



Beachley



Echoes

Edition No. 26 ~ April 2020

Corona Covid-19 Virus Announcement.

Please make sure that you read the important announcement on Page 3.

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The President's jottings for 2020 - 2021

I greet you well and hope that you are doing your bit against this terrible Virus by staying at home, boring but essential.

OLD AGE STRIKES AGAIN – Sorry Ray that I am very late submitting my annual blog – just plain forgot thanks for the size 9 kick up the rear end!!!

TROUBLED TIMES – Lockdown has effected everyone and whilst we know that Beachley Boy's are an extremely tough and hardy bunch they must lead by example. I am confident they will. Enough.

VERY MANY CHANGES Within the Association we have managed to cope with changes, new projects and proposals. Please be sure to read ALL the individual members reports to be sure of the progress being made. Whilst each and every member has been involved in the work they have been guided, cajoled and inspired by the tremendous dedication and drive of your Chairman – many thanks Chris.

AGAIN – PLEASE READ HIS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS REPORTS and give them YOUR FULL SUPPORT. They do an awful lot of work on YOUR behalf

The President !!!!!

As I have said old age is creeping up very fast and my brain box is now in decline, I am not able to concentrate, give the committee advice or keep them in order !!!

Perhaps it is time for you to consider electing a new President !!!!!

The London Cenotaph Parade

Tony Waite is now your point of contact. You will need to contact him to get your place on this very special event. He did so very well last year and gathered together a record number attending the parade – most pleasing was the 'new boys' Give him your support and get your bids in early (I feel sure that the lockdown will be lifted by November).

The Annual Reunion

A very special year – 25 years since the College closed and we became 'New BOBA'. It taxed the committee to get everything arranged and considering that we were using a new venue for the Dinner, I thought that despite the odd problem it was a good night and the committee learned a lot! It is going to be very tricky this year as we have no way of knowing if we will be able to hold a reunion weekend – my advice is WATCH AND WAIT.

Bits and Pieces

Membership. We need new blood to keep going, it is very necessary for the 'younger groups' to come forward and join as members. Otherwise it is very much your responsibility to encourage others to join – if we all could recruit just one new member we would be fine for the next 10 years.

BOBA Golf. There must be lots more that play (including the ladies) – why not have an enjoyable and relaxed round with us – look for the entry form.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS. We still need volunteers – can you spare a little time to ensure the future of BOBA. There is always a need for a backup committee member. Ladies – nothing to stop you volunteering !!!!

THANK YOU.

WE ALL OWE THE COMMITTEE A GREAT DEAL FOR THE TIME AND EFFORT THEY PUT IN ON OUR BEHALF – GIVE THEM YOUR SUPPORT.

I sincerely hope that you and your families are virus free and as well as possible,

God Bless – Stay Safe, Stay in and lets beat this bloody virus.

Syd Thomas



BOBA Annual Reunion 2020

As a result of the current and anticipated restrictions and Government advice due to Covid-19 it has been necessary for YOUR Committee to **CANCEL** the 2020 Annual Reunion.

The committee has spent a lot of time in discussion over the last few days and weeks and throughout this time have considered alternatives to this but have unanimously agreed that we have little choice.

We realise that this will doubtless create issues for some and many of us will be disappointed, but your safety and well-being are more important so we hope that you will understand and we can all look forward to 2021.

This has not been an easy decision to make as it is the 1st time it's happened since WW11 and was taken in the interests of all of our Members.

Furthermore, this decision has meant that we can no longer hold the AGM where you have your opportunity to ask questions etc., as well as to re-elect or elect those whose tenures are over. It is suggested that all such activity is held over until 2021 and the next (hopefully) Reunion although anything of particular concern can be mailed to me and will be forwarded to the Committee for discussion.

Take care and stay safe one and all.

Chris Ricketts (on behalf of the Executive Committee)



Chairman's Jottings

Where to begin, 2019 was a great year for the Association.

We had the 25th Anniversary of New BOBA which was perhaps the biggest achievement since 1994 when we were reborn with the continued support of our loyal Members. This loyalty has been rewarded with more Members, new adventures and several bold changes.

The Reunion, despite the enforced changes was a success with about 130 of us enjoying catching up again and meeting lads we had not seen for many years and despite the very minor issues, it proved to be a success. But the one thing I notice whenever I meet both new and old Members is that we all suddenly become young boys again. Yes, we all don't have our hearing, sight and whatever other bits we used to have but we have the most important thing, comradeship and memories. So long may it continue.

The Heritage Centre proved to be a roaring success too and the numbers from the weekend and subsequent visits from all over the world have established it as "a must visit" venue. Not only that but new Members have joined the fold.

Moving now to another project, The Beachley Gates, which have now been taken down and are being fully restored and will be back in their rightful place as soon as they can be moved. When we first moved the gates my phone and Email inbox received dozens of questions, who stole the Gates?, are the Barracks sold?, will they be back? and suchlike, so Beachley meant a lot to local folk as well as us. Many of you will have seen the photos that were published on our Facebook pages and have received positive reactions, like most of us I am looking forward to the re-erection and the opening.

The "Beachley Barracks Project" is progressing albeit slowly but still being looked at and still supported by the MP's.

As we moved forward into 2020, we were dealt a massive blow with the development of Covid-19 throughout the world and the Association hasn't been left out of the disruption by any means.

We have closed the Heritage Centre as advised which in turn has impacted on both visits and other associated matters, but in true Beachley Boy style we will see our way through and like the Phoenix rise again.

Maybe the biggest impact has been the reluctant cancellation of the 2020 Annual Reunion, especially as it appears that numbers were rising with several groups hoping to celebrate their respective anniversaries. I am sure that reading the note about this will cause us all to reflect on how our safety and well being is so important and mustn't be taken for granted. The 2021 Reunion will have a lot to look forward to so please make a note of the Dates; September 17/18th and 19th 2021. This will obviously be confirmed in due course but rest assured "we'll meet again and once again be young together".

I am sure that there will be many stories to be told of our hardship in being at home in the garden and enjoying the distant contact with friends and family. Oh! I nearly forgot the odd beverage or three.

Finally, I wish to thank YOUR Committee for all their hard work giving the Association and me personally such great support. Thank You All.

Please take care and stay safe; Your Association NEEDS YOU



RUBBING SHOULDERS WITH FIELD MARSHAL MONTGOMERY

In 1949 as a Staff Sergeant in the RASC, I was living a peaceful existence in Shorncliffe Barracks, with the Workshops of 46 Company, where our most dangerous activity was the Colonel's Garden Parties, which we were expected to attend.

One day I was told to report to the Workshop Officer and with the usual thoughts of, what have I done now?, I did so.

The meeting turned out to be praise rather than a dressing down as the first words he uttered were "Would you like to go and set up a Workshop Detachment at Montgomery's Headquarters in France?" Always being one for ignoring the old saying of "Never Volunteer," if it was to my advantage, I pretended to consider the question and then said if this would help the Unit then I would be willing.



A quick recap. In 1947 the Treaty of Dunkirk was signed between Britain and France. In 1948 the three BENELUX Countries Belgium, Netherlands and Luxemburg were included and it became the Treaty of Brussels. Monty's Headquarters were in the Chateau des Fougères in Fontainebleau. The unit being the Western Europe Commanders in Chiefs Committee, the forerunner of NATO. The Arm Badges worn by those serving there were five Gold Links of a Chain forming the shape of a pentagon, on a blue background.

On the trip to France I found myself billeted one night in the London Underground, at Goodge Street on the Northern Line. It had been closed to the public during the War and was used for "Troops in Transit" in London and could hold up to 8000 troops. It had also been used by Eisenhower as part of his Operational HQ for D Day. It is a deep station which has a lift, which in my time only Officers were allowed to use. The rest of us had to carry our kit down many steps. Actually 136.

I had been allotted an electrician and two vehicle mechanics to go with me and in due course we found ourselves on a ferry with our full kit, including our tool boxes, travelling from Dover to Calais. We were sitting in the saloon carrying out a spot check to ensure the beer on sale was not substandard, when a Military Police Sergeant came up behind me put his hand on my shoulder and said "Hello Staff". Once again my mind turned to any recent activities that could have led to this meeting, but it turned out that he, with several other MP's, were going to the same destination as us. They were going to form Monty's Bodyguard. The Sgt turned out to be one of the nicer type of MP and he and I took several weekend trips together to Paris.

The chateau itself was a large imposing building which if you listened to all the stories, had once been a girls school, a German brothel, or the HQ of the German Gestapo in the area. There was a large room equipped with many bidets, so the evidence seemed to point in one or two possible directions. It could of course have been all three. It was situated on a sharp bend on the main road to Paris and as there were many high level meetings held at the Palace in Fontainebleau, we quite often saw and heard the various big wigs being escorted to the palace by numerous French motor cycle outriders with sub machine guns slung across their chests and their sirens blaring.

The Unit was manned by personnel from many different Regiments and Corps, with a predominance of



Rifle Brigade men doing odd jobs, several RASC drivers, and many clerks.

There was also a mixture of other troops from many different units, whose functions were vague. However their presence gave their unit CO's in the UK an excuse for a trip to France to check on their mens' welfare. They usually did this at weekends so that it didn't take too much time away from their duties at home. One of the troubles as far as I was concerned in these welfare trips, was that these C.Os always had little time for their visit ,and in order to utilise the most of that time insisted that their drivers drove as fast as possible so that they spent less time travelling , thus leaving more time for other activities which were usually in Paris. This meant new engines were being treated badly, resulting in more work for us. Those were the days when new engines had to be "Run In", in other words, no excessive revving, speeding or loading. Their misuse left us with more engine changes than should have been necessary. I came up with a bright idea which I put to the Transport Officer. Should I run in the new engines myself for 500 miles so that we would have fewer problems? Much to my surprise he agreed to this, so in my own time, I and my passenger of choice, would roam round the French roads which included trips to Paris, "Running In" the engines.

We had many vehicles, Humber Pullman cars for the higher ranks, Humber Snipes for the lower, and an assortment of domestic vehicles, with a horrible Bedford QL that was fitted out as a wireless vehicle with suppression on all the high tension leads. These leads were always giving trouble and replacements were rare, so it very rarely ran smoothly. I never saw it used for it's purpose in life, so it didn't really matter

Montgomery had several vehicles at his disposal. One, which he used mostly, being a Humber Super Snipe given to him by the Rootes Group, one stipulation being that it must only be serviced and repaired by Rootes in Paris. I was glad of this when on one occasion the bonnet flew up with Monty present. NOT GUILTY SIR.

This stipulation by Rootes reminded me of the "War Office Car Company" in London that had Rolls Royce's amongst its vehicles, the workshop staff were not allowed to carry out repairs and drivers were only allowed to clean the Rolls with water.

All the vehicular activity and administration took place in the area which had previously been used by the chateau's servants, together with the old stable areas. This was also where the W.Os and Senior NCO's were housed and also contained their Mess. The Mess was also used by American Army NCO's who were part of a Graves Commission. They had Polish other ranks who exhumed bodies from where they had been randomly buried during the War.

There was a lot of smuggling going on mainly cigarettes (not by us). Occasionally Customs made us a present of any cigarettes found, usually Camel. Phillip Morris, and other American Brands. They once left us with a Jeep that had been modified with the addition of an extra fuel tank, in which cigarettes were smuggled, it was fitted with a dummy filler tube containing petrol.

The French Army was hospitable and we were invited to social functions, where there was usually plenty of food and drink.



As we had no Army Dental support any tooth problems meant a trip by train to Paris, to an approved French Dentist in the Place Mange. As we made our own appointments with the dentist, this trip could usually be made to last the day. We travelled in civilian clothes as there was an order that we must not leave the camp off duty in uniform. The political situation was such that American troops had been attacked in Paris and there was a chance we might be mistaken for Americans, so no uniforms Off Duty.

Shortly before I left the unit, we took part in a parade held at Fontainebleau Racecourse. It was in honour of Airmen who had died at a spot in the woods and a Memorial had been erected to commemorate this. We were drawn up in a hollow square and we had the misfortune to be in the cross bar of the square that placed us directly opposite our Brigadier. The French, Americans, and Poles all felt free to move about, while we, under the eye of the Brigadier, stood at ease and dare not move. It was a long drawn out affair with British, French, Polish, and American troops on parade. It was pouring with rain and a representative from each country addressed the parade in his own language. The address was then read out again by interpreters; a long job, as for instance if the address was in Polish both the French and English interpreters had to repeat it. The thing I remember most though, was marching on soggy wet grass to the tempo of a French Military Band.

The French were still experiencing the aftermath of the War but it did not affect us much, sometimes it was even an advantage to us. For instance when I wanted Jeep spares that were not readily available. A local French business man had purchased all the surplus Jeeps he could get from the Americans and was converting them by means of fitting spiked wheels, into farm tractors. Apparently with great success. He also had many spares so I could buy from him when necessary.

A small rundown garage in a back street had been appropriated? Or rented? For our use, the only reason we wanted it was the use of its storage tank and the one petrol pump for our vehicles. My duties included checking the amount of petrol in the storage tank once a week. No matter what I did, the sum of petrol receipts, minus the amount used, never left me with the right amount in the tank. At first the Major blamed me for not dipping the tank correctly, but after having shown me my supposed mistakes, he came up with the same results. After that I was left alone. The official answer to the problem was, fluctuating temperatures, who was I to argue?

Did I rub shoulders with Montgomery? Of course not, in fact I never even saw him. The highest rank we used to see, and he was at the Race Course Parade, was a Brigadier, but I was there at Monty's HQ and I enjoyed the experience. When Monty retired, although Field Marshalls don't do that, he went to live in Isington Mill near Farnham, Hampshire and his driver Sgt from the RASC went with him. One day my Mother was walking along a country lane when a Rolls Royce stopped and the driver asked her if she wanted a lift. She got in the car and in conversation she told him I was in the RASC, to which he asked my name and then said he knew me. He was Monty's driver who had served with me in Fontainebleau. This sort of coincidence is rare.

NATO took over from BENELUX after I had returned to the UK, and everything became more organised and a camp was established. I was lucky to have experienced the freedom that I had in Fontainebleau and although we played a lot, we also worked hard and achieved our objectives.

John Eveleigh 42A



'The Project'

In the 2019 edition of The Echoes the Project purpose was set out and we thank those who responded. In the intervening 12 months we have continued to promote the Project and significantly a number of events have intervened.

The big picture events include BREXIT. It seemed to suck the life out of Government decision making as a minority government sought to legislate in a reluctant Parliament. Resolution came with the last general election and now Parliament has a party in power with a working majority. There are several consequences as a result. The first of these is to review the UK's defence commitments and positioning on the world stage and how those requirements can be met. To what extent this will impact on the future of Beachley is not at present known.

The second, which was in the election manifesto of the elected governing party, was the intention to make the **Armed Forces Covenant** primary legislation placing a statutory duty to deliver the Covenant's intention in a practical way.

The first step was to create the **Office for Veteran Affairs** (OVA). This has been done and is currently part of the Cabinet Office. Retired Colonel David Richmond CBE former Commanding Officer of 5th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland has been appointed to head up the new OVA.

The Cabinet Office issued a press release on the 16th October 2019 that was clear in its intention "***New Office for Veterans' Affairs will ensure the UK leads the world in care for the Armed Forces Veterans***".

The OVA has been tasked with "*improving veterans' services in areas such as mental health, employment and housing.*"

The OVA "*will pull together all the functions of government, and better co-ordinate charity sector provision*" to deliver the improvement.

The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP represents the OVA in Cabinet and is quoted as saying "*I want the UK to be the best place in the world to be a veteran. Through the new Office for Veterans Affairs we can make sure the government delivers on its promises to those who have served and make it easier for veterans and their families to get the support they need in many other walks of life after they leave service*".

BOBA fully supports the ambition of these sentiments and indeed its 'Project' for Beachley addresses the same themes in a viable and practical proposal. As BOBA's proposal is written by former military personnel who in the words of David Richmond CBE, "*I know that our former military personnel are hugely talented, committed and have a range of skills, experiences and qualifications that we must ensure continues to benefit UK society*", that he will give BOBA's Project serious consideration and support within government.

Your Chairman, Chris Ricketts, has written on behalf of BOBA to David Richmond CBE with a copy of the Project set out in the BOBA Interim Report and we await a reply.

The final event is of course Covid 19 that has directed resources away from other matters in government and also makes communication more difficult. The Armed Forces are giving valuable assistance to the Civil Authorities and we wish them well in that task.

Stephen Barker 66C

29th March 2020

**Life as a "Wife Of" - W/O 24179496 - Let Me Take You back A Few Years**

As a child it was my answer to a familiar childhood question that created hilarity amongst my family, "Susan, what do you want to be when you grow up?" "A Farmers Wife" was my reply every time I was asked. Why the amusement? Well I was a city child, born and bred in South London. How on earth was I going to meet a farmer!

Well I never met my Farmer, but I did meet a Soldier and in an odd sort of way my childhood dream was fulfilled. Through my own choice instead of a Farming life I became married to a Military life.

In Summer 1975 I met L/Cpl E.H. (Tommy) Tomiczek a nickname that had been given to him in 1969 by a Beachley SNCO who had a problem pronouncing his Apprentices' surname and declared that "Tommy" would do, it is an affectionate endearment that remains to this day!

I was a Student Nurse, going out one evening with my friend and colleague Anne, when we both met our Soldier husbands to be, they told us their unusual first names and the next day whilst discussing the previous evening both Anne and I became suspicious that our chaps had given us false names - Constantine and Eugene, but their names were true.

I married Tommy and became his "Wife Of" (W/O) we were to be blessed later by "Daughter Of" (D/O) times two. Anne married Con and they had two sons (S/O).

Many wives felt belittled by this method of recognition (W/O), a term that would remain for several years to come. But there was a sound logical reason why families were grouped together this way, it ensured that all their documents when required could be easily accessed and retrieved by relevant Military personnel, Medical and School staff. This was particularly essential on posting so that all paperwork relating to the "Last Three" of the serviceman's number would stay together never to be separated or lost. That's good common sense and pretty good thinking from my point of view, plus I was very proud to be Tommy's W/O.

Army life with Tommy in the Royal Engineers was full of extremes of emotions including the usual family joys and happiness with ups and downs. The endless opportunities to make lifelong friendships. Attending Squadron do's, Fancy Dress Parties, glorious Regimental Dinners, spectating Military parades especially those involving Tommy. Hearing the RE Band "Beating Retreat" and in Concert, hosting VIP's at cocktail parties once at the House of Lords, Hogmanay Celebrations not forgetting whirling Scottish reels on Burns Night. The glamorous exuberant fun times of dancing the night away at the Christmas and Summer Balls often until dawn, then to be served with an abundant breakfast buffet complete with Kedgeree and Bucks Fizz before carriages arrived to escort us, the late revellers home. The absolute delight in receiving an invitation to accompany Tommy to a Buckingham Palace Garden party that just happened to fall on my 48th Birthday, I never thought aged 8 watching the changing of the Guard gripping the railings that 40 years later I'd be on the other side strolling across the forecourt of a Royal residence arm in arm with my Beau.

To the upset and sadness, and fear for departures to "Active Duty" for many months, together with long "Training Exercises" both at home and abroad. Clinging on to the hope that the postal service would be as good as it could be, clutching "Bluies" (blue air letter forms available free, including postage to all Servicemen and their families from the Post Office). Telephones were rare in married quarters. During separation Tommy and I wrote every day remembering to number our letters, as often the postal deliveries were sporadic and it was not uncommon to receive letters out of sync, which was disappointing but, always looking on the bright side, meant we had to be reread our letters to make sense of the content, eagerly awaiting the arrival of the next collection of bluies to keep us smiling as "Days-to-do-Charts did for our children. Bluies are now white, but in true Army style they have affectionately kept their original name even though service families now keep in touch using technology.

Tommy began his Army career at Beachley College in 1969 aged 15yrs 3weeks. After completing his Plant Mechanic Apprenticeship, he continued to serve Queen & Country in the Royal Engineers for 39years 11 month and one week.

During 36 of those years we moved house 18 times, we moved quarters five times in five years twice! We were also privileged and appreciated remaining in one home for five years. We were posted between Germany (BAOR) and UK. Our girls remained with us attending Army Schools and Church Schools, although we were criticised by our peers for not taking advantage of the available Government Boarding School Grant. Keeping our girls with us didn't harm their education both



attained good Degrees including a master's from Imperial College. Our daughters would add that the travelling broadened their horizons and "moving" was always a positive adventure. As for me, to date I have 19 separate employments under my belt, I retrained aged 39 and achieved 13 years serving the NHS, before taking early retirement to join Tommy.

Now we have all been told that moving house is one of the most stressful situations anyone can endure. Well, that's true unless you are organised in military fashion. Let me take you back a few years!

THE MARCH IN. Our very first Quarter was a two bed semi-detached house, we moved in on a chilly wet day in February 1976 and I was allowed to sit in the house instead of remaining in the car in the cold whilst the "March In" was carried out, this was a privilege as the presence of the wife was forbidden.

The military official cradled a foolscap buff folder and proceeded from page one, working his way down an alphabetical list relating to every item on "Army Issue" and I mean every item!! All household linen from tray cloths, ironing board covers, to bedspreads, furniture, crockery, cutlery, pots and pans, counting everything, Including inspection of the cooker, furniture and carpets, plus garden tools.

So, there was I, directed to sit in silence on a settee where I had a grandstand view of the proceedings. To start with I was baffled as Tommy and the-man-in-charge went back and forth upstairs and downstairs, in and out of rooms, until eventually staying put in the Lounge-diner I was patiently waiting in. Then the penny dropped how I restrained my giggles I don't know whilst the audit continued ... Forks dining twelve 1 2 3 4 5 forks desert twelve 1 2 3 4 5.... Forks fish twelve 1 2 3 4 5, forks digging!!! With the Official leading Tommy, they traipsed through the kitchen to exit the back door to the garden shed, I just had to follow into the garden too. What a hoot!

As time passed the procedure improved, I pondered that a female had influenced the Accommodation Services and re-vamped the inventory into room contents to simplify the process. I also wondered if in a previous employment she had been a time and motion manager?

PACKING. Moving meant packing and back in those days MFO (Military Freight Organisation) conducted the operation using self-assembly plywood boxes. We had to collect our permitted number of boxes, and their screws, from the unit MFO storeman. So, the pain began! Real pain from bleeding and bruised fingers due to screwdriver rash whilst screwing in the endless number of tiny slot headed screws (why couldn't they have been cross head – Health and Safety!). Thankfully, several moves later, the adoption of tri-wall cardboard boxes meant you no longer arrived at your next posting with plastered and bandaged fingers. I did learn a lot by practical experience about packing and carrying! I had managed to pack all our LP and 45's record collection with all the books that we owned at the time into a 2-foot cubed wooden MFO box, not an inch of space was wasted. Success!! I pushed and slid the box across the Marley tiled floor and placed it in the corner, the first of many to wait for collection. What I had completely missed was that on moving day it took a forklift truck to lift it – 4 strong men, aka my husband and three MFO removal men. My husband's face said it all!! "what on earth is packed in here?" after my reply I'm sure I heard the word stupid woman muttered or maybe something stronger as they struggled and staggered out to the truck.

Then in the mid 1980's, Heaven! A civilian style full removal service was introduced. We were allowed a sizeable amount of space as most of us by then had our own furniture and an assigned removal company assessor would complete your estimate several weeks prior to your move. It was obvious that assessors were not always held in the best regard by the removal crews, as estimates of hours to load should have been days in some cases. I adopted my own routine with the crews on collection days. The removal team foreman, leaving his crew in the Pantechicon cab, would firstly assess the items to be moved and then return to brief his men, as they all came through the door to start I would request that they begin in the Dining Room, often the foreman would interject that upstairs was first on his agenda, but I would insist they follow me. It was wonderful to see their shocked faces when they saw the dining table laid for breakfast – "Will it be a full English all round? Who's for orange juice or would you prefer grapefruit? Do help yourself to tea and coffee anyone for toast and how do you like your eggs...." I made sure I kept up the strength of the removal team and I received more smiles from them when they noticed that 30 or more boxes were already packed and were of a manageable weight. This breakfast ritual was to become our tradition. Surprisingly unlike stories from some of our peers we never suffered any damage or loss to our personal effects and still received smiles even after I purchased an upright piano!!!

THE MARCH OUT. This entailed cleaning your quarter from top to bottom, from the ceiling lampshade, wall washed, floors scrubbed and polished, down to the underside of sink plugs and every item issued to be gleaming. The takeover of your



Married Quarter was handled by the Accommodation Service Personnel who were often ex-servicemen (never women) who had carte blanche authority to accept it (or not) and stipulate any charges for damages and deficiencies. Some took their power to extreme levels of mill board scribbling and cleaning charge issuing. The anxiety of the impending March-out with thoughts of white gloves and coin scraping checking of oven and cooker surfaces, was enormous to some families. Wives were never present, and woe betide the inexperienced soldier who used any of the terms: The missus cleaned that! - It was like that on the March-in! - Is that not fair wear and tear?

In the past as well as a Families Officer who was available for help, advice and assistance, Families would have support of Regimental and Squadron Wives Clubs run by the boss's wives. The Commanding Officer (CO), Officer Commanding (OC), Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) & Squadron Sergeant Major (SSM) wives. This was our first-hand social and welfare mechanism to support families around the world wherever postings would take them. It was expected of us to give our time voluntarily to carry out a host of tasks, this was particularly important when posted overseas. Running weekly coffee mornings with craft demonstrations, children's school holiday activities such as a trip to playparks and the zoo. We had to be an active Regimental Wives Club Committee Member and organise monthly wives evening events, the Annual Wives Christmas Dinner (complete with a cabaret usually acted by husbands and soldiers). We would visit new wives in their new quarter shortly after they arrived to welcome them and help orientate them in their new environment. To be a friendly face to escort if she so wished, an apprehensive wife to her first coffee morning to give her an opportunity to make new friends. We conducted hospital visits and it was particularly enjoyable to take a bouquet to congratulate a new mum and welcome their baby into the squadron family. When my time came "to-do-my-bit", I felt a huge sense of duty and willingness to follow on the kindness of ladies who had done all the above for me when I was a new wife. In addition, as a RSM's wife, I was formally trained to take on a role as an Assistant Casualty Visiting Officer at the time of the Gulf War. As an OC's wife I also had the responsibility to organise and arrange flowers for Mess Dinners too. Tommy's OC tour was unusually extended to 3 years and the Kosovo Deployment took place during that time, so our Wives Club was very busy aiding us wives in support of each other.

As time went on with so many "Bosses" wives having careers and not able or wanting to be a unofficial Volunteer Social Worker, the Wives Club hierarchy began to change to allow any wife to run the clubs, enabling them to hold regular get-togethers organised by the wives themselves. Because the "Old Girl Network" no longer existed in the previous way, the Families Officer and his team became more active. And the HIVE (Help Information Volunteer Exchange) similar to the civilian CAB was established.

Other fond memories are having fun taking part on a "Wives Exercise" (three in all) learning to be soldiers! We were taught to drive an APC (Armoured Personnel Carrier) it looks like a small tank without a gun. A "Stolley" a huge amphibious vehicle, and a Bridge Transporter truck. Loading a "Bar Mine Layer" with dummy mines of course. Being up to our ankles in mud!

Being in a team, building a bridge in 3 hours using Christchurch Cribs, Sapper's build a Bailey Bridge in far less time with fewer people! Being "On Stag" in the dark, having nothing but a shovel to facilitate a latrine. Tucking into Compo (composite rations) "Babies Heads" (Fray Bentos tinned Individual steak and kidney puddings) with mash and veg eaten from a mess tin, outside at night in the freezing cold, such a welcome warm up with a steaming mug of tea. Being attacked at dawn with thunder flashes blasting us from a short slumber. Enjoying a Full English with the sun also warming our souls. Achieving 2nd place on an assault course challenge, being first to attempt abseiling down a sheer granite drop in the rain then completing the run of a BFT (Battle Fitness Test). The best fun of all was on the rifle ranges both indoors and out. Being schooled to load and clean a weapon. How to achieve a "good grouping" firing a Point 22 rifle, a SLR (Self Loading Rifle) and an LMG (Light Machine Gun) and being shown by an expert what a 9mm Pistol can do. Wearing NBC kit and learning the drill for a chemical warfare and gas attack!

How's about that! not your usual "Weekend Away"! I'm definitely a cat-on-your-knee-knitting-by-the-fire" lass, but I took part because I appreciated the effort and free time given by our professional Brothers-in-Arms to ensure we wives could safely have the opportunity to have this unique life experience not available to our civvy sisters.

Do I have any regrets? I wish I hadn't had to have shed so many tears and wished my life away waiting for my Tommy to be



home safe and sound.

Would I do it all again, Yes providing I could be Tommy's lady once more with our daughters by our sides.

I do hope you have enjoyed my brief account of service life from a wife's perspective. The stories from 36 years would fill a book (now there's a thought) and it is so comforting to have so many friends from all those years and reflect back on what we achieved as a Forces Family during a full and rewarding career in the Corps of Royal Engineers and now we add our BOBA chums we met during our visit to Beachley last Sept!

So where are we now? Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) E.H. Tomiczek BEM and Mrs (W/O) S.L.Tomiczek live at 600 metres elevation, halfway up a mountain in Andalucia enjoying peace and tranquillity in the Spanish countryside creating our own rural retreat, perfect for R&R (Rest & Recuperation).

We are not quite Derby & Joan, we're still Jack & Jill "The folks that live on the hill" (there's a song there) living "The Good Life" someone has even suggested I could change my name to Barbara!

Best wishes to you all.

Suzy Tomiczek

Finally - A Joke - There are two mice in the airing cupboard, which one is in the Army?

The one on the tank

P.S Our youngest daughter is very good friends with a farmer's son.....TRUE

Susan Tomiczek

Hon Secretary's Report for 2019/2020

Various items of correspondence have been received since the AGM, these have been predominantly from Steve Joyce who is the secretary of the AANM detailing current happenings within their association and of course minutes of their AGM.

These items are of course forwarded to the BOBA committee, but should any members wish to view any of said items please contact me direct and I will forward them to you.

Hopefully all members receive and read the Beachley Echoes which contains minutes of the AGM, committee member's reports and brief details of correspondence they have received directly rather than from myself, however, if you feel you may have missed something or would like clarification on an item, again please contact me direct and where possible I will try my best to help and forward the item(s).

My personal thanks go to the rest of the committee who have taken minutes when I have been unable to attend meetings due to working, and for their general support.

Chalky White 73A

Hon Secretary

garywhite404@hotmail.co.uk



On Saturday we were given a guided tour of the camp at Beachley.
Here are some photographs taken during that visit.





Here are a few photographs taken during the Reunion 2019









Is it going to
rain?

Permission to
March Off.



The March
Past.



BRUNSSUM, is a small town in Holland.

Brunssum is the current home of Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum (JFC Brunssum), an operational level NATO headquarters one level below military-strategic level SHAPE in the integrated military command structure. There are two operational level NATO headquarters; another one is Allied Joint Force Command, Naples. The headquarters was known as Headquarters, Allied Forces Central Europe (HQ AFCEA) from its inception in Fontainebleau, France and relocation to Brunssum in 1967. The name was changed to Regional Headquarters, Allied Forces Northern Europe (RHQ AFNORTH) when a restructuring in 2000 led to the closing of HQ AFNORTH in Kolsås, Norway. The current title was adopted in 2004 to add flexibility to the military command structure by removing regional restrictions. The main base area, Hendrik Camp, was built on a former coal mine called Hendrik Mine.

To mark the 75th anniversary of their liberation, the people of Brunssum bestowed a unique honour upon the 328 British soldiers buried in their local Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) cemetery. A lot of the soldiers buried here are Royal Engineers, but as far as I can ascertain not an Ex-Boy amongst them. The majority of these Sappers were Bomb Disposal that lost their lives "doing their job".

Mayor Gerd Leers said: "The Brunssum War Cemetery has been at the heart of our community, ever since the first burials were made, almost 75 years ago. It was one of the first Commonwealth war graves in the world, of which every grave was adopted by local citizens. Now, with the 75th anniversary of our liberation approaching, there was a widespread and heartfelt feeling that we should make a special gesture to express our deep gratitude to these men. The city council elected to make them honorary citizens, a distinction only rarely awarded and never before posthumously. The inscription on the medal of honour reads: 'Their lives. Our freedom'. Through awarding this distinction, the people of Brunssum wish to stress that these 328 men are not forgotten by us – and never will be"

I was invited to the 75th Anniversary Weekend celebrations by the Mayor but as much as I wanted to attend, I found it impossible due to the fact that it was the same dates as The BOBA 25th Anniversary. A very difficult decision was made and I was in Chepstow.

One of the gatherings that they arranged was a candlelight vigil on Saturday 21st December 2019 which I was able to attend whilst on my return drive from Luneburg. I paraded our Standard at the ceremony in attendance with representatives of various military sources, both current serving and veterans. I received a very good reception and was approached afterwards by a few people who were aware of Beachley and what it means.

The town produced a DVD commemorating the 75th Liberation Anniversary that they coincidentally called "The Echoes".

I was proud to receive a copy of this DVD.





TEARDROPS IN BRUNSSUM

IN A FIELD IN BRUNSSUM OUR SOLDIERS LIE AT REST
WE NEVER WILL FORGET THEM, TO US THEY WERE THE BEST.
WE VISIT WHEN WE CAN AND TELL THEM ALL OUR NEWS
HOPING THEY CAN HEAR US AS WE STAND AND PAY OUR DUES.
AN UNKNOWN SOLDIER LIES AMONGST THE OTHERS
GOD PLACING HIM PROTECTED BY HIS BROTHERS.
WE SAY HELLO TO THIS YOUNG MAN AND TELL HIM THAT WE
CARE.

A WHITE STONE, A BLOOD RED POPPY, A SMALL WOODEN CROSS
WE PLACE UPON THE GRAVE,
WE WALK AWAY, THEN GLANCE BACK AND SAY OUR LAST
GOODBYES, WE BLOW A KISS AND SADLY WAVE,
YOU NEVER REALLY DIE UNTIL YOU ARE FORGOTTEN
SO THERE IS THE REASON WHY - WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

C. DALE (MRS).



BOBA Merchandise

To all our customers, many thanks for your generous support during 2019.

The Hon Treasurer will report on the financials. I am pleased to say there was a surplus in the year and we had a particularly good trading time over the reunion weekend. One 'wag' that referred to it being like Arkwright's, open all hours – I'll take as a compliment.

Other sales were steady and mainly on line, but since the Heritage Centre opened we have seen sales being booked through it and I can say it is our best performing branch.

Stephen Barker 66c

BOBA Merchandise

BOBA Website

Most of you reading this edition of the Echoes will be doing so on our website, however, we are aware that a minority are not aware that the site exists. The site can be accessed through The Army Apprentice site which has a link to the BOBA site or directly (<http://armyapprenticecollege.homestead.com>).

Paper Copy of the Beachley Echoes

If you require a paper copy of the newsletter please drop the Editor a line stating name, group and address.

Editor's Contact Details:

***Ray Armstrong
125 Baker Street, Wigan, WN3 5HG
Tel: 01942 491140
email ~ r.armstrong@virgin.net***

Please note that all arrangements for the BOBA Reunion will be organised by

Chris Ricketts

35 Bigstone Grove

Tutshill

Chepstow

Monmouthshire

NP16 7EN



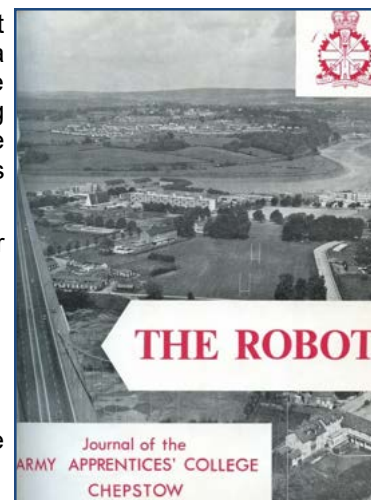
New Robots for Old

Do you ever wish that you had held onto The Robots covering your time at Beachley? Well you can now get them in PDF (Portable Document Format) on a disc. As the result of a request there is now an ongoing project to scan all of the issues of The Robot from the first edition in 1924. The scanned copies covering your time will be put on a CD along with the first three years worth of issues. The cost of the CD including P&P is £5.00, an element of which will go towards repairing the books holding the original copies.

To obtain a CD with the issues covering your time at Beachley please send your cheque for £5.00 (made Payable to 'Beachley Old Boys' Association') with

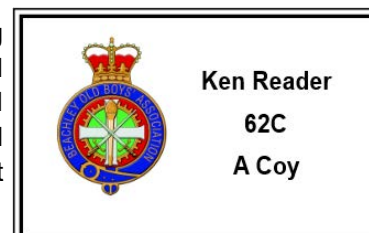
- ◆ Your name and group
- ◆ Address
- ◆ Month and year of arrival—month and year of departure

to Ken Reader (contact details below). Please note that there may be a delay if the editions covering your time have not yet been scanned.



2019 Reunion ID Badge and Holder

Once again we will be producing a reunion name holder for members attending the reunion this year. They are of a simple design on laminated card, which will be inserted into the clear plastic sleeve envelope with a press frog clip and secure safety pin mounting. At £1.50 each they are good quality with a coloured badge and border. Order yours on the reunion application form please and pick it up when you arrive for registration at the Racecourse.



Lt Col (Retd) Ken Reader OBE BEM Minst RE

Carrick House, 8 Cross Lane, Little Downham, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 2TJ

Telephone 01353 699096

email ~ kenreader@msn.com

Photos and Memorabilia. It is hoped that the members of **70 Groups** can search their attics and albums for items and send them to Alan Chatt for display at their 50th anniversary reunion in September 2020.

Honours and Awards Book. We maintain a record of the Honours and Awards presented to ex-Beachley boys, GC, MM, OBE, MSM, MBE, BEM and MiD etc. It records the individual and his years of service at Beachley. Anyone having decorations please notify a Committee member with the details.

Missing Passing out Parade Programmes. Our earliest held programme is for 45B's Passing Out where **Field Marshall Montgomery** was the Reviewing Officer. **We are still looking for** any programmes prior to 45B and for 47A, 48A – 49A, 51A, 52A, 59A – 62C, 63A, 64A, 64B, 64C, 65B, 65C, 66A, 66B, 68A, 69C, 70B - 81, 83 - 84 and 86-87. We are happy to copy any that you might have so that you can retain the original.

Missing Robots. We are missing the Spring 1977 issue, Summer 1979 issue, Summer 1980 issue and Spring 1981 issue. Any copies would be appreciated.

Alan Chatt

8 The Chase, Washington, Tyne & Wear, NE38 9DX

Telephone 01914 175960

email ~ a.w.chatt.121@btinternet.com



*Make sure to
place*

CANCELLED

*book your
at the event of the*



BEACHLEY OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REUNIONS

For many years, BOBA members, many with their Ladies, have met annually, usually on the third weekend in September, in the Chepstow area.

The reunion Friday evening get-together for 2019 was held at The Beaufort Hotel in Chepstow and was deemed to be a success. This year will see a continuation of this. The other main actions apart from Sunday's Founders' Day Church parade will take place at The Heritage Centre.

In order that you can attend any of the BOBA activities held during the reunion weekend i.e. Golf, Reunion Dinner, etc., you must be a Member of The Association. The forms for Membership are in the Beachley Echoes Newsletter and should be returned to the Membership Secretary, Derek Fox, his details are on the Committee page.

Reunion Friday

Friday is a social evening, including supper, where Members can enjoy each others company, chat or swing the lamp over a drink or two.

Reunion Saturday

Friday and Saturday allows members who have previously registered, to take part in 'The BOBA Golf Open'. An 18 hole Stableford tournament held at the Golf Club at nearby Coleford.

Saturday the BOBA Heritage Display takes place in the Heritage Centre

The BOBA AGM will take place at 14:30 in the Florence Court of The Beaufort Hotel.

The AGM is where BOBA business from the previous and coming year, is discussed and voted upon

In the evening the **BOBA ANNUAL DINNER** takes place when approximately 200 (pre-booked) members, including Ladies, Guests and Families sit down for a pleasant three course meal, followed by an evenings entertainment with a live group or a disco in the function room. Many dance into the early hours, whilst others have a great time just chatting, reminiscing and enjoying a social drink.

Reunion Sunday

Sunday rounds off the weekend with a mini 'Parade and March Past' on the parade ground in Beachley Barracks (weather permitting).

The parade is followed by our Founders Day church service in St George's Church.

For further information on the Reunion weekend, please contact Chris Ricketts (details on the Committee Contact details Page 18)



MY EARLY YEARS

I left the School in January 1945 with mixed feelings. Joy was one, but sorrow that despite having completed three years of Trade Training for mustering as Motor Vehicle Fitters we finally were mustered as Vehicle Mechanics. In other words we were redundant before we existed. It was a sad day in that respect but despite the Army's policies we still possessed the skills of a Fitter, and that they could not take away.

Looking back, our Trade Training at Beachley was basic but everything was basic in those days and because of this our training was limited to the extent of the then limited scope. We were taught how to do many basic repairs which included cases of "Do It Yourself". We never saw any Flux during our Tinsmith training but were shown how Zinc Chloride Flux could be obtained by putting strips of corrugated roofing into Hydrochloric Acid. The assumption being that we would not be depending upon supplies of flux. Nobody told us where to find the Hydrochloric Acid. All of our vehicle equipment was antiquated, for instance we had a Rolls Royce engine from a World War One Armoured Car. It served its purpose though as a demonstration model of engine components if you ignored the cone clutch. The best model we had was a sectionised Vauxhall car, supposedly produced for a Pre War Motor Show.

I only remember two new items of equipment. One was a magnetic chuck which Staff Sgt Fouracre demonstrated to us by using it when he sharpened a blade for a wood plane. Another; and this was near the end of our training, a Black and Decker valve grinding machine. In my first unit in Man's Service we were still placing engine valves in the chuck of a pillar drill and holding a file against the turning valve face to remove any defects before grinding it in by hand. The main Improvement was in Diesel Training. Diesel engines were relatively new to the Army, in my limited experience only AEC, Leyland, Scammel and Foden vehicles were in service. With the addition of American vehicles such as Diamond T and Federal. A diesel repair room was built for us at the School where we stripped-down injectors and pumps in sanitised conditions. Before phasing and calibrating them with our brand new "Hartridge Fuel Pump Test Bench", this part of our training was very comprehensive

Brakes were identified as Bendix, cable operation, or Girling, rod operation. I vaguely remember vacuum servos being in the Syllabus. I do not remember hydraulics being dealt with in any depth. Air brakes not at all.

Axle crown wheels were mated up to the pinion by the use of Engineers Blue and adjustments made until finally the Blue showed up in the middle of the teeth and they could be assembled.

It had taken another War to make "The Powers That Be" realise that equipment must be ready for action as soon as possible after it's being rendered unfit for use and this didn't just apply to guns etc. but to the vehicles that supplied the ammunition as well. The days of running in Big End Bearings, making our own Gaskets, carrying out Tinsmith repairs, using files and all other bench fitting tools, removing a dynamo and overhauling it, were all luxuries that although providing a competent repair, just took too long. The day of Replacements Parts was upon us. If a dynamo failed, fit a new one, half an hour and the vehicle was back in service. This policy specified short term repairs in the Front Line Areas, leaving the longer term repair work to the Communication Areas, with Heavy Repairs completely out of any Enemy Ground Action area.

The RASC had always used this policy, which started with a fitter attached to each Platoon to act as a Platoon Fitter, carrying out all running repairs on his Platoon Vehicles. Then came the Workshop Platoon run by the Workshop Officer and then the Heavy Repair Workshops well behind the Front Line. We still had fitters repairing minor items, again for instance the dynamo, in our Mobile Workshops. These Workshop Platoons were equipped with Breakdown Vehicles, and Workshop Vehicles which include a Machine Shop Vehicle equipped with Pillar Drill, Lathe etc.



I spent part of 1945 in England serving in an RASC Workshop. It was an enlightening period as for instance when told to repair a faulty starter motor I first had to find out how to reach it and then how I could remove it. This was part of the job we had still to learn. I was lucky as I was placed with an experienced fitter, who taught me the practical application of the trade, something we had never learnt.

One very difficult problem was batteries which were in short supply. At one point I was given a Bedford OX, Battery Slave Vehicle, which had lead covered benches with bus bars running above them on both sides of the vehicle. These were used for battery charging with power supplied by a generator driven by the vehicle engine. I travelled round my Company's various locations which were spread over Wiltshire, removing flat batteries from vehicles, fitting a replacement, and then later in the day would run the generator to give a long charge to the batteries. Then using a Heavy Discharge Tester, weed out the batteries that were past redemption. Of course I also had slave cables for any short term help. The Company was then being used to convey POWs to and from local Farms and it was not unusual for one of the prisoners to carry out repairs to the vehicle he was on.

We had two POWs working with us in Devizes, one had been a Ford mechanic pre-war, and the other was a U-Boat Mechanic. They were brought in by Camp Guards every morning and worked quite happily for the day, then the guards returned them to the POW Camp. We treated them as equals and helped them when we could. I used to take one of them on Test Runs with me and he would ask me to stop in the town so that he could buy some bread rolls. He would join the queue and I never saw anyone commenting on this or complaining.

As I only spent the last 5 months of the War on Mans Service I can only speak of what I saw in that short time, but if during the rest of the War there were similar shortages of tools and spares, then the Tradesmen certainly not only earned their keep, but to a certain extent prevented us from losing the War.

Towards the end of 1945 I went to Egypt and then to Palestine

It was here that I actually used my skills. We could apply for our second class Trade Test and we were tested within the Unit. For First Class however we had to go to a REME Unit for the test. I went and as part of the test was actually asked to braze a joint between two steel pipes using a blow lamp. As this was part of the Syllabus at Chep we had no problem.

I used a lathe once or twice in Palestine, but the biggest job I under took was repairing the generator that supplied the power for the Machinery Lorry. The generator was driven by a Power Take Off on the Gear Box and this particular generator was not doing much at all, so we decided to give it an overhaul. Removing the Generator Armature we mounted it in the lathe and now having no power, set up the tool, engaged the lathe feed, and turning the armature by hand skimmed the commutator. Which we then undercut, and after fitting new brushes the generator was fully operational again. So I actually used some of my fitter training in this instance. You young men who only know an alternators will probably realise our problems compared to yours. At the School we also had to turn up new bushes for the generator as well.

Specialist tools were also few and far between. BSA Clutch's for instance had one central Compression Spring which had to be compressed for assembly. The compressor tools were not available so we compressed it in the vice, wrapped and soldered a strip of tin around one side, reversed it in the vice, and repeated the tin action on the other side. Removed it from the vice fitted the spring and retaining nut, cut the tin and the job was done. Another instance, if a Motor Cycle control cable snapped we had to cut a length of Bowden Cable and solder on the ends from the broken cable

Jeep Gear boxes were difficult to remove on sand, so we tipped the vehicle on to its side and worked on them in that position. Rogers Tank Transport Trailers had suspension and wheels that were very difficult to remove on



sand, so we would winch the trailer over until it was upside down and then lift out the relevant wheels and suspension with the breakdown vehicle.

Our only shelter in those days was the Aldershot Shelter. These consisted of tubular sections which fitted together and were then covered with canvas. There was a laid down method of assembly and involved building up one section on the ground which was then raised, with difficulty, to the vertical and anchored. Then another section was assembled on the ground and by using a rope over the first vertical section, pulled upright. It was then secured to the first section by tubes and so it went on.

One very frustrating task was removing tyres from wheels as the only equipment we had were Tyre Levers. The method used was to deflate the tyre and then hit it with a Sledge Hammer as near as possible to the wheel rim, until finally the tyre broke away from the wheel. If you have never experienced hitting a rubber tyre with a sledge hammer I don't advise you to try it. We had to do it.

In Palestine we were also experiencing the usual battery problems and the Workshop Officer made numerous enemies when he made all starter motors unusable by removing the foot operated Starter Switch. All vehicles had to be started by hand. This still left us with dud batteries so he then embarked on a renovation program that involved batteries being turned upside down to drain out the electrolyte and then refilling with fresh electrolyte. What he didn't realise was that when you turn a battery upside down you deposit any debris present in the cell, between the plates. This is not good. We also removed serviceable cells from otherwise useless batteries and inserted them in other batteries to make up a serviceable battery.

As a Platoon Fitter there were two things, one, I ate the Platoons dust, as we were the last vehicle, and two, sometimes I never reached the destination as the Platoon passed me on their way back to camp while I was still repairing a broken down vehicle.

Eating Dust was always the case, the worst instance, I think, was following a Tank Squadron across open country in my Half Track. We ate their dust, but they wouldn't have got far without us. What is a vivid memory for me is the RTR Major, CO of my Squadron, shaking hands with me when he left and saying "I could never have done it without you" That made it all worthwhile.

John Eveleigh 42 A

A little girl was leaning into a lion's cage. Suddenly, the lion grabs her by the collar of her jacket and tries to pull her inside to slaughter her, all under the eyes of her screaming parents.

A biker jumps off his Harley, runs to the cage and hits the lion square on the nose with a powerful punch.

Whimpering from the pain, the lion jumps back, letting go of the girl, and the biker brings the girl to her terrified parents, who thank him endlessly.

A reporter has watched the whole event.

The reporter, addressing the Harley rider says, "Sir, this was the most gallant and bravest thing I've seen a man do in my whole life."

The Harley rider replies, "Why, it was nothing, really. The lion was behind bars. I just saw this little kid in danger, and acted as I felt right."

The reporter says, "Well, I'll make sure this won't go unnoticed. I'm a journalist, you know, and tomorrow's paper will have this story on the front page. So, what do you do for a living, and what political affiliation do you have?"

The biker replies "I'm a British Army veteran, a Conservative and I voted for Brexit". The journalist leaves.

The following morning the biker buys the paper to see if it indeed brings news of his actions, and reads, on the front page: UK VETERAN ASSAULTS AFRICAN IMMIGRANT & STEALS HIS LUNCH.

And THAT pretty much sums up the media's approach to the news these days.



Editor's Ramblings 2020

Another twelve months gone by, where did they go? Has anyone seen them passing by?

Time to stop pondering and do some real work.

Now what shall I write about when everything in the news is no longer Brexit but something to do with the door to door delivery of lemonade.



Something about a picture saves a load of words, or in my case fills the empty space.

Being a little, honestly only a teeny bit, over seventy I am one of the hard done by being ordered to self-isolate. Sounds good, instant holiday, days of sitting staring at the centre of modern life, the TV. Sorry, not for me. I can now do all those jobs that I kept postponing because the outside world and its distractions were much more interesting.

Projects, not necessarily in this order;

Install a new external CCTV to replace the outdated system at home.

Build some more, lots more, control and monitoring modules for my model railway.

Win the lottery.

I wonder how the rest of you are coping with this enforced stillness. Of course, the younger members of our Association will only be isolated when they or one of their close contacts become affected. I do hope that this does not happen and that you can all remain free.

Where I live, we cannot find toilet rolls in any of the shops, I have been told that the corner drug suppliers have started to distribute rolls at a high price.

Seriously, I am hoping that the current plan of long-term

isolation will be rescinded in time for our Reunion to go ahead. This situation is being monitored daily but the prognosis is really not good. I have had to cancel quite a few planned visits, meetings and gatherings over the next few months. There is a serious possibility that BOBA Reunion 2020 will have to be either postponed or even cancelled.



Had a gap of a couple of days and everything is changing. This has really grown rather large. Big enough for our Boss to go on TV and give us a "State of the Country" speech. Well done Ma'am. Then Boris lands up in hospital and NHS front line workers are falling to the virus.

Though I did isolate with the rest of my family that live in the house with me I was trying to deal with this in a light-hearted way. You cannot keep a Beachley Boy down. I do hope that you do not consider that I am treating this too flippantly.

On a brighter note, this year I have received a missive, yes, a whopping four pager, from one of our ladies. Thank you, Susan. We have a Ladies Page again. Seems such a long time since we had one of those.

As far as my personal projects are concerned:

Installed two new cameras. Static camera under the eaves in the back garden that caught a neighbour fly tipping within twenty-five minutes; result.

Replaced the corner Wi-Fi camera with a hard wired Pan/Tilt/Zoom that works but not as well as it should. Have to wait for the supplier to return to normal business to sort that.

Electronic controls for the railway, managed a couple but need lots more.

Lottery win, well I am still here so I guess that was a complete no show.

Hope to see as many as possible at Chep in Sep, meanwhile please take care of yourselves.

Since writing this the Committee have decided to cancel the Reunion this year.

**2019 CENOTAPH REPORT**

Following a posting on the AAC Facebook Page, numbers for the 2019 Contingent swelled by some 20 attendees, mostly from 70's, 80's and 90's Entries. Although 50 Tickets were obtained, on the day 43 Ex Boys marched, with a few last-minute dropouts due to ill health, most notably our President, Lt Col Syd Thomas. Despite the setbacks, the group did BOBA proud and we did achieve a few seconds coverage on the TV.

The day itself was fine, although somewhat chilly. Lt Col Nick Winder (58A) led the Group with Dave Youdle, also 58A, being Left Marker and carrying the Wreath. Ray Armstrong took the role of Right Marker and was instrumental in getting the group into some semblance of order, in his inimitable style.

The Application Procedure changed significantly in 2019 due to increased security with all attendees having a two-stage registration to obtain a ticket.

Tickets are now specifically named and are not transferable, as they were in previous years. Unfortunately, the Royal British Legion did not give co-ordinators details of the new procedure in advance, changes in identification details, and to compound the confusion, kept changing deadlines backwards and forwards, first extending a deadline then withdrawing it.

Over a dozen BOBA Membership Application forms have been sent out to those 2019 Attendees who were not previously members of BOBA. To date, I am aware of only two who have returned them, and joined. However, I have recently chased up some of those people dragging their heels and I'm hopeful that we shall see some of these join in the near future.

2020 CENOTAPH CONTINGENT

For 2020, details will be posted in the Echoes as usual, with names of those who attended in 2019, being carried forward to 2020 automatically. A few people who applied last year, eventually having had to defer or withdraw will be re-invited for 2020 and it is hoped we could be applying and obtaining 60+ tickets this year. A small number of new people have also expressed an interest in attending for 2020.

Applicants will be invited to join BOBA if not already a member and preference will be given to BOBA Members.

Applications will close on 30th of June 2020, no late applications will be accepted due to the more complex registration process.

Details will be available for posting on the BOBA Website and will also be posted on the AAC Facebook Page to encourage new blood.

Car Parking Facilities at the Commonwealth Office remain in place for those who may need it.

The current situation arising from the Coronavirus Pandemic is being monitored on a day by day basis, the final decision on whether the 2020 parade in Whitehall on Remembrance Sunday In November 2020 will take place, will lie with the relevant authorities. However, the pre-planning will continue to ensure that the BOBA Contingent will be marching if circumstances permit

Anthony Waite 60C

Cenotaph Co-ordinator 2020

This is always an extremely moving event.

Please consider joining us on November 8th 2020 and use the opportunity to say your thank you to those who gave their everything for the future of others.

**BOBA CENOTAPH DETACHMENT 2019**

On Remembrance Sunday 2019 those listed below assembled at Horse Guards Parade to march along Whitehall past the Cenotaph to remember and pay respect to our War dead. It is a

Mr	Matt	Arlow	92	
Mr	Raymond	Armstrong	55A	RH Marker
Mr	Paul	Bedford	88	
Mr	Robert	Beeston	60C	
Mr	Steven	Bell	88	
Mr	Tim	Birkbeck	79C	
Mr	Alan	Chatt	59A	
Mr	Neil	Coulthard	73B	
Mr	Roderick	Davis	57A	
Miss	Tina	Dean	Carer	
Mr	Jez	Dykes	92	
Mr	Raymond	Field	58A	
Mr	Neil	Foster	90	
Mr	Gerald	Francis	65C	
Mr	Nigel	Furness	77C	
Mr	Andrew	Gogarty	78A	
Mr	John	Goodall	74C	
Mr	Phillip	Gough	71A	
Mr	Michael	Harley	74C	
Mr	Ian	Harrower	RE Guest	
Mr	John	Hatchett	83C	
Mr	David	Head	87	
Mr	Barry	Hipwell	75C	
Mr	Mark	Kerr	70C	
Mr	Hank	Lawrence	58B	
Mr	Christopher	Le Gallez	77B	
Mrs	Fiona	Locke	Carer	
Mr	Mark	Pengelly	80C	
Mr	Richard	Poole	RE Guest	
Mr	Tim	Sedman	80C	
Mr	David	Smith	60C	
Mr	Kenneth	Stout	53B	
Mr	Derek	Taylor	72C	
Mr	Gordon	Taylor	74C	
Mr	David	Threadingham	60C	
Mr	Nick	Trood	71C	
Mr	Geoffrey	Watkins	53A	
Mrs	Pamela	Watkins	Carer	
Mrs	Nicola	Whaley	Carer	
Mr	Wayne	Willetts	75A	
Lt Col (Ret'd)	Nicholas	Winder MBE	58A	Leader
Mr	Robert	Wise	53A	
Mr	David	Youdle	58A	LH Marker





Two extracts borrowed from BBC's broadcast of Remembrance Sunday Parade at
The Cenotaph November 10th 2019





BOBA CONTINGENT FOR REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE 2020

The Procedure for obtaining Tickets for the Remembrance Parade changed significantly in 2019, and the new system was not well communicated by the RBL to Organisations. Further changes to the procedure have been made to overcome the problems incurred last year.

If you attended last year, 2019, or have already applied for 2020, your details will be carried forward automatically to the 2020 list.

Otherwise, if you wish to attend the National Remembrance Parade in Whitehall, (Subject to any Coronavirus Restrictions) as part of the BOBA Contingent on Sunday November 8th 2020, please confirm your request before 30th June 2020 by one of the methods below. Title

Name (in Full)

Postal Address including Postcode

Group and BOBA Membership No

Date & Place of Birth

Contact Telephone Nos – Landline and Mobile

Email Address

Military Service No

Passport No, Issuing Office (IPS / Other) or Driving Licence No / Service ID Card

(You will need to bring the relevant item as Photographic Identification Evidence on the day)

Reserved Parking Requirements in Pall Mall – Yes / No

Carer's Ticket Required – Yes / No

(Note:- Carer's Details will be required as above in addition to your own)

Note: - Requests received after 30th of June 2020 will not be accepted as we are restricted to a very tight deadline for Applications. Late applications last year caused many of the problems and I am trying to avoid any issues this year.

In October, you will be issued with a Named and Numbered Ticket which you will need to bring with you for admission to Horse Guards Parade, (No Ticket and /or No ID = No Entry)

Security has been tightened considerably over the last few years and will no doubt continue to be tightened further in the future. 2020 will be no exception. Our submission for tickets will need to be submitted during early August 2020, hence the defined date for inclusion.

If you pre-book and then find you are unable to attend, please let me know at the earliest opportunity, so that I can allocate your reservation to someone else.

My email address is anthonywaite22ss@hotmail.com

Telephone Nos 01823 669336 / 07788 581775

Address Sutton Lodge, 22 Seymour Street, Wellington, Somerset, TA21 8JU

Anthony Waite 60C: – REMEMBRANCE PARADE CO-ORDINATOR (BOBA)



"I'd Do Anything To Escape"

When visiting the Royal Hospital Chelsea on Remembrance weekend I met an in-residence pensioner.

John Humphreys OBE DL RE (Lt Col Retd).

He had shared his early memories of his early service in the Home Front Magazine of the Friends of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea of which I am a member. Realising that he was a Beachley Old Boy and a typical one at that, I thought you should all share his memories. This is his story of the man who did his own Great Escape, Twice!

Alan Chatt 59A, Heritage Team.

JOHN HUMPHREYS was born in 1922 in Chatham, but moved to Singapore before He was 10 years old. His father was in the Army and John "knew nothing else but the Clomp of boots". At the age of 13, Johns Father took him aside and said "Boy, you'll Be 14 next year—are you going into the Army, Navy, or the Air Force".

JOHN CHOSE THE NAVY. It was only checking through his examination paper that he realised his father had sent him to sit the exam for the Army Technical School. His future had been decided for him. A couple of weeks later, John was on a troop ship bound for England.

At his Military School near Chepstow, John studied academic subjects in the evening and did army training during the day. As a Royal Engineer- his father's choice- John had to have a trade, and he learned to be a fitter and turner. In 1936 you just did what you were told, he remembers.

After three years John joined a Royal Engineers training battalion. "I was still technically a boy and paid as a boy- 11 pence a day." Soon after war broke out and John was promoted. The training battalion was flooded with volunteers and there was a need for instructors. He was an acting unpaid Lance Corporal, teaching men old enough to be his father the basic rudiments of military engineering. "Still on 11 pence a day, I might add. Then in January I became an adult. My pay went up to six bob a day. I was in wonderland".

John soon started to want something more. "I got fed up with being an instructor because soldiers were going to France and, being young, I was mad keen. I wanted to go as well. But Dunkirk occurred, and instead of France I went to Africa. The Italians were trying to capture Egypt and the Suez Canal. When the Italians were defeated, the Germans came in."

In 1942 John was in Tobruk. "I was tasked with preparing all the harbour installations for demolition, in case the Germans broke in. Which, of course, they did." He explains what happened next. "I was busy blowing up cranes and water towers around the harbour, and a couple of tanks appeared- I thought they might be ours. I looked closely and could see that they were German. So I dropped into a nearby trench and stayed in the bottom while the tanks went over the top. The following day I tried to escape. The Germans were all over the place; they'd captured Tobruk. I tried to get out, but got mixed up in a fire fight and hit in the head. The Germans put me in a vehicle and sent me to Benghazi- to the hospital. When I came out of hospital I was sent to Ancona, in northern Italy, as a prisoner of war."

The camp was "bloody awful", John remembers. The men slept on straw- filled sacks, in three tier bunk beds, 12 in a space just over six-foot square. Their rations for a day were half a pint of watery vegetable soup and a small piece of bread or cheese. During his time there, John went from 11 stone down to just seven. He decided to escape because he was "fed up", but after two aborted attempts he came up with a long term plan.

"I realised the only way I could escape was if I could speak fluent Italian. So I acquired a Hugo's Italian grammar from the Red Cross. I used to sit outside and memorise Italian until I had a large vocabulary. Then I realised I would have to practice. Where I used to sit outside was quite near a sentry box. I called out to the sentry in Italian, and he looked at me and said "yeah?" And I started to talk to him. He was obviously bored stiff in that box all day, so he was quite pleased to have someone to talk to. Unbeknownst to me, I acquired his accent- which was the Italian version of Oxford English."

When John arrived at the camp, he had been wearing clothes suitable for Africa, so had been issued a Greek uniform by the



Italians. Fortunately for John, the uniform was very similar to an Italian soldier's uniform.

John found two friends who were also eager to escape. "One roll-call night, I said to Dick and Bernard, "I'll march you along as though you were prisoners." Soon after they put John's plan into action: "I made them walk in front of me and looked like I was escorting them, until we got near the sentry who guarded the wicket gate. I told him- in Italian of course – that I was taking these two to the Commandant for punishment." The plan succeeded and the prisoners found themselves on the other side of the perimeter wall.

The men started to walk south, stealing grapes, figs and tomatoes from the fields and trees to feed themselves. After about a week, they came across a farmer: "He looked at us and said, "it's obvious your British prisoners of war. I'll give you some civilian clothes and you can give me your uniforms"- the Italian country people hated the Germans. We did a swap and carried on."

Sometime afterwards they came upon a motorway, where they had a narrow escape, as John explains: "We had to cross an Autostrada, or motorway. I was walking about 100 yards ahead of the others, so if I ran into trouble, they could go to ground quickly. I waited by the Autostrada and a column of German vehicles started going by. At the end of the convoy there were motorcycles and sidecars. The last one stopped right opposite me, and that's when my heart went into my boots. He had a bloody big machine gun on his sidecar. There was nowhere I could go. He called out to me in very broken Italian – Where could he get water for his motorbike? I explained to him that if he carried on for another five or ten minutes he would come to a river. He looked at me rather strangely, but eventually he said OK got back on his bike and cleared off. That was a narrow squeak."

Eventually, John and his companions reached Bari, where the allies were coming ashore, and realised they were "home and dry". From there they travelled to Algiers and boarded a troop ship back to England. When John finally got home, he was told that he had been selected for a commission – but would involve weeks of delay and he was reluctant: "It was common knowledge that everyone was getting ready for D-Day. I asked my Company Commander if I could go back into the ranks and not be commissioned. He flatly refused". This is the end of John's first great escape!

"Then in the barracks there was this poster of this chap hanging from a parachute, asking for volunteers for the airborne forces. I filled out an application form and gave it to the CO – who tore it up and threw it out." John refused to be deterred. There was an address for the Colonel Commandant of the Airborne Parachute Forces on the corner of the poster. "I wrote a letter to him saying, "You are wasting your time putting these posters up, because when we volunteer we get turned down". Thirty -six hours later I was doing my Para selection course. I finally qualified and was posted to the 1st Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers, stationed at Donnington, Lincolnshire. The next thing was the operation at Arnhem; we dropped into Arnhem.

At Arnhem, John and the Paras were tasked with capturing the bridge, but things did not go according to plan. "We captured the North end of the bridge, but couldn't capture the South. The RAF had refused to drop us there. What was left of my troop were told to occupy the school that overlooked the North end of the bridge. So, we went into the school, broke the glass out of the windows, filled the baths with water _ the usual stuff you do when you are fighting in street warfare. If somebody starts chucking grenades and mortar bombs and things like that, the first thing you need to do is get rid of anything that could possibly injure you.

"I was positioned in the corner, overlooking the bridge, and to my right was a park. The Jerrys came over the bridge in half-tracks, a small armoured vehicle, so we fired down into them. Then another lot came through the park and got the same treatment. I had a Bren gun and Sid, my number two, would fill the magazines. "I said to Sis "Get those magazines filled", but he just fell to one side. He was stone dead.

This went on from Sunday evening until Wednesday afternoon when we ran out of ammunition and were forced to surrender. Well I didn't want to surrender, so I tried to escape from the school. There was a row of houses opposite, with gardens facing us. I took three of my stick with me. I said "I'm going to make a run for it" and they said OK. We ran across the road, got into the gardens and climbed over the garden walls, heading for the river. I lost one along the way, then John Maddy got stuck on one of the walls and I had to go back for him. Then there was a burst of machine gun fire and I saw the brickwork beside me fill with holes. I pushed John off the wall, dived to the right and ran like hell towards the Rhine.



As he climbed over the last wall, John thought he had made it but instead of the Rhine there was a depot of trams, it was also full of Germans.

John found he had an unexpected weapon when he dropped down in the tram depot. "I landed at the feet of two German soldiers, who took one look at me and ran like hell. I had five days growth of dirt, blood, muck – I must have looked a bit grim! The Germans went one way and I went the other, behind the trams. I thought their big steel wheels would shield me from any small arms fire and I'd be able to work my way down and finally get to the Rhine. But one of the Germans brought up a self-propelled gun, pointed the barrel down and said "If you don't come out, I will blow you out". I was back in the bag.

Although John was interrogated, he wasn't harmed. In fact, the German Major showed his respect for the enemy: He said to me, "If the British Army had fought in France as hard as you people fought here, we could never have captured France". I thought, "Well that's a nice complement!"

Nevertheless, John was put in a truck with other British soldiers and taken to another prisoner of war camp.

After his experience in Italy, John wasn't prepared to submit to imprisonment without a struggle: "when we got to the camp, everybody in the truck jumped out, and ran towards some other POWs, thinking they might find their friends. I stayed by the entrance and looked to see if there was anyway I could escape. You've got to bear in mind I had already been a POW once, and I had no intention of being a prisoner of war again. I'd do anything to escape".

"In the far distance I saw a small brick building. I went down to look at it – it turned out to be a sort of cookhouse with two stoves. It had two windows in the wall, with three bars down them. All Royal Engineer soldiers carried a jack-knife, a big thing with a blade and a marlin spike for splicing wire rope. When I was searched on arrival, they had missed my jack-knife, which I had hid. I used the marlin spike to pick out all the cement around the base of the bars. We got there about 2 o'clock and by 4 o'clock I'd got the bars free".

"I went looking for these friends of mine and three of them came down with me when it was dark. Mackay looked at the barred window and said "How the hell do we get out of here with those bars on the window?" I said "like this". Then I put my hands on the bottom of the bars and my feet on the wall, and pulled, bending all three bars out. Then it was head out, shoulders out, drop...and that's it".

The four men started walking and eventually they reached the Rhine, where they lay low for almost a day, watching the river.

The Rhine army barges were coming down the river and one of them stopped about 200 yards from them and the crew got out and went ashore. They went on board, and tied up against the barge was a row boat.

"We got in and cast off£.

"The Rhine flows fairly fast, with the right- hand side going to Arnhem and the left-hand side going to Nijmegen. We'd been going down the river for quite a while and it was very early in the morning when we heard this very English voice call out "Halt who goes there?" That was it. We were there – back among the Brits". That was the end of John's second great escape!

There was a war photographer at Nijmegen when the men rowed in and John has kept the cutting showing him and his triumphant fellow escapees in the boat that brought them there.

After this last escapade, John's squadron was reformed and he was sent to Norway, where he was serving when the war came to an end. He has a medal and Diploma from the Norwegian government, acknowledging his contribution there.

Over subsequent years, John's squadron would meet annually at Donnington, where they were stationed before Arnhem.

"Every September, we'd have dinner in the evening and a Church Parade on Sunday. The numbers gradually dwindled. At the last one, there were three of us. Two have died, so I am the only one left". JH.

We Beachley Old Boys are very grateful to John for sharing his memories with us.

Alan Chatt 59A, A Coy. Heritage Team.



BOBA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE as at 25TH APRIL 2020

NAME	GP	ROLE	E-MAIL	ADDRESS	TEL NO
Chrascina Alf	67B	Golf Organiser Reunion	alf.chrascina@gmail.com	April Cottage, Silver Street, Curry Mallet Somerset, TA3 6SR	07484842355
Fox, Derek	58B	Membership	memsecboba@sky.com	51 Church Close, Pentney, Kings Lynn Norfolk PE32 1JJ	01760 788159 07842555110
Armstrong, Ray	55A	Beachley Echoes Editor	r.armstrong@virgin.net	125 Baker Street, Wigan Greater Manchester WN3 5HG	01942 491140 07941 432306
Henderson, Brian	65A	Hon Treasurer	brianhend@hotmail.com	21 Hartland View Road, Morteohoe, Woolacombe North Devon EX34 7HB	01271 871716 07970 951259
Warren, Geoff	67C	Co-opted Local Facilitator	sapper0519@hotmail.co.uk	1 Priory Close, Chepstow Monmouthshire NP16 5ND	01291 620374 07392494761
Reader, Ken	62C	Co-opted Ad Hoc assistance	kenreader@msn.com	Carrick House, 8 Cross Lanelittle Downham Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 2TJ	01353 699096 07752 209941
Ricketts, Chris	65A	Chairman Reunion	chris.ricketts@talktalk.net	35 Bigstone Grove, Tutshill, Chepstow Monmouthshire NP16 7EN	01291 626730 07779 719422
Thomas, Syd	47A	President	sydtthomas4hd@gmail.com	4 Hawthorn Drive, Coychurch, Bridgend Glamorgan CF35 5ER	01656 661180 07785 282266
Tony Taylor	68C	Heritage	tontertay@gmail.com	61, Severn Avenue, Tutshill, Chepstow Monmouthshire, NP16 7EE	07989 503893
Barker Stephen	66C	Merchandising	sebarker@peterloo-uk.com	Suite 7, Booths Park 1, Booths Park Chelford Road, Knutsford, WA16 8GS	01565 757845 07712 108078
White, Chalky	73A	Hon Secretary	garywhite404@hotmail.co.uk	9 Appledore Drive, Allesley Park, Coventry West Midlands CV5 7PQ	02476404999 07576844990
Woodward, Denis	58A	Heritage	denis.woody@gmail.com	8 Farmington Road, Benhall, Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL51 6AQ	01242 526284
Chatt, Alan	59A	Heritage	a.w.chatt.t21@btinternet.com	8 The Chase, Washington Tyne & Wear NE38 9DX	0191 4175960 07462538613
Watkins, Geoff	53A	Heritage Reunion	geoff@cedarsedge.co.uk	Cedars Edge, Bristol Road, Thornbury Bristol BS35 3JA	01454 412508 07780 916227



BEACHLEY OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

C/O, Mr. Chris Rickets, 35 Bigstone Grove, Tutshill, Chepstow, Mon., NP16 7ENT.

President
Lt Col (Retd) S. Thomas
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Secretary
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CV5 7PQ

Email: garywhite404@hotmail.co.uk
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September 2019

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF BOBA

HELD AT THE BEAUFORT HOTEL, CHEPSTOW

ON FRIDAY, 20th SEPTEMBER 2019.

Item 1: OPENING

1. The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming those present and thanked them for taking the time to attend, he gave his assurances that the meeting would not take long and said all members were encouraged to have their say.

Item 2: APOLOGIES

Apologies have been received from D. Woodward 58a and G. White 73a

Item 3: IN MEMORIAM

The Membership Secretary read out the names of those members who's passing since the publication of the 2019 Echoes was notified to us.

DennisButler43B
JohnOld50B
KevinStaples66C
DenisPerry54A
GeorgeHorton50B
Peter MarkCook58B
JoeMills-Flynn43
GeorgeRobinson49B
DaveTaylor58B
BarryHunter60C
Tony Pitt 73A

Item 4: MINUTES OF PPREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

As the minutes of the last meeting were published in this year's Echoes it was assumed that all the membership had read them therefore it was proposed by R Marie 46A and seconded by G Warren 67C that the minutes were a true reflection of the meeting. CARRIED.



Item 5: MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising

Item 6: PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT

The President advised those present of the tremendous amount of work completed by the committee since last year's reunion. A change of venue for the reunion dinner coupled with altering the sequence of the weekend's events and timings had not been without its problems, this however, was dwarfed by the task of the association's removal from its old HQ in the Old School House and the setting up of a Heritage Centre based in the old NAAFI located near the Beachley Gates.

This Heritage Centre venture has consumed a tremendous number of hours and thanks go to the association's heritage team for all the work to date. Although the centre will be titled the Army Apprentices College Heritage Centre and contains all things AAC Chepstow it has been supported throughout by BOBA. It is an excellent project and deserves the support of all BOBA members and all who served at Beachley Camp.

The President informed the meeting that an official opening of the centre will take place in the morning (Saturday 21st September) just after 0900 hours.

The President thanked all the committee for their support during the period when he was not well, he asked that the younger members of the association should consider joining the committee and thanked all those present for attending this AGM and hoped all enjoyed the rest of the weekend.

Item 7: CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reminded the meeting that it was now nearly three years since BOBA had started the project of having a permanent presence on Beachley Point. The memorial stone had been moved from outside St George's church to a site on the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery. The ornate arch and gates to the camp have now been removed for refurbishment, the lease on the Old School House had been withdrawn by the MOD but we now have a Heritage Centre based in what was the families NAAFI building. This means we now have the memorial, the gates and the centre all within a very short distance of each other.

The President had eluded to the amount of work put in by the committee, this was not to be underestimated but would have been impossible without the support of outside agencies e.g. 1 Rifles, local companies, etc. The Chairman paid particular thanks to Dave Clement 71C who runs a local training company, Dave had played a major role in the movement of the memorial stone, removal of the gates for refurbishment, relocation of the cannon, etc. The provision of Risk Assessments and Method Statements plus heavy lifting equipment ensured the success of the tasks.

The Heritage Centre will be officially opened in the morning, most of the heritage items that BOBA held are on show but more are welcome.

He reminded those present that in addition to the AAC/BOBA website there are now Facebook accounts for AAC Chepstow and the Heritage Centre.

He thanked the committee and the membership for their support, he asked that all those who served at Beachley consider joining BOBA and attend the reunions whenever possible. He also asked those present that they spread the word in order to keep the association alive.

**Item 8: TREASURER'S REPORT**

As with the minutes arising from the 2019 AGM, the Balance Sheet, General Purpose Fund Summary and the Treasurers comments were included in the 2019 issue of the Beachley Echoes. On the assumption that all those attending this AGM had read the documents it was proposed by D Walker 55A and S Walker 55A that the accounts be accepted. CARRIED

Item 9: MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

The membership secretary began by stating that BOBA had approximately 1000 members on its database but sadly those that were fully paid up totalled just over 300, generating an income by way of subscriptions of around £3k. He encouraged all registered members to pay their subscriptions.

With optimism the membership secretary hopes that the opening of the Heritage Centre will generate a lot of interest among all ex Beachley Apprentices and they will join the association. Whilst the rules of the association were amended and passed some years ago, they have yet to be reprinted. The stock levels of the rule book are now low and it is intended to have a reprint sometime in the next financial year.

Item 10. HERITAGE REPORT

Much work within and without of the heritage centre had been completed by the heritage members. Meetings with the National Army Museum had taken place and proved to be fruitful and an ideal network to be part of, however there is more work to do with this organisation.

Meanwhile the heritage centre was now a participating member of the Wales and West of England Army Museums. There is regular attendance at the meetings and again much information/guidance is gleaned from this group.

In closing all members were encouraged to visit the heritage centre as it was an experience not to be missed.

Item 10. BEACHLEY ECHOES

The editor advised the meeting that this year 90 hard copies had been sent out to those who did not have access to the internet, and also to the widows of former members. Printing (especially in colour) and postage costs continue to rise so members were encouraged get 'online' whenever possible. Parading of the BOBA standard by the editor was ongoing subject to his other commitments.

Item 11. THE BOBA SHOP

The shop manager although not in post during FY 2018 advised the members present that shop sales had raised the sum of £599.50, of this £157.05 was profit.

Now that he had been in post for a few months some changes had been made to the stock levels and to the nature of the stock. Members wishing to make a shop purchase should contact him direct using the details on the website or via any member of the executive committee.



Item 12. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The President, Lt Col (Ret'd) Syd Thomas was re-elected for a further two-year period.
The remainder of the committee were elected en-bloc.

Chairman Chris Ricketts 65A
Hon Treasurer Brian Henderson 65A
Hon Secretary Chalky White 73A
Golf/Reunion Alf Chrascina 67B
Membership Secretary Derek Fox 58B
Echoes Editor Ray Armstrong 55A
Merchandising Stephen Barker 66C
Heritage Tony Taylor 68C
Heritage Dennis Woodward 58A
Heritage Alan Chatt 59A
Heritage/Reunion Geoff Watkins 53A

Co-opted (Local Facilitator) Geoff Warren 67C
Co-opted (Ad Hoc Assistance) Ken Reader 62C

Item 13. CENOTAPH PARADE

More tickets had been obtained by the liaison officer but there was still a reserve list for those who wanted to attend.

Attendance at the parade is strongly recommended and popular therefore those who wished to take part should keep in contact with the liaison officer with regards to ticket availability.

Item 14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A question regarding the future of Beachley Barracks was raised; the simple answer was that nobody knows. The battalion may move out by 2024 and the barracks may close by 2027, or the barracks may not close at all. All is dependent on the movement of other units and of course priorities/pressures on the defence budget.

Item 15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next AGM will be held during the 2020 BOBA reunion weekend (the third weekend in September 2020). Precise dates and timings are to be confirmed.



BEACHLEY OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

BALANCE SHEET at 31st December 2019

Previous Period Figures			Item	Current Period Figures		
Totals	Sub-Totals	Detail		Detail	Sub-Totals	Totals

ASSETS

	£0.00	Cash in Hand	£0.00
	£15,147.99	Cash in Bank	£9,080.72
£15,147.99		Total Cash	£9,080.72
£36,969.86		Monmouthshire Building Society Account	£43,097.48
£0.00		Sundry Debtors	£0.00
£52,117.85		Total Liquid Assets	£52,178.20

SHOP STOCK

£1,190.99	BOBA/AAS Regalia	£1,729.49
£53,308.84	Total Current Assets	£53,907.69

LIABILITIES

£15.13	Reunion	-£49.16
£384.86	BOBA Golf Fund	£237.11
£289.40	Benevolent Fund	£325.90
£0.00	Heritage Centre	-£49.42
£689.39	Total Liabilities	£464.43

£52,619.45	Net Working Capital	£53,443.26
	being Current Assets minus Liabilities	

FIXED ASSETS

£0.00	£0.00	Capital Property	£0.00	£0.00
£0.00	£0.00	Investments	£0.00	£0.00

GENERAL PURPOSES FUND

	£51,063.99	Balance as per last Balance sheet	£52,619.45	
	£1,555.46	Add surplus of Income	£823.81	
£52,619.45		Subtract deficit of Expenditure	£0.00	£53,443.26
£52,619.45		Accumulated General Purposes Fund		£53,443.26
		being Net Working Capital and Total Fixed Assets		

Audited By:

Name	
Signed	
Date	

Treasurer:

Name	B Henderson
Signed	
Date	

**GENERAL PURPOSE FUND SUMMARY (FY 2019)**

EXPENDITURE	2019	2018	INCOME	2019	2018
Expenses	£2,040.67	£1,379.99	Subscriptions	£3,622.50	£3,702.50
Refunds	£ -	£ -	Refunds	£ 109.20	£ 5.00
Fees	£ -	£ 20.00	Shop Postage	£ 4.00	£ 54.52
Stationery	£ 162.43	£ 46.85	Bldg Soc Interest	£ 127.62	£ 57.56
Postage	£ 258.04	£ 101.34	Church Collection	£ 342.00	£ 262.00
Website	£ 217.21	£ 207.39	Shop Profit	£ 211.86	£ 157.05
Insurance	£ -	£ -	Investment Dividends	£ -	£ -
Donations	£ 616.00	£ 848.91	Donations	£ 290.00	£1,011.91
Wreaths	£ -	£ 40.00			
Misc Expenditure	£ 325.53	£ 123.60	Misc Income	£ 1.61	£ -
Reunion	£ 40.00	£ 600.00	Reunion	£ -	£ -
Transfers	£ -	£ -	Transfers	£ -	£ -
Write Offs	£ 29.10	£ 171.50			
CD/DVD's	£ -	£ -	CD/DVD Sales	£ 45.00	£ 10.00
Name Badges	£ -	£ -	Name Badges	£ 9.00	£ 9.50
Echoes	£ 250.00	£ 250.00	Echoes	£ -	£ 75.00
Total Expenditure	£3,938.98	£3,789.58	Total Income	£4,762.79	£5,345.04
Surplus	£ 823.81	£1,555.46			
Deficit					
Grand Totals	£4,762.79	£5,345.04		£4,762.79	£5,345.04

Comments (FY 2019 v 2018):

1. Income from subscriptions down slightly so members are requested to pay their dues annually and recruit another member.
2. Building Society interest very low, income minimal. Action is in hand to re-invest the funds with a building society paying a higher interest.
3. Production and postage costs of The Echoes is steady but as more members request hard copies these costs will rise. To keep costs down please view the document online.
4. Shop sales/profit increased.
5. The 2019 reunion was just about cost neutral.
6. Account shows an income in excess of expenditure of £823.81 for FY 2019.


BOBA Membership Secretary's Report ~ by Derek Fox 58B Group
Report Dated 27/03/2020
Membership / New Members:

There have been 18 new members join since the last Echoes (2019).

New Members.

Mr	A C	Alexander/Alex	Marks	70A
Mr	DM	David / Dave	Bell	71C
Mr	N C H	Nigel	Barnard	59A
Lt.Col	EH	Tom	Tomiczek	70A
Mr	J	James/Jim/Mac	McKenna	70A
Mr	G	Granville / Spud	Watkins	70A
Mr	MJK	Mike	Kelly	70A
Mr	D	David(Dave)	Head	87Sqn
Mr	J E	Joseph (Joe)	Massey	70A
Mr	TS	Timothy/Tim	Sedman	80C
Mr	B	Brian	Waddell	70A
Lt.Col	S C	Stuart/Stu	Cunane	82C
Mr	D J	Dave	Walker	70C
Mr	A J	Andrew John	Gogarty	78A
Mr	J	Joseph (Joe)	Cairney	72C
Mr	J C	James (Jim)	Riches	Mil/ Staff
Mr	G	Gary	Sunderland	86Sqn
Mr	C	Clive	Attwood	76A

Mr. Chris Angell is paying subs but has not registered with the association. I have tried contacting him on Facebook but he appears to be ignoring me. I seek him here, I seek him there.

Membership Numbers

Membership currently stands at 844, of which 498 are paid up. (Sept 2018)

New Member Booklets

I am still not in receipt of the BOBA Objectives and Rules Book. New members are still receiving the old copies with the four amended pages stuck in.

Sympathy / Get Well Soon cards

As previously advised, I am now holding Sympathy and Get Well Soon cards. All I need now is your input as to who has passed away and who is sick. Members will slip through the net but it would be good to show to others that we are here and that we do care.

**In Memoriam**

I have been advised of the following deaths since the last copy of the Echoes.

N-M	Mr	B	Brian	O'dell	51B	
392	Mr.	DG	Dennis	Butler	43B	D
741	Capt.	JD	John	Old	50B	C
740	Mr.	K	Kevin	Staples	66C	B
N-M	Mr	D	Denis	Perry	54A	D.Coy
684	Mr.	G	George	Horton	50B	B
1467	Mr	P M	Peter Mark	Cook	58B	A
1249	Mr	JL	Joe	Mills-Flynn	43	B
N-M	Mr	G	George	Robinson	49B	
28	Mr.	BJ	Barry	Hunter	60C	C
N-M	Mr	D	David 'Ossie'	Osborne	64B	A
N-M	Mr	D	David	Allison	52A	D
			William Edgar/			
1468	Mr	W E	Bill	Langley	58B	B
1208	Mr	D	Denis (Woody)	Woodward	58A	C
N-M	Mr	D	David	Mann	58B	B
N-M	Mr	D J	Dave	Taylor	58B	B
1277	Mr	A C	Tony	Pitt	72C/73A	A

May they rest in peace.

Subscriptions

Cheques sent to me in regard to annual subscriptions may take some time to be debited from members accounts. This is on account of my having to travel to towns other than that which is nearest in order to access Lloyds Bank. I would ask for your forbearance in this matter.

MY CONTACT DETAILS:

You can contact me by any of the following methods:

Membership Secretary ~ Derek Fox (58B)

Home Address: ~ 51 Church Close, Pentney, King's Lynn, Norfolk. PE32 1JJ

Home Tel No: ~ +44 (0) 1760 788159

Mobile Phone No: ~ +44 (0) 7842555110



Your instruction to set up anew, amend or cancel a,

Standing Order

The easy way to make regular payments from your account

1 Your Details

Please write clearly in the white spaces with capital letters or Tick boxes

Your full Name or name of business

Branch name

Your contact telephone number

Sort Code

Account number

All sections must be completed

2 Standing Order details

Does this instruction replace any existing standing order or direct debit instructions?

Yes

No

How often do you want payments made?

Weekly

4 Weekly

Monthly

If 'YES' please complete section overleaf or detail in special instructions opposite.

Quarterly

Half yearly

Yearly

If 'NO' please complete all remaining boxes.

Recipient's name:

Beachley Old Boys' Association

Recipient's bank & branch name:

Lloyds TSB, CHEPSTOW, 7 Manor Way

Recipient's sort code

Recipient's Account number

3 0 9 1 8 9

0 0 0 9 8 8 5 2

First payment amount

First payment date

(if different to usual amount)

(Month & Year)

0 1 2 0

Usual amount

Usual payment amount in words

£ 1 0

TEN POUNDS STERLING

Second payment amount

Second payment date

(if different to usual amount)

(Fill in year)

0 1 0 4 2 0

Until further notice (X)

Special Instructions

1. Ensure you fill in all dates where asked.
2. Make sure you sign and date this form.
3. When complete, send to your bank not BOBA.

To Bank

Please note that the second payment and all consequent payments are to be made on 01 April of each year.

Your payment reference (max 18 characters) (Surname, Initials & Group)

(e.g. Humberdink, E, 27A)

3 Your agreement with us

Lloyds TSB Bank plc
Registered office
25 Gresham St
London EC2V 7HN
Registered in England & Wales No 2065

Please note that we will not;

1. Make any reference to VAT or any other indeterminate element.
2. Advise your address to the person/organisation you are paying.
3. Tell the person/organisation you are not able to pay.
4. Ask the bank of the person/organisation you are paying to tell this person/organisation when payments are received.

ID confirmed (for bank use only)

Your signature

Date

Lloyds TSB Scotland plc
Registered office
Henry Duncan House
120 George St
Edinburgh EH2 4LH

I authorise you to debit my/our account, in accordance with the details shown in Section 2.

This request is addressed to the bank which holds my/our account.

For bank use only

Registered in Scotland
No 95237

Signatories to the Banking Codes

From branch name

Sort Code

Contact name



This form is to allow an opportunity for members to complete, or submit an update.

BEACHLEY OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE, BEACHLEY



Dear BOBA Member

Re: Next of Kin (NOK)

BOBA ~ Membership Secretary

Derek Fox

51 Church Close, Pentney,
King's Lynn, Norfolk.
PE32 1JJ

Tel. 01760788159

Mobile: 07842 555110

email: memsecboba@gmail.com

This is a particularly difficult subject, however one that decidedly requires to be addressed. When a BOBA member 'passes on', the Executive Committee are left with a quandary as to if and whom they should contact in the family. If such a contact is desired, please be so kind as to complete the details below and in doing so, assist the Executive Committee to help where they are able. The Data Protection Act will apply to all details given.

(Please use block capitals throughout)

NOK Name: NOK Relationship:

NOK Address:

..... NOK Postcode:

NOK Tel. No: NOK Email:

Your Name: **Membership No:**

Please return this information to the Membership Secretary using one of the following means:

Email: memsecboba@gmail.com

Telephone: +44 (0) 1760788159

Mobile: +44 (0)7842 555110

By Royal Mail: Send to the address above.

Thank you in anticipation.

Sincere Regards,

Derek Fox ~ BOBA Membership Secretary



Horse Guards prior to the Cenotaph March Past on Remembrance Sunday 2019

Notice ~ Please note that the views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the policy and views, official or otherwise of either the Editor or of The Beachley Old Boys' Association and therefore no responsibility for these will be accepted. All contributions and articles for inclusion in the Echoes are very welcome and gratefully received. When submitting items it would be of assistance (though not essential), if Microsoft Word is used (Rich Text Format). JPEG or TIFF is preferable for photographs with images at or over 200 dpi where possible.

Editor

The BOBA Standard

Readers may like to know that, should the family wish it, the BOBA Standard can be present at the funeral of members who have passed on. This is of course subject to the availability of a standard bearer.

Please note that where we can assist a donation of £0.30 per mile may be requested to offset the standard bearer's motor vehicle expenses, other than this their services are entirely free of charge.

Alternatively a BOBA flag can be sent directly to the nominated undertaker for use as a coffin drape. Please contact any committee member.

The BOBA standard can be seen on the left of this page ; it was paraded at the opening of the Army Apprentice Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum by Ex WO2 (AQMS), Lou Walker, REME, 55A Group.



Paper Copy of the Beachley Echoes

If you require a paper copy of the newsletter please drop the Editor a line stating name, group and address. His contact details are above.



The BOBA Shop

The following items are available from our shop.

Item	Notes	Price
Fleece Jackets	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL	£40.00
"The Beachley Boys" Book	A story written by Brian Elks	£12.00
The Beachley Apprentices Story	Anecdotes by Apprentices compiled by Brian Elks	£12.00
The Story of the Army Apprentices at Beachley Camp 1924-1994	Official College History	£12.00
Tidenham Parish Churches Book *	Edited by Carol Clammer & Keith Underwood (£3.00 P&P)	£15.00
Mugs	Single Badge AAS / BOBA , Dual Badge	£6.00
Embroidered BOBA Blazer Badges		£10.00
Embroidered BOBA Blazer Badges	(Patch Pocket)	£10.00
BOBA Lapel Badges		£5.00
Cap Badge GSC		£5.00
Cap Badge KC		£5.00
Cap Badge QC		£5.00
Cap Badge QC. Anodised		£10.00
Wall Plaques	AAS or AAC	£20.00
Wall Plaques	BOBA	£20.00
BOBA Car Sticker		£2.00
BOBA Wire Wound Blazer Badge		£10.00
AAS Wire Wound Blazer Badge		£10.00
AAC Wire Wound Blazer Badge		£10.00
BOBA Ties		£5.00
BOBA Bow Ties		£5.00

* Covers all Beachley Churches.

All items can be viewed on the BOBA website and are available from the BOBA Shop Manager. Payment must be made with the order and can be:

- Cash
- Cheque (payable to "Beachley Old boys' Association")
- PayPal transfer

Extra fees apply for packing & postage and PayPal use.

Contact:

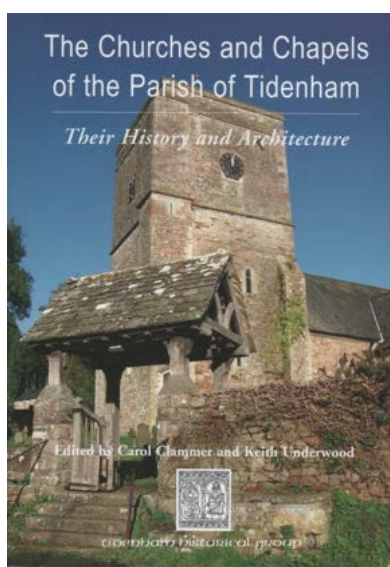
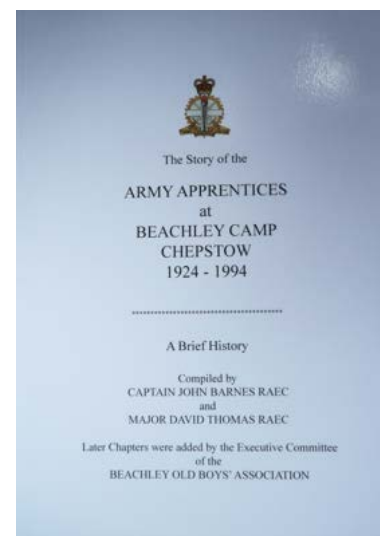
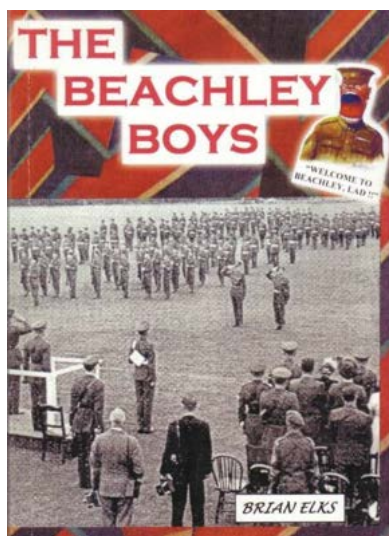
Stephen Barker
Suite 7, Booths Park 1, Booths Park
Chelford Road, Knutsford, WA16 8GS

sebarker@peterloo-uk.com

Additional items
illustrated on page 45

Details of Robot CDs on
page 18





Latest additions to the Shop List are as follows, all to order + £3.00 p&p (Small quantity of some items in stock)



- BOBA T Shirts @ £10.00 each in Navy & other Colours, S,M,L, XL, XXL
- BOBA Polo Shirts @ £12.00 each in Navy & other Colours, S,M,L, XL, XXL
- BOBA Sweat Shirts @ £15.00 each in Navy & other Colours, S,M,L, XL, XXL
- The New Car Stickers @ £2.00 + £1.00 p&p (8.7cm/2.5inch dia—see photo on right)





from the Fairway : BOBA Golfing Society

2019 BOBA Annual Reunion Golf Competition

The course at Bells Club Coleford was again in great condition, we were blessed with mild weather and thankfully none of the wet or windy stuff we endured the last couple of years.

It was good to see our numbers increase this year by 15%, let's see if we can recruit a few more for players for next year's event.

It was good to have some new names picking up the main prizes, with Geoff Warren having the best score on the front 9, Chris Jarvis the best score on the back 9 and this year's runner up (yours truly) Alf Chrascina.

Sitting 5th and 3 points down after 9 holes, our very worthy winner this year was Dave Potton with 38 points, well done Dave and we all look forward to you defending the trophy in 2020.

Thanks to all for attending and hopefully see you all again next year.

PS: If anyone is interested, with so many of us being retired we generally organise (local to Chepstow) a pre-BOBA warm up round on the Thursday afternoon. Just add a note on your golf application form for details.

Alf Chrascina, Golf Organiser. alf.chrascina@gmail.com

Editor's Contact Details ~

Ray Armstrong

125 Baker Street, Wigan, Greater Manchester , WN3 5HG

Tel: 01942 491140

email ~ r.armstrong@virgin.net

AGM Agenda

Any point you want raised at the AGM in September please let the BOBA Secretary know as soon as possible.

Gary (Chalky) White

9 Appledore Drive, Allesley Park, Coventry

West Midlands CV5 7PQ

garywhite404@hotmail.co.uk