

O B A N



ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

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Vice Presidents - Past Commandants

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SSgt Cuthbert REME (84C)

W E N Pusey (46A)

Committee meetings are held 3-4 times per year. Any member wishing to put forward a motion or item to the Committee for consideration may do so by writing directly to the Honorary Secretary. Additionally, an ad hoc administration committee is convened, usually under the Chairmanship of the College Adjutant and attended by all interested parties, to deal with the details of the reunion weekend.

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Arborfield Old Boys Association Newsletter

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From the Editor

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Issue 10. Again we have had a sizeable amount of letters in response to others and some on new subjects, and some interesting articles on a wide range of subjects, so many in fact that I have started compiling OBAN 11. It was very interesting for me to be able to put names to faces, having met so many of you personally at Reunion 96. Apologies for being brief, but there's no more space! Lastly, may I wish you all a Merry Xmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Last date for Issue 11 contributions:
28 february 1997.

Brian Hornsey (54A)

THE NORMAN FURSDEN AWARD

By
Lt Col Nigel Moore REME

The Norman Fursden Award has its roots in the Old Boys Association Award which itself goes back to 1981 (as far as I can trace at the moment) The Award was renamed in late 1986 in honour of Norman Fursden, an Old Boy who left a sum of money to the OBA to cover the cost of the Award on a recurring basis. The Award was aimed at apprentices who by their personal endeavour and actions in the eyes of the Community, Garrison or the College enhanced the prestige and reputation of the College. Acts of heroism, voluntary and noteworthy effort by individual apprentices in aid of the local community, Garrison or College in conjunction with satisfactory endeavour in all aspects of training would merit a recommendation for this award. Inevitably because of the nature of the award it is not necessarily presented every term however in the Spring 96 term there were 5 recipients each of whom met the awards strict requirements.

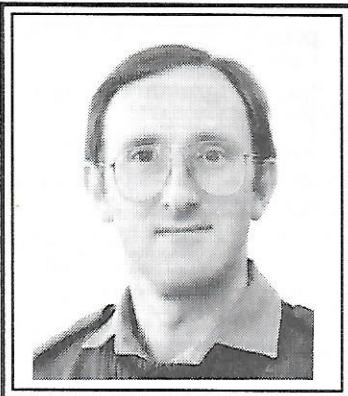
AT Fowler - 94B was selected for the Norman Fursden Award as a result of his prompt action at the scene of a car accident in which he resuscitated the accident victim and kept him alive until the arrival of medical help.

AT Cpl Anderson - 95C gained the Award as a result of his public spirited actions in assisting, in his own time and without prompting, the elderly in his home town.

AFL Cpl Clough, AT Bluff and AT Duce - 95C were deemed worthy of the Award as a result of their efforts to publicise the activities of the Army and the College. This initiative was not driven by the College but arose from the individual efforts of the apprentices themselves.

Chairman's Message

A good place to start with my first Chairman's Message is to tell you a little bit about myself. My name is Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Moore, I'm a mechanical engineer and I joined REME in 1979. Prior to that I worked for Hawker Siddeley, British Aerospace and British Rail. Most of my service has been here in the UK or in BAOR and sadly 'sunny postings' have never



come my way. I took over from Lt Col Bob Mount, the last in a long line of illustrious Commandants, in February and became the College's first Commanding Officer. What I took over was an extremely busy College manned by a group of dedicated staff who, despite all the changes over the past 18 months, remain to this day totally committed to producing apprentices who will form the backbone of the Army for many years to come.

At this stage it is worth giving a resume of my first 6 months in command as so much that will be of interest to all of you has happened. The reality of the end of the 2 year apprenticeship was brought home to everyone with 2 Pass Out Parades in April. Over 300 apprentices left to complete their trade training at SEAE and SEME leaving only the VMs of 94C and 95A to complete their 2 year courses in the College. At the same time the first 2 term intake, 95C, passed out thus marking not only the end of an era but also the start of a completely new phase in the College's history. Over 2000 friends and family attended these 2 parades, a logistic nightmare for the QM's staff who performed magnificently.

One other point of note during this term was the College's success in the annual Quadrangular Games with the other 3 apprentice colleges. Our apprentices did so well that we were in an unassailable position by the end of day 1 of the 2 day tournament. As we beat the apprentices of HMS SULTAN last November we were able quite rightly, and with some pride, to call ourselves Combined Services Apprentice Champions.

In May the first of many Royal Signals staff joined us in readiness for an intake of R SIGNALS apprentices in September. (If you recall from the last Chairman's Message, Arborfield is to become the home of a single Army Apprentices College training REME, RLC, RE and R SIGNALS apprentices on a 2 term course).

Also in May the trade wings, less Vehicle Wing, closed and sadly many old friends left the College most, I'm glad to say, for employment in SEME and SEAE. By the end of the term our R SIGNALS staff had increased further, Harrogate had closed and with the departure of John Lloyd I had gained a R SIGNALS adjutant.

During this period a Guards Lt Col and an AGC(ETS) Major (RAEC for those of you who have not been able to keep abreast of all the changes to the Army in recent years) were beavering away to redesign the 2 term course and to sort out the College organisation ready for the arrival of the RE and RLC apprentices in 1998 when Aldershot and Minley close. This work has gone surprisingly well and just to ensure the team do their job properly the AGC(ETS) Major will join the College in December for 2 years as our Senior Education Officer when Major Robin Cooper is posted.

What will the College be like? Firstly it will run a 2 term course covering pretty much the same as our current course but by then linked to the government's Modern Apprenticeship Scheme. The College badge will revert to that known and loved by many of you. However, each apprentice will wear the capbadge of his parent Corps.

The College will change its name to 'The Army Apprentices College' (haven't we been here before?) and such old established traditions as the 3 intake per year pattern and the College Collect will remain unchanged. Each intake will be of 250 from September 1996 until 1998 when it will rise further to around 350 giving a college strength of around 650 at one time. To cater for these numbers a new gymnasium will be built, the blocks at the top of the old college square will be converted back to barrack blocks and we will take over the old Garrison HQ and REME Officers' School building as a military training wing. In addition the current gymnasium will be converted to a lecture theatre and church, WRVS facilities will be expanded and we hope to get a floodlit all weather playing surface as well. Many of these improvements will be complete by Christmas this year with the remainder complete by early 1998. Finally the College will get its own permanent External Leadership Wing at Cwrt Y Gollen Camp at Crickhowell in Wales.

If all this seems to be layer upon layer of change than you are absolutely right. However, although the length and structure of the course have changed, my staff and I remain dedicated to ensuring that our apprentices will be of the same high calibre they have been since 1939. We are all determined that the College in its new form will succeed and with your support I have no doubt that this vision will become a reality.

**From the Honorary Secretary
Larry Le Var (47A)**

I recently drove into Rowcroft Barracks and saw a sign which took me back almost 50 years. On the sign was the original Army Apprentices cap badge, which is being used again by the new Army Apprentices College, although each apprentice will wear the cap badge of his parent corps. It is a world of change, last year you visited Princess Marina College, this year you visited the Army Apprentices College. Under the circumstances it is pleasing to know that the first apprentice badge has been re-introduced for the apprentices of the future.

The numbers attending Reunion 96 were well up on the 1995 figures. My thanks to Tony Wootton who liaised with members and spent much time ensuring that everything went smoothly. At the time of writing, we had 196 booked in for the dinner which is an all time record - we could have gone to over 210 if we had the space available! Some of the increased attendance must be due to the fact that Reunion 96 was advertised in SAGA Holiday magazine. My telephone number has been ringing non-stop. It became apparent that I was the named contact person. Some of the names I was addressed by were quite interesting - Mr Levi, Mr Lever, Mr Lava etc. As a result of these calls I was contacted by Mark Clifford, a friend from bygone days - it was 30 years since we last spoke!

Once again, the Commanding Officer and Staff of the College have been fully involved in the administration for Reunion 96. It is very much a fact that without the support of the College we would have had problems. Since the departure of Major John Lloyd QLR, Captain Colin Scoles RRF has taken over as Chairman of the Administration Committee, who we welcome, and he is doing an excellent job. I had great pleasure in presenting John with an Old Boys tie in recognition of his services to the Association. He was also offered and accepted membership of the AOBA. We wish him well in his new posting.

We have also lost SSgt Park REME from the Committee. I would like to him for representing the interest of the light blue berets and being involved in the activities of the past reunion weekends, including the 'bowler' and carrying the banner on parade. We wish him well in his new posting.

I would also like to welcome SSgt Cuthbert REME who replaces SSgt Park. He is also an ex boy, and has since been persuaded to become a member!

John Northam continues as Membership Secretary, an appointment he fills most efficiently. Brian Hornsey (as you will be reading in this copy of OBAN) is doing a really professional job as Editor and Mick Harold has been very busy organising the seat plan for the 196 or so diners! I mention just a few names, but there are numerous other helpers who make the reunion weekend possible.

May I also take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas, good health and all prosperity for 1997.

Larry Le Var

**From the Membership Secretary
John Northam (47A)**

Well, we finally made it! On 19 May we travelled down to Somerset to spend the night with my brother and sister-in-law ready to move in to our new home the following day. All went according to plan and since then we've been getting used to a different way of life and enjoying the experience. The natives have made us feel very much at home and on a clear day we've a view of the Blackdown Hills and Wellington Monument.

Our new address and phone number appear inside the front cover

Thanks to some very active recruiting on behalf of a few members, our active (address) list now stands at 634, an increase of 34 since OBAN 9 and a whopping 54 since the last AGM, leaving no doubt that the Association is very much alive and well.

On the down side, only 78% have paid their subs for 1996 and will not therefore receive OBAN 10 - they will instead receive the usual gentle reminder and, hopefully, a number will respond in time for Issue 11. And so it goes on!

Finally, may I also take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 1997.

John Northam

REUNION 96

Presentation to June Northam

On Saturday 5 October, during the buffet lunch in Rowcroft Barracks Sgts' Mess, our chairman, Lt Col Nigel Moore, presented June Northam with a watch in recognition and thanks from the AOBA for her services in assisting with organising the membership administration with husband John and also assisting with the production of the OBANs from their resurrection in Spring 1992 with the first OBAN 1, to their handover at OBAN 8.

June spent many a long evening, typing and re-typing, laying out the pages, updating membership details, proof reading, checking grammar and spelling mistakes. Without June's dedication (& John's enthusiasm) there would indeed be no OBAN in existence today!

The Association wishes June a long and happy retirement and, of course, will always be very happy to welcome her to future reunions.

PERSONALITY SLOT

by **Brian Conway (42A)**

In January I enlisted in the ATS (Boys), Arborfield coming from the Duke of York's Royal Military School. I was appointed the first Boy Drum major of the Corps of Drums.



Boy Drum Major B Conway, May 1942

I left Arborfield in 1944, when the School dispersed prior to the D-Day landings and I was posted to the Motor Fitter's School, Thornhill and Clayton Barracks, Aldershot for a trade test.

On completion, I was posted to 14 TTC REME, Ashton-under-Lyne for driving instruction and from there to Infantry training Centre, Meanee Barracks, Colchester.

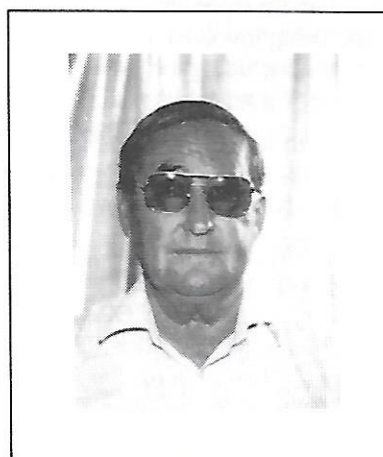
In December 1945, I went to Otley Transit camp for posting to the Royal Armoured Corps School, Ahmednager, India.

On the partition of India, I was then posted, in May 1947, to 2 Base Workshops, Tel-El-Kebir, Canal Zone, Egypt and in November of that year was posted to 325 L of C Workshop, Mackinnon Road and Nairobi, Kenya.

From then on my potted history goes like this:

- January 1948: 406 Command Workshop, Mogadishu, Somalia.
- January 1949: 7th Royal Tank Regiment, Tidworth and Bovington Camp.

- October 1950: C Squadron, 7th RTR, 29th Infantry Brigade, Korea.
- January 1952: Permanent staff instructor, RASC (TA), Leeds.
- January 1954: Motor vehicle mechanic instructor, Army Apprentices School, Arborfield.
- April 1957: 624 Ordnance Depot Vehicle Park Workshop, Benghazi, Libya.
- January 1960: Motor vehicle mechanic instructor, Army Apprentices School, Arborfield, where I re-established the Corps of drums.
- September 1967: I left the service and entered Garnett Teacher Training College, Roehampton, London.
- 1968: Head of British Teaching team, Islamic Arts and Craft School, Tobruk, Libya.
- 1970: Lecturer, Nassau Technical College, Bahamas Islands.
- 1972: Oman Technical Institute, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.
- 1975: Service manager, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.
- 1978: Peugeot Automobiles Nigeria (Pan Ltd, Kaduna, Nigeria.
- 1980: Senior maintenance engineer, Royal Palaces, Salalah, Sultanate of Oman.
- 1986: Retired to Cyprus.



Brian Conway as he is today

The 'Behind the Scenes Gang' - Pantomime 1947

by Ted Brigham (49A)

What memories spilled back from OBAN 9 - Page 15 and the idea of putting on a pantomime. Its inception was early in the summer of 1947. Until then, the Camp Hall had only a stage with one set of curtains and a roll-up cinema screen. In order to put on the pantomime the stage had to be converted to being a fully operational theatre stage with curtains, wings, coloured lighting, scenery and several backcloths. Battens of coloured lights were needed above the stage at front, centre and rear plus, of course, foot-lights. Additionally, lighting sets were needed overhead, in front of the curtains. There were, I believe, existing spotlights for the hall side walls and in the cinema projection box. To control all this, we had to build a full switchboard complete with dimmers, fuses and switches.

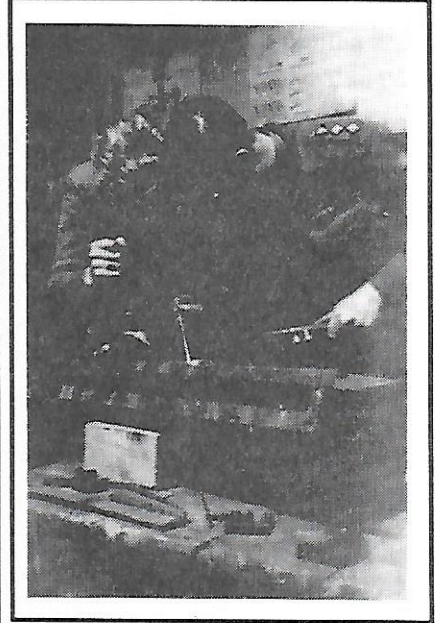
Captain McAuliffe REME and Corporal Stanford RE recruited a 'behind the scenes gang' to construct all this. When we were not in the workshop we were more often under or above the stage than behind it.

The Padre, Reverend Dacre RACHD, was the producer and he was constantly asking us to hammer or saw quietly so that he could hear the actors rehearsing. So we would endeavour to saw or hammer in time with the singing, but it seems even this, somehow, distracted the performers. I wonder why?! The effect of hammering under the stage immediately under their feet surprisingly caused problems to the performers as they rehearsed their new dance routines! We really were trying to help - honestly!

The budget was very limited, the costumes taking most of the cash. Others may remember more vividly to what extent was taken to provide the various items needed without actually spending money, as maybe the photographs depict. The vast proportion of the equipment and other bits were begged for or 'acquired'. Of course, training materials were used and a lot of parts were made as part of our workshop training exercises. With the lights in particular, improvisation was the order of the day. Close examination of the welding photo will reveal that the metal was once corrugated! In fact, it used to be a hut!

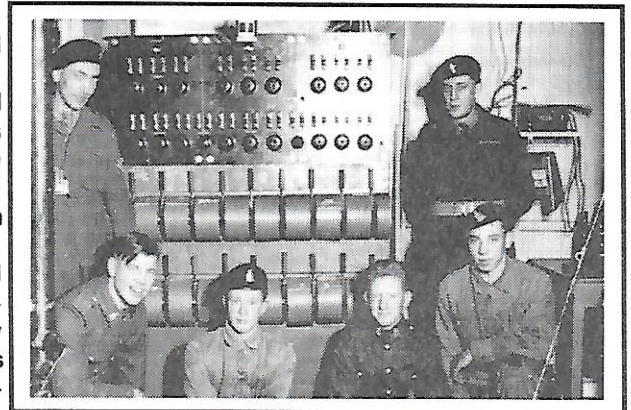
The dismantled sheets were laid on the floor in the MT Workshop and then were flattened with a road roller. They were rolled on one side, then inverted, and rolled again until flat. The sheets were then taken to the Fitters Workshop, where templates were made, the sheets being marked out, guillotined and punched into shape prior to welding. The 'welding' photo, in fact, shows my first lesson in welding - being a Telemech that was not considered part of our normal curriculum! Captain McAuliffe allowed us all to try with the result that he had many blow-holes to refill afterwards. The final assemblies were then silver plated and completed with light fittings and wiring. The coloured filter sheets in front of the bulbs had to be purchased because they had to comply with Fire Regulations. The switchboard was a great achievement. The switches and fuses were new and 'obtained', I believe, from Garrison Services. The dimmers were made from asbestos sides, fitted with arcs of brass studs, interconnected with wire. The handles, control rods, dimmer studs and many more parts were turned up in the Machine Shop. Several nights were spent assembling and testing these, getting the studs flat and smooth, this being essential to their correct operation - quite a marriage of trade training, voluntary work and procurement. The frame was made from angle iron and the protective screen from wire mesh. The light was originally covered with a tin can to direct the light beam onto the script table and yet not shine onto the stage.

The second photo shows, from left to right, Cpl Stanford RE, Bill Webster, Mike Lindley, Ted Brigham, Capt McAuliffe and A/T Pickard - sorry, his first name has been forgotten over the 47 years. Cpl Stanford supervised all the woodwork. To produce the panoramic effect behind the stage and to serve as a cinema screen, a curved wooden frame was built to the full height of the ceiling and nearly the full width of the stage. This was covered with wire mesh and then coated with cement, which was then covered with plaster and skimmed smooth. Yes, many aspiring actors had 'fly droppings' from us 'flies' working overhead! I believe only one hammer was



A Lesson in Welding

dropped and that was behind the panoramic screen. While all this was well underway, the props, scenery, wings, and several backcloths also had to be made and painted. Many of these had to be suspended from beams so that they could be raised and lowered. Most beams were formed from old scaffolding poles and together with the all the lighting rigs, the area above stage became quite crowded. There were also many sandbags suspended on ropes in the wings, used as counterweights for various props. Many months of our evenings were spent devoted to this often hard and dirty work. We received training in skills that we would otherwise never have experienced. Hard work, but very enjoyable and varied. By the time the Christmas pantomime started I had joined the Pipe Band as Trainee Drum Major, but that was another experience and another story.



The 'Behind the Scenes Gang'

THE ROYAL TOURNAMENT - 1947 The Toy Soldier Display

by Bill Pusey (46A)

The decision was made early in 1947 that the Army Apprentices School, Arborfield, as it had been designated on 1 February 1947, would participate in the first post war Royal Tournament. Apprentices from 3 and 4 divisions would fill the roles required, but those selected did not appreciate how much work was involved. The smallest apprentices were drilled in the various movements under the eagle eye of RSM R L McNally, Scots Guards, initially on the square and then on the football pitch between the Camp Hall and the Sergeants Mess as depicted by the large photo. We were drilled on grass so that we would get used to the feel of the tree bark that covered the floor area at Olympia. A select group was taken and given tuition to provide a taste of the full parade in restricted areas. I recall going to the Temperance Hall (now defunct I believe) in West Street, Reading, adjacent to the Co-operative Store and performing with my colleagues on the stage. On another occasion, we gave the full display at a fête in a town centre car park, which I am now fairly certain was in High Wycombe. Perhaps one of the other 102 toy soldiers can remember the location more accurately.

However, the greatest adventure was the 3 weeks we spent in Olympia, living in partitioned rooms on the balcony of one of the lesser halls, being fed at a level we had not experienced before, and rising to a later reveille at 0730 hrs, with parades mainly consisting of rehearsals both in and out of the main arena and last, but no means least, the tournament pay of 1/9d a performance! On Wednesdays and Saturdays there were matinees to be performed and on these days we were given 3/6d! Of course, this went into credit as usual.

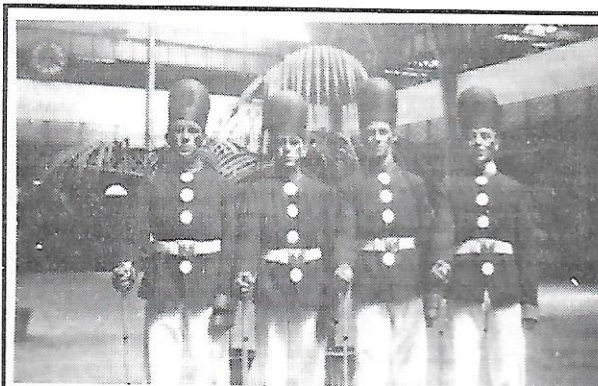
At every performance there was always someone very distinguished in the Royal Box and when Queen Mary, accompanied by her granddaughter Princess Margaret came, the Toy Soldiers lined the red carpet and for the first time in my life I saw members of the Royal Family in the flesh.

Previously, like most people, I had only seen them on film during visits to the cinema. Princess Margaret would have been 16 years of age and appeared precisely as one of the princesses described in the fairy tales of story books - she had a flawless complexion, lovely hair, a beautiful face and a perfect figure. I think she took the breath away of every member of the Guard of Honour - she certainly took mine!!

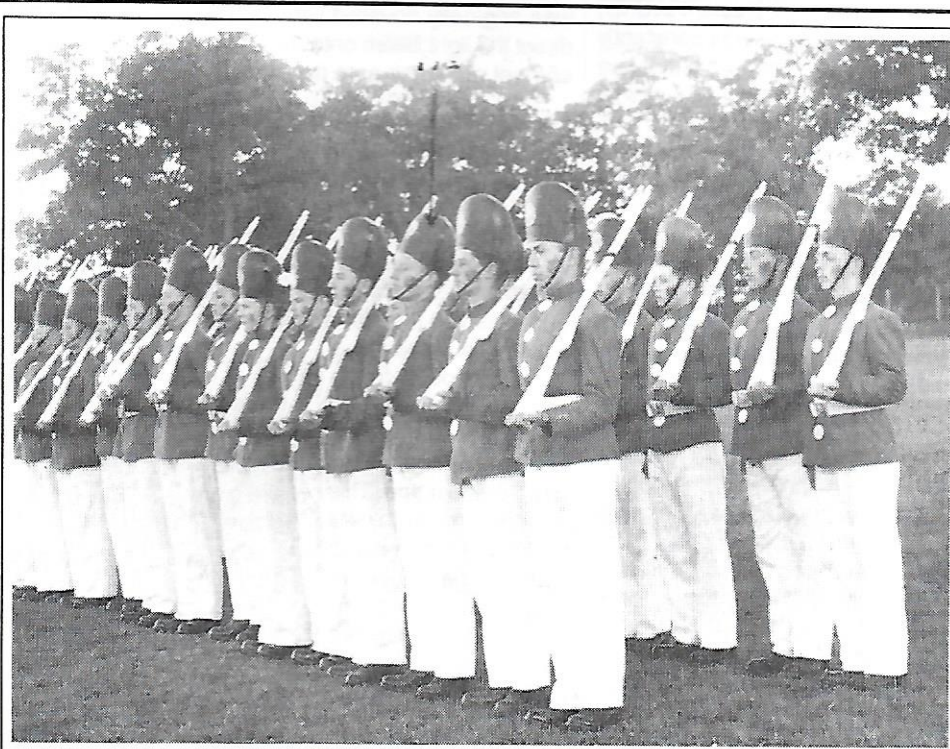
I used to spend most of my time playing chess with one of the managers from the Lyons Restaurant. One day while doing so, was told by one of the Reserves that a snap rehearsal had been called and I had been listed as absent. I immediately got into my Toy Soldier uniform and

rushed to the Hall where RSM McNally was just commencing the build-up to the rehearsal. I marched up to him and said, "A/T Pusey reporting for rehearsal duty, Sir! I was playing chess and did not hear the parade call. I'm sorry, Sir!" He fixed me with those clear blue eyes, blinked once and said, "Fall in!"

I heard nothing more about the incident and have come to the conclusion that never before had he received an apology from an apprentice on parade. It had left him completely non-plussed. I may be wrong, but I like to think that was the case - anyway, it is one of the several memories I have of the Royal Tournament in 1947.



Left to right: Bill Pusey, Alf Parker, George Rowe, 'Freddie' Mills



Apprentices on Parade as Toy Soldiers in 1947

REMINISCENCES - Part II
Further Thoughts from an
Oct '43 Ex Boy
By
Walter Jobber (Oct 43)

Of course, although we were enlisted into the Army as Apprentice Tradesmen, the School certainly took that old saying, 'a healthy mind in a healthy body', to heart - especially the healthy body. Physical training or PT was amply catered for and many a *happy hour* was spent in the gymnasium doing all sorts of exercises and other violent activities that could be devised by the 'Gymbusters'. The following are a few who are immediately recalled whenever I think back on the sporting activities at Arborfield:

Cpl. Mickey (the last name unfortunately forgotten) who was a wizard on the high bars and reputed to have been an ex circus performer.

Bdr Sam Cohen, of whom it was said that he was thoroughly skilled in the art of unarmed combat, although I must say that I did not witness any evidence of same.

Cpl Alfie Danabar (brother of the British Boxing Champion Arthur Danabar), who was no mean performer himself and who I had regular contact throughout my sojourn at Arborfield (and Bury) through my membership of the boxing team.

SSI Cunliffe, who played professional football (for Aston Villa, I believe).

Sgt Dennis Compton of England, Arsenal and Middlesex fame, who of course, played both football and cricket at the highest level.

CSMI Dave Forward, the Welsh middleweight champion.

Cpl Allenby Chilton who played inside-left for Manchester United's post war team.

There were many others who shaped our destiny for sport and

other allied activities and if I have not mentioned those known to others please bear with me. The memory is not what it used to be and names illude me, though I can still remember the command, 'Top of the gym - Go!' I cannot remember the name of the RSML, although I did meet up with him again in Hong Kong in 1949/50, where he was in charge of the Army Football Team.

Being a keen sportsman, I partook of most sports that were available. The best was a toss-up between boxing and football. There was not much in it, but boxing had the slight edge.

When I first competed in the Company and School championships, the winners and losers both received a NAAFI voucher after the results had been declared, the winner's for 5/- and the loser's for 2/6d (*qv - Walter's article in OBAN 9 - Ed*). After a while this stopped as somebody (I never did find out who it was) said that the vouchers were considered payment and that we were infringing our amateur status. We boxers were not too worried as to what our status was. What concerned us was that we were being denied a good feed in the NAAFI. After this, for each fight we participated in, we were given a certificate and a good dinner in the main cook-house after the contests had all been completed no matter what time we finished the last bout. Not only this, but we got to visit places outside the School. Trips were organised to box at Reading, London, Hartley Wintney and other places that could be arranged by Captain Day, OC D Company and his sterling supporter in the ATS - never did know her name because as far as we boxers were concerned she was forbidden territory. Maybe someone more interested than me managed to find out - all that interested me was that after each bout we had a good meal.

It can be seen from the foregoing that I, at least, looked after the inner man!

Football also allowed us to participate at outside locations. One of particular note was when we visited Broadmoor to play against their team. As can be imagined it was with some trepidation that we approached this venue. After all, we had been informed that not only were the inmates mad, but in addition they were all murderers. As it turned out, all our fears were ill-founded. We were treated like royalty and thoroughly enjoyed the game. I must say, though, it was a bit disconcerting to have the home team's supporters cheering every move we made and being quite nasty to their own team.

When we returned to the School after the invasion, having had a spell at Bury, Lancashire, our old loyalties were displaced. Some of us were transferred to different Companies than those allocated on our enlistment day.

I was informed that henceforth I would be in B Company instead of my original C Company. At the time, although I did not know it, this was to put me in touch with the footba'-mad Scotsman Captain Pete Gardner, Midlothian & Border Horse - I swear it, that was his Regiment, they had colourful names in them days).

At the drop of a hat, many the times his own, Captain Pete would organise 'a wee footba' match'. He had one ambition - to make B Company the top footballing Company of the School. Well, three ambitions really, because he also wished that Arborfield would always defeat Beachley (Chepstow to the uninitiated among us, remember, as far as we were concerned, there was only Arborfield and Chepstow Technical

Schools) and he was also adamant that B Company was going to be Champion Company at sport. Captain Pete had us out in all weathers, and I do mean all weathers! Snow storms, hail, buckets of rain all meant nothing to him. If you could see the ball at the end of your boot, the game was playable. It mattered not that the opposition, as well as the remainder of the team was invisible, if you could 'see it - kick it', was his motto.

Regarding his ambition to be Champion Company, I can remember one particular cross-country run (not my forte I hasten to add) when he instructed us to try and ensure that we ran 'as a team'. Well, we did, but I do not think that Captain Pete had it in mind for us all to come in as a single body - LAST! He was none too pleased and neither were we after we had completed the course for a second time! Needless to say, the Company did become the Champion Company (Sports).

Then there were the other sports that I indulged in, but not to the same extent as boxing and football - cricket, hockey, rugby and even a spot of athletics. Following are just a few of the people who instantly spring to mind when I start to think about life at Arborfield.

Boxing: Pilkington, 'Tosh' Harris, 'Johnno' Johnson, 'Susie' Benfield (jnr), 'Baggy' Orchard, 'Paddy' Hart, 'Lugsie' Ballantyne. Others come to mind such as, Greenfield, McNally and Co, but are difficult to identify as persons.

Football: 'Lofty' Hayward, 'Pod' Livesy (last seen in Singapore circa 1950 as a Sergeant Clerk in the RASC), 'Jacko' Jackson (now he was a runner), Reg Tye, 'Scoop' Middleton, Dave Higgs and others too numerous to mention, but remembered - especially when I take

the photographs out, which I must say is quite often these days.

For me the pleasure I experienced while playing the different sports at Arborfield lasted throughout the remainder of my Army career and I must say for a reasonable length of time after leaving the service.

40th ANNIVERSARY REUNION

By Peter Gripton (56B)

Regular readers of OBAN will recall an earlier letter from this trusty (or should that be crusty?) scribe, hoping that a large number of 56B ex-brats would be able to attend the 1996 Reunion in October. In some ways, this has been overtaken by event - that being a 'mini' reunion, which took place over the weekend of July 13/14 in the Sergeant's Mess at what is still (just!) Princess Marina College.

At this point I would like to say a big thank you to RSM Roy Matthews for allowing us to use the Mess, to himself and his lovely wife for their hospitality, and Kevin and all his staff who helped make the occasion such a success.

Just back-tracking for a while now, having hoped to attract 56B back to the 'official' Reunion, John 'Doc' Houghton called me and together we discussed the possibility of a Summer get-together, and this to include wives, sweethearts and/or girl friends - or any combination of the same!! Well, to cut a long story short as they say, we managed to arrange the event, and I would like to thank John for all his efforts in producing the menus, place names, car passes etc, in fact the 'admin' side that goes behind a successful occasion.

Most people arrived at lunch-time

on the Saturday, and the Mess reverberated with such comments as 'You haven't changed a bit - but where's the hair?', 'How come your hair's the same colour as mine now?' and 'You still owe me five bob!'

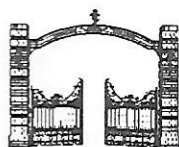
After a few visits to the bar, and a splendid buffet lunch, we were all left to ourselves for a while, some wandering round the perimeter, trying to remember where all the old buildings used to be, others dashing off to visit local friends, and a few who retried the ancient art of Egyptian PT!

We all met up in the bar (strangely enough) for a pre-dinner drink - or two - and were then piped into dinner by one of the present apprentices - don't they look young nowadays?

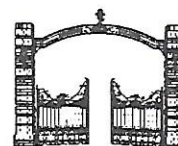
Dinner was a splendid affair and we had further entertainment from the piper, a drummer and Scottish dancer - well done lads. After that, retirement back to the bar was almost compulsory, and amidst all the elbow bending, a few of us old rockers managed to show how jiving used to be done, having been well practiced at such venues as the Oxford, Court School of Dancing, the Majestic etc - Fred Hall's efforts in the Camp Hall notwithstanding!

Sunday morning arrived - somewhat early for some! - and after a real Army style breakfast (did you manage to nick any cold fried bread Norman?), we all said our Good-byes and looked forward to 'doing it again sometime' - but perhaps *not* in another 40 years!!

Watch this space, as they say! Meanwhile, let's hope that everyone arrived home safely (How's the car, Bob?), and that everyone can come back in October - plus all those who couldn't make it this summer.



REUNION 96



ATTENDEES

ADAMS BRYAN Oct42
ADAMS DENNIS 45A
ADEY KENNETH Jan42
BAKER BILL 44B
BALDWIN PETER Jan42
BARRETT BILL 42C
BARRETTO B D 48B
BATES STANLEY 43A
BAX ALEX 44A
BAX LARRY 46A
BENFIELD R Oct 43
BENDALL GORDON 47B
BENDALL JEFF 64A
BEUZEVAL JOHN 62C
BIRCH ALAN 44B
BLACKMAN RAY May39
BOLDING DAVE 43A
BOLDING JIM 44A
BOND LEN 39B
BONE DAVID 44B
BOUCHER DOUG 43A
BOWEN MERVYN 39B
BRADSHAW JOHN 45A
BRICKLEY DAVE 61C
BROOMFIELD EDDIE 45A
BURTON WILLIAM 51B
BYRNE GEORGE 48A
CAINE PETER Feb44
CAREW ROGER 47B
CASTELL BOB 64A
CHALMERS STEVE 50A
CHATTEN GERRY 39A
CHITTY BARRY 68B
CHRISTIE PHIL 46A
CHURCH PETER 57B
COLLIS JIM 39A
COLQUHOUN DEREK 46A
COOPER EDWARD 52A
COPPARD ROBIN 57A
COULTAS VINCENT Mar41
COWDREY CYRIL 46B
COX JEFFREY 65A
CRESSWELL DOUGY Jan42
CROSS DAVID
CROWSON PETER 44A
CURNOW PETER 44A
CURRIE GEOFF 62B
CUTHBERT MIKE 84C

DALHOUSIE NORMAN 43A
DANGERFIELD LES Oct39
DANN ROBERT 42C
DAVIDSON BOB Oct43
DAVIS MIKE 60B
DAVIS PETER 38C
de BARRY BARNETT BARRY 52B
DEAR GERALD 39May
DERRICK R J 48B
DODDS RUSSELL 56B
DOIG JOHN 42Oct
DORWARD MIKE 60A
DOUGALL BOB 39May
DREW JOSEPH 47B
DUTTON JOHN 43Apr
EDGECOCK LEN 46A
EDWARDS EDDIE 46B
EGLETON BARRIE 52B
FALE IVAR 38B
FARRELL DENIS 54B
FEAST JOHN 60A
FERNS DAVID 44B
FOOTNER WALLY 39B
FORTUNE BRIAN 56B
FRAZER FRANK 42C
FUNNELL MICHAEL Oct42
GARDINER RONALD 46A
GARDNER CLIVE 63B
GIBSON PETER Perm Staff
GILES KENNETH 42B
GOAD PETER 46A
GODDARD D 46A
GOODWIN GRAHAM 51B
GORDON EDWARD 60A
GREEN JIM 43A
GRINT DAVID 64A
GRIPTON PETE 56B
GUEST TREVOR 60B
GUSCIN STANISLAW 48B
GUY TONY 43A
HADAWAY KEITH Oct42
HALL NOBBY July39
HAMBLY BOB 64A
HAROLD GEORGE 46A
HAROLD MICK 53B
HARRIS ALAN 59C
HATT GEOFFREY 64A
HAYTER DAVID 43B
HEAD TONY 46A

HINCKS GERRY 56B
HODSON FRANK 46B
HOOPER BILL 39B
HORNSEY BRIAN 54A
HORWOOD PETER 46A
HOUGHTON JOHN 56B
HOUSE ANTHONY 64A
HOWES JOHN 55B
HOWLETT DAVID 56B
HOWORTH RAY 55B
HUDSON PAUL 58A
HUGHES ROY 45B
HUGHES TONY 50A
HUNT M W Perm Staff
HUNTER TONY 53B
JENNER KEN 44A
JOBBER WALTER Oct43
JOHNSON STEVEN 46A
KAY NEVILLE 46B
KEETLEY KEN 56B
KELLY BERT 39A
KELSEY JOHN 58A
KINSON JOE Perm Staff
KNOX GEOFF 55B
LARBY MICK Oct42
LAWSON PETER 46A
LE VAR LARRY 47A
LEE JOHN 55A
LENNOX TOM 50B
LIDDELL HARVEY 46B
LOFTUS ALAN Jan42
LOMAS MICHAEL 55B
LUDFORD ARCHIE 38J
MACDONALD JAMES Apr43
MACKAY CHRIS 60A
MacLELLAN JOHN 79A
MADDOX JOHN 44B
MALONE GERRY 47A
MARDON ALAN 42E
MARSH JOHN 60A
MARSHALL GEORGE 46B
MARTIN DUDLEY H38
MASON DUNCAN 65A
McCORMICK WALTER 38B
McCRILLEN BOB 46B
McGUIGGAN PETER 57B
McGUIRE MIKE 42C
McKAY DUNCAN 44A
MIDDLETON GARRY 60A



REUNION 96



MILLARD ROGER 46A
MILLER ROY 41A
MITCHELL BRIAN 60A
MORTON ALAN 51B
NIXON LAWERENCE Apr42
NORTHAM JOHN 47A
OLIVER GEORGE 45A
PACKMAN JOHN 39A
PANTER DAVID 46A
PARNELL PHIL 46B
PARSONS ANTHONY 42C
PARSONS MICK 46B
PATTERSON DENNIS 44A
PEARCE TOM Feb44
PEERS HARRY 44A
POULTON LEONARD 44A
PRESTON GERRY 44A
PRITCHARD ALAN 42C
PRITCHARD NORMAN 39C
PURSGLOVE GERRY May39
PUSEY BILL 46A
PYE LAWRENCE Oct43
RAINEY JOHN 54A
RAYNER ALAN Oct42
READ DAVID 65A
REYNOLDS JOHN 55B
RICHARDS DAVE 45A
ROBERTS MIKE 54B
ROBERTS SPANKY 39H
ROBSON DEREK 45B
SAINSBURY ARTHUR 39B
SANDFORD JIM 39B
SANDS FRANK 45B
SANDS JOHN 42C
SCHOFIELD DAVID 65A
SHALES DOUGLAS Feb46
SHAW HARRY 38C
SHINN PETER 44A
SHRUBSOLE BERNARD 49A
SILBY JIM 39E
SMART DAVID Jan42
SMITH CLIVE 55B
SMITH DONALD Jan42
SMITH KEN 55B
SMITH PETER 51B
SMITH WILLIAM May39
SPARGO P S 39
SPEARMAN IVAN Oct42
STEPHENSON WILLIAM 39A

STONE BRIAN 54A
STREETER GEORGE 39A
STYLES PETER May39
SULLIVAN BRIAN Oct36
SULLIVAN WILLIAM Oct39
SURTEES JOE Perm Staff
SURTEES TIM 76C
SURTEES WILLIAM
SURTEES WILLIAM 65B
SYMONDS LEN 54A
TATE WILLIAM 44B
TAYLOR BILL 48A
THOMPSON GERALD 45B
TILT DAVID 45B
TIVY VIC 44B
TODD JOHN 52A
TOWNSEND FRANK 52B
TOZER ALF 47B
TOZER ERNIE 48A
TRAVES ROGER 57A
TRILL HOWARD 54A
TUCKER ALAN Oct39
WADE DICK 39A
WALKER GINGER 46A
WARD RON 42C
WAYLAND DAVE 58A
WEBB ALAN 51B
WEBBER NICHOLAS 50B
WELLS FREDERICK 44A
WELLS WILLIAM 42B
WHEATLAND DEREK 57B
WIGGINS PAUL 58A
WILLIAMS COLIN 44A
WILLIAMS JOHN 52B
WILSON PAUL Jan42
WINCHESTER ALAN Jan42
WINTLE JOHN 39C
WORBOYS KEITH 39B
WRIGHT NORMAN 46A

GUESTS

ALANBROOKE VISCOUNT
CULLEN MAJOR AW
MATHEWS RSM RLP
PIGGOTT WO2 (CSM) G
SCOLES CAPTAIN C
THOMPSON CHAPLAIN P

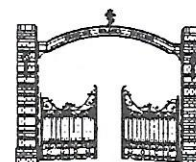
APOLOGIES

AYRE C 50B
BAKER JAMES 46B
BARNARD MICHAEL 61C
BENTLEY LW 42C
BIRCH ALAN 44B
BONE DAVID 44B
CHAMPKEN MICHAEL 39A
CHANCE COLIN 58B
COOK ERIC 42Jan
CROOKES LES 39B
CURRIE GEOFF 62B
DICKINSON L 45B
DUKMIO LOU 45B
DUNCANSON CAPT GM
FORD FRED 39A
GARDNER AUBREY 53A
GIBSON W A 39B
GILPIN KAYE 52B
GLLEOCK Oct42
GREEN K D B37
HAMILTON JOHN Oct39
HENRY PETE 49B
HIGGS DAVE 44B
HODGEKINS A
HOLLAND RON 39A
HORWOOD JOHN Oct43
HUTCHINS B G C 61B
KEHOE D J 42B
LEVITT DAVID 55A
LONG T E H36
MARSHALL D 46B
MOIR JOHN 39A
NEWCOMBE ROBERT 44A
O'CALLAGHAN TREVOR 42C
ORDYNSKI FRED 57B
PENFOLD F 42C
ROGERS GERRY 51A
SMALLMAN R D 39B
STANISLAW SOBLEWSKI 48A
STOCKEY J Oct39
TOMLINSON A 42A
WILLIAMS D S 45A



REUNION 96

As recalled by Tony Head (46A)



This was the reunion I was not going to miss. Why? Because it is 50 years since us innocents of 46A & 46B first passed through the gates of the Army Technical School in 1946.

I arrived a little late for coffee in the Sgts Mess and as I wriggled through the throng, towards the harassed coffee pot ladies, I could not help overhearing huddled groups talking about the 'jew member'. Who was he? In those far off times we had all come from different regions, backgrounds and religions, but who was this 'jewish' boy who merited so much discussion. With my coffee cup poised in one hand I soon found a group of kindred souls, and within minutes we were 'jawboning'. Jew member when we were first issued with battle dress, jew member 3-inch belts, jew member puttees, jew member wearing the bakerlite General Service Corps cap badge, Jew member 'Chalky White' and so on. (If you haven't already guessed, 'jew member' is a corruption of 'do you remember?').

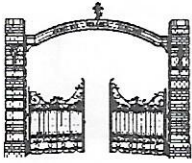
My name is Tony Head, alias 'Digger' from B Coy 46A. It befalls me, through forgetting the 'never volunteer doctrine' learned 50 years ago, to summarise the 1996 reunion as seen and heard by me. I was late for coffee because as at the 1994 reunion there were insufficient beds available and I needed somewhere to change my clothes. The reason for the shortage was that some 'nerks' like me forgot to tick the box on the application form and secondly... well does it matter?... all was part of the fun! I think it was a deliberate ploy to disorientate and confuse us so that we would all be placid at the AGM. Later as if by magic, apprentices in A Company decided to vacate their downstairs bedspaces for the enjoyment of sleeping upstairs on the floor. I cannot imagine what or who induced them but they all took it in good heart. The next day, before leaving, I carefully folded my (sorry - his) blankets and left a note saying 'Thanks for giving up your bed - much appreciated, Tony Head 46A.' Perhaps one day when he reads my obituary in 'The Craftsman', he will remember the 'pleasure' it gave him to relinquish his bed in 1996 to this old codger.

Now, back to the coffee session in the Sgts Mess. Shortly before 1100 hrs, RSM Mathews suggested 'sweetly', as only RSMs can, that perhaps we might like to make our way, either to spectate or partake in the old boys parade. I chose the latter. After forming up, we marched off, preceded by the Pipe Band, followed by our parade commanding officer Major Robin Cooper (64B), then our Standard bearer, Alan Morton (51B) and then us. Wow!, I thought, 201 of us, altogether having a collective age of over 10,000 years. If we were reduced to a single person we would pre-date 'Himself in the manger' by 8 centuries! Drill sergeants used to say 'there is one in every squad' and today 'he' was in

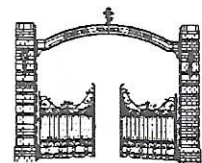
front of me. In the past I have tried to march with my right arm swinging forward as my right leg is also going forward and it makes my nerve ends tingle and I find it very difficult. Not so with 'no-name', he was a world champion. All I could do was to try not to look at him and concentrate on the drum beat. Through the Old Gates we marched and I thought of Boy Pipe Major Pete Green tossing his mace over the arch with all the panache of a world performer. We halted, advanced and took part in a short Drum Head Service conducted in front of the new Memorial Gardens by the College Padre, the Reverend Paul Thompson C F.

Then, off we marched to IT - that small piece of ground, always to be walked around and *not* across. The place where thousands of boots with 13 studs in each had endlessly crunched on the gravel. *The Old Barrack Square*. We didn't have to be here, but here we were. We were to be reviewed by Brigadier J B Palmer, watched by a host of very knowledgeable spectators and intensely scrutinised by the current apprentices of A Coy, already on parade. I prayed that our parade commander would shout 'halt' as our left feet hit the ground, so ensuring a good chance that the sound of our halt would be more like a clap of thunder than the clatter of a thousand castinets. He got it right. We all zapped to a halt, including no-name in front of me, and I thought to myself that it was a bit like riding a bike, you never forget it. By comparison to the 4 hours we stood on the square when Field Marshall Montgomery reviewed the passing out in 1946, the length of time we oldies in the rear rank stood to attention, waiting for our decreasing hair and increasing girth to be inspected by the Brigadier, was a piece of cake. I wondered, would he talk to me, and would my 66 year old joints unlock to respond to the next word of command when it came? He didn't and they did. The inspection over, we marched past the saluting base, eyes right, arms swinging, band playing, sun shining, no-name momentarily out of step, bus passes in our pockets - we felt good to be there - we really did!

After the parade, group photographs were taken, one each of intakes 46A and 46B and one of all the attendees. Then, it was back to the Sergeants Mess to gossip about old times, meet members of other intakes, watch Lt Col Nigel Moore make a presentation to outgoing OBAN 'girl Friday' June Northam and enjoy a much appreciated buffet lunch. Later, we would wander around the School grounds, visit the Corps Museum and Shop, the new Military Education Wing and for those nostalgically minded, a walk down memory lane. I, for one, stood on the place where, in the cookhouse on a certain Sunday morning, I consumed 11 plates of porridge before the 30 gallon vat was hosed out, ready for the next week. To this day my wife will not believe me!



REUNION 96



Next came the serious stuff. 1800 hrs and the AGM with the new Commanding Officer, Lt Col Nigel Moore, in the hot seat as Chairman. A lively meeting it was too, but those of us in the back rows had difficulty in hearing all that was said, owing to bad accoustics - perhaps a sound system could be set up for next year? As all members will be receiving a copy of the minutes, I will not repeat the details here. After the AGM, a quick snort in the bar and then off to the cookhouse - sorry, 'college restaurant', for dinner. Once more, the College had done us proud - 195 place settings, candelabras, excellent food, wine from a never ending supply, humorous speeches and a wonderful atmosphere. We enjoyed the drum playing of Drum Major Widney of the Royal Anglians, the pipe playing of Pipe Major Elder of the Black Watch and the dancing by AT Fleming 'of my Company' as CSM Piggot of the Coldstream Guards proudly declared to us. Twenty-seven volunteer apprentices and two supervising Corporals served us with the aplomb of professional waiters. Goodness knows how many more people were behind the scenes. The whole event went perfectly and I'm sure that all involved have our sincere thanks. As I slurped my sixth glass of wine, I said to my waiter, "Just think, you and your mates will look like us in 50 years time." I am not sure if this thrilled or depressed him, but I never got a seventh glass! After dinner, where else but back to the bar for more reminiscences. I later made it to my benefactor's bed by 2 a.m, others not until 4 a.m.

Next morning, after breakfast, off we went to the Arborfield Garrison Church of St Eligius for the morning service conducted by the Reverend Paul Thompson CF. We were pleased to see that Larry Le Var was able to join us and was able to read one of the 3 lessons, as he had been unwell over the weekend. For those of you who have not visited this church, it is a modern, light and airy building, small enough to allow an atmosphere of warmth and friendliness to pervade. If you have ever attended services where the only people singing were the Vicar and the fat lady, and the rest of the congregation were either mumbling or miming, I can tell you that this service was very different. The church was virtually full. I counted 104 persons in the congregation, including 26 apprentices and 9 members of the new REME TA Band. Of the remainder, probably half were old boys. The band played with such verve that whether we sang or mimed, it was of no consequence. The Reverend Paul Thompson got his message across with just the right amount of humour and be we apprentice or pensioner we could all relate to him - for me, a great experience. After the service, we remained in the church to have coffee. I noticed the impressive flower arrangements and was told that these had been prepared by 'Maggie' the Dental Corps dentist. I also noticed the clusters of chandelier type overhead lights and that 4 of them had blown. A well informed lady told me that

for some time the church had had a problem with lamp bulbs blowing prematurely and there was a good chance that more would blow while we were talking! She went on to speak of 'voltage spikes' and 'current surges' which went right over the head of this old vehicle mechanic. I lamely suggested that the spirit of St Eligius might be into energy saving! Driving home that day and thinking over events, I realised that, what with the free cup of coffee and the free 10 service page booklet, my £1.00 donation in the collection plate could have meant a nett loss for the church were it not for the willing help of the volunteers. I was still back in 1946, when £1.00 was twice my weekly pay! If you are reading this, Padre, I promise to donate a fiver next year - we all do, don't we lads.

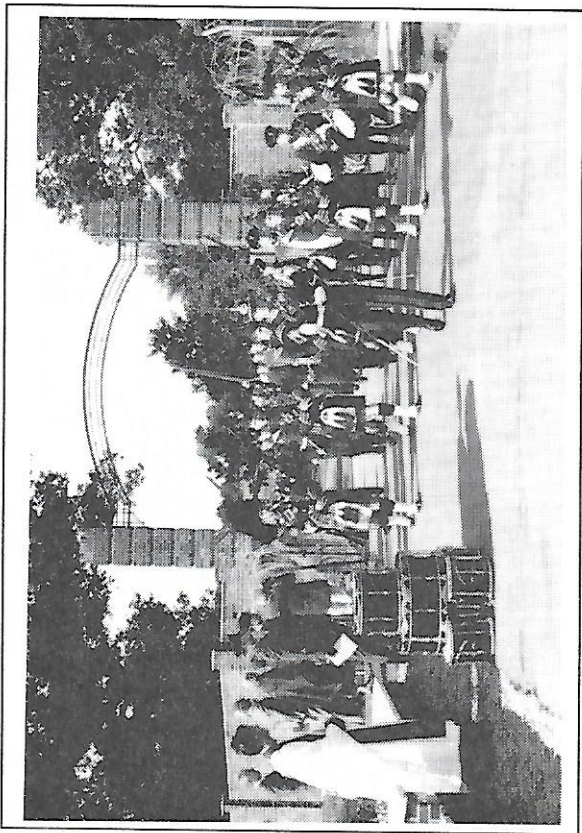
Previously, at the 1995 reunion, I met old pal Pete Horwood for the first time in 30 years. We enjoyed ourselves so much that we made a wager to pay each other £10.00 for every ex 46A boy that we could entice to this 1996 anniversary reunion. My phone bill trebled. I pored through telephone books, wrote to Pam Ayres, the Duke of Yorks School and even Alcoholics Anonymous. I telephoned numerous people, many of whom slammed down the receiver, muttering, "Bloody double glazing salesmen!" - this, after my opening gambit, "Hello, my name is Tony Head, I wonder if you might be....." I was lucky finding Doug Shales - there were only 7 Shales listed in the Jersey telephone book, and I trembled at the thought of trying to trace another 46A boy, John Smith. I found the detective work interesting and all of those contacted were delighted. Of the three I traced that were unable to attend the reunion, one lives in Australia, one is coping with illness and one is deceased. I do not mean to sound frivolous, but these were excuses that I sadly had to accept. In 1995, there were eight 46A ex boys at the reunion and this year there were seventeen. Now, if each of the seventeen can find one other of our intake for next year, just think of it - thirty-four people - or put another way - more than twenty-five percent of the original intake.

So, what do I think of the College today? What is different from our time? The buildings and facilities are far better than we had. As for the apprentices, dare I say it, they are better educated, more articulate, better informed, better fed, better clothed and appear happier with their lot. The one thing that has not changed, is the spirit that sets Arborfield apprentices apart from others.

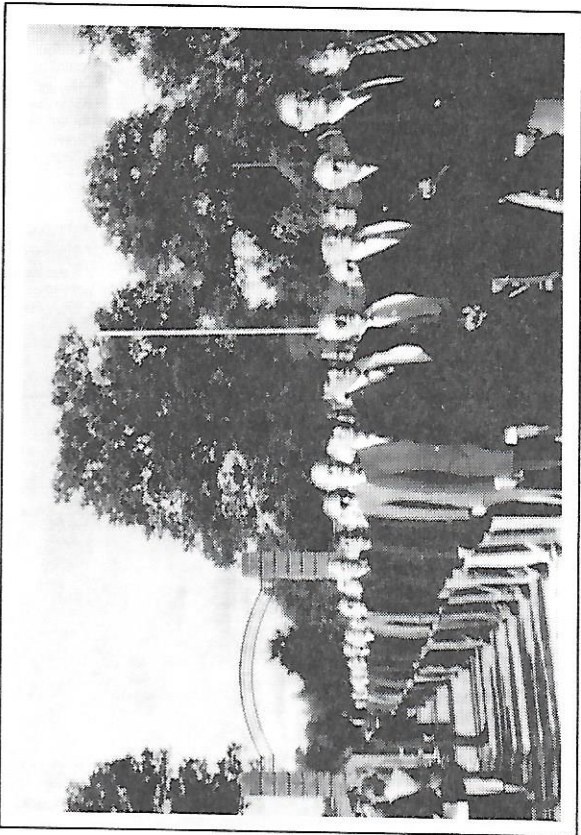
Finally, our thanks to all who worked so hard in the planning and execution of this year's reunion and also to those who continue to work throughout the year on behalf of the AOB. What can I say but you all do a great job. The 3 of us, jew member, no-name and myself look forward to 'swinging the lamp' with you all next year.



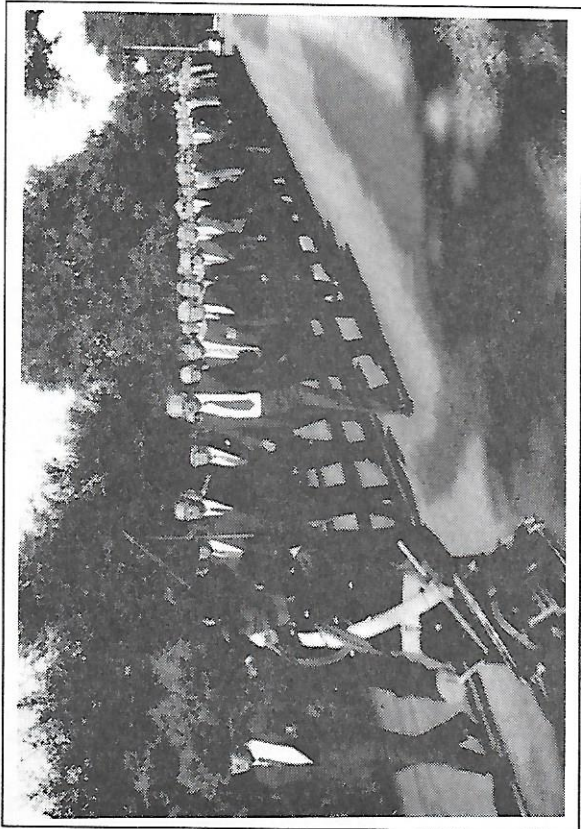
REUNION 96



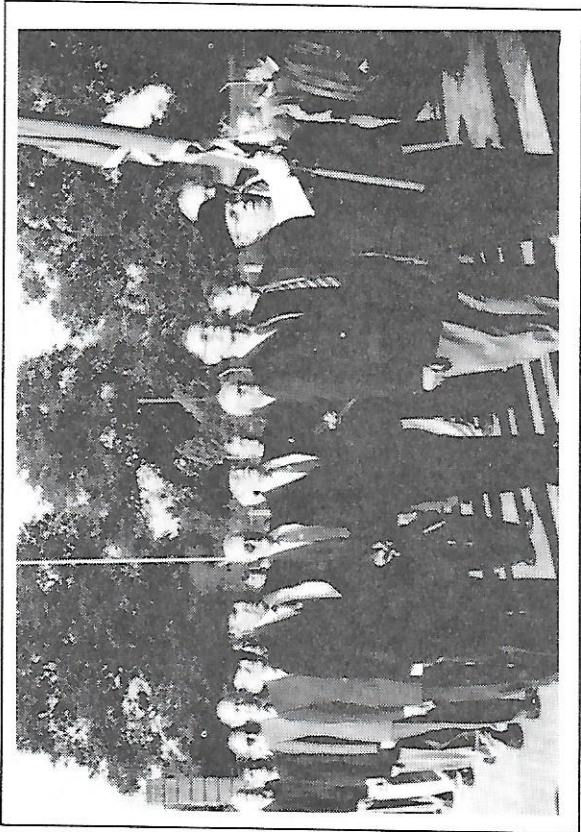
.....preceded by the Pipe Band.....



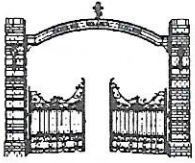
.....and then us.



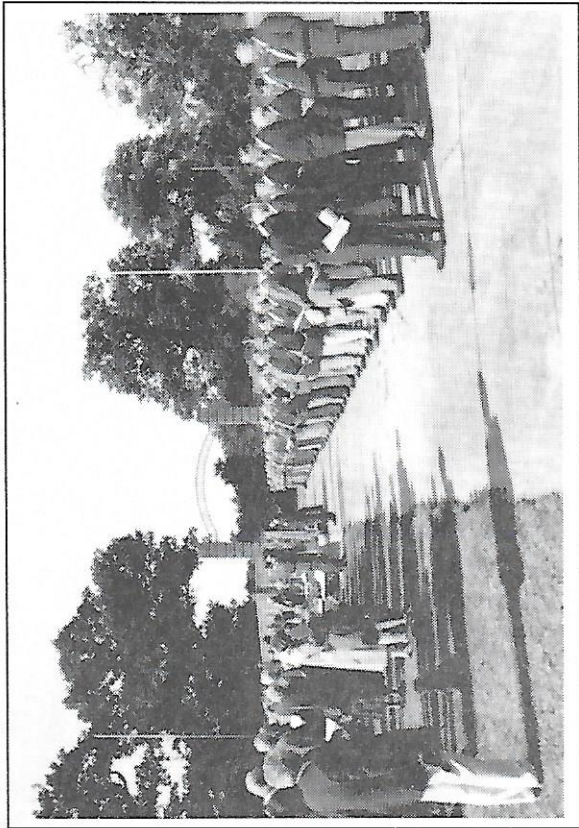
After forming up, we marched off.....



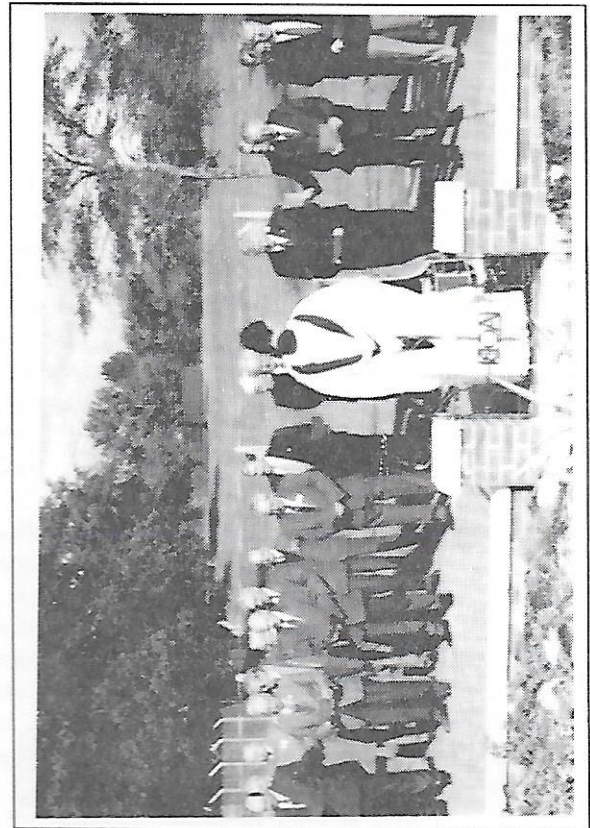
.....and then our Standard Bearer, Alan Moreton (51B).....



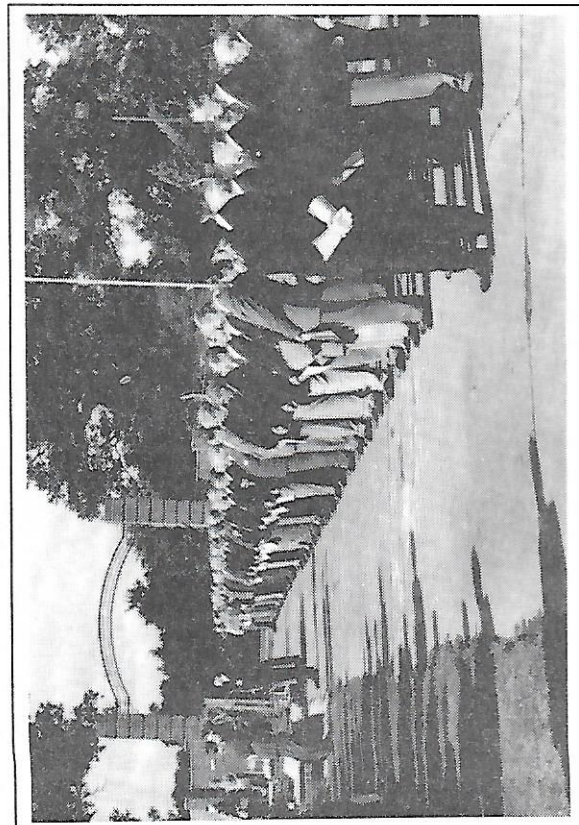
REUNION 96



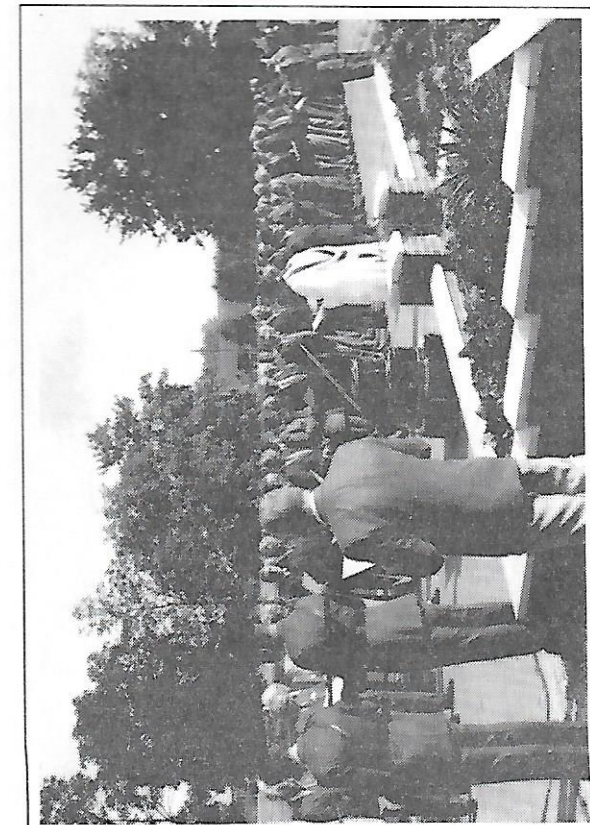
.....and took part in.....



.....conducted by the College Padre, Rev. P Thompson C F.



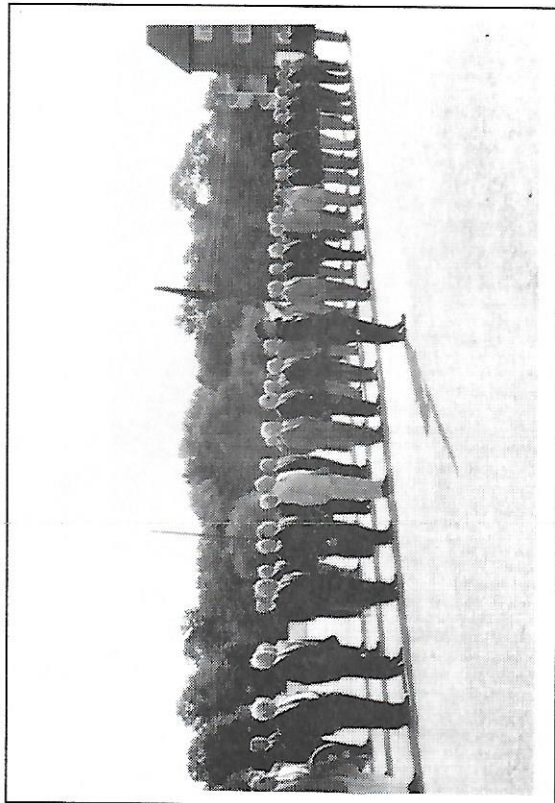
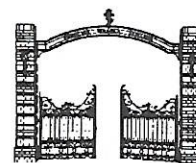
We halted and advanced.....



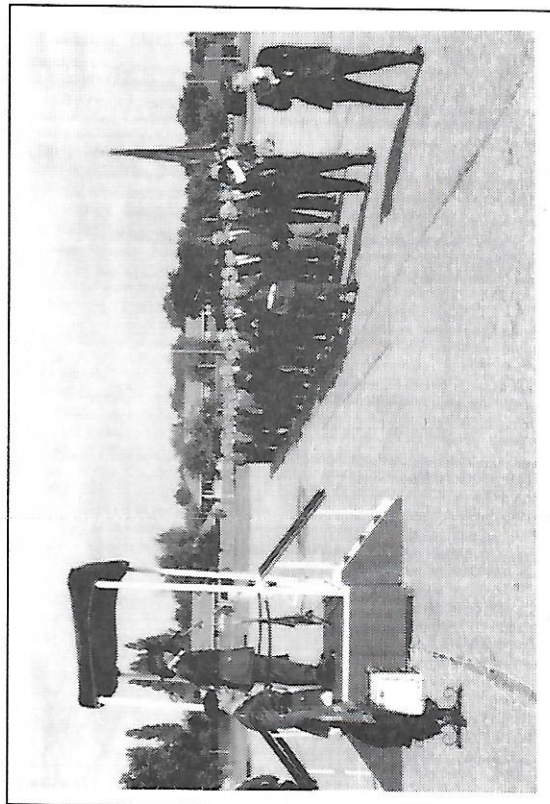
.....a short Drumhead Service.....



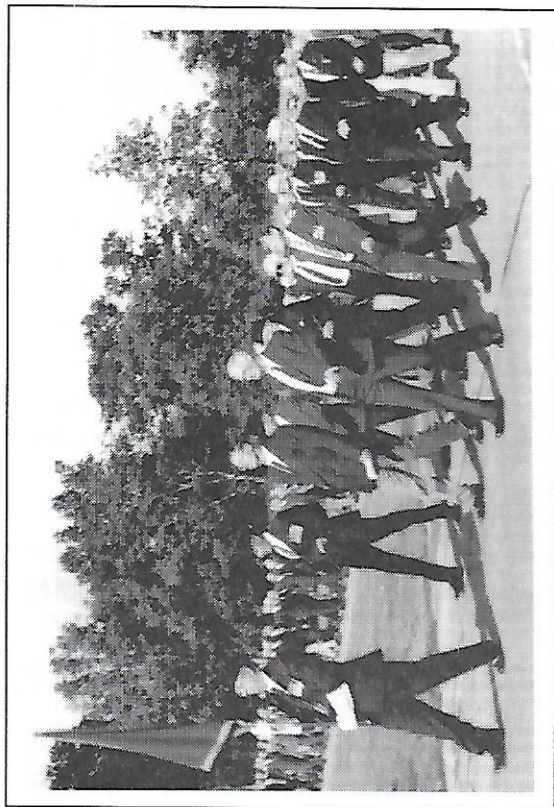
REUNION 96



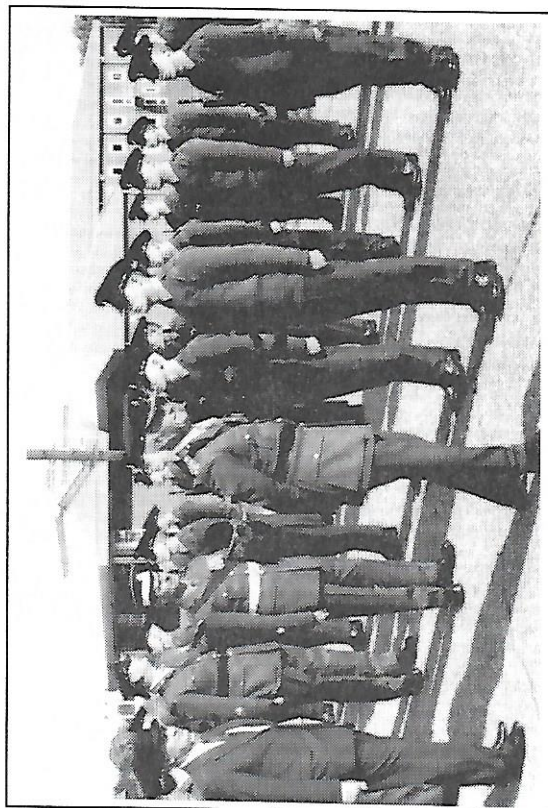
.....to IT - that small piece of ground.....



We marched past, eyes right, arms swinging, the Band playing.



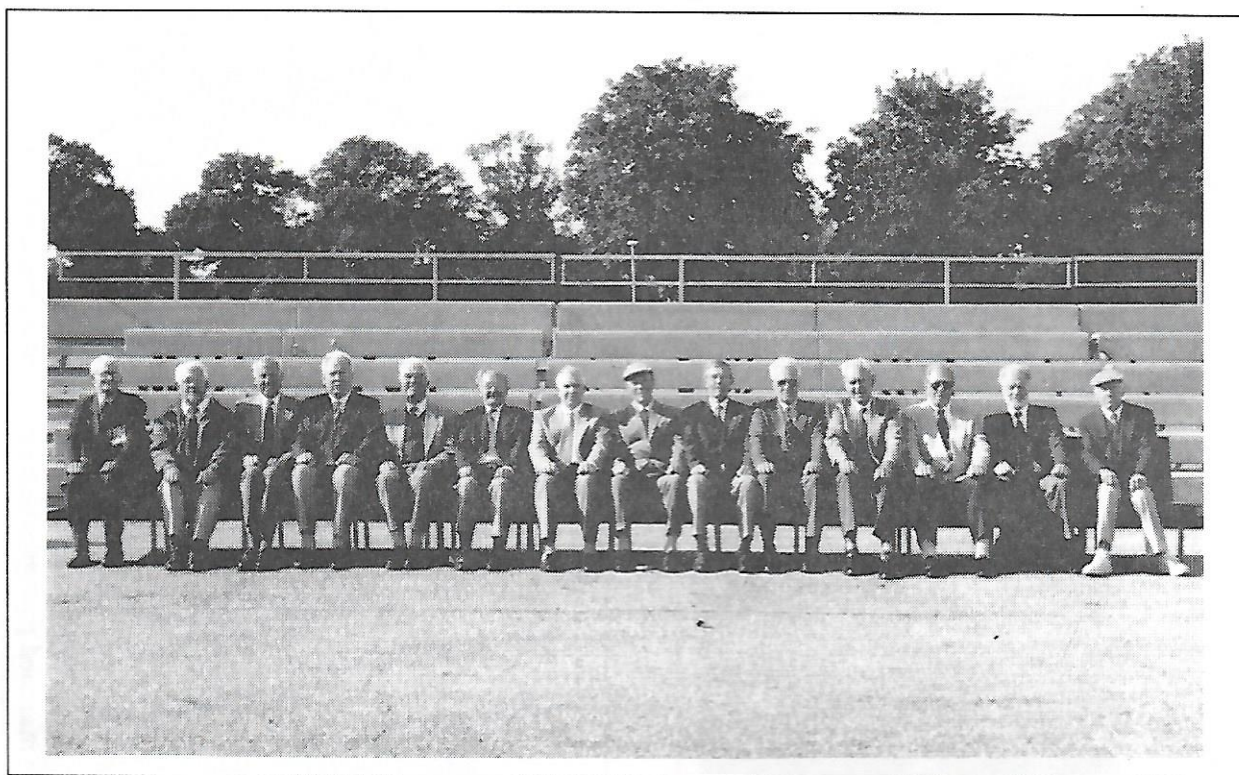
Then off we marched.....



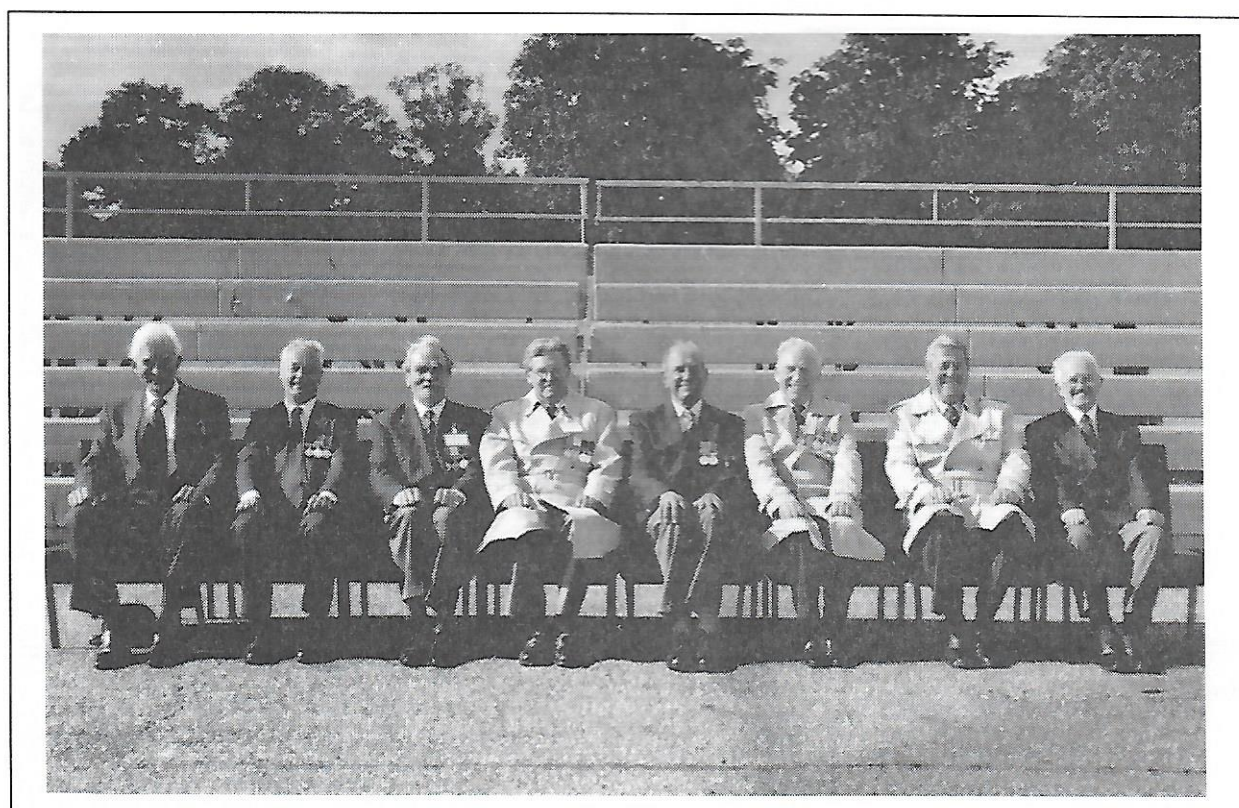
..where Brigadier Palmer inspected us & today's apprentices.



REUNION 96

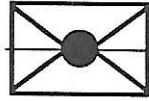


Intake 46A - 50th Anniversary Group Photograph



Intake 46B - 50th Anniversary Group Photograph

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



✉ *Brian Conway (42A) writes from Cyprus*

Reading through past editions of OBAN, I note that Frank Webb (63C), writing on *Page 18, Issue 2*, enquires about a film called, 'Ten Feet Tall', which he believed was made at the School during his time there, and in this he is supported by Paddy Doyle (63A).

As an instructor (Vehicle Mechanic) at the School at the time (1954-57 & 1960-67) I have no recollection of such a film being made, but then, I had no idea that an Old Boys' Association existed at Arborfield at that time either, until Paul (Tug) Wilson (42A) wrote to me about it.

By a strange coincidence, I too, for almost the whole of 1995, have been seeking information about a film called, 'Stepping Toes' made in 1936, which has scenes of the Duke of York's Royal Military School (DYRMS) Band and Drums and Toy Soldier Display team. My enquiries led me to the Bursar of the DYRMS, who sent me the address of the National Film and television Archive (NFTVA), 21 Stephen Street, London W11 2LN, for further information. He also forwarded my enquiry to the Honorary General Secretary of the DYRMS OBA and I was 'roped-in' to the OBA after a lapse of 35 years! I wonder if the NFTVA have a copy of 'Ten Feet Tall'?

(we received a follow-up from Brian with a reply from the NFTVA, see later - Ed)

Within days of my becoming a member of the DYRMS OBA, I received a letter from Paul Wilson, along with eight issues of OBAN, which have made fascinating reading, and it looks as though I am about to become a member of the Arborfield Old Boys' Association also. With 'feet' and 'toes' in the titles of the respective films, an augury, perhaps?

By the time this issue of OBAN is published, no doubt you will be, Brian - Ed)

Paul and I were 'Dukies' together, although in different Companies - he in the Military Band, me in the Corps of Drums. We then went to Arborfield together, again in different Companies - he in the Military Band and me becoming Arborfield's first Boy Drum Major of the Corps of Drums as can be seen from the photograph. So I'm sorry, Pete (Taffy) Jones (42B), writing from 'Sarf Efrica' (*Page 19, Issue 2*), Tiny Parsons was not THE Drum Major! I had that honour, although Tiny did wear his dad's aiguillettes when leading the Military Band down the square after the Sunday church parade in the Camp Hall.

You may remember, that in those days, after the church service, we all marched through the main gates with yours truly and the Corps of Drums leading, up the main road and in through the Sergeants Mess gates, to link up with the Military Band waiting beside E block at the top of the square. Whereupon, I had to double from the Corps of Drums to get to the front of the Military Band before they reached the top of the square to lead them down for the March Past. There was no Junior Company block in those days. It was to dispense with this practice that Tiny was selected by RSM McNally as an additional Drum Major.

I seem to remember meeting Captain Parsons RAOC, at a band engagement in Reading (circa 1964) when he was in the Junior Leaders Company RAOC, Blackdown. Whilst writing about Parsons (*if you'll pardon the pun, Ken Burren (42A) writing on page 25 Issue 8*), not only was the Reverend Clutterbuck a Pardre at Arborfield during our days, but I believe he broke the hearts of all the apprentices at the School by marrying the very beautiful blonde ATS Corporal physical training instructor, on whom we all had a crush.

To Pete Jones, (*your letter on Page 28 of Issue 8 refers*), I do not recall the Pipes & Drums wearing kilt order during the war years. Are you perhaps confusing this with the Pipes & Drums of the Gordon Boys Home of Woking (Commandant Brig. Hilborne, late Commandant ATS (Boys) Arborfield) who paraded in full highland dress with our Pipes & Drums on the Open Day, 1943, when the Band and Drums paraded in 17th century style military uniforms?



This photograph was taken in May 1942 and shows Lt General Montgomery, in unfamiliar garb, talking to Brian Conway, just before the General went out to North Africa to take command of the Eighth Army. On the far side of the General, partly hidden from view, is the Commandant, Colonel Hilborne and behind him, the unmistakable figure of RSM McNally, Scots Guards, and beside him Bandmaster 'Shinco' Knell, 4/7 Dragoon Guards. Standing next to the Bandmaster is, I believe, Captain Tennant, RAOC, Adjutant, and behind them is Major Prior, RAOC, the Deputy Chief Instructor. Please note, Pete Jones (42B), there is only one Boy Drum Major on parade!

It was on this same parade that the senior division performed the Changing of the Guard Ceremony on the Camp Hall field, with a mock castle back-drop made from painted black-out shelters.

What happy memories were recalled as I read of Ben Cook and Sergeant Hotchkiss ('*Memories of Early Arborfield*' by Fred Ford (39A) in Issue 4). The bellowing voice of Ben as it reverberated throughout the School ordering, "Sergeant Hospice'(?), report to the Guardroom at the double" (well that's what it sounded like to me, although why anyone should liken Sergeant Hotchkiss to a 'sanctuary of love and tranquillity', I cannot imagine).

Horse Gilbert was not amused either?? (*David ferns (44B) letter, Page 19, Issue 3 refers.*)

Doing press-ups whilst wearing respirators was a 'piece of cake', (if Gilbert will pardon the expression) compared with running up and down the air-raid shelters in them, as those doing their stretch in the School Guardroom found to their cost, being too young to do time in the Glasshouse at Fort Darland for stealing food from the Cook-house (*see letter from Ron Callaghan (42A), Page 23, Issue 4*).

They would have wished they had been older, I think.

On the subject of 'time', I am reminded of two stories. The first being about Fred Silvers, KRRC, another former provost Sergeant, illustrating Fred's keen sense of humour (*David Fisher (49B), Page 22, Issue 6*). It may be recalled that members of the Royal Green Jackets wear a black lanyard as part of their uniform, upon the end of which, it is said, senior NCOs carry a silver pocket watch.

Some apprentices, believing Fred was unable to tell the time (*as implausible a story as Charley Leah's on Page 9, Issue 7*), delighted in mischievously asking Fred to tell them the time. One particular Saturday afternoon, after a heavy session in the Sergeant Mess, Fred was unsteadily riding his bicycle towards the main gate, a bundle of clean laundry under his arm, when out stepped a foolhardy boy to ask Fred the time. Fred took his hand from the handlebars to reach for his pocket watch and fell from his machine with a resounding crash.

"You bloody fool," roared Fred, "what you want to ask me the time for?"

I got to know Fred very well in those days when I took over the Buglers from him as an extra curricular activity during my first tour of duty as a Vehicle Instructor at the School from 1954 to 1957. It was during this period that I first heard of the book entitled, 'Captain Cat', by Robert Holles. The character of the 'cat' was believed to have been based upon an ATS Captain, said to have been a member of the aristocracy. This is probably why the book was banned reading material at the School and why almost every boy had a copy.

I last heard of Fred during my second tour of duty as an instructor at the School from 1960 to 1967, when I was able to re-establish the Corps of Drums and was taking part in the Annual Dedication Service of the Combined Cadet Forces at Winchester Cathedral in 1967, just prior to my leaving the Army.

Members of the Royal Green Jackets Depot Sergeants Mess confirmed that Fred was a traffic warden in the area, thus supporting what David Fisher had told us.

Apprentices in the Corps of Drums may remember playing 'Winchester Cathedral', rather appropriately on that occasion, as they marched the cadets into the cathedral, much to the disdain of the band Sergeant Major 'Toby' Parker, Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, but to the delight of the Bishop of Winchester. The Bishop, from his pulpit was able to recite almost all of the words of the song to the young congregation which is more than can be said for me and Toby Parker.

I wonder how many 'horrible crows' in the Corps of Drums remember daring to ask me the time, at about 7.55 on a band practice evening and my threatening to tell them the story of when I was a young soldier at Catterick Camp? (Coincidentally, that story was also about a pocket watch! - My second 'time' story) - or those apprentices late for their dental appointments at the Arborfield Dental Centre and my wife, the chairside assistant, covering up for them by telling the Dental Officer she had 'misaid' the records? Having laundered 30 pairs of white gloves prior to every ceremonial parade and band engagement, I was able to forgive my wife such indiscipline.

I sincerely hope that those members of the AOBA who knew me during the past 54 years will make contact with me at *PO Box 1335, 8133 Kato Paphos, Cyprus, Tel No. 357 6 242656*.

(Brian, your reference to the Green Jackets sparked off an argumentative discussion back here as to which regiments are so called. So we consulted a friend of ours, Victor Waller, who is connected with the Aldershot Military Museum and he has supplied us with the potted history that follows - Ed)

Victor Waller writes

The Light Division now consists of the Light Infantry and the Royal Green Jackets, each of two battalions. Prior to 1881 all Regiments were known by 'Foot' numbers with, in most cases, a local designation in brackets. Some of these local designations changed.

For example, 46 (South Devon) became 2nd Battalion Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. The exception was the un-numbered Rifle Brigade (known originally as 95th, but the number was dropped in 1800).

(Anyone who follows the Richard Sharpe fictional novels of Bernard Cornwell, will already know of the 95th Rifles - Ed.)

1957 saw the beginning of many amalgamations and they include:

The Somerset Light Infantry (13) and the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry (32/46) to form the Somerset & Cornwall Light Infantry (13, 32, 46) on 6 October 1959.

On 10 July 1968 the above amalgamated with King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (51, 105), King's Shropshire Light Infantry (53, 85) and the Durham Light Infantry (68, 106) to form The Light Infantry.

Initially, the above became respectively, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions, retaining sub-titles, but these were dropped and the Army List showed Light Infantry (13, 32, 46, 51, 53, 68, 85, 105, 106), i.e. indicating that the new Regiment 'inherited' all the traditions etc., of all the Regiments. The 4th Battalion was disbanded in 1967 and the 3rd in 1990, leaving just the 1st and 2nd Battalions only.

Similarly, in November 1958, the Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry (43/52) were re-designated a 'Rifle' Regiment and, had full dress been in vogue, would have exchanged scarlet uniforms to rifle green. They were also re-named '1st Green Jackets' (43/52) whilst the King's Royal Rifle Corps (60th) became the '2nd Green Jackets' and the Rifle Brigade became the '3rd Green Jackets'.

On 1 January 1966, the units were re-named 'The Royal Green Jackets' and sub-titles omitted. The Army List then read, 'The Royal Green Jackets (43&52, KRRC & Rifle Brigade)' and simply became the 1st, 2nd, 3rd Battalions.

The 3rd Battalion was disbanded in 1971, being re-formed shortly afterwards, but disbanded again in 1990, leaving the 1st and 2nd Battalions. In July 1968, the two Regiments were linked as The Light Division.

The reasons for changing the Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry to Rifle was to firstly, balance the number of units and secondly, to perpetuate an historical association of 43/52 with the Rifle Brigade under Sir John Moore in the early 1800s!

The terms, 'Corps' (KRRC) and 'Brigade' (Rifle Brigade) must be confusing to foreigners and indeed to British people who are not 'au fait' with the vagaries of British Army custom.

P S With reductions, only one Military Band exists to serve the 4 Battalions.

(Victor, thanks for your letter. Some of the permanent staff through the years at the School belonged to some of these Regiments. In my time, we had a Major Stocker, Rifle Brigade - CO HQ Company, Provost Sgt F Silvers, KRRC, Sgt Phillips and Corporal Tofts - both D Company and KRRC, and Sergeant Major R Patey, Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry - CSM of D Company - Ed)

£ Brian Conway' (42A) Writes

Subsequent to my last letter about the two films 'Stepping Toes' and 'Ten Feet Tall', I received a letter from Sarah Davy at the NFTVA which follows.

The climax to my own search for information about 'Stepping Toes' led to the President of the DYRMS OBA travelling to the NFTVA premises in London, to view a preservation copy of the film on my behalf, only to discover, and I quote,

'Having viewed 5 reels of film over some hour and a half in time, there was not even a single frame of the Toy Soldier Display Team or the Band and Drums, with the film having a lead-in in French, and with French sub-titles!!'

Despite the disappointing end result to my search, the President of the DYRMS OBA, Mr Aubrey Sadler, very kindly lent me 2 still pictures of the film from his own archive, which do, in fact, show the Band and Drums and Toy Soldier Display Team, copies of which I have sent to Sarah Davy at the NFTVA, and to the Bursar of the DYRMS in appreciation of their efforts on my behalf in tracing the film.

Two very satisfying results of my search has been my becoming a member of the DYRMS OBA and AOBA, albeit after a lapse of more than 50 years.

An extract from the NFTVA letter goes as follows:

'Stepping Toes (1938). Thankyou for your letter with your kind donation of the stills from this film. I have arranged for these to be sent to our Stills Department, where they will be held for reference purposes, with the information you have provided about the identity of the people involved.

Although our records indicate we do not hold material on the film **Ten Feet Tall (1964)**, I enclose a print-out from our filmographic database for your information. I suggest that your colleagues could try the Imperial War Museum Film and Video Archive to see if they hold this film.'

(Brian, do you intend to continue with your search? - Ed)

 *Ken Burren (Jan42) writes*

My good old friend Paul Wilson prompts me to put pen to paper again. Whilst visiting us at our home, Paul showed me a large photograph of D Company taken in 1943 and given to him by AT Loftus who was in my room (I think J4). I remember Loftus well (although I forget his first name) along with a few others; Jack Drennan, Fred Bracknell, Jock Brannon, Ron Hawkins (a good friend whom I met on subsequent occasions), Basil Jennings, Silcock and Gilbert, to name but a few.

I believe the photo was probably taken just as we were all about to be sent far and wide. Apparently, according to Paul, the Jan 42 intake were the only ones who never returned to Arborfield. Myself along with a few others (15 or so) were sent to the Base Ordnance Depot, Donnington, Salop.

I can only remember one guy who was at Donnington with me, I think his name was Petch or Petchey. For a guy like me from a one-horse town like Whitstable, Donnington was a real eye opener - so much transport and equipment, acres of it! I, being a Turner by trade, was sent to work with a civilian on a large facing & boring lathe. We were, among other things, finish-turning muzzle brakes for 17 and 25 pounder guns.

At Donnington, there were to be seen row upon row of 30 cwt Ford and Chevy trucks which were being fitted with searchlights and/or 40 mm Bofor AA guns. Also I saw a few long lines of tanks (which were in fact S P guns) which I was told by an american GI at the time, were M10s.

The M10, being a Sherman derivative, had a peculiar shape to its hull, which I have always remembered. I wrote to a Scots friend who served with the REs in the middle east about that time (his hobby is military models) and apparently, America sent us 1,624 M10 Tank Destroyers which saw active service in most theatres of World War 2, especially North Africa. These were sent to Army Workshops to be fitted with 17 pounder guns to replace their less efficient 3 inch american guns. So, after all these years I finally found out that I was machining parts for those M10s and did not at that time realise it! Good to know one did a little something at the time to help the war effort.

Interestingly, I went to a Military Vehicle Rally at Whitbread's show ground at Paddock Wood, Kent, and lo and behold there was an M10 on display, but still with its original 3 inch gun - so I didn't fix that one!

Also to be seen at Donnington at that time, tucked away in one part of a huge shed was a unit where one was 'encouraged not to go'. However, as this outfit was staffed by some 20 pretty civilian girls, it was exactly where one wanted to go.

It contained a secret machine called a Teleprinter, the forerunner of our present day Telex, I think.

There was one particular american GI, named Bill, who at times would drive us to RAF Cosford in his 10 ton white truck for a swim in their swimming pool. Bill would say, "Yeah, ten miles, aint it", stick a foot long 'ceegar' in his mouth and say "12 minutes" - and most times he made it! Sometimes, Bill would say to me "Goddamn shaver, come into the Mess and get some yank grub." Well, their Mess was like Aladdin's cave to us - you name it, it was there - as many eggs as you wanted (our ration was one per week) spam, tinned fruit, chips and, I believe, ice cream. There was more bad language and fights in that Mess than on the Western Front! Of course it was well out of bounds to us.

Each Wednesday at Donnington, all the different outfits stationed there were made to form up and march behind a band back to workshops. One day, while taking part in this peculiar event, the yanks caught sight of our little platoon and shouted, "Oh my God, King George must be scraping the barrel looking at you lot." They didn't realise our extreme youth, coming up to 17 years old as we were! One day all our yank buddies had gone. I think they went south for D day - I often wonder how they fared. Not long after this, I and two or three others were posted to Warley Barracks, Brentwood for six weeks primary training. I was about eighteen then. We were welcomed by an officer who said, "I am Lt Tucker and you will *not* confuse my name"! He then gave us the usual 'pep' talk- you play the game with me and you will enjoy it here. This gave us a great sense of foreboding which was later proved right. I was very glad to leave that place! Off for a few short months at 14 Command Workshops, Ashford, Kent where I got my second class trade test - 4/6d per diem now - and then off to Tarranto, Italy and, later, the Middle East - but that's another story.

John Loy (39B) writes

I noted the Tiffy Stake League Table in OBAN 8 and I would like to submit my claim. From the dates shown on my Certificate of Service I was

appointed Armament Artificer on 16 August 1944, my date of birth being 13 July 1924, which makes my claim 20 years, 1 month and 3 days. My parchment Warrant which was granted after six years as a Staff Sergeant is dated, 16 August 1950 for promotion to Substantive Warrant Officer. This confirms the other date. I do not think I will be found to be the youngest as I know there were some younger who will I hope still be with us and in due course make their claim.

My kindest regards to you all and all connected with OBAN, which I read with great interest.

(You are right, John, Ray Blackman (39B) beats you in the 'Tiffy' stakes. The league table so far stands as below - any more runners out there? - Ed).

The Youngest 'Tiffy Stakes'				
The Runners	Date	Age		
		yrs	mths	days
Ray Blackman (39B)	23/05/43	19	11	24
John Loy (39B)	16/08/44	20	1	3
Pat Hardy (39B)	25/05/43	20	2	8
Lawrence Nixon (Apr 42)	08/10/47	20	4	5
Eric Cook (Jan 42)	25/02/47	20	6	10
Pete Spargo (39A)	10/11/43	21	2	4
Peter Jones (42A)	28/08/48	21	2	14
Pat Naylor (42A) - LASS	14/12/47	21	3	27
Tony Ireland (46A)	08/08/53	22	4	4
Oldest Tiffy? -				
Michael Addison (48B)	18/12/68	36	0	9

Fred Wells (44A) writes

During March of this year my attention was drawn to a photo of the September 1944 Intake, published in the June 1995 edition of 'YOURS' magazine. It had been submitted by a Mr D C Bone of Herne Bay, Kent. I wrote to him and from him I found out about the AOBA. From the information I had been given I wrote to John Northam, who sent me an application form and also the latest edition of OBAN.

I must say that I had often wondered if there was an Old Boys' Association, but I had never done anything about it.

Anyway, I have now sent John my subscription to join, so better late than never! I will now have to talk to my elder brother who is also an ex-boy about joining as well!

Regarding the letters from G Knight (44A) and Duncan McKay (44A), the evacuation in 1944 was to *Bury* in Lancashire, not *Berry* as printed. The Mills we were sent to were the premises of the School of Electric Lighting, as I remember it. The other item that sticks in my mind is of collecting hay and straw to fill the striped mattress covers on arrival, and as I remember it, it was near a reservoir. I haven't tried to find it since coming to live in Yorkshire, but being so near Otley I did go to find the old overseas embarkation camp there (someone should remember this camp), but it is now a housing estate, so there is nothing there to jog the memory.

The letters and articles I have read in OBAN 8 have certainly jogged *my* memory. It would be great to hear from my old friends of those years long ago, and although we thought that they were the worst days of our lives, the fact that we can remember the good times must count for something.

(Fred, welcome to OBAN, your letters and articles will always be considered and incorporated - Ed.)

✍ *Joe Gutteridge writes for assistance*

I am the Treasurer/Secretary of the RASC Jersey Boys, where 'claims to fame' lie in the fact that during 1938/39 our Army Technical School in Jersey also included about 80 RAOC apprentices. They trained with the RASC boys until Arborfield was ready to receive them. The other 'claim' is related to our hurried evacuation from the island on 19 June 1940 and being given succour at Arborfield for a couple of days prior to being sent on indefinite leave.

I am in contact with a few of these RAOC boys and have been able to put some in contact with each other during the past 20 years.

One particular ex-RAOC boy who transferred to RASC in 1938 is Marshall, Raymond Charles. He passed the entrance examination of July 1937 and would have enlisted into RAOC in January 1938, and probably commenced his apprenticeship in Hilsea. I have been searching for him during recent years, but to no avail. He transferred when our technical school was located at Aldershot and members of our senior group remember him arriving in uniform with RAOC badges and buttons. I remember him being posted to man service RASC in January 1941, but no further information is available. I wonder if any other ex-RAOC boys of 38A group might be able to provide extra information.

Since 1974, my searches for the 250 RASC apprentices have traced 143, but sadly not all are above ground. I am still looking for the 'unexpired portion'. We have enjoyed 3 nostalgic reunions on Jersey and plan to return for another in 1998 to commemorate our 'Diamond Jubilee'.

I find the contents of OBAN extremely interesting and enjoy the 'flavour' of the old days. My very best wishes in your endeavours.

If anyone can help Joe in his search, please let me know and I will write to him or with his permission pass on his address - Ed)

✍ *Eric Cook (Jan42) writes*

Many thanks for yet another first class newsletter, we are indeed fortunate to have someone putting it together for us.

I was very pleased that Frank Hodson (46B) was able to solve the mystery of the 'Yogi' cap badge. He had phoned me, so I was rather looking forward to his letter. It is still a mystery as to how the dyeline print came into my possession. My only visit to Singapore was on 'shore leave' from a trooper from Korea en route to North Africa.

We were invited to the Base Workshop Sergeants Mess and were made very welcome. I have memories (or rather nightmares) of the ride in the 'string and sealing wax' taxi down to the docks at midnight!

I must point out to Tom Pearce (Feb44) that he is wrong to suspect that most, if not all those currently in the 'Tiffy Stakes' took short wartime courses as he states in his letter in OBAN 9. I have a feeling that we're going to hear from my good friend Lawrence Nixon (Apr42) on this one. I was on No 8 Art (Veh) course which was a post war course lasting about 20 months or so. However, I did enjoy reading the rest of the letter, it brought back memories. I suppose at times we all wished we were somewhere else, but we stuck with it and it proved to be worthwhile.

I don't wish to stir the pond, but I also completed a LASS Arty(Fld) course on 16 September 1946. I was 20 years and a few days then. It must be right because it says so in my Certificate of Service - but then even that cannot be trusted. On page 1 it says, 'Mr Cook is a' and then goes on to describe someone I never met! Then on page 3 it says, 'Mr BROWN is a very competent"! Written by the same person. This has to be unique.

(Eric, you are stirring the pond - are you saying you should be at the top of the 'Tiffy Stakes' table, instead of where you are currently? - Ed)

✍ *Don Walker (45A) writes*

A couple of years ago I had some bookmarks made especially for the AOBA. They are embroidered in the same colour as the AOBA Standard, with a silk backing. Having already paid for them, they are no use to me at home. I have sold a number to members, who have replied with glowing comments on the high standard of workmanship.

I had them made as I thought they would be a little keepsake or would make a little gift. I still have 20 to sell. The AOBA will receive 40p for each one sold at £2.00.

If any member would like one, please apply to Don Walker (45A), 2 Anthony's Way, Brandon, Suffolk IP27 0DN.

✍ *Paul Hudson (58A) writes*

I passed out way back in 1961 and had not set foot in the old place until one day in 1980 I found myself driving through Arborfield. I could not resist the urge to go and have a look, expecting a total different College following the planned rebuild started while I was still there.

Life is full of surprises and this was one, the College looked virtually the same, even down to the colour scheme of the spiders. This colour scheme had changed during my time there from a morbid green to a shade of yellowy-cream (rumoured at the time to be a better colour to disguise certain 'deposited stains' under most windows, the results of Saturday evenings let loose to the hostilities of Reading or Wokingham).

I was fortunate in that this visit meant that I was made aware of the forthcoming 'last reunion' in the old College. I duly contacted Harry Shaw and secured my reservation to attend. Fears of not knowing anybody were soon allayed as familiar faces were recognised.

I well recall Peter Gripton (56B) saying that I may well have missed reunions up till then, but he doubted very much that I would miss any more. How right he was, I have been to every one since.

Last year (95), however, was something different, my thoughts at the time were simply, 'we'er back home'. Ironical really, as for the 3 years from 1958 to 1961 we all had just one ambition, to get the hell away from the place and join the real Army.

The sense of pride and emotion in all of us as we marched down the road and through the old gates was very evident. I am sure that the Police holding up the traffic and those being held up could not fail to observe every single member of the squad visibly grow by at least 6 inches as the gates got nearer.

Regardless of what any of us thought of the place at the time I am sure that most, if not all of us have done well as a result. I have certainly enjoyed a career of 9 years in the Corps and a subsequent 26 years with the Vehicle Inspectorate, with a few more to go yet, so have no regrets. No doubt like all members I could write volumes on experiences of my time, both good and bad, but that would leave no room for other contributors, so I will resist the urge.

(Paul, its good to hear from the occasional 'Jeep', so please write to us about the School during the late fifties - early sixties, this being a period we don't often hear about - Ed.)

✍ *David Tilt (45B) writes*

Whereever I go, whatever I do, radio, TV and the press, I never forget Arborfield. It taught me so much, it moulded my life, it educated me, guided me and taught me many skills. It helped me to obtain a Commission, it helped me to do everything - so how can anyone forget their 3 years as a boy. I have written a book, which *I hope* is to be published this year or next entitled, 'Hey You Boy'. The suggested leader goes as follows:

'This is the biography of David L Tilt, *Toastmaster Extraordinary*. It traces his steps from early childhood to becoming a boy soldier, winning a commission, experiencing various professional positions and finally, his establishment as a Toastmaster operating at the highest levels. In his occupation he has met many people and served many organisations which are household names. However, this book is much more than a biography; it examines the role of Toastmaster in the world of public relations.'

By the time this Issue of OBAN is produced, I will have attended Reunion 96. Incidentally, I still have all my trade (VM) hand-written books taken whilst at the School. How useful would they be to the Musuem?

(David, we look forward to seeing your book. Please contact Judy Booth at the REME Museum, I am sure she would be glad to receive your old trade books - Ed.)

✍ *John Pewsey (45A) writes*

My name is John Pewsey and I would like to state my claims to fame in the annals of 'Goolie College'.

My main one is that I have been married to Ben Cook's eldest daughter, Molly, for nigh on 45 years (...and it don't seem a day too long). It may be that 'er indoors will be prompted by her muses to write to the OBAN with reminiscences of 1939 when the old camp hall was just being erected! My other claims to fame during my time at Arborfield are:

- blowing off the tips of my left forefinger and thumb with a 20 mm cannon shell detonator while attempting to make a table lighter in the Electrical Workshop (much more fun than a boring old knife switch),
- being a School cross-country runner, running Woodbines from the Robinson Crusoe shop for the fag barons (mainly 43 intake Boy NCOs) and collecting 73 days jankers as a result of the aforementioned and other minor misdemeanours,
- winning 5/- from the 'powers that were' as second prize in the 'Design of a Cap Badge for the ATS (Boys)' competition - as it happened, my design was used, with the minor modification of adding the Royal crown over the torch flame - I don't feel qualified to suggest that we should have been known as the 'RATS (Boys)'!

(John, I am sure we would all be delighted to hear from Molly, if she could be so persuaded - Ed.)

 *Bryan Adams (Oct 42) writes*

Thinking of mixed male and female apprentices and equality of opportunity, I cannot but giggle to myself when picturing the Army Technical School (Boys) ceremony of the 'Short Arm Inspection'. I expect this is another hallowed tradition that is no longer observed. Perhaps it is another aspect concerning past Apprentices Training that will not appear in the official records. For those who know not (or can't remember), the inspection was strictly observed on the return of boys from block leave (Christmas, Easter and Summer). The procedure was as follows:

All the boys, numbering perhaps 1000, were paraded by Companies dressed in PT shorts and plimsolls at the camp hall. Thence in a long line, all shuffled forward around the walls until each in turn faced the Medical Officer. Then, shorts were dropped to the ankles and arms were raised high as in surrender. The MO would then, with head forward, bend and closely inspect the front. On command, the boy would then about turn for his rear to be scrutinized before bending to pull up his shorts and returning to his Company lines.

Witnesses to this ritual would note the differing attitudes of the apprentices. The 14 year old small boys would perhaps be embarrassed and pull up their shorts as fast as possible, whereas the well built older boys would, maybe, show a tendency to exhibitionism and face all present with a slow and deliberate demonstration of pride of manhood.

Perhaps some of us joined too soon, for if such an activity took place today, I'm sure 'calling the role' would be quite unnecessary! But then, the old camp hall is no more. It is for reflection that over 50 years ago, Commandants were suspicious of the dubious company we innocent young boys might keep while on leave.

 *'Eggy' Eggleton (52B) writes*

I joined on the 9th of September 1952. Being one of the first arrivals of 52B I went into Room F1 along with about 9 others, whence we all went for our first meal at the School - dinner.

On our return to the room we found a large pile of suitcases had arrived. Their owners appeared - Burmese boys who opened them and produced 'strange' food and 'bulled' boots, having already served in the Army for some time. The next day we were issued with our kit. My greatcoat was a 'greeny' colour with less buttons on it than anyone else's (on leaving Arborfield I had it tailored at RAF Uxbridge and still had it on my demob in 1963). I also had 2 large boot brushes and no clothes brush, and my pullover was light khaki. My Army number was 22821157, the last four digits matching those on Form 1157, so every QM automatically remembered my name!

In those days, HQ Company was in spiders F & G. We were squaded by height and I was allocated to 'A' Squad, staying in room F1. I had signed-on for 8 years with the colours and 4 on reserve. I had proposed to sign-on for the full 12 years with the colours, but the recruiting sergeant talked me out of it - my thanks to him.

The permanent staff drill sergeant for 'A' Squad was Sergeant Buckley, Grenadier Guards - he always saluted with his left hand. HQ Company was commanded by Major Stocker, Rifle Brigade, aided by his 2 IC Captain Palmer REME, CSM Brady, Irish Guards, CQMS Drury Irish, Guards and Apprentice CSM Webber.

After 6 months education, chipping and filing, we all had an interview with a Lt Col REME (who was the Chief Instructor and 2 IC of the School) regarding our trade training. I wanted to be a Vehicle Mechanic, but as I was good at Mathematics and in the top education class, this man said to me,

"Don't you think we know what you want to be better than you do?"

I stayed silent and thought, here endeth my Army career. I was not looking forward to being a Telecommunications Mechanic! However, in compensation, I was chosen to be the A/T who drilled our squad in the HQ Drill Competition.

And so into 2 division and A Company, the 'boxing' Company, commanded by Major Langley Middlesex Regiment, aided by CSM 'Bull'

Weston, Grenadier Guards (a massive man who shook the spiders as he walked around them. In those days, A Company occupied A and B spiders. My boy NCO was a 'Paddy' Hanlon. During my time in 2 division, I was selected for the Drill Cadre Course, which I passed.

In 3 division I was promoted to Apprentice L/Cpl and detached as a room NCO to HQ Company, where I was initiated - a savage but apparently normal occurrence in HQ. I was initially installed in room G6, outside the room sergeant's bunk. Half way through my time in 3 division I and another boy, 'Buster' Townsend, were promoted to full Corporal - being promoted to this rank in 3 division was unheard of until then - but owing to mishaps to other NCOs, we were suddenly 2 full Corporals short. I then moved into room F3 bunk, my only ambition since being forced into Tels. This was 'E' Squad - all the little boys. In charge was Sergeant Channel, Royal Hampshires - a youngish, portly man with a sense of humour I liked.

4 and 5 divisions saw me *still* in room F3 bunk and *still* a Corporal and *still* with the little people. I had been a Corporal then for 15 months, Others had caught me up and some had become Sergeants. Most parades were as easy as an OD. I was one of the senior apprentices and did not now see the permanent staff NCOs very often.

6 division at last! 'A' Company was Champion Company and the time had arrived for us detached NCOs to return to our parent Company. But there was to be no change in policy and we remained in HQ. I was promoted to Apprentice Sergeant at last. I asked to return to A company, even as a Corporal, but was refused. It was very awkward being in 6 division and living in HQ Company lines on the other side of the square from A Company - orders, dress and parades changed and we were not told. I even missed the A Company photograph. In the inter Company Drill Competition we had to stand at the side of the square. A Company was so large that for the final salute, it was split into 3 half Companies and I marched the third half company and saluted.

During 52B's time at Arborfield, the Command-

ment was Colonel Magee, East Surreys, aided by Quartermaster Lt Col Jarman, South Wales Borders (he started as a bugle boy), RSM McNally, Scots Guards and Provost Sergeant Fred Silvers, KRRC (he was off sick when I originally arrived, apparently recovering from having been stabbed!). The remainder of the permanent staff were from 40 different Regiments, the badges being displayed in a showcase on the outside wall of the guardroom. All the time we were there we had no Apprentice RSM, D Company was reformed, C Company followed by A Company were Champion Company and I still have my silver coloured badge to remember it all.

I think it was a retrograde step when REME took over the School. We lost various traditions, such as having a silver bugle awarded to the Champion Bugler, the pipers wearing the Royal Scots tartan and our affiliation to them, and our learning all about these other Regiments from the individually proud members of the permanent staff.

As with other ex-apprentices, I have many stories, incidents and names I could mention, but they would take pages of space. Friendships forged in boys school last for life, very different from those formed in REME and civvy street. Ex-boys have an esprit de corps like no other and I am proud to be one.

(Eggy, I was one of the little boys in HQ during your time and I remember you and Sergeant Channel. Can you remember the squad (letter) whose drill sergeant was Sergeant Perry - Royal Tank Regiment? - Ed)

✉ *L R 'Jess' Pye (Oct43) writes in response to our Teletext Advert*

Thank you for pointing me in the right direction in order to join the Association. Now having in my possession Issues 1 to 9 of OBAN, I am desperately trying to revive brain-dead memory cells which is being helped by the letters from many of the ex-boys of my era.

Referring to Walter Jobber's letter in Issue 9, I don't think sentences were remitted by Chalky White. I think the sentences were remitted by him in the old camp hall after a 'legal' leave when no transport was laid on from either Wokingham or Reading and there was conflict over whether we had been so informed before going on leave. I personally was serving 3 days for being two and a half minutes late and completed my sentence as Chalky announced it earlier that evening.

Referring to the letter about Joe King, and I am not joking, I met the gentlemen when we were evacuated to Bury along with Sergeant Jock Thornton who always spat haggis as he spoke. I think they were Lowerstoft mills, partly derelict and painted brilliant white to lighten the classrooms. This and the hot summer coupled with the theory course on magnetism resulted in many A/Ts and sometimes instructors nodding off to sleep.

The best was when Tom Long, a renowned 'nodder', was made to stand up by the side of the instructor to avoid dropping off to sleep. Tom proceeded to edge towards a cast iron stove to lean against and as the instructor's voice droned on, we watched as Tom gently drifted off to sleep and eventually toppled over. The Staff Sergeant instructor whose name escapes me was the only one not amused.

Reading the letters of other members has certainly revived memories of the Arborfield years. I shared Walter Jobber's Saturday pheasant shoots on 4 or 5 occasions. The letter about the camp Hall being used as a cinema made me recall the film nights, Tuesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, if memory serves me correctly, with the long running serial of 'Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars' for starters.

Sports days were always special, whether as a participant or a spectator. I well remember Denis Compton being bowled out by A/T (Ben) Tony Basham in the first over of a Staff *versus* Boys match, and of Reg Tye long-jumping some fabulous distance to create a new school record. Then the day that Staff Sergeant Cunliffe APTC, with the referee on his blind side, running half the length of the football pitch, bouncing the ball with his hand.

Seeing the photo of AQMS Charnley in Issue 2 of OBAN, reminded me of the hectic days in the Electricians Shop. He and a civilian, Mr Craddock, were the Chief Instructors, ably assisted by Mr Corke (Basic Fitting) and Mr Hall (Motor Vehicle Electrics) and Mr Cahill (AC Theory). Vivid memories of break times, when large clouds of smoke issued from the the toilets as a single Woodbinew was passed from hand to hand among a dozen or so smokers who had congregated for a 'drag'. On the appearance of a member of staff, frantic fanning with F S caps ensued until the smoke was dispersed. Those were the days!

Just a suggestion that might help jog some memories out there of names and places. I wonder if anyone can tell me if and when and where they met any of the following ex-boys:

Steve Steval	Changanwy, East Africa, 1947
Jock McCann	Changanwy, East Africa, 1947
Alan Barrett (44 intake)	Mackinnon Road, East Africa 1948
Taffy Stevens (Oct 43)	Mackinnon Road, East Africa 1948
George Knight (44A)	Mackinnon Road, East Africa 1949
Jock Emmitt (Oct 43)	Nairobi, East Africa 1948
Roger Hicks	Nairobi, East Africa 1950
? Saville	Mackinnon Road, East Africa 1948
? Burford (44 intake)	Mackinnon Road, East Africa 1948
'Ginger' Drennon	Tok Chong, Korea 1952
'Porky' Firth	Tok Chong, Korea 1952
Bob McGrillen (44 intake)	Tok Chong, Korea 1952
Alan Gillam	Tok Chong, Korea 1952
'Ben' Basham (Oct 43)	Tok Chong, Korea 1952
Alan Printer (Oct 43)	Mogadishu, Eritrea 1947

(Jess, welcome to the Association and keep digging at those memories - Ed).

✍ *John Loy (39B) writes again!*

Further to my previous letter reference the 'Tiffy Stakes', and in reply to Tom Pearce's article in OBAN 9, my course lasted just under 14 weeks. This included a final 2 weeks regimental at Arborfield.

We were promoted to Sergeant for the duration of this course, the successful candidates then getting back-dated promotion to Staff Sergeant from the start. If I remember correctly, this gave us an extra 2/- (10p) per day or just under £9.0.0 in total - not much by today's rates, but a very welcome extra two weeks or so pay in 1944. I note that we now have an oldest tiffy position. Depending on who is eligible, my father would have been a contender as he completed a Vehicle Arm Arts course at Arborfield in 1941. As he was born in 1896 he would then have been about 45 years old. I look forward to receiving my copies of OBAN and I wish you many happy years editing.

(Many thanks John - reference your claim for your father's position in the Tiffy Stakes, the question is, was he an ex boy? - Ed)

✍ *Peter Simmonds (44A) writes*

I don't know if this subject has come up before, but the Army Apprentices School badge which replaced the General Service Corps badge was, to the best of my knowledge, designed (or a large reproduction made) by Mr Williams, a metalsmith instructor at the School. I also believe this badge was stolen (or 'borrowed') by one of my intake (Feb 44) but found in a kit bag on Wokingham station shortly afterwards. We were on our way to do 6 weeks regimental training with the Oxford & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, where we learned to march rather faster than the Guards. I also remember it was very cold!

(Peter, I bet we will never find out who the culprit was - Ed)

✍ *Peter Crowson (44A) writes*

Reading and re-reading OBAN generates a flood of memories and the mention of two names in Issue 9 has brought pen to paper. 'Tosh' (?) O'Callaghan, surely it was 'Toss', who did not start with my intake, but certainly finished with it.

I have a War Office recruiting booklet printed in 1948, of some 32 pages, with a foreword by Field

Marshall Montgomery, entitled, 'A proud Career'. A few of the photographs are of my lot. One of them, grandly termed, 'the Senior Turning Shop', shows Toss and the rest of us general fitters studiously attending our lathes. Toss always looked smarter in his pressed denims than most others in SDs. He failed his trade test and went to some armoured lot. Visiting my brother later in 1950, an A/T in D Company, I was delighted to find Toss as a permanent staff Corporal in that Company and keeping a friendly eye on my brother. I have heard that he died relatively young, but cannot confirm it. Another name rings a *giant* bell - Provost Sergeant Dransfield, who took over from Sergeant Jock Ellesmore, who in turn had taken over from Sergeant Hotchkiss. I was on jankers the day Dransfield took over. He discovered that I wasn't wearing braces and accused me of "Standing there looking like bloody Pontious Pilate with no bloody braces", and got me 3 days jankers. The reference puzzles me to this day!

✍ *Ray Blackman (39B) writes*

I read with interest the article written by Tom Pearce regarding early Armament Artificer training and the young age at which many of us qualified. Although young in heart, we gained a wealth of experience due to the variety and volume of equipment that we encountered in RAOC & REME Workshops during those early war years. I remember with gratitude those instructors who taught us the technology and necessary skills that enabled us to become Armament Artificers; civilian instructors such as Mr Burgess and Mr Hall who taught the general fitters in Squad 17, also AQMS A W Hall, later to become a Lt Col and a well known member of the Corps.

If at this late stage I may throw my hat in the ring, as a young 'tiffy', my promotion to SSgt was 23 May 1943, age 19 yrs, 11 mths, 24 days - 6 days before my twentieth birthday on 29/5/43. There are probably others around somewhere as several artificers RA also joined the courses at the Military College of Science at that time.

(I was still an apprentice at 19! - Ed)

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OBITUARIES

Peter Crowson (44A) writes:

It is with regret that I inform the Association of the death of 2549094 Ray Kendrick (44A) on 30 March 1996. After 22 years service with REME he continued as a civilian at Scales Branch Woolwich, finally retiring to reside in Shrewsbury.

G E Streeter (39B) writes:

It is with regret that I must inform the Association that Bob Griffin (41A - D Company) passed away suddenly last October shortly after attending Reunion 95 with his wife. I understand from her that she intends to attend Reunion 96 with a couple of Bob's old friends. It is with her permission that I am informing the Association of this sad event.

DECEASED

It is with sadness and deep regret that the Association reports the deaths of the following:

On Dec 95 H R Griffin (41A, D Coy)

On 21 March 1996 A M W (Tony) Andrews (47A)

On 30 March 1996 R M (Ken) Kendrick (44A)

On 31 March 1996 J R Dunkling (39A)

Alan Tarbrooke (51B)

P Young (39B D Coy)

P Males (46A)

Lt Col Hastings (46A, A Coy)

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Charles Ashdown

Charles Ashdown, (42 intake), who served in both the British and Canadian Armies, wishes to contact Ronald Garnett of the same intake who served in REME before being commissioned into another Corps. Any readers, who are in contact with Mr Garnett or who can recall into which Corps he was commissioned, are asked to write to the Corps Museum.

Cyril 'Titch' Cowdrey JP (46B) writes in response to 'Lofty' Cotsford's enquiry in OBAN 9:

Two old boys, Bill Smith (39A) and Mike Parsons (46B), phoned me after seeing the 'Where Are They Now?' article and Bill kindly sent me a copy. It is a long time since I was referred to as an innocent young thing, and due to increased size (not height) I am seldom called 'Titch' these days! Lofty Cotsford's photos brought back many happy memories, such as:

mis-timing a cross country run after we sat in a hedge for an hour or so, and arriving home first - a dodge that I now suspect was fully recognised by those in authority,

Doug Foster's yell when the cigarette quickly passed to him when Ben Cooke arrived, burnt a hole through his trouser pocket (it was always Doug who got caught!),

dashing up to the Royal Box after the show at the Royal Tournament (Page 29, OBAN 9) to pick up dog ends, etc.

Invalided out in 1954, while on my Arm Arts course, after a dispute between my motorbike and an American Air Force lorry (an accident which later instigated the Visiting Forces Act), I joined the Admiralty Experimental Works at Haslar in Gosport. Making minute adjustments to ship's models for the boffins to play with soon palled, and I seized the opportunity in January 1956 to take over a small family coach firm. One 5 year old coach and four 'old dogs' in a ramshackle garage! The first takings in double figures did not happen until April that year, with a return journey to London after someone else had broken down.

Army training must have stood me in good stead, however, and the firm of thirty plus vehicles is as likely to be seen these days in Budapest as in Bangor! I have been a Magistrate now for 21 years and was the last Chairman of the Gosport Court prior to closure. I am currently Chairman of the South Hampshire Bench, based at Fareham and I suppose it is only reasonable to say that I hope to see none of my old friends there.

P. S. 'Ginger' Seal worked for me for a short time in the 80s, when we were exporting double decker buses to Hong Kong and as far as I know, still lives in Gosport, as does Colin Wakeley, although I do not have either of their addresses.

ADMINISTRATION SUBSCRIPTION FOR 1997

Gentlemen,

Please note that payment of the Annual Admin Subscription of £5.00 is necessary to ensure that you remain on the active list and continue to receive future OBANs, reunion information and Association correspondence. To date the following members **HAVE** paid their annual administration subscription for 1997. If your name does not appear, your subscription is due before 31 March 1997. Please use the return slip included with this Newsletter, when sending your cheque.

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These terylene ties have a single motif incorporating the College Gates in gold with scroll and letters AOBA below. They are available in royal blue, maroon and green (note that green ties are only available while stocks last). Please state colour preference when ordering. Price £5.50 each incl P&P, UK only. Please note that postage on overseas orders will increase as appropriate.

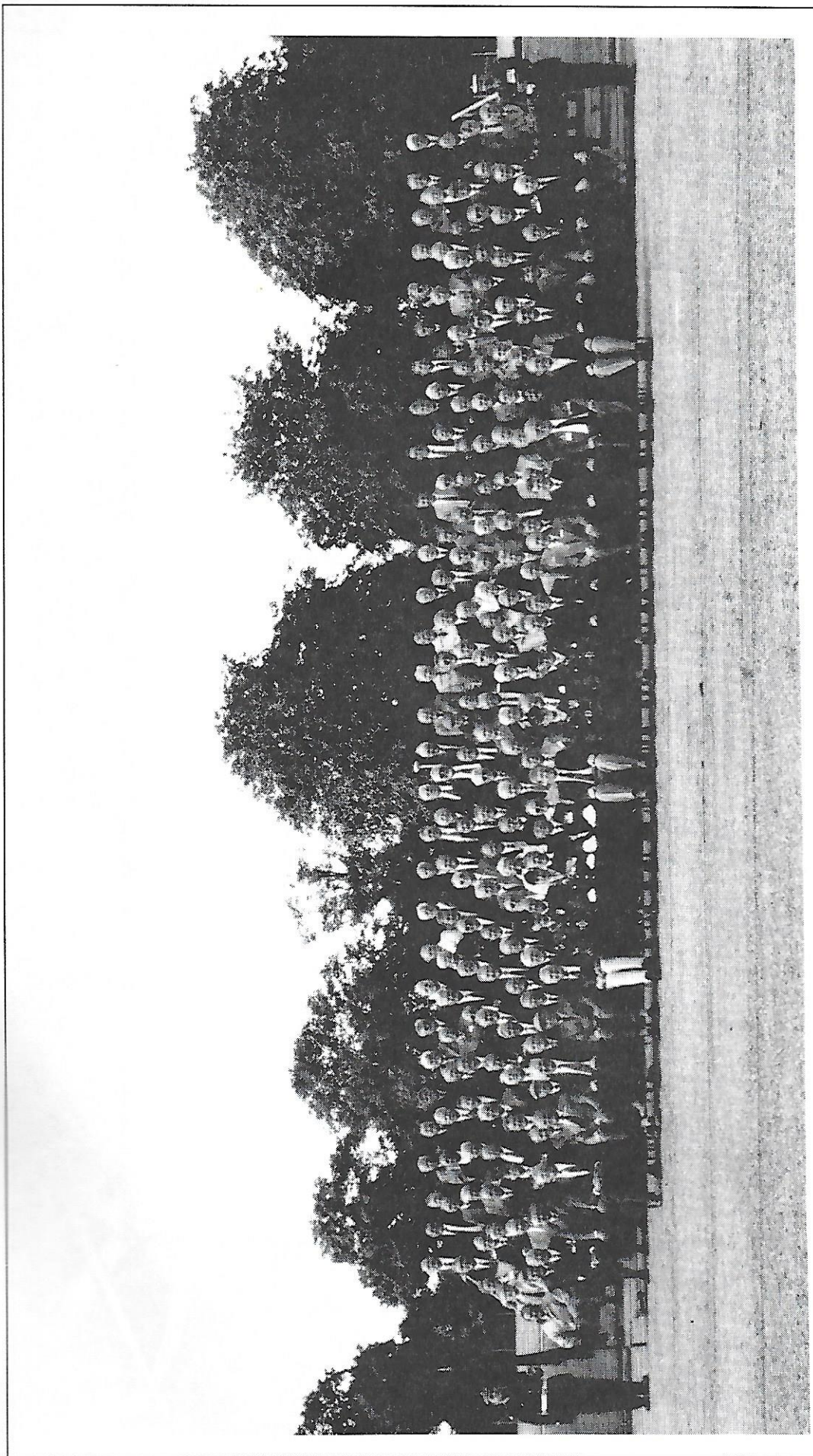
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REUNION 96 - GROUP PHOTOGRAPH