



The Beachley Old Boys' Association Newsletter

Edition No. 4 - April 1998

1997 REUNION

Chepstow Revisited

4th Year At The Old Course Hotel

The annual reunion of The Beachley Old Boys' Association was held over the weekend of 12/13/14th September 1997. The venue was, once again, the Old Course Hotel, Newport Road, Chepstow. By general consent, it was a most enjoyable experience.

193 members, together with 73 of their ladies, attended the BOBA Reunion dinner on the Saturday evening. These figures were a little down on the previous year when 211 members and 90 ladies attended.

The newly elected President of the Association, Colonel Alan Holman OBE, circulated amongst the members at the President's Reception prior to the dinner. Brigadier Mike Addison, the retiring President of the Association also attended.

As in 1996, the Executive Committee agreed to put on a free half-bottle of wine per head for dinner. No complaints there! Although, for those who noticed what they were eating - the lamb at dinner came in for some comment!

The majority of of the members, (130 or 67%), came from those groups which first joined Chepstow in the 'Roaring' Forties - that is during the war years and just after. The biggest turnout was by 42A with 23 of their number coming along. Well done! 17 of those at the dinner were from pre-war groups whilst 46 were from 1950 onwards. Included in the 'forties' attenders were the members from the 47 groups celebrating their 50th anniversary. They were well represented - including the Chairman.

Earlier, on the Friday evening, 184 came along to the hotel for a hot supper, a dance, a drink and a chat (not necessarily in that order).

On Saturday morning, the BOBA Open Golf Championship proved another winner (see page 13 for a full report from Ken Standen). The HQ at Beachley was again open for members and wives to dig into the archives. Anne Rainsbury from Chepstow Museum also set up a photo display at the Old Course Hotel. Saturday afternoon saw the annual AGM held inside Beachley Barracks at St. Georges Chapel.

The Sunday service at St. Georges Chapel was, as always, well attended and this was followed by Sunday lunch at the Old Course Hotel which proves popular for those who need the extra hour in Chepstow!

Peter Burridge

BOBA UPDATE

New BOBA is five years old; a surprise no doubt to some who thought closure of the College signalled the end of the Association. New members continue to trickle in, but these are balanced by those who don't continue their membership and by those who pass on. Nevertheless, by any measure, New BOBA is a success.

The difficulty comes in recruiting new members who left Beachley after about 1955. As mentioned, by Peter Burridge on this page, BOBA relies on the 'forties groups'. Efforts are being made to find new members through advertising but its hard going. If you know someone who could join but hasn't - why not get in touch and give him Dave Jayward's details? See page 7.

The BOBA Fund continues to grow. The balance sheet enclosed with this newsletter, shows its now worth more than £20,000. Because of this strength, the membership at the last AGM agreed to limit subscriptions to £50 per member. This means many members will make their last payments this year.

From this year all members will receive their own copy of the 'Objectives and Rules' with their membership details inside the back cover. The Association's officers are also listed. Thanks are due to Syd Thomas for this project.

The AGM in Sep 97 also saw the relaxation of the membership rules so that Beachley civilian staff with three years service can now join. Within minutes of the 'ink being dry', Pat Perry became the second lady and first civilian member. Welcome Pat.

You will, no doubt, have been absorbed over the years by Alan Holman's after dinner speeches. Now read on page 4 how he feels about Beachley and the soldier tradesmen it produced over the course of some 70 years. (The editor was under strict instructions to interfere with not as much as one full stop or comma!)

Putting together this edition of 'Beachley Echoes' was made easier by the number of items I received for publication - especially from the Exec. Committee! Thanks, as always, to John Bass and to Eddie Edwards for never failing to write. If you have an article in you, please let me have your effort as text, on disk or by e-mail. And thanks as well to Christine, the proof reader.

Looking forward to seeing you all again in September.

Dave Chapman

Please note this is the last year that the Echoes and Reunion Pack will be posted to BOBA's full mailing list. From 1999, only members with up to date subscriptions will receive it

ITEMS FOR PUBLICATION

If you have anything you want to say via the BOBA Newsletter then please send your copy to Dave Chapman at 21 Brynhyfryd Road, Newport, South Wales, NP9 4FX. We are always looking for stories, news, views and letters for publication. You might also use the newsletter to trawl for information on friends with whom you have lost touch. You can also place an advert free of charge.

Your copy for publication can be handwritten or typed. However, if you are able to send it on floppy disc to be read into Microsoft Word, so much the better. Alternatively send by e-mail (davec@bryn21.demon.co.uk).

BOBA BENEVOLENT FUND

The Benevolent Fund has stood at £991 for two or three years now as no suitable cases for assistance have been forwarded to the Trustees of the Benevolent Fund. It is available to provide help to ex-Beachley apprentices, or their families, who have fallen on hard times or need a little help over a temporary problem. Please direct any enquiries to the Chairman in the first instance.

BOBA HQ

BOBA's Headquarters are located in The Old School House, adjacent to Beachley Church. Many of the wall-mounted rolls/lists from the College have been fitted in the main room of the building. All the records including nominal rolls and copies of Robot are also available. Access to the HQ is arranged through Derek Knight, (01292 622441).

ARE YOU A PAID-UP MEMBER?



Since the formation of 'New BOBA', membership subscriptions of £10 per annum have been payable. The accounting year runs from 1st April to the following 31st March.

At the AGM of BOBA on Saturday 13th Sep 1997, a proposal to restructure the payment of annual subscriptions was approved by the membership.

It was agreed that a member having paid total subscriptions of at least £50.00 in total after 31st March 1993, i.e from year 1994/1995 onwards, would not be required to make any further payment and would become a 'paid-up' member. (This decision could be reversed by the membership at any future AGM should BOBA's finances require it).

Therefore, a member who has paid subscriptions each year since 1994/1995 will make his/her last payment in the year 1st April 1998 to 31st May 1999.

A member who wishes to achieve fully paid-up membership, may at any time pay a subscription sufficient to bring his/her total up to £50.00, or if this is not convenient, can continue to pay £10 per annum until £50 has been paid.

At the BOBA Reunion in September 1998, the Hon Treasurer will be able to confirm whether you are 'paid-up' and if not, how much you still need to pay. When you have qualified to pay no further subscriptions, and have been paying by standing order, please remember to cancel it with your bank to prevent further payments being made.

THE CHAIRMAN'S JOTTINGS

Nearly every year we seem to celebrate an important anniversary in the 'School' history: this year it is an extremely important event - the 75th Anniversary of the setting up of the Central Training School. It is also 50 years since 48A and 48B arrived as young boys to start their careers in the Army. I hope that they will have a very strong turnout. They will have to make a special effort to contact non-members of their year to encourage joining BOBA and attending the reunion.

Each year your Committee work hard to try to ensure that the Reunion weekend is a success. I believe that they succeed to a large extent (I know that a very small minority would not agree!!). Credit must go to Peter Burridge who mainly shoulders the organisational responsibilities - a task he accomplishes very well.

The Reunion weekend gives us all a chance to meet old friends, reminisce on the good/bad old days and enjoy each other's company. My wife tells me that our wives also feel this way and that they look forward to meeting each other, and to seeing new faces, every year.

For this year's Reunion, Peter has the arrangements well in hand. Ron Marie is hoping to make the Friday Night a social and dance affair rather than just dancing. We will be inviting the Commanding Officer and RSM of the resident Unit to attend the Saturday dinner as our guests.

1997 Reunion. The 51st Reunion went very well apart from a few minor hiccups, which yet another change of hotel manager should rectify. Peter Burridge has had long discussions with the new man (ex-Army) and is confident that the meals will be an improvement.

The 1998 AGM.

The President. I shall be asking you to approve the extension of Colonel Alan Holman for a further year, ie to the 1999 AGM.

Chairman As most will be aware, I will have completed my three years in office at the AGM and according to our rules we must have an election. Nominations should be sent to The Secretary well in advance of the AGM - please be sure that your nominee is willing to stand and that you have a seconder.

Reunion Venue The possibility of holding the Reunion at Pontins, Sand Bay will be put as a proposition at The AGM - I hope that we will not have a long drawn out discussion on the subject, - you will be asked to vote on it. Our latest enquiries, based on the numbers likely to attend, show that it would be a very expensive weekend. If you have any questions ring Ron Marie on 01934 412986 (weekdays).

The Objectives and Rules Book At long last I have managed to produce this document - it is included along with other items in this mailshot. Please try to keep it up to date.

Membership Dave Hayward has completed a study showing that we lose many members after they have paid their initial fees. Of the 456 members that joined in 1994, 117 have failed to maintain their membership, a 25% loss. In 1996, of the 59 who joined, 30 have not renewed membership - a 50% loss. WHY?. Dave, together with Ron Marie (REs) and Frank Pickering (REME) are using their corps magazines, local and national press, TV and radio as recruiting vehicles. I still believe that each and every member has a responsibility in this respect.

The Newsletter David Chapman has again produced an excellent newsletter without much input from you the members!! If David is to continue to produce the letter he needs your articles.

The Ladies Column Very few of the ladies had seen Jo's column in the last Newsletter - come on hand it over to your partner to read. I can only hope that Jo will be fit enough to attend the Reunion - she is due to have a hip replacement in Jul/Aug.

The BOBA Open Golf Championship An 18 hole Stableford competition on the Saturday morning - see Ken Standing's page for details.

Both Jo and I look forward to seeing you over the weekend of 17/19th September 1998.

Syd Thomas.

PPP or A PRESIDENT'S POT-POURRI

"What goes around comes around" How often have we said as much when we hear of a "new" idea. The wheel gets re-invented on numerous occasions and of course we all know the person who had the original thought. But life is like that and when all is said and done does it really alter the price of bread. Of course not ! What does matter is that we afford the other person their right to a point of view no matter how vigorously we might contest the argument. To some extent that is precisely what we do when we choose to come together once a year to re kindle the friendships, relive our experiences and yes, as often as not, re write the history. But it is so much fun, even if the harsh reality of circumstance often denies us important cast members - it is the memory that counts and their memory that matters.

My memories of "the Apprentice" while being a lot more recent than some of you Old Soldiers nevertheless typify attitudes and reputations of many in similar circumstances. Strangely, they start with it's "product" and the everlasting impression created one wintry morn in January 1960 at Gibraltar Barracks in Aldershot. I was a bright and bushy tailed newly promoted 18 year old Lance Corporal on my first posting out of training. He was an extremely confident "Ex Rat" - two stripes - two dodgers, box pleats, elastics, weights, sharp creases and wearing a beret as only Ex Rats did. When he marched, he swaggered. He oozed confidence and pride and he was to become my guide and mentor for the next 2 years as well as my Best Man. I remember being enormously impressed by the amount of experience he had gained and by the qualifications he had achieved in his apprenticeship - both training and education - and maybe even just a little envious of the perceived advantages I believed such a start had given him. If I was to compete I was going to have to work hard - and I did -thanks to him.

Eleven years later, after influential spells of Service in both Corporals and Warrant Officers and Sergeants Messes, I had been commissioned and fate handed me an opportunity to view the Apprentice College first hand as a Wing Captain in A Company. Those early impressions, and of course, those of many more friends in the intervening period, were not to be dashed. The place was throbbing! Industry, pride in performance and team spirit are but three expressions that come to mind.

Work hard, play hard. Military Training hand in glove with Trade and Education while each department was fiercely protective of its' individual contribution. I was reminded of my school motto "Absque Labore Nihil" - "Without Work,Nothing" or perhaps more succinctly - "yer get owt f'nowt!" It was an enormously rewarding experience and one that was to have a lasting effect on my own attitudes, ambitions and personal goals. I marvelled at the dedication of the Staff and loved the participation in all things associated with College life. Just like you all I made lots of friends and acquaintances many of whom were there to welcome or perhaps even haunt me some 14 years on - but more of that later!

There were of course many fond memories including two Royal visits and a whole host of important landmarks as well as a variety of less important but no less significant events. To this day one of my proudest memories comes from my involvement with the College Football team and their success in the Blythe (Sapper Units UK) Cup . It was unusual to enter a team without any members of the Permanent Staff; let alone to do so and win. It was a feat that remains unequalled to this day. Such a feat was indicative of the ethos of the College. It created an atmosphere that said to each and every one that with hard work, determination, the support of others and a modicum of good luck, anything was possible if you wanted it badly enough. What a philosophy for life. Sadly some 6 years later I was reminded of that team in more tragic circumstances when it's skipper lost his life during the Falklands campaign. I wonder how many of you too have occasion to reflect on such bitter sweet memories?

In the years that followed, I was reminded time and time again of the camaraderie and, more importantly, of the value of the Junior Entry to the Army . The value in terms of the numbers provided on a regular basis to both Corporals and Sergeants Messes, and of course, of the numbers making it through to commissioning. What a wonderful return on an investment for both the Army and to society in general. Given such feelings and the passion I felt for the organisation and after tours of duty in UK, Germany, Belgium, and the USA in some wonderfully inspiring appointments, you may well imagine my delight when 14 years later I was selected to return to Chepstow as it's

Commandant. "What goes around. Comes around, or perhaps even "everything comes to those who wait?" Whatever - for me it was the fulfilment of a life time ambition and a moment to be treasured.

What happened next was no more than that which happens each year to all of us when we renew friendships often after a considerable time - that is to say that the gap is bridged with infinite ease. Why? Because the memory of the time spent together through thick and thin proves far stronger than the time elapsed. That is exactly how I felt returning - the College was an old and respected friend as, indeed, were the many members of Staff from all Departments and of all persuasions. If I remember correctly no fewer than 40 of the 180 Civilian Staff had been at the College on my departure in 1975 - what more could one ask for at the start of what was to prove an extremely demanding and challenging tour of duty.

Now you will recall that the late 80's was a time of revolutionary proposals and change in the Armed Forces. Since many of you will have heard me pronounce on the events which eventually led to the College closure at the end of my successor's reign, I do not intend to labour the matter here. More to the point and perhaps somewhat perversely, I would have to say that in some ways it heightened the challenge and made demands on staff and apprentice alike, that should have been unheard of in such an intensive training environment. There was a plethora of major issues to address in addition to those which beset the organisation on a regular basis.

The first of these, and a subject that was rarely out of any strategic discussion, involved money! (now there's a surprise). These were the days of "accountability" - the Executive Responsibility Budget! We had to account for absolutely every penny and while for many of you in the "real world" this is the norm, you will also appreciate just how alien it was at that time to the culture of the Armed Forces especially at Unit level. But run the budgets we did and with no small degree of success, (he says modestly), despite year on year enforced reductions down to a figure that was close to £11.5 million on my departure. I actually enjoyed the experience, but then perhaps you have always thought me "a ha'p'orth short of a shilling" in any case.

The pressure was on to make savings - the so called peace dividend. The Junior entry was

vulnerable. We tried running Combat Engineer Training courses on top of everything else and when the Junior Leaders Regiment closed at Dover we sought to prove our flexibility and worth by taking one such Junior Leaders Squadron at Chepstow. We re-designed courses - took active part in the most exhaustive review of the Junior Entry army-wide and then did it all again. The word "Justify" was given an altogether different meaning. Logic and common sense went out of the window - "to justify" meant produce a solution which made the required savings without due consideration for the long term effects on the fabric of recruiting and, more importantly, for long term youth opportunities in a khaki uniform.

But enough of this tirade - time is a great healer! Suffice it to say that the Junior Leader is being reintroduced this year and a Single Apprentice College is in the offing as recommended by all Apprentice College Commandants, in 1990/91. The Armed Forces are also working energetically to resolve undermanning. Good job I am not a cynic! One might assume that against such a back drop normal life would have been impossible but not a word of it. We recruited, retained and competed. Our results matched those of preceding years, both at work and play. Naturally, this does not mean that there were not major problems - there were - but by working together we prevailed. We prevailed because this was the nature of the beast, not simply for this short period of time but from the creation of the establishment in 1923 to the present day.

Beginning with those impressions created for me in 1960, right through my own 33 years of Service experiences and the many happy years of my association with BOBA, one thing is common throughout - we care. We remember with dignity and pride those with whom we served and those who served us whilst at the College. We are indebted to them all. We relive those experiences through the medium of the Association year in and year out at our Reunion safe in the knowledge that we are of one mind. So let us look to the future with added zest and constructive discussion. To use the well known phrase "don't tell me why not - tell me how". Yes, indeed, we are still going "round" - and long may it continue.

Alan Holman

The Beachley Boy - Recording a 70 Year Heritage

We have invited Anne Rainsbury, Curator of Chepstow Museum to set up a display of 'Beachley memorabilia' at the Old Course Hotel on the morning of Saturday, 19th September 1998.

The display will include hundreds of photographs arranged in lever-arch files. Unfortunately, most of the boys and staff in these photos are, to date, anonymous. Please come along and help identify names, dates and events - you might be there yourself!

Anne is keen to compile, on tape or in manuscript, reminiscences of apprentice's activities during their time at Beachley with a view to printing a publication describing Beachley Boys' lives. Such reminiscences could include apple scrumping, raiding QM's coal compounds, unusual feats, escapades against the Staff, dirges of the day etc.

There are, of course, a great many connections between Beachley Boys and the local community - how many marriages I wonder? But do you have any recollections of apprentices assisting in local community aid viz. wrought iron working, stonemasonry, wood working, electrical installation, construction of footpaths, roads, bridges etc.

One possibility is to arrange all the information into the three eras of apprentice life at Beachley.

Boys Technical School/Army Technical School (Boys)	1924 -1942 Groups Nos. 1 to 45
Army Technical School (Boys)/ Army Apprentices School.	1942 -1965 Groups Nos. 42A to 65C
Army Apprentices College	1966-1994 Groups 66A to 92.

Please help - phone me on 01934 412986 - or come on the Saturday morning at the Old Course.

Ron Marie

The Ladies Column

It seems only a short while ago that I wrote notes for last year's newsletter. Just where does the time go?

Last year's BOBA Reunion was a huge success and our thanks are due to the Committee for their sterling efforts. Syd tells me that the Old Course Hotel has once again changed its manager, this time he is ex- Army. He has promised to return to the very high standard we saw on our first visit to the hotel in 1994. To assist a smooth and efficient service we will be going into dinner half an hour before the men.

BOBA Reunion is very special, as Chepstow is a lovely venue which forms a base for a relaxed, away from those home chores, weekend. It gives us the opportunity to meet old friends and hopefully welcome new ones.

Moreover, we can discuss the year's happenings, visit the local shops or go further afield to Newport, visit relations or friends who live around the area, partake of the social scene and indulge in the odd glass of wine.

I have it on good authority that many ladies did not see the last Ladies Column - come on chaps pass it over.

There must be other ladies who would like to have their say, voice an opinion or have an interesting story to recall, if so please send it to David Chapman for publication in the next newsletter. We might even get a Ladies Page!!.

Until we meet in September - God Bless.

Jo Thomas

Membership Secretary's Update

This year I've taken over as Membership Secretary from Frank Pickering. I wish to thank the Committee members for their support during the transition period. Initially, there was something of a communication problem, because only a few members knew my address or telephone number. Consequently, I have been receiving mail via the Beachley HQ or other Committee members. I've now included my contact details below which should avoid future delays.

The Committee is currently exploring a number of avenues with the aim of increasing membership numbers. These have resulted in an encouraging number of enquiries, but only time will tell if they join. The majority of the (about) six hundred members are from pre-1940 groups and the groups within the 1940-1949 decade (410). There is a dramatic decrease in membership from thereon - 50's intakes (72), 60's intakes (78), 70's intakes (37) and 80's intakes (6). As age takes its toll on early groups we need to encourage the younger ex-Beachley boys to join if BOBA is to survive in the future. If you are in touch with anyone who is not a member and is interested in joining, please get them to contact me.

The new membership fee system, agreed at the 97 AGM, comes into effect this year. This limits the total required to be a 'paid up member' to 5 payments of £10. e.g. those members who joined in 1994 and have maintained their annual payment will complete this year.

Any concerns or queries - please contact me at this address or telephone number:

Dave Hayward - 14 Ash Grove, Middlewich, Cheshire, CW10 0AQ - Tel. 01606 833617

Member 628 - A Special Welcome.

At the 1997 AGM, BOBA's Rules were amended to allow civilians with three years Beachley service to become full members. A special welcome is therefore due to Pat Perry, who has become the second lady member and the first civilian under the new rule to join BOBA.

Pat started work as a lab technician in the Education Department at Beachley in 1980 and continued right through to the end in June 1994. Pat is no stranger to BOBA members: around about 1982/83 when Ken Taylor was unwell, Pat began helping out running BOBA - answering old boys' enquiries, general admin and helping on the Reunion weekend etc.

Pat will be attending the Reunion once again this year.

*"God and the old soldier all men adore,
In times of trouble but not before.
When the enemy's gone and the wrong is righted,
God is forgotten and the old soldier slighted"*

Maurice Murtagh

Robot Editorial Extract from December 1939

"Since the last editorial pen was wielded, we have been forced to draw the sword for justice and freedom. We find ourselves again with Germany as our enemy, and France as the same faithful ally".

There followed a letter to the Army from HM the King and a reply by the Secretary of State for War.

The editorial concluded "For the guidance of contributors of news and other articles, the following will be of use:- a) No information must be published which might in any conception be of use to the enemy". Four other sub-paras in a similar vein followed.

The editor concluded "Censorship restrictions affect adversely any editorial instinct; but the Editor is not restricted from wishing all, in spite of circumstances, a very happy Christmas, good leave, and a happy new year".

Derek Knight

AN INCIDENT REPORT

Lt Col Syd Thomas (ex C Coy Art Vehs) intercepted this email report from the Captain (an ex Commandant) of a large luxury yacht (£9 million Gin Palace) to the Owner's agent (an ex BOBA Chairman).

Subject: Incident Report.

Sir,

It is with regret and some haste that I write this report. Regret that such a *small* misunderstanding could lead to the following circumstances and haste in order that you should receive my report before you form any preconceived opinions from press reports which may exaggerate the affair.

We had just picked up the Pilot, a crew member had changed the "G" flag for the "H" flag. As this was his first voyage he was experiencing some difficulty in correctly folding the flag. I proceeded to show him the correct way to do this but the lad, (ex D Coy Blacksmith), is none too bright and coming to the last part I told him to "let go". His failure to understand this simple command necessitated my having to repeat it in somewhat sharper tone.

At this moment the Mate (ex B Coy Art ECE) entered the wheelhouse and, thinking that it was the anchors being referred to, repeated the order to the crew member (an ex D Coy Bricklayer) at the bow. The port anchor, having been cleared away but not walked out, was promptly let go. The effect of dropping the anchor with the vessel proceeding at full harbour speed proved too much for the windlass brake. I fear that the damage to the anchor locker may be extensive. The braking effect of the anchor naturally caused the vessel to sheer to port towards a swing bridge which spans a tributary of the river up which we were proceeding.

The swing bridge operator showed a presence of mind not usually found in these parts by immediately opening his bridge but, unfortunately, without first stopping the traffic. This resulted in the following being deposited on the foredeck: one Volkswagen, two cyclists and a small livestock transporter. The yacht's crew are at present rounding up the contents of the latter which I would guess, from the noise, to be pigs. (I understand from the Chef that it is roast pork for dinner!)

In a quick minded effort to slow the forward progress of the vessel, the foredeck crew member let go the starboard anchor. This proved a little too late to be of any practical use for it fell on the swing bridge operator's cabin, destroying the same. When the port anchor was let go and the vessel started to sheer to port I at once gave a double ring Full Astern to the engine room and personally phoned

the engineer (an ex A Coy Veh Mech) to order maximum revolutions. I was informed that the sea temperature was 53 degrees and asked if the yacht's bar was open yet. My reply would not add constructively to this report.

So far I have confined my report to events at the forward end of the vessel but down aft there were also problems. A second crew member (ex Staff RD) was in the process of securing the aft tug and passing down our towing spring to them. The braking effect of the port anchor caused the tug to run under our stern at the very moment that the propeller was at full astern. The prompt action of this crew member in securing the inboard end of the towing spring delayed the sinking of the tug by some moments.

By a strange coincidence there was a power cut ashore at the very moment the port anchor was let go. The fact that we were passing over an underwater power cable area may have had something to do with this but, at any event, it was fortuitous that the overhead cables, brought down by our mast, were not live. I regret, however, that the resulting darkness means that I am presently unable to report where the supporting pylons fell or what damage they did in falling.

The reaction of the average foreigner to a minor inconvenience is a source of constant amazement to me. The Pilot, for example, is huddled in a corner of the wheelhouse alternately crooning and weeping after having consumed a bottle of gin in a time worthy of an entry in the Guinness Book of Records. The Tug Captain, on the other hand, after being rescued by my crew became so violent that he is now handcuffed in the heads. Of the swing bridge operator, there is no sign despite having caused the destruction of a number of vehicles by his actions.

I append the names and addresses of the drivers and insurance details of the vehicles presently parked on our foredeck. These particulars should enable you to expedite the claims for damage they caused to the foredeck and hatch.

In closing I would just like to say that it is sad to note that the quality of instruction given to Beachley Boys during sailing courses has so declined. Had the boy known that there is no need to fly the Pilot flag after dark, none of this would have happened.

I remain, Sir
Your obedient servant !!!!

The Finding of 'Nev'

Improper procedure. Illogical! Yet it found OUR Neville.

Neville George Adams was two numbers ahead of me in 'signing-on', or was it 'signing-in' on our first day in Beachley: his last 3 being '179' and mine '181'.

During our last holiday in Blighty we were in Cirencester for a few days when I suggested to Irmgard, my wife, we could 'drop' into Stroud on our way towards Wales.

"Nev Adams lived in 'The Manse' before going to Beachley...." seemed adequate enough, but I had my doubts when we got there. In the library, embarrassment almost choked..... Suppose the nice lady asked me when it was that I last met Nev....? But she didn't....50 years, plus a few months, and Nev had 8 years with the Colours to do at the time. I took photocopies of Adams in the telephone book and wrote to five addresses, including a SAE, asking did you have a relation named Neville George Adams who joined the Army at 14 -15?

A reply came. From the Neville himself! He'd spent years in other places than Stroud, including Jersey. Last Saturday, (6th Dec 97), I went down to Somerset to meet him ... It was a wonderful weekend with Mary (wife he married last year) and Neville. I was sad to leave and return to Germany.

So another of 44A A Coy has been found and we'll be having the pleasure of this delightful couple at BOBA 98.

John Bass 44A

I'M FINE THANK YOU

There is nothing the matter with me,
I'm as healthy as can be.
I have arthritis in both my knees,
And when I talk with a wheeze,
My pulse is weak and my blood is thin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in!

Arch supports I have for my feet,
Or I wouldn't be able to be on the street.
Sleep is denied me, night after night,
But every morning I find I'm all right.
My memory is failing, my head's in a spin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in!

The moral is this, as my tale I unfold,
That for you and me who are growing old,
'tis better to say "I'm fine" with a grin,
Than to let people know the shape we're in!

How do I know that my youth is all spent?
Well, my "Get up and go" has "Got up and went".
But I really don't mind when I think with a grin,
Of all the grand places my "Get Up" has been!

Old age is golden, I've heard it said,
But I sometimes wonder as I get into bed,
With my ears in the drawer, my teeth in a cup,
My eyes on the table until I wake up,
Ere sleep overtakes, I say to myself,
"Is there anything else I could lay on the shelf?"

When I was young, my slippers were red,
I could kick my heels right over my head.
When I was older, my slippers were blue,
But still I could dance the whole night through.
Now I am old, my slippers are black,
I walk to the shops and puff my way back.
I get up each morning and dust off my wits,
And pick up the papers and read the 'obits',
If my name is still missing I know I'm not dead,
So I have a good breakfast and go back to bed!!

Contributed by Eddy Edwards 44A

From Maurice Murtagh - *For all politicians who reminisce on what **they** have achieved for us:*

It is the Soldier, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the Soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the Soldier, not the campus organiser, who gives us freedom to demonstrate.

It is the Soldier who salutes the Flag,

who serves under the Flag,

whose coffin is draped by the Flag,

who allows the protester to burn the Flag.

Fr. Dennis Edward O'Brien

Shoebury Garrison. Eddy Edwards (44A) and Joe Finnerty (43B) attended the Last Sunset Ceremony at Horseshoe Barracks, Shoeburyness in March. The Barracks will be finally closing later this year after 150 years. Eddy believes many ex-boy gunners will have served at Shoeburyness and will have many fond memories of their time there.

'Tank Surgeon' Extraordinary

Jack Stratford, (29 Group, Member No.347) had a father to remember. He was a soldier, an NCO in India for 12 years; training and teaching soldiers and soldiers' children alike. He was commissioned; probably trained my own father at Woolwich, and survived WW1. Afterwards he had a bric-a-brac shop in Croydon, where he gave each item to be sold, some lines of poetry. He later had a shop near Brentwood, Essex. He died in 1958 at almost 96 years of age.

It seemed the artistic talents and the academic abilities of the father were repeated, albeit in a different way in his son, Jack, because he became a very special type of artisan; much more advanced, than most, in technical know-how for his day. He became one of the 'Tank Surgeons', who helped Monty take the credit out of Rommel's desert warfare. There weren't many of Jack's sort available at that critical period of WW2.

Jack's father had considerable concern for the boy. This is clear in the following poem, written by Jack's father, when the boy joined Beachley in May 1932:

1. Jack Stratford is a soldier bold,
At Beachley on the Wye.
In Monmouth County, so I'm told,
With Chepstow quite nearby.
2. Six Wing, C Company is his mob,
You'll find him there, no doubt;
He'll probably be on his job,
Or somewhere thereabout.
3. Now don't get angry, postman dear,
And gnash your sharp canines;
For this address you'll find is clear,
Within the first four lines.
4. So take this to him with good cheer,
You'll grieve me if you don't.
P'raps Jack will treat you to a beer,
But then - perhaps he won't.

This fatherly concern is not so strong in the next poem - yet it is still there; particularly in the latter part where the father directly addresses his son:

1. You'll find Pte Stratford at Bovington Camp,
In Dorsetshire - Wareham's nearby.
I'd put in his number, but fear writer's cramp,
Besides -- the ink's not yet dry.
2. But he's getting on now, he's eighteen - today,
And so reaches manhood's estate.
Which brings, in its train, an increase in pay,
And conduct, we hope, more sedate.
3. The Royal Tank Corps will a fit tribute pay,
To this noble coming of age;
By granting the Depot a half-holiday,
And at parlour games - - all will engage.
4. From now on, my lad, it's 'eyes front' for you,
Your shoulder put firm to the wheel;
Wire into your job, with vigour anew,
Nor let setbacks diminish your zeal.
5. You're fit, and you've the brawn and the brain,
Not all mortals, alas, are so blest;
With assets like these, your goal you'll attain.
Go ahead and give of your best.
6. By these means alone, a place you may win,
A place which is a real workers' due;
Meet trials and troubles and kicks with a grin,
The result - win or lose - lies with you!

Only four were accepted for the Royal Tank Corps at Bovington. By George V's institution, the black beret became their symbol of difference - and rarity - yet it was a sensible innovation. Imagine wearing a peaked 'cheesecutter', forage cap or pith helmet when upside-down-inside repairing a tank! Jack says that when they dumped him in the desert he threw his pith helmet into the Suez Canal - it was a constant encumbrance!

I was amused when Jack told me of the drill parade on the

square in front of the RA BSM and other ranks at the famous Military College of Science at Woolwich. "Instead of the usual loud shouting, "We 'tank men' had very special hand signals to drill without our tanks on the square".

"Line Ahead" - following in-line, leader facing;

"Line Abreast - in-line all facing front;

"Arrow", or "Chevron" formation;

An arm out twice meant a FULL turn, right or left;

Out once meant a HALF turn; Both arms up or outward meant GO and STOP.

And there were several others!

Of course, tanks on the move in action go where terrain demands; in the desert they spread out to prevent 'zero visibility' dustclouds, the commander uses a flag and radio helps.

Number One, or Squadron Commander, as leader blew a whistle preceding these commands, for effect on the

square. In reality, of course, a whistle would be ludicrous. One day to confuse the BSM, Jack and the leader switched their clothes .. and wore fancy leggings, and of all things - spurs! They wore their berets wrong-sided i.e. badge over right eye (instead of the left) and beret draped over left ear (instead of the right). Small wonder Jack's father had expressed concern!

Then it was Lydd and Farnborough, where Jack gained that specialist expertise of 'fixing' the most 'unfixable' tank.

The Munich crisis of Sep 38 saw him in his overseas posting, already in Egypt, to protect the Suez Canal against Mussolini. He'd arrived in March 38. In 39, he was transferred to the Royal Armoured Corps, five months before WW2 got under way.

In the Tobruk area the worst discomforts were accompanied by 1200 air raids in 8 months; flies, stomach disorders, too much work with too little sleep, desalinated water which was still salty, chancy food and one letter which had been recovered from a sunken ship and finally got to him ...to change his later life ... Violet, Jack's girl of a few years before, had told young Jack to hop it ... or was it a joint taking of umbrage? and that recovered letter was postmarked eight times, at different BFPOs, before getting to Jack. But more than 50 years later Vi, who was in the WAAF, and Jack can look back and laugh at a stupid war.

And yet that happy half century could have been taken away by an over-zealous REME officer who threatened Jack with

execution for disobeying an order under fire.

The order was to repair the CO's car. Jack, in charge of a repair group had got all THEIR tanks across a length of desert and not one was out of order. "Its a simple adaption - one of your blokes could do it. Shoot me after I've had a kip" Jack told the officer and went back to sleep.

"Just a squaddie doing my job to the best of my ability and that twit was so twisted up in his ignorance of what was going on he could easily have had me shot. I'd not had a proper night's sleep for more than ten days" said Jack; yet - not bitterly.

Roughly 2000 miles covered on active service in the desert fixing tanks. Egypt, Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, Tunisia and Algeria. This was followed, without break, by the invasion of Salerno and 100 miles in Italy - still fixing the unfixable tanks.

Then Blighty, but no leave. Flap on in preparation for D Day. Jan 1944 at Sugar Hill, Didlington, near Thetford, then Ipswich and Tilbury, preparing tanks by 'bostikation' waterproofing. To allow batteries to breathe during charging, and still be waterproofed, the well known latex rubber sheaths were used; expanding and contracting in a most unlikely fashion.

During that time, security was tight. In early June, after more than 5 years active service overseas in the desert and four months in Italy, Jack was a virtual prisoner in a British camp.

This camp at Childerditch, was four miles from the Stratford family home at Hutton near Brentwood. It was guarded by British MPs, armed with machine

guns because of secrecy due to the coming invasion. But, Jack being an ex-boy easily went thro' the wire, the guards and patrols; made it home and back without detection, or being declared absent...just an hour, or so, at home.

On 7th June 1944 he landed with the tanks to spur on towards Germany. There are many more episodes, in the Jack Stratford military story, which will be in Jack's book; perhaps not a superstar, or wonderman; yet I think worthy of telling and reading.

I'll conclude this with, 'The 50th Njmagen Anniversary'.

Jack showed me a wide-angle photo of 'the 50th D Day Anniversary'. He was prominent in the black beret with gleaming tank, the ever-enquiring look and deeply observant eyes.

"Never knew it had been taken", said Jack proudly, "Ellon, France, Conde, Basse, Normandy -- all had, 'thank you liberators!' cards - everywhere you looked. Little children giving us flowers and calling us heroes; it was just wonderful to have all those people greeting us. And really, you know, we were only doing our job".

At the ceremony to close the College in March 1994, Jack was in the BOBA ranks wearing his black (Royal Tank Corps) beret as protection against the teeming rain. Such a small thing as a cloudburst could not PREVENT a real ex-boy taking part!

John Bass

DON'T FORGET THAT PETER BURRIDGE CANNOT ISSUE REUNION TICKETS UNLESS YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION IS UP TO DATE

From the Hon Secretary

May I begin by thanking all those members who attended the Reunion last year. The weekends go from strength to strength. I expect this year's Reunion to be no different; planning is well in hand and I, for one, look forward to seeing some familiar faces and hopefully some new members.

The Founders Day service in St George's Chapel was well attended and the collection of £305 was well in excess of the monies raised in the previous year. As you all know the money is donated to the Army Benevolent Fund for the good and benefit of soldiers, ex-soldiers and their dependants of all arms and corps. The response from the Trustees was as follows "Will you please thank the members of Beachley Old Boys' Association for this very generous donation and assure them that it will be used wisely helping the many soldiers, ex-soldiers and their families who look to the Fund when they are in real need. It is much appreciated." The generosity of those who contributed to the collection is to be applauded.

Jottings.....

Did you know ? that in January 1925 it was decided to turf the numerous playing fields at Beachley rather than wait for the seeding process. By the end of the year, there were 3 cricket pitches, 5 soccer pitches, 9 hockey pitches and a solitary rugby pitch. All this turfing, and there was much more to be done throughout the camp, led to a novel idea by HQ Wing. A Turfing Competition was devised with teams comprising, wielders of turfing instruments, wheel barrow pushers and turf layers. It is recalled that "No 2 hut scraped home in the final by 2½ sods to 1."

More jottings.....

Continuing with the sports theme, *Did you know ?* that during the winter of 1944 - 45 a certain Capt George Taylor supervised German prisoners-of-war in constructing a cinder running track, creating envy for miles around.

Yet more jottings.....

Did you know ? that in July 1939 Col Shears formed the Beachley Old Boys' Association, as a "means to foster and keep alive in the future the many friendships made in Beachley." It was decided at the first Association General Meeting that a re-union would be held on the fourth Saturday of every September (i.e. the nearest to the Foundation date). Sadly the war prevented the first re-union from taking place. At the close of this first meeting the Association had 52 members and 7 associate members !!!

Brian Henderson

A Foreign Tongue

13th Jan 1960; a new group was arriving at Beachley. It was late afternoon and already dark. I was last getting onto the bus at Chep railway station as Sgt Jones thrust a warrant into my hand with the instruction "This will pay for every boy on here".

I duly gave it to the conductor as the bus slogged up towards Tushill. Knowing nothing of warrants, the Army and life outside Gosforth, Geordie, (now Lt Col) Brian Stafford spotting my apparent wealth barracked naively "This skinny toff's paeid for the whoole bloody bous!! But the jibe was completely lost on me because I hadn't heard any Geordie spoken in Suffolk, and we didn't have a telly at home where we might hear funny accents!

Dave Chapman

Snippet from The Robot July 1933.

"A swimming exhibition by Miss Valerie Davies, the well-known Olympic champion, was the highlight of the first aquatic sports day held at the School.

Miss Davis entered the water and demonstrated how easy it is to do difficult things. Among the very clever things she did were:- swimming upside down, imitation of a porpoise at play, a monkey up a stick and a turtle having a sun bath. Her display was followed with wrapt attention by all."

Photos show Miss Davis to have been 'comely'. I particularly liked the caption under one of the three photos which was entitled "Boys watching Miss Valerie Davies".

Ed.

Since the Hon Sec announced the latest deaths at the 1997 AGM the following have sadly been reported.

Member No.51 - **R J (Mac) Macdonald** - 43 Group : Member No.430 - **T (Tom) Hamper** - 42 Group

THE 1997 BOBA OPEN GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

The BOBA Open, in the form of an 18 hole stableford competition, took place on the Valley Course of Dewstow Golf Club on Saturday 13th September 1997. An excellent turnout of 22 golfers played on the day, including three ladies.

The competition started at 10 a.m., an hour later than usual, to allow the players to clear their heads from the excellent function held on the previous night!!

The Valley Course proved to be in very good condition, the weather was perfect and the standard of golf was generally good!

After many recounts the following were declared winners:

BOBA Champion 1997	David Fowle 66C	37 points - H/C 28
Runner Up	Tony Battle 57B	35 points - H/C 13
Nearest The Pin	Chris Jarvis 67B	H/C 28
Longest Drive	Foster Pattison 56B	H/C 22
Best Gross Par	George Murray 43A	H/C 10

The Stableford Trophy was kindly presented by the BOBA Chairman together with the minor prizes.

Already the planning for the **1998 BOBA OPEN** is underway and I hope that you all make every effort to take part in this year's competition. Members who are already registered will automatically receive the details of the 1998 event. Any golfer who wishes to join us for the first time should ring me, Ken Standen, on 01291 624022 and I will send you the necessary papers.

In the meantime, keep practising and I will look forward to seeing you in September.

Ken Standen

A SAPPER'S WAR

Len Watkins, 39 Group D Coy, has done what many talk of doing - he has written a book about his wartime experiences - in this case a Royal Engineers field company. As a measure of its merit, Len's story has been selected as 'The Military History Society's catalogue book of the year'!

"No punches are pulled in describing day to day action from the initial days of training at the Army College, Chepstow to 'The End of it All' in Central Europe in 1945. The horrors of mine warfare, bridging under fire, and the author's experience of a French brothel are fully described".

The book is available, on request, from W H Smith and all leading booksellers. Minerva Press : ISBN 1 85863 715 5. Price £8.99. After publication costs have been met, a donation will be made to Royal Engineer Funds.

You can obtain a signed 1st edition copy direct from Len for £8.99 UK post -free. For overseas orders, please include £1 p+p for EU addresses and £2.50 elsewhere.

To: **L Watkins, Trecase, 3 Cwrt Newydd, Greenhill Way, Crickhowell, Powys, NP8 1AQ.**

Please send me copies of "A Sapper's War" @ £8.99 per copy.

My cheque, to include postage, where applicable, is enclosed for £.....

Name.....Address.....
.....Post Code.....

BEACHLEY OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE, BEACHLEY, CHEPSTOW, GWENT NP6 7YG

Secretary

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MINUTES OF THE BEACHLEY OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** **HELD AT BEACHLEY BARRACKS, CHEPSTOW** **ON SATURDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 1997**

Present	Brig (Retd) WMR Addison	President
	Lt Col (Retd) S Thomas	Chairman
	Maj (Retd) DC Chapman	Treasurer
	Mr M Murtagh	Vice President
	Mr G Gasser	Vice President
	Mr P Burridge	Entertainment
	Mr D Knight	Chepstow Liaison
	Mr B Henderson	Secretary

There were some 155 BOBA members assembled in St George's Chapel for the meeting, numerous members had sent in their apologies, some of our members who currently live overseas had also tendered their apologies.

The meeting opened at 1530hrs.

Opening Address.

1. In time honoured tradition the President opened the meeting by welcoming all present. He thanked them for their loyalty and support in particular those who had travelled many miles within the UK and from abroad to attend the reunion. He fully anticipated that the weekend would be yet another success and looked forward to meeting the members later in the day.

2. The Chairman then introduced himself and also the members of the Executive Committee to the members present. Continuing he said that the main business of the day was to agree the proposed changes to BOBA rules of membership.

Item 1. - Minutes of last Annual General Meeting.

3. As in previous years, the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 14th September 1996 were included in the annual information pack that was sent to all

members. The Chairman felt that all the members present should be aware of there contents and asked if there were any comments or observations.

4. There being no comments, observations or matters arising, it was Proposed by F Pickering and Seconded by F Spindler that the minutes were a true record of the 96 AGM.

Carried unanimously.

Item 2. - In Memorium.

5. The Executive committee have been notified of the deaths of the following Beachley Old Boys during the previous 12 months:

WJ Atcherley	
GM Avard	46A
J Baston	46A
D Boriszenko	65B
SF Curran	8
JH Dawes	41
R Elder	43
GD Evans	47B
PLT Godbehear	35
M Griffin	48A
AW Hall	25
D Jeffery	46B
CK Lewis	23
NA MacDonald	46A
VHJ Mealyer	1
WG Owen	21
WJ Ralph	40
CHR Rogers	5
FH Rye	8
RJ Sings	16
P Stansbury	45B
G Todd	43A
J Tooher	39
S Waite	
WA White	43A

The members present stood and observed a period of silent remembrance.

Item 3. - Executive Committee Reports.

Item 3a. - Financial.

6. For reference, copies of the Final Accounts and Auditor's Report for the period up to 31st March 1997 were circulated by the Treasurer.

7. The account was audited by Capt (Retd) DA Knight and he was satisfied that proper books of account have been kept and that the final accounts give a true and fair view of the

results of transactions over the period. He was also satisfied that cash and bank balances and stocks in hand are correct and that adequate insurance cover exists.

8. The accumulated General Purpose Fund (GPF) had a closing balance of £17,854.39 with an excess of income over expenditure for the period of £1,927.39. The main expenditures from GPF were postage and committee expenses e.g. Motor mileage allowances. Membership subscriptions showed a healthy increase over the previous period of approximately £1,000.

9. It was Proposed by S Moir and Seconded by D Griben that the Treasurers report be passed as read and congratulations given for all his effort in maintaining and presenting the account.

Carried unanimously.

Item 3b. - Secretarial.

10. The Secretary commenced by reading out some of the apologies that he had received. Correspondence had been sent by JT Stratford 29 Gp, Mr Gilligan 1 Gp, Mr G Trowsdale 41D Gp, Lt Col Winder plus many more.

11. Last years offertory at the Founders Day Service had raised £243.38 and as usual the monies were donated to the Army Benevolent Fund for the good and benefit of soldiers, ex-soldiers and their families of all Arms and Corps. A letter of acknowledge had been received from the ABF and this was read out to the members present.

12. The Secretary said it was evident from recent phone calls he had received that some members were not receiving the annual information pack, this was mainly due to the committee holding the incorrect postal address. For those members present who had not received a pack a number would be available for distribution after the meeting.

13. The Secretary then read out a number of articles from the College history and the BOBA Minute Book.

Item 3c. - Membership.

14. The Secretary explained that for the past few months he had carried out the duties of Membership Secretary since the resignation of Mr Frank Pickering because of his move from Chepstow to a smaller property in the Southampton area.

15. The membership database contained 597 names of which 313 had paid their fees for the year 97/98. Sadly 12 names have been moved from the main database table because the members had died.

16. Since taking on the temporary duties of Membership Secretary 8 Old Boys have joined new BOBA and their names are now on the computer, yesterday a further 4 names were passed to the Secretary for inclusion on the database. Membership at present therefore is static however we should all take it upon ourselves to recruit more members.

17. As always the ideal way to pay BOBA subscriptions is by Standing Order as this reduces the processing effort needed by the committee in particular the Membership Secretary and Treasurer.

18. Referring back to the failure of some members to receive their annual information pack, the Secretary said that membership lists are displayed in the Old Course Hotel, if any of the personal details eg. address, etc.. are incorrect he requested the members amend the list. The database will then be updated and hopefully all the members should receive their correspondence. Likewise the Secretary felt sure that the new Membership Secretary would be pleased to be notified of any changes that occur throughout the year.

Item 3d. - Chairman

19. The Chairman opened by welcoming all including our President, he also apologised for the poor sound system in the church.

20. Continuing he felt that BOBA had had yet another successful year with particular emphasis on the work carried out by the Executive Committee.

21. The sudden death of Lt Col Arthur Hall was a sad loss to BOBA and a sad loss to the Executive Committee, he will be missed by us all.

22. The Chairman then gave a special thanks to the following :

Dave Chapman for his sound handling of the BOBA accounts, his production of the financial statement and his excellent work in editing the Newsletter.

Brian Henderson for completely reworking the membership computer programme.

Frank Pickering for maintaining the membership database in its old and new format.

Peter Burridge for organising yet another successful reunion.

23. He also thanked George Gasser, Maurice Murtagh and Derek Knight for their attendance at meetings and for their advice and encouragement.

24. He advised the membership that the posts of President and Chairman were proposed for election one year ahead, the Chairman will have completed 3 years in post by the 98 AGM.

25. Finally he asked that we all spread the word and recruit as many members as possible in particular we need the new younger element who served or are currently serving with the Royal Engineers.

Item 4. - The Revised Rules.

26. Copies of the revised rules in draft form were available for observation and comment. The main point of discussion was paragraph 10 "Expulsion from BOBA", the right to appeal would be looked at on a case by case basis.

27. There being no further comments it was proposed by Mr F Pickering and Seconded by Mr R Smith that the revised rules be adopted. New Rule Books will be issued before the 98 Reunion.

Item 5. - Confirmation of President.

28. Before confirming Colonel Alan Holman as our new President, the Chairman asked the membership to join him in thanking Brigadier Addison for his service over the past two years.

29. Brigadier Addison responded by saying it had been a great honour to serve as President of BOBA and wished the Association well for the future.

30. The Chairman then asked the members present to confirm Colonel Alan Holman as our President.

Carried unanimously.

Item 6. - Resignations

31. The resignations of Lt Col Ron Overd, Mr D Fowle (Vice Presidents) and Mr F Pickering (Membership Secretary) were accepted.

Item 7. - Election of Officers.

32. The following have been proposed and seconded for the office of elected Vice President :

Ron Marie, Ken Standen and Frank Pickering.

Carried unanimously.

33. The following has been proposed and seconded for the post of Membership Secretary:

Dave Hayward.

Carried unanimously.

34. Following the many years of service to BOBA the Chairman asked that the members present honour Ron Overd by making him a Life Member, he joins Alf Jeffs.

Carried unanimously.

Item 8. - Membership Fees.

35. The Treasurer explained that the worth of the BOBA fund is continually on the increase, this is because the reunion weekend is self financing and membership fees are received on a yearly basis. Expenditure from the fund is low and is mainly on postage, stationery, expenses, etc. He proposed that all members should pay a maximum subscription fee of £50 either as a lump sum when joining, £10 over their first five years of membership or variations thereof within their first five years of membership. The Executive Committee would however have a caveat that would allow a reinstatement of subscription fees should the need arise.

Carried unanimously.

Item 9. - Any other Business.

36. There was a lengthy period of discussion concerning recruitment with many ideas coming from the floor. The agreed view was that all avenues should be tried in an effort to increase the membership numbers.

37. While the golfers have their annual match some members requested that an angling competition be laid on. It was agreed that this would be investigated for future years.

38. Mr Rocky Evershed informed the meeting that the BOBA Medway Branch was now closed.

39. A member offered the use of a sound system for next years AGM. This was accepted with thanks by the Chairman

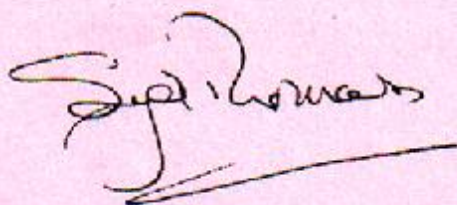
40. The membership asked that they may have greater access to the camp next year. The Chairman agreed to speak with the resident battalion.

41. Finally the Chairman asked that all members should consider submitting articles, irrespective of size, to the Newsletter editor for inclusion in future editions.

Item 10. - Closure.

42. The Chairman closed the meeting by thanking the Royal Welch Fusiliers for their hospitality. He said the reunion dinner this evening commences at 7pm for 8pm and the Founders Day Church service begins at 11am tomorrow. He continued by expressing his delight at seeing so many members attending the reunion and looked forward to meeting as many as possible over the weekend.

43. A vote of thanks to the Chairman and the Executive Committee was received from the floor.



Chairman BOBA



Secretary BOBA