

*The Public Life
of a
Twentieth Century Princess
Princess Mary
Princess Royal
and
Countess of Harewood*

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Abstract

The historiography on Princess Mary is conspicuous by its absence. No official account of her long public life, from 1914 to 1965, has been written and published since 1922, when the princess was aged twenty-five, and about to be married. The only daughter of King George V, she was one of the chief protagonists in his plans to include his children in his efforts to engage the monarchy, and the royal family, more deeply and closely with the people of the United Kingdom. This was a time when women were striving to enter public life more fully, a role hitherto denied to them. The king's decision was largely prompted by the sacrifices of so many during the First World War; the fall of Czar Nicholas of Russia; the growth of socialism; and the dangers these events may present to the longevity of the monarchy in a disaffected kingdom.

Princess Mary's public life helps to answer the question of what role royal women, then and in the future, are able to play in support of the monarchy. It was a time when for the most part careers of any kind were not open to women, royal or otherwise, and the majority had yet to gain the right to vote. Her work was carried out during four periods: the First World War, which broke out when the effects of the industrial revolution were still being felt by the majority of the poor and working class, in health and housing in the big cities; the inter-war years at a time of economic depression, unemployment and deprivation for so many; the Second World War; and the post war period 1945-1965. The princess's particular areas of interest were philanthropic, civic, regimental and diplomatic, both at home and abroad. Philanthropy was to become a major factor in the royal family's efforts to provide publicity and support for the charitable organizations working to alleviate the plight of so many of the nation's deprived citizens.

Given that Princess Mary may be said to have disappeared from British history the resources for my research have been limited, first, to the entry in the Dictionary of National Biography, the National Archives, and the only published biography. Newspapers have been consulted both nationally and

foreign, in particular *The Times Court Circular*; without this publication research would have been almost impossible. Not only did it provide a record of her daily engagements throughout her lifetime, but it provided knowledge of the many organizations with which the princess was connected. Thus, I was able to gain access to their archives, where available; locally, regional and foreign. Histories of the various organizations were also helpful when Princess Mary's involvement was described, even if only briefly. The Royal Archive at Windsor does not hold her papers, but on occasions staff were able to answer my questions. Princess Mary's archive at Harewood remains uncatalogued.

Despite the various limitations on my research I believe I have obtained an overview and understanding of Princess Mary's public role, and its value to the nation and the monarchy. During her life time she set the template for the public role of future princesses, and other females, within the royal family.

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*ABBREVIATIONS**AA Anti-Aircraft**ACV Armoured Command Vehicle**ANA Australian National Archives**ARP Air Raid Precautions**ASC Australian Signals Corps**ATS Auxiliary Territorial Service**BEF British Expeditionary Force**BAOR British Army on the Rhine**Bn Battalion**CAB Cabinet**CO Colonial Office**CRO Commonwealth Relations Office**DBE Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire**FCO Foreign and Commonwealth Office**FO Foreign Office**GBE Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire**HO Home Office**IWM Imperial War Museum**MT Ministry of Transport**NA National Archives**NATS National Service**NZSC New Zealand Signals Corps**PEC Palestine Executive Committee**PIN Ministry of Pensions**PREM Premier**RA Royal Artillery**RCS Royal Corps of Signals**RCSC Royal Canadian Signals Corps**T Treasury**USN United States Navy**WO War Office**WRAC Women's Royal Army Corps*

*ACRONYMS**GOSH Great Ormond Street Hospital**NAAFI Navy Army and Airforce Institute**SSAFA Soldiers Sailors and AirMen's Association**VAD Voluntary Aid Detachment**WVS Women's Voluntary Service**YMCA Young Men's Christian Association**YWCA Young Women's Christian Association*

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*The Public Life of a Twentieth Century Princess**Introduction*

The impetus to undertake research into this subject emerged in a roundabout way and was prompted by four factors. The first was to chart the changes in the lives of two British princesses, Mary and Margaret, and to discover the expectations for them as female members of the royal family, particularly in the latter half of the twentieth century. The second, the coincidence of being offered a position in the State Apartments at Kensington Palace in the latter stages of earlier undergraduate research, which included a chapter on the life of Queen Caroline, wife of George II. The palace was the home of Queen Caroline and, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, that of Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, daughter of Queen Victoria, and Princess Margaret, after their marriages. Whilst at the palace I was able to see Princess Margaret as she went to and fro on her daily engagements, and was a witness to a number of public events held at the palace. Third, I was curious about Princess Mary, Countess of Harewood, after learning from a relative that English boys in the twenties and thirties were dressed in styles worn by Princess Mary's sons. Finally, when beginning this new research, I found that the Society for Court Studies had not undertaken research into the public lives of British princesses in the twentieth century, and I hope that this thesis will begin to redress the balance.

The common link between Princess Mary and Princess Margaret, aunt and niece, is that they were daughters of one monarch and sisters of another, and were described at various times as the only princess in the palace. Their births were separated by a gap of thirty-three years, Princess Mary being born in 1897 and Princess Margaret in 1930. With the expansion of the role and work of the royal family, especially in relation to charity work, and particularly in the latter half of the twentieth century, the participation of both princesses was considered necessary for this new and enlarged role, which King George V had earlier envisaged for his family after the First World War. During the twentieth century, changes and advances, economic, social, political and cultural, had occurred in Britain, Europe and the wider world, and in the lives

of British women; and, more particularly, in the lives of female members of the royal family. I believed the work of the two princesses warranted serious investigation to discover if these changes had affected their lives and their contribution to the philanthropic role of the monarchy, and to national life.¹ However, as my research progressed, it became clear that it was Princess Mary who set the template for princesses in what came to be known as the Welfare Monarchy, as described by Frank Prochaska.² Notably, her public life after 1922, for the most part, remains undocumented in published biographies and academic research, except for brief references in the studies of Frank Prochaska and Dermot Morrah.³ At the end of her life the princess was patron or president of fifty one organizations, and held honorary ranks in twelve service organizations, a total of sixty three. Given the lack of biographies, this study has had to rely on further information obtained from the organizations with which she was connected, and remarks about her work for them have been complimentary. Nevertheless, I feared it would be difficult to undertake a critical assessment, which has proved to be the case, but an assessment of Princess Mary's public role, as the daughter of one sovereign and the sister of another, has been attempted. In the second half of the century she was followed by Princess Margaret. Princess Anne, the present Princess Royal, after the death of Princess Mary, is also the daughter of the sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II, and she began her working life in the late nineteen sixties. The fourth working princess with a public role is Princess Alexandra of Kent, granddaughter of King George V, and cousin of Queen Elizabeth; her public

¹ An indication of the increase in the philanthropic role of British princesses is the totals of organizations taken on. Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, in the nineteenth century, had the greatest number of presidencies and patronages, totalling 19, followed by Princesses Helena and Marie Louise each with 16, whilst in the twentieth Princess Margaret had 65, including six service regiments, at the time of her death in 2002.

² Frank Prochaska. *Royal Bounty*. New Haven London: Yale University Press, 1995.

³ Dermot Morrah. *The Royal Family*. London: Odhams Press Limited, 1950.

role began in the nineteen fifties. These three princesses require research in a new thesis.

Other research has relied on information taken from local and foreign newspapers where available, as well as from official documents in regional, national and foreign archives. People connected with the various organizations investigated have given access to their archives and/or provided written or verbal information during visits to their offices, and all have been glad to cooperate. The Worshipful Company of Gardeners, which offered Princess Mary an Honorary Fellowship in 1933, has advised that many of its records were destroyed by enemy bombing during the Second War, and this would appear to be the case with other organizations.⁴ The National Archives routinely destroys documents but, in cases where files have been retained but remain closed, requests to have them opened have been granted. These archives are devoted in the main to Princess Mary's overseas visits and tours. There are a small number regarding the use of her name, and two associated with fund-raising. Other organizations have moved headquarters thus losing documents, and/or staff who may have had information but are no longer employed. The Royal Archive at Windsor does not hold Princess Mary's Papers, and those at Harewood remain uncatalogued. The Times Court Circular listing the daily engagements of Princess Mary over the course of her life has proved invaluable in giving an account of her public life; without it research would have been almost impossible. It directed me to the organizations with which she was connected and, therefore, knowledge of and access to their archives.

My aim was to achieve an overview of Mary's public life. The method used was to divide that life into four periods, beginning in 1914 and, second, to subdivide into six areas, beginning with her activities when accompanying her parents. This gave her an initial training for public life, which ended in the post Second World War period from 1945. She began a life alone after the death of her husband, the Earl of Harewood, in 1947, and this ended with her

⁴ Email from *The Worshipful Company of Gardeners*, 11 February, 2013.

own death in 1965. Covering the fifty one years of Mary's public life, research centred on the princess's undertaking of a solo role after 1917; a review of the organizations with which she developed an association, either of her own accord or in response to a request; her unique role as the sister of the sovereign, King George VI, during the Second World War 1939-1945; and, finally, the post-war period, when she expanded her role to represent the sovereign and the government during oversea visits and tours. The changes in her public life from those of her predecessors were unprecedented and unique in British royal female history, until the second half of the twentieth century, and it is those changes which I have endeavoured to uncover and record. As research into Princess Mary's life progressed it became apparent that the required length of the thesis meant that I would not be able to include Princess Margaret to any great degree.

The origin of the changes occurred during the Victorian era, particularly in the fifty-two years up to 1901 and the death of Queen Victoria when, first, her cousin Princess Mary Adelaide and, second, her daughters Princess Helena and Princess Louise, undertook increasing philanthropic work, a role ideally suitable for all women, as well as royals in this era. Therefore, it appeared necessary to search first, briefly, for royal female role models during the latter half of the nineteenth century, and chart the progressive changes in the role of women within the royal family, before investigating Princess Mary's role

Philanthropy had played a part in royal lives in previous centuries, and in the nineteenth century Prince Albert had given an indication of what should be the role of the royal family; he saw 'the function of royalty as being the headship of philanthropy.'⁵ The first princess to play her part was Queen Victoria's cousin, Princess Mary Adelaide, who may be said to have laid the foundations for the increased part played later by the queen's daughters, granddaughters, and great granddaughters in the twentieth century. Mary Adelaide, described by Prochaska as 'a charitable bulldozer,' whose work was chiefly centred on

⁵ Jehanne Wake. *Princess Louise*. London: Collins, 1988, p. 361.

the poor of the east end of London, was born in 1833.⁶ She was the granddaughter of King George III and daughter of Prince Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge, and his wife Princess Augusta of Hesse Cassel, both of whom set her an example. The duke was the seventh son of George III and Queen Charlotte. Princess Mary Adelaide was the mother of the future Queen Mary, wife of George V, the parents of Princess Mary.

The families of Queen Victoria and her successors, Edward VII and George V, did become responsive to economic, social, political and cultural changes, if at times reluctantly; so too, for the most part, did the nineteenth-century royal women, if in limited and various ways when the opportunities presented themselves, given the restrictions placed on any women entering public life. The Victorian princesses who remained in England after marriage, or who remained active in public life as single women, apart from Princess Mary Adelaide, were Queen Victoria's three younger daughters, princesses Helena, Louise and Beatrice, who were born between 1846 and 1857. These princesses began an association with a number of organizations, particularly Princess Mary Adelaide who worked with or for ninety-three. Those of Princess Helena and Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll numbered eighteen apiece, and the latter was honorary Colonel in Chief of two regiments; the Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment, formerly the 13th London Regiment, and the Argyllshire Highlanders. Princess Beatrice was Colonel of the Fifth (Isle of Wight Princess Beatrice's) Volunteer Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment, and also Governor of the Isle of Wight. However, these positions of her aunts bear no resemblance to the role Princess Mary was later to play with and for her regiments.

All five nineteenth century princesses have been subjects of published biographies, and one of Princess Helena's daughters, Princess Marie Louise, published her memoirs.⁷ In the twenty first century Princess Mary has almost

⁶ Frank Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, p. 179.

⁷ Marie Louise. *My Memories of Six Reigns*. London: Evans Brothers Limited, 1956.

disappeared from recorded British history, and Princess Margaret, whilst many thousands of words have been written about her in popular biographies, and in the media, is known almost exclusively by her private life and not for the role she played within the royal family.⁸ At the time of Princess Mary's marriage *A Personal Sketch* provides a description of the princess's character, and an insight into the way in which she was likely to conduct her public life.⁹ It describes her as being extraordinarily little known, having lived a life in complete privacy, that 'only her intimate friends are acquainted with the real quality of her personality.' At that time the sketch said her greatest interests were the Children's Hospital at Great Ormond Street, The Queen's Needlework Guild, the National Organization for Girls Clubs, and the Girl Guides. This would indicate that her early interests centred on children and women. The sketch closes by writing that

She is essentially thoughtful for others and never fails to make a demonstration of her inner sympathies a practical one. She is totally unspoilt and unites a very youthful simplicity with a sturdy dependableness of character and a capacity for great thoroughness in all she undertakes.

In order to investigate Princess Mary's role research begins on the outbreak of the First World War, although she had accompanied her parents to civic and charitable events well beforehand. In attempting an assessment of her life consideration will be given to aspects such as her education, training, her activities both domestic and foreign and why they were undertaken; the effect and value these activities had for the respective organizations; and the difference, if any, the princess made to their functioning.

⁸ Princess Margaret became what is known today as a media princess.

⁹ The Times. 6 February, 1922, p.

Chapter One

A Twentieth Century Princess

Princess Mary was born in 1897, the only daughter of the then Duke and Duchess of York, later to become King George V and Queen Mary in 1910 on the death of King Edward VII. On hearing of her birth Gladstone remarked “This event is of no direct political significance.”¹⁰ Gladstone was correct in his opinion given that the princess had two older brothers who became before her in the line of succession. Even had she been the first born they would still have superseded her. She was the third child of her parents and, through an act of fate, both her older brothers became king. First child and son was David, known as Edward VIII in 1936, whose brief reign was brought to an end because of his abdication in order to marry an American divorcee, Wallis Simpson.¹¹ Second was Albert, formerly Duke of York, who took the name of his father, becoming King George VI in 1936. Given the international and cultural background of her mother,¹² Princess Mary’s education is considered to have been of a different and higher intellectual and artistic standard from that of her father and paternal grandmother, Queen Alexandra. This was a requirement given that as the daughter of the monarch she would be ‘the third lady in the land’ until her brothers married and their wives superseded her.¹³ The princess was educated at home, her governess from the nursery to adulthood was a former teacher at the Wimbledon branch of the Girls’ Public Day School Trust, Mademoiselle J Dussau, and her history tutor was Miss M Howes-Smith, former head mistress of the Altrincham Secondary School. The only official published biography of Princess Mary is that of Mabel C Carey,

¹⁰ Geoffrey Wakeford. *The Princesses Royal*. London: Robert Hale, 1973, p. 206.

¹¹ M. C. Carey. *Princess Mary*. London: Nisbet & Co., Ltd., 1929, p.29. When her brother David was reminded of his future destiny to become king he is reported to have said “*what a pity it’s not Mary, she is far cleverer than I.*”

¹² Anne Edwards. *Matriarch*. Great Britain: Paperback Edition, Coronet Books, Hodder and Stoughton, 1986, p. 20.

¹³ M.C. Carey. *Princess Mary*. pp. 19, 23.

and ends at the time of her engagement in 1921.¹⁴ It was written with the cooperation of the Royal Household, and Princess Mary provided photographs from her private collection. Mabel Carey wrote that Princess Mary had ‘an immense power of application...thorough to a degree, a trait noticed again and again throughout her life...and she was made to treat her studies a good deal more seriously than most children – who would not have the responsibilities of royalty ahead of them.’¹⁵ The princess was joined in her schoolroom by a small group of young friends but, apparently, on occasions she would go for weeks without seeing anyone apart from her parents, tutors and servants.¹⁶ She was close to her two elder brothers, David and Bertie, but they were sent away to naval college before the princess entered her teens, and these factors may account for the more serious and withdrawn side of her character which developed in later years.

Princess Mary as she grew into her adolescence developed into a shy, but thoughtful young woman, attested to by her elder son George Lascelles.¹⁷ She possessed a well-developed idea of her responsibilities and the duty she owed to country and the monarchy, traits instilled in her by her parents. Among her earliest interests were the guiding movement and nursing. She trained as a children’s nurse at the Great Ormond Street Hospital before her marriage. Perhaps, most of all, the influence of the war time years during her youth left a lasting impression, being seventeen in 1914 when the First World War began. She accompanied her parents on many visits to areas and organizations

¹⁴ There is an unauthorized biography by Heather Graham, the alias of Netley Lucas, a known fraudster gaoled on a number of occasions. Another alias was Barron, under which he published his autobiography in 1925. The most recent biography of Graham was written by Matt Holbrook, *Prince of Tricksters*, published in 2016.

¹⁵ M.C Carey, *Princess Mary*, p. 19.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 20.

¹⁷ Harewood, *The Tongs and Bones*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981, p. 27.

affected by the war. She was to extend her interest in, and duties for, organizations connected to the welfare of wounded and maimed men.

In the nineteen twenties King George V had lists drawn up of the various duties he expected his children to undertake, and Princess Mary's life before and after her marriage is a testament to the seriousness with which she fulfilled her father's expectations. The king was aware of the philanthropic work carried out by Mary and her brothers, and at Christmas each year Robert Hyde brought a list to him of 'the family's public appearances over the year...Princess Mary's output was considered 'satisfactory.'¹⁸ However, the Royal Archive at Windsor no longer holds a copy of the list.

For Mary emphasis was concentrated on her work, at home and abroad, for civic, charitable, educational and cultural organisations, and in this she was also following the examples of her female predecessors, but to a greater degree.¹⁹ After her father created her an honorary colonel of The Royal Scots Regiment, in 1918, she received further military ranks at the behest of her brothers King Edward VIII during his brief reign, and King George VI, and from her niece Queen Elizabeth. She was expected to take an interest in the activities and welfare not only of service men and women but also their families, and she did this with enthusiasm; and she married a military man in Viscount Henry Lascelles.

His sister's marriage prospects were of considerable concern to her brother David, as he recounted to his married mistress, Freda Dudley Ward, in a series of letters in the nineteen twenties. He feared she would not find a husband because of their father's possessiveness of Mary. He was extremely close to his sister, writing that

she is a darling really, and such a marvellous friend and confidante to me...and that poor little sister of mine is the greatest tragedy of all,

¹⁸ Frank Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, p. 193.

¹⁹ She was followed to an even greater degree by Princess Margaret in regard to the numbers and styles of foreign visits and tours.

though it's not her fault as it's the way she has been brought up and she is quite happy and not to be pitied....If only we could get her married and save her from complete ruination and get her away from court; but that's easier said than done and heavens only knows how any man will see enough of her to fall in love with her and take her....I do resent the foul way my father treats her in imprisoning her at court and not letting her lead a normal life and ruining her chances of getting married or even existing as a girl of 23 should...my sister's future has been a great worry to me for some time...I suppose we shall get her off one day but God only knows when and it won't be easy.²⁰

According to the royal biographer Anne Edwards King George was 'none too pleased' when his wife thought it was time to find a husband for their daughter in 1921.²¹ However, he was agreeable to the suggestion of Viscount Lascelles and, after a courtship during the summer of that year, the engagement was announced in November. Apparently, 'the nation, the whole empire, were unfeignedly delighted to learn that their Princess was to marry a Briton.'²² His family had a tradition of service to the monarchy, and his father, the fifth earl, had been ADC to Queen Victoria and King Edward VII; George V awarded him the same position in 1922. Thus, he became the first English nobleman in over four hundred years to become the father-in-law of the daughter of a reigning monarch. Those monarchs, Queen Alexandra, and Mary's parents when Prince and Princess of Wales, had all stayed at Harewood House from time to time. So, it is safe to assume that the princess would have known her future husband for some time, as the viscount was also a friend of her parents.

²⁰ Rupert Godfrey, ed. *Letters from a Prince*. Great Britain: Little, Brown and Company, 1998, pp.74, 80-81, 231-232.

²¹ Anne Edwards. *Matriarch*, p. 283.

²² GOSH Archives. The Times. *A Biographical Sketch of Princess Mary's Bridegroom in Princess Mary's Wedding Supplement*, 28 February, 1922, No 42,967. GOS/14/62.

The weeks leading up to the wedding on 28 February 1922 were covered extensively in the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth, the United States, and many countries throughout the world. Mary's brother Bertie wrote to David, away on a tour of India, to declare that in the newspapers it was being reported as being

a day of national rejoicing in every conceivable and unconceivable manner. In fact, it is no longer Mary's wedding but...a national wedding or even the people's wedding...of our beloved Princess.²³

The press coverage at the time would now appear, to modern eyes, perhaps overly sentimental and extravagant, but it has to be remembered that it was just four years since the end of the first war. It was a moment in the life of the nation which, perhaps, lifted the gloom of so many who were still suffering the effects of that war, and for those suffering hardship and unemployment. The crowds on the streets were enormous, and enthusiastic, as shown in film of the events of the day.

The couple received an enormous number of wedding presents, including what must only be described as fabulous jewels for the princess; and not only from her family. People from all walks of life and many organizations contributed funds to buy them. For instance, the officers and men of the Royal Navy collected £2,684.²⁴ The princess responded by saying she would buy a small gift for herself and the remainder would be given to the RN Seamen's and Royal Marines' Orphans Home. This was the procedure adopted by the princess when the gifts were in money.

A gift of 10 chairs was presented to the princess at Buckingham Palace, by 'the bridegroom's father, Lord Harewood...on behalf of the Executive and members of the West India Committee.'²⁵ In her reply Princess Mary said

²³ Anne Edwards, *Matriarch*, p. 289.

²⁴ The Times, 21 February, 1922, p. 10.

Equivalent amount in 2018 £144,940.00

²⁵ The Times, *ibid*, p. 12.

“the chairs will be placed in my Yorkshire home...It is especially interesting to know that the West India Committee is the oldest Colonial institution in the United Kingdom.” Little could she have imagined that, as former colonies gained independence from Britain, forty years later she would be presiding at the Trinidad and Tobago Independence ceremonies. Her niece, Princess Margaret, would open the first West Indies Federation Parliament in Trinidad in 1958; and preside at the Independence ceremonies in Dominica in 1978.

The Times correspondent in New York reported that there was ‘keen interest in the USA.’²⁶ The reporter wrote that there was a bewildering amount of space devoted to the event ‘in every imaginable phase’ in the Sunday newspapers. There were window displays of her wedding dress and trousseau, and ‘a limited number of copies will be made’ for one particular fashionable shop in Fifth Avenue. The New York World newspaper displayed Mary’s trousseau on half of its front page, and wrote that they were ‘the realization of the more or less conscious dream of very girl in the world.’²⁷ A somewhat surprising presentation of a wedding gift was that from the New York City Police Reserve, which sent a pair of Georgian Candelabra. It has been impossible to discover why this organization was prompted to send an expensive wedding gift.²⁸

The French response to the wedding was notable, not only for the tribute paid to the couple, but to Britain, by Marshal Foch. For days French newspapers had been taking a great interest in Princess Mary’s marriage, and The Times reported the words of the Marshal, much of them full of admiration of the British nation and its armies during the conflict of 1914-1918:

At this moment when England honours the Royal family of which she is proud, we ought to live again, those tragic moments of history when France and Britain sealed in the generous blood of their sons a union which differences and polemics can never turn into a scrap of paper.

²⁶ The Times, 26 February 1922, p. 12.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid, 28 February, 1922, p. 171.

After her marriage Princess Mary set up her own households in Yorkshire and London. The viscount was the owner of a vast estate in Yorkshire and a grand mansion, Chesterfield House, in Mayfair.²⁹ Much has been made of the difference in their ages and the fact that the bridegroom looks so old in the photographs taken at the time, although he was only in his late thirties. He was once described to their daughter-in-law, Marion, as ‘a cold, hard man;’ but in his autobiography her elder son George, the future Earl of Harewood, wrote that his parents had a happy marriage, with many shared interests, and that the princess was unhappy and emotionally disturbed for some time after the death of her husband.³⁰ Her son also wrote that his mother ‘found it uncongenial to make a move without his support and very rarely did so.’³¹ There is no doubt that Mary’s husband, a man with a fine military and diplomatic background, supported his wife fully, accompanying her on numerous occasions. His support for his wife’s role included lending the Harewood House and Estate in Yorkshire, and Chesterfield House in London, for the pursuance of his wife’s activities. After his appointment as Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire in 1927 he would welcome his wife to her engagements in the area.

In the nineteen twenties and thirties, Princess Mary became associated with a number of organizations which were trying to alleviate the ills of the country, deriving from periods of unemployment and economic depression for much of the population. These included those in health, child welfare, housing; and in education and those developing vocational training and employment programmes. The princess became a figurehead through her patronages and presidencies, the latter by presiding at their meetings as a non-executive president. She gave support and encouragement to their efforts through her visits; and by taking part in fund raising events which would draw publicity and advertise the role of the organization. She began her involvement with

²⁹ Demolished in 1937, as were so many of the great London houses.

³⁰ Harewood, *The Tongs and The Bones*, p. 27.

³¹ Harewood, *ibid*, p. 98.

The Red Cross, and the military part of its work during world wars will be discussed in a separate chapter on her regiments, as will be the British Legion and disabled ex-servicemen's organizations.

The health of the nation, particularly in relation to hospitals, was extremely important to her, and in 1926 she began a nine-year campaign to visit every hospital in the kingdom. This was completed with a visit to the Shrewsbury Hospital in 1933, according to the entry in *The Times*.³² In 2018 there is no possibility of confirming this information, therefore it is accepted, at face value, that the information was taken from a handout to the newspaper, either from Buckingham Palace or Harewood House. However, an examination of her engagements would tend to confirm the campaign, given that she travelled the length and breadth of the United Kingdom visiting hospitals.³³ There was a concentration of her activities in industrial areas such as the midlands and the north, and in Scotland and Wales, the total of those visits being almost as great as those in London and the south. Three cities visited during the inter-war years give an insight into the direction Princess Mary's interests were developing during this period in relation to the poor, employment and housing.³⁴

Next in importance to her was the Guiding Association and her desire to reform the lives of the young girls and women of the country, which will be discussed in the chapter on the Second World War when its members adapted to a new role. The University of Leeds, of which she became Chancellor in 1951, was a major interest, as was general education at primary and secondary level. Other interests were the YMCA and YWCA; and civic affairs, including the role of industry in contributing to the economic wealth of the

³² *The Times*, 23 May 1933, p. 17.

³³ *The Times*, 11 May 1948. Later, in an address to The Red Cross Society, she said "the Society wished to make the new NHS a success."

³⁴ See p. 33.

nation.³⁵ Although she had already begun undertaking solo engagements before her marriage, in 1918 she began a two year part-time practical nursing training course at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children. The part-time course thus allowed her to continue with her solo public duties which began officially in May 1917 at the age of twenty, three years after the outbreak of war, and five months before the onset of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia.

This latter event was an act which led, eventually, to the assassination of the Tsar and his family, who were cousins of the king. Fearful of revolution, and with hostility to Germany and all things German, as well as the growth of socialism in the country, the king decided to change the family German name to that of Windsor and, perhaps more importantly, to a re-assessment of the place of the monarchy in British national life. He was determined to modernise and re-connect the monarchy with the people by beginning a series of tours of the kingdom, visiting communities particularly in industrial areas. In doing so he expected that his entire family contributed time and effort when each member was available. Princess Mary had already played her part by participating in most, if not all, of her parents' engagements after the outbreak of war in 1914, and she continued this participation even after she began her official solo life. The former engagements, numerous as they are, will not be included in this chapter. However, she had represented Queen Mary on three occasions, first in 1916 and on two occasions in 1917.

Her solo engagements were still a minor part of the princess's public life until 1922. When the three years' participation with her parents between 1911 and 1914 are included her active life until 1965 numbers fifty-four years. During the five-year period 1917 to 1922 there was also a small number of engagements when she was accompanied by the other female members of the royal family or by her brothers. The total of all of her engagements from 1917

³⁵ After her marriage and her move to Yorkshire she developed a great interest not only in that county but also its agriculture, and that of the entire country.

to 1922 is approximately two hundred and five, of which fifty-two were carried out by Princess Mary alone.

The greatest influence was exerted by her parents, in particular by her mother Queen Mary, who saw to it that the princess developed a social conscience, first introducing her to the work of Queen Mary's Needlework Guild in 1912. Its aim was to 'distribute clothing, household linen and articles suitable for the sick and poor; in hospitals, nursing institutions, missions, refuges and parishes in London.'³⁶ Originally, it was one of the chief charities of Princess Mary Adelaide. It is still functioning in the twenty first century for the yearly distribution of parcels from its base in St. James's Palace, earlier offered to the organization by George V.

³⁶ M. C. Carey, *Princess Mary*, pp. 84-85.

Chapter Two

Princess Mary's Solo engagements

The engagements Princess Mary began to undertake reflected her interests, although doubtless the palace would have determined which she would carry out. For instance, The Guiding Association was obliged to obtain Queen Mary's consent for the princess to accept the role of president of the Norfolk branch in 1917.³⁷ Almost immediately her solo public life began, until 1922, the Guiding Association, including the Brownies, in various parts of the country, asked for and received the greatest part of her attention; followed by visits to schools; attention to child welfare, and the welfare of women and girls; hospitals; and orphans. A number of these organizations retained her interest and attention until the end of her life. This and succeeding chapters will survey a limited number of engagements in order to discover the breadth and nature of her public life; the subsequent chapters will examine specific aspects of her role.

Her first official solo visit was to the Whitelands Teacher Training College for Women in Chelsea on 5 May 1917. Coincidentally, the subsequent curriculum for the associated elementary school provides evidence of a number of Princess Mary's interests which would engage her attention throughout her life. It included botany, art, first aid, kindergarten therapy, drill, needlework and music, as well as the French and German languages; she was tri-lingual. The college was founded in 1841 by the Church of England for the National Society for the Promotion of the Education of the Poor. One of its Friends in the nineteenth century was the art critic, social thinker and philanthropist John Ruskin. In 1844 part of the building was converted to a practising school for the trainee teachers, and its pupils were poor children who were admitted free. Whilst Princess Mary was a visitor only, this engagement suggests that she was giving royal approval, firstly, to the reforms taking place in education and, secondly, the idea of sacrifice, given the nature of the programme during her visit; this at a time of death for thousands of servicemen, and the maiming of thousands of others. The consequences were

³⁷ The Times, 11 July 1917, p. 9.

likely to cause immense problems for the wounded soldiers themselves, and possible poverty and misery for wives and children of both categories.

The main event at the school, the crowning of the May Queen, appears in itself childish and of no great significance, but not only was the Archbishop of Canterbury present but, during the ceremonies, a masque was presented. ‘Its theme was the awakening of youth from dreams and indolence to the realization of the splendour of sacrifice.’³⁸ Princess Mary was already aware of the idea of sacrifice and the consequences of the war, through her visits to hospitals with her parents, there seeing the severely wounded and maimed patients with life-changing disabilities. Whether these men saw sacrifice as splendour is debateable.

After her marriage in 1922, and during the period to 1931, other organizations with which Princess Mary had a connection included the Church of England Church Army; the Royal School of Needlework; and the Mothers’ Union. Her association and visits with them increased and developed, and will be discussed in chapter three. Her husband had his own interests, particularly in agriculture as the owner of great estates, and in the civic and philanthropic affairs of Yorkshire, holding a number of patronages and presidencies, and at one time the office of County Lord Lieutenant. He would receive the princess when she was undertaking engagements in the county, and in turn she accompanied him on his engagements at various times.³⁹ Princess Mary developed a great love for and interest in Yorkshire affairs after her marriage, and Lord Lascelles’ contributions to her role should not be under-estimated. For instance, it appears that he maintained and supported it at considerable expense, given that £6,000.00 p.a. was the fixed income for younger members

³⁸ The Times, 7 May 1917, p. 3

³⁹ Miles Jebb. *Lord Lieutenants and their Deputies*. London: The History Press Ltd., 2007; and,

NA Various documents from Series C, *Records of the Crown and the Crown Office*, the Lord Chancellor’s Department, Administrative History 1283-1985

of the royal family in the Civil List Act of 1910.⁴⁰ It was awarded to her on her marriage and remained unchanged as late as June 1964, when the Cabinet Office was considering the expenses of her forthcoming visit to Newfoundland.⁴¹ There are no available records to discover the extent of Lord Harewood's financial contributions to his wife's activities, but it is doubtful if the £6,000.00 per annum would have been enough to support the princess over the next twenty five years, as her programmes increased.⁴² However, in 1936 her father left her £750 thousand in his Will.⁴³ It is not possible to discover if this amount was for her personal use or to contribute to the funding of her public life. At the time the king could not have foreseen the extent to which his daughter's public would grow, or the financial demands which would be placed upon her over the next twenty-nine years. There are however, Court Circular records of various donations made by the princess and, at times, in conjunction with her husband. They included The Red Cross a number of times, and to prisoners of war, among others. The items were of cash, jewellery and furniture, particularly during the second war, 1940 to 1945.

Her role in Yorkshire affairs and the country was acknowledged by various organizations, even if not actively sought, when she received first the Chancellorship of Leeds University in 1951; and then, in May 1954, an Honorary Doctorate of Laws from the University of Manchester on the occasion of Founder's Day, at which the Chancellors of three universities, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester, were present.⁴⁴ This was the first of eleven

⁴⁰ NA, *Payment of Consolidated Fund (Civil List Provisions) Act 1951, Annuity to Princess Margaret 1950-1951*, 2 March, 1951, T 233/494

After tax the amount paid to the princess was £2600.

⁴¹ NA *Royal Visits*, 22 June, 1964, CAB 21/51

⁴² In the same year Princess Margaret was awarded £15,000.00 p.a.

⁴³ Philip Ziegler. *King Edward VIII*. London: The Harper Press, Paperback Edition, 2012, p. 246.

In 2018 this would amount to approximately £73million.

⁴⁴ Email, and notes, from Manchester University Archives, 12 February 2013

Doctorates she would receive between 1925 and 1958, four of which were awarded by foreign universities; McGill and Laval in Canada in 1955, Lille, France, in 1956 and the Newfoundland Memorial University in 1964. In his address the Chancellor of Manchester said that

there have been other Royal Chancellors since Prince Albert but Leeds holds the distinction of being the first...to call a Royal Lady to the highest academic office...and uncommonly well-equipped through long residence in the area served by the University...and to form a just estimate of the part which a great University can play in the life of its people....showing a keen and lively interest in all that affects the welfare of the University.

He went on to say that

[she] accepts public duties with a ready willingness, and discharges them with conscientious and selfless thoroughness...the list is long...[but] has been and is of incalculable benefit to our fellow men – her sterling work as Commandant in Chief of the British Red Cross Society....never evading the obligations that go with royalty: she accepts and fulfils them readily and graciously.⁴⁵

In reply the princess referred to

the great achievements of the mind – history, literature, theology, science, commerce and industry...all Universities are bound together by an allegiance to learning and truth. All fail ...[if] any one of them departs from that allegiance.⁴⁶

It is impossible to know if these are the princess's own words, or written for her by a secretary, but one must assume that she would not have spoken them unless she agreed them, or was of like mind at least.

Princess Mary began and continued extensive travelling further afield than Yorkshire, and London, as she undertook more duties throughout the United Kingdom. These included a second visit to Ireland in 1928, where she had

⁴⁵ Manchester University, *ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

been invited to open extensions to the Samaritan Hospital in Belfast; visit the shipyard of Harland and Wolff; and inspect the new Parliament buildings at Stormont, among other welfare, industrial and civic engagements being considered. Her husband also wished to introduce her to his Irish connections. The visit drew the attention of IRA/Sinn Fein sympathisers, even if the princess may not have been made aware of it. A particularly scurrilous and sarcastic pamphlet was circulated in which many of the perceived wrongs inflicted on Ireland by Britain over the centuries were listed. After describing Queen Victoria as the 'Famine Queen' it concluded with the remark that 'her august parents had annexed for your [Mary] comfort the miser hoard of millions, which Clanricarde extracted from the flesh and blood of our Western peasantry.'⁴⁷ Nevertheless the people in both parts of the island turned out to greet her and the visit was considered a great success by all concerned; and she had carried on her work to support hospitals and industry, as she had done during the preceding eight years.

Back in London the princess also opened the new headquarters of the General Nursing Council; presented prizes to raise money for an employment scheme for boys and girls; and received purses on behalf of the Benevolent Orphans Fund and the Institute for the Deaf and Dumb. The chairman of the Royal Association in aid of the Deaf and Dumb said "it was fortunate in having been of so well supported by the royal family, who were always the first to come forward to help the afflicted."⁴⁸ She also opened the new headquarters of the Mothers' Union, which had been instigated in 1876 by Mary Sumner, to bring together women of all classes in many countries to uphold the sanctity of the home, and to raise children in the love of God. Marriage, good parenting and

⁴⁷ NA *Visit of HRH The Princess Royal to Ulster*, 11 October, 1929,

HO 45/20434

Clanricarde was the extremely wealthy uncle of Viscount Lascelles to whom he left his £200 million estate in 1906. That would now be the equivalent of approximately one billion pounds.

⁴⁸ The Times 5 May, 1925, p. 1.

prayer were the key to the future of families, according to its creed.⁴⁹ Doubtless Princess Mary would have agreed with this creed wholeheartedly.

As the nineteen twenties drew to a close the princess continued her by now well-established round of engagements. These included a visit to the Battersea Polytechnic for Women Students on 11 December 1929, to open a new addition to the building, and where, in his address, the chairman of the governing body, Canon Hubert Curtis, said “no woman could be said to be properly educated if she could not manage her own house. It was toward this end that their domestic science school, the largest in the kingdom, was directed.”⁵⁰ If the students had indeed enrolled to learn how to manage their own house, well and good, but it takes a leap of the imagination to suggest that if she were not able to do this then she was not properly educated. The Canon’s words are an indication of just how far women still had to go to be genuinely well-educated, or to be considered well-educated. One need look no further for corroboration than in the work of John Newsom on their education and prospects, and the limits he discussed.⁵¹ Even then there were further limitations on opportunities for women and girls, given the unemployment and economic situation in the nineteen twenties and thirties. According to Derek Aldcroft, the situation was not as desperate in London and parts of the south, and he mentions the growth of house building in London’s urban areas, but this industry would not be open to women at that time, even if they desired it.⁵²

In the shipbuilding industry the princess had launched two ships, the HMS Rodney at Edinburgh on 24 December 1925, and HMAS Canberra at Clydebank on 31 May 1927.⁵³ This ship was destined for the Australian

⁴⁹ Ibid, 17 September, 1930, p. 15

⁵⁰ The Times, 12 December 1929, p. 12

⁵¹ John Newsom. *The Education of Girls*. London: Faber & Faber, 1948.

⁵² Derek H. Aldcroft. *The Inter-War Economy: Britain 1919-1939*. England: B.T Batsford Ltd. 1970, p. 79

⁵³ Film of the launch entitled UK *Princess Mary Launches HMAS Canberra* may be seen on Reuters – Empire Newsreel, www.Youtube.com

Navy. On another visit to Edinburgh she visited the Niddrie Housing Estate, developed to 'deal with slum problems' by moving residents to better and more suitable housing. After this engagement she drove to Usher Hall where she received the Freedom of the City of Edinburgh on 17 September 1930. She was only the second woman, and 'the first royal lady to receive this honour...on her first visit to the city,' although the princess had had a long association with The Royal Scots Regiment.⁵⁴ The Provost, who was making the address, said that it was recognized that

her devotion to the interests not only of the men but also the women and children of the Regiment, has endeared her to all hearts...following the long traditions of personal service and effort...of the Royal Family.

He then named her presidencies of the League of Mercy and Girl Guides, as Commandant-in-Chief of the British Red Cross Detachments, and Dame Justice of the Order of St John of Jerusalem as being

positions in which she has rendered distinguished service [and] in which her willing co-operation and assistance have proved invaluable assets to these different organizations, [as well as] her social work in various spheres [being] well known.

In 1931 her final engagements were all in relation to industry, charity, civic and music programmes. The first was a visit to Sheffield where she carried out a number of engagements. These, included a visit to the Vickers Works of the English Steel Corporation on 12 November; she spent two days sorting clothes for the poor at the Queen Mary Needlework Guild; and on 21 November attended a civic symphony concert in the Leeds Town Hall. Although she did not attend the event she also gave her patronage to a dinner in aid of the Papworth Village Settlement on 15 December; all in support of industry, charity and civic programmes.

⁵⁴ Edinburgh City Archives, *letter and notes*, 28 February 2013.

Also, in December 1931, Princess Louise, the Princess Royal, died, and Mary's father then created his daughter Princess Royal in 1932.⁵⁵ It was also the year in which Princess Mary received the Freedom of the City of Leeds, again the first woman to receive the honour.⁵⁶ The Lord Mayor in paying tribute to her and giving the reason for the honour said

the Royal family...could share the simplicities of home in combination with the splendour of their public ways...[their] sympathy and spirit...exemplified in [the princess] and [who] had shared consistently in social and philanthropic efforts in their midst, was particularly concerned with child welfare and nursing.

The princess said

she would hope always to continue her association with the manifold activities connected with its welfare

and this she did for the next thirty-three years. In his role as County Lord Lieutenant Lord Harewood then spoke, and although no reason was given for his speech he expressed his thanks for the honour conferred on his wife, which

had given expression of two social principles: first, that the activity of woman was a real power in the world, and that her beneficial influence was of real importance to a city such as Leeds...and second, that it was not necessary to take an active part in political life to play one's part in the world.

One cannot know the Earl's intentions in the utterance of these words. However, women were beginning to take an active part in political life, and were attempting to instigate social reform in the country. It appears that he

⁵⁵ She was one of six princesses awarded this title by their fathers, beginning with the daughter of Charles I, Princess Mary, born in 1631. It was usually offered to the oldest daughter of the monarch throughout history. Princess Mary and her predecessor Princess Louise were the only two who remained in Britain after their marriages. The title had no constitutional significance but does distinguish the holder from princesses of lower rank.

⁵⁶ The Times, 6 July, 1932, p. 1.

The New York Times, 7 July 1932.

was suggesting that the role played by his wife, and others like her, was equally important, if being attempted by different means, and not as overtly performed in the political domain, as was the case with the male population. Therefore, women's efforts should not be ignored or thought of with indifference.

This year also witnessed a further deterioration in living conditions and in the lives of many of the people, particularly in industrial areas, due to the depression and unemployment, with the consequent poverty, homelessness and ill-health. Therefore, during the next eight years, and whilst she continued the same round of engagements, Princess Mary was to continue undertaking visits to projects to help the poor and unemployed. One of the first of these was on 23 March 1927, and a second on 17 May 1927 during visits to Leeds, when she inspected two welfare centres for the unemployed, followed by a visit to poor districts of Hunslet.⁵⁷ The second city visited was Nottingham on 1 May 1927, although on this occasion she was accompanied by her husband. This visit is important because of the speech made by Lord Lascelles on behalf of his wife. The princess had four engagements: to open a new wing of a hospital, visit a Children's Hospital, inspect a clinic for crippled children, and a home for paralysed sailors and soldiers. Replying to an official address of welcome to the city Lord Lascelles said "Princess Mary hardly ever visited a town without going into a hospital serving the poorer classes."⁵⁸

The princess also continued her work with the Personal Service League, an organization which encouraged charity knitting by, mostly, middle class women; although at various times the princess also knitted for charity. The garments were sold to raise funds for the unemployed in distressed areas. She also assisted at other times by sending jewellery and furniture to organizations raising funds for a number of varying causes. These attempts seem trivial when viewed in the context of the problems of the thirties, but at least the women involved were not ignoring them. Instead, they were using whatever

⁵⁷ The Times, 1 March, 1933, p. 15

⁵⁸ Ibid, 1 May, 1927, p. 22.

means were available to them in order to try and alleviate the consequences of poverty, unemployment and homelessness.

During two periods, 1933 and 1935 respectively, the princess had been admitted to hospital. Then, following the death of her father, a period of mourning in 1936 meant that her activities were again curtailed for some weeks. On an occasion, in September 1933, her husband deputised for his wife and, speaking of her commitment to her duties, said

I do hope the public in general will recognize it is impossible for the strength of any human being, let alone a lady, to do all that is asked of the royal family.⁵⁹

The newspaper which published this piece continued, writing that

[the princess] has a record of public appearances on behalf of one cause or another almost as extensive as that of the Prince of Wales, particularly devoting herself to aiding hospitals, nursing homes and child welfare clinics.

Apparently, the summer had been particularly hot and the princess had undertaken a heavy programme and, consequentially, she had suffered physical and debilitating overstrain. Queen Mary was also concerned 'about the amount of work' the princess undertook, and the toll it took on her stamina.⁶⁰ The Queen asked her grandson to 'persuade his mother to do less'; and she was concerned about the number of speeches her daughter made, having only 'made two in her whole life.'⁶¹ Princess Mary continued to be supported by her husband when he, as president of the Infirmary, in his first

⁵⁹ Montreal Gazette, 8 November, 1933, p. 9

⁶⁰ Harewood, *The Tongs and The Bones*, p. 91.

⁶¹ A recent TV documentary made the claim that Queen Mary spoke with a German accent, which is not accurate. She spoke in the tones of an upper-class English woman, which may be heard in an Empire Day broadcast recorded at Buckingham Palace on 28 March 1923, and relayed on [www. Youtube.com](http://www.Youtube.com) in 2018.

official duty under the new Royal Charter, received her when she opened the new nurses' home at the General Infirmary on 3 October 1937.⁶²

One of the last engagements for 1937 was on 6 October at Harrogate when Princess Mary opened a two-day convention of the National Coal Board, the first to be held outside London, after which she attended the first morning's addresses by the various speakers. In her own speech she stressed the importance of the coal industry to the nation's prosperity, and said

...it continued to be the foundation of our national prosperity...and I include its use in one form or another in the homes of the people. For that reason I am glad to note that there are ladies present.⁶³

It has to be assumed that the speech, of which the foregoing is just an extract, would have been written for the princess by a member of the Coal Board, but by her presence she was expressing her support for the industry, and also the importance of the Yorkshire mines, as well as those in other counties, in providing employment for the population, at a time of depression and unemployment.

Then, when the year 1938 opened, the couple flew to Cyprus on a private visit on 16 February, where Lord Lascelles consecrated the new Masonic Lodge, of which he was Pro Grand Master, though there is no evidence that the princess attended the engagements of her husband. This was followed by a visit to Greece, so that the princess did not begin her domestic round of engagements until after their return to England. As the year proceeded it was beginning to become clear that tensions were rising in Europe, particularly after the German army had marched into Austria in March. Consequently, these tensions were acknowledged on 27 June when the princess, as the Commandant-in-Chief of The British Red Cross Detachments, attended a service in St Paul's Cathedral to give thanks for its work. The address given by the Archbishop of

⁶² The Times, 4 October, 1937, p. 11

⁶³ Ibid, 6 October, 1937, p. 16

Canterbury was entitled Service to Humanity; this at a time when ‘the international world was full of misunderstandings.’⁶⁴

With her attention still directed at the problems of housing the poor and on child welfare she undertook a number of visits throughout the country. The first was on 26 July to the new Hepworth Housing Estate to which people had been moved from areas of slum clearance in Yorkshire.⁶⁵ This was followed on 31 October by a visit to High Wycombe, to open the new health centre at Dyke Meadow, at which it was proposed to give lessons to men and women in father and mother craft.⁶⁶ No further details are given, but it must have been instigated to encourage parents to take better care of their children, and it need not have been necessarily for the benefit of the poorer and less well-educated members of the community, but that is the assumption one draws.

As 1939 opened Princess Mary began her usual round of engagements, but on 4 February, wearing her ATS uniform, she visited the London Post Office Airgraph Letters Department, to see staff at work receiving and dispatching letters to members of the British Forces serving overseas, which was an early sign of possible events to come. Still, in another step, and a move to further cement relations with France in case of war, President Lebrun of France arrived in London on a State Visit. One of his engagements was a visit to the Institute Français of which both he and Princess Mary were patrons.⁶⁷ The president was received by Princess Mary, and then he asked her to open new buildings at the Institute.

As the year progressed the United Kingdom began to set in motion preparations for war should it break out with Germany. Increasingly, the princess’s engagements reflected the situation, particularly those connected with the armed forces, and associated organizations such as The Red Cross

⁶⁴ Ibid, 28 June 1938, p. 1

⁶⁵ Ibid, 26 July 1938, p. 9

⁶⁶ The Times, 29 October 1938, p. 9

⁶⁷ Ibid, 27 February 1939, p.9

Voluntary Aid Detachments. Others included a visit to Liverpool where she launched the battleship HMS Prince of Wales at Birkenhead on the 3 May.⁶⁸ On 6 May the princess was appointed to be a Counsellor of State during the forthcoming visit of the king and queen to Canada and the United States; this visit was planned to cement relations between the countries in the advent of war. The long-anticipated war began on 1 September when Germany invaded Poland, and the Royal Navy mobilized; then, on 3 September, Britain declared war on Germany. Consequently, the nature and style of the role of Princess Mary changed considerably. As the year closed not only was the country at war but, on 3 December, Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, died. This was the beginning of a number of deaths of the descendants of Queen Victoria and of the older members of the royal family. It was the end of one era and the beginning of another. During the next five years Princess Mary's public life changed to one that she probably could not have envisaged, but they would now determine the course her public life would follow, and will be surveyed in chapters four and five.

The war in Europe ended on 8 May 1945, and that in Japan and the south east three months later on 15 August. The princess's first engagement recorded in the Court Circular is dated 19 June, when she began a four day visit to Ulster to inspect members of the Women's Section of the Hillsborough branch of the British Legion.⁶⁹ She then received purses containing £20,000.00 on behalf of the YMCA War and National Services Fund. In the meantime, the Earl of Harewood had undergone a stomach operation on 12 August 1945, and Princess Mary's engagements, if any, are not recorded for a short time. Those from September to November were still connected with the war effort but, on the morning of 7 December, she attended a statutory meeting of The Red Cross, at which she gave an account of all visits she had carried out to county

⁶⁸ The ship was later bombed and sunk by the Japanese Airforce off the coast of Malaya on 10 December 1941.

⁶⁹The Times, 19 June, 1945, p. 4

branches during the war; then, in the afternoon, as Dame Grand President, she presided at the annual meeting of the League of Mercy.⁷⁰

In recognition of her war work⁷¹, and that of her sisters-in-law, the Duchesses of Gloucester and Kent, the king awarded the three women the Defence Medal on 10 January 1946. The recipient had to have served on non-operational duties for a minimum of 1,080 days.⁷² Engagements continued to be those connected with the war effort until 8 May, when the princess attended the annual meeting of the Girl Guides Association. At this meeting there was an exhibition of handicrafts organized by the Guides International Service Teams, in aid of the displaced persons' camps in Europe; and so the round of engagements continued until 1947. In January of that year she was again appointed a Counsellor State, along with the Duke of Gloucester and Lord Lascelles, during the absence of the royal family in South Africa. Then, on 23 May, her husband the Earl of Harewood died. No reason is given for the death, or whether it was the result of the condition for which he had been treated in 1945, but he had developed pneumonia. The first recorded engagement for Princess Mary, after a short period of mourning, was on 14 June when the widowed princess attended a Red Cross Rally of 1,000 members of the Kent branch; inspected a parade at Canterbury Cathedral, and then visited the Royal School of Music.⁷³ This despite her son's comment in his biography that it took Princess Mary many months to recover from her husband's death.⁷⁴ However, it must be acknowledged that not only was The Red Cross of great importance to her, but that the Rally would have been arranged many weeks, if not months, in advance. She would have been unhappy to cancel her attendance, and thus cause disappointment for the organization and its members.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 7 December, 1945, p. 6

⁷¹ See chapters three and four.

⁷² The Times, 12 January, 1946, p. 21

⁷³ Ibid, 16 June, 1945, p. 6.

⁷⁴ Harewood, *The Tongs and The Bones*, p. 98.

On 17 July 1948 she carried out a broadcast to inaugurate Empire Rangers Week, at which she concluded her remarks, perhaps because of the upheaval of the war and the rebuilding of the nation in the years up to 1948, and to the tasks still ahead, saying to her listeners “let us now go forward to meet the unknown.”⁷⁵ For Princess Mary’s own future she received the Freedom of the City of Inverness and an Honorary Doctor of Laws from Cambridge University in 1951. Then she was elected Chancellor of Leeds University, the first woman to hold the Office, on 7 June 1951.⁷⁶ On 6 February 1952, Princess Mary’s public life changed again when her brother George VI died, and her niece Princess Elizabeth ascended the throne.

Nevertheless, her scheduled engagements continued to be carried out and the princess began yet another four-day visit to Ireland on 22 June. Then began a series of overseas visits and tours to her regiments; and, on behalf of the new Queen Elizabeth, to Independence ceremonies in various parts of the Commonwealth. The last of these were in September 1964 and October 1964, the first to Newfoundland in Canada, to mark the 50th anniversary of the departure of the first contingent of the Royal New Foundland Regiment for service in Europe. The second was to Northern Rhodesia for the Independence ceremonies, when the country was re-named Zambia. These events will be surveyed in chapter five.

Princess Mary died suddenly on 28 March 1965, five months after her Canadian visit, and just three weeks after representing Queen Elizabeth at the funeral of the Queen of Sweden. Thus, ended her long and active public life on behalf of the Monarchy and the nation, during which she attended hundreds of engagements and travelled thousands of miles. Yet, whilst every royal female figure undertaking a public role, from the nineteenth to the twenty first centuries, has been the subject of a biography, it as if Princess Mary as an historic royal female public figure does not exist in British history.

⁷⁵ The Times, 19 July, 1948, p. 7

⁷⁶ Ibid, 8 June, 1951, p. 4

During her lifetime a small number of universities did award her an honorary degree, and she was awarded the Freedom of a City on a few occasions, otherwise her life has gone unremarked for the most part, with the exceptions of her engagements recorded in *The Times Court Circular*, and in a small number of archives. Hers was a ground-breaking period of public service for a female member of the royal family with a non-constitutional role, and would not be repeated until her niece, Princess Margaret, began her official public life in 1947.⁷⁷ During the years of her life Princess Mary expressed her concern, and provided support, often on a practical level, for those in need, whether from poverty, homelessness, unemployment or illness. She had gained a practical knowledge of the medical profession when she enrolled at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children. She was not just an ornamental figurehead, and this carried on into all her public commitments. Her husband, first as Viscount Lascelles and then as the Earl of Harewood, gave her his support for the twenty-five years of their married life, and it appears that again this has not been recognized publicly. In her turn Princess Mary had given her support to four monarchs and her country, during the first half of the twentieth century and beyond. She was unstinting in her contribution to those organizations which called upon her for aid and assistance. After her marriage, and as she moved further down the line of succession, she could quite easily have retired to a country life in Yorkshire, as a minor royal, and the wife of a wealthy landowning aristocrat. Instead, she responded to calls from four monarchs to undertake duties on their behalf, and from organizations seeking her interest and participation in the functioning of their work. Hers was a unique role during the second world war as she travelled the length and breadth of the country in support of military organizations and, to a lesser extent, non-military organizations; it was a role that could not and will not be repeated, given the particular circumstances of the time.

⁷⁷ Princess Margaret carried out an even greater number and variety of overseas visits and tours, on behalf of the monarchy, the government, and organizations such as the Board of Trade and the British Council. These documents have been retained in the National Archives.

*Chapter Three**Princess Mary's Role and Connections with Civilian Charitable Organizations from 1914-1945; during Two World Wars, and during the Inter-War Years.*

Princess Mary's role in the First World War was a minor one, but it introduced her in particular to the suffering of combatants and to the civilian organizations set up to deal with the afflicted men, thus affecting and partly determining the course of her philanthropic life. It also led to enduring connections with a number of these civilian charitable organizations, some of which lasted until her death in 1965. A number of them were associated with her during the first war only, others up to and during the inter-war years, and others during the second war only. Her participation in the philanthropic work of her parents and relatives taught her the lesson of what it meant to be a member of the royal family in an evolving monarchy; and what was expected of the members of that family. It led her to set up a Christmas Gift Fund in 1914 at the age of seventeen, for the benefit of servicemen from Britain and the empire fighting overseas.

In return for their exalted position in the functioning of the nation, and for the privileges this brought, their philanthropic work performed by the royal family was considered a small price to pay, when so many had paid such a large price in suffering and misery during the first war; the Depression of the inter-war years; and then during and after the second war. Established organizations to which the princess was connected included The Red Cross formed in 1870; the Church Army in 1872; the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Family Association, formed in 1885; the League of Mercy and the Lord Roberts Workshops, both formed in 1899; and, finally, the Guiding Association, formed in 1910. The League of Mercy was already known to the princess before the outbreak of the first war in 1914 and it, like other existing organizations, changed and adapted to deal with the consequences of the war, although some earlier than others. Three new organizations were formed to aid the war effort; the YMCA Women's Auxiliary Service, formed in 1914 under the presidency of Princess

Mary's second cousin Princess Helena Victoria [Thora],⁷⁸ and to which office Princess Mary succeeded on her death in 1948; the St Dunstan's Homes and Hostels for the Blind, also formed in 1914, with which her wartime connection ended in 1922; and the Women's Land Army formed in 1915, disbanded in 1919, and reformed again in 1938 when it appeared another war was likely.

Inter War Years 1919-1939

During the inter-war years her contacts widened, particularly with those dealing with and assisting disabled and limbless war veterans, such as the Not Forgotten Association for the Disabled, set up in 1920 by an American woman living in London; and the British Legion Women's Section, set up in 1921, and of which Princess Mary, described as 'winsome and charming,' was asked to be its first patron. Apparently, her appointment was 'a popular choice.'⁷⁹

Second War Years 1939-1945

During the second war she became involved with the activities of the Women's Voluntary Service, set up during the inter-war years in 1938 to assist the Air Raid Precautions organization in the advent of war; whilst maintaining contacts with the Guiding Association, which may be said to have come into its own during this period 1939-1945. The princess had first become president of the Norfolk branch in 1919.

During the three periods under investigation there developed a change in the manner in which Princess Mary carried out her duties. When the first war broke out in Europe on the 28 July 1914, followed by Britain's declaration of war on 4 August, Princess Mary, a single woman aged seventeen, had already begun her philanthropic role, usually in the company of her parents, and most particularly with her mother; occasionally with relatives; but more often alone after 1917 until her marriage in 1922. Twenty-five years later, on 3

⁷⁸ David Smith wrote that Princess Helena Victoria gave the Women's Auxiliary credibility.

⁷⁹ Brian Harding. *Keeping Faith. The History of The Royal British Legion*. Great Britain: Leo Cooper, 2001, p. 166.

September 1939, Britain and the wider world were again at war with Germany, and then Italy and Japan. By this time the princess was now aged forty-two, with a husband who had served, and was decorated, during the first war.⁸⁰ She was also now the mother of two sons, both of whom were to become members of the armed forces. During the second war three occasions are recorded when she was accompanied by her husband, but mostly she travelled with a lady in waiting, an equerry and/or with an official from the organization being visited. Almost as soon as war was declared in 1939 for the most part Princess Mary donned the military uniform of the Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service, and was rarely seen out of it.

During both wars, as well as offering comfort to affected people and support for various organizations, she made appeals, particularly of a financial nature, or undertook visits on behalf of various Funds in order to raise their profile and to prompt contributions from the public. She also made appeals for clothing and comforts; books and entertainment for the wounded; ambulances;⁸¹ canteens and communal kitchens; hospitals; clubs; hostels; and munitions factories, to name just a few of her undertakings. In at least one instance documentation reveals that the princess acknowledged problems she saw on one of her visits and tried to offer help. For instance, after a visit to the

⁸⁰ ODNB. He had first joined the Grenadier Guards, then, in 1914, transferred to The Yorkshire Hussars, but re-joined the Grenadier Guards after the battle at Neuve Chappelle in March 1915. He was wounded a fortnight later; was wounded again, gassed once. His actions earned him the Croix de Guerre, p. 592.

⁸¹ Agnes Pavey. *The Story of the Growth of Nursing*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1937, p. 141. The first record of the use of ambulances, being in fifteenth century Spain, and now would play an important and vital part in twentieth century warfare. In the first war the drivers were women of the Green Cross Society;

The Women's Reserve Ambulance, was formed in June 1915 and they worked during the Zeppelin raids on London.

NA *Green Cross Society*, NATS 1/1310, 1916-1918.

Dunstan Hill Hospital for Disabled Veterans in Northumberland, on 23 November 1946, she sent a handwritten letter to the Minister of Pensions, instead of having a lady in waiting write on her behalf. Commenting on what she had seen during her tour of the hospital and its facilities, she suggested improvements which should be made for recreation which would be of benefit to patients and staff. However, in her letter she wrote also that she fully understood that the post-war building programme had to take priority over other work, however important.⁸² In a letter from the Ministry of Pensions office, Blackpool, written by Captain R H Webb to the private secretary to the Minister, A O Woodgate, he wrote ‘we did not need the royal visit to spur us to action, we have nevertheless, used it as a prod to the Treasury.’ This response would appear to indicate that the building programme itself was not the problem, but lack of funds from the Treasury.⁸³ If there were other occasions when she used her position to intervene by contacting government ministers and officials they have not been uncovered. However, histories of various organizations do record interventions by the princess on their behalf, as will be seen in the reviews of their work later in this chapter.

Princess Mary and the First World War

During the first war a study of their engagements listed in the Court Circular reveals that scarcely a day went by that the king and queen, accompanied by their daughter, did not undertake visits to hospitals for the British, Commonwealth and foreign wounded troops, particularly those established to aid recuperation, rehabilitation and the training of men who had lost limbs or who had been blinded. These visits may be said to be Princess Mary’s most important contribution to the war effort between 1914 and 1918, although there do appear to have been limits set. For instance, whilst her parents visited Froggnal Hospital which was treating the tragically burned and mutilated troops, many suffering disfiguring facial and jaw injuries, there is no record of her accompanying them, although she did attend fund raising events on behalf

⁸² NA *Welfare Arrangements for Staff and Patients, and Visit by HRH The Princess Royal*, 5 December, 1946. PIN 38/338, 1944-1952.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 10 December 1946.

of the hospital. The princess and her parents also visited army camps, and associated depots; munitions factories; air raid shelters and the victims of Zeppelin raids; and communal kitchens where the queen and her daughter, on occasions, would take their places at the counters in the kitchens serving meals, to the surprise of the people lining up to receive them. Other visits were made to allied troops stationed in England, and the princess also went to railway stations to welcome home repatriated servicemen and returning prisoners of war. It is not known if the princess was aware, or became aware of, their harsh and cruel treatment in the German camps, so graphically described in the work of the historian John Lewis-Stempel.⁸⁴

The four years of war, and the sights she witnessed and experienced, would have introduced Princess Mary to a world completely alien to the sheltered life she had lived previously. Nevertheless, although the cost to the men fighting in that war was tremendous, and on a scale previously unknown to Britain, the Commonwealth and their allies, the events and experiences of that war opened up new opportunities for women throughout the United Kingdom. They were able to fill many roles in work previously undertaken by men, and once thought to beyond female capabilities. For Princess Mary it led to a wider public and philanthropic life, as it did for a number of women from the middle, upper and aristocratic classes as they participated in the running and work of the charitable organizations.⁸⁵ Her new life of public service would become more extensive than that of her aunts and cousins, particularly given that royal princesses were not necessarily expected to have such a full public life, with the exception of her grandmother, Princess Mary Adelaide. Later, presidencies and/or patronages of Princess Margaret amounted to sixty, as well as being honorary Colonel in Chief of six regiments. Her life also included undertaking an increased number of foreign visits on behalf of the monarchy, the government, the Board of Trade and the British Council, among

⁸⁴ John Lewis-Stempel. *The War Behind the Wire*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2014.

⁸⁵ Not so working-class women, many of whom had always worked in unskilled and menial drudgery.

others. This field of public work would continue to grow during the lives of Princess Alexandra and Princess Anne.

Whether the working role adopted by Princess Mary in the early twentieth century would prove to be a role model for women is difficult to answer. Most certainly it would not have been to the lower and working-class women, who had always worked as servants in many instances. Princess Mary was not only royal, which set her apart completely from all women, but she was also married to an extremely wealthy man. He was in a position to provide financial assistance in order that she was free to maintain a working life outside the home, without the encumbrance of caring for children at the same time, who were cared for by nannies and servants. Her life was not devoted almost entirely to 'letter-writing, gardening and, above all, horse racing,' as described by Theo Aronson.⁸⁶ Nothing could be further from the truth, and it is an illustration of royal biographies being written in ignorance.

Before beginning a review of the major organizations with which the princess became closely associated mention should be made of five of her earliest undertakings, particularly those in which she was to hold an office. In June 1915 the princess took on her first patronage, that of The Girls' Patriotic Union of Day Schools, still functioning today. This was made up of thousands of secondary school girls from every denomination. Most, if not all, of the pupils and staff would have had relatives at the front, and worked in association with local organizations. This included acts of self-denial such as giving up pocket money, sugar, cakes and sweets, the money saved being given to The Red Cross or Relief funds. The funds would buy materials such as hospital bed linen, swabs and bandages. The girls did mending for neighbouring hospitals, and for troops quartered in their neighbourhood. They undertook secretarial work in local Red Cross centres and the older girls, with a mastery of French, formed a Girl Guides Corps in order to help with

⁸⁶ Theo Aronson. *The Royal Family at War*. London: Thistle Publishing, 2014, pp. 162-163.

refugees, interpreting at some of the centres. Half-holidays were given up in order to free men and women for war work.

Secondly, in May 1917, surprisingly recorded in *The Straits Times*, Singapore, on 2 July, she undertook her first solo role, when she represented her mother at a concert arranged by the Duchess of Wellington, in aid of the Mesopotamia Comforts Fund, which was held at Apsley House, the London home of the Duke of Wellington. Comforts were parcels of articles such as socks, scarves, headgear, and cigarettes etc. sent to the troops as morale boosters.⁸⁷ At that time the British army was heavily engaged in fighting in the extremely harsh area today corresponding in the main to Iraq, Kuwait and part of north-east Syria, and the troops were in the thoughts of their relatives and friends at home.⁸⁸

Thirdly, and her first major initiative after the outbreak of war, was the launch of the Princess Mary Christmas Gift Fund on 14 October 1914, the palace having given permission for her name to be used. The Fund is described by her biographer Mabel Carey in 1922, and by a curator at the Imperial War Museum, Diana Condell, in 1989. The aim of the fund was ‘to send a Christmas present to every man at the front either ashore or afloat.’⁸⁹ At first the princess intended to provide funds from her own purse, but when it became apparent that this was going to be beyond her resources an appeals committee was formed. Princess Mary, accompanied by her mother’s Lady in Waiting, attended the inaugural meeting of the committee. It was composed of many high-ranking personages, including the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for War and the High Commissioners for the various Dominions, as well as many others, who would administer the Fund. The chairman of the

⁸⁷ Dr Peter Grant. *Philanthropy and Voluntary Action in the First World War*. London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2014.

⁸⁸ The study by Peter Grant suggests that comforts were not the panacea at first thought; the recipients had had their fill of a never-ending supply of caps, scarves and socks.

⁸⁹ Mabel Carey, *Princess Mary*, p.73.

smaller Executive Committee was the Duke of Devonshire. A letter, signed by the princess, was published in which she expressed her thoughts about the appeal: ‘...I want you to help me send a Christmas present from the whole nation to every sailor afloat and every soldier at the front.’⁹⁰ Subscriptions were to be sent to the princess at Buckingham Palace. Almost immediately though she learned discretion, when it was realised that Indian troops would not appreciate tobacco or cigarettes so, instead, their gift box contained sweets. The provision of the boxes was not without its problems. Brass was in short supply in Britain and supplies were sought in America. No reason is given but the supplies were offloaded from the SS Drum of Airlie and reloaded on the RMS Lusitania, which was subsequently torpedoed and sunk by the German Navy on 7 May 1915.⁹¹

The sum total raised for the Fund was £162,591,⁹² and Condell says that ‘while there were some substantial single donations most of the money came from thousands of small gifts sent by ordinary people from all parts of the United Kingdom.’⁹³ The total number of gifts presented on Christmas Day was £426,724.00.⁹⁴ The fund was finally wound up in November 1919 and ‘the remaining monies were given to Queen Mary’s Maternity Home.’ This was set up to benefit the wives, many of whom had been working in unskilled jobs, and the infants of sailors, soldiers and members of the newly-formed Royal Air Force. Soon after war broke out trade and exports dried up in the textile industries for one, and women working in these factories lost their jobs.⁹⁵ However, as the war progressed and men were being sent to the front,

⁹⁰ IWM, Diana Condell, *A Gift for Christmas, Review 4*, pp. 69-78.

⁹¹ NA HRH *The Princess Mary’s Sailors’ and Soldiers’ Christmas Fund*. MT 23/356, 22 April 1915.

⁹² Equivalent amount today approximately £17Million.

⁹³ *Princess Mary’s Christmas Fund*, MT 23/356.

⁹⁴ Equivalent amount today approximately £46Million.

⁹⁵ Queen Mary was also concerned with the plight of women and girls thrown out of work in industries which ceased working during the war, hence the setting up of Queen Mary’s Work for Women Fund. It was the Women’s

thus there was an opportunity for women to be employed in their place in many fields of work. This, though, was not without hostility at times in many quarters. Braybon and Summerfield report on the response from the War Office to the offer by Dr Elsie Inglis to take ‘fully equipped medical units to France: she was told to “Go home and keep quiet.”’⁹⁶ In the factories the owners and managers would not accept that women could undertake skilled work. After the intervention of the government under Lloyd George, finally, women and boys were ‘allowed to operate semi- or completely automated machines in munitions factories.’⁹⁷

Princess Mary’s fourth interest began after 15 December 1914 when the princess accompanied her mother to the clothing depot of the Officers’ Families Fund where, on a practical level, they assisted in the packing of gifts. Her association with the organization lasted into the second war. This Fund had been set up by Lady Maud Lansdowne, wife of the fifth Marquess, during the Boer War. The Marchioness was a Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Alexandra between 1905-1909, and thus was able to ensure royal patronage for her organization, including that of Queen Mary and Princess Mary’s great aunt Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, during the first war. In August 1914 Lady Maud sent letters to the newspapers and magazines such as *The Spectator*, appealing for funds. The undertaking by Lady Maud was recorded widely, as far afield as Singapore and *The Straits Times* on 28 October, 1916. The funds were to be used to assist wives and dependent relatives of British and Colonial troops, by grants of money and other benefits if they were suffering financial hardship, ‘financial embarrassment or any other trouble’⁹⁸ Princess Mary was also concerned with the fate of the children of officers as

Section of the National Relief Fund, set up by the Prince of Wales in 1914. Its aim was to alleviate financial problems facing the families of the troops at the front thus boosting their morale.

⁹⁶ Gail Braybon and Penny Summerfield. *Out of the Cage*. London: Routledge, 1987, p.34.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 35.

⁹⁸ Officers’ Families Fund; SSAFA’s *World War One Records 1914*, p. 1865.

she understood that their welfare and wellbeing depended on that of their mothers. By August 1916 ‘a sum exceeding £310,000.00⁹⁹ had been subscribed...the committee had given assistance in nearly ten thousand cases, such as illness, confinements...[giving] gifts of clothing, housing, hospitality to wounded and convalescent officers and their families...and to education of up to five hundred girls and boys.’¹⁰⁰

Finally, there is her interest in the St Dunstan’s Homes for the Blind set up by Sir Arthur Pearson.¹⁰¹ He realised that the men, if trained, could go on to become useful members of society. Originally the organization he founded was named the Blinded Soldiers and Sailors After-Care Fund but, in 1923, it was renamed St Dunstan’s. Princess Mary visited the Regent’s Park hostel offering encouragement and support, including one visit on 16 May 1917 when she accompanied her brother David, Prince of Wales, who was ‘on leave’ from France.¹⁰² On other occasions during the war she was accompanied by other brothers, when they visited the workshops and training rooms, where they learned of the work being carried out by the men. She also attended fund raising activities, an example of which was her visit to the gift shop in Regent Street in July 1922. This is the last record of her support for blinded servicemen at St Dunstan’s, although she did visit a St Dunstan’s Hostel for Blind Girls at Church Stretton during the second war; in June 1941 and again in December 1943. On the first occasion she visited the operating theatre, the massage instruction, the workshops and the telephone room, after which she visited the wards and spoke to the patients.

Princess Mary’s Major Organizations

These organizations retained Princess Mary’s attention and concern through the inter-war years and up until the end of the second war. The first of these

⁹⁹ Amount today approximately £25Million.

¹⁰⁰ The Spectator Archive; and The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser (1884-1942), 12 December, 1916, p. 7.

¹⁰¹ A blind man, owner and founder of the Daily Express newspaper.

¹⁰² *St Dunstan’s Review No 12*, June 1917, p. 3.

was the League of Mercy, ‘a money-gathering auxiliary of The King’s Fund’, originally set up as the Prince of Wales Hospital Fund for London in 1897.¹⁰³ Princess Mary was later to become Lady Grand President in 1936. Previously she had begun in a minor way on fund raising activities; on one occasion before the first war accompanying her parents and brother Bertie, the future Duke of York and King George VI, to a fund-raising matinee in 1912; and on another accompanying her parents to yet another fund-raising event, a garden party at Gunnersbury Park, West London, in July of that year. The League was an organization which continued up to and during the Second World War. It was finally wound up in 1948 after the introduction of the National Health Act, when the state took over responsibility for the health system of the United Kingdom. The purpose of the League when it was formed by Royal Charter in 1899 was to establish a body of voluntary workers who would assist with the maintenance of voluntary hospitals. Princess Mary succeeded her second cousin Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, as Lady Grand President in 1924, whilst her great aunt Princess Louise, the Duchess of Argyll, was appointed Lady President of the Scottish League. The Prince of Wales was the Grand President of the organization.

The first of the organizations with a Christian ethos which held great appeal for the princess, and which reflected her own nature and upbringing, was The Church Army, founded in 1882 by the Reverend Wilson Carlisle.¹⁰⁴ His aim was to organize groups of people to act as Church of England evangelists among the lower classes, and those he considered immoral, in the slums of Westminster. The Army is still carrying on its work today. During the first war it produced *The Soldier’s Pocket Companion* for the man on active service, which contained a message from Princess Mary’s aunt Princess

¹⁰³ Frank Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, p.134.

¹⁰⁴ Additionally, in 1892 he founded the Fresh Air fund for the benefit of poor children of the East End. It gave the children a day’s outing in Epping Forest and a fortnight’s holiday in the country or by the sea. On 23 June 1921 the Prince of Wales celebrated his birthday, accompanied by Princess Mary, with the children on a visit to the forest for one of the yearly outings.

Louise, Duchess of Fife, the then Princess Royal. In it she wrote 'it will be of much use to our brave soldiers to assist their work, to equip their minds, to preserve their souls....God bless you and keep you from danger.' She concluded by paying tribute to 'all who are gallantly fighting for our King and Country.'¹⁰⁵ During the war the Church Army turned its attention to prisoners of war interned in Germany when, with the good offices of the United States Embassy, it was able to send parcels to the men, too late for Christmas 1914 but in time for the New Year in 1915. It continued to send parcels throughout the war, 'each containing food, an article of clothing, such as socks, a greeting card and a copy of the New testament.' When news was received of the terrible conditions endured by Russian prisoners it was decided to include them in the scheme. At home the Church Army also looked after the welfare of the wives, widows and children of men on active service. It provided medical aid free of charge, and homes at the seaside and in the country-side which families were able to visit from time to time. Visits were arranged to the wounded in hospitals whose families were unable to travel to France, whilst escorting wives and mothers of the wounded who were able to make the journey. The Church Army established recreational huts and canteens for troops on the western front, and at home established canteens for workers in munitions factories. Between 1915 and 1918 Princess Mary attended fund raising activities such as art exhibitions held on behalf of prisoners of war in Germany; visited a hostel for soldiers in London; and an army musical training school founded in 1865 in Newport Market, Soho, and which was later moved to Westminster. This school was for children of soldiers and destitute boys with musical ability who wanted to join military bands. In 1917 its president was the son of Queen Victoria, Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, Princess Mary's great uncle. Then, in 1928, the school's name was changed to the Newmarket Army Band School. The princess became its patron in 1932.

¹⁰⁵ The Earl of Meath, KP, PC, Ed. *The Soldier's Pocket Companion*. London: Crosby Lockwood and Son and The Church Army, 1916, pp. iii-117.

Princess Mary's interest in children followed her training as a VAD nurse at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children which she commenced in 1918, having previously formed her own Red Cross VAD at Buckingham Palace in 1917, at which she was joined by friends. Her links with The Red Cross lasted until her death, and in the history of the society its author, Dame Beryl Oliver, dedicated her work to Princess Mary, the Princess Royal; writing our 'Commandant-in-Chief worked so devotedly and selflessly for The Red Cross.'¹⁰⁶ This work commenced in 1915 when the princess accompanied her mother Queen Mary to a Victoria Station free buffet for troops, where the two women stood at the bar talking to the soldiers. She also attended fund raising activities; rallies; made hospital visits; presented colours to branch organizations; attended displays and demonstrations of the work of The Red Cross; and attended parades and reviews. During one of these parades, in Scotland in the presence of Queen Mary in 1920, the princess commanded the parade. Princess Mary's attention to the VADs lasted until the outbreak of war in 1939, after which they were absorbed into the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Airforce, so that she would have seen members at work only when she visited these services.

An official history of the VADs has not been written but there are accounts of service during the second war compiled by two former members, Doreen Boys and Joyce Drury.¹⁰⁷ They give brief details of the history of the formation and service of the detachments during the first war; and mention should be made of two remarkable and important women in this field; Dame Katherine Furse and Dame Beryl Oliver, both of whom have entries in the ODNB. Dame Katherine enrolled in the first Red Cross VADs attached to the Territorial

¹⁰⁶ Dame Beryl Oliver. GBE RRC. *The British Red Cross in Action*. London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1966, p. 232.

¹⁰⁷ Doreen Boys. *Once Upon a Ward*. Upminster: Compilation and Publisher, 1980.

Joyce Drury. *We Were There*. Written and Compiled 1995. Great Britain: The Jupiter Press, 1997.

Army in 1909. After her service in France during the first war she was recalled to London to start a VAD department. When a joint committee was set up to coordinate the VAD work of The British Red Cross and the Order of St John of Jerusalem she was appointed commandant-in-chief. She resigned from her post in 1917 and then became director of a new organization, the Women's Royal Naval Service.

Dame Beryl Oliver was born in Australia but was educated in England and France. She joined the St John Ambulance Brigade in 1910, which was operating under the auspices of the VAD training scheme. This had been established in 1909 soon after the passing of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act of 1907, and combined the resources of the Order of St John of Jerusalem and The British Red Cross Society. The outbreak of the first war created a huge demand for trained volunteers to supplement nursing staff, and she was given responsibility for the military section of the joint VADs, organizing work in hospitals. At the end of the war Dame Beryl continued working at VAD headquarters. The proposed disbandment of the VADs brought her into conflict with the War Office committee [as it had for Dame Katharine] and she resigned in 1922. Consequently, she joined The British Red Cross where she continued with the promotion and training of detachments nationwide. During the second war she was responsible for meeting the huge demand for Red Cross personnel overseas. On her retirement from the organization in 1956 she was appointed the society's archivist.

In her study Janet Watson's chapter on the healing of men, entitled *Amateur and Professional*, gives an account of the work of the VADs during the first war, and points out the differences between professional nurses and the VAD volunteers who had first aid training only.¹⁰⁸ The latter were treated with suspicion by the professional nurses, who had to earn a living. The volunteers were from the aristocratic and upper middle classes for the most part, who

¹⁰⁸ Janet Watson. *Fighting Different Wars*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Paperback Edition, 2006, p. 59-104.

were serving only for the duration, and who would return to their usual lives of leisure at the end of the war.

During the first war fourteen thousand women in one hundred and eighty detachments undertook duties such as ‘the escort of the seriously injured; manning dressing stations; assisting doctors; cooking; and helping to staff fourteen hundred Emergency Hospitals....The volunteers served in Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa, supplemented by units from the Dominions.’¹⁰⁹ Doreen Boys writes that at war’s end recruitment continued and new member were given part-time training in first aid and home nursing. In 1923 revision of the scheme meant that detachments became part of the voluntary reserve of the Forces of the Crown, composed of Mobile members. If they were called upon in the future they could be kept at home or sent overseas. Immobile members would carry out their duties from their homes.¹¹⁰

Two years after the outbreak of the second war the Ministry of Labour set out plans for recruitment and mobilization for government departments in 1941. A brief reference is made to recruitment for both the services and civilian organizations, such as the ATS, civil defence, land army, factories and munitions works. In regard to the latter in particular many factories and works were sited far away from urban areas and centres of populations, so it was thought impractical and unreasonable to expect mothers and older women to be employed there. Instead, women between the ages of twenty to thirty were recruited and this regulation applied also to the ATS and the land army. Princess Mary played her part both in visits to exhibitions and recruitment centres, and in making an appeal for recruits through a BBC broadcast on 26 June 1940.

¹⁰⁹ Joyce Drury, *We Were There*, p. 9.

¹¹⁰ Doreen Boys, *Once Upon a Ward*, pp. 204-205.

Princess Mary and the Inter War Years 1919-1938

It was during this period that Princess Mary continued her association with the VADs and The Red Cross. ‘Every year since her appointment as Commandant-in- Chief she held at least three inspections of detachments in different County branches, where the members were training and giving demonstrations of their work. Mary attended lectures; carried out inspections of hospitals; and awarded decorations after competitions.’ Other developments in this period included the formation of the Not Forgotten Association for disabled veterans in 1920; the British Legion Women’s Section in 1921; the Women’s Voluntary Service; and the reformation of the Women’s Land Army, both in 1938, when it was becoming clear that war was likely.

Also, in 1938, the princess attended ‘a séance - a session in the gas chamber - at the Civilian Anti-Gas School, Easingfold, Yorkshire....Instructors were holding courses of instruction for ARP Officials; Air Raid Wardens and members of the Fire Brigades, among others; and were working in close touch with Local Authorities.’¹¹¹ Other engagements undertaken during this period included presenting awards; presenting colours; carrying out inspections and reviews at which she would take the salute at the march past; watching displays, for instance that in 1932 of a relief operation of a supposed attack on a civilian population. Finally in November 1938, whilst attending a Statutory Meeting of The Red Cross Society held at headquarters, in her speech the Commandant-in-Chief reported on “what had been done in preparation by The Red Cross and Order of St Johnshould war break out.”¹¹² Even though the Munich crisis had passed it was apparent that the nation and the organizations, such as The Red Cross and Order of St John, were under no illusion that it was

¹¹¹ Beryl Oliver, *The British Red Cross in Action*, p. 341.

¹¹² The Times, 19 November 1938, p. 19.

likely that the country would be at war with Germany in the future, and that therefore it was necessary to be prepared.

During the twenty-one years between the two wars, and after Princess Mary married in 1922, her public life was interrupted in 1923 and 1924 by the births of her two sons; by a visit to Ireland in 1928; ill health in November 1933 and June 1935; a visit to her brother David, the exiled Duke of Windsor, in Vienna in 1937; and visits to the Mediterranean in 1928, 1934 and 1938. She was also unable to carry out duties early in 1936 after the death of her father in January, when the Court went into mourning for a few weeks.¹¹³ In between these events she kept up her schedule and also increased her work throughout the United Kingdom. Between 1919 and the of war in 1939 she continued to support all the organizations with which she was connected.

Her programmes and itineraries included attending meetings and conferences; conferring awards and decorations as thanks for efforts by members; offering support by attendance at social and fund-raising events; laying foundation stones and opening new buildings; attending rallies; and carrying out inspections of members of guards of honour at specific events. On occasion the princess and her husband offered the use of their London home, Chesterfield House, for charity events until it was sold in 1930. Three of the organizations for investigation are the Women's Land Army; the British Legion Women's Section; and the Not Forgotten Association.

The Women's Land Army was an organization which was, at first, greeted with suspicion by the general public at large and, particularly, by the farmers on whose land its members would work. Their recruitment was essential given that 'fifty percent of the food for Britain's population of thirty six million had to be imported...yet by 1915 the enemy's navy had begun to mount a successful blockade of ports , and the question of food shortages was

¹¹³ In his memoirs the Duke of Windsor wrote of his sister that 'my mother leaned more and more on Mary since my father's death.' See Geoffrey Wakeford, *Princesses Royal*, p. 216.

causing concern to Lord Selbourne, the Minister of Agriculture.’¹¹⁴ The recruitment of women was essential after the exodus of men from the farms as they were called up for the forces, even though the farmers were at first unwilling to employ unskilled female labour, whom they believed would not have the physical prowess of men to undertake heavy work. Unfortunately, the women were expected to return to domesticity at the end of the war, in many cases against their will such was the freedom and independence they had enjoyed. Princess Mary assisted in the recruitment drive on one occasion during a visit to Cambridge in June 1915, and again in February 1918, where ‘Rowland Prothero, president of the Board of Agriculture in the Lloyd George government, addressed the women...praising their patriotism and professionalism.’¹¹⁵ The princess also visited Oxford in April 1918, again presenting awards to women workers for their contribution to the war effort. Mobilization and co-ordination of the Land Army was under the direction of Meriel Talbot, great niece of Catherine Gladstone, wife of the former Prime Minister W E Gladstone. Meriel was created a Dame in 1920. After six weeks of training the women worked in three areas; agriculture, timber cutting or forage. Their work could be as dairy workers, tractor drivers, field workers, thatchers, or shepherds.

On 28 November 1919, when the Land Army was about to be disbanded, Princess Mary attended a function in London to present awards, including a Distinguished Service Bar. In her speech she said

the war work of the women of the Land Army will always be gratefully remembered by the King and country...today I realize more than ever all that has been accomplished, and what skill and courage have, on many occasions, been displayed by its members.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Bob Powell and Nigel Westacott. *The Women's Land Army*, paper edition. Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2009, p. 5.

¹¹⁵ Dr Caroline Dakers. *The Countryside at War 1914-1918*. London; Constable and Company Limited, 1987, p. 152.

¹¹⁶ The Times, 28 November, 1919, p. 9.

After this engagement her only contact with the reformed Land Army was a visit to the Shropshire headquarters in April 1940, but she had been an asset for the government in encouraging women to enlist during the first war.

The next women's organization with which Princess Mary was connected was The British Legion's Women's Auxiliary Section whose patroness she became in October 1921; an office she held until her death in 1965. She was eligible for membership in her own right, being a former VAD nurse. The princess continued her attention to the organization throughout the inter-war years and during the second war. It was not a social organization, and one of its aims was to support the annual Poppy Day fund raising appeal. Other aims included assistance for ex-servicewomen; provision for the needs of children; concern for the unemployment of women, 'most of whom were dependants of ex-servicemen...pressing for training' so that they could be re-employed.¹¹⁷ As had been the case with the Women's Land Army, the women working in this and other areas were expected to return to domesticity at war's end. Yet many war widows were forced to seek work where they could find it given the inadequacy of pensions. During her lifetime Princess Mary made visits to branches; and headquarters; and the poppy factory; laid foundation stones and/or opened buildings and housing; and where disabled were on parade took the salute at a march past; and attended annual conferences. When she addressed the conference in April 1944, when it seemed likely that the allies would win the war, she spoke of the future of the British Legion and said "it might well be that when the war ended our greatest tasks and opportunities would only be beginning." Referring to work carried out by the Women's Section "...she said she had visited a number of sites" during the war.¹¹⁸ At war's end in Europe in 1945 the princess visited Northern Ireland for four days, during which she attended a parade and inspection of the Hillsborough Women's Section held in the grounds of Government House on 19 June.¹¹⁹ When Princess Mary died, a month before she was due to address the 1965

¹¹⁷ Brian Harding, *Keeping Faith*, p. 172.

¹¹⁸ The Times, 19 April, 1944, p. 6.

¹¹⁹ British Legion Archives, Hillsborough.

conference, Harding writes that ‘there was much genuine sadness; she was very popular with members...[she was] a giver.’¹²⁰

Yet another organization dealing with the needs of disabled and ex-servicemen was the Not Forgotten Association. It sought and received Princess Mary’s patronage in 1921 and retained it until her death in 1965. Unfortunately, like so many other organizations, it suffered the loss of records after an air raid fire in 1941. At its inception the Not Forgotten Association had as its ‘aim, purpose and ideals [which were] laid down by its founder Marta Cunningham,¹²¹ and have remained in force to this day. The Association was ‘to act generally for the benefit of service and ex-service personnel with disabilities or who are wounded, including organization of, or provision of, items or facilities for leisure and recreational activities, travel, holidays and outings.’”¹²² Marta Cunningham realized there was a need for such an organization when she discovered that hospitals throughout the country were accommodating thousands of lonely and wounded servicemen. She strived to form the association with the assistance of friends and supporters and achieved this aim on 12 August 1920. Princess Mary’s first engagement on its behalf was to attend a fund-raising matinee in December 1921. The next engagement was recorded with a photo of the smiling princess, in the company of her new fiancé, cutting the cake at the Christmas party on 21 December 1921, at which only five hundred men were fit enough to attend. Other fund-raising engagements up to 1935 included attendance at public cabaret teas, the money raised being used to buy gifts and provide entertainment for the men. She also entertained the disabled at garden parties, usually held in the riding school mews at Buckingham Palace; and attended Christmas parties for the men. If she was unable to attend she would invariably send Christmas cakes, on one

¹²⁰ Brian Harding, *Keeping Faith*, p. 304.

¹²¹ An American woman living in London. She came to Europe in 1887 to further her singing training, and in 1901 sang at the Coronation concert for King Edward VII at Crystal Palace.

¹²² *The Not Forgotten Association 92nd Annual Review*, for the year ended 31 January, 2012, p. 1.

occasion sending fifteen. However, it is doubtful that she baked them herself, given her son's remarks in his autobiography that 'she saw the cook and ordered the food...and assumed that others did, as they always had, the household chores.'¹²³ After 1935 there is a gap until 1940, after which time she recorded at least one engagement each year on behalf of the association. During this period a number of the disabled men she visited or entertained were veterans still from the first war. In 1943 the guests at a garden party at Buckingham Palace also included returned prisoners of war, and foreign guests who were members of the air crews of the US Eighth Army Air Force, many of whom had arrived in Britain in 1942. It is not clear if these men had yet flown on bombing missions during the war, to which period this investigation now turns.

Princess Mary and The Second World War 1939-1945

A number of civilian organizations still received the attention of the princess although her abiding focus now would be concentrated on the services, both national and foreign, and her regiments, to be investigated in chapter four. The civilian organizations included The Guiding Association; The Red Cross; the League of Mercy; and the YMCA. She also began an association with the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Association; and the Lord Roberts Workshops, the training and work arm of The Forces Help Society. This society was formed by Princess Mary's great aunt Princess Christian [Helena] in 1899 at the suggestion of the latter's son, Major Prince Christian Victor of Schleswig Holstein, who had realised that

there was a real need for something to be done to help sick [wounded], or disabled ex-servicemen...as they could expect little support from the State...and few would qualify for a pension...[many] faced a life of poverty, hardship and neglect as they would be unable to find a job given the unemployment problems of the nineteen twenties and thirties.¹²⁴

¹²³ Harewood, *The Tongs and The Bones*, p. 118.

¹²⁴ Julian Paget. *No Problem Too Difficult*. Hampshire: Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Association, 1999, p. 1.

During 1943 the princess, at times either with her mother or husband, visited cities and their people suffering the effects of German air raids, as she had done during the first war. She continued to visit old established organisations, as well as taking over The Papworth Village Settlement after the death of the Duke of Kent in 1942. In 1945 the princess also took over his role of president of the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 for scientific research.

Research into this period has yielded surprising not to say quite unexpected information on the Guiding Association and the WVS. Histories have been written and, in particular, that of the guides by Janie Hampton, and it contains heartfelt tributes paid to the young children, girls and women described in it. It also helps to understand the devotion of Princess Mary, and later Princess Margaret, to that organization for so many years.¹²⁵

Princess Mary, president of the Norfolk association since 1919, and president of the Guiding Association from 1920, had proved to be a great asset to the founder of the association, Lord Baden Powell. He was well aware that much of society did not approve of young women being part of such an association, with its concentration on outdoor life and its overtones of male activity. He realised that to give it respectability he needed the support of the ‘upper echelons’ of British society; and who better than to have as a member the only daughter of the monarch.¹²⁶ What’s more, she was a young woman who relished the outdoor life, often in the company of her father and brothers. The activities of the guides and brownies did not present strange experiences nor hold fears for her.

¹²⁵ Princess Margaret became president after Mary’s death. The Guiding Archives holds a letter from Princess Margaret who wrote *I always feel safe when I cross the threshold.*

¹²⁶ Janie Hampton. *How the Girl Guides Won the War*. Paperback Ed. London: Harper Press, 2011, p .27.

During the twenty-six years 1919-1945 only seven appear to have passed when the princess did not have contact with the guides, according to The Times Court Circular. Princess Mary did not become a guide as a young girl but when she was created president in 1920

she took her role seriously – this was no nominal title – she insisted on being properly enrolled, made her guide promise, and for the rest of her life travelled throughout the United Kingdom, visiting brownies and guides.¹²⁷

At the end of the second war in 1945, when she again began foreign travel, visits and meetings with members of various Guiding associations were always included in her itineraries, as far afield as the Mediterranean, Africa, Canada and the Caribbean.

She presided at meetings; visited camps including those held at Harewood, taking part in camp-fire sing songs; attended rallies, reviews and parades; carried out inspections; attended fund raising events; presented awards, on one occasion handed over ten ambulances, the first of twenty, to the First Sea Lord. They had been funded by money amounting to £50,000,¹²⁸ raised by the members worldwide. Princess Mary also visited mobile canteens run by the guides for troops. Janie Hampton gives a full account of guiding activities but a brief summary of their roles is given here, and it helps to explain why the princess was so full of admiration for the role played by the guides during her lifetime and, particularly, during both wars.

In the early days of their membership these young girls and women were gaining badges for proficiency in, among other subjects, first aid and the ability to dress wounds; as electricians; cyclists; surveyors; telegraphists; mechanics; carpenters; translators; pharmacists; laundry managers; farmers; geologists; boatswains; rifle shooters; air mechanics; astronomers; dairy maids; land workers on farms; and workers in factories. Consequently, there were several thousand volunteers ready to take the places of the young men

¹²⁷ Janie Hampton, *ibid*, p. 12.

¹²⁸ Equivalent amount today approximately £2M.

going to France; even though it was not thought women were worthy of having voting rights.

In 1914 they began training as nurses with the VADs; and, most unusually, given that 'even well-educated women had no freedom of action, no training for life, and little education compared with that of boys....they replaced boy scouts as messengers for MI5, the scouts having proved to be troublesome and unreliable.'¹²⁹ The girls, aged between fourteen and sixteen, were 'entrusted to carry secret counter-espionage memoranda and reports...[and had to pledge] with [their] honour not to read the papers carried.' Hampton writes that in both wars the guides took over the jobs of adults but their roles are not mentioned in histories.

In the second war their training proved invaluable yet again for war work, including that in morse code which was of benefit, and an aid, for fighter pilots; they built emergency ovens from the bricks of bombed houses, and gave first aid where required in bomb damaged areas such as the cities which suffered during the Baedeker raids when those listed in the guide book were chosen to be attacked. They looked after children for absent mothers, and the children from the Kindertransports from Europe; and worked in soup kitchens. They practised fire drill, and knew how to give artificial respiration. Their capabilities were endless. Then, as the allied armies were pressing on through Europe, the Guides International Service, formed in 1943, 'was following the British Army, which provided the young women, aged over twenty-one, with billets, board, transport and uniforms.'¹³⁰ Before their work in Europe ended in 1950 they had travelled across Europe as far as the concentration camp at Auschwitz; and dealt with the thousands of displaced and homeless in a number of countries, to name just two of their duties. It seems highly likely that, until Hampton wrote this work in 2015, very few, outside the Guiding Association, would have had any idea or knowledge of the service given by these young girls and women in two wars. It would also seem to suggest that

¹²⁹ Janie Hampton, *ibid*, p.12.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, p.262.

this service was the reason Princess Mary gave so much of her time and attention to the association over so many decades, amounting to forty-six years. To celebrate the 100th anniversary in 2010 a BBC television documentary 100 Years of Guides, was transmitted by Channel 4, 29 July 2010.

The other organization which played such a vital role during the second war was the Women's Voluntary Service, formed in 1938. Princess Mary was asked to become president of the Yorkshire branch in September 1940.¹³¹ There are six occasions when the princess had contact with the organization and its members in the four years between April 1940 and July 1944. The first visit was to the Shropshire headquarters in Shrewsbury, combined with a visit to the Land Army headquarters, in 1940; and latterly in 1944 when she toured the Hull and East Riding centres. Other engagements included a visit to a mobile canteen run by the WVS in Birmingham in 1941; and the opening of a WVS clubhouse for servicewomen in Clarendon Place, London, in 1942, where she said "she had been round the country on many inspections and knew how much clubs of this description were needed."¹³² The club house had a canteen and dining room, sitting and reading rooms, bathrooms and an ironing room for the rest and relief of servicewomen on leave. Use of the club was free and a meal obtainable for 8p, or snacks for even less.

Histories of the WVS have been written by the journalist Charles Graves, with a foreword by its founder the Dowager Marchioness of Reading, G.B.E., published in 1948;¹³³ and by the social historians Patricia and Robert Malcolmson, published in 2013.¹³⁴ The British women in the WVS assisted in

¹³¹ *Royal Voluntary Service Archive & Heritage Collection*, 16 September, 2014.

¹³² *The Times, Speech by The Princess Royal, 29 September, 1942, p. 7.*

¹³³ Charles Graves. *Women in Green. The Story of the WVS in Wartime.* London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1948.

¹³⁴ Patricia and Robert Malcolmson. *Women at the Ready.* Great Britain: Little, Brown, 2013.

many areas, including evacuation of the people from areas of danger, their feeding and clothing, as well as caring for refugees and bombed out families. It worked with the Civil Defence Services; and collected salvage. The book's list of illustrations provides further evidence of the work of the WVS during the war. Included in the list are records and photographs of the women looking after nursery children who had been moved into their locations; making sandwiches by the million over the years, and making soup in the streets of Coventry after the air raid in November 1940, for which they made an emergency outdoor cooker. Other roles included working in the storage and packing department of a London hospital; making meat pies for rural workers; delivering a hot midday meal to a Surrey school; working in a services canteen at Newcastle on Tyne; garnishing camouflage nets for the army. Bombed out householders brought belongings to a mobile laundry. There are photographs at a rehousing depot in Shoreditch; a corner of a WVS clothing depot; women renovating damaged furniture; providing marooned troops with canteen supplies; and so the list goes on.¹³⁵ Lady Reading, became 'one of the most influential women in twentieth-century Britain.'¹³⁶ She was yet another woman formed in the same mould as Dame Beryl Oliver and Dame Katherine Furse, although she had her own distinctive ideas as to how an organization should be run. She 'disliked committees, bureaucracy and the fund-raising efforts of the well-intentioned charitable organizations.'¹³⁷ Even though the marchioness was an independent-minded woman, it is suggested that even she would have been appreciative of the support provided by Princess Mary.

Fortunately, the WVS was funded by the government and local authorities and it 'soon became established as a vital and highly valued part of the war - effort.'¹³⁸ The Malcolmsons say the WVS was 'instrumental in...the feeding

¹³⁵ Charles Graves, *Women in Green*, p. ix.

¹³⁶ Previously her husband's secretary, and then his second wife after the death of his first wife.

¹³⁷ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online, 23September, 2004.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

of those in war service...bringing comfort and support to the needy and displaced people...[British] women discovered in themselves untapped resolve, energy and creative resources...[their work was] a saga of sacrifice and determination.’ It is suggested that this description, if not a saga of sacrifice, could be applied to Princess Mary.

Another of these wartime civilian organizations members to which the above description should be applied are the '50,000 women who joined the YMCA Auxiliary Service in the first year of the war, when there was a desperate need for volunteers.'¹³⁹ The Women's Auxiliary was founded in 1914 under the presidency of Princess Mary's second cousin, Princess Helena Victoria [Thora], its members described by David Smith as The Forgotten Angels.¹⁴⁰ Their role was to offer comfort and support, particularly to the wounded during the first war. They visited hospitals, and worked in ordinance factories, bakeries and field support units, and provided huts for the workers for rest and food. After the war and their return to domestic life they managed to find other outlets for their capabilities. The women worked to provide boys clubs, village institutes, and hostels and information bureaux for the discharged men, and cooperated with other agencies wherever possible. When Thora died in 1948 Princess Mary was asked to become president; this was her cousin's wish, as there would be too much work and travelling for Thora's sister, Princess Marie Louise, to undertake the office, according to the latter's Memoirs.¹⁴¹ Marie Louise, who had previously deputised for her sister at various times, went on to write

...the princess [Royal] is a most admirable successor to my sister, and a wonderful supporter of the Women's Auxiliary Force of the YMCA in Yorkshire, where she was already president of the Yorkshire branch,

¹³⁹ Charlotte Barringer and Peter Larter. *A History of the Young Men's Christian Association in Norfolk and Lowestoft*. Norwich: YMCA Norfolk, 2007, p. 41.

¹⁴⁰ David Smith. *YMCA. The Forgotten Angels. History of the YMCA Women's Auxiliary*. March 1992.

¹⁴¹ Marie Louise, p. 185.

and the north of England. [She] interests herself in all causes brought to her notice and leads a very full and busy life.

Princess Mary's association with the YMCA Women's Auxiliary dates back to 1917 when she attended a fund-raising matinee at the Coliseum in the company of her mother, her great aunt Princess Christian [Helena] and her aunt Princess Victoria. After that there is no record until the inter-war years, beginning in 1927, when Princess Mary visited the Darlington branch as president of the Yorkshire association. This was followed by a series of events, five in number, until the outbreak of war in 1939. One of these was a visit to Sheffield in 1929 as part of the Royal Purse Scheme. This Scheme is not mentioned in the Prochaska work and research does not reveal any details of the Scheme. It would appear to have been a fund-raising event but, more likely, to receive purses [funds] for the Scheme raised by the YMCA Women's Auxiliary. There were three further visits between 1930 and 1931; including laying a foundation stone in Bournemouth in 1930; and a visit to Dewsbury to receive purses and to inspect headquarters, also in 1930.

During the second war Princess Mary undertook four engagements between February 1944 and June 1945, including a visit to a canteen in Northern Command of the British Army near Lichfield; attendance at an Auxiliary meeting in Leeds; a visit to an officers' hostel; and a visit to a Commonwealth Canadian YMCA club. Finally, on 19 June, 1945, when the princess undertook the four-day visit to Northern Ireland, another engagement was to receive purses on behalf of the YMCA War and National Service Fund. This was a scheme set up to provide finance and accommodation, if required, for young men leaving the services, and civilians, who were no longer living at home, as they embarked on post war careers and/or apprenticeships. The next recorded dates regarding the YMCA, and its Women's Auxiliary, are post war in 1947 and 1948, the latter during Mary's visit to the British Army on the Rhine in May of that year.

Finally, there is Princess Mary's connections and work for The Red Cross during the second war. They began with a fund-raising sale when she sent

jewellery to The Red Cross Jewel Sale in February 1940, followed by yet another fund-raising sale to benefit the Lord Mayor of London's Red Cross and St John's Ambulance Brigade Fund. Later, in February a committee was formed to organize this event under the presidency of Princess Mary. During 1940 the princess, and other members of the royal family, began a new public life when the nation and its people began what can only be described as a fight for survival. It began with the Luftwaffe blitz from September 1940 until May 1941, on London, and bombing raids on other cities, ports and industrial sites throughout the kingdom. Simultaneously, a battle was being fought in the Atlantic as the German navy endeavoured to lay the kingdom to siege, leading to rationing of supplies of every kind. It was later reported that at one point in this siege the nation was left with a supply of oil which would last for just three weeks.

The princess began by inspecting detachments of The Red Cross and St John's Ambulance Brigade which came at the end of a two-day visit to Shrewsbury in April. She had already visited a night canteen for troops breaking their journey in Shrewsbury; called at a Salvation Army canteen; visited the Royal Salop Infirmary where she saw recently completed extensions, and spoke to every patient in the hospital; engagements of this type continued throughout the year.

On 14 February 1942 she toured Red Cross Centres in seven London boroughs. To facilitate her travels in London and the south King George VI granted her a grace and favour apartment in St James's' Palace.¹⁴² Before the princess and her husband could move in the apartment had to be 'put into a reasonable living condition.'¹⁴³ Since the sale of Chesterfield House the couple had been living in 'a modest house in Green Street Mayfair.'¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Formerly occupied by Sir John Fortescue, an equerry to Edward VII when Prince of Wales.

¹⁴³ NA *Official Residence Apartment Number 27 (formerly Number 25) of Sir Seymour John Fortescue*. Work 19/962, 1921-1942.

¹⁴⁴ Harewood, *The Tongs and the Bones*, p. 2.

In July 1943 the princess donated yet more jewellery to the Duke of Gloucester's Red Cross and St John's Fund. This was followed by a visit to The Red Cross and St John's Ambulance Brigade book depot in London, where she bought a wide selection of books to be sent as gifts to hospital units in which she was especially interested. The Times says that 'since the UK-wide campaign opened in Bristol in April 1943...no fewer than forty thousand books have been sold on behalf of the duke's fund.'¹⁴⁵ By March 1944 Princess Mary was touring again on behalf of The Red Cross, on this occasion visiting the headquarters in Belgrave Square, and then spending the remainder of the day at branches in Hammersmith, Paddington, Chelsea and Woolwich, to show an interest and observe activities, and to thank the members for their war efforts.

Thus, this study comes to the end of the inquiry into part of Princess Mary's role and work for civilian charitable organizations, from the outbreak of the first war in 1914 to the end of the second war in 1945, a period of approximately thirty-one years. Her attention to and participation in the affairs and activities of these organizations ranged from hospital visits; concerns for the convalescence and rehabilitation of the sick and wounded; for families and dependents of servicemen; and for the poor and unemployed. She made appeals for financial aid; inspected institutions, offering support and comfort for them and those being accommodated. In the meantime, the princess continued travelling extensively throughout the United Kingdom on a constant round of engagements. She attended meetings and learnt of the work being carried out, and rewarded those who had contributed so much to the war efforts. On one officially recorded occasion she was not above trying persuasion, through official and government quarters, to achieve ends for the Dunstan Hill Hospital. She turned her hand to practical work, as evidenced by her participation in such areas as communal kitchens, and the unpacking, sorting and repacking for the distribution of clothing from Queen Mary's Needlework Guild at St James's Palace. Permission for the palace to be used

¹⁴⁵ The Times, 20 November 1943.

for this service was given earlier by George V. Princess Mary also undertook another practical role when she began her own VAD troop at Buckingham Palace during the first war. One can only conclude that she was prompted to do this by the experience of visits to the sick and wounded servicemen in hospitals, convalescent and rehabilitation homes.

She had begun her work for civilian organizations by supporting the young girls of the Patriotic Union who were assisting the first war effort, and ended it with the affairs of the extraordinary women of the WVS, and the young girls and women in the Guiding Association. She had before her as a young woman the role models of her mother, Queen Mary, and her various aunts and cousins. According to The Times Archive Princess Mary recorded the greatest number of engagements with The Red Cross and the Guiding Association, followed by the Voluntary Aid Detachments, Queen Mary's Needlework Guild, the British Legion, the Not Forgotten Association, the League of Mercy, the YMCA, the Land Army, the Women's Voluntary Service and the Church Army. However, when I began this research The Times archive had not been fully updated so it is possible that Princess Mary's engagements were even greater in number than indicated at present.

During her public life she had carried out her father's wishes that his children should serve and participate in the life of the nation and its citizens wherever and whenever appropriate.¹⁴⁶ The king had decided to start 'moving freely and frequently among his people' given the unrest in the kingdom. One episode which prompted the king's decision was the Russian revolution and the assassination of the Tsar and his family. Also worrying for the monarchy was the thought of republicanism and the growth of socialism throughout Europe and the United Kingdom. Lord Stamfordham had suggested inducing 'the working classes, Socialist and others to regard the Crown...as a living power for good.'¹⁴⁷ One way to do this was to undertake a philanthropic role by supporting charitable organizations. The two older princes, David and

¹⁴⁶ Harold Nicolson, *King George V*, p. 404.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 403.

Albert, were already carrying out such work. After the first war, 'as the younger children reached an age at which they could take up a public role,' they joined in the royal family project.¹⁴⁸ The outbreak of the First World War and then its consequences enabled, and ensured, that Princess Mary would make her contribution, up to her marriage, and throughout the inter-war years, ably supported by her husband and, then, throughout the Second World War, mostly alone. She accepted the positions of patron or president of suitable organizations when asked to do so, if she believed it was within her capability to assist them; in a number of instances following in the footsteps of relatives when she took on their roles after their deaths.

Not only was the princess concerned with the plight of the wounded and disabled ex-servicemen in particular, and their families, she also cared about the future lives of so-called ordinary and lower-class girls and women, so many of whom had gained freedom from the drudgery of domestic service during two wars. Regrettable as they were, given the tragedy of these events, nevertheless they gave girls and women previously unforeseen opportunities to change the course of their lives, as they did for Princess Mary. Her philanthropic work took her on journeys throughout the United Kingdom, on a scale not previously undertaken by royal women, in which she was carving out a template for future princesses who were the daughters of the sovereign.

Whether she could be described as a role model for women is a moot point, and would not apply to working class women, particularly during the Depression years. Her station in life was far removed from middle-class and even aristocratic women. However, if their husbands were wealthy, and could afford servants and nannies, in order to relieve their wives from domestic duties of any kind then they too had the opportunity to move out of the domestic sphere. The work Mary undertook was designed for a female member of the royal family, in accordance with the wishes of her father, that his sons and daughter should undertake public duties in support of the monarchy. It was a unique role; for instance, no other women in the country

¹⁴⁸Frank Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, p.193.

would be invited to become an honorary colonel of a regiment; nor would they be asked to undergo the amount of travelling Princess Mary undertook, which her work demanded of her.

Social changes in attitudes to women in the twentieth century had also freed middle class and aristocratic women to enter the public domain, and engage in professions such as medicine, nursing and teaching, and to undertake charitable work to alleviate the distresses of the poor and sick, to a greater degree than in previous centuries. Perhaps Princess Mary best illustrates the idea that where there is the wherewithal for a woman to undertake public work, and a life divorced from that of her husband and family when necessary, then possibilities abound. The princess also came of age and entered public life during the first war, which demanded an increased contribution from women not necessarily required in peacetime, and thus provided evidence that they were capable of greatly expanded roles in life. The princess also required good health and stamina to carry out her programmes, and she had to learn and display knowledge of the organizations with which she was connected. According to the evidence uncovered in this research she was well able to meet the tasks and demands placed on her.

If a role model requires and displays great interest in a subject, has a clear set of values and has a commitment to the community, as well as having the ability and resources necessary to overcome obstacles, then Princess Mary may be seen as a role model for women. Her life was not limited to letter-writing, gardening and attending race meeting in the nineteen thirties, as described by Theo Aronson.¹⁴⁹ This is a complete distortion of the facts and of the truth, and typical of the many instances of mis-reporting of royal lives, as this factual account of Princess Mary's public life has proved.

¹⁴⁹ Theo Aronson, *The Royal Family at War*, p.162.

Chapter Four

Princess Mary's Role with Service Regiments and non-military organizations during the Second World War 1939-1945

At the outbreak of war in 1939 Princess Mary held the honorary rank of Colonel-in- Chief in seven regiments, both national and Commonwealth, and she had accepted the presidency of the Princess Mary RAF Nursing Service in 1923. Her first award was made in 1918, when she was twenty-one, and still a young woman, when her father created her the honorary CIC of The Royal Scots regiment. This was just four years after the much older females of the British royal family were designated honorary CICs, a custom already existing in Europe. The first award was made to Queen Mary for the 18th Queen Mary's Own Hussars, followed by Queen Alexandra, 19th Queen Alexandra's Own Hussars, and Princess Louise, the Duchess of Fife and Princess Royal, 7th Princess Royal's Dragoon Guards.¹⁵⁰ The first award to Princess Mary was followed by those to the Scottish Regiment 1930; the Royal Corps of Signals and the Canadian Scottish 1935; and the Indian Corps of Signals 1936, awarded to her by her brother King Edward VIII before his abdication.¹⁵¹ There appears to be no evidence that the princess had any contact with the Indian Corps, except in 1946, when the Corps was stationed at St. John's Wood in order to take part in the Victory Parade through London.

¹⁵⁰ NA *Regimental Honours and Distinctions: General: Approval for Ladies of the Royal Family to be Colonels in Chief of certain regiments, 1914.*

WO 32/5053.

Curator. *The Rifles, Berkshire and Wiltshire Museum.*

Then followed colonecies to the Duchess of York, 1927, the Duchesses of Gloucester and Kent in 1934 and 1935 respectively, and to Princess Margaret, her first in 1948.

The name of Princess Charlotte was added to that of the 49th Regiment of Foot by her father King George III in 1816. She was not designated CIC.

¹⁵¹ NA *Visit of the Princess Royal and Lord Harewood to Cyprus 1938.*

CO 67/281/20 and WO 32/18128.

It presented the princess with a Japanese sword captured in Malaya after the surrender.¹⁵² Previously, a detachment of the Corps took part in the Coronation ceremonies of 1937, according to a document on a visit to Cyprus; and the princess had accompanied her parents on visits to the Brighton Kitchener Hospital, 21 and 25 August in 1915, where troops from the Indian Expeditionary Force were being treated.¹⁵³

On his accession to the throne George VI was approached, through the Australian Governor General, with a request from the Australian Signals Corps, already amalgamated with the RCS, that Princess Mary be granted the honorary rank of CIC of the Australian Signals Corps, duly granted in 1937.¹⁵⁴ Then, in 1938, on the formation of the women's Auxiliary Territorial Service the princess was appointed Controller Yorkshire. Finally, Princess Mary was created CIC of the Royal New Zealand Signals Corps and the Royal Canadian Signals 1940. In the same year there was a request from the newly formed Cyprus regiment that it be named after the princess, but this request was declined. The reason given was that the regiment had yet to have seen active service, or 'had some achievement behind it....'¹⁵⁵ and there is a formal procedure to be followed in the granting of these honours. In this instance one of the reasons given, for the request to include Princess Mary's name in the title of the regiment, was that it provides

publicity and political value to Cyprus....[and the princess] was the only member of the Royal Family to have made a long stay in Cyprus...and had shown an interest in the island. The visit was undertaken in order that Lord Harewood carry out Masonic engagements on the island.

¹⁵² The presentation was made in conjunction with the Royal Corps of Signals.

¹⁵³ *The Times*, 24 August, 1915, p.9.

¹⁵⁴ ANA *Coronation Honours 1937 – HRH Princess Royal appointment as Colonelcey-in-Chief of Australian Signals Corps*. A2924/24/1937/7.

149 NA Visit of the Princess Royal and Lord Harewood to Cyprus 1 February 1938-30 April 1938. CO 67/289/15.

All awards were made through the Honours and Distinctions Committee at the War Office which issued Army Council Instructions.¹⁵⁶ Whilst these have not been located for the reign of King George V, documents relating to those of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth II are available, and it is assumed that conditions would not have changed greatly, if at all, in the intervening years. The Committee issued an Army Council Instruction No 209 of 1946 on 23 February

For appointments of Members of the Royal Family to Colonels-in-Chief of Regiments and Corps,...

(a) For appointment of Members of the Royal Family to Colonels-in-chief of Regiments and Corps...

(b) For the grant of "Royal" title to Regiments and Corps.

Each application will state clearly on what grounds it is made i.e. historical, on account of association with a Member of the Royal Family, etc.¹⁵⁷

A later document dated 28 June, 1950 states that

these honours are normally awarded...on important Royal occasions such as a Jubilee, 21st Birthday, Coronation, visit of the Royal Family to a Dominion etc.It is emphasised that any approach to a royal person to become Colonel-in-Chief must come from the Palace and not from any other source....the number of appointments which members of the Royal Family can undertake are likely to be fewer than the applications received,' given the demands on their time.¹⁵⁸

Only after the War Office had first written to the monarch's private secretary, and the monarch had agreed to approach a royal personage and obtained their consent to the appointment, would the regiment then write to that

¹⁵⁶ Similar to the Board of The Admiralty, chaired by the Secretary of State for War, the supreme body in the British Army.

¹⁵⁷ NA *Appointments of Members of the Royal Family to Colonel-in-Chief of Regiments or Corps, 1946*. WO 32/12220.

¹⁵⁸ WO 32/12220, June 1950, *ibid*.

personage.¹⁵⁹ Then their duties involved not only attention to the military members of the regiment and their activities, but also the welfare of the wives and families; and, post-war, to returned prisoners of war, as well as to Regimental Associations.

It would appear that the award of CIC of The Royal Scots, in 1918, was in recognition not only of the work Princess Mary had carried out during the first war but to celebrate her 21st birthday. With regard to her Colonelcy of the Australian, New Zealand and Indian Signals Corps, as she did not visit these dominions at any time, Princess Mary would have received reports only on their activities, and she would have acknowledged Corps birthdays by the sending of messages to them at the appropriate time.¹⁶⁰ Thus, whilst the awards to distant regiments may be seen as a formality, it did give them prestige and publicity. A former cipher operator in the RCS has written a supplementary volume on Commonwealth Signals Corps, and whilst he mentions the present Princess Royal as being the Hon CIC of the RACS, there is no mention of Princess Mary, nor is there in his chapter on the RNZCS, whose CIC is also the present Princess Royal. However, he does record Princess Mary's appointment to the ICS in 1936.¹⁶¹ With regard to the RCCS he merely writes that as the Corps 'was allied to the RCS [it] had the same CIC.'¹⁶²

The regiments which received the greatest attention from Princess Mary were first the women's Auxiliary Territorial Service [ATS], in which the then Princess Elizabeth enrolled in 1945. Princess Mary became Controller Yorkshire Division in 1938, and then Controller Commandant of the regiment

¹⁵⁹ See Correspondence between the princess and the Secretary of State for War, David Margesson, p. 85 of this chapter.

¹⁶⁰ The ASC served in Greece but the NZSC did not serve in northern Europe; the ISC served in Italy.

¹⁶¹ Cliff Lord. *The Royal Corps of Signals, Supplementary Volume*. England: Helion & Company Limited, 2007, p. 162.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, p. 73.

from 1941. Then followed the Royal Signals Corps; and the Royal Canadian Signals Corps from 1940. The Canadian Scottish Regiment also received her attention during this period. Over the course of her lifetime the princess's longest and closest connection was with The Royal Scots, after the first and second wars. During the second war she visited the regiment on two occasions only, as the battalions were serving overseas. Another longstanding interest, and of importance to the princess, was the Princess Mary RAF Nursing Service. It was a non-military organization, but with military connections, so is included in this forthcoming section.

Service Organizations and Regiments

A history of the PMRAF was commissioned and written by the author and journalist Mary Mackie.¹⁶³ She wrote that 'by 1942, in one period of four months, the princess had visited seven RAF station hospitals...in order to raise morale and foster esprit de corps among her nurses.'¹⁶⁴ The Air Ministry had first approached King George V in October 1918 with the request that his daughter 'be named as Royal Patron of the newest nursing service.' It was thought she would be the perfect candidate: 'young, fresh, modern, caring, the personification of the RAFNS itself,' which was just newly formed in July 1918. The king's response was to 'withhold his consent until the service was thoroughly constituted and working on a sound and efficient basis.' Finally, Princess Mary accepted the presidency in June 1923; and in recognition of her long years of service George VI created her Hon Air Chief Commandant on 7 October 1950, published in The London Gazette, Supplement 5551, Friday, 3 November 1950.¹⁶⁵ Her first official visit was made to the RAF Hospital Finchley in April 1924, followed by a visit to the aerodrome at Cranwell in

¹⁶³ Married to an RAF serviceman.

¹⁶⁴ Mary Mackie. *Sky Wards*. London: Robert Hale Limited, 2001, p. 114.

¹⁶⁵ *Royal Air Force Museum Archives, Hendon, 13 January 2013*.

Documents from the inter-war years relating to Princess Mary have not been kept; and the senior archivist at the RAF Museum writes that the archive holds only photographs and press cuttings of her visit to Cyprus in 1962.

April 1925, to see both the hospital and the cadet college. It was noted that the princess spoke to almost every one of the eighty patients in the hospital. In the post second war period Princess Mary began visits to overseas bases and hospitals, including those in Cyprus in 1962 and it is the records of these visits which are lodged in the National Archives.

During the second war the princess travelled the length and breadth of the United Kingdom visiting the five military Commands: Scottish, Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern. They constituted a number of areas but the headquarters were in Edinburgh, Catterick North Yorkshire, [near Harewood House]; Luton Hoo Bedfordshire, Chester, and Wilton House Salisbury respectively. When her visits lasted more than one night she occasionally stayed with relatives in the area, including her mother in London at Marlborough House, and her brothers; the king [and queen] at Windsor, the king [and queen] at Buckingham Palace,¹⁶⁶ the Duke of Gloucester in Northamptonshire, and the Duke of Kent in Buckinghamshire.¹⁶⁷ From these names and houses it is possible to conclude that members of her family were supporting the princess in her efforts on behalf of the armed services throughout the kingdom.

Princess Mary offered her support by attending a variety of charitable engagements and visiting a similar variety of non-military organizations, a small number of which are named here because in a number of instances they remain generally unknown today. Their roles at the time were important in sustaining the morale of the nation and for their support for the armed services. They are the Air Raid Precautions, known as the ARP; Women's War Services Recruitment Centres and Exhibitions; the Navy League; the

¹⁶⁶ William Shawcross. *Counting One's Blessings. The Selected Letters of Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother. 24 July 1940.* London: Pan Paperback Ed., 2013, p. 293.

¹⁶⁷ NA *Visit of HRH The Princess Royal to Scottish Command 1 January 1941-31 July 1943.* WO 32/244/152.

This case number also includes documents relating to various Signals Units.

Ladies Committee of the West Indian War Services Committee; and the Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes, the NAAFI, created by the government in 1921. Other engagements included attending a reception for liberated prisoners of war in April 1945; meeting American representatives when she attended a luncheon in 1944 at Peterborough, to welcome American Servicewomen stationed in the United Kingdom. Finally, in September 1945, the princess visited Catterick Camp to present a bronze statue of Mercury, the badge of the British Signals Corps, to representative officers of the Signals Corps of the United States Army, which they took with them on their return to their signal school at Fort Monmouth. This was a tribute to the success of integrating the Signals Corps of the British and American Armies.¹⁶⁸

Another undertaking was to join members of her family, including the king and queen, as they endeavoured to reassure the population that they were well aware of the people's suffering and misery during the Blitz from September 1940 to May 1941; and during later attacks by the Luftwaffe on London and cities throughout the kingdom. In one period London was bombed day and night for eleven weeks, and in the final outcome it was estimated that one third of the city had been destroyed by the end of the war. The family tried to assure the people that their endurance, as well as the ministering efforts of aid workers and the support of other organizations, were greatly appreciated. For Princess Mary this meant visiting bomb-damaged cities alone, or in the company of either her mother or husband, where they talked to rescue workers and patients in hospitals. Her first visits were to Bristol; one with Queen Mary on 3 December 1940 and the second with her husband on 30 December 1940. On this latter occasion the couple toured many parts of the city, and visited rest and feeding centres, one a centre where 30,000 meals for the homeless were cooked daily. They visited the city General Hospital, talking to

¹⁶⁸ The Times, 26 September 1945, p. 2. When the American force lost communications, due to work of the German forces cutting the wires, during the Battle of the Bulge in 1944, they were restored by magnificent British-US team work in twelve hours, according to Major-General Francis Lanahan, US Signals Corps.

patients who had been injured in air raids. Then, in June 1941, the princess visited the Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital which had been hit in the raids of April.

Finally, there was Princess Mary's role in the Emergency Medical Services. Two of the prime movers in the Service were Brigadier Angus Hedley-Whyte, DSO, MID and Brigadier Arnold Walmsley Stott, KBE, the latter having connections with the royal family as a paediatrician. Brigadier Hedley-Whyte, a well-known consultant surgeon, and a member of the Central Medical War Committee, sought the assistance of the princess in gaining the use of stately homes as extension beds [bed expansion].¹⁶⁹ As a member of the royal family she would have known many of the owners, and her contacts and influence between 1940-1945 would 'facilitate the taking over of such homes' for this purpose.¹⁷⁰ The Brigadier met the princess on at least two occasions at Harewood, the first between 9 and 12 February 1943. Significantly, Harewood House was converted to a convalescent hospital in both wars; 'during the first the earl's' sister cared for the patients under the supervision of the matron.'¹⁷¹ Princess Mary played her part at Harewood during the second war when her other duties permitted. Another role for the EMS was to ensure standards of care were followed, and she was highly qualified for this, given her training at the Great Ormond Street Hospital. She is described as 'having a multi-faceted role in the EMS, and her close liaison with one of the consultants was of great value to the allies.'¹⁷²

Both doctors were appointed to Northern Command and the now Major General Stott was stationed in Escrick Park near York, and worked in the Midlands for the Army as well as EMS. He inspected war time hospitals in

¹⁶⁹ *Royal College of Physicians.*

¹⁷⁰ J. Hedley-Whyte. D.R. Milamed. *Surgical travellers: tapestry to Bayeux . Ulster Med. J 2014: 83(3): pp. 174-177.*

¹⁷¹ *The Country House at War 1914-1918.* Gloucestershire: Pitkin Publishing. The History Press, 2014.

¹⁷² Hedley Whyte and Milamed, *Surgical travellers.*

the region; and Princess Mary visited two in Leeds which, like Sheffield, had suffered from Luftwaffe bombing raids nine times, the worst of which was in March 1941. The pilots were searching for industrial sites and railways, not only in Leeds but in the surrounding towns. The Major General was one of the planners for medical and surgical staff caring for the victims of the Normandy landings in 1944. It is possible that one or both doctors may have treated the more fortunate members of The Royal Scots; those who had been injured but managed to escape to Dunkirk, and were rescued during the evacuation from the beaches in 1940. Hedley-Whyte had accompanied the BEF to France and Stott was consultant physician to the BEF, one of whose regiments was the 1st Bn The Royal Scots.

Military Regiments

Mary's contribution to the war effort in connection with the military and associated regiments and organizations was extremely busy and widespread between 1939 and 1945. Her first visit was to The Royal Scots when she carried out an inspection of a battalion on 17 November 1941 but it is not named, most probably for security reasons. Thus, the three which would have been in the United Kingdom at this time were the 7th, and 8th/9th. On the second occasion the princess, accompanied by her husband, visited The Royal Scots at Northern Command on 7 January 1944, but again the battalion is not named. However, it is likely to have been the 8th Bn which had 'remained in England from 1940 until 1944...moving from Northumberland and Durham to Yorkshire' in the intervening years.¹⁷³ The remaining two the 1st and 2nd were out of the country from the beginning of the war in Europe in 1940, in particular the 2nd Bn which was stationed in Hong Kong from 1935; and the 1st Bn was with the BEF in Belgium and France in 1940. Members of both Bns had the great misfortune to be killed or captured and taken prisoner. In the case of the 2nd Bn military authorities failed to anticipate Japanese tactics, as the enemy did not attack where expected, resulting in the loss of Hong Kong. For the 2nd Bn this resulted in being taken prisoners and going into captivity

¹⁷³ A.M. Brander. *The Royal Scots*. London: Leo Cooper Ltd., 1976, pp. 92, x.

for the duration of the war. Again, the princess would have been made aware of these events, and the effects they would have on relatives at home.

The 1st Bn moved to France with the BEF in September 1939, along with The Royal Norfolks and the Scottish Borderers. This period was called the phony war and they saw little action until arriving at Wavre, south of Brussels on 10 May. The troops held the line against the Germans until the 15th when they retreated to the Escaut Canal, being the rear-guard covering the retreat of the BEF and French troops to Dunkirk. They made contact with the enemy with a counter attack but suffered such heavy losses on 21 May that the Bn was described as being annihilated.¹⁷⁴ Finally they, along with The Royal Norfolks, arrived at the village of Le Cornet Malo near Le Paradis. Here the remnants of both regiments were captured by a division of the SS Totenkopf which massacred the men who had surrendered and were now prisoners of war. The Norfolks lost ninety-seven members and the Scots, twenty-one, the latter hitherto unknown until 2007 after a mass grave was found.¹⁷⁵ Two men of the Royal Norfolks, Albert Pooley and William O'Callaghan, survived by pretending to be dead, lying underneath other bodies. One of them, Albert Pooley, after recapture and becoming a prisoner of war, was debriefed on his return to England but his story was not believed.¹⁷⁶ He, and other interested parties, decided to return to France to gather evidence on the massacre. They were successful and the commander of the SS Totenkopf who gave the order to shoot the prisoners, Lt. Col. Fritz Knoechlein, was tried at a Hamburg court in October 1948 and executed in January 1949. It is supposition only but these later events would have become known to Princess Mary, and thus intensified her interest in the welfare of all military personnel and their relatives.

¹⁷⁴ Brander, *ibid*, p. 84.

¹⁷⁵ *Royal Scots Museum and Archives Edinburgh*.

The Herald, 21 Royal Scots executed by SS at Dunkirk, 11 June, 2007.

¹⁷⁶ Cyril Jolly. *The Vengeance of Private Pooley*. Norfolk: first published by the author in 1956.

At the end of the war Princess Mary resumed her association with The Royal Scots which continued until her death in 1965. Brander describes this as

a grievous loss...from 1918, when she became CIC, Royal Scots of every rank had benefited from the interest she had displayed in them and the whole-hearted devotion she gave to them...no regiment was more fortunate.... in its much-loved CIC.¹⁷⁷

The Royal Warrant for the formation of the ATS was issued on 9 September 1938 and part of it says ‘to provide an organization whereby certain non-combatant duties in connection with Our Military and Air Forces may from time to time be performed by women,’¹⁷⁸ although initially it was thought by many in the military that these duties would be beyond the women’s capabilities. Then, when war broke out, their work enabled men to take up their front-line military duties, and also proved previous negative assumptions baseless. In 1941 Captain Margesson, Secretary of State for War, wrote to the princess asking if she would

honour the ATS by becoming its first Controller Commandant...I know it would be a source of great gratification and encouragement to members of the Service.¹⁷⁹

Princess Mary replied on 10 July saying she was

very proud indeed to accept, and that the King talked to me about this appointment at Windsor this week so I know it meets with his approval.

The princess then expressed a desire to

visit and inspect the ATS in various parts of the country....I am greatly interested in this Service....and I know how keen the women are in their work.

¹⁷⁷ A.M. Brander, *The Royal Scots*, pp.101-102.

¹⁷⁸ Barbara Green. *Girls In Khaki*. Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2012, p. 7.

¹⁷⁹ *ATS Appointment of Controller Commandant*. 7 July 1941. WO 32/18128.

One of the most important of her activities, and contributions to the war effort, was during recruitment drives when she broadcast an appeal for women to join the ATS during the BBC 6.0pm news on 26 April 1940, saying “every girl you see wearing the ATS uniform is replacing a soldier and thus increasing our fighting.”¹⁸⁰ The value and effect of her message was realised three days later, when increased numbers of volunteers were recorded at recruitment centres throughout the country. The princess was continuing a campaign she had undertaken during the first war; attending recruitment centres for the Women’s War Services on 4 July 1940, and attending exhibitions illustrating the outstanding features of their war service, designed to inspire and guide those anxious to do their part. One of these was on 6 June 1941 in Birmingham during which the princess delivered a speech, saying

[she] hoped it would bring in a flow of recruits...never before in the long history of our country had we faced such critical times and never before had there been so clear a call to the womanhood of the nation.¹⁸¹

In the beginning the women trained and worked in the United Kingdom, but by the end of the war they were serving as far afield as ‘the Middle East, East Africa, Italy, Belgium, France, the north and south Caribbean and the USA.’¹⁸² They were attached to four main regiments: The Royal Artillery; Royal Engineers; Royal Signals Corps; and Royal Ordnance Corps which incorporated Motor Transport.

The work of the ATS for the Royal Artillery included that in mixed batteries for aircraft recognition, and the ability to call firing orders to the men from the Home Guard operating the guns; working as plotters; searchlight operators; training the gun; predictors – gun aiming and predicting how far in front of an aircraft the gun would have to be fired, in order to explode close enough to the aircraft to knock it off course; gun laying - aiming for direct and indirect

¹⁸⁰ The Times, *BBC Broadcast 26 April 1940*, p. 8.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, 6 June, 1941, p. 1.

¹⁸² Leslie Whateley, DBE. *As Thoughts Survive*. London: Hutchinson & Co., (Publishers) Ltd., 1949, p. 94.

firing; and night guard duty. They did not fire the guns and did not carry out heavy manual labour. These batteries were sited all over the United Kingdom and Princess Mary visited them whenever and wherever possible. The ATS duties for the Royal Engineers included postal work; and work as cooks, clerks, orderlies and typists.

The Royal Ordnance Corps relied on thousands of ATS members for its various stores and depots, including clothing, technical, armament, guns, ammunition; and working as ammunition examiners. Motor Transport was also part of this organization and the ATS worked as drivers, dispatch riders, ambulance drivers and chauffeurs, including chauffeuring Princess Mary on occasion, the first recorded instance being during a visit to Scottish Command in 1941.¹⁸³ The contribution of the ATS to the Corps alleviated the shortage of manpower.

The women came from all walks of life, and their entry into the Service offered ‘opportunities for further education, higher wages, skilled employment, management roles, and for a different future from the housebound duties of their mothers and low-paid domestic jobs;’ the fate of most women who had participated in the first war.¹⁸⁴ The first Director was Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan and, third, until 1946, was Dame Leslie Whateley, appointed on 29 October 1943. In her biography she pays tribute to Princess Mary on a number of occasions, in particular her attendance at monthly conferences of the representatives from each command, writing

I can count on one hand the number she missed’ [during the five intervening years] from the beginning of the appointment of the princess in 1941 until the Director’s retirement’ in 1946.¹⁸⁵ The two women also met regularly, often at Marlborough House, [and Harewood] to discuss Service problems...[and] the princess displayed

¹⁸³ NA *Visit of HRH The Princess Royal Controller Commandant ATS to Scottish Command, October 7 – October 16, 1941*. WO 244/152.

¹⁸⁴ Barbara Green, *Girls in Khaki*, p. 7

¹⁸⁵ Leslie Whateley, *As Thoughts Survive*, p. 36.

spontaneous warmth, overwhelming kindness and understanding, showing a deep interest and desire for detailed knowledge of the Service.¹⁸⁶

Princess Mary met many servicewomen of all ranks during these years, and these meetings spread beyond units and conferences.

Those with whom she came in contact had only to mention that someone was ill, or something urgently needed...she never spared herself until the need was met¹⁸⁷

Women such as Leslie Whateley, who were commanding large organizations during a time of war, were immensely practical and not given to flattery; there was too much at stake. Therefore, it is reasonable to accept her description of Princess Mary's character, given the words of many others in the various organizations, who paid similar tributes and/or requested her participation in their war efforts. They realized that the princess was immensely reliable and responsive to their needs, and her contacts could be useful to them in pursuance of their aims.

Barbara Green writes that Princess Mary's 'interest in the ATS and its role within the British Army, together with her visits to ATS companies, did much to raise morale and establish the value of the service. Royalty was held in high regard at this time.'¹⁸⁸ Whatever the correctness of this assertion it appears to have some justification, when yet another obituary, that from the archives of the Royal Signals Corps in its magazine *The Wire*, is considered.¹⁸⁹ This was a tribute to her thirty-years' service to the Corps. Not only was the princess Colonel-in-Chief but she was also the Patron of the RSC

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, pp. 75, 82.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 43.

¹⁸⁸ Barbara Green, *Girls in Khaki*, p. 13.

¹⁸⁹ *Royal Signals Museum. The Wire, The Royal Signals Magazine, Vol 19, No 5, April/May 1965, p.115.*

Association. King George V had awarded his daughter the colonelcy of the RSC on the occasion of his birthday on 3rd June 1935, and in commemoration of his Silver Jubilee in that year. On receiving the news of the appointment one aspect of her accomplishments, which gave great satisfaction to the mounted regiment, was that she was an excellent horsewoman, and they would have common interests. Her first visit was made in 1937 to the three major units at Aldershot, and these visits to the various units throughout the country continued for the next twenty-eight years. During the first visit the princess 'inspected the parade, watched demonstrations of signals equipment in operation, visited the Messes, and visited the married quarters of the other ranks.' The value and effect of this visit by the princess 'led to improvements in married quarters at Aldershot and elsewhere...and from this [visit] sprang an association which ripened into a full and lasting affection.' However, the means Princess Mary employed to achieve improvements in the married quarters are not related, but it is likely that she wrote to commanding officers or regimental headquarters expressing her concerns if she saw a need for improvements.

During the next two years the princess witnessed the preparations for war carried out by the regiment throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom, visiting 'barracks, billets, hutted camps and tented areas.' A number of the visits to the RSC regimental units during the war are well documented in the NA, covering the years 1940 to 1944, and include accounts of its work with the ATS in mixed Anti-Aircraft batteries, a fighter group, and an armoured divisional signal unit, among others. The AA batteries were formed into an Anti-Aircraft Command in April 1939, under the direction of RAF Fighter Command in the grounds of Bentley Priory. According to Dermot Morrah 'during the flying bomb days the princess used to tour the gun posts in southern England, where the women who were serving in mixed batteries were shooting down the missiles under fire.' Therefore, whilst not engaged in active service nevertheless Princess Mary was facing danger at various times, and was not shirking her duty.

Given that throughout her life the princess was described as shy and retiring, the visit to the 9 Armoured Divisional Signals in 1941 would appear to prove that on occasions she was just the opposite. In a letter from HQ Northern Command, York, to Brigadier H Willan, the Colonel Commandant of the Signals Corps, reporting on the visit, wrote that

the unit had arranged a very excellent show for her; she travelled in an ACV and controlled a small exercise...[then] travelled in a cruiser tank and charged through the woods. I think HRH was very pleased with everything she saw.¹⁹⁰

From the evidence provided in these documents there was not an activity or a building that the princess did not inspect during the visits she undertook. A tour of a cookhouse is not surprising given her activities during the first war, when she served in various canteens and communal kitchens in and around London.

Turning to the Commonwealth regiments stationed in the UK, Princess Mary, as their CIC, was ‘especially attentive’ and took a deep interest in the Royal Canadian Signals Corps and the Canadian Scottish Corps.¹⁹¹ RCSC Units in the United Kingdom between 1940 and 1944 were visited and inspected by the princess on eight occasions, and she also attended two sports days. Her appointment on 29 May 1940 had been petitioned at the suggestion of Brigadier J E Genet, who was to command the 1 Canadian Divisional Signals when it left Canada in November 1939. The units inspected were the 1, 2 and 3 Canadian Infantry Division Signals, the 4 Canadian Armoured Division Signals and the 1 Canadian Reinforcement Unit. The Reinforcement Unit was the depot for reinforcements from Canada ‘on hand to replace any signaller

¹⁹⁰ NA *Visit of HRH The Princess Royal Colonel-in-Chief, Royal Corps of Signals, to 9 Armoured Divisional Signal on 2 June, 1941*. WO 244/152.

¹⁹¹ Dermot Morrah, *The Royal Family*, p. 121.

who was promoted or who had been killed etc.;¹⁹² and was first based at Tournay Barracks, Aldershot. The 4 Armoured Division was authorised on 24 May 1940 in response to the events in France, finally sailing for Scotland in mid-1942. It moved to Burwash Common in England where Princess Mary inspected it in 1943, before it crossed to France at the end of July 1944.

2 Division was inspected by the princess in 1940 and 1944; 1 Division in 1941, 1942 and 1944; and 3 Division in 1941 and 1942. She maintained contact with Brigadier Genet into the post-war era, writing to him periodically.¹⁹³ In April 1945, in response to the good wishes for her birthday from the Canadian Signals, she wrote, 'I...appreciate very much this thought of me at this time and one prays and hopes hostilities in Europe at least will soon be at an end – I shall hope before too long we may meet again.'¹⁹⁴

In 1914 the 16th Battalion, (Canadian Scottish) Canadian Expeditionary Force had applied to be known as 'The Princess Mary's Highlanders of Canada.'¹⁹⁵ As had been the case with the Cyprus regiment, the Battalion first had to 'win its spurs.' The Secretary, War Office, replied that when it was proposed to award an honour involving a member of the royal family, it is 'as special marks of appreciation for distinguished service in the Field...this application [should] be deferred until the present hostilities are over, when it is hoped that the Battalion will be in a position to support their application by record of their service during the war.' The CS became affiliated with The Royal Scots in 1927 and there was

¹⁹²Annette E. Gillis, *Curator, Military Communications & Electronics Museum, Kingston*, National Defence/Government of Canada, 15 December, 3015.

¹⁹³ The Brigadier's family has lodged his papers, including this correspondence, in the Division archives.

¹⁹⁴ Military Communications and Electronics Museum, *Princess Mary's letter to Brigadier Genet*, 29 April, 1945.

¹⁹⁵ R. H. Roy. *Ready For The Fray*. Canada: Bunker to Bunker Publishing, 1958, Paperback Ed., 2002, p. 23.

a strong desire to carry the alliance further to the extent of having a mutual CIC...a much-prized privilege [and] the beginning of a period of a close and happy association with Her Royal Highness.¹⁹⁶

The first meeting between the regiment and their CIC took place at Aldershot in September 1941, after the regiment had arrived in England earlier in the year. After the visit and inspection Princess Mary wrote to Colonel H M Urquhart, the CO:

I was struck by the very fine physique of the men and so many having served in the last war....after the inspection I witnessed weapon training, bayonet practice, etc...it was a pleasure to be photographed with [all ranks] such a fine-looking lot. The welcome I received from the Battn touched me deeply.¹⁹⁷

The princess next visited the Battalion at the end of September 1942 at Sandgate Park, near Folkestone, where the men were undergoing many months of combined operations training, prior to their eventual embarkation for the amphibious assault, Operation Overlord, on the coast of France in June 1944. Again, Princess Mary wrote to Colonel Urquhart:

I was greatly impressed by all I saw; a coast raiding party, a dry assault course, a wet assault course and anti-tank action....both Officers and Men need to be hard and tough...It was a most interesting afternoon and I felt most encouraged by all I had seen.¹⁹⁸

The next meeting took place in January 1944; then the final one during this period came at the end of the war before the Canadian Scottish returned to Canada, when Princess Mary again carried out an inspection on 4 December 1945. The next day she attended a luncheon at the Mansion House, in which members of the Royal Scots among the guests. Finally, the Canadian regiment began a series of requests for the princess to visit it in Canada when she began her overseas tours in the post war period, such was the relationship

¹⁹⁶ Roy, *ibid*, p. 24.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 115.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 137.

which had transpired between them.¹⁹⁹ These tours will be discussed in chapter five.

Non-Military Organizations

The first to be considered is the role of the ARP during the Second World War, which may be traced back to the Zeppelin attacks on the United Kingdom during the First World War. If another war were to break out in the future it was almost certain that aerial warfare would occur and the country and its citizens had to be prepared. Thus, in 1924, the Air Raid Precautions committee was set up to consider events such as the ‘defence of the civilian population.’²⁰⁰ With the rise of Hitler, and Germany’s rearmament in the nineteen thirties, the United Kingdom’s plans and preparations hastened under the auspices of the ARP Department at the Home Office, and approximately 400,000 full-time paid personnel were recruited. From January 1938 local authorities became involved in the setting up of training facilities for each area throughout the Kingdom. In addition, the Government had a policy of readying the population for war, and for the ARP to ‘engage the public in making plans for their own personal protection.’²⁰¹ The enemy aerial warfare on the mainland began in May 1940, and the heaviest onslaught was delivered constantly not only on to London but major cities and ports up until July 1941; and then periodically up until 1944.

Over the years since the end of the war the work and operation of the ARP has been described in many films, documentaries and accounts, and Doyle’s is one of those. He says that after an initial, sometimes unfriendly, reaction to the ARP members, ‘the planning for its services had proved worthwhile.’ The organization had a name change in 1941 and became known as the Civil Defence. By 1942 in conjunction with the Fire Service their numbers had reached one million, two hundred and fifty thousand members. A visit to an

¹⁹⁹ Princess Mary’s name was added in 1948.

²⁰⁰ Peter Doyle. *ARP and Civil Defence in the Second World War*. Oxford: Shire Publications Ltd., 2010, p. 6.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, pp. 8, 15.

ARP reception station was yet another of Prince Mary's undertakings, such as that on 18 June 1940 in Sheffield, when she saw the preparations being made, and offered encouragement and support for the members efforts. This was her second visit to the city in just two months, and six months before the blitz on Sheffield on 12 and 15 December, although the first German bomb had been dropped on 18 August. The last bomb fell on 28 July 1942. Sheffield was a likely target as it was the centre of heavy industry, including steel, armaments and collieries. The steel works although damaged were able to maintain production. The worst hit were the city and residential areas. Sheffield City Council records reveal that approximately seven hundred people were killed, and eighty-two thousand homes damaged.

The Navy League was yet another organisation to which Princess Mary gave her support and encouragement. It was set up in 1894 and described as 'one of the foremost naval interest groups.' The League had four aims: 'to promote awareness of the need for a powerful navy; to provide justification for adequate expenditure and maintenance of the navy; non-interference by political parties; and to educate the public and young people about the need for a strong navy through publications and lectures.'²⁰² In 1910 the League began sponsoring units of the Naval Lads Brigade. This was an organisation set up in 1858 by naval veterans of the Crimean War and named the Navy League Boys' Naval Brigades.²⁰³ Its role was to look after orphans and destitute children from the conflict 'who were living on the streets of ports and cities.' Other youth organisations began to join including the sea scouts, and the Admiralty officially recognised the Brigades in 1919 when the name was changed again to the Navy League Sea Cadet Corps, and an annual inspection instigated. There is a gap in the history until 1936-1937 when the Corps was re-launched by the Navy League and private sponsorship sought. One of those who contributed was Lord Nuffield 'who gave £50,000.00', an enormous sum at that time.²⁰⁴ There is no indication in the history that preparations were

²⁰² *Royal Naval Museum. Online Information Bank, Research, p. 1.*

²⁰³ *Marine Society Headquarters, London.*

²⁰⁴ *Marine Society, i.*

being made for war, but the timing of the re-launch of the Corps suggests that likely event was in the minds of officialdom. In 1941 a three weeks special training course was set up for the Corps to prepare members to join the Royal Navy and the Merchant Marine in order to fulfil the shortages of naval ratings and seamen. At the end of the war the Corps had fifty thousand members. In 1942 girls were admitted for training and their organisation named the Girls' Naval Training Corps. Other female organisations such as the Girl Guides were interested in seamanship, forming a section of Sea Guides. They then joined the Sea Rangers in 1927, and first Princess Elizabeth transferred to the Rangers in 1943, Princess Margaret following her in 1945, both taking a seamanship course. Prince Mary visited the headquarters of the League on a number of occasions, to inspect the thousands of gifts which were received daily from all parts of the globe under its RN Comforts Scheme. The Admiralty ordered that the gifts were to be sent to its ships, including minesweepers.

The Empire wished to lend its support to the war effort and this included The West Indies Ladies Committee, which was a section of the West Indian War Services Committee, the latter part of the West India Committee.²⁰⁵ The War Services Committee was intended to 'act on behalf of the Caribbean Colonies acting in close touch with the Colonial Office, Ministry of Information and Propaganda, Crown Agents for the Colonies, Shipping Companies and other Bodies.'²⁰⁶ Both The War Services and The Ladies Committees had functioned during the First War, the former reconstituted in September 1939 and the latter in November 1939. By October 1939 the War Services committee was receiving enquiries from the Caribbean countries, including Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guiana, Barbados and St Vincent's, regarding

Equivalent today nearly £5M.

²⁰⁵ The West Indies Committee, Hope House, London. This organization was formed in 1780 by the London Society of West Indian Planters and Merchants. It was a lobby group for British-based merchants and absentee plantation owners with business interests in the Caribbean.

²⁰⁶ Senate House Library, Minute Book No 13753, 6 December 1939, p. 2.

clothing and comforts which residents wished to send to their troops on active service, as well as to nurses and students already living in the United Kingdom. To assist in the task of receiving and distributing goods and medical supplies it was agreed that the Ladies Committee be reformed to take on this role. The Committee was to work closely with The Red Cross, the WVS and other organisations such as the Personal Services League, with which Princess Mary was also closely associated or had a knowledge of their work. The Ladies committee decided to approach Sir Algernon Aspinall, a former secretary of the West Indian Committee, and ask him to write to the Lady in Waiting to Princess Mary, with the request that the princess would agree to become patron of the Committee. There is no available record to indicate whether this request was because of Princess Mary's philanthropy, and her association with The Red Cross and WVS, or because of the Lascelles interests in the Caribbean; or a combination of both. Not only did Princess Mary visit the Committee rooms in Norfolk Street and its depots, she asked to be kept informed about its work on a regular basis, 'having a great interest in its activities.'²⁰⁷ This may have led to a desire to travel to the West Indies, which she began in the nineteen fifties, accepting invitations from local organizations, and also at the behest of the British Government.

The final organization, and precursor to the formation of the NAAFI, was the Canteen and Mess Co-operative Society, formed in 1894 to replace private firms providing poor, not to say bad, supplies to the army. During the First World War the Army Service Corps provided the canteens and staffed them for the Expeditionary Force, simultaneously absorbing the Society into its operation. The Army Canteen Committee was formed in 1917 for the canteens on the home front and, eventually, it was named the Navy and Army Canteen Board. It was this board which was then renamed the NAAFI. It provided goods and services, and recreational facilities. The Forces War Records history writes that the 'NAAFI'S greatest contribution was during the Second World War. By 1944 it ran 7,000 centres and had 96,000 personnel...it also controlled and funded ENSA, the forces entertainment

²⁰⁷ Ibid, P. 21.

organization.²⁰⁸ The work by Eve Diett, formerly a Land Army Girl, is an account of the lives of the women she met who had volunteered to work for the organization after she had joined it.²⁰⁹ Typical visits Princess Mary made were those to the Leeds Institute in September 1944, and again to Catterick at the end of the war, to open new clubs for the personnel serving there. The RAF airfields were cited in the east of Leeds and in the Vale of York, including those accommodating Bomber Command and a fighter squadron. Diett makes no reference to the princess, although royalty had long been associated with the organization. King George V had employed it to cater for the Household staffs in the royal palaces during the Depression of the thirties. The NAAFI also catered for royal events including the coronation of King George VI; both inside and outside Buckingham Palace; in the latter case being there to support the troops lining the streets. Further, there is no doubt that the NAAFI would have been on the streets again at the end of the wars in Europe and the Pacific in 1945, providing services for all the troops still stationed in the UK, or for those being demobbed and returning to the United Kingdom.

In return for her service during two wars, and to those still suffering during the inter-war years, Princess Mary was offered the honorary rank of General in the British Army in 1956, an honour she did not seek, and believed was undeserved. The Secretary of State for War, Antony Head, sounded out Sir Michael Adeane in October 1956, with the idea of the possibility of honouring the princess, writing

the Army as a whole is immensely appreciative of the time and trouble taken by the Princess Royal concerning all the units of which she is

²⁰⁸ Don Bridge, Ed. *Naafi Up. The Official History of Naafi*. Cornwall: Q & DJ Publications, 1996, p. 58.

NAAFI – *Regiment History, War & Military Records & Archives*.

²⁰⁹ Eve Diett. *Diary of a NAAFI Girl*. GB: Pen Press, 2012.

Colonel-in-Chief...showing immense interest and going to endless pains to do everything possible to help them.²¹⁰

The response was almost immediate, Sir Michael replying on 9 October ‘the proposal...would be very acceptable to The Queen...[who] knows very well what an interest The Princess Royal takes in the Army and she is delighted to know that you feel that this should be recognized by her promotion to General. I assume that you...will take the necessary soundings with Her Royal Highness.’

He wrote again on 29 October to Head’s successor as Secretary of State for War, The Right Honourable John Hare, saying ‘The Queen has now heard from Her Royal Highness that she is delighted with the suggestion which she greatly appreciates.’ In her letter to John Hare on 19 November Princess Mary, who expressed her appreciation and gratitude for the honour, nevertheless felt that

It is quite undeserved. I am very proud of being Colonel in Chief of various units...and it is always a pleasure to do anything for them. I have always been interested in the Army and military matters. [Signed Mary]²¹¹

Given her activities during the second war, Theo Aronson’s words are misleading when he described the princess as ‘an ordinary-looking, tongue-tied member of the royal family.’²¹² In this work he devotes just ten lines to Princess Mary.

Aronson’s attention to Princess Mary and her work is indicative of the apparent place she holds in British history, and that is that her life and work has little, if any, relevance and importance; even though her role as the only sister of the monarch during the second war is unique, and unlikely to be

²¹⁰ NA *Princess Royal: promotion to honorary rank of General*, 5 October, 1956. WO 32/16710.

²¹¹ WO 32/16710, *ibid.*

²¹² Theo Aronson. *The Royal Family at War*. London: Thistle Publishing, 2014, p.163.

repeated, given that the world has moved into the nuclear age and military matters have changed completely. In this respect, though, if her father had not begun the act of creating royal women honorary colonels of regiments, then it is probably true to say that the years 1939-1945, and Princess Mary's work, would have been different. Unlike the women of the nation whose lives also changed during the war, Princess Mary did not join one of the women's military services. This type of career was suitable for princes but not for princesses, until Princess Elizabeth joined the ATS in the closing weeks of the war. Nor would Mary work in a munitions factory, or ferry planes from factories to RAF bases throughout the Kingdom. However, like these other women, the war did give her the opportunity to move out of the domestic sphere, and undertake a completely new role, while at the same time continuing her philanthropic role for civilian organizations.²¹³ Her role was to offer support whether through visits or fund-raising, and show the population that their behaviour and work was appreciated and worthwhile. During this period she carried out her role, as did the population, whilst the United Kingdom was being bombed by the enemy and suffering hardship, whilst bearing the loss of loved ones killed at home, or overseas on active service. Princess Mary and her husband shared the sadness of many in the population when their elder son, George, was taken prisoner and incarcerated in a prisoner of war camp for two years.²¹⁴

Because of the work and travelling the princess undertook before and during the second war Morrah concludes that at that time

²¹³ An example being the diary kept by Mrs Nella Last for the Mass Observation project from the outbreak of war. It was transmitted as a Granada Television film, *Housewife*, 49, on 10 December, 2006. "Her whole life improved dramatically and a whole new world opened up for her when she joined the WVS."

²¹⁴ Mrs Last, a downtrodden housewife, suffered similarly, living in the shipyard town of Barrow-in-Furness, where the first bomb dropped on 29 August, 1940.

she was a more familiar personality in the public imagination than any member of the Royal Family except the King himself; and in her own county they speak proudly of her as “our own Yorkshire Princess.”²¹⁵

Given the author’s background, as Court Historian and Arundel Herald Extraordinary, it is accepted that he had access to the Court and to official papers. Therefore, his words are accepted as a true and accurate description of Princess Mary as a public figure, and as an important representative of the royal family and the monarchy.

She knew that support and sympathy were important for all people, and she extended it, not only to British regiments but also to the overseas regiments which were stationed in the United Kingdom; and to overseas charitable organizations established in the country to aid the war effort, such as that from the West Indies. Her efforts and connections made during this time were much appreciated and one result was to receive invitations to visit the BAOR in Austria and Germany, to the West Indies, Nigeria, the Mediterranean and the middle east, and Canada. This led to another role for Princess Mary; she began a series of overseas regimental visits and tours, as well as those of a philanthropic and civic nature. Her travels began in 1948 when she visited the BAOR in Germany, and followed this with another in 1951, this time including regiments stationed in Austria. Her first visit to the West Indies was in 1953. In the last three years of her life, at the ages of sixty-five and sixty-seven respectively, she visited Trinidad and Tobago for the Independence ceremonies, and Newfoundland to visit the reinstated regiment, and to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the date when the former regiment left for the United Kingdom in 1914.

²¹⁵ Dermot Morrah, *The Royal Family*, p. 115.

Chapter Five

Princess Mary's Foreign Visits and Tours, both private and official 1906 – 1965

Princess Mary's visits and tours took place over a period of fifty-nine years if her first, in 1906, is included. This was at the age of nine, when she accompanied her parents to the coronation of King Haakon of Norway. It would appear to be the beginning of her training for a future public life. Before the first war the princess, together with her brother David, accompanied their parents on the Coronation tour of Ireland in 1911 but, for an unknown reason, her second elder brother, Bertie, was not included in the party. Her last foreign visit was to Sweden in 1965, representing Queen Elizabeth at the funeral of Queen Louise of Sweden on 7 March; Princess Mary's death following three weeks later on 28 March. In the intervening years she undertook many visits and tours abroad, both private and official, and even on private visits she was not off duty, meeting civic dignitaries; including on her honeymoon in Florence in 1922. The majority of those pre-1939 were private, except that to Ireland in 1928 which was a combination of both. As the number of her engagements increased at home and abroad so, too, did the official visits and tours which took place after the death of her husband in 1947, but now without his support, on which she had always relied.²¹⁶ If she was nervous and restrained it was not displayed, as reports and photographs confirm. However, she did display emotion on one occasion, when leaving Canada in 1962, being described as 'a weeping princess...crying as she walked aboard a tender to be carried to the Empress of England, standing in the St Lawrence River.'²¹⁷ It was disclosed after her death that she had been suffering from a mild heart condition, so it is possible that she may have realised this would be her final visit to Canada.²¹⁸ No reason is given for this emotional display but from the evidence available it is the only incident of this kind. Everywhere she travelled she behaved exactly

²¹⁶ Harewood, *The Tongs and The Bones*, p. 98.

²¹⁷ *The Globe and Mail (1936-current)*: June 29, 1962; ProQuest Historical Newspapers, p. 1.

²¹⁸ Harewood, p. 295.

as would be expected of a female member of the royal family, displaying notable *savoir faire*, whatever the nature of the visit, and whether she was a young woman, when she had entered middle age, or in her closing years. She was an extremely finished personage.

Princess Mary's official overseas visits and tours, numbering sixteen, began in 1948. She was called upon when the British Monarchy began to increase its global activities. Hers encompassed diplomatic, philanthropic and regimental events, the diplomatic and regimental usually including a philanthropic element. She had regimental ties as Colonel-in-Chief of regiments in Australia, New Zealand, India, and Southern Rhodesia. This last, the country's Corps of Signals, was the final regiment to which she was appointed Colonel-in-Chief in 1964, but at no time did she visit any of those countries. If Princess Mary travelled only a short distance outside the United Kingdom, these visits are classified as minor visits, even if officialdom was involved with arrangements, or present during the visit. They included islands such as Guernsey in 1956, which was celebrating liberation from the Nazis, and where she opened the new Red Cross headquarters; and Ulster on a number of occasions, the first in 1928 to open an extension to the Samaritan Hospital. This was seven years after her father had opened the Ulster Parliament in Belfast City Hall. On this latter occasion the king and queen were well received. However, the following day the IRA blew up the train carrying the king's cavalry escort, killing four men and eighty horses.

During Princess Mary's visit the inspection of a guard of honour at Portadown was carried out by Lord Lascelles. It has been reported that the princess thought this was a more fitting role for a male, but during her lifetime she carried out many such duties, and in film does not appear to be perturbed. The visit also included her first to the Irish Free State where her husband had property.²¹⁹ This part of the visit passed with the co-operation of the authorities, and without any demonstrations against the princess, except for the

²¹⁹ NA Royal Matters. *Visits of HRH The Princess Royal to Northern Ireland 1928-1945*. HO 45/20434.

circulation of a cynical pamphlet put out by IRA sympathisers. The report on the visit to Ulster was described by Sir John Anderson in a letter to Charles Markbreiter at the Home Office as

a colossal success in every way...I can assure you as I was closely associated with the princess during the entire time, that she thoroughly enjoyed herself, and I was very much struck with the obvious loyalty and delight with which she was received everywhere she went.²²⁰

Private Visits

These included one to her brother David, the exiled Duke of Windsor in Vienna 1937, which was entirely personal, and two to the middle east and North Africa, in 1928 and 1934, and Cyprus 1938. Although the visits to the middle east were considered private nevertheless the foreign office was involved, if to a lesser degree than would be expected in a major official visit or tour. The couple were not deterred by the state of the local political situation, generating upheaval and violence in these countries. First to occur were those in Cairo on 8 March 1928, six days before their arrival, after which the princess and her husband were due to travel on to Jerusalem. The rioters were students losing patience with King Fuad and the members of parliament, when it appeared the new liberalism may be about to collapse; and from the apparent desire of the king to assume a dictatorial role as monarch. Both students and police were injured, motor cars burned, buildings damaged at the American College and the principal manhandled.²²¹ Also, the Treaty of Alliance between Britain and Egypt was faltering, as Egypt was pressing for further independence from Britain.²²²

Nevertheless, it was a matter of diplomatic courtesy that the daughter of King George and her husband should dine with King Fuad; and Princess Mary

²²⁰ Ibid. Sir John Anderson, formerly Under Secretary for Ireland, now Permanent Under Secretary of State at the Home Office to Charles Markbreiter, Head of the Home Office Northern Ireland

²²¹ Bay of Plenty Times, Volume LVI, Issue 9732, 10 March, 1928, p. 3.

²²² The Spectator Archive, 10 March, 1928, p. 4.

visited Queen Nazli. In Palestine the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which established the right of a homeland for Jewish people, and the British Mandate of 1927 which put the country under British administration, led to a deterioration and violence in the relationship between the Jewish and Arab populations. The Declaration was a letter from the British Foreign Secretary to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, dated 2 November, 1917, stating the government's desire to establish a home in Palestine for Jewish people, but not to lead to a diminishing of the rights of the Palestinians. Local British officials had a poor appreciation of Egyptians, especially those living under British protection in Damascus in the 1920s, during the demand for Independence from 'the hated shadow of British domination.'²²³ A letter from the Consulate in Damascus to the Foreign Office described them as a 'turbulent, dishonest mob, with few exceptions.'

The second visit to Palestine, beginning in March 1934, was supposed to be a recuperative trip for the princess, who was recovering from an appendix operation. The Foreign Office asked that there be 'no avoidable official demonstrations calculated to weary a sick Princess.'²²⁴ Demonstrations are taken to mean engagements, unless there was an expectation of political demonstrations, although not necessarily against the princess. For the first time it is stated that 'a plain-clothes man of the British Section Palestine Police will be on duty with the Princess from the moment of her arrival at Kantara East.'²²⁵ It is not revealed if this was a precaution in order to be prepared for trouble if there were to be further Arab riots, after the experience of the Arab riots against the Jewish community five months before the visit of the princess. The Arab community feared domination by the growing Jewish population, after the numbers increased following the rise of Nazism in Germany, when thirty-seven thousand arrived in Palestine in 1933.

²²³ NA Activities of Egyptian Political Agitations in Syria, 1921-1928. FO 141/511/3.

²²⁴ NA Visit of HRH the Princess Mary to Jerusalem via Port Said and Kantara, 1934. FO 141/498/10.

²²⁵ Ibid.

The Colonial and Foreign Offices were involved in these visits but the former appears to have retained just four documents relating to the first visit in 1928, and the Foreign Office three for 1934. One of the earlier documents is a letter of thanks written by Lord Harewood on behalf of his wife. In it he expressed Princess Mary's admiration for the organization of education for Jewish girls by the Palestine Executive Committee.²²⁶ This was in response to a letter of welcome to the Holy Land, from the PEC, with the expressed hope that the princess would see

something of what has been achieved...in...the organisation of the Jewish community, its education institutions...its hospitals and medical welfare work....for this we have the endorsement and protection and cooperation of His Majesty's Government, through the Mandate of the League of Nations based on the Balfour Declaration.²²⁷

A visit to a kibbutz, the Qiryath Anavim, Town of the Grapes, was arranged for the princess. The kibbutz was founded in 1921, 13 kilometres from Jerusalem, and she would see how the Organisation was transforming wasteland into the Jewish National Home. However, there is some dispute as to whether the transformation was in wasteland, but rather to arable land sold by the Arabs to the Jewish settlers at this time.

Although the Colonial and Foreign Offices were involved in the preparation and planning there is no evidence to suggest that they had a diplomatic or political interest in either visit, or had any serious fears for the safety of the princess. The available documents do not reveal any contact with Arab officialdom nor that the couple visited Arab quarters. Although it was a private visit Princess Mary inaugurated the work of the British Sailors'

²²⁶ NA Report from the Zionist Organisation in regard to the visit of Princess Mary to Palestine, 1 April 1928 – 31 March, 1928. *Letter from Lord Lascelles to Henrietta Szold, 13 April, 1928.* CO 733/157/7.

²²⁷ *Ibid, Letter to HRH The Princess Mary, Viscountess Lascelles, from the Palestine Zionist Executive, 12 April, 1928.*

Society on 21 March at Haifa, unfurling the flag upon the site of the Institute being erected by the Society. This organization, formed in 1818, was a Christian charity attending to the welfare of and caring for seafarers, having missions in ports throughout the world.

The next private visit in this period was that to the British Colony of Cyprus in 1938, at a time of relative calm. Sir Alan Lascelles, the king's private secretary and Lord Harewood's cousin, wrote to Gerald Creasy, the private secretary at the Colonial Office, in December 1937, regarding the forthcoming visit of Princess Mary and her husband to the island.²²⁸ The visit was instigated by Lord Harewood in order to fulfil Masonic engagements, after which the couple hoped to 'see some of the antiquities of Cyprus.'²²⁹ Documents do not reveal her presence, if any, at her husband's engagements. Nevertheless, the Colonial Office and The Admiralty, among others, were again immediately involved in the arrangements. The authoritarian Governor of the island, Sir Richard Palmer, appears to have been under the impression that the princess would be staying in a Famagusta hotel. He protested, writing to the Colonial Office stating the opinion that 'I do not consider, having regard to all the circumstances present in Cyprus, that these arrangements are fitting...the princess should come to Government House and they should sail to Piraeus not by an Italian steamer but by one of His Majesty's Ships.'²³⁰ Sir Richard does not indicate the circumstances, of which there were a number, but included among them were the previous Moslem unrest in 1931; and when 'Turkish nationalism among the young was on the ascendancy';²³¹ when the Greek Cypriots burnt down Government House; and riots again during 1937. Also, there was the fermenting idea of Enosis²³² in Greek communities inside

²²⁸ NA Visit of the Princess Royal and Lord Harewood to Cyprus 1937. CO 67/281/20.

²²⁹ *Ibid*, Letter from Lord Harewood to Gerald Creasy, 5 January, 1938.

²³⁰ *Ibid*, Letter from Sir Richard Palmer to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Ormsby Gore, 3 January, 1938.

²³¹ Stavros Panteli. London and The Hague: East-West Publications, p. 150.

²³² Enosis: the desire to achieve a union between Greece and Cyprus.

and outside the island, and the wish of incorporating it into the Greek state, which was a continuing problem. Still, the Colonial Office took the position that there was no apparent danger to Princess Mary and her husband during their visit and it was permitted to go ahead. This attitude held by the Colonial Office is an indication that the couple could not travel as they pleased; they were required to seek permission from the government officials of the United Kingdom. At the end of the visit Sir Richard wrote to Gerald Creasy saying:

Mr. Ormsby Gore, Secretary of State for the Colonies, may like to know that the visit has been a very great success in every way....it certainly did good from the political point of view, the enthusiasm becoming more pronounced every day after the Masonic side of the visit ended...[the visitors] taking a great interest in everything, and this was much appreciated locally.²³³

There is no indication as to who were those who appreciated the visit locally, whether Cypriots with British loyalty or British officials concerned with the interests of the British Government. However, it may be that one effect of British government soft power and Princess Mary's visit was that in 1939 '37,000 Cypriots, of whom one third were Turkish, volunteered for the British Armed Forces, including a future president, Glafcos Clerides, who became a fighter pilot.²³⁴

Semi Official Visits

At the end of the first war Princess Mary undertook her first visit to France and Belgium, in November 1918, following in the footsteps of her parents, and cousin Princess Helena Victoria [Thora]. This may best be described as an humanitarian visit, although, doubtless, the foreign office, or other, would

²³³ NA Letter from Sir Richard Palmer to Gerald Creasy, Private Secretary of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 24 February, 1938. CO 67/281/20.

²³⁴ William Mallinson. *A Modern History of Cyprus*. Paperback Edition. London. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co., Ltd., 2009, p. 11.

have been consulted as to the wisdom of it, and permission sought from Mary's parents and the government. During the ten day visit the princess wore the uniform of the Commandant VAD of The British Red Cross Society, as she toured a number of camps, Red Cross, St John's, and Commonwealth hospitals, convalescent homes, service units, and the ambulance drivers of the Field Ambulance Nursing Yeomanry.²³⁵ Mabel Carey writes that the princess made the visit as the representative of Queen Mary, whilst Evelyn Graham describes it as being 'entirely spontaneous...and the personal desire of the Princess.'²³⁶ Whichever assertion is the more accurate the visit was the first occasion on which Princess Mary was to step away from the shadow of her parents; although she was accompanied by numerous officials. In the past her attendance at events in the United Kingdom meant staying in the background to the appearances of the king and queen, to whom she was a constant companion. This is borne out in Pathé film of the time. The aim of the visit was for Princess Mary to see the work which had been carried out by British women, and to hear of their experiences, at times close to the front line, and where they had suffered bombing by Zeppelins. New experiences for the princess included being driven by VAD drivers, until they reached the front line where male drivers were substituted, sleeping in a wooden army hut, and riding in a whippet tank. She also visited the Army Economy Depot at Le Treport, where the economic aspect of the conduct of the war had been planned.²³⁷ At Ypres she saw the damage which had been inflicted on the town and the scenes of desolation. Whilst in the town the princess noticed two members of her regiment, the Royal Scots, and when she was told that the entire 17th Bn was in Ypres she asked if it would be possible for a surprise parade to be arranged. The result was that she took the salute during the

²³⁵ Mabel Carey, *Princess Mary*, pp. 119-142, and, Evelyn Graham. *Princess Mary Viscountess Lascelles*. London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1929, p. 117.

²³⁶ Whilst Evelyn Graham was a published author her credentials are suspect, as she was a man named Netley Lucas, who on a number of occasions had brushes with the law over charges for fraud.

²³⁷ Evelyn Graham, *Princess Mary*, p. 125.

march-past, standing in front of the historic but ruined 13thC Cloth Hall, which had been completely destroyed by German artillery shells on two occasions. The British forces were entrenched in the east of Ypres and on the second occasion, on 21 November 1914, the onslaught must be considered a revenge attack, when the Germans realised that they could not take the city.

The visit to France might be considered a learning experience for the princess as it brought her an understanding of the capabilities and the work of so many women which, previously, would have seemed impossible. Their role during the war helped, eventually, to deliver to women the right to vote in elections, which had been denied to all but a few for so many years. On moral grounds this right could no longer be denied to them, given that they had contributed so fully to the conduct of the war; as was the contribution made by the women at home, to name just one, their work in the munitions factories where they had replaced men going to war. The publication of books written on the role of women at war was beginning at the time of Princess Mary's visit, and these contained accounts of their thoughts on their coming demobilization. The women were facing the return to 'the humdrum of civilian life,' and the lack of a certain freedom, necessitated by the return to domesticity for so many of them.²³⁸ There is no evidence to suggest that they related their concerns to the princess, but this is not to say that she did not hear of them in conversations during her tour. Histories of the period reveal that the numbers returning to domestic service as servants declined sharply after 1918; but for the women working in factories it meant giving up their work to the returning soldiers. This was not a fate awaiting Princess Mary, before and after her marriage, as she began to enter public life to an even greater degree during the inter-war years 1919-1939. Further overseas visits and tours would not begin again until the end of the second war in 1945, apart from those already described.

²³⁸ Evelyn Graham, *ibid*, p. 129.

Planning for Official Visits and Tours After the Second War

Princess Mary's official foreign visits and tours are divided into two categories: semi-official and official, including those of a diplomatic, philanthropic and regimental nature. The first was a regimental visit to the British Army of the Rhine [BAOR], followed by another to Austria in 1951. The princess represented Queen Elizabeth at two Independence ceremonies, the first that of Trinidad and Tobago in 1962, and the second of Northern Rhodesia in 1964. In between, among others, there were visits to Nigeria and the middle east and Mediterranean, Canada and France, the latter both in 1955. Here she was the recipient of honorary degrees at Laval and McGill Universities in the former, and the University of Lille in France. They were followed with another degree at the Newfoundland Memorial University during her visit to Newfoundland in 1964.

Planning for all visits and tours undertaken by Princess Mary began many months beforehand and invitations would come in a number of ways, and fell into one of a number of classes:- from regiments; from the Colonial Office, the Foreign Office, or the Commonwealth Relations Office, on behalf of the government; and as invitations for a particular Member of The Royal Family.

A regiment of which Princess Mary was CIC may sound out Major Eastwood, Comptroller to the princess, asking if there was any possibility that she would visit the regiment, in which case the relevant government department would be notified. Second, a request may come from the CO or FO which would then ask the monarch to consider it, after which the Royal Visits Committee would study the proposal. Third, a request may be received from a foreign government and/or organization for a visit or tour. Before Princess Mary was approached the monarch, first King George VI and then Queen Elizabeth, was consulted and their permission obtained, although he or she would take heed of advice from the prime minister and officials on the suitability of the invitation. This is another indication that royal personages were not completely free agents, but servants of the State. Once an acceptance was agreed, again, the relevant departments would be notified, such as the Colonial Office, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Commonwealth Relations

Office, the Treasury, the Air Ministry, the Admiralty and the War Office. In one instance this procedure was followed in order to space visits, so that numerous members of the Royal Family were not visiting a particular country in the same year.²³⁹ An invitation to Princess Mary from the War Office, initiated by the Army to visit regiments in the Middle East, was agreed but, as the Permanent Secretary of the Treasury wrote, ‘when She accepted the idea, news of the visit got around and various other suggestions were then put forward,²⁴⁰ including one from the Foreign Office that She should pay a visit to King Idris of Libya’ at the same time.²⁴¹ If the visits were to be to Commonwealth countries Governors General and High Commissioners were consulted. The correspondence was voluminous and the planning intensive.²⁴² Correspondence on both official and private visits was conducted through royal private secretaries; although on occasions Lord Lascelles did write on behalf of his wife at the request of an official or the queen’s private secretary.

In 1954 the criteria for overseas visits were promulgated in Memorandum For Private Secretaries, written by the private secretary to The Queen, Sir Michael Adeane.²⁴³ He emphasized that ‘before any official invitation is finally accepted the country, and the organizations involved...[and the United Kingdom’s] Foreign and Colonial Offices, had to have a clear idea of the cost involved and that satisfactory arrangements can be made to defray it.’ Any

²³⁹ NA *Letter from the Office of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, Earnscliffe, Ottawa to Commonwealth Relations Office, Downing Street, 28 June, 1954.* DO 35/7921.

²⁴⁰ Another example is that of a private visit Princess Margaret was preparing to make to Portugal in 1959. Once it was known the Board of Trade asked her to visit and open a British trade fair in Lisbon.

²⁴¹ NA Treasury 1961-1963. Expenditure on Visit of HRH The Princess Royal to the Mediterranean Countries in February/March 1962, *Memorandum from W. Armstrong, 22-27 September, 1961.* T 296/127.

²⁴² NA Visits by members of the royal family to foreign and commonwealth countries 1954-1959, 4-28 June, 1954. DO 35/921.

²⁴³ *Ibid*, May 1954.

visit or tour by Princess Mary had to have a focal point to it before the invitation was accepted.²⁴⁴ Then there were three areas of concern for officials to consider; the local political situation, security and the possibility of embarrassment to the royal personage at any time during the visit. ‘Even so there was no guarantee that when an invitation is sent to a particular member of the Royal Family it will be accepted.’²⁴⁵

If the Royal Yacht was to be used for sea travel the Admiralty was consulted. Use of the Royal Yacht might entail official entertaining aboard and who, or which department, was responsible for costs had to be considered and discussed. This was to prove a problem for Princess Mary, particularly for her 1962 tour of the middle east, and Newfoundland in 1964, given the state of her finances.²⁴⁶ The death of her husband in 1947 had burdened the Harewood Estate with large death duties totalling seventy percent, leading to the sale of valuable possessions and land.²⁴⁷ This factor would have to have been considered in discussions, and would appear to support the idea that Lord Harewood had subsidized the performance of his wife’s public duties. The princess had not received an increase from the Civil List since her marriage in 1922; and given the opinion expressed by Sir Frederick Ponsonby, Keeper of the Privy Purse, in 1922, he must have considered that the princess would be reliant on finance from her husband. Ponsonby had written to a Treasury official, R E Harwood, on a tax matter, and about Princess Mary’s position, saying, ‘she is marrying a rich man but there is something distasteful in the

²⁴⁴ Except The Queen, who is always the focal point.

²⁴⁵ NA Flights by Members of the Royal Family, Loose Minute issued by J R Chaplin, Group Captain, DDOps(AT), 11 June, 1954. AIR 20/7572.

²⁴⁶ NA Royal Tours. Expenditure in respect of Clothing and Baggage Allowance. Treasury Memorandum, 1961-1964. T 317/1189.

²⁴⁷ Harewood, *The Tongs and The Bones* p. 96.

See also discussion relating to the proposed visit of Princess Mary to the Mediterranean in 1962, and again to Newfoundland in 1964.

fact that an English Princess should be entirely dependent on her husband for money.²⁴⁸

The number of staff travelling in the party, clothing allowances, both for the royal personage and her staff, were costed, and the matter of giving and receiving gifts also discussed and costed.²⁴⁹ A problem arose between the princess and the War Office on the matter of presenting a gift to the Chancellor of Austria during her visit to that country in 1951. She initially objected, believing that she should have been consulted before discussions took place; on this occasion for her visit to the BAOR stationed in Austria. She finally relented and agreed to receive a gift from the Chancellor, and in return gave him a signed photograph when they met.²⁵⁰ There was considerable discussion between the Foreign Office, the War Office, the British Legation in Vienna, Sir Alan Lascelles and one of the Princess Royal's Ladies in Waiting before the matter was settled. Trivial as the subject may first appear, it was considered so important in 1961, when Princess Alexandra arrived in Thailand with gifts deemed 'quite inappropriate' by the British Ambassador, that 'better gifts had to be secured and flown out urgently.'²⁵¹ The documents do not indicate who chose the gifts or what they were, but they were 'paid for from public funds, a sensitive topic.' It is assumed that on this occasion action was taken to avoid embarrassment to Princess Alexandra, the recipients, and whichever department was bearing the cost.

²⁴⁸ NA Royal Family General: King George V; the younger children and Princess Elizabeth: taxation on parliamentary annuities, 29 July 1920-22 December 1932. T 160/639/2.

²⁴⁹ NA Visit to Austria of the Princess Royal, 1951. Memorandum from Foreign Office to Vienna, 17 July, 1951. FO 371/93638.

²⁵⁰ NA Royal Tours Abroad Estimates and Expenditure on Clothing and Baggage, 1962-1967. T 317/1189.

²⁵¹ Ibid, Letter from J E Herbecq to Sir Mark Tennant, Third Secretary at the Treasury, 13 October, 1964.

Given the evidence in the departmental documents, including those from Downing Street, on these overseas visits and tours, officials were always concerned that planning was undertaken with the wishes and the welfare of the princess at the forefront. In a discussion on the amount to be paid towards clothing an official wrote that ‘it is reimbursed from Votes.’²⁵² of the sponsoring department and ‘we are most anxious to avoid the possibility of unnecessary embarrassment to members of the Royal Family.’²⁵³ Apparently, the Royal Family contributed to the expense in particular of their clothing taken on tours. Nevertheless, this aspect was important to officials as a letter from the Diplomatic Service Administration to the Treasury indicates:

The Royal Persons...are something in the nature of a showpiece for Britain and it is very much to our interests to see that they live up to the best that we can produce in the way of fashion and clothing. I hope...that the “representational” aspect of these tours – and the expense which that necessarily involves – will be recognised by the Treasury.²⁵⁴

The Treasury was not necessarily penny-pinching, but wishing to ensure that no criticism should be directed to the royal personage by members of parliament, the press or ‘the man in the street.’²⁵⁵

²⁵² HM Treasury. *Letter to the writer from the Correspondence & Enquiry Unit, 21 March, 2016.*

Votes: in modern terms ‘Supply Estimates which provide detail on expenditure of departments...the money coming from the Consolidated fund, which is under the control of the Treasury.’

²⁵³ NA *Royal Tours Abroad*. T 317/1189.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, *Letter from E S Jones, head of Finance department at the Foreign Office, to J E Herbecq, joint permanent secretary, Treasury, 28 July, 1965.*

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, *Letter from J E Herbecq, 28 July, 1965.*

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, *Letter from J E Herbecq to Sir Mark Tennant, third secretary at the Treasury, 14 September, 1964. T 317/1189.*

Where regimental visits were concerned it is noticeable that the military, air and naval services at the time were in competition, and they were keen to have an equal number of visits in any one year. For instance, an Air Ministry document notes that ‘last year the Royal Family visited far more Army units than Naval or RAF units.’ On another occasion consideration was given on ‘how to create more personal and social links between Members of the Royal Family and RAF formations. This will be the subject of a further report if we have any bright ideas.’²⁵⁶

Princess Mary had already developed close links with her regiments, and she entertained their members at her homes in London, first at Chesterfield House after her marriage in 1922 and, later, when she moved into her apartment at St James’s Palace in 1940. Associations she had also developed with Canadian regiments, based in the United Kingdom during the second war, led to invitations to visit them on their home soil in 1955, and again in 1962, and to Newfoundland in 1964.²⁵⁷ She was setting a precedent in numbers and scale undertaken by a princess. Her aunts and cousins, Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, Princess Helena, Princess Helena Victoria and Princess Marie Louise, had undertaken foreign visits in the past, but not necessarily on such a scale, nor official or semi-official.

Princess Louise had lived in Canada when her husband was the Governor General between 1878-1881. Princess Helena had travelled to South Africa at the end of the Boer War to visit her son’s’ grave in Pretoria, and whilst there had undertaken a small number of minor engagements. Princess Marie Louise had travelled, mainly as a tourist, to the West Indies in 1913, and widely between 1923-1925 in West Africa, in particular the Gold Coast [Ghana], Rhodesia, and the far east, including Ceylon and Burma, but again as a tourist. One of her duties in the West Indies was to deliver a message from

²⁵⁶ NA Visits by Members of the Royal Family to Royal Air Force Units.

Appendix A. *Letter to Air Ministry dated 25 April, 1953.* AIR/20/7572.

²⁵⁷ See visit to Newfoundland.

King George V.²⁵⁸ Among her other engagements she visited the Pitch Lake at La Brea. This was the world's largest asphalt deposit, discovered by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1595.²⁵⁹

Accounts of her travels in Africa and far east were sent by Princess Marie Louise in letters to her sister Princess Helena Victoria [Thora].²⁶⁰ For the most part Princess Marie Louise was making private expeditions, although she did 'lay the foundation-stone of the first European hospital in the Northern Territories,' at Tamale, in the then Gold Coast, on 6 May... she then made a speech in reply to that of the Governor.²⁶¹ Princess Helena Victoria had crossed the Channel to France in 1917 to visit organisations with which she was connected, in particular the YMCA Women's Auxiliary, and to visit hospitals, as well as to deliver a message from King George V. The visits and tours of her predecessors, though, bear little comparison with those to be undertaken by Princess Mary between 1948 and 1965.²⁶²

In order to present an idea of the wide and varied range of foreign duties Princess Mary carried out, it is proposed to investigate a small number of the more important and/or major visits in detail, including those to the BAOR, the West Indies, Nigeria and Newfoundland. The minor and/or shorter visits to an overseas territory such as Gibraltar, and to Ulster within the United Kingdom, will be discussed in just a few lines; this section will also include longer tours where there is little or no documentation held in the UK national archives.

²⁵⁸ NA Visit of Princess Marie Louise to Trinidad 25 April, 1913.

CO 295/482/38.

²⁵⁹ Wearing a hat and gloves Princess Mary was taken to the same site forty years later, during her 1953 visit.

²⁶⁰ NA *Misreporting of speech made by Princess Marie Louise, 9 March – 6 April, 1927*. CO267/620/1.

²⁶¹ Princess Marie Louise. *Letters from the Gold Coast*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1926, p. 63.

²⁶² And the ninety-seven undertaken by Princess Margret between 1947 and 1997, including those for the Board of Trade and the British Council.

These include regimental visits to Canada in 1955 and 1962, and the Mediterranean and middle east also in 1962. In the case of the latter there is, though, documentation and discussion on the use of the Royal Yacht. Concentration will be on semi-official and official tours of a regimental, philanthropic and diplomatic nature, in order to illustrate the style and scope of the visits. There is little relating to Princess Mary, and the actual visit itself, in documents retained by the NA for the seven weeks regimental visit to the Near East and the Mediterranean in 1962. The exceptions are the planning for it and details of discussions with her Comptroller, Major Eastwood, regarding the covering of expenses. The Queen had offered the use of the Royal Yacht so, given the precarious state of Princess Mary's finances since the death of her husband, there was concern as to who would be meeting them for the accompanying party. It would include Major Eastwood, a lady in waiting, a dresser and/or a maid and steward. When use is made of the Royal Yacht at any time there was always

an unhealthy amount of attention from certain MPs, and at times the Admiralty had been hard put to defend her cost.²⁶³ The sponsoring departments would meet the cost of official entertaining aboard the Royal Yacht. These were The War Office for military units, the Foreign Office for Libya, The Commonwealth Relations Office for Cyprus, The Air Ministry for Base Areas in Cyprus and the Colonial Office for Malta and Gibraltar. Otherwise, any significant new item of expense [for Princess Mary] could be embarrassing.

There are detailed briefing papers giving the history of the Mediterranean area, the present political situation, and its relationship with the United Kingdom.²⁶⁴ The Independence ceremony in Trinidad 1962 and the regimental visit to Newfoundland in 1964 are well documented. Only two minor documents for

²⁶³ The Admiralty's position was that 'although responsible for carrying the Royal Family at Sea...we should not be called upon to bear [any] part of the expense.'

²⁶⁴ NA Visit of HRH The Princess Royal to the Mediterranean countries in February/March, 1962. T 296/1267.

the Independence ceremony for Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, in 1964, have been retained so it is discounted for the purposes of this thesis. With regard to the Canadian tours of 1955 and 1962 there are reports and newspaper clippings held by local Canadian organizations and library archives which have been consulted. It is an assumption only but this omission in the National Archive of the UK may be because arrangements were made between the Royal Household and the Canadian Government, which issued the invitations, and/or by the Canadian regiments involved.

The associations Princess Mary had developed with Canadian regiments based in the UK during the second war led to invitations to visit them on their home soil. The first was to the Canadian Royal Corps of Signals at the instigation of General John Genet, with whom Princess Mary had corresponded spasmodically, since meeting him in England during the war. He had sent a letter of good wishes for her birthday in April 1945, to which she replied.²⁶⁵ The second visit was to the Canadian Scottish regiment but, as during most visits and tours, other events were organized. These were to hospitals, and attending civic receptions and dinners, as well as meeting government and local officials. During the course of the visits the princess crossed Canada from coast to coast. Tours of this long and busy nature were a test of her stamina, and a requirement for remaining in good health if the entire programme was to be carried out.

The regimental tour of the Mediterranean and near east was at the request of the War Office that Princess Mary should visit the various units of which she was Colonel-in-Chief. However, whilst there are photographs in the NA, there are just two sets of documents available for inspection, and neither relate to the events planned for Princess Mary; except that the Foreign Office was eager for the princess to call on King Idris, not only as a diplomatic courtesy, but as a mark of respect, and a means of keeping and strengthening the relationship between the two countries. The first set of documents begins with a Minute

²⁶⁵ Military Communications and Electronics Museum, Letter from Princess Mary 29 April 1945.

setting out the itinerary, to Libya, Cyprus, Malta and Gibraltar from 5 February to the end of March 1962, approximately seven weeks.²⁶⁶ The Minute relates to a proposed meeting with Princess Mary's Controller, Major Eastwood, regarding the expenses of the tour. Expenses would be met by the sponsoring department(s); as would the expense of official entertaining on the yacht, such as meals and receptions. 'The Secretaries of State of all Departments...indicated that they would welcome a visit by The Princess Royal to the territories with which they are concerned.'

Thus, concentration will be on semi-official and official tours of a regimental, philanthropic and diplomatic of a major nature, but with a brief account of shorter and minor visits to overseas territories. This investigation will illustrate their style and scope, and discover whether she was asked to undertake them by the government, the War and Foreign Offices, or if invitations came in from foreign governments, regiments and other organizations. The first of her foreign visits was in 1948 when she inspected units of the BAOR in Germany, the last visit to them being in 1964. There were a series of visits and tours to the West Indies, beginning in 1953 with a visit to Trinidad, British Guiana [Guyana] and Barbados.

Minor Visits

Her first regimental visit to Gibraltar, an overseas territory, occurred in 1960. She presented new colours to the West Yorkshire Regiment, of which she had become Colonel-in-Chief in 1958, and which was then amalgamated with the East Yorkshire's to become the Prince of Wales Own Regiment of Yorkshire. The princess also visited other service units stationed on the rock. The year 1960 also marked another visit to Ulster, primarily to open a new oil-fired power station at Coolkeeragh, Londonderry; and to visit the Women's Royal Army Corps [WRAC], formerly the ATS, at the Thiethyl Barracks, and Queens University.

²⁶⁶ Visit of HRH Princess Royal to Mediterranean Countries, T 296/127.

Major Visits

Foreign visits and tours to regiments and Independence ceremonies were a new phenomenon. They were brought about by, first, the post war posting of British regiments; and second, because the British Empire was evolving into the Commonwealth of Nations, as member countries were gaining independence from British rule. In both instances, officials had to consider and resolve political and other problems, when planning and arrangements were being prepared. The number, style, scale and range of visits Princess Mary undertook in this period set a precedent for younger princesses following her, the first being Princess Margaret. The latter flew to Germany for a four-day visit in 1954, accompanied by the historian Arthur Bryant. Her engagements included a visit to an RAF base, and a call upon President Theodor Heuss and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in Bonn. This was the first official call by a member of the royal family on a German leader in the post war period, and at a time when relations with the Soviet Union were strained.²⁶⁷

At the end of the war in 1945 Germany had been divided into four zones to be occupied by the British, American, French and Soviet forces. The first of three regimental tours to Germany Princess Mary undertook between 1948 and 1964 began with that to the BAOR, when she visited not only military units, but hospitals and Red Cross Foreign Relations and Civilian Relief Organizations in the British zone. She made a point of visiting The Red Cross units, including the headquarters at Vlotho. There is some confusion as to whether or not she made an unscheduled and unrecorded visit to a British Military hospital in Berlin, but this seems unlikely given the political situation at the time.²⁶⁸ A visit to Italy and Trieste was contemplated during the 1948 tour,

²⁶⁷ Princess Margaret represented Queen Elizabeth at Independence ceremonies In Jamaica, 1962, and Dominica, 1978. She was unable to preside at another ceremony in Tuvalu in 1978 because of pneumonia and a viral infection, which resulted in a flight to Sydney for a hospital admission.

²⁶⁸ Red Cross Executive Meeting No 409, RCB 1/2/13-16.

but the War and Foreign Offices decided that her safety could not be guaranteed and it did not go ahead.

We anticipate some trouble over Labour Day which may not subside for some time after. There is further consideration that Slav controlled Communist propaganda is harping on the “Colonial“ character of Allied administration. Any stimulation of anti-Monarchist feeling by unscrupulous agitators might have unfortunate consequences.²⁶⁹

The final major visit undertaken by the princess to Germany began on 8 October, 1960, and included a visit to the 4th Canadian Signals Squadron, part of the Canadian Royal Signals Corps, at Fort Henry near Soest. The visit also included the Royal Signals Corps regiments, members of the WRAC, and Princess Mary’s RAF Nursing Service. Visits are occasionally undertaken in weather which prove to be a real test of stamina, being cold, extremely wet and much of it outdoors, which was the case for Princess Mary in 1960. Then followed a minor morale booster visit to the 1st Bn of the Irish Guards at Hubbelrath in March 1964, when she presented shamrocks to the troops. This battalion was immortalised in the 1977 film *A Bridge Too Far*, about Operation Market Garden.²⁷⁰

The BAOR was formerly 21st Army Group which was commanded by the newly promoted Field Marshal Montgomery after the Normandy landings. The Group was renamed in August 1945, and totalled eighty thousand men, and the visit by Princess Mary was planned as a major event. The BAOR also included the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division, and bases were in Hamburg, Hannover and Berlin. HQ was at Bad Oeynhausen until 1954, at which members of the Women’s Auxiliary Territorial Service were also based. In

²⁶⁹ NA Visit of the Princess Royal to Germany, Austria and Trieste. Telegram from Trieste to Foreign Office (Office of Political Adviser), 23 April, 1948. FCO 372/2306.

²⁷⁰ It proved to be a disastrous failure, and many allied soldiers were either casualties or taken prisoner. The town of Arnhem was destroyed, after the planners of the operation had under-estimated the strength and capabilities of the German forces; the intelligence information provided was inaccurate.

1948 Germany divided into east and²⁷¹ west following the Soviet blockade of Berlin, and in 1952 the BAOR became responsible for the front between Hamburg and Kassel. In 1954 HQ moved to Rheindalen.

Princess Mary was intensely interested in the various regiments of which she was CIC, but it is not revealed if she or the War Office initiated the proposal for a visit in 1947. She hoped to be able to visit the Royal Scots in Trieste and the West Yorkshire Regiment in Austria; and units of the Royal Signals and the ATS in either Germany or Austria. However, a Memorandum from the British Legation on 30 April does state that it was ‘approached in January via the Prime Minister and the Private Secretaries about a visit which the Princess Royal wished to pay to regiments of which she is Colonel-in-Chief.’ The Assistant Private Secretary to Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, wrote to the Assistant Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, saying he had been asked by the latter’s Principal Private Secretary, L. N. Helsby, to ‘find out what the Foreign Secretary thought of a proposal that the Princess Royal should visit regiments in Germany, Austria and Italy.’²⁷² During this period negotiations were underway with the Soviet Government on ‘the question of repatriation of German assets in Austria’, which is the main bone of contention in the Treaty negotiation. Now the negotiations had broken down between the allies and the soviets over Independence for Austria from foreign rule, and the matter of the reparations to the Soviet Union. ‘Mr Bevin thinks it would be a good thing...to visit Austria after a Treaty is concluded.’²⁷³ Among other issues to be resolved were first the proposed independence of Austria from foreign control, which had been instigated at the end of the war and, second, the disbursement of reparations to the Soviet Union. The visit was still under consideration in February 1948 when Helsby wrote to Sir Alan Lascelles, saying ‘The Prime Minister...has given careful thought to this proposal and feels that he should advise The King that it would be better if the

²⁷² NA Letter from J P E Henninger to F L T Graham-Harrison, 16 August, 1947. FO 372/6679

²⁷³ *Ibid*, Letter from Henninger to Helsby, 30 January 1948.

visit were to be postponed until after 1st May.²⁷⁴ A letter from Sir Alan to Helsby confirmed that ‘I have laid this before The King and by his instructions have sent a copy to the Princess Royal...[and] to suggest that she follow the advice which the Prime Minister tenders.’²⁷⁵ The general principle at the time not only applied to the princess; there were restrictions on foreign travel for all, including Ministers.

By late February the War Office wished to ensure that the Foreign Office still had no objections, writing that ‘the Adjutant-General is anxious’ to know its views.²⁷⁶ At the conclusion of the negotiations, and correspondence between the interested parties, it was decided that not only would the visit to Trieste be cancelled but also that to Austria. One reason given in April was because of ‘the activity of Jewish terrorists who recently blew a large hole in a British military hotel in Vienna, and we have good reason to suppose that further outrages are being plotted.’²⁷⁷ The writer of the letter was also concerned that the proposed visit by the Princess was to

carry out a programme, under the auspices of the War Office, above the heads of the Austrian President and Government...surely we have reached the stage where we should treat the Austrian State as completely sovereign and independent...this is a matter on which the Legation, as well as the High Commissioner, should have been consulted.

This letter would seem to suggest that, at this late stage, the Legation was only now being informed of the idea of a visit to Austria, as the princess left for Germany on her six- day visit to the British zone on 7 May; the visit to

²⁷⁴ Ibid, 3rd February, 1948.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, *Letter from Sir Alan Lascelles to L N Helsby, 4 February, 1948.*

²⁷⁶ Ibid, *Letter from Major-General V. Blomfield, The Director of Personal Services, The War Office Annexe, to P H Dean, German Political Department at the Foreign Office, 20 February, 1948.*

²⁷⁷ NA *Letter from the British Legation, Vienna, to P. Dean, 30 April, 1948.*

Austria did not go ahead. She visited Hanover and Hamburg, only five and a half weeks before the Soviets instigated the Berlin blockade. It lasted until the 12 May, 1949, during which time they blocked the roads and railway lines into the allied zone of West Berlin. The allies overcame this by mounting the Berlin airlift.

The second visit to Germany and the first to Austria occurred from the 26 July to 2 August, 1951, after the princess had presented new Colours to The West Yorkshire Regiment at Spittal in the British zone. On this occasion she was accompanied by, among others, General Sir William Slim, Chief of the Imperial General Staff. General Slim later became Governor General of Australia. Preparations for the visit to Austria did not augur well in the beginning as the princess was not consulted, and her approval not sought, for the idea of the receiving and giving of gifts with the Austrian Chancellor. The Foreign Office had apparently been told that

the Princess Royal has been informed by the War Office that arrangements have been made in Austria for the Chancellor to make...a presentation on behalf of his government...and for Her Royal Highness to offer a gift in return to the Austrian government.²⁷⁸

There is no indication that either the Foreign Office or the War Office instigated the idea, and it seems more likely that it arose from either the Chancellor or the Austrian Government. The Foreign Office said

please advise urgently whether you think Her Royal Highness must now accept the Chancellor's gift; whether she should be advised to offer a photograph in return...and in any case you should avoid making any further commitments to the Austrians until we have obtained Her Royal Highnesses' views on your advice.

It is reported that Sir Alan Lascelles and one of the princess's' Ladies in Waiting, Miss Gwynned Lloyd, were surprised to learn of the arrangements

²⁷⁸ NA Visits to Austria by the Princess Royal, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, and the President of the Anglo-Austrian Society, 1951, *Telegrams from and to Foreign Office and the Vienna Legation, 17, 18, 19, 21 July 1951*. FO 371/93638.

being made, advising that the princess 'would prefer not to receive any present at all and to give none in return'. A decision was not reached until after consultation with Sir Harold Caccia, the Ambassador to Austria, 'for his views on the matter, given the difficulties which HRH was making.' The Legation in Vienna was most apologetic about the apparent liberty taken

greatly regretting the inconvenience and naturally had no intention of anticipating Her Royal Highness's approval which, we understood, had been obtained by the Military Attache to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff...now it would cause embarrassment to the Austrian Government if it was suggested that they should abandon their intention to present Her Royal Highness with a piece of Augarten porcelain.

In the event the Austrian Government's gift was presented at an afternoon reception, and the princess offered a signed photograph of herself at the end of the Government's dinner. Nevertheless, the princess had not yet conceded all

stressing the importance of keeping all arrangements as informal as possible...hoping that she would not be expected to make any formal speeches...she would agree to a simple exchange of toasts.

Princess Mary was well aware of who she was and what was due to her, not as a person, but as a member of the royal family, and as a representative of the monarchy, but she also 'disliked fuss and bother of any kind.'²⁷⁹

Suffice to say at this stage is that

although the object of the visit was a purely British occasion, HRH graciously consented to allow the Austrian Provincial and Governmental authorities to share in the arrangements and the result has been a signal event in the development of Anglo-Austrian relations since the war.

In the final out-come Princess Mary did give a speech in German at the end of the dinner, wishing the Austrian people 'her good wishes for the future.'²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ Harewood, *The Tongs and The Bones*, p. 295.

²⁸⁰ NA Report from the British Legation, Vienna, to the Right Honourable Herbert Morrison, MP, Foreign Office, 30 July, 1951. FO 371/9368.

The local communist and Soviet-controlled press saw fit to welcome Her Royal Highness and the CIGS as ‘emissaries of an imperialist war-mongering power, who came with the sole object of ensuring Austria’s effective enslavement to the aggressive plans of the supreme command of the Atlantic Pact countries.’ This reaction was at odds with that of the Austrians themselves. Austria had been defeated and was occupied by the victors. The report from the Legation at the conclusion of the visit explained that the Austrians were hoping for understanding and friendly relations with Britain. That they were ‘able to act as hosts in some sense to a member of the Royal Family, the sister of The King, was of great significance.’²⁸¹ They did everything they could to welcome her, and the crowds turned out in the streets. The visit was a morale booster for the Austrians and in the interests of both countries. There is no evidence in the documents that the visit was planned with a political motive, but it should probably be taken as understood, given that the Austrians themselves would not wish to be ruled eternally by the Soviets. Given Princess Mary’s status, although not a political figure, she was, possibly, a political instrument for the government. If nothing else the visit to her regiments in the country should at least be seen as an excellent move by the Foreign Office in promoting its intentions. The report also noted that ‘the People’s Party and Socialist press were unreservedly enthusiastic.’ It closed by saying that ‘Her Royal Highness, by her evident friendliness and constant graciousness...and understanding of the German language...won the hearts of all with whom she came in contact.’²⁸² These words could be dismissed as mere flattery, but as all military actions, events and reports always have a section on lessons learned, or to be learned, then the words should be taken as genuine. In this instance the regimental visit would have been of interest and concern to the foreign office at least, and prove to be a barometer of the attitude of the Austrian government to Britain.

²⁸¹ Ibid, Report from the British Legation.

²⁸² Visit of HRH Princess Royal to West Indies, 3 August, 1960.

By 1963 government attitudes to overseas visits by members of the royal family were changing. Princess Margaret was advised by the FCO to include an official visit to the town of Iserrlohn, whilst she was visiting the 1st Bn The Royal Highland Fusiliers. It was described as ‘a departure from precedent and the first occasion on which the new policy on royal visits... had been put into practice... while visiting British units.’²⁸³ Whilst not necessarily connected with Princess Mary’s visit in 1951, in later years the government did have a policy of using members of the royal family as political instruments, even though the monarchy was to be above politics.²⁸⁴ Members of the royal family had a presence and standing unavailable to others. In 1963, during diplomatic manouevering over considerations of possible visits to France and Germany by Princess Margaret, a foreign office official acknowledged her status and importance to government policy by writing ‘The very fact that she is Princess Margaret.’²⁸⁵ The same description could be applied to Princess Mary, particularly as she had been elevated by her father to the rank of Princess Royal.

Princess Mary’s next foreign tour was of a philanthropic nature and took place in 1953 to Trinidad, British Guiana and Barbados, from 14 February until it was curtailed by the illness of Queen Mary in March. The princess was forced to cut short the visit and make a hasty return to London on 5 March. On her last day in Port of Spain, before she arrived at the airport, the princess detoured to visit the USN naval base at Chaguarama, but why the visit took place, or who initiated it, is not recorded in either United Kingdom or United States archives. Nevertheless, it is a legitimate speculation that the visit was arranged when it was known that the princess was planning to visit the island. British Royal Marines fought alongside the American 1st Marine Division at Chosin, North Korea, when the latter was surrounded by vastly superior Chinese troops. This was the first time that Marines from both countries had

²⁸³ Princess Margaret’s Visit to Germany. Letter from the British Embassy, Bonn, 29 July, 1963. FO 372/7833

²⁸⁴ Princess Margaret’s Visit to Budapest, 18-22 April, 1985. FCO28/6784.

²⁸⁵ Princess Margaret’s Visit to Germany, 14 February, 1963. FO 372/7833.

fought together since the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. There is a newspaper clipping showing photographs of the princess being ‘piped aboard’ and reviewing a guard of honour of US Korean War veterans, presumably then stationed on the island.²⁸⁶ Her status as a representative of the British Royal Family and the British Government was honoured by the award of a 21 Gun Salute on entering and leaving the base. A similar visit to a US Base took place in 1960 during her official tour of the West Indies, which included a visit to the Turks and Caicos Islands.²⁸⁷ Included in the itinerary was a tour of the US Auxiliary Air Force Guided Missile Base and the navy’s facility, the hospital and library. Again, there is no available documentation, apart from the prints of the visit. However, it is assumed that because both the Royal Navy and the US Navy had bases in Bermuda, and there was a close relationship between the two during and since the second war, it was almost an automatic decision, whoever made it, to invite Princess Mary to the base when she visited the islands.

Another aspect of the 1953 tour which is of historical interest is that it came just seven months before political upheaval in British Guiana, and after expressions of loyalty from British Guiana at this important stage of the Colony’s constitutional development.²⁸⁸ In the month of April the People’s Progressive Party, founded by Dr Cheddi Jagan in 1950, to ‘alleviate the squalor and poverty in which the local inhabitants lived, to campaign for workers’ rights, and for independence from British rule,’ won a victory in the national elections, although ‘power remained in the hands of the British-appointed governor.’²⁸⁹ Nevertheless, in June 1953 Dr Cheddi Jagan, as The

²⁸⁶ USN Archives, HRH The Princess Royal Visits US Naval Station, Trinidad BWI, 4 March, 1953.

²⁸⁷ NA Turks and Caicos Islands 5. Events 1958-1960. Includes Prints of The Princess Royal’s Visit to the Islands, 25 March, 1960. CO 1031/4103.

²⁸⁸ NA Resolution passed by the Legislative Council in appreciation of the Princess Royal’s visit to British Guiana, 19 February, 1953. CO 1031/1075.

²⁸⁹ The Guardian. M15 files reveal details of 1953 coup that overthrew British Guiana’s leaders, 26 August, 2011.

Chief Minister, asked the Governor to ‘convey to Her Majesty...the Colonies grateful appreciation for her Message of Goodwill.’²⁹⁰ Dr Jagan and his American wife were suspected of having communist sympathies, and there was unrest in the sugar industry caused by striking workers, so that the British Governor, Sir Alfred Savage, ‘announced on 9 October that the constitution was being suspended and the elected ministers were being removed from office.’ There was concern expressed in America where the Jagans were seen as ‘a potential communist threat on America’s doorstep.’ Furthermore, this attitude prevailed for a number of years, and the MI5 files reveal that ‘successive British governments gave in to pressure from the White House to allow the CIA to use subterranean means to ensure that the first leader of independent Guyana in 1966 was not Cheddi Jagan.’²⁹¹ Although these events took place after the royal visit the princess, Colonial Office briefings before she left London would have made her aware of the social conditions in British Guiana. There is no record of her having any opinion on the subject, and if she did have she would not have disclosed it, not only because of her own reticence but, as a member of the royal family, she would not have been permitted to do so.

Her visit was principally to inspect the work of The Red Cross, St John’s Ambulance Brigade, and the Girl Guides. Further, the people of the British Caribbean colonies

are appreciative of the fact that she was closely associated with the activities of the Ladies’ West Indian War Services committee, and she helped to look after the comfort of West Indian Servicemen and women stationed in the United Kingdom during the war, as well as tourists and students stranded in the UK on the outbreak of war.²⁹²

The newspaper article reporting on the visit goes on to express the value of ‘a tradition of service and devotion to public duty exemplified by the Royal

²⁹⁰ Ibid, Speech by the Chief Minister, Dr Cheddi Jagan, in the British Guiana House of Assembly 17 June, 1953, “We Harbour No Illusions.”

²⁹¹ The Guardian, 26 August, 2011.

²⁹² The Guardian, 14 February, 1953.

Family,' of which Princess was a valued member. The training received by these organizations from British Red Cross and other traditions was also greatly appreciated. After a parade of the various organisations in Kingston on 15 February the princess was prepared to make a lengthy speech of congratulation to them, one of the rare occasions when she spoke at length, publicly, at any time. Then followed days of the regular type of events arranged for a royal tour, including visits to the headquarters of the organizations involved, to a convalescent home, and attending receptions. Before travelling to New Amsterdam Princess Mary made an unscheduled visit to the Blairmont Estate, and the sugar factory. Her younger son Gerald had spent time on the Estate so that may have been one reason for the visit, or it may have been because of the Lascelles' family interests in the region, for she also visited two estates belonging to the family on the island of Barbados, crossing from Trinidad on 15 February.

This was supposedly a private visit but nevertheless entailed, whilst on the island, receiving the Freedom of the City of Georgetown, attending the usual receptions and dinner parties, visiting the headquarters of The Red Cross, a public hospital, the YMCA and YWCA, and finally unveiling a plaque commemorating the deaths of Barbadians who had died in the second world war, and presenting new Colours to the Barbados Regiment. Although this latter ceremony is usually carried out by the honorary Colonel-in-Chief there is no record that the princess held this rank in that regiment.

Princess Mary's next overseas tour of significance was to Nigeria in 1957, and would be classified as semi-official, civic and philanthropic. The tour was reported in a variety of newspapers throughout the United Kingdom, including The Glasgow Herald, 13 November, 1957. The official document written after the tour, and submitted to the Colonial Office in London, reported that, although the princess travelled many hundreds of miles by train and plane in eleven days, in trying heat and feeling unwell before leaving London, nevertheless cancelled only one day's engagement in Kaduna in the Northern

Region; and another the following morning in Zaria.²⁹³ The invitation for the tour was initiated by the Governor General of the country, Sir James Robertson, and formally forwarded by the government of Nigeria. Correspondence regarding the tour was carried out between Sir John McPherson, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Major Eastwood, and various Ladies in Waiting, including Miss Gwynedd Lloyd. The main purposes of the tour were four-fold; first to open two of Nigeria's major institutions of higher education...[University College Teaching Hospital, Ibadan, Western Region and the Nigerian College of Art, Science and Technology, Zaria, Northern Region]. They were developed as part of the British Government's long-term strategy to establish higher education facilities, in order to provide capable educators and administrators after decolonization. The third event was for the princess to be present at a service at Onitsha to mark the centenary of the Diocese of the Nigeria; and the fourth event to read a speech from the throne from The Queen to the Western Region House of Assembly on the attainment of self-government. This was not part of an Independence ceremony; that would not take place until 1960 when Princess Alexandra represented Queen Elizabeth. It was also proposed that Princess Mary would call upon the Emirs of Zaria and Kano in the Northern Region as a matter of diplomatic courtesy. The planners of the itinerary also hoped that the two main regions of the country, eastern and southern, and the Cameroon, could be included, the last being acquired from Germany in 1916, two years after the outbreak of the first war.

As early as April one of Princess Mary's Ladies-in-Waiting had written to Sir John Rankine, Governor of the Western Region, when the tour was first suggested, saying

Her Royal Highness bids me tell you that she is very much interested in...a visit to Nigeria if her engagements [in November] allowed...[she] is deeply interested in higher educational projects...[and] she will be seeing The Queen informally at the end of

²⁹³ NA Visit to Nigeria of HRH The Princess Royal 13-24 November, 1957. *Letter from Princess Mary*. CO 554/2052.

the month...and then will have an opportunity of discussing your letter with Her Majesty...before giving an answer to the Governor General and Mr Lennox Boyd, the Secretary of State for the Colonies.²⁹⁴ Mr Lennox Boyd expressed his delight on learning that the princess had agreed to the tour after consulting the queen.²⁹⁵

There seems little doubt that behind the diplomatic, civic and educational aspects of the tour, the government of the United Kingdom was using it, and Princess Mary, in a soft power play to try and ensure a smooth transition to self-government for Nigeria, when that should take place.

Princess Mary's tour came after the ending of the London Constitutional Conference in June 1957, planned to discuss regional self-government, the appointment of Prime Ministers, and the creation of a Nigerian Federal Council of Ministers, among other factors. The Governor General was of the opinion that the 'Ministers of the Federal Government and regional Premiers would greatly welcome such a visit...the atmosphere in Nigeria [now] will continue to be one of loyalty and cheerfulness.' For instance, the Kano riot of 1953 between northerners and southerners over the timing for self-government in the regions and independence for Nigeria had faded into memory, particularly as Queen Elizabeth had undertaken the State Visit in 1956. The federal government of Nigeria would bear the cost of the visit, including air fares to and from London.²⁹⁶ However, the situation regarding the planning of the itinerary was not quite straightforward, given the rivalry between the regions. This situation was borne out in a letter from the Governor General in August who wrote 'I am sorry that the Visit of the Princess Royal is now getting muddled up in politics and the rivalry between East and West and Azikiwe and Awolowo. If it were not for the West's wish to have a member of the Royal Family open their Parliament, the whole thing

²⁹⁴ Ibid, *Letter from Miss Gwynedd to Sir John Rankine, 6 April, 1957.*

²⁹⁵ Ibid, *Letter from Sir John McPherson to unnamed Lady-in-Waiting, 30 April, 1957.*

²⁹⁶ Ibid, *Letter from Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir John McPherson, 17 June, 1957.*

could be easily arranged.’ Nnamdi Azikiwe, of the Ibo people, became President of the Eastern Region in 1954 and Obafemi Awolowo, of the Yoruba people, first Premier in the Western Region. Both were political activists seeking independence from colonial rule. On learning of the arrangement for the princess to visit the Western House of Assembly, the Eastern Region then requested that the princess undertake the same engagement in its region when, previously, it had not considered having such a ceremony.²⁹⁷ When the Eastern Premier Azikiwe made his speech of reply to The Queen’s Message, read by Princess Mary, he thanked her for “gracing the Chamber by her presence on that day on 16 November.”

Other complications and events arose in the weeks before the arrival of Princess Mary, the first over seating arrangements in the Land-rover which she would use to tour the assembled children at a rally at Ibadan in the Western Region on 19 November. The suggestion seems to have come from the Premier Awolowo’s office, that he should accompany the princess. Sir John Rankine wrote seeking guidance on the matter saying ‘I do not like this because it will give [him] a build up at the expense of HRH, and may even steal some of her limelight. It might also occasion political demonstrations’²⁹⁸ The reply on 1 November was emphatic that ‘In no case would it be thought appropriate that the Prime Minister of a country or Governor should accompany.’ Using the precedents set for the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret it was stated that a Lady-in-Waiting sits behind the standing royal personage with a Private Secretary or Equerry or Detective sitting in the front seat.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷ Ibid, *Letter from Sir Peter H G Stallard . Secretary to the Prime Minister of the Federation of Nigeria to Sir Edward Ford, Assistant Private Secretary to HM The Queen, 10 September, 1957.*

²⁹⁸ Ibid, *Inward Telegram from Sir John Rankine to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 31 October, 1957.*

²⁹⁹ Ibid, *Outward Telegram from Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir John Rankine, Western Region Nigeria, 1 November, 1957.*

The second event, which cast a shadow over the ceremony at the College of Arts, Science and Technology, was the train disaster on 29 September, when a number of students were killed or injured as they returned to college. The Lagos to Kano train was swept off the rails by a wall of torrential rain twenty miles north of Ibadan. One planned educational visit, that to the Ibadan University College, had to be cancelled because the ‘students had been in revolt...objecting to and pulling down the school’s [new] fences, saying they had been put up to cage them “like animals.”’³⁰⁰ As had happened to other royal visits throughout the world over the years, all the detailed scheduling and itineraries did not always go to plan. Two tours did go to plan, those to Trinidad and Tobago for the Independence ceremonies in 1962, and the regimental visit to Newfoundland in 1964, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the participation of the Newfoundland regiment in the First World War.

The Independence ceremonies in Northern Rhodesia are not included in this thesis as there is little documentation held in the National Archives, just two pages from the Commonwealth Relations Office [CRO] to Major Eastwood, with a copy to Sir Burke Trend at the Cabinet Office. The first page reads ‘official information...received from the Prime Minister’s Office that Her Majesty would be pleased to appoint the Princess Royal to be her representative at the Northern Rhodesia Independence Celebrations in October...would you kindly confirm with Her Royal Highness that she will be free to undertake this Engagement.’³⁰¹ The second page is an Outward Telegram to Lusaka stating that the Princess Royal will be representing The Queen at the request of the Prime Minister of Northern Rhodesia, Sir Roy Welensky, and gives the date and time of the press release. The final paragraph gives the names of the recipients, including Major Eastwood at St James’s Palace, Sir Michael Adeane and Commander Colville at Buckingham Palace.

³⁰⁰ Ibid, *Memorandum*, 21 November, 1957.

³⁰¹ NA Northern Rhodesian Independence Celebrations. 4 June, 1964.

DO 183/3114.

The celebrations in Trinidad are covered in more detail, giving a full itinerary, and including messages between the two countries.³⁰² It is mere speculation but perhaps the difference in coverage is that the document for Northern Rhodesia comes from the CRO whilst that for Trinidad originates in the Cabinet Office. As the 1964 visit to Newfoundland was not an official diplomatic visit it is recounted before turning to the Trinidad and Tobago Independence celebrations. They were two of three major and final ceremonies presided over by Princess Mary.

³⁰² Royal Visits Overseas, 18 June, 1962. CAB 21/4963.

Conclusion

During the years 1962 and 1964, two foreign visits undertaken by Princess Mary were bringing to a close a long and varied public life, when she was still a central and important member of the royal family, working on behalf of the monarchy and the government. Trinidad and Tobago and Canada were regions in which the princess had a deep personal interest. They were also important to the United Kingdom, which wished to maintain good and long-term relations with both as members of the Commonwealth. Both were countries where the princess was much appreciated, and her presence warmly received, which will be illustrated in a survey of the events.

Princess Mary travelled to Newfoundland for a regimental visit. Although the visit is described as private and not a state visit, the Governor of Newfoundland 'was anxious to issue an invitation, [but] has to secure the approval from Ottawa,' and the Canadian government.³⁰³ The Canadian government was involved because Newfoundland and Labrador had become a province of Canada in 1949. Consequently, when guest lists were being prepared the government and the Canadian Legion put forward names so, if not a State visit, it was a semi-official visit. As was often the case, when the invitation was accepted then other events came into play, and there proved to be three elements to the visit. The first was to visit the Royal Newfoundland Regiment of which she was Colonel-in-Chief, having received the rank on 20 July 1963; second, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of an earlier regiment and its leaving for active service during the first world war; and third, to receive an honorary degree from the Newfoundland Memorial University, founded to commemorate the dead of the first war. Here she would also unveil a plaque honouring Newfoundland's war dead in World War II, as well as in World War I.³⁰⁴ Princess Mary's ability to accept the invitation to visit Newfoundland was problematic. Her intended hosts could not have had any idea of the difficulties facing the princess in deciding

³⁰³ Royal Visits Overseas Arrangements for 1964-65, CAB 21/5157, p. 1

³⁰⁴ The regiment was not active during the second war, but other men served with the Royal Artillery, and naval and air personnel also saw active service.

whether or not to accept their invitations, given the financial difficulties which had existed since the death of her husband in 1947.

The Queen had again offered the use of the Royal Yacht for travel to Newfoundland, as it could then be used for other royal visits to Charlottetown, Canada, and Central America in October; the princess would be returning to England by air in a Canadian aircraft. Generous as the offer was, nevertheless, it presented financial problems of a nature already presented at the time of Princess Mary's visit to the Mediterranean in 1962.³⁰⁵ It is speculation only but it is a mystery why this problem should reoccur. At the very least it should have been assumed that Princess Mary's financial situation would now be considerably altered; and that the conduct of her public life, at the request of both national and foreign governments in a number of cases, may present difficulties. Whilst supporting the costs may have once have been seen as partly the responsibility of her husband, it was not necessarily the case that the burden should be accepted by her son, the new Earl. The officials in the Treasury costing the visit were aware of the situation and proved to be sympathetic, as discussions revealed. Their other concern was that a compromise could lead to demands for 'an increase in her civil List,' as indicated to the Committee Chairman on Royal Visits.³⁰⁶ The writer [signature indecipherable so faint is the print] further stressed that it would be 'unthinkable that we should put the Princess Royal in the embarrassing situation of having either to decline The Queen's offer or to meet expenses that She cannot really afford.' The writer also added that 'Her Civil List was insufficient to meet the cost of Her programmes in Britain... She is far less placed than other Members of the Royal Family.' After consultations between all the interested parties Major Eastwood was advised that, again as in 1962, the special financial circumstances of the princess ensured that there would be no financial burden placed upon her. They 'justified exceptional

³⁰⁵ Royal Visits, *ibid*, 2nd June, 1964

³⁰⁶ *Ibid*, *Letter to Treasury Cabinet Secretary, Sir Burke Trend, dated 22nd June, 1964. Sir Burke was also the Committee chairman on Royal Visits.*

treatment;’ although the decision ‘in no way affecting the full application of the rules in other cases.’³⁰⁷

Princess Mary sailed in *Britannia* on 11 September 1964, accompanied by Dame Mary Colvin, Lady in Waiting, The Lord and Lady Tryon,³⁰⁸ Major Eastwood, two maids, a hairdresser and a butler. Details of the planned visit were even published in *The Desert Sun*, as far afield as Palm Springs in the United States.³⁰⁹

Princess Mary’s main aim was to visit the Royal Newfoundland Regiment but this was the re-instated regiment, the original royal regiment having been disbanded after the first war in 1919. The regiment had received the Royal prefix during the that war, being the first in the British Army to receive this honour during active service. The princess sent her first message to the regiment as its Colonel in Chief on 18 December 1963, writing

it is fitting it should be a foreword to the history of this famous Regiment and its predecessor...Colonel Nicholson has succeeded splendidly in tracing the long history...and in relating its military virtues to the to the character of the loyal people of Newfoundland, the oldest member of the British Empire and Commonwealth.³¹⁰ She concluded the message by writing that she wished to strengthen the ties of the regiment with ‘my Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment).’³¹¹

³⁰⁷ *Ibid*, *Draft Letter from the Treasury to Brigadier The Lord Tryon, Keeper of the Privy Purse and Treasurer to the Queen*, 22nd June 1964.

³⁰⁸ Lady Tryon was also a Lady in Waiting.

³⁰⁹ *The Desert Sun* Number 21, 28 August, 1964, *Royalty to Visit Widely*.

³¹⁰ Memorial University of Newfoundland Archives, *Message from Princess Mary, St James’s Palace, Whitehall, 18 December, 1963*.

Newfoundland was first established as an English Colony in 1610, and then a Crown Colony in 1854. It achieved Dominion Status in 1907.

³¹¹ Princess Mary was created Colonel in Chief by her father on 30 August, 1918.

In his history of the regiment Nicholson wrote that ‘a very great distinction was thus conferred upon it’ when Princess Mary became its Colonel in Chief.³¹²

An earlier Newfoundland Regiment had fought with The Royal Scots during the American War of 1812. It is these ties of the regiment with The Royal Scots which may have prompted the idea of Princess Mary being awarded the Colonelcy of the Newfoundland Regiment. The regiment saw the appointment as

the happy culmination of a long association which had begun during the First World War when she visited wounded Newfoundland soldiers in hospital, and helped to entertain Newfoundlanders who were included in parties of overseas troops invited to Buckingham Palace.³¹³

The first regiment to fight with the British Army was His Majesty’s³¹⁴ Newfoundland Regiment of Foot, raised in 1783, and the second was The Royal Newfoundland Regiment of Fencible³¹⁵ Infantry, which fought with the British and Canadians against the American Army in the war of 1812. In 1914 a world war had erupted, first in Europe against the German and Austro-Hungarian Empire and, then, against the Turks in the Middle East. The Government of Newfoundland immediately decided to support Britain and her European and Commonwealth allies, and a recruitment drive began for service with the British Army. Despite the small size of the population, approximately two hundred and forty-one thousand men volunteered, so that a battalion of approximately thirty officers and eight hundred men [other ranks/ORs] was easily formed. They were first known as the Blue Puttees,

³¹² Memorial University Archives, G W L Nicholson in *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, published by the Government of Newfoundland, 1964.

³¹³ Memorial University Archives.

³¹⁴ King George III. Newfoundland sided with the British in the American War of Independence 1775-1783. Fifty thousand loyalist refugees fled from America to Canada and Newfoundland.

³¹⁵ A militia serving on and/or defending home soil.

the colour chosen to differentiate them from other forces. Five hundred men formed the first contingent to travel to the United Kingdom, although it is reasonable to suggest that a number of them would also have been drawn by the thought of foreign travel and adventure.

Disembarking at Plymouth on 14 October 1914 the regiment was incorporated into the British 29th Division, and served with it in Gallipoli, France and Belgium. After training in various parts of the kingdom, the regiment and the 29th Division arrived at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli, on 20 September 1915, joining forces with the Australian and New Zealand forces, the ANZACS. Over the next three months the Newfoundlanders suffered thirty casualties either killed or wounded, and ten died from diseases associated with trench warfare. A further one hundred and fifty suffered from exposure and frostbite, totalling one hundred and ninety casualties all told. The regiment ended its campaign on 9 January 1916, after forming part of the rear guard from the Dardenelles Peninsula. After rest and recuperation and receiving fresh reinforcements to bring the battalion up to strength still, as part of the 29th Division, the force moved to Western Europe in March, and began preparing for the Battle of the Somme, against elements of the German Army. They arrived at the Beaumont Hamel line in April., where the infantry assault began on 1 July. The Newfoundlanders fought in conjunction with the 1st Battalion the Essex Regiment but by the end of the first day the former had been almost wiped out, losing all their officers and six hundred and fifty-eight ORs, a casualty rate of 90%. Approximately one hundred and ten survived but only sixty-eight answered the roll call the following day, probably owing to injury and wounds. Six weeks later, again after rest and recuperation, and having received reinforcements, the regiment moved to Flanders, taking part in the Battles of Arras and Ypres, among others. Eventually, the regiment joined the 28th Brigade of the 9th (Scottish) Division and took part in the One Hundred Days Offensive, beginning with the Battle of Amiens from 8 August to 11 November 1918. The allies finally overcame German resistance and forced the German Army to seek an armistice. It was during this last offensive that the Newfoundlander seventeen years old Private Tommy Ricketts was awarded the Victoria Cross, the youngest soldier to do so in

combat during the war, taking on an enemy battery singlehandedly... with utter disregard for personal safety.³¹⁶ He was also awarded the French Croix de Guerre with Golden Star in 1919. It was the Newfoundland Regiment's service during the first war that Princess Mary was commemorating in 1964.

During the visit the princess carried out thirty-seven engagements but, unlike other visits and tours, on this occasion the schedule permitted just two unconnected with the main purpose. They were an attendance at a children's rally and a visit to a paper and pulp mill. The latter was a major employer in the province and part of the timber industry, a mainstay of the economy, so it would be logical and appropriate for it to be included in the programme.³¹⁷

The other engagements included three presentations, wreaths laying, church services, five inspections of guards of honour, taking the salute for regimental parades three times, visiting hospitals, museums and officers' messes, meeting wives at morning and afternoon teas, attending three luncheons and three dinners, and so the engagements continued. On one occasion, after taking the salute at a parade earlier in the day, and before going on to a dinner that night, Princess Mary 'unexpectedly dropped in on a reunion of more than eight hundred veterans, and joined in the singing of wartime favourites.'³¹⁸

Evidently, the princess was quite prepared to depart from the formal schedule and dispense with formality when she thought the occasion warranted it, particularly those connected with the military.

³¹⁶ He ended the war as a Sergeant, but declined an invitation to meet Princess Mary in 1964. To date no reason has been given for his refusal to accept the invitation.

³¹⁷ Foresters from the province also took part in the first world war. VADs from Newfoundland and Labrador served in the war, on the Western Front and at the 3rd London Military Hospital, Wandsworth, among others.

³¹⁸ Newfoundland Evening Telegram, 25 September, 1964, p. 31.

The third element of the visit was to receive the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, *Honoris Causa*,³¹⁹ as a mark of esteem, from the Memorial University on 21 September. The Vice-Chancellor first wrote to Princess Mary on 3 July, 1964, telling her that ‘the Senate had unanimously decided ...to ask Your Royal Highness to do the University the great honour of accepting the Degree of Doctor of Laws...when you visit your Regiment in September.’³²⁰ In introducing Princess Mary to the Vice-Chancellor³²¹ [and President] Dr Raymond Gushue,³²² the Public Orator, P J Gardiner, described her as Britannia’s

illustrious passenger...Chancellor of our sister University of Leeds. The demands of public service...have been met by her...in a life devoted to service of Commonwealth and Man.³²³

He also referred to the Royal Newfoundland Regiment saying “no regiment is prouder of its association with Her Royal Highness.” He described her humanitarian service during the first world war and later becoming a nurse, her participation in the work of The Red Cross, and undertaking the Presidency of the Guides Association, among others. The Orator closed his remarks by describing Princess Mary as “bringing here today all the grace, freshness and quiet serenity of an English country garden.” Doubtless the princess may have been somewhat surprised by that tribute likening her to a country garden, though no doubt it was derived from her well-known love of gardening and her interest in those of the Harewood Estate. Among his other remarks he referred to Princess Mary’s’ visits

³¹⁹ Without taking an examination.

³²⁰ Memorial University Archives.

³²¹ The Chancellor was The Right Honourable Lord Thomson of Fleet Street.

³²² Memorial University Archives, in a letter from St James’s Palace dated 1 October, 1964, Princess Mary wrote to Dr Gushue, thanking him for giving her the scarlet doctoral gown and velvet cap, and hoped to find an occasion to wear it at her own University, and she invited him to visit her at Harewood should he have the occasion to visit Leeds University. She liked to have visitors to her homes as this to Harewood confirms.

³²³ Memorial University Archives.

throughout the world and especially those to Canada in the past, saying “God willing we hope will be made on many occasions to come.” Little could anyone present have expected that just six months later the princess would be dead at the relatively early age of sixty-eight, and that there would be no further visits to Canada.

In her address to the Convocation the princess referred to the honour and pleasure she felt in receiving the degree, and noted the tremendous growth in the demand for higher education in the province, and in the increase in student numbers and buildings on the campus, resulting from ‘the drive and initiative of the planners of this great expansion...and attention to the attainment of the highest academic standards without which no University will flourish.’³²⁴ The princess spoke from the standpoint of her own position as Chancellor the University of Leeds which, she said, “I find deeply absorbing.” She talked of the similarities between the two universities, including the fact that just as Leeds was the centre of the woollen industry so was Newfoundland in the centre of the timber industry, and of the interest of the former in textiles and the latter in forestry. Princess Mary closed her speech by referring to the academic connections between the two universities, including the numbers of Leeds graduates on the staff of the Memorial University. She expressed her appreciation of the honour awarded to her, and said to the audience that “I hope that it will be apparent to you that my simple words of thanks for the honour you have conferred upon me today come from the heart.”

This honorary degree was just one of a number which Princess Mary had received during her long life of public service. Nevertheless, her visit to Newfoundland was primarily regimental, on the occasion of her becoming Colonel in Chief of the reinstated Royal Newfoundland Regiment. This was on the order of her niece Queen Elizabeth, and forty-six years after she received her first colonelcy. She had undertaken a lifetime of service to various regiments of the Commonwealth, and from all the evidence available she did this willingly and with enjoyment.

³²⁴ Memorial University, *ibid.*

One of her main aims was to work to strengthen ties between the commonwealth countries and their organizations, whether charitable, educational and, in this case, regimental. It seems that this was achieved, given the regiment's appreciation of such a long association with her. Consequently, she wished to visit veterans still affected by their service during the first war so that three hospitals were included in her schedule. The regiment paid a large price for its support of what was often called the mother country³²⁵ between 1914-1918. The Public Orator, in his address, had time and space to refer to a mere handful of Princess Mary's humanitarian work over the past fifty years. Evidence suggests that in regard to the military regiments, at home and abroad, she carried out this work with enthusiasm and dedication and, in her own words, regarding her chancellorship of Leeds University, saying "I find it deeply absorbing." The sacrifice, and the casualty figures, for the men of the Newfoundland Regiment, and the country, would have been known to Princess Mary from briefings before her journey. She would have understood that it was her duty to acknowledge them which, given her sympathy and affection for her regiments, she did willingly.

If this visit to her regiment in Newfoundland was typical of the visits so dear to Princess Mary's heart, then her visit to Trinidad and Tobago in 1962 for the Independence celebrations was an example of the 'ritual and ceremony' enacted by the monarchy.³²⁶ The princess had become familiar with ceremonial over many years, beginning as a child with the coronation of the King of Norway in 1906 and, next, the coronation of her father in 1911. When Princess Mary visited Trinidad and Tobago, for the last time, in 1962, she had taken part in ceremonial ritual for fifty-six years. When the Independence ceremonies in Trinidad and Tobago were due to be held, both

³²⁵ Even in the post 1945 years there was in Australia a phrase, 'going home', which became a one-word noun. For instance, anyone winning a scholarship to study in England was not travelling to that country but 'going home.'

³²⁶ David Cannadine and Simon Price, Eds. *Rituals of Royalty. Paperback Ed. Cambridge:University Press, 1992.*

the monarch and the government had cause to be grateful for the willingness of Princess Mary to attend as their representative. The other three senior female members of the royal family were unable to participate as they were expecting a child or had just given birth. She was not slowing down or neglecting her duties. The Royal Assent for the independence of the islands was delivered on 1 August.³²⁷ The struggle for independence had begun in 1917 and the chief protagonist was Captain Arthur Cipriani, on his return to the West Indies. He had served with the British West Indies Regiment, incorporated into the British Army during the First World War. Other men who joined his cause were Tubal Uriah Butler, C L R James, Cola Rienzi and George Weeks, representatives of the various racial groups and organizations on the islands.

Media coverage of Princess Mary's arrival and of the visit was extensive, and she received the honour and ceremony she was due, not only as the queen's representative but in her own right.³²⁸ A royal personage always adds status and importance to such ceremonial events; and as the princess was attending at the request of the British government, her presence was a sign of that government's approval. As David Cannadine points out such a ceremony allowed the British to leave with dignity.³²⁹ The princess arrived at Piarco Airport in Trinidad at 6.00pm on Tuesday 28 August 1962, where she inspected a guard of honour from the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment; received a welcome address from the Prime Minister designate Dr. Eric Williams, to which she replied, and received presentations of local officials; opened the new terminal building; and attended a reception; before driving to the

³²⁷ Presentation of Copies of Independence. Constitutional Instruments to Trinidad 1960-1962. Presentation Volume, Order in Council. CO 1031/062. Published in The London gazette 3 August 1962.

³²⁸ Trinidad Guardian, September 1962.

³²⁹ Robert Holland, Susan Williams and Terry Baringer, editors, *with an introduction by Sir David Cannadine. The Iconography of Independence*. Oxon: Routledge, 2010, p. 8

residence of the governor general designate, Sir Solomon Hochoy, the first appointee of ethnic origin to hold that position. The main official events occurred at midnight on 30th August with the removal of the British flag and the raising of the flag of Trinidad and Tobago, and on the 31 August in parliament, The Red House, when Princess Mary read a message from Queen Elizabeth, and handed over the Instruments of the Constitution to the prime minister.³³⁰ Seated in the chamber among the foreign guests was the United States vice president Lyndon Johnson and Mrs Johnson.

During the following days the princess followed the usual programme planned for royal visits, attending church services, inspecting guards of honour, attending civic welcomes in various parts of Trinidad and Tobago, attending youth rallies, luncheons, dinners, state balls and gala concerts. She also opened a new Teachers' College at Arima, opened an exhibition in the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port of Spain, toured an industrial and agriculture exhibition on Tobago and, back in Trinidad, toured a technical institute and, finally, watched a Beating Retreat. This is a ceremony usually carried out by a band of the Royal Marines from the Royal Yacht if it has carried the royal personage to the event. Otherwise the ceremony may also be carried out by a local organization.

The people of Trinidad extended an extremely warm welcome to Princess Mary, and crowds were present at events also outside the capital, according to the few decipherable Trinidad Guardian newspaper reports. Her visit to Trinidad in 1962 was her first official attendance at an Independence

³³⁰ *Letter dated 17 July, 1962 from Duncan Sandys to The Queen, attaching the Trinidad and Independence Act, 1962, to be presented to the Government of Trinidad by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal on the occasion of her address at the Independence ceremony.* CO 1031/4062/001.

These British Pathè ceremonies filmed August 1962 may be viewed on www.youtube, submitted by J. McKelly, 9 May, 2013.

ceremony, but it was her last visit to the Caribbean. It took place forty-eight years after she began her public life, when Britain still had an empire, but was about to begin fighting a world war. These events began a change of circumstances in Princess Mary's life and that of the monarchy, and in the life of the people and the nation.

When I began this research I had no idea of the extent and nature of the public life of Princess Mary, beginning with the outbreak of the First World War, and ending fifty-one years later on her death in 1965. The war caused the killing and maiming of thousands of troops in action. Then there were the inter war years at a time of world-wide economic hardship and poverty, ill health and homelessness, and unemployment for much of the nation's population, although conditions had improved by 1939. This was due mainly to the rising employment as the nation began to prepare for war again in the industrial sector, such as munitions factories, shipbuilding, aircraft production to name just three. The organizations involved in the rehabilitation of the sick and wounded from the previous war, and those engaged in trying to alleviate the consequences of the Depression years, were only too glad to receive the concerned interest and efforts of Princess Mary on their behalf. She travelled widely throughout the United Kingdom, drawing attention to their work, offering her help and support, and participating in fund-raising events.

The next era was the duration of the Second World War when the nation endured not only enemy bombing, leading to death and destruction, but homelessness from the damage caused to housing. The population suffered rationing of food and clothing while, in hundreds if not thousands of cases, simultaneously receiving the news that so many of their husbands, fathers and sons were killed, wounded, missing or prisoners of war. In the last Princess Mary and her husband could sympathise, when their son, George, was

captured and became a prisoner of war at the hands of the Nazis. At one time he was incarcerated in the notorious Colditz Castle in Germany.³³¹

If there was one role which might be considered her most important it was that during the Second World War. Her life was completely different from those of the women working in the forces, the munitions factories and the philanthropic organizations, but she played her part in the war effort in the only way open to her. Being a member of the royal family meant that her life was far removed from that of every other woman, but she could be described as being 'one of us' during the war years.

Given the foregoing, in all instances the morale of the nation had to be supported as had the organizations dealing with the consequences. This was to be the life work of Princess Mary; offering encouragement, support, recognition and status for those organizations and the people. During 1940 the nation faced the threat of a Nazi invasion and Princess Mary rose to the occasion and thereafter, by continually touring and visiting the towns and cities of the United Kingdom, and meeting and sympathising with the worries and problems of the citizens.

While the princess did not suffer the hardship of much of the population, she required stamina and a strong mental disposition, to continually travel throughout the kingdom, seeing and hearing of the travails of so many

³³¹ Where the British politician, and friend of Margaret Thatcher, Airey Neave, was also a prisoner. Ironically, he was not killed by the Nazis but, years later, by an Irish National Liberation Army bomb which had been planted under his car parked at the Palace of Westminster in 1978.

throughout her lifetime, and offering encouragement and support as required and when it was asked of her.³³²

Then, in the post war years, and a period of peace, her horizons and her interests widened, as she began travelling overseas in 1948, visiting her regiments, both national and foreign. During the war years she had travelled throughout the United Kingdom visiting the latter then based there in their thousands, training and preparing to take part in Operation Overlord in June 1944, when the allies launched their assault on France in order to begin the fight against the enemy, and free occupied Europe from the rule of the nazis. The interest and support she offered to the Canadian regiments resulted in invitations to visit them, which she did on three occasions after the war.

In the post-war period she began visiting overseas organizations with which she was connected. As well, countries such as Nigeria issued invitations to visit, on this occasion primarily on a religious and educational tour, but at a time of political change. These visits were diplomatic, semi-official and official, at the behest of the governments of the time, during which, more than likely, they were using her as an instrument of soft power, in pursuance of their political policies.³³³ Her influence in any area or for any organization

³³² *A letter to the Treasury noted the 'difficulties in separating private from public tours, and even when it would appear to be a private tour, there is normally a strong element of duty as well, though often hard to define...Members of the Royal Family, when travelling in a Foreign Country, are rarely "off duty."* Signed Tryon. 1 November, 1967. T317/1189

³³³ Officials are calculating in their opinions as instanced in a memorandum from the Eastern Department dated 1 February 1966. A visit to Iran was being considered for Princess Margaret. Apparently, dealings were not exactly harmonious, and it was remarked that 'relations with the Shah were going to be a little tricky in coming months and that a bonus in the shape of a visit from

was not political; her name and presence bestowed status, brought attention and engendered support for them. She was at the forefront of playing a part at a time when the monarchy was becoming global in its activities. Follow-up reports on her visits and tours painted her in a friendly and favourable light as a representative of Britain, the monarchy and the government of the day, whatever its political colour.

Princess Mary has been described as having a sense of humour but devoid of personality.³³⁴ Her son described her as being shy, gentle and ‘kindness itself...with a little Hanoverian spleen underneath it all in later life.’³³⁵ One assumes this last was either a state of melancholy and/or seriousness, perhaps caused by the death of her husband, and unlikely to be sullenness.³³⁶ He believed that his mother had been ‘conditioned to communicate only on as uncontroversial a level as possible...but [it] encouraged a form of strong, loving, family feeling.’ Family feeling was also strong in Princess Margaret, who is described by Gore Vidal as speaking of the royal family with reverence.³³⁷ Aronson writes of Margaret saying that “everything I do is to support the queen and to help her.”³³⁸ These statements and descriptions could be applied to Princess Mary, who had supported her family and the monarchy throughout her life. When her father died the princess stayed with her mother for a number of months, and then helped with Queen Mary’s move from Buckingham Palace to Marlborough House.

Princess Margaret might be very useful.’ Signed P H Gore-Booth 27 January 1966. Princess Margaret’s Tour, FO 371/186736

³³⁴ Anne Edwards. *Matriarch*, 1986, p. 283.

³³⁵ Harewood, *The Tongs and The Bones*, p. 27.

³³⁶ *The Concise English Dictionary*.

³³⁷ Gore Vidal. *Point to Point Navigation*, GB: Little, Brown and Company, 2006, p. 210.

³³⁸ Theo Aronson. *Princess Margaret*. Great Britain: Michael O’Mara Books Limited, enlarged paperback edition, 2001, P.309.

Princess Mary may not have had the appeal and ‘common touch’ of her sister-in-law the Duchess of York, and then as Queen Elizabeth, consort of King George VI, and latterly as The Queen Mother.³³⁹ Given the circumstances of Mary’s position in life she was brought up in an entirely different manner and atmosphere. Moreover, she had been given to understand what was to be her duty and role in life, at least until she married.³⁴⁰ Still, such was her nature that, instead of retreating from royal duty and philanthropy, she carved out a career for herself in that field over the remainder of her life. In her last years, she was carrying out foreign diplomatic tours when other female members of the family were unavailable, and working women in many professions and industries would be reaching retiring age. She endeavoured to remain out of the spotlight when not on duty, and was able remain out of the media circus which began in the 1950s, with the advent of Princess Margaret on to the world stage. This latter princess was described as ‘becoming a media star overnight,’ although she never sought it, on the whole ignoring the press and film media.³⁴¹

Princess Mary was close to her father and photographs show her riding with him, and accompanying him on engagements when her mother was unavailable. It is difficult to imagine that he would have contemplated an arranged marriage for her, as people in their circle postulated at the time. He was upset at the thought of her leaving the family, and believed that life in the palace would be lonely without her when she established her household in

³³⁹ Roland Flamini. *Sovereign. Elizabeth II*. Great Britain: Corgi Edition, 1992, p. 259.

³⁴⁰ Lady Elizabeth Bowes Lyons was brought up in a more carefree and happy family and a royal marriage, with all the personal restraints it would entail, was probably not envisaged by her parents.

³⁴¹ Anne Edwards. *Royal Sisters*. London: Fontana, this edition 1991, p.235. Both princesses were deeply religious, and Princess Margaret never travelled without her bible. Princess Mary always travelled with a photograph of her husband.

Yorkshire. Nevertheless, a review of the Court Circular during her life-time records many occasions when she and her new family met and/or holidayed with her parents. She visited her brother the exiled Duke of Windsor and his wife in Austria in 1937, the only one of his relatives to do so after he left England. However, Harewood notes that his mother saw her brother when he visited Queen Mary at Marlborough House from time to time, and they travelled back together from New York at the time of Queen Mary's final illness in 1953.³⁴² Apparently, the bond between the pair had not been broken after her brother's abdication in 1936. Harewood questions the moral contradiction in the denial of central Christian virtues – forgiveness, understanding and family tenderness by members of the royal family.³⁴³ On the other hand, the duke had forsaken his duty to the nation, given that so many had sacrificed so much during the first war; and when the people of the nation were enduring the hardship of the 1930s. His sister had not forsaken her role within the royal family in support of the monarchy and on behalf of the nation. In doing so she exemplified the changing role for royal women who were not the sovereign.

The two World Wars in particular had given Princess Mary an opportunity to enter public life more fully and extensively as a female member of the royal family. They also presented opportunities for any woman, if she so desired during the first war, to enter a profession such as nursing, or to enter the work force in the munitions factories, on the land, on public transport, as ambulance drivers, policewomen and fire workers. During the second war, as well as the foregoing they joined the armed forces in varying roles deemed suitable for women, worked in the shipyards, and ferried planes of all types to RAF bases throughout the kingdom.³⁴⁴ They had proved that they could replace men in

³⁴² See British Pathè film aboard the Queen Elizabeth docking at Southampton on 12 March 1953.

³⁴³ Harewood, *The Tongs and The Bones*, p. 17.

³⁴⁴ Then there were the brave and heroic women who worked and, in many cases, died for the Special Operations Executive in Europe.

many occupations when the nation required and conscripted them. However, at the ending of both wars their services were no longer required, and they were dismissed and sent back to domesticity.³⁴⁵ This state of affairs did not apply to Princess Mary who was able to continue and expand her role in philanthropic work, and to be an ambassador for the work of the royal family, at home and abroad, in a changing and evolving monarchy in the twentieth century.

Thus, given the results this research has revealed, it is remarkable that Princess Mary's contribution in a long and valuable public life has gone unrecognized since her death. After it her son wrote that 'it entailed the disappearance of the lower-èchelon trappings of royalty-ladies-in-waiting, official visitors, foreign tours, uniforms in peacetime, our occasional visits to Buckingham Palace.'³⁴⁶

Princess Mary broke new ground and prepared the way for the daughters of the sovereign, and other female members of the royal family, to develop and undertake increasingly varied and world-wide work. Thus, in addition to the duties her aunt performed, Princess Margaret undertook new types, including engagements on behalf of the Board of Trade and the British Council. As well, she was the first royal female to take an interest in the work of the Lighthouse organization in 1987. It was founded for the treatment of those suffering from the Aids disease, and she eventually became its patron in 1992.³⁴⁷ Princess Margaret, Princess Alexandra and Princess Anne presided at further Independence ceremonies and openings of Commonwealth parliaments; and Princess Anne has travelled widely throughout the world on behalf of the Save the Children organization. Princess Anne was later created

³⁴⁵ During the first war one female doctor who offered her services to the War Office was told to be quiet and go home.

³⁴⁶ Harewood, *The Tongs and the Bones*, p.296.

³⁴⁷ Christopher Spence. *On Watch*. London: Cassell, 1996, pp. 26, 36.

The late Diana, Princess of Wales, followed in Margaret's footsteps.

The Princess Royal by her mother, Queen Elizabeth. These princesses could not have had a better relative and example to follow than Princess Mary. Her attitude to her public life was one of dedication to the monarchy and the nation.

I wrote at the beginning that the princess had been almost forgotten in published British history. There are records of her public life in various archives throughout the world, but it is doubtful if they are ever accessed. They do record the honours and awards the princess received during her lifetime, perhaps none more important than the official recognition she received from the British military when she was created an honorary General in 1956. This was a first for a British woman and for a female member of the royal family. It was a fitting tribute for a unique woman and princess in the twentieth century. Princess Mary had devoted her life to the role her father had first envisaged for the monarchy and the royal family; her life and work was much more than satisfactory, as was described in the nineteen twenties. She was not just a philanthropist who gave money and financial aid to causes but left it to others to try and solve problems; she had developed a deep social conscience and gave of her time and herself.

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