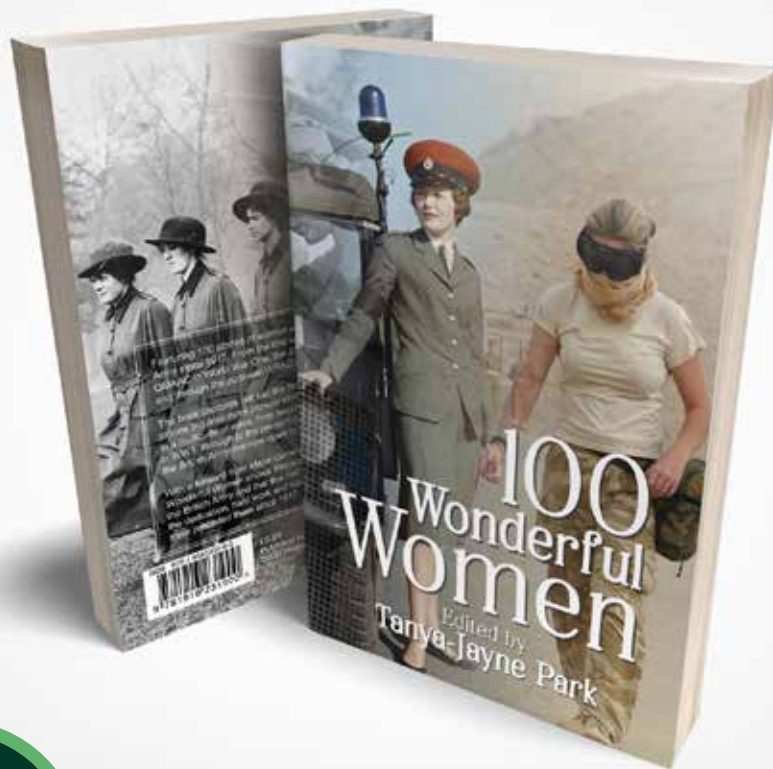


LIONESS



COMING
SOON!





WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

(Incorporating the QMAAC & ATS Comrades Association)

Registered Charity No. 206184, founded in 1919

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The Archbishop of Canterbury

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Association Secretary & Editor Lioness - Penny Muxworthy
Benevolent Fund Secretary - Julie Winks **Finance Officer** - Julia Doig
Office Manager - Tanya-Jayne Park

STATE OF THE NATION



Association Vision Statement

To be a recognised and accessible charity, supporting women who served in the ATS, ATS TA, WRAC, WRAC TA and WRAC TAVR, to which our members are proud to belong.

Well what an absolutely fantastic 6 months. I am not really sure where to start. From the start of our Centenary year, with a Service at Guildford Cathedral on 1st February, through the Grand Reunion in Southampton, all of the events at the National Army Museum including our exhibition, the Rise of the Lionesses, and on to National Armed Forces Weekend in Salisbury, the dedication of our plinth at the National Memorial Arboretum and all of the events taking place at Area and Branch level. We have had an absolute blast.

That is only the first 6 months. We still have nearly 200 of us descending on York in early August for the 10 kms run, Centenary lunches being held by branches, Area AGMs and planning is well underway for the Association AGM and Unveiling of the WRAC Statue at the National Memorial Arboretum on 21st March 2020. This will mark the end of our Centenary Year.

I am so grateful to all who have thrown themselves into marking our 100 years of existence. We have received publicity in national publications and on national television and radio as well as on local radio. This coverage has been brilliant in spreading the word of the Association and our membership has leapt as never before. It is difficult to pick any highlights but I do have two; the first of these is the noise we all created singing along to the Dambusters at the Gala Dinner of the Grand Reunion in Southampton and the amazed expression on the face of Major General Sharon Nesmith, and the second is the opening of the Rise of the Lionesses Exhibition at the National Army Museum. The latter has been a partnership I could have only dreamed of and so many visitors to the Museum will see our exhibition charting our history from 1917 to the current day.

My thanks to all we have achieved and enjoyed must go to all at the National Army Museum, to Curious PR who have helped us to navigate the complexities of media and PR and to our HQ Team of Penny, Julia, Julie and Tanya who have worked tirelessly to enable all of the events you have enjoyed.

This edition of the Lioness is all about these first 6 months and the articles and the photographs show clearly the vibrancy of our Association and all that it represents. We still have 6 months to celebrate and I know they will be as good as the first 6 months. As an Association representing women who served and are still serving, we have so much to be proud of.

Ali Brown

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Front Cover: Wonderful Women Book - Celebrating women who served The book will feature 100 stories of women who've served in the British Army since 1917. From the first women's corps of WAAC & QMAAC in World War One, the ATS during World War Two and through the post-war WRAC



What an amazing year ... to date! And, hopefully one that fully honours the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Women's Royal Army Corps and the Centenary of the (charitable) Association. The comradeship, esprit de corps and support (not to mention the keeping of traditions alive) you all give, and receive, among each other has been more than evident.

Sadly I, along with some others, missed the Evensong on 1st February. Julia and I made it to Junction 8 of the M3 but decided to go up to the roundabout and turn round for home, after we saw the lorry in front of us slide sideways up the motorway! So, like others, we were snowed away. However, it was great to read how well the service went, along with the official launch of the documentary DVD. Huge thanks to everyone who managed to make it through, along with thanks to the Cathedral for all their continued help and support.

A month later some of us/you gathered at the National Army Museum for 'Women in the Army' Day, ahead of International Women's Day. A great turnout – and we had some wonderful conversations with the public about the ATS, WRAC and women in the forces in general.

Not long before the 'famed' Grand Reunion was upon us. It was to be both my and Julie Winks (Ben. Fund Secretary) first such weekend. We'd heard lots about previous ones, but they didn't really prepare us for just how awesome a weekend it would be. Naturally, it was busy, with well over 400 of you attending one or all of the events. We safely got everyone to Guildford Cathedral for a Reception with HRH Sophie, Countess of Wessex, and back again. Your inventiveness with the 'Wonderful Women' themed fancy dress was great.

Saturday's AGM was exceptionally well attended, and it was lovely to have interaction with you, the Association's Members – a copy of the Minutes appear later in this edition. And then off to get ready for the Gala Dinner. Gosh, don't we all brush up well in our glad-rags. I haven't attended a Gala Dinner like that for very many years (the only other people I know that could/can party like that are Young Farmers Clubs' members) – the atmosphere (friendships, new and old; comradeship; kindred spirits) and noise were something to behold. It was truly amazing and something to never be forgotten ... by me, at least.

Nursing some sore throats and a few sore-ish heads saw a good number at the Sunday Drumhead Service. To see the Standards parade in and be laid onto the drum altar was lovely – the error over the words in the Order of Service was mine, for which I did and do apologise, but your memories of the words were still crystal clear. And then to see you Parade along the side of the City Walls in the spring sunshine, headed by the band, was awesome. Obviously, marching is much like riding a bike – once you've learnt, you never forget!

Then onto June (and the start of a very busy few weeks) and the

launch of the first-ever WRAC exhibition at the National Army Museum – featuring the Association's artefacts, images and 'community labelling'. The launch night was the same evening I was setting up for Armed Forces Day 2019 in Salisbury – which was over three days! (more later in the magazine) – so I didn't make this, but some did. And many of you have attended either events being held alongside the exhibition and/or visited the museum and exhibition itself. It has been wonderful working with the NAM and their staff, who really have engaged so well with all that you and the Association stands for, and all that women have achieved since 1917.

July saw another very good number of you congregate at the National Memorial Arboretum to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the WRAC and Centenary of the Association – the last such event at our NMA Plot before the WRAC Lady statue goes in, over the winter, and is Dedicated next March (Saturday 21st).

The NAM exhibition, and associated Community Engagement Programme, continues until mid-October with a series of portrait paintings and a Behind the Scenes evening in early October (which will also see the launch of the 'Wonderful Women 100' book) – again, see later in the magazine for more details.

Before we know it Remembrancetide will be upon us. Don't forget – the Association does not have a 'uniform' and so you do not have to wear anything specific to parade with / on behalf of the Association; just be your usual smart selves. Therefore, you do not need to wear beret, stable belt, skirt, green, or anything else that used to be considered Corps uniform, nor do you have to wear Association polo shirt, fleece and/or coat (although these are available from the Association office) – just Parade with Pride.

And then it will be:

... 30th November – and time to ensure your Branch Reports, news, stories and requests are in for inclusion in the next *Lioness* (so it can come out bright and early in 2020). I know that some Area and/or Branches are organising / have organised specific Centenary events – if we haven't had a report on yours yet, send it in for inclusion next time;

... Christmas and New Year (party time?!)

... Association AGM and WRAC Lady Statue Dedication at the NMA in March.

Throughout all the above, we have continued to work with Curious PR - both on events and on the work of the Benevolent Fund (don't forget, if you, a family member, friend or colleague served for even just one day in the ATS and/or WRAC you may be eligible for assistance through the Fund – enquire through SSAFA or the RBL) - who have managed to get some really great slots on national and local radio, television; onto BFBS; and into the written media. Your stories are getting out there and awareness of all that you, and your predecessors, have achieved (and in some cases still are achieving) is gaining greater recognition. See 'Association News & Updates' for more details.

Penny Muxworthy

editor@wracassociation.org.uk

SUPPORTING WOMEN WHO ^{SERVE}/SERVED

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Comings and Goings

TIM SAVAGE

Trustee & Non-Executive Member Council



Tim is a former serving AGC(SPS) officer who retired in 2008 after twenty-six years' service. He joined the Army as a soldier in 1981 and was commissioned into the RAPC through RMAS in 1986 on SMC862. He served all over the world including Germany, service with the Gurkhas in Hong Kong and Brunei, Gibraltar, the Balkans, Sierra Leone, Washington DC and of course, Worthy Down. His first staff appointment was in DSPS(A), where he came under the tutelage of the very famous Sue Westlake, Penny Gold and Jackie Smith. As he says today, "I could not have had better role models than these bastions of the WRAC!"

Tim is now a self-employed Business Coach and also runs an online Amazon Business. He lives in Westward Ho! with his wife Tracey, where he spends his time trying to keep a single figure golf handicap in between work commitments. He describes himself as an "Apprentice Beach Bum" with the intention of retiring one day to spend his days swimming in the sea and enjoying the delights of living in North Devon. He has two grown up children who have flown the nest permanently, but keep returning to enjoy his cooking.

In the meantime, Tim keeps himself busy working to earn enough to keep his beloved VW Camper on the road. He is extremely honoured and proud to serve as the first male trustee of the WRAC Association and hopes to meet as many members as possible during his time serving. Tim brings considerable business and finance skills to his role and is enjoying meeting up with many old friends and colleagues from his service days.

SHAN VEILLARD-THOMAS

Trustee



I served in 31 Signal Regiment TAVR, London, for 6 months before going to WRAC College for the short commissioning course in late 1973. I asked to be posted to Northern Ireland straight away but needed to do a platoon officer's job first so off I went to COD Donnington for 9 months to learn how to become

a WRAC Officer. There were a large number of technical store women and I learned so much from them, and from the wonderful Sergeant Major. I then took the ferry from Liverpool to Belfast. As my MFO boxes hadn't been properly secured, most of the contents fell into the sea as they were being lifted off the ship. The subalterns of the Blues & Royals squadron decided to put a hose pipe and turn it on in my bed, mistaking it for their Squadron Leader's bed. However, I soon settled in and enjoyed my 5 months with Colonel, then Major, Audrey Purton and 181 Provost Company of 2 Regiment RMP in Aldergrove. Of course, lots of adventures and some quite scary ones. I had wanted to see the Army in action and that was about the most action there was in the 1970s.

I applied for a posting to Edinburgh as I got engaged to an officer in a Scottish regiment. First, though, I had to complete a two month signal officers' course at School of Signals, Blandford, and then I was on my way to 242 Signal Squadron at HQ Scotland running a comcen and telephone exchange, with WRAC, Royal Signals and civilians under command. My first weeks were involved with the refuse collectors' strike in Glasgow and I visited the city several times, and will never forget the piles of stinking rubbish all over the streets. Following on there was a massive exercise for removing Army families from BAOR and getting troops to Germany, which took place in the autumn of 1974. I had 69 full, part-time and operational-only telephone exchanges all over Scotland to look after, and a fantastic team. Colonel Nan Robertson was DADWRAC at the HQ and a wonderful support to me.

My Army career took a rather unexpected turn as I got married and then followed my husband's postings. Not long after I arrived in Edinburgh, he was posted to RAC a centre in Bovington, so many weekends were spent on the train. After my posting in Edinburgh at Craigiehall I was posted to the Communications Projects Agency (a MoD organisation that sent engineers all over the world – that was my job) in Blandford, where I spent two years as an admin officer and without any other WRAC in sight.

In 1978 my husband was posted to Brunei, so very sadly I had to leave the Army. He set up an armoured recce squadron of Scorpions which the Sultan had bought. There wasn't much for me to do, so I had a baby.

Two years later we were posted to HQ 2 Div in Lübbecke and so then I had another baby and became a real Army wife and mother with husband away frequently on exercise. I set up a couple of pre-school playgroups, one for officers' wives and one near the NAAFI.

The School of Tactics at Bovington followed for 4 years (husband was in Oman setting up an armoured school for two of them), which eventually caused the marriage to collapse. I rode a lot and did Open University.

The next posting was to the French Cavalry School in Saumur. I spent 6 years with my daughter and son, for holidays, which we sometimes spent in Oman. I started teaching English and set up a flourishing business. Off to university to do an English degree, and then to Paris as a legal translator at Linklaters, a large international law firm. Two years later, back in London, and law school, university, and work as an executive coach and mediator. This took me to Paris, Abu Dhabi (my son and family live there) and Dubai.

I stopped travelling and volunteered at Citizens Advice for three years in London, and now work for a small law firm. Now I have a grandson of two and have recently been appointed as a trustee of the WRAC Association, which I am so proud to have accepted.

HELEN JEPHCOTE Scotland & Northern Ireland Co-ordinator

Helen will be taking over from Jo Young after their Area AGM, so a fuller bio for her will appear in the next edition. In the meantime, we wish her well.

LESLEY ROBERTS Northern Area Co-ordinator



I have been asked to provide a small piece on myself so ... I joined the W.R.A.C. in September 1979 attached to the Royal Signals as a Data Telegraphist, I went from basic training in Queen Elizabeth Barracks to Catterick for 5 months of trade training. Then enjoyed postings to Lisburn, NI, Hong Kong and then to Krefeld and Rheindahlen in Germany. It was during this time that I married and then left as I was pregnant. My WRAC career ended in April 1984.

With my husband who was in the Royal Air Force, we travelled to various units in the UK and also to Episkopi in Cyprus (the RAF are not well known for overseas postings). I was employed by the Civil Employment Pay Office as a Clerk Typist for the 17/21st Lancers in Episkopi. After the birth of my youngest son I started full time work as a secretary and had various jobs down south and then up in the North East.

Upon my husband's retirement we settled back in my home town of Gateshead, I carried on working for a local property developer as the Finance Manager and his P.A., until the financial crash resulted in the business being folded by the Administrators. When I returned to the North East I joined the Association where my local branch is Newcastle and I am an active member of the branch. Around the same time, my husband was diagnosed with stomach cancer, he successfully fought the disease and went into remission. However 5 years later he was diagnosed with terminal colon cancer, he eventually lost his battle to the illness 2 years ago.

Following the death of my husband I became heavily involved with the running of our local Breakfast Club, I was the secretary until it folded, it was then that the Chair and I set up the new Geordie Breakfast Club and this club has become a popular group with our veterans.

I am currently employed by the largest independent local charity in the North East as a Senior Finance Officer. I am regularly in contact with the elderly vulnerable residents, assisting with their finances and holding baking demonstrations especially at Christmas, where the residents enjoy reminiscing with the sights and smells of the baking.

I also volunteer for "Veterans at Ease" a military charity helping with their clerical and financial needs. Despite the loss I have suffered my life at present is not boring, and thanks to my military family it is full of tears (but of laughter not grief).

'Job' Adverts

The following roles within the Association have come / are coming available in the next few months. If you feel this is something you would, and could, like to take on please contact Ali Brown to discuss.

AREA CO-ORDINATORS

This new title (were Area Chairmen), as previously mentioned, reflects the evolution of Areas and the links between Council, Association HQ and Branches. Area Co-ordinators will still be part of your Council, which meets in London twice a year – the Area Co-ordinators arriving the previous evening for Area Forum, the ideal opportunity to talk through issues you all have in common. Nominations for WRAC Association Mention in Dispatches will still come from Branches to you, before going to Council. It is hoped that you will continue to organise a regular / annual AGM or get-together for your area – another great opportunity to share and promote 'comradeship, support and esprit de corps' for "Women who Served".

South & South West – Sharon Bingham announced she was standing down earlier this year so if you are in the South and West Area (branches include Bath, Bournemouth, Bristol, Isle of Wight, New Forest, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Salisbury, Southampton, Swindon, Torquay, Weymouth & Portland and Winchester) and are interested please let us know.

Eastern Area – Wendy Hooton has announced she will be standing down later this year, so if you are in this area (branches include Cambridge, Chelmsford, Colchester, Herts/Bucks/ Beds, Norfolk and Suffolk) and are interested, please let us know.

It matters not whether your branch is / was 'formal' or 'informal', well-established or new.



ARMED FORCES FOOTBALL MATCH Lyn Hatch



Norwich football club's 'International Womens' Day'

Friday 8th March was the designated Armed Forces match at Norwich City Football Club, which also just happened to be International Women's Day. I was given 10 tickets for the game and invited to nominate a Community Champion to place the ball on the plinth just before kick-off. With us commemorating the centenary of Women in the Army for me there was only one person I would ask, and I was delighted when Joan Awbery accepted.

What a fantastic night it was for us all. Joan Awbery, her granddaughter Sarah and myself arrived at the Directors Entrance in the hospitality buggy, grateful for the ride as the rain decided to fall. When the commentator announced Joan, and gave a brief history of her time in the ATS, what a reception she got from the fans of over 26,000, a full stadium. I was so proud to be stood beside her and for her granddaughter to be able to share this night with her. Joan, who is now registered blind, with a little help, placed the ball on the plinth and again the stadium responded with a huge cheer. At half time (top picture) Mary Rezlik, Katrina Nobbs, Dianne Boisson and myself joined the other veterans for a parade around the pitch.

MARG DAVIES' WALK – 100 MILES FOR 100 YEARS OF THE WRAC ASSOCIATION

On Friday 15th March 2019 I started my latest 100 Mile Solo Walking Challenge at RMA Sandhurst to finish six days and 100 miles later at Southampton in time to attend the 100th Anniversary AGM of the Women's Royal Army Corps Association. This year my two charities were again the WRAC Association and my local Worcestershire Breast Unit Haven who look after the needs of Breast cancer sufferers. Sadly, in early 2018, I lost my very good friend Shirley Berry (ex WRAC/RMP) who was instrumental to my joining and getting support from the Association. This year's walk was dedicated to her memory.

I started my walk at Sandhurst and walked via the WRAC College site at Camberley where I did my own training, then via the former WRAC Training Centre & Guildford Cathedral, past former ATS/WRAC training sites at Hindhead & Liphook and on to the WRAC Association HQ in Winchester and finished on Wednesday 20th March in Southampton where the WRAC Association AGM and celebration of 100 Years took place.

I had been practising and building up my strength and stamina prior to the walk with the help of friends from the WRAC Association. Most of the walks took place on the borders between Herefordshire & Shropshire or Herefordshire & Worcestershire and many of them have involved hills!! I did a couple of lung-busting speed walks with Jo Foster around Ludlow and Mortimer Forest in Shropshire & there were also longer and fractionally less lung-busting walks on Malvern Hills and Much Marcle Ridge in Worcestershire & Herefordshire with the Hereford Branch WRAC Association walkers.



Training walk

The day before I actually started my walk, I was lucky enough to have a 'tour' of RMA Sandhurst in the company of Sue Hatton of the Sandhurst Trust. It was only the second time I had entered the "hallowed grounds" as my own Officer Training was at the WRAC College up the road at Camberley.

Marg at Camberley in 1971

Day 1 and I was walking through the housing estate that was my old WRAC Officer Training College at 8am in the morning. Funny but I don't remember a hill anywhere on the site when I was there, but I had to climb up and down one to eventually get to the bridge over the M3! The only things I vaguely remembered from my time there were the large fir trees. Sadly, the listed chapel that I'm sure I would have recognised was burnt down whilst the developer was waiting to put in the development plans!! The going was good over the heathland and woodland tracks between Camberley and Guildford. The paths were easy to spot so that even I managed to stay pretty much on course. The weather was fairly kind almost to the last few steps of the day. It was generally a bit blustery and sometimes threatened rain but it never amounted to much. The threatened storm re-appeared as I finished the day's walk at Guildford Cathedral and almost got blown away by the wind while taking photos, and then the heavens opened as we got back in the car to drive to our accommodation



Day 2 - Greensand Way

Day 3 was from near Hindhead to Four Marks where we had our accommodation. Gibbet Hill and the Punchbowl were sunny but there was a cold bite to the wind. I thought I was continuing with the technical gremlins again as my camera refused to take pictures at first. All that climbing and nothing to show! It's surprising how switching the darn thing off and shouting at it (and deleting as many old pics as I dared) does the trick. By the time I got to the viewing platform at the Punchbowl NT Site I was still cold but at least I could take some pictures of the view. From there it was a very quick, downhill march to the edge of Bramshott Common, the first of the military training areas of the day. The heathland made for very pleasant walking being soft and slightly spongy underfoot. At the edge of the common, nearer to Bramshott itself and Liphook, signs announced a disused Camp. I wondered if it was the ATS Training Camp that I was told was "on the A3 in the middle of nowhere!!" It looked very pleasant on a sunny Sunday morning!! (I later gathered that the WRAC Training Camp was on the Liphook side of the A3 . . . but equally "in the middle of nowhere"!)



Day 1 - Sandhurst 2019 Day 1 - Guildford Cathedral

Day 2 was a mixed bag of blessings and curses!! Blessing number one was a smooth run to the start of the walk as no commuters on a Saturday!! Curse number one was the very changeable weather. The wind was very blustery all day; not too bad when walking in woodland, though I did keep an eye out for creaking branches and falling trees! It was a different matter when in the open, particularly on the hills. No matter in which direction you walk the wind is always in your face; unless you are negotiating a slippery, narrow and sheer-sided ridge, in which case it gusts at you from the side almost blowing you off! After walking down the Wey South Path from Guildford I cut across on the Greensand Way. I had lunch at Hascombe where I spent longer than intended with my lovely niece, Bethan. No, it wasn't the beer . . . or the lovely food . . . or my wonderful niece's company that kept me. As I arrived I noticed that my GPS gizmo was running low on battery so the very nice lady who ran the place found somewhere to plug it in. Beth and I had our lunch and a drink and then I went to pick up the gizmo only to discover that the lady had plugged it in but not switched it on!! The machine was severely in the red!! So we stopped for a coffee and another chin-wag before deciding that it would have to do!! And it did, until I was driving home at the end of the day when it died!!



Day 3 - Bramshott Training Camp

Day 4's walk was from Four Marks to Itchen Abbas. I encountered lots of stiles at the start of the walk; four stiles in the space of a couple of hundred metres! They were doing their job of keeping the many flocks of sheep in their own fields! Normally the sheep I come across (though I don't know any personally) are rather shy and retiring types they tend to shuffle away no matter how calmly I cross their field. The first lot I came across that morning were as brazen as anything; so much so that they worried me. No, not me 'sheep-worrying' but them 'Marg-worrying'!! As I clambered over the stile they moved towards me en-masse!! I walked past and they (fortunately) parted to allow me to progress. I continued walking to the next stile glancing back to see them staring after me. When I got to the stile I realised there were two stiles in VERY close proximity so I stopped to take a photo. This seemed to be a sign to the sheep. They started trotting purposefully towards me again! I hastily took the picture and clambered swiftly over the stiles!! I'm sure there was a look of mild panic in my eyes in the photo I took? After New Alresford the St Swithun's Way combines with the Itchen



Way (after the River Itchen. "Oh goody" I thought, "That means it'll be nice and flat!!" No such luck. It went up and down like a roller-coaster and was often nowhere near any form of water! I'd just got to the end of the up bits and was looking forward to a nice gentle downward slope to finally be able to walk beside the Itchen when the heavens opened and the rain poured down. Just as quickly it stopped and, much relieved, I ambled down towards the river at Itchen Abbas.

Day 4 - stiles!

Day 5 saw me walk through Winchester to Shawford. I had realised that if I diverted my intended path slightly I would be passing much closer to the WRAC Association HQ at Basepoint, Winchester. Rude not to call in I thought; they may have the kettle on. They would also probably have a well-appointed loo (much nicer than squatting in the bushes!!) I also thought that, so close to the reunion weekend, they would be up to their armpits in work and not really appreciate a visit from a muddy-footed random Association member interrupting them. So I called on them anyway!! They kindly offered me a very welcome coffee and were even happy to have their photo taken with me. My grateful thanks to ALL the hardworking ladies of the WRAC Association (Penny, Julie, Julia and Tanya & those not 'office-bound') who worked their little fingers to the bone to provide us with a fantastic weekend of 'Events'. Eventually I dragged myself away from the warmth and comfort of Basepoint and continued on my way via old Winchester itself. My day's walk finished at Shawford where Denise picked me up, packed me in the car and took me back to our accommodation.



Marg with HQ staff (L-R): Julia Doig (Finance officer), Tanya Park (Office manager), Penny Muxworthy (Assoc. Secretary) and Julie Winks (Ben. Fund secretary)

Day 6, and my last day of walking was from Shawford to Southampton. Because I had set off so early (the Winchester rush hour didn't happen!) I arrived way too early at my intended lunch-stop so I carried on going!! I eventually stopped for my lunch of sandwiches overlooking Southampton Airport. I was just making a comfortable little spot for myself with my back

against a tree when an airport security vehicle appeared (on the airport side of the perimeter fence!) lights flashing!! Oh heck!! I approached the fence smiling at him as he drove up and rolled down his window. "You OK?" he asked. I replied that I was fine, just taking a well-earned break on the last day of my 100 mile walk. He seemed suitably impressed and we chatted a bit longer before he wished me well and drove on, continuing his perimeter check. I flopped down against the tree and sat and ate my lunch in between taking pictures of planes landing and taking off!!

The remaining journey into Southampton was a mixed bag of annoying detours, beautiful public parks and switchback roads leading to the road bridge over the Itchen, near the Ocean Terminals, where I was able to prevail upon a couple of students to take a photo of me within sight of the finish. Those last few miles seemed to take ages. The hotel seemed miles away, but at last I spied its eye-catching glass, triangular frontage. And, almost on cue, there was Denise, phone camera in hand! I'd done it, all 99 miles (plus at least another couple of miles to and from the car each day!!) Yes it's hard, but then it's supposed to be a challenge! My feet were a bit sore and I had a couple of aches and pains but who doesn't! Would I do it again - probably but after a year's rest!!



Day 6 - Itchen Bridge



Day 6 - Finish!

Thank you to everyone for your fabulous support. In particular I would like to thank Lt Col (Retd.) Sue Westlake, MBE for her generosity in accommodating Denise and myself for the entire walk at her house. It made the walk so much easier for us both. I would also like to thank my Denise for her un-stinting support and care during the whole long 10 days! She was my chauffeuse, cook, nurse, porter, rock and constantly encouraging companion throughout. Without her I doubt that my challenges would be completed.

Marg Davies

WAY OF THE ROSES 21ST - 23RD JUNE (2019) Baggers (aka Dawn Bagnall)

It all started as an idea after a few too many drinks.....

The girls - (Dawn Bagnall aka Baggers, Cheryl Jones aka Jonesy and Heather Bradbury aka H - don't we Army girls just love nick names) were visiting me in Lytham just before Christmas 2018, when after a few drinks in the local pub, Baggers has an idea...."why don't we do a sponsored bike ride to raise money for the statue". We all agreed and continued to discuss and develop the idea. Initially it was a few miles, after another drink it was fifty miles, after another drink a hundred miles, and after another drink a hundred and fifty miles.

Thankfully we stopped drinking and settled on the idea of cycling the coast to coast, otherwise we could have ended up with an around the world trip.

Christmas out the way and New Year resolutions set, we all began training. January and February weather for outside cycling is very limited, so we all got turbo trainers for our bikes and started pedalling. Baggers set up a WhatsApp page and we began recording our progress and sharing it with each other, and in true Lioness style, and our natural competitive nature, this spurred us on to keep up the training sessions. Jonesy would record a training session, this meant Baggers would do one too - usually within the next hour!, that in turn would spur H on to complete one, and so I wouldn't be left behind - I would drag myself to the summerhouse at the bottom of the garden and jump on my bike to start pedalling to the next episode of Eastenders on BBC iPlayer.

Spring was arriving in March and the weather improving, so we all chucked our bikes in our cars and travelled from the three corners of England - Sheffield, Lytham and Gloucester - towards the English border up North. Jonesy took the 'High Road' and H and myself took the 'Low Road', and that's right, "we 'were in Scotland afore' her"! Baggers entertained us for the whole weekend in Stirling, taking us on several bike rides and even a trip to a bike exhibition in Glasgow. We established as a team, where we were up to with our training and how we rode together as a Lioness team. After a few drinks we also started to fine tune what Coast to Coast route we would be doing and guess what we went from two days and 136 miles to three days and 170 miles within the consumption of only two glasses of red wine!

Moving onto Easter and the warmer weather, and the girls again are chucking their bikes in their cars and this time travelling West to mine. I wanted to increase time in the saddle with distance and hills, however, if anyone has ever been to Blackpool, you will all know there are no hills around here and it's as flat as a pancake. Baggers, H and Jonesy never realised this at the time. The Forest of Bowland, I thought; if it's good enough for Bradley Wiggins to train in, then it's good enough for the Lionesses. So, we set off on our bikes. We cycled. We cycled some more. And we cycled some more. Eventually we hit the hills and continued climbing until we descended into a lovely village called Chipping. Lunch. Then I told H that we had to climb back up the hill to get out of Chipping. H just looked at me ... no words ... just the 'look'. I remembered that 'look' back in 1988 when I was 18 years old and a Private at CAD Kineton. H was the Sgt then and she had called me into her office for 'a word'. It was that same 'look' and I knew I was in trouble. Anyway, after a bit of time and space for H, we cracked on with the cycle ride back home to mine, although Jonesy started to get a bad case of Tourette's, but strangely enough it only came on whenever we turned a corner and there was a big hill in front of us.

May arrives and it's bad news for the Ride. Baggers has double booked herself and been torn with having to make a choice between our ride or seeing her WRAC best friend Kaz Smith set

sail on her round-the-world sailing trip. I bet that sailing trip idea originally started as only a few nautical miles, and then a few more drinks meant a few more miles ... a few more drinks ... more miles ... and so on. All I can say is "At least I know when to stop drinking Kaz Smith". Honestly though, Good luck Kaz and Bon Voyage with your journey.





So, in order that all four Lionesses can complete the 'Way of the Roses' Coast-to-Coast Morecambe to Bridlington cycle route, the date has been rescheduled to 30th August- 1st September. However, in true military style, for the original dates 21st June - 23rd June, we deployed an Advanced Party consisting of Jonesy, H and myself. I posted our journey of the Advanced Deployment Way of the Roses on some of the WRAC social media websites, and here are some of the photos snaps.

However, I will not tell the story of that ride yet and will save it to add to the big event in August.

I apologise in advance if I leave you all in suspense and on a cliff-hanger until the next Lioness edition, but ladies you know what they say "What happens on tour, stays on tour".

NATIONAL ARMED FORCES DAY SALISBURY, 28TH – 30TH JUNE 2019

Salisbury was determined to shine over the National Armed Forces weekend. After securing the event following an 'interesting' year we wanted to ensure the whole weekend was a rip-roaring success. I reckon we achieved the desired result!

The preparation and planning was as staggering as were the numbers that took part! We raised the NAFD flag in the Market Square on Monday and the excitement was getting ramped up, especially with headlining band Kasier Chiefs on the Saturday night. The tickets for this become as hot as the temperature! Some 27,000 people watched Kaiser Chiefs on Saturday night alone; a total of 40,000 enjoyed an action-packed weekend. The build started only a few weeks before on Hudson's Field and the clear down was completed by just two days afterwards!

With an HRH present, The Princess Royal, we all had high hopes, along with soaring temperatures over the weekend, of an action packed event to say the least. Over 1,300 participants in the Parade, led by the Household Cavalry, started an excellent splash of pageantry. We had Dogs, Horses, Tanks, Band of RM Portsmouth, Band of Royal Air Force Regiment, 5 Rifles all took part. It was brilliant to see the Chelsea Pensioners lead the Veterans, which included our own wonderful Sharon Baker-Joyce, WRAC National Standard Bearer, and two of our ladies from the new Salisbury Branch.

The WRAC Association stand was manned all weekend by Penny Muxworthy and with the support of Rowena Naile (Griffiths), Ali Brown and a few members of Salisbury Branch we were able to give a warm welcome to visitors. It was great to see the memories coming flooding back along with smiles when conversations started, notes compared, common acquaintances remembered and everyone reminiscing about their time as a Lioness – you could see the years fade away before your very eyes. Penny secured an interview with BBC Wiltshire, and many new members were signed up to join the fold.

One of the highlights was the Veterans Breakfast where we were joined by the Leader of Wiltshire Council – Baroness Scott of Bybrook (Jane Scott to us). The heat of the weekend was only matched by the warm reception that was given and received by all our visitors over those three days! Next NAFD stop will be Scarborough for 2020!

*Amanda Foster
Salisbury branch*

ARMED FORCES DAY 2019

NATIONAL EVENT SALISBURY 28 - 30 JUNE



Parade through Salisbury City Centre



Battle of Britain fly-past



Association stand, banner and map



Gun salute



With (Association Mascot ?) Oboe

National Armed Forces 'Day' – well there was an oxymoron to start with! Wiltshire County and Salisbury City councils decided to have a 3-day 'day', both to celebrate the close links with everything military in the area (army HQ at Andover and all over Salisbury Plain; RAF at Boscombe Down; and the Royal Navy just down the road in Portsmouth) and highlight that Salisbury is well and truly open for business following last year's very sad poisonings.

In light of the Association HQ being just 21 miles away in Winchester, three of the HQ staff living within 10 miles of Salisbury (myself being the nearest at just 5 miles), one Trustee being just 21 miles away and a new Salisbury branch opening up, it was decided we should take a 'stand' in the Military Charities 'Village' (marquee / tent to you and me), and sign up to be a 'sponsor' of the event.

Our table and display were immediately inside the entry door, so could not be missed. We had the Association of WRNS and their Benevolent Trust one side of us, and Team Rubicon the other. We also showed off our new banner (Supporting Women who Serve Served) and map (highlighting Branches and Areas), and freely gave away the new promotional leaflets (with info on both the Association and Ben. Fund) we had printed – Salisbury even added stickers with their own contact details, if appropriate. If you would like some of these leaflets please contact the office – great to hand out or, unfolded, as small posters to put up.

The weekend included all the usual military and civilian displays and stands, with Friday afternoon being dedicated to school children. The Red Arrows flew over to start the Saturday Parade, and again acknowledged the event on a fly past on Sunday. Other displays included a lone Battle of Britain Spitfire (many of which were built in various sheds, back-rooms, garages etc in Salisbury); the RAF parachute display team; Imps motorcycle display team; and an attempt to create the largest human poppy. The music stage and BBC Wiltshire tent were filled with a variety of singers, musicians and bands throughout each day, and each evening there was a festival-vibe with The Feeling, Kaiser Chiefs and Bjorn Again headlining on separate evenings.

As Amanda said, we secured a couple of interviews with BBC Wiltshire, and two of Salisbury branch were interviewed for Radio 4's 'The Listening Project'.

We had a great weekend with lots of visitors to the stand and we sent Salisbury branch away with around twenty names of potential new members – both veterans and those still serving. It was great to encourage some visitors to consider joining, especially since they admitted to being ex-WRAC but who didn't realise they could join (either because TA and/or what they thought to be insufficient service). We also made contact with quite a number of women still serving in the Army, but who would appreciate an all-female group to join.

Penny Muxworthy

The Association also decided, in light of this year's special celebrations, to be a 'sponsor' of the Armed Forces Day, for which we received the following thanks:

"We hope you've managed to draw breath after an action-packed Armed Forces Weekend in Salisbury.

Thank you so much for your support - not just in providing the sponsorship required to make the 3-day event the wonderful occasion it was, but also for the creative and energetic way in which your organisation and your representatives participated in it. We've already received fantastic comments from sponsors, partners, forces representatives and members of the public. The service chiefs who attended from the MOD were hugely impressed and have asked for their thanks to be conveyed to all involved.

Best wishes

Becky, Emma and the AFD Event Delivery Team

EASTERN AREA ARMED FORCES DAY, BURY ST EDMUNDS

**Wendy Hooton
Eastern Area Co-ordinator**

A fabulous day was had on Armed Forces Day in Bury St Edmunds. With thanks to Sharon Fairweather-Murray of West Suffolk Council, who provided us with 2 stands on the Market for free. All the branches rallied round collecting items for our tombola, giving their time on the day to man the stall and to visit us. We also had a Street Collection with all the ladies wearing WRAC Association tops. Not forgetting our canine supporter Ellie who made her debut in her WRAC hoodie! Thank you Sue Elsknis. We saturated the town promoting the Association.





Wendy Hooton being interviewed by radio

St Benedict's students had a great display of 100 Years of Women Serving, including stories from Catherine Buchanan, Bev Fenning and myself. They covered the SOE Ladies, Flora Sandes and the local spitfire Pilot Eleanor Wandsworth 101yrs.

Our local Moyses Hall Museum had a cabinet display of articles for the weekend too. Local residents were invited to bring in any memorabilia they had to go on display. It was a great effort from the whole community.

I was able to meet up with BBC Suffolk Radio Live to promote the event the day before. Our local MP Jo Churchill came to see us, and we thank her for the support she gives.

My grateful thanks to all those who gave up their time to support this event, especially Lyn Hatch, master of tombola's!

We raised an amazing £560 and West Suffolk Council are kindly giving a donation of £150 making our total £710. All monies going towards the WRAC statue. Fantastic for a day's work!

ROUND THE WORLD CLIPPER RACE

Kaz Smith

My Background: I served in the Regulars for 22 years 1983-2005, WRAC and REME, leaving as a WO2. Some of my highlights were instructing at Guildford and at the RMAS. I then commissioned into the Reserves and did a further 8 years in the RLC, leaving as a Major in 2013. I have worked for an Expedition Provider to school-aged children as Head of Sales since 2007. I have now decided to take a Gap year!

The Adventure: I am about to sail around the world as part of the Clipper Race www.clipperroundtheworld.com. We leave on 1st Sep 2019 and return in Aug 2020. 11 boats compete against each other, so it is relentless in the most extreme conditions. Each boat is sponsored; I will be representing Team WTC Logistics. The race is in 8 legs and we stop at ports around the world during the race. Some people like me go all the way around; others may do 1 leg. At any one time there are a max. of 24 people on the 70' boat in very cramped conditions.

Clipper are extremely good at media coverage and keeping families and friends involved. There are daily reports from each boat, there is a family and friends facebook page and there is also a race viewer. This allows anyone to see where the boats are, 24 hours a day which means you can follow the race at any time. It is quite addictive!

I am telling most of my journey in snippets on my FB page, keeping a diary and am considering writing a blog. I would be happy to visit some of the Branches on my return and tell the story of my adventures. Naturally, this will be much more interesting if people have been engaged through my journey, which is why I thought I would raise it now.

WIMBLEDON 2019

Sue Goodes and myself were also lucky enough to be chosen to go to Wimbledon courtesy of The Not Forgotten Association. We decided to stay in The Victory Services Club for a couple of nights.

Day 1. Our adventure started on arrival at Grantham railway station. All trains south were delayed due to an electric cable down between Peterborough and Grantham, it was chaotic to say the least. I had booked assistance for Lou to get on and off the train and a wheelchair space on the train - we were very excited as it was the new Azuma. We were told they could get us to Nottingham to then get to London. The station was packed with so many travellers, and buses were being provided for the more able bodied. After about an hour's wait Lou and I were provided with a taxi to Peterborough Station. On arrival chaos continued to reign at the station, the lift was broken so had to use the steep ramp, no assistance provided here – but eventually we were on our way to London. It would be safe to assume that everything went ok after that, but oh no, at Kings Cross we waited to be assisted off the train using a ramp, and no one came. I looked around the train and the platform and it was deserted. I rang the station and explained our predicament and was asked which platform; I said I hadn't got a clue, but we had arrived via Peterborough. At last a cleaning supervisor arrived and got us the help we needed, and assistance to the taxi rank for transfer to hotel. Phew!

Once we arrived we settled into our room and then immediately went to the bar for a much needed G & T.

On the Saturday night, after a lovely meal and a couple of glasses of wine at the hotel, we whizzed off by taxi to the Tower of London where we had been invited to watch the Ceremony of the Keys. Sue's late husband Andy's RHQ Royal Regt Fusiliers is in The Tower of London and the Regimental Secretary kindly arranged the visit for us. Sue had been before but I hadn't, so

a truly wonderful experience. There are no photos of this as photography is not allowed. We did, however, get one with the very entertaining Yeoman Warder Gary after the ceremony. The journeys by taxi you would expect to be incident free, but oh no, this is Lou were are talking about - the first taxi driver cut his hand getting the ramp down, and the one on the way home had his foot run over as her ladyship reversed down the ramp!

Day 2. In the morning, after a sumptuous breakfast, we were off on the bus to Wimbledon. Arriving at the site we went for a great wander around. Everyone was so friendly and welcoming. Absolutely nothing was too much trouble. We were very lucky to have our photo taken with the Lady's and Men's trophies – Lol.

As it was rather warm a Pimm's was in order, so we had rather a large one and then went to find our seats. We were just below the wheelchair places so I was told that I could sit in a wheelchair place unless the seat had been booked. We were lucky as we were able to swap places with someone else so we were able to stay there for the rest of the day

We watched the men's doubles on court No 1, which was very exciting - the winners of the match, Mahut and Roger-Vasselin, who eventually lost in the final. We went for tea, which was yummy, and included the obligatory scrumptious strawberries and cream. Then back to watch some more tennis before deciding we were tired and would go back to the hotel. On our way out we had the mandatory photos with men in uniform, 2 of London's finest Fire fighters.

The next part of the tale I will leave for Sue to tell you.

On the way out we were persuaded to go into Court 12 to watch the Gentlemen's Invitation Doubles - two of my old favourites, Mark Philippoussis and Tommy Haas were playing so off we went in. To our surprise we were the only ones sitting courtside, but it meant that at a line call Tommy Haas asked my opinion! I said I couldn't tell it was so quick and he told me, with a cheeky smile, to pay more attention; made my day! We watched the first set and then set off for the bus back

We got a few snacks on the way back to the hotel, had a drink in the bar and then off for a picnic in the room and sleep ... What a wonderful time we had, and an uneventful journey home the next day.

Lou Davies





I had the immense privilege of being chosen by the 'Not Forgotten ' charity to receive Wimbledon Tickets for the 11th July on Court One, with my husband Bob as my carer/escort. We had a very enjoyable time; met fellow veterans from the tri-services. We had the most delicious High Tea with dainty sandwiches, cakes, scones and, of course, strawberries and cream. I would like to thank Lyn Hatch, Norwich, for putting me forward due to me having had health problems. Also to Wendy Hooten for her involvement.

ROYAL GARDEN PARTY HOLYROOD PALACE, EDINBURGH 3RD JULY 2019 Mhairi Irving

Back in January the Scottish branches were asked for names to be put forward for this year's Royal Garden Party. I never thought for a moment I would have been one of the 8 chosen. I am one of the lucky ladies. My embossed invitation will be treasured.



Now I have an invitation, the next question what to wear. Thanks to a good friend I found the ideal outfit.

We couldn't have asked for a better day in Edinburgh, around 8,000 attending this year's Holyrood Palace Royal Garden Party. Everywhere you looked there were ladies and gentlemen dressed in their finery as everyone made their way to the Palace, much to the amusement of the tourists.

Once through security, our group had all arranged to meet up at a prominent tree in the grounds.

Our group consisted of Lt Col Lady Martha Veronica Bruce OBE TD WRAC (TA); her companion was Chairman of Scotland & Northern Ireland Area Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Jo Young. The Scottish branches were represented by Senga Palmer, Mhairi Irving, Isobel Gordon, Yvonne Burns, Susan Marcroft, Liz Dixon and Mary McGregor. Unfortunately, Ann Robson our 107-year-old ATS lady, who also received an invitation, felt unable to attend.



Seated – Lady Martha Bruce; L - R – Jo Young, Isobel Gordon, Yvonne Burns, Sue Marcroft, Liz Dixon, Senga Palmer, Mary McGregor and myself Mhairi Irving

Lady Martha's nephew, Adam Bruce is a member of the Royal Company of Archers, which makes him one of the Sovereign's Bodyguards whilst Her Majesty is in Scotland. He was originally going to look after our party, but as he was a bit busy, his lovely wife Sofia took over the role.



I'm so glad to be a proud recently-joined member of the Union Jack Club. Bob (husband) and I stayed 2 nights whilst visiting Wimbledon Tennis in July. We had a very comfortable room, the food was delicious and the ambience was very homely - we thoroughly recommend it, if you haven't already.

Sue Seaward (Norwich)

**Enjoying Union Jack
Club hospitality**



Lady Martha Bruce & Mrs Sofia Bruce

We were then informed that we were all going to be presented to the Queen. I knew I should have practiced my curtsying. The nerves set in.

The Queen arrived on the steps just after 4pm, accompanied by three of her children – Princess Anne, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward. The National Anthem played, followed by a round of applause.

Her Majesty & family made their way through the assembled crowds.



HM The Queen



Scotland group meeting The Queen

We were ushered through the crowd; Lady Martha led, making way with her delta walking frame.

In the main arena we formed a semicircle and awaited the arrival of the Queen. We were entertained and put at ease by the handsome Gentlemen Archers and Equerries.

One by one we were introduced to the Queen by one of the senior members of the Royal Company of Archers.

Looking back our time with the Queen, it flew by, but we must have all been chatting for some 5 – 10 mins. We spoke about her time in the Army and learning to drive. Conversation topics ranged from where we all came from, how long we served, our marching pace and uniform skirt with/without pleats.

Who would have thought we were then to be interviewed by the press? If you were lucky enough to see any of the press at the time, and latterly Hello magazine on 15 July 2019, you would have seen a picture of our group, minus me. I can't tell you how gutted I am not to have a picture of myself meeting the Queen, but thanks to my trawl through hundreds of Instagram posts I found one I'm in and the author has allowed me to share it.



Mhairi Irving

Don't tell anyone, I managed to get a selfie with the Queen, well sort off!

The Queen then headed off into the Royal Tea Tent for tea.

We made our way back through the crowd. It was a bit surreal as we were applauded and asked why we were singled out, and our answer was it was because we were celebrating the WRAC Centenary Year.

Looking back the day is all a bit of a blur, but we all have our different memories of the day

WRAC LIONESSES YORK 10K RUN

Wendy Hooton

We have 142 runners this year and over 168 people attending the post run meal. It has been a mammoth task. The most I've had before for an event was 60 runners in Hull in 2017! All this from 7 runners in 2013....how it's grown.

This is a short report, a longer one will be in the next Lioness magazine, 2020 No1. Where to begin? Where to go for the WRAC Association Centenary Year??

It all began at our HQ in Winchester when the Association were planning Centenary events with Curious PR (a marketing PR Company). Ali looked at me and said, "How about 100 runners for 100 years". I responded with a face like I had just sucked on a lemon! However, the seed was sown, and I publicised the

challenge in a similar way to Lord Kitchener's WW1 poster "Your Country Needs You".

"WRAC LIONESSES NEEDED, 100 Women for 100 years each raising a minimum of £100 for the WRAC Association". Unbelievably the numbers rolled in for running/walking and supporting. Our final number was 142 WRAC Lionesses, including a few Lions and over 50 supporters.

I chose the York 10k for the Association Centenary Run as many had been stationed there and it is such a beautiful city. Oh, and I had withdrawal symptoms for Betty's Teahouse Fat Rascals!!



Pre-race pep-talk



Mo Bear carried by Chris Whitworth, one of the original Lionesses in Manchester 2013



Supporters' bear, CHELSEA Bear, held by Tanya Lolly Hall, our Deputy Cheerleader



Sue Elsknis is in the wheelchair being pushed by Bev Fenning with Jennie Thomas



Everyone together, having completed the race



Our race volunteers did a fantastic job at the finishing area, welcoming us over the line with huge smiles and a goody bag each. Thank you to Melanie Howell, Jan Foster QA, Gaynor Morris Webster QA, Sharon Margison and Lyndsey Fryer. Not forgetting our 2 volunteers in the Race Office, Jenny and John Jackson, thank you.

After group photographs we all dispersed to various bars to celebrate, there were over 200 of us!



Support team

The evening took 168 of us to the Principal Hotel for our post run meal. The Standard was raised outside the hotel to let people know we were in residence ... at the bar!! No entertainment or music was required, the chatting was loud enough as people recalled their past memories in the Army and met up with friends. Some hadn't seen each other for over 40 years. One such group was a table of 79'ers who had all enlisted in August 1979. Incredible!



Venue for post-race meal



**Assoc. Vice-president
'in the frame' at dinner**

We had the obligatory general raffle - Julie White raffled a beautiful WRAC Centenary cake and Jackie Clarke made some lovely wooden keyrings with YORK 2019 carved on them. Together these raised over £1,000. Our fundraising has gone over and beyond what I could have imagined. As I write this we are on £25,418.25 without gift aid. Thank you all so very much for helping us achieve this amount of money for the WRAC Statue and WRAC Association. It is overwhelming.

I will write a full report for the next Lioness as this one is about to go to print. I do not have a date or venue for next year's run, most dates for 2020 haven't been released yet. BUT THERE WILL BE ONE!! [Editor's note: Subsequent message received that 2020 will be Cardiff 10k Run, Sunday 6th September].

*Suaviter In Modo Fortiter in Re
Supporting Women who Served/are Serving
Best wishes to you all*

Wendy Hooton

[Editor: CONGRATULATIONS one and all. A huge and wonderful effort – and I am so pleased to hear that you enjoyed the whole event (not just the run). And thank you for your amazing combined fund-raising efforts. 'The Lady' is on her way.]

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP WHY NOT 'FIRE AND FORGET'

Wouldn't it be a great if you didn't have to remember to make an annual membership payment? Help is at hand as now when you renew online it will automatically set up a recurring payment using your debit or credit card (you can cancel or change this payment at any time). To renew online go to the members area of the website, if you have forgotten your login details use the link provided at the login screen.

WRAC LIONESSES 8TH ANNUAL 10K RUN



COME AND JOIN THE FUN!!

**WHAT: 10k RUN / WALK / JOG /
CRAWL!**

WHERE: CARDIFF

**WHEN: SUNDAY 6th SEPTEMBER
2020**

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE WRAC
LIONESS',**

**RAISE FUNDS FOR THE WRAC
ASSOCIATION,**

**AND BE PART OF THIS MEMORABLE
OCCASION
AS AN ENTRANT OR SUPPORTER (Just as
important),**

PLEASE CONTACT:-

WENDY HOOTON
Email: Wendyhootonski@aol.com
Mobile: 07775-505326
Facebook/Messenger: Wendy Hooton
Or HQ WRAC Association 0300 400 1992

SERVE
SUPPORTING WOMEN WHO / SERVED

EVENTS DIARY

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	DETAILS
2019			
Until 20 TH OCTOBER	WRAC Centenary Exhibition	National Army Museum	A special exhibition of WRAC Association artefacts and information from the items gifted to the Museum in 1992.
October 4 TH	Behind the Scenes And Wonderful Women Book launch	National Memorial Arboretum	
NOVEMBER 7 TH	Remembrance: Field of Remembrance	Westminster Abbey	
8 TH	Lord Mayor's Show	City of London	
8 TH	Festival of Remembrance	On TV, from Royal Albert Hall	
10 TH	Remembrance Parade	Cenotaph, Whitehall	
10 TH	Act of Remembrance	Guildford, Surrey	
2020			
MARCH 21 ST	A.G.M	National Memorial Arboretum	Including end of Centenary Celebrations
	Statue Unveiling and Dedication	National Memorial Arboretum	

WEBSITE UPDATES

Over the past few months we have been busy reviewing, and updating where appropriate, various forms, lists and information for use by Members, Branches and Areas. These include:

Membership Application Form – A slightly revised Form has been designed, a copy of which is included in this edition of Lioness. If you are aware of anyone wishing to join please encourage them to use this form.

Mention in WRAC Dispatches – A slightly revised Form has been designed for use by Branch Secretaries, which then need forwarding to your Area Chairman, for them to send onto Headquarters. The nominations will be taken to the next Council meeting and successful nominees will be honoured in the next edition of Lioness.

Events Tab, on website – hopefully this now makes more sense of who meets where, when etc. A revised form for submission of events has been sent out to Branches by Tanya – please use this form if at all possible, as it makes her task of inputting that information onto the website that much easier and quicker.

WRAC Association (incorporating ATS and WRAC Benevolent Fund)

Anti-Discrimination Policy

The WRAC Association does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in any of its' activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, employment of staff, selection of Trustees and Council members, membership and esprit de corps activities, and the distribution of Benevolence and other services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all our members.

CENTENARY & 70TH ANNIVERSARIES

*"To All WRAC Association Members.
Many congratulations on reaching your Centenary
year.*

From all at The Association of Wrens".

*Jill Stellingworth
Chairman, AoW*

CHORAL EVENSONG FOR CORPS' 70TH ANNIVERSARY FRIDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 2019 GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL Ali Brown

To begin our Centenary year, a Service of Celebration was planned for 1st February 2019 in Guildford Cathedral. This date marked the 70th Year since the formation of the WRAC to the exact day. To follow the service we planned a reception to launch the WRAC Association film that we had commissioned.

The day dawned with ominous weather forecasts of sleet and snow and by the afternoon, the Service was due to start at 6pm, it was clear that travel was going to be a real problem for many. I arrived at the Cathedral at 3pm and with the skies darkening did a radio interview with BBC Radio Surrey over the phone as the producer could not get to Guildford due to the weather. As the afternoon wore on so the skies got darker and the snow and sleet started in earnest.



BBC Radio Surrey Interview by phone

Amazingly, by the start of the Service, we had managed, not only to have our own Padre, Sue Wing, safely with us but also the Deputy Military Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, the Mayor and Mayoress of The Borough of Guildford and the High Sheriff of Surrey. We had also managed to mass over 50 members of the Association, including two In Pensioners from the Royal Hospital and 3 Standard Bearers. Having exchanged tales of pretty hairy and stressful car journeys we were able to start the Service and, led by The Dean of Guildford Cathedral, we gave thanks for the WRAC, its antecedents and all those who have served and were still serving.



Guests



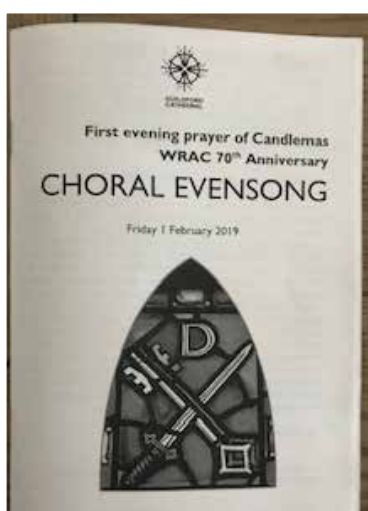
Standards



Wendy Hooton at the pulpit.



**Launch of
Association film**



**WRAC Association
Window**



On exiting from the Cathedral we were met by blizzards and quickly took the opportunity for some snacks before showing the WRAC Association film for the first time. The Association film was very well received and once completed, people departed to return to various locations across the south east and south west. I am extremely grateful to all those who made the journey to Guildford in such terrible weather conditions and made it possible to celebrate and commemorate this important anniversary.

WOMEN IN THE ARMY DAY NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM SATURDAY 2ND MARCH 2019

What a way to kick-start the main Centenary celebrations – a whole day dedicated to Women in the Army at the National Army Museum. The NAM had arranged to have a couple of re-enactors present (including one in ATS uniform); had a selection of ATS and WRAC uniforms and artefacts; and children could colour-in an ATS or WRAC badge. We took our stand and newly-launched DVD along with some Lioness magazines.

The NAM had arranged for 5 speakers to give presentations on their memories and experiences – these included: Betty Webb MBE on her time in the ATS and particularly at Bletchley Park; Moira Cameron who went on to be the first female Yeoman Warder of the Guard at the Tower of London; Ali Brown, our own Vice-president and Chairman; Lt Col Lucy Giles, the first female College Commander at Sandhurst; and a member of the Military Wives Choir on life both as a military child and wife.

There was a really good attendance from the general public, NAM Supporters and our own Members. We had some wonderful conversations with people of all ages.

Penny Muxworthy
Assoc. Secretary



**Women in the Army Day - Ali Brown, Col Lucy Giles,
Betty Webb, Moira Cameron**



Women in the Army Day - WW1 nurses cape

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM 'RISE OF THE LIONESSES' EXHIBITION & ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME EVENTS Thursday 27th June – October 2019

NATIONAL
ARMY
MUSEUM

PRESS RELEASE

**RISE OF THE LIONESSES NEW
EXHIBITION EXPLORES CHANGING
ROLES OF WOMEN IN THE BRITISH
ARMY**

A new spotlight exhibition at the National Army Museum in Chelsea, explores the changing roles of women in the British Army from 1917 to the present day. The free exhibition is written in partnership with the WRAC Association and runs until 20 October 2019.

The exhibition charts the major contributions women have made to the Army's history. On display for the first time, is the combat shirt and medical kit belonging to Sergeant Chantelle Taylor,

who was the first female British soldier to kill in combat. Additional highlights of the exhibition include the first Army-issue bra and the vehicle chassis used to train Princess Elizabeth (now Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II) in vehicle maintenance while she served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) during the Second World War.



The exhibition examines the relationship between society and the Army.

It considers how the perception of 'appropriate' feminine roles affected the contributions of female soldiers and how women fought to redefine those roles. Ali Brown, vice president of the WRAC Association and retired British Army colonel, says, ***"Without the women who have gone before - who faced and broke down so many societal norms, myself and many like me would not have had the full careers, with operational deployments, that we had. All barriers are now down to women serving in the Army and that is what this exhibition is about: where we have come from, where we are and where we are going."***

This year is a significant opportunity to recognise the presence of gender balance in the Army, for three significant reasons:

1. in October last year, the Ministry of Defence announced that all roles in the British Army would now be open to women, finally including combat roles in the infantry and special forces
2. this year is the centenary of the WRAC Association, which was the first, and remains the only charity that cares for veteran and serving female soldiers in the British Army
3. 2019 marks 70 years since the formation of the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC). It was disbanded in 1992 when women were integrated into the rest of the Army's regiments and corps, instead of being in their own unique unit.

The show runs until 20 October 2019 with an extensive public programme alongside. - ends



Military Wives Choir

LAUNCH NIGHT THURSDAY 27TH JUNE 2019



WRAC cap badge



ATS



"Welcome" to 'Rise of the Lioness' exhibition

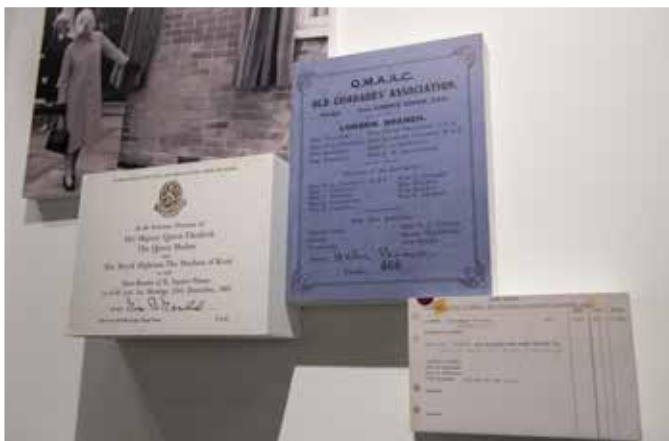


May 1965 Lioness edition



Standard issue bra







EXHIBITS



**Col Eleanor Bowles
uniform, 1976**



**S.Sgt Chantelle Taylor's
uniform shirt, 2008**



**Virtus scalable tactical
vest, 2015 - 2018**



**Tourniquet -
part of
Sgt Taylor's kit,
2008**

**Quick-clot bandages -
part of Sgt Tylor's kit,
2008**



**Combat gauze - part of
Sgt Taylor's kit, 2008**



Experimental Assistant in Gunnery



An Experimental Assistant in Gunnery is involved in a wide range of work associated with the proof and development of all types of ammunition, guns, missiles and explosives. The job involves the use of optical and electrical equipment as well as the analysis of film. Working conditions can vary from all-weather outdoor work on open ranges to the analysis of data under laboratory conditions.

An Experimental Assistant in Gunnery has only two postings open to her – either Shoeburyness in Essex or Benbecula in the Hebrides. 'O'-level maths is desirable and physics or general science is useful.

Training lasts about three months and takes place in the unit to which she is posted.

Kennelmaid



A Kennelmaid works with the Royal Army Veterinary Corps (RAVC). She works with dogs, usually akitans and labradors which are trained as guard dogs. She is involved in grooming, exercising and feeding them and with the cleaning and care of their kennels and equipment. A Kennelmaid is not involved in training the dogs.

Kennelmaids must be prepared for outdoor work in all weathers. Minimum height and weight requirements are: 156 cm (62 in) and 53.5 kg (118 lb). Previous experience of working with dogs is essential.

The training and probationary period last about three months at Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire – which is the only posting.

Rider Groom: Some Kennelmaids are able to transfer to working with horses at Melton Mowbray. The duties and requirements are the same as those for Kennelmaid.

Women's Royal Army Corps For a brighter future...



WRAC brochure, 1983

Medical Assistant



As a Medical Assistant you would be trained in basic nursing techniques, storekeeping and medical clerical work. You would be supervised by the Medical Officer or qualified nurses and would be expected to give minor treatments, administer medicines, look after the needs of patients – as well as acting as receptionist/clerk/nursing attendant in the unit medical centre.

A Medical Assistant must be prepared to commit herself fully to the welfare of her patients. She must also be able to remain calm in a crisis. Previous experience is helpful.

Training lasts for five weeks at Mytchett in Surrey and is followed by a two weeks' attachment to a military hospital.

Military Accountant



Military Accountants are employed by the Royal Army Pay Corps (RAPC) to do clerical work which has an emphasis on figures. The work includes dealing with pay and allowances, charges, PAYE, savings etc involved in soldiers' accounts. This is done by preparing computer inputs and checking printouts. Military Accountants also deal with the payment of bills by the Army, auditing of accounts or claims, and work in units dealing with the soldiers' pay documentation.

To become a Military Accountant you need to have achieved a good standard in both English and arithmetic. You must be able to work with great accuracy. It goes without saying that your integrity and honesty must be above reproach.

Training lasts for 12 weeks at Worthy Down in Hampshire.



**EVERY FIT WOMAN
CAN RELEASE A FIT MAN
JOIN THE
WOMEN'S ARMY
AUXILIARY CORPS
TO-DAY**

FOR WORK WITH THE FORCES EITHER AT HOME OR ABROAD

FOR ALL INFORMATION & ADVICE WRITE TO OR APPLY AT
NEAREST EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE

THE ADDRESS CAN BE OBTAINED WITHIN

WAAC Recruitment poster, 1918



Members of the WAAC in a uniform store, 1917-18

LIFE MEMBERSHIP			
NAME H.R.H. ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH ALEXANDRA MARY			
ADDRESS	Buckingham Palace, London, S.W.1.	1945	6323 £5 -
PERMANENT ADDRESS			
NEXT OF KIN (Father) His Majesty THE KING GEORGE VI, <i>Queen's House, The Banks of Edinburgh</i>			
MARRIED OR SINGLE			
DATE OF ENROLMENT			
DATE OF DISCHARGE			
ARMY CATEGORY Officer in the A.T.S.			
REMARKS			
BRANCH			

Receipt of payment for life membership of the Association signed by Princess Elizabeth, 1945



ATS servicing Churchill tank, 1942



WRAC Radar operator, 1950 - 69



Members of West Indies ATS, 1943 - 47



Queen Elizabeth II unveiling plaque for Grand Reunion for the 60th anniversary of the Association, 1979



***WRAC attached to the Force maintenance Area,
entrenching in Saudi Arabia, 1990s***



***An AS90 crew taking a break during fire missions at
Oyterburn Training Area, 2015***



Soldier from the Royal Regiment of Scotland, 2016

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAMME NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM 23RD JULY 2019 - BETTY WEBB Ali Brown

On a very warm evening in London, an excited audience gathered in the National Army Museum to watch Betty Webb MBE be interviewed by Tessa Dunlop about her service life with the ATS at Bletchley Park and in the Pentagon Washington DC. The added dimension to this interview was that Betty was having her portrait painted by Ann Witheridge from the London Fine Arts Studio during the interview.

The interview started and the rapport between Betty and Tessa was instantly visible as we heard about Betty's childhood, her enlistment into the ATS at the age of 17 and her immediate journey to Bletchley Park; a place she had never heard of. As the interview developed so the portrait came alive from the start point of a series of grey lines to an outline of heads and shoulders. By the time Betty was telling us about the details of her role at Bletchley Park, the portrait was starting to have colour added and Betty slowly emerged from the canvas.

Betty and Tessa were in full flow after about an hour and the interview was engaging, fascinating and full of Betty's personal memories of her time involved in de-coding messages and her impressions of Washington DC between VE Day and VJ Day. The latter was especially interesting as it became clear that the average American knew little about the war in Europe and were mostly focused on the war with Japan.

The latter half of the evening was spent hearing about Betty's service after the war as she continued to serve with the TA, ending up being the Recruiting Officer for the West Midlands. This included the recruitment of a certain Babs Anderson, the Area Co-ordinator for Wales and the West Area. Now we know!

By 8pm the portrait was finished. I have no idea how Ann completed it so quickly and all the while, Betty and Tessa were talking, laughing and answering questions from the audience. The portrait will be hung in the NAM as a lasting reminder of Betty's service to her Country. What a fantastic evening.

This was the first of a series of Artist in Residence events, all listed on the National Army Museum's website. Four more of our members will be painted - Pauline Milne, Wendy Hooton, Rowena Griffiths MBE and Cathy Munro MBE. All of their portraits will be on display at the museum. I can highly recommend these events and they complement our Rise of the Lionesses exhibition, which is on at the National Army Museum until the middle of October.



Betty Webb MBE, Tessa Dunlop and Artist



Betty Webb MBE and Tessa Dunlop



Being interviewed by Kirsty Parsons, NAM, about my service



Betty Webb MBE Portrait by Ann Witheridge

**ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAMME
NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM
3RD AUGUST - PAULINE MILNES**

"I can honestly say the experience is in my top ten list of the most wonderful things that have happened to me.

The day was fun filled and I was treated and felt like a celebrity by NAM staff and those who came to support me".



With Michael Gallone, Fine Arts Studio



Finished portrait by Michael Gallone



With Greater London branch, family and friends

The exhibition has also been mentioned in various 'trade' (ie museum) and general press and media including: History of War magazine and a 4-page article in The Lady.



BEHIND THE SCENES evening Friday 4th October 2019; Doors open at 18.00

A special evening for Members to hear from Kirsty Parsons, who has curated the 'Rise of the Lionesses' exhibition, and Ali Brown (our Vice-president) on how the Association has got to where it is today, celebrating it's centenary of 'supporting women who served'.

Draft programme:

- 18.00 Wine on arrival
- 18.30 30 minute talk from Kirsty Parsons
- 19.00 30 minute talk from Ali Brown
- 19.30 30 minutes with the objects from our archive
- AND Sale of Wonderful Women books
- 20.00 Close of evening

The new 'Wonderful Women 100' book will be launched this same evening and will be available to purchase from the NAM and Association HQ.

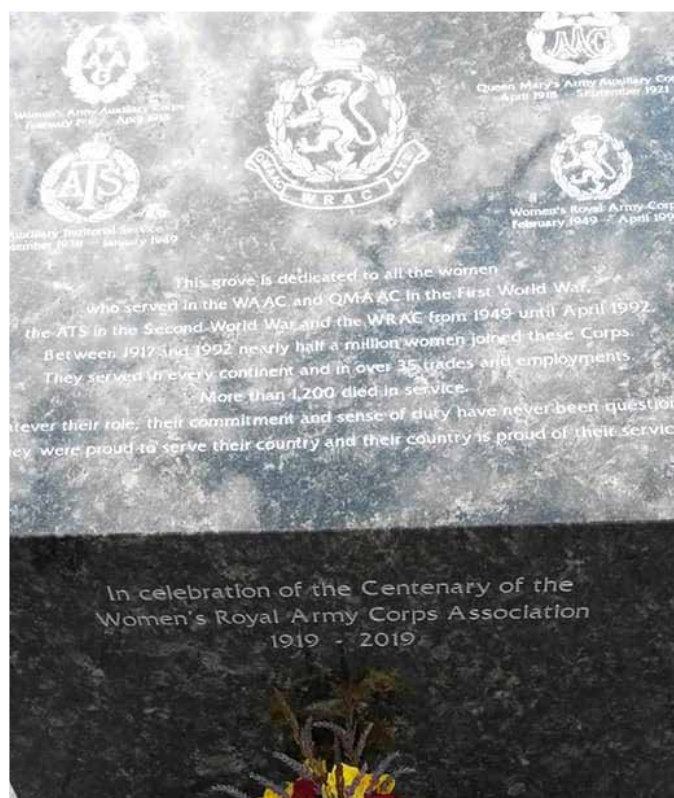
**Tickets: £5 per person (£4 for concessions)
Go to National Army Museum website to book
(<https://www.nam.ac.uk/whats-on>) tickets.**

ACT OF COMMEMORATION & RE-DEDICATION NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM Penny Muxworthy

Bright and early, after a hectic couple of weeks for some members, HQ staff set off for the NMA and a short service to Re-dedicate the Association Plinth at the NMA in recognition of the Corp's 70th and Association's 100th anniversaries. The plinth had been re-engraved by the stonemason and a sentence added to celebrate the anniversaries.

Rev Sue Wing, Association Chaplain, led the Service and Col Frances Castle laid a posy – one of her last acts as a serving officer.

Everyone then retired to the new Aspects (events) building for Afternoon Tea. A lovely spread was laid on by the NMA catering team – it was a shame that so many were obviously not able to make the day after booking, but the spare food was shared out among those that did make it.



Re-engraved Plinth



Wendy & Helen Meades-Davies



**Col Frances Castle
ADC MBE**



I set out from London alone and met three wonderful women on my journey, by train, and our two hour delay brought many laughs, memories and shared stories. We were so sad to miss the event but very pleased to make it in time for a cup of tea and scone.

Shan Veillard-Thomas



Patiently waiting for a train!



Helen and Betty sharing memories



GRAND REUNION 2019

21st – 23rd March

Southampton

The weekend started with:

GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL RECEPTION **Friday 21st March 2019** **Guildford Cathedral**

A Reception at Guildford Cathedral in the presence of HRH Sophie, Countess of Wessex

We were very honoured to welcome HRH Sophie, Countess of Wessex to our second event at Guildford Cathedral to celebrate our Centenary – this time a drinks Reception. The Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, Mr Michael More-Molyneux and his wife Sarah, officially welcomed The Countess to the County; and the Dean, the Very Reverend Dianna Gwilliams, welcomed her to Guildford Cathedral.

It was a privilege to also have local Civic guests with us (Cllr Mike Parsons and his wife, the Mayor of Guildford Borough; Cllr Paul Spooner, the Leader of Guildford Borough Council; David Munro, Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner; Cllr Tony Samuels, Chairman of Surrey County Council; and Mr Jim Glover and his wife Cath, High Sheriff of Surrey).

Other guests we had with us for the event included Barney Haugh, Director of Grants & Welfare at the ABF; Jill Stellingworth on behalf of the Association of Wrens; and Tracy Watson, Chair of the WRAF Association.

And, of course, ... Yourselves!

The photographs shown here are just a small selection of those taken both by our official photographer for the event and yourselves. The full selection of photos taken by Hester Barnes can be seen on our website.





Marg Davies & Betty Webb & HRH Countess of Wessex



Reception guests with Association Stand



inc Pauline Milne, Pat Rosewell & Wendy Hooton





With Sarah Morris





*Ali Brown sharing humour with
HRH Countess of Wessex*





With Surrey Chief Scout



HRH with Dean of Guildford Cathedral





Rowena Naile & Nina Smith



Ali Brown, Penny Muxworthy & Sharon Baker-Joyce



Betty Webb



Association Window, in Guildford Cathedral



Pat (Budgie) Rosewell & Countess of Wessex



Books of Remembrance





'On Parade'



*Tanya-Jayne Park, Julia Doig, Julie Winks
& Countess of Wessex*



*Sue Westlake, Penny Muxworthy
& Countess of Wessex*

The weekend continued with:

FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER, INCLUDING FANCY DRESS Southampton

The theme for this year's non-compulsory fancy dress was 'Wonderful Women' – a great source of ideas and suggestions, many of which we saw 'in the flesh' at the dinner. An amazing display of ideas, creations and inventiveness were on display. Well done to everyone who participated. The result was that "everyone was a winner", especially as no competition is held. Dancing to the disco continued until late, showing just how well you all can party!



England ladies hockey team

SATURDAY AGM

After a morning spent 'at leisure', whether in the hotel, Southampton engaging in some retail-therapy, or elsewhere, a good number convened in the hotel's Mayflower Suite for this year's Annual General Meeting.

We started with a good number of branch secretaries/organisers/contacts getting together with Penny and Tanya to share ideas and discuss things of mutual interest. Tanya has set up a branch contacts' facebook group so ideas can be shared quicker and directly, along with any queries.

At the end of the meeting the Prize Draw was made and prizes either given out, or posted on after the weekend. Marg Davies also raffled a couple of items donated to help with the fund from her 100-mile walk. Congratulations to all the many winners – and thank you so much for purchasing raffle tickets, all the funds go to support the work of the Association. Minutes of the AGM appear later in this magazine along with a shortened version of the Annual Accounts.

SATURDAY BEATING RETREAT

As tradition dictates, the Yorkshire Military Band led a Beating Retreat at 17.00 – this year held on the patio and garden just outside the hotel's Conservatory Bar. It was lovely weather so everyone was able to stand outside to listen and watch – it certainly drew quite an audience both from Association Members and general hotel guests. A wonderful start to the evening.



Beating Retreat with Yorkshire Military Band

SATURDAY NIGHT GALA DINNER

18.30 saw everyone reconvene in the Mayflower Suite Foyer bar, in our glad-rags, for pre-dinner drinks, with dinner starting at 19.00. The Gala Dinner was fully subscribed; and we were honoured to welcome Major General Sharon Nesmith as our guest speaker, along with Brig. Fiona Gardner CBE, Brig. Celia Harvey OBE QVRM TD VR, Col. Frances Castle Regt Col AGC MBE and Col. Karen Graham.

The party got under way immediately, wonderfully and ably assisted by the Yorkshire Military Band, under the leadership of Louise Lingard-Smith; they certainly know how to get you all up, moving and singing.

General Sharon gave an excellent speech, without notes, making reference to both the Association's past and her own and referencing how those females serving today did not know what they were missing by not having a female-only organisation to join.

After dinner the party continued. Old friends were caught-up with, and new friends were made. And still the party continued. The young male soloist from the band was a great hit and entertained well into the night.





Yorkshire Military Band, under Louise Lingard-Snape

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE AND PARADE

10.15 saw a very good number convene back into the Mayflower Suite for the Drumhead Service. The Drumhead was kindly provided by the Band, who also accompanied the singing during the service, which was led by our own Chaplain, Rev Sue Wing.

After the service everyone made their way through the Conservatory Bar to Western Esplanade for the Parade, taken by Brig. Fiona Gardner. What a wonderful sight you all made, particularly in the warm spring sunshine. Several local people stopped to watch as you smartly paraded up and down, with the City Wall as your backdrop.

A wonderfully fitting way to end an amazing weekend.



Tracy Biddlecombe assembling with other members & Portsmouth branch for Drumhead Service & parade on Western Esplanade, Southampton



Veterans of the IW & Portsmouth Branches of ATS & WRAC attending the Grand Reunion Centenary weekend.



RELAXATION IN SOUTHAMPTON



LETTERS:

For those of you who were not able to join us for the weekend I include a selection of the letters and cards we received afterwards.

Editor



Colonel Alison Brown
Vice President
WRAC Association
Basepoint Business Centre
1 Winnall Valley Road
Winchester
SO23 0LD

28th March 2019

Dear Alison,

Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex has asked me to thank you for welcoming her to Guildford Cathedral on Friday. The Countess of Wessex was delighted to be with you to celebrate the WRAC Association centenary and thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and so many members.

Her Royal Highness hopes the weekend was a huge success and sends her best wishes to you and the organising committee.

Yours sincerely,
Amy Mayes

Amy Mayes
Assistant Private Secretary to
TRH The Earl and Countess of Wessex.

BAGSHOT PARK · BAGSHOT · SURREY GU19 5PL
TELEPHONE: 01276 707040 · FACSIMILE: 01276 707041

"Please accept my heartfelt thanks for inviting me to the WRAC Association Gala Dinner – what a fantastic evening it was. The atmosphere and energy in the room was electric, and while the Band was absolutely superb and I thought the hotel did you proud, it is the 400 ladies I will remember – a potent force in full voice. It was such a pleasure to talk to so many, to hear their stories, and to reconnect with comrades from my own distant past.

I thoroughly enjoyed the Drumhead Service on Sunday (and was rather proud of my largely accurate, if totally tuneless, remembering of 'I Vow to Thee My Country') and it was my privilege to take the Parade. The Ladies marched with pride and pizzazz, delivering a very impressive Eyes Right, and there was such warmth and camaraderie as they said their farewells.

As I contemplate retirement I am so pleased that connections have been made with the next generation. It was a truly memorable celebration of the Centenary, and for the Association there is a real sense of purpose and optimism for the future.

An amazing weekend, thank you"

Brig. Fiona Gardner CBE, FCIPD

"I'd like to thank you and the team for all your tremendous hard work in organising such a brilliant and memorable reunion for us all. It was greatly appreciated, I assure you. The weekend certainly provided a wonderful opportunity to catch up with friends and colleagues. The whole occasion once again made me appreciate just how fortunate I am to be a former member of the WRAC, and, most importantly, to witness the "esprit de corps" that still binds us all, which remains as strong as ever.

Kind regards",
Sue Donovan

"On behalf of myself and my fellow Lady Pensioners who attended the Royal Reception at Guildford Cathedral on Friday 22nd March, I would like to say a big thank you for arranging for us to attend such a memorable occasion.

I know I speak for all of us when I say we all thoroughly enjoyed it and were all honoured to be presented to the Countess of Wessex.

It was absolutely wonderful meeting up with so many ladies we'd all served with at some point in our Service days".

(226 I/P) Marjorie Cole

"What can I say? That was the most extraordinary, upbeat, fun and enlightening event I think I have ever been to! Thank you so much for inviting me to the Dinner to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the WRAC Association – it is an evening I will never forget – simply brilliant.

The band, the singing, the companionship in a common history and the sheer joie de vivre are all features that stick in my mind; I think the post-1992 generation are missing out by not having a similar group to be a part of.

Despite thinking I wouldn't know anyone, I was happily surprised to bump into a few familiar faces from the past. It was also great to meet so many new comrades – a real privilege".

Thank you once again for inviting me to join you at the Grand Reunion it was a real treat".

Celia Harvey

"What a wonderful weekend! What a party!
Until the next one". Lynne Connolly

Please accept many congratulations to all involved in the arrangements for a very successful 2019 Grand Reunion. The venue of the Grand Harbour Hotel Southampton was perfect, a lovely hotel in a stunning setting, the staff in all departments were helpful, kind, and efficient, they made our stay very enjoyable indeed, the Friday buffet evening food was excellent, and the dinner evening menu was really good, every course was delicious - the starter was refreshing, the main course was served piping hot and really tasty, and the desert, oh my goodness it was so yummy. Our room was lovely and clean with beds and bedding that ensured we had a good night's sleep.

It was a wonderful weekend with a special atmosphere, and the Saturday dinner evening was simply amazing, the band had everyone on their feet for every tune, they created a very special and wonderful feel good atmosphere.

What added to the evening was the amazing speech, (Maj Gen Sharon Nesmith), it really was the best and nicest speech we have ever heard, it was uplifting and inspiring and delivered so naturally. To give a spontaneous speech like that is a very special gift, and to include everyone in the room showed such depth of feeling, it wasn't an ordinary speech, it was an extraordinary speech, one we will never forget. Some of the staff of the hotel were stood at the side of the room, and were listening intently mesmerised by the words, we felt for those young people to hear this heartfelt speech must have made such an impression on them, and for everyone in the room to be included and given recognition was very special. It was also very emotional to listen to, and we all had a tears in our eyes, so please pass on our heartfelt thanks.

Once again, many thanks to all involved with the organisation of such a massive event, it really was a wonderful weekend".

Carol Traynor



"It was lovely to meet you briefly last Friday at Guildford Cathedral. Thank you so much for inviting me! It was an honour to help you all celebrate your Centenary. Hopefully you all had a wonderful weekend celebrating (to be fair, I have no doubt that you all did!)"

Tracy Watson
Chair, WAAF/WRAF/RAF(W) Assoc.

"Thank you so much for a splendid reunion. I have been coming to these since the mid 1980's and have never experienced such an atmosphere. It was a real baptism of fire for you all and I am sure that you had to draw on your previous knowledge. Not much could have prepared you for the event, so many responding, such a high-profile Friday at the Cathedral and then it was helter-skelter into the rest of the weekend. How you all kept your balance I am not sure and were never publicly without a smile. Great; thank you for making my contribution easy. God Bless"

Rev Sue Wing

"Thank you to everyone who helped organise the WRAC/ATS Grand Reunion. Not only was it well organised but the atmosphere was happy and friendly throughout the weekend. I enjoyed every moment and was so pleased to attend"

Rose Ide

"Thank you [Ali] and your fantastic team for putting together such a well organised and fun weekend. It was the first Grand Reunion I have attended, and I was very impressed. A huge amount of work had gone on before, during – and I expect – after the event and I couldn't fault it.

How wonderful to have a military band present – it really added to the atmosphere and reminded me how much I miss Beating Retreats and Dinner Nights!

It was a great opportunity to meet up and I had a good catch-up with people I hadn't seen for well over 20 years! I really enjoyed the chance to meet wonderful Betty [Webb] – what a fine and interesting lady.

The whole weekend had a fantastic buzz about it – clearly everyone was having a fantastic time. I thought the Drumhead Service was very special and meaningful and, with the Parade, made an excellent finale.

I would like to thank you, your Trustees and admin team very much for all you do to keep the WRAC Association so vibrant and well run".

Gerry Gold

"This message is for all the ladies at the WRAC Association.

"What an amazing weekend!

Dear all,
I am still on a high from an amazing weekend.

The organisation, attention to detail, and thought that went into the event was incredible.

I am very appreciative of all the hard work that must of gone into organising it all and what a fantastic job you all did, from Friday through to yesterday [Sunday].

You have left everyone buzzing and looking forward to the next Grand Reunion.

It's events like this and others that makes me proud to be a member of the Association.

Thank you so much".

Wendy Hooton

Thank you.

Editor / Association Secretary:

On a final note, my work colleagues would like to express their gratitude to you all because my voice has completely gone and they will get at least a day of peace and quiet".

Pauline Milnes

Thank you to everyone who came along and/or was involved in the Grand Reunion – a great weekend which would not have been the same without everyone attending and making it such an amazing event (and individual elements within the weekend). Thank you to our special guests for giving their time to attend; the Band for their skill and the entertainment provided; the Standards for parading on Sunday; and anyone/everyone else who was involved in whatever way. Without each and every one of you the weekend would not be the same. I understand it was the biggest Grand Reunion of recent years, so....

"Just like to say thank you very much for organising the WRAC weekend in Southampton. I had a lovely time, as did my Gill who has recently joined the Association and had no idea what to expect.....

Thank you again and well done. I/we look forward to future functions.

... keep your eyes peeled for news of exactly when, and roughly where, the next Grand Reunion – in 2022 – will be held; hopefully slightly more northerly than this year. Naturally, booking forms etc will not come out until 6-9 months before the event.

May the Association go from strength to strength".

Barbara Gallafent

Penny

ASSOCIATION VISION STATEMENT AND STRAPLINE

At a meeting of your Trustees in February 2017, and as confirmed at the March AGM, the following Association Vision Statement and Strapline have been adopted:

Association Vision Statement

To be a recognised and accessible charity providing support for women who have served in the ATS, ATS TA, WRAC, WRAC TA and WRAC TAVR, to which our members are proud to belong.

Supporting Strapline

Supporting Women who Served

along with a **Trustees Vision Statement:**

To be an effective Board of Trustees who deliver the Charity's vision both now and in the future.

FEATURES – GENERAL

“BUDGIE AND BETTY GO LIVE” BBC RADIO LONDON 94.9 FM Pat Rosewell

I received an early morning call on Tuesday the 9th July from Hannah Kapff at Curious PR. “Pat are you free on Thursday 11th July to do an interview at the BBC on the Jo Good afternoon show”? Our Vice President Ali Brown was unable to make it, so I was asked to help out. The BBC had picked up on our exhibition “Rise of the Lionesses” currently running at the National Army Museum until the 20 October 2019.

The BBC also wanted to do a telephone link-up with our Bletchley Park Veteran Betty Webb MBE. Well of course I said yes, anything to promote the WRAC Association.

I arrived in good time to go through security at the BBC. I was impressed as they still had my details from my previous visit to radio 5 live!! As I was entering, I bumped into Frank Gardner a journalist who I recognised. He is a security correspondent for the BBC who was shot by the Taliban whilst reporting from Saudi Arabia in 2004. We soon got talking as Frank had previously been a major in the Army and skied with the same coach as me!!

I was soon ushered into the green room for a briefing; we were going live in just 10 mins. I was given my cue and walked into the live studio!! Jo jumped out of her seat to greet me with a great big hug!! “Hello Pat thanks for joining me!! You are short just like me” she said. I was still shorter than Jo; I think that made her day!! Sit down, head phones on, we were live after the next record.



At BBC Radio London



Questions came thick and fast from Jo. I was there to talk about my 23yr Army career - where I had served and what my job was in the WRAC, so I proudly told her I had been a Physical Training Instructor!!

Jo then focused on our link up with Betty Webb, who was sat in the comfort of her own home. I had taken my copy of Betty's book *Secret Postings* into the studio to show Jo who she was talking to. Jo asked me if I would tell the listeners a little about Betty, and then asked me if I would introduce her on air. What a great honour and privilege that was. Betty was bright as a button and on form once again with her Bletchley tales and Pentagon stories, just an amazing interview. It was a great opportunity to plug Betty's book too.



Betty Webb & Pat (Budgie) Rosewell

It was then back to us in the studio, and I was asked about the Lionesses exhibition at the National Army Museum. It was so good to give them some airtime as they have been instrumental in putting the excellent exhibition together. I also talked about the WRAC Association and the fact that we have over 65 branches and need to spread the word about our amazing association!!

I had cheekily tuned into Jo's show the day before so I could get the feel of the programme. Jo Good is a real dog lover and she has a spot on the show called "Barking Mad" - listeners phone in and tell Jo their funny doggie stories!! She announced there's no phone in today as Pat is going to tell us her encounter with some Royal Corgis!! So, put on the spot, I began to tell my story!! I was cycling from John o' Groats to Land's End on a tandem with a colleague for the RBL Women's section and the WRAC Association to raise funds for their charities in September 1989. Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, as Patron of the RBL, invited us and our back up team to take tea with her at the marital home she had with her husband King George VI, at Birkhall, near Balmoral in Scotland. We arrived at the start of the long driveway and in the distance we could see HM waiting at the entrance with Corgis sat either side of her. As we peddled hard up the driveway and got nearer, all of a sudden the Corgis ran down to greet us snapping and barking at our ankles!! When we reached HM and dismounted from the tandem HM apologised for her dogs' behaviour and said "I am so sorry, they just took off as they have never seen a tandem before"!!

Jo thanked me and said she loved my Barking Mad story. Our allocated time had come to an end. What a fantastic opportunity for publicity of the WRAC Association. It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience for Betty and I to go live on BBC Radio London with the fabulous Jo Good. My most grateful thanks to the BBC and Curious PR for making this happen!!



With Jo Good

BBC RADIO MEDIA COVERAGE REPORT – JULY 2019 Curious PR

BBC Radio London is London's BBC Local Radio station and part of the broader BBC London network. The station broadcasts across Greater London and beyond.

Jo Good interviewed Pat Rosewell and Betty Webb (via phone) on their careers in the army. Also mentioned was the talk Pat delivered at the National Army Museum and the Rise of the Lionesses exhibition, as well as the Association charity in general.

The interview lasted 15-20 mins and went over the scheduled slot.



WRAC LADY STATUE

Babs Anderson

I have been progressing the production of the WRAC Statue to be installed on the WRAC Association plot at the National Memorial Arboretum. I visit Andy DeComyn regularly, so regularly that he has bought in teabags, just for me.

I have shared photos of developments as we went along and taken members' comments back to Andy. Once we reached the stage of having the maquette ready, I invited Ali Brown to come and check that it was a suitable representation of how we all envisaged her. Happily, Ali liked what she saw, so we gave Andy the go ahead to produce our 7 foot tall version, with a slight adjustment to her tie. I propose continuing to visit his workshop regularly to take photos of progress as he goes along, and the next time I report to you will be to confirm that she is ready for installation by crane on site.



Statue maquette



Ali Brown, maquette & Babs Anderson

The NMA contacted me through Andy, who was there with another of his projects, to ask for our help. Next door but one to our plot is a memorial to the Ack Ack gunners, which has become neglected due to their leading light passing away. The memorial refers to the ATS in particular. The NMA landscaping committee asked if we would accept the granite plaques into our plot if they were refurbished, and in exchange for us agreeing, we would be able to have a separate memorial bearing the WAAC and QMAAC badges, rather than having them engraved onto the ATS Statue, as previously agreed. This seemed like a deal which suited our plot perfectly, so I contacted Ali for her to make a quick decision, as the NMA wanted our immediate response. Ali and I thought it was a great idea and that we should agree to it. Andy has promised to make the Ack Ack plaques look fabulous and also the separately displayed badges. He is doing this extra work within the quote of £20,000. So, we will now have the WRAC Statue, the ATS Ack Ack gunners memorial, the WAAC and QMAAC badges memorial and maintenance of them all for 10 years. We get to keep the maquette and will raffle it off to the membership, ploughing the proceeds back to the WRAC Association. Andy will also oversee getting small statuettes made from the maquette. I will negotiate a quote for those separately, but I'm sure they will be popular.

We commenced fundraising for the statue in the middle of February, going out to the members via email and Facebook. I am happy to tell you that we achieved the required £20,000 within 4 months. The WRAC Lionesses have raised the majority of the funds under the leadership of Wendy Hooton. Additionally, there have been some amazing donations sent directly to HQ.

Hopefully you will feel able to attend the NMA for our AGM and unveiling of 'Maureen' on 21 March 2020. Had I mentioned her name?

Book Preview

'High Heels & Beetle Crushers' By Jackie Maude

Dedicated to those who served in the Corps.

"A fascinating look into life in Britain on the brink of the 'Swinging' Sixties. Well-bred, conventional young ladies still wore gloves and hats, while among them a rare few, more adventurous, rejected the stereotypical careers expected of them and chose a life in the armed forces, with all its considerable challenges.

In this coming-of-age story written from the heart, the author relates her life, loves, heart-breaking loss, and her military career. I found it an engrossing read and valuable social history record that took me back on a wave to nostalgia to a bygone era."

Susie Kelly
Memoir/travel writer

To be published December
14th



Wonderful Women Book - Celebrating women who served

The book will feature 100 stories of women who've served in the British Army since 1917. From the first women's corps of WAAC & QMAAC in World War One, the ATS during World War Two and through the post-war WRAC and into the present day.



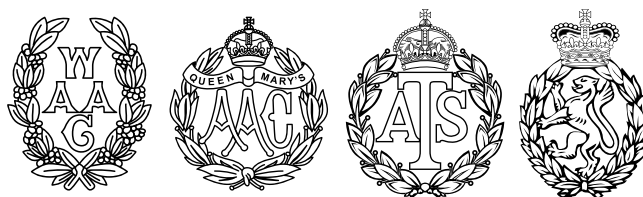
It will capture a broad spectrum of stories, not just the more well known stories and individuals but also more prosaic stories of women's service, in a multitude of roles, from telephone switchboard operators in WW1, through to the present day.

The book will show that women are a valuable part of the British Army and that this has only been possible due to the dedication, hard work and sacrifice of the women who have preceded them since 1917.

The book features a forward from Major General Sharon Nesmith who is the current Director (Personnel) at Army Headquarters.

Due to be published in October 2019 with a launch event at the National Army Museum on the 4th October the book will be on sale for £9.99.

You can pre-order your copy at
www.wonderful-women.org
or via the Association Website.



Bloomsbury Press Books

To mark the 75th Anniversary of the D Day Landings we have put together a range of titles that may be of interest to your Members, as you can see on the attached flyer; but we also have many more titles covering WWII as you can see.

Our books are invoiced and distributed by Macmillan. Please note that those titles marked

POD are print on demand and printed as we need them so please allow up to 15 working days for delivery.

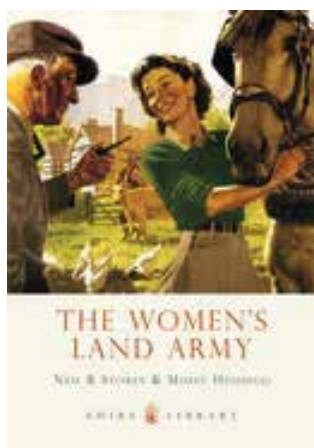
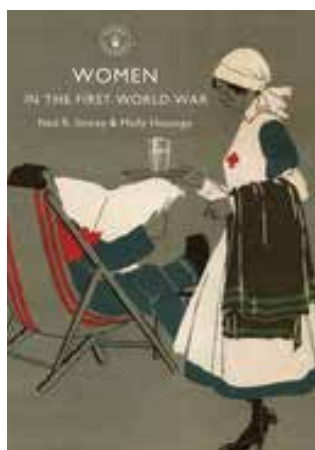
Standard delivery of books in stock is 3 – 5 working days but if you need them sooner than

that please let us know and we can provide a next day service with a £5.50 delivery charge.

On standard orders there are no delivery charges and 30 days payment terms.

Julie Gribben, Bloomsbury Publishing

(Small sample selection below)



The UK Armed Forces Veteran ID Card The Ministry of Defence launched a new Veterans ID card on 18 February (2019)

which will enable public and charitable sector services to instantly recognise the service of a Veteran. This card will provide proof that a Veteran has served in HM Armed Forces in line with the Government definition of a Veteran, which is one day's service.

Currently, there is no way for existing Veterans to easily prove the fact that they have served, and the administrative burden on providers when verifying that a person is a Veteran can be considerable, both in time and cost. This card will allow you to confidentially verify that someone has served in the Armed Forces.

However, this card will not be held by all Veterans as it is being rolled out in tranches and some genuine Veterans in need may not have the capacity to apply for one. Therefore, please do not take the absence of a Veterans ID card as proof that a person is not a Veteran. Instead continue to use your existing processes to verify their Veteran status.

Delivery will be rolled out in two tranches
Phase 1: The Veterans ID Card will be provided to all Service Leavers only, as part of the discharge process with effect from today (18 February 2019), and retrospectively to those who left on or after 17 December 2018.

Phase 2: Applications from the wider Veteran Community will be encouraged once the process has been agreed. Information on how to apply will be made available closer to the time, before the end of 2019.

If you are asked questions about the ID card, please refer Veterans to the Veterans UK helpline number and they will be able to provide the relevant information, details below.

Telephone: 0808 1914 218
Website – www.veterans-uk.info



BENEVOLENT FUND NEWS

This year has seen lots of exciting changes to the Ben Fund criteria including the introduction of a number of new Annual Maintenance Grants.

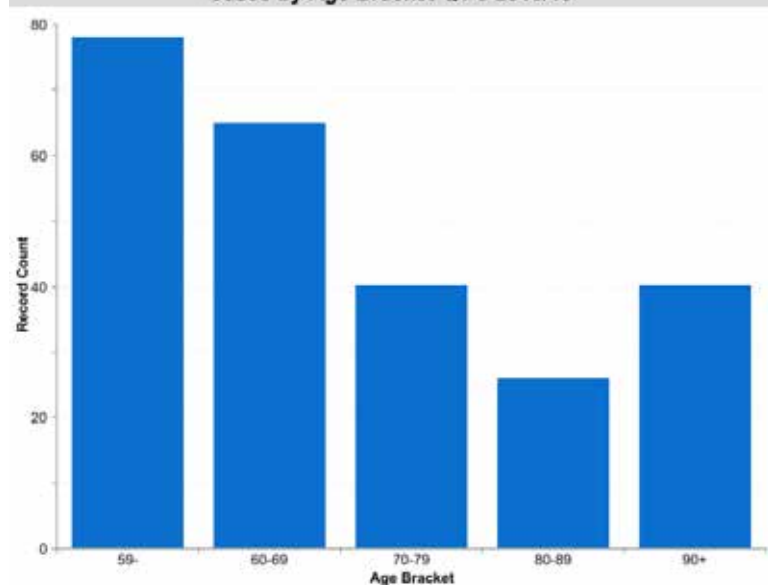
New Grant Giving Criteria. These were agreed by Trustees in Feb 19 and came into effect from that meeting. They were briefed to members at the AGM in March and have been published on the Association website and on CMS. They will be reviewed in Jan 20 and any changes briefed to trustees in Feb 20. There are now 3 types of grants committee meetings:

- Minor grants committee meetings are held daily as required and can award immediate grants up to **£2,000**
- Chairman grants committee meetings are usually held weekly or when required and can award one-off grants up to **£3,000**.
- Major grants committee meetings (MGCM) are held once a month and can award grants up to the maximum of **£6,000**. The MGCMs also consider applications for care home fee top-up fees and annual maintenance grants.

Details of the introduction of new regular charitable payments can be found in the section Benevolent Fund Grants.

Welfare Grant. As part of the Strategic Direction the Chairman was tasked to look at how the Ben Fund could provide welfare assistance to Association members. Details of the new grant can be found in the section Welfare Grant – New with information on how to apply.

Cases by Age Bracket Q1-3 2018/19



Key Facts Q1-3 2018/19

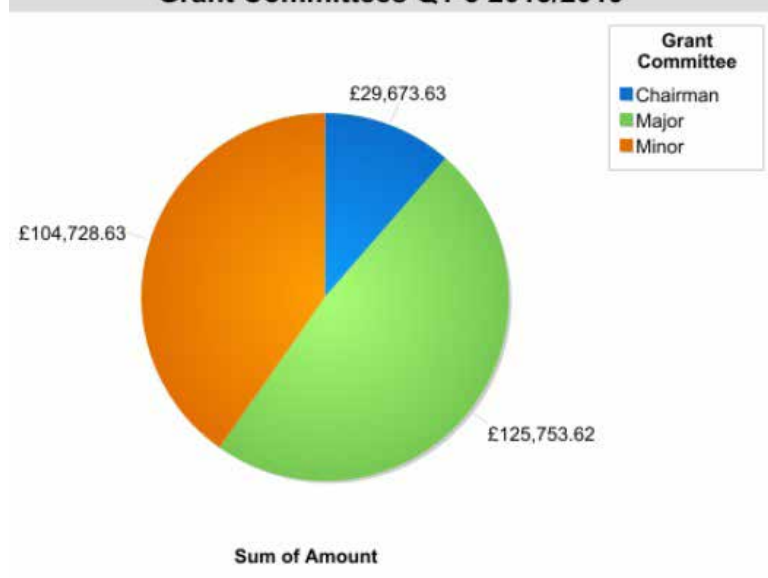
- 223 applications for assistance received.
- 29 ATS and 185 WRAC, 9 cases were not applicable.
- This is a slight decrease on the same period last year. (225 applications)
- 30 PRMF Annuitants (inc 4 former ABF annuitants) and 2 PRMF Overseas Annuitants.

Current Spend – end of Q3

Ben Fund £243,288.00

PRMF spend has now been incorporated into the Ben Fund.

Grant Committees Q1-3 2018/2019



Grants awarded

New Criteria

The introduction of the new criteria has enabled cases to be dealt with more swiftly and reduced the number of cases needing consideration by the Major Grants Committee.

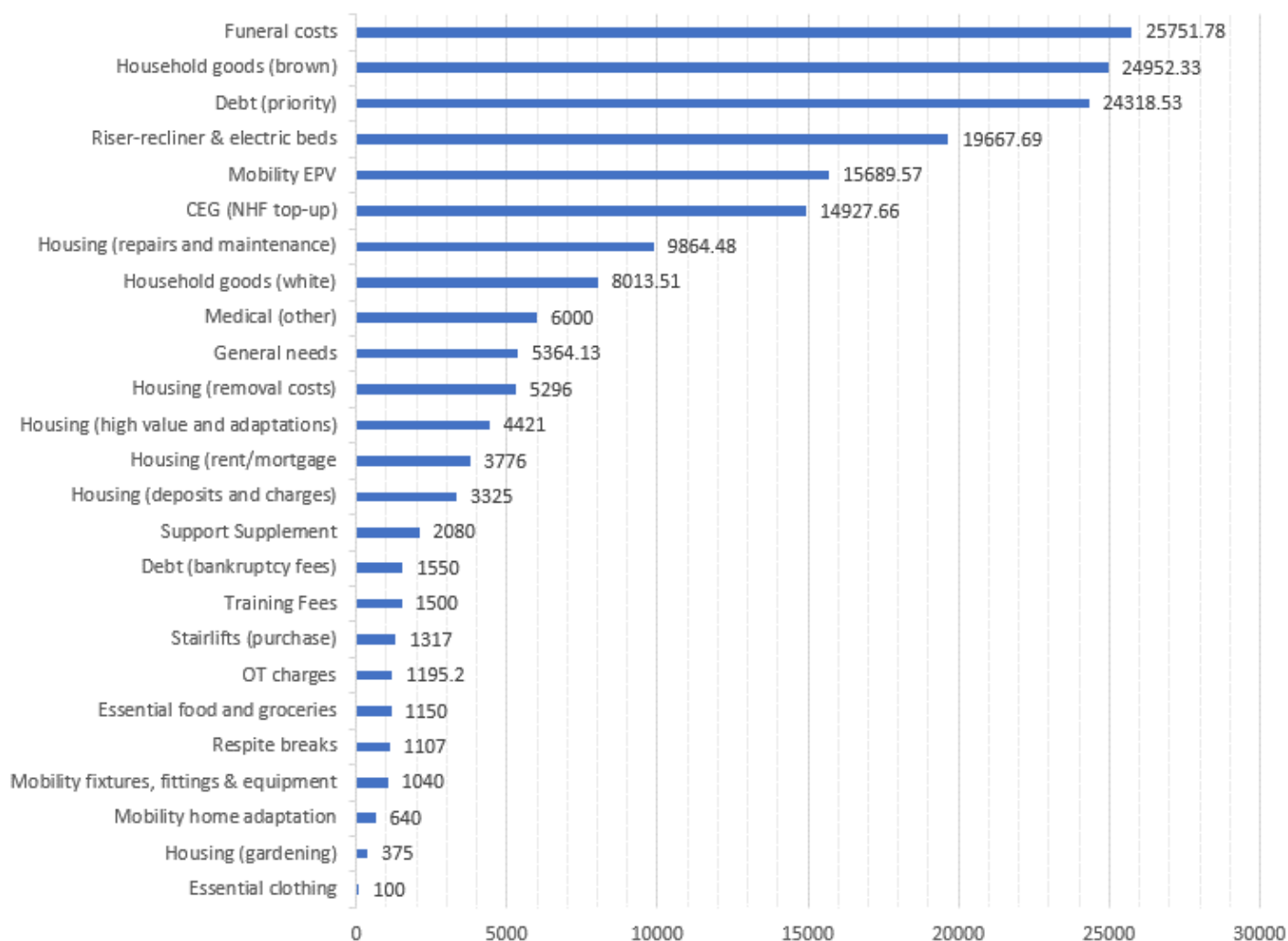
Number of Grants Awarded:

Minor	145
Chairman	23
Major	65

8 grants awarded by Major were above the original max of £3,000.

“Thank you so very much for your generosity towards the purchase of my scooter. It is an absolute god send for getting me to the shops and mainly to the Doctors”. £874 mobility scooter.

Ben Fund Expenditure Q1-3 2018/19



"I am very satisfied with the chair and it has improved my quality of life immensely. I recently had a total hip replacement and using the chair has aided with my recovery and also supports my other joints affected by arthritis", **£481 towards a riser/recliner**

"I am very grateful for your gift of a fridge/freezer and the Hoover, which will help my carers to help me". **£308.99 for white goods.**

A caseworker wrote
 "Miss ??? has asked me to pass on her gratitude for the very generous award that the Major Grants Committee has made to her. I phoned her this morning and she was clearly overwhelmed with the support that she had received. She found it difficult to find the words to adequately describe the positive effect that this award will have lifting the worry of eviction from her giving her a chance to get on with her life". **£5,721 priority debt.**

A caseworker wrote "Thank you so much for providing this grant ??? shed tears of joy when she saw the apartment that she had been offered. This grant will make her move much easier and will be the icing on the cake".
£380 removal fees.

BENEVOLENT FUND GRANTS

The ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund awards one-off and recurring financial grants to purchase specific goods, services or facilities for eligible former servicewomen, or their dependents, in need. The charity also provides annual maintenance grants to former servicewomen who are either elderly, alone, living on low incomes or in ill health, and makes contributions to top-up care-home fees.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR HELP?

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

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.

ONE OFF GRANTS

The fund has helped with one-off grants in a wide range of categories. Please refer to the graph titled Ben Fund Expenditure Q1-3 2018/19 for the list of categories.

REGULAR CHARITABLE PAYMENTS:

- Princess Royal Memorial Fund Annual Maintenance Grants (AMG) – a grant to help with day-to-day living expenses. Applicants will be of State Retirement Age, living on a low income and demonstrate need for such assistance.
- **New** Overseas Princess Royal Memorial Fund Annual Maintenance Grant (Overseas PRMF AMG) – these have the same criteria as the AMG but for those ex service women living overseas.
- **New** Ben Fund Annual Maintenance Grant (AMG) – this grant is for applicants below state pension age where there is a long term need for support. It would apply to those who are unable to find employment through no fault of their own due to being persistently in poor health or caring for family members.
- **New** Ben Fund Support Supplement (SS) – a short term grant of variable duration for those applicants below State Retirement Age. It can be used to cover income shortfalls arising from delays in receiving state benefits or short term loss of salary due to medical treatment.
- **Revised** Care Enhancement Grant (CEG) – weekly assistance for beneficiaries of state pensionable age to cover nursing/care home fees top up, care at home or a personal expense allowance for those resident in a nursing/care home.
- All Regular Charitable Payments are reviewed on an annual basis.

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 does, then your first port of call is your local branch of SSAFA or regional Royal British Legion (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.

SSAFA: 0800 731 4880

www.ssafa.org.uk/help-you/do-you-need-our-help-or-support



RBL: 0808 802 8080

www.britishlegion.org.uk/about-us/contact-us

Applications for the above grants cannot be accepted direct by the Benevolent Fund Secretary.



WELFARE GRANT - NEW

The Welfare Needs Grant has been introduced primarily to assist WRAC Association members to attend either Branch or Association social events where without the grant they would be unable to do so. Grants can be awarded by the Ben Fund Secretary up to £100 per individual member per event but must not exceed £200 per year.

Applicants must be a current member of the WRAC Association and a former ATS or WRAC servicewoman, including TA, with one day's paid service or more. Applicants will need to complete a Welfare Needs Grant Request form and provide evidence of costs/use of grant.

For more information and details on how to apply please contact Julie Winks, Benevolent Fund Secretary on 0300 400 1992 or alternatively please email to: benfund@wracassociation.org.uk.

WHAT DOES BEING A MEMBER OF A BRANCH MEAN?

Ali Brown



This was a question asked by myself at the Council meeting in July 2017. The answers received were diverse and varied. Much of belonging to a Branch is variable and intangible so I thought it would be interesting to publish some of the replies I received to share them with you.

If you read this and like the sound of it, all you have to do is join a Branch. All Branches are an integral part of the WRAC Association.

"I certainly see Branch membership as a much-valued part of the life of the Association; especially for those ladies who are on their own. It gives them a sense of belonging and interest, so they look forward to every meeting as for many it is a key part of their social life. It gives them a network of people from a common background who look after each other in sickness and in health, and there is a bond of friendship which becomes stronger with age. The Branch network can provide an individual with friendship, companionship and care with likeminded people who have shared experiences, and can provide them with a sense of belonging and opportunities for fun, laughter and social interaction".

"I think being in a Branch rekindles the comradeship experienced during service and provides for the meeting of old and possibly new friends. Members are offered friendship, advice and generally look after each other. This works whether the Branch is formal or informal".

"It is the uniqueness of belonging to a really special group that you cannot buy your way into. The Armed Forces, as a whole, is a unique family. If someone is wearing a military badge there is always a conversation to be had. All service is important, irrespective of length or type, and we all have memories we wish to share and celebrate".

"The advantages of belonging to a Branch are many and varied. To name a few - knowing someone is always nearby for you night and day; that feeling a warm personal welcome gives you; forming the kind of friendships you have not made since your service days; being able to share the up and downs of your life with friends; and the pride one gets from turning out for events with fellow Branch members. Members go home from our meetings feeling happy, loved and wanted. Being a member of a Branch gives us the additional joy of belonging".

SERVE
SUPPORTING WOMEN WHO / SERVED

SCOTLAND & N IRELAND Jo Young

This is my last opportunity as Area Coordinator for Scotland and Northern Ireland to say a few words, including a thank you or two before I hand over in September.

I am very grateful for the huge amount of work which goes on behind the scenes on behalf of all Members of the Association. Updates at Association Grand Reunions, Annual General Meetings and the Lioness give us a flavour of what is going on, but I would like to thank all at the Association Headquarters, Association Trustees, Council Members and my fellow Area Coordinators. The Association would not be what it is without the time and effort they all give for the benefit of our Members.

Thank you to all past and present members of the Area Committee for their hard work and last, but by no means least, a special thank you to all the Area Members. They have put up with me for quite a long time, but it has been an honour and privilege to be your representative and I have very much enjoyed your friendship and kindness.

Keeping with local issues, the Area AGM will take place in Perth on Saturday 21st September at the Queens Hotel in Perth. Planning is underway and we have put the date on the Association website. Once we get a little further with the planning, we will put contact details for anyone who may wish to come and join us. It would be good to see you. Very best wishes.

ABERDEEN Mhairi Irving

Hello from the Aberdeen branch. Our numbers are sitting at 11, which includes 3 life members.

We didn't have a great start to 2019 - one of our members, Miss Helen Thomson, passed away in December 2018, she will be sorely missed.

In May 2019 we went out for lunch to the Carmelite Bar & Grill, as always partners are most welcome. We were lucky to have the lovely Ian Thomson join us.

We were joined a little later by Margaret Irvine, a transfer in from the Glasgow branch; our newest branch member.



L-R: Sandra Lemmon, Irene Thomson, Ian Thomson, Moira Thom, Moyra Brodie, June Fisher, Margaret Muirhead & Joan Bartlett.

In early June 2019 I was thrilled to receive an invitation to the Royal Garden Party at Holyrood Palace, let the fun begin – what to wear.

Later that month three of our ladies took part in the Aberdeen Armed Forces Day, with Irene Thomson & Margaret Muirhead marching down Union Street and Moira Thom doing a collection for SSAFA.



Mhairi Irving

The 3rd of July was most definitely the highlight of my year, I had the honour of attending the Royal Garden Party at Holyrood with other members of the Association. I have posted a separate article about the day.

I have recently found out that one of our ladies, Mary MacLeod, has gone into a nursing home after an illness earlier this year, she is 94 years young, and it's so easy to lose touch.

We are in the throes of organising something to celebrate the WRAC Centenary; I am in discussion with the Gordon Highlanders Museum Aberdeen to do a tour, followed by afternoon tea, in September or October. Who doesn't love afternoon tea?

The Scottish AGM is just around the corner – 21st of September. I think the Aberdeen branch will have a great contingent this year.

Contact details for the branch are:

Mhairi Irving email wracaberdeen@gmail.com.

We meet between February and December on the 1st Monday of the month @ 11:00 in the Snug Bar, Ma Camerons, 6-8 Little Belmont St, Aberdeen AB10 1JG, but this is subject to change.

DUMFRIES **Susan Marcroft BEM**

Dumfries Branch members and friends started the year with our usual Spring Lunch, a joyous occasion. Before our next event we were very saddened by the passing of Nancy Lindsay on the 10th May 2019. She was a strong and generous supporter of the Association and will be missed at our lunches which she used to attend with us.

When we met for our next lunch on the 15th May, we enjoyed lunch at The National Trust for Scotland, Threave Gardens, near Castle Douglas. The gardens are beautiful there and whatever time of the year you visit there is always something lovely to see. In June, we celebrated our Centenary and Christine Tomkinson, who I would like to say a big thank you too, made a fantastic cake which many members enjoyed.

Also in June, Maureen Thin-Smith and myself represented our Branch at Dumfries Armed Forces Day Parade.



Susan Marcroft BEM and Yvonne Burns

On July 3rd, Yvonne Burns and myself had the honour of being invited to attend The Queen's Garden Party at Holyrood Palace along with seven other members from Scotland. We all thought this was honour itself, but once we had all arrived, we were told that we would be presented to the Queen, (how cool is that), she shook hands and spoke to each and everyone of us, we were all so very proud.

But we still have more to look forward to later this year - lunches, and the AGM in Perth, a really memorable year.

ULSTER **Sylvia Connachan**

First of all, I would like to apologize for missing March Lioness, I am a learner in this post, hopefully for not long.

Some of the Ladies went to the First World War Victoria Cross Commemorative Service in Belfast, which was a memorable night in September.

We had our AGM in September, of which we went for lunch at the Pizzeria Restaurant, Lisburn, just across the road from the Robin's Nest Bar, which I am sure some of you ladies will remember when you were stationed in Lisburn. Then at 2 o'clock, we went to the Royal British Legion for our meeting.

We went to the Cenotaph at Belfast City Hall, where I laid a cross in our WRAC plot, on the Monday before Remembrance day. Then on the Sunday Joan McCabe and myself attended the service at the Cenotaph, where Joan laid the poppy wreath. Thankfully the weather stayed dry.

We had our Christmas lunch in Park Inn hotel, Hollywood road, which was a lovely day. 19 attended which was a good turnout; we all had a good laugh, and a bit of craic between us all.

Then February Lunch was in the New Forge Country Club, Belfast. Turned out a very good afternoon had by all, brilliant company.

I attended the Grand Reunion in Southampton. Unfortunately, 3 of our members which always go, we're unable to attend. I had a brilliant weekend in Southampton, and going to Guildford Cathedral. Very good turnout; lovely weekend.



***Joan McCabe and Yvonne Ritchie at
HM The Queen's Birthday***

Our member Joan McCabe attended the Queen's Birthday celebrations at the Palace. Joan is secretary of the Not Forgotten Association, to which our group has been to some of their functions. The Royal British Legion, Pop in Centre, Belfast, hold a coffee morning, last Wednesday of the month, most of us try to go to; one of the men bakes cakes, tarts, buns, etc. it is a relaxing morning from 10 until 12. If anyone is in our fair land, please contact us and we will try to meet up.

Florence Logan, Marie Jenkins, Sarah Cairns and myself attended a dedication of a standard of the Royal Air Force, which was held in Carrickfergus; lovely service. Five of us went to St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, for a service with the Royal Air Force, for the Battle of Britain.

Sarah Cairns and I went to Old Soldiers Day, at Palace Barracks, Hollywood, Belfast, where there was a parade with the veterans from different regiments, plus the Ulster Defence Regiment, Greenfinches. A good day was had by all.

I attended a ceremony at Craigavon Council Offices for the raising of the flag, for the Armed Forces Day.

Sarah Cairns, Carole Cameron and I went by train to Islandbridge, Dublin, for the commemoration of WW1 and WW2, at which I laid a poppy wreath for the Woman's Royal Army Corps Association. I was also interviewed for RTE Television - have put our WRAC on the map of Ireland. It was a lovely day.



***Carol Cameron, Sarah Cairns and Sylvia Connachan
at Islandbridge, Dublin***

We have OP Banner 50th, on the 17th August 2019, at Wallace Park, Lisburn. Our AGM 16th September 2019.

Would like to thank our ladies of the branch, for attending venues making everything possible.
Cheers, all.

NATIONAL & OVERSEAS

GRIFFIN BRANCH Cathy Munro

As we head into the tail end of this our Centenary Year, it has been another productive six months for the Griffin Branch. We ourselves had our doubts as to how and why this Branch could be any different to the hundreds of WRAC Facebook Groups already out there. We have, despite those reservations, persisted and, working closely with the Area Coordinators, we have continued to act as a rest stop or road map for those yet to find their way to their permanent WRAC Association Home.

Ongoing recruiting campaigns within the social media platforms of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, have meant we have continued to see a steady rise in the recruitment figures over the last six months.



***Sarah Cairns, Ron, Florence Logan, Tony, Sylvia
Connachan, Marie Jenkins and Fred at Carrickfergus,
Dedication of RAF Standard. The Gentlemen are from
The Malay/Borneo Association***



"Always recruiting"



Uniforms on parade

Numbers are on the increase, and not just for Griffin Branch (currently at just under 400 members). At last count we also had directed over two hundred former serving WRAC Veterans towards local Areas, Branches or had encouraged them towards the formation of new branches. The "Experiment" is working, and many find that this particular branch dynamic is a great way to break the ice without the pressure of having to join the Association straight away.

The Griffin Branch has also acted as a notice board for both major and minor events across the world and hopefully as we continue to grow, Area Coordinators, Branch Secretaries, Breakfast Club Administrators and independent members will advertise their events in the Group thereby reaching a wider audience. It may be that your event is the one that gives someone the opportunity to 'come home'.

Our Biggest Success to date, has had to be the formation of the Pan Pacific Branch, covering Australia, New Zealand, Canada and United States of America. As Griffin Branch Secretary I am still hopeful to be invited to an AGM in one of these far away locations. Our work is just beginning, and our sights are already set on our next recruiting campaign. So, an appeal if you will. If you are a member of the Association, without a local Branch to attend, why not consider joining us in Griffin Branch? Hopefully we can then put you in touch with other ladies closer to you, it might just be for coffee, there might be cake, one thing is for certain, there will always be friends old and new just waiting to connect with you.

For further details on how to join the Griffin Branch contact cathmunro@hotmail.com

SOUTH & SOUTH WEST

Nina Smith

Interim Area Co-ordinator

I would like to thank the ladies within the S&SW Area for all your hard work in bringing up the membership to the Association within the area, it is greatly appreciated. As you know we need the association to grow, so "welcome new members". The ladies in this area are working hard to ensure future growth for the association.

There is a new branch in the area – Salisbury. Due to this year's Armed Forces Day being held in Salisbury, Salisbury branch, along with HQ, took turns looking after the stall over the whole of that weekend. I know that this event was busy, so a big thank you to all of those who helped. It was greatly appreciated by all within HQ.

As an area you have had a busy year to date, and it looks like it's going to busy up to the AGM next year.

Please remember I am here if you need anything.

BOURNEMOUTH

Val Wright

On taking advice and contacting all our members it was agreed that we become an 'informal' branch. Those who paid their annual Membership through the Branch can still do so. Regular newsletters will continue to members and we will continue with our quarterly lunches.

We hope that in future we will get a number of younger new members attached to us; currently we are the more senior end of the age spectrum. Whenever there is a Grand Reunion there is an influx of ladies joining the Association, and us, which I add to the nominal roll and write them a letter of welcome - following which I hear nothing at all from them.

Jillian Hurst, the Chairman, and I do not wish to close the Branch but want to keep it going for its loyal members who are mostly ATS.

BRISTOL

Judith Stinchcombe

It's been an energetic few months for the Bristol ladies. We continue to meet each month and catch up, and we gallivant to various venues to have lunch or get involved in numerous activities. We made chocolate in the Cheddar Chocolate Factory, where some very glamorous headdress was compulsory; and have blown Blue Glass in Bristol, our items were processed through the kiln overnight and we collected them a few days later. It was a warm experience on a rainy day.

A number of us attended the Grand Reunion in Southampton, which consisted of a weekend of shopping, eating, drinking and dancing, and for a few of us, the chance to catch up on Association matters at the AGM.



Cheddar chocolate factory



Afternoon Tea with the Not Forgotten Association at Oake Golf Club near Taunton was delightful. The entertainment was provided by the Swingtime Sweethearts - two ladies singing songs from the 1940's and, for the more active amongst us, there was jive dancing. We were seated with a group of ex Navy men and women, but they seemed to have forgotten the rum, 'shocking'!

The Branch celebrated its Anniversary in June. Twelve of us, which included two ex WRAF ladies were warmly welcomed by the Mayor of Bristol (the Right Honourable Jos Clark). Both the Lord Mayor and Rev Harold Clark, spoke enthusiastically of the contribution of Women who had served in the Armed Forces. We gathered to honour the plaque dedicated to 100 years of Women who served - this plaque hangs in the foyer at the Bristol Town Hall. We were invited into the Mayor's Parlour for refreshments where we recalled our Service stories and chatted for about 45 mins before leaving to have lunch together in a local pub. It was a lovely inclusive time which we hope to repeat on an annual basis.



With Lord Mayor of Bristol

We joined other Associations and Agencies on Armed Forces Day showing our support to the veteran community. The Branch was represented at Weston-super-Mare, Bristol, Kingswood and Gloucester. A WRAC stand was erected at Gloucester and a number of the Gloucester branch ladies joined a full day of celebrations, three new members joined the Association on the day.



In July we joined over 200 lovely ladies for afternoon tea at the NMA to celebrate the centenary/anniversary of the Association, it's always a pleasure.

We rounded off our busy months with a very quintessential tea party in the lovely garden of one of our branch members. Branch members continue to visit and look after the ladies we do not see on a regular basis. Our numbers have increased over the last year, as always we operate an open door policy in Bristol and welcome all who wish to join us for any of our activities - you can contact us at wracbristolbranch@mail.com for more information.

ISLE OF WIGHT Tracy Biddlecombe

WRAC 100 - fab WRAC Grand Reunion weekend celebrations! Well done and thank you to all HQ staff for all the organisation of this. This was also mine and one other member of IW Branch ATS/ first WRAC Association event we have ever attended, and it was a very enjoyable/memorable occasion. Whilst we are a small branch of six to seven members only, we linked up with the Portsmouth Branch for the weekend, which included 3 ATS veterans, and made new friends, as well as finding old friends who we served with during the weekend. We also forged stronger links for the future.

Some of us never got to bed till 3pm one evening/morning as the singing and dancing went on and on and on after the Gala Dinner, until the singer (a young lad) could not sing anymore. He said "you are amazing" and we were! and so was he!!



Checking into Novotel, Southampton

We paraded on Sunday morning following a service with music by the Yorkshire Military Band, and presenting of standards, and amazingly we all remembered how to march, keep in step and halt at the same time.

It was an opportunity to re-acquaint with former women soldiers and one friend I had not seen since Guildford for 34yrs!



IW & Portsmouth branch members in conversation with Chelsea pensioner



Officers meeting, at Gala Dinner

We meet bi-monthly, so please contact me for forthcoming dates and events.

Armed Forces Day - Riverside, Newport, Isle of Wight. Tracy and Jill tried out some military vehicles, including a 1943 American Jeep - trying to get in/out was fun as the step up was very high! but a kind male veteran soldier was at hand to assist! Three members attended from IW Branch, the march past included the Band of the Royal Marines who were amazing, as usual. The weather was perfect, it was a lovely commemorative day and Veterans were treated to a free buffet lunch in the Riverside Centre.



Tracy & Jill

PLYMOUTH

Jean Cundy-Borge

A small group of Plymouth members regularly meet for coffee in Dingles Restaurant; we have had a very enjoyable year so far.

On Thursday 28th March I received a phone call from a lady who introduced herself as Kathy Austen from Oregon USA. She had bought a poppy brooch and it had details of a lady who died as the result of her wounds in the 14/18 war. As this was the 100th anniversary Kathy wanted to buy a wreath and asked if I could get it placed in the cemetery. I assured her it was no problem, so we exchanged details on email.

The veteran being remembered was Beatrice Trefozea Pooley of the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps; she died on 7th April 1919. Jane and Sid offered me a lift and Evon joined us at Weston Mill cemetery. Thanks to the maps of grave numbers emailed to us by Angela Webber of the cemetery office we were able to find the grave with its memorial stone with little problem. The wreath sent by Kathy Austen USA, laid in place by Jane Evans Plymouth group former Chairman and photographed by Jean CB and Evon Roberts.



Wreathlaying for Kathy Austen, Oregon, USA

On the 9th April Tanya contacted me and asked that I contact Helen Cresswell who will be visiting Plymouth from New Zealand in May. Contact was made and as a result Helen (right hand side of photo) met us on Sat 4th May at Buckfast Abbey for a very enjoyable lunch.



Helen Cresswell with Branch Members at Buckfast Abbey

On the 1st June 20 of us met for a very enjoyable lunch for our first of the year to Tamar View Restaurant, Carkeel.

On the 25th June we met in Dingles Restaurant, Royal Parade, Plymouth at 12.00 noon for our next Branch meeting.

13th July we will be meeting/met in Windy Ridge, Trerulefoot for lunch.

August 14th Evon has applied to attend the Commemorative Service at the National Arboretum for the start of Operation Banner in Northern Ireland.

Evon's fund raiser for Cancer Research will be held 17th August in Burraton Methodist Church Saltash between 2 and 4pm.

Our Christmas Lunch will be held on 23rd November at the Tamar View Restaurant, Carkeel.

All are welcome to attend our meetings / get-togethers.

Evon is now on the contact list for the Federation and attends the meeting when she can.

Jean Cundy-Borge 01752 567844

Evon Roberts 01752 215780

PORTSMOUTH Val Duke

The Portsmouth Branch continues to thrive with another new member showing interest this year. We chose to have our annual Christmas luncheon at the Maritime club, where we meet, having had such an excellent time there last year.

Two of the Isle of Wight branch members joined us for our March meeting where the topic of conversation was the forthcoming centenary celebration. We are pleased that the 3 ATS members (Marjorie, Edna and Rose) who travelled to Guildford for the Friday reception were all presented to the Countess of Wessex. On Saturday at the Gala night 'Happy Birthday' was sung to Rose by the ladies attending the re-union in advance of her forthcoming 100th birthday.



Edna and Rose with HRH the Countess of Wessex



Marjorie with the Countess of Wessex

5 of our members attended the D-day commemoration on Southsea Common, Portsmouth, in the presence of Her Majesty and on the following day (6th June) we paraded our standard at the D-Day Stone, South Parade Pier.

We were asked to parade at two funerals this year. Firstly, on the 27th February where 5 of our members attended the funeral of Mrs Irene Hartfree (aged 101), and again on 8th May at the funeral of Mrs Di Gardiner, (Southampton Branch).

4 of us attended the Act of Commemoration at the National Arboretum having a pleasurable and reflective day.



Val, Phylis and Megan at NMA

SALISBURY Amanda Foster

I never thought that turning up at the Grand Reunion would have such an impact on me. If that sounds dramatic its true! After securing a "shout out" on Radio2 I left on the Friday morning very nervous of what to expect. I left on the Sunday feeling energised, with more friends and that feeling of "coming home" and very sore feet from dancing more over the weekend than I have ever done in my life so far! I also left after agreeing to see about re-launching the Branch. What me, a TA? But after being slapped numerous times for saying this, and being game for a laugh off I went. Well actually by the early hours of Sunday morning I had set up a Twitter account and started to spread the word!

By the Monday afternoon I had secured a display in Salisbury Library Walk – most people walk along here to the Market Square. Press Releases sent out; That's TV Salisbury and BBC Wiltshire interviews done and dusted. But would anyone come?

Our first meeting was held end of April giving me three weeks to spread the word – and I make no excuse for blitzing Social Media with crazy videos, and hurrah we had some 14 Ladies turn up – RESULT! But now the work began to keep the momentum going – we have had a couple of lucky breaks with contacts/press opportunities and a great bunch, which includes the wife of our new Mayor! We have had three meetings; have our Polo Shirts (if not rather large ones); a regular meeting slot and a programme about to be launched. We have about 10 who are regular attendees but a growing list of Ladies who are interested – come jump aboard!

We are looking to acknowledge our previous branch members and so have Coffee meet-ups during the day and Saturdays, but with the majority still working we meet on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Thanks must go to many people but firstly Jane Ricketts who tagged me when I said I was going to the Reunion not knowing anyone, also to the hardwork and support of Linda Clark & Jackie Clark who are really helping me with links with previous members and securing our Branch Banner, which might be used again in Salisbury.

We have already had a successful Armed Forces weekend and an Away Day to National Army Museum – Oh, watch out, we are back in action with a spring in our step!

Contact us via SalisburyWRACVets@gmail.com -
Facebook: WRAC Salisbury Branch
Twitter: @SalisburyWRACVets

SOUTHAMPTON **Jean Doe**

Hello everyone. Well, here in Southampton we started off with a revisit to Rosebourne Garden Centre (a lot different to normal garden centres). They were very helpful, and we sat down together for lunch – our waitress was an incredible girl; I think she enjoyed herself looking after us – we had a lovely day.

We attended the funeral of Lynne Ashby. The place was packed and Teresa May did an incredible job of organisation; the day was amazing. Following shortly after Di Gardner passed away very suddenly.

We then had the pleasure of being invited by Winchester branch to celebrate their 18th birthday with a buffet lunch at a local hotel; again, with very good company. Herme, you planned a very well organised day, and much appreciated.

Armed Forces Day arrived; Stephanie and I on the 'gazebo' stand and several joined the march, whether by foot, buggy or wheelchairs. We had a good, interesting day, which was well attended.

I enclose a photo of one of our ladies - Babs Bowers, who served as a Red cap for 21½ years. Managed to get her to join us - despite bouts of ill health, she has been a very good asset. I don't think she has missed a meeting; so very generous; members enjoy her company and she has an incredible humour. She asked me why I wanted this photo – now she will know, when her copy of the Lioness arrives! Well done Babs and thanks for all you have contributed.



We hope all branches are well and we will all continue to enjoy meetings.

SWINDON **via Nina Smith**

We now meet every 3rd Wednesday at the RAFA Club here in Swindon as this was requested by some of the members.

We did have a stall at the Armed Forces Day here in Swindon and were asked to return again next year. At Armed Forces Day we were given permission by Mr Arkell to have a visit round his brewery which we are in the process of arranging. Our branch now has a twitter account too.



Armed Forces Day, Swindon



**Afternoon Tea Sharon Marie King, Tina Baker,
Betsy-Jane Lawton, Wendy Wright**

A group of ladies met up in March at a local garden centre and was treated to afternoon tea by one of our members as she won big on lotto/bingo.

WINCHESTER Herme Emary

At the start of 2019 the Branch lost 2 of its members Cath Cox and Audrey "Chips" Everett, both of whom joined the branch just after it was formed. Cath lived in Winchester and attended nearly all the branch meetings; she passed away after a fall from which she never recovered. Chips unfortunately lived in Guildford and did not drive so was only ever able to attend one meeting, but she was an avid supporter of the Association and branch enjoying the Lioness and Branch Newsletter; she passed away after a short illness. Both will be missed

The first meeting of the year was at the Old Vine, a new venue for us. The management had put us in a back room on our own, nice for privacy as we do tend to get a bit noisy, but at times we felt that the staff had forgotten us, quite often having to find someone to take an order or clear away - the food however made up for that inconvenience. We also welcomed new member Patsy who as it turned out had sat at the same table as Lynn and Herme at the Grand Reunion Blackpool, small world.

Quite a few of the branch went to the Grand Reunion in Southampton in March, an enjoyable time was had by all meeting old and new friends.

The next main event for the branch was a trip to the Silver Vaults in London on 4 April. Well we could not have picked a better day to go to London, most of us got soaked getting to London, in the end 7 of us met up at Waterloo. Some of us paid a visit to the Union Jack Club for a quick warm up - was that snow or ice on the steps? Apart from looking at old and new silver pieces in the first vault there were some silver covered guns, a couple of American Tommy guns, a Bren and a Russian Spotting scope, some of us even got a history lesson about the Abyssinian Campaign when we admired a large table centrepiece. Everyone enjoyed the visit and worth keeping in mind if you need a special gift, entry is free.



Outside Silver Vaults, London

Unfortunately, after the visit we all parted company; Lynn and Herme headed off to Westminster Abbey, Kim and Ish headed home, and Rowena and Emma headed off to do their own thing. At least the rain held off for most of the time we were in London, Herme got wet again going home as did Lynn.

Our June get together was to celebrate the Branch's 18th birthday (any excuse). We had a buffet lunch at the Winchester Royal Hotel, which was attended by some members from Southampton Branch including Jean Doe who had also been at our first meeting in 2001. Also attending was the Association VP, Ali, who kindly stopped off one her way to the opening of the Lionesses exhibition at the NAM. It turned out to be a beautiful day although for some reason we never made it to the Hotel's lovely walled garden. The buffet was very nice and lots of it and the company was as usual great.



Winchester birthday cake



Sarah Morris & Rowena Naile

June 29th was of course Armed Forces Day. As Herme could not get to Salisbury she went to the event in Southampton on the 30th to support the ladies of Southampton Branch at their stall. It was nice to see the 3 ladies who had joined us on the previous Thursday manning the stall.

On July 7th Sandy and Herme travelled to the NMA for the service of rededication. Sandy had never been before so was keen to look around and a great deal had changed since Herme last visited. It turned out to be yet another beautiful and very hot day. We had decided that if we arrived in time we would catch the Land Train to get our bearings before heading off to the WRAC plot for the service. The event was very well attended (standing room only), the service was short but to the point which did help as it was so hot. Then off for a bit of tea - a very nice spread had been laid on, which was very welcome as we had not had any lunch. Herme left Sandy chatting to friends as she wanted to look at a couple of memorials, particularly the main

Armed Forces one at the top of the hill. Back to the main area to look at the badges on the Hero's Court floor then home. A most enjoyable day. Thanks to HQ for organising it all.



NMA - Sandy after the Service



NMA Hero's Court



NMA - Avenue up to Armed Forces Memorial

LONDON & SOUTH EAST

Nina Smith

2019 has seen a busy year, and I would like to thank all the ladies within the London and South East Area for all their hard work. When visiting the branches this year, I have been really heartened to see the friendships and support that you give to each other and you have all made me feel very welcome and part of your branch – for which I thank you.

It's great to hear that you all meet up on a regular basis, not just for meetings but also as friends catching up over coffee/tea. Unfortunately, we do have ladies within the area who are unable to attend branch meetings, but each of the branches ensures that these ladies are contacted and kept informed of what is going on not just in the branch but also the association.

We have been working hard to help with raising funds for the WRAC Statue and for this I would like to say thank you as I know that this statue means a lot to one and all.

Back in Feb 2019 the year started with a Choral Evensong at Guildford Cathedral which was celebrating 70 years of the WRAC. We also saw the launch of the WRAC Association 100 Year Film. Unfortunately, the weather wasn't with us on this evening as it was snowing, so many of us had to leave early to ensure that we got home safely.

In March we all met up in Southampton for the Grand Reunion. On the Friday we went to Guildford Cathedral to meet HRH Sophie, the Countess of Wessex; and later that evening saw us back in Southampton celebrating Wonderful Women and many of you dressed up, which was great. Saturday evening was the main event of the weekend where Sharon Nesmith was invited. We were all dressed up for a fantastic evening of nattering, drinking, dancing and the live band we had was second to none and you ladies kept them busy late into the night with all your requests. Then Sunday saw the Church Service, where I think there were a few sore heads, followed by the march, but our Rev did us proud. This weekend was well attended by the ladies within the L&SE Area and I think I managed to speak to you all.

In May we had Margaret and Barbara from Invicta attend the Not Forgotten Association Royal Garden Party for afternoon tea at Buckingham Palace. Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Gloucester did the honours on this day. On reflection, both Margaret and Barbara had a wonderful time and enjoyed catching up with other ladies from across the country. Barbara even managed to speak to the actress Sue Pollard.



Barbara Gallafent & Margaret

May saw Founders Day at Royal Hospital Chelsea - once again the founders' statue (King Charles II) was covered in oak leaves, as is tradition. The weather was good and the sun was out whilst the parade was happening, but it rained as soon as the review had finished. The Reviewing Officer this year was His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex (Prince Harry). He spoke to the Pensioners and made a point to visit and talk to all those who were unable to parade.



Founder's Day with Prince Harry

In June we saw Trooping the Colour, and a lucky few of us managed to get tickets from the Not Forgotten Assoc. to attend the Review which His Royal Highness the Duke of York took (Prince Andrew). It was a wonderful morning and it was fascinating to see the process of the review. Unfortunately, a couple of men fainted due to the heat, but we heard afterwards that they were OK. Unfortunately, we weren't able to take any photos of this day due to the sun shining in our eyes.

We have a few more events booked for the rest of year and hope that as many of you as possible attend them.

Keep Safe

CANTERBURY via Nina Smith

Our year started in March, with a catch-up meeting. It was nice to meet up with our members again after what seemed to be a long winter, making plans for the coming month over a refreshing cup of tea and a biscuit or two.

In April Mrs Sally Waters gave us a lively and very informative talk about a year in office as the Lord Mayor of Canterbury. She very kindly waived her usual fee and so the Branch made a modest donation to her local charity.

May gave us time to gather suggestions for our summer outing, a boat trip on the River Stour, followed by fish and chips was the favourite.

In July we enjoyed afternoon tea at Kate's house in Broadstairs, she thoroughly spoilt us all, and we started with some bubbles to celebrate her birthday (belated). It was a lovely warm day and sitting in the garden we had to keep an eye out for the seagulls as they were watching us whilst we ate.

GREATER LONDON Nina Smith

We have recently moved from Hyde Park Barracks to the Royal Hospital Chelsea and we are much happier there. Everything we need is on ground level and we can adjourn to the bar after the meetings! We are usually joined by the In Pensioners and over the last few months we have attracted several new members, so the branch is growing.

The branch was well represented at the Grand Reunion in Southampton and as always, we enjoyed the weekend. It was especially good to catch up with old friends and to meet in person the Facebook 'stars', Phyl Cox and Pip Flegel among others.

In June we were invited to the launch of the new exhibition at the National Army Museum, Rise of the Lionesses, which celebrates both 70 years of the WRAC and centenary of the Association. A week later we were there again for another event. Ali Brown, Audrey Smith and our own Pat (Budgie) Rosewell spoke about their service in the Corps and it was fascinating and entertaining to hear so much of their achievements and exploits.

Some of our members attended the Centenary Commemoration at the National Memorial Arboretum and they had an enjoyable day. Unfortunately, a few missed the service because the train taking them there let them down and they just made it in time for the tea.

Our upcoming social event is an afternoon tea in a restaurant not far from the Royal Hospital. It's the second time we've been there, and it replaces a summer lunch. We have invited a few friends, including two gentlemen In Pensioners, to join us and hopefully there will be a picture in our next report.

INVICTA Karen Radford

Wow, what a time we have had since Invicta Branch was formed 18 months ago. Although it has been difficult for us all to get together all of the time, most are managing to attend the lunches held at different locations around the County on the last Saturday of each month. The dates for these can be found on the Invicta Branch Facebook page. These are very well coordinated and organised by Kay Styles and there is no doubt that everyone appreciates her superb efforts. Thank you Kay.



Enjoying a meal at Wildwood in Maidstone



Meal at Newnham Court Inn Maidstone

In October 2018 some of our ladies attended their first Dinner Club event, and at this year's Nottingham venue there are even more coming. DC needs to watch out, that's for sure, as we have filled nearly two tables! It was a fabulous weekend and the ladies managed to come away with some great memories and lots of fun stories.



Left to right – Jacky Elliman, Amanda Joynson, Mandy Cox, Eve Carroll, Tricia Wright, Sandra Hand, Margaret Ahmed Mohamed, Christine Haddock, Fi Mac, Kay Styles, Karen Radford

A number of Ladies met up in London for Remembrance Parade in November, a few marched and others supported but it was great to have so many Invicta Branch ladies in the parade. Everyone felt very proud to be able to take part.



L-R: Barbara Anderson, Karen Radford, Cathy Munro, Countess of Wessex, Wendy Hooton & Rowena Naile

March was again a first for many of the Branch ladies. The Grand Reunion weekend in Southampton was one to remember. All ladies attended Guildford Cathedral to mark the Association's Centenary. I was fortunate enough to be presented to Sophie, the Countess of Wessex during her visit to the Cathedral. I told her I had been in the WRAC for six years as a Medic, and that I had just retired from the Police Force after 26 years, before she found out I was now working in the Community Safety Unit at Dartford Borough Council - her reply was "Gosh". I think all of that wore her out!

The weekend was fancy dress one minute and then posh frocks the next, which proved we were all able to scrub up well when we wanted to. As a Branch we were lucky enough to kidnap Major General Sharon Nesmith for a photo call. As you can see, she obliged, and we all feel very lucky to have had the opportunity to meet her and steal this memorable picture.

The Drumhead Service on the Sunday was another bonus as it gave the ladies yet another opportunity to put their amazing drill skills to the test. I'm not sure the "Morecombe and Wise" run was part of it, eh Eve Carroll!



Rear- Front- Kay Styles, Mandy Cox, Janette Brook, Tricia Wright, Barbara Gallafent, Amanda Joynson, Amanda Tillotson, Annette Erskine, Carol Foley, Lavender Purple, Geraldine Bowman, Jacky Elliman, Margaret Ahmed Mohamed, Liz King, Kim Regan, Major General Sharon Nesmith, Karen Radford, Eve Carroll.



A number of ladies attended the London Marches in support of Soldier F. This was a large National turnout and was quite an emotional experience for all of them. Their presence, and the presence of other WRAC ladies, was a real boost to the march.



Margaret Ahmed Mohamed along with Barbara Gallafent were picked from a list of ladies to attend the Palace garden party on the 23rd May. The day was full of meeting celebrities and the weather couldn't have been better. Annette Erskin and Debs Channon, also Branch ladies, attended through other means.

On June 1st Mandy Cox was lucky enough to attend the rehearsals of the Trooping the Colour, and was grateful she went to this event as the weather was beautiful (unlike the official day!). She said the weather was so hot that two poor soldiers found it a tad overwhelming wearing their Busbies and got to see the parade ground from a close up perspective oops!



Margaret Ahmed Mohamed with Su Pollard "Hi De Hi"



Margaret and Barbara



Annette Erskin and 'friend'

Also in June, three attended Founders Day at The Royal Hospital Chelsea with their host and Branch member Jean Simmons. After a name-in-the-hat play off, Tricia Wright, Amanda Joynson and Margaret Ahmed Mohamed were the lucky winners and enjoyed an amazing day. Thank you to Jean for giving our Branch ladies the opportunity to go.



Left to right - Margaret Ahmed Mohamed, Jean Simmons and Tricia Wright



Tricia Wright, Margaret Ahmed Mohamed and Amanda Joynson

July 7th was the Rededication at the NMA and our core groupies, Eve Carroll, Kay Styles, Trish Wright, Margaret Ahmed Mohamed and Jacky Elliman represented us Southerners. It was a beautiful day for it, making the long trek there a more pleasurable one.

Ashford Kent Breakfast Club has now been set up by Amanda Joynson. She has worked very hard at getting this off the ground and now has about 48 members with 15 regular attendees. They meet on the second Saturday of every month at 09:00hrs at the Harvester in Ashford. She deserves a big pat on the back for her hard work in getting this up and running.



Core groupies

And finally, as if our Invicta Branch member Amanda Tillotson didn't think she was important enough, she now feels that she is famous well vintage anyway! The picture below is of a "vintage" titled photograph for sale on the American Amazon site of her as a 17 year old young Private receiving the Liberation of Kuwait Medal from the Saudi Ambassador in London, but pictured with Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in the first Gulf War, Sir Peter de la Billiere. Of course, the picture is now currently unavailable, as it has been bought by someone in England - ummm I wonder who!



L-R; Senior Jane Morton (RAF), a WREN, Sir Peter de la Billiere (CiC of British Forces in 1st Gulf War) and Amanda Tillotson with Liberation of Kuwait medal

WALES & WEST

Babs Anderson

All is well on Planet Wales and the West Area. Our Branches continue to be busy little bees, regularly attending Branch meetings, going to the theatre, visiting many places of interest and of course, supporting WRAC Association events. We also have members meeting up informally more often for coffee or cocktails, sometimes giving themselves titles such as Worcester Coffee Branch and Shrewsbury Cocktails. It's a great idea, so let's do much more of that.

Our next big Area event is the AGM and Reunion to be held on Saturday 21 September 2019 in Newtown and hosted by Marches and Mid Wales Branch. It promises to be a joyous occasion. Look out for a group mug shot in Lioness 2020 Issue 1.

BIRMINGHAM

Babs Anderson

Brum Branch started off the year with the usual visit to the pantomime - Oh yes we did! Already we have booked our tickets for Snow White and hope to be seated in amongst the children so that we can shout out and nobody will turn a hair.

Shortly after the pantomime we found ourselves at the theatre again but this time to participate in Singalonga The Greatest Showman. If you've never done a Singalonga, please give it a go. It makes your heart sing.

Next up was a trip to the bowling alley along with loads of other silver headed people. Another good time was had with a decent lunch to boot. Our standard of play is improving so we'll soon be taking on, and beating, toddlers.

Branch member Pat Neale was a contestant on Tipping Point in February. Oh wait ... I don't think she wanted me to tell you that. Forget I said it will you?

Many of our members were able to attend the Grand Reunion in Southampton and the Reception in Guildford Cathedral. It was superbly organised and we all thoroughly enjoyed it. There will be loads of photographs of the occasion in this edition so there is no need for me to share any others with you at the moment.



Babs Anderson, Debbie Walkeden, Margaret Walkeden and Marg Davies



Pat Neale, Chris Fretwell, Marilyn Preece, Lord Mayor Yvonne Mosquito, Morag Hardie, Heather Gaughran and Sue Dolphin

Several Branches have invited us to join them for some of their events. We go along if we can and have a thoroughly good time. It's part of the WRAC Association ethos that we meet up and enjoy each other's company.

It was with great sadness that a group of us joined ATS girl, Gwen Smith's family to celebrate her life. She was 96 and a regular attender until ill health prevented her from travelling. We stayed in touch with her right up to shortly before her passing. She was a lovely lady and will be greatly missed by us all.

A small group of our members were invited to meet with the new Lord Mayor and have a bit of lunch. She was most welcoming and interested in what the girls had to say about their service life.

Marg Davies and I visited Margaret Walkeden (ATS) in deepest, darkest Wales, where she lives in a care home near to her daughter, Debbie. It was lovely to see her and spend time chatting and laughing. She hasn't been too well but is still ready with a smile. She enjoyed having her photograph taken, but she was a little confused by the whole selfie process. I'm going to need considerably longer arms if I take any more selfies with Marg Davies though.



Phyl Mattinson, Chris Fretwell, Wolfy Smith, Babs Anderson and Debbie Kay

Brum girls continue to hold Pizza Nights once a quarter. Sometimes there are loads of us and other times there might only be four. We love doing it though and will continue. We meet up on the second Wednesday of March, June, September and December - join us if you're in the area.

In June we were told that our meeting place, the Irish Centre, was to close imminently so I rushed around to find an alternative at very short notice. We found ourselves joining locals at the Bull Ring Tavern in the bar. They love us being there and join in with our raffle. It has become a symbiotic relationship, but it is a little bit snug. Then we found out that the Irish Centre wasn't to close just yet after all and had in fact got another year to go. What to do?!?!

Twenty odd members were able to make it to the WRAC Association Commemoration Day at the NMA in July. It wasn't quite as warm as last year but still required shedding of jackets. We had a lovely high tea in the newly opened conference centre and had plenty of refills for our tea pots. The NMA has become our second home and is proving to be an ideal venue.

A couple of days later we gathered again to see Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat at the theatre. We were lucky enough to be immediately behind a large school party who sang along, and we joined in. It was lovely to see their little faces, as they happily showed off that they knew all the words.

On 23 July our Branch President, Betty Webb, was the first to have her portrait painted whilst she was interviewed on stage by the author Tessa Dunlop, at the National Army Museum. If you haven't read *The Bletchley Girls* give it a shot; Betty is featured in it. The National Army Museum made us all very welcome and we had a great time listening to Betty and Tessa. It was most entertaining. The portrait was amazing and is to be hung in the NAM along with four others.

By the time you read this several Brum Branch, and a couple of hangers on, will have completed the York 10K. The annual fundraising event was to gather up enough funds this year to have the WRAC Statue made and installed at the NMA on the WRAC Association plot. We are all looking forward to the unveiling, even if we aren't particularly looking forward to the run itself. The pain will be worth it.

This year it has been noticeable that more of us are falling ill, requiring operations, having ongoing treatment and needing the support of our friends. Hopefully, we are heading into a fitter and healthier period and can get on with having a blooming good time.

Please feel free to join us at our meetings any time you're close by on the first Wednesday of the month at lunchtime.

Forward in comradeship.

CARDIFF **Debbie Amphlett**

Since the last issue of *Lioness*, we have moved our meeting venue to the Fox and Hounds in Whitchurch, and I think we all agree that is it a far nicer environment. We did not have meetings in December 2018, or January 2019, so we kicked off the New Year on Saturday 9th February. Eighteen of us met at our new meeting venue for our annual meal. We all learnt a little bit

more about each other that day, as we had an icebreaker where everyone had given me a fact that they did not think anyone would know about themselves. Each fact was read out and the others had to guess who it was. Would you be able to guess who supplied the following facts?

1. For my birthday I asked for, and got, a full Leeds United football strip complete with Billy Bremner endorsed football boots.
2. At the age of 9 I gave up ballet and took up the violin. By the age of 10 years 6 months I was lead violin in the school orchestra.
3. I once met President Clinton and shook his hand.
4. I climbed Annapurna 2 via the Thorung Pass at 18,000ft in the Himalayas
5. I worked at the Bonn Embassy in the 80's
6. My dad used to say I was the fastest girl in Wales ... and I still hold the National Record for Wales Schools Amateur Athletics Association 880yd Middle Girls.

In June, some members of Cardiff branch attended a meal in Port Talbot for Ex Servicewoman from all branches of the forces. There were 15 in attendance from Army, Navy and Air Force and it was great to hear stories of what it was like to serve in other branches of the Armed Forces and new friends were made. The get-together was arranged via a new Facebook group called 'South Wales Ex Service Women' set up by Cardiff Branch members, Kath Smith and myself.

July saw our annual bowling competition. Eight of us met at Tenpin in Nantgarw for the event which, as always, was very competitive. It was lovely to see new members attending, and I must also mention the winner who was on fire and bowled superbly on the night. Congratulations 'me'. In truth I think it was more down to other factors like last year's winner being on holiday. Thank you for giving me a chance, Marg Davies. Bring on next year's competition.



Thank you to everyone who has attended the meetings and events, and thank you Barbara Davies and Lynda Armstrong for supplying the photographs.

The Cardiff branch informal meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Fox and Hounds, Old Church Road, Whitchurch, Cardiff, CF14 1AD, unless there is a special event arranged. If you would like to join us please feel free to contact me either by email on wrac.cardiff.branch@gmail.com or via the WRAC Cardiff Branch Facebook group.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Ann Stack

Monica Parrott, our very own Chelsea Pensioner, began the Gloucestershire WRAC Branch in 2015 and launched our Facebook Group. You did us proud Monica, and from our first meeting of 5 Veteran WRAC's, we now average around 15 ladies at our meet-ups, with 40 members on our Facebook site and a few that we connect with via email. Our service to the Corps dates from the early 60's onwards and we have various trades represented which include Drivers, RMP's, Admin, Clerks and Royal Signals but of course, first and foremost, we were WRAC's!

We've been a busy Branch this year both in the Shire and outside and have enjoyed a variety of experiences and activities. Two of our ladies had the privilege of attending the Chelsea Pensioners Founder's Day where Prince Harry took the Inspection. They had the opportunity to tour around The Royal Hospital and to meet the wonderful Veterans who live there.

Some of our members journeyed to Southampton for The WRAC Grand Reunion and to Guildford Cathedral for the Royal Reception celebrating the WRAC Association Centenary.

A handful of us took part in the 10K run in York to raise money for The WRAC Statue, and we survived to tell the tale with just a twinge here and there.

Lastly, one of our ladies was chosen to have her portrait painted and it will be displayed in The National Army Museum as part of The Rise of The Lioness Exhibition, which celebrates the role of women in The British Army. What an honour!



Pauline Milnes NAM

Within Gloucestershire we were invited to participate in Gloucester Armed Forces Day. What a fabulous day it was and three new members to the WRAC Association were recruited as they passed by our stall. We marched with the Regulars and Veteran's through the streets of Gloucester to the beat of The Royal Marine's Band. How proud we all felt, and what a wonderful reception we were given by the people of Gloucester. That same weekend we were hosted by The NHS Veteran's Covenant Trust in Sandford Park, Cheltenham, where a light lunch and entertainment by The Military Wives Choir from Innsworth was provided to recognise our Service. We joined some dignified and very smart WWII Veterans as well as the Royal British Legion Riders Branch.



Gloucester Cathedral March 2019



Armed Forces Day Gloucester June 2019

So, what do we do when we're not participating in big events? We meet up about four times a year and in the past we've toured historic Gloucester Cathedral, visited Batsford Arboretum and our next trip will include a Boat Trip along The River Severn. The one thing that never changes is that we always have a delicious lunch as well as lots of chatter, smiles and laughter. A warm welcome is awaiting those joining us for the first time, so come along and be part of Gloucestershire Branch WRAC.

Ann Stack
email:fran.f@btopenworld anndewsnip@hotmail.com
Facebook Group: Gloucestershire Branch WRAC

HEREFORD Lynda Armstrong

December 2018 and Hereford Branch were lucky enough to have been invited to a Christmas Lunch held in Worcester by The Not Forgotten Association. Eight of us were in attendance and we had the most fabulous day.



NFA Christmas lunch

As in previous years, January brought Hereford Branch plus friends, together for their Post-Christmas lunch at The Greenman, Fownhope. Members from other WRAC Branches and also some members from The Worcester and Sherwood Foresters Association joined us.



Branch post-Christmas lunch

The month of February brought a large group of us together at Queenswood Park, to celebrate the life of the late Peggy Rose, where 2 memorial benches were erected in her name. Mary Woollard has been instrumental in getting these benches made - thank you Mary, they look brilliant and Peggy would be so proud to see them erected in the park where we hold our annual picnic.



Peggy Rose's Memorial Bench, Queenswood Park

We then gathered again for yet another Post-Christmas Lunch, this time in Cardiff with Debbie Amphlett and the ladies of Cardiff Branch. Lots of laughs while enjoying a meal. A few of us hung around after the meal to watch Wales play, and win, against Italy in the 6 Nations Rugby. The end to a perfect day.

Like everyone else, March brought us our Grand Reunion weekend in Southampton. What an outstanding time we all had. From the Friday Guildford Cathedral Reception through to The Drumhead Service on the Sunday Morning, everything went amazingly well. So much fun seeing some of the fancy dress costumes of famous Women through the past century.



**GR'19 Friday
Fancy-dress**



On a much sadder note we lost one of our ATS ladies in April, Mrs Vera Denning. Vera was 97 years young and was extremely proud of her time in service. She attended as many of our WRAC functions as she possibly could. She will be a great loss to our Branch.



Vera Denning's funeral

In May a few of us went to The Royal Arms, Llangrove to their 1st All Services Veterans Day. An excellent turn out from Branch's across all Services, both male and female. A very nice lunch was provided, and it was a great day all round; there will be more I'm sure. A few of us also put away our fear of heights and did the 'Go Ape' rope lines and zip wires. It was hilarious and we all completed it in about two and a half hours when it's meant to take only one and a half - mind you we aren't getting any younger. What's next I ask myself?



At Cardiff post-Christmas lunch, Llangrove



Jane Griffin-Ash and The Worcester Ladies



Jo Foster & Tracy Loftus in Ludlow



Walking in / on Snowdon

Our Branch member Jane Griffin-Ash has set up a WRAC Worcester Group to possibly meet up for a chat and coffee. If anyone is interested in joining them on any of their meetings, then please feel free to make contact with her either on their group FB page, 'Worcestershire WRAC Group' or alternatively you can contact Jane on 07880732245 or email her at janebash@hotmail.co.uk.

The start of June saw Jo Foster and Tracy Loftus parading our Branch Standard, and Cleve Hill Royal British Legion Standard, at Ludlow to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the D Day landings.

'The Hereford Branch Ramblers' took on many 'Monday' walks, from along The River Wye, up The Malvern Hills, across Much Marcle Ridges, amongst many others and culminating in June at Snowdon; the latter organised perfectly by Jo Foster. The Paths we decided to attempt was to go up 'The Pyg Track' and come down 'The Miners Track.' The weather wasn't in our favour sadly and the very low cloud and very cold conditions prevented us from getting to the summit, but never mind, an excuse to do 'Snowdon the Return' in the near future.

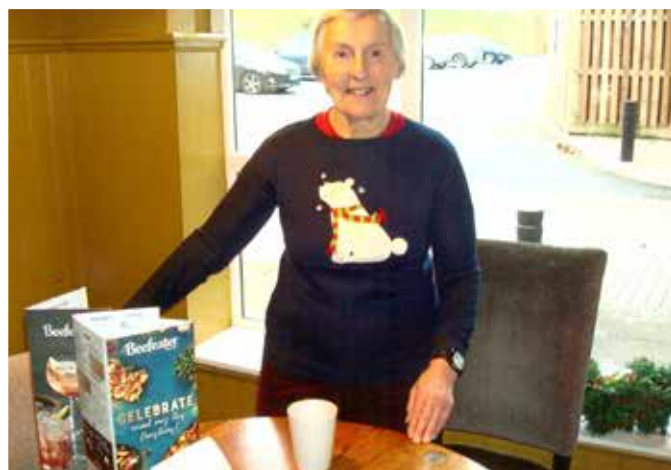
Coming up in July, we will be holding our annual Summer Veterans Lunch and this year it will coincide with the 30th Year of the formation of Hereford Branch WRAC, so we will be raising a glass or two in thanks to our founder members. Also coming up in August, we will be holding our annual picnic in Queenswood Park. We are then hoping to organise a day trip in September, destination yet to be confirmed.

OXFORDSHIRE **Christine Townsend**

We are a happy group of ladies always looking for new faces. We meet at the Littlebury Hotel in Bicester on the second Saturday of alternate months at 1230 for lunch and a chat. Anyone who is interested in further details call Christine Townsend (secretary) on 07756681441.

PHOENIX **Sheila Johnson**

On 15 December 2018, as planned, Branch members met at the Beefeater Inn, next door to Telford Railway Station, for our Christmas Lunch. Those attending included members' family and friends plus similar guests from nearby Branches, eg Shropshire. Several wore Christmas jumpers, which added much colour to the gathering. 'Secret Santa' (albeit unseen!) clearly approved as everybody received a seasonal gift.



At the beginning of 2019 Janet Edwards resigned as Branch Secretary. The Chairman and Branch members expressed their gratitude for Janet's work and out of necessity Maggie Purkis doubled her efforts until a replacement could be found. Not long after the Grand Reunion in March, Angie Stanford-Barclay took up the post of Branch Secretary and will be assisted, as and when required, by Sandy Stanford-Barclay. We wish them success and thank them for agreeing to take on this important role.

In July 2019 the Branch learned that our ex-ATS member Millie Power had been hospitalised (Millie moved into a Residential Home in February 2019). Happily, her stay in hospital did not have to be prolonged. When I visited Millie, she said she was happy in the Home and was looking forward to being discharged from hospital - this happened on 18th July. We wish Millie well, together with her family members who visit the Home on a regular basis.

The WRAC Lionesses' Annual 10k Run takes (took) place on 4th August. Phoenix branch have entrants for this, but plan to 'walk' rather than run the course!

Best wishes to all Branches.

SHROPSHIRE **Ali McGowan**

Once again Greetings from the Shire.

Shropshire Branch resumed their monthly meetings in February this year and almost immediately began their plans for the biggest party of the year (nay Decade even), the Grand Reunion in Southampton in March. We had a large enough contingent from our Branch to organise a coach to take us there and back. What a wonderful time we all had; two of our members, Chris Powell and Mel Howel, were lucky enough to be presented to Her Royal Highness, The Countess of Wessex at Guildford Cathedral. We met up with old friends, met new ones and even managed to gain new members for the Branch. The photo is of us all waiting to get on the bus to the Reception at Guildford Cathedral and you will be pleased to note that most people got the memo about wearing navy!



Ready for GR'19 Cathedral Reception

We did not hold our usual Annual Post Christmas lunch this year seeing as our Branch Secretary was celebrating a significant Birthday in January so, instead, we decided to organise a spring event, aptly named May Mayhem. This was held in the Beaconsfield Club in Shrewsbury and we were happy to welcome members from the Birmingham, Chester and Phoenix branches to the lunch. As usual the food was excellent and the company even better.

June saw us organising a charity event at the Beaconsfield Club. We held a Table Top sale in support of the fundraising appeal to raise £1.5 million to build a dedicated Veterans Orthopaedic Centre that will be the first of its kind in the UK and will be based at the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital in Oswestry. A massive thanks to Sue Jackson and Sheila Murphy for their time and effort put into this which has resulted in a fantastic amount of over £1,800 pounds being raised and the money is still coming in. This will be handed over to Col. Carl Meyer and his team when all the money is in.



It's been a year for Birthdays and July was the birthday of our Nancy (Annie Tipton). She hasn't been well lately and not able to attend our meetings at all this year. It was decided that we would not let her birthday go by uncelebrated, so Chris and Mel picked her up a couple of days beforehand and took her for what she thought was a cup of coffee. Unbeknown to her other members of the branch had assembled at the Beaconsfield Club and Nancy was treated to lunch and cake. She absolutely loved it and was so happy to be with everyone again, she said she felt as though she had come home.



Nancy's birthday

WORCESTER **Jane Griffin-Ash**

Hereford Branch member Jane Griffin-Ash has set/is setting up a new WRAC Worcester Group to possibly meet up for a chat and coffee. If anyone is interested in joining them on any of their meetings, then please feel free to make contact with Jane either on their group FB page, 'Worcestershire WRAC Group' or, on 07880732245, or email her at janebash@hotmail.co.uk.

EAST MIDLANDS **Cathy Munro MBE**

Another busy six months for the East Midlands Area (EMA). Our new Branches in Bradford, North Lincolnshire & East Riding, and Grantham are now fully established and enjoying regular outings which, in turn, have been encouraging many new potential members to make that effort to find out more and join us. These fledgling branches, along with our more established ones, are certainly highlighting our presence on the East Midlands map, especially in places where we did not have a prominent footprint before. A great team effort by all our Branch Secretaries.

The new improved infrastructure for HQ-EMA has now been set up with close liaison between the EMA Coordinator, Branch Secretaries, individual members, social media and local groups (not least Veterans Breakfast Clubs). The email distribution lists and Facebook pages have been created for each Branch, all being linked to the main HQ Group so, whilst we are still a work in progress, we are certainly moving forward at a fast rate of knots. If you would like to be added to our distribution list then please send an email to: eastmidland.area@wracassociation.org.uk

The setup of a HQ-East Midlands Branch has given our area a focal point which has shown great success in bringing in more members, primarily those who felt somewhat isolated as they did not have a home branch near to where they lived. The HQ-EMA Branch gives direct access to information about key WRAC Association reunions, ballots and local events, and hopefully we can encourage more to join us, (whether that be virtually via social media or physically, even if only for the AGM once a year). If unsure why not break the ice via our social media groups or our newly formed Pen Pal project prior to attending an event?

THE EMA family are certainly working closely together and the continued dedication and enthusiasm shown by everyone will, we hope, give the breakthrough needed to encourage more "Enlistments" from not only Veterans but also serving soldiers from both Regular, Local Reserve and Cadet Units. Our next targeted campaign will be Sheffield, Doncaster and York, having identified a huge network of WRAC Veterans who currently attend local breakfast clubs. Are you interested in joining us?

Additionally, and more importantly, we are thrilled to have had WRAC Association Mention in Dispatches awarded to two of our wonderful ATS Ladies of the Leicester & Notts Branch. Doris Doswell and Doris White have served in key roles within the Leicester and Notts Branch WRAC Association for over 120 years combined service. They are a credit to the Area and we are looking forward to Col (Ret'd) Ali Brown, Vice President of the WRAC Association, presenting them with their much-deserved awards at the Centenary Lunch due to be held in August in Leicester. (Citations printed within this edition of the Lioness).



**Bradford Branch – Mrs Pat Barker
and Area Co-ord Cathy Munro MBE**

Onwards and upwards and as we continue to head well into this, our 100th year of the Association. We hope to maintain the fabulous turn out at WRAC Association Events not least the Grand Reunion, the Rededication Ceremony at the NMA and many international, national and local ceremonies all of which have seen the EMA Branch Standards paraded with great pride. As an Area Coordinator I am exceptionally proud to be a part of such a fabulously proactive team, we couldn't do what we are doing without everyone playing their part.

If you would like more details on Branches within the East Midlands Area, or would like to form a new Branch then give us a shout at HQ-EMA – eastmidland.area@wracassociation.org.uk – I look forward to welcoming you home.

DERBY Judy Smith

Derby Notts branch meet every month on a Saturday lunchtime, at a venue selected by the majority. Everyone is welcome to join us and can contact Judy Smith; if you are not already a member of our Facebook page please let me know. Our numbers are growing all the time and good times are had by all. Please feel free to join us.



Enjoying Armed Forces Day

EAST RIDING & NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE Roberta Grant

Lionesses, just a look back at what can only be described as a fantastic start for this new Branch. We took a vote to take our unofficial catch-up club to the next level and formerly become an official Branch of the WRAC in November 2018 and since we have gone from strength to strength.

Our program of events for 2019 had us getting the New Year off to a great start with a visit to the Escape Rooms in Hull. We all managed to escape to a local restaurant to welcome more new members.



**Guildford Cathedral 2019 (1) – Mr and Mrs martin
Freeth, Madge Cole, Cathy Munro MBE
and Pauline Milne**



March was dominated by the WRAC Grand Reunion in Southampton.

Some of us also went to see our very own Hazel Richings in an amazing play Turning the Tide about the women of Hessel Road and their fight for improved safety for trawler men.

April, we gathered for lunch at The Kings Head in Beverley. We also helped Allison Pietras celebrate being married for 40 years to her ex RMP husband.

May, we ventured across the Humber and enjoyed lunch with some of our ladies who live across the water. Some of us also enjoyed an overnight trip to Scunthorpe for the wedding of the year - Angie Wardle & Mark. A beautiful bride.



June was our time to let the inner child spill out and off to Bridlington we did go. An absolutely amazing day and for a while sailed the North Sea under the Jolly Roger, celebrating that we are all landlubbers at heart.



We have more events planned for the next 6 months. In July some of us are going to the Arboretum to celebrate 100 years of the WRAC. August the branch are planning to support the WRAC Association 10k race in York. We will be going on the train and making the day of it. September, Sunday 1st, we will have lunch (possible venue is Wetherspoon's in Beverley). October is Dinner Club in Nottingham. Any newcomers who are interested please contact the branch via Facebook page titled East Riding and North Lincolnshire WRAC. November see's Remembrance Sunday with our branch planning local attendance along with London. December is party time. Wreath making on the 1st December and this year we are having our Christmas function at Willerby Manor on Friday 20th December.

As the branch covers a large area we are all committed to having our activities in a variety of locations so that the travelling is as fair as possible.

On the whole our branch is diverse and interesting. We can pull up a sandbag or two while recognising our common links of past service but also continue as women supporting each other in the future.

GRANTHAM Louise Davies

We have had several fab meet ups for a meal. As per usual, we go to a different restaurant each month so all tastes will be catered for. Such a laugh. We always have a poem, and sometimes two, from the very lovely Val O'Dell. One lovely thing that has happened is a very new member called April Guildford. She has become much loved and lodges with Sue Goodes. Her Aunt, Val O'Dell, was her founder! Here she is at her first meeting.



New member 'April Guildford'



We have also been lucky enough to have had a couple of trips out. The first was the WRAC Grand Reunion in Southampton. Such a fantastic weekend. Lots of ladies, lots of noise and lots of photos. Unfortunately, we were unable to go to Guildford but attended everything else. I can't pick out a best bit as all were as great as the other. I personally, though, really enjoyed the service on Sunday. Some of the fancy dress (Friday night) was a sight to behold!!



Several of us went to the Re-dedication of the WRAC Plinth at The National Memorial Arboretum. What a lovely day that was. Lots of Lionesses; lots of sun and lots of laughs, and some sadness.



From left to right are Lou Davies, Pip Flegel, Sue Goodes and Elaine Frampton. I do have to say that Pip is an interloper from the Manchester Branch but she was staying with me for the weekend lol

A more poignant photo from the day is Sue standing at the wall by the name of her late husband Andy. She also laid flowers for him.



LEICESTERSHIRE & NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Sue Slattery

2018 ended with Christmas lunch attended by 26 members and 10 guests, as usual fine food and drink and our resident Santa Claus, Maurice, with his sack of gifts.

2019 - sadly this year our meeting numbers have declined, mainly due to mobility and health problems, which means our ATS ladies struggle to travel to be with us. Ann Atkinson was admitted to a care home last November; Doris Doswell and Doris White are now both in care homes permanently, both of these ladies were founder members of the branch since the early fifties. We thank you both for the loyal support that you have given to our branch over many years. We hope to see all three of you at some time in the future.

January: We discussed the forthcoming meetings and events for this year. Cakes were provided by Jessie on her birthday and flowers and cards were given to Lilian on her ninety second birthday.

February: Sandra Smith read out the history of our branch going back many years, great details of memories and friendships that have continued to this day, remembered, kept and written by Doris Doswell. What a memory she still has to be able to recall all that happened at each branch meeting since 1955!! Dare I suggest that the branch may continue for another 64 years(HA HA). Flowers and cards were sent to Teresa Neal on her ninety fifth birthday. Debbie (pink hair) arranged for the green token scheme at Asda Fosse Park to include our branch, and what a surprise when Debbie presented us with a cheque for £200 - many thanks Debbie.

March: Well we should have had a beetle drive, but with so many events and activities to discuss the beetle had to wait. Sadly this month eight branch ladies attended the funeral of Phil Bates, another member of many years who passed away on the 12th of February. Flowers and cards were sent to Vi Rawlins on her ninety third birthday. Debbie then asked the ladies if we would like to fund raise at Asda Fosse Park, where she works. Following a positive response, the date was set for Saturday August 3rd, so buckets at the ready, who knows we may even attract some new members for our Association. Finally this month eight members met up with other branches in Southampton for our Grand Reunion. The biggest attendance yet at this event saw just over 400 ladies at our Gala dinner - so many new faces and even Gus, our dog, joined the parade on Sunday as our mascot and carried our Association badge proudly on his coat. Thanks to our HQ for all their hard work.

April: This month we planned to play a game of dominoes but many ladies were missing and more events to sort out - yes, you've guessed it, no dominoes. One or two of the ladies even suggested that the secretary talks to much!! Recently Doris White (Chairman) was admitted to hospital following a few falls at home and as a result, she is now permanently in a care home as previously mentioned.

May: Sandra Smith began to read out the military service of Doris Doswell, but she only managed to read half of this story from her time spent in both the ATS and WRAC; as soon as time permits we will hear the second half of this story. We always change our meeting day this month and take the opportunity to have lunch at the local Wetherspoon - enjoyed by 14 ladies. Both Ellie and Jessie have had reasons to visit hospitals, they seem to be on the mend and back in the fold.

The branch was presented with a portrait of the late Joan De'Vall, which was painted by one of her friends, veteran John Bailey. Along with the framed portrait three other prints were given to us and branch members suggested we give the framed portrait to Joan's daughter, one to her best friend Ann Atkinson and the third one to the Thurmaston branch of the RBL, of which Joan was a member for many years.

June: Our bring and buy raised £50 this month, and Doris Doswell was able to visit us at the meeting. Events this month included 4 ladies visiting the Royal Chelsea Hospital on Founders day; a narrowboat trip from Loughborough to Mountsorrel for a lunch at the Waterside pub enjoyed by 18 ladies and 5 guests; Armed Forces Day service and parade in Leicester, where our standard and 5 ladies took part; and finally the flag raising service at County Hall attended by our standard and 6 ladies.



Canal boat trip (& lunch 18th June)

Lilian spent the day in hospital for eye surgery; we wish her a speedy recovery and hope she is soon back with us.

It was with great sadness that our chairman wrote a letter to us saying that now she is in a care home and requires a wheelchair she feels it would be very difficult for her to make any meetings or events so she feels it is time to resign her chairmanship. What could we say in response to someone who has given over 60 years service to our branch, except a huge "thank you for your help and support, and all our best wishes for the future. We will all miss you. For me, as the branch secretary during the past 10 years, it has been a special pleasure, Doris, having you by my side". Five of us joined Doris and her family at the care home on her 96th birthday, we presented her with flowers and cards from the branch and enjoyed her cake and a tipple to wash it down. Three ladies visited Ann Atkinson in her care home, taking flowers and cards, to celebrate her 92nd birthday.

July: Peter Cousins gave a very interesting talk called Tommy's Mail about the letters and parcels which made it to men on the front line in WW1. The branch received a donation from the estate of the late Phil Bates who passed away in February.

Finally this month, our standard and 15 ladies went to the NMA for our Association Centenary Commemoration service followed by afternoon tea. Once again, the weather was kind to us, fine and warm. Thanks to HQ for all their hard work to put this together for us.

We now look forward to the rest of the year, which will include our branch Centenary lunch.

Our best wishes to you all.

LINCOLN & DISTRICT **Jo Worsdall**

Our members continue to meet each month at St Mary le Wigford Church in Lincoln (next to Lincoln Rail and bus Station); please drop in if you are nearby, you would be very welcome to join us for lunch, cuppa and a chat (third Tuesday of every month).

We enjoyed our Annual Anniversary Lunch at Branston Hall in April. As ever the food was delicious and the company lovely. Thanks to all who provided exciting raffle prizes. A wonderful afternoon was had by all.



Anniversary lunch, Branston Hall



A sad farewell to a valued member, Ella Reast, who always has a smile. We hope to see you soon at our next event and we will miss you!



Ella

Sue Smith and Beryl MacEwan attended Newark Armed Forces Day and managed to meet the local MP Robert Jenrick.



Sue & Beryl with MP

Jo Worsdall was invited to bring the Standard along to the Spilsby Show with Barbara Chandler to parade with the Royal British Legion Standards. It was a lovely afternoon, including being treated to a VIP Lunch.

Please drop in and say hello if you are in Lincoln on the third Tuesday of the month (1200-1400hrs), we always have tea and coffee on the go!



Barb & Jo at Spilsby show

LINCOLNSHIRE Sue Beevers

After failing to arrange a Christmas party due to family commitments this group of ex WRAC decided to celebrate it in July instead. Ably assisted by the wonderful staff at The Carre Arms in Sleaford (who provided both crackers and Christmas pudding) a good time was had by all.



Linda Hilton; Sue Beevers; Martha Lamb; Jan Burchett-Vass; Jenny Quirk; Karen Smith; Mary Faver



Linda Hilton, Jan Burchett-Vass and Jenny Quirk enjoying their Christmas pudding

We are a very informal group, some still working and with school age children, so gatherings are irregular but always chatty and fun; children are always welcomed too! All of us live in the Lincolnshire area and we meet in different locations to share the travelling onus between us. If anyone would like to join us (sometimes lunch, sometimes supper) please email Mary@faver.plus.com or Suebeever@btinternet.com.

PETERBOROUGH & DISTRICT Dot Ryder

Since the last report Peterborough & District branch is meeting regularly; we have several new members but some are still working so do not always attend our meetings and events. We enjoyed a Christmas lunch in December at the Ramblewood Inn where 14 members attended.



In February we had planned a cinema visit, unfortunately the films showing were not that exciting so we enjoyed afternoon tea with fun and laughter at a local garden centre and agreed we would do it again.



In early March some of the branch members helped Thelma Milton celebrate her 70th birthday, it was a great evening with frivolity and dancing until late.

Thelma Wilton

Some members attended the Grand Reunion in Southampton and joined in with Leicester Branch, where again we enjoyed the occasion and meeting new and old friends.



At Grand Reunion, Southampton

In May the branch again met for an unplanned get together where we had tea; and then 4 of us decided we would have a game of mini crazy golf and it was crazy as it rained, but we were determined to play on as all good sports Lionesses do, even though everyone else ran for cover.





EASTERN
Wendy Hooton
Area Co-ordinator
wendyhootonski@aol.com

Much is the same in Eastern Area.

CAMBRIDGE - The ladies are still meeting up for lunches occasionally.

CHELMSFORD - The last gathering was the Christmas lunch. Gina Shadrack who runs the branch is in poor health. I will be visiting Gina shortly.

HERTS/BEDS/BUCKS - The ladies are meeting quarterly, taking it in turns to organise lunches. A date for a Christmas lunch is already in the diary.

COLCHESTER - This branch is very active with Kerry Warnes at the helm. They have had some very successful events during the year. Seaside Havoc on the beach at Clacton on Sea is always well attended. Their Christmas party date is in the diary.

NORFOLK - Lyn Hatch rounds up the ladies for some interesting and varied social gatherings. Tour of Westminster, trips on the Norfolk Broads and lunches. A Christmas lunch date is in the diary.

SUFFOLK - Since the passing of the Secretary Sheelagh Wilson, the ladies aren't meeting up regularly as before. I will visit the Chairman Sylvia Johnson shortly and hopefully get the few members for a lunch.

A fabulous day was had on Armed Forces Day in Bury St Edmunds [Editor – see Events pages for more details and photos].

Eastern Area lunch is on Saturday 31st August @ the Pegasus Club, Colchester. Distance and travelling is a problem for most but we have approximately 20 ladies attending.

CAMBRIDGE
Jean Farrington

Closing our Cambridge branch in January this year was a very sad feeling, having been a founder member in the late 1970s, treasurer for last 30 years, and going from a membership, at one time, of 88 down to 4. Not all came to monthly meetings; averaged low 20s, with raffles, bring and buy, bingo etc. A healthy branch, so could subsidise trips to Grand Reunion, Remembrance day, various occasions at Guildford, including opening of the Museum with HM Queen Mother. Dabs Brook drove 4 of us doing 90 mph at times; not many months before that she'd had a heart attack!

We enjoyed monthly birthday meals with flowers - expensive if more than one in a month. Christmas dinner another highlight of the year to dress up for. Donations to WRAC courses as well.

Dabs Brook was chairman. Avril Williams secretary. Many of our WRAC ladies had served with Dabs; someone you don't forget. Avril took over as chair/secretary and kept us going as long as possible.

We still meet up for coffee or meal occasionally, and join in with Norfolk and Peterborough when possible.

PS 4 of us had a great time at Southampton, despite the Fire Alarm!

COLCHESTER & DISTRICT
Dawn Amey and Heather Savin

Afraid we need to start our first submission with some sad news; one of our members Patricia "Stevie" Wiles passed away in January at the grand age of 93. Several members of the branch acted as a guard of honour at her funeral and the ceremony closed to the sound of Tina Turner's Simply the Best, which brought a smile to our faces. Further details of Stevie's amazing life can be found in Obituaries – Their Final Salute.

Following our AGM in April we have a new secretary – Jackie Smith - with us (Dawn and Heather) composing items for the Lioness. Kerry Warnes remains at the helm as our amazing chairperson.

Now on to a brief resume of the past few months. A great time was had by all at our Christmas Dinner that took place on 8th December at the Best Western Claydon Country House Hotel. There was a good turnout with some excellent festive outfits on display. It was slightly quieter at breakfast!



Christmas lunch 2018

We continue to support the local Veterans Breakfast on the third Sunday of the month, this gives a chance for a good catch up whilst partaking of a bacon butty.

Members of the branch headed to London to participate in the Million Veterans March on 19th April and again at the BBC Centre on 11th May. We met up with several Lionesses from around the country whilst supporting a good cause.



Million Veteran March 2019

The branch was invited to join the parade in Colchester on Armed Forces Day. We marched alongside cadets and assorted fellow veterans. It just happened to be on the hottest day of the year!

Well, it was sun and sea and no A&E for our 2019 Seaside Havoc outing on 21st July. Plenty turned up, including Stevie's wonderful daughter, Yvonne who gifted the branch a most beautiful 'Stevie Trophy' to be presented to the winning Tug of War team each year. As many of you know, even at the young age of 93, Stevie was an avid participant in all our games at Seaside Havoc but she mostly enjoyed putting her back into the Tug of War, usually sitting down and holding on for dear life. She was sorely missed this year, but she was with us in spirit and Yvonne took her place. She did not let her mother's memory down, managing to pull with her team, to win the trophy. The event grows in size each year and people come from all over the country to participate in all the fun. Thanks go to Vinnie and Kerry for the organization, including the beach hut. With further thanks to Jenny, our photographer. We hope to see more turn up next year and should you come from afar, beds will be made available. For more photos please look up WRAC/ATS Colchester and District Branch.



Seaside Havoc 2019

NORFOLK Lyn Hatch

Here in Norfolk it has been very a busy start to 2019.

In February we had a trip to London, starting off with a tour of the Houses of Parliament arranged by Pepi Simpson, her husband Keith, one of our local MP's, waiting to greet us as we arrived. It is an amazing place steeped in history and tradition; so much to see and to absorb in just a few hours. Once the tour was over we jumped on the tube and headed for the Imperial War Museum. Our day finished off with a meal and the chance to rest some weary legs before catching the train home.

On 8th March a few of us, at the invitation of Norwich City Football Club, joined other veterans to parade at half time at the Norwich v Swansea match, made special as it was also International Women's Day. The highlight of the evening was escorting Joan Awbery, Community Champion for the match as she placed the ball on the plinth just before kick-off. What a reception she got, and it was lovely for her to share this special night with her granddaughter.



L-R: Lynda Oldfield, Pam Malcolm, Sheila Crowe, Carol Larkins, Lyn Hatch, Annette Jackson and Katrina Nobbs

Later in March we travelled to Southampton via Guildford for the Grand Reunion. Heading first to Guildford Cathedral for the Royal Reception, for some the first time they had been back since their training. Onto Southampton for the start of the celebrations and a chance to catch up with old friends. A wonderful weekend had by all.

Early in May a short Memorial Service was held at the Burlington Hotel, Great Yarmouth for the members of the ATS that lost their lives when their accommodation took a direct hit from a German bomb. Once again it great to be able to support our ATS members (Joan and Meg) in commemorating this event.

Founders Day at the Royal Hospital Chelsea 6th June - Mary Rezekle, Sheila Crowe, Linda Graver and myself had a fabulous day.

NORTHERN Lesley Roberts

At the Association's Council meeting in July, Lesley reported: "that the Lord Lieutenant of Durham will be inviting the Association to play a prominent part in the 9th November Remembrance commemorations, when they hope to accommodate as many WRAC as possible". Contact Lesley Roberts about this Durham Cathedral event in November: northern.area@wracassociation.org.uk

CLEVELAND Hazel Adamson

Cleveland Branch is still ticking over. We only meet every other month now, to cut the costs of the room hire. We still try and arrange to meet for lunch elsewhere on the free month. Since the last report we have held our Christmas lunch at the 6 Medals.

February, we held our annual auction - few pennies raised to help us fund some of the outings. March, 4 ladies attended the Grand Reunion in Southampton - Jenny Severn, Chris Minns, Pam Ashenden and Wendy Wall. April enjoyed a fish and chip dinner in Olivers restaurant at Redcar.

May we went to the Dressers Tea Rooms that is situated within the Dorman Museum. We enjoyed an afternoon tea, which was very nice and all had catch up. Couple of ladies attended the Not Forgotten Association Garden Party - Jenny Severn and Morag Lippe - which they enjoyed very much. This year was the first year for a while that we did not have a stall for Armed Forces Day - we are finding it difficult to set up as all getting on a bit; we will have to try and find some younger members.

Our Standard Bearer Anne Mahony is still going strong. In May she was at Blackpool with the Standard, with the RA, for their annual AGM. There she met Colin Thackery, the Chelsea Pensioner who won Britain's got Talent. (photo attached)

We have now got our August outing to look forward to.

Our Chair lady, Jan Williams Landess, has decided to step down as she does not feel up to it at the moment. Suzanne Allan as kindly stepped in to her shoes.



Redcar outing, L-R: Wendy Wall, Judith Gallagher, Jenny Severn, Chris Minns - back, Audrey Grainge. Pam Ashenden -Back, Pearl Cawley. Maxine Lane. Front Connie Meakins and Suzanne Allan - kneeling.



Anne Mahony & Colin Thackery



Jenny Severn



**Chris Minns
& Pam Ashenden**

LEEDS Irene Jones and Jayne Maitland

The year started well, following on from the festive season, with afternoon tea planned with four ATS ladies. But due to the bad weather the ladies postponed until the summer. Not wanting to waste the booking, or think about their waist lines, Ann, Michelle, Krysia and Irene decided to have a dry run testing cakes and sandwiches in anticipation for another event later in the year. A good day was had by all.

Later in January Irene arranged a one-hour private gym session at the Movement Hub with Reflexology sessions followed again by cakes, smaller ones this time ... I think there is a theme going on with the branch members! There was a great turn out of Ann, Annie, Ruth, Michelle, Jayne, Krysia, Lynda, Irene with Juliette unfortunately missing reflexology due to being double booked. Everyone had a great time, but there were some choice words the following day when muscles were letting people know about the stretching they had done.

Following on from the success of the Christmas hamper (Ruth did us proud with her creative skills and created a lovely hamper), she did her magic again and put together a lovely Easter hamper to raise money for branch funds.

The hamper was on display in the Leeds branch, of the Royal British Legion, with the draw taking place just in time for Easter.



Easter hamper

Grand reunion: In March we were well represented at the Grand Reunion in Southampton ... We had a ball catching up with friends from years ago and making new friends. I'm sure you've all seen some of the dodgy videos and photos, so you don't need to see them again!



At Grand Reunion 2019

Armed Forces Day – Leeds: After the success of our tombola stall last year, we decided to do it again, only bigger and better. We had loads of prizes donated and a few of the girls spent a day numbering prizes and folding raffle tickets. Who knew running a stall could be so stressful and nearly caused World War III over the numbering system! Luckily Michelle knew what she was doing and gave everyone the proper instructions (I'm still baffled by it all weeks later!). Anyway, it was more successful than last year and we raised over £300 for Branch Funds.

All in all we've had a fab few months and looking forward to many more social events during the second half of the year.



Leeds AFD



MANCHESTER

Jan Westfield (Jean Latham's daughter)

I have some other good news, I attended the first meeting of the greater Manchester Branch of the WRAC Association held on the 3rd Sunday, which was the 18th of November 2018, and was quite well attended. They will continue to meet each 3rd Sunday at 11am at Barton Areodrome - they have an area there called the Veterans Garage. They have agreed that they want it to be a social group rather than an official one and they were happy to open it in your Mum's honour.

Their next meeting is Sunday 16th December and they are having their Christmas Lunch there. It's a very sociable place so hopefully this will be the start of a very good group.

WIRRAL **Andrea Jenkins**



Dot Cheffings

They say time flies when you're having fun - well us Wirral ladies are having a lot of fun and can't believe 6 months has flown by. We have been eating out, going to the theatre, and we have laughed all the way.

We had sadness, as we lost one of our Wirral ladies, we said goodbye to Dot Cheffings, and we miss her at our meals and trips; I can still hear her laughing.

We had the Grand Reunion earlier this year in Southampton, and what a weekend that was; there a few things we will never forget - on arrival we did what everybody does and went to the bar, now I know down south things cost more, but £34 for 2 gin and tonics is a bit on the expensive side.



At Grand Reunion



**Sheila making friends
with the coach driver**

Going to the cathedral with all the ladies was fabulous, and an amazing place to see and spend time in. Another great day out getting to meet other ladies and make new friends. As per usual, our Sheila had to find herself in the sight of another man - seriously we can't take her anywhere.

One thing we can't forget is Jan falling out of bed, getting a black eye, and she did all this sober!!!

AYRSHIRE VETERANS BREAKFAST CLUB ... **Suzanne Fernando**

... enjoyed a welcome visit from the Scottish Veterans Minister Graeme Dey MSP and North Ayrshire Provost Ian Clarkson. Veteran Suzanne Fernando said: "I'd like to say a big thanks to Elaine at the The Melbourne cafe for opening up just for us, and to the lovely Emma at DMWS for arranging the visit. We had a great turn out and everyone had a lovely morning filled with tea, cakes and banter!"

The Veteran breakfast club meets every Monday morning in the Melbourne Cafe Saltcoats from 9.30, and every Saturday morning in The Carrick, Irvine. All services veterans (if you can cope with the banter), who turn up will be made welcome.



Thank you one and all for your contributions – they make great reading, and it is wonderful to see you all so active, busy and living up to Comradeship and Esprit de Corps. I love seeing (and reading) all your reports, and the photos, but could I just ask that you send your photos separate to your report text (preferably as attachments to the report email) – I struggle to copy some of the photos when they have been kindly inserted into a Word document report.

Editor

All Branch details are correct at time of going to press. 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.

NATIONAL & OVERSEAS

Band

When: The Band Branch is a national Branch and does not meet on a monthly basis.

If you have Band news for the Lioness send direct to Editor@WRACLioness

Griffin Branch

Griffin Branch is a virtual Facebook group primarily designed to unite those ex members of the WRAC who do not yet belong to the Association, or if they do already belong do not have a geographic branch to attend.

Contact: Cathy Munro MBE cathmunro@hotmail.com.

Tel: 01733 201231 (working hours)

Mobile: 07786 260988

Facebook page: WRAC Griffin Branch

Mediterranean

When: At least every 6 months or more - 2nd Wednesday of each month (from 12 September 2017)

Where: Albir Arms, Albir

Contact: Melanie Howell melphil@britvegas.com

Tel: 0034 9658 78963 Mob: 0034 622 036333

Perth (Australia)

Contact: Ann Page ann.page3@bigpond.com

Postal & Courier

No further WRAC Postal & Courier reunions are being organised

SOUTH & SOUTH WEST

Area Co-ordinator: Vacant

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: 12noon, 2nd Wednesday of the month, March, June, September and December

Where: Lynton Court Table restaurant (in Premier Inn), 47 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, BH1 3PA, for informal lunch

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: Judith Stinchcombe

Email: wracbristolbranch@mail.com Tel: 07837 455352

Isle of Wight

When: Bi-monthly

Where: Various venues around the Isle of Wight

Contact: Tracy Biddlecombe. Tel: 07980-673402 mobile or Email: tracyelizabeth@live.co.uk

New Forest

Contact: Madge Evans Tel 01425 620995

Plymouth

Contact: Jean Cundy-Borge on 01752 567844 or

Ruth Jennings on 01752 363118

Portsmouth

When: 10.30 1st Saturday of the month

Where: The Maritime Club, Queen's Street, Portsmouth

Contact: Sally Watson Tel: 02392 666712

Salisbury

When: Mixture of 'coffee meet-ups' during the day and Saturdays; and 4th Wednesday of the month.

Where: Contact Amanda Foster for details

Contact: Amanda Foster via email: SalisburyWRACVets@gmail.com; Facebook: WRAC Salisbury Branch; or Twitter: @SalisburyWRACVets.

If you prefer to phone contact HQ Office and we'll put you in touch.

Southampton

When: 19.00-21.30 on the 1st Wednesday of the month

Where: Eastleigh Working Mens Club, 18 Upper Market Street, Eastleigh, SO50 9FD

Contact: Jean Doe Tel 01794 523146

Swindon

When: 19.00, every 3rd Wednesday of the month

Where: RAFA Club, 41-43 Belle Vue Rd, Swindon, SN1 3HN

Contact: Sharon Bingham via email:

slbingham1@yahoo.co.uk or Tel: 07872 643776

Torquay

Contact: Pauline Marr Tel: 07787763779, alternatively email paulinemarr55@gmail.com.

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: sec.wrac.winchester@gmail.com

LONDON & SOUTH EAST

Area Co-ordinator: Nina Smith

Email: wracnina@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 07771-834-730

Canterbury

When: 13.00 on the first Wednesday of the month (except Jan, Feb, Mar)

Where: Newport Court, Cowdray Place, Old Dover Road,
Canterbury, CT1 3PB
Contact: Jenny Smith Tel: 01843 613552

Greater London

When: 14.00 on a Saturday in March, May, July
and September
Where: Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London
Contact: Chrissie Mills Tel: 020 8578 2715

Invicta (Kent)

When: 4th Saturday of each month
Where: Various (contact Karen Radford or view Facebook/
WRAC Invicta Branch)
Contact: Karen Radford (Chair)
email: mousemole@msn.com, or Jackie Elliman (Sec)

London

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

Worthing

When: 10.00 on the last Tuesday of the month (except
December)
Where: Lancing Parish Hall
Contact: Janet Goldsbrough-Jones Tel: 01903 207485

WALES & WEST MIDLANDS

Area Co-ordinator: Barbara Anderson

Email: babs.blay@gmail.com Tel: 07921 832094

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: Please phone Babs for details
Contact: Babs Anderson Tel 07921 832094

Cardiff

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month
Where: The Fox & Hounds, Old Church Rd, Whitchurch,
Cardiff, CF14 1AD (Please check via email or facebook
before attending in case date or venue has changed)
Contact: Debbie Amphlett on wrac.cardiff.branch@gmail.
com or the WRAC Cardiff Branch Facebook page

Colwyn Bay

When: Every Wednesday
Where: 22 Station Road, Colwyn Bay for lunch
Contact: Linda Goodier Tel: 07392729387;
Email: goodierlynda@yahoo.co.uk

Gloucestershire

If you are interested in joining Gloucestershire Branch, as
a member and/or at something ...
Contact: Ann Stack at anndewsnip@hotmail.com OR-
Frances Fairclough at fran.f@btopenworld.com or 07739
344846 and/or look them up at Facebook Group:
Gloucestershire Branch WRAC

Hereford

When: 19.00 on the last Tuesday of the month
Where: The Herdsman, 54 Widemarsh, Hereford,
HR4 9HG
Contact: Lynda Armstrong Tel: 01443 837592

Marches & Mid Wales

When: 3 - 4 times per year
Where: Location varies, phone for details
Contact: Carys Palmer Tel: 01588 640985

Oxfordshire

When: 2nd Saturday of alternate months, 12.30 for lunch
Where: Littlebury Hotel, Bicester
Contact: Christine Townsend Tel: 07756 681441

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

When: Every 3 months
Where: Phone for details
Contact: Maggie Purkis Tel: 01952 251717 or 07808
139543

Shropshire

When: 14.00 or 19.00 (alternates month by month) on the
1st Wednesday of the month (except December and
January). 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/Where: Meetings held monthly, location varies,
contact for more details
Contact: Mrs Pat Williams (Chairman) on pat@williams.cx,
or Marie Smedley (Secretary) on
marie.tamworth.branch@gmail.com

Worcester

If you are interested in joining a new WRAC Worcester
Group, to meet up for a chat and coffee, please contact
Jane Griffin-Ash via: 'Worcestershire WRAC Group'
Facebook group, Phone 07880732245 or email
janebash@hotmail.co.uk.

EAST MIDLANDS

Area Co-ordinator: Cathy Munro MBE

email: cathmunro@hotmail.com Tel: 07786 260988

Bradford

Contact: Lee Guthrie Tel: 07909 961188,
Email: Lee.guthrie@sky.com

Derby

Contact: Judy Smith at judy.hirst123@ntlworld.com
or phone 07790 848364.

Doncaster

Contact: Veronica Hanson Tel: 01226 714575

East Riding & North Lincolnshire

Contact: Dorothy Mitchelmore.
Tel: 07897449920 Email: mydeluxe06@icloud.com

Grantham

When: Monthly (usually a Thursday)
Contact: Lou Davies at tonymitz1@hotmail.co.uk

Hull & East Riding

When: The 1st Friday of the month
Where: Wenlock Barracks, Anlaby Road, Hull, HU3 6PB
Contact: Confirm details with Janet Mitchell Tel 01482
508087 or Janet Marshall Tel 01482 806799

Leicester & Nottingham

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

Lincoln & District

When: 12.00-14.00 on the 3rd Tuesday of the month
Where: St Mary-le-Wigford Church Hall, St Mary's Street, Lincoln, LN5 7EQ
Contact: Sue Smith. Tel: 01636-671874
Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/Lincoln&District

Lincolnshire

When: Very informal group, meeting as and when commitments allow.
Where: Different locations, to share travelling
Contact: by email Mary@faver.plus.com or Suebeever@btinternet.com.

Peterborough & District

Contact: Pam Sussex Tel: 01733 243944.
Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/groups/WRACPeterborough

Sheffield

When: 11.00 on the 1st Thursday of the month except January and August
Where: The Benjamin Hunstman (Wetherspoons), 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

EASTERN

Area Co-ordinator: Wendy Hooton

Email: wendyhootonski@aol.com Tel: 07775 505326

Cambridge

Contact: Jean Farrington 01223 503867;
Email - jeanfarrington62@gmail.com;
Facebook - Cambridge Branch WRAC Association
Please phone for when, where and what

Chelmsford

Contact: Georgina Shadrack Tel: 01245 251088
Please phone for when, where and what

Colchester

Contact: Kerry Warnes 07763122474;
Email - kerrypam@hotmail.com; Facebook- WRAC/ATS Veterans of Colchester and Surrounding Areas
Please phone for when, where and what

Herts/Bucks/Beds

Contact: Chris Barratt 01799 526671; Email - 78chrisbarrett@gmail.com; Facebook - WRAC/ATS (Herts, Beds, Bucks) Please phone for when, where and what

Norfolk

Contact: Lyn Hatch Tel: 07929 070665; email wracnorfolk@aol.com; Facebook: WRAC/ATS Veterans Norfolk. Please phone for when, where and what

Suffolk

Contact: Liz Ives - 01473 807099 / 07714-259949;
Email - eaissafa@outlook.com
Please phone for when, where and what.

NORTHERN

Area Co-ordinator: Lesley Roberts

Area Secretary: Helen Rowan. Tel: 07714-950219

Bury & Rochdale

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, phone for details
Contact: Susan Feeney on 07813 313508 or Kath Kirtley on 07910 925070

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

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

Cumbria

If you are interested in joining a newly forming Cumbria Informal Branch please contact Kerryanne Wilde on 07972 799307 or email khtraining@aol.com

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

Lancashire

If you are interested in meeting for the occasional informal Saturday lunch at the Walton Fox, Bamber Bridge, Preston contact Gail Newsham on 07939 505485 or email gaildki@talktalk.net

Leeds

When & Where: 1st Wednesday of each month, 12.30, at the RBL, 73-75 Albion St, Leeds, LS1 5AA
And 3rd Saturday of each month, 11.00, at the Cosy Club, 53 Albion St, Leeds, LS1 5AA (except January)
Contact: Jayne Maitland email: jayne849@msn.com
Tel: 07904-084491

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 724 5966 (**Please note new number - Editor**)

Oldham

When: 19.00/19.15 on 3rd Wednesday of the month
Where: Different restaurants – phone for details
Contact: Kath Kirtley 07910925070 kathleenkirtley@gmail.com or Susan Feeney 07813313508 susan4michael@yahoo.co.uk

Manchester

When: 11.00 on 3rd Sunday of the month
Where: Veterans Garage, Barton Aerodrome
Contact: Contact: Pip Flegel pipflegel2009@gmail.com 07375095532

Newcastle

When: 12.00 on the 3rd Thursday of the month
Where: Leazes End Club, 45-47 Leazes Park Road, Newcastle, NE1 4PG
Contact: Tanya Hall Tel: 07590 323497

Wirral

When: 19.30 on the 1st Wednesday of the month
Where: TA Centre, Chetwynd, Wexford Road, Birkenhead, L43 9TF
Contact: Andrea Jenkins Tel: 07808 648509 or email andrea-jenkins1@hotmail.com

SCOTLAND & N IRELAND

Area Co-ordinator: Helen Jephcote

Email: scotland.ni.area@wracassociation.org.uk

Aberdeen

When: 11.00 on the 1st Monday of the month (except January)
Where: Ma Cameron's (Snug Bar), 6-8 Little Belmont Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1JG (but contact Mhairi to confirm details)
Contact: Mhairi Irving Tel: 07759 076813.
Email: wracaberdeen@gmail.com

Dumfriesshire

Contact: Susan Marcroft BEM Tel: 01556 611944

Edinburgh

When: 2nd Saturday of the month
Where: Location varies, phone for details
Contact: Senga Palmer Tel: 07876 782773
Facebook: Edinburgh and area WRAC/women who served, social group

Fife & Tayside

When: Last Thursday of the month
Where: Salutation Hotel, 34 South Street, Perth, PH2 8PH
Contact: Margaret Selfridge Tel: 01738 639882

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: Liz Dixon Tel: 01786 743635

Ulster

When: Meetings 3-4 times per year
Where: Location varies, call to confirm details
Contact: Sylvia Connachan. Tel: 02892 693533 or 07764711069, conna2312@gmail.com

West of Scotland

Based in / around Glasgow area
Contact: Cathy Philip Email: catriona223@gmail.com

If you co-ordinate a branch or a group who get together, whether face-to-face or 'virtually', let us know and we will include you in this list of 'branches'. There is no longer any difference between 'formal' or 'informal', 'face-to-face' or 'virtual'. It doesn't matter how or when you meet up. We are just keen to know that women who served are meeting up to support each other with comradeship, friendship, memories, etc. Let HQ office know and we will also include on the Association website.

Editor

VETERANS' GATEWAY

The first point of contact for veterans seeking support

"We put veterans and their families in touch with the organisations best placed to help with the information, advice and support they need – from healthcare and housing to employability, finances, personal relationships and more".

Veterans' Gateway is made up of a consortium of organisations and Armed Forces charities, including The Royal British Legion, SSAFA – the Armed Forces charity, Poppyscotland, Combat Stress and Connect Assist (and ourselves, the WRAC Association).

"Our connection with additional key referral partners and information organisations – both within and outside the Armed Forces sector – means we can get you to the right organisation who can help".

Funded by The Armed Forces Covenant, this group has come together formally to deliver a service to help the Armed Forces community. So if you, or someone you know, is looking for help please point them in the direction of Veterans Gateway. They can be contacted by telephone (0808-802-1212) or email (via their website 'contact form'). For more information look at their website: <https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk/>

MOVING HOUSE?

If you have moved recently, or are about to move **please** let us have your new address (and email address) as soon as possible. This will help us reduce the number of Lioness magazines which are returned undelivered. Please email your change of address to office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk, phone us on 0300 400 1992 or post to WRAC Association, Unit 11 Basepoint, Winnall Valley Road, Winchester SO23 0LD.

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR OLD POST CODE.

All items can be purchased online via the website, by post, or phone 0300 400 1992. Cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association and sent to: WRAC Association, Unit 11 Basepoint, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD. All prices include postage & packing.

See our website for information on our WRAC Association membership gift vouchers



WRAC Association Fleece

£28.00

Green fleece with embroidered WRAC Association logo.
Sizes XS, S, M, L, XL
(these are unisex and come up large)



WRAC Association 2020 Diary

£5.00

Get organised with the WRAC Association 2018 Diary, week to two pages



WRAC Association Polo Shirt

£20.00

WRAC Association Polo Shirt is a high quality, unisex Fruit of the Loom cotton shirt with embroidered WRAC Association logo.
Sizes S, M, L, XL



WRAC100 Commemorative Coin.

£10

WRAC100 design on both sides in leatherette presentation box.



WRAC Association Brooch

£5.00



WRAC Pin Badge

£4.00



ATS Pin Badge

£4.00



Canvas Weekender Bag

£43

Black & grey with WRAC100 logo, detachable shoulder strap & padded handgrip. 30lt capacity.



Dog Collar & Lead Set.

£10

Green with white lettering.
Adjustable Collar: 25x65mm.
Lead: 25x1400mm



Printed Scarf

£18

Printed with WRAC100 logo
700 x 700cm



WRAC Association Paperweight

£15.00

A beautiful 4 inch diameter paperweight crafted from Bristol Blue glass (includes display stand)



WRAC Association Ballpoint Pen

£5.00

High quality WRAC Association branded ballpoint pen in dark green



WRAC History Booklet

£3.00

A short history of the WRAC from 1949 to 1992

All our usual memorabilia items still available

EILEEN ROSE BEARD

Here are some images of Eileen Rose Beard (W/374047), who joined 28th November 1951 (died 2009), sent in by her daughter, Eileen Cooper. Does anyone recognise Eileen Beard, or anyone else, in these photos? Please contact the Association Office if you have any information and we will pass it onto her daughter. PHOTOS: On-board SS Lancaster, Wedding day, In / around Fayid, Egypt, 1953-54



Joan Sweet (nee Adams)



Joan, now & then

Joan was eighteen when she joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) in 1944.

Joan had originally wanted to join the Women's Auxiliary Air force, but an illness thwarted her plans. She thought about joining the Women's Land Army, eventually changing her mind to join the ATS.



Joan is second row in fourth from our right

Joan did her Training at Glen Parva barracks Leicestershire, which is now a young offender's institution.

Her postings as a switchboard operator were to Edinburgh, Preston, Newton Abbot and Germany; often having to take on a dual role as a Physical Training Instructor (PTI).



Joan's Wedding, 1947

In 1947 whilst still serving Joan married and in attendance were her Sgt Major and Commanding Officer



ATS pay book, red book and discharge papers



Joan is second row from the back, third in from our right

After her service with the ATS Joan signed up with 54 Signals Squadron, WRAC (TA). Joan eventually left the services in 1951.

By Pauline Milnes

Memoire of Sergeant Olive Parker ATS

My aunt - Sergeant Olive Parker ATS - with whom my mother and I lived in Exeter from June 1942 (one month after the massive air raid on the city) to September 1944, when my father was away serving in the Royal Air Force.

Aunt Olive was wounded in a later (c1943) 'hit-and-run' air attack when a bomb exploded near to the office in which she worked. I think it was a Regimental Pay Office as she was attached to the Royal Army Pay Corps in which I later served (1952-1954) in National Service. I think the insignia might indicate Southern Command. Her sister - my Aunt Cissie - was also in the same office as a Corporal where Olive was her superior! They were of a family of eight. All save one - my aunt Marie whose husband was in the Royal Tank Corps - served in the Armed Forces in either or both of the two World Wars. My still-surviving cousin - Marie's daughter June - served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force at Bletchley Park on de-coding duties.

Aunt Olive was based in her home city of Exeter because she had to look after her aged mother and her daughter, then just finishing school. One small tale shows how kind she was - the city was full of Americans and Royal Marines so Olive, with my mother, decided on Christmas Day 1943 to walk into the town centre - some distance away - and invite some servicemen to have lunch with us. Food, of course, was in very short supply being heavily rationed.

To my delight and amusement, they came back with four! Two Royal Marine Commandos - Arthur and Dennis - and two American sailors - Cleve, from the backwoods of Virginia, and Ted from the city of Chicago. The sailors were in the CB's, 'Seabees', meaning they were in a Construction Battalion. This was a few months before the invasion in June '44. Olive heard

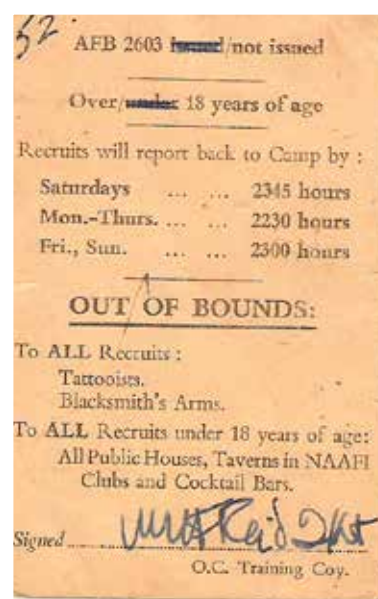
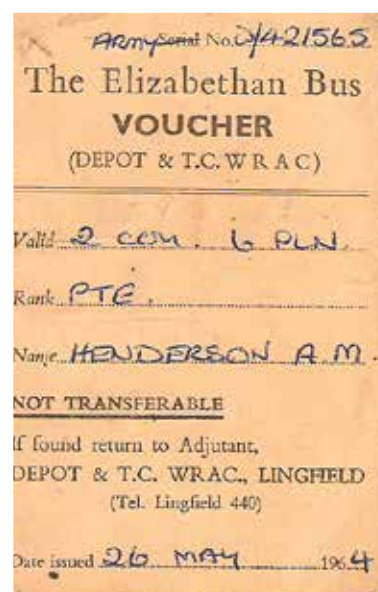
from the Americans after the war. We think the Commandos went on to assault Northern France and they may well have been among the first ashore on D Day.

Olive made sure I knew what was going on in the war. When the siren went, as it often did, for German aircraft flying over at night, we left our beds and she took me out - both wearing tin helmets - to see them passing over, illuminated by searchlights with the AA blasting away to no ill effect on the raiders. In the morning, the road was littered with shrapnel from the shells (hence the tin helmets) and silver paper ('window').

So, as a child I was surrounded by people in uniform - including Americans! All of this - and much more of the same - was fascinating for a nine year old boy!

I attach a photograph of her in her uniform.

Tony Dowland
Nephew of Olive Parker



Anne Henderson shared the following photo and images, from Lingfield 1964 and wondered if anyone remembers either being in the photo and/or the bus pass?

[Editor]



WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB Ishbel Thomson & Sue Hatton

On Saturday 24th November 2018 the WRAC Officers' Dining Club enjoyed a fabulous dinner at the Victory Services Club, London. We were delighted to welcome 94 attendees including a table comprised of ladies who were commissioned after 1992, several of whom are still serving. Although the dinner will always hold fast to its WRAC roots we actively welcome those who were commissioned post WRAC, all cap badges welcome! Please 'save the date' for this year's dinner which will take place on Saturday 23rd November 2019 at the Victory Services Club. For further details search on Facebook for WRAC & RMAS Sisterhood Officers' Dinner, or email wracofficersdc@gmail.com.





WRAC WHO SERVED AT 68 SQN RCT , RHEINDAHLEN, GERMANY Jan(TC) Reeshulme

We recently (May time? – Editor) held our annual reunion, we being WRAC who served at 68 Sqn RCT, Rheindahlen, Germany. Our photographer Ian Cocking will be sending you a photograph of us girls taken over the weekend. Linda Clarke will be submitting a draft of how we formed and tell the story of our fab reunion.

Over the weekend we fundraise and donate money to worthwhile causes - this year it was agreed unanimously, even by the RCT boys, that we would donate money towards the WRAC statue and Beacon alert.

Also over the weekend I tried to encourage the girls to submit their own story and complete the story proforma for the Lioness, hopefully this will happen. I will be submitting my story. I am also trying to encourage the girls who served with me in the Gulf war to tell their story over the conflict, this is proving quite challenging but I'm hoping to locate a few more girls so we can submit an explicit account of our experience. A shout out in the next Lioness edition would help. Thanks

Hope all this makes sense, my mobile number is 07976834969 if you to contact me reference anything, thanks again.



A RECRUIT'S REUNION Barbara Anderson (nee Cockerill)

As I stood there in my school uniform, with my right hand raised and my left resting on a Bible I had no idea how the ladies beside me were to influence my life. I had gone through all the hoops to become a suitable candidate for the Women's Royal Army Corps under the watchful eyes of my Recruiting Officer, Captain C E Vine-Stevens and Recruiting Sergeant Y Barry. I was ready to swear my Oath of Allegiance and get back to school for my last week. The following Monday the ladies were with four of us in New Street Station to see us off on the adventure of a lifetime.

Many years later, I was attending a Birmingham Branch meeting when a new member approached me and asked where I had joined up. When I said it was Birmingham in 1968, she said that it was probable that she had been my Recruiting Officer. I replied that it was easy enough to prove as I had copies of my attestation papers and correspondence on my phone. There it was; Capt C E Vine-Stevens. "I'm called Betty Webb nowadays. I got married" she said. From that day onward we have been firm friends.

THE QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S ROYAL ARMY NURSING CORPS
OR
THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS

TO: MISS B.J. COCKERILL FROM: Army Information Office,
31 FEELEIGH WALK 67, CHARLES ST.
DRUIDS HEATH BIRMINGHAM 14 BIRMINGHAM, 3.

Date 15th July, 1968.

You have today been enlisted into the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps - Women's Royal Army Corps on a normal Regular Army engagement of SIX years.

You will therefore report to the Officer Commanding WRAC CENTRE QUEEN ELIZABETH BKS. GUILDFORD, SURREY on 22.7.1968 as early in the day as possible. ~~Anticipating departure for your journey to arrive at 9.45am. PLEASE REPORT AT THE BOOKING HALL, NEW ST. STATION AT 9.45am. WHERE YOU WILL BE MET.~~ You will be given leave without pay and allowances from 16.7.68 until 21.7.68 which is the day before you have been told to join. This period of leave will NOT count towards pay or any gratuity or pension which you may receive at the end of your service. You will however be able to serve for an additional period equal to that spent on leave to enable you to qualify for the full gratuity or pension. You should keep this letter as you can take up with your Commanding Officer, near the end of your service, the question of your service to count for gratuity or pension.

You must bring your National Insurance Contribution Card and National Health Service Card, but DO NOT DELAY JOINING BECAUSE YOU CANNOT GET YOUR CARDS.

68th Recruiting Officer
Date 15th July, 1968 Army Information Office Birmingham

INSTRUCTIONS

You will be issued with uniform and other necessities soon after arrival at the Training Centre. You will also be given a clothing grant to be spent on the following articles, either at the Quartermasters store, or at a civilian shop:-

2-Buttons Belts or Corsets	4-vests	2-Pairs of Knickers
2-Bralettes SEE ATTACHED	2-Pairs of Panties	1-Sanitary Belt

You may bring any of your own underclothes, as they will be accepted against items in the list above, if they are in good repair.

Bring your nightdresses/pyjamas too, if you wish.

You will also need your washing articles and your hairbrush and comb.

The following are useful but if you have not got them do not buy them specially:-

Dressing Gown	Shoe Polish (black and brown)	Cleaning Fluid
Slippers	Dusters 3	Pressing Cloth

COAT HANGERS

229/R (W) 5/62

UNDERWEAR: CLOTH GRANT.

You will be paid the following sum of money during your first week ~~£6.7.6~~ to purchase underwear to the following scales:-

£8.7.6

Belts, corset.....	1
Belt, sanitary.....	1
Brassieres.....	3
Panties/Briefs.....	3
Pyjamas/Nightdresses.....	2
Vests.....	3

In your last week (6th week) you will be paid £2. 5. 0. for the purchase of shoes, court black leather, medium slim heel, medium pointed toe (or shoes, black leather, flat-heeled, laced, in lieu)

Recruits who, at their own request, are granted their discharge within one month of actually joining for duty, will refund the underwear grant. The items purchased will be retained by the women and may not be handed back in lieu of the sum to be refunded.



It turned out that Betty was still in touch with Sergeant Barry and she was determined to get us all together. I was shocked to discover that Sergeant Barry had another name - Yvonne. Synchronising our diaries was the hard part as Betty is in such demand and I am a little bit busy too. Yvonne must have been tearing her hair out as we lurched from date to date. Eventually, we settled on 28 May 2019 and met up for the first time in 51 years. It was a lovely occasion as we all swapped stories of what we had been up to since they waved me off at the station. My goodness, we have been busy.

We had the regulation photograph taken for posterity, giggling as we tried to all be smiling at the same time. Here is the best of the bunch, taken by Yvonne's sister. I have also enclosed photos of the paperwork Yvonne sent to me bearing Betty's signature.

RHS Chelsea Flower Show Deb Davies

I recently attended the Chelsea Flower Show and had the pleasure of meeting Marjorie Cole.

I introduced myself as ex Lcpl Deb Davies W0804353, who served in the WRAC from 1986-91. Marjorie asked me to send her the image and also send a copy to you at the Lioness. I was so thrilled to meet them both and they said they wished more ex-service women would approach them; made my day.



From Stewart Leach MBE National Secretary
RMPA

I am delighted to be able to advertise the
following event:

WRAC Provost Reunion 2020

Those who served as members of the WRAC Provost are invited to attend a reunion event, to be held On 7th March 2020
At The De Vere Tortworth Court Hotel Just off junction 14 of the M5 motorway

Any one of our WRAC Colleagues wishing to seek further details may approach
June Stevenson on jcsmelksham@yahoo.co.uk

ELIZABETH F HERSCHEL (W/45481) Raeburn Garrison

George Herschel, Elizabeth's son, forwarded the following message:

"Could I thank all the members of the W.R.A.C for looking after me on Armistice Day's parade" "Mum was the only A.T.S "GIRL" on parade, aged 95".



THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION'S MONTE CASSINO 75 CEREMONY AT THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM SATURDAY 11 MAY 2019 Barbara Davies

I had the pleasure to attend the 75th Anniversary of Monte Cassino as a representative of the WRAC Association with Anna Toon, whose family originated from the area of Monte Cassino, and our National Standard Bearer Sharon Baker-Joyce at the National Memorial Arboretum on Saturday 11 May 2019.

The Italy Campaign to liberate Italy would be one of the toughest of the entire war, resulting in over 330,000 Allied casualties. Starting with the invasion of Sicily in July 1943, the fighting would last the better part of two years and not end until the final surrender of Milan on 25 April 1945.

The Italian Campaign played a vital role in the overall Allied victory of World War 2. The Battle of Monte Cassino (17 January to 18 May 1944) became one of the most important battles of this war, and one of the bloodiest engagements of the Italian campaign involving four actions in the mountains around Monte Cassino with the intention to break through to Rome. The Campaign involved allied troops from across the world; USA, UK, French Morocco, British India, New Zealand, Poland, Southern Rhodesia, Canada, South Africa and Italian Royalist Army to name a few. The Allied Forces suffered 55,000 casualties and the Germans suffered an estimated 20,000 casualties.

The ceremony was led by Flight Lieutenant Mandeep Kaur Sikh Chaplain to the Armed Forces and music was provided by The Black Watch Association Pipe Band and The Band of the Prince of Wales' Division.

Following the Ceremony a reception was held in the excellent new Aspects Conference Centre.



Standard Bearers parading at the new Aspects Building



Anna Toon with bugler Anthony Sochi



Sharon Baker-Joyce with serving members of the Polish Army

WO2 "PEGGY" ROSE & WRAC CENTENARY

In February of this year members of Hereford Branch WRAC met at Queenswood Arboretum, Hereford to commemorate 2 memorial benches that had been erected to mark the life of a much loved and the deliciously naughty WO2 Peggy Rose and the centenary of the WRAC Association.

Peggy joined the Land Army, aged just 17 in 1941, she made the National press when she became London's youngest Land Girl. Her media career was to continue when she became the face on cigarette cards to promote recruitment. At the end of WW2 Peggy went back to civilian life in 1946. Missing the Services she enlisted into the WRAC in 1950 and went on to enjoy a full career, leaving as a WO2 in 1979.

Peggy eventually settled in Gloucester and became a much loved member of Hereford Branch. Peggy passed away in 2015 she left the Branch a legacy with which we have marked her life and the Association's centenary.



Remembrance (& other parades)

It is wonderful that so many of you participate in whatever parades take place (whether Remembrance, Armed Forces Day, or other), but don't forget: The Association does not have a 'uniform' and so you do not have to wear anything specific to parade with / on behalf of the Association; just be your usual smart selves. Therefore, you do not need to wear beret, stable belt, skirt, green, or anything else that used to be considered Corps uniform, nor do you have to wear Association polo shirt, fleece and/or coat (although these are available from the Association office) – just Parade with Pride.

From: Michael Cooper, Sgt

I served with the WRAC and I'm a bloke! I was posted as Education Sergeant to Depot and Training Centre, Guildford in 1958. Accommodation, at first, was with the Queens next door but later we were accommodated in a Nissen hut on camp. I say "we" as we comprised 3 x RAEC Sergeants and 3 x RADC personnel. I used to find it amusing when we had to parade along with everyone else when I had to march towards the officer i/c parade, come to a smart halt and declare "male personnel, 3x RAEC and 3x RADC present and correct, Ma'am." I enjoyed my time there, particularly the teaching, so much so that I became a teacher when my three years were up. There are many memories but one of the most enduring is of the band. The WRAC band was absolutely superb with many gifted musicians. Visitors to the Warrant Officers and Sergeants' Mess would never believe me when I said I was billeted there!

Michael Cooper 23530759

Hello Ladies

A bit of a strange one, but wondering if anyone can help me, trying to do some research on some medals I acquired recently from an ATS Lady who I believe may have been a member of the Association.

Winifred Richardson - Nee Potter - Ex 510 (Mixed) HAA BTY

I am trying to do some boards for a display and was wondering if anyone knows anything that might be of help, eg date of birth or an address if possible. I have found some information on the Unit she served at (TA) but seem to have hit a dead end.

Hope you can think of something that might help get me started on Ancestry xx Fingers Crossed

*Best wishes
Catherine Munro MBE*

[Editor's note: we do not have anything on our system but if any of you, our Members, has any information that may help Cathy, please let us know]

Dear Editor

The visit to Guildford Cathedral in March this year, reminded me of my first visit in August/September 1966. My parents had come to watch my passing out parade and afterwards we visited the Cathedral.

I have sketchy memories of my time at the Depot, even less of Guildford itself. I do remember being told I could not be understood. I had lived 10 years in Scotland; not being Scottish but having the accent did explain a lot, so from then I slowed down my speech as much as possible - still have a slight accent but no longer have to answer to Jock.

A girl on our intake had an uncle in the Navy so a few of us went down to Portsmouth and had an unofficial tour of the Ark Royal before a trip to the fun fair.

There was no hanging around then as it was off to Catterick for the next 6 months, training to be a Data Telegraphist, ComCen Op it was called in those days, then down to Aldershot. Didn't have time to get used to the place when myself and Marilyn Moorin was sent to Hounslow but working with 2 WRAC coming from Salisbury to work at the all-male, civilian operated Tape Relay Centre at Beaconsfield.

Our arrival at Hounslow was a spectacle. Having been told by the operator that the camp was just round the corner we hadn't realised they thought we were at the tube station not the railway station, luckily the postman was collecting mail bags off the train and kindly offered us a lift, not sure what the guard thought when we emerged with luggage from the back of the lorry.

Later that year, 3 of the 4 of us were off to Rheindahlen, Germany, where I stayed for for 2 years, great times. The next time I saw Guildford was at my demob September 1969.

I'm sure that many of those there have fond memories of their times at the Depot however long or short their stay was.

Thanks for organising a great weekend.

*Jean Mills, W/429268
Bicester Branch, Oxfordshire Area*

*Carole & Don Tyler
Diamond Wedding Anniversary – 18th April 1959*

Carole (nee Tupling) was in the WRAC Staff Band, and Don was in the RAF, when they started writing to each other as pen friends. They met in Guildford, Surrey, for the very first time in November 1958, got engaged December 1958 and married in April 1959. Carole played the largest Tuba in the band, and Don was on bomb disposal in the RAF, when they married.

Their first daughter was born in March 1960, and their second daughter in 1964. They have granddaughters, grandson, great-granddaughters and a great grandson.

Don served for 34 years in the RAF, and they lived in Germany and Cyprus as well as various camps in England. Don worked for British Aerospace after leaving the RAF, and his hobby was painting scenes until his recent illness.

Carole is the chairman of the Grimsby branch of the WRAC Association and also the Standard Bearer for the branch. She is still an active case-worker for the Royal British Legion and also a volunteer for the Lincolnshire Police and Humberside Police, and hopes to continue in all her roles.

Carole Tyler (nee Tupling)



Hi Julia (and Association),

I just wanted to thank you for the information you sent me last month on the Rise of the Lioness exhibition at the National Army Museum.

I was up in London at the weekend with my partner, Rob, and we were able to fit in a visit to the exhibition on Sunday. I was really impressed by the quality of the exhibit and thought that it conveyed a lot of information in a very relatable way - the commentary and quotes that accompanied the clothing exhibits were particularly good!

We usually make it up to London a couple of times a year but neither of us had been to the National Army Museum before, so it was also a great opportunity to visit the other exhibits on display there, and I was pleased to see that the role of the WRAC is mentioned in several places around the museum, and so will continue to be highlighted even after the Lioness exhibit reaches the end of its run.

We probably would never have headed over to Chelsea if you hadn't mentioned this to me, so I wanted to thank you for bringing this to my attention - it was an excellent way to spend our morning.

Samantha Day

I want to thank you for entering my Group Photo on Page 7 of the Lioness (2018#2), but I think I may have made a mistake as I am 2nd RIGHT, on second row, on 2nd left.

*Jean Bradley
Las Vegas
[Editor – Happy to correct]*



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? More information can be found inside back cover. Donations can also be made online via the Association website or by phone 0300-400-1992. Whatever you decide to do, PLEASE make sure that we have a Gift Aid form from you - if you pay tax, we can reclaim the tax and the government adds to the donation you have made, without it costing you any more.

Dress on Parade. In line with the Royal British Legion and other Regimental Associations, parade dress is to be smart and appropriate; the norm is for dark colours. Since the Association is no longer an active Corps (regiment) Stable belts and forage caps should NOT be worn. Within the WRAC Association the tradition has arisen to wear a green WRAC Association fleece or a bottle green blazer. **Please note that this form of dress is not mandatory and those who do not possess it are still very welcome to parade, as long as they are dressed smartly and appropriately.** (See Medals & Badges etiquette below for further information).

Event Tickets. We occasionally receive free tickets for events, or invitations to attend functions organised by The Not Forgotten Association. Historically these have primarily been offered to regional Branch members. However 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). Traditionally, *Lioness* magazine is available as an audio version. However, due to the size of the last, current and forthcoming couple of issues we have been / are unable to offer this service at present. We apologise for this break in service, but the size of recent editions makes it too difficult to record.

Lioness. Articles for inclusion in the next edition of *Lioness* must be received by 30th November 2019. 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**) as attachments, do not embed them in a document (or email)! Additionally if you are able to give names to people in a photo that would be helpful, and we will try and include.

Medals and Badges Etiquette. Etiquette rules for wearing medals only allow the wearing of official awards. The WRAC Association badge and the Veterans badge may be worn on the left lapel by the position of the buttonhole.

- 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).
- Unofficial medals, or badges, other than the WRAC Association badge/pin and Veterans badge, should not be worn when representing the WRAC Association.
- Unofficial purchased medals and foreign medals which do not have the Sovereign's permission to be worn are not allowed.

Memorabilia. We have a selection of Association Memorabilia and, Centenary Memorabilia available to purchase online via the website, by post (prices include P&P) or by phone. See page 96 for details.

Remembrance. The Association receives an allocation of tickets for the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey

on the Thursday prior to Remembrance Sunday, for the Cenotaph Parade and for the service in Westminster Abbey on Remembrance Sunday. Tickets are open to any member of the WRAC Association who wishes to attend. Prior attendance or Branch participation are not a prerequisite.

Thu 07 Nov 2019 Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey

Sun 10 Nov 2019 Cenotaph Parade – Ticket applications closed for 2019. (For future years applications need to be made by letter via Tanya, or email only (office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk), no later than 01 July.

Please note that the RBL have changed the criteria for this Parade, along with reducing the number of tickets available. Participation is only open to Veterans (no carers, unless they also served) and you will need to be in possession of 2 forms of ID, one of which must be photo ID.

Sun 10 Nov 2019 Guildford Borough Remembrance events

Sun 10 Nov 2019 Westminster Abbey Service - Ticket requests to be made to the office ASAP, by email (office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk) or letter only. If demand exceeds supply a ballot will take place, as with all events.

Guildford – Places are available each year at the Service of Remembrance in Guildford (the 'mother' city of the WRAC Association). For 2019 we would like to cement our historic links with our 'mother city' and so encourage you to apply to attend here, especially if you are unsuccessful with tickets for the London Cenotaph. Please apply to the Association Office (office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk) or letter only.

Durham - the Lord Lieutenant of Durham will be inviting the Association to play a prominent part in the 9th November Remembrance commemorations, when they hope to accommodate as many WRAC as possible". Contact Northern Area Co-ordinator, Lesley Roberts, about this Durham Cathedral event in November: northern.area@wracassociation.org.uk

Overseas Members. Overseas Members are requested to pay an additional £5.00 per year to cover additional *Lioness* postage costs. Only sterling payments can be accepted.

Service Records. 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.

Subscriptions. Annual Members are reminded that subscriptions (£10.00) 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. For your convenience, we now offer multiple-year (3, 6 or 10 years) subscriptions (after your initial first year of Membership). See Member Log-in area of the Association website or telephone HQ office manager on 0300-400-1992. (No discounts apply).

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.

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

WRAC Officers' Dining Club. The WRAC Officer's Dining Club Dinner will take place on Saturday 24th November 2018 at The Victory Services Club. For more details email wracofficersdc@gmail.com or visit the Facebook Closed Group 'WRAC Officers' Dining Club'.

MARKETING & PR

We continue to work with Hannah and Chrys from Curious PR, specifically for **press and media coverage**. They have secured interviews and articles on national and local radio and television (BBC, Channel 4, BFBS, etc) and in the written media – particularly The Lady in July, with a 4-page article “In Praise of the Wonderful WRAC”.

Much of the coverage Curious have secured for us is something that we would never have been able to do on our own. Their expertise and connections really have helped make the right connections.

Coverage has been in relation to:

The Societal Trends Report, that came out late last year – and focusing on some of the issues particularly pertinent to women who served (serve);
Launch of the Association DVD, celebrating the Centenary, and tying that in with Evensong at Guildford Cathedral, the Corp's and Association's “Mother Church”;
The Grand Reunion, specifically the Cathedral Reception in the presence of HRH Sophie, Countess of Wessex;
The National Army Museum March “Women in the Army” day, specifically connecting with ladies who gave presentations, representing all eras of women's service;
The National Army Museum “Rise of the Lionesses” exhibition - the launch evening, Insight days and Artist in Residence/portrait days, etc.

All of these have focused on your memories and experiences of time in the army, along with more recent concerns such as support for women who served and some of the very specific issues relating to female veterans. In all cases, the outcome has been overwhelming support for you all and all you have done and achieved.

Social media posts go out from HQ almost daily. Posts have included past recruiting posters and links with associated organisations (eg National Army Museum, etc). More and more of you are connecting with us and each other via social media. Tanya met with NAM re a specific social media group around the summer Exhibition.

We continue to write ‘template’ **press releases** for Branches / Areas to use – for Remembrancetide etc. All you have to do is fill in the ‘blanks’ – ie who is attending, what, when and anything interesting about those attending, etc.

Promotional materials: We have produced a new generic leaflet to promote the Association and Ben Fund. Quantities were given out to Area Co-ordinators at July Council, but if any Branch would like some please do ask – they are ideal size for either handing out personally and/or displaying in local libraries, surgeries, Clubs, Notice-boards, etc.

We also have a new promo stand and banner, that can be used on occasions like AGM, NMA, NAM.

Media enquiries - We also receive requests from press/media outlets, individuals, families and friends to help with specific stories, obituaries etc. and to that end, we continue to try and source your/Members' and Beneficiaries with ‘stories’ for PR – so please let us know your stories so we can share and encourage

more to join the Association and see how we/you ‘Support Women Who Served’.

Result – All this activity has seen a large increase in new Association Members (300+), and hopefully you have seen similar increases in new Branch members and enquiries. Don't forget – the WRAC Association is here to:

SERVE SUPPORTING WOMEN WHO / SERVED

regardless of age, length of service, ATS, WRAC or current capbadges, whether TA or Regular.

So, let's all continue to build on the success of this Centenary year and make sure we continue to promote the Association and Membership so more ladies benefit from ‘comradeship, esprit de corps, maintenance of tradition, friendship and support’.

The Lady magazine

In July The Lady magazine, which is now published fortnightly, ran a 4-page spread “In Praise of the Wonderful WRAC”. Hopefully you, like many others caught a copy of it. If not, here is the cover page. We are very grateful to Curious PR for helping secure this piece, which caught the imagination and from which some ex-WRAC joined the Association.



WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE GRAND HOTEL, SOUTHAMPTON (Grand Reunion) Saturday 23rd March 2019

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks. The Chairman started the meeting by thanking everyone for attending this AGM and Grand Reunion weekend. She also welcomed the new, and first male, Non-executive member Mr Tim Savage.

The Chairman started by outlining the Purpose of the AGM, namely: that this is the Trustee's opportunity to brief Members on the activities of the Association. It is also the opportunity to brief Members on the governance, finances and investments. "As Trustees and Council, we are responsible to you for all of these and in front of you is a copy of the Annual Report submitted to the Charity Commission. Just as importantly this is your (Members') opportunity to raise any issues and ask any questions of the Trustees". This is done following the circulation of the Agenda for the AGM in the Lioness, direct to the Association or through your Area Coordinator. Each Member has a Vote on any issues brought to the AGM.

The Chairman introduced the support team of:

Lt Col (Rtd) Rowena Naile MBE	Chairman of the Executive & Finance Committee
Col (Retd) Isabel McCord	Chairman of the Ben Fund Grants Committee
Maj (Retd) Barbara Davies	Honorary Treasurer
Penny Muxworthy	Association Secretary & Editor Lioness
Julia Doig	Finance Officer
Julie Winks	Benevolent Fund Secretary – welcome to her first AGM
and Tanya-Jayne Park	Office Manager

The Chairman started with Thank you's:

Fund-Raising and Donations: I am hugely grateful to all those who have raised funds or donated to the Association. Following an appeal in the Lioness the donations and fund-raising have continued to rise on previous years. It is always difficult to single people out but I am going to name a few - Marg Davies for her annual walks (2 since the last AGM); Wendy Hooton – the annual 10km Run is paying for our plot at the NMA; CJ Johnston for arranging the trip to Scotland; and Mel Howell for Benidorm Babes. Also thank you to the WRAC Dinner Club for all of their fund-raising efforts. There are lot of others who donate, and I am hugely grateful to all of you as it is this fund-raising that enables the Association to carry on.

Branches: I want to pay tribute to all the Branch Secretaries and thank them for their hard work and support. This is really appreciated not just by Association HQ but by each one of their/ your members. Every Secretary is part of a significant team which includes the Chairman and Treasurer and anyone else who volunteers to do stuff. This Branch network remains crucial and I am glad to say that we are seeing a resurgence in the number of Branches and this is particularly so on FaceBook. Social media remains key to what we do so thank you to all of the administrators of these Groups

HQ Team: My thanks to Penny, Julia, Julie and Tanya for all their work and support throughout the year. They are what makes this charity work.

National Standard Bearer: Thanks to Sharon Baker-Joyce for all of the appearances she made in 2018 and will continue to make in 2019 and 2020

Onto my key issues:

Curious PR: Our contract with Curious PR is now almost 12 months old and we are really starting to see benefits. We have had both national TV and radio coverage and we see spikes in membership following these. We have had success with local radio, and national and local publications. I am learning lots in this process and have gradually accepted that all press is good publicity as it gets the word out. We are going to continue with this contract until the end of our Centenary year and will continue to get our messages of esprit de Corps and the distribution of benevolence as far and as wide as we can.

The partnership we are in with the **National Army Museum** is fantastic and I am really looking forward to the opening of a dedicated Gallery in July, which gives us a permanent exhibition for 4 months at a nationally recognised museum and it means a lot of our archives and items can come out of the basement where they have been for the last 27 years.

The Chairman read out a:

Message from the Patron of the Association thanking all Members for their Loyal Greetings on the occasion of the AGM and for their continued support.

Message from the President of the Association congratulating all Members on the Association's Centenary and sending best wishes for the Grand Reunion.

2. Apologies for Absence. Apologies were received from the following Life Vice Presidents, Trustees and members of Council: Jo Young (Area Co-ordinator Scotland & N.Ireland), along with a number of individual Members and Branch Secretaries. The Lady Martha Bruce sent a letter 'apologising for not being able to attend the Centenary celebrations and congratulating everyone for "putting the WRAC Association where it should be"'. 152 were present at the meeting.

3. Confirmation of Minutes. The Minutes of the previous meeting had been published in Lioness 2018/2, no comments had been received.

Proposal: It was proposed that the Chairman sign the minutes of the 2018 AGM as a true record.

Proposed: Chris Powell **Seconded:** Wendy Hooton **Agreed: All** They were signed as correct by the Chairman.

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. Trustees had met three times and Council twice since the 2018 AGM. In addition, an Area Co-ordinator's Forum meets before each Council. The main items of interest were:

No new **Life Vice President or Trustees** have been appointed since last AGM.

Area Co-ordinators: We have said farewell to Anna Orlinski and Sharon Bingham, and I thank them for their 3 years of service to the Association. The new Area Co-ordinator of Northern Area is Lesley Roberts, so welcome. We still have a vacancy for the South & South West Area. Only by filling these appointments will we continue to spread the word and grow our membership. So, please, if you live in the South & South West, we need a volunteer for this appointment.

Non Executive Members: Where appropriate we appoint NEMs to the Board of Trustees. Jenny Ogden has been one for two years now. They are there to provide specialist advice on such

years now. They are there to provide specialist advice on such areas as the law or business. I am delighted to be able to announce that the Board of Trustees have appointed Tim Savage as a NEM. Tim is a bloke!!!! so this is a first, but we must increase the diversity on our Board of Trustees. Tim is here today so please do say hello to him over a cup of tea later.

I am not going to give a formal report as all of the Business that the Trustees and Council have done over the last 12 months is detailed in the **Annual Report** – this is our Charity in a little booklet and is worth a read.

6. Financial Report. The Treasurer presented the Annual Report and Accounts for 2017/18. Our Auditors, Rothmans, have found the accounts for 2018 to be in good order. There are no outstanding actions to be taken and we are following all the Guidelines indicated in the latest Charity Commission survey. We demonstrate high standards of conduct and behaviour, and annually review our policies in order to demonstrate transparency and efficient use of resources; we are well-governed and well-managed whilst remaining true to our values and making a positive difference.

The really good news is that again, in 2018, the Association finished in the black, our income overall exceeding our expenditure by £222,204. The downside of this is we are now classed as a 'larger charity' for the first time because our income exceeded £500k. More administration!

The total value of the funds (Association and Benevolent Fund combined) as at 30 Sep 2018 was just over £7m (£7,345,876). This continues the upward momentum. The Treasurer reminded everyone that the funds are divided between 'Restricted Funds' (Benevolent Funds), 'Unrestricted Funds' (Association Funds) and 'Designated Funds' (Life Subscription Funds). The value of the Benevolent Funds was £6,588,152 and the combined Unrestricted and Designated Funds (the Association) was £757,724.

Obviously the Association is thankful for the substantial and generous donations and legacies of £415,263k (see page 25). We are very grateful to those who are able to donate or make a legacy to the benefit of the Association; you are ensuring the longevity of the Association, so "Thank you".

Investment and Deposit Interest returns for 2017/18 were £225k, up £2k from last year (pp.10&26).

Already this Financial Year we have received legacy payments into both the Unrestricted Association and Benevolence Funds. In addition, we have also received notification of further legacies to the Assoc Fund, expected later in the year and in February 2019 we received £20k for the Association Fund. We are so very fortunate to receive such generous legacies from our members, and due to them we have deposited extra income into the Investment Funds which will hopefully increase our investment income further.

No one can accurately predict how markets will perform. The main form of financial risk faced by the charity is that of volatility in equity markets and investment markets due to wider economic conditions. The best way to protect ourselves from any potential stock market turbulence is to ensure we continue to have a properly balanced and diversified portfolio.

The Internal Financial Controls Policy was updated in July 2018. In essence the policy reflects current policy and ensures good safeguarding of all financial elements of the charity as directed by the Charity Commission.

The Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year ending 30 Sep 2018 will be published in Lioness edition

2019/2, and is in the Annual Report.

Last, but not least, the Treasurer extended her personal thanks to our Finance Officer, Julia, for her hard work and due diligence not only in the preparation for the Audit and Annual Report but also her everyday duties that she carries out so well on behalf of the Trustees and you our Members.

Proposal: That the financial statements be accepted and that the audited accounts be ratified.

Proposed: Cathy Munro **Seconded:** Barbara Johnson

Agreed: All

7. Report of the Editor of the Association Journal.

The editor reported that we continue to issue 2 copies a year and offered sincere apologies for the slight delay in the September 2018 issue, due to endeavouring to get as many ATS memories in as we could, along with all branch, Area and individual news, AGM Minutes, Financial Report, etc.

The recent edition (2019/1) included photos and recollections of last year's Remembrancetide – another busy one.

Both have also included news on planned Centenary events, along with suggestions for Members – although the editor didn't doubt that Members had plenty of ideas of their own.

Distribution numbers remain pretty static, although we saw a large increase in Membership following the Remembrancetide media coverage, so had very few spare copies.

The size of the last couple of editions has, unfortunately, meant that we have had to temporarily cease offering a 'talking' version of Lioness. Winchester Talking Newspapers are still interested in helping again in the future, but 80+ pages takes them an incredible amount of time to edit, suitable for recording, and a similar amount of time to actually record. We look forward to resuming normal service sometime in 2020/2021.

In the past year we have made slight amendments to the Association website, including the 'administration' – which is now carried out by TJP Solutions, and has led to better accessibility and usability. Many of the past Lioness' are available to view online, through the Members portal. It is this archive that Tanya has been accessing for social media posts, thereby getting pieces from the magazine out to a wider audience.

The editor reminded everyone that this, your, magazine and a prime benefit of Membership.

It enables Members:

- to keep in touch with friends and colleagues, far and wide
- to find out what other Members and branches have been up to
- to find out what events have taken place
- to find out what events are up and coming
- provides a resource for how to attend events, access Benevolence, 'comings and goings', re-connect with past colleagues and friends, buy Association memorabilia (diaries, fleeces, etc, etc)
- and find out what is going on in the Association

While it is the 'Membership' magazine, Lioness is also a good way of introducing new Members and show them what they too can get involved in and of keeping in touch with those with whom you served, wherever they may now be.

Future editions: Particularly –September 2019: Grand Reunion and Centenary celebrations reports, articles and photos. Closing Date for next issue is 31 July.

Content is only as good as the material received.

The editor made a couple of pleas – try and ensure the photos are of as high a quality as possible, otherwise reproduction can be difficult; and try and let the editor know who is in the photos, so they can be annotated appropriately;

Wonderful Women stories – we can still take your memories and recollections, and hope the Wonderful Women 100 book will be published in the summer.

The Editor offered to take any questions outside of the meeting.

8. Reports of Committees.

a. Executive & Finance Committee. The Executive and Finance Committee executes the business of the Association to further the Objects and take our direction from the Trustees and Council, generally at their meetings but also at any time as directed. We have met 4 times since the last AGM but have carried out a lot of work in the interim.

The Risk Register for the Association is maintained by the EFC, and of highest risk concern to the Association was of not being able to provide benevolence support due to the unsupported software that managed the database. With the successful introduction of SALESFORCE we are glad to say this risk is no longer present. If any members identify anything they see as a risk to the Association carrying out its objectives then please let me know.

Societal Trends. The publication of the updated Review of Societal Trends, after the Trustees and Council meetings, took place in July and you may have seen this on the website. This is an important aspect of the Association business as it provides us with up-to-date information as to the lifestyle changes of our members and assists us with the direction of our benevolence and welfare support. Many thanks to Monica Jones for taking on this vital piece of work.

In October the Trustees produced strategic direction for the EFC. The update of the Constitution with regard to Trustees is in accordance with this direction.

Constitution changes, for which we need your agreement - and which will be voted upon shortly. 3 areas have been amended – Trustees, Area Chairmen, Branches.

Trustees. The Charity Commission directs that the Board of Trustees for any charity should be diverse, and as a result the WRAC Assn Board of Trustees decided that the current practise of only allowing Ordinary Members of the Association to be eligible to be Trustees did not enable the Board to be diverse. The Assn can/will be externally audited in the area of Trustee Governance and it is unlikely to be seen in a good light for its lack of diversity. To enable the Board of Trustees to be as diverse as possible, and to have the ability to bring in Trustees with the necessary skills, it was decided that there should be no restriction on who could be a Trustee, on gender or background. Therefore, the proposed changes remove the requirement for a Trustee to be an Ordinary Member, to have been military or to be female. To retain the esprit de corps the majority of the Board will have to be Ordinary Members of the Association.

Area Coordinators. The Council agreed that the role of the Area Chairman needed updating and the Area Chairmen worked together to refine and define the role, and the title of Area Co-ordinator better reflects the actual role. This was agreed by Council in July 2018.

Branches. Council agreed in July 2018 that there should be no division between 'formal' and 'informal' Branches. The proposed amendments in the Constitution reflect this by removing the following requirements (although Branches may continue to do so) - for Council to approve affiliations, payment of Branch subscriptions, have a Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer and have a meeting prior to the AGM.

I would like to thank all the members of the EFC for their hard work this year in continuing to provide the Association with the support it requires to successfully operate; and a particular thanks

to Penny and Julia for all their work for the EFC, and being in attendance at the meetings.

b. Benevolent Fund Grants Committee. Isabel McCord presented a report starting with thanks to Gabi Shanahan, our Ben Fund Secretary for many years, who, unfortunately, had to retire in July last year due to ill health. Isabel took this opportunity to thank her on all our behalves, and on behalf of our beneficiaries who benefitted enormously from her care and attention to their applications.

Julie Winks, who is here today, has taken over Gabi's role and I want to thank her for her help and support over the last 7 months. She, like Gabi, provides excellent support to our beneficiaries. Thank you also to Helen, my deputy, for chairing the MGCM. This was particularly important during Gabi's period of sick leave when I was handling the applications. Finally thank you to the Service charities that support us and our veterans – particularly ABF TSC, SSAFA and RBL. Activities of the Ben Fund are in the Annual Report pages 3 – 6.

Who qualifies for a grant? We make grants based on financial need to anyone who has served in the ATS or WRAC, even if only for 1 day. We aim to give a 'help up', and take care for the grants not to be seen simply as a hand-out with the danger of developing a dependency culture. Full details of our grant giving criteria are on the website. If you know of anyone who might qualify look at the website, contact Julie direct or direct them to the service charities who have welfare workers (eg SSAFA or the RBL).

Changes to the amount of the annual grants (PRMF Annuities and Nursing Home Top Ups). In Feb 2018 the Trustees agreed to increase the PRMF Maintenance Grant (Annuity) from £36 per week to £40 per week with a Christmas Bonus of £70, and Nursing Home Fee Top Up from £40 to £50 per week.

So how did we spend our money in 2018?

Benevolent Fund - Spent £167,713. Less than 2017 due to a decrease in applications.

Princess Royal's Memorial Fund - Spent £50,912. The PRMF spend increased against 2017 due to an increase in number of annuitants and the increase in the allowance paid. Additionally, the ABF supported 8 of our ladies to the tune of £13,542 by awarding them ABF annuities. From this year these ladies will receive PRMF annuities direct from us and only be passed to the ABF if they need more money than we can provide.

As last year, there is a trend towards more money required by fewer applicants. This is not surprising as the rise in essential living costs impacts more severely on people on low incomes and particularly the elderly and disabled. The most common awards were: Annual maintenance grants, Funeral expenses, Debt, Electrically powered vehicles and Nursing Home Fee Top Ups.

Operational Support. The new beneficiaries' database (Salesforce) is now operational with Tanya as the System Administrator. She and Julie will work together this year to further develop the application so that it holds every piece of information we need. This will allow us to produce reports more efficiently and to drill down for information to assist in developing future Ben Fund.

Review of Grant Giving Criteria (hard copy available). We reviewed our grant giving criteria, taking into account the review of societal trends completed last year, as well as best practice in other service charities. In particular we looked closely at the criteria used by WRNS Ben Trust. The changes allow us to provide more support to our eligible veterans. They were agreed at 7 February 2019 Trustees meeting and were effective from

then. The main changes are:

We have introduced 2 new recurring grants for those below state retirement age, namely:

Ben Fund Annual Maintenance Grant (Para 22). This is where there is a need for long term support, eg an applicant who cannot work due to chronic medical conditions and yet cannot draw a pension; or someone with caring responsibilities. Grants up to £40 pw depending on need.

Ben Fund Support Supplement (Para 23). This is a short-term grant of variable duration for those below state pension age, eg someone who does not have enough money to live on while they wait for Universal Credit or a loss of salary due to being off sick. Again, up to £40 pw.

Also, we looked at what extra support we can provide to the elderly in need of care. As many like to remain in their own homes, rather than go into a residential home, we have introduced a **Care at Home grant** to help with the costs of care being provided at home (Para 26). This is the same weekly rate as we give to those in care/nursing homes, so up to £50 pw. And we will now be able to give more to those in a care/nursing home where all they have for spending money is the £25 or so they are allowed to keep from their state pension. We will be able to top that up to £50 per week – to allow them to have their hair done or buy small presents for their family. This is the **Personal Expense Allowance** (Para 27).

One Off Grants. There are no changes to the one-off grants apart from doing away with the £3,000 upper limit; now there is no upper limit, although any grant over £6,000 would need to be agreed by Trustees. Changes have also been made to the amounts various people can award (eg The Ben Fund Sec, now be able to award grants up to £2k and I/Fund Chair can award up to £3k, etc). Grants between £3,000 and £6,000 will be decided by the MGCM.

Publicity. The changes have been published on our website, sent to the service charities we work with, and will go into the next Lioness. You also have a copy, so please take it back to your branches and spread the news!

Ali thanked Rowena, Isabel and Barbara for the all time and effort they all put into the Assoc.

9. Resolutions.

a. Trustee Resolution – That the amendments to the Constitution, presented by EFC and Trustees be agreed.

Proposed: Maggie Purkis **Seconded:** Ishbel Thomson
Agreed: By 143 votes (6 against & 3 abstentions)

b. Branch Proposals – there were none.

c. Election of Honorary Treasurer. The AGM is required to ratify the appointment of Honorary Treasurer on an annual basis.

Proposal: To ratify Barbara Davies as Honorary Treasurer.

Proposed: Helen Merrington-Rust **Seconded:** Wendy Hooton
Agreed: All

10. Any Other Business.

a. Gala Dinner. The Chairman informed Members that guests at tonight's Gala Dinner include 5 serving senior female officers, including the first mainstream 2-star Major General.

b. Sunday Parade. All branch Standards should make themselves known to Sharon Baker-Joyce so she can co-ordinate everyone tomorrow morning.

c. SSAFA Case-workers. Liz Ives highlighted that the need by SSAFA for more volunteer case-workers and encouraged Members to consider helping in this way.

d. Ticket allocations. Following a query about numbers and names of those marching each year, the Chairman confirmed that we receive a limited allocation of tickets for the Cenotaph from The Royal British Legion (whose event it is and who organise everything), and we do not know the allocation until notified. We are 'entitled' to 40 as a veteran's organisation and have been very fortunate to be allocated 100 – 120 each year. However, with the Parade getting bigger each year, and it now including civilian organisations, there is increased pressure on numbers. Only 'veterans' organisations can participate. Mention is made in every Lioness, encouraging Members to contact Tanya for inclusion on the list, but we are always oversubscribed, often well before the date, and so a waiting list is operated. All Members were reminded that this year we are hoping to have a good attendance at Guildford (in recognition of our Centenary), and attendance at local events is always encouraged.

The very limited tickets we receive for things such as Wimbledon, Royal Garden Parties, etc. are organised by the Chairman and allocated by ballot, if appropriate, after nominations from Area Co-ordinators and Branches.

e. BBC coverage – We need to be grateful for the coverage we received in 2017 at the Cenotaph and Festival of Remembrance. The Chairman reminded everyone Remembrancetide is not about TV coverage but 'remembrance'. It was confirmed that the Assoc. always issues appropriate notes on how to pronounce ATS and WRAC, despite what happens in practice.

f. 10k Run/Walk – anyone interested in participating or supporting need to contact Wendy Hooton.

g. Ann Guthrie asked if **Partners** could be invited to the **Grand Reunion** in future. It was pointed out that the weekend is oversubscribed from among Members each time, and the Assoc. prefers to accommodate as many Members as possible. For every partner who attended it would be one less Member who could. Therefore, agreed not to change.

h. Guildford – Attendance for Remembrance is being co-ordinated. Additionally, the Dean is aware that the current Cathedral visitor leaflet makes no mention of the WRAC window, etc and will ensure this is rectified in the new leaflet.

i. Fundraising – Marg Davies thanked everyone who supported her 100-mile walk this year, which has raised £708 from this weekend alone. Winners of the two raffle prizes were: Jo Foster and Sheila Murphy.

j. Thank you – Sue Westlake thanked Ali Brown, Assoc. Chair, on behalf of all the Members, for all her hard work on behalf of the Assoc., particularly in this Centenary year.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting. Subject to confirmation, the 2020 AGM will be held on Saturday 21 March 2020 at the NMA, when we are also hoping to dedicate our new WRAC Statue. The event will be advertised in the Lioness 2019#2. Hopefully as many members as possible will attend.

Presentation to Sharon Bingham – Sharon was Area Coordinator for South & South West for 3 years. Ali Brown extended her personal thanks for volunteering and for all the work completed in getting the word of the Association out. It is a really important role so thank you. The post is currently VACANT!! So please contact Ali or the office if you are interested. A thank you presentation was made to Sharon.

Grand Draw – Winning tickets in the Grand Raffle were drawn. Chrissie Mills won first prize. Those not present were sent their prizes in the coming week.

The Meeting closed at 15.40 with afternoon tea.

Signed as a true record.

Chairman:

Date:

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2018**

		Unrestricted			Total Funds Year Ended 30.09.2018 £	Total Funds Year Ended 30.09.2017 £
	Notes	General Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £		
INCOME FROM:						
Donations and legacies	1	39,626	-	389,301	428,927	213,781
Charitable activities	2	-	-	-	-	11,723
Investments	3	17,795	-	207,657	225,452	222,991
Other income	4	8,142	-	339	8,481	11,857
TOTAL INCOME		65,563	-	597,297	662,860	460,352
EXPENDITURE ON:						
Raising funds	6	3,111	-	29,872	32,983	35,268
Charitable activities	7	87,974	-	319,699	407,673	388,774
Total Expenditure		91,085	-	349,571	440,656	424,042
Net Gains / (losses) on investments	10	31,269	-	242,169	273,438	573,526
NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)		5,747	-	489,895	495,642	609,836
Transfers between funds	16	2,229	(2,229)	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		7,976	(2,229)	489,895	495,642	609,836
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:						
Total Funds brought forward	19	731,046	20,931	6,098,257	6,850,234	6,240,398
Total funds carried forward		739,022	18,702	6,588,152	7,345,876	6,850,234

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

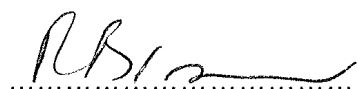
All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 22 to 38 form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2018

	Notes	2018 £	2017 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Intangible assets	8	17,675	14,739
Tangible assets	9	4,512	3,757
Investments	10	<u>7,238,122</u>	<u>6,716,036</u>
		7,260,309	6,734,532
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stock	11	4,687	1,782
Debtors	12	65,226	15,259
Cash at bank and in hand	13	<u>51,976</u>	<u>139,342</u>
		121,889	156,383
LIABILITIES			
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	14	36,322	40,681
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		85,567	115,702
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
TOTAL NET ASSETS		<u><u>7,345,876</u></u>	<u><u>6,850,234</u></u>
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY			
Restricted Funds:			
The Benevolent Funds	15	5,644,046	5,164,869
The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund	18	944,106	933,388
Unrestricted funds:			
General Funds	19	739,022	731,046
Designated funds:			
Membership life subscription fund	16	18,702	20,931
TOTAL FUNDS	19	<u><u>7,345,876</u></u>	<u><u>6,850,234</u></u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 5 Feb 19 and were signed on its behalf by:



Colonel (Retired) Alison Brown, Chairman

The notes on pages 22 to 38 form part of these financial statements.

'Mentioned in WRAC Association Dispatches' replaced the system of considering regional branch members for the award of a Certificate of Appreciation in 2014. Details of individuals awarded a 'Mention in WRAC Association Dispatches' will be published in Lioness, thus enabling all members 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 Co-ordinator 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 to be submitted for approval at a meeting of the Council of the WRAC Association (held twice per year).

Miss Doris Doswell Leicester & Nottingham Branch

Miss Doswell has been with the Branch since its' formation in 1955 (64 years). She has been nominated for a WRAC Association Mention in Dispatches for her dedication and unfaltering service to the Branch.

Having served many years with the Auxiliary Territorial Service, and being awarded the Defence Medal 1939 -1945 and the British War Medal 1939 - 1945, Miss Doswell, even after retiring from HM Forces, has continued to serve the WRAC Association with great dedication and pride.

Miss Doswell has rarely missed a meeting (or parade as she likes to call the Branch get togethers), always immaculately turned out with medals and shoes highly polished, she continues to set the standard for the junior members of the Branch. Miss Doswell, like her ATS Comrades, is a credit and an inspiration to many. Her keen eye for detail ensures that everyone is aware of the minimum standard required when representing the Branch. She leads by example and as a result, many strive to be just like her. Miss Doswell has throughout her service seen many changes, not least with the disbandment of the ATS and subsequent formation of the WRAC. She has throughout the years dedicated her time and effort to ensuring the Leicester and Nottinghamshire Branch has remained as one of the leading Branches in the East Midland Area.

Without doubt, Miss Doswell has given her all to the Branch, her dedication and love of tradition coupled with her enthusiasm when welcoming new members is a credit to her long and varied career.

Always modest about her own achievements, Miss Doswell has kept a firm hand on the accounts, ensuring the Branch has prospered and therefore can continue to support future generations of female veterans as they follow in her footsteps.

Miss Doswell should be recognised and rewarded for her long and dedicated service. Until recently, and even though now "retired" from her role, she shows no signs of slowing down and the Leicester and Nottingham Branch are privileged to have such a wonderfully supportive and influential member.

**Sue Slattery,
Leicester & Nottingham Branch**

I fully support this application. Having spent numerous times in Miss Doswell's company, she truly is a stalwart of the Association. Her stories are a delight to listen to, her keen eye for detail and indeed tradition keeps the younger members (willingly) on their toes. This request is long overdue.

Cathy Munro MBE, East Midlands Area Co-ordinator

Given your long service in the ATS during World War 2 and your membership of the Branch since its' formation in 1955, we feel that you thoroughly deserve this public recognition of your commitment and dedication to the WRAC Association. Your colleagues have noted and celebrated your keen eye for tradition, your unfaltering energy and your enthusiasm in encouraging new members; all this while keeping a firm hand on the accounts.

You have held appointments within the Branch as follows: Committee Member in 1955, Branch Secretary 1959 to 1968 and Branch Treasurer from 1968 to 2013. This consistent leadership over the last 64 years has ensured that many have followed in your footsteps and I am so very grateful to you.

Ali Brown, Assoc. Vice-president

Miss Doris White Leicester & Nottingham Branch

Miss White has been with the Branch since its' initial formation in 1955 (64 years). She has been nominated for a WRAC Association Mention in Dispatches for her dedication and unfaltering service to both the East Midlands Area and the Leicester and Nottingham Branch.

Miss White has for the last 47 years served as Branch Chairman, a role which until 2019, she carried out, with as much energy and passion as she did when she first took over the reins from Miss Snowden in 1972.

Having served many years with the Auxiliary Territorial Service, and being awarded the Defence Medal 1939 -1945 and the British War Medal 1939 - 1945, Miss White has continued to serve the WRAC Association with great pride. Always there for Meetings and for Parade, smartly dressed with her medals and shoes shining brightly, Miss White is a credit and an inspiration to the many "Junior Members" of the Branch. Her attention to detail to this day ensures that anyone parading alongside her always makes sure they are properly turned out at all times.

Miss White has seen many changes, not least with the disbandment of the ATS and subsequent formation of the WRAC. She has throughout these changes continued to support the Branch and ensured that it has remained front and centre within the East Midlands Area. She has stepped up time and time again, not only to encourage but also to guide the Branch through the various transition periods. Her dedication and her keen eye for tradition, coupled with her enthusiasm when encouraging new members, is a credit to her long and distinguished service.

Always modest about her own achievements, Miss White should be recognised and rewarded for her long and dedicated service. Whilst she has now "retired" as Chairman of the Branch, Miss White will no doubt continue to influence the running of the Leicester and Nottingham Branch. Miss White will be forever linked to the branch.

**Sue Slattery
Leicester & Nottingham Branch**

I fully support this application. Having spent numerous times in Miss White's company, she truly is a stalwart of the Association. Her stories are a delight to listen to, her keen eye for detail, and indeed tradition, keeps the younger members (willingly) on their toes. This request is long overdue.

Cathy Munro MBE
East Midlands Area Co-ordinator

Given your long service in the ATS during World War 2 and your membership of the Branch since its' formation in 1955, we feel that you thoroughly deserve this public recognition of your commitment and dedication to the WRAC Association. Your colleagues have noted and celebrated your unfailing support to your Branch over the last 64 years with you stepping up time and time again to guide and encourage branch members through the various transition periods that have taken place since. You have held appointments within the Branch as follows: Committee Member, Branch Secretary, Branch Treasurer and Branch Chairman from 1972 to the current time. You are always modest about your own achievements and Leicester and Nottingham Branch are so privileged to have such a wonderful Chairman.

Ali Brown
Assoc. Vice-president

Poem In Praise of Poppies

*A small and simple flower,
Some folk call them weeds.
But it holds a secret history
Inside the tiny seeds.
It flowered on the battlefield,
And knew the death and pain,
Their seeds took root in soldiers' blood,
Their blooms a blood red stain.*

*It doesn't have the beauty
Of a sweetly scented rose,
Or the elegance of the lily.
Yet everybody knows
Just what this simple flower means.
It's worn on many a heart,
A symbol of remembrance
For the men who played their part.*

*So now in praises of Poppies,
As their blood red petals fall,
Give thanks to those who
fought for peace;
Those men who gave their all.*



Val O'Dell

Ardrossan cancer survivor and charity campaigner Suzanne Fernando awarded an MBE



An intrepid Ardrossan charity campaigner has revealed her shock at being awarded an MBE.

Suzanne Fernando was revealed as the recipient of an MBE on the June (2019) birthday Honours list for her services to Cervical Cancer, Autism and Military Veterans in Ayrshire.

Since 2002 Suzanne has devoted most of her time to charity work. The three main charities that she has worked with are Cancer Research UK, Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust (JCCT) and North Ayrshire Cancer Care. In 2013 she set up, and has since annually run, 'Steps for Jo's', on behalf of JCCT, securing patronage from many organisations in Ayrshire for the fun runs. 'Steps for Jo's' now raises over £30,000 every year.

Suzanne told the Herald how a tough year has been made that bit better and how she was "overwhelmed" by the award.

She said: "What started off as the worst year with various illnesses and bedded down for almost four months has now transformed into a whirlwind of a week for me. This week I celebrated my wedding anniversary, birthday, TACT Volunteer Award, British Citizen Award and now I've been told I'll be off down to Buckingham Palace to receive an MBE. I am still in shock, I can't quite believe what is happening and I don't think it's really sunk in yet. I am overwhelmed, delighted and humbled to have been awarded this amazing honour."

Suzanne does a lot for the Three Towns and wider North Ayrshire community and wants to thank those who help her out. She added: "I'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has supported me, especially my family whom I continue to drag here, there and everywhere setting up events and seminars. They have, are and always will be my rock."

Courtesy Ardrossan & Saltcoats Herald

Obituaries - Their Final Salute

Jean Maxwell Latham **1926 - 19 September 2018**



It is with great sadness that the family of Jean Maxwell Latham announce her passing on Wednesday 19th September 2018 at the age of 92 years. Wife of the late George Edward Latham, loving mother to the late David, Peter and Janet, sister, aunty, mother-in-law, nanna and great-nanna. Jean will forever be loved and remembered by her family and friends. She will also be remembered by the WRAC Association, of which she was an active member and Chair Person of the Stockport Branch before her illness. A Requiem Mass in celebration of her life will be [was] held at St. Joseph's RC Church in Reddish, Stockport on Monday 8th October 2018 at 10.30am, followed by a brief service at the Cypress Chapel, Stockport Crematorium at 12 noon.

Jean Westfield (daughter)

This lady was the last Chair of the ATS ladies Stockport Branch, now no longer. Her Daughter, Son and Grand-daughter were telling all about her and she was very proud of being a member of our beloved Association, and very proud of their branch

Anna Orlinski

Elma Mary Mcgrath **14 April 1934 – 6 December 2018**



Elma Mary Mcgrath was born in Aberdeen in April 1934. She did her schooling in Aberdeen and completed a Secretarial course. After a couple of office jobs, she obtained a position in The Chemistry Department at Aberdeen University and was Secretary to Professor Hal Taylor for 35 years.

It was at this time that Elma joined the WRAC Territorial Army, attached to The Royal Signals. Again, she thrived on carrying out her tasks and enjoyed all aspects of Army life, quickly rising through the ranks to Staff Sergeant. She was a keen sportswoman and a brilliant squash player.

At the end of her time with the WRAC she was offered a position as Colour Sgt to The Gordon Highland Cadets. This again was a position tailor made for her: she participated in all activities such as camping, skiing and climbing Ben Nevis. Whilst there she became a mother figure to the cadets at the same time being able to keep control and get the best out of her charges. She was greatly respected and loved by all.

Throughout Elma's life her greatest love was music. She was an accomplished pianist and had a beautiful contralto voice. She probably could have become a professional singer, but her mother was against her leaving Aberdeen to sing "Down South". When she decided to come to Wales to live, the fact that it was 'The Land of Song' appealed greatly. She settled in quickly and joined lots of groups and choirs and knew most of the Newtown residents!

Elma took enormous pleasure in singing to her beautiful Golden Retriever – Oscar. Each morning she would sing to him and he would gaze up at her and gently wag his tail as though he was conducting.

Elma was a lively member of the Marches and Mid Wales Branch and enjoyed any function that was organised. She became suddenly very ill in May 2015, so beginning a very hard journey. For over three years she was given wonderful care by all staff at Plas Cae Crwn in Newtown, Powys where she was a popular resident. She was born to this life on 14 April 1934 and born to eternal life on 6 December 2018. She will be greatly missed.

Chris Williams QARANC, lifetime friend.

Edith Seabrook (Doughty) **2nd May 1944 – 26th August 2018**



21st December 1961, enlisted in Nottingham. A proud newly enlisted 17-year-old young lady had joined the Women's Royal Army Corps (W.R.A.C) wanting to see what the world had to offer away from her hometown of Market Harborough, Leicestershire. Her name was Edith Doughty.

Edith joined the W.R.A.C band and was based at Guildford and loved every minute of it.

Edith joined the W.R.A.C band and was based at Guildford and loved every minute of it. Edith loved music from all genres. Whilst off duty and at a mess bar with friends, and having waited a long time to get a drink, a young soldier tapped her on the shoulder and asked her if her drink was nice. Without hesitation the young soldier whipped the drink from her hand and said it was nice and handed the empty glass back to her. The soldier returned to his friends after winning a bet and nursing a sore slapped face. Not deterred the young soldier used his winnings to buy a double of the liquid he had just drank and returned to Edith and handed her the drink. Edith was surprised but appreciated the gesture. The evening dance was ending, and rock & roll music came on and without hesitation the young soldier was asking Edith if she Jived, she did and that was that. The young soldier's name was Graham Arthur Seabrook known as Arthur (Archie or Noshier by his friends).

Within 6 months of meeting they were married and Arthur was posted to Bahrain shortly after that. Edith decided to stay in the W.R.A.C. after her marriage. Edith and her band members carried out many performances, one in front of HRM Queen Elizabeth II, and it was rumored that the Queen had noticed that Edith was the only married woman in the band. Edith had many friends in the band which she kept in touch with over the years especially Carol Holland (godmother to her eldest daughter).



Edith left the army in December 1964 and travelled with Arthur to various postings around the world, including Germany and Hong Kong. After 25yrs+ service Arthur retired, and the family settled into civilian street. Arthur worked in security and Edith had various jobs over the years but mostly in the local hospital as

Always loving a challenge Edith took on the roll as a drum teacher for the local community children's Jazz Band in the early 1980s as they entered local competitions. In later years she took up Karate and gained a green belt, as well as learnt and helped teach 'Ti-Chi' to groups in her local community alongside her instructor. Edith would also help the local dance school by sewing costumes for their yearly shows and loved card making.

Edith & Arthur had 3 children, 2 Daughters and 1 Son, 1 granddaughter and 3 grandsons who they love dearly and they affectionally call 'Acid Edith and King Arthur.' The name 'Acid Edith' was due to Edith always being on the dance floor first when 'Acid Music & The Prodigy' were played and she could show the younger generation you're never too old to have fun & dance!

March 2019 would have been Edith & Arthur's 55th Wedding Anniversary and May was Edith's 75th birthday along with other family celebrations. Many family, friend & strangers would always comment on their love of dancing and loved watching them jive.

We believe that even though she had a short service the W.R.A.C memories were her treasured ones of which we believe she was forever grateful for.

Enlisted: 21st December 1961; Discharge: 20th December 1964

Alison Mitchell

Elizabeth 'Beryl' Holder (Nee Lewis) 04 December 1924 – 11 December 2018



ATS (AckAck) 514 Battery 151 (Mixed) Heavy Anti Aircraft Regiment 23.12.41 – 31.01.45

'Beryl' / 'Betty' was born in Somerset and joined the ATS in 1941 (at age 17!). After her basic training in Honiton, she served in Devizes, Whitby, Manchester, Beverley, Hull, Sheffield, Huddersfield, Norwich and Sunderland.

The following extract was taken from The Star newspaper March 2000.

When the raid siren shrieked, Beryl would leap from her bed, dragging curlers from her hair as quickly as she could so

she could put her tin hat on. "We often got to our posts with nightdresses under our uniforms and a few rollers still in place." She recalls, "It was such an exciting time, we rarely thought about the danger we were in. Life was just one big adventure. It's only looking back that I realise the full extent of what we did." Beryl and comrades were among the first women ever to join the Army – and as such were forerunners for the liberation of women.

"We all felt we had something to prove being the first. Some of the men didn't like us being there at all. They thought we were after their jobs and took every opportunity to tell us we should have been at home, washing the pots. But it never really occurred to us that we were fighting for feminism as well. We were on two thirds of the man's pay, yet what we did made people realise women were a vital part of the war effort and had just as big a part to play in life after the war, too."

Being the first women in the Army, uniforms posed a problem. Beryl and her comrades had to wear men's battle dress, complete with flies! Those curlers were a vital part of an Army girl's kit bag. "We had to do something to make ourselves look attractive" laughs Beryl. "Six months after joining up they amended the uniform with a softer fabric and a side zip, thank goodness. But it still looked very ugly. A few curls and a bit of lipstick made us feel like women and kept our morale up. We had a weekly beauty night, when we all stayed in darning our stockings, polishing our buttons and washing our hair!"

Beryl was a predictor with the newly formed mixed heavy anti-aircraft 514 Battery and served in Sheffield and the Hull area, trying to defend the two cities under siege. While in Sheffield, Beryl met her husband-to-be. He was a local lad on leave from the Navy and the pretty girl at the bar in the Nag's Head captured his heart. They were married and a year later Beryl left the Forces to settle in Sheffield and have their first child. She spearheaded Sheffield's efforts in the national battle for a memorial to the women who served during World War 2. "Women did sterling work in the munition factories, the nursing and ambulance services and the Land Army as well as the Services and every one of them deserves their efforts to be commemorated."

And so it was in July 2005, that *The Memorial to the Women of WW2* was unveiled, by The Queen, in Whitehall.

In 1991 Beryl picked up a book *On Target* in the library written by Vee Robinson. She tracked Vee down and this led to a reunion in 1993. This was going to be a 'one off!' but many more reunions were organised, and in 1997 they founded The ATS Members of Ack Ack Command Royal Artillery Association with in excess of 1,000 members from around the world who served on the Gun Sights during the War. Annual Reunions at Imphal Barracks York, services at York Minster, twice yearly Newsletters, their own Standard and a garden at the National Memorial Arboretum were their 'claim to fame'.

In 2005 the Association almost folded but Beryl took over becoming editor of the Newsletters, keeping the Association going single handedly until July 2012. As a result of the ever-increasing age of the members The Branch was formally laid to rest with the Laying up of *The Standard* at a Service in York Minster in June 2015.

Sadly, in the last 3 years of her life, Vascular Dementia and Alzheimer's took its toll but Beryl never lost her loving and caring personality. Beryl leaves behind her husband Ken, now in his

99th year, daughter Jane, daughter-in-law Eve, 3 Grandchildren and 6 Great Grandchildren. Always loved and greatly missed.
Jane Birdsall (daughter)

Dorothy Cheffings To 12th March 2019



Our dearly departed Lioness Dot served as a medic at Bovington, where we (Wirral Branch) laid a bouquet of flowers with a short service for her at this year's Grand Reunion.

Sheila Brown

Vera B Denning (nee Skinner), ex LCpl ATS 1921 - 2019



Vera was born in India in 1921 whilst her father, Harold Skinner, was serving with the 7th Hussars. Her mother, Hilda, was of Spanish descent. The family came back to UK whilst Vera was quite young so most of her schooling was in England. She always had an eye for fashion and clothing and spent much of her career working as a sales assistant. She left her job in Winchester early in the war to move in with family in Shepherd's Bush and what she hoped would be the excitement of London. Initially she worked in a munitions factory in Hammersmith. As London was battered with air raids and bombings she wanted to do more towards the war effort so volunteered to join the ATS in January 1942.

She left the bright winter sunshine of London and travelled to Durham in her fashionable 'best clothes' for basic training. She arrived in heavy snow, 6-foot drifts, and survived the shock of army barracks (she had foolishly chosen a bed nearest the exit which often ended up covered in snow blown in from under the door!!) She was pleased to have her issue of uniform and sensible shoes, much better to deal with the wintery conditions. She had wanted to be a driver but, like many others, she was not found to be a suitable candidate, weak eyes being the excuse given her. Bearing her previous employment as a shop assistant in mind she was trained as a stores clerk. After a month or so in the comparative quiet of Durham she was posted back to the London "Blitz" to the huge RAOC Depot at Wembley.

Once fully trained she became a 'progress chaser.' The Wembley Depot had to gather and send out massive orders that were loaded onto lorries for onward transportation to the forward units. The convoys couldn't leave until every item, no matter how small, was 'ticked off.' It was Vera's job to 'chase up' any missing items. She was a hugely important small cog in the massive machine that was the progress of the war effort. Vera also trained as a PT Instructor at the Police College in Hendon. She always said that the main reason she had volunteered as a PTI was to get her out of drill!!! She did say that learning to land properly in gymnastics had saved her from injury many times (although not latterly).

Life wasn't all work, and Vera managed to have a good time in her off-duty hours. There were dances at Wembley Hall where she once won first prize for the most original dress having decorated a borrowed blue dress with a V for Victory, E for England, R for Russia and A for America - VERA (all fashioned out of black ribbon). The prize was presented by a film star of the time, Burgess Meredith. She also met the actor Trevor Howard while working as an extra on the film "The Gentle Sex." You may yet discover her 'milling about' on the train station, although I've seen the film a couple of times and have yet to recognise her.

Vera was one of the thousands who gathered outside Buckingham Palace on VE and VJ Days. She saw the King and Queen on the balcony with the two princesses (Princess Elizabeth in her ATS uniform). In July 2005 Vera went to London again to watch as the Memorial to the Women of World War II was unveiled by Queen Elizabeth. Later she was lucky enough to be presented to the Queen at the special veteran's reception. She always regretted that, in her excitement, she forgot to curtsy.

After the war Vera married a soldier who served in the parachute Regiment, the late James (Jimmy) Denning. They had two children, Sandra (who sadly died of cancer leaving a husband and young family) and Richard who survives his mother. She was devoted to her family; her brothers (who all predeceased her), her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren as well

as her nephews, nieces and their extended families.

During her post war life Vera and her husband loved to travel. She had a huge curiosity for the world in general and the people that she met along the way. Even after her husband died Vera still thirsted for new experiences and continued to travel and enjoy learning more about the world. Even though she became unable to travel abroad she made up for it in other ways. Until quite recently she knitted jumpers by the dozen for an orphanage in Africa and loved to receive letters and photos from the recipients.

Vera was a fiercely proud veteran who was adamant that women should let people know more about their military service. She loved to meet members of the WRAC Association and one of her proudest moments in recent years was when she and Sharon Baker-Joyce (in full Standard Bearer uniform) gave a talk to her luncheon club. Rest in Peace Vera, you will be greatly missed.

Marg Davies

W/340350 PTE WRIGHT J (Joan) ATS (Mrs Joan Watkins) 14 May 1928 – 3 May 2019



Joan Watkins was born in Widnes, Lancashire on 14.5.1928, to Mr and Mrs Wright.

Joan served in the Middle East between 1946- 1948 as a switchboard operator, and for most of the time she worked at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. When she left the ATS she joined the Land Army, which is how she met my father, George Watkins, in Bromyard, Herefordshire.

Joan died on 3.5.2019 and had a memorial service at St Peters Church on 24 May, including attendance by the National WRAC Association Standard (with Sharon Baker-Joyce) and ex-WREN Chris Walker.

Hilary Deakin & Jan Brodie-Murphy

(Major) DIANA HENDERSON, Champion of women and veterans 21 May 1946 - 10 April 2019

Looking back to the 1960's Diana Henderson, who died of cancer at the age of 72, saw herself as a country-girl from Hawick, where she became Captain of games – for girls – at the High School and cherished her ambition to join the Army, a goal fuelled by stories and relics of ancestors going back to the 1780's who served in India. But first she proudly became the first woman in

her family to attend college, and the first woman law graduate from Strathclyde University in 1970. In that year she was also commissioned into the WRAC, having joined the University OTC, and everything thereafter was defined by her unshakeable moral integrity and commitment to duty, service and trust. Like many young women, then and now, 'glass ceilings were only to be learned about later'.

As a TA officer for the next thirty years she enjoyed numerous short attachments and assignments throughout Europe and the Middle East. In 1976 she took a Military Dancing Team to the USA, as part of the Bicentennial Celebrations, and herself trained briefly with the US Marines – the first British female Officer to do so. She had always lived with horses and in 1986 was the first female Officer to train with the King's Troop. In 1995 she became Commanding Officer of 162 Movement Control Regiment RLC (V), in charge of almost 400 men and women. Her charismatic and inspiring leadership was enhanced by superb physical fitness, enabling her to excel in almost all competitive sports, from shooting and boxing, to swimming and hockey. Her advocacy of rigorous self-discipline among all her colleagues enabled many young women to succeed in undreamed of activities: 'Duties, not rights: no excuses: no fuss'.

She held the Douglas Haig Fellowship in 1998, was the first female Trustee of The British Legion, first female Liveryman of the Watermen and Lightermen, Freeman of the City of London, and Lay Canon of Ely Cathedral. She advised numerous trusts associated with animal welfare, the conservation of archives and historic buildings, and her lectures on military, legal and fundraising subjects were widely admired.

Alongside her TA service she practised as a Solicitor in the Highlands until 1980, at which point she travelled alone in the North West Frontier to examine military sites from the 19th century. She also completed a PhD in Military History at the University of Edinburgh - published in 1989 as *Highland Soldier 1820-1920*, and embarked on a series of appointments where the glass ceilings became increasingly apparent, protected by entrenched attitudes towards women and about money. She became the first female Alumni Officer and Director of Development at Edinburgh University, St George's School for Girls, and Fettes College, followed by election in 2005 as a Fellow and Director of Development of Queens' College, Cambridge.

In 1995 under the Patronage of the HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, and Chairmanship of General Sir Michael Gow, she created The Scots at War Trust. The aims were to locate and seek conservation of the rapidly dispersing archives of disbanding Scottish Regiments, and of surviving veterans from World Wars I and II. For over a decade, sharply focused seminars enabled veterans, often for the first time, to share their recollections, thereby opening new avenues of research. The underlying premise was that 'what it was like' could be conveyed, albeit at a limited scale, only by those 'who were there'. Hollywood-style films of the purported characters and events were regularly deplored, alongside know-all academics. The topics discussed ranged from 'The Royal Navy in Scotland' to 'Polish Forces in Scotland', from 'Bletchley' to 'The Women's Land Army', from 'The retreat from Burma' to 'The 51st Highland Division in France'. School and university students attended all the events.

In 2011 she married Peter Jones, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh. They moved to Norfolk after her retirement from ill health in 2013, where she

created a beautiful garden and was able to practise her beloved bagpipes, much to the chagrin of her spaniel, Spar (she had also played them during the lectures she gave at the University of Edinburgh, startling students by bringing them out when she wanted to demonstrate the customs of the Highland regiments between 1820 and 1920, the subject of her book *The Highland Soldier* (1989)).

Rachel Jones

Step-daughter

(Courtesy of the Daily Telegraph & The Times)

Margaret Crawley **18th October 1924 – 12th July 2019**



Margaret, as a little girl, always wanted to travel, and so she had no hesitation in signing up for the ATS in 1943 despite her family's misgivings. After training, she served in G.H.Q. 2nd Echelon, Casualties and Effects Section, in London and then in Oxford (perhaps not quite the travelling that she was envisaging!). However, in March 1945 the Section was posted to Brussels as the advance party for G.H.Q. 2nd Echelon and there she was promoted to Sergeant. In June 1946 she moved to Hamburg, where she joined the Statistics Section before being demobbed in December that year.

Although her service was not lengthy she remembered it with fondness all of her life – in particular the friends that she made – and was a member of the Bath branch of the WRAC Association for many years, attending a number of their functions. Her time in the forces (as might be expected) led directly to a long and eventful civil service career abroad, working in Norway, Switzerland, Egypt and Japan – again making friends that she treasured all of her life and who treasured her.

For the last 30 years she has lived at Partis College Almshouses in Bath and at the time of her passing she was very much the senior member of that community. Many of the residents have said how much they will miss her and how strange it will seem not to have her smiling face and sharp wit there amongst them. She will be missed too by her family. She always felt that family was important and, indeed, she was always important to them.

Sheelagh Douglas (niece)

Irene Hartfree (nee Wakeham) **3rd June 1917 – 26th January 2019**

Irene Hartfree was born Irene Wakeham on 3rd June 1917 in Leeds Yorkshire. She joined the ATS as a volunteer, as she wanted to have some choice of occupation. She gained the rank of corporal and was very proud after basic training to have 'potential NCO material' in her file. She trained as a PTI, but was transferred for a short time to catering corps after having been severely deafened in a medical accident, and was invalided out in around 1944 when she married Douglas (parachute regiment 6th Airborne Div. no 2 Para.)

She carried her PTI training all through her life. She was fit and healthy, did her exercises every day, cycled, played badminton and had the energy of a dynamo, and she was a terrific dancer with my Dad. She was still running for the bus to do her shopping and carried it home in her 90s whilst looking after Douglas single handed.

She died on 26th Jan 2019 aged 101 years. Her funeral was on 27th Feb 2019 at Portchester Crematorium.

*Val Duke
Portsmouth branch*

Mary (Terri) Marshall **October 1935 - 9th August 2019**



Mary Marshall, also known to many as Terri, sadly passed away on Friday 9th August 2019 in Kettering General Hospital, Northamptonshire.

Born in October 1935, Terri joined the Women's Royal Army Corps in 1953 where she served until 1962. Throughout her time, she touched the hearts of many and will be remembered for her wicked sense of humour and smile that could light up a room.

Terri was the loving mother to Malcolm Marshall and Grandmother to Penny and David Marshall. She will be sorely missed but is now at peace and will leave a legacy of beautiful memories to all of her friends and family.

Funeral arrangements are to be confirmed but will take place

Hemswell, Lincolnshire. Family flowers only, however, donations may be made to the WRAC Association."

Penny Marshall

Grand daughter

Terri suffered from Vascular Dementia in her last few years and her family moved her from her home in Hemswell Cliff to be near to them at one of The Hawthorne Residences at Upton in Northants for her last months. Terri had originally belonged to Grimsby WRAC Association and moved over to the Lincoln & District WRAC when it was created.

*W/405712 Jean Evans
Friend*

Vera May Harding (nee Watts)



Former W/133533 Lance-Corporal Vera May Harding (nee Watts) passed away on 9th April, aged 93 years. Vera enlisted in the Auxiliary Training Service (ATS) in 1942 and served with the ATS Provost Wing, London District, until she was discharged on the 25th September 1945. The other ATS member on the left of the picture (right) is named as Kit Short. Vera's funeral took place in Chichester on the 30th April, which was attended by members of Depot and West Sussex Branches.



LAST POST

BRABENDER (nee Smith), Mrs Margaret of Cranbrook, Kent on 13th April 2019 (ATS)
COX (nee Rickman), Mrs Catherine of Winchester on 18th February 2019 (WRAC)
DENNING, Mrs Vera of Worcester on 25th April 2019 (ATS)
EVERITT (nee Chipperfield), Mrs Audrey “Chips” of Guildford on 31st March 2019 (ATS)
FARIS (nee Mariner), Mrs Joyce of Bournemouth on 17th April 2019 (ATS)
FRANCE (nee Parkinson), Mrs Betty of Huddersfield on 27th June 2019 (ATS)
GILBERTSON, Miss Patricia of Poole on 8th April 2019 (WRAC)
GOOCH (nee Lines), Mrs Enid of Swaffham, Norfolk on 18th February 2019 (ATS)
GRANT (nee Peacock), Mrs Amanda of Watford on 5th May 2019 (WRAC)
HARTFREE (nee Wakeham), Mrs Irene of Portsmouth on 26th Jan 2019 (ATS)
HULSE (nee Haldean), Mrs Betty of Bournemouth on 3rd September 2019 (ATS)
HUMPHREYS (nee Watts), Mrs Joyce of Bristol on 3rd August 2019 (ATS)
JACKSON (nee Gregory), Mrs Hilda Kathleen on 29th March 2019
LINDSAY, Miss Agnes, of Dumfries on 10th May 2019 (WRAC)
LITTLEWOOD (nee Adams), Mrs Marion of Gloucester on 21st June 2019 (WRAC)
MCCALLUM (nee Fassier), Mrs Helga of Peterhead on 2nd June 2019 (WRAC)
MCELWAINE (nee Tennuci), Mrs Peg of Weymouth on 8th August 2019 (WRAC)
PEARCE, Ms Joan, of Croydon on 28th December 2018 (WRAC)
ROSCOE (nee Hannigan), Mrs Ellen of Chester in July 2018 (ATS)
RICHARDSON, Miss Margaret of Stewarton in September 2018 (ATS)
ROBERTSON COOK (nee Walker), Mrs Irene on 3rd December 2018 (ATS)
SHARPLES, Mrs Connie of Lancashire on 14th May 2019 (ATS)
SILVER (nee Ather), Mrs Olive of Ormskirk on 31st July 2018 (ATS)
STRETCH, Miss Samantha, of Bury on 3rd May 2019 (WRAC)
WANNELL, Mrs Edna ‘Billie’ (nee Spooner), of Uffculme, Devon on 11th August 2018 (ATS)
WILES (nee Stephens), Mrs Patricia (Stevie) of Colchester on 21st January 2019 (ATS & WRAC)
WOOLCOCK, Mrs Doreen of Weymouth on 28th May 2019 (ATS)



Supporting Women who Served

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

SATURDAY 21st MARCH 2020 - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

The 2020 AGM will be held in the Aspects Centre, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffs. on Saturday 21st March 2020. Any Branch Secretary or HQ Branch member who wishes to submit an item for inclusion in the agenda is to do so by 31st January 2020 to penny.muxworthy@wracassociation.org.uk.

DRAFT AGM AGENDA

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Confirmation of 2019 Minutes
4. Business Arising
5. Trustees Report
6. Financial Report
7. Report of Editor of the Association Journal
8. Reports of Committees
9. Resolutions
 - a. Trustee/Council
 - b. Branch
 - c. Re-election of Honorary Treasurer
10. Any Other Business
11. Date of Next Meeting

BUFFET LUNCH

will be served between the AGM and Unveiling (12.30 approx.)
Which must be pre-booked – at nominal £5 per person

WRAC LADY STATUE DEDICATION & UNVEILING

The newly-commissioned Statue of a WRAC Lady, in No2 uniform with GSM, will be Dedicated, and unveiled, along with the relocated Ack Ack Memorial, into her new home at the WRAC Association plot, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffs. on Saturday 21st March 2020 after lunch.

DRAFT TIMETABLE FOR DAY

- 11:00 AGM
12:30 Buffet lunch (for Association members only, must be pre-booked)
14.30 Unveiling and Dedication of WRAC Lady Statue & Ack Ack Memorial
15.30 Close of day (NMA and its facilities remain open until 17.00)

See insert for Booking Form





LEGACIES & DONATIONS

The WRAC Association Needs You



Those of you who read the Annual Report, or the excerpts published in *Lioness*, might have the impression that the WRAC Association is well provided for financially, with the total worth of our funds being approximately £6 million. However, due to the way that the original trust funds were set up the vast majority of the money, some £5.4 million, is mainly for the use of the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund. This means that anyone who has served in the ATS or the WRAC for any period of time, who is in financial need, can be considered for help by the Benevolent Fund (providing they meet the grant giving criteria). The youngest person who served in the WRAC before it was disbanded in 1992 would now only be just over 40 years old and therefore, with life expectancy increasing all the time, there will still be applicants eligible for assistance for over 50 years. All costs of administration of the Benevolent Fund have always been paid for by the Fund and the Trustees are confident that the reserves held will be sufficient to provide for the all future needs.

The Association provides other functions to members who are not in financial need but are a great benefit and support to those women who have this special bond of having served, irrespective of the length of that service. You all wait eagerly for *Lioness* to arrive twice a year and for those who are visually impaired we have financed a recorded version. Many of you enjoy Area and Branch functions and attending the Grand Reunions. Additionally there are several important anniversaries to commemorate in the next few years, however there are financial implications that we now have to consider. As you know we have a plot at the National Memorial Arboretum, which has to be maintained, and we are always anxious to establish permanent memorials, most of which also need funds to maintain them. In order to ensure that all that was achieved by women up to 1992 is not forgotten we must make sure that we continue to have representation wherever possible, particularly connected with Remembrance events.

Until recently the staff and overhead costs of the Association was provided by the MOD, however the Association now has to cover the full cost of staff and office space. We must continue to provide these key functions and as part of this you have already agreed to increase the membership fee to £10.00. This was very welcome but this will not prevent the speedy depletion of the Association Funds, as we strive to maintain the Area and Branch network and continue our representation at a national level. We therefore need to consider raising funds in other ways.

Many members already make regular and one off donations or are kind enough to leave legacies which help the WRAC Association to continue its work, for which we are very grateful. As the future of the Benevolent Fund is secure, if you are considering making a donation or leaving a legacy please consider making such a donation or legacy specifically to the WRAC Association, rather than to the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund. This will enable us to continue to provide you with all of those activities that contribute to esprit de corps and comradeship, both now and well into the future.

The WRAC Association is so very grateful for all of your support so far. This appeal is made with the aim of ensuring that the Association can continue in its' key role; that of supporting and maintaining our esprit de corps.

Leaving a legacy to the WRAC Association is a special way to give help, as it costs nothing now and a gift of any size will make a big difference. Legacies do not get taxed, so every penny comes straight to the Association. It can also reduce Inheritance Tax because the taxable value of the estate is calculated after charitable bequests are made. We appreciate that leaving a gift in your will is a big decision and you will want to take professional advice prior to any decision.

Thank you.

WRAC Association Charity No. 206184



IN MEMORIAM

During Financial Year 2019 kind donations were made by individuals and Branches in memory of the following personnel:

The Late Josephine Shelley

The Late Kath Hughes

The Late Irene Hartfree

The Late Joan Evelyn Clara Kelleher DBE

The Late Joan Florence Butler

The Late Joan Elizabeth Pearce

The Late Elizabeth Bustard

The Late Catherine Jane Cox

The Late Dorothy Mary McCuan

The Late Anne Bray

The Late John Laurence Smith OBE

The Late Patricia (Stevie) Wiles

LEGACIES

During Financial Year 2019 the Association very much appreciated the legacies received from the following, of varying amounts, every penny of which will ensure the continued work of the Association:

The Late Elaine Bowles

The Late Phyllis Brisk

The Late Frances Cook

The Late Betty Margaret Metcalfe

The Late Audrey (Chips) Everett

The Late Hazel Powell

The Late Eileen Illingworth

The Late Margaret Eileen Catherine Horsham

WRAC Association, Unit 11, Basepoint Business Centre, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD
Tel: 0300 400 1992 (local rate call, including mobiles) Email: office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk
Benevolence: benfund@wracassociation.org.uk Lioness: editor@wracassociation.org.uk
Website: www.wracassociation.org.uk



WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

SATURDAY 21st MARCH 2020 - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGM & WRAC STATUE UNVEILING



WRAC LADY STATUE DEDICATION & UNVEILING

The newly-commissioned Statue of a WRAC Lady, in No2 uniform with GSM, will be Dedicated, and unveiled, along with the relocated Ack Ack Memorial, into her new home at the WRAC Association plot, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffs. on Saturday 21st March 2020.

DRAFT TIMETABLE FOR DAY

11:00 AGM

12:30 Buffet lunch (for Association members only, must be pre-booked)

14.30 Unveiling and Dedication of WRAC Lady Statue & Ack Ack Memorial

15.30 Close of day (NMA and its facilities remain open until 17.00)

Book Online at www.wracassociation.org/agm2020 or by completing the form below:

AGM & WRAC Statue Unveiling

BOOKING FORM:

SATURDAY 21st MARCH 2020

I wish to attend the AGM, Buffet lunch and Statue Unveiling on Saturday 21st March 2020 at the National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire.

Surname: First Name (known as):

Email:

Tel No:

Address:

..... Post Code:

Dietary Requirements:

I enclose £5 towards the Buffet lunch ☐ (please tick and enclose with booking form)

Cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association

Return to: WRAC Association, Unit 11, Basepoint, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD by 14th June 2019, or email to office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk



WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS DINNER CLUB

Application for Membership

Please complete the form in BLOCK LETTERS

* Miss/Ms/Mrs/Rank (if serving)/Other (please state):

Name: Known as:

Address:

..... Post Code:

Tel No: Mobile:

Email:

* WRAC/TAVR Service From: To:

Army No: * P/W/WO: Last rank held:
(present rank if still serving)

Surname when serving: Date of Birth:

Trade/Job when serving:

Decorations:

I wish to join the WRAC Dinner Club and enclose:

* **£13.00** (includes initial joining fee of £3.00) for **5 Year Membership**

Or

* **£18.00** (includes initial joining fee of £3.00) for **Life Membership**

Cheque/Postal Order must be made payable to: **WRAC Dinner Club**

Signature: Date:

Please return the completed form to:

WRAC Dinner Club Membership Secretary

Ali McGowan, Meld House, Hawthorn Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 7NB

A 2nd Class Postage Stamp would be much appreciated. Thank you.

* Please delete as appropriate

(WRAC Dinner Club Membership Secretary to input Membership No:)

For WRAC Dinner Club
please do not make cheques out to the WRAC Association
and do not send to the Association Address

WRAC ASSOCIATION APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Send to:

WRAC Association
Unit 11 Basepoint Business Centre
1 Winnall Valley Road
Winchester
SO23 0LD



I wish to apply for membership of the WRAC Association:

UK Annual Membership: I wish to join the WRAC Association as an Annual Member, I enclose a cheque for £10.	
Overseas Annual Membership: I wish to join the WRAC Association as an Annual Member, I enclose a cheque for £15.00 (Overseas Members are asked to pay an additional £5.00 per year to cover postage of Lioness magazine).	

All cheques must be in **sterling** and made payable to **"WRAC Association"**.
Alternatively, go to our website (www.wracassociation.org) and Join and pay there.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- 2 copies of *Lioness* magazine per year
- Events, Friendship and Support through network of Branches
- Invitation to WRAC Grand Reunions Association and AGMs
- Notification of WRAC Association events
- Option to apply for tickets to certain non-WRAC Association events (geography and timescales permitting)
- Various updates from Branches, Areas and HQ via letter or email

Please complete this form in **BLOCK LETTERS**

Miss/Mrs/Ms/Other: Surname:

First Names: Known as:

Surname when serving: Date of Birth:

Address for Correspondence:

.....

..... Post Code:

Email: Local Branch: (*)

(*) We encourage branch membership, where possible, as this is where the Association best "Supports Women Who Served" through comradeship, esprit de corps, benevolence, preserving traditions and events. We need your permission to contact your chosen Branch Secretary, so – **I grant permission for WRAC Assoc. HQ to contact the named Branch: Yes NO**

Home Tel: Mobile Tel:

In order to comply the Data Protection Regulations 2018 we require your express permission to contact you in various ways.

Please tick all that apply:

Methods of contact:	Email	YES	NO
	Landline phone	YES	NO
	Mobile phone	YES	NO

Your copy of the *Lioness* magazine will be posted to you unless you advise otherwise.

Signature Date

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

Date of Enrolment: Date of Release:

Membership Subscriptions

There are a variety of ways for you to pay your Annual Subscription to the Association:



Recurring Card Payment: Just go to the Join page on our website (wracassociation.org/join) and select either UK or Overseas membership, on the next page enter your details, choose a username and password and enter your credit or debit card details and click Sign Up to setup your yearly annual subscription which will be charged to your card yearly on the same day, each year, as your first payment.

(NOTE: If you already have a Member's Area login please contact the office first)



Online: Login to the Member's Area of our website (wracassociation.org/members-area) then select "Manually Renew Membership", select your membership type (UK or Overseas) and how many years (1, 3, 5 or 10 years) you wish to renew for and complete the payment form and click "Renew Now" to process your card payment.



Post: Please send Cheques or Postal Orders only (no cash) made out to "WRAC Association" to WRAC Association, Unit 11 Basepoint, Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD. Please include a payment slip (found on the reverse of the Address Slip send with Lioness) or a note with your name, postcode, phone number, the total amount of the payment and what the payment is for. (e.g. Jane Doe, AB1 2YZ, 01234 567890, £10 Subscription)



Phone: Credit or Debit card payments can be taken over the phone. Please call 0300 400 1992 (weekday mornings are best). If calling from outside the UK please dial +441962832524



Branch: If you're a member of a Branch you can give your Association Subscription to the branch secretary or treasurer who will send it on to the Association along with subscriptions collected from other branch members.



Bank Transfer or Standing Orders: You can make one off or regular yearly standing order payments directly into our bank account using the following details:
Account No.: 10004831 Sort Code: 16-34-25 Please use **SUB [initial] [last name]** for the reference (e.g. SUB J Doe)

(NOTE: For new Standing Orders please complete the form below & post to the office)

New Standing Order Form:

Surname_____ Initials_____ Postcode_____

Email_____ Phone_____

I have set up a new Standing Order, effective from (DD/MM/YY)/...../..... using the following Reference:

Payment	Initials	Surname (as many characters as will fit)
SUB		