Association at Packington.

June. What a very special month this turned out to be for 11 of our ladies who were invited, by The Not Forgotten Association, to attend a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 26 June. Five members, including the Standard travelled to France for the 70th Anniversary of the D Day landings. Maybe you spotted them on the television, albeit very briefly. Ann Atkinson should have travelled with them but unfortunately was unable to go. Armed Forces Day service and parade was attended by 10 ladies, the Flag Raising ceremony at County Hall was attended by 7 members and the Rutland Water boat trip and lunch was enjoyed by 27 ladies and 11 guests. Many thanks to Carol for all her hard work in organising this great day out. Also my thanks to our Branch Committee who work so hard all the year round to make the Branch the success it is today, and we thank all the members for their continued support. Finally our congratulations to Sue Westlake on the award of an MBE.

NEW FOREST (Informal Branch) Madge Evans

'New Forest Informal Branch', phew what a mouthful, although it's appropriate in every way! We're based in New Milton and we are, so far, very informal. We had our third meeting on 11 June, all five of us, which has been our average attendance thus far. They have been very friendly, convivial meetings to date, and we are doing our best to swell the ranks by word of mouth and advertising. Working on the premise that "great oaks from little acorns grow" we are looking to the future. After all, we started Luton Branch with only 7 members, and they didn't do too badly!

Interested in joining us? Phone Madge Evans on 01425 620995 for further information. Should I not be around please leave a message on the answerphone and I will return your call.

NORFOLK (Informal Branch) Joan Awbery

We have a very successful and happy band of twelve former ATS members who come together regularly to enjoy themselves. As eating and talking are favourite pastimes we combine the two whenever we can. Twice this year we have had lunch in the beautiful surroundings of the Assembly House.



*At the Assembly House in January
Liz Winter, Linda Graver, Pepi Simpson, Madge
Freeman, Joan Whittingham, Irene Warren, Marjorie
Spears, Maisie Capes, Barbara Ranson, Meg Watson,
Peggy Bell, Doris Brook, Audrey Juby,
Lorna Lansdowne, Beryl Manthorp*

In March 9 members went to King's Lynn where we met Mrs Elsie Plummer one of our members living there who cannot get easily to Norwich. We visited a small privately run museum of life, military and civilian, in the 30s, 40s and 50s. We were met with great courtesy and helped to get around all the rooms in a very steep and ancient house. Afterwards we were treated to a wonderful tea party, which makes us think we may need to go back again, there must be some exhibits we missed! The committee accepted, for display in the museum, a copy of Mrs Elsie Plummer's book 'Sergeant', about her life in the ATS and also extracts from Miss Beryl Manthorp's book 'Full Circle' about her time as a PTI.

All were saddened to hear of the death of Lady Soames on 31 May. When Mary Churchill was in the ATS many of us knew her and we felt a particular loss. Lady Soames unveiled the Plaque at Great Yarmouth remembering the deaths of so many ATS girls. She made a very moving speech and afterwards spoke to each and every family member present which all greatly appreciated. We presented Lady Soames with an ATS brooch and membership of the Norfolk Branch of the WRAC Association.

At our lunch early in June our guest was a young woman from Suffolk interested in all things military. She possessed a good collection of ATS uniforms and equipment, bought mainly from car boot sales and auctions, but knew very little of ATS life. We happily filled her in! For those Branches unfortunately suffering a decline in numbers attending meetings, we can heartily recommend informal lunches and an occasional day out instead. It works very well for us and we certainly do not feel we have lost connection with the Association. Liz Winter and Linda Graver (our Secretary and Chairman) who, though unable to join us regularly, do so when they can. We are very fortunate too in having Wendy Hooton as Area Chairman who keeps all local Branches in touch. Thank you to all three.

PHOENIX Sheila Johnson

January. We held a lunch at the Crewe Arms Hotel situated directly opposite Crewe Station, 9 members were able to attend and enjoy the meal. The hotel had recently undergone a major refurbishment so with this in mind it was voted the ideal venue for the Branch AGM in July.

February. In February we celebrated Millie Pover's 90th birthday. Millie is a founder member of Phoenix branch and her family kindly extended invitations to fellow Branch members to attend the celebration at the Waverley Hotel in Crewe. Millie arrived in style courtesy of a chauffeur driven Bentley limousine loaned to the family! The Bentley Company, based in Crewe, recognise the good service of employees and provided this special treat enjoyed by Millie, her relatives and friends throughout the afternoon. The laden buffet tables were balanced by a fantastic array of gifts and cards which epitomised the significance of the milestone achieved by Millie this year. Congratulations Millie!



L-R: Sheila Johnson, Millie Pover, Joan Berry

May. In May we made our annual trip to the National Memorial Arboretum which included a Spring Lunch. It was a very rainy day which prevented many of those present seeing several of the new or renovated memorials at close quarters. The most satisfactory way round this proved to be taking a one hour ride on the NMA 'Land Train' to tour the site. The ensuing lunch provided opportunities for inter-branch chatting, always a welcome feature at this type of gathering.



Spring Lunch, National Memorial Arboretum

June. At our June meeting we enjoyed hearing branch member Louise Rhodes recollections of her ATS service and subsequent Comrades Association membership. Louise served in the ATS from 1945 to 1947. After basic training she became a Clerk stationed in Llandudno, she was then posted to Derby as a Storewoman assigned to the RAOC. This was in marked contrast to the 18 months she spent in Cairo. There were none of the present day systems of military stock control and she executed her RAOC responsibilities manually, clear manuscript being a crucial element of her job description!

On reverting to civilian life a neighbour invited her to a meeting of the North Staffs Old Comrades Association. The Branch met in a small cafe in Newcastle Under Lyme, with members coming from the surrounding districts, no one had access to a car but bus services were good. There were about ?? WW1 members and 20 ex ATS ladies, 2 of the WW1 veterans had been nurses and another had served with the Army Air Corps. The meetings were quite informal, although owing to rationing there was no food available for refreshments. Louise remembers there was plenty of smoking! Local speakers enlivened the meetings alongside activities such as Whist, Beetle Drives and Housey Housey (bingo). Due to austerity measures only a 2lb bag of sugar and 1/4lb of tea could be offered up for auction!



Louise Rhodes

Christmas meetings were slightly more adventurous with biscuits and a glass of sherry to spice up proceedings. Efforts were made to raise the profile of the Branch by visiting near by locations such as Stafford. In 1985, prompted by the loss of the Branch's then venue, the North Staffs Branch closed and remaining members found a home within the new formed Crewe Branch. The latter eventually closed and together with Wolverhampton Branch re-emerged as the Phoenix Branch of today.

PLYMOUTH Ruth Jennings

We all enjoyed our Christmas 2013 lunches! Many in the West Country know that quite a few of us throughout the association tend to pile on the pounds due to the many outings over the festive season; particularly if you have a large social circle of family, friends and clubs to spend time with. Hopefully then we'll be back to normal in time for the summer.

We had our Committee meeting in January and immediately decided upon a lunch date to Windy Ridge and Kernow Mill for February. We enjoyed our meal and then drove across the road for a light shopping spree and a tea break. Unfortunately we were not able to get to Guildford for the AGM, partly due to the weather and partly the loss of the rail links and flooded roads etc.

In May we took the train to Truro for a very successful reunion trip. We actually had no names called in from the ladies in Cornwall to meet us so we decided that we would treat it as another day out, with the bonus of having Sue Westlake and Mack Maskens-McIntyre coming to join us.

We met at the former RBL Club which is now a private club called The Kernow Club. The owners have kindly granted all privileges to any member of the forces without having to join their membership, which we are very grateful for and we all enjoyed a lovely buffet lunch. The icing on the cake for us all was that 2 ladies, Lorraine Moore and Ellen Ferguson, came in on spec and were greeted with great pleasure, thank you girls!



Plymouth City Council, in collaboration with the local Forces and the Plymouth and District Federation of ex-services associations really made a great effort for the 70th anniversary D-Day celebrations. My local area, Saltash Passage, benefited greatly with a beautifully resurfaced road along the riverside, the vandalised toilets were demolished and the Memorial Park spruced up. The Commemorative plaque on the Memorial was refurbished, plus a new information board was erected to explain that in 1944 the 5th and 7th Corps of the U.S Army were billeted in the fields close to the Brunel Rail Bridge, and finally marched down Vicarage Hill, (renamed Normandy Hill later on), to a newly built embarkation jetty to sail for Normandy. Many of our local folk attended a service at the Memorial on Sunday 8 June with the city dignitaries. There were 4 distinguished visitors from Plymouth, Massachusetts who were in town to discuss the pending celebrations in 2020 for the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the Pilgrim's ship, The Mayflower. A lovely event topped off with a sudden squall just as the service finished.

In our previous report I told you that we had successfully tried out a new venue to hopefully entice ladies in the Torbay/Exeter area for a mini reunion in June of last year. This year we went back to Dart's Farm near Exeter on 14 June. The interest and bookings were registered with us quite quickly and our list grew to 22. Unfortunately double bookings and illness took their toll over the weeks and we ended up with just 14. We had a great time and it was especially great to see Pauline Marr from Torquay again and Shirley Taper came from Newton Abbot for her first visit. We hope that next year we will entice more ladies to join us for a lunch and a chat.

Plymouth celebrated Armed Forces Day on 28 June with a great programme of events designed to suit young and old throughout the day. We attended the South and South West Area reunion hosted by Southampton Branch and look forward to Evon's 'At Home' Day in her new home. We have another lunch date at Knightstone tea rooms near Tavistock in the diary and then to Solihull for the WRAC Dinner. Not too far off is Christmas and all those lunches and dinners again, back to the diets in the New Year, girls! We have our meetings on the 4th Tuesday of the month except in December at 1.30 in the Lower Abbey Hall, behind the Minster Church of St Andrew in Royal Parade.

PORTSMOUTH Margaret Bush



All is well in Portsmouth, we still meet once a month at member's homes for a coffee morning and general catch up. We welcome new members as I am sure, like most, our numbers are dwindling. One of our members Diana Weston was able to make the AGM at Guildford which she enjoyed, she even met some comrades from her time served.

In May I was very honoured to meet HM Queen Elizabeth on board HMS Lancaster, a day that I will treasure. In June some of us attended the D-Day celebrations in Southsea, it was a beautiful day. Events were held over 4 days a great tribute to all hero's. Unfortunately due to work commitments for some members we were unable to attend the AFD ceremony in Portsmouth. As I write this we are looking forward to the area reunion in Southampton in July. Thank you to our few members for your continued support.

SHEFFIELD Brenda Colley

The summer isn't doing bad so far, my lawns have just dried out after being a foot under water for months. Any day now there'll be an announcement that we are officially in a drought situation! Numbers wise we average 6 to a meeting and we now meet earlier, 11am at Wetherspoon on Cambridge St. It means there's no expensive room to pay for and so far it's working out pretty well. It's fairly quiet at that time and we manage to get the serious business over with before it gets busy, then it's bacon buttie and coffee time. We had our usual Spring Lunch at the Sheffield catering college restaurant, great food and good company.

Four of us went to Normandy with the Normandy Veterans Association (NVA) for the 70th Anniversary of the D-Day landings. It was well worth the long trip as the atmosphere was fantastic, as was the weather most of the time. On the 5 June we attended a parade and service of Commemoration at the Statue of Field Marshal Montgomery at Colleville Montgomery. Prior to this members of 16 Air Assault Brigade did a mass 'drop', it was quite a sight to see so many parachutes in the beautiful blue sky. Meg, whose wedding featured in the last issue, said her son Adrian (best man) was jumping and we promised to wave to him as he came down. We waved at them all so as not to disappoint her! At midnight there were fireworks at Pegasus Bridge, followed by a speech from David Cameron and a 2 hour wait for taxis to take us to our hotel. Fortunately it was pleasantly warm and there was plenty going on as we waited between the bridge & the Paras billet, a field under canvas. The whole regiment stopped to chat as they passed us.

On 6 June (D-Day) there were services in the cathedral and cemetery at Bayeux, with the Royal family in attendance. After that it was time to turn our attention to the hessian bag containing our packed lunch; pasta salad, 3 sandwiches and 2 cakes, all quite delicious. As we munched our way through it Prince Charles and Camilla walked among us chatting, all very informal. Then it was a dash to Arromanches for a re-enactment of the 'landings'. A dozen or so re-enactors wading from a landing craft waving a Union Jack (the atmosphere was slightly awry because of bathers in the sea and sunbathers on beach!). They repeated the landing 5 or 6 times. Jean and I came across them later resting in a sunny spot on a quiet street, they were actually French, moaning about how wet they were. I remarked that at least they weren't getting shot at as our lads were on D-Day. They agreed with that and a couple of them even looked sheepish. Prince William made a couple of speeches and a Gendarme nearby said "William, a lovely boy". Gordon Prime, NVA organiser, was presented with the Legion d'honneur medal, it's quite beautiful. Altogether a marvellous few days (hastily condensed into this paragraph!).



Jean Smith and Brenda Colley

We attended Armed Forces Day in Sheffield, which seemed to be a week earlier than other towns? Branch member Chris Spencer was Parade Marshall, how smart (& pleased with herself) she looked.



Chris Spencer (right)

We went to the NMA on 5 July for RA Day and on 20 July to York for the NVA's last parade and service in York Minster. On 7 September we went to Eden camp for their annual Remembrance Service, which is a must on our calendar, a chance to perfect our marching ready for November in London! Hopefully there will be 6 of us on parade at the Cenotaph.

On 20 September we will be in York again for the North East Area Reunion, always an enjoyable day meeting friends we haven't seen for a while. Three days later we will be at the National Memorial Arboretum when the Normandy Veterans Association dedicate their memorial. My goodness, it's almost Christmas again, hopefully everyone enjoyed a long hot summer.

SHROPSHIRE Sandra Davies

Before I start rambling on and forget, the Shropshire branch sends the warmest of greetings to all branches and hope that everything is going well, isn't 2014 flying!

January saw our Branch post crimbo lunch at the Mytton & Mermaid at Atcham. Chris P put in so much hard work as per normal, whilst I just moved the odd piece of paper about. No, honestly, I pulled my weight and there's a lot to pull too! We're pleased to say all the hard work paid off because all our guests had a blast of a time, as did our own Branch members (hint to all other members that we have yet to see!). We thought at one point we were going to have to issue out wellies because the venue is right by the River Severn which was steadily rising!



In **February** we had our first Branch meeting of the year at the usual haunt of the Red Lion pub, where we tucked into a good lunch before getting on with the business in hand. We had a good natter along the way, punctuated by branch affairs! If anyone is in the area on holiday and would like to join us then you would be more than welcome, our details can be found on the WRAC Association website.

March roared in and on the 1st Chris P, Alison and Chris R legged it to the Phoenix Branch lunch at the Lord Hill in Shrewsbury. I do believe that the building is still standing, so they weren't fibbing when they told me that they had behaved! We enjoyed our 2nd meeting, an evening event, this is pure and simple so that we can make our way through the curry menu! On the 14th Chris P, Sheila, Nancy and Sandra broke the land speed record on our way to the Skittles, our thanks to Belle for inviting us. The AGM took us to Guildford, so we thought that we'd give the rail network a break by terrorising the motorways. Once at our overnight stop we must have said our prayers because the weather was great. The AGM went well and we bid a sad farewell to Sue Westlake and a fond welcome to Ali Brown.



April saw a quartet, in the shape of Chris P, Sheila, Chris R and Sandra, heading up to Fort William for the 2nd, and even better, long weekend of fun and games! I won't dwell on this because it's not technically an Association event. Thank you to CJ and her team for organising something really solid.

In **May** five of our rabble went off on a train terrorising trip to the Birmingham Branch birthday lunch. Once again I can report that the rail network survived yet another attack. They were all full of good things to say at the meeting that evening. This month was an outing to the NMA, the weather realised that it was nearing summer and decided to rain, just for a change!

In **June** our monthly meeting was in the afternoon, but with a twist. The Branch Secretary took herself off on holiday to Spain, for the WHOLE month, I ask you, I'd like to know who signed her chitty! Anyway, guess who was let loose with the meeting? Give up? It was the Chairman, Sandra, woo hoo what a hoot we had, it was like a classroom full of kids! On Armed Forces Day we made the short hop to RAF Cosford for a great day out.

Well that brings me to an end, you might or might not hear from me again, depends if the Branch Secretary is amused with my efforts or not. If she is then I just might have this job full-time! I think that so far we've had a wonderful time on all our jaunts and look forward to many many more. Take care and hope to see you at some point in the calendar!

SOUTHAMPTON

Jean Doe

Well, despite a slow miserable start to the year with many people suffering great hardship due to the weather everything seemed to kick in. The gardens have been looking good and the weather has been superb. We have had a change of venue for our monthly meeting, a warm, comfortable club which members seem very happy with. We didn't meet in December, January and February due to the unreliable heating in our previous place. After a slow start this year we are now looking forward to the reunion on 12 July. We appear to have a good number coming and if the weather and food are good it's possible a grand time will be had by all.

Three of us, at the invitation of the Not Forgotten Association, went to the Colonel's Review of Trooping the Colour. After a heavy shower it was a fantastic 'do', thoroughly enjoyed and not to be missed. We were disappointed when the BBC asked to interview ATS Branch members for a D-Day anniversary programme, but then changed their minds with no apology. That's it for now folks, until next time.

SUFFOLK

Sheelagh Wilson

In February sadly Jean Kent, a founder member of the Branch, passed away at the age of 88. Jean served in the ATS, was a great friend to the Branch and will be greatly missed. We have had 3 new members join us this year; Karen Beard, Deborah Green and Nikki Young. Nice to see new, young and wrinkle free faces!

Our **January** meeting was the usual post Christmas topic of gossip, scandal and chat. **February** saw the first of this years quizzes, courtesy of Sylvia Johnson and based on general knowledge. **March** was a 'Favourite Film', a very mixed bag of films with some good old classics as firm favourites.

April was another quiz, devised by yours truly, all round general knowledge again. At the end of the month several members had a very enjoyable lunch at The Plough in Ipswich.

May saw us having a debate, true to form we started on one subject but quickly digressed to several others! By the time we had finished the world was put to rights and the initial subject long forgotten. June was another quiz from Sylvia 'A Dish Full of Ps', very cleverly devised with all answers beginning with the letter P. Three of us managed to achieve an outstanding score of 98%.

Member numbers for meetings this year have been very good and hopefully the trend will continue. As another year draws to an end we wish you all good health and happiness for 2015.

SWINDON

(Informal Branch)

Sharon Bingham

Swindon Informal Branch was formed on 4 June 2014. It was brought together by people talking through Facebook and locating others in the area. Yvonne Parsons and Beverley Backstrom then thought it was a great idea to bring everyone together for a social gathering. We unanimously agreed that this group would be one that was of a social aspect due to the location and work commitments by all. The group consists of (me) Sharon Bingham, Yvonne Parsons, Beverley Backstrom, Betsy-Jane Lawton,

Monica Parrott, Joy Mutlow, Brenda Goodfellow, Gillian Bastin, and Debbie Windeatt. Since opening a Facebook Group just for this area we have had 3 more ladies join, so I would like to say welcome to Helen Shearan, Terri Stevenson and Sue Reid. We are all looking forward to meeting again in August and again before Christmas.



TAMWORTH

Belle Jenkinson

Branch members continue to meet on the last Wednesday of the month, we are now meeting at The Moat House, Lichfield Street, Tamworth at 19.30hrs. We have had new members recently, we would like to welcome Tracey Scrivington, Tracey Reading and Marie Smedley. If there are any more of you out there we would love to see you at our meetings.

There were 17 of us celebrating at The Castle Hotel for our Christmas meal in December and a great time was had by all when we danced the night away, we had to get rid of the calories somehow. On a bright sunny morning in March we welcomed ladies from Birmingham, Leicester, Lincoln and Shrewsbury Branches and had a great skittles match. There were three teams; The Fillies with a final score of 186, Birmingham Belles with a score of 188 and Shropshire Stars with a score of 206. The highest scorers of each team were Lynda, Jenny and Belle, then the final was between Lynda and Belle and yours truly won. It was the first time that anyone from Tamworth had won so we can hold our heads up now we have a trophy. As usual Maggie Purkis, our Area Chairman, also supported us.

On Saturday 24 May we had a invite from Phoenix Branch to the National Memorial Arboretum, six of our members attended; Vee, Janet, Pat Tracey, Marie and Belle. We had a lovely day catching up with ladies from other Branches of Wales and the West Region and had a lovely meal.

We are looking forward to another good day of skittles in September and a Poppy Quiz in November. We haven't decided where we are going for our Christmas meal this year but I am sure we will have a great time as usual. We would like to wish all other Branches a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year 2015. See you all in Harrogate in March!

ULSTER

Jean Hopper

Hello from Northern Ireland, over here the Ulster Branch members have been enjoying fabulous weather, what a difference the sunshine makes. Our Christmas Dinner was again held in the Beechlawm Hotel on the outskirts of Belfast. The Christmas fayre was really superb and our Treasurer, Rae Halley, presented me with a beautiful bouquet of flowers from the members. Such a lovely surprise, being a keen gardener flowers are a favourite of mine.



Jean Hopper and Rae Halley

Prior to Christmas a number of us went to see the pantomime *Sleeping Beauty* at the Grand Opera House, Belfast. TV star Lorraine Chase was in a leading role and the entire cast and show were just great. We had a good time, enjoying the Bailey's miniatures and chocolates that Sylvia Connachan brought along, whilst listening to good music and admiring the costumes. It always leaves us in good form for Christmas. Indeed Sally Davies brought her daughter and grandchildren along to see the show and I know they really enjoyed it.

On 30 April some members visited Stormont, Northern Ireland's parliament, at the invitation of Jonathan Craig MP. The drive through the Stormont estate was breathtaking with beautiful spring shrubs and trees in full bloom. The last time we had been there was for HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, which brought back happy memories of that wonderful occasion. On arrival Jonathan took us to the main staircase for a group photo which included another MP, Brenda Hale. After the photo we went to the main Assembly Chamber where we were given a talk about parliamentary procedure which proved very interesting. Marion Dunbar and I felt really special when we discovered we were sitting in the First and Second Ministers' seats, however my high blood pressure would never survive the debates which take place there. Following the talk we were entertained to refreshments in the visitor's restaurant.



Visiting Stormont

The South of Ireland was chosen for our first outing of this year and on 17 May we took the Enterprise Express train to Dublin, as an added bonus we were able to use our senior smart passes. The train was very comfortable and we treated ourselves to refreshments whilst admiring the passing scenery. We arrived in Dublin at lunchtime and went to Maddigans for pub grub, and I do believe I saw some of the members testing the black stuff (Guinness). After lunch we hit the shops, my legs just gave up and Amy Wall and I took a seat in O'Connell Street and watched the world go by. We finished up in a little cafe by the River Liffey for a cold drink. We came home on the train tired but happy after a most enjoyable day. By the time you read this we will have been on another outing, this time to Cookstown, County Tyrone where the Saturday street market is outstanding.

On 28 June Armed Forces Day was held in historic Carrickfergus, with the castle forming a suitable backdrop to the parade. The programme of events included HMS Charger berthed in the harbour and Army and Police helicopters coming and going, bringing various dignitaries to the event. The bands included the Royal Irish Pipes and Drums who performed a Beating Retreat. One of the day's highlights for me was the unveiling of the Churchill Tank in Marine Gardens, indeed there was something in the programme to suit everyone. Our members were delighted to have received an invitation from the Royal British Legion to attend such a prestigious event. They looked very smart in their WRAC berets and green blazers, an absolute asset to the Ulster Branch.



L-R: Florence Logan, Maggie Pridgen, Marie Jenkins, Joan McCabe

WINCHESTER Herme Emary

The year started off very well with a Branch lunch in January at the Winchester Hotel in Winchester. We had the 2 and 3 course set menu, which we pre-ordered, this kept the cost down but ensured a very good meal. Twelve branch members and 2 husbands attended, which was a very good turnout for a lunchtime meal. The staff at the hotel were very helpful and looked after us very well, even after we had moved most of the tables and chairs in the bar area so that we could sit together.

In March we had another lunchtime get together, this time at the Golden Lion a firm favourite with all members. Ten members and one husband attended again a very good turnout. In May eleven members and one guest visited the Loch Fyne Restaurant in Winchester for an evening meal, a first time visit for some of us.

The meal was excellent and everyone enjoyed themselves.

At the end of June we had hoped for a trip to Cadbury World but it had to be cancelled because of the cost of the transport. Instead a few of us decided to go to the Aldershot Army Show, with the added bonus that being a Saturday entry was free and it was Armed Forces Day. I had not visited the show since it was held at Rushmore Arena so was quite looking forward to the day. Typically after two weeks of lovely weather rain was forecast, we went through 2 storms on our way to Aldershot but the weather was fine and hot by the time we arrived. Lots to see although not many army stands but to give them their due they seemed to be showing off all sorts of Army sports. We all made our way to the arena where we saw an excellent display by the band of the Welsh Guards who were joined by the Military Wives choir and then by a local school choir.

After a short display by the Army Medics it had started to rain, light at first but heavier and heavier. By the time I got back to the transport I was very damp! Our driver did very well to avoid all the standing water on the way home. A damp end to a day I think everyone enjoyed despite the weather.

WORTHING

Janet Goldsbrough-Jones

These last six months have been very up and down for Worthing. We had to attend two funerals, for our two Dorothys, just over three months apart. Dorothy Lade's on 16 December and Dorothy Sleigh's on 24 March. Two very sad occasions but we gave them both a good send off.

On 29 March we joined others at the AGM in Guildford. Only Eddie Sinclair and Janet Goldsbrough-Jones attended, but we had an enjoyable day meeting up with friends from all over. On 7 May several of us went to Winchester for a day out. We love the museum there, with the iconic ATS advert which we donated.



Visiting the AGC Museum, Winchester

On 3 June ten of us went to the rehearsal parade for Founder's Day (Oak Apple Day) at The Royal Hospital Chelsea; met with the lovely Madge on the way in, and got thoroughly soaked when it bucketed down with rain! Most of us then queued for half an hour in the Cafe. Eddie and Heather managed to get taken into the Friends' tent. Several of us hit the local pub for an excellent lunch before we caught our train home, still wet. By the time you read this we will have taken part in the Armed Forces Weekend here in Worthing, which aside from the Christmas Lunch is the highlight of the year. On 12 July we went down to Romsey to meet members from that Area.



A rather wet Founder's Day rehearsal

HOW DO I SUBMIT AN ARTICLE FOR LIONESS?

Articles for inclusion in the next edition of *Lioness* must be received by Friday the 12th December 2014. Please email to editor@wracassociation.org.uk. I am happy to receive copy in many formats including handwritten and hard copies of photos. However if you have access to technology I'd be grateful if you could adhere to the following guidelines:

Text

- Please **type the text into the body of the email** if at all possible, I don't need a beautifully laid out document.
- **Try to avoid sending text in attached documents.** If you do attach a document can you please ensure it is in Word (Windows) or Pages (Mac) format i.e. the attached document has a .doc or .pages ending.
- **Short articles** are really appreciated! The equivalent of no more than one side of A4.

Photos

- **3 or 4 good photos only, you select the best, I don't have the time to sift!**
- Send photos as attachments in a .jpg format.
- Do not embed photos into the text of documents, they are difficult to work with.
- Hard copies of photos sent by post are also accepted as we can scan them for you.

Editor: It is planned to make this list a permanent fixture in Lioness, with the information duplicated on the website. This is definitely a work in progress and is by no means 100% correct, if you wish to amend your details please email editor@wracassociation.org.uk or phone 0300 400 1992. If there is no Branch listed for your area but you would like to meet up with like minded members, and consider forming a Branch, contact HQ WRAC Association.

LONDON

Greater London

When: 14.00 on a Saturday in March, May and September
Where: Hyde Park Barracks, Knightsbridge, London
Contact: Val Gaff Tel: 020 8854 8477

London (Informal Branch)

When: 1st weekend of each month
Where: Location varies, phone to confirm
Contact: Lauren Fia MacKenzie Tel: 07709 172351

SOUTH & SOUTH WEST

Bath

When: 14.00 on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month, except on a Bank Holiday when the meeting is held on a Wednesday
Where: Manvers Street Baptist Church, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JW
(www.manversstreetbaptist.wordpress.com)
Contact: Sylvia Musgrave Tel: 01225 339904

Bournemouth

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month, except January and August
Where: Premier Inn, Poole Road, Bournemouth, BH2 5QU
Contact: Val Wright Tel: 01202 314047
or Jillian Hurst Tel: 01202 679433

Bristol

When: 10.30 on the 1st Thursday of the month
Where: Broadmead Baptist Church, 1 Whippington Court, (entrance on Union Street), Bristol, BS1 3HY
(www.broadmeadbaptist.org.uk)
Contact: Jackie Naysmith MBE Tel: 0117 971 2524

Plymouth

When: 4th Tuesday of the month (except December)
Where: Abbey Hall, Catherine Street, Plymouth, PL1 2AD
Contact: Ruth Jennings Tel: 01752 363118

Portsmouth

When:
Where:
Contact: Sally Watson Tel: 02392 641747

New Forest (Informal Branch)

When:
Where:
Contact: Madge Evans Tel 01425 620995

Salisbury

When:
Where:
Contact: Lt Col (Retd) Val Trout Tel: 01980 623692

Southampton

When: 19.00-21.30 on the 1st Thursday of the month
Where: All Saint's Church Hall, Desborough Road, Eastleigh, SO50 5NH
Contact: Lynda Jenkins Tel: 02380 470965

Swindon (Informal Branch)

When:
Where:
Contact: Sharon Bingham slbingham1@yahoo.co.uk

Torquay

Editor: If you would like to join a number of members in the Torquay area who are planning to get together and meet on a regular basis please contact: Elaine Harwood Tel: 07821 942947 or 01803 394323, alternatively email elaine.wayne@hotmail.co.uk

Weymouth & Portland

When: 13.00 on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month (no meetings from late December to late February and late June to late September)
Where: RAFA Club, Maiden Street, Weymouth, DT4 8AY
Contact: Di Lawrence Tel: 01308 425149

Winchester

When: 2nd Thursday of January, March, September and November plus a summer outing
Where: Location varies depending on lunch or evening meeting
Contact: Herme Emary sec.wrac.winchester@gmail.com

SOUTH EAST

Bexhill-on-Sea (Informal Branch)

When: 14.00 on the 1st Thursday of the month (except January)
Where: Poppins, 40 Devonshire Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 1AX
Contact: Jenny Nye Tel: 01424 731882

Canterbury

When: 13.00 on the 1st Wed of the month
Where: Housing 21, Cowdray Place, Canterbury, CT1 3PB
Contact: Sue Foulks Tel: 01304 823824

Medway

When: Meetings held monthly, location varies.
Contact: Janet Cameron Tel: 01634 854298

Worthing

When: 10.00 for 10.30 on the last Tuesday of the month (except December)
Where: Cornerstone Methodist Church, Brighton Road (by Steyne Gardens), Worthing, BN11 3EA
Contact: Janet Goldsbrough-Jones Tel: 01903 207485

EAST

Cambridge

When: 19.30-21.30 on the 1st Monday of the month (2nd Monday if a Bank Holiday)
Where: The Railway Vue, Station Road, Impington, Near Histon, CB24 9NP
Contact: Avril Williams Tel: 01954 210859

Chelmsford

When: 13.30 - 15.30 on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, except January and August
Where: RAFA Club, Oliver House, Hall Street, Chelmsford, CM2 0HG
Contact: Georgina Shadrack Tel: 01245 251088

Norfolk (Informal Branch)

When: Once per month (most months) for an outing or lunch, phone for details.
Contact: Joan Awberry Tel 01603 455070

Suffolk

When: 14.00 - 16.00 on the 3rd Thursday of the month, except December
Where: Ipswich Labour Club, 35 Silent Street, Ipswich, IP1 1TF
Contact: Sheelagh Wilson Tel: 01473 725707

NORTH EAST

Cleveland

When: 13.00 on the 4th Wednesday of the month
Where: Newport Youth and Community Settlement Centre, St Pauls Road (off Union Street), Middlesbrough, TS1 5NQ
Contact: Hazel Crammen Tel: 01642 290830

Darlington

When:
Where:
Contact: Sandra Hubbard Tel: 01388 720366

Doncaster

When:
Where:
Contact: Doreen Lowery Tel: 01302 729463

Grimsby

When: 14.00 on the 2nd Friday of each month
Where: Cartergate Social Club, Cartergate, Grimsby, DN31 1QZ
Contact: Gail Davy Tel: 01472 347868

Hull & East Riding

When: The 1st Friday of the month
Where: Wenlock Barracks, Anlaby Road, Hull, HU3 6PB
Contact: Confirm details with Janet Marshall Tel 01482 809042 or Lynne Marsh Tel 01964 615973.

Leeds

When: 12.30 on the 1st Wednesday of each month (except January)
Where: The New Headingley Club, 56 St Michael's Road, Headingley, Leeds, LS6 3BG
Contact: Pat Harpin Tel: 01226 201628

Lincoln & District

When: 12.00-14.00 on the 3rd Tuesday of the month
Where: Central Methodist Church Hall, High Street, Lincoln, LN5 7PR
Contact: Jean Evans Tel: 01964 534280

Newcastle

When: 12.00 on the 3rd Thursday of the month
Where: Newcastle Companions Club, 45-47 Leazes Park Road, Newcastle, NE1 4PG
(www.newcastlecompanionsclub.webs.com)
Contact: Tanya Hall Tel: 07552 758093

Sheffield

When: 13.30 on the 1st Thursday of the month except January and August
Where: Wetherspoon, Cambridge Street, Sheffield
Contact: Brenda Colley Tel: 01709 365828

York

When: 14.00-16.00 on the 1st Wednesday of the month (except August), phone to confirm
Where: Haxby & Wigginton Methodist Church Hall, Haxby, York, YO32 2JJ
www.haxbyandwiggintonmethodistchurch.org.uk
Contact: Feona Dixon Tel: 01904 633438

NORTH WEST

Bury & Rochdale

When: Monthly Meeting at 13.30 on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at The Old White Lion, 6 Bolton St Bury, BL9 0LQ
Contact: Pat Oldham Tel: 0161 761 7926
Informal Evening Meeting on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the Toby Carvery, Burnley Lane, Chadderton, OL1 2QS.
Contact: Susan Feeney Tel: 07813 313508 or Kath Kirtley Tel: 07912 617694

Chester

When: 13.00 on the 2nd Monday of the month
Where: Chester Military Museum, The Castle, Chester, CH1 2DN
Contact: Pat Sanders Tel: 07733 270567

Liverpool

When: 13.30 on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 12.00 in the hotel foyer if you would like to join us for lunch
Where: The Adelphi Hotel, Ranelagh Place, Liverpool, L3 5UL
Contact: Pat Brown Tel 0151 733 3453

Wirral

When: 19.30 on the 1st Wednesday of the month
Where: TA Centre, Chetwynd, Wexford Road, Birkenhead, L43 9TF
Contact: Pat Sanders Tel: 07733 270567

WALES & THE WEST

Birmingham

When: 12.00 on the 1st Wednesday of the month (except January). There is also an evening meeting every quarter (phone for location)
Where: Irish Centre, 14-20 High Street, Deritend (Digbeth), Birmingham, B12 0LN www.irishcentrebirmingham.co.uk
Contact: Babs Blay Tel: 07748 300492

Derby

Editor: Judy Smith would be interested to hear from any members living in the Derby area who would like to meet up on a regular basis. Please contact: Judy Smith email judy.hirst123@ntlworld.com or phone 07790 848364.

Hereford

When: 19.00 on the last Tuesday of the month
Where: The Herdsman, 54 Widemarsh, Hereford, HR4 9HG
Contact: Sharon Joyce Tel: 01905 821189

Leicester & Nottingham

When: 13.30 on the 2nd Tuesday of the month
Where: Devonshire Place, 78 London Road, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 0RA
Contact: Sue Slattery Tel: 0116 259 2743

Marches & Mid Wales

When: 3 - 4 times per year
Where: Location varies, phone for details
Contact: Judith Bradbury Tel 01970 828453

Phoenix (a regional Branch covering Wales, parts of the Midlands and North West)

When: Every 3 months
Where: Phone for details
Contact: Irene Hall Tel: 01743 271155

Shropshire

When: 14.00 or 19.00 (alternates month by month) on the 1st Wednesday of the month. Come 1.5 hours earlier if you wish to join us for lunch/dinner
Where: The Red Lion, Holyhead Road, Wellington, Telford, TF1 2EW
Contact: Chris Powell Tel: 01743 241646
chris.powell3@mypostoffice.co.uk

Tamworth

When: 19.30 on the last Wednesday of the month
Where: The Moat House, 35-36 Lichfield Street, Tamworth, B79 7QQ
Contact: Belle Jenkinson Tel: 01827 64156

SCOTLAND

Aberdeen

When: 10.15 on the 1st Monday of the month (except January & May)
Where: Ma Cameron's (Snug Bar), Little Belmont Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1JG
Contact: Joan Bartlett Tel: 01224 596520

Dumfriesshire

When:
Where:
Contact: Dorah Mundell Tel: 01387 811524

Fife & Tayside

When: Last Thursday of the month
Where: Salutation Hotel, 34 South Street, Perth, PH2 8PH
Contact: Kate Arnold Tel: 01577 830136

Glasgow

When: 13.00 on the 2nd Monday of the month
Where: RHF Museum, 518 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3LW
Contact: Joyce Steele Tel: 0141 322 5639

Stirling

When: 12.00 on the last Saturday of the month
Where: Allanpark Hotel, 20 Allanpark, Stirling, FK8 2QG
Contact: Irene Watterson Tel: 01786 469597

NORTHERN IRELAND

Ulster

When: Meetings 3-4 times per year
Where: Location varies, call to confirm details
Contact: Jean Hopper Tel: 02892 675747

NATIONAL & OVERSEAS

Band

When: The Band Branch is a national Branch and does not meet on a monthly basis. Phone for details of our next meeting.

Contact: Ann Jones Tel: 0117 9406185

Mediterranean

When: Hopefully twice a year
Contact: Samantha Stretch samanthastretch@hotmail.com
Spanish Mobile: (0034) 722 389205 UK Mobile: (0044) 7804 249320

PHOENIX

Although administered from Wales and the West Area the Phoenix Branch exists to provide a focus for all those who would like Branch Membership (regardless of location) and the chance to meet friends, albeit only 3 or 4 times a year, but are unable to make it to regular monthly meetings. We'd love for you to join us, especially at our annual lunch at the National Memorial Arboretum. Call Maggie Purkis on 01952 251717 or 07808 139543.

WRAC ASSOCIATION FLEECE & POLO SHIRT

The WRAC Association has a stock of dark green fleeces embroidered with the Association Badge on the left side. The current range are men's sizes so tend to be on the large size. Sizes are as follows: XS 34 inches, S 38 inches, M 42 inches, L 44 inches, XL 48 inches. Cost: £25 including P&P.



The new WRAC Association Polo Shirt is a high quality, unisex Fruit of the Loom cotton shirt with embroidered WRAC Association logo. Unisex sizes S, M, L. Cost: £19.50 including P&P.



Fleeces and Polo Shirts can be purchased on-line via the website, by post, or phone 0300 400 1992. Cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association and sent to WRAC Association, Gould House, Worthy Down, Winchester, SO21 2RG.

WRAC 4 - 30 YEAR REUNION

katejblackburn@gmail.com
sue.evans61@btinternet.com



WRAC 4 take part in Sovereign's Parade April 1984

Commissioning Course WRAC 4 was held at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst from September 1983 to April 1984. Whilst we lived at the old WRAC College in Camberley, we were bussed to Sandhurst for lessons and were the first group of women to pass out from Sandhurst. In those days we were not allowed to take part in the full Sovereign's Parade as our skirt would only permit a 28 inch pace, whereas the boys marched with a 30 inch pace! We were only "allowed" to march on at the end of the parade in order to march up the steps of Old College from the parade square – the first women ever to do that. We feel like pioneers now, although it felt a bit of a struggle at the time!



Back (L-R in order of view):

Ros Thackery (Cameron-Mowat), Alison Wright (Haden), Amanda Cooper (Gutierrez-Cooper), Morag MacDonald (Philpott), Carol Woodhead (Prosser), Kate Blackburn, Sue Wilcox (Armitage), Debbie Fenn (Coulter)

Middle: *Jo Pevalin (Myers), Leah Doherty (Bretton), Lu Forsythe (Mellor), Sue Currie (Evans), Jane Gregory (Wicks)*

Front: *Sally Holt (MacDonald), Wendy Morrison, Clare Harrill (Stannett), Robina Lodge (Upton), Tracey Stewart*

We had a fantastic reunion day on Wednesday 9 April 2014. We all met up for coffee in Old College and then went out to watch the Commandants Parade, which was absolutely brilliant. Lunch in Camberley was a very noisy affair with memories flooding back as we all shared our Journals to step back in time 30 years! Sue Armitage (nee Wilcox) then had tea and cakes laid on for everyone at her home just around the corner.



Reuning over lunch

Dinner followed in Old College and if we thought lunch was noisy, dinner definitely was! Lamp shades were swung and sandbags pulled up as we all caught up on 30 years of history. Pepi Simpson (nee Hollingsworth), one of our Platoon Commanders way back then, gave a fabulous speech reminding us all how brilliant we were; encouraged on by other Directing Staff from our intake, Carolyn Fenn (nee Jenkins) and Vida Parsons (was Gough). Breakfast the next morning was a little quieter, but not much!



On Old College steps 30 years on

A special prize to Debbie Coulter (nee Fenn) for travelling from Texas to join the party, no wonder she won the Sash of Honour! And a huge thanks to Sue Evans (nee Currie) for organising our fantastic day. It was truly inspirational to meet up with friends you made 30 years ago and connect again as though you had just stepped out of the room. We can't wait for the WRAC Officers' Dining Club Dinner (22 Nov 14) to meet up again! If you were in WRAC 4 and we haven't tracked you down yet, please get in touch and we can share the day through our photos on a special WRAC 4 Reunion Facebook page.

Editor: See page 6 for more news on stride length and skirts!

FORT WILLIAM WRAC EVENT 2014

C J Johnson

Veni, vidi, vici! The first weekend in April saw the second invasion of Fort William by the ladies and klingons who attended FW2014. The advance party of Jane Brown and Pat Barker had arrived on the previous Monday, undercover, pretending to be part of a coach trip. They reported back to HQ with the good news that there were only 9 people in the bar, Exercise FW2014 was going to prove to be a doddle!

On the Thursday the second advanced party arrived, and without as much as a spilled glass of wine the takeover was complete! Friday saw the remainder of the take over force arrive. By this time the selling stall and raffle tickets were already in place and the only thing left to do was to show the locals the strength of our partying experience.

Saturday morning brought us a lovely sunny morning, perfect for our plan to go up The Nevis Range in the Gondolas (ski lift) to take part in sledging, skiing or snowboarding. The majority opted for the sledging, middle aged women found the years falling away as they slid down the snow, screaming and chuckling like 10 year olds. We were led from the front by Maggie Purkis, her unbounding enthusiasm and laughter ringing in our ears as she showed her true leadership skills on the slopes!



There were many red frozen faces, wet bottoms (I am assured all due to the snow!) and even a cracked cheekbone for Babs Blay, after she landed in a water filled ditch and being accidentally head butted by Di Richardson. But this didn't spoil the fun, like a true trooper she held a bag of ice to her face and just carried on!

Saturday evening saw our Dinner Dance take place, the pastry on the steak pie caused most people to laugh (the hotel had a disaster!) and was a grand talking point for the rest of the evening! A second problem that we had was being let down at the last moment by the Ceilidh band. Sadly we were unable to find alternative entertainment at such short notice so the decision was taken to just have the disco. In the end this didn't prove to be a problem, our talent for making our own entertainment knows no bounds and it meant more money towards our collection for the WRAC Association!

Sunday dawned a rather dreech and wet day for our trip to our memorial tree in the Fairy Forest. Off we set and managed to get there without losing any of the following vehicles. Tanya "Lollypop" Hall being aided with a map and a postcode and told NOT to follow random white vans this year! Babs Blay read the WRAC Collect followed by Maggie Purkis, who gave us all an inspiring and emotional speech

"In 1945, at the end of the war, the vast majority of the surviving servicemen and servicewomen, packed up, de-mobbed and went home to pick up the pieces of the lives they had left in such a hurry. The men, traditionally the bread winners, reclaimed the jobs they had handed over "for the duration" and the majority of the women were pleased to let them; it allowed them to go back to their traditionally safe role of "the little woman", wife, mother and homemaker. But that didn't suit all women!

The war, horrific as it was, had given many women a taste of independence, and allowed them to gain a measure of self-worth. There was, however, a very real threat that their independence would be snatched back and women would once again take up their posts at the kitchen sink, or if they were really adventurous, as part of a typing pool or serving behind a counter in a shop. But whatever they did they would in all probability, once again, become subservient to their men folk.

Edmund Burke said that "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." Thank God, there were a few good women, who refused to do nothing and thereby revert to subservience. The Desiderata applies equally to women as men when it declares: You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. The ATS kept the options open, and eventually in 1948 Emmanuel Shinwell applied to the King for permission to acknowledge the worth of women in the armed forces, and so, in 1949 the Women's Royal Army Corps was created.

Those who joined the WRAC and served with pride and distinction between 1949 and 1992 opened up the crack in the rock which epitomises the acceptance of male superiority, and day by day, year by year, widened that crack until they split that rock asunder, and destroyed it utterly.

Nowadays, what is there that any man can do that we can't (apart from standing up to pee?). Women? What can we do? The sky's the limit! Anything, including bringing forth new life, which of course, they can't! And, what really pee's some of them off, many of the jobs traditionally held in the male domain, we do so well!

Now, I don't care whether you're black, white or coffee coloured; it matters not to me whether you're gay, straight or undecided; a Buddhist, a Baptist or a Jew. I don't care if you were (or are!) a Cpl, a SSgt or a Brigadier. I do care passionately about our Corps and our shared heritage. I am so pleased that so many of us still care for our sisterhood and continue to offer comradeship, support and humour (soldier's humour at that) to each other. That every so often we make the effort to get together, and I trust that we will go to any lengths to uphold our ethics, our ideals and our traditions; that we are, and will remain; Gentle in Manner (and perhaps more importantly) Resolute in Deed."

Our wonderful young piper Laura returned again this year, not only piping us into the entrance of the Fairy Forest but accompanied the hanging of our memorial shapes onto our tree. There were very few dry eyes in the forest, and not because of the rain!



We returned to the Croit Anna Hotel via The Commando Monument and the Woollen Shop in Spean Bridge, soaked through but smiling. We then prepared ourselves for the great "Heeland Games", sadly due to the weather these also had to be readjusted and amended at the last moment. But the games that we had including; catching tennis balls in fishing rods, Plunger Racing (rude but funny!), Mummy Wrapping, Sumo wrestling and Find the CD proved an absolute hoot and the lovely buffet put on for our lunch was a great hit.



Sadly some of our ladies and klingons had to leave on the Sunday, but for the remaining gang the wonderful entertainment of Paula MacAskill was absolutely fantastic once again. And how can we not mention the superstar that is Angie Hamilton with her plastic straw headpiece and spoons! There were so many funny moments that it is impossible to mention them all; Janette Cowie being catapulted up the mountain and landing flat on her face because she didn't realise the top ski lift pulled you up the mountain if you were wearing ski's (she wasn't!), the worst of it being she is a local Fort William lass!; the screams of joy at the sledging, the fake divorce ending the fake marriage that took place last year, the sumo fighting, the positions that were found with the plungers (say no more!), the space hopper, the singing nun, the inflatable horse, the impromptu singing. Not to mention

the memory of Angie Hamilton showing us how to cycle when wearing a skirt, and convincing a very nice young man and his girlfriend (who had just popped in for a quiet drink) to donate £20 to the Association if she managed to bounce the length of the dance-floor on the spacehopper (she did, and collected)! Just a few memories that raise a smile but there were so many more.



Sides ached, heads hurt, hearts smiled! A perfect fun weekend. The next Fort William event will be in April 2016, we miss next year due to the Grand Reunion. We hope to see many more of you in 2016, this is the only event where partners and children and other klingons are welcome. All we ask is that you turn up ready to laugh! CJ Johnson and Janette Cowie would like to thank you all for your wonderful generosity, we were delighted to raise £1525.18 this year for the WRAC Association, far exceeding what we thought we would raise.

Until 2016 Bidh mi 'gad fhaicinn

EASTERN AREA LUNCH

Joan Awbery

Saturday 5th July was a red-letter day for the Eastern Area, and in particular the Norfolk Informal Branch. We were joined in Norwich by members representing Suffolk, Cambridge and Chelmsford Branches. We welcomed Sue Westlake and were able to wish her well in her retirement from the Association; to thank her for all her support and encouragement over many years as our Vice President and to congratulate her on the well deserved award of MBE in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Twenty five of us joined in a toast to her. Sue responded in her usual relaxed and friendly way, praising the comradeship and support of all members, giving an account of the many important events she had been involved in on our behalf. We were happy to renew our acquaintance with Mrs Patricia Stevenson, our previous Area Chairman, and were sorry that her predecessor Lady Val Kemble was unwell and not able to be with us. All our good wishes, Val!



Sue Westlake and Wendy Hooton

It was a very happy occasion and decibel levels were above legal limits. Once again, Sue, all happiness for your future, we hope to see you again! When presenting Sue with a token of our thanks and affection Wendy Hooton, our Area Chairman, summed it all up in a poem:

I first met Sue in 1985

HQ Scotland from England was a really long drive
We said farewell in the Witchery on the Golden Mile
And here we are, another farewell, it's certainly been a while
Sue, you are amazing and your dedication second to none
I know these are the thoughts of each and every one

Thank you for everything you have achieved for us all
Arboretum plot, Guildford Obelisks, Memorial Cabinet, you
thought of it all

You can now sit back and take a well-earned rest
And from Eastern Area we wish you all the best

CONISTON LAKE DISTRICT REUNION Carol Traynor

Planning our spring getaway each year always helps us through the dreary winter months and this year, with various locations suggested, we decided it would be the Lake District. So with maps out, train, bus timetables, suitable cottages scrutinised, we considered Keswick, Bowness, Ambleside, Windermere, and in the end the lovely village of Coniston was chosen. We found a lovely cottage right in the village near to everything as travelling to the Lake district for some was a huge undertaking! Patricia (Flogger) came the farthest distance, from Wivenhoe in Essex. The journey took her 14 hours by National Express coach! Jenny, Irene, and Cherry came from the North East by train and had to negotiate three counties in order to arrive at our meeting venue at Preston station in Lancashire. In fact they did a huge loop, or it could be described as a massive U turn; down from the North East, through Yorkshire, then into Lancashire to Preston, then up into Cumbria to our destination. Maybe would have been easier to have gone to Europe!



Arriving at Windermere L-R: Carol Traynor, Jenny Nelson, Irene Maclean, Anne Gurney, Christine (Cherry) Greenwood

Never mind, when we were finally settled in our lovely cottage we had a fabulous week. We had fantastic days out to Keswick, Bowness, Ambleside, Hawkshead and a tranquil boat ride over Coniston Lake to the stunning lakeside house of Brantwood. It had been home to John Ruskin poet/artist/philosopher, which had beautiful gardens with views over Coniston Lake that are out of this world. The only thing was there was a rather steep climb from the boat jetty to reach the house through the gardens, and then what did we see, another steep incline before us to get to the house! At this point Irene couldn't go on anymore due to her back condition, but did we leave her sat on a bench while we went to look round the house? No indeed not, would we leave a comrade not able to experience what we had sailed across the lake to get to? No never. Then we thought of a solution to our pals predicament, they must have wheelchairs for visitors use at the house, so off a couple of us charged up the hill to

commandeer one. Sure enough the lady on reception duly obliged, so down the hill, feeling chuffed to Naafi breaks with ourselves off we sped. Before Irene had time to think about it we had placed her comfortably in the wheelchair and proceeded up the hill, but there was a small problem to this venture. This wheelchair had a mind of its own and kept trying to take Irene through the rhododendron bushes, which would have then taken her hurtling through a field and into the lake! However we were determined that this fate would not befall our good friend and we mustered all the strength we were physically capable of. Onwards and upwards we shoved that wheelchair, huffing and puffing, pushing and staggering, wobbling and swerving, laughing and gasping so much so we all ended up holding our stomach with stitches! Irene just buried her head in her hands wishing she hadn't been persuaded to get into this left inclined wheelchair. Then half way up this very steep incline, stopping for a breather, we spied some tourists sat comfortably on a seat high up by the house thoroughly enjoying the entertainment. Eventually we got our comrade into the house to enjoy the lovely rooms and artefacts and artwork on display, however when we reached the bedrooms it was very tempting to rest our weary bodies and have a kip!



L-R: Patricia Gates, Christine Greenwood, Irene MacLean, Carol Traynor, Anne Gurney, Patricia Gates, Rita Broomfield.



Our lovely week passed by merrily with us all mucking in with chores, shopping etc. How lucky we were to have Jenny and Cherry with us, who love kitchens so much they couldn't be prised out. But we were more than happy with that arrangement and enjoyed some lovely meals whilst we got in the way trying to be helpful. Shopping was hilarious, with girls dashing out into the village buying double of everything "who's bought another mega pack of loo rolls" and that sort of thing went on all the time! What a wonderful week it was, the weather was good to us, the scenery out of this world, the company fantastic, the humour was as usual brilliant. I don't know if our stomachs (due to both the food and the laughing) could have taken even one more day though. Here's to the next time pals, how wonderful it is that we have retained our friendship and have these happy times together, which goes back an amazing 48 years from our service days. Long may it continue.

Mentioned In Dispatches

Editor: 'Mentioned in Dispatches' is a new feature for Lioness and serves to replace the long standing system of considering regional Branch members for the award of a Certificate of Appreciation. This new process will allow all Association members to be eligible for nomination, and enable everyone to read about the contribution an individual has made, either to their Branch or to the Association. The method of nomination for an individual remains via Branch Secretaries to Area Chairman for regional Branch members, or direct to Association HQ for those who are HQ Branch members (i.e. not a member of a geographic Branch). All nominations are submitted for approval at a meeting of the Council of the WRAC Association (held twice per year).

MRS DOROTHY MIRFIN **Hull & East Riding Branch**



Dorothy joined the WRAC Association in 1970 and began attending Hull Branch meetings in 1993. She was Standard Bearer from 1994 until 1997, having become a Committee member in 1995. In 1997 she was voted in as Vice Chair and also acted as Assistant Secretary during the period 2000-2001. She became Chairman in 2001 and in 2004 also took on the duties of Secretary as there were no other volunteers. She continued in both roles until December 2011 when she gave up the post of Secretary to devote more time to the care of her ailing husband.

She has continued as Chair with unfailing patience, good humour and natural authority. She is a font of information, particularly on rules and regulations pertaining to meetings, insurance and customs. Despite the loss of her husband and poor health she continues to wear her Association uniform with pride at all occasions.

In her 21 years of Branch attendance she has only missed 4 meetings and, despite frailty, still attends meetings and social events. She has kept the Branch alive, despite an aging membership and is thoroughly deserving of a Mention in Dispatches.

Anniversaries

GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY **Mr and Mrs Maureen Smith née Glover** **8 August 2014**



Engagement party, Queen's Hotel, Farnborough

We celebrated our Golden Wedding anniversary on the 8th August 2014. I met my husband while posted to the PT wing at Hammersley

Barracks, Aldershot and he was serving in 3 Para. We were both Privates, my nickname was Clover which was derived from my maiden name of Glover. My husband retired as a Lieutenant Colonel and was known as Smudger Smith at that time.



Southern Comd Athletics Champions Jun 64
Maureen Smith née Glover - top row 2nd from right

DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARY **Ken and Kathleen Allan née Kendrick** **14 August 2014**



14 August 1954
St Andrews Church of Scotland, Moascar, Egypt



Ken and Kathleen in 2012

GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL

On Saturday 29 March 2014 over 100 members of the Association travelled to Guildford Cathedral to attend the AGM and lunch. The AGM was held in Guildford to enable attendees to view the newly installed Memorial Cabinet and Books of Remembrance in the Cathedral, and to visit the new plaques erected on two Obelisks in Queen Elizabeth Park to mark the former use of the site. The Memorial Cabinet was designed and made by Cabinet Maker Ronald Emmett of Beaminster, Dorset. The Obelisk plaques were made by Stonemason Nick Johnson of Young Johnson from Westbury. Nick also made and installed our replacement memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in 2013.

The AGM and lunch were held in The Refectory, with Caper and Berry providing excellent catering as always. Several presentations were made during the AGM; Mack Maskyns McIntyre was presented with a montage of Lioness photos depicting Cenotaph Remembrance parades to mark her standing down after 13 years as Parade Commander; Janet Lawson and Val Gaff received Certificates of Appreciation; and on completion of the AGM Brigadier (Retired) Shirley Nield CBE presented Sue Westlake with a photobook of Lioness covers representing her tenure as Vice President and Chairman of Council of the WRAC Association from to July 2003 until July 2014.



Val Gaff receives her Certificate of Appreciation



Sue Westlake and Brigadier (Retired) Shirley Nield CBE



Mack Maskyns McIntyre - Cenotaph Parade Commander 2000-2013



Janet Lawson receives her Certificate of Appreciation

MEMORIAL CABINET

Ron Emmett installing the Memorial Cabinet

OBELISKS Queen Elizabeth Park Guildford



Engraved plaque



On Tuesday 15 April 2014 the Dean of Guildford, The Very Reverend Dianna Gwilliams, conducted a short ceremony to bless the newly installed Memorial Cabinet. The Blessing was attended by 7 members of the WRAC Association and Jim Blake, Deputy Director Operations Guildford Cathedral.

Memorial Cabinet Blessing



Forster Road, GU2 9AG



Hopkin Close, GU2 9LS

STATUE "FAITH" Guildford Cathedral



Readers may be interested to know that there is an additional, rather overlooked, WRAC memorial on the outside wall of Guildford Cathedral situated under the WRAC Association window. On Saturday 2nd September 1961 a service of dedication was conducted for the original WRAC window. After the service Brigadier Dame Mary Railton DBE, Deputy Controller Commandant, unveiled a statue of "Faith" (by John Cobbett), which stands on the south wall outside the window. This statue was a gift from the Corps, who had collected £2,537 for the Cathedral building fund.

There are seven figures in total carved at the base of the windows by three different sculptors. These represent the Seven Christian Virtues; Charity, Hope, Faith, Courage, Temperance, Prudence and Justice.

40th Anniversary of the Guildford Pub Bombings

The 40th anniversary of the Guildford Pub Bombings falls on Sunday 5th October 2014. There will be a short service of commemoration at 4pm on this day, held outdoors in the garden known as Quaker's Acre in North Street (next to the Library and opposite the building that was formerly the Horse and Groom) where there is a memorial plaque to the five people killed that evening: Private Ann Ray Hamilton and Private Caroline Jean Slater of the Women's Royal Army Corps, Private William Forsyth and Private John Hunter of the Scots Guards and Mr Paul Craig. The WRAC Association National Standard will be present at the service.

ARMED FORCES DAY 27 JUNE 2015 GUILDFORD

Next year's Armed Forces Day celebrations will take place in Guildford. Guildford Borough Council is currently planning an exciting line up of activities for the public to honour military personnel. A service at Guildford Cathedral followed by a formal parade in Guildford High Street and a 'picnic and proms in the park' are just some of the ways in which Guildford plans to make Armed Forces Day 2015 a memorable event.

Plans for WRAC Association participation will be published in *Lioness* 2015/1 and via the website and Facebook page.

2015 DIARY AVAILABLE NOW!

Due to popular demand the WRAC Association Diary is back for 2015, buy now to avoid disappointment (limited stock). Only £5 including p&p. Purchase online via the website, by post, or phone 0300 400 1992. Cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association and sent to WRAC Association, Gould House, Worthy Down, Winchester, SO21 2RG.



WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE REFECTORY, GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL

SATURDAY 29 MARCH 2014

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks. The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all those attending. She thanked everyone for making the effort to make the journey to Guildford; it was an opportunity for members to view the new memorial cabinet in the Cathedral and to visit the Obelisks in Queen Elizabeth Park. She continued by introducing her support team:

Col (Retd) Ali Brown	Chairman of the Executive & Finance Committee
Col (Retd) Isabel McCord	Honorary Treasurer
Col (Retd) Audrey Smith	Chairman of the Grants Committee
Maj (Retd) Sue Hatton	Regimental Secretary & Editor Lioness
Maj (Retd) Gabi Shanahan	Benevolent Fund Secretary & Finance Officer

The Chairman thanked two members who had raised significant funds since the 2013 AGM; in April 2013 Jeanette Cowie had arranged (via Facebook) a weekend in Fort William and raised over £900 for Lioness, in May 2013 Wendy Hooton had encouraged a team of 5 'Lionesses' to run the BUPA Manchester 10K and raised a £1000 towards an audio version of Lioness. The Chairman then paid tribute to all the Branch Secretaries and thanked them for their hard work and support, 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.

a. Programme of Visits. The Chairman outlined her programme of visits to individual Branches and Area Reunions:

06 Jun 13	Founder's Day, Royal Hospital Chelsea
03 Jul 13	Canterbury & Medway Branches
08 Nov 13	Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey
11 Nov 13	Remembrance Day, Cenotaph
27 Nov 13	Marches & Mid Wales Branch Lunch
04 Dec 13	Birmingham Branch Christmas Lunch
06 Dec 13	Royal Hospital Chelsea Christmas Grants & Lunch
13 Dec 13	Plymouth Branch Christmas Lunch
01 Mar 14	Phoenix Branch Lunch
19 Mar 14	Funeral of former WRAC Association General Secretary (1975-1985) Brig Norman King

b. Presentation and Loyal Greetings. The Chairman presented Maj (Retd) Mack Maskens-McIntyre with a framed montage of Cenotaph Parade photos in recognition of her completion of 12 years as Cenotaph Parade Commander. The Chairman read a message from the Patron of the Association thanking all members for their loyal greetings and support. She also read a message from the President of the Association thanking all members for their loyal greetings to mark her 81st birthday on 22 February 2014.

2. Apologies for Absence. Apologies had been received from a number of individuals, several Branch Secretaries and the following Trustees and members of Council: Brig (Retd) Nicky Moffat and Ms Carrole Montessori Gorman.

3. Confirmation of Minutes. The Minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated in Lioness 2013/2, no comments had been received.

Proposal: It was proposed that the Chairman sign the minutes of the 2013 AGM as a true record.

Proposed: Mrs Chris Corker
Seconded: Ms Leslie Scott
Unanimously agreed

4. Business Arising from the Previous Minutes. There was no business arising that would not be covered by other Agenda items.

5. Chairman of Trustees & Council Report. The Chairman reminded the meeting that as reported in the minutes of the 2013 AGM (part of the revision of the Constitution voted in at the AGM 2013) there were now separate meetings of Trustees and Council. Both committees had met twice since the 2013 AGM; the last joint meeting took place in Worthy Down in Jul 13, separate meetings then took place on the same day in London in Jan 14. The main items of interest were:

a. Retirement of Trustees. Honorary Treasurer, Major Leona Barr-Jones had stood down at the end of her 3 year tenure in Jul 13. Following revision of the Constitution in 2013 two Life Vice Presidents (Brig (Retd) Shirley Nield and Brig (Retd) Nicky Moffat) had agreed to remain as Trustees, the remainder would continue as Life Vice Presidents but without the responsibility of being a Trustee. All Area Chairmen would remain as members of Council but without Trustee responsibility.

b. Newly elected Trustees. Lt Col (Retd) Frances West was elected in Jan 14, effective from 08 Jul 14.

c. Vice President. Lt Col (Retd) Sue Westlake would be standing down as Vice President with effect from 08 Jul 14. Trustees and members of Council had unanimously voted in Col (Retd) Ali Brown as Vice President with effect from 09 Jul 14.

d. Appointment of Auditors. Rothmans LLP had been re-appointed as auditors.

e. HQ Update. Maj (Retd) Gabi Shanahan handed over the responsibilities of Regimental Secretary (except the financial aspects of the Charity) to Maj (Retd) Sue Hatton in Oct 13 and retained the posts of Benevolent Fund Case Secretary and Association Finance Officer. The Chairman sincerely thanked Gabi for her sterling work as Regimental Secretary since 2010. She thanked Sue Hatton for volunteering to step up into this appointment from the role of Assistant Regimental Secretary. The Chairman thanked Tanya Jayne Park, Office Manager, for keeping the Association running smoothly on a day to day basis.

In Feb 14 HQ WRAC Association moved offices within Gould House. The Association no longer received MOD funding and was accommodated in Worthy Down on an encroachment basis (at no charge). As notice to leave could be given, short notice contingency plans were in hand, this would involve more home working. There would be no difference in the service received

There would be no difference in the service received by members.

Plans were in hand to continue to develop the website and include more historical information. An Association Facebook page had been launched in Mar 14 as means of disseminating information to members.

f. Permanent Memorials.

(i) Memorial Cabinet and Books of Remembrance Guildford Cathedral. A cabinet containing books of remembrance (WAAC/QMAAC, ATS, WRAC) had been installed in Guildford Cathedral. The WRAC Book of Remembrance would remain open on the page listing the two Servicewomen killed in the Guildford pub bombing on 05 Oct 74.

(ii) Obelisks in Queen Elizabeth Park Guildford. In 2005 two Obelisks were erected by the housing developer on the site of the former Barracks. In Mar 14 the Association commissioned a stonemason to fix identical engraved marble Plaques on each Obelisk to record the former use of the site.

h. Branches and Informal Groups. Stockport Branch had closed and Norfolk Branch was meeting informally. In Jan 14 Council agreed that Branches that could no longer operate on a formal basis would be encouraged to continue meeting informally to maintain esprit de corps and comradeship. Informal Groups had started up in Torquay, Derby and the Mediterranean. There was Interest in forming a group in New Milton.

6. Financial Report. The Honorary Treasurer thanked her predecessor, Major Leona Barr Jones, for the work she had conducted during her tenure. She thanked the Finance Officer for her continued hard work in managing the accounts in an efficient manner.

The Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year ending 31 October 2013 had been published in Lioness edition 2014/1. The Honorary Treasurer presented the Financial Report and explained that the total value of the funds (Association and Benevolent Fund combined) as at 31 Oct 13 was £6,119,128, an increase of £549,367 on FY 2011/2012. It was explained that the funds were divided between 'Restricted Funds' (Benevolent funds), 'Unrestricted Funds' (Association Funds) and 'Designated Funds' (Life Subscription Funds). The value of the Benevolent funds was £5,400,100 and the combined Unrestricted and Designated (Association) funds was £719,618.

Proposal: It was proposed that the financial statements be accepted and that the audited accounts be ratified.

Proposed: Lt Col (Retd) Jo Young
Seconded: Lt Col (Retd) Janet Lawson MBE
Unanimously agreed

7. Report of the Editor of the Association Journal.

The Editor reported that Lioness would continue to be produced and distributed by Tiger Ink Ltd, guidelines for submitting content had been published in Lioness 2014/1. The 2014/1 edition was the second to also be recorded as an audio version, initial take up had been low but much appreciated by recipients. It was planned to continue production of the audio version providing there was sufficient demand. The digitisation of all past copies of the Association journals had been completed and could be viewed via the members area of the website.

8. Reports of Committees.

a. Executive & Finance Committee. The Chairman of the Executive & Finance Committee (EFC) explained that at the request of the Trustees a Strategic Review of the Association would be conducted. It was hoped the Review would provide clarity as to how the Association might best endure into the future.

The Chairman EFC outlined the format for the Grand Reunion 2015 (GR15). The Yorkshire Band of the Royal British Legion had been booked to support the event. The programme and application form would be published in Lioness 2014/2, the cost per head would be £55.

b. Benevolent Fund Grants Committee. The Chairman of the Grants Committee gave an update of the work of the Benevolent Fund in the financial year 2012/13. Applications for grants are made through almonizing agencies, predominantly SSAFA Forces Help and The Royal British Legion, and the grants are paid to these agencies for disbursement on behalf of the charity.

(i) Process. Each month a major grants committee meeting is held to consider applications for grants in excess of £600; for servicewomen with less than 12 months service or for servicewomen who have already received grants in excess of their guideline pro rata for service, currently £500 per annum. Major grants committee meetings can authorize; one-off grants up to £2,000, new Princess Royal's Memorial Fund annuitants, and new or increased nursing home fee top-ups

(ii) Grant Expenditure. The maximum level of contribution towards Nursing Home Fees top ups was raised to £35 a week by the Trustees in Jan 13 and the responsibility for paying continues to rest with the Benevolent Fund. The Trustees agreed in Jan 13 to increase the annuity paid by the Princess Royal's Memorial Fund to £1,308 (£24 per week and a £60 Christmas bonus). Those who receive help from the PRMF are reviewed on an annual basis to assess if they still require assistance. The Trustees will withdraw the assistance if there is no longer any financial need.

The Benevolent funds received 420 applications for assistance on behalf of ex-servicewomen of the ATS and WRAC in 2013, a decrease of 15% on 2012. In all, 141 applications were on behalf of ex-ATS servicewomen and 279 applications on behalf of ex-WRAC. Of the 420 applications received, 355 met the criteria for assistance. A total of 25 former servicewomen were assisted with Nursing Home Fees top-ups and 18 ex-servicewomen received annuities from the PRMF. The total amount of money distributed, including in-year refunds and returned grants, amounted to £198,012, a decrease of £4,875 (2.4%) on 2012. Of this, £31,499 was disbursed on Nursing Home Fees, a commitment that had previously been met by the Princess Royal's Memorial Fund. Grants were awarded in 20 categories, the most costly of which, excluding NHF top-ups, were for assistance with debt, funeral expenses and house repairs and/or adaptations.

As well as making grants from its own funds, the Benevolent Fund received support from many other Service and civilian charities, the Trustees thanked the external organisations for their support. The Chairman concluded by reading some thank you letters that had been received.

9. Resolutions.

- a. Motions of Urgency.** There were no motions of urgency.
- b. Trustee/Council Resolutions.** There were no Trustee/Council Resolutions.
- c. Branch Proposals.** There were no Branch proposals.
- d. Election of Honorary Treasurer.** The AGM is required to ratify the appointment of Honorary Treasurer on an annual basis.

Proposal: To ratify Col (Retd) Isabel McCord in her appointment as Honorary Treasurer.

Proposed: Lt Col (Retd) Mary Woollard
Seconded: Lt Col Rowena Griffiths MBE
Unanimously Agreed

10. Certificates of Appreciation. The Chairman awarded Certificates of Appreciation to the following members:

Lt Col (Retd) Janet Lawson MBE	Chairman Scottish Area
	(1992-2003) and Chairman Glasgow Branch
Mrs Valerie Gaff	Greater London

Since the 2013 AGM the following members had been awarded a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of devoted service and significant contributions to their Branch and the Association. These were presented at the Scottish Area AGM on 28 Sep 13:

Aberdeen

Mrs Lucy Burns
Mrs Mary Macleod
Miss Helen Thomson
Mrs Pat Valentine

Dumfries

Mrs Helen Craig

Stirling

Mrs Christina Allan
Mrs Helen Burness
Mrs Jean Collin
Mrs Jean Gibson
Mrs Alison McLennan
Mrs Mary McMillan
Mrs Georgina Rutherford
Miss Janet Strang

11. Any other Business.

a. Individual Fundraising.

- (i) Wendy Hooton had organised a group of 22 'Lioness' runners to take part in the British 10k London Run (marking the centenary of WW1) on Sun 13 Jul 14. They would be raising money for the WRAC Association and Help for Heroes.
- (ii) Margaret Davies was planning a 100 mile Walk Right Against Cancer (WRAC) in Jun 14. She would be raising money for the WRAC Association and Cancer Research UK.

b. Vice President Farewell. Lt Col (Retd) Sue Westlake was standing down in Jul 14 after 11 years as Vice President and Chairman of Council of the WRAC Association. She thanked all the members for their support and comradeship during her tenure and was presented with a photobook by Brig (Retd) Shirley Nield capturing memories of her service.

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting. The 2015 AGM would be held on the morning of Sat 21 Mar as part of the Grand Reunion in Harrogate.

Signed as a true record.

Chairman:

Date:

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," 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 (cheque payable to WRAC Association), or, the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund (cheque payable to ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund). It is important that you do make out your cheque to the right account! Donations can also be made on-line via the Association website or by phone 0300 400 1992 (local rate call, including mobiles).

Whatever you decide to do, PLEASE make sure that we have a Gift Aid form from you (a form can be found in the centre of this edition). If you pay tax, we can reclaim the tax which adds to the donation you have made without it costing you any more. If you have made a donation in the past, and you have not sent us a form, please request one 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 a 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!

LADY MARY SOAMES DBE 15 September 1922 - 31 May 2014



Lady Soames, who died aged 91, was a Vice Patron of the WRAC Association and was the last surviving child of Winston and Clementine Churchill. In 1941 she joined the ATS, serving in mixed anti-aircraft batteries, and rose to the rank of junior Command (equivalent to the rank of captain). While she was manning the batteries in Hyde Park, her father often used to drop in on her during the course of an air raid. Mary acted as ADC to her father on several overseas trips, including the first Quebec conference in August 1943 between Churchill, President Roosevelt and the Prime Minister of Canada, Mackenzie King. She accompanied him to Potsdam for the Big Three Conference in the summer of 1945, witnessing with amusement Stalin autograph hunting after dinner. She was demobilised early in 1946 and appointed MBE (military).

Editor: The WRAC Association sent a letter of condolence to Lady Soames's son, The Rt Hon Sir Nicholas Soames MP, who sent the following reply:

"Thank you very much for the wonderful letter you wrote to me upon the death of my mother.

That she died peacefully, with her children and grandchildren at her side, is for all of us a matter of great comfort, but we shall miss her quite dreadfully. She leaves a great gap at the very heart of our family.

The tidal wave of affection and respect which has attended her death is a source of great pride to her family and it was so good of you to add your words, which we greatly appreciate.

My Mama was very fond of her connections with the ATS and we are all so grateful for your generous remarks.

Nicholas Soames"

W/94866 SGT JOYCELIN (JOY) D BENTON née WRIGHT 01 November 1919 - 11 February 2014



Cpl Joy Benton meeting Princess Alexandra

Joy (known as "Ticki") was born in Sleaford, Lincolnshire. At the outbreak of the Second World War she went to work in a munitions factory, then join the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) in 1940. After her basic training she was put forward for a course to become a Training Instructor.

After she passed her course she was posted to many different Training Depots including; the Orkney's, St Andrews Golf Course, Officer Cadet Training Unit Dunblane Hydro, Edinburgh Castle, Stirling Castle, and Stranraer where she collected new recruits from Northern Ireland,

She then went on to Leicester where one of her recruits was Pte Denne, who later became a Colonel in the WRAC. They met again in the late 1980's when Colonel Denne worked in London District and Joy's daughter Gay was then her PA. Lastly to Guildford where she was in charge of a Training Company at the same time as the then Princess Elizabeth was doing her training. This depot then became the first all female training depot of the Women's Royal Army Corps, Queen Elizabeth Park.

When the war ended in 1945 she remained in the ATS and in July 1947 married Sergeant Aubrey Thomas Benton of the Royal Corps of Signals. She did not come out of the ATS on marriage but completed her service. The marriage lasted for 38 years until his death in April 1985.

Later in life she had a job as swimming instructor at the local Secondary Modern School which her children Gay and Ian attended. She then became a Warden of an Old People's Complex in Langley Mill, Nottinghamshire, which she held for 15 years until she was 65. She moved back to Sleaford, with her husband, and led an active life within the local community until her death.

Gay Benton

RACHEL BRIDGE née TURNBULL **31 December 2013**



Rachel Bridge (née Turnbull) died on New Year's Eve 2013. Born in 1936, she served in the WRAC (1953-62) leaving as a Captain to marry. Determined to escape her parents, "Boo" Turnbull joined at the earliest age she could, 17, after the Royal School, Bath. The Army seemed logical: an Army child (born in Gibraltar); her father was a British Army Brigadier, her uncle an Indian Army Brigadier, her beloved brother (a Sherwood Forester) had been killed commanding a company of 2 R Norfolks in Burma. During the Great War her grandmother had been awarded one of the first MBEs, and further back, both grandfathers served in the Boer War (one in 6th Inniskilling Dragoons, the other an Imperial Yeoman - Royal Bucks Hussars).

Rachel was always very proud of having served. Her postings took her around the UK and to the Far East, and skiing in Germany. Singapore and Malaya was her favourite posting (with R SIGNALS). She enjoyed working with the locally employed soldiers (she was told that the military exchange had been at its most efficient under the Japanese, after an irate officer had decapitated a faulty operator). Away from work Bukit Timah drew her, she raced polo ponies, for which their owners received a subsidy from the Malayan Racing Association. In Singapore she first met her great friend, Fiona Burley (Capt Fiona Macdonald WRAC). It amused them both, when 45 years later, Fiona's youngest daughter married Rachel's older child, both still serving.

Lt Col Toby Bridge

JANET M CAMERON née BEER **28 MAY 1938 - 13 December 2013**

W/398968 Pte Janet Beer joined the WRAC on 22 January 1958 and left 3 years later to the day! She enlisted at Tunbridge Wells and served her whole career at Bicester. She was born in Chatham on 28 May 1938 and spent all her married life in Gillingham, Kent until her death on 13 December 2013.

Janet was employed in the Army as a vehicle Storewoman for all types of vehicles. Her red book (Certificate of Service) read "She is a capable, reliable worker, industrious, not needing any supervision..Enthusiastic, self reliant...thoroughly honest and trustworthy." This is the Janet we knew and loved. Proud to be our Medway Branch Secretary for 28 years, Janet would always organise all our meetings and functions along with the local WRENs and WRAF ladies too. As a founding member of the WRAC Dinner Club she loved to reminisce of the many happy times she spent with people she loved.

Talking to her dear friend, 96 year old Nellie Dodds (ATS), I was told how Janet, Nellie, Nan Ovenden and Dot Higgins would

all book into the Victory Services Club in London in order to attend the Remembrance Parade. How the black cab taxi drivers would let them ride in the cabs (in uniform) for free, Janet loved everything to do with the Army and would attend all the Grand Reunions.

Janet and the Medway girls (Nellie Dodds, Dot Stedman, Joyce Giles, Joyce Keam, Margaret & Barbara Gallafent & myself, Sadie Kemp) would meet up monthly and occasionally with the Canterbury Branch, namely Mavis Middleton & Doreen Dennis! Soon both the branches were best of friends; Strawberry Teas sat in Janet's beautiful back garden were an event everyone looked forward to. To raise funds for our Branch Janet would book a pitch at the local Car Boot fair, she would always contribute her never ending supply of 'Auntie's stuff out the garage'!

In the last few years, despite being burdened with illness and being widowed, Janet would always keep going and never let anyone down. She was always smiling despite the dreadful pain she endured at the end. Her funeral took place at the Medway Crematorium on 06 January 2014. There was a strong military presence; many members of the WRAC Association were amongst the mourners, including the Area Chairman & Secretary of the Canterbury branch, a contingent of WRENs, and our RBL Standard Bearer John. Early on in her illness Janet asked the Reverend Susan Wing if she would consider conducting her funeral service, should she lose her battle against cancer. When the time came she held a very moving service; I was also able to contribute a poem on friendship which I knew Janet loved.

We all loved dear Janet Cameron and thought the world of her. She will be sorely missed and never forgotten. May she rest in peace and stand down now her duty is done.

Sadie Kemp

W/36392 MARY E DAVIS née ANGOVE **26 December 2013**



Mary enlisted in 1940 at the age of 17 and was sent to Aldermaston for training, then posted to Penhale Light Ack Ack training camp in Cornwall. Early in 1941 she was posted to Raglan Barracks in Devonport where she trained as a Mess Orderly. She took great pride in her work which had a lot of complications due to having to adapt during the Blitz. Mary frequently worked without proper facilities and dodged being strafed by Stukas as she sprinted from the bomb damaged mess to the handiest trench. Following those nights of terror she and her fellow mess mates had to rustle up drinks and food for 'their' officers, without running water and or electricity.

Eventually, the Americans joined in the fray and were posted into the Garrison Commander's Mess. What a culture shock for these ladies, Mary told us that the Yanks were very generous and Camel cigarettes, chewing gum and candy plus other exotic treats from the PX canteen eased their lives quite considerably. She met her future husband, Kenneth E Davis, just before his 116th Infantry Regiment were shipped out. They were amongst the first troops to land on Omaha Beach on D-Day.

Mary finally left Plymouth for a relatively quiet posting to Porthkerry Woods, Barry, near Cardiff. Here she enjoyed some much needed R & R in between her duties. After a while her Battery was posted to a gun site near Sidcup, a rather dangerous place to be because it was in the flight path of the V1 Doodle Bug Rockets. The winter of 1944 was very severe and when their boiler died they had to provide food from field kitchens, and at night went to bed fully clothed to try to get warm enough to sleep. When VE Day arrived Mary was posted to Buckingham Palace Gardens and served her last few months in a clothing Depot until she was demobbed, married Kenneth and sailed off to a new life in America.

In more recent years Mary loved the Association and being involved with the running and social side. She was a member of Plymouth Branch years ahead of my short 17 plus years. Mary had been Standard Bearer, Escort to Standard, tea maker, raffle ticket seller, Association Delegate for the Federation of Ex-services Plymouth District; information researcher and Treasurer for 12 years. She was always ultra smart in uniform; she looked after the Standard for many years and kept it in impeccable condition. She was a great ambassador and attended the Lord Mayor's inauguration for us when our Chairman could not attend; she would talk to anyone and last year was presented to HRH the Duke of Wessex on Veteran's Day. Mary will be sadly missed by us all in the association.

Ruth Jennings

JOYCE (JOY) C DRUMEY 16 February 1918 - 05 July 2014



Born in February 1918, she was called 'Joy' because her mother Jane feared that John Drumey, her husband, would be killed in France and that there would never be the joy of another baby. John Drumey did come home but died, at the age of 27, soon after Joy was born from the effects of mustard gas. Jane Drumey was left aged 23 with a War Pension of 10 shillings a week, one and sixpence for Jack, Joy's older brother, and a shilling a week for Joy. Her mother scraped by through working two jobs; as a Post Lady during the day and by scrubbing office floors at

night. Ethel, Jane's sister, helped by looking after the children when Jane had to work. Joy remembered a gentle, loving Mum who devoted herself to her children and died early from the hard work and strain of being a War Widow and single parent in the 1920's and 30's.

Jack and Joy went to Bowes Road School in north London and left at age 14; Jack was apprenticed to a piano maker, as he was musical and good at carpentry, Joy trained as a bookkeeper as she was good with numbers. Aged 21, doing well in her job and engaged to be married to an electrician, she was called up to National Service and trained as a Driver. As the air raids intensified over London Winston Churchill asked for 'the women to step up', to take over the jobs of men needed at the Front. Joy volunteered as a Searchlight Operator in response to this call, partly so that she might be based in London to be able check on her Mum more often. Thus, Joy became part of the first and only ATS Division of Ack Ack Command in the Royal Artillery, stationed on the searchlights by the big guns defending St Paul's Cathedral. Winston Churchill often went to visit the gun crews and 'the girls' at St. Pauls who had stepped up in response to his call. Joy said she was given her first pack of cigarettes by the Prime Minister and wartime leader!

The girls in Joy's Searchlight team had to walk back to their billet each morning, clambering through the new rubble of collapsed buildings and past people searching for their families. There they slept and rested until reporting for duty again the following night. Joy worried a lot about her Mum but could rarely get back to north London to see if she was ok. She had many stories to tell of that time; of comradeship under fire, the loss of friends; of fear and bravery. She received the news that her wounded fiancée had drowned when a Red Cross ship had gone down, thought to have been sunk by order of Mussolini.

Sometimes, after a British bombing raid somewhere in Europe, she told of how a signal would come that a disabled plane was limping back home. It perhaps had damaged navigation equipment, or on only one engine, or leaking fuel. The Searchlight teams on the South coast would be on alert, listening for where the plane crossed the Channel. They'd pick it up in their beams and 'point a path' towards Biggin Hill. The Searchlight team there picked up the plane in their beams and pointed it towards London. In London Joy and her team would wait for the signal from Biggin Hill and 'switch on everything' to guide the way home. Joy once explained that "when we had the plane in our searchlights overhead, we'd 'point it' towards Hatfield. The team there would pick it up and guide them in to land as best they could. We reckoned the Searchlight girls saved a good few air crews and planes, to fight again in the Battle of Britain."

Joy permanently lost her hearing in the first waves of bombardment against incoming enemy bombers. In 1989, after 50 years of being profoundly deaf, she finally received a War Disablement Pension. When the war ended she went home to live with her Mum. Her brother Jack (miraculously alive after 4 years fighting in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany) returned to his wife Margaret and their little daughter Frances. Jack and Margaret had two further children, Jacqueline, born in 1947 and John in 1951. Joy always said that she would love to have had a family of her own, but her fiancée was gone, like many men he did not come home from the Second World War. Instead Joy stepped up to her new role as the world's most supportive daughter, sister, niece, Auntie and friend.

She returned to her studies, qualified as an Accountant and

spent much of her career working for Haringey Council. She also cared for Jane, her Mum, and her Auntie Ethel until their death. In retirement Joy lived near Frinton-on-Sea and then moved to Kent to be near to Jack and Margaret after they too retired. She became part of the Rockdale Housing Association community in Sevenoaks, Kent in 1990 where she lived for 24 years.

Joy was 'on duty' all her life, for her family, and for her country in 1939-1945. At the same time as the boats were landing on the D-Day beaches Corporal Joy Drumey and her team of ATS colleagues were on duty at the searchlights at St. Paul's Cathedral, waiting for news and for the next wave of bombers to appear over London.

Jacqueline Penn

BRIGADIER (RETIRED) NORMAN C KING MBE 07 March 2014

Brigadier (Retired) Norman King MBE, who passed away on 07 March 2014 at the age of 94, was General Secretary of the WRAC Association from 1975 until 1985. Brigadier Norman served in the Royal Corps of Transport, he maintained a high level of fitness and was reported to still be going out running in his 94th year.

JOYCE M LAMBOURNE 20 October 1926 - 04 November 2013



I met Joyce over the internet, after she replied to my request in Lioness 2011/1 for information about two WRAC graves in Singapore. Joyce had served with one of the girls, Pte Barbara Atkinson, and her account and photos were subsequently printed in Lioness 2011/2. Her excellent memory and attention to detail had not dimmed despite her age of 84. We corresponded for another two and a half years, but her health was failing and she battled with cancer. Her network of friends was substantial and Joyce wisely sent out health bulletins to conserve her energy. She loved the internet and all the interest gleaned from it.

Inevitably, an email arrived from her nephew with news of Joyce's death, and later he sent a photo and an excerpt from her eulogy, taken from her personal writings about the war. I have woven that account with notes she sent me about her service history.

Joyce left school at 16 and worked for Hamilton H Turner and Son as a shorthand typist. In October 1948 Joyce joined the ATS for two years, mainly to see bit of England. After initial training at Guildford she was posted to Gresford in North Wales for Clerical and Driver training, then back to London. Being the only shorthand typist on the course she was "claimed" by the War Office. "This was infuriating to me as I was billeted just around the corner in Victoria from where I'd worked in civilian life, but on wages of 19/6d per week in lieu of £5. I worked in Combined Operations at Hyde Park Corner and the only way to get out of this was to apply for an overseas posting, which I did as soon as I'd served the necessary 6 months! Thus I was posted to Singapore."

En route there were several adventures; in Port Said Joyce narrowly avoided being kidnapped and taken into the desert as a slave; in Aden she dived into very shallow water and was badly hurt. On arrival in Singapore she wrote with great enthusiasm of the sea, the sand, and the number of eligible men..."I wasn't short of escorts by any means. In fact we worked out that we could go out with a different lad every night for several years...so I had a really good time. Of course we were only paid two thirds of the male rate. I never minded this as I always thought their extra third was for taking us out!"

"I left the WRAC in 1950 and joined the WRAC/TA in 1951 at Chelsea Barracks, serving originally as a Clerk, then as a driver, finishing as a corporal Driving Instructor some 14 years later!" Joyce was offered promotion several times, but she said "I was enjoying myself too much being a Private (in Singapore) with no responsibilities. As for the TA, I turned down promotion time and again because I felt I had enough responsibility in my civil occupation!"

Sue Bateman

W/2731587 MOREEN C MOSS (née HEAD) 21 October 1922 - 18 November 2013

Moreen had no surviving relatives so the following is an extract from page 75 of "Girls in Khaki" by Barbara Green. The 'Y' Service was a chain of wireless intercept stations across Britain and in a number of countries overseas.

"Moreen had first hand experience of the Y Service. She joined the ATS from the Civil Service and was sent to Glen Parva barracks in Leicester for her basic training. Moreen obviously did well in some relevant part of the selection tests that recruits went through, although she wasn't very sure of the reason why she was posted to the Isle of Man to train for the Y Service. Moreen recounts how: 'we were billeted in commandeered hotels on the seafront, known as the Palace Camp, and the course lasted almost six months. We were given our training squads of 30 men and women and at the end of the course I was kept on as a Lance Corporal Instructor, eventually made up to Corporal. I loved my time in the ATS. As an only child it was a great change for me to have so much company, a lot of it so different from my upbringing.'"

Betty Webb

DOROTHY J SLEIGH 17 February 1928 - 12 March 2014

Dorothy was a much loved and is a sadly missed member of Worthing Branch. She decided that making the teas and coffees was her job, and she did it with a smile every month. Dorothy served in the ATS from 1947 for a short while and remembered it fondly, like the rest of us.

She died on 12 March 2014 after a short illness. She had plenty of visitors in hospital, and had a smile and cheerful disposition right to the end. Her funeral was held at St George's Church in Worthing on 24th March 2014, with lots of friends attending, including members from the Branch.

Janet Goldsbrough-Jones

JEANNIE R P SPENCE née HOGGAN
21 JULY 1954 - 14 FEBRUARY 2014



Jeannie was born on Wednesday 21 July 1954 in Gorebridge, south of Edinburgh. Her father, a very proud, hard working miner, instilled a strong work ethic into his five children; "Save for what you need and always stand up for the under dog". As a young girl Jeannie was very close to "Goods", her Granny, who was the matriarch of the family and gave all her Grandchildren unconditional love.

Jeannie joined the Women's Royal Army Corps at 17, with her father's words ringing in her ears, "I'll give you three months and you'll be back home". Of course Jeannie was riddled with her Catholic PhD in guilt for leaving, and like most of us spent some very home sick nights, but the three months stretched to 22 years! Jeannie loved Guildford, everything new and exciting, marching, bulling shoes, ironing, learning many new things and of course trying to understand all the new accents. Then it was on to Blackdown for her trade training.

Her first posting was Bicester and that is where I first met her in January 1973, little did I know she would be my greatest friend for over 40 years; loyal, loving, a quick wit and a wonderful sense of humour, but who could nag for NATO on a good day.

Jeannie was posted to Germany from Bicester but became ill and was transferred to Westminster Hospital in London for a year, with throat cancer. She was devastated, not for herself, but for her family. No mobile phones, no internet etc, it was such a difficult time for her and of course her family. The consultant at Westminster gave her 6 months to live, but Jeannie wasn't having any of it and she got over her 'little blip' as she called it.

After retraining as a clerk she was posted to London for 3 years and had a fantastic time; theatres, clubs, restaurants etc meeting people from around the globe. It was there that she met Ann (Galan) who, like me, was a friend for life. They got into some scrapes but Jeannie loved every minute of her London posting. Middle Wallop was another posting she loved because she would go on flying training to Scotland to see Goods and pop in for a cup of tea. Helicopters didn't register on Goods' radar, she would tell everyone that Jeannie came up on the train.

Into the 80's now and Jeannie was back in Germany. Galan and I were also posted there, along with Dolly May, Nerys, Jess,

Marge, Babs Robinson, Jane Kelly, Lyn and Alison. We all had a ball, laughing hysterically at each others misdemeanours. We were fortunate enough to reconnect with some of our friends once again at the WRAC Dinner Club.

Jeannie went on to Cyprus and her life changed for ever. Sun, sea and love struck, she met the dashing Fusilier Mr Spence with his good looks. Jeannie soon realised it was his kindness and caring ways that she loved. Then it was onto Deepcut and Sandhurst for Tony. It was Jeannie who proposed to Mr Spence, she didn't want a big wedding but Tony did. So it was on 17 June 1989 that they married in Canterbury, with all their family and friends around them, fluffy white dress and all. Tony was the best thing that ever happened to Jeannie, at times they were like two kids in a sweetie shop they were so happy. They had such adventures on holiday; from nearly getting jailed in Africa, mugged in Russia, car jacked in America, it could only happen to them.

When Jeannie left the army Tony and her settled in Alum Waters, just outside Durham. She became a SSAFA caseworker and driver, ceramics teacher and PAT dog carer at St Cuthbert's the local Hospice. Jeannie said this was the most rewarding work she had ever done.

When Jeannie became ill there were so many flowers, texts, emails and humorous cards sent which really lifted her spirits and kept her strong. Jeannie's words now ring in my ears, "I have been truly blessed with a charmed life, I would have liked a little longer with my loved ones, but my greatest honour was to become Mrs Spence".

For Ann and I we haven't lost our loyal, generous, loving friend, she has just gone into the next room and is waiting for us to join her (but not just yet though Hogis).

Jenny Quirke

GLADYS K STAPYLTON née TULETT
15 December 1924 - 20 June 2014



Gladys (known as Tulip) enlisted in the ATS in 1941 and served as a Kine Theodolite Operator. After the war she produced a regular newsletter and organised many reunions for the 'girls', the last one having taken place in 2013. She died peacefully at home on 20 June 2014 aged 89 years and will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her.

Anne Hull

LAST POST

ANDREWS, Mrs Jennifer, née Carr, of Stanley on 06 January 2014, WRAC.

AULDGIRTH, Mrs Doris, née Lane, of Auldgirth on 23 June 2014, ATS.

BARLOW, Mrs Andrey M, née Taylor, of Cockermouth on 26 December 2013, ATS.

BENTON, Mrs Joycelin D, of Farndon on 11 February 2014, ATS.

BOX, Miss Cora L M, of Hove on 14 May 2014, ATS.

BRIDGE, Mrs Rachel, née Turnbull, of Salisbury on 31 December 2013, WRAC.

BRIERLEY, Mrs Kathleen M, née Woolley, of Sale in 2013, ATS.

BROWN, Mrs Gladys, née Allan, of Cardenden on 04 August 2014, ATS.

BOWERS, Mrs Meriel, née Firth, of York on 15 July 2014, ATS.

CAMERON, Mrs Janet M, née Beer, of Gillingham on 13 December 2013, WRAC.

CASTLE, Mrs Agnes, née Kenny, of Stirling on 22 March 2014, ATS.

CHOPPEN, Mrs Molly, née Cooke, of Chester on 01 January 2014, ATS.

CURTIS, Mrs Lillian H, née Bennet, of Sturminster Newton in March 2014, ATS.

DAVIS, Mrs Mary, née Angove, of Plymouth on 26 December 2013, ATS.

DAWSON, Miss L D L, of Dalkeith on 11 February 2014, WRAC.

DODDINGTON, Mrs Margaret, née Gallagher, of Lowestoft on 22 June 2014, ATS.

GUNNING, Mrs Mary, née Spencer, of Birmingham on 14 January 2014, ATS.

HARDMAN, Mrs Irene A, née Tranter, of Scarisbrick on 16 July 2014, ATS.

HARTLEY, Miss Sylvia, of Pontefract on 14 February 2014, WRAC.

HILL, Mrs Insie on 05 March 2014, ATS.

HINE, Mrs Joan F, née Barnes, of Salisbury on 26 March 2014, ATS.

ILES, Mrs Mollie, née Bell, of Poole on 27 April 2014, ATS.

INGLIS, Mrs Pamela J, née Cole, of Maldon in June 2014, ATS.

JAMIESON, Miss Marjorie N, of Guildford in February 2014, ATS/WRAC.

JENNINGS, Mrs Alma, née Taylor, of Chesterfield on 23 April 2014, ATS.

JEWELL, Mrs Olive, née Pearson, of Leeds on 18 November 2013, ATS.

KENT, Mrs Jean B, née Robinson, of Ipswich on 25 February 2014, ATS.

LEED, Miss Dorothy, of Coventry on 12 November 2013, ATS.

LOY, Mrs Joan P, of Colchester in 2014, ATS.

McKAY, Mrs Pamela, née Stansfield, of Lee-on-Solent in 2013, ATS.

MIDDLETON, Mrs Mavis, née Prince, of Herne Bay on 21 February 2014, ATS.

MILLS, Mrs Eve P, of Cheddar on 29 March 2014, ATS.

MONK, Mrs Gwen J, née Bass, of Haverfordwest on 15 January 2014, ATS.

MOSS, Mrs Maureen C, née Head, of Warwickshire on 18 November 2013, ATS.

NEWELL, Mrs Beryl V, née Wright, of Great Bentley on 10 April 2014, ATS.

PENKETH, Mrs Edith née Birchall, of New Ferry on 16 July 2014, ATS/WRAC.

POWLES, Mrs Eileen A, of Ramsgate on 23 March 2014, ATS.

POWNALL, Mrs Nora, née Melvin, of Hazel Grove on 06 April 2014, ATS.

PUXLEY, Miss Rosemary B L, of Wantage on 13 March 2014, ATS/WRAC.

REES, Mrs Betty, née Cooper, of Hull on 25 July 2014, ATS.

ROSE, Mrs Joan P, née Evenden, of Portland on 17 September 2013, ATS.

SAVAGE, Mrs Jean C B, née Ritchie, of Aberdeen on 31 March 2014, ATS.

SHEARMAN BEM, Miss S H, of Filey on 07 May 2014, ATS.

SILHAN, Miss Peggie L, of Worthing on 06 March 2013, ATS.

SINCLAIR, Mrs Elliot M Sinclair, née Tough, of Dumfries, ATS.

SLEIGH, Miss Dorothy J, of Lancing on 12 March 2014, ATS.

SMURTHWAITE, Miss Alice, of Victoria, Australia on 03 October 2010, ATS.

SPENCE, Mrs Jeannie R P, née Hoggan, of Durham on 14 February 2014, WRAC.

STAPYLTON, Mrs Gladys K, née Tullett, of Whitley Bay on 20 June 2014, ATS.

TAYLOR, Miss Doris, of Reading on 01 December 2013, ATS/WRAC.

TWIST MBE, Mrs Mabel K, of Omagh on 28 November 2013, ATS.

VALENTINE, Mrs Laura M, née Kelly, of Newdigate on 06 February 2014, ATS.

WARD, Mrs Sybil N, née Topham, of Leicester on 27 July 2014, ATS.

WILSON, Mrs Helen A W S, née McHardy, of Inverness on 07 July 2013, ATS.

WILSON, Mrs Marian, née Parker, of Dallas on 25 November 2013, ATS.

YEATMAN, Mrs Ann, née Middlecoate, of Lydney in 2014, WRAC.

Editor: The previous edition of Lioness contained an obituary for Sheila Edyvane née Puddephat. A reader sent a letter to Sheila's sister, Jean Pointer (née Puddephat), via Janet Goldsbrough-Jones, unfortunately the letter went missing in the mail. Jean is keen to hear from you and can be contacted at 57 Franklin Road, Shoreham by Sea, BN43 6YE.

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