

Beachley Echoes

Edition No.6 - May 2000

BOBA Vets Parade at Cenotaph

AS SEEN ON TV!

To celebrate seventy five years of Army apprentice training and to play a part in the Nation's annual Parade of Remembrance, BOBA provided a contingent of twenty five sprightly members at the Cenotaph on 14th November 1999.

Our boys were seen by millions on television as they proudly marched past in the traditional procession of men and women representing the military and civilian services. Wearing berets with apprentice school cap badges they certainly looked the part and were a credit to the Association.

The TV commentary as BOBA passed by was full and accurate. The exposure was brilliant in generating new interest from several ex-boys who

didn't know 'new' BOBA was alive and kicking!

The contingent was led by the President, Colonel Alan Holman, and the Chairman Lt Col Syd Thomas. Indeed, it was they who did most of the letter writing and so on to set up this wonderful success for BOBA.

We must not forget the late Keith Butcher of 47A whose original idea it was for BOBA to attend the Remembrance Parade. He had intended to parade himself, but sadly was too ill to make it but was able to see his friends on television from his hospital bed.

A list of the contingent can be found on page 17.

75th Anniversary Reunion 17/18/19th September 1999



The Friday evening fireworks display captured by Alan Whitelock (46A).

The fireworks read
'BEACHLEY - 75 YEARS'



INSIDE : APPLICATION FORMS FOR THE REUNION 15/16/17 SEPTEMBER 2000

1999 BOBA REUNION

75th Anniversary Success

The 75th anniversary of apprentice training at Beachley was celebrated in fine style over the weekend of 17/18/19th September 1999. BOBA members descended on the Old Course Hotel, Chepstow for the sixth annual reunion in succession - and without doubt this was the best so far.

Hotel staff enter into the spirit

The Old Course management and staff treat the BOBA weekend as their major event and this showed in the standard of service, food and hospitality on offer. The staff really got into the swing of things by dressing up in some rather unregimental forms of uniform for the Friday night festivities. They even produced their own Staff News 'BOBA edition'; which was circulating in the hotel, Chepstow and surrounding district by the following week!

Congratulatory message from the Queen and fireworks

The weekend followed the format which has now become standard and seems to suit most members. Friday kicked off the weekend in fine style with a social and dance. The President read out a letter from Her Majesty the Queen wishing the Association well on the 75th anniversary of the Army Apprentices School at Chepstow. Then, in the presence of our guest, the Mayor of Chepstow, a match was put to the commemorative fireworks display. And very good it was too; delighting all who watched.

A busy Saturday - an excellent dinner

Saturday was the usual busy day culminating in the BOBA dinner for 177 members and BOBA Ladies' dinner for 66 partners. Again, Anne Rainsbury set up mounted displays of Beachley photos and others for identification. Ron Marie's heritage display also attracted plenty of attention and Ron was kept busy enlisting members to provide their own reminiscences. The BOBA Golf Championship took place at Dewstow and the AGM took place at Beachley.

The BOBA dinner was a definite highlight - an executive decision to turn the tables by 180 degrees certainly helped speed up serving. As in 1998, members were sat on tables roughly by decades and this seems to be a popular change for the better. However, with a fairly late start, golf presentations and a typically interesting and humorous speech by the President, there was not much time for dancing afterwards to Welsh TV celebrity pianist, Richard Harris. (If members look carefully at the programme for Reunion 2000, which accompanies this newsletter, they will find the BOBA Dinner is to start one hour earlier at 1830 hours).

Back in step!

Sunday morning saw the return of the parade on Beachley Square, march-past and march to St George's Chapel for the annual BOBA service. The salute was taken by the President, Col Alan Holman, the Chairman led the marchers and George Murray was an impressive parade sergeant major. An excellent lunch in the Old Course for 55 members and ladies followed, finally putting another memorable reunion to bed.

They make it happen

The success of this event each year relies on the efforts of many people. The BOBA Executive Committee spend a good deal of time and effort throughout the year to make sure that all goes well on the actual weekend - but it is a year-long effort to make sure it comes off well. The hotel management and staff also give their all to make their hotel a welcoming home for the weekend. The current manager, Steve Gething, really came up trumps in 1999.

However, our stalwart organiser, Peter Burridge, deserves a special thank you. Peter does most of the groundwork and looks to the nuts and bolts of the whole weekend, but was unable to attend in 1999 after setting up everything. His wife, Rona, has been ill and is currently recovering from another operation. Everyone connected with BOBA wishes Rona well and hopes she can make it to BOBA with Peter in September this year.

The next BOBA Reunion September is on 15/16/17th 2000 - Are you coming?

The Chairman's Jottings

It must be old age! – it seems only a short while ago that I sat down to write for last year's newsletter and once again its already that time of the year.

BOBA 2000 – after a period of some years where we celebrated various events in either BOBA or 'Beachley' history what apart from the Millennium do we celebrate this year? As those who joined in 1950 will be quick to advise – it is their 50th Anniversary, that's enough for a celebration. We look forward to seeing a large contingent of the 50 groups attending the Reunion.

Last year I was unable to say how many 'young men passed out through the gates over the 70 years', Our Historian, Ron Marie, tells me that it was well over 16,500 that actually completed their training and passed out. Thanks Ron, I owe you a pint.

The 75th Anniversary Celebrations

Although unable to attend, Peter Burridge once again masterminded the Reunion Weekend. The celebrations started with a BANG as the President, after reading a telegram from Her Majesty The Queen, pressed the button to set of the fire work display. This high standard was maintained throughout the weekend, only broken by my dismal golf on the Saturday morning! (could have been the result of the pint or three of cider I had). The Sunday Church Parade and Service went very well and we are arranging for a repeat this year, Jo Rooney giving his usual bright and interesting sermon. By all accounts everyone had an excellent weekend.

Change of Regiments

1st Battalion the 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment have now departed for sunny Cyprus and have been replaced by the 2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment (The Poachers). We wish them a pleasant tour in 'our camp'.

The Remembrance Day Parade at Whitehall

A full contingent of 25 attended on the 14th November 1999. Led by The President and Chairman the very proud group marched past the Cenotaph, all wearing their berets and Apprentice School cap badges. The TV reporter and cameramen did their utmost to give us as much air-time as possible. I was very impressed by the whole occasion and felt a strange mixture of both pride and humility at being privileged to represent BOBA in such wonderful company. My day was made by the kindness of Baz Morgan who picked me up at home, drove to London, parked so near to Whitehall and then returned me home, his car is a wolf in sheep's clothing!!!

We are going to repeat the experience again this year – If anyone would like to be one of the members of the

BOBA Platoon please write to me at the address in your BOBA Rule Book.

Get well Ken

Mister BOBA Golf, Ken Standen, is making a steady recovery from his illness – being nursed back to fitness by Julie. Glen Chalmers and Tony Battle will organise this year's 'Beachley Open'. We all wish Ken a speedy return to full health.

Membership

You are our best recruiting agents – make a serious effort to enlist new one member every year. Seeing our Whitehall contingent on TV brought many inquiries about membership. There are plenty of ex-boys out there who don't know that BOBA lives on. Try writing or phoning a past friend to spread the word.

I look forward to meeting old friends and making new acquaintances at the Reunion, until then take care and God bless.

Syd Thomas.

The Ladies Column

Spring is in the air; I know that is true because Syd has asked for my contribution to the BOBA Newsletter!

It is also time to work out just what I will NEED for the Reunion Weekend and to adjust the housekeeping to suit without being asked "what the hell do you need a new dress for", you have so many in the wardrobe. Men just don't seem to understand at all.

My sincere thanks to all those who have wished me well after having, at long last, my second hip replacement. I am doing well, now not having to use crutches or sticks. With a little luck and some 'training' I hope to be able to have the odd slow dance at the reunion.

Last year's reunion was a wonderful occasion and on behalf of all The Ladies I would like to compliment Peter Burridge and the BOBA Committee for the enjoyment they provided.

If there are any ladies that have not yet attended a Reunion Weekend please badger your husband to come this year. I can assure you that it is a great weekend of meeting old friends and making new acquaintances, which together with the food and entertainment ensure an enjoyable time.

I hope to see you all, join in the discussions (gossip) and enjoy each other's company over the odd drink!

Until September, look after each other and God Bless.

Jo Thomas

Where boys became men...

Such was the banner for a front page news item in the **Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Review** for 17th September 1999. A photo of one 'Don' (actually our man Ron) Marie standing in front of the old Beachley Camp gates, headed the little story about 75 years of army apprentices.

'Don, at Beachley 1945-49 says that although he afterwards served 22 years in the Royal Engineers "the three years at Beachley were the hardest I ever did". He has something else to thank his time there for, however, "I courted my future wife, a Sudbrook girl, on the Chepstow waterfront," he says.'

However, Ron's picture was just a taster for the bigger article it referred to within the Review. This was a double page spread of Beachley reminiscences by John Truscott (Group No.40).

The following week's review carried another double page spread of John's memories of Beachley. However, this second article was shared with Major Neville Cheese of 24 Group who joined in September 1930 - 70 years ago. Neville remembered winning the Boy's Army Football Cup in 1932/33. His medal remains a treasured possession.

ROBOT APPEAL!

The editions of ROBOT listed below are missing from the archive at BOBA HQ.

April 72 : Winter 75 : Spring 76 : Spring 77 : Winter 77 : Winter 78

Summer 78 : Winter 79 : Spring 80 : Winter 80 : Spring 81

Can anyone provide any of the missing copies either as a donation or on loan so that I can make copies?

Give me a call on 01934 412986. Thanks, **Ron Marie, BOBA Historian**

For Want Of A Fuse. ALL Was Lost -

There I was writing an article for fun, plus letters to Paddy Greer and Eddie Edwards 44A A Coy; progressing nicely in parallels when my computer stopped! Stopped functioning. Blanked itself out and everything gone.

Its like having arms suddenly cut off. Crippled, as it were.

Couldn't retrieve what I'd already written, although of course, I had SAVED. No panic, went my thoughts, it has to be a fuse, look around and find it. BUT no -- No sign of a fuse-holder. Had to leave it until next day when we had the possibility to talk to the fellow who sold me the computer package. On the phone it was, "There has to be a fuse -- keep looking." In spite of this there was not one to be found

There is a power-pack, upon which is stated, "DANGEROUS: High Voltage! Do not remove. Only trained service personnel to work on this unit." It was the old story of the lost horseshoe-nail losing the horse then the rider and finally the war. For the want of finding a fuse I was feeling, as I said, like I had no arms, I sat down with pen and paper to write to Paddy. It was quite a strange experience. He writes so neatly it became a double challenge to make it neat and without mistakes because there's no wiping out. Was hard going. My hand and wrist ached quite a bit. Just proves that if we slip away from the skills they'll probaly never come back.

Regarding skills, nowadays, it is replace parts when repairing anything. In the latest Legion mag I read that even the infantryman will be equipped with a computer, in helmet & back-pack, which will order him where to go, when to shoot, and at what. Of course, if the computer fails the infantryman will be headless as well as legless, in the sense of being lost. Poor chappy was always cannon-fodder anyway. Like a lot of the unfortunates who only joined up because of the shortage of paying jobs. Of course, I guess, there has to be a fail-safe alternative and, possibly, each squaddy has a signal sender with GPS location. It would be battery powered anyway but supposing the pack got shot up? Reliability goes to zero as did my computer.

The next evening we nobbled our neighbour: a computer buff. Complete with ash dropping from his fag he took out the power-pack and quite nonchalantly removed the cover. Could have done that myself, I thought, but I'd been too much of a coward. Sitting among the conglomeration of mystery bits was the fuse. A standard, 230 volt, 3amp glass-tube fuse. But our neighbour sadly shook his head. Made in Taiwan, he said. We gave up using those type of fuses in the eighties. Thus he did not have a fuse of the correct type. Then he dashed out and returned with a brand new power-pack; connected it up and showed that everything functioned, as it should. It only needed the main box to be modified: with holes to take the new unit, switch and sockets - didn't take me long!

Every time I walk past my computer now, I see that neat bit of **MY** fitting which millions of young people are totally incapable of these days. My good old dad would have been proud because my craftsmanship was started off by him. He taught me many handicraft skills before I ever got to Chepstow. But they were well polished up and improved at Beachley Workshops. I'll always be grateful for that.

John Bass 44A

Thanks to John for another article giving an insight into life in the land of the Teutons. John never fails to provide something a bit different! Ed.

50 A Group 50th Anniversary Reunion at Arborfield

By Joe Kinson

In April 1999 I spotted a notice in the "Craftsman" magazine suggesting a 50A group reunion near to our enlistment date, so I contacted John Cox who was the UK contact, and later Don Jacobs, who lives in Holland. That was when the work began in searching for old friends, however with hindsight I should have started a year earlier.

Initially, I wrote to the other 5 BOBA members. I mentioned the names of people who I had met during my 29 years in REME, and also some names that I remembered, to jog memories. One of those contacted sent me a copy of the Robot, which was published after we left Beachley. What a find this was, because it listed by service number, names and initials, those who passed their trade test on 12 December 1952. One problem was I really needed their forenames for my search, as many were known by nicknames. However the search began with those names for which I had a positive forename. By late December 1999/early January 2000, I had 27 who wanted to attend the planned reunion and I knew of 7 who have died, one sadly on my 65th birthday, just two weeks before I spoke to his widow on the telephone.

Chepstow, our first choice, was a non-starter so Don Jacobs approached the Regimental Colonel at the RHQ in Arborfield, to see if our reunion could be held there in February 2000. In January, the Sgts Mess Manager, on behalf of the Corps RSM, advised that we could hold our reunion in the Sgts Mess on the weekend of Friday 18/19/20th February 2000. Because John Cox was awaiting heart surgery, Don asked if I could co-ordinate the arrangements at Arborfield and send out details to everyone.

I arranged a visit to Arborfield and met the Corps RSM, WO1 (RSM) D.L. Parsons and the Mess Manager on 21 January 2000. We discussed what facilities we would require, such as accommodation, meals and the menu for the Reunion Dinner to be held on Saturday 19 February 2000 for a group of about 27. Although costs are now much higher than when we were serving, it all looked affordable and worth holding the reunion. It was now starting to come together and I was feeling quiet excited feeling it was all beginning to become a real possibility.

We also wanted to visit the REME Association shop and the REME Museum on Saturday morning and the Army Apprentices College Arborfield in the afternoon. Don arranged the shop and museum visit while I made the arrangements for the College visit. Arborfield being the sole remaining Army Apprentices College, we felt it might be of interest, to see how things compared to our time at Beachley 50 years ago.

Following the visit to Arborfield, I prepared a letter complete with attendance proforma which was sent to all those who were interested in attending. Inevitably, there were some who could not make because of ill health, other commitments or transport problems. However, I was able to confirm to the Mess Manager that twenty one would be attending the Reunion Dinner, including RSM Parsons, as our guest.

Don and I got to Arborfield early on the Friday, so that we could check everything was in order. After lunch we visited the Museum and Association shop to confirm arrangements and about then Terry Ingles, Paddy Fahey and John Hogg turned up. From that moment, the reunion came alive. We retired to the Mess bar and as others arrived they joined us. Later that night in the bar we all exchanged details of our life since leaving Beachley on 6 February 1953 with nearly everyone remaining until the bar closed.

On Saturday morning we visited the REME Association shop and the old part of the Museum followed by the new part "Prince Philip Hall". After lunch we visited the Apprentices College and were met by Lt L Hay RE, who gave us a presentation in the Lecture Theatre including a video about the apprentices at work and play. The Lecture Theatre was converted from the old gymnasium and has been re-named "Beachley Hall". We later toured the College and were shown one of the living accommodation blocks. Much has changed since our day and its clear that much has to be fitted into the reduced time allocated for 'apprentice' training at Arborfield, before the youngsters start their trade training at the adult schools of their respective Corps. However, we were most impressed by those apprentices (boys and girls) who we met during our visit.

We later met in the Mess bar at 1900 hrs. for drinks, followed by a group photograph. On entering the dining room, we were very impressed to be met by a typical Regimental Dinner layout complete with Mess silver, and the room illuminated by candles in six silver candelabra. Three had candles in RE colours and three had candles in REME colours! The food and wine served was excellent. On completion of the dinner, the "Loyal

Toast" was proposed by Brian Rowson, our ex A/T RSM. Later Don Jacobs said a few words about how the reunion idea began and he mentioned names of some who have passed on and others who were unable to attend. He then asked everyone to toast 50A group. Don then gave me a gift in thanks for all my efforts and he then presented a very personal gift to Paddy Fahey.

I thanked everyone for making a special effort to attend the first 50A Group reunion and for making my efforts so worthwhile. I also remembered some old friends. Richard Hyde then presented me with a fine mounted collection of keys, to thank me for bringing the reunion to a successful conclusion.

After retiring to the bar we enjoyed the rest of the evening in the company of RSM Parsons; he certainly made us feel at home. Everyone enjoyed a wonderful evening with much drinking and talking. We even managed to sing some of our old Beachley songs, and our Sapper element (five of them) sang the CRE (without the fire at my request), as I was mindful that we might like to hold another reunion there. I don't think anyone wanted the evening to end, but end it had to, and I dare not tell you what time we departed for bed!

Sunday morning it was packing of kit in the cars, some photograph taking and sad farewells, with promises to keep in touch and many expressing the hope of meeting up in Chepstow in September. Then 20 very happy 50A group ex-Beachley boys departed for home. My search for many more 50A group members will continue, thanks to information and help given by Brian Henderson. I hope many will meet at the BOBA Reunion in Chepstow this September, when we will celebrate our 50th Anniversary along with 50B group.



50A group just before the Reunion Dinner in the Bailleau Sgts' Mess Arborfield

Rear row: Les Porter, Terry Ingles, Mike Millard, Roy Wells
Centre row: Joe Kinson, Steve Ninnis, Dave Boycott, Pete Baugh, Roy Barnett,
Brian Rowson, Ken Trowsdale, Geoff Pendle
Front row: Dave Leswell, John Hogg, Paddy Fahey, Pete Bignall, Richard Hyde, Ian
Rumble BEM, Jim Neilson, Don Jacobs

Memories Of 54A B Company

May I firstly confirm the story by Brian Laurence 54B C Coy concerning Big Mac, the Provost Sergeant, whose dog changed colour to blue one night. (Echoes 99 article).

Brian also mentioned the boilerman at Beachley - well, I married his daughter! I had a few 'run ins' with him when breaking into the showers on my late return from Chepstow after courting his daughter. Visits to their house were fraught with danger. His name was, and still is, Ronald Pangbourne, now aged 88. They have lived in the same house in Chepstow for 62 years.

However, back to Big Mac's dog. Myself, Ozzie Hines and Willie Sarland carried out several night sorties to the Cookhouse. (I found out many years later these raids were well known to Big Mac as we used to meet in the Chepstow British Legion). After one such visit his dog was seen sniffing around, so it was known he was about. The spoils were quickly hidden under the coal bunker, which in summer was cleaned, polished and upturned at one end of our hut. Big Mac duly entered and searched everywhere without success, and was about to leave, when the dog found the goods. The result was a dose of jankers for several unfortunates. Hence, the resulting change of colour to the dog, though I cannot reveal the culprit. The poor thing had to be sheared quite closely to rid it of its new coat!

There was also the case of the RAF helicopter which landed in Beachley because of fog. Although it was parked outside the Guardroom with lights and patrols all night, it mysteriously displayed several intake numbers on its fuselage the

next morning. The RAF were not amused - and nor were the staff!

I believe at that time C Coy had a staff 'tankie' drill instructor, Sgt Amos who again I had many happy chats with in the Legion. My own drill horrors were Sgt Kavanagh Irish Fusiliers, who had a quarter full of children outside the main gate, and Sgt Barrett, whose son was in our intake in B Company.

I remember the joys of the old Chepstow Cinema, and also the battle experiences with the local youth over girls. Does anybody else remember the dance class at the rear of St Marys Church and the dances in the Public Hall by the Arch where I met my wife? We married at St Marys Church in 1958.

They speak of bullies and such in today's world but while I was in Beachley we called it group seniority. But you took it and although it might have been hard at times it gave me confidence to meet the world full on. After passing out with a good trade, I saw nine years in the REME in Germany, North Africa, Malta, Cyprus, Northern Ireland and such, and I look back at my time in Beachley with pride, plus a bit of affection and gratitude for giving me the chance to make my way in life. I feel sorry that this sort of establishment has been allowed to disappear. It gave us the chance to learn something useful, it provided comradeship and all the sporting chances you would ever want. Most young people today will never benefit from the sort of start we had.

Bob Adams
54A B Coy

Editorial Comment from Robot December 1948

This is still the School Jubilee Year ... we have reported on the Passing Out Parade at which the boys were inspected by Field Marshall Montgomery and the most successful BOBA reunion at which we were glad to see many old boys..... also glad to be able to take this opportunity of wishing Col & Mrs Cuddon many years of happiness in their well-earned retirement. No one could have done more with advice, encouragement and guidance, but never interference, to help successive editors in the production of this magazine.

The Future of 'New' BOBA

What has 'New' BOBA achieved?

- Since inception in 1994 the membership has risen from approximately 450 members to currently 660+ members.
- A sound financial base has been produced from membership fees and prudent accounting.
- Following the pilot reunion at the Old Course Hotel, which highlighted a number of problem areas that required solving, there has been year on year improvement until the 1999 reunion when those attending considered it to be a first class social occasion.
- The 'Beachley Echoes' newsletter has proved to be very popular. It is now being produced in a more accessible format.
- For the first time BOBA was represented at the 1999 Cenotaph remembrance service and march past.

Membership

Since 1994 the membership has been steadily growing. However, trends are starting to show that as age and illness takes its toll on the two largest elements of the Association (Groups 1 to 45 and 42A to 49B) there will be a rapid decline in numbers over the next few years. If recruiting does not show significant improvement from the 1950 to 1990 intakes, the Association could very quickly become a nonviable organisation.

Recruitment

We are currently looking into better ways to present to potential members the 'New' BOBA as a continuance of the original BOBA. At present out of every 100 that enquire only about 25 actually join. The number of enquiries seems to indicate that the advertising methods being used are working but there is a reluctance to join.

There are still some objections from a number of the original BOBA members in relation to fee payment. They feel if they were original life members of BOBA they should be exempt payment. We have explained the reason why we must have funding from members to operate - but seemingly to no avail.

Lapsed members

During the last two years I have attempted to recover fees from members who had not paid since their initial payment, concentrating on those joining in 1994 and 1995. I had reasonable success but there is still no response from some members. The Executive Committee is reluctant to invoke the suspension rule until we are fully aware of personal circumstances. If this applies to you, please get in touch and discuss any problems.

Please remember - the future of BOBA is dependent on attracting new members

Dave Hayward
Membership Secretary

It is with great regret we record below the list of members and non-members are reported to have died since the issue of the last newsletter in May 1999.

Group	Mem	Name
14	251	Price RAG (Rex)
45	431	Skipp RA (Dick)
42A	323	Hessey Major G (George)
43A	108	Codd RM (Bob)
43A	Non-Memb	Clarke (P)
43A	128	Bordoli GW (Gordon)
43A	87	Fletcher MC (Maurice)
40	125	Carruthers Major J (Jack)
46A	119	Lillington Major P (Peter)
41	33	Hathway FJA (Fred)
47A	503	Butcher K (Keith)
44A	Non-Memb	Staples F
21	275	Gray Capt FA (Frank)
42	Non Memb	Paul JS
60A	Non-Memb	Evans Lt Col BR (Brian)
63	Non-Memb	Watkins Lt Col M MBE (Mike)
2/3	Non-Memb	Merritt E
31	Non-Memb	Hall WP
?	Non-Memb	Addcock G
43B	Non-Memb	Fulford D (David)
43A	12	Sherran C (Cyril)
51B	280	Branchett Capt KC (Ken)
49B	671	Waller G (Geoff)

1999 BOBA Church Parade

Splendid photographs of last year's Church Parade will be displayed at this year's reunion. The march-off was photographed into fourteen sections - so if you were there, you're on film! Please see **Ron Marie** on the Reunion Weekend to order your copy.

UPPER CASE or lower case (or is there no case to answer?)

Of course, it wasn't a problem for Groups 1 to 45. Whether one wrote 29c Group, 39A Group or just 14 Group it was readily understood. It was the arrival of 42a Group (or was it 42A Group) *et seq* that ruined the party. Confusion has reigned ever since in labeling the original 42 to 45 Groups and the 'new' 42a to 45b Groups.

I don't really know whether those august members of 42A Group in C. Coy were designated 42A(C) or 42aC or any other combination of letters and brackets. Reason dictates that the Company should be in upper case and the intake letter in lower case. But, what was the official line when those rosy-cheeked, wide-eyed youths of the first intake of 1942 took their first uncertain steps into Beachley Camp?

M.Murtagh. 49th Intake!!

BEACHLEY OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE, BEACHLEY, CHEPSTOW, MONS NP16 7YG

Secretary

Capt B Henderson R Mon RE (M)
20 Wyebank Way
Tutshill
CHEPSTOW
Mons NP16 7DN



Telephone

Home 01291 620140
Office 0117 9131428

MINUTES OF THE BEACHLEY OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT BEACHLEY BARRACKS CHEPSTOW ON SATURDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER 1999

Present	Col AGR Holman OBE	President
	Lt Col S Thomas	Chairman
	Maj DC Chapman	Treasurer
	Mr M Murtagh	Vice President
	Mr G Gasser	Vice President
	Mr R Marie	Vice President
	Mr F Pickering	Vice President
	Mr D Knight	Chepstow Liaison
	Mr D Hayward	Membership Secretary
	Mr AW Waite	Treasurer (Des)
	Mr B Henderson	Secretary

There were 120 plus members assembled in St George's Chapel for the meeting, apologies had been received from numerous members, many of whom lived overseas.

The meeting opened at 1540hrs.

Opening Address.

1. The President opened the meeting by welcoming all present. He said the reunion weekend had already got off to a resounding start with the fireworks display the previous evening, celebrating the 75th Anniversary of No 1 Group arriving at Beachley. He thanked the members present for their loyalty and support and gave particular thanks to all those members who had travelled many miles from within the UK and abroad in order that they may attend the reunion weekend.

2. The Chairman echoed the President's opening statement and also apologised for the delay in commencing the meeting, this was due to the ever present but necessary security procedures being applied at the camp entrance. He also informed the meeting that our Entertainments Member, Peter Burrige, would not be present at the reunion because his wife was unwell. In anticipation of the members' wishes he had thanked Peter for his excellent work in organising and liaising with the Old Course Hotel in order to provide the weekend's entertainment and was sorry that he could not be with us.

Item 1. - Minutes of 1998 Annual General Meeting.

3. As in previous years, the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 19th September 1998 were included in the annual information pack that had been sent to all BOBA members. The Chairman felt that all the members present were aware of the contents of the minutes and asked if there were any comments or observations.

4. There being no comments, observations or matters arising, it was Proposed by I Anthony, and Seconded by P Russell, that the minutes were a true record of the 1998 Annual General Meeting.

Carried unanimously.

Item 2. - In Memoriam.

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

251	R Price	14 Group	NM	D Colclough	40 Group
431	D Skipp	45 Group	323	G Hessey	42 Group
108	R Codd	43 Group	NM	R Williamson	39/40 Group
NM	G Addcock	Group Unknown	NM	E Merritt	2/3 Group
NM	WP Hall	31 Group	NM	M Watkins	63 Group
299	F King	8 Group	NM	I Fellow	42 Group
67	J Spindler	37 Group	340	J Johnson	Staff
245	R Boorer	9 Group	341	F Collins	42 Group
72	J Hatton	28 Group	294	H Chandler	5 Group
344	E Clarke	36 Group	653	N Adams	44 Group
142	G Gilligan	1 Group			

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

Item 3. - Committee Changes.

Item 3a. - Treasurer.

7. The duties of Treasurer had been handed over to Mr Tony Waite during the preceding twelve months. The Chairman and all the members present thanked Dave Chapman for his sterling work in supervising the BOBA funds. During his stewardship of the account since the formation of new BOBA profitable investments had been made and the account remains in a healthy state.

8. It was proposed by G Gasser and seconded by G Horton that Mr A M Waite 60C Gp, be appointed the BOBA Treasurer.

Carried unanimously.

Item 3b. – Membership Secretary.

9. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Membership Secretary would like to stand down and hand over before the next Annual General Meeting, he asked if any of the members present would like to take on this appointment. Mr C Allsop 79 Gp, volunteered to take on these duties.

Item 3c. – Chepstow Liaison.

10. Our Liaison Member, Derek Knight, had also expressed his wish to stand down and John Furley, who lives in Sedbury, had volunteered to take on the appointment. On behalf of the Executive Committee and the membership, the Chairman thanked Derek for his support and effort during his tenure as the Liaison Officer.

11. It was proposed by A Orchard and seconded by R Marie that Mr J Furley 56 Gp, be appointed as the Chepstow Liaison Officer.

Carried unanimously.

Item 3d. – Elected Vice President.

12. The Chairman expressed his wishes that Dave Chapman's talents and enthusiasm should not be lost by the Association and therefore asked that he be made an elected Vice President.

13. It was proposed by F Pickering and seconded by J Thayer that Maj D Chapman 60A Gp, be appointed an Elected Vice President.

Carried unanimously.

Item 4. – Committee Reports.

Item 4a. – Treasurer's Report.

14. Copies of the 98/99 BOBA balance sheet was distributed for the members to examine. The Treasurer talked the members through the balance sheet that showed the fund to be in a very healthy state, investments totalled £15,000 paying a current dividend of £1,202 per annum and a the Net working capital totalled £8,782. He informed the members that the account had yet to be audited but this would be part of the final handover to the new Treasurer.

15. In conclusion he asked if there were any comments or observations from the membership; J Warner noted that the Benevolent Fund showed a reduction for the current period. The Treasurer said this was due to a donation made to a member who required urgent surgery.

Item 4b. – Secretary's Report.

16. The Secretary said that much correspondence had been received since the 1998 Annual General Meeting, the highlight of which was the letter received by the Association from Buckingham Palace congratulating BOBA on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the formation of The Boys Technical School at Beachley. This letter was read out verbatim to the members present. The Secretary also read out the letters of apology that had been received prior to the meeting.

17. A letter had also been received from the Army Benevolent Fund thanking the Association for the generous donation of £280 following the Founder's Day church service.

18. On a lighter note, the Secretary concluded by reading out a number of extracts from the minutes of bygone AGMs.

Item 4c. – Membership Secretary's Report.

19. The Membership Secretary said that 22 members had joined the Association in the last twelve months, this had been the result of about 100 enquiries. Inevitably the membership total is falling as the influx of new members is failing to keep pace with those that have passed away. The Membership Secretary was adamant that the Association must attract more members from 60 Group onwards.

20. A great deal of effort had been put in to contacting those members who had not paid for a number of years. This had generated much income and renewed interest in the Association.

21. The Chairman and Membership Secretary agreed that the best method of recruiting was the personal approach and requested that each member present recruit at least one member during the next few months.

Item 4d. – Historian's Report.

22. The BOBA Historian, Mr R Marie, thanked those members who had sent in articles, information and the like for inclusion in the "Other History" of Beachley. In particular he requested that articles be sent in by the post 50 Groups.

23. For next year's Heritage display he requested any memorabilia in the form of documents, badges, etc.

24. Continuing, he said that an inventory check had been made at The Old School House which indicated that a number of Robot issues were missing, they are the issues from 72, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80 and 93. The Association would like to replace these issues, therefore should any members have copies of these issues it was requested they contact the BOBA Historian.

Item 4e. – Chairman's Report.

25. The Chairman opened by giving his personal thanks and those of the membership, to the Executive Committee for its support and effort put in during the previous twelve months. He expressed his delight that the reunion weekend had got off to an excellent start the previous evening with the firework display and buffet supper.

26. Concerning the history of Beachley, he said that Parts 1 and 2 were in existence. Likewise Part 3 was in existence but this had yet to be published, meanwhile Captain George Crump had agreed to write Part 4 and it was the intention of the Executive Committee to produce these two parts as Volume Two.

27. He requested the membership keep the Executive Committee informed of any changes to their address so that the database can be amended and new information labels be issued for insertion in the rear of the BOBA Rule Book. He also asked that the Committee be informed of those members who have died, are in hospital or in long term care.

28. Finally, he informed that meeting that in accordance with the BOBA rules, he and the President could remain in office for a further twelve months only. He asked the membership to give some thought to changing the rules as they were written when Beachley was in existence and by tradition the appointments could always be filled.

Item 5. – Cenotaph Parade.

29. The President informed the meeting that he had obtained for BOBA a place in the order of march at this year's Cenotaph parade in London and urged that full support was given to this event.

30. The parade will be held on Sunday 14th November 1999 and BOBA had been allowed a maximum of 25 in its party. The contingent is to form up at the St James end of Horse Guards in Column F. Other associations in this column include the Dunkirk Veterans and the South Atlantic Association. Security procedures mean that admission to the form up area is by ticket only, each ticket is numbered and is marked with participant's name.

31. Concluding, the President asked that those members who would like to attend the parade should give their names to the Chairman before departing from the reunion weekend.

Item 6. – Church Parade.

32. The Chairman said there would be a simple but formal church parade prior to the Founder's Day service. The members were requested to form up on the square under the guidance of the parade RSM, Mr George Murray.

33. The band of the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers (Militia) will play and the President will take the salute following which the members will march to St George's Church. Members of 49 Group were requested to take the collection during the offertory hymn.

Item 7. – Any Other Business.

34. The Chairman was pleased to note that there were no comments being made this year about alternate venues for the reunion weekend and no observations were being raised concerning the entertainment.

35. Following some discussion it was agreed that widows of those members who traditionally attended the reunions should be invited to attend in their own right. The Chairman requested that members inform the Executive Committee of any widows in this category.

36. Lt Col I Anthony informed the meeting that due to rising maintenance costs the Catholic Church would be pulled down in the coming months. In response, the Chairman agreed to write to 160 (W) Brigade for permission to remove any artefacts that were produced or manufactured by former apprentices.

37. It was proposed that the UK be split into areas for the purposes of recruitment and benevolence. The Chairman felt this was a good idea and would be investigated further by the Committee. The President suggested a more cautious approach regarding benevolence because SSAFA and the Royal British Legion had the necessary skills to deal with this aspect in a more professional manner.

Closing.

38. The members present were reminded that the dates for the first reunion of the Millennium are 15 – 17 September 2000.

39. In closing the Chairman thanked the members for their continuing support and hoped to see them all later at the reunion dinner and at Sunday's church parade.



Secretary



Chairman

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 appropriate adverts 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 to (davec@bryn21.demon.co.uk).

BOBA BENEVOLENT FUND

The Benevolent Fund 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.

During the last year the Association was glad to be able to make a grant of £250 to Douglas Everett of 48A Group who is severely disabled.

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 John Furley, (01292 630491).

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 have made his/her last payment in the year **1st April 1998 to 31st March 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.

If in doubt, please contact the Membership Secretary to check your own payment situation.

DON'T FORGET TO CANCEL YOUR STANDING ORDER TO BOBA ONCE YOU BECOME PAID-UP

DUNKIRK

Stories of the withdrawal to and the ensuing epic siege of this small channel port when our Army hung on to the narrow coastal strip until it could withdraw, across the sea, to live and victoriously fight another day are now immortalised in our history and heritage. So much so that the name of the town has become part of our language, as an adjective, to describe a tenacious and determined spirit.

During that summer of 1940, as during all the war-time years, the average person living in our islands, including all the forces of the allied nations based here, were given only the sketchiest idea of what was going on in the world. True, the newspapers were always full of war information but a great deal of it was not only late in its relevance to the actual time of the occurrence but also grossly 'padded out' with supposition, editorial comments and always the bad news was skillfully camouflaged.

Therefore, whilst we were all aware that things were not going well for us in France and Belgium, we had little idea of how bad it really was. Probably, even as late as the 26th of May. In fact, during the whole war, the atmosphere, here, at home, despite air-raids, food rationing and notices in the papers of our military losses and failures throughout the world was one of, "Oh - we'll win in the end." Actually, and it is the great strength of our character that no one ever considered we would lose, let alone our enemy should ever set foot on these shores, other than as a prisoner.

This is how it was in the late spring and early summer of 1940. Life at Beachley went serenely on. But there were changes, which even to our young eyes, were obviously due to the war. For instance at its outbreak, all our Wing Sergeants, most of the workshop instructors and almost all our officers were young, fit, regular soldiers. A few had the old "North West Frontier" and "Palestine" medals and these were regarded with awe. A few, but only a few, had the old 'Rhoti Gong' - eighteen years of undetected crime - whilst one, a tall, strong looking "D" Company 'sapper' sergeant had First World War ribbons. Rumour had it that he was a 'Kings Sergeant', that is promoted in the battle area for bravery.

Gradually, however, these "backbone" elements left us for more active service and for many of them, rapid promotion. There was 'Old Tanky' in A Company, some famous 'sappers' such as Townsend, Townes, Peabody, Redman, Major Perry, "Geordy" Coates of the D.L.I and Tientsin. There were others but I was a little boy then and only the "stars" names still stick. They were replaced by older men, mostly volunteers from the First World War and reservists, determined to do 'their bit'. Perhaps some of them thought that Beachley was a 'cushy billet'. How wrong they found that to be with a thousand, active, mischievous, high spirited boys all eager to fight somebody even if it was only the local Chepstow Boys or the younger men of the Welch Regiment then camped on the racecourse.

In those days between the hours of ten minutes to ten at night and half past six in the morning, woe betide any boy who made a noise or even spoke. It was 'lights out' and a totally quiet camp. We all, always, slept like logs and the night of the 1st of June, was no exception. We never saw newspapers in camp and never heard a radio, except in the N.A.A.F.I. and so were oblivious to the desperate struggle then taking place on the beaches of France. I can dimly remember some activity on the camp roadways that night, however, it did not "ring a bell" with me or anyone else and we all slept on.

But at Reveille, what a different story. Rapidly we became aware that the camp was filled to overflowing with many hundreds of strange men. There must have been two or three thousand of them. They were lying on the grass between the huts - it was beautiful weather - on the playing fields and in almost every place they could gather.

Gradually as we went to breakfast and our morning took shape the scene unfolded and we understood it all. Beachley had received a train load of survivors from Dunkirk and was taking them into its comfort with all the essential speed. The staff must have worked miracles during those few silent hours.

Some senior boys had vacated their rooms and beds, 'doubling up' in other barrack rooms. Bell tents had been erected on the playing fields, every spare room - and there weren't many, had been filled with palliases. The Gymnasium by the gate, the school rooms, the Sergeant's Mess, just every conceivable thing had been done to house the men.

Old 'Rissolle' and 'Generosity' the sergeant and corporal who fed us all, contrived a system of staggered meal times so that all these starving soldiers were stuffed with food, without it having any effect on us. Both those august gents took a 'lot of stick' from us during those war-rationed and primitive messing days, but without doubt their efforts during this awful period of history were tremendous. I'm sure we didn't appreciate it then, but subsequently, and years later I found the same sort of army cooks feeding me hot, filling meals, in circumstances where lesser men would have just thrown us a cardboard carton of American 'K' rations and left in a hurry.

During that day and a few more that these soldiers stayed with us, we saw more of them and how quickly they returned to normal. I remember the groups of ragged, partly clothed, some bandaged, dazed, men of the 10th Battalion, Durham Light Infantry, just walking slowly about the camp. We were forbidden to talk to them but did, usually they were short conversations, for what could we ask them, these heroes from another world. But from time to time, we would manage to get a 'half tale' of war and swimming and ships sinking beneath their feet.

Not once did I hear anything other than simplicity and thankfulness that they were home. No whining or complaining, they were still soldiers. The impact upon us was terrific. The war was thrust upon us for the very first time and psychologically it did us a world of good. The "Draft" our Senior Group was always called that in those days, could not get to their units quickly enough whilst I, with many months still to endure, 'champed at the bit', wanting to become soldiers and rub shoulders again with such men.

Suddenly, as quick as they came and within a week of their arrival, they went away. For a brief time and for the very first time, the real war had come to Army Technical School (Boys). We, in our remote isolation had been touched with a disaster. Dunkirk, for us, would never be just something to read about, for we had been as close as it was possible to get without leaving our shores.

Quickly we settled down again into the hectic routine of the time, little did we know then that

before we left Beachley a grimmer circumstance would overtake us, but that's another story.

Jack Horsfall 44C Group (1939 entry)

CENOTAPH DETACHMENT 1999

The members who represented BOBA at the Cenotaph in Whitehall on Sunday 14th November 1999 were:

Mr Alan Ball	46A
Mr Tom Davitt	54A
Mr Noel Drew	60A
Mr Colin Freindorf	65B
Mr John Furley	56A
Mr Bob Harder	50B
Col Alan Holman	Staff
Mr George Horton	45A
Capt Derek Knight	44A
Mr Bob Lomax	47A
Mr Ron Marie	46A
Mr Jim Morey	47A
Mr 'Baz' Morgan	73B
Mr Peter Newton	47A
Mr John Overs	39
Mr David Pott	47B
Mr 'Digger' Stanley	42A
Mr John Symes	47A
Mr John Thayer	32
Lt Col Syd Thomas	47A
Mr Tony Waite	60C
Mr Stuart Walker	55A
Major Derek Walker	55A
Mr 'Chalkie' White	73A
Lt Col Nick Winder	58A

**If you have a change of address or phone no.
or a membership query please contact:**

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

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Please address Reunion 2000 enquiries to:

**Peter Burrridge, 19 Hawthorn Avenue,
Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 4ST.
Tel 01747 825270**

OUR HERITAGE

The Beachley Boys' Heritage layout, comprising intake ledgers, Robots, a photo display and chart showing the changes in uniform, was again on show at the Old Course Hotel on the Saturday morning of the 1999 Reunion in conjunction with a fine display of archive photographs from Chepstow Museum. The interest generated in members was phenomenal. Many brought, or posted to me after the Reunion, memorabilia items to add to our museum collection and these will be on display this year.

I will again set up the display at the Old Course Hotel this year from 1000 hrs to

1300 hrs on Saturday 16th September. The central theme will be cap badges, badges of rank and other insignia worn by apprentices during the seventy years of apprentice training at Beachley.

The Chepstow Museum curator, Anne Rainsbury, and I thank those members who have returned their 'Boys Own Story' forms. However, we still need some input from the later groups e.g. 1950 to 1992. Please ask me for a proforma.

Note. The BOBA HQ, Old School House, Beachley will only be open after the church parade on Sunday 17th September.

BANDS AT BEACHLEY

During the seventy-odd years of apprentices at Beachley, the playing of musical instruments had an important role in hobbies and activities. Records show that this led to the formation of a School Band as early as 1924 with the Robot showing a photograph of the band in 1931. This was a brass band with plenty of 'oompah'.

A succession of School Bands followed, playing at passing-out parades, Sunday services, Chepstow Cenotaph parades, local fetes and the weekly march to the Workshops on Wednesday mornings. The band also spawned various dance bands providing swinging music at the dances held in the Gym where the local girls were invited. Many a partnership was begun at these dance meetings.

In the early 1950's records show that the Band and a Corps of Drums were in existence. Robot records farewell presentations of a side drum from 52A Group and three silverine bugles embossed with the new AAS badge from 55A Group. The Band and Corps were fitted out with No1 dress. Appeals also led to donations of leopard skins from civilians outside the School. Thus, in all their finery, the band's musicians were a star attraction when the Queen's Birthday Parade was revived in 1957 after a lapse since 1939.

In 1968 the College Military Band won the Army Junior Military Band Competition for the first time. During the intervening period, a Pipe Band had been formed and in the same year came third in their section of the 1968 competition. The writer is led to understand that the bands were about a hundred strong at that time.

The high quality of the performance by these bands spoke well of their part-time musical training over the decades, gaining them many prestigious invitations to perform at both military and civilian regional and national events.

Over the years, there are references in Robot of musical compositions written for the School Band.

- In 1925, 'Beachley', the School March was composed by Miss Salmond, a visitor to Beachley.

- In 1949, the Bandmaster, WO2 Trivas, Coldstream Guards composed a military march entitled, 'The Army Apprentice'. This latter piece was played as part of the musical programme by the Band at the passing-out parade of 47B group on 20th July 1950.
- In 1951, WO2 Trivas was at it again with a pipe drum march entitled 'Beachley Airs'.

Unfortunately, the archives do not hold any of the embossed silverine bugles nor any of the music for these marches. Can any ex-band members provide a 'score on card' for these tunes? Or even better play them at this year's reunion!

Ron Marie

Footnote : In Robot for Autumn Term 1987, WO2 Trivas (then retired) notified BOBA that a new record just released by Droit Music Company, PO Box 18, Blandford Forum, Dorset included the College March, 'Beachley Airs' in their military band recording titled 'On the March' by the band of the Wessex Regiment (No. DR82). From enquiries made it seems the company no longer exists. **Can anyone help?**

"CHALLENGE"

Can you help to complete the names of those who participated in the Old Boys versus School 1st XV rugby match played at the BOBA Reunion in October 1948? See photo below.

This item will be displayed for completion as part of the BOBA Heritage exhibition between 10.00 hrs. and 1300 hrs. on the Saturday morning of this year's reunion. **Ron Marie**



FROM THE HONORARY SECRETARY: Brian Henderson 65A Group

Belated Millennium greetings to all Association members; the last year of the century for BOBA was certainly memorable, especially the 1999 Reunion. From a secretariat point of view the highlight of the year must have been the letter the Association received from Buckingham Palace regarding the 75th anniversary of the establishment of Boys Training at Beachley Camp. For interest, I've included the text of the letter from our President and the response from the Queen's Chief Correspondence Officer.

The Private Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen

May I respectfully request that you draw Her Majesty's attention to the forthcoming 75th Anniversary of the establishment of The Boys Technical School at Beachley Camp, Chepstow in 1924. The School changed its title three times, becoming successively the Army Technical School (Boys), the Army Apprentices School, and finally in 1966, the Army Apprentices College, Chepstow.

Her Majesty will be aware that the College closed as an Apprentice establishment under Options for Change in 1994 but the memory of the 16,300 apprentices from a variety of Corps who underwent training there lives on through a flourishing Beachley Old Boys' Association who have met on Founders Day in September of each year for the past 51 years. We shall be doing so again this year in Chepstow over the period 17 to 19 September 1999.

As we approach the Millennium may we as an Association also take this opportunity to wish Her Majesty and all members of the Royal Family the most sincere best wishes for the years ahead and assure Her of our continued loyalty and respect.

AGR Holman OBE

Colonel Holman

The Queen was pleased to receive your kind expression of loyalty sent on behalf of the Members of the Beachley Old Boys Association as they celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the establishment of The Boys Technical School at Beachley Camp, Chepstow, from 17th to 19th September.

Her Majesty thanks you for your thoughtfulness in writing as you did and sends her best wishes to all those concerned for a successful and enjoyable weekend.

Mrs Deborah Bean

Sadly our last link with that initial intake of boys who moved from Aldershot to Beachley over 75 years ago has been lost. BOBA received a moving letter from Mr C Gilligan informing us of the death of his father Mr George Gilligan, the last surviving member of No 1 Group. Due to failing health George had not attended a reunion since 1993. To the end, George was very much a Beachley Boy and was angry at the closure of the College, maintaining there would never be a better location for the training of young boys commencing a military career.

The Founders Day church service again showed the outstanding generosity of the Association members, the proceeds of the collection from St George's totalled slightly in excess of £300. These moneys were donated to aid the good work carried by the Army Benevolent Fund.

What of Beachley Camp (now called Beachley Barracks)? Little has changed over recent months apart from a changeover of residents. The Anglian Regiment are now in station, the previous occupants, The Cheshire Regiment, replaced them in Cyprus. The latest building to be demolished because of rising maintenance costs has been the Catholic Church. Prior to its demolition the Executive Committee obtained permission and removed all the artefacts that were produced by the apprentices in bygone days.

The Old School House continues to be an icon to our existence, inventories are now in place and work continues to refurbish the memorabilia that adorn the walls. Inevitably, with a building of this age the maintenance costs are steadily rising, the roof had temporary repairs carried out during the Summer of 1999 in order to make it watertight. However a survey shows that extensive work is needed to get the roof in good order again.

On a more humorous note:

Members will be aware that the Association funds are in a healthy state but this was not always the case. Below is an extract from the AGM Minutes dated 1948:

"The Dinner Fund showed a debit of £4. 8s. 9d. The main cause of this debit arose owing to the fact that a considerable amount cutlery was missing after the last reunion."

It would appear that knives and forks with legs are not a new phenomenon!!!

Finally; good luck to Joe Kinson and Geordie Horton who are rallying the 50A and 50B Groups for their 50th Anniversary. We look forward to seeing you all in September.

1939 AND ALL THAT

I wrote in last year's newsletter about the Association tie. There were at least 4 versions of our tie in circulation. There were variations of colours, variations of stripe widths, variations of colour order and even one variety where the stripes were in the wrong direction.

In response to my letter Dave Tiemey (41 Group) has produced the original tie that was issued to him in 1939. He has kindly lent his precious original so that it can be accurately copied (less gravy stains!) and manufactured with a modern length and blade width.

In Peter Burridge's invitation to the 2000 BOBA Reunion are details of how one can purchase our Official Tie.

As they say on 'Watchdog' a result!

M.Murtagh 43B

The 2000 BOBA Open Golf Championships

The "BOBA OPEN", is in the form of an 18 hole Stableford competition open to all members and their spouses. It will be held at The Dewstow Golf Club on Saturday 16th September 2000.

As most golfers will know, Ken Standing, has not yet fully recovered therefore Glen Chalmers and Tony Battle will be arranging this years competition. At the time of going to press we are not sure the costs but they will be very near to previous years.

In order for us to book tee times you must complete and return the proforma below if you intend to play and please remember we have to pay green fees for all who indicate they will play.

Full details of timings etc will be on the BOBA Notice Board in the foyer of The Old Course Hotel on the Friday afternoon/evening. For those not arriving until the Saturday morning please be ready to start from 08:30hrs.

.....Please cut here.....

RETURN ASAP TO : Lt.Col.(Retd) AG Chalmers, 20 Morrison Road, Swanage, Dorset. BH19 1JL

I/we wish to enter the BOBA Open.

Rank/Title Name & Initials.....

Address

Phone Number

Member atGolf Club

Club Handicap

If you wish to play with anyone in particular please give his or her name/names.

Signed.....Date.....