



Beachley



Echoes

Edition No. 30 ~ March 2024



Jubilee Roundabout on B6161 Oaker Bank at Killinghall, Harrogate marking the location of our replacement.

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Sylvia Smith

On 18th October 2023

We said Goodbye to Sylvia.

Beachley Boy John Smith & Sylvia Edwards, met in Chepstow in 1950. Sylvia had worked at the Matrimonial Bureau (Thank you Ray) also known as Woolworths, which she enjoyed.

They Married in Crewkerne in 1952 and John was posted to a camp near Ripon Yorkshire where in July 1954 Susan their daughter was born. They then went on to Osnabrück Germany, then back to UK to Tottenham where John was assigned to the Territorial Army Barracks. In 1960 the family flew to Hong Kong residing on Kowloon side. Some of John's many tasks were to escort the Hong Kong Governor Sir Robert Black and Princess Alexander on their tour of Hong Kong. Sylvia missed out meeting The Princess as she was avidly cine filming the event, but Daughter Susan did and spoke to the Beautiful Princess. Next posting was to Singapore, the only notable part of this posting is that John learnt to play Golf on a respite trip to the Cameron Highlands Malaya.

Next came Berlin all the family loved this posting even under the shadow of the Berlin Wall. In 1967 Sylvia & Susan settled in the house bought in Luton, Beds, while John finished his Army career in Stoke-on-Trent as WO2 Quartermaster.

Having secured a position at George Wimpy, they settled into civilian life. Over the years they have enjoyed many reunions and Social Gatherings at Chepstow with the B.O.B.A folk.

John's Ashes are interned at the cemetery near Beachley camp.

Sylvia's will be interred there on 9th March 2024.

Sylvia's family were honoured to have the Standard Bearers (Ken Reader and Ray Armstrong) From B.O.B.A at her funeral also representatives of the REA.

Also, a special mention to Chris Rickets for his care and help, Sylvia would have greatly appreciated it, as do the family.

RIP Sylvia Smith

Thank You

Susan (Daughter) & Roger Barton

Editor's Note.

We were greatly honoured to receive the above via email.

John and Sylvia were a typical "Beachley Boy Marries Chepstow Girl" couple that managed to last the full term. They were a welcome pair of visitors at quite a few Reunions over the years. We thank Susan and Roger for allowing us to show our respect at the Luton Funeral Services for both John 9th May 2018 and Sylvia on 18th October 2023.



ARMY APPRENTICE AT BEACHLEY, CHEPSTOW 1924-2024

THE CENTENARY YEAR

1924-1929 Boys Technical School.

In 1919 a War Office committee was set up to “examine the necessity for, and practicability of, establishing a school for training boys for the Army in order to supply the deficiency consequent upon the impossibility of recruiting tradesmen in sufficient number from civil life”

There was an acute shortage of skilled tradesmen in the country owing to the disruption of training during the First World War and this, allied with the increasing mechanisation of the Army, resulted in the Army Councils decision to train its own tradesmen. Additionally, the scheme would greatly benefit the country's youth during the period of difficulties in employment and training facilities.

Difficulties of obtaining a site were considerable, but finally on February 28th 1924 the school, now numbering about 250 all ranks, left its temporary quarters and established itself at Beachley. Lieutenant Colonel V.T.R. Ford DSO from the York's and Lancashire Regiment being the first Commandant at Beachley.

Chepstow is in Wales and is the nearest railway station to Beachley and so began a new connection with the Beachley Camp on the English side of the river Wye and the historic town of Chepstow. Beachley had been a former National Shipyard and prisoner of war camp in WW1

Throughout its history Beachley Camp would be infamous for its weather; rather like the old school saying “if you can't see the Point it's raining-if you can it's about to rain”, although in reality it was the winds that were antisocial. Despite this staff and boys got down to the task of developing the school. As one boy put it “when I asked what I should use because all the gardening tools were in use, I was told to fetch my eating irons!” That will bring back memories even to the modern soldier.

1926 saw the passing out of Group 1. This included apprentice number one J. Alcock Gp1 who also passed his City and Guilds grade one and graduated as a Fitter and posted to the RAC (Bovington) in Dorset.

In November 1924 the first school magazine was published and named The ROBOT and continued to be published until the closure of the school. CD copies of your own groups Robot can be obtained via the BOBA website.



1929-1947 Army Technical School (Boys)

As we all know, organisational changes were and still are a feature of the Armed Forces, and Beachley was no different. The school changed its name to the Army Technical School (Boys) and a new Commandant was appointed.

New trades were added to the basic four. The electricians were involved in making "wireless sets as this was the wireless age" and also included making and installing aerials. Although, this skill was the cause of them having to enclose the Officers Mess tennis courts with high wire!! Typical resourceful Beachley Boys.

A few weeks after the arrival of the new Commandant, Lieutenant Colonel Baker MC, KSLI, in 1939, the Second World War broke out and life at Beachley changed considerably.

Of the five Army Tech establishments for boys, only Chepstow and Arborfield remained open and the transfer of boys from other tech schools took place causing a considerable amount of overcrowding. On the morning of 1st of June 1940 a BEF detachment of 400 men arrived from Dunkirk, staying at Beachley for two weeks. About this time assistance was given by Staff and Senior Apprentices in the training of the local Home Guard!!

Air raid warnings were frequent with enemy aircraft frequently overhead. On the 9th of November a lone aircraft strafed the school and dropped a 500lb bomb and tragically caused the death of A/T Thornton and wounding a sergeant.

In 1943 Colonel P.B. Cuddon CBE, MC was appointed Commandant. A significant change to all the boys' schools took place. Colonel Cuddon felt the General Service Corp badge and school name was unsuitable. With the Commandant of Arborfield he approached the then War Office. In 1947 the new badge and new name for the school was adopted. The badge was designed by Sgt Boldon REME

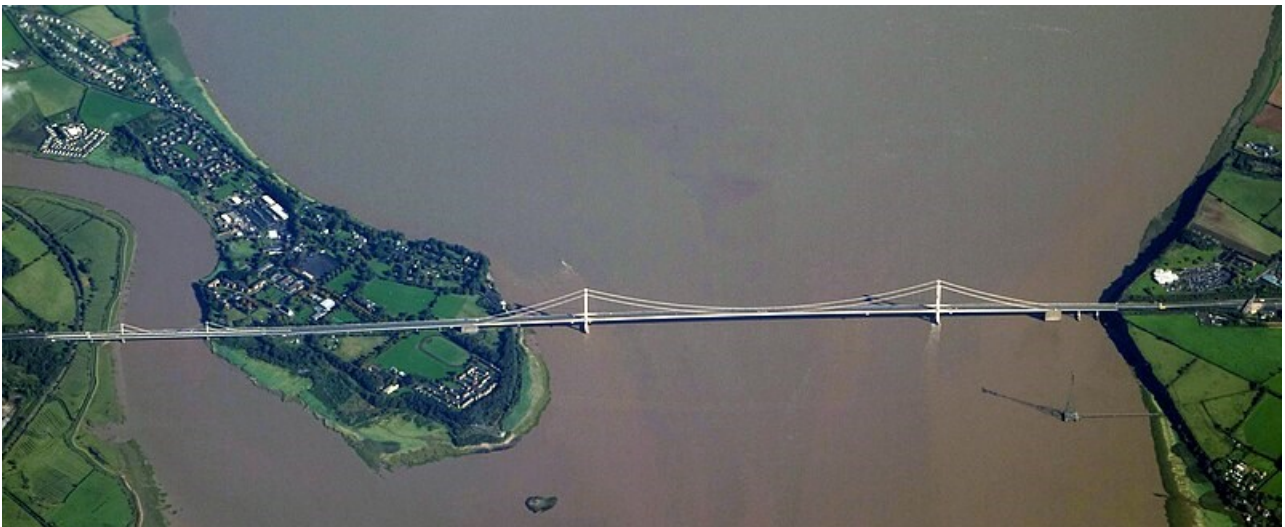




1947-1966 Army Apprentice School

Significant changes took place between these years, both to the school and the outside world including another name change for the school. The Berlin Airlift took place, sweets came of ration, 1953 Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and the Korean War started. One of our oldest members of BOBA, and who still attends reunions, Alan Whitlock REME saw action in Korea.

We also saw a change in the trades offered as schools in both Harrogate and Carlisle were opened. I had the privilege of being in Group 59A, the last of the REME VMs to pass out of Beachley. This trade moving to Carlisle and 10 years later to Aborfield. During the late 50s and early 60s the first Severn Bridge was built and opened by Her Majesty on the 8th September 1966. An ideal construction to test the pioneering spirit of Beachley Boys. Many a Monday morning saw the triumphal flags of underwear at the top of the bridge pylons or the bridge itself. Quite a feat if you have ever seen the fifth largest suspension bridge in the world!





1966-1994 Army Apprentice College.

Our last name change took place from School to College. October 1966 unfortunately brought tragedy to Aberfan. Beachley being the closet Army unit was requested to provide assistance. Staff Sergeant Ron Birch RE commanded a rescue party of senior staff and senior apprentices, 150 in number. They found a chaotic scene which they quickly turned into some kind of order to help rescue teams coming in after them. As you can imagine this turned from a rescue to a recovery operation. They pulled 60 bodies from the slurry. The young soldiers acquitted themselves well in this blackest of tragedies. Ron was proud of them. They toiled at their task for five days and just before they left Aberfan many of the grieving parents came to thank the young soldiers for their efforts.

Training of apprentices continued as normal, mostly for the Royal Engineers, but the RAOC with apprentice Ammunition Technicians were still here together with the RASC apprentice Marine Engineers until they rebadged into the Royal Corps of Transport.

Beachley Old Boys Association itself continued, supported by the MOD. Until, unfortunately, the closure of the college meant that this support ceased. The members had agreed at their AGM in June 1994 that the association would continue but would be self-supporting. This was achieved with subscriptions being raised. The enthusiasm of old boys for Beachley has continued and also embodies itself in the founding of our own Heritage Centre at Beachley and our thanks for the support of 1st Rifles presently based at Beachley and on deployment in Cyprus.

Extracts of this article were taken from—The Beachley Apprentice Story 1923-1994 Edited by Brian Elks ex REME ISBN 978-0-9555073-4-2

The story of Army Apprentices at Beachley Camp Chepstow 1924-1994 Compiled by Captain John Barnes RAEC and Major David Thomas RAEC and later chapters by the Exec Committee of BOBA

Copyright is claimed by BOBA. Article compiled by Alan Chatt 59A Corp of Drums, A Coy (REME) Member of the Heritage Team



The President's Thoughts for 2024

Due to ill health Syd is unable to put pen to paper but plans on giving a full report at the AGM.

Syd Thomas

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Once again, I welcome you to the 2024 edition of the Beachley Echoes. Our current president is Lt Col (Retd) Syd Thomas (ex REME) of 47 A Group, but due to health problems he feels unable to write his annual report, so I've been asked by the Echoes editor to provide a couple of paragraphs.

Last year's reunion was centred around the Beaufort Hotel so overall it was a much smaller and quieter affair than usual however those that attended were in fine form. That said, all the business and social affairs that form part of the reunion weekend were duly completed thanks to the committee and the support of all the staff at the Beaufort. The minutes of the AGM and the Treasurers report can be found elsewhere in these Echoes.

Our Founders Day service was as usual held at St George's Church at Beachley Barracks (Camp), again numbers were not as they have been, but Padre Paul was excellent, and our offertory hymn provided a generous donation to the Army Benevolent Fund (I'm told the relatively new title of 'The Soldiers Charity' has been scrapped due to its unpopularity). I cannot close on this subject without thanking all who 'got on parade' and provided a brilliant march past, and the standard bearers who escorted the marching contingent to the church and carried out their duties impeccably during the church service. Some may have noticed that Mary Rooney joined us at the church, she came with Gareth her grandson who provides the music for the hymns. Mary continues to take a keen interest in BOBA, and it was a great joy to have her with us.

At this point I normally mention those ex-boys who are no longer with us but thankfully the past twelve months have seen fewer deaths than usual, perhaps it has something to do with the many years since Covid struck. Derek, our membership secretary keeps an accurate list as possible, but remember you are our eyes and ears in order to keep us up to date. The latest list will appear in his report and the AGM minutes.



By now most BOBA members will be aware that 2024 is the centenary year of the commencement of apprentice training at Beachley. On the 24 February 1924 the Central Training School for boys moved from Aldershot to a disused World War One shipyard on Beachley Peninsula and was renamed the "Boys' Technical School" under the command of Lt Col VTR Ford DSO, The York and Lancaster Regiment.

The committee started work on this year's reunion/centenary celebration within days of us saying farewell to each other following our church service. Much work and a few Zoom meetings mean preparations are now well in hand. To make this centenary year very special we are returning to the racecourse for extra space and more comfortable facilities. The weekend will have some extras added to it, but we've kept the costs reasonable. Keep an eye out for the application proforma for all the details.

Much appreciation is given to those who participate in the Cenotaph parade in London on Remembrance Sunday, they do so at their own expense and time and put on a good show for all to see. Navigating the requirements of the Royal British Legion application process is not straightforward but Matt Arlow does a sterling job pulling all the threads together to ensure all the needs of our attendees are met.

Finally, on your behalf I thank all the committee for what they do on behalf of Beachley Old Boys' Association, the myriad of activities they get involved in is amazing and carried out in a professional manner.

Brian Henderson 65A

Hon Vice President

Editors Note:

This photo is nothing to do with Brian's Report, just a gentle reminder to anyone who witnessed the bridge being built.

Boy Stephen Briggs





Chairmans Report for the Beachley Echoes 2024

Well, here we are again, it doesn't seem possible that we are looking ahead to the 2024 Annual BOBA Reunion.

2023 saw us together at the Beaufort Hotel in Chepstow for our Reunion as a result of the Chepstow Racecourse having a four-day festival booked over our usual weekend, but in true Beachley Boy tradition, we overcame the issue and had a great weekend.

Notwithstanding the changes a very good time was had by all attendees, in fact, many were pleased that we were able to see and hear each other in the smaller area. Not to mention the food which was tasty and well-presented meaning a good time was had by all.

Throughout 2023 changes were happening at Beachley, the 1st Rifles went to Cyprus, no, not on holiday, but as the resident Infantry Battalion there, in case of any unwanted disturbances. To date they have had a peaceful but busy tour and we look forward to their return.

The whole of the Beachley Estate has undergone some very major changes following the UK withdrawal from Afghanistan. Beachley was identified as a suitable holding area for many of the Afghan Interpreters that supported the UK Forces in theatre. To that end there are now many families, along with other extended family members living in the Married Quarters at the top end of the estate, in the newest estate along the Beachley Road, in what we knew as the "Officers Patch" and inside the wire, occupying the former accommodation blocks. Those inside the wire have restricted access but are able to leave the site via manned gates. All told, there are some 4-5 hundred people here. However, I have been advised that whatever numbers or



locations maybe occupied by them it will not impact upon our Reunion whatsoever.

On a more pleasant outlook for 2024, we are very fortunate to be celebrating 100 years since the first of the Apprentices of the Boys Technical School arriving here at Beachley, under the Founding Commandant, Colonel Ford. Colonel Ford was to remain as Commandant for an extended tour, and we have him to thank for our heritage as Apprentice Tradesmen. He had a huge impact on where we came from and how Beachley developed into what became The Army Apprentices College in 1966, until its sad demise in 1994.

I believe, as do the majority of Old Boys, that our time here was a foundation for the remainder of our lives, no matter whether we served our Country for a short time or indeed a full and an even an extended period.

To this end, your Association will ensure that the Annual Reunion 2024 will be a once in a lifetime celebration of The Army Apprentice Scheme, which is to this day still a part of the British Army, albeit in a different guise.

This Reunion will demonstrate the skills that we learned here, our dedication to our Sovereign and their heirs, the different Corps and Regiments that we joined, our respect for others throughout the world, but perhaps most importantly, the bond that we all have for each other, along with our grateful appreciation to those who guided us from young boys into worthy and respected men.

There will be a lot going on over the weekend of 13/14/15th of September this year, please make every effort to attend what will be the only opportunity for us all to celebrate 100 years of our heritage.

The application forms and details are available via our website, armyapprenticecollegechepstow.co.uk or if you are having any difficulties, please contact any member of the committee if you wish, all their details are in the Beachley Echoes.

Chris



Hon Secretary Report 2023/2024

During 2023 we as an association received correspondence from the AANA with regard to not only a name change (formerly the AANM), but also a change in status. It would appear that amongst other things they wish to dissolve their charitable status, although we at BOBA do not believe they are able to do this. The AANA also asked us for a donation towards their drumhead service of £100 annually, we informed them that as we are not confident in how things are changing/progressing within their association that we would not be donating any monies. The AANA also requested members of BOBA to become part of it's management committee, which of course any of our members are completely free to do so, however, we informed the AANA that should any members of BOBA choose to sit on the management committee of the AANA they would be doing so purely on a personal basis, they would not be representing BOBA in any shape or form. No further correspondence was received after this.

If any of our members have any concerns or queries regarding BOBA business, or any suggestions you may have to promote and enhance the association, please contact me via email as a preference, but by all means by regular post, all of my details are on our website and also in The Echoes (Page 2).

Regards

Gary White

Hon' Secretary

BOBA

Editors Note:

This photo is nothing to do with Gary's Report, just a punt towards Page 41.

Boy Stephen Briggs





BOBA Membership Secretary's Report ~ by Derek Fox 58B Group

Report Dated 25/02/2024

Me

Membership / New Members:

There have been 12 new members join since the last Echoes (2023).

New Members.

Mr	AE	Antony/Edward/Tony	Hastings	83C
Mr	JS	John Stanley	Cook	63C
Mr	NM	Neil Mitchell (Mitch)	Fowlie	75AC
Mr	M	Marcus	Nicola	88-90
Mr	PW	Perry	Willis	75A
Mr	PL	Philip Leslie	Dickerson	75A
Mr	PD	Peter Dennis	Phillips	50A
Dr	RS	Ronald /Ron	Roberts	72C
Mr	M	Michael/Taff/Mike	Evason	69C

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

Paid up members total is currently unclear as 2024 subscriptions are not as yet paid for the new financial year. The total should be known for the A.G.M.



New Member Booklets

I am now in receipt of the BOBA Objectives and Rules Book. New members will be receiving the new copies wef the date above.

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.

Mr.	AD	Don	Turner	44A
Mr	I	Ian	Gerring	59A
Mr.	R	Ron	Field	61A
Mr	D	David	Girling	N/K
Mr	HE	Harry Ernest	Long	1935
Mr	R	Richard	Dows	NK
Mr	J	Joseph	Brennan	60C
Mr.	GA	George	Stubbington	65B

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.



Postage

With the ever-increasing costs of postage, subject to the agreement of the AGM and/or The Committee I intend using only 2nd Class stamps for all letters that can be deemed not urgent (my decision).

Where are they If Dave Garner 59A reads this would he please send his email address TIA.

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

Email Address: ~ memsecboba@gmail.com (Please note this [address](#) should be used for all Association Membership business)



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

How often do you want payments made?

Does this instruction replace any existing standing order or direct debit instructions? Yes No

If 'YES' please complete section overleaf or detail in special instructions opposite. Quarterly Half yearly Yearly

If 'NO' please complete all remaining boxes.

Please allow up to three working days for the funds to reach the recipient's account

Recipient's name: **Beachley Old Boys' Association**

Recipient's bank & branch name: **Lloyds TSB, CHEPSTOW, 7 Manor Way**

Recipient's sort code **3 0 9 1 8 9** Recipient's Account number **0 0 0 9 8 8 5 2**

First payment amount (if different to usual amount) First payment date (Month & Year) **0 1 | 2 0**

Usual amount **£ 1 0** Usual payment amount in words **TEN POUNDS STERLING**

Second payment amount (if different to usual amount) Second payment date (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. Humperdink,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

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

Registered in Scotland
No 95237
Signatories to the Banking Codes

- 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.

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

From branch name Sort Code Contact name

ID confirmed (for bank use only)

Your signature

Date



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

BEACHLEY OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

AAC Heritage Centre

Beachley Gate,
Beachley Road,
Beachley
Glos.
NP16 7YG



BOBA ~ Membership Secretary

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

Tel. 01760788159
Mobile: 07842 555110
email: memsecboba@sky.com

Dear BOBA Member

Re: Next of Kin (NOK)

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@sky.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



CENOTAPH REPORT—November 2023

Following a fantastic handover from the previous Coordinator Anthony Waite (60C), I was in a comfortable place to begin coordinating the 2023 BOBA Cenotaph Contingent. Having followed Anthony's action plan, application forms were sent out to all past attendees, Facebook Groups posted in and even a few phone calls were made. Numbers soon started to grow, and I applied to the Royal British Legion for 60 places for the 2023 Parade. Luckily, we were allocated the 60 and I set about uploading all the application forms onto the RBL system. After a few last-minute requests put on social media platforms, we had a full contingent plus 12 reserves.

As November got closer, there was a few unfortunate cancellations, sadly the RBL don't allow name changes after September, so it was too late to call up some of our eager reserves.

Sunday 12th November soon arrived, and I set off early to get to Horse Guards Parade ready for the 0830hrs opening of the entrance gates. Once inside I quickly located our Column and Number (B46). It wasn't long before I was joined by some early arrivals and within no time at all our numbers grew as Horse Guards started to fill up.

Unfortunately, we had some members unable to attend due to travel issues, but we soon had 51 BOBA marchers, carers and guests accounted for and all looking extremely smart, proudly wearing medals and their BOBA/Corps badges and pins.

We once again had Lieutenant Colonel Nick Winder MBE (58A) leading us out on to Whitehall with Ray Armstrong (55A) as left marker and carrying our Wreath of Remembrance. In our ranks we had 15 Beachley Old Boys attending their first Cenotaph Parade, 3 of which joined myself and Jez Dykes from the last intake of Apprentices trained at Beachley between 92-94. We look forward to the numbers of new attendees growing and we hope to be joined by more Beachley Old Boys next year.

As we waited on Whitehall our numbers grew as Roderick Davis and his carer Simon Edwards joined us having been delayed due to rail delays. With now 53 attendees we waited patiently for the service to begin.



I have attended this parade for 5 years now and it never ceases to amaze me how quiet it falls as we prepare for the 2-minute silence. You can feel the respect and reflection in the air as all around you veterans and spectators pay their respects. There aren't many moments that compare to the sense of pride felt by all as the National Anthem is played and voices rise to sing God Save the King. Everyone stands slightly taller and prepares to step off when their contingent is called to begin the march down towards the Cenotaph.

As groups march past, those waiting clap to pay respect. All eagerly waiting for their column to be called forward. We soon set off, 53 individuals connected by memories and friendships made as young men. There might have been 39 years separating the oldest and youngest intakes on parade, but the ethos and values installed in us all at Beachley brings us together. As the crowd's clap, the band plays and pride grows, it can be hard to hear the step being called out over the noise. It's easy in the moment to feel annoyed and worried about how these momentary lapses in step can look to the thousands of spectators on the sides of the route. But we should remember that most of those watching aren't even looking for Guards levels of perfection and drill standards. All many see are veterans with heads held high and medals proudly pinned to our chests. Marching to pay our respects to those that paid the ultimate price, many that we knew personally and those that we never met. All elevated by the occasion and remembered now and forever.

I would like to thank all that marched with us, it has been a real pleasure to have organised my first year as the Cenotaph Coordinator and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible next year.

Finally, a call for anyone reading this article that would like to join us in 2024. As the 100th Anniversary of the Army Apprentices, we would love to increase our numbers marching. I am going to apply for 100 places for 2024, if successful it would be fantastic to have 100 BOBA members on parade. We may be the Beachley Old Boys by name, but I would urge those younger members to consider joining us. As time passes our numbers sadly reduce, all Ex Beachley-Boys are needed to keep our association strong. Whatever the year you passed through the gates of Beachley, you are part of the future of the Association, and we would love to grow our active membership.

Matt Arlow

Cenotaph Organiser



A list of Attendees is shown below together with a few photographs taken on the day.

Mr Matthew Arlow 92– Coordinator

Lt Col (Ret'd) Nicholas Winder MBE 58A – Leader

Mr Raymond Armstrong 55A – Left Marker Wreath Carrier

Mr Robert Wise	53A	Mr Nigel Furness	77C	Mr Michael Kirkhan-Ingram	92
Mr Roderick Davis	57A	Mr Alistar Simpson	77B	Mr Brian Paterson	92
Mr Maurice Taylor	58A	Mr Richard Tyers	77C	Mr David Wakelin	92
Mr Alan Chatt	59A	Mr Mark Williams	77B	Mr Richard Pool	JLRE
Mr Robert Beeston	60C	Mr Alan Coome	78C	Mr Anthony Stamford	Guest
Mr Anthony Waite	60C	Mr Paul Higham	78C	Mrs Tina Crossley	Widow
Mr David Smith	60C	Mr Graham Kerr	82C	Mr Simon Edwards	Carer
Mr David Threadingham	60C	Mr Michael Brown	82C	Mrs Linda Hill	Carer
Mr Terence Curran	62C	Mr Mark Tonge	82C	Mrs Fiona Locke	Carer
Mr Gerald Francis	65C	Mr John Campbell	83	Mrs Monica Waite	Carer
Mr Alan Bell	66B	Mr Mark Cardon	83		
Mr Nigel Brickell	68A	Mr Anthony Hastings	83C		
Mr Thomas Whitely	72A	Mr John Hatchett	83C		
Mr Howard Till	73C	Mr Roland Watmore	85C		
Mr Peter Coe	74C	Mr David Head	87		
Mr Philip Dickerson	74C	Mr David Morgan	87		
Mr John Goodall	74C	Mr Alexander Spinks	87		
Mr Duncan Lewen	74C	Mr Marcus Nicola	88		
Mr Gordon Taylor	74C	Mr Phillip Tindle	90		
Mr Richard Wheller	74C	Mr Jeremy Dykes	92		

Apologies Received:

Mr David Youdle	58A
Mr Nicholas Trood	71C
Mr Neil Coulthard	73B
Mr Gary White	73A
Mr Christopher Le Gallez	77B
Mr Mark Pengelly	80C
Mr Anthony Washer	87







NOTE: - 2024 IS THE 100th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMY APPRENTICE SCHEME

Name (in Full) including Title where relevant:

Postal Address including Postcode:

Group / Squadron No:

Dates attended (Starting & Leaving):

Date of Birth:

Place of Birth:

Contact Telephone Nos – Landline:

Mobile:

Email Address:

BOBA Membership No:

Military Service No:

Date of Leaving Service:

Rank on Leaving:

Carer's Ticket Required – Yes / No

(Note: - Carer's Details (as relevant above), will be required as above in addition to your own, on a separate form please).

DO YOU WISH TO PURCHASE A 100th ANNIVERSARY BOBA TIE AT A PRICE OF £12. YES / NO (Please circle)

Assuming we are allocated enough Tickets and you are allocated a Ticket, you will be issued with a NAMED Electronic E-Ticket which you will need to bring with you for admission to Horse Guards Parade, (No Ticket and No Photo ID = No Entry).

I will be requesting additional Tickets for 2024, but if I do not have enough to go round, the tickets will be issued on a first come, first served basis to BOBA Members and those who confirmed they wish to attend in 2024. Applicant Names of those who applied last year 2023, will be carried forward as a priority for the 2024 Parade. If you are not a BOBA Member and wish to attend, please request an application form from me.

Security has been tightened considerably over the last few years and will no doubt continue to be tightened further in the future. 2024 will be no exception. Your Details will need to be submitted to me no later than the end of June 2024, hence the defined date for closure of applications.

If you are initially allocated a ticket and then find you cannot attend, please let me know by Phone / Email as soon as possible, so that the place can possibly be allocated to the next person on the Reserve List. Likewise, if you find that you cannot attend during the last couple of weeks before the parade, and even on the day, as we need to have an accurate register on the day.

Address: Matthew Arlow
73 Suffolk Road
Andover
Hants
SP10 2JU
Mobile: 07474 447554



Editor's Hurrah

Hello All, or Hi All for you youngsters managing to put your smart phones and/or tablets aside to read my offerings.

There we go, oxymoron in my first line, because you cleverer (made up word) persons will be using your electronic gizmos to read The Echoes.

After that not so celebrious start I think that I had better think of something to write for your entertainment, you are allowed to laugh at me, as well as with me. Well, I can hope for more of the latter and less of the first. To help with this I did my usual good sense trick of looking at earlier Echoes offerings which in my case is relatively easy to do; I save all my work on a memory stick. A memory stick will make it easily possible for my executors to pass onto the committee all my records in the unfortunate, but ever possible, case of me managing to catch my last bus passenger journey. I have decided to let my bus licence lapse this year so it is now safe for you to venture out on the highways and byways of our fair land without fear of being mown down by yours truly at the wheel of a monstrously humungous tri-axle bus/coach.

Back to the job in hand, the exercise made me realise that I have penned seven(7) editorials for The Echoes. All started with some allusion to the passing of time, so I plan on using a long tried and apparently successful opening gambit. This is the point at which you may go back to Emmerdale Farm or whichever soap you are currently using for entertainment. I promise I wont cry, throw a tantrum maybe but no boo-hoos.

It's that time again to sharpen my pen and fill my pencil with ink. Where has it all gone? Another twelve months vanished into the mists of past glory.

We still need you younger guys to step up and possibly start to assist us old fogeys at the helm of our Association, eventually (better still sooner rather

than later) taking control and progressing us into the wonderful future that I am hoping for.

Here is a repeat of my annual appeal for input. The Echoes is not "Ray Armstrong's POV", it is your newsletter/magazine, please help me to keep it going. Anything, typed, pencilled on an envelope, photographed, printed, written in a letter or an email, anything, just send it in, pretty please. All right even in braille or another language; I can read/translate them, just no good at lipreading.

The 2023 Reunion was smaller than previous ones but was still very enjoyable with a few new faces on show. 2024 is

our 100th Anniversary and we are hoping for a good turnout. We have been able to return to Chepstow Racecourse this year, they have been extremely helpful this time around. I have booked my accommodation and paid for my Reunion Tickets. Please do the same as soon as possible and join the gang.



Empty nest syndrome has appeared in my lifestyle. The two cats are still here and it does seem that they are here to stay. I have now become familiar with rattling around in a five-bed house. The bedrooms have received a change of purpose, though mine and the gets room have stayed with the same usage. That leaves three which have become a workroom/upstairs shed, an ironing/printer room and the most important, a double bedroom is now a railway room. Having three toilets is really useful at my age. The model railway has not progressed like I want, too many other people requesting my assistance in sorting their models for them. You know the "Dad, can you just fix this" multiplied by all the local rail enthusiasts needing "just a little help with". I have managed to build a "proof of concept" display showing electronic automation of two trains on a length of track using simple circuits that can be built from kits with simple soldering skills. I have managed to encourage a ham-fisted bricklayer/stonemason to successfully purchase and build some kits for his own model railway.

We luckily have a Veteran's Hub in Wigan where we support veterans from all the services, including emergency. We hold Craft Clubs, Modelling Clubs, War Gaming, Walking and Garden Clubs. Monday and Friday mornings we have an extended Breakfast Club that is open to anyone that cares to visit. We are luckily endowed with a few volunteers that serve and cook. My role is to use my Beachley trained skills and do the washing up. I am also mentoring some of the vets and acting as an ambassador to bring the hub to the notice of local businesses. We do have a certain amount of assistance from our council, and even MPs visit for photo shoots.

Well enough of my blather, time for a cuppa, the kettle does not boil itself, and tea bags do not jump into the cup.

I am still waiting for that 18-year-old blonde's phone number!











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We thank her for the professional work and her permission to use these





The “Pony Major”

Ray Field 58A Group who passed away the 25th of July 2023 was the first Pony Major. Early in 1959 the Commandant Colonel Cordy- Simpson decided that the school should have a mascot so presented to the school a Welsh Cob Pony which was named “Beachley”. Its minder was provided by the Corps of Drums as it was in possession of a number of smart red tunics. Ray Field who played B flat flute stepped up to the mark and was fitted out with a red tunic and given the title “Pony Major” thus becoming the minder and trainer of a highly strung animal.

It was down to Ray to train “Beachley” and to prepare him for his debut taking his place on the Commandants parade. To achieve this Ray trained him to act on his word of command, walk under harness at a sensible pace and to stand still when ordered. Many hours were spent to achieve the aim, Ray, with “Beachley in tow was often seen circumventing the sports field and pounding the many paths and tracks on the Beachley peninsular.

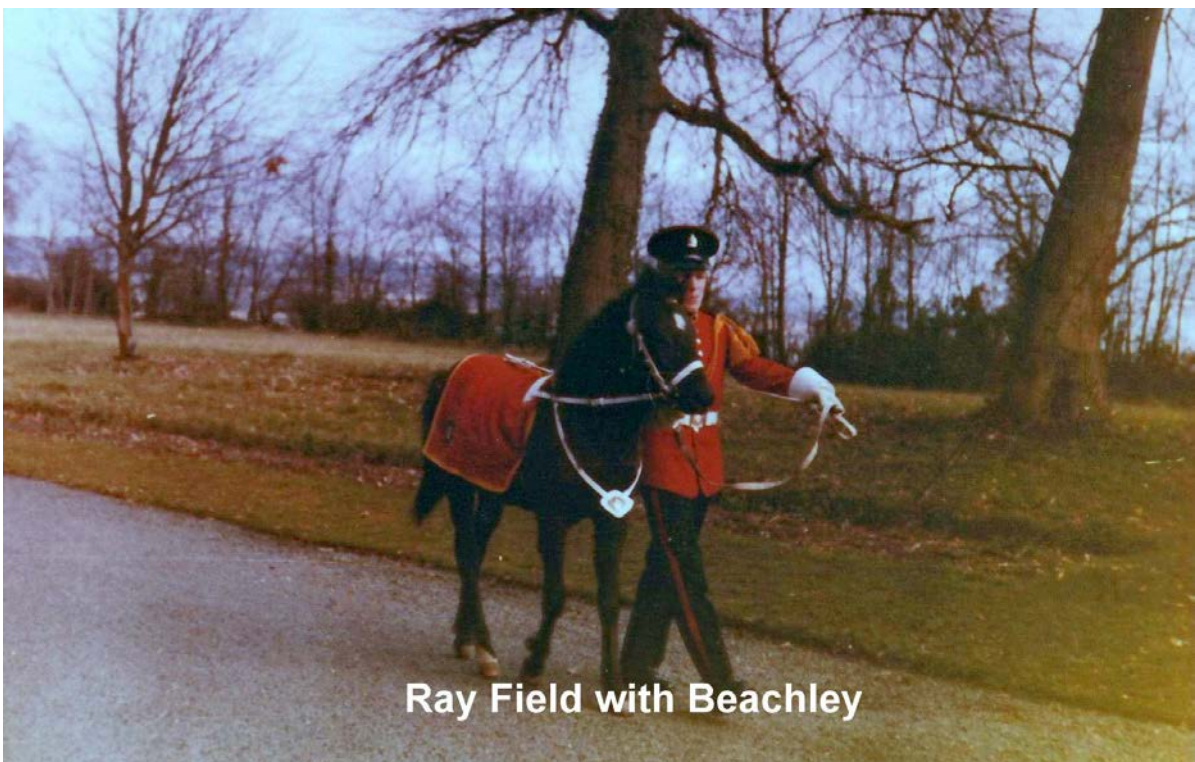
Ray took a pride in his uniform particularly his best boots which every Beachley boy knows took many hours of work to reach the accepted standard. Army boot leather had a pimple finish that had to be burned off usually by misusing the issued dinner knife which was heated and applied to the dreaded pimples followed by hours of spit and polish; to diverse slightly we also remember being issued with sand-coloured plimsolls that had to be black polished. Happy days all designed to keep the boys busy.

Returning to Ray and “Beachley” by the time of the 56B passing out parade in July 1959 “Beachley” was ready for his first parade looking well turned out sporting a smart saddle cloth to match Ray’s tunic. Taking up prime position in front of the parade facing the saluting Dais with the band formed up behind him “Beachley” appeared calm and collected. The inspecting officer on that occasion was the Secretary of State for War one Christopher Soames as he stepped onto the Dias the band played general salute which startled “Beachley” who proceeded to stamp his hooves trashing Ray’s best boots the hours of bull wiped out in seconds. From that time until Ray handed over responsibility for “Beachley” he was permitted to wear his working boots when on Commandant’s parade.

Ray completed a full career in the Royal Engineers retiring 1983 as a warrant officer he was proud to be both a “Beachley Boy” and a “Sapper”. During the celebration of his life



at the Charlton Crematorium the mourners sang "Hurrah for the CRE" the song of the Corps of Royal Engineers that Ray would have sung many times. So came the passing of the first "Pony Major".



Ray Field with Beachley

Editor's Note

With apologies, I have mislaid my notes on who sent me this article so I am unable to apportion blame to the correct person.



What Did You Do at Beachley Grandad?

Lt Col (Ret'd) K Reader OBE BEM

If my grandchildren should ever get enough curiosity to ask me “what did you do at Beachley grandad?” I have two ways of answering. The first is to explain that we were educated, learned to be a tradesman (draughtsman in my case) and made into soldiers who were fit and disciplined (most of the time!). The second way would be to tell them of the many things that we could and did undertake during our time there. We were required to work hard at being apprentices, but we also had a rich and varied bag of activities that we could delve into. I won't say that they were all relaxing, but the activities helped with fitness or broadened our horizons.

I am sure that all old boys remember the mauling sessions that the gym staff put us through! I did reasonably well and found myself steered into the company boxing team; luckily there were a couple of other lads running at the same weight. One of these was picked for the team and faced a very talented boxer, Tom Dick, and though he tried hard he was well beaten – I guess that I would have been well and truly slaughtered – end of boxing for me.

My first choice of sports were rugby and basketball. However, I found out pretty quickly that there were many other players far better than I and if I am honest much taller. My father had been a good hockey player and that enticed me to have a go. I found it very enjoyable and eventually was selected for the company team and then the school. Somewhere near the beginning of playing hockey the rugby also got abandoned.

Judo was quite a popular martial art, and I had a go at it in a later term. It was enjoyable but I kept getting a foot injury and as it was incurring on the hockey, I decided to throw in the towel on that. To try and get us to join the various clubs there were the occasional ‘suck it and see’ days. One I tried was archery which always looks easy but, as usual wasn't. I enjoyed the day but decided that it was not for me, this despite having done a Robin Hood and placed an arrow in the tail of another. The photograph shows the chap running the session looking at the result of my shot (bottom arrow).

Another sport (torture) that I took up was cutter rowing. This involved much rowing against the tide on the Wye, we would row against the current up to the old Chepstow bridge and then row back down to the slipway against the incoming tide. Unfortunately, my rowing experience at Beachley was not a great success as there were stronger and better rowers than I. Being relegated to the reserves was not the stopper but ending up with, I think, three worms from the mud burrowing into my flesh was. It took the doctor and some gooey black cream a few weeks to



remove them. The experience was good and got employed when, as a SNCO lecturer at the Royal School of Military Engineering I volunteered (I know!) to train and cox the units' other ranks team against the young officers, Navy, fire service and others but that is another story.

We were able to set up weekend adventure trips. Two of these stick in my mind for different reasons. The first was a canoe trip down the Wye on a very sunny weekend. The trip was enjoyable but nearly spoiled when our (Ted Lowe) canvas canoe was holed on a rock. Luckily, with the good weather it didn't take long to repair the damage and get back on the river with the rest of the party. The second trip was with several guys from our group in J company, we planned to get dropped off in the Breacon Beacons and hike over the weekend to an RV that we agreed with the platoon sergeant. It would have been great except that the weather was abysmal, and we had drawn boots CCW from the stores without fully understanding what we were doing! When we eventually got back to the camp and stripped out of our very wet gear, we were faced with appalling blisters that had burst and left us with bloody socks – lesson learned.

Two less physical clubs were the model club and stamp collecting. Not much to report here except that we did get a weekend in London for a large stamp exhibition – what happens on a stamp weekend remains sealed down.

There were so many other things that one could do such as football, cross country running, sailing, gliding, camera club, scientific & historical society, angling, miniature (smallbore) rifle shooting, swimming, lifesaving, sub-aqua club, senior scout troop, cycling, golf, choir, badminton, climbing, gymnastics, weightlifting, and skiing. Not forgetting the trips to places like the Baltic, France, or Norway. We were truly spoilt for choice, and it was great.





WEIR IN TRIPOLI

I along with about seven other Royal Engineers spent three years in Tripoli, Libya. We were only a small troop with a similar team in Benghazi. It was a part of the world that the 8th Army and 'Monty' fought over and defeated Rommel and the Germans in WW11. Every year and sometimes twice a year we would be sent into the Libyan Desert, (connected to the Sahara) to construct a temporary airfield so that a Battalion could do a parachute drop and a desert exercise and so they could be resupplied using the runway we constructed. Under wartime conditions 9 Squadron of the Royal Engineers would have parachuted in with a lot of heavy machines and undertaken the construction, however it was far too costly to fly bulldozers etc. from the UK along with all of the men. We had all of the necessary machines in Tripoli that we had to trundle into the desert. I flew with the RAF to find a suitable desert site and point out sites we had previously used. Because we were such a small team with a limited number of machines, we commenced our work about six weeks before the parachute drop was due to take place. The desert can be a frightening place especially for those with no experience. It's mainly all sand with some scrub and every sandhill looked exactly the same as the one next to it. It was very easy to get lost and whenever we moved in a vehicle, we ensured that we had a week's supply of food and water, along with an old tyre, kindling, paper and matches. If you got lost or experienced a vehicle break down you waited until you saw search planes then lit the fire and tyre to create black smoke, you were soon spotted and recovered. On one occasion when we left the road and plunged into the desert to find our chosen location, after half an hour into the sand hills we could see no sign of habitation, no houses, huts, tents or people. However, within an hour of setting up camp we had four visiting Arabs who could not speak English. However, with our impoverished knowledge of Arabic, that was mostly swear words, we got the message over to them as to what was about to take place and they departed, but not before casting an eye over the equipment we had. We soon had our three tents erected, one for stores, one for cooking and eating and the last for sleeping. We also had a water bowser and a generator, for lighting and heating the tents and water. We were old hands at being in the desert and made sure we had our creature comforts along with a fridge. During the day the temperature soared but at night a bowl of water would freeze over depending on how high up in the world we were.

On our third day one of the Arabs made a return visit but on a donkey this time. We knew he was up to no good and kept an eye on him. Later we saw him quickly lash a jerrican of petrol to the saddle and take off. I and another lad set off in a grader, this was a big four wheeled earthmover that was much faster than the poor old donkey, as we got nearer the Arab abandoned the donkey and petrol and slithered down an escarpment. We soon recovered both the petrol and donkey that we tied to the back of the machine and slowly made our way back where we gave the animal some water. A little later one of the other lads with the donkey still tied to the machine took it in the opposite direction before setting it free. We never saw another Arab after that.



We had just started work on the runway when we had a visitor fly overhead in a single engine Auster spotter plane and wagged its wings before landing alongside our excavations in the scrub. The captain who flew it alighted with a big smile and had tea with us and passed the time away. He was part of the 14th/20th Hussars and was their spotter plane and pilot, he was also a Scouser and we got on well especially as we both came from Huyton, he was from the Blue Bell part close to where my grandmother had lived. He also knew the Bluebell Pub, Tommy Booth the managers son was in my class at school. It was uncanny that here in the middle of a desert I should meet someone who wasn't far off being a neighbour. He asked me if I had ever flown in an Auster plane and took me on a flight, I pointed out some of our earlier runways we had constructed and he made notes of their positions should he have an emergency. Sadly, sometime later he led a team from his regiment to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa, they all perished in a fall.

Despite our many trips and times spent in the desert I encountered only one small snake when we had to remove a big boulder, it quickly slithered away to find cover elsewhere and some days later we saw our first desert rat (Jerboa), with its long back legs it could jump large distances and travel very fast. Montgomery's 8th Army were named the Desert Rats and had a Jerboa as its emblem. Our runway was ready well before the operation started and the local RAF made sure the approaches were clear for the heavy aircraft. Beverleys and Argosys would be landing and doing the resupply. It was a night drop at about ten o'clock for the Paratroopers, I had to stop our generator as they wanted complete darkness and we gazed up into the stars as the big planes discharged their cargoes of men and some heavy drop platforms with land rovers, field guns and other equipment. All of the planes made two passes over the drop zone before returning to Tripoli's main Idris airport, named after the King.

We went to bed that night without our lights and electric fires. Despite the daytime heat at night, it got quite cold. At first light we restarted the generator and the lights flickered on and the heaters started doing their work. Our washing water was heated in a fifty-gallon metal drum with one end removed. A piece of wood straddled the top and an all-metal kitchen whisk was lowered from it and connected to the electricity supply. It was lethal and had to be switched off to extract any water. We were part way through our breakfast, nothing fancy as we like everyone else were on Composition Rations, (or Compo, as we called it.) I'm sure a lot if it was left over from WW11. One particular offering that everyone hated unless you could eat mouthfuls of fat was, Mutton Scotch Style. If that was on offer most went hungry. A few more words about Compo Rations. They came in cardboard boxes, each lettered A, B, C and so on, everyone hated the letter G box as this contained the dreaded mutton. Each box was one man's rations for ten days or two men's for five days or whatever permutation the Quartermaster used. You would never get fat on what was rationed, it was designed to keep you alive. I remember breakfast back in camp once when I spotted a big dish of what I thought was Scrambled Eggs. It turned out to be old bread reduced to crumbs and mixed with Dried Egg, it was dreadful. Mind you this was in the days of National Service when if you had done an apprenticeship or had some decent qualifications the Army tried hard to make use of you,



otherwise you just got placed with any unit, a lot who were lacking in education went into the Catering Corps. The phrase 'he couldn't boil water without burning it,' along with some unprintable epithets were often heard. As we were eating our breakfast, we heard a plaintive voice ask for help. It was a Sapper (Royal Engineer) telling us that two of his Sapper mates were unable to walk and were freezing cold through lying in the desert all night. We swiftly recovered them and with a hot breakfast, drink and some aspirins in front of the electric fire they started warming up.

Our vacated beds were put to good use and the grateful Sappers were soon resting. They had landed fast and heavily on their heels and were unable to walk. Both had their chutes collapsed by others who jumped after them. It was about ten in the morning when a Sapper Captain came looking for them. He was relieved to find both happily asleep and was much appreciative of the help we had given. About two hours later a Blood Wagon, (ambulance) came and carted them away. During the course of the hot day, we had many ask about beer, I sent our driver in his three-ton wagon back to Tripoli with a note to the NAAFI manager, whom I knew quite well asking for beer that I would pay for on our return. We were successful and before darkness fell the driver had returned with the desert nectar. We anticipated a big demand and had increased the price by a few pennies for our own pockets. I expected the Paratroopers to buy a couple of cans but most bought full cartons and we had to hide some for ourselves before we sold out. The following morning our driver set off back to Tripoli with money in his pocket to pay for the beer and with another note requesting the same again.

At the other end of the runway two marquees had been quickly erected, these were the Officers and Sergeants messes. Both had sent requests for beer the previous night but we had already sold out and we knew they would require their share on the return of our wagon. Our little group were quids in from using our initiative. Within a week we were back in barracks and returned all we had borrowed to the stores.

Sharing our workshop area was a British attachment of the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, they had the responsibility of looking after the Married Quarters and Barracks of both the Army and RAF, they had some locals working for them and we were often called upon to assist. They had a number of Clerks of Works along with three from the Royal Engineers with responsibilities for Construction, Mechanical and Electrical. One of the civvy clerks had the RAF at the airport and the Tarhuna bombing range in his charge. Because I repaired construction plant, he called on me to visit Tarhuna, a desert location that was used by the RAF Vulcan Bombers for bombing practise, but only with 25-pound practice bombs as opposed to the Atom bombs, they would normally carry. They descended from a great height to about 100 feet from the desert and when they were about 5 miles from the target they climbed almost vertically before lobbing the bomb and scooting off in the opposite direction, they were some miles away before the practice bomb landed and exploded. My job was to service the generator and chat with the lads who told me they had two observation points and took bearings where the practice bombs landed and exploded. They quickly informed the planes of the hits and misses so they could adjust their sights. The planes were permanently based in Cyprus.



The Americans were stationed at Wheelus Airfield about ten miles from Tripoli and we were entitled to use their facilities and they used ours. Of course, theirs were far superior to ours and their Sergeants Mess had a resident band and new cabaret acts were flown in from Europe on a regular basis. They also had a place that did Southern Fried Chicken, it was ideal if you were entertaining. A swift visit in the car along the coast and your supper was ready. We British were lucky and had a beach on the Mediterranean called Piccoli Capri reserved for our use only and our guests. We had the occasional Arab come strolling through but no females as seeing a Muslim lady in her swimming outfit was against their religion.

After spending just over three years in Libya my time was up and it coincided with the British leaving Libya altogether. I had the responsibility of packing and delivering to the docks all of our equipment, bulldozers, cranes, compressors and many other things that were being sent to Malta. All of the other lads were in England leaving me as the last one to leave after dealing with the shipping. We were allowed to buy most of the things in our married quarters and the Army shipped it to the U.K. at their expense. One guy had done his time and was leaving the Army on a pension and he bought most of what was in his quarter along with other items from his mates' quarters, furniture, beds and bedding, towels, fridge and all of the crockery and cutlery for what would be his new home in England.

Finally, we headed home and landed at Heathrow on a frosty morning and from there to Euston Station in December of 1966. Our three girls had siren suits sent out from England for them and they were needed, our train had been parked up overnight and was frozen up and was a few hours late getting to the platform. I was running our three daughters up and down the platform to keep warm and with the build-up of waiting passengers I went and paid the difference and we travelled first class. We had a compartment all to ourselves for the journey that ended with a visit to the buffet bar for a bit of breakfast and drinks, only for the train to lurch as a waiter was passing and I got hot coffee spilled down my neck.

Photo taken from the balcony of our first-floor apartment in about 1962/3 They are camels on the way to market to be sold.

C. Weir 55A





APPRENTICE GARDENER SHAPING UP

Prior to leaving School I had applied for a Gardening Apprenticeship which I obtained. My pay was to be £1 per week and I would work 5 and a half days per week.

Duties as an apprentice involved starting work in the mornings at the large house, which was situated next to the gardens. In this house I came under the command of the Housekeeper; I say command as she was rather regimental and gave me my orders every day and reprimanded me if anything was not to her liking. There was a boiler situated outside the building which supplied hot water, but only for the taps, as heating was by coal fire throughout the building. This boiler was by far the most difficult task I had, as it had to be kept alight all night so that there would be hot water in the morning. The problem was that it had to be controlled by a damper in the flue and a vent in the base of the stove, these two items controlled the air flow through the boiler and in theory the rate of fuel consumption. Too little air flow and the fire went out, too much, and the boiler used the fuel up too quickly, and the fire went out. Either way I lost and received my telling off from the Housekeeper. The house occupants then demanded hot water be brought from the kitchen where it was heated in kettles. This did not make me a friend of the maids employed there. I managed to master the boiler to a certain extent but never succeeded in keeping it alight every night. It was fuelled with coke and this left a clinker on the fire bars that had to be removed as it reduced the air flow. This clinker was removed using a special tool, and always resulted in the small space of the boiler room being full of fumes.

Having dealt with the boiler my next tasks were to chop firewood, and fill all the coal scuttles with coal and take them and the firewood into the kitchen where the maids took over and lit all the fires. The Housekeeper then gave me a list of fruit and vegetables she required for the day, I would go to the gardens and obtain these and return to the house. The Housekeeper examined every item and if anything was not to her liking I had to return to the garden to obtain another one for her to approve.

Then I was allowed to go to the gardens and begin my day as an Apprentice Gardener. The training I received was good and involved a lot of practical work where I was expected to carry out the same amount of manual work as the Adult Gardeners. All soil cultivation was done by hand and I learnt to dig not only single spit digging but double digging where we removed a single spit(A spit was the depth of the fork) which was taken to the far end of the piece of garden we were digging. Then we dug the bottom of



the trench that was left and moving back turned over the next top spit into the trench, and then dug the bottom spit of the new trench. When the end of the land was reached, we used the soil from the first spit to fill in the trench that was left.

All tools were kept in the tool store and at the end of each day we had to clean the ones we had used in a large tank of water and coat them in oil, before taking them back to the tool store, where the foreman inspected them and made us clean them again if they were not to his liking.

The Garden area was bordered on three side by hedges and on the side nearest the road by a high brick wall. Entry was by gates at one end of the wall where the Tool Shed, and Potting Shed, Apple Store, and other stores, surrounded a paved area. Turning to the right inside the gates took you to the Potting Shed, the rear wall of which was the perimeter wall. Continuing through the Potting Shed you came to the Hot House, the Vinery and Peach House all three of which were situated with the brick wall at the back of the house. They were heated by a boiler in the Potting Shed which thankfully I did not have to look after. In the area in front of these buildings were a Carnation House Tomato House and many Cold Frames.

There was a large orchard further down the road and soft fruit raspberries etc., were grown on canes in an area somewhere further away from the main garden area.

The apprenticeship was mainly practical work by day, and night classes on some evenings. The idea being that at the end of the apprenticeship you sat the RHS (Royal Horticultural Society) exam and received your RHS certificate.

I covered most aspects of the practical work, as the war had resulted in many able-bodied men going into the forces, leaving more work for those of us left. The result as far as I was concerned was the taking over of the whole grass cutting commitment, which meant all the lawns and sport fields were my responsibility. Most of the lawns I cut using a Dennis Motor mower, this had a small trailer mounted on a roller and with a seat so that on large lawns I could sit while cutting the grass. The fields used for sports were cut using a gang mower. This consisted of three cutters in a triangle towed by an old Morris that had been converted into a flatbed vehicle. I taught myself to drive and as the garden was in a private estate did not have to have a licence which I couldn't have any way at the age of 14.

There were many hedges on the Estate and these we cut by hand using special hedge cutting shears that were longer than normal shears. As the administrative staff were rather pernicky about appearances, we had to make sure that we left the hedges smooth and level from all aspects. The worst were the Laurel hedges, which had to be



cut with secateurs, in order to avoid the brown edges of leaves that had been cut. So, every cut was made by secateurs so that leaves were removed whole leaving no brown leaves showing.

One of the trustees on the Estate was an advisor to the Government on food production during the War, he liked experimenting and we were using Hydroponics on a small scale in 1941. This involved growing tomatoes in a bed of gravel and feeding them with chemicals. There was also in existence a section of the government that told farmers what crops to grow. We seemed to come under this scheme and were told to grow a certain area of carrots, which we did. They were duly harvested and we received a number of sacks which had to be filled to a certain weight with carrots, and then the opening was sewn up. I spent several days with a needle and twine sewing these sacks. Then they were placed in a store where they stayed until they rotted.

In the Hot House we grew many, (to us) exotic flowers which were used to decorate the big house and various offices. We were also growing an Egg Plant, unknown to many of us in those days, and which for some reason was given liquid nicotine as a feed. In the Vinery the roof was covered in vines and one of the most boring jobs was being given a pair of long nosed scissors and having to thin out the grapes to provide bunches suitable for the visitors to the house.

The Peach House had peaches growing up the wall and when they were approaching ripeness, we had to tie small nets under each peach to support them this allowed the peach to be left on the tree until it was fully ripe and ready to be parted from the tree, it was then supported by the net. This was done as the visitors did not like seeing peaches being served that were bruised.

I suddenly received more pay; it was decided that there should be someone on duty every Sunday morning to look after the boiler and to provide fresh fruit and vegetables. About this time another apprentice had been taken on, he was a refugee from Germany or Austria. It was decided that we would do alternate Sundays for which we would be paid an extra one shilling per week. We also now had the assistance of three Womens Land Army girls to take the place of the men who had been enlisted. Around about this time we lost the foreman to the Army. A local farmer supplied Army Camps with vegetables and if he was short on any item he would come to the gardens and buy some from us. I used to get the job of getting the vegetables for him and as I always made sure he had the better vegetables he would give me a shilling for helping.

We grew all our own plants from seed and the Potting Shed would be busy. There was a



long wooden bench along one wall which was divided by wooden shutters into several bays. We mixed our own potting compost in the bays and then used it to plant seeds, or pot on plants.

When apples ripened, we picked them and placed them in the Apple Store where there were special trays which allowed air to circulate about the fruit. They kept fairly well and at Xmas we were all given a couple of apples to take home. They were wrinkled but still nice to eat.

We had two old men working in the gardens who were very experienced in all aspects of gardening and I was put to work with them at times, when they taught me many useful tips. One of them always had a pipe in his mouth even when it was raining, although then he turned it upside down. If he did ever take it out you could see an indentation in his lip where the constant pressure of the pipe had permanently marked it.

I kept at this employment for 15 Months and then enlisted as a Boy Soldier. I had used Mechanical Equipment during my spell at gardening, which urged me towards Trade Training, but who could say that any of my experiences up to then, had any connection with my later life.

John Eveleigh 42A



Spiders at Beachley



RAOC Boy Soldiers

Army Apprentices and Junior Leaders were often referred to as "Boy Soldiers". The real "Boy Soldiers" were actually the predecessors of Apprentices and Junior Leaders. In fact, there really was an army rank called "Boy". It referred to those soldiers in the British Army that had not yet reached the minimum age for enlistment.

"Junior, or Boy, service in armed forces is as old as warfare itself, Alexander the Great commanded his first army at the age of sixteen. The existence of a minimum age for armed service is a relatively new concept that has developed with society. The boy soldier, however, has had a particular place in the history of the British Army since early medieval times. Richard I, in the twelfth century took boy soldiers to war with him as minstrels; these minstrels performed a vital function in indicating by their sound the rallying point of the army, which often could not be seen. He also took with him apprentice saddlers, harness makers and like trades. In these beginnings eight hundred years ago we can see the predecessors of our RAOC tradesmen of today, and even the College Corps of Drums!

As armies were raised, from them as boys continued to be used for similar functions. In Elizabethan times companies of soldiers had about a dozen boys, known as Comarados, added to them. It was the task of these boys to forage for firewood, prepare food and generally acquire the local provisions of the soldiers. There is in this function a direct ancestor of some of our activities today." Lt Colonel Jiggins 1985 on the disbandment of the RAOC Apprentice College.

"Boy enlistment was a traditional method of augmenting recruitment. Regiments consisting entirely of boys had been formed at an earlier date, but the last had disappeared in 1802. Between 1859 and 1899 regulations specified that the number was not to exceed 2 per cent of the unit establishment. (*Thus all Ordnance units would have Boy Soldiers on the establishment*) Boys were taken on from the age of fifteen and served an apprenticeship until they reached the normal age of enlistment. During this time they were taught one or more trades. Nearly three-quarters of all boys recruited underwent training as musicians (i.e. drummers and buglers), the remainder as tailors and shoemakers. (*At this time not unique Ordnance Trades*) On reaching the minimum age for enlistment, boys formally joined the regiment to which they were attached as private soldiers.

What was new was the suggestion inspired by the practices of the Royal Navy, of a comprehensive training scheme. Borrowing directly from the navy's experience, many advocated that special training schools be set up, and that the establishment of boys at the Royal Military Asylum and the Royal Hibernian Military School be substantially increased." SKELLEY, A.R. *The Victorian Army At Home: The Recruitment and Terms and Conditions of the British Regular, 1859-1899*. McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 1977, pp. 240 and 243.



RAOC Technical Training

After W.W.1 the lack of skilled tradesmen became noticeable and after various committees and conclusions were made. The recommendations that the armies need for more mechanical, technical, electrical and craft trades could be eased with the training of young men in military apprenticeships.

So the training of young tradesmen in the Army is by no means a recent innovation. Prior to World War II Artificers R.A., Armourers R.A.O.C. (both specialist trades) and other tradesmen for technical corps were trained at Woolwich, Hilsea and Chepstow. The boys were taken direct from school and taught a trade in a manner similar to industrial practice; except that the military apprentices were also trained as soldiers so that they could take their proper place in the regiments or corps to which they would eventually be posted. With mechanisation going ahead it was clear, by the early 1930s, that the Army would be unable to obtain enough tradesmen for its needs from adult enlistment and existing apprentice training units. Two hundred RAOC Fitter Apprentices were recruited and enlisted on 1st October 1936 of whom 100 started their training at Bramley and 100 at Hilsea. During the summer of 1939 around one dozen Bramley apprentices went to Woolwich to be trained as Instrument Mechanics, whilst the rest of the Bramley first intake, and a few of the Hilsea intake, proceeded to Aldershot to complete their training. Some older apprentices who completed training in 1939 served in France with the B.E.F. in various RAOC Ordnance Field Parks and Workshops. There was still a shortage of specialist soldier – tradesmen however, so it was decided to build three new Army Technical Schools at Arborfield, Chatham (never completed) and Jersey (abandoned in 1939). These schools were to produce tradesmen for the special needs of the R.A.O.C., R.E. and R.A.S.C. respectively. By 1st May 1939 the almost completed Arborfield School was ready for its first intake of 400 boys who were badged R.A.O.C. Later that month the square was completed but the workshops were not finished until June.

R.A.O.C. and R.A.S.C. boys were transferred to Arborfield from Jersey, Hilsea and Didcot, arriving during the summer months. Further intakes followed in October 1939 and in April and October 1940; and yet more arrived from Hilsea and Chepstow. The training of Clerks, Storeman & Regimental Duties continued at Haslar & Hilsea. The April 1941 intake of potential armourers was the last to be badged R.A.O.C. It was also in 1941 that the Drum and Fife Band was formed, composed entirely of ex-pupils from the Duke of York's School. They supported the band of the 4th/7th Royal Dragoon Guards who were stationed at the School whilst the regiment was on active service.

Significantly, from the formation of R.E.M.E. in October 1942, all R.A.O.C. apprentices at A.T.S. Arborfield were re-badged R.E.M.E.

Apprentice RAOC Ammunition Examiners were already being trained at A.T.S. Beachley (Chepstow) which was mainly a R.E. College.

Edited extracts above with thanks to the 'History of the Army Technical Foundation College' by Capt. (Retd.) D.B. Richards Dip. Ed. Tech REME.



RAOC Non-Technical Training

It is not yet known when centralised Boys training was started at Hilsea & Didcot, but was probably not long after the end of World War One. Boy's training was moved from Hilsea in 1939 to other locations. But was centralised mainly at Aldershot by 1946.

"In September 1949 the Boys Training School had moved from Aldershot to Haslar in Gosport, Hampshire under a new OC, Major R A J Wiggins, himself an ex-boy soldier. Major Wiggins set about improving standards, both in sports, for which there were excellent facilities, and in military and trade training and education. Recruiting improved as (for a time) did the quality and, in one case in particular, the physical size. The particular case was Boy Tett, who on joining at 15 years of age, was already 6' 6" tall. Under Major Wiggins's direction the famous "Toy Soldiers" were formed in late 1950. They gave their first performance at a searchlight display on Portsmouth United's football ground, Fratton Park, the curtain-raiser of some five years of publicity and recruiting displays up and down the country, including an appearance at the Royal Tournament in June 1952. Reporting on a display by the Toy Soldiers a year later, the London Star commented: "Their precision drill in the style of uniform of Wellington's day, has given them a reputation of being one of the Army's best showpieces for recruiting boys over 15". But by 1955 the demand on the Toy Soldiers has become such that it was interfering with training, and with reluctance the activity had be discontinued.

By 1953 the urge to recruit increased numbers of boy soldiers at the expense of quality caused overcrowding of the accommodation at Haslar in Gosport and discouraged intake of a high standard. The error was put right by a purge of certain unsatisfactory elements, and by moving the unit back to North Firth Barracks Blackdown (Near Deepcut Surrey) in early 1954, to become a Boys Wing 1 (Regular) Training Battalion, with Major W R Eccles taking command of the Company. In the autumn of the following year, the Company was divorced from 1 Battalion, once again becoming a separate unit as the RAOC Boys' School. At the same time the School became responsible for training REME boy entrants for the trades of clerk, storemen and regimental dutymen.

There had been for some time dissatisfaction within the Army over the term "boy soldier". It was a disincentive to recruiting, and did not give a true image of the potential of the junior soldiers as the future NCOs of the Army and indeed, for a sizeable percentage, commissioned officers. Hence in 1957 the term "boy" was replaced by "Junior Leader" and the RAOC Boys' School was retitled the RAOC/REME Junior Leaders School. That this change was well-conceived is borne out by the fact that the RAOC junior leader recruiting figures for 1958 were double those for 1957⁽¹⁾. A further change came in 1959 with the name of the establishment being changed again, this time to the RAOC/REME Junior Leaders Battalion. The appointment of CO was upgraded to Lieutenant Colonel, with Lieutenant Colonel J W Harley-Peters being appointed to the command. Yet while all those changes were occurring and following a decision made by



the War Office in 1956, to group Boys' units into large units of around 1,000." Major General L T H Phelps, History of the RAOC

⁽¹⁾ It may have been well conceived by the War office but was resented by the Boys themselves. This resentment seems to carry on by the majority of Ex Junior Leaders who incorrectly still refer to themselves as "Ex-Boys"

Boys Uniforms & Badges.

The first uniform worn by Army Apprentices was Service Dress with stiff peaked cap with a large 'General Service Corps' Cap Badge and Buttons as standard. With brass Boys Technical School (B.T.S.) Shoulder Titles, later changing to 'Army Technical School' (A.T.S.) One must sympathise with the apprentices in their aversion to wearing brass A.T.S. insignia on their epaulettes thus confusing them with the then familiar female element of the war-time Army. After the January 1943 intake, the powers-that-be took the point and cloth shoulder flashes 'Army Technical School', in gold lettering on a black background were approved, giving a more dignified title.

At some time during W.W.II (believed to be about 1943) Battle Dress with at first a Khaki Woollen Beret were issued, later changing to a navy blue beret.



In 1947 a Cap Badge was designed for the Army Apprentice Schools which continued in use till c1966 when Corps or Regimental Badges were adopted.

The AAS Collar Badge continued to be worn when in Service or No2 Dress however. Service dress was again issued from 1951 onwards.

Boy soldiers continued to wear khaki service dress until the 1960s, although the inconvenient puttees had been discontinued. Whilst adult soldiers were clad in the utilitarian battledress, boys paraded in the much smarter service dress, with its high-necked tunic, brass buttons and peaked cap, also wearing denim trousers and jackets, at first in the battledress style for (*dirty*) working dress or field training.

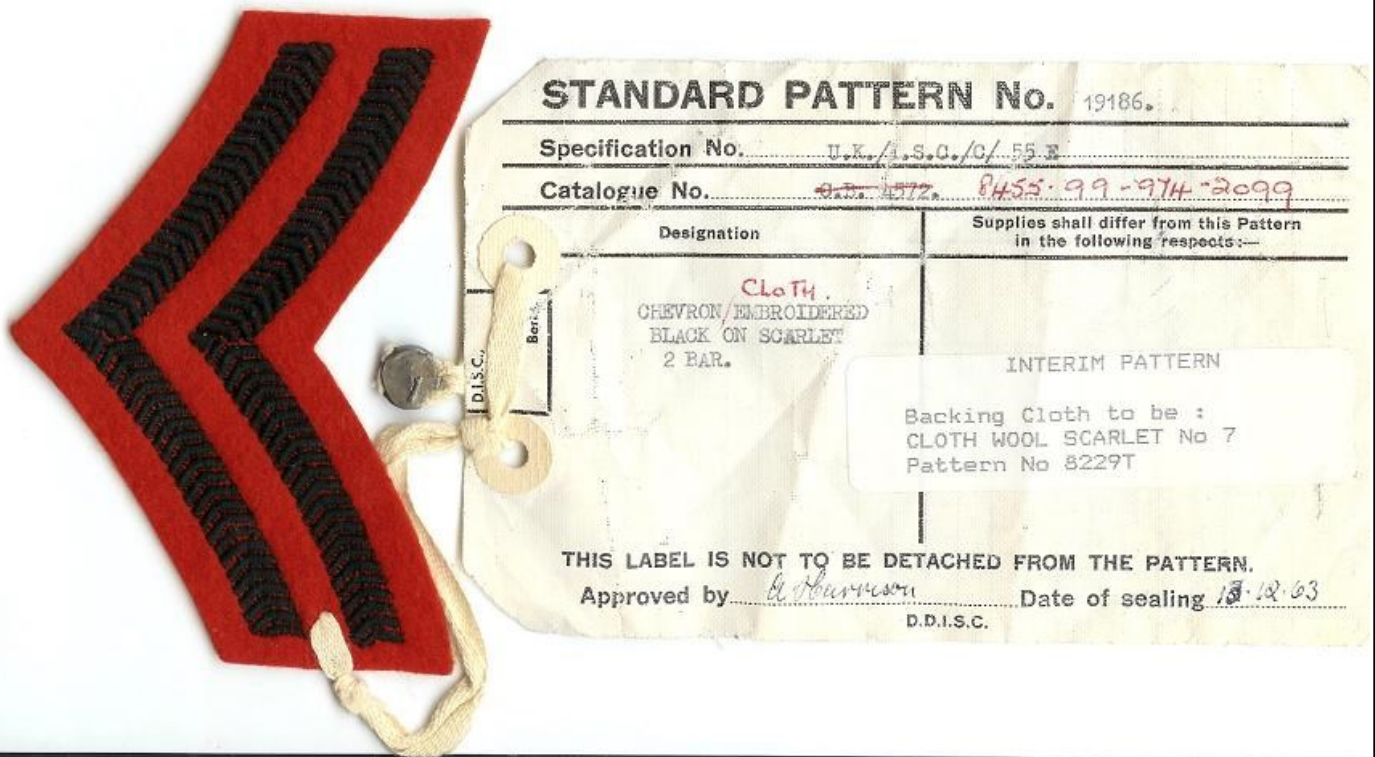
Adult soldiers exchanged battledress for the more presentable new No 2 dress in the early 1960s, but the powers that be then decided to put boy soldiers into the now obsolete serge battledress, again without puttees or anklets. (Junior Leaders at Deepcut continued to wear Service Dress till the late 60's)

By the mid to late 1960s boy soldiers had at last started to graduate to the smart No2



dress, At least for 'Best Dress' to start with. This uniform, with its 'easydress' cloth and 'staybright' buttons and badges, was much easier to maintain than the scratchy serge uniforms which preceded it, as well as being rather more comfortable. Battledress continued to be worn until the early 1970's in other forms of dress, being replaced by barrack dress/lightweight trousers with pullovers, and combat dress when on duty or exercise. Always one step behind the regular army, it would take a little longer to obtain the DPM combats of course!

In 1963 it was decided to adopt the Red & Black Chevrons of the Light Infantry & Gurkha's to identify Junior NCO's (The rationale being that the Cap & Collar badges would tell them apart!) and these were being worn by Army Apprentices and Junior Leaders by 1965.



8455-99-974-2098	1 bar	2nd Green Jackets (KRRC) 2 GR, QRR, 6DLI,
8455-99-974-2099	2 bar	AAS and Junior Leaders Bns
8455-99-974-2100	3 bar	
8455-99-974-2101	4 bar	
8455-99-974-2102	5 bar	Good conduct only
8455-99-974-2103	6 bar	Good conduct only



Royal Army Ordnance Corps Boys Training establishments have undergone various name changes since W.W.II :

RAOC Apprentice Company co-located at A.T.S. Beachley (Chepstow) (for Ammunition Examiners/Technicians)

(RAOC Apprentices at Aborfield till 1942 & Chepstow wore the large General Service Corps followed by the A.T.S. Cap Badge until c1966)

RAOC Enlisted Boys Wing - Parsons Barracks, Aldershot. 1947 (for Clerks, Storeman & RD)

(RAOC Boys wore the RAOC Cap & Collar Badges at all times of their history)

RAOC Boys Training School - Haslar, Gosport. (inc Ft Gomer & Hilsea) 1949

RAOC Boys Training Wing - North Firth Barracks, Blackdown, Surrey. 1954

RAOC Boys School*, Blackdown. 1955

(Joined by REME Boys training as All Arms Clerks & Regimental Duties)

RAOC/REME Junior Leaders School* - Deepcut. 1956

(Exact date of move to Dettington Barracks, Not yet known)

RAOC/REME Junior Leaders Battalion* - Deepcut. 1959

(Joined by Intelligence Corps Junior Leaders from A.T.S. Harrogate training as All Arms Clerks)

RAOC/REME Apprentice College* - Deepcut. 1970

RAOC Apprentice College - Deepcut. 1983

(REME Apprentices re-located to A.A.C. Aborfield. Winter 1983)

Amalgamated with the RCT Junior Leaders Regiment to form the

RCT/RAOC Junior Leaders Regiment at Colerne, nr Bath, Winter 1986

RCT/RAOC Junior Leaders Regiment was disbanded circa June 1992

Transferred to Junior Leaders Regiment RAC at Bovington, Dorset. (Dates to be confirmed)

Remaining RAOC Junior Leaders are believed only to have numbered about 30

All RAOC Apprentice/Junior Leaders training ceased by April 1993

* Conflicting histories record title as RAOC and/or RAOC/REME with overlapping dates during this time period.

Training of Junior Soldiers continued after 1993, but to a different 'All Arms' syllabus in 2 Army Foundation Colleges.

AFS Harrogate for 'Teeth Arms' and ATFS Aborfield for 'Technical Corps' Thus young men and now women can join at age 16¾ and undertake further education and NVQ's as well as undergoing basic military & adventure training. This is a modern form of the old Junior Leaders.



Hello Ray

May I first State how enjoyable I found this year's Reunion Diner, would be more than happy to repeat the table in future years , however I will go where I am told!!

The story, I said I would send, is true in as much as was in the public (Camp) domain at the time. I would NOT like any acknowledgment as the person may now be head of a local "Mafia"

In the 60's, an apprentice in the print/draughtsman section of the Survey Department, managed to produce a convincing stamp that showed he had monies in his post office savings book (POSB). Which he then proceeded to withdraw from. After a time the Post Office found that a crime had been committed by this person, and told the then Camp Commandant (CC) that they intended to proceed with criminal charges. The CC managed to convince the Post Office that the camp would refund all monies illegally taken, and would deal with the individual with army discipline, this was accepted . The individual was then put in the guard house for several weeks to atone for his crime.

When the sentence was finished the individual was taken before the CC for final interview .

Marched into the office at double time, "HALT"! at which point his cleated boots slid from under him, he threw out his arm in an effort to save himself, only to sweep the ink wells, papers etc from the CC's desk .

The CC reached over and told the now ink stained apprentice to "GET UP ! Stand to attention. Well lad, have you learnt anything from your time in detention"

"Yes sir" came the reply- "it proves I can give up smoking"!!

"Not what I had in mind" retorted the CC.

"Oh, and I must not commit forgery."

The apprentice was returned to his company.

Though this is basically a true story, the details of what was said in the CC's office cannot be verified. A Beachley boy will always retain his humour. Hope it helps with a future issue, look forward to '24

Best Wishes

John

Editor's note:

This email must remain anonymous, as per the author's request.



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>).

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 below..

Editor's Contact Details:

Ray Armstrong
125 Baker Street, Wigan, WN3 5HG
Tel: 01942 491140
07941432306
email ~ r.armstrong@virgin.net



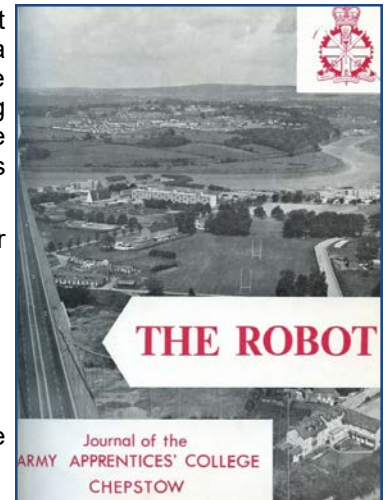
New Robots for Old

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

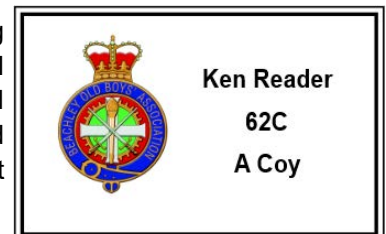
- ◆ Your name and group
- ◆ Address
- ◆ Month and year of arrival—month and year of departure

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.



2024 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 Beaufort Hotel.



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 **74 Groups** can search their attics and albums for items and send them to Tony Waite for display at their 50th anniversary reunion in September 2024.

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.

Anthony Waite
Sutton Lodge, 22 Seymour Street, Wellington, Somerset TA21 8JU
Telephone 01823 669336/07788 581775
email ~ Anthony.waite22ss@btinternet.com



Reunion 2024 Booklet

This is available on the “armyapprenticecollegechepstow.co.uk” website ready to download.

You will find it on the BOBA membership link.

Those receiving a printed copy of the Echoes will have received the booklet

Make sure to book your place at the event of the year!

BOBA Reunion—13th to 15th September 2024



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 2023 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 Chepstow Racecourse
In order that you can attend any of the BOBA activities held during the reunion weekend you must be a Member of The Association, The forms for Membership are in the Army Apprentices College and Beachley Old Boys Association Webpage “<https://armyapprenticecollegechepstow.co.uk/>” 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

Saturday the BOBA Heritage Display takes place in the Heritage Centre which is just inside the old School Gate.

Beachley Gate, Beachley Road, Beachley, Glos NP16 7YG

The BOBA AGM will be held at the Beaufort Hotel at 13:30, where BOBA business from the previous and coming year, is discussed and voted upon.

In the evening the **BOBA ANNUAL DINNER** takes place when pre-booked members, including Ladies, Guests and Families sit down for a pleasant three course meal at Chepstow Racecourse. Many 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.



The BOBA Shop

The following items are available from our shop.

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

Prices are published on the web page.

* 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.

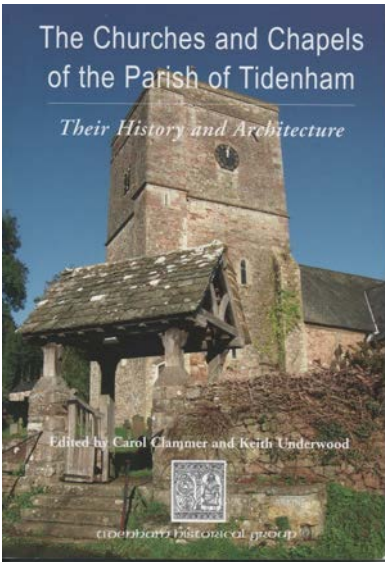
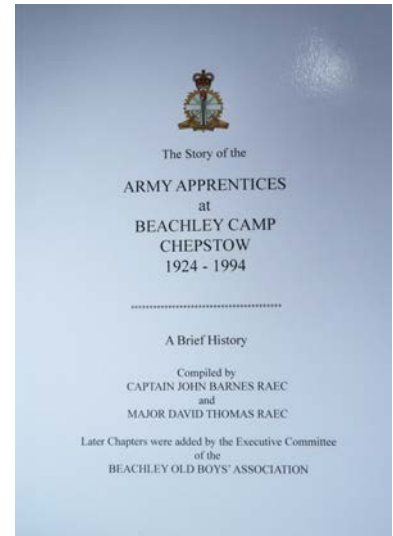
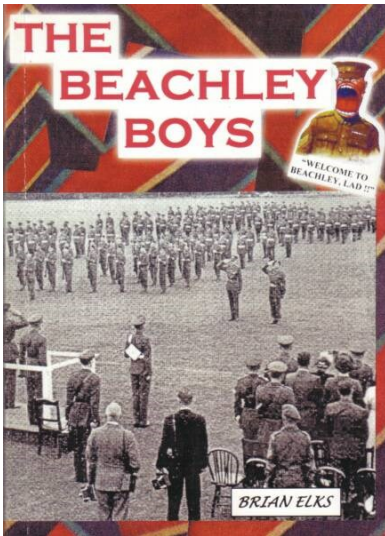
Place orders at admin@beachley.org

Additional items
illustrated on page 53

Details of Robot CDs on
page 48

Contact: Chris Rickets if you are unable to use the internet (details on Page 2).





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)

