



# Beachley Echoes

Edition No.8 – May 2002

## BOBA Reunion September 2001

The 2001 reunion of BOBA was held at the Old Course Hotel, Chepstow over the weekend 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> September. Once again it turned out to be great value and a time to meet, greet and reminisce with old friends.



The weekend followed the well-proven format of Friday night social, Saturday morning displays followed by the AGM in the afternoon and the Reunion Dinner in the evening. The BOBA Golf Championships (more popular than ever) took place on Saturday morning. Sunday brought the parade and church service at Beachley with lunch in the Old Course to wind up things for another year.



*Members enjoy the archives*

As always the staff at the Old Course went out of their way to make everyone welcome, working really hard to make the weekend a success.



*Registrars Peter Burridge and Maurice Murtagh*

Anne Rainsbury, from Chepstow Museum, and Ron Marie again set up their popular displays on Saturday morning. Indeed, the registrars (above) all but succeeded in taking money for entrance to the display room - but then thought better of it. Tim Ryan also kindly brought along an interesting layout with video of the work under way to restore the Severn Princess of Beachley Ferry fame.



*The President and Chairman at the Reunion Dinner*

There were 169 who attended on Friday night, 188 at the Reunion Dinner, 78 at the Ladies Dinner and 96 at Sunday Lunch (the most yet).

*The Reunion weekend is becoming more popular. Book early this year as tickets may be limited for the Reunion Dinner on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September.*



## The View From Behind The Bar

### Judy Lomax : The Old Course Hotel

Believe it or not but some of the Old Course staff have worked on, and survived, every BOBA reunion held here! Everyone, including the young part-timers, look forward to one of our busiest and best weekends of the year.



Karl, Judy and Gareth on Friday night

On Friday nights the staff are allowed to dress up in a variety of Army gear! Not only does this add a party atmosphere for staff (and old-boys) its also more comfortable – for some. However, Saturday nights are more formal and everyone is in more formal outfits. These are really busy and long nights but we all enjoy it. Sometimes old staff come back from university and such to help out.

For new staff, the weekend is a real eye-opener as the work is practically non-stop and forward planning is absolutely essential, as extra items are often needed just to cope with sheer numbers of guests. The work carried out behind the scenes is quite monumental which sometimes we forget. We estimate that we probably serve up to 700 meals over the whole weekend, from fish and chips and roast beef to a full fry-up.



The Old Course Gang – Ready for Action!

Our General Managers, Lynn and Steve Gethin, are old hands now having overseen three BOBA weekends since arriving in early 1999. For my part I am virtually a fixed item having been at the hotel since 1991.

We look forward to extending a warm Welsh welcome again to all BOBA members in September this year.

## Old Course Hotel Refurbishment

The hotel is in the process of having a real face-lift so that by the time of the BOBA Reunion in September there will be a number of changes to its use and layout.

The work is being carried out in three phases.

During Phase 1 the restaurant at the end of the building used for the Ladies Dinner was refurbished as a conference and function room. It is now called the Two Rivers Suite and has a dance floor, bar, toilet facilities and its own entrance.



The Two Rivers Suite

Phase 2 was to install an extensive new kitchen situated in the old Severn Suite (restaurant) which is fitted with up to the minute ovens and cooking facilities.

Phase 3 is under way at the time of writing. The lounge bar, the small Larkfield bar and part of the Severn Suite are to become a restaurant and bistro. There will also be a new bar. The Reception area will also be altered to make it more attractive and welcoming to guests. There will also be new furniture and furnishings incorporated in all the phases.

Additionally, the third floor bedrooms are being refurbished as well - so book now for 2003!

Judy Lomax

### No more pull-ups

While BOBA's HQ building at Beachley suffers from various defects and leaks but continues to stand, other landmarks are still disappearing.

All Chepstow ex-boys will remember the 'Old Gym' where they endured PT, watched regimental boxing matches and strutted their stuff at Beachley dances.

Well dear boys – its gone! It has finally succumbed to the demolition gang and another part of our history is no more. The old building has completely vanished – not even a brick or piece of the foundations is left.



## The Chairmans' Jottings.



Another March – another Newsletter, how the time flies when you get older. So much has happened since the last reunion, far too much to bore you with here – so just the important points, in no particular order.

### Membership

John Furley has survived another very serious operation and, thank God, seems to be recovering well. He still puts in so much time to BOBA matters that I have to ensure that he is not allowed to do any extra. In this respect I would ask if anyone would be willing to take over the running of the BOBA website. John has got it 'up and running' but the Committee think that he should now hand it over. There must be a keen & competent "WEBMASTER" out there somewhere. Membership continues to increase; John has cajoled many members back into the fold (unpaid fees). As at today we have 639 paid up members. There is still, in my view, no better recruitment than personal contact. Try to recruit a new member every year!! Please read John's article on both the website and recruiting.

### AGM Matters

At the AGM I shall be proposing that you re-elect Colonel Alan for a further two-year term. I feel sure that you will all support this proposal. My term as Chairman will also end at the AGM in September. Despite my request that someone younger should take over, the Committee have asked that I stay on. However, that will be for you, the members, to confirm at the AGM. The remainder of the Executive Committee are happy to remain in Office if you want them to.

You will, I hope, confirm Les Johnson as a co-opted member to assist in maintaining/printing all our historical data/records.

### A Sad Loss

Our deepest sympathy goes out to Peter Burrige on the sad loss of his wife, Rona.

### Anniversaries.

Seldom a year passes without some major event to celebrate or remember, this year it is the Queens Golden Jubilee. We will record this with a special Menu Cover. It is of course the 50<sup>th</sup> for 52 A&B; I hope you manage to round up a good attendance for the reunion.

### Widows (Friends of BOBA)

There has been interest shown by some of our widows in attending the reunions. THEY ARE VERY WELCOME TO ATTEND. The difficulty is letting them know. If you are in contact with anyone that might like to attend please, either pass a photocopy of the booking form to her or let us know her address.

### Congratulations

To Jim Kingsbury, 42B "D" Coy, on the award of the MBE in the New Year's Honours List. Jim's many, many years of dedication and success in the field of athletics coaching have been rightly acknowledged.

### Caution, Disaster Area.

My dear wife has managed to have a further spell under hospital treatment. After two hip replacements, and a fractured femur in the last three years she has now added, as the result of a fall, ten stitches in a head wound and a fractured right arm, and worst of all has damaged the hip pin!!! (Can't see this preventing her attending the Reunion).

### The Cenotaph Parade

I was a little disappointed that we did not manage to fill all the 40 places allocated. With no restriction on numbers this year I hope that more of you will plan ahead and hopefully swell our numbers to about 50. Please let me know if you can attend.

Until September, God Bless and look after yourselves. See you at the Reunion.

Fair winds,

Syd Thomas

### **MOVING?**

**DON'T FORGET TO LET THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY KNOW YOUR NEW ADDRESS**



## The Ladies' Column

Just where does the time go? It seems only a very few short months ago that I was being badgered into putting pen to paper to write notes for the last BOBA newsletter.

One major problem at the moment – I had a 'little fall' a month ago at craft class. I managed to cut my head (10 stitches), fractured my right arm and damaged my right hip. With my arm in plaster writing is out of the question so this will have to be dictation! Are you ready Syd?

I wonder if lady readers would help me by letting me have me their views on the yearly BOBA reunion. What is it you like or dislike? Any ideas for improvement? Not that we ladies want to change anything! But, who knows, we might just come up with a bright idea or two.

Peter Burrige and the Committee put in so much work to make the weekend a success and I'm sure that you all will join me in thanking them. I understand that they have already adopted one of our customs – that of collecting for the Staff at the end of the dinner!

Just in case this is being read by one of the members – please hand it over to your Good Lady so that she can make a note of the dates and start the necessary planning for the weekend - no good asking you to do it.

Any Lady who has not yet attended a Reunion must cajole her other half to take her, it is a very lovely and special event, where you will gossip a little, eat good food, have a drink or two and above all, meet old acquaintances and make new friends.

Until September, look after the 'Old Man'.

God Bless.

Jo Thomas

### Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers

Thanks to the buglers from the Regt who played at the BOBA Church Service on 16<sup>th</sup> Sep 2001.

Drum Major D Bell  
LCpl W Jones

## A Novel Way To Retirement

As a 'Beachley Boy' of the 50B intake, I served my time there kitted out like a soldier destined for the 1914-18 war. Our uniform was the Great War Service Dress, the same peaked cap, much the same webbing and drill - and we fired the Lee-Enfield 303. Later in life I was to identify and empathise with the soldiers of the Great War. After all I had experienced the same problems, the stiffness of the jacket collar, the awkward square rain-cape or groundsheet, the heavy overcoat. Only the puttees were missing! Like me, surely you must have identified with those soldiers in the grainy black, brown and white photographs of the Great War. 'So what!' I can hear you saying. 'Didn't we all wear that kit?' I never thought the experience would be of any great use. That is until I retired and took up writing historical novels. In my latest novel, 'My Heart and I', which is mainly set in 1914-18, the knowledge and experience proved most useful.

The story follows a group of men, lads and women from the declaration of war in 1914 as they are gradually drawn into the conflict. By 1918 the men and lads find themselves in the front line when the German Army launches its last great offensive of the war. It is their date with destiny. The story incorporates some of the major exploits of the 'Ox and Bucks' Light Infantry.

This is what Colonel (Retd) JMA Tillet, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, wrote about the novel. 'I, having served from 1937 until retirement, found it most interesting. I relived the days of my youth, my father's youth, including the terrible privations of the 20's. What excellent research and writing on your part. Your book will be a valuable asset to our Regimental Archives.'

When writing about the past, the research is fascinating, the writing absorbing - the additional friendships created rewarding. After reading 'My Heart and I' an old lady telephoned me to say thank you. Her father had served and died in the Great War and she could remember waving him goodbye. These were her words. 'I sat in my room. I'm too old to get out much these days. So I read every word, sang all the songs out loud - and cried my eyes out as the memories flooded back.'

It is said we all have at least one book in us. Why not you?

The novel 'My Heart and I', ISBN 0-9540236-0-9 is only available in hardback. It can be ordered from your local bookshop or direct from me at a discount price of £9 for BOBA members (post free).

Brian Elks, 12 Cheshire Road, Thame, Oxon OX9 3LQ.



## Veteran BOBA Athlete in Honours List

### Jim (Bill) Kingsbury 42B D Coy awarded MBE

The photograph opposite shows Jim Kingsbury talking to the Prince of Wales following the presentation of his MBE for services to Athletics at Cardiff Castle in March 2002.

The 74-year-old athletics coach from Porth in the Rhondda, says it was an occasion he will always treasure. He says "I was very proud but also very nervous when I met Prince Charles, but he was absolutely brilliant."



Jim chatted to the Prince about his long career in athletics and amazed him by revealing that he is still competing at hammer throwing! Another talking point was Jim's BOBA tie, which caught the royal eye and created great interest in the Prince.

Jim's athletics career spans from 1942 to the present time, winning his first Welsh AA Championship in 1944 as a Junior and later the Under 20 Championship in 1946. He won many Army, County and Welsh International Athletic competitions. After reaching veteran age he continued, again winning Welsh and British Championships at all age groups from 'Over 45' up to 'Over 70', setting many records along the way. Jim is currently British Champion and Record Holder for the 'Over 74' Hammer.

As well as competing himself, Jim has enjoyed equal success as a coach, producing many champions (in excess of four hundred and fifty) and has worked tirelessly with youth, creating new Welsh and British Champions who are praised for their well-mannered performances. He is presently coaching seven Rhondda athletes who have reached British rankings, plus six others from various parts of Wales, as well as many county and club champions. Some of Jim's numerous awards are listed below:

- Meritorious Award : Welsh A.A. 1963.
- Rhondda Coach of the Year Award. 1993 1998 & 2001.
- Lloyds Bank Coach of the Year Award. 1993.
- Welsh 'Roll of Honour' Award. 1996.
- Received gold medal and tie from Welsh Schools A.A. for producing over 300 Champions. 1998.
- Represented Great Britain at the World Veterans' Championships in 'Over 70' Hammer. 1999.
- Received the Torch Trust Trophy Award for over 50 years of voluntary services to sport. Presented by HRH Prince Philip, London. 1999.
- Presented with the 'Golden Award' for sporting achievements over fifty six years, Savoy Hotel, London. Norman Wisdom was presented with a similar award for over fifty years contribution to show business. 2000.
- Awarded the M.B.E, in the Queen's Honours List. Presented by HRH Prince Charles at Cardiff Castle. March 2002.



Jim with his MBE. He is now thinking of giving up athletics and going back to Rugby Union!

*BOBA salutes Jim's lifetime in sport*



## Membership Report 2002

1. **For over a year I have been sorting out outstanding subscriptions.** I found there were some 197 members with outstanding subs when I took over and so I wrote to them all. The letter I sent was well received and I am grateful to the 89 members who responded and paid up. A further 92 members did not respond and regretfully the committee had to cancel their memberships. Sadly, 16 members resigned for varying reasons. However, the exercise netted over £2,500 in membership subscriptions to the Association.
2. **Membership now stands at 678 members who are paid up to date.** Of these, 85 are new members, joining in the past year. With the help of BOBA members, our website, internet recruitment sites and TV Teletext, more new members join each month. New BOBA is on Channel 4 **TELETEXT** Association pages 171 & 172. We have been advertising there for over a year; the free advertisement appears every 6 / 7 weeks and provides continued interest.
3. **The BOBA website: Our very own domain website address is: [www.boba-beachley.org.uk](http://www.boba-beachley.org.uk).** Visit it and please inform all Beachley Boys you know of its existence. If you're not on the Internet you can see the website at your local library (usually free). More and more new members are joining through our new website. Go on try it!
4. There are two other **websites directly associated with Beachley.** The first set up by Andy Yarrow, who was at Beachley with 76B, and now lives in Canada. Andy's excellent, informative and very friendly website is RE orientated and the web address is: <http://armyapprenticescollege.homestead.com>. The second website about Beachley is run by 65B Group 'A' Coy, who have already enjoyed reunions of their own, with details on their website. Terry Evans is the organiser of the reunion and Michael Keeble of Brisbane, Australia is their Webmaster. The 65B website address is: [www.uq.au/~zzwkeeb](http://www.uq.au/~zzwkeeb)
5. Last year Jack Duke of 51A emulated Joe Kinson's previous year's detective work, by tracing over a hundred 51A & 51B for their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. **No one has taken up the challenge for the 1952 year.** There's still time, who's going to volunteer for the recruitment of 1952 year? I promise ~ I will help!
6. Eighty percent of the 85 new BOBA members to join in the last year are from groups in the 50's, 60's & 70's. These 'new' Old Boys are more than welcome and will help ensure that BOBA continues to thrive for decades to come!
7. Sincere apologies go out to Bern Olley, A/T RSM of 54A. Despite reporting him killed in a 1995 RTA and double-checking the source of information, I am more than pleased (but not as pleased as Bern is) to report that he is very much alive and kicking! Bern is now a BOBA member; we look forward to seeing him at future BOBA reunions. (A lesson has been learned here! **Please be accurate in reporting facts to BOBA, ensure 100% accuracy, it helps keep egg off all our faces!**)
8. I won't bore members this year by repeating the article on **Membership Fees. But please keep up with your subscriptions!** It is very important for us all to see that none of our friends becomes a lapse statistic!
9. Unfortunately, the **Data Protection Act** prevents me from informing your pals of your contact details without your written permission. Please help solve this by completing the **orange A6 form** enclosed and returning it to me ASAP.
10. Please contact me if you have any doubts or questions, or just need to talk about your membership details. Perhaps you have never received a membership book! I won't know if you don't tell me about your question or problem. BOBA Membership Secretary is: John Furley, 9 Park View, Sedbury, Chepstow, NP16 7BE. Tel: 01291 630491 Fax: 630492 email: [membership@boba-beachley.org.uk](mailto:membership@boba-beachley.org.uk)

***A VERY GOOD WAY TO ATTRACT NEW MEMBERS TO THE ASSOCIATION IS BY WORD OF MOUTH! CURRENT MEMBERS NEED TO ENCOURAGE MORE OLD BOYS TO JOIN US!***

John Furley, Membership Secretary



## New members of BOBA March 2001 to March 2003.

787	Mr.	GJ	Ellis	67C	B	831	Mr.	R	Richard	Nouch	62C	B	
788	Mr.	PJ	Paddy	Alexander	51B	C	832	Mr.	S	Shaun	Roberts	76B	C
789	Mr.	GR	Gustavus	Hughes	51A	C	833	Mr.	TA	Tug	Wilson	51A	D
790	Lt. Col.	JL	John	Powell	51B	D	834	Mr.	RI	Bob	Sutherland	51B	D&A
791	Mr.	RGP	Rod	Hickey	54B	B	835	Mr.	M	Mick	Thompson	74C	C
792	Mr.	ME	Mark	Keary	60C	C	836	Mr.	S	Stan	Wildash	53B	A
793	Mr.	NL	Neville	Donnan	51A	B	837	Mr.	RG	Ray	Barlow	51B/52A	D
794	Mr.	ME	Malcolm	Dooley	51B	D	838	Mr.	C	Chris	Adwell	74C	C
795	Mr.	JJ	Jack	Clayworth	51B	C	839	Mr.	P	Peter	Hepton	66A	B
796	Mr.	ND	Norman	Blyth	51A	B	840	Mr.	CF	Frank	Smith	51A	C
797	Mr.	RJ	Dick	Randall	51A	D	841	Mr.	DT	Dave	Smith	64C	A
798	Mr.	JR	James	Routledge	51A	D/A	842	Mr.	PA	Patrick	Barrett	51A	B
799	Mr.	LT	Les	Bell	51B	C	843	Major	CA	Charles	Fisher	1 Group	
800	Mr.	AG		Weare	51B	D	844	Lt. Col.	DN	David	Hamilton	62B	B
801	Mr.	RW	Bob	Barclay	51A	B	845	Mr.	M.	Del	Delaney	57B	B
802	Mr.	DK	Derek	Fisher	51B	C	846	Mr.	AG	Tony	Smith	45	C
803	Mr.	D	David	Budding	51B	C	847	Mr.	B.	Brian	Elks	50B	C
804	Mr.	LG	Algy	Gardner	51B	C	848	Capt.	GE	Gordon	Ridgeway	63A	C
805	Mr.	MD	Mick	Heath	64C	B	849	Mr.	RH	Bob	Bone	53B	D
806	Mr.	AE	Albert	Elliott	51B	C	850	Major	BAM	Bern	Olley	54A	C
807	Mr.	C		Tatham	51A	C	851	Mr.	PJ	Paul	Daniels	73C	A
808	Mr.	BW	Brian	Brompton	51A	B	852	Mr.	JW	John (Tex)	Harrington	50B	B
809	Mr.	R	Ricky	Polly	51A	D	853	Mr.	R	Roger	Smith	60C	C
810	Mr.	RD	Roy	Williamson	53B	A	854	Mr.	P	Peter	Lea	54A	B
811	Mr.	R	Russ	Hayes	79B	B	855	Mr.	WEG	Wally	Woods	38A	D
812	Mr.	KJ	Ken	Wilkinson	51B	B	856	Mr.	RD	Ray	Kirby	42B	C
813	Mr.	DJ	Derek	Dobson	51A	B	857	Mr.	RJW	Ray	Allen	66C	C
814	Mr.	G	Gordon	Taylor	74C	C	858	Mr.	SJ	Steve	Mawer	67B	A
815	Mr.	H M	Mac	MacDonald	51B	B	859	Mr.	T	Trevor	Allen	70B	A
816	Mr.	R J	Rod	Hearne	51A	C	860	Mr.	S		Evans	72C	A
817	Mr.	KF	Ken	Jones	52B	B	861	Mr.	NCF	Noel	Christian	52A	A
818	Mr.	RH	Bob	Foster	50A	B	862	Mr.	RS	Gaff	Sell	45B	C
819	Mr.	MP	Martin	Grove	60B	B	863	Mr.	B	Brian	Elkins	51A	C
820	Mr.	PR	Peter	Gibbs	51B	B	864	Mr.	BE	Brian	Jackson	52A	C
821	Mr.	R	Rex	Goddard	50B	B	865	Mr.	J	John	Morton	68B/C	B
822	Mr.	R	Bob	Teare	54A	D	866	Mr.	A	Alan	Turner	50A	C
823	Mr.	P	Peter	Saunders	51A	B	867	Mr.	R	Ron	Greenhalgh	53A	B
824	Mr.	MHR	Michael	Brown	51A	D	868	Mr.	P	Pat	Bourne	42A	A
825	Mr.	AJ	Tony	Welch	51B	D	869	Mr.	KL	Ken	Williams	53A	A
826	Mr.	ERE	Bob	Boggis	47A	A	870	Mr.	CA	Craig	MacKenzie	84C	D
827	Mr.	EH	Ed	Fillbrook	51B	C	871	Mr.	G	Geoff	Loake	47A	B
828	Mr.	CR	Chris	Reeves	51A	D	872	Mr.	WR	Bill	Killen	58A	B
829	Mr.	G.	Gordon	Gray	56A	D	873	Mr.	R	Bob	Adams	65C	C
830	Mr.	LJ	John	Lingham	51A	D							

**A WEBMASTER NEEDED FOR THE NEW BOBA WEBSITE : [www.boba-beachley.org.uk](http://www.boba-beachley.org.uk)**

At the AGM last year some members thought the BOBA website could be improved. While I have got the project up and running, I am by no means an expert in web design or administration. Hence, to take things forward from here, the Executive Committee is looking for a new 'BOBA Webmaster'; someone willing to take on responsibility for the site and perhaps redesign it. The Webmaster would probably become a co-opted member of the Executive Committee. Here is a great opportunity for someone to take over the website, rebuild it using your own ideas as approved by the Executive Committee. Come on you experienced webmasters, which one of you is going to take up the challenge?

**Applications initially to me please – contact details on opposite page.**

**John Furley**



## The Beachley Connection

Like most of us during our Army careers I met many ex-Beachley apprentices, although in my case not a lot from my own Group.

It was not until I left the Army, in 1979, and started to work for a large company in the Defence Industry, that I realised just how wide the Beachley web spread. Soon after joining the company I discovered that the staff included a number of ex-Beachley apprentices. I was soon a member of an exclusive group that met every few weeks for a lunchtime drink and to reminisce about how hard it was during our time at Beachley.

About this time I joined the Chobham and District branch of the REME Association, the Branch Secretary being Richard (Dick) Green, and you've guessed it - Dick was a member of 45C Group, C Company, at Beachley. I'd met Dick during my time in the Army but was unaware that he was 'one of us'. During a natter with Dick he told me that he was a Yeoman in the Queen's Body Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard (not to be confused with the Yeomen Warders at the Tower of London - Beefeaters). He explained that as a member of the Queen's Body Guard you are called for duty approximately eight times a year, to take part in State occasions such as the State Opening of Parliament, the Royal Maundy Service, the Garter Ceremony, etc. The idea of being a member of The Queen's Body Guard appealed to me and I applied to join. After a couple of interviews I was accepted as a Yeoman early in 1982.

On joining the Body Guard I soon became aware that it was made up of mostly ex members of the Household Division and that Dick and I, both ex REME, were a bit of a novelty. There was quite a lot of friendly banter which, being Beachley trained, we coped with and gave as good as we got.

In 1987 I was on duty, 'waiting in wings' to take part in the State Opening of Parliament, and as often happens I was talking to a fellow Yeoman, George Kirkham MBE. During our chat I happened to mention that I was an ex-Beachley apprentice. George's immediate response was to ask me why he had not seen me at the BOBA reunions. As George was an ex Grenadier this came as a bit of a surprise until he told me that he was, for some time, the Apprentice School RSM ~ The 'Beachley Connection' had struck again! I later learned that George was a very keen supporter of BOBA, and he left me in no doubt that he expected to see me at the next reunion. So it was that I started attending BOBA reunions again, after a break of some twenty-five years. Sadly George has since passed away but I will always be grateful that he got me back in contact with many old friends from my days at Beachley.

In 1995 Dick Green was placed on The Exempt List of The Queen's Body Guard, which left me as the sole Beachley representative. I will also go on to The Exempt List in three years time, but the staff at St James's Palace have obviously recognised the merits of having an ex-Beachley apprentice in the ranks of the Queen's Body Guard. In January 2001 a new Yeoman, Ken Moffatt of 72A Group C Company, joined, thereby ensuring that the 'Beachley Connection' continues.

Whilst writing this article the Beachley Connection struck again! My Mother, who is nearly ninety years old, had a visit from her GP. As he was leaving the house he noticed a photograph of me, taken at Beachley in 1950, and asked who it was. My Mother explained that it was her son who was an apprentice at Beachley. Whereupon the doctor replied, "My Dad was there too and he has told me a lot of stories about Beachley!!"

**WHO SAID THAT THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS THE BEACHLEY CONNECTION?**

Roy Barnett 50A Group, D Company



## George Alfred Murray 43A (1927 – 2001)

*The following is a short summary of the eulogy spoken by Brigadier Brian Ridley DL on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2001*

George Alfred Murray - a friend to all of us here and many who could not make it today, of extraordinary charisma, unfailing loyalty, charm and immense fun – whose life touched so many in such different ways.

George was fine soldier. He started his army life aged 15 in a very hard school with the apprentices at Chepstow where he literally fought his way, both in competition and in the boxing ring, to the top post of Boy RSM. Whenever he talked about this it was not to boast of being best out of hundreds but to say quite simply that his greatest achievement as Boy RSM was to stop bullying at Chepstow – or you had a couple of rounds with George in the ring – and some of those who joined up with him in 1943 are here today which would please him greatly.

From Chepstow he was, exceptionally in those days, selected for officer training, went to Mons and was commissioned into the RASC, his father's Corps, in 1947. As an officer he continued to collect honours, not only because he was probably the smartest officer I ever knew both in turnout and drill, but because of his all-round natural sporting talent. He trained and led the renowned 15Bn RASC Boxing Team to win the Army Championships; but not from the ringside but by his own example being the Officers Light Heavyweight Champion in 1949, 1950 and a finalist in 1951. George joined the prestigious 63 Coy of the Parachute Brigade, and went to the Canal Zone in the early fifties and it was there that he met a very young Annick whom he pursued with ardour and enthusiasm, marrying her in Paris in 1956. George's last appointment was adjutant of a BAOR Transport Regiment, having passed out top of the Regimental Adjutants' Course.

George was ambitious and in his early thirties he set out to seek further fame and fortune in civilian life – and he achieved both. His start in the motor industry was not easy but his determination and inherent skills as a great salesman saw him through; and led eventually to the animal feed world where he found his niche; and it is fair to say his impetus totally revolutionised the way horses are fed in this country. His knowledge of the equine world and his standing in it, particularly racing, was due entirely to his resolve to be simply the best in the business.

His overriding passion latterly was his golf. He was honoured to be the captain of the East Berkshire Golf Club, and very proud of his membership of the Berkshire, which he joined in 1986.

And so we all have our own memories of George, and whenever we think of them quite automatically a smile comes to our face – as a fine soldier, as a super salesman, as an outstanding sportsman; as a dad on the touchline at Wellington cheering on his boy at a decibel level which exceeded the rest of the spectators put together; as an Old Comrade marching at the Cenotaph only last November; playing his ukulele; telling his stories; being one of the great raconteurs and wherever he was being the centre of the party.

Here our thoughts are with an extraordinary man of so many parts and our prayers are with Annick and her family today and over the coming weeks. God bless you George – life cannot be as much fun without you.

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## Len Pearson 39 Group (1921 –2001)

Len, who died last year, was awarded a Military Medal for his brave work as a demolition expert in Burma, where he operated behind enemy lines as a Staff Sgt RE with the SOE Force 136, his final parachute training jump being operational! Operating behind Japanese lines his team of Karens ambushed many enemy convoys after Pearson had mined the road. He accounted for more than 100 Japanese vehicles, demonstrating extreme bravery on numerous occasions and behaving with great coolness and determination in exceptionally difficult conditions.



Len was a boy Sgt Major at Beachley before being posted for service in Persia, where he was employed mining possible lines of approach of the Afrika Korps. In 1944, he contracted typhus and nearly died. He was sent to Poona to recover, where Force 136 recruited him. He was eventually posted back to UK, disarming thousands of mines around the Cornish coast. However, he contracted TB and was discharged while still a young man to later forge a successful career with Imperial Tobacco. He bore the effects of a stroke for thirty years and eventually moved to the Royal Chelsea Hospital, where he worked in the Surveyor of Works Department.



## IN MEMORIAM

### THE FOLLOWING BOBA MEMBERS ARE REPORTED DECEASED SINCE THE 2001 ECHOES

3	John	Broad	42A	02/07/01	435	Les	Hall	29	18/04/01
7	Ben	Lanchbury	42A	02/08/01	449	George	Murray	43A	24/06/01
98	Ray	Smith	43B	20/08/01	497	Len	Hawkins	45B	14/03/02
169	Steve	Ninnis	50B	30/03/02	504	Pete	Gore	56B	27/08/01
207	Jimmy	Halliday	36	11/01/01	605	Roland	Hutt	40	2000
326	Len	Pearson	39	07/04/00	712	John	Brennan	50A	18/05/01
411	Harold	Alderson	42B	01/09/01	745	Reg	Matthews	Staff	23/03/02
419	Alf	Jeffs	16	22/11/01	843	Charles	Fisher	1	05/04/02

### THE FOLLOWING NON-BOBA MEMBERS ARE REPORTED DECEASED SINCE 2001 ECHOES

Phil	Goodman	74C	16/07/01	John	Fry	51B	2000
Brain	Horrocks	51B	1995	Bill	Furley	42A	18/01/70
Bill	Care	19	21/02/01	Rodney	Commins	50A	NK
Ron	Nunnick	53B	1999	Bill	Jackson	46B	08/01
George	Fox	41	29/06/01	John	Cox OBE	50A	05/05/01
Len	Pearson	37	06/01/01	John	Waghorne	51B	1994
John	Reeder	50B	26-09-01	Robert	Barratt	43B	1996
Dave	Wright	56A	15/04/01	Harry	Hooper	43A	18/08/00
Ron	Lupson	40	31/12/01	Reg	Poindgestre	50B	27/06/01
Fred	Mantle	13	NK	Douglas	Vowden	52A	30/06/00
Peter	Anderson	43	1985	Don	Reynolds	51A	15/05/00
Wally	Weston	51B	1998/99	Ernie	Allcock	43A	31/05/01

### THE DEATHS RECORDED BELOW HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY APPEARED IN ECHOES

N-M	WJ	Atcherley	42	06/97	237	Eric	Marrison	40	NK
N-M	DWJ	Carter	NK	01/09/98	267	Vic	Mealyer	1	06/97
21	Neil	MacDonald	46A	05/97	306	Dick	Fudger	7	07/97
196	Mr	McGahan	16	02/04/00	330	Bill	Eames	34	06/98
217	Peter	Stansbury	45B	06/97	359	Fred	Hulme	36	08/97
225	Harry	Hapson	39	08/98	517	George	Avard	45B	04/97
227	Charles	Lewis	23	07/98	518	Ron	Tuck	46A	NK
236	Jack	Powell	40	05/98	539	Joe	Baston	46A	08/97

#### BOBA Cenotaph Detachment 11 Nov 2001

1.	Mr. John Adams	70B	13.	Mr. 'Baz' Morgan	73B
2.	Mr. Peter Ashford	46A	14.	Mr. Maurice Murtagh	43B
3.	Mr. Nigel Brickell	68A	15.	Mr. Peter Newton	47A
4.	Mr. Roy Brown	49A	16.	Mr. Alan Picken	66A
5.	Mr. Peter Burridge	43B	17.	Mr. Frank Pickering	47B
6.	Mr. Dave Coburn	44A	18.	Major John Skinner	46B
7.	Mr. Noel Drew	60A	19.	Mr. Donald Smith	61A
8.	Mr. John Fleming	53B	20.	Mr. 'Digger' Stanley	42A
9.	Mr. John Furley	56A	21.	Mr. John Symes	47A
10.	Mr. Martin Grove	60B	22.	Mr. Gordon Taylor	74C
11.	Col. Alan Holman OBE	(Staff)	23.	Lt. Col. Syd Thomas	47A
12.	Mr. Mark Keary	60C	24.	Mr. Tony Waite	60C
			25.	Lt. Col. Nick Winder	58A
			26.	Mr. Brain Woolsey	50B
			26.	Mr. Colin Wadsworth	59C
			27.	Mr Pat Burke	(RGJ Guest)



**BEACHLEY OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION**  
**THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE, BEACHLEY, CHEPSTOW, MONS NP16 7YG**

Secretary

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24 April 2002

**MINUTES OF THE BEACHLEY OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**HELD AT BEACHLEY BARRACKS ON SATURDAY 15<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2001**

Present: Col AGR Holman OBE	President	Mr F Pickering	Vice President
Lt Col S Thomas	Chairman	Mr AW Waite	Treasurer
Maj DC Chapman	Vice President	Mr P Burridge	Reunion
Mr M Murtagh	Vice President	Mr J Furley	Membership Secretary
Mr G Gasser	Vice President		& Chepstow Liaison
Mr R Marie	Vice President	Mr B Henderson	Secretary

**In Memoriam**

Opening the meeting, the Chairman said he could not let it pass without mentioning the terrible events in America. On behalf of the Association he hoped that no ex-boys were victims and asked the members present to stand and observe a brief period of silence and reflect upon the tragedy that had befallen the American people.

**Introduction**

1. The AGM was held as usual at St George's Church, Beachley. The members attending exceeded 100, although many couldn't attend because of poor health, travelling distance or other commitments. A number of apologies had been tendered, many from overseas. The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all present.

**Item 1. - Opening Address.**

2. The President gave a personal welcome and thanked all members attending the weekend for attending the Reunion. He congratulated all those who were actively involved with the welfare of the members and also to those who were recruiting ex-boys to new BOBA. The increase in membership levels was against the prevailing tide and the President asked that the momentum be maintained.

3. Speaking on welfare, he said the Association was performing extremely well following the lead set by SSAFA and the RBL. He pointed out that a couple of areas in the UK still needed representatives from within the Association, any volunteers should approach a member of the Executive Committee for further details.

4. In closing the President expressed his delight that the weekend was succeeding as usual and looked forward to meeting as many members as possible at the Reunion Dinner and during Sunday's church parade.

**Item 2. - Minutes of the 2000 Annual General Meeting.**

5. As in previous years, the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2000 were included in the Beachley Echoes that had been sent to all BOBA members. The Chairman felt that all the members present were aware of the contents of these minutes and asked if there were any comments or observations.



6. There being no comments, observations or matters arising, it was Proposed by D Walker, and Seconded by A Orchard, that the minutes were a true record of the 2000 Annual General Meeting.

*Carried unanimously.*

**Item 3. - In Memoriam.**

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

<u>Member No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Member No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Group</u>
348 ✓	MJ Farrow	43B	7 -	HB Lanchbury	42A
240 ✓	CC Jones	43B	98 -	RL Smith	43B
443	BD Miles	39	504 -	PNA Gore	56B
500 ✓	WMR Addison	Staff	411 -	BH Alderson	42B
26 ✓	A Hardie	43B	Non Member	DG Miller	42B
221 ✓	PWG Collins	49A	Non Member	DP Aston	44
207 ✓	J Halliday	36	Non Member	SJ Stevenson	Staff
498 ✓	KCB Bunch	45	Non Member	T Stokes	45
345 ✓	GP Russell	44	Non Member	J Bell	61C
268 -	C Bolton	43A	Non Member	C Bell	62A
673 ✓	J Sloan	43B	Non Member	L Pearson	37
662 -	R Lomax	47A	Non Member	HW Care	19
435 ✓	LG Hall	29	Non Member	F Shepherd	43A
712 ✓	JB Brennan	50A	Non Member	AE Allcock	43A
449 -	GA Murray	43A	Non Member	G Fox	41
3 ✓	BJ Broad	42A	Non Member	P Goodman	74C

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

**Item 4. – Chairman’s Report.**

**Item 4a. – General.**

9. The Chairman commenced his report by giving all a very warm welcome, especially the 51 Groups, who 50 years ago walked through the School gates to begin a ‘New Life’

10. He said it had been a very busy year for the Executive Committee; as would be clear when their reports were presented, which tend to be short and so belie the tremendous amount of work and time given to BOBA. Highlights of the year were of course the last reunion, the Cenotaph Parade, the Newsletter, massive recruiting as they would hear from our Membership Secretary, further inroads into our history/ heritage and much more.

11. In recognition of the many new members present, the Chairman introduced all the Executive Committee members in order that a face could be put to a name.

12. Closing, the Chairman again thanked the members for attending and reminded all that the Reunion Dinner commenced at 1830 hours, and that the church parade was at 1030 hours on Sunday. For those not staying on he wished them all a safe journey and hoped to see them next year.

**Item 4b. – Election of Executive Committee.**

13. The Chairman informed the meeting there had been no changes to the structure or members of the Executive Committee. All were willing to stand for a further year subject to the agreement of the members.

*Carried unanimously.*

**Item 5. – Committee Reports.**

**Item 5a. – Treasurer’s Report.**



14. Copies of the end of year (31 Mar 01) Financial Statement were available for the members to examine. The Treasurer, Mr Tony Waite, said that the expenditure in excess of income of the General Purposes Fund for the FY 00/01 was around £880, this was due to the setting up of the BOBA website and the refurbishment of the BOBA swords. Income was steady from subscriptions, consolidated members' fee payments and returns on investments. He talked those present through the balance sheet, which showed that the fund remained in a very healthy state.

15. The account had been audited and there being no comments from the floor it was Proposed by F Pickering and Seconded by S Walker that the financial statement be passed as read.

*Carried unanimously.*

16. The Treasurer also received a vote of thanks for all his effort in maintaining and presenting the account.

Item 5b. – Secretary's Report.

17. The Secretary, Capt Brian Henderson, opened by reading out letters of apology received prior to the meeting. They were from Tug Wilson 51 Group, living in South Africa, Eric Hillman Staff, living in France, Bill Withers 41C from Dorset, John Thayer 32 Gp visiting friends in Australia, John Butler 40 Gp from Chichester. There were many others including Denys Goldfinch 43B, Geoff Trow 55B, Gordon Trowsdale 41 Gp, Chris Thompson 82C, Jim Winchester 42 Gp, Charles Creswell 8 Gp, Jim Horton 39 Gp, Tony Kemp 57B, Chris Irish 53A, Bill Welch 55A, Jack Mathews 42A, Slim Bartrum 51B, Gordon Gray 56A and Bob Boggis 47A. Lastly, Mr Walker (Senior) 14 Gp was unable to attend but was represented by his sons Derek and Stuart.

18. The Secretary said that limited correspondence had been received since the last AGM but thanked those members who had contacted him on various matters concerning the Association. Perhaps the saddest letters were the notifications of the deaths of Brig Michael Addison (Past President) soon after the 2000 AGM and Len Pearson (In Pensioner) in the early spring of 2001.

19. A letter had been received from the Army Benevolent Fund thanking the Association for the generous donation of £261 from the 2000 Founders' Day service. The moneys donated since 1995 now totalled £1,343.70.

20. The Secretary closed his report by drawing the members' attention to a letter recently received from the Royal British Legion inviting the Association to take part in the Remembrance Day Parade at the Cenotaph, Chepstow. Any volunteers should speak with our Historian, Ron Marie soonest.

Item 5c. – Membership Secretary's Report.

21. The Membership Secretary, Mr John Furley, reported that 96 new members joined from 220 enquiries in the last year. Much was due to the efforts of Jack Duke 51A, 51 members having joined from 1951 year. Others had joined through varying advertising outlets, the Internet, Channel 4, etc. Thanks should also go to Andy Yarrow 76B who lives in Canada and has produced a link to BOBA from his Army Apprentices College website.

22. The Association database shows a membership strength of 712 of which 603 are fully paid up members

23. In closing the Membership Secretary said that BOBA is thriving, younger members are joining and he expected this to continue as long as we all keep talking to potential members, our old pals from Beachley and convince them of the continuing friendship and camaraderie that exists in the Association.

Item 5d. – Historian's Report.

24. The BOBA Historian, Mr Ron Marie, thanked members who continued to send in items and articles enabling him to build up the history of Beachley. Many of these articles are now part of the Heritage display.

25. The Roll of Honour was about 98% complete and the final names would soon be added. The Book of Remembrance was now also in good shape but more names were to be added and a message of dedication inserted. He asked that the membership approve the expenditure of up to £550 in order to complete these tasks.



*Carried unanimously.*

26. A vote of thanks was given to Ron Marie and also Anne Rainsbury of Chepstow Museum for their work that ensures the memories of Beachley remain alive.

**Item 6. – Life Membership.**

27. The Chairman reminded the meeting of one of our oldest members, Maj. Charles Fisher 1Gp, now residing in New Zealand and who was currently 96 years of age and who also has a son as a member of BOBA.

28. He continued by proposing that Maj. Fisher be granted Life Membership in recognition of his services to the Association.

*Carried unanimously.*

**Item 7. – Cenotaph Parade.**

29. The President confirmed the Association would parade again at the Cenotaph in London. Whereas last year numbers were restricted to 25, this year the numbers permitted on parade were to be unrestricted.

30. The President asked that we maintain or preferably increase our presence at the Cenotaph and requested that members who intended to attend the 2001 parade place their names on the notice board in the hotel foyer.

**Item 8. – Any Other Business.**

31. Some members raised concerns that letters sent to Beachley Camp were going astray. A letter would be sent to the Headquarters of the resident battalion advising them of a suitable forwarding address.

32. The matter of reunion nametags was discussed. The Chairman said these had been provided previously at some cost, but that many were unused. However the matter would be revisited for next year's reunion.

33. The Committee was asked to investigate the possibility of producing a reunion photograph as in previous years. The Chairman pointed out that this was time consuming but the matter would be looked into.

34. It was proposed that Anne Rainsbury be invited to join the Association. This was agreed in principle; Anne would be approached and the matter would be discussed fully at the next AGM.

35. After a short discussion about the BOBA Standard it was agreed that its attendance at funerals was and always would be permissible. However, the Association does not have a standard bearer and therefore members wishing to use the standard should initially contact the Chepstow Liaison Member or the Honorary Secretary.

36. Lt Col Glen Chambers said the Golf Tournament presentations would take place in the hotel bar commencing at 18:00hrs.

**Closure.**

37. The members present were reminded that the President's Reception commenced at 1800 hours that evening to be followed by the Reunion Dinner. The Ladies Dinner commenced at 1900hrs.

38. The reunion next year will be held over the period 13 – 15 September 2002.

39. The Chairman closed the meeting by once more thanking the members for attending the meeting, he also thanked them for their loyal and continuing support and hoped to see them all later at the Reunion Dinner and at Sunday's church parade.



Secretary



Chairman



## Six Decades to the Day

On 8<sup>th</sup> April 1942 the lads of 42A trooped through the gates of Beachley Camp. Who could have forecast then that on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2002, and sixty years to the day, the Group would dine in style in Chepstow at the Old Course Hotel.

The event was organised by 'Pud' Rice and 'Digger' Stanley and was attended by members of 42A and 42B. With partners, thirty-four sat down to an excellent dinner served by the attentive Old Course staff. John Furley, BOBA Membership Secretary and Mrs Furley were guests, John having helped the organisers considerably with contact details. Apologies were received from the President and Chairman of BOBA who were unable to attend.

John also arranged for the BOBA HQ at Beachley to be opened on the following day and most of the party took advantage of the opportunity and visited the Old School House.

Digger Stanley 42A

## Beachley Military Marches

You may recall my article, in a previous edition of the Echoes, about two marches particular to Beachley and how I have tried to locate the sheet music for them. Since then I have continued with my search for the 'Army Apprentice Beachley' and 'Beachley Airs'. I have written to several music publishers with no luck, approached the Bodleian Library and Music Room in Oxford and Major Roger Smith at the Royal Military School of Music. The School had heard of 'Beachley' but of the two others - nothing. I have also searched the archives of Bossey and Hawke without luck.

I must therefore conclude these marches are lost to us forever – unless, of course, you know better.

Pete Bignell 50A

## An Irish Conspiracy?

After 50 years its time to come clean!! It was drill & turnout time for 53B HQ Coy. We, in 4 Platoon would soon be A Coy, Alec Beach and his mates in 1 Platoon would be D Coy. To their dismay we won the closely contested competition fair and square – ish! And by the 'smallest of margins'.

In the evening before the big day, Paddy Barrett, stalwart HQ Coy Platoon Sgt, arrived to help in our fevered preparation. Paddy knew we were unready and brought nail varnish with him to help those who had not mastered the art of spit and polishing. Many took advantage of Paddy's foresight.

The next day we were inspected by some 'imported' Guards officers. Along the ranks comes this longhaired captain in his dull brown shoes and Sam Browne. He stopped at every third or fourth boy and made comments. He passed me by but stopped opposite our smallest and youngest boy, Sammy Smyth from Ireland (still under 15). The officer, obviously impressed, said "Have you anything on your boots other than polish"? To everyone's horror Sammy piped up "Yes sir". Paddy Barrett turned grey – there was an almost audible cumulative intake of breath. "And what is that"? asks brown shoes. "Sput sor", says Sammy, oblivious of the tension. The captain smiled and moved on. Paddy Barrett wobbled.

Shortly after we were marching our hearts out the equal of anyone on the day. I reckon the 'smallest of margins' was thanks to Sammy Smyth's "Sput".

Ken Stout 53B A Coy



## TRACING OLD PALS ~ THE BEST WAYS!

When our BOBA website was initially launched some BOBA members requested a 'Where are you now?' type page to search for their old pals using the BOBA website. After studying this situation, the logistics of administering such a page, or many pages, as it would most certainly become, was far too daunting.

The reason for this apprehension is multi-fold. Firstly, we are unable to allow contact details to be placed directly on the BOBA website by members because of possible misuse by non-BOBA persons, leaving the Association open to litigation. Secondly, someone would have to design and build a system to respond to enquiries and administer the pages. A fully automated site may be possible at a substantial cost but it would still need physical support for email enquiries. This would inevitably mean the BOBA website administrator taking on this duty. This is impractical for several reasons, some of which are: 1. He would have to trace people and find the answers to all the questions that both potential and full BOBA members might ask (this could become a very time consuming job). 2. The experience and know-how does not currently exist to set up such a system and 3. The time just isn't there to learn the necessary skills or carry out such work. However, **THERE ARE BETTER WAYS!**

Looking for old pals can be an uphill struggle, but for those who are willing to tackle the Internet its easy and great fun!. What's that? You're not on the Internet! Even using your local library computer is both easy and cheap! With a little guidance and self-help everyone can master the Web. In addition, **THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO WANT TO HELP YOU!** Below are the websites I have found useful, some being better than others. The old school friends' site named 'Friends Reunited' is the only one I know with a small charge. I think £5 a year, little enough for a good chance to find some old pals (AAColl Chepstow is a listed school).

The other websites are all fairly new and cheap, if not free. These websites search in different ways, some actually search by the units personnel actually served in, so if you are trying to find old pals in addition to Beachley Boys, such websites can help. I successfully found many new BOBA members on Friendsreunited, but why not join them all for a better chance to find those long lost pals.

Here are seven website addresses, anyone can register on them, most are free, what have you got to lose? Go on have a go! Try them all! One piece of advice - make sure you keep a record of all 'User names' and 'Passwords' issued by websites, as you will need them to 'log on' when visiting the sites.

<http://www.comrades-in-arms-reunited.com>  
<http://www.modreunited.com>  
<http://www.friendsreunited.co.uk>  
<http://www.comradesandcolleagues.com>  
<http://www.forcesreunited.org.uk>  
<http://www.around.co.uk>  
<http://www.getonparade.com/>

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Another place to look for your pals and indeed to make an entry should you wish to do so, is:  
Channel 4 teletext: Lost touch: page 170. Service pals: pages 171 - 172  
BOBA is included in the Association pages on Channel 4 every 6 to 7 weeks.

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### A PASSING THOUGHT:

In case you have never visited your BOBA website, the newly updated website domain address is:

<http://www.boba-beachley.org.uk/>

It's your BOBA Association website, if you haven't visited it already, please give it a try!  
Good luck with tracing your pals, from **John Furley** ~ BOBA Membership Secretary.



## Pals Reunited



Ken Melton (left) and Frank Pickering

Whilst on my Artificer course at Arborfield Ken Melton (48B B Coy) was on the same course and made great use of my married quarter to get through the study time required away from the bustle and distraction of life in the sergeants mess.

From then on our paths through the Corps seemed to intertwine and when Ken married Sylvia my wife, Daphne, stood as witness for them and our boys and Ken's stepdaughters were good pals.

Then, as seems so common in service life, our postings moved us apart and the last I heard of Ken was that he was living in Melton Mowbray.

The years passed and last autumn, out of the

blue, my wife received a phone call from the Daily Mail "Find a friend" service asking if it was OK to pass on our phone number to a Mr.K.G.Melton in Inverness.

We contacted each other that evening and as you can imagine the years rolled away. We exchanged e-mail addresses and were in contact over the web straight away.

Daphne and I arranged a coach trip to Inverness and Loch Ness. The hotel was only three miles from Ken's home in Smithton. We were able to spend a whole day and an evening with Ken and Sylvia. As he is in poor health he will not be able to visit us but we pass frequent e-mails back and forth.

### Bob Harder (50B)

Bob has been a regular attendee at both BOBA and REME reunions in the past and will be well known to those of his group. He has attended at the Cenotaph parade for two of the years that we have paraded.

Unfortunately, he has now been confined to the secure unit at Moor Green Hospital in Southampton (severe dementia). I am sorry to say that his condition has worsened and on my last visit he failed to recognise us despite the fact that he regularly visited Daphne and I in Southampton. We remain in touch.

Frank Pickering (47B, B Coy)

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## Food Hygiene : Then and Now!

Those of us who had the pleasure of living in the wooden huts during the 40s will remember that each barrack room had a central chimney with a fireplace at each side to heat the room (that was the theory). Unfortunately, coal rationing did not allow for two fires to be lit, in fact on some nights even one fire could not be lit so evacuation was made either to another barrack room or the NAAFI. Even the coal yard had barbed wire over it so that option was closed to us, not that we would 'borrow any extra coal'.

During the winter of 44-45 one of life's luxuries, which were very few and far between, was to go to the cookhouse for supper (one or two slices of dry bread with something to go with it - cheese or whatever we could scrounge). I seem to think I was friendly with one of the pretty ATS girls, which was very helpful in acquiring extra food to take back to the barrack room.

On the days we did have fires, we would put the bread and the cheese on an upturned shovel under the grate until the cheese had melted. Any pieces of ash that fell on the melted cheese were flicked off and the hot cheese on toast was consumed. It still makes my mouth water when I think of it.

Our method of cooking, (although it didn't seem to do us any harm), was certainly unhygienic when compared with today, where food is wrapped so tightly it is sometimes difficult to get into! It makes me realise how things have changed.

Ah! Happy Days (I think).

Stan Pearson 43A B Coy



## Our Heritage

The Beachley Boys' Heritage layout comprising intake ledgers, photo display and a chart showing uniform changes over the decades will be displayed in the Two Rivers Suite at the Old Course Hotel from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. on Saturday 14 September 2002. Anne Rainsbury will again make available a very fine display of archive photographs from Chepstow Museum.

The display of apprentices' badges of rank is nearly complete although we are still looking for the brass Boys Technical School' (BTS) epaulette badge from the period 1924 – 1929 to finish it off. Does any member know where we might find one of these elusive items?

I have continued to receive contributions to our archives from members this year including :

Two Robots dated April 1938 No 31 Vol XI and July 1939 No 35 Vol XII from a 'Down Under' 39 Group member.

A complete set of notebooks and detail sheets covering six terms for a Fitters Gun course from a 46B Group member.

A print showing illustrations of various apprentices trades being taught at Beachley from a 60A Group member.

A course records register of Design Discipline Trades with photos of courses from 72B through to the last group in 1992. Donated by an ex-permanent staff member.

### Beachley Memorabilia

It is my aim to collect together a broad spectrum of the different aspects of Beachley life for inclusion in our archives. However, at the moment, I am looking for only 'one offs' and so for written items this will be limited to presentational material such as:

Passing Out parade and Prize Giving programmes for 1927 – 1948, 1954 – 1981, 1983 – 1994.

Details of Trade Prizes for all years.

Details of the Western Command Prize : A/T RSMs of Groups 45A – 70A

Details of the South Wales District Prize : A/T CSMs or others 45A – 70A

BOBA Awards : presented to App RSMs.

The Falklands Memorial Award of December 1982. Presented to A/T CSMs in memory of Chepstow apprentices who were casualties of the campaign.

Where requested, items will be copied and returned to the donor.

I am also looking for school colours : lanyards, red flashes or cloth shields.

### Roll Of Honour

I am pleased to report that since last year's AGM I have been very successful in updating the original Roll of Honour with the missing casualty details. The roll is now about ninety nine percent complete. The updated Roll of Honour will be on display during this year's reunion weekend in September. The Book of Remembrance held in St George's Chapel, Beachley will also be updated to include all amendments and additions.

### Pipe Band Apprentices : Can you help?

I wonder if you were in the Pipe Band in the period between the 1950s and College closure? If so, can you confirm that apprentices, who were members of the Pipe Band, wore a **chromed** version of the Army Apprentice School (College) Badge? Presumably this would have been only when in full kilt dress. The badge was definitely worn by members of the pipe bands of both Arborfield and Harrogate.



Should the answer be "YES"; then we shall need one to add to our collection of badges! Therefore, piper or not, we will need your help to track one down. Please contact me with any details.

### Dedication of the HQ Branch BOBA Standard 1951



The original of the photograph above carries a note on the reverse stating "Church Parade on dedication of original BOBA Banner – circa 1950"

Research of BOBA records reveals the following interesting story involving at least two men who gave much to Beachley and to BOBA:

The dedication of the HQ Branch\* Standard was conducted by the Padre, Rev J E Davies, at the Church Parade on Sunday 23 Sep 1951. The parade was led by a contingent of Old Boys following the new furled BOBA Standard, flanked by the RE Branch Standard. (BOBA bearer is obscured in the photo).

During the speech made by Colonel P B Cuddon, BOBA President, at the Reunion Dinner on 22 Sep 1951 he brought to the notice of members the beautiful new standard. He pointed out that it had been made solely by Sgt A Jeffs RE (16 Group) for BOBA's HQ Branch. The President hoped that everyone would see the standard dedicated on Sunday for it was really a work of art and represented true loyalty to the Association.

*\* This was in the era when there were a number of overseas BOBA branches.*

Sadly, BOBA Honorary Life Member Mr A Jeffs passed away in late November 2001 at his daughter's home in Grantham.

Can anyone help with the names of any of the Old Boys or School Band in the photo?

### Casket Search



A presentation casket (see inset photo) and scroll were presented to the Army Apprentices College by Chepstow Rural District Council in April 1972. I believe this took place in a ceremony beside the Wye in Chepstow.

Where were these displayed in the College and for how long?

Where are they now?

BOBA Heritage Member : Ron Marie



## A Sapper's Life

I arrived at Beachley in 1937 with 40 Group. The CO was Lt Col Shears and one of the Wing Sgts was Arthur Hawkes under who I did my square bashing at 2 TBRE at Newark in 1940. Arthur later took a pub in Tutshill. I left for the Sappers shortly after the Dunkirk evacuees were sheltered at Beachley.

A contemporary at Beachley was Len Pearson, whose daring exploits and career are to appear in this copy of Echoes. Our paths met several times during the war and at reunions in later years. I believe Len used to come to Beachley reunions over the bridge from Bristol in his motorised wheelchair.

Like Len, I also served in Burma but after the war in 1950 – 51 as an adviser to the Burma Engineers at Maymyo, a hill station north east of Mandalay. However, I served with Len with PAIFORCE (Persia & Iraq Force) in 1942 – 43. While Len was clearing mines in Persia I was in 865 Mech. Wksp. and Park Co. in Shaiba, Iraq. After Iraq I was posted to Culaba Camp Bombay and worked on the site of the disastrous ammunition ship explosion when many were killed and gold ingots were scattered thousands of yards into Bombay.

After Bombay I found myself in Ceylon training the (Ceylon) REs on plant, road and airfield construction in preparation for the invasion of Malaya, which never came because of the Japanese surrender in August 1945. I still have my (Ceylon) Royal Engineers cap badge. In 1991 I returned to Sri Lanka on holiday and met an old comrade from those times. Remarkably on this visit I went to a barber in Colombo who said "Hello Mr Brown". I was dumbfounded. He turned out to be one of the labour force employed in Libya as company barber when I worked for an oil company from 1966 to 1986 as a maintenance engineer.

I had an interesting life as a sapper but I believe Len Pearson's story should be more widely told, as he was one of Beachley's most notable old boys. An example to us all.

David Brown 37 Group C Coy

### Reg Matthews (1920 – 2002)



Reg Matthews will be sadly missed, a man who gave virtually his whole working life to the service and to Beachley. He was a Royal Engineer through and through. Reg volunteered for 224 Fd. Co. RE TA, soldiering in Belgium and France and being seriously wounded at Dunkirk. After being medically discharged he was later called up again and finished his service as a Sgt Instructor at Beachley.

He changed his battledress in 1946 for the brown dustcoat and became a civilian instructor. Reg trained many thousands of Beachley Boys in his 40 years, filing, scraping, chipping, turning, milling etc. An avid angler, Reg also ran the Beachley Fishing Club for many years.

Earlier this year Reg was elected President of the Chepstow RE Association, a moment he treasured. Reg certainly embroidered his entire life with the principle of the RE Association motto, "Service Not Self".

#### ITEMS FOR PUBLICATION

Please send all copy to Dave Chapman by 31/03.  
6 Century Road, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 7LE.  
Email [dave.c.chapman@btinternet.com](mailto:dave.c.chapman@btinternet.com)  
Tel : 01379 871487  
Floppies or CD. MS Word for PC (in RTF).  
Good typed copy is also OK.



## The College Gates

The 2001 Reunion Dinner printed programme carried a recent ink drawing of what was the main entrance to Beachley, drawn by Keith Underwood – the son of Arthur Underwood, an ex-member of staff.

The new School gates were first built 1946/47 – being fabricated by Dept 10 and the stone pillars and wing walls built by Dept 17. The entrance was remodelled in 1954 with the addition of the ornamental arch, again fabricated by Dept 10. The wording at that time was 'Army Apprentices School Beachley'. The arch was later altered in 1965 to read 'Army Apprentices College Beachley'.

Did any current members of BOBA work on the original or redesigned gate? Let me know.

Ed.

### Reunion Dinner 2001

*The toast to HM The Queen :* J Blaus 77C Group  
*The toast to The Association :* C Collins 14 Group  
*The Response :* Lt Col S Thomas 47A Group  
*Guest :* The Revd J Rooney

### Brand new Members (additions to page 7)

874 Mr G Gordon Butcher 53B D Coy  
875 Mr V Vincent Canham 59C A Coy  
876 Mr M Malcolm Holmes 53B B Coy

The Association extends sincere condolences to Peter Burrige, our dedicated Reunion Organiser, on the loss of his wife, Rona, on 21st October 2001. Although, Rona was very ill at the time of last year's reunion, Peter nevertheless arranged everything in his modest and professional way but had to leave on Saturday before the Reunion dinner. You are in our thoughts Peter.

### Nicknames

*"Why", asked our Ed Corps captain as he tried to re-arrange his flattened cap, "Are 14 to 17 year old youths so cruel and spiteful to others?" Capt M was bespectacled and very old: at that time, must have been in his mid-thirties, at least. His peaked-cap was ever flat, unlike most of ours with illegally 'slashed' peaks. He'd taken his off and lodged it on a shelf by the door. Whilst M... had been wandering between the desks, Spud Guise (I think) had slipped it onto his seat...*

*Our 3-Rs-mentor went on, "I mean, why do you make up such nasty nicknames ---? You there! Stop that!" Dozy had loudly sniffed again.*

*Bending his hat nervously he went on, "...Fatty, Worm, Slobber, Snake, Jap, Nancy, Snotty, Dracular, W...ker, B...er, and many unmentionables are downright cruel."*

*Paddy, Jock, Taffy, Geordie, Sprog, Ginge... and Yorky were all quite pleasant. 'Lofty' for our diminutive Ayleen seemed a fair-do. Spud was all right yet with no real reason ... Ginge because he had red hair. 'Dickie' because someone mistook the R of 'DR Coburn' for RICHARD and it stuck! Dickie's Mum gave me a rocket for it – his name is David Roy she told me severely.*

*'Rookie' for the junior group – naturally – although that seemed an American influence.*

*'Dozy' Bowdidge did not mind his ... Sometimes he was, 'Dewdrop' because he frequently had a drip at the end of his leaking, long nose which he noisily sniffed back up ...*

John Bass 44A



## A German-eye View of British Culinary Habits: Spotted Dick Spotted at BOBA!

The first course was very good. Yet when My-Man was eating his choice he muttered that it seemed second best to that which the next man had. He always wants someone else's choice. His neighbour's fish-and-chips did look delicious.

"First time to BOBA ", the lady told My-Man, "My husband was 51 Group. It's their 50th anniversary ... It was Friday, the first evening of BOBA 2001weekend. I told John, the steak & kidney pie we both had was very good.

Then I saw them and asked, "What on earth are they?" They were steaming lumps of grey-whiteness with black dots. Very anaemic looking. I had never seen, much less eaten such a thing in Germany. He answered, " Spotted Dick. It is a suet pudding " which didn't really tell me much until I'd thought about that word 'suet '. In German: 'Nierenfett ' ...Uuh! How could the English use kidney fat to make a Nachtisch (Afterdish)? "With currants..." John went on, "If it doesn't stick to your ribs it drops like a thousand-ton bomb into the very depths of your stomach. "

After church on Sunday we sat opposite a lovely couple. Very nice people. We should have broken the ice earlier ... The gentleman surprised me by demanding 'Spotted Dick' even when the youthful waiter told him the Spotted Dick had all gone. "No! No!" said our gentleman quite gently, yet very positively, "I saw one on it's way back to the kitchen ". He got it and ate the strange sweet with great relish.

Why had my man been so critical of that pudding? That was not the only revelation of this scenario. Later I had to mention it to John. "Did you see that? How the gentleman handled the situation. He persuaded that waiter into doing what he wanted. All you ex-boys seem to have that sort of charisma. An ability, with vigour and gentleness to get others to do as they desire of them". "Yes ", My-Man replied, "Comes of having to train, persuade and control people in odd places around the world as well as England - I suppose.

Irrgard Bass

### BOBA REUNION 2001 A Life In Pictures



My heritage is in front of me!



The Editor with a young lady first encountered at Chepstow in 1961!



Church Parade : Pretty good dressing for old fellas struggling to see straight!



Geoff George  
Getting to be a fixture.



Sam Fielon taking in a lungful  
of Pat Perry's perfume



"See you next year boys – but do you know where I left my car on Friday?"





## From the Fairway : BOBA Golfing Society

This year saw a record entry for the 2001 golf championships with thirty golfers taking part on the Saturday morning, including three lady golfers. This must reflect the welcome increase we have seen in BOBA membership over this last year. Well done John Furley!

We were extremely fortunate on both days, as the forecast of unsettled weather did not appear, so the brollies and waterproofs were not required. Readers may recall that last year George Murray 43A Group stated his intention to present us with an additional trophy for the golfers to contest, unfortunately before he was able to, he sadly passed away. It was decided however to proceed with the purchase of the trophy and to dedicate it to George's memory. A splendid eleven inch pewter cup has been purchased which bears the inscription:

**" The George Murray Memorial Cup"**  
and on the reverse,  
**"Presented in Memory of Captain George Murray R.A.S.C.,  
43 A Group,  
July 2001"**

Two of our newer members Colin Chambers and John Powell, both 51 B group drew the names out for the pairings before we teed off. The results of the competition were as follows:

<b>Longest Drive (4<sup>th</sup> Hole)</b>	Jimmy Hough (73A)	219 yds
<b>Nearest the Pin (18<sup>th</sup> Hole)</b>	Tony Battle (57B)	4ft 6ins
<b>Best points on Par 3's</b>	Syd Thomas (47A)	10 points (After 4 way countback)
<b>Drawn Pairs (The George Murray Memorial Cup)</b>		
Winners	Colin Chambers (51B) & Alan Duncan (67 B)	73 points
Second	Stuart Burton (67B) & Foster Pattison (56B)	72 points
Third	John Powell (51B) & Alf Chrascina (67B)	56 points

### **B.O.B.A. Championship 2001**

Winner & 2001 Champion	<b>Stuart Burton (67B)</b>	39 points
Second	Colin Chambers (51B)	38 points
Third	Alan Duncan 67B)	35 points

That's it for another year. My thanks to Tony Battle, Foster Pattison, Alan Whitelock and all the others who helped and took part.

**SEE YOU ALL NEXT YEAR. ENTRY FORM ON THE BACK PAGE.**

**Glen Chalmers**

\*\*\*\*\* **To all BOBA Non-golfers** \*\*\*\*\*

I gained the distinct impression at the AGM last year that some BOBA members thought that the Golfing Society is in some way financially subsidised by the BOBA main account. This is certainly not the case. The golfers themselves have paid all the monies accrued and kindly held by the Treasurer.



## Chepstow RBL Remembrance Parade : Sunday 11 November 2001

In response to an invitation from the RBL Chepstow to a local muster, BOBA provided a small contingent for the Chepstow Parade as follows:

T Hetherington	45B	P Gilbey	53B
R Marie	46A	K Standen	57A
R Cocker	47A	B Morris	50B (Parade Master)

On this occasion the BOBA Standard was impressively paraded by AAC cadet S Monk.

## The 2002 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 Dewstow Golf Club, Caerwent on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2002. All golfers are required to meet in the clubhouse at 8.15 a.m. on Saturday morning.

Those wishing to enter should complete the form below and return it as indicated, with a cheque for £24 made payable to BOBA, **BEFORE SUNDAY 1<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 2002**. Starting times will be allocated on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September and all golfers playing informed by letter, so please make sure your entry is on time. In the event of too many entries being received, a "first come" system will be operated.

There is also an opportunity to play on the Friday afternoon under personal arrangements, please indicate below if you wish to play on the Friday and we will make a block tee reservation.

✂-----

**PLEASE RETURN TO: Glen Chalmers, 20 Morrison Road, Swanage, Dorset, BH19 1JL.**

Please complete **FULLY** and **IN BLOCK CAPITALS**.

RANK/TITLE:..... SURNAME..... FORENAME.....

ADDRESS:.....

.....

POSTCODE: .....PHONE NUMBERS:.....

CHEPSTOW GROUP/INTAKE: .....

MEMBER AT:.....(Golf Club) HANDICAP:.....

I WOULD LIKE TO PLAY WITH: .....

.....

I WISH TO PLAY FRIDAY AFTERNOON \*YES/NO \*Delete as applicable

I ENCLOSE A CHEQUE MADE PAYABLE TO "BOBA" TO THE VALUE OF £24.

SIGNED:..... DATE: .....