

Salvo saw it all in Soho

SALVATION Army duties in Mayfield seem a long way from London's Soho, but Christine Whitten has taken it all in her stride.

Every Friday night she appeals for donations for the Army's work from drinkers at district pubs and clubs.

But about a decade ago she was involved in a different, rougher world among the pimps, prostitutes and drug addicts on the late-night patrol with a lady officer in sleazy Soho.

But the uniform was the badge of protection along with the Army's reputation on the mid-night patrol.

'We always went in twos, but the Army was so well respected that nothing ever happened to

anybody,' Mrs Whitten said this week.

'I suppose Soho would be a lot tamer today. A showpiece for the tourists. But while I was there I did see a fellow who had been stabbed.

'How long we were out on patrol depending on how long people wanted to talk to you about their problems.'

Mrs Whitten became involved along with friends with the social work of the Army in England while still at school.

She and her husband (also involved with the Army's work) later migrated to Australia and in recent years she has been a member of the Army's Mayfield corps.

And now besides the regular Friday night hotel visits for donations to help the Army continue its work, Christine helps out with corps cads work.

With the growing drug problem she believed that the back streets of King Cross today may be a lot tougher than her time spent in Soho.

The Salvation Army will spend \$1.6m on social/welfare work in the region in the next 12 months but expects to raise less than \$500,000 on Sunday.

That's the Army's Red Shield Appeal day and more volunteer collectors are still needed for Cardiff, Warners Bay, Mayfield and Newcastle.

Army spokesman Captain Alan Peterson said the doorknock appeal was aiming to raise at least



● Christine Whitten collects for the Salvation Army at the Mayfield Hotel.

\$225,000 in the Newcastle region including \$45,000 from individual homes in the Lake Macquarie area (\$42,000 raised there in 1984) and \$50,000 from Newcastle homes.

In the whole Hunter area (from Macksville down to Gosford and west to Murrurundi) the Army

realistically expects to raise \$465,000.

That, however, still leaves a shortfall of \$612,000 to be found 'somehow' during the rest of the year.

But of the money raised, \$119,000 will be spent on family welfare, about \$360,000 on re-

habilitating drug addicts and on capital works such as the \$100,000 needed to renovate the homeless men's hostel at Wickham.

As their motto says: *Thank God for the Salvos.*

Volunteer collectors are needed to work two to three hours on Sunday. Phone 2-5273.