



## The Beachley Old Boys' Association Newsletter

# Beachley Echoes

Edition No.9 – April 2003

### A National Treasure

I write these lines as the Iraq War is at Day 6. When you read them it will probably be over. I am sure that Beachley Boys will have played a significant and valuable part in the conflict – often carrying out some of the most dangerous tasks that soldiers are asked to do – bridging, mine clearance, bomb disposal and other perilous duties.

Apprentice training at Beachley got under way some eighty years ago and about 17,000 superbly trained and disciplined soldier tradesmen passed out through the gates until the College closed in 1993. These young men were to become the backbone of the technical corps of the British Army – the senior NCOs and officers of the best-trained army in the world.

However, a soldier's duty sometimes means he has to face the perils of war. From the earliest days Beachley Boys have been in the thick of things – WW2, Korea, Malaya, Suez, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, The Falklands, The Gulf War and many other smaller conflicts.

Sadly, over the decades many ex-boys have paid the ultimate price for our freedom. I fervently hope that we will lose very few lives in this current conflict and that all Beachley Boys will come safely home.

When the Army Apprentices Colleges were closed in the early 1990s, the Army lost something of great value; I believe a *National Treasure* was prematurely brought to an end. Many ex-boys gave their all for their country during eight decades and our defence is the poorer without that stream of selfless young men.  
Ed.

### BOBA Reunion 2003

Get ready to do it again boys and bring your ladies with you to the Reunion at the Chepstow Hotel from Friday 19<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2003. It promises to be another great event that is becoming more popular every year. But please bear in mind that 'New' BOBA now has over seven hundred paid up members, many of who would like to attend. The message is get your ticket requests in early!

The new members list shows Groups 53A and 53B are working hard in building their numbers for their fiftieth anniversary of joining Beachley. Well done.



Peter Burrige has organised the detail of every one of our New BOBA Reunions but sadly this year is his last. Thanks Peter – have a well-earned rest now!



Alan Holman also stands down as BOBA President this year. Thanks Colonel for your wise leadership in recent times. Who will be able to emulate your hilarious and informative dinner speeches???

**Please note your new membership book is enclosed with this issue of the BOBA newsletter. This 2003 revised edition supersedes the 1997 issue; keep this copy and destroy the old one.**



## BOBA Reunion September 2002

The 2002 reunion of BOBA was held at the Chepstow Hotel over the weekend 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> September. Since the 2001 get together the hotel had been extensively refurbished and re-branded from its previous incarnation as the Old Course Hotel. The new hotel layout was certainly different but a great improvement. The hotel remains a great venue for our annual event, which involves a major effort by the hotel staff. As always the manager and Judy Lomax provided BOBA's members with a great service.



*Ken Russell 52A and Alan Barlow 50B study the archives*

The weekend followed the well-proven format of Friday night social, Saturday morning displays and the AGM in the afternoon. The BOBA Golf Championship took place on Saturday at Dewstowe. The Reunion and Ladies' dinners followed in the evening. Music, dancing and just plain chat were plentiful on both nights. After the annual church service at Beachley, the weekend concluded with lunch back in the hotel.



*Anne Rainsbury (Chepstow Museum Curator and new BOBA member) talks with Noel Drew 60A*



*The Chairman, Lt Col Syd Thomas at the dinner*

199 members attended the Reunion dinner with 65 ladies at their function in the Two Rivers Suite. Apologies were received from 45 members.



*The 'top table' – Rev Joe Rooney, Tony Waite, Alan Holman, Syd Thomas and Brian Henderson*

51B mustered 13 members at the reunion. Other good scorers were 46A(9); 51A(8); 45A(7).



*But which Walker and friends?*

John Blaus 77C proposed the loyal toast yet again (final year perhaps) while Cyril Collins 14 Gp. proposed The Association.



## The Chairman' Jottings.



Another March – another Newsletter. A very sad year for me with the loss of Jo, after so many operations for hip replacements and fractured bones she was finally beaten by a cancerous tumour of the brain. I miss her very, very much. My sincere thanks to all for the wonderful support given - without which I don't think I could have got through the Reunion weekend. As you know she was a great BOBA supporter. Some of the wives held a raffle at the reunion, which raised the princely sum of £350, and as some of the prizes were not collected they were used again at a coffee morning. The net result was a donation of over £500 to Macmillan Cancer Relief - in memory of Jo. Thank you - it meant a lot to me.

Its intended to make this a permanent feature of the reunion weekend so if you have any item you wish to donate to the raffle please bring it with you. It will be gratefully received and faithfully applied.

Your Committee continue to beaver away on your behalf; they make my efforts look very insignificant. There will be some changes as mentioned at the last AGM – Dave Chapman will take over running future Reunions from Peter Burrige (Peter has organised all the Reunions so far, incl. this next one). That means we need someone to take over the Editor of the *Beachley Echoes*- any volunteers? Ivor Anthony will replace Maurice Murtagh as an Elected Vice President. Tony Waite will hand over as Treasurer after the AGM, Ron Marie is looking for someone to help or replace him as Historian. Last but far from being the least – Col Alan will stand down as President!!! Just who will replace him is not yet known but he is trying to contact a previous Commandant. Should this not prove fruitful we NEED a member to come forward. The Committee think I should offer myself – I believe that I am better suited to being Chairman but in the end I will have to do what is best for the Association. We still need some of the younger members to come forward and offer their services – we oldies can't go on forever!! We need to be put out to grass.

The Cenotaph Parade was a great success and we got good coverage on TV (well I did). We now do

not have a restriction on numbers so I look forward to a record number making the effort to attend. Please let me know either at the Reunion or by phone/email if you wish to be allocated a ticket. Once again my thanks to ex A/T RSM Baz Morgan for being the South Wales 'transport' man. (He also did a very good job of the Reunion Church Parade).

John Furley, as usual, has been very busy – this time he has been investigating the possibility of converting the Beachley Chapel (next to The Old School House) into a permanent home/museum for the Association. He is at the moment putting together a paper for discussion at the AGM. Much will depend on the outcome of our application to the MOD to have written confirmation of our ownership of the Old School House. Early days for this project but there could be compelling reasons for us to seriously consider the Chapel despite the costs involved.

The Association is going from strength to strength with the membership growing each year. It is still everyone's responsibility to try to encourage ex boys' to join – ask yourself – “When did I last get someone to join”!!!

Finally, I look forward to meeting you at this year's Reunion, I understand that 53 groups are making strenuous efforts to round up a big attendance. Until then, God Bless – look after yourselves and each other. Life is too short!!

Fair winds,

**Syd. Thomas**

### **Calling All Ex-Dukies**

At last year's BOBA Reunion four of us ex-Duke of York's Royal Military School lads decided that somewhere among the ranks of BOBA members there must be a few more ex-Dukies. At present we are the only four we know of.

Therefore, could I request any that any ex-Dukies contact me and I will in return pass on any replies on to the one's I already know of so we can possibly arrange a get-together of some sort. I was at the Duke of Yorks from Feb 1940 until I joined Beachley in Feb 1944.

Please contact me at 155 St James Avenue, Thorpe Bay, Essex, SS1 3LW.

**Eddy Edwards 44A A Coy**



## BOBA Car Badge Surfaces

BOBA Reunion 2002 at the Chepstow Hotel was in full swing, nominal rolls were being studied, the bar was about to open on the Saturday morning and Ron Marie, BOBA Historian, was nearly overcome with ill-concealed delight.



It seemed that a second BOBA car badge had been discovered on a car owned by John Moore 73C C Coy in the hotel car park!!

“Dave, quick come outside with your camera I must get this recorded as soon as possible,” said a flushed and excited Ron. I duly obliged of course and the results are to be seen right here. Ed



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## Lt Col J W Pike OBE

*Born 13 July 1911, died 7 June 2002 aged 90*

Jim Pike joined the Royal Engineers as a boy soldier in 1926 aged 14, following in his father's footsteps. He became a boy sergeant major at the Apprentice School at Beachley and the gates he made for the church when qualifying as a blacksmith still stand there.

In 1935 Jim was posted to a searchlight unit at Dover where he met and married his wife, Dot. At the outbreak of WW2, searchlights were transferred to the Royal Artillery but he elected to remain with the Royal Engineers and, joining 291 Company RE, embarked with them for France in March 1940. Following the German attack in May, the company was involved in demolition tasks and Jim, later Mentioned in Dispatches for his actions at this time, found his way back to England via Cherbourg.

Having risen to the rank of RSM by 1942, Jim was then commissioned into the Royal Engineers and posted to the Middle East, serving in Persia and Iraq. After the war, and having gained a regular commission in 1951, he served for many years in 36 Engineer Regiment in Ripon and BAOR. His final posting in 1962 was as Quartermaster in 17 Port Regiment RE at Marchwood. Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in 1963, he remained with the regiment on its transfer to the RCT in 1965 and on his retirement from the Army in 1966, he took up an appointment as an RO with the headquarters at Marchwood where his integrity, long experience and sound advice were invaluable.

He was given the honour of taking the salute at the Queen's Birthday Parade in 1966 and was appointed OBE in the same year.

Jim was a life-long supporter of the Royal Engineers Association and the Beachley Old Boys Association and both were represented, with standards, at his funeral. His wife, Dot, and his daughter survive him.

Copy of obituary provided by Major Chips Rafferty



## An Uncertain Memory

My first memories of Beachley are still with me but which of you Echoes readers can fill in the little gaps in my memory from 1953 to 1955? These matters trouble me.

Now, I can well remember the eerie black and white buildings seen from the train across the river as we approached Chepstow Station. I can also still see the greatcoat and boots, which drowned my five foot one frame. The boots always needed two pairs of socks and the greatcoat never looked right but it kept me warm and showed only my boots below its vast canopy.

Of course I still recall the production line haircuts when the barber's wife used the scissors and he followed up with a set of blunt hand clippers to pull out all she had left. I still see Busty Baker's car, which had a distinct tilt to the off side that greatly increased when he got in! And I remember raids on the coke and coal stores to keep the fire going so that we could toast the bread liberated on Cookhouse raids.

However, does anybody remember the date of the Beachley Ferry murder? It made its mark on me but I can't place when. I remember we were detailed to help look for the murder weapon (a knife) by searching along the foreshore and in the trees close to the road. Anyway while using a branch to swing over a wall I fell and cracked my head against a rather solid wall. I got two stitches in the MRS and excused duties for a week. I do remember being stopped every few yards to show my chit to every NCO I passed.

I also can't remember the date that Frank Smith (52B) put Uncle Mac's bell on top of the workshop chimney. Can anyone remember? It was quite a feat of strength and I always wondered if the hero worship of the junior groups was worth the time that Frank later spent with Uncle Mac and his friends.

Let me make one last enquiry of you. Can anyone remember the words to the Companies Song? We always bellowed it out when travelling to inter-school sports meetings etc. The words that I remember are shown below. (A Coy version).

*For it's a grand old colour RED - When you hear its history it's enough to make your heart go siilgh (sigh) - We don't care what D Coy says as on our way we go  
For we only know that there's going to be a show and then the RED supporters will be there at the NAAFI waiting for their buckshee tea.*

Does anyone know the name of the tune or any other lines / words? Ken Stout 53B A Coy

### 90 up for Major Ted Lane



On 29<sup>th</sup> June 2002 over 70 guests, celebrated the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of Major Edward Lane

MBE at his retirement home in Watford, Herts.

Ted's family has a long tradition of military service. His father served in the RE from 1914 to 1920 and was awarded the MM and Croix de Guerre (on show in the RE Museum). His grandfather fought at Rourke's Drift in 1879 with the South Wales Borderers.

Ted joined 11 Gp (Boy 995) in 1926 as an apprentice C&J and after serving throughout the Empire was commissioned in Singapore in 1942. He was later awarded the MBE for services during the Suez crisis.

At his birthday celebration, -SSgt Olaf Dudley of 131 Ind Commando Sqn RE presented Ted with a certificate of service from the RE Association (see photo).



## Life Member Remembered

I was a member of 53B Group C Coy at Beachley. My father Charles Aiken Fisher always had plans for me to follow in his footsteps; he was Boy No 35 in No.1 Group back in 1923. Dad sadly passed away on 6 April 02 in New Zealand at the good age of 93. He was honoured to be made a life member of BOBA shortly before his death

If there was one thing more important to him than being a Sapper then it was being a founding member of the Boys' Technical School (as it was known) Beachley. He recounted to me on many occasions, especially when I spoke about my AAS experiences, the early days at Beachley that he went through.

I was approached by Mr. Keith Underwood a few years ago to try and get some stories out of Dad for the Historical Society. On a subsequent visit to New Zealand I unearthed the facts. I don't think Keith published the account opposite and it may entertain BOBA members to read how our school/college started off. Many of the memories also ring a bell with me despite me following 30 years after him! I was destined for a career in REME, and Dad and I kept up a friendly rivalry about our two respective corps.

**Keith Fisher 53B C Coy**

## George Franks – Boy 518.

I recently heard of and then visited an elderly ex-boy living near me in Essex, Walter George Franks who was born in Wiltshire in 1910. He lived in Somerset as one of six children including his twin sister, and went to school in Dorset. His father took him to join up, as there were too many children at home to feed.

He joined ATS Beachley in January 1925 (he couldn't remember his group) but his boy's number was 518. He trained as a VM and was a boy Corporal. He said the food was good and remembers the long walk into Chepstow.

George went to Chatham in 1928 aged 18 and for a while was a driving instructor in Gillingham. During WW2 he was with 23 Field Coy RE and served in Sicily and Italy. He was invalided out some time during the war having reached the rank of Sergeant. After the war he worked in administration for the NHS. He was married and had been a widower since 1988

Unfortunately, George was not well otherwise I would have offered to bring him to the reunion.

Sadly, a short time after my visit George died. I only wish I had known he lived near me a bit earlier so I could have done more for him.

**Noel Drew 60A C Coy**



**Photo left** shows some of the BOBA contingent at the 2001 Cenotaph Parade.

Colonel Alan Holman BOBA President striding out in front with Chairman Lt Col Syd Thomas to his right. Vice President Maurice Murtagh creeps in to the right edge of this shot.



## Early Memories of the Boys' Technical School, Beachley – the late Major (Retd) C A Fisher RE

My father advised me to take the entrance exam for training as an Army Apprentice during August 1923. I travelled from our home in Portsmouth to Winchester by train to take the exam; I was fourteen years eight months old and had never lived away from home before. To our delight a result sheet was sent to my father shortly afterwards showing that I had passed and my enlistment into the General Service Corps took place on 1 Sept 1923. All successful candidates were given three weeks immediate leave and instructed to report to Buller Barracks Aldershot on 21 Sept 1923. The camp at Beachley, used for PoWs during World War One, was still undergoing conversion and behind schedule to receive the 108 boys of No 1 Group. I had been assigned the number B35 (Boy 35) of No 1 Group.

When I reported in to Buller, it was quite a shock to the system. Some of the other lads had come straight from the Duke of York's School and also a Military School in Scotland (I think at Dunblane). They were fairly hardened to the discipline and routine of boy soldiering. These first weeks were spent issuing and sorting our kit and uniforms with lots of square bashing. I remember being very homesick and wondering if I had made the right decision by joining up. Adult soldiers of the RASC mainly occupied Buller Barracks, it wasn't really the environment for boy soldiers. We were told that a move to Beachley Camp near Chepstow would take place early in the new year. This took place in February 1924 and I for one was pleased to get away from Buller and Aldershot.

We were allocated sixteen boys to a Barrack Room with a Senior Boy in charge who wore a star on his arm. A central "cenotaph" containing two fireplaces for burning a meagre ration of coal provided heating. The main event of the day was meal times, as we were always hungry. Eight lads sat at each wooden table and a loaf of bread was issued. The loaf was first cut into half then quarters then eighths for an issue to each individual, this was quite a ritual and blocks of cheese were divided in the same manner. Many ruses were attempted to obtain extra food. Much amusement was caused by an individual who purloined some sausages from the kitchens when on COs Orders he stated "I only meant to take one, the others followed on behind"!

A local lady known as "Ma Snitch" lived in Rose Cottage in Beachley Village. She was well known by us all for her speciality "Bread Pudding". She used to bake large trays, which were divided into twenty-four equal slabs, these were known as "sinkers" (probably because of the effect on our digestive systems) and were priced at one penny a slab. Various rackets were set up where lads "with money" bought a tray of sinkers for two shillings and then sold them on to their hungry mates at tuppence a slab cum pay day on Friday. Everyone seemed happy with this profit margin. I remember collecting trays of sinkers for the "well off", receiving a free sinker as payment. Pay was a princely seven shillings a week but only two shillings was paid out in cash, the remaining going to Credits etc. Money soon got spent buying cleaning kit and essentials. If one was careful one could buy a small loaf of bread and a tin of condensed milk to spread on it from the remains of the weekly florin.

Other incidents also come to mind from those early days at Beachley Camp. Some large cranes existed down near the slipways in the Workshop Area and were a challenge to some individuals. When we marched to work on Monday mornings, the cranes would often be draped with all sorts of clothing such as socks, vests, overalls etc. Tragedy and injury also occurred during my time at Beachley. A/T Dudson of No 3 Group was trapped in the mud and drowned while attempting to swim the Wye (a forbidden activity), this part of the river became known as "Dudson's Point". A/T Bland of No 1 Group lost a finger while using the circular saw in the Carpenter's Shop and was swiftly whipped off to hospital. I discovered the severed digit lying on the floor amongst the wood shavings and reported it to CSM Waterman our instructor. "Well done Fisher," he said as he consigned it to the forge in the Blacksmith's Shop!!

Recreational facilities at Beachley in those days were limited and we couldn't really afford to go into Chepstow much. I remember a gymnastics display, which we gave in Chepstow Castle for the locals. Plenty of sport took place in camp and it set me up as a keen footballer and cross-country runner for my future in the Corps. Another going concern was the Amateur Dramatic Society, which gave performances in the Camp Theatre. Col Ford, the first Commandant, and his wife were the mainstays of these productions.

I left Beachley Camp in 1926 qualified as a Carpenter Class 3 with Education Certificate Class 2. They were very important and formative years for me, which helped form my attitudes and gave a good grounding for my subsequently long and happy career as a Regular Soldier in the Royal Engineers.



## A Reprimand from the Commandant

As a result of the Labour victory in 1945, CDC (Colonial Development Corporation) was formed and funded by the new government. A lot of money was to be spent on economic development - especially in Africa. The Groundnut Project in Tanganyika (as it was called in 1945...) was one rushed and ill-prepared scheme that cost the general public an arm-&-a-leg.

Just after the Labour victory CDC were headhunting. Lack of skilled artisans was their major headache. Most of the well-trained WW2 squaddies wanted home and not service overseas. At the same time some of us army apprentices felt incarcerated for life. Well age 25 seemed centuries away - at fifteen

A certain Den... of 44A A Coy was the instigator of an application letter to CDC which three of us signed. It was to the effect that if CDC were prepared to buy-us-out we would pay them back out of our wages. Den didn't get a reply but Brigadier Cudden, our Commandant, did!

He sent us a reprimand via an officer whose name is forgotten to the effect that buying out was NEVER in our terms-of-service. He added that CDC was only interested in 'experienced and qualified' personnel, not trainees under 21 years of age!

The Groundnut scheme became known as, "The Poundnut Project" because an economist calculated it cost a pound for each healthy nut taken out of the African dust: 36 million pounds spent before total abandonment of the work

**John Bass 44A**

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**Molly Todd** Sadly Molly Todd widow of Gordon Todd 43A C Coy died on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2003. Gordon and Molly were well known as members of the '1943 Club'. Molly will be missed by her many friends. Reported by John Smith 44A C Coy

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**George Dale 50A** My dad George Dale died on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2002. He really enjoyed his time in REME seeing service in East Africa, Malta, Egypt, Cyprus and BAOR. He loved the camaraderie of service life. Although my mother came from Scotland they met in Chatham; I was the only child. My mother was looking for a settled life so George left the Army in 1964 and worked on a farm in Buckinghamshire becoming foreman. He later worked for an agricultural merchant in Cambridgeshire where his discipline and supervisory skills, he learned in the Army, served him well until he took ill-health retirement in 1993. Latterly he lived in Soham (infamous recently but really a friendly place) and though diagnosed with cancer he refused to be beaten and lived his last years to the full. Lynda Elbourne

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**Reg Matthews** I am writing to say how sorry I was to read in the last edition of Beachley Echoes of the death of Reg Matthews. I knew Reg quite well when he and I worked together in Department 6, Fitters Shop from 1960 to 1963. He was an established civilian instructor by this time and I had just been posted in as a SSgt Instructor. As a new 'boy' in the fitter's bay I started my period of instructing teaching the basic principles of filing, scraping, chipping etc. on the bench, all of which brought back memories of my time on the bench in 1943 under the guidance of Mr Saddler. Compared to Reg I was indeed a novice and I learned a great deal from him over the next few years about the art of controlling a boisterous class of young apprentices.

Other well known military instructors during my time were WO1 Archie Wearn RE (Dept 6), Ken Banger WO2 RE (Dept 16 Electricians) and of course the then Sgt Ron Overd later Lt Col and BOBA Chairman.

While on the Beachley staff I received my LSGC in 1961 on the same square where I started my army career. My daughter, Sally, was born in our married quarter in Bridget Drive, Sedbury in 1961. So Beachley means a lot to me. **Tony Meates 43A C Coy**



## **More on George Murray**

I read in the 2001 Beachley Echoes an item, which brought back many memories. It was about Capt. A. G. Murray RASC winning the Army Officers' Boxing Championship at his weight in 1950.

I never volunteered to box for my company. It was during my early days on bench fitting that a rather large Sgt in the Royal Artillery came round the benches looking for boxers. Somehow when he moved on I was on his list. I boxed merrily for the Company never really achieving fame while Murray was well known for his boxing skills, which included a powerful punch. One year I had managed to reach the quarterfinals of the light heavyweight class, only to loose on points to a boy called Oliver. This didn't worry me, as I knew in the semi final the winner of my bout had to fight Murray.

Unfortunately, the winner of my bout went sick leaving me to face Murray in the semis. I got lots of advice on how to tackle him, the best from Sgt Cyril Gallie APTC which was to jump out of my corner on the bell and hit him with everything I had in the hope of either worrying him, or getting in a lucky punch and finishing the fight in the first round. I followed this advice and covered Murray with punches, which he absorbed and as I slowed down he hit me in the midriff with something like a sledgehammer but I found out later it was his fist. This one blow was sufficient for the referee, Capt Webb RASC, to stop the fight, although I protested (not too much though) that I could continue.

This was the only time that I did not last the distance but never felt that I had let the Company down. I then had the pleasure of seeing Murray win the final although I felt sorry for his opponent. I'm sorry to hear that since I read the Echoes article George has died.

**John Everleigh 42A A Coy**

## **Memories of J Company 1960**

Despite the fact that my father was a retired Captain (QM) in the Royal Artillery he was very surprised when at the end of 1959 I told him that I had been accepted as a boy soldier.

On arrival at Chepstow in January of 1960, I discovered the OC of A Company was Major Machin (no relation). This did not appear to make any difference until about April/May when one Wednesday sports afternoon CSM Polly Perkins told me that he had a special job for me - he chortled and told me I was to report to Major Machin's house to do some gardening.

I went to Major Machin's house as instructed to be met by his wife, who invited me into the kitchen and asked me my name and where I came from. When I informed her it was Machin and that I came from Sunderland she said that Alec (Major Machin) had relatives in South Shields and wondered whether we could be related.

I don't think I did any work that afternoon we just sat in the kitchen talking and I was introduced to the Major's three daughters aged 15, 17, and 18, which, as a 17 year old I thought was brilliant. Although today I can't remember the name of a single one.

In July my parents came down for a visit, and on the Wednesday when we marched up from the workshops at lunchtime I was told to change into my best uniform and to report to the 2 I/C's office as my parents were taking me to Chepstow for the remainder of the day. When I reported I was amazed to find my father and the 2 I/C discussing how their relatives had played cricket together for Ryhope Colliery and how the 21/Cs mother still lived next door to my aunt! With all that contact with the officer class I was bound to have a brilliant Army career. And so I did. I rapidly rose to the rank of Sapper and stayed there.

**Jim Machin 60A A Coy**



## IN MEMORIAM

### REPORTED DEATHS SINCE THE 2002 BEACHLEY ECHOES

#### BOBAMembers

M/No:	Name:	Grp:	Date
320	Jim Pike	8	07-06-02
18	Pat Moloney	13	29-12-02
73	Charles Walker	14	08-02
646	Frank Franklin	15	12-09-02
293	Jack Lamport	23	10-11-01
770	Bernard Lacey	32	17-10-02
181	Alex Allen	42	22-06-02
94	Charlie Elliott	42A	04-03-02
426	Stan Harper	42A	30-04-02
8	Jack Jessup	42A	02-03-03
380	Ken Maunder	42A	01-07-02
44	Frank Yellen	42A	15-02-03
432	Jim Tinsley	43A	04-02
452	Peter Waugh	43A	15-11-02
536	Jim Elsworth	46A	07-08-02
708	George Dale	50A	20-09-02
821	Rex Goddard	50B	04-02-03
891	Michael Green	59B	31-08-02
483	Mike Park	60C	27-06-02
176	BA Coleman	63C	14-11-01
688	Bob Jordan	71A	25/07/02

#### Non BOBA Members

Name	Grp:	Date
George Franks	5	02-02
Mike McGarry	42	14-02-03
Peter Aston	44	11-10-00
Peter Brewin	45	21-08-01
Cyril King	43A	01-10-02
Ian Patterson	43A	06-03-02
Robert Barrett	43B	1996
Len Hawkins	45B	14-03-02
Bill Jackson	46B	08-01
Mike Crooke	48B	08-02
Reg Sturgess	48B	2002
Derek Jenkins	49A	02-02-03
Bill Lucie	50B	23-07-02
Tom Sanford	50B	28-01-02
Brain Manston	53A	20-05-02
Peter Darrington	53B	NK
Brian Pipkin	53B	NK
Gerald Jones	53B	NK
Derek Hines	54A	1976
Roy Mawdesley	54A	NK
John Roberts	54A	NK
David Shingles	54A	NK
Haydn Wales	54A	17-06-1995
John Bridgeland	54B	2002
Gordon Sands	54B	02-09-02
Nobby Medina-Clark	56B	19-06-97
Mick Danville	Staff	30-03-02
George Kirkham	Staff	NK

If you move let **John Furley** know.  
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### A Thank You to Colonel Alan OBE

Alan told me there was a "Two's Up, Two's Up!" during his time at Beachley. Which really meant, of course, "Three's Up!" Thank-you for putting me right SIR!

But, more importantly, thank you for being you when BOBA really needed your sort of push and vigour. Thank you for the humour. Thank you for reciting Kipling in the manner of my English teacher of so many yonks ago. Such poetry stirs the inner souls of lesser men to action they'd never dream of taking under normal circumstances. The pipes and drums are there with the thump of marching feet as you speak. I am sure if you asked me to volunteer to do something impossible (like joining up again as a 7-stone weakling) I'd go and do it - again!

The successor to Colonel Alan Holman as BOBA President will surely be hard pressed to match the lively and perhaps, sometimes wild humour and use of words that Alan pleased us with.

**John Bass 44a A Coy**



# BEACHLEY OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

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01 April 2003

## MINUTES OF THE BEACHLEY OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT BEACHLEY BARRACKS ON SATURDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2002

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

### Introduction

1. The AGM was held in St George's Church, Beachley Barracks at 1500 hours with the Chairman welcoming all present. A number of apologies had been tendered including some from overseas members. A head count showed just over 100 members were seated in the church.

### Item 1. Opening Address.

2. The President expressed his delight at seeing BOBA members' old and new attending the AGM. He also welcomed those who could not get to the AGM but would be attending other functions and events being held over the course of the weekend. He gave his personal thanks to all those who were continuing with the recruitment drive and also to those actively involved with the welfare of the members.

3. He asked that the members give some thought to the following points during the meeting. They were the forthcoming Armistice Parade and the election of new Executive Committee members

4. The President closed by confirming it was yet another successful reunion weekend and he looked forward to meeting as many members as possible at this evenings dinner and also at Sunday church parade.

### Item 2. In Memoriam.

5. Since the last AGM (Sep 01) the Executive Committee had been notified of the sad deaths of a number of Beachley Old Boys and the list was read out to the members.  
*(The list of notified deaths since the last edition of Beachley Echoes is produced in full on page 10).*

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



### **Item 3. Minutes of the 2001 Annual General Meeting.**

7. The Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting, held on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2001, were included in the Beachley Echoes, a copy of which 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.

8. There being no comments or observations, it was Proposed by W Finnerty, and Seconded by A Orchard, that the minutes were a true record of the proceedings.

Carried unanimously.

### **Item 4. Matters Arising.**

9. The resident Battalion Headquarters were now aware of a forwarding address for BOBA mail, this should prevent mail, etc, going astray.

10. Name tags had been produced for all the members attending the reunion.

11. Extensive investigations and discussions by the Executive Committee showed that a reunion photograph was not a viable option in terms of time and cost.

12. Following the reunion last year Anne Rainsbury, Chepstow Museum Curator, had been invited to join the Association as an Honorary Member and she had agreed. Subject to a rule change, the motion was proposed by S Thomas and seconded by P Russell. The members voted unanimously in favour.

### **Item 5. Chairman's Report.**

#### **Item 5a. General.**

13. The Chairman commenced his report by saying that it gave him great pleasure to welcome all and especially the 52 Groups, who 50 years ago walked through the School gates to begin a 'New Life'.

14. It had been a busy year for all the Executive Committee. Their reports will show the tremendous amount of time they give to BOBA. He said the past year had, as most knew, been a particularly difficult and sad year and he thanked all for the wonderful support given and the messages of condolences received.

15. The BOBA attendance at The Cenotaph Parade was an important event in the year although there was no TV coverage this time. The Beachley Echoes goes from strength to strength, our Membership Secretary continues his excellent recruiting campaign and the history/heritage is developing rapidly. Hopefully Col Cliff Haskell will by next year complete the final chapter of 'The Army Apprentices College – A Brief History'.

16. As there were many new members present and in order to allow them to 'put a face to the name' the Chairman introduced all the Executive Committee to the members present.

17. The Chairman confirmed the reunion dinner was at 1830hr and Sunday church parade was at 1030hr. He thanked the members for attending, wished them all a safe journey home and hoped to see them next year.

#### **Item 5b. Election of Executive Committee.**

18. The Chairman confirmed that some of the committee wished to stand down within the next year. They were the Treasurer; T Waite and Elected Vice President; M Murtagh. Other committee members wished to stand back and allow new members to shadow them with a view to them taking up the reins in the fullness of time.



19. The following were re-elected for a further twelve months:

- a. President: Col AGR Holman Proposed by D Chapman / Seconded by M Murtagh
- b. Chairman: Lt Col S Thomas Proposed by F Pickering/ Seconded by B Morgan

Carried.

20. It was Proposed by W Moore and Seconded by P Perry that Lt Col I Anthony replace Mr M Murtagh as an Elected Vice President.

Carried.

21. All the remaining committee members agreed to continue but volunteers were requested to come forward and shadow the following:

- a. Treasurer, to takeover at the end of the financial year, 31 Mar 2004.
- b. Reunion, to take over following the 2003 reunion.
- c. Heritage, to take over following the 2003 reunion.

### **Item 6. Executive Committee Reports.**

#### **Item 6a. Treasurer's Report.**

22. 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 balance sheet showed an increase of £3k, this was due to the increase in membership and the collection of outstanding subscriptions. The reunion last year had been cost neutral, income from interest was low but shop sales were up. The account remained in a healthy position.

23. The account had been audited and there being no comments from the floor it was proposed by I Anthony and Seconded by F Pickering that the financial statement be passed as read.

Carried unanimously.

#### **Item 6b. Secretary's Report.**

24. The Secretary; Maj Brian Henderson opened his report by reading letters of apology from Lt Col Wally Green, Bob Carrington 36 Gp, due to illness and Jack Stratford 29 Gp.

25. A letter had been received from the Army Benevolent Fund thanking the Association for the generous donation of £345 following the 2001 Founders' Day church service.

26. The Secretary thanked those members who had corresponded with him on various BOBA matters and hoped that all had received a response.

27. The Secretary closed by drawing the members' attention to a book titled 'Equity Raped' written by Bob Carrington. Bob had sent a couple of copies to the Association for any member to read.

#### **Item 6c. Membership Secretary's Report.**

28. The Membership Secretary; Mr John Furley, reported that 74 new members had joined BOBA since the 2001 reunion; there are now 685 active members on the database.

29. Recruitment by 53A & B groups continues apace for their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 54 Group are already looking ahead to their half century.



30. The BOBA website is very successful, helping many old boys to find the new BOBA Association and thereby join our ranks. Within the next year the website will be handed over to Major Brian Henderson.

31. The Membership Secretary discussed further means of recruitment, outstanding subscriptions, the Data Protection Act and the computerisation of the enlistment/induction records.

32. He noted that 29 members had died over the last year and asked members to inform him of such events. He also reminded members that BOBA has a benevolence fund which exists to be used and that not all areas of the UK are covered by welfare representatives. Anyone interested should contact Maurice Murtagh soonest.

#### Item 6d. Historian's Report.

33. Mr Ron Marie reported that the Roll of Honour was nearly complete but the Book of Remembrance still contained some minor errors. For the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2003 he anticipated they would be rededicated at the next Founders' Day service. Additionally, the Freedom of Chepstow Casket will return from Arborfield.

34. Two versions of the BOBA car badge have now been discovered.

35. 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 7. Any Other Business.

36. Glen Chalmers reported that 33 members had entered the BOBA Golf Challenge and the tournament presentations would take place in the hotel bar commencing at 18:00hrs.

37. Dave Chapman reminded members that articles for the Newsletter should be sent to him direct.

38. It was pointed out to the committee that not all members are on the 'Web' but many were in receipt of the Royal British Legion magazine. It was suggested that an article should be placed in this journal.

39. Peter Russell asked the committee to investigate the production of a BOBA video similar to that used by Arborfield. The Chairman said he had a copy of the video and would look into the matter.

#### Closure.

40. The members present were reminded that the President's reception would commence at 1800 hours followed immediately afterwards by dinner. The Ladies' Dinner would commence at 1900hrs.

41. For the Church Parade members were asked to park their cars on the lower car park where they will form up, the salute will be taken on the steps of the College Headquarters.

42. The reunion next year will be held over the period 19 – 21 September 2003.

43. 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 of the Association.



Secretary



Chairman



## New BOBA members joining from March 2002 to March 2003.

874	Mr.	G	Gordon	Butcher	53B	D	921	Mr.	TL	Trevor	Sheppard	60B	A
875	Mr.	V	Vincent	Canham	59C	A	922	Mr.	GL	Lee	Robinson	49A	A&D
876	Mr.	M	Malcolm	Holmes	53A	B	923	Mr.	AJ	Arthur	Collingwood	60A	C
877	Lt. Col.	J	Dave	Bench	53B	D	924	Mr.	KM	Keith	Andrews	50B	C
878	Mr.	SL	Steve	Card	75A	B	925	Mr.	KA	Keith	Underwood	Staff	-
879	Mr.	PB	Paul	Withers	86C		926	Mr.	JC	Jack	Dandy	56A	C
880	Mr.	DH	Dan	Scrivens	43	C	927	Mr.	AC	Alan	Floyd	53B	C
881	Mr.	CP	Chris	Gould	71B	C	928	Mr.	TK	Terry	Stratton	53B	A
882	Mr.	M	Mick	Rawlins	56B	D	929	Mr.	RC	Rob	Wilson	73A	C
883	Mr.	AJ	Tony	Keogh	52B	B	930	Mr.	T	Terry	Boughton	50B	A&C
884	Mr.	I	Taff	Coombs	73B	B	931	Mr.	S.	Ken	Ogley	47B	D
885	Mr.	D	Doug	Braid	46B	B	932	Mr.	K	Ken	Nunn	56A	D
886	Mr.	B	Bernie	Mills	56B	D&B	933	Mr.	DJ	John	Collier	45B	C
887	Mr.	N	Norman	Tree	42A	A	934	Mr.	W	Bill	Garland	54A	B
888	Mr.	H	Harry	Berresford	54A	A	935	Mr.	B	Brian	Simm	72B	A
889	Mr.	DJ	Dave	Fettis	82C	A	936	Mr.	R	Bob	Curran	71A	B
890	Mr.	PH	Peter	Hayward	65C	B	937	Mr.	TL	Terry	Williams	53B	A
892	Mr.	K	Keith	Hook	61B	C	938	Mr.	RJ	Bob	Avenell	61C	A
893	Mr.	SM	Nudge	Nugent	73B	B	939	Mr.	JA	John	Coupe	61A	C
894	Mr.	G	Geoff	Warren	67C	B	940	Mr.	D	Dave	Carr	60B	C
895	Mr.	AJ	Tony	Taylor	68C	C	941	Mr.	AE	Pebs	Mawer	65B	C
896	Mr.	B	Brian	Kirtley	61B	C	942	Mr.	TG	Terry	Reilly	53B	B
897	Mr.	J	John	Moore	73C	C	943	Mr.	R	Richard	Simacek	83C	E
898	Mr.	A	Alan	Haywood	58B	A	944	Mr.	TE	Ted	Hall	48A	C
899	Mr.	RP	Ron	Devereux	65C	C	945	Mr.	GC	Jeff	Jefford	53B	C
900	Mr.	RW	Ron	Davies	57A	A	946	Mr.	AJ	Tony	Zendra	68A	C
901	Mr.	IA	Ivor	Evans	52B	B	947	Mr.	RV	Rex	Baker	53B	D
902	Mr.	MP	Sam	Fox	54B	B	948	Mr.	TL	Terry	Price	50A	B
903	Mr.	J	John	Duncalfe	61B	C	949	Mr.	PH	Pete	Le-Prevost	53A	D
904	Lt. Col.	J	John	Woods	53A	C	950	Mr.	FJ	Frank	Lobban	53A	D
905	Mr.	MJ	Magnus	Larnach	74C	A	951	Mr.	CJ	Chris	Thickpenny	79A	B
906	Mr.	KG	Ken	Melton	48B	B	952	Mr.	NJ	Nick	Boughay	91	?
907	Mr.	D	Dave	Timperley	62B	B	953	Mr.	P	Peter	Wallis	50B	D
908	Mr.	IF	Ian	Macpherson	61A	A	954	Mr.	D	Dave	Teasdale	46B	B
909	Mr.	C	Colin	Emsley	66A	B	955	Mr.	M	Stan	Mitchell	80C	D
910	Mr.	WG	Mike	McConville	52B	D	956	Mr.	GG	Geoff	Watkins	53A	D
911	Mr.	PJ	Phil	Zygmant	62B	C	957	Mr.	BJ	Tim	Holt	53A	D
912	Mr.	JM	John	Hannon	62B	A	958	Mr.	WD	David	McMaster	64B	C
913	Mr.	K	Ken	Russel	52A	B&A	959	Mr.	CR	Christopher	Olsen	53B	B
914	Mr.	PR	Pete	Bell	47A	D	960	Mr.	CR	Chris	Robertson	53B	A
915	Mr.	A	Tony	Lafrenais	61B	C	961	Mr.	PD	Peter	Phillips	50A	B
916	Mr.	DW	Derek	Melton	50A/BB		962	Mr.	JE	John	Drewery	54A	A
917	Mr.	DR	Desmond	Church	44A	D	963	Mr.	PE	Patrick	Long	53B	B
918	Major	MM	Major	Dempster	56A	C	964	Mr.	JL	Jarvis	Penden	54A	D
919	Mr.	PF	Peter	Beard	54B	A							
920	Mr.	JW	John	Moody	47B	A							

**Why not visit the BOBA Website – there's a lot to see :**

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

**Also have a look at Andy Yarrow's excellent Beachley site at :**

**<http://www.armyapprenticescollege.homestead.com>**



## The Membership Secretary's Report for the Beachley Echoes Newsletter 2003

**1. I am very pleased to report recruitment of new members high again this year. We have now 720 paid up members.** In the last 12 months membership has expanded with **87 new members** joining the ranks of new BOBA. Keep up the good work you guys and find more of those Beachley Old Boys to swell our ranks even further.

**2. Membership Fees:** I am more than pleased to relate a vast improvement in the payment of subscriptions, only 6 members are behind with annual fees, that's a whole lot better than last year when 197 members had outstanding fees; thank you guys for paying up! Sadly there remains more to rejoin after lapsing last year, but some are making the effort and paying up; the lapsed list has reduced from 92 to 84. I am sure more lapsed members will rejoin as time goes by.

**3. New BOBA remains on Channel 4 TELETXT** at page 171 & 172. We have been advertising there for over two years; the free advertisement appears every 6 / 7 weeks. Interest has dwindled a little but still brings in a few new members each year.

**4. The BOBA website at: [www.boba-beachley.org.uk](http://www.boba-beachley.org.uk)** is doing great things for the Association. Please do visit it and please do inform any Beachley Boys you know of the website's existence. If you're not on the Internet you can see the website at your local library (usually free). The website is the single largest recruiting agent we have currently, more and more new members are joining through this source. Go on try it! Visit the website - the Nostalgia almost oozes out of the screen!

**5. The other website directly associated with Beachley** belongs to Andy Yarrow, who was at Beachley with 76B, now residing in Canada. Andy's excellent informative and very friendly website is RE orientated, the web address is: <http://armyapprenticescollege.homestead.com>

**6. This year, Malcolm Holmes (53A)** is working hard recruiting for his group, with some assistance from others in 53A. **Alec Beach of 53B (Is there any other group he asks?)** is recruiting hard, with assistance from many others in 53B. A/T RSM Chris Robertson 53B has been unearthed and has already joined our swelling BOBA ranks. Well-done chaps, sterling work!

**7. More new members from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half!** I was pleasantly surprised when I carried out a small survey on current members some weeks ago! Of the 720 paid up members we now have, precisely 331 members from intakes between 1923 and 1949. The membership numbers from 1950 to 1994 amount to 389 members. I would remind/inform members that 1958 is approximately half way through the Apprentice establishments at Beachley, so we seem to be settling down to recruiting for the future and a long living BOBA!

**8. Bern Olley A/T RSM of 54A,** still living in Germany and hopefully remaining very much alive and kicking, has asked **Bob Adams of 54A** to assist, if not to run the recruitment for 54A. Bob is doing fine and has discovered quite a few of his group, with the aid of the electoral rolls in UK. He also intends to rope in the Pensions Department in Glasgow, as Joe Kinson 50A, Jack Duke of 51A and Alec Beach of 53B already have!

**9. Last year a special A6 pink card was included with the Beachley Echoes Newsletter,** in an attempt to comply with the Data Protection Act. This act currently prevents BOBA from informing your pals of your contact without your written permission. Just less than half of our membership returned the pink card; sadly this is not enough to make the scheme work. Please help solve this. If you haven't returned your card, please find the card from last year, complete it and return it to the membership secretary ASAP. If you have mislaid the card just a short note with your name, address and group on it will suffice, simply stating: "I do\*", or "I do not\*" (exclude as required\*) give my permission for BOBA to pass my contact details onto other Ex-Beachley Boys" date and sign it and return it to the address below.

**Membership contact: John Furley, 9 Park View, Sedbury, Chepstow, NP16 7BE.  
Tel/Fax: 01291 630491 email: [membership@boba-beachley.org.uk](mailto:membership@boba-beachley.org.uk)**



## Snippets from a Full Career

Philip Bomford 42A B & C Coys

I joined that unique mob 42A, yes I do mean unique as we were the first new recruits after a break of some two years due to the fact that Chep was full of evacuees from Chatham, Wolwich, Hillsea, Jersey and Bovingdon – we were almost eaten alive! But after a year we suddenly became Senior Group and stayed that way for two whole years.

### Mutiny on HMS Beachley

It was Whit Monday 1944 and normally we had the afternoon off but on this occasion it was decreed we should have a rehearsal for 'Salute the Soldier' parade. Feelings began to run really high and mutterings grew louder and we decided that we would not attend. Even the A/T NCOs felt the same way, so we upped sticks and made for Beachley Point, telling the A/T NCOs not to join us thereby avoiding any trouble for them. At teatime we returned as a rather undignified rabble of some 200 or 300 A/Ts via the water tower and along the main road into camp to be met by the RSM and Provost Sgt, one 'Smokey' Stoves. The RSM demanded to know what this was all about and he was politely informed why the walkout. We had of course achieved our objective of missing the parade. He and Smokey attempted to put the ringleaders in the Guardroom but we got them out again and were told to get back to our rooms and go to tea. This affair never reached the ears of the Daily Mirror and no one was court martialled.

### Singapore

On leaving Beachley, I found myself in a deadend trade with lousy promotion prospects in an RA searchlight Regt in Kent. I upset the applecart and volunteered for a commission in RA, which after a long struggle I gained and landed slap bang back in my trade of electrical fitter on searchlights in Singapore in late 1948. The photo shows a quarter of my Beachley course together on the island.

Don't forget to book early for the BOBA Reunion 2003 at the Chepstow Hotel. Tickets will be issued on first-come first-served basis.



Singapore 1951

Standing: Cecil Crapnell, Mike Cottle  
Sitting: Sam Weller, Phil Bomford, Ted Ayling.  
All ex-Chep electrical fitters of 42A except Ted 43A

At Beachley in 1943 and usually about once a week Fairfields Yard in Chepstow would send off another Landing Craft Tank Mk 4 destined for the South coast and eventually D Day. One day I particularly noticed LCT 1111. Six years later we were called upon to do a sea landing attack across the beaches of SE Johore with part of the Johore Brigade cordoning off the landward side. Low and behold one of our three LCTs for the operation was LCT 1111. We set off in the dark for a dawn attack sailing around the Eastern end of Singapore Island. The LCTs dropped their kedge anchors and we went over the bows in the well-known and approved manner wading ashore as per countless war films and up the beach and into the rubber plantations, which bordered it. But we found not a single communist, carried on till we met the cordon, embussed and returned to camp.

### Dinner with the Ruler of Bahrain

I was in the Persian Gulf in 1966 and was invited with all the HQ officers to dine with the Ruler of Bahrain. We had no idea what to expect. We were introduced in the throne room in pecking order to his Nibs and offered cigarettes and coffee but no drink and went through an elaborate hand-washing ceremony. We sat at a long table in pecking order looking at the cooked carcasses of about eight roast sheep. Rice also appeared but who was going to carve? We soon found out it was the lackeys who tore the meat apart with their hands and dumped it on our plates! Yes, there were sheeps' eyes but we didn't have to eat them. Later our outgoing Commandant was presented with a gaudy looking jewelled dagger and we departed making a beeline for the Mess and that drink!



## Changing to the Guards

An historic event took place on 1st February 1947, when the Army Apprentices School, as it was renamed, met its first Brigade of Guards RSM. This was in the form of WO1 J (Busty) Baker, Grenadier Guards who displayed a large woven royal coat of arms badge on the upper right arm of his uniform. He told me this signified that he had been the RSM of the 1st Battalion of his regiment.

Busty was a mountain of a man, not less than 6'3" tall, and tipping the scales at around 18 stones. The incumbent RSM, Bill Spence, of 'The Queens' Regiment, was about the same height as a first year apprentice; say 5'2", and weighing under 10 stones. It was my good (or mis) fortune to be the A/T RSM, at the time of this changeover. I fitted physically somewhere in the middle of this ill-matched pair.

In those days, the A/T RSM controlled the morning and afternoon workshops parades, when companies formed up at 0830 and 1330 in a 'T' formation at the road junction above the workshops, and marched to work with the current champion company leading. There was no parade ground then. Major occasions, and Saturday morning drill parades, were held on No 1 sports pitch, weather and ground permitting.

My introduction to the intricacies of manoeuvring some 600 plus A/Ts twice a day, down the sloping road to the Workshops, was done under the guidance of Bill Spence. He had a stupendous booming voice, and I marvelled at how so small a frame could manufacture such volume. He insisted that I should emulate his style, "Do it like this boy", following up with his bass pitch fog-horn of a voice, so that even the most dozy of A/Ts in the furthest ranks, were jolted into locomotion. Of course, there was no way I could match his

performance, and it was a form of relief when Busty Baker and his 'Guards' trained voice arrived.

It is generally perceived the Guards are leaders in the art of voice projection. This is a fact that I was rapidly made aware of by Busty, in his 'enthusiasm' to convert me into a Guardsman.

He delivered orders in a singsong manner, with the pitch being as important as the volume. "Bring it up from the stomach boy, like this", he would say and proceed to demonstrate. And an awesome sight and sound it was. Prior to the emission of any sound, his voluminous girth, under the extended webbing waist belt, began to quiver and move up and down, and when the vocal chords were finally activated, the whole mass moved up and over the belt, and then settled down again as the command was completed.

I developed a dual personality during the two-week period of their handover. They took turns blessing me with their presence at School parades, with Bill Spence telling me "Do it this way boy", and Busty instructing "Sing it boy, sing it". The worst moments were when they were both on parade, standing alongside me and glaring at each other - and me! I attempted to oblige both, but it was a relief when Bill Spence completed his handover, and went to collect his demob suit. Busty and I soldiered on happily together, with me manfully trying to emulate his vocal abilities. Although I was not able to deliver, with anything approaching his expertise, (probably something to do with my comparative stature), he was well pleased with my efforts.

The arrival of Busty Baker in 1947 was the start of an unbroken run of Guards RSMs ceasing only when AA College Beachley closed.

**Alec (Nez) Nesbitt 45A D Coy**



## Major (Retd) Len Hawkins



*Capt (Retd) P C Russell Writes:*

Len died of a sudden heart attack on 14 Mar 2002 aged 71 after a long fight with a heart condition. He was born 19 Feb 1931 in Edmonton, London and entered, on the urgings of his serving uncle, the Army Technical School, Chepstow in 1945, aged 14. He qualified as a VM in 1948.

Len became an Airborne REME after he attended No1

**Privately Shocked!!** A nameless roommate of Hut No 1 Beachley in 1944 removed a wallboard to find an unattached electrical cable-end, which he connected to another loose wire. I just happened to be in the latrines at the time. On passing water I got a nasty shock up through my works.

After that the connection was only made when one of the lads from Hut 2 or 3 happened to be in there. Our Wing Sgt mandated that barefoot use of the latrines be out. He eventually found us out but was puzzled for months...!!

**Hugh Dunnett 44A A Coy**

Army Apprentice training began 80 years ago in 1923

Parachute School RAF. 1951 saw him deploying to Cyprus and the Abadan-Iran crisis with a second move to the Suez Abrogation Canal Treaty. In 1953, on completion of his Artificer Vehicles Course, he joined 16 Airborne Workshop REME. Returning from Egypt in 1954 to Aldershot he served through a number of Para Bde excursions including the Suez campaign in late 1956.

Len was posted to the LAD of Cyclops Sqn, 2 RTR at Tidworth in 1963. During this tour he was promoted to WOII and was engaged on security classified work on anti-tank guided weapons. Jan 1965 saw Len being part of the formation of the Parachute Sqn RAC from the SAS trained Special Recce Sqn RAC and elements of Cyclops Sqn.

He was commissioned in 1966 and served in workshop appointments in Germany, NI and UK until his final tour with MOD(PE) in Woolwich. He retired from the Army in 1976.

A keen and competitive athlete he played rugby, water polo and represented the Army in both badminton and ski bobbing/biking. He also put back into the sports by being an active committee member. Whilst in retirement a heart condition meant he had to pursue a less physically demanding sport so he joined Ramsgate Croquet Club where he was treasurer for 17 years and lately president. Not only a player, he qualified as a referee and early this year he was in Palm Springs USA refereeing the World Championships.

Len lived his life to the full and our sympathy is extended to Len's wife Zoë, daughter Kim and family.

### Canadian Queen's Jubilee Medal

BOBA member Rod Travers-Griffin (46B C Coy) received the Queen's Jubilee Medal for his volunteer work with the Canadian Red Cross. Since his retirement from the Ontario Government, Rod has worked in the Tracing and Reunion Service of the Red Cross. This involves finding and bringing together families who have been separated by war, natural disaster or personal tragedy.

Rod emigrated to Canada in 1966 after twenty years in the RA and RASC. He met his wife Helen, a Canadian while on a posting to the West Indies. Rod is also active in the Royal Canadian Military Institute as a member of their Museum Committee.

The award came as a total surprise; T-G as they called him in the Army, was thrilled. He now says all he has to wait for is the Suez Medal to make things complete!

Looking at *Beachley Echoes 2002 P 19* - the photo of the church parade for the dedication of the HQ BOBA Standard in 1951 shows the Drum and Fife Band under Drum Major Dickie Shanahan.

**Pete Bignell 50A**



## OUR BEACHLEY HERITAGE:

The Beachley Boys' Heritage display will again be presented in the 'Two Rivers Suite' at 'The Chepstow Hotel' from 10.00 hrs to 13.00 hrs on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2003. Anne Rainsbury the curator of Chepstow Museum, will also display some archive photographs from Chepstow Museum. Many of these photographs still need completing such as naming the event, persons in the photographs and the rough time/date they were taken.

### Beachley memorabilia:

The highlight of the Heritage Saturday morning last year was the arrival of the "Twin" for the Army Apprentices College Car Badge (See separate article p4). The other was presented to Mr. Arthur Underwood on his retirement from the College and was donated to our archives by his son Mr. Keith Underwood. Until last year it was thought to be the only one in existence. Any bets on another surfacing at some point?

This year I will display memorabilia featuring 1953, i.e. relevant to 53A and 53B groups for their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Additional items already contributed over the past twelve months from the 1950's include:

AAS Standing orders in pamphlet form (Early 50's). / Examination papers for the A.C.E. 'Senior Test' Nov 1953.

Examination papers for the G.C.E. 'O' Level Jul 1954. / 53A passing out church service - Jan 1956.

53A passing out parade programme - February 1956.

Information received from my request last year for details of prizes for trade achievement awards from Army Command and later prize awards to successful apprentices, all indicate these prizes were made in 'Book form', with details of the award stated on the 'Fly leaf' of the book. Any books from 'Beachley trade prizes' etc. will be welcomed as additions to the BOBA museum archives.

### **BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE:** (Beachley Camp ~ St Georges Chapel).

The Book of Remembrance is now with the original supplier, J. Wippell & Co. Ltd. of Exeter. They are adding the missing names and updating inaccuracies to reflect the now fully updated Roll of Honour. A current company director of Wippell still remembers the original order for our 'Book of Remembrance'.

During the Church Parade service on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2003 a 'Rededication' of the 'Book of Remembrance' will take place. After which it will return to its permanent display place in St George's Chapel in Beachley Barracks. As a point of interest, the original dedication of the 'Book of remembrance' was carried out on 13<sup>th</sup> November 1948, during the writer's last six months in Boys Service - 55 years ago!

### **BOBA Heritage Member : Ron Marie**

### **Echoes Editor Fails Ten-Year Test**



Having pulled together many stories, reports and snippets over the last nine years I have decided to make this my last edition of the Beachley Echoes. It has been hard work for a few weeks every year but great fun and very rewarding as the feedback from you, the members, has always been very positive. This year I apologise for not getting everybody's items published as I received a lot more than needed – look for yours in 2004.

Next year I will be taking over from Peter Burrige as Reunion Organiser and I will try to maintain Peter's year on year success – a tall order indeed!

John Furley will be getting out next year's newsletter. Please send all your copy to him at *9 Park View, Sedbury, Chepstow, Mon, NP16 7BE*. As always, on disk or CD if possible and preferably in Rich Text Format.

**Dave Chapman 60A**



## BOBA WELFARE



The BOBA Welfare Officer until Sep 2003 is Maurice Murtagh (01279 422937). The country has been divided into geographical areas and a Welfare Rep. has been (or will be) appointed for each area.

Should any member feel that he requires assistance or a friendly shoulder he can, in the first instance, contact his Area Rep.

He can also contact the Area Rep if he has knowledge of another member's demise, serious illness or change of address.

Should you require a lift (or can provide a lift) to the next reunion, the Area Rep may be able to help you make contact.

*Don't fold your tent and steal away,  
Let us know where you intend to stay.*

Welfare Area Representatives are needed for the following areas: Berks/Bucks/Oxon, Suffolk/Norfolk, Hunts/Cambs, N.England, N. Wales, London/Middx, Surrey/Sussex, Gloucs/Bristol & Lancs/Cheshire.

### Welfare Area Representatives

Kent	C Whitehead 45A	01634 361801
Essex	J Finnerty 43A	01702 554362
Dorset / Wilts	R Durnall 37	01202 763270
Hampshire	D Stone 49A	02392 265554
Ditto	F Pickering 47B	02380 847881
Soms/Devon/Cornwall	A Waite 60C	01884 32660
Ditto	R Currell 46B	01726 64799
Worc/Herefd/Warks/W Mid	G Waite 42B	01217 449117
Ditto	G White 73A	01203 404999
Shropshire	A Ball 46A	01952 591060
Staffs	A Roulston 46A	01785 257410
Herts / Beds/Northants	J Smith 44A	01582 592432
Lincs/Notts/Derby	W Green 50A	01522 595963
Ditto	G Winter 66C	01623 743560
Yorkshire	T Medcalf 43A	01904 644569
Scotland	D Lackie 43B	01313 362268
Ditto	A Hay 46A	01224 822248
S Wales	J Furley 56A	01291 630491
Ditto	J Stokes 42A	01974 821697
Germany	J Bass 44A	0049 220456437

Offers of assistance have also been received from RBL officials, for which I am very grateful.

M.Murtagh 43B April 2003

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**March – Army Apprentice Beachley** I expect by now everybody is getting fed up with the ongoing saga of the search for 'our march', but it's over – I've got it! The band of the Hussars and Light Dragoons had it and their Director of Music sent me the score. I have tried it out with Parkend Band and the memories flooded back. It's now being arranged for brass band.

Pete Bignell 50A



## BEACHLEY OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION DEUTSCHLAND (BOBA.de)

This may well be the start of something big! There are many Ex-Chepstow Boys in Germany, some still serving, and of course many others who have made it their home. With a bit of research using the forces newspaper The SIXTH SENSE, The SAPPER, and exploring other avenues I am convinced we could unearth a large number of BOBA "sleepers".

The aspiration initially is to organise a weekend get together including wives at a central location in Germany, possibly Hameln. As the serving Lt Col (QM) of 28 Engineer Regiment in Hameln, I would be delighted to host the event making available our facilities in order to keep costs to a minimum, as well as ensuring variety with a full weekend programme.

Although planning has yet to start I would suggest a FRIDAY evening gathering to meet and greet, a tour of historic Hameln with a bi-lingual guide on the Saturday plus possibly a boat trip on the Weser and a Dinner in the evening in the Warrant Officers & Sergeants Mess. I am sure I could enrol the Padre to give us a "special" BOBA church service on the Sunday, with everyone leaving for home after a farewell lunch

Of course if it all turns out to be successful, it could conceivably be an annual gathering and I am convinced it would grow. As I write this my unit and me are about to deploy to sunnier climes, therefore specific planning and organisation of the event will have to be on temporary hold, and in any case this is a probing, speculative article to test the interest and make you aware that BOBA.de is coming.

The principal instigator of the idea is Mr John Bass (44A) who lives at:

Giselbert Strasse 26, 51429 Bergisch Gladbach

If you are interested in being part of the inaugural "WEEKEND," could you contact John in the first instance so he can gauge possible numbers who would be willing to attend, as well as having your details for future correspondence. I cannot give any dates as to when the event would take place, but as soon as I return from the deployment I will start the planning in earnest.

I look forward with much excitement and anticipation to the "Beachley Old Boys' Association Deutschland" initial gathering

Lt Col (QM) E.C. Stables RE (65A -Electrician)

### BOBA Cenotaph

#### Detachment

10 November 2002

- |                           |                            |                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Mr John Adams 70B      | 12. Mr Gordon Gray 56A     | 26. Mr Alan Picken 66A     |
| 2. Mr Trevor Allen 70B    | 13. Mr Dave Hayward 47A    | 27. Mr Reg Rider 54B       |
| 3. Mr Peter Ashford 46A   | 14. Mr Eric Hillman Staff  | 28. Mr Peter Saunders 51A  |
| 4. Mr Bob Birrell 47B     | 15. Col Alan Holman Staff  | 29. Mr John Smith 44A      |
| 5. Mr Nigel Brickell 68A  | 16. Mr Mark Keary 60C      | 30. Mr Donald Smith 61A    |
| 6. Mr Roy Brown 49A       | 17. Mr Jim Machin 60A      | 31. Mr Digger Stanley 42A  |
| 7. Mr Norman Brummitt 45A | 18. Mr Craig MacKenzie 84C | 32. Mr John Symes 47A      |
| 8. Mr Dave Coburn 44A     | 19. Mr John Moore 73C      | 33. Mr Gordon Taylor 74C   |
| 9. Mr Noel Drew 60A       | 20. Mr Billy Moore 59A     | 34. Lt Col Syd Thomas 47A  |
| 10. Mr John Furley 56A    | 21. Mr Baz Morgan 73B      | 35. Mr Tony Waite 60C      |
| 11. Mr Chris Gould 71B    | 22. Mr Maurice Murtagh 43B | 36. Major Derek Walker 55A |
|                           | 23. Mr Peter Newton 47A    | 37. Mr Stuart Walker 55A   |
|                           | 24. Major Roger Norton 61B | 38. Mr Chalkie White 73A   |
|                           | 25. Mr Tony Orchard 56A    | 39. Mr Geoff Winter 66C    |





# from the Fairway: BOBA Golfing Society

Once again we have broken our own record. This year saw 33 golfers assemble to contest the BOBA trophies, albeit some of them were unexpected late arrivals. Well done lads, it keeps the organiser on his toes! We also had three lady golfers again this year with Sally Powell playing off ten, as our lowest handicap player. The weather was kind in the extreme with perfect golfing conditions on both days. It was nice to see Ken Standen again this year, and another of our stalwarts, Bill Withers (41 group), appeared in the guise as chauffeur/caddy/guide/sage to Alan Whitelock. Before the start Stuart Burton (67 B) and Mike McConville (52B) drew the names for the George Murray Memorial Cup, the drawn pairs competition. The results of this year's competition are as follows:

<b><u>Longest Drive</u></b> (4 <sup>th</sup> Hole)	Tony Battle (57A)	242 yds
<b><u>Nearest the Pin</u></b> (18 <sup>th</sup> Hole)	Sally Powell	7 ft 2 ins
<b><u>Best points on Par 3's</u></b>	Andy Foster (75C)	11 points
<b><u>Drawn Pairs</u></b> The George Murray Memorial Cup		
Winners	John Powell (51B) & David Fowle (66C)	66 points
Second	Reg Rider (54B) & Chris Jarvis (67B)	64 points
Third	Jamie Bryant & Jimmy Hough (73A)	60 points



The Champion

### **B.O.B.A. Championship 2002**

Winner & 2002 Champion	<b>Reg Rider (54B)</b>	36 points
Second	David Fowle (66C)	35 points
Third (on countback)	Glen Chalmers (56B)	33 points

My thanks as ever to Tony Battle and to Pat & Peter Saunders for their valuable assistance.

SEE YOU ALL NEXT YEAR, ENTRY FORM ON BACK PAGE, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE

SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY BEFORE THE CUT OFF DATE.

Glen Chalmers.



## The 2003 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 20<sup>th</sup> September 2003. 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 £25 made payable to BOBA, **TO REACH ME BEFORE FRIDAY 12<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2003.**

Start times will be allocated on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September and all golfers informed by letter, so **please ensure 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:..... TELEPHONE:.....

CHEPSTOW GROUP/INTAKE..... COMPANY:.....

GOLF 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 "B.O.B.A." TO THE VALUE OF £25.**

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