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O B A N



Arborfield Old Boys Association News

www.arborfieldoldboys.co.uk

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Notices

Please note that the views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the policy and views, official or otherwise, of either the Editor or of the Arborfield Old Boys Association and, therefore, no responsibility for these will be accepted. **All contributions and articles for inclusion in OBAN are most warmly welcomed although text in Microsoft Word format and photos/images in TIFF or high grade JPEG format are preferred. Photographs or diagrams must be of high resolution if they are to look acceptable - aim for something at least 500Kb in size.**

Membership of the Arborfield Old Boys Association is open to all those who served, as apprentice or staff member, at one of the Army Apprentices' Schools or Colleges at Arborfield, between 1939 and 2004. There is a joining fee of £15.00 for life membership plus an annual subscription of £15.00. Application forms are available by post from the Membership Office at the REME Museum, and on the Association website, www.arborfieldoldboys.co.uk

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Having just spent the day with Peter Gibson, who was attempting to show me how to use this new computer, the phrase 'punched, drilled and countersunk' comes to mind – if I have recalled it correctly! The Association kindly agreed to replace my old 'steam-driven' Windows 98 computer with this new system, with the intention of streamlining the lines of communication between Peter Gibson and myself in order to speed up and simplify the way in which OBAN is produced. As at this moment, the jury is still out on that, but I am sure I will improve as time goes by!

Another New Year has rolled into existence – can it already be a decade since we were celebrating the Millennium? I was fortunate enough to spend the Christmas period over in Chicago, thus missing a lot of the terrible weather that hit my area. But I still had the pleasure of driving home from Heathrow to find a foot of snow piled up on the drive! And just to rub it in, having cleared the bulk of it away, we then had another snowfall by the following morning! I then picked up a copy of the local newspaper and read all the stories of the mayhem that had taken place on the A3 in Surrey and Hampshire – glad I missed it.

During the process of putting together this latest issue of OBAN, I have again been reminded of the large amount of material 'in the bank', yet to be published. However hard I try to include your wonderful contributions, there is never enough space available to keep everyone happy. Please be patient, those who have sent in your articles, they will appear one day! It is certainly a privilege to be 'OIC Data Bank' and to have the chance of making my own small contribution to the combined efforts of all you guys out there. Keep up the good work!

Pete Gripton, 56B

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Cover photographs

Front cover: Brian Fortune, Bob Hudson and the Editor enjoy a visit to a museum in Nantwich during a 56B reunion weekend. All were in 'A' Company at boys' school together.

Rear cover: Photograph kindly supplied by Jim Ainslie, 61B

OFFICERS' REPORTS

Chairman's Message



It seems such a short time ago that we were lapping up the sunshine in the garden of the WOs' and Sgts' Mess while tucking into a super barbecue! How quickly summer and autumn came and went.

There was a hint of winter as some of us paraded at the Cenotaph, glad of our headwear to keep the chill from follicularly (?) challenged heads. And, more recently, there has been this snowy winter. I know those of you in the north will be more familiar with all this white stuff, but down here in the south we are used to warmer climes – that's probably why there are so many sensible Scots down here! However, I am sure that many of those of my ilk from the early 60s will recall the Christmas (was it '62 or '63?) when we each received a telegram with the not-so-cryptic message: **'BOYTRAIN CANCELLED STOP REPORT ARBORFIELD 11 JANUARY'**.

This meant an extra week's leave and was treated in

much the same way as kids of today are, when their schools close when it gets a bit slippery – Wimps! Anyway, it was received with some jollity, except that by then our Christmas Leave money was down to the last couple of bob. So, if you were anything like me you were looking at the post for a letter containing a week's (miserly) pay and 7 days ration allowance of 42 shillings. It never came of course, so we were forced to borrow from Mum and Dad. I remember my Dad remarking that he thought he had got rid of me as a financial burden when I joined the Army! Then, when we finally returned to Arborfield, we found the pipes and radiators had burst and they kept us busy clearing the ice and snow from the roads around the blocks, using six-foot tables as snow ploughs. We also discovered we would have to work later each day - and some weekends - to make good the week lost from our training. Happy days!

Brian Hutchins, 61B

From the Honorary Secretary



Happy New year to everyone and let's hope that 2010 will be a good one for all of us. Certainly the Association appears to be in good heart, with many new members coming on board since the last Reunion.

The Association Office, run by Keith Evans, has been very busy with endless telephone calls and e-mails arriving from all parts of the world. It has become almost a seven-day service and I am most grateful to Keith for all his hard work. You will be pleased to hear that your

Coming back to the present – some of you may have heard about the work going on to produce an Army Apprentice Memorial, to be sited at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. It is an exciting project, which deserves to be supported by all old boys. Check out www.armyapprenticememorial.org.uk for the latest developments and graphics of the proposed memorial. We are well represented on the national steering committee and I am sure that I speak on behalf of all of us in thanking Keith Thrower, Gordon Bonner, Maurice Hope, Mike Davis and Max Warwick for their sterling work on our behalf. The cost of the memorial is expected to come in at about £20K to £25K and fundraising has already started. If you wish to contribute, please send a cheque to Mike Davis, his address is on the inside cover page of OBAN, made out to **AOBA No.2 Account (AANM)**. Just a reminder that the 2010 Reunion will be held over the weekend of July 30th to 1st August, at which we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the 1960 intakes. Hope to see you all there.

God Bless, Bill Cleasby, 61C

Web Developer's Report



Sadly I have to report that an unscrupulous website, purporting to reunite members of our Armed Forces, had blatantly copied material from our website. They produced two pages outlining Arborfield Boys' School, by simply copying some wonderful stuff, written in the main by our OBAN editor, without any acknowledgement of its source. Anyway, to cut a long story short, the offending material



Happy 80th Birthday, Keith!

Management Committee took Keith out to a local pub at the back end of last year, to celebrate his 80th birthday. It was a splendid occasion and he was 'wined and dined' in the manner expected of Arborfield Old Boys.

has now been removed and full apologies rendered. It is sad that money-grabbing low lifers resort to stealing wonderful material to fill their own websites, but it does prove that we have to be ever watchful, to ensure the outstanding content of our site is not stolen.

On a lighter note, most will know by now that we've moved our Forum. We did this to gain complete control over all the wonderful stories and anecdotes being posted, as the old hosts were - to put it mildly - not too reliable. Now it's all safely secured on our own hosting plan, together with the main website. This ensures we can, and do, take regular backups - providing us with a wealth of information for years to come. So, if you haven't yet joined us, then you're really missing out on some great fun. Simply visit the main website and follow the links to 'Forum' and you'll be assured of a very warm welcome.

God Bless, David (Tich) Schofield, 65A

Money Matters



It is hard to believe that another year has passed so quickly. The annual examination of our fund has taken place and its findings will be presented to the Chairman for his approval on your behalf. During the year we have received two legacies, a reasonable return on Fixed Deposit account considering the economic climate, and a record number of new members. I end with the usual plea - will all members who pay by cash each year please do so as soon as possible.

All the best to you all, Mike Davis, 60B

Recruiting and Membership



The Association goes from strength to strength, thanks to all you guys out there. I am looking forward to seeing the 60ers at the Reunion this year. I know the hard work that has been going on to make this another great attendance, possibly a record number to the dinner. Regretfully we have had a more-than-average number of deaths since the last Reunion - God Bless Them. Happy New Year to you all and keep up the good work trying to find new members.

Regards from Fred Mills, 51B



Preparation is under-way for this year's Reunion on 30, 31 July and 1 August. Details and Application Forms will be included with OBAN 48, due to be published by the end of May. The 1960 intakes are progressing very well with new membership - obviously a very large top table will be needed. Membership applications received during November and December of any year will be credited from the first of January of the following year. So you will not be paying two subscriptions within a matter of two or three months.

I attended the funeral of George Hougue (41A), who died on 24th December 2009 (he was one of our Chelsea Pensioners) and presented the AOBA Scroll, produced by Eddie Broomfield (45A) to his son. Another who has passed on was Paul Hudson (58A/B), who attended the Cenotaph Parade each year. You can see his photograph on the front cover of OBAN 44 (extreme front left).

Keith Evans, 45A

Please support

The REME Association Shop

The REME Association Shop is situated at the entrance to the Museum on Isaac Newton Road in Arborfield, Reading. We sell everything from Ties to Tankards, Prints to Plaques and Clothing, including uniform items. We also provide a Medal Mounting and Engraving service. For full details of our stock, please visit our website at www.rememuseum.org.uk



Opening Times
Monday - Thursday 0900 - 1630
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Orders can also be made by telephone on 0118 9763223
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All major credit cards accepted except American Express. Cheques also accepted.

*** New Items ***

Socks in Corps Colours • Ladies Scarves with REME Badge
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From Farm Boy To Army Boy

Part 1 of a series by Mike Larby, 42C

During my eighty-plus years on this earth, I suppose the question most asked of me - apart from those largely unanswerable ones beginning with, "*Why don't you?*" - is, "*What made you join the Army?*" All in all, a very good question, and even after all these years and with some consideration, difficult to answer. Well, not difficult maybe, but an honest reply is a different matter, and only since Frank Fendick urged me to write the odd article for OBAN, before I finally sank beyond recall into deeper senility, have I really given it much serious thought. The surprising (to me) and simple reason seems to be 'bone-headedness'.

A farming heritage

To explain, it may be an idea to give an outline of my background, which is virtually one hundred percent farming stock, mother's ancestors having lived on the same farm since 1634. The only change is that they ceased to be tenant farmers in 1994, when a more adventurous cousin bought the farm from the trust that owned it - from yeoman farmer to gentleman farmer in three and a half centuries, some going! Father's background was also in farming but, being a younger son, he took up a clerical apprenticeship in the civil service (Admiralty) until 1916, when he became a Gunner in 'B' Battery, HAC (The Honourable Artillery Company) - "*Because he loved riding*", he used to say. This lasted until 1917 at Ypres, when he was badly gassed, and he was discharged in 1919. He then reverted to type, taking up the tenancy of a small farm in Bedfordshire, marrying - and I appeared at Mill Farm in July 1927.

Consequently, my early life was spent in various village schools as farming fortunes varied, and many delightful hours were taken up with the usual boyish pursuits. The River Ouse ran along our meadows, so time was spent rafting (stealing wood from the stack yard), swimming and a generally idyllic life with the village lads and lassies. This lasted until I was about nine years old, when, upon return from school, I was expected to pump water (hand pumping from the well) for the cattle, about 200 gallons a day, mix animal food, and to do any other menial chores a lad could manage. As strength and stamina increased, school

holidays, depending on the season, were filled with such delights as muck carting (moving tons of manure from the cattle yards and spreading it on the fields), harvesting (stoking or shocking), stack building, haymaking, thrashing - you name it, we did it. None of this was done with any goodwill or enthusiasm on my part, and whenever possible I would slope off, hide somewhere and read. Reading was, and still is, a great part of my life, with in-built idleness being the other major part. Daydreaming and sloth would not, on the face of it, be good qualifications for an Army career, but I am sure we can all remember postings where such assets were handy!

Salvation came at about ten years of age when father acquired his first tractor, the ubiquitous *Ford 'Model N'*. This was a petrol/paraffin-engined tractor with an iron seat and no weather protection. As this was the standard specification of any piece of agricultural machinery that could be ridden, this was no hardship. A cold winter's ride was better than walking up and down the field behind a horse (or horses), which pulled arcane machinery and required skills far beyond my capacity to operate. Of course, once the art of tractor driving had been mastered - which in fact takes time, as plowing long straight furrows of even depth is quite an art - it becomes boring, but not unpleasant. Left to mine own devices for hours at a time gave me an opportunity to woolgather, watch the seasons change and, after 1939, the War's progress. Bedfordshire, like most of East Anglia, became one vast airfield thanks to Paddy *McAlpine* and his boys, and early in the war, plowing until dark, one could watch the *Vickers Wellington* bombers flying low and singly into the twilight *en route* to their targets in Germany. This all changed early in 1942, when the USAAF *Fortresses*, *Bostons*, *Mitchells* - and goodness knows what else - began to arrive in their hundreds. As, of course, did their American crews, which cheered the village maidens up no end!

Whilst all this farming was going on, my education was also progressing. The village school (one teacher and one class aged 5-11) had done its best for me. The curriculum finished by my 10th birthday, so three whole terms were spent reading library books, as the county library van delivered different cases of books once a

week. 'Fanny' Bird, our teacher, didn't mind what I read, but tactfully introduced a few travel books - Aesop, Greek myths and even Empire or military history. I chose for myself John Buchan, Edgar Wallace, Leslie Charteris (the Saint books) and anything similar, like Biggles or Bulldog Drummond. All this came to a sudden end in 1938 when I was told to go to the Bedford Modern School, a minor public school, which was half boarding and half day boys. All day boys, to avoid any perceived favouritism, had to conform to boarding school regulations during term time. There was 'lock-up', i.e. off the streets and indoors (or at least home) by 18.30 in the winter and 19.00 in the summer, including weekends - we went to school six days a week anyway. No form of public entertainment was permitted - no cinema, theatre, circus or funfairs; all chain stores, such as *Woolworths*, were out of bounds. School uniform was to be worn at all times - and we weren't allowed to carry parcels of any kind on the streets, except of course school books and games kit. Get the picture? All these rules were administered by school monitors, of both house and school varieties. They were about 17-18 years of age, seemingly selected for their innate savagery, and they had authority to apply corporal punishment whenever they deemed fit - which was always! After lunch, the house 'mon' would read a list of those luckless enough to be caught - or accused of - breaking the rules. They were then summoned to the monitor's room, charges read and punishment awarded by the monitors sitting that day. The punishment was by cane across the buttocks - at least two strokes, sometimes more, never less. No one, in my experience, was ever found to be 'not guilty'.

On one occasion, I was in attendance as a spectator at a 'compulsory' rugby match - that's the attendance not the game - and, as we were *not to be trusted*, a duty monitor was in attendance with a list of attendees, against which he ticked your name upon report to him. Basil Bulmer, for that was his name, was nowhere to be found, but I wasn't particularly bothered, as I knew we would be both on the same train home that evening - as we were. Next day, after lunch, a nasty surprise awaited - a summons to the 'mons' room. "*Not at the game? Of course I was.*" "*Name not ticked.*" "*What does that*

matter? Surely the object was to spectate at the game, wasn't it?" "Certainly, but no tick by your name - bend over!" Throwing all caution to the wind, I refused, and appealed for the house-master to hear my case (one PJ King, who had played rugby up at Cambridge with my uncle Norman, who in his time had been head boy only fifteen years before at BMS). "Okay here", thought I. In stormed PJ, who listened to what I had to say, turned to the assembled monitors and asked if my name was ticked. "No? Then cane him!" So, instead of two, I got four - as hard as the executioner could pile it on! I was black and blue for weeks, with a very jaundiced view of justice, but one lesson learned. Don't take on the authorities head to head, bide your time, learn the system, and with a bit of luck it may be possible to win. Not the war, of course, but just the odd skirmish.

So - what has the above have to do with a future military and mechanical career? Well, an understanding of discipline in its basic form, an enthusiasm for machinery - tractors, *Meccano* of course - and all that book stuff from "Let's Learn to Drive" and "The Motor Car and How it Works" to "The Grand Prix Car". I still have them as a matter of fact. Any military experience? Well, 'yes' actually, through a body known as the BMS OTC or, in full, the Bedford Modern School Officer Training Corps. What? No ORs? This was affiliated to the Beds and Herts Regiment, and we went to summer camp with them one week in the year. We also paraded twice a week and had an annual 'Field Day'. We learned all the drills, movements and tactics of WW1. We wore SD and 4" web-belts, though not puttees. We drilled a bit, used SMLEs on the range, and boiled them out afterwards - five pints of 'biling ile' when really corroded. We threw dummy grenades, learned about the *Lewis* gun (the body locking pin, ha! ha!), the *Spigot* mortar (I think, or something like it) and the *Smith* gun, as issued to the Home Guard. Why did I join the OTC? Well, if one managed to avoid the cane, the alternative punishments were three hours detention on a Saturday afternoon (depriving my father of three hours of tractor driving!), or an hour's drill on the square by our OTC Sergeant. What would you choose?

So, now we have the military experience, a working knowledge of the internal combustion engine, and a sense of discipline, all mixed with a yeoman's sense of independence. What has that to do with electing to go to the ATS (Boys) at

Arborfield? You may well ask - absolutely nothing! As I got older, people i.e. relatives, family and busybodies, used to ask what I wanted to do/be, gradually getting more insistent as time crept on. "Farming?" - no way. "Journalism?" - I was usually top in English. "Engineering?" - maybe. But I was bottom of the form in maths, algebra, geometry and, more latterly, physics - no hope there then. These extremes in academic abilities - or results rather - are explained by my aforesaid affinity with sloth. Those subjects I liked, I was 'good at', because the work was enjoyable and therefore easy. Those subjects I was 'bad at' required more thought, much harder work, and consequently neglect on my part. This attitude endured for years until .. well, that's for another day.

All planned out?

So here we have a fifteen year-old, not pulling his weight on the farm. In recent years, I've come to bitterly regret this, when my father worked hard and I know had looked to me for help. Also, not doing his best at school - after the family had made sacrifices to send him there - generally bored and useless, with a future career unmapped. My father never raised his voice to me, and never pointed out my shortcomings - although I was always called 'Never sweat' by the men on the farm! It wasn't until many years later that I had any rapport with my father, and even then we never spoke about my youthful days and his expectations of me. Suffice it to say (and I hear I'm not the only one), the family were sitting at tea one day, listening as usual to the six o'clock news. Suddenly my father said, "There you are, you want to be a soldier and an engineer, why don't you go there?" "Where?" I asked, daydreaming as usual. "This Army school thing", he said. "Army?" I didn't want to join the bloody Army, but I'd rather have died than let him know that. I was hurt, because I thought he wanted to get rid of me, so that was that.

Once we got the brochure and I saw the bleak facts of ATS (Boys) Arborfield, I was horrified. A recreation room with a ping-pong table for pleasure, lamps with green shades on, living in a hut? Our pigs had better looking quarters than that! But, I would be a MT fitter - or was it fitter MT? - and get to play with real machines.

Anyway, like it or not, there was no intention of backing down, so the wheels were set in motion, and have been rolling ever since. (Do you VMs know that 'Volvo' is Latin for 'I roll?') (Not a lot of

people know that! Ed.) My first visit to the recruiting centre, where we did our written exams (Form II standard at BMS and I was in IV) and a medical. "Amazing the difference in physique", said one medical type to another. Being a well-fed farm boy, I took that as a compliment, but I'd yet to meet the PT bashers at Arborfield! Through the screen, "Next boy. Pass water into this", said one medic. "Do you think he'll understand?" said the other. "Do you mean urinate?" said I, already the cocky sod. It was at the recruiting centre I met someone I knew, one Paddy Steval, also soon to be an 'old boy' of BMS - and a real tearaway. We went through Arborfield together, but I don't know what happened to him - probably something mundane, but more likely the Marine Commandos or the glasshouse, maybe both!

Before we leave my *Alma Mater* BMS for the last time, I must relate the story which highlights my (and maybe Steval's) career pinnacle there. Rolling some wheat one fine day, on the trusty *Fordson*, I saw a green fin sticking from the soft ground. On pulling it out, I saw it was an unexploded incendiary bomb about 14" x 2", with two bright detonators sticking out of the cylindrical bottom. Call the ARP? No way! Into my satchel and into school, proudly showing it to my mates. Paddy Steval was dying to have it, so we did a swap - my bomb for his old but serviceable *Remington* typewriter - I often wonder where he got it from. Deal done, home goes Paddy with the bomb. He takes it to the garden and hits it with his coal hammer - **Bang!** Unfortunately, Paddy's next-door neighbour was the chief ARP warden for Bedford. Next morning, not the house 'mons' room, not even the school 'mons' room, but the headmaster's study. Not only Steval either, but me too, as (unreasonably I thought) he had shopped me as well. After a lengthy harangue, we both got the standard beating, but it was child's play compared to that administered by muscular masochistic monitors! Oh yes, by the way, shortly before leaving BMS, around about my 15th birthday, I was drawn into fisticuffs with Basil Bulmer on the train going home. He was all of 18, but with right (and some spite) on my side, he got a really good 'panning', as they later said at Arborfield. It was good to see a nearly-grown man cry, although they were tears of rage and frustration, because I'd got him jammed down between the seats and he couldn't move. So much for name ticking!

So you see, the only reason I found myself leaving the farm forever, that day in October 1942, bound for heaven knows what, was just a chance remark, not seriously made, by my father when listening to the news. Plus a subsequent churlish teenage attitude from me, with a stubborn bone-headed refusal to change my mind and apologise. This, I now know, caused my parents huge disappointment and a great deal of trepidation, not to mention abject terror on my part. After all, if school was that bad, what would the Army be like? 'Leaving the farm forever' sounds dramatic, but it so happened that father had already decided to give up farming. He was selling up at the end of October, to take up a post in the Ministry of Food, as an area supervisor with the Potato Marketing Board. This, remember, at a time when farming was becoming really profitable after 25 years of struggle! He never was much of a businessman, albeit a brilliant farmer.

And so it begins

Be that as it may, it was on to my trusty bicycle, to catch the 8.10 train from Sharnbrook station, just as if it was a normal school day - as it was, I suppose. Mother saw me off, but father was busy milking and didn't bother. St Pancras - I'd often wondered where the school train went. The underground - wow, those escalators! Waterloo Station, and an unfamiliar green train to Reading - LMS (London, Midland and Scottish) trains were maroon and plain chocolate, I think. A '6 x 4' truck to Arborfield - and so it begins, my military and technical career. Everyone has described *ad nauseam* their impressions and experiences at Arborfield - Ben Cook, the Regimental Police and their lair (the guardroom), RSM McNally and so on. So perhaps a slightly different viewpoint may be taken. It is difficult to recall the feelings and emotions of the first few weeks and also some of the finer details. What personal possessions, if any, did we arrive with? And how much was allowed to be kept? All civilian clothes were packed and sent home after we were issued with our kit. Presumably, therefore, we must have arrived with a suitcase or some form of hold-all, into which our possessions that had to be returned were packed. Mine must have been a small suitcase or it couldn't have been bicycle portable. What were we allowed to keep? Handkerchiefs, pyjamas, a cut-throat razor and strop given to me by my father. (I'd only just started to shave but was quite adept with the razor and, to this day, I still

have two of father's that I use from time to time - with caution.) And, of all things, my OTC button stick, one of those posh ones, with curves of varying radii down one side - what on earth were they for?

Did we buy blanco, metal polish, etc. from the NAAFI? If so, with what? Who paid to send our civvies home, or were they consumed secretly by the incinerator behind the NAAFI? By the way, who remembers 'behind the NAAFI'? All sorts of arcane buildings were there. The NAAFI girls' quarters, the refuse bays and incinerator. The Command Post, where the out-of-hours Orderly Officer lurked (don't ask how I know that). A cold room of some sort (wasn't some luckless A/T found there hung up by his wrists? - a jolly jape). And last, but not least, the back gate and bridge over a stream, with a path leading to green fields beyond the Remount Depot. Ingress and egress for permanent staff, ATS cooks and the like - but out of bounds to all A/Ts, except the bravest of the brave!

Also behind the NAAFI - 'tin crushing'. Tin crushing? Saturday mornings were devoted to various chores, rotated around the Companies. Interior economy, Regimental training, fatigues, etc. Fatigue duties were like 'Russian Roulette', from emptying the grease traps by the Cookhouse, through sweeping the workshops to working in the Sgts' Mess kitchen. The most bizarre however was the aforementioned 'tin crushing'. Some of us will remember the 'flimsies', those square metal cans that contained everything, from those large square dog biscuits to petrol? They used to accrue during the week and, on Saturday mornings, were flattened and put on the scrap metal pile. Flattening was not achieved by 'On the spot, quick mark time' (probably because none of the Permanent Staff had thought of that), but by the judicious use of a *Vickers* light tank (probably a Mark II or IV), driven by a MT instructor. We'd lay the cans out in front of, and behind, the tank; it would then trundle back and forth on the hard standing. The flattened cans would be removed and new ones replaced, as the tank tried its best to flatten them. It couldn't do many at a time, due to the light ground p.s.i. of the tracks and the non-crushability of the cans. Get the ratio wrong and the *Vickers* would clamber up and perch vaingloriously on the top. However, the can crushing rate could be accelerated by increasing the p.s.i. - achieved by A/Ts riding in, and on top of the tank! Being tiny, the tank didn't carry

many A/Ts, but Oh! What fun! Health and Safety, what's that?

But I digress - back to the early days. All went well for the first few days, as I (apart from 'Dukie' Hands, who knew better than to expose his talents) seemed to be the only chap to know about Boots, Buttons and Blanco - thanks to my experience at the BMS OTC. This ability was duly noted by Sgt 'Gunga' Plume, a lovely man, a KOSBI, who must have done something awful to be posted to Arborfield. Of course, I could also drill a bit, so I was quite a favourite of his. Very bad news! This lasted for about three weeks, when the level of OTC standards began to be exceeded by the standards of ATS (Boys). Clean boots were one thing, mirrored toe-caps another, and indolence was beginning to take over from prudence. By the way, where did the heat source come from to melt the boot polish? And those spoons - were they the same ones we ate with? Gunga Plume's disappointment was made plain, first from solicitous enquiry, through to sorrow, and then to discipline, culminating in the 'B' Coy Commander, a fatherly figure, awarding me three days CB. That was a short, sharp and painful lesson, never to be repeated!

The nadir of my life at Arborfield was at first janker call - was it 0600? I was required to lay out all my kit in the Guardroom, before first parade. A sprint back up to Barrack Room D3, biscuits, blankets, all my kit swept from the locker, back to the Guardroom. Luckily, there was good camaraderie in D3, otherwise I could never have done it (on reflection, maybe biscuits weren't included, that would have been too much). Never again, and my standards were raised accordingly - only just enough to be acceptable, never high enough to be selected for any regimental display, or to be considered suitable for promotion, or any similar such duties. I became adept at maintaining this middling level throughout my career - maybe the odd extra Orderly Sergeant duty for long hair (even though I was nearly bald at 23 years of age!). Once the initial three weeks of the 'getting to know' pattern life, D3 'B' Coy became acceptable, and certainly much easier than BMS and farm-work. One could tolerate rough shirts, even rougher blankets, cold rooms, - but not as cold as my bedroom in the old stone farmhouse - strange room mates with unintelligible accents, and so on, for a steady routine. 'Go with the flow' would have been my motto for the regimental side, had the term been coined then, and I positively lapped up trade

classrooms and education. That filing and chipping business was difficult to shut from one's mind, however, it really was the epitome of boredom. When was I going to get into MT2 - the shed with the vehicles, for those of you who have forgotten - and play with the spanners?

The biggest disappointment was the food - not the quantity, which depended on whose turn it was to be mess orderly - but the absolutely, uniformly poor quality of it. What a disaster was that very first breakfast - 'Cornflakes and Milk' it said on the board. Goody, goody - the only milk I had ever had came straight from our cows, often still warm. (Although I seem to remember 1/3 pints at school, sealed with cardboard discs with a punch-out hole in the centre, through which a straw could be inserted.) The cooks couldn't mess with milk, surely, and cornflakes, well, they are just cornflakes. Moreover, I knew the milk was good because it arrived in 12-gallon churns, just like we'd had at home. What I actually got was water (warm?) with a faintly blue tinge and a heap of dust, which combined to make an inedible paste. Applying some thought to this, I reckoned the logistics of distribution (of the milk) went as follows: 25 per cent Officers' Mess, 25 per cent Sgts' Mess, 30 per cent Cookhouse and Permanent Staff - and the final 20 per cent to 350 A/Ts. Another illusion shattered. So, survival depended upon parcels from home, always ceremoniously divided (by me at least) into 16 equal portions, on the scrubbed six-foot trestle table, and trips to the NAAFI. Actually, it was my room-mates who made most trips, as I got a weekly supplementary benefit from home (2/6d). This enabled me to go to bed early and read, whilst, for a buckshee bun, they'd bring me back a cha and wad. (Food from the NAAFI and parcels was permissible in the room, while food from the Cookhouse wasn't - not altogether surprising!) More astute A/Ts than I, if they had received postal orders from home, would go to Wokingham, buy fags, and then smuggle them in (in bicycle frames was one ruse). Smoking was not one of my pursuits, so I was OK, but those that did would pay the purveyor 'a penny a drag' (3 puffs) or 'a halfpenny a draw' (1 puff). This was duly entered into the smuggler's little black book and, come end of term, he and his minders would collect their dues from those hapless A/Ts who'd just drawn their back pay (credits) for the term. Business acumen seems to be a talent, rather than an acquired skill.

First leave period

The first leave, Christmas '42, was memorable, because our new home in Nottingham beckoned - remember that I had left the farm forever in October - so there was really something to look forward to. Early breakfast for the distant travellers, kit packed, credits in one's hot little hands - about £7 or £8 I think, a veritable fortune. Then the truck to Reading station, with the magic railway warrant, then great excitement as brass ATS shoulder insignia (what was their proper name?) were removed and replaced by RAOC ones, with GS cap badges swapped for RAOC as well. Why not REME? - after all, the Corps was already ten weeks old! Obviously, there was far more RAOC regalia around, sold to innocent Jeeps as the senior chaps adopted REME stuff. But anything was better than 'ATS' - later on, we in our turn wore REME badges on leave, plus lanyards and that delightful forage cap of blue and red, with yellow piping and a white centre piece (the bit you can't see when the cap is flat). What were we like? The general idea must have been to 'pull the birds', as they say today - a bit pathetic really when compared to GI's silk stockings and dollars, or glamorous Marines and Paras - or any other real soldier or airman come to that!

Anyway, to Nottingham station LNER (London and North Eastern Railway - there was also an LMS one), and out onto the concourse - no parents! Wait a while, still no one. Where was home? I knew the address was 1, Clare Valley, The Park - but where was 'The Park'? About a mile away I was told, easy to find. Kitbag on my shoulder, the crash of ammo boots on stone, and I set off. Arriving at 1 Clare Valley (a massive Gothic Victorian pile, which I subsequently discovered had been requisitioned by the Ministry of Food for the duration), I tried the door - it was locked. I rang the bell, no answer, so using my initiative, I sat on the doorstep and waited. Soon enough, up rolled my distraught parents - they'd been to meet me but somehow we had missed each other. Not a good way to start a new relationship with Dad. City life was infinitely better than farming - or so I then thought. As The Park was only half a mile or so from the city centre, it was a magnet for a farm boy and many happy hours were spent strolling the streets, frequenting cafes and 'standing on the corner, watching all the girls go by'. I never knew there were so many in the

world, and all looking so beautiful and sophisticated. In reality, they were factory and office girls, their number explained by the fact that Nottingham was a city of light industry and, at that time, virtually fully engaged in war work. But they bravely also did their bit to boost the morale of the servicemen, mostly RAF and USAAF!

That first leave was over all too soon and it was back to Arborfield and stark reality. The year 1943 seemed uneventful, but I was beginning to realise that the Army wasn't particularly aware of my ambition to be a VM, and a certain amount of focus was necessary on my part, in order to achieve this target. The use of hand and machine tools has always given me pleasure and, during the short course on lathe-work, my instructor suggested that, because of my application and good results, I should consider changing to Fitter General - much more up-market than being a grease monkey! To say I was alarmed was an understatement - nothing could be more distressing than to be valet to an artillery piece - an inert assembly of metal that spends ninety-nine percent of its time sulking, and a mere one percent in naked aggression. It can't even move by itself - although I believe the AS90 can move, in a limited slug-like fashion.

(Glad that Frank persuaded you to tell your tale Mike! Hopefully, we can look forward to a follow-up in the not-too-distant future? Ed.)

BENEVOLENCE

Please remember that the AOBA maintains a **Benevolence Fund**, for the benefit of any Old Boy who may be in distress or going through hard times. If you know of any case where the Fund can be of assistance, please contact the Honorary Secretary at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Boy From The Potteries

By Maurice 'Mo' Hope, 59B

It was fifty years ago - yes an amazing half-a-century - when I stood with my little case on the platform at Reading's main railway station, having been inducted into the khaki brotherhood at the Recruiting Office nor too far away. I wonder now if it then crossed my mind, that it could have all been so different had circumstances not intervened? I could have thought back to 12 months earlier, to an audition I passed at the Royal Marines Recruiting Office at Snow Hill (Birmingham), hoping to follow my dream of becoming a Royal Marine Band Boy at the School of Music in Deal, Kent. At that time, I was a very junior cornet player with my local town brass band - *The Stone Silver Prize Band* - in the county of my birth, Staffordshire. All the interviews and aptitude tests were completed and I was considered to be musically proficient enough to start 'at the bottom' in the band business. I was raring to go, with parental permission gained and the mandatory signatures of 'every man and his dog' completed. All that was needed was for the school authorities to give the nod for me to finish my fragmented education a year early, and I was on my way to my dream career. Alas, this all fell apart when the 'powers that be' refused my pleas.

Within a couple of months of having those dreams shattered, the family moved south to the Central Ammunition Depot at Bramley, Hampshire, where my father was to take up a post with the War Office Constabulary and I was to start at my new school, *'Fairfields'* in nearby Basingstoke. I think the only claim to fame that the school had was in that a former pupil was none other than John Arlott, the noted cricket commentator. (*"The ball hits Denis Compton on the head - and there's Brylcreem orr! over the pitch!" Sorry, just had to put that one in! Ed.*) It made a pleasant change to go and live in 'the outback', as I considered it, surrounded as I was with strangers speaking in a foreign tongue. Mind you, I suppose I must have sounded equally strange to them, having been only recently transplanted from the then 'smoky Potteries'. At the time, the Clean Air Act hadn't yet kicked in, and so, between the coal-mines, the pottery kilns, steelworks and the *Michelin* tyre factory, all spewing out smoke, I had literally been raised 'under a cloud'. Blue skies, clean fresh air and trees were things that only

country-folk ever saw.

As I was then fourteen plus, it was time for the local school's career officer to do his stuff. The first question he asked me was, *"Which farm to you want to work on when you leave school?"* For a tender young soul, raised within the confines of the brick jungle that was Stoke-on-Trent, I was totally horrified! But it was at this same interview that I spotted a leaflet, singing the praises of being an Army Apprentice. Well, it wasn't the Marines, but I filled in the forms anyway and sent them off. I subsequently sat the tests that we all did then sat back to await the results. I had chosen three options of trade I wanted to follow - the first choice being 'Control Equipment Mechanic'. I hadn't a clue what it was, but it didn't half sound important! My second choice was 'Electrician' - Dad had said I must choose a good trade for when I came out! Lastly, as an afterthought, I stuck down 'Vehicle Mechanic'. I never really fancied a dirty, greasy, smelly job like that - but they had asked for three choices so, what the heck, stick it down to keep everybody happy! Although it was an odd choice really, as I couldn't even have mended a puncture at that time of my life.

Having dipped out on taking the eleven-plus and again, through moving house, missing out on taking it at thirteen, my overall education standard was not perhaps as good as it should have been. Geography? Art? History? Yes, I was pretty good at those, but at the 'nuts & bolts' of mathematics, I was a right duffer! So no one was more elated than me when the letter (which I still have) dropped through the letterbox, with the news that I had passed and been accepted for training as - yes, you've guessed it - a Vehicle Mechanic! So that's how I found myself, at fifteen and a quarter, having just exchanged my rail warrant for a 'ticket to ride'. My destination was somewhere called Chepstow - yes, the 'auld enemy' at Beachley Camp, to where I was now headed. A few days later, having been processed, kitted out and needled, to protect me against all sorts of unknown diseases I was wasn't ever likely to catch anyway, I found myself doing the same railway trip - but in the reverse direction! It was my first, but certainly not my last, experience of the term 'Almighty cock-up', after some officer or another had

issued the immortal phrase, *"Who the hell are you? I haven't got a Hope on my list!"*

And so to Arborfield

So it was that this four-day old action man found himself on a big red bus (was it a 4A?) to some obscure Army Camp at somewhere called Arborfield. In truth, this was only about ten miles from home, but at the time it felt more like a million! I joined the other, equally bewildered lads of intake '59B', where my 'squad' was knocked into some sort of soldierly shape by a Royal Artillery Battery Sergeant who went by the name of 'Sandy' Sanderson. I wonder how many of my old squad still remember that name? (*I certainly do, I was in Sandy's squad in 56B and we won the drill competition! Ed.*) I believe my intake was a bit spoiled initially, as I think we were the first occupants of the newly built 'Jeep' block at the top of the Square. Still brings a lump to the throat, seeing that it is the last building left standing from those days. After 'passing off' the Square came the grim reality of life in 'E' Spider and our introduction to 'the bumper' and all it entailed - and the somewhat primitive conditions of the central ablutions area. It all made us realise that we were 'here for the duration'!

It's so funny, the silly little things we all remember. After we had settled into the 'spider routine' and got used to our Room NCOs - A/Sgt Bob 'Geordie' Ord in the bunk and A/L/Cpl Monty Makin in the 'bedspace' - I recall us all sitting on the ends of our beds one night. We were joined by A/Cpl Blackman from the next room and our fine 'leaders of men' started a discussion, contemplating just where each of us would progress in the promotion stakes, once we eventually joined 'man's service'. It would be quite an eye-opener to see just how accurate those predictions were!

Due to my past hobby, I was fast-tracked into what I found was the biggest 'skive' of all - the School Military Band! Thinking back, it was a really cushy number, with many odd perks - although in the eyes of many of our mates, we were considered the lowest of the low! But it was we who wore smug smiles on our faces when, on parade in the middle of our Companies, we escaped all the rollicking handed out for poor drill or bad turnout. Plus, of course, you didn't have to be a

potential drill-pig, educational boffin or super sportsman to get promotion. You just had to develop the knack of staying out of trouble and being a good musician.

I must admit that 59B's bandmen were not the 'cream of the crop'. We did have Stan 'Jock' Barker, who became Drum Major next door with the Pipe Band. But the four of us in the Brass Band – A/Ts Dixon from 'D' Coy, and three of us from 'A' Coy, Bob Inglis, Les Eden and yours truly – must have been the only intake not to get a Band Sergeant at all. Les and myself were Band Corporals, more perhaps because we were 'into' the Band rather than for our Senior Maths tests. This educational oversight was later remedied soon after my arrival in 'Bratwurst' land. The other priority was to master something far more difficult – drinking from a 'stieffel' without losing half of it down the front of your shirt. Not that it seemed to bother anyone too much – we were usually half-blathered by the time we got into that escapade anyway!

Home advantage

There were many obvious advantages to having my home so near, even though it was only a married quarter in another Army Camp! It did mean that, during that first year, I had more Saturday and Sunday dinners at home than in the Cookhouse. I believe they call it a 'restaurant' nowadays, but it doesn't have the same ring about it, does it? If the old grey matter serves me correctly, it was just a half-crown (12.5p) return fare on the bus to Reading and another 1s/9d (around 9p) on the train from Reading Central. That left Platform 2 for the twenty-minute scenic trip to Bramley, then it was a slow stroll through the village and up the lane to home. It is a well-trodden route that should be remembered by numerous old 'A' Coy pals, who themselves – and through no fault of their own – lived too far away to get home at the weekends. It got to be so regular that my poor old Mum began to refer to them all as "My soldier boys"! Indeed, I think that, during that first 12 months, Don Allen and Bob Inglis spent more weekends at my house than I did!

Don's parents were, at the time, in far-off Kenya, 'Blondie' Burch's were ensconced on Malta, while Jim Reeves's father was serving in BAOR. Bob Inglis came from just outside Plymouth, in the village of Ivybridge, where I recall spending the Easter holiday in 1960 with his folks. Others who sampled my Mum's home cooking were Barry Williams,



Bob Inglis(l) and me(r), c1960, outside the family home, MQ5, at CAD Bramley

Derek Brunt, 'Betty' Martin and 'Ginge' Fletcher ah, happy days. In early 1960, the local villages around the area held a football knockout tournament, which was won by Bramley Schoolboys. The strange thing was that at least half the team was from 'A' Coy at Arborfield – a small oversight that somehow wasn't divulged to the organisers! I think my Mum used to enjoy those 'open house' weekends. As she used to say, if ever I was a long way away from home, she hoped that someone's Mum would do the same for me. We never got any complaints, so I assume it was all appreciated.

Those sneaky little trips home later became even easier, due to the generosity of the *Nuffield Trust*, which donated a substantial amount of money to the School for leisure purposes. One benefit was that the School Band was equipped with brand-new *Boosey & Hawkes* musical instruments, whereas previously, we had borrowed clapped-out old second-hand stuff from other Regimental Bands. Also purchased were several 'top-of-the-range' *Claude Butler* racing bicycles for the Cycling Club. Barry Williams was already a keen and very proficient member of this club, and it didn't take me very long to see the potential in also joining! I used to jump on the bike for a Wednesday 'sports afternoon' and pedal furiously for around 45 minutes, to arrive home just in time for tea! Then I would catch the matinee showing at the Bramley AKC (cinema) before cycling back to Arborfield before 'lights out'. To all intents and purposes, I had been out for an exhausting 4 to 5-hour training session – wasn't I the crafty one? Sadly, all these perks came to

an abrupt halt on Derby Day 1960, when my father passed away suddenly at the age of forty-eight, possibly brought about by the effects of some mysterious illness he had during the war. There followed a rapid vacation of the Police house and my family re-located back to the familiar environs of Stoke-on-Trent.

One 'good number' that I recall was when a couple from Reading organised a 10-day trip to Locarno in Switzerland, for the princely sum of just £17 a head, which was just too good to pass up. It did mean that you first had to enroll into the Youth Hostel Association to take advantage of the deal. It was the first time I had ever been across the Channel and we had what seemed a ridiculously long train ride to reach our destination. The only two languages I spoke were 'English' and 'Vulgar' – so I recall living solely on peaches and *pommes frites* for the whole trip! The only other person known to me in the party was Bob Ord and, with him being in Senior Div and me a mere Jeep, fraternisation was not the order of the day.

A serious event

On a more serious note, there was the sad case of A/T Stuart 'Ginge' Callender, which is briefly referred to in *'The Army Apprentice'* book. This was in early 1962 and we were carrying out our Military Training phase in an old house near Reading, which was used for Civil Defence exercises. It was the usual mix of mock casualties and eager rescuers, and was all good fun until it all went 'pear-shaped'. The cellar of the house had long since flooded over the years and everywhere was extremely damp. Poor old Ginge was placed, as a casualty' in a toilet and a certain Wing Commander (it wasn't just the RAF that had that post) decided in his wisdom to make things more realistic. He set off a smoke canister on the landing in front of the toilet and, assisted by the damp atmosphere, the toxic smoke fumes sadly turned our fake casualty into a real one. The Military Funeral at Camberley was a really sad affair, made worse by the fact that we were so close to 'passing out' into the wide world of adult soldiering. I don't recall anyone ever being held to account for those events, but I well recall, later in Germany, reading the instructions on what would have been a very similar smoke canister, stating that it should never be let off in an enclosed or damp area. I will let the reader form his own thoughts on the matter.

Many people will remember where

they were when momentous moments in history took place. These would almost certainly include England winning the World Cup, or the earth-shattering news to many red-blooded Apprentices that Marilyn Monroe had been found dead in bed. Or how about Elvis being found dead on the toilet, a victim of taking too many 'uppers' and 'downers'? Or even the infamous shootings of President John Kennedy and former Beatle, John Lennon? But I wonder how many ex-Apprentices remember the parade, the morning after the Russians had catapulted Major Yuri Gagarin into space in *Vostok 1*? That had taken place on April 12th 1961 and there we were, next morning, all lined up on the Square, rather pleased that the drudge of marching around in slow and quick time was over. We were waiting patiently for the order to 'March Off' from the RSM, a gentleman by the name of Stewart, of the Irish Guards. He suddenly piped up with the request, "*To mark this historic occasion, Bandmaster, let us march off this parade to some rousing Russian music!*" We in the Band must have thought up quite a few retorts to this request, under our breaths of course, but what could Paddy Parker do but to acknowledge the request in the only way he knew?

And so we did indeed march off – to the strains of 'Scotland the Brave' and 'When the Saints go marching in'! Perhaps our illustrious Bandmaster was not exactly 'flavour of the month' in the Sergeants' Mess for a while! Now, I appreciate that Army Apprentices may have been smarter than the average teenager, but come on – how the hell he expected the Band to know the current 'top of the pops' in Muscovian marching music, with only 30 seconds notice, is beyond me to this day. Now if he had given us, say, an hour's warning, then I'm sure we could have come up with something different. We could have kept him sweet by marching the parade off to 'Danny Boy' – or perhaps to even rub more salt in the wounds, with a

rousing rendition of 'The British Grenadiers'!

Intakes, postings and careers

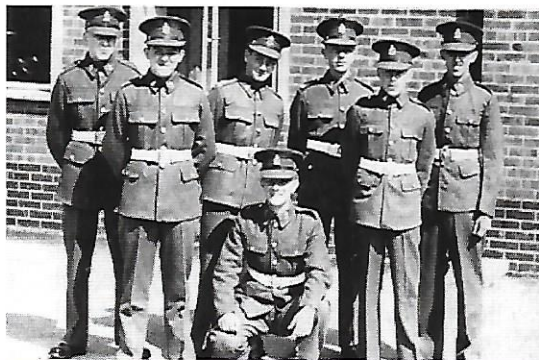
I think that we may have been the first ever 'Easter Bunny' intake, heralding the start of a three-intakes per year regime. Prior to us, two annual intakes had been the norm. We were also one of the smallest in numbers, with only 81 starting their lives in 'Jeepland'. Then, following the opening of another Apprentices' School at Carlisle, our numbers were depleted to just 51, with the exodus of Armourers, Fitters and Fitters Gun up to Hadrian's Camp. So, even with the unfortunate few odd-bods relegated from 59A, we must still have been the smallest Div ever to pass out – and march through those famous gates to the sound of the Band playing 'Bless 'em all' ringing in their ears. The other thing I remember was that, as Bandsmen in the passing-out Div, we were given the choice – either to stay on the Square with the Band, or parade and march off with our own 'brothers', those that remained from the original intake of three years previously. That would have meant experiencing the communal relief and excitement that marked the transition into man's service but, oddly enough, we all voted to stay with the Band – a decision that perhaps, with the benefit of hindsight, I now regret.

After being with, and literally 'coming of age', with the same group of boys going

from 'lads to men', I think we all assumed that, even upon leaving Arborfield, our paths would cross again in our later careers. This wouldn't just be 'the end', we would meet up again sometime, somewhere in the future. So it's a bit of a surprise that, in twenty-odd years in the Corps, I only ever met two of those lads again – and that was in Germany, within a few very short years. My old mate Don Allen's parents were now posted to 15 Inf Wksp in Paderborn, and he came to look me up during a brief spell of leave he had. He eventually returned to what became the 'College' at Arborfield and was the last ASM of Vehicle Wing when it was transferred to a new home. The other lad was a mate from the Band, 'Dicko' Dickson, who I came across on the same accelerated promotions board at 4 Armcd Wksp in Detmold. Two other stalwarts of my old Div also returned to their old stamping grounds as instructors – Barry Williams and Stan 'Jock' Barker.

I well recall the excitement when our postings were published on 'Orders' – the big adventure was about to begin. Along with Keith 'Chad' Heyhurst from 'C' Coy, I was to be posted to 123 Tank Transporter Company RASC, based at Antwerp Barracks, Sennelager – something that meant absolutely nothing to either of us! After a week or so in the REME Depot, we were carted off to Gatwick Airport for a flight to Gutersloh. In the dead of night, we were transported in an old green Army

Bedford bus, driven by a funny little foreigner in a green MSO uniform, dropping off guys at different locations until it became our turn. We alighted at a pokey little single-storey guardroom in the middle of nowhere. Was this probably the worst lager in the world? (Apologies to Carlsberg!) The reception that greeted us is well known to ex-boys. "*Who the hell are you? Nobody informed me that you were expected.*" But what he did do was to point us in the general direction of the accommodation blocks, somewhere in the far distance through the stygian darkness, where we would



Passing off the Square, June 1959. L/r – Mo Hope, Jim Reeves, Ginge Fletcher, Keith Dewhurst, Ray Burch, Bob Inglis - with Derek Brunt kneeling

2010 REUNION - DATES

The dates for the 2010 Reunion have had to be changed. New dates: 30 JULY TO 1 AUGUST

have to 'sort ourselves out' next morning.
Willkommen nach Sennelager!

And so off we trudged across the largest cobbled square in Germany on a moonless night. All we wanted to do was find a friendly floor somewhere and something to sleep on. Then – Jesus wept! – what the hell were all those huge great ugly things, parked across the square and blotting out the meagre star-light? Complete with loaded-up trailers, these

were the first real tanks I had seen in my life – surely we weren't meant to work on those? Don't kid yourself! On our first morning in the workshops, Chad was allotted to the bottom section, which repaired motor-cycles, trailers and small 'B' vehicles, while I was directed to the top section, dealing with nothing but 10-ton AECs and *Thornycroft Mighty Antars* – lucky old me! And that's precisely where I stayed for more than five years. After that length of time, I could almost

get them to purr for me, but the thought of having to work on anything else now absolutely terrified me. Oh what happy days they were to be – and the stories I could tell. But, as they say in all the best books – that'll have to be kept for another time.

(I wonder if Maurice can be persuaded to continue those 'stories' in a future OBAN – over to you Mo! Ed.)

Beer Really IS Good For You!

by Mike Sibbons, 61C

(Mike Sibbons is currently the Corps Archivist at the REME Museum. The Archives contain a wealth of information about the Corps' heritage and this article draws on a piece written by C L Boltz in 1946 - reflecting the views of that era, including rationing and queuing. It certainly explains how the term 'a liquid lunch' came into being and how 'science' can be used to justify most things, even beer drinking! Health Warning - remember, beer was much weaker in 1946 than it is now! During World War 2, C L Boltz was responsible from 1940 to 1943 for the training of 1,000 military technicians. A writer by profession, he wrote prolifically on a number of topics. At the age of twelve, he won his first cash reward for writing an article on The Gas Works - he was awarded five shillings! He wrote many interesting articles for the REME Magazine, as 'The Craftsman' was then called.)

As if you had ever doubted! Many of us used to be amused to read that Tom Brown, during his schooldays, drank beer for breakfast. However, our amusement disappeared when we learned that beer was, for many centuries, the best source of pure water. Now we have the analyses of Dr F W Norris of Birmingham University, to confirm that there are also food values underneath the froth! We ought not to be surprised, for the materials from which beer is brewed are full of healthy foods. Barley is used to make the malt and to this is added maize and rice. Hops supply flavour and have antiseptic qualities. Sugar, a basic food, is also used in considerable quantities. The barley consists chiefly of starch, protein and vitamins. In the malting and mashing processes, the starch is changed to sugar and near-sugars, while the protein is changed into soluble products,

some of them nitrogenous. At the boiling stage, the hops are introduced and the nitrogenous matter collects into lumps. In the fermentation stage, this nitrogenous matter is lost to the yeast and encourages its growth. At the same time, the sugars and near-sugars are turned into alcohol. Starting the process with barley of 60 per cent starch and 10 per cent protein, we end up with beer containing 3 per cent carbohydrate (such as sugar), 0.2 per cent nitrogenous matter and 3 per cent alcohol - the rest is water!

The carbohydrates provide nearly half the energy value of beer. The nitrogenous products have some amino-acids, which are the basic compounds of body protein. The advantage of the alcohol, of course, in addition to its kick, is its quick absorption through the walls of the stomach, whereas all other food, except glucose, has to be slowly absorbed through the digestive system. The energy value can be estimated in calories (calories are units of heat and the body is treated as if it were a machine that absorbs fuel and turns it into heat, because the food is oxidized in a similar way to the fuel in an engine). The energy value of beer varies from about 120 calories per pint for mild ale to about 400 calories per pint for the strongest. Compare these figures with 100 calories per ounce for cooked beef and 220 per ounce for butter. So a pint of mild and bitter is worth about the same in energy-giving calories as an ounce and a half of cooked beef, about three-quarters of an ounce of butter, or about two ounces of bread! But this calorific value is an oversimplification. Our bodies are much more complicated than engines and the estimation of food values in calories is only a convenience and does not give a true picture of nutrition. Some foods are accompanied by large quantities of

indigestible cellulose and so may not be assimilated by our bodies. Nuts, for example, need so much mashing and grinding in our mouths that the acquisition of nourishment is really hard work. In addition, all the calories may not be available to us. In short, nutrition is a complex affair. However, the estimation of the beer's energy value in terms of calories can be justifiably compared with the value for some other food when estimated in the same way.

Besides carbohydrates and alcohol, beer contains some vitamins and minerals. The former are essential to real health and are needed in small quantities daily, for we cannot manufacture most of them in our bodies and we cannot store them. Some of the vitamins have been shown in recent years to consist of many different components; so much so that the vitamin formerly called 'B' is now called the B-complex. Certain strong beers have been found to contain 85 micrograms per pint of aneurin (one of the constituents of the B-complex). Another component, riboflavin, essential to good health, is found in quantities varying from 200 to 800 micrograms per pint, according to the strength of the beer. It may dismay some of you (and please others) to learn that, according to the US Army's estimate of a soldier's daily ration, you would need about 6 pints of beer a day to get all the riboflavin you require. The third vitamin found is nicotinic acid and an average beer contains about 6 milligrams per pint. The daily need, according to the same authority, is some 30 milligrams, so again about 6 pints of beer daily is required. Of course, only if you want to live entirely on it! The calorific value of 6 pints would be about 1,500, which is rather below the need for anyone expected to work. So let us say

12 pints daily is a much safer quantity for survival on beer alone. Then you can give up all worry about queues and rationing - and crawl from pub to pub collecting your daily intake of nourishment - and live happily ever afterwards probably.

In addition to calories and vitamins, we need traces of minerals in our diet and, here again, beer compares well with other food. The calcium content varies

from 25 milligrams to 270 milligrams per pint and the calcium to phosphorus ratio seems steady. There is copper in small amounts and sometimes manganese. Salt and potassium compounds are also present, and so make a useful food for heavy workers who tend to lose a lot of salt in perspiration. The facts about other minerals and vitamins are not yet available, but it may be found that the

vitamin pantothenic acid is present. Now it is known that this is in some way connected with the prevention of grey hair - so it may yet appear that beer will help your hair to keep its colour.

CL Boltz concluded his article with the comment that, while the results of the analyses are interesting, it has to be admitted that *'the public consumes the product, primarily because it likes it'*!

Sevenoaks, Kent, 1944

by Keith Hadaway, Oct '42

(Written in response to the article 'What do you know about Garages?' in OBAN 45.)

Back in 1944, when the School was broken up on the famous 'dispersal', we were sent on Easter leave, taking all our kit with us. After a couple of weeks, through the post came a travel warrant and orders to report to 17 Command Workshop at Sevenoaks in Kent. This, of course, I did! When I made my way to the camp, I found other boy Armourers of my intake had also arrived there, plus some older boys from the Armourer intake of 1941. There was also a Regular Corporal from Arborfield, a WO2 Armourer and - I think - an AEC Sergeant from somewhere or other. As one can imagine, this was all so exciting to us boys, as here we were in a real REME unit. The invasion of France was imminent - all over the south of England there were units of troops ready to go, and we kidded ourselves that we were part of it. The accommodation was a Nissen-hutted camp in some parkland. We settled in quickly and tried the grub - which was surprisingly good!

The unit controlled two large civilian garages in the town as workshops. One was the 'Sennock' garage, up the road from the railway station, the other the 'Sevenoaks' garage, right in the main street of the town. This contained the Armourers' Shop and a motorcycle overhaul shop. There was also a bicycle repair shop further along, just past Woolworth's, 'manned' by women and girls! I don't know that we made a great contribution to the armourers' work, but we certainly enjoyed being there and made ourselves as useful as possible. The 1941 boys took their Trade Tests and, as far as I know, they were all successful. We all took a turn in the bicycle shop, of course, for obvious reasons!

Life in the camp was good. The cooks continued to be good to us, as did the ATS girls in the dining hut. The ablutions were

a bit crude, but that didn't seem to matter at the time. From time to time, an entertainment group from ENSA would come along, consisting of a couple of girl dancers, a comedian and a singer. They would arrive in a little van, with all their clutter, and amuse us for an hour or so. When the weather was suitable, we would go along to Riverhead for a swim at the outdoor lido. Cpl Handley would fall us all in and march us along there. We also had some cricket gear from somewhere and a pitch nearby to have the occasional game.

Our small detachment of boys enjoyed being in Sevenoaks through the month of May, both in camp and at the garage in town. All leave for the Army had been cancelled, so it was obvious that 'it was going to happen soon'. Then, as history has recorded, it did. On June 6th 1944, the great invasion of Europe began. Throughout that day we and everybody else followed the reports coming in on the wireless - 'Was it going well?' - 'Were they getting ashore successfully?' etc.

A few more days into June and Hitler unleashed his secret weapon - the 'Flying Bomb'. The particular night it started, we were all in bed in our Nissen hut when we heard that terrible noise we hadn't heard before - magnified, as it was, by the metal roof and walls of the hut. Needless to say, we all kept to our beds. Then, next morning, walking to breakfast, I actually saw one, just a couple of hundred feet up in the sky, flames coming out of the rear and making a noise like a two-stroke motorcycle, winging its way to London. A barrier of barrage balloons was thrown up around the capital; there was one sited near the entrance to our camp. I recall watching one 'doodlebug', one day, coming foul of a balloon cable - as was planned. One wing was sheared off and the weapon fell to the ground, spinning like a sycamore seed, followed by a huge explosion. We didn't know it at the time,

but one such flying bomb fell at Lenham, killing many personnel of a REME mobile workshop, waiting to be moved to France.

That wasn't too far away from us at Sevenoaks.

The only parade we ever had on that camp was one afternoon, when the entire unit, including us boys, fell in with our soap and towels, to be marched to the public baths. Here we all bathed in double-quick time and marched back in well-scrubbed manner! August arrived and we boys took a short leave, staggered through the month. I elected to take mine towards the end. My hometown was Folkstone, on the coast, and it was now that cross-Channel shelling was at its height, just before the Canadians drove the 'Jerries' from the French ports on the other side. Then came our recall to Boys' School; we were the last detachment to return. I think our attitude to Arborfield had now radically altered; all we now thought about was completing our time, passing our Trade Tests and joining a REME unit. Upon our final move from the School, Mike Maguire and myself were posted to the Coastal Defence Maintenance Unit at Dover - a bit of a right rag-time unit, if I say so myself!

Brian Baxter, Technical Historian at the REME Museum, wrote back: Many thanks for this article connected with 'Garages'. When I wrote my piece about them being used by the Ministry of Supply as workshops, and in some cases as training units, I did not touch on the fact that some were taken over as accommodation for pukka REME workshops too. What is also interesting is the account of an Apprentice who was booted out of Arborfield to make way for the D-Day troops, with details of his activities whilst away and his return. Whilst I knew that the boys were dispersed hither and yon - John Dutton was one, I believe - this is the fullest account of 'what happened next'.

‘A Happy Life’

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought
And simple truth his utmost skill!

Whose passions not his master's are,
Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Not tied unto the world with care
Of public fame – or private breath

(Having, for family heritage, written a simple autobiography, I entitled it ‘A Happy Life’. Just wish I’d known about this poem at the time, I would have used it as a quote! The stirring words are by Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639), English author and diplomat. Ed.)

Major ‘Chinny’ Charrington – Memories Of A Gentleman Officer

by Nick Webber, 50B

On 7th September 1950, I was deposited at the gates of Arborfield with five other boys, amongst 134 new Apprentices. As we milled around on the open ground outside what was the Gym and Guardroom, a man wearing a peaked cap (who I later found out was CSM Brady of the Irish Guards) came and sorted us by height. We assembled into a formation that was to remain, whenever we got together, for the next three months. My end of this formation was made up from the tallest in the group and was to be ‘E’ Squad. Once we were settled, he barked “*Shun!*” – which some of us understood to be ‘Attention’ and duly responded. He then introduced us to an Officer, Major Charrington of the 10th Hussars, who was to become affectionately known to all as ‘Chinny’.

Chinny was to figure largely in my Army career and later in civilian life, until his death in the early Seventies. His ensuing introductory chat was to be punctuated by an unfortunate stutter, which was to always be a characteristic of his. He was also to be my first Company Commander. About six weeks later, at the end of our basic training, we were given our first period of leave. Chinny sent for me and another of the boys and suggested that, as he lived in the Dorset village of Sturminster Newton (close to our part of the world), perhaps we would like a lift as far as Bournemouth? Rather apprehensively, we duly accepted.

The first day of leave arrived and, as we drove out through those famous gates in his car, Chinny proceeded to tell us assorted tales of his Regiment’s customs

and his life in Egypt. Gossip had it that he had managed to lose some Armoured Cars from a big depot at Tel-El-Kebir, resulting in him being passed over for promotion, when such a new Colonel’s post became vacant. As we drove along, Chinny went on to explain what our jobs would be once we had qualified and left the School. It was all quite an eye-opener!

To illustrate his total acceptance of his minor disability, I remember later, when I was in 4 Div, I was escorting an A/NCO brought up on a charge before Chinny. When he asked the NCO to explain his bad conduct, there was some difficulty in the boy understanding Chinny’s stutter. What was even more of an impasse was that the NCO on the charge also stuttered! It was the CSM who took control of proceedings, with the result that the case was dealt with satisfactorily. I was there in attendance as an A/Sgt and, after the NCO was marched out, Chinny turned to me and said, quite unperturbed, that it was part of the CSM’s duties to assist in such situations.

Chinny was also considerate to us boys outside of the School. Once, when I was in 5 Div, he asked some of us A/NCOs if we would punt his boat along the Thames, while he entertained some friends for an afternoon. We agreed and later, somewhere near Henley, we stopped alongside a riverside pub. As his party disembarked, Chinny turned to us and said, “*I know that some of you lads like a drink. Help yourselves*”. With that, he lifted a tarpaulin from a crate of the appropriately named *Charrington Ales* and added, “*Don’t go ashore – and don’t*

dump the empties in the river!” He then left us and, with a warm feeling of happiness, we proceeded to follow his orders to the letter!

Still in 5 Div, it was decided to form an arms-drill squad, drilling with the old .303 rifles, to give a demonstration at the Royal Tournament. This was to take place at Earl’s Court, in front of thousands of spectators – so quite a daunting, but thrilling, prospect. While we were waiting for our turn to march on, Chinny took us around to the stalls, where the mounted Band of the Household Cavalry was assembled. He seemed to know all the Officers present and I was allowed a ‘sample’ beat of the massive, solid silver kettle-drum. At his prompting, we were given a potted history of these old cavalry regiments, which had by now been ‘motorised’. This incident always made me more aware of the other arms of the Army – knowledge of which I was able to put to good use later, during overseas service.

When I passed out of the School to join the Regular Army, I kept in touch with Chinny once a year by Christmas card. Some 19 years later, having now left the Army, I was driving down to Dorchester and found myself close to Sturminster Newton. Recalling this was where Chinny lived, I decided to ‘drop in’ and see him – for the first time since 1952. His address was just off the main street and, as I approached his house, it was a sight to see – a real old picture-postcard view of an English house and garden, dating back to around 1640. Over the heavily beamed front door was a brass fire-mark, with the

'sunburst' sign of the *Prudential*. This company would fight a fire if it occurred – but only if the correct fire-mark was displayed.

I knocked on the front door a little apprehensively and waited. After a short while, the door was opened by an elderly gentleman, dressed in a woolen cardigan. He paused, eyed me up and down, just as he had on the parade ground all those years ago, and said, "A/CSM Webber, how nice to see you. Is your father still serving?" He invited me inside, where the style was marvellous. As we sat down, he told me of his 'old boys' and lifted down a

number of photo-albums containing pictures of my Division. He knew the history of many of them – some were dead, some were now Officers and others – like me – had left the Army. He even knew where some of them were stationed and always referred to us as "my boys". When I left him, it was with a feeling of sadness. The Army Apprentices' School meant a lot to him and may I say that, although it may be politically incorrect to use the term, he truly was a 'gentleman officer'. He was very confident in his job and used his senior NCOs to control his men.

(The article above is a shortened version of that first published in OBAN 15, towards the end of 1998. It is indicative of the affection and respect that many ex-boys had, down the years, for some of the permanent staff charged with our upbringing and wellbeing. I'm sure we can also remember 'the alternatives' – but, as they say, the longest memories are usually the happiest ones! I do hope that it inspires more readers to keep up the good work towards OBAN's future. If you have a tale to tell – this is the place to tell it! Ed.)

Clever New Words

Cashtration: The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period of time

Ignoramus: A person who is both stupid and an a**hole

Intoxication: Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with

Reintartation: Coming back to life as a prostitute

Bozone: The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The Bozone Layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future

Foreploy: Any misrepresentation about yourself for the purpose of getting laid

Giraffiti: Vandalism spray-painted on very, very high buildings

Sarchasm: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.

Inoculatte: To take coffee intravenously when you are running late

Osteopornosis: A degenerate disease

Karmageddon: It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's like, a serious bummer

Decafalon: The gruelling event of getting through the day, consuming only those things that are good for you

Glibido: All talk and no action

Dopeler Effect: The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly

Arachnoleptic Fit: The frantic dance performed just after you've accidentally walked through a spider's web

Beelzebug: Satan in the form of a mosquito that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning and cannot be cast out

Caterpallor: The colour you turn after finding half a worm in the apple you're eating

Global Warming

by John Hernon, 60B

My part in the reduction of global warming started many years before the term ever appeared in the media, when I struck a blow against the prolific consumption of finite fossil fuel, by eliminating one of the *Shell Oil Company's* fuel tankers! This incident occurred while on attachment to 1st/10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles LAD, based at the Sungi Udang camp, next to the 27th Commonwealth Garrison outside Malacca in Malaysia. The circumstances leading up to this monumental gesture of green consciousness unfolded as follows.

I was called out to recover one of the Battalion *Bedford* 3-tonners, used as a

personnel carrier for transporting troops to and from the railhead at Tampin. The task had all the appearance of being an easy enough effortless job at first glance, merely requiring the use of a straight towing bar and another 3-tonner to be driven by yours truly and drag the broken down truck back to camp. On arrival at the location, which was about 3km from Tampin, I found the normally cheerful driver, Rifleman Ojang Bahadur, in a very mournful state, as the engine had overheated and cracked the cylinder head. It was late afternoon by the time we had hooked up and moved off and, in hindsight, I probably put my boot to the

floor, in an attempt to get back to camp before nightfall. My haste must have unnerved Ojang, as he kept swinging out to try and see the road ahead, instead of remaining directly behind my vehicle - or maybe he was being slowly choked by the clouds of red laterite dust we were kicking up.

I stopped a couple of times and attempted to explain that this 'nipping out for a looksee' was not good. It was a one-sided diatribe, delivered in my standard squaddie heavily-accented pidgin English, used to address Gurkhas, Malayan Chinese and Tamils alike. Ojang, who was more Mongolian than Nepalese in

appearance, always replied with a broad grin and an intelligible burst of Gukhali, leaving both parties thinking that their point had been made. Abandoning any further attempt at communication, we set off on the penultimate leg of the journey as dusk was approaching. The hour of reckoning was close at hand and, on a long curving bend near Alor Gajah, we encountered a *Shell Oil Company* fuel tanker, towing a bowser, coming towards us with headlights full on. The graded laterite track was barely wide enough to pass two vehicles, thus caution and slow speed was required, bearing in mind the statutory deep monsoon ditches on either sides of the highway.

I breathed a huge sigh of relief as my 3-tonner and the *Shell* tanker slipped past each other like ships in the night, albeit at a fast lick. Unfortunately, my relief was short-lived when I saw the look of horror that crossed the face of the wizened old Malay driver, as his raised eyebrows touched the rim of his songkok. A fear-stricken glance in the rear view mirror revealed the final few milliseconds of our ill-fated journey. Ojang had decided to have a look at road ahead and had swung out, creaming the side of the bowser that the *Shell* tanker was towing. Ojang's *Bedford* side-swiped the bowser, with a screeching sound of tortured metal being radically rearranged to the accompaniment

of the high-pitched squealing of hastily applied brakes; a shower of sparks illuminated the cloud of dust and metal shavings. This cacophony of artificially created noise effectively silenced nature's night-time nocturnal orchestra of cicadas and bull frogs copulating in the underbrush.

I watched in stunned amazement as the *Bedford* and bowser performed a dance of death, waiting for the inevitable explosion that would propel us all to 'kingdom come'. Finally, the two units separated, slewing off the track into the respective monsoon ditches on either side of the highway. Gradually the noise and dust subsided and a sickly moon broke through the scudding cloud cover, a precursor of the imminent monsoon rains, but also illuminating the sorry mess. The *Shell Company* tanker lay on its side, disconnected from both its wheels and chassis and the truck that had been towing it. Ojang's *Bedford*, or rather the two-thirds of what remained of it, lay in the monsoon drain on my side of the track, a hundred yards or so behind my vehicle.

Officer Commanding's Orders in the Brigade of Gurkhas was somewhat different from an AFB 252 appointment in the British Army – such as being marched in before the O/C with a Gurkha prisoners' escort marching up your backside with a

drawn Kukri! This tends to exercise the mind and sphincter muscle with equanimity. This precaution is taken in case the plaintiff should attempt to jump over the table and attack the officer sahib, but even contemplating such a rash move was decidedly mentally unstable, given the Gurkha penchant for removing certain body parts required for continued longevity.

It was a nerve-wracking potential encounter with the grim reaper and taught me a valuable lesson, to the effect that being economical with the truth is the best course of action when someone is standing poised behind you with an unsheathed large kitchen knife. I sang the praises of Rifleman Ojang sweeter than any linnet and vilified the driving ability and total incompetence of the *Shell* driver, who, in my honest estimation, should not have even been allowed to drive anything larger than a wheelbarrow. Undoubtedly, the poor old Chogie lost his livelihood and *Shell* pension to boot, but, on the bright side, Ojang became 'B' Coy 'number one driver' and I was lauded as 'number one British soldier'. Every time I now come across a *Shell* fuel tanker, I can't help thinking how I definitely must have helped to reduce the effect of global warming and 'done my bit' to save the planet!

Piddling Tales

by West Robertson, 50B

There was potential friction brewing! The specialist, having detected some problem with my eyes, had subsequently requested a brain scan. Now, as he perused the results, he muttered, albeit almost to himself, "Hmmm ... empty cavity". Of course, I took umbrage, claiming there had to be some brain, however minuscule! An explanation followed, detailing that it was the cavity behind the eye he was referring to, and that more tests were called for. The machine, like some medieval torture device, was adjusted to fit snugly around my head. The technician, fiddling impressively at some control panels, was soon joined by a young lady in a white coat bearing a tray loaded with an assortment of bottles, syringes and needles. My blood pressure rose alarmingly, not because of the tray, but on seeing the girl, who was straight from the pages of some 'girlie magazine'. Notes were consulted, a decision made, and the

contents of one bottle transferred to a syringe.

With an alluring smile, the girl approached, hands gently feeling for tight clothes around my neck. Then she exposed naked flesh - mine unfortunately! I doubted she would find blood in my upper body, but selecting a suitable spot, she plunged the needle into what I suppose must have been an empty vein and easily injected the liquid. Whatever they had to do, they did, and the process was soon over and, as she left, the young lady explained that I might experience some unusual reactions to the injection but that, "They will soon pass". It was required that I wait while my eyes recovered from the atropine applied, and that the test had proven satisfactory - so off I went to 'the Gents'. It was almost fluorescent, the bright orange flow that left me - to linger but momentarily in the urinal! Then, glancing in the mirror, I found that I had acquired that artificial tan more usually

associated with some minor celebrity attending a public function. Searching for, then finding the girl, I enquired as to how many colours she had available in her repertoire and, on being informed that there were several, requested that I be given a few. Just why it was necessary for her to ask my reason for such a request, I do not know. But when I replied that I thought that it would be an unbeatable 'party trick' to sign my name in a variety of colours next time it snowed, the request was refused! Perhaps she was jealous of my physical ability, but then, could it be that I was infringing her copyright?

The accommodation in 40 Base Wksp, Singapore (Rowcroft Lines), consisted of wooden huts perched on the side of a steep slope. Sharing one of the highest with me were two other Inst Mechs, Don Walker and Alec Bradley, both 50B, two watchmakers and one 'Scouse' Gibson, whose actual trade was a mystery, even to himself, but who was employed in the PIC

(Precision Investment Casting) section. And, as I remember, we were all Corporals. We were a happy bunch, pooling our wages, each in turn acting as treasurer for a week and paying the 'Bearer', 'Char Wallah' and 'Dhobi Wallah' regularly, while retaining enough cash to keep us hydrated and amused throughout the week. Doors and windows were never closed, people came and went at will, so it was a touch unusual to hear a knock on the door one Saturday afternoon as we planned that evening's entertainment - more so when we saw standing there, 'Waxy' Walters. He was so called because of the twirled and waxed ends to his moustache, and he was our CSM.

The CSM was looking for help, and it was obvious that we were not his first port of call, since nobody would climb all those steps by choice. He was carrying in his hand an old, battered and corroded shell-case and approached me with that condescending air that old-fashioned Sergeant Majors are prone to adopt, when forced to address minions that they would rather eat. *"The word is", he said, "that the best tradesmen to help me are to be found here, so who's going to polish this shell-case for me?"* It was a lovely situation to be in, watching the man who was behaving like a puppy which had just crapped on the carpet, thinking that, by exaggerated wagging of his tail and offering his unprotected underside, he would get away with it! There was no need to leave my bed to think on my feet. I just lied that, much as I would like to help, the small buffing wheel I had access to would take a fortnight of lunch breaks to do the job justice - but the PIC plant had proper wheels. 'Scouse' hardly stirred, he would rather sleep than argue, and so took possession of the shell-case. Within a couple of days, the buffed and shining case was delivered to the CSM who, by this time, had obviously used his charm elsewhere to procure a bracket, which was fixed to the wall, outside the Company Office. If there was a ceremony of dedication I missed it, but we now had an audible warning of fire, plague and pestilence.

Scouse meanwhile had other ideas! The Corporals' Club closed at around eleven each night and, prior to our hike back to bed, we would all jettison excess fuel prior to the climb. That is, all except Scouse, who would take great pleasure at the halfway point, both in the relief and the filling of that polished shell-case! It

became an obsession with Waxy to find the culprit, even returning to our billet to seek assistance, sure that we, who had been so helpful, would decry the desecration. We did, always ensuring that the coast was clear when Scouse committed his dastardly deed! Much as he loved his shell-case, Waxy had an even greater love for his monstrosity of an American car. All tail fins and polished chrome, it rarely appeared in the barracks, Waxy being fearful that some evil might befall it at the hands of some of the rougher elements and, as part of these elements, we could only watch and wait! So it came to pass! A Vehicle Mech from District Wksp happened to visit our room and casually mentioned that he had just serviced the CSM's car. Knowing that we had designs on it, he requested that nothing should happen until after receipt by the CSM, who incidentally was Duty Officer that day. On such meagre intelligence, great plans can be constructed! Scouse took no part. Having had a couple of close encounters, he was now getting a touch paranoid about filling the shell-case. He declared that he was 'going for a run'.

I sat at a suitable table in the Corporals' Club and watched the occasional runner pass the window. Tail fins were just visible, but if I leaned a bit, I could see half the car. There was an atmosphere of expectancy about the other members assembled. We waited. At last, action! *"Everything alright?"* As expected, Waxy had poked his head into the room and called the usual greeting, as is the way of Duty Officers, knowing that there would be no adverse reply. *"A drink, Sir?"* I called, well aware that he would agree, then we sat and chatted, as I kept one eye on the window. A runner appeared, approaching steadily with not too much speed. Leaning forward, with what I hoped was an inquisitive expression, I asked the CSM if he knew who owned the car parked outside. *"It is mine, why do you ask?"* *"Because a man is peeing into the petrol tank"*, I replied.

'Hell hath no fury like a man whose car is being assaulted'. Well, that's how the phrase should read, for Waxy left the table like a man possessed, feet hardly touching the ground and not stopping until he had the runner in a headlock. There were quite a few men who used to run in the evenings, and I had not bothered to identify my unfortunate victim. I don't think Scouse ever forgave me, he was certainly spoiling for a fight when he had

recovered enough from being strangled. And Waxy? Well he never really had much affection for me after that!

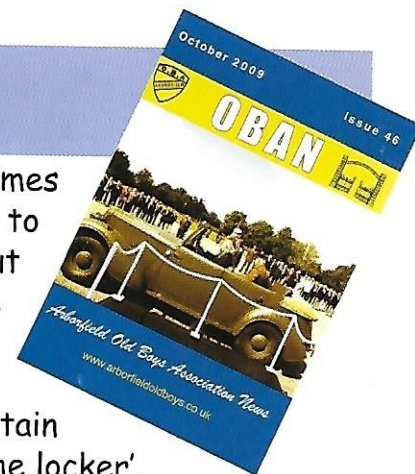
As they do, the years went by, and was now a S/Sgt Instructor in the Instrument Section at SEME, Bordon, the only military member of staff. Thus I had no support when the Section was called upon to supply an instructor to assist CVHQ REME with their weekend training commitment. I was instructing all week at SEME and travelling the country to do the same at weekends, but must admit to some enjoyable trips. We had gone to Liverpool for a weekend meet, I had done my bit and, while the majority of the CVHQ contingent were to remain to cater for some arrivals from Ireland, three of us were returning to Bordon on the Sunday afternoon. *(CVHQ was the Central Volunteer Headquarters - or HQ REME TA to use a more recognisable title. Ed.)*

Packed in the rear of a Ford Escort with assorted teaching aids for company, there was little comfort. The two men occupying the front seats were both well known to me - senior Armourers, they wore full No.2 dress, coat-of-arms badges sparkling in the late summer sun. Let's refer to them as Bill and Bob, well those were their names after all, and we were travelling through country lanes on a lovely sunny evening, heading back to Bordon. As we approached a garage, the forecourt packed with cars and shoppers, I was told to sit tight. Into the forecourt we went, stopping and parking well clear of the pumps. The two stalwart's up front alighted. Resplendent in their uniforms, hats straight and arms swinging, each marched to an independent petrol pump and piddled all over it! With a nod to the proprietor, and hardly a smile, the two returned to the car and we drove away.

Asking what that was all about, it transpired that on the way up north to Liverpool they had stopped there and politely requested to use the toilets, and to use the area to refuel from the cans they carried. This simple request had been refused, so this had been their revenge. Did I mention that we three were all products of that esteemed institution at Arborfield, well renowned for the quality and integrity of the men who passed from within those hallowed walls, and who by ability and example, were rightfully acknowledged as leaders of men? Perhaps not, but as just a 'Jeep', who was I to cast the first stone at those rough diamonds of the Forties?

News Of The Newsletter

Issues of your OBAN are currently planned for publication three times per calendar year, although the actual dates will always be subject to change, dependent upon circumstance! This issue (47) should come out early in the year, with 40 pages, with a second one due out well in time for the Reunion which will have the application forms included. That issue will also be of 40 pages. Your 'bumper issue' of 48 pages will be distributed sometime after the annual Reunion, and hopefully contain Reunion reports and photographs. Currently, I have 'plenty left in the locker', so to speak - but will always gratefully accept your letters, articles and particularly photographs, for future publication. Ed.



And Another Thing

by Keith Tilly, 51A

We were all on the range one fine day, firing our Sten Guns; Sergeant Clarke was in charge. *"Nah then, when yer fire yer weapon, it might jam. If it does, make sure yer point the it dahn the range, and not at anyone."* OK, now Bulmer was an idiot at the best of times. During the auto-fire sequence, his gun jammed. You guessed it - he turned round to face Clarke, shouted out *"Me gun's jammed"* and pulled the trigger to demonstrate the fault. About half a magazine unloaded into Clarke's leg, nearly crippling him for life. But it is the sequel that makes the story 'funny'! A few years later, Clarke, who now had a limp, was being employed on light duties back at Arborfield. He had the task of

setting up the Sports Field, ready for the REME Sports Day. One of his jobs was to set up the Tannoy System. A large lorry full of kit was being driven to the various locations where the re-entrant loudspeakers were to be positioned - each speaker weighed about 50 pounds. When the lorry arrived at the first spot, Clarke shouted over the tailgate, *"Anyone up there?"* *"Yes!"* came the faint reply. *"OK, pass me one of the speakers."*

An unidentified body peered down at Clarke, holding a speaker in its hand. Clarke reached up, just as the body released the speaker, which crashed down. The edge of the speaker landed on the

bridge of Clarke's nose, shattering the bone. As he looked up through the pain and blood, the body's head now appeared over the rear of the truck. Yes, that's right, it was Bulmer! Fate is a funny thing, isn't it? *"That effing ban will 'ornt be fer the rest ob be effing life"*, whimpered the shattered Clarke. Never was a truer word spoken, sorry, spoken! So, if you ever come across an old guy with a shattered leg and a flat nose, never offer him *Bulmer's Cider* if you buy him a drink, because it could spell curtains for you!

(Following Keith's amusing articles in OBANs 45 and 46, he later sent this afterthought! Ed.)

The Hands-on Approach To Further Education

by Chas Pepper, 43B

Plastic shopping bags are nowadays regarded as an environmental menace, but they once helped me out of a tricky situation. The days of hairy-armed mechanics tightening engine cylinder-head bolts to as tight as they could get them, and then re-using those same bolts for as long as the engine lasted, are long gone. The modern bolts have to be discarded upon removal and a new set utilised. The reason for this is that the bolts should not be stretched beyond their 'elastic limit'. This entails accurate use of a torque wrench to make sure that the bolts are not stressed to their 'snapping point'. And so the object of the lesson was to show, not the bolt snapping if the torque setting was exceeded, but the manner in which the bolt lost diameter and went putty-like, before it actually snapped. The particular class of students had little technical knowledge, therefore the graph

of *Young's Modulus* would do more harm than good - and there were no examples to show them.

By good fortune, I had noticed that plastic bags, when stretched, behaved much like over-stressed metal. So, being a great believer in the 'hands-on' approach, I split some bags into strips and handed a strip to each student, explaining that they would indicate when a material was over-stressed. *"OK"*, I said, holding one such strip at each end, *"assume this is a bolt and copy me as I demonstrate"*.

'Elasticity' of the material is shown by a gentle pull, the plastic strip returning to its original shape on release.

The 'Elastic limit' is shown by pulling harder, so that the strip cannot return to its original length.

The third, even stronger, pull shows

that, once past the 'Elastic limit', the strip collapse, loses its dimensions and tails off into a string.

A discussion then followed to establish how the torque setting for a bolt ensured that it had sufficient clamping force, slightly over the elastic limit, for its purpose - but that if the bolt were used again it would stretch and snap. A bit of self-congratulation ensued, as I thought of a tricky point well explained. But I was brought down to earth as the class dispersed, when I heard a muttered statement that *"He's really flipped this time!"* Teaching can be a funny business.

p.s. I doubt if this demonstration could be repeated these days, as the modern so-called 'plastic bags' consist of fortified rice paper, which can take little load before tearing!

The Old Year

The Old Year's gone away to nothingness and night;
We cannot find him all the day, nor hear him in the night.
He left no footsteps, mark or place, in either shade or sun;
The last year he'd a neighbour's face, in this he's known by none.

All nothing everywhere; mists we, on morning, see
Have more of substance when they're here and more of form than he.
He was a friend by every fire, in every cot and hall -
A guest to every heart's desire and now he's nowt at all.

Old papers thrown away, old garments cast aside;
The talk of yesterday are things identified.
But time, once torn away, no voices can recall;
The eve of New Year's Day left the Old Year lost to all.

(This classic verse, written by John Clare (1793-1864), bids farewell and marks the passing of yet another 'Old Year' - and possibly reminds us all to make the most of the one just arrived! Ed.)

The XODDAM Trophy

It has become the custom for small groups of old boys to gather at the *Bramshill Hunt* for the odd pint or two, prior to the gates opening for each annual reunion. The 66ers are one such group and, in previous years, were honoured to have John Maddox, 44B, join them in their libations. Unfortunately John passed to that great 'Parade Ground in the Sky' a couple of years ago and all still sadly miss his company.



In memory of him, the 66ers decided to hold a small sporting event on the Friday morning of the reunion. It was first thought that a game of golf would be ideal, but so many old boys, 66ers and others, wanted to join in that it was decided to play Ten Bowls instead. Dave Cosway, 65C, was delegated with the task of organising the venue at the Wokingham Bowling Alley. The event was truly an old boys' event, with ex-apprentices from a number of Divs and international representation from Australia, Canada, Ireland, Scotland and Wales!

The photograph shows Ron Hooper proudly holding the 66ers Xoddam Trophy. By the way, in case you still haven't worked

it out, the 'Xoddam' is Maddox in reverse, just one of John's little jokes.

Ken Anderson, 58A

From a Back Copy of the Bristol Evening Post

Outside Bristol Zoo is a car park, with spaces for 150 cars and 8 coaches. It has been manned, 6 days a week, for the last 23 years, by the same charming and very polite car park attendant, armed with his faithful ticket machine. The charges are £1.00 per car and £5.00 per coach.

On Monday 1 June, 2009, the attendant failed to turn up for work, so a member of Bristol Zoo management phoned Bristol City Council, asking them to send a replacement.

The clerk at the Council said, "That car park is your responsibility".
To which the lady at the Zoo replied, "The attendant is employed by the City Council ... isn't he?"
The Council clerk then asked, "What attendant?"

Gone missing from his home in Clifton is the man who has been taking daily car park fees, amounting to about £400 per day, 6 days a week, for the last 23 years ... !

Passing-out Ceremony, 23rd July 1958

from John FitzPatrick, 55B

Responding to the suggestion in OBAN 45, I have an original programme for the July 23rd 1958 Passing-out ceremony for 55B intake. I have copied all pages and attached them to this e-mail. I hope the format and quality is suitable for OBAN, should you choose to include any of it in future issues. Whisper it quietly, but I also have all my School Reports (Army Form C322) for each term but these are not for publication! You may have guessed that my mother was a bit of a hoarder.

Passing-out Ceremony, 23rd July 1958

Commandant – Col J R Cole; **Chief Instructor** – Lt Col R T Barfield; **Adjutant** – Maj E Rhodes
Champion Coy – 'B' Coy; **Commander** – Maj A L Campbell

The School Bands

Band Serjeant – B/Sjt A Parker; **App Band Sjt** – A/Sjt D E Precious; **App Drum Major** – A/Cpl G Pearce;
Pipe Major – Sjt J Massie; **App Pipe Major** – A/PM M C Sloan; **App Drum Major** – A/DM P D Campbell

Commanding the Parade – A/RSM J Drasutis, 'B' Coy

Awards

'Award of Honour' – A/CSM B R King, 'D' Coy
'Commandant's Cup' (for military ability) – A/RM J Drasutis, 'B' Coy
'Chief Instructor's Cup' (for technical and educational ability) – A/L/Cpl J A J FitzPatrick, 'C' Coy

Prizes for regimental efficiency

Senior Division – A/RSM J Drasutis, 'B' Coy
5 Division – A/Cpl G P Tiley, 'D' Coy
4 Division – A/L/Cpl J A Scurr, 'D' Coy

Prizes for technical ability

Armourers – A/Sjt J E Smith, 'D' Coy; **Control Equpt Mechanics** – A/Sgt R Mansbridge, 'A' Coy
Electricians – A/Cpl J M Golding, 'A' Coy; **Fitters** – A/Cpl R V Strachan, 'D' Coy;
Fitters, Gun – A/Cpl D McNeil, 'D' Coy; **Inst Mechanics** – A/T R J Wells, 'B' Coy;
Tels Mechanics – A/L/Cpl J A J FitzPatrick, 'C' Coy; **Vehicle Mechanics** – A/L/Cpl M J Sharp, 'C' Coy

Prizes for education

Mathematics – A/Sjt P D Quigley, 'C' Coy; **English** – A/Sjt P D Quigley, 'C' Coy
Physics – A/Sjt R J Brown, 'C' Coy; **Map Reading** – A/L/Cpl J A J FitzPatrick, 'C' Coy
Best all-round progress – A/L/Cpl D C Naylor, 'C' Coy
Highest Educational Achievement – A/CSM F R Ede, 'A' Coy

Other achievements of the Senior Division

Winner of the VALON CUP for the best Junior athlete in track events – A/Sjt D E Precious, 'B' Coy
Winner of the INFANTRY OFFICERS' CUP for the best .303 rifle shot – A/Sjt M C Sloan, 'A' Coy
Winner of the ebony drumsticks for the Champion Drummer – A/Cpl G M Kay, 'C' Coy

Awarded full colours

Athletics – *A/Sjt Precious (Capt), 'B' Coy; *A/CSM Wilson, 'C' Coy; A/Cpl Beatson, 'D' Coy;
A/Sjt Mansbridge, 'A' Coy; A/Cpl Munn, 'C' Coy
Boxing – A/Cpl Platt (Capt), 'A' Coy; A/T Mawdsley, 'B' Coy; A/T Shand, 'B' Coy
Cricket – A/RSM Drasutis (Capt), 'B' Coy; A/CSM Wilson, 'C' Coy
Cross-country – *A/Sjt Precious (Capt), 'B' Coy * denotes a 'double colour'
Football – A/CSM King (Capt), 'D' Coy; A/Cpl Pugh, 'D' Coy; A/Sjt Radcliffe, 'D' Coy
Rugby – A/Sjt Haben (Capt), 'B' Coy; A/Sjt Edwards, 'C' Coy

Afghanistan

(with apologies to Kipling), by an anonymous British soldier

When you're lying alone in your Afghani bivvy
And your life it depends on some MoD civvie;
When the body armour's shared (one set between three)
And the firefight's not like it is on TV;
Then you'll look to your oppo, your gun and your God,
As you follow the path that all Tommies have trod.

When the gimpy has jammed and you're down to one round,
And the faith that you'd lost is suddenly found;
When the Taliban horde is close up to the fort
And you pray that the Arty don't drop a round short -
Stick to your Sergeant like a good squaddie should
And fight them like Satan or one of his brood.

Your pay, it won't cover your needs or your wants,
So just stand there and take all the Taliban's taunts;
Not generals, nor civvies, can do aught to amend it,
Except make sure you're kept in a place you can't spend it.
Three fifty an hour in your Afghani cage,
Not nearly as much as the minimum wage.

Your missus at home in a foul married quarter,
With damp on the walls and a roof leaking water;
Your kids miss their mate, their hero, their Dad;
They're missing the childhood that they should have had.
One day it will be different, one day by and by,
As you all stand there and watch to see the pigs fly.

Just like your forebears, in mud, dust and ditch,
You'll march and you'll fight, and you'll drink and you'll bitch.
Whether Froggy or Zulu, or Jerry or Boer,
The Brits will fight on 'til the battle is o'er.
You may treat him like dirt, but nowt will unnerve him -
But I wonder sometimes, if the country deserves him.

Snippets From *Craftsman* Magazine

Museum Space

The REME Museum has recently launched a myspace site. If you'd like to keep up-to-date with everything that's happening at the Museum, including information about forthcoming exhibitions, special family events, recent acquisitions and more, why not join us at www.myspace.com/rememuseum

Afghan Training School

British Forces in Afghanistan will take the lead in developing a new Combined Arms Training School, providing training courses to the Afghan National Army (ANA). The school will provide essential 'train the trainer' courses across Afghanistan for junior officers, non-commissioned officers, infantry support weapons, armour and artillery training. This represents an important new stage in the international NATO Training Mission for Afghanistan.

Manning Figures

Figures showing that the UK Armed Forces are currently at 97.2 per cent of their full time trained strength requirement have been released by the MoD. This is up from 97 per cent at the same point last year and shows a continued upward trend in both recruitment and retention. At April 1st 2009, the full time strength was 173,920 against a target of 178,860. This comprises 168,240 UK Regular Forces, 2,100 full time reserve service personnel and 3,580 Gurkhas.

Some Rather Appropriate Book Titles - By Author's Name

'TROUBLE AT THE BOTTOM'	by	Emma Royd
'I'M NOT BRAGGING'	by	Ivor Biggun
'IT'S A BUM JOB'	by	Anne R Sole
'PROBLEMS WITH OLD AGE'	by	Gerry Actick
'ON THE REBOUND'	by	Rick O'Shea
'SHORTENED FORE-NAMES'	by	Pat Risher
'LOSE WEIGHT FAST'	by	Anna Wreckseer
'DRESSING SMARTLY'	by	Ellie Gant
'DRESSING CHEAPLY'	by	Fred Bare
'LIVING WITH DYSENTRY'	by	Dai O'Rear
'THE ROYAL ARTILLERY BROTHEL GUIDE'	by	Gunner Rear
'PRIVATE WINDOWS'	by	Annette Curtin
'CLIFF HANGER'	by	Eileen Ova
'HE'LL WIN THE NEXT RACE'	by	Betty Duzzunt
'GEORDIE PHILOSOPHY'	by	Havannah Klewman
'LONG DISTANCE ROUTES'	by	Lawrie Driver
'CLOSE TO THE ROAD'	by	Minnie Driver
'COOKING FOR BREAKFAST'	by	Chris P Bacon
'LIFTING THE LOAD'	by	Andy Crane
'STORAGE & HAULAGE'	by	Hertz Van Rentill
'LYING FLAT'	by	Sue Pine
'RUSSIAN SEX MANUAL'	by	Gertcha Leggova
'LAYING A BATHROOM FLOOR'	by	Lynne O'Liam
'GIVE US A SMILE'	by	Sir Lee Luke
'HOW TO PEEL ONIONS'	by	Major Eiswater
'IT'S MISTY THIS MORNING'	by	Edina Cloud
'CHINESE COOKING'	by	Chris P Duck
'DOES MY BUM LOOK BIG IN THIS?'	by	Hugh Jarre
'MANAGING DEBT'	by	Owen Munnie
'PASS THE VIAGRA'	by	Drew Peacock
'ON THE STREETS IN GLASGOW'	by	Selma Boddie
'BARGAIN HUNTING'	by	Ivan Osferit
'HOW TO BE A CRIMINAL'	by	Ben Trotter
'PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT'	by	Tanya Hyde
'STICKY BUSINESS'	by	Harold Eyte
'JAPANESE RECYCLING SYSTEMS'	by	Rhoda Lubbish
'SLIMMING IS GOOD FOR YOU'	by	Anita Figger
'HOSPITAL OPERATIONS'	by	Major Sir Gerry Pending
'DON'T IRON THAT SHIRT'	by	Brian Eilon
'PAINLESS SURGERY'	by	Anna S Thettick
'BREAKING AND ENTERING MADE EASY'	by	Dora Jarre

Being Patient

Anyone who has ever had a loved one in the hospital will enjoy this. A woman caller rings a local hospital.

"Hello. Could you connect me to the person who gives information about patients? I'd like to find out if a certain patient is getting better, doing as expected, or getting worse".

"What is the patient's name and room number please?"

"It's Sarah Finkel, she's in room 302"

"Hang on a sec, I'll connect you with the nursing station"

"Hello. This is Ward 3A Nursing Station. How can I help you?"

"I'd like to know the condition of Sarah Finkel, in room 302, please"

"Just a moment, let me look at her records. Mrs Finkel is doing very well. In fact, she's had two full meals, her blood pressure is fine, and she is to be taken off the heart monitor in a couple of hours. If she continues this improvement, Dr Cohen is going to send her home on Tuesday at noon"

The caller says, *"What a relief! Oh, that's fantastic, that's wonderful news!"*

The nurse replies, *"From your enthusiasm, I take it you are a close family member or a very dear friend?"*

"I'm neither", comes the reply, "I AM Sarah Finkel in room 302! Nobody here tells me a bloody thing!"

Army Apprentice Memorial

At our last Reunion, the idea of an Army Apprentice Memorial was raised during our AGM and, since then, the project has moved along at quite a brisk pace. During August and September, dialogue with the other three main schools' Old Boys' Associations took place (Chepstow, Harrogate and Carlisle), which resulted in a meeting of nominated persons from each School coming together. It was agreed that a joint project be set up to achieve the task of planning, designing, costing and erecting a joint memorial, to all persons who took part in the Army Apprentice Scheme (irrespective of the eventual Corps in which they served).

That first meeting was held at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas (Staffordshire) on the 28th of October, at which Mr. Paul Kennedy, who is the British Legion curator of the site, was present - and who outlined the process needed to erect a memorial. This gave us some guidance on size, materials allowed and the basic rules that we must follow to conform to health & safety regulations etc. A national steering committee was elected and the following appointments were made. As can be seen, Arborfield is very well represented, so that our views and input is quite considerable.

Chairman: David C Chapman (Chepstow)
Vice Chairman: Keith Thrower (Arborfield)
Honorary Secretary: Gordon G Bonner (Arborfield)
Honorary Treasurer: Mike J Davis (Arborfield)
Committee Webmaster: Max Warwick (Arborfield)
Members: Colin Weir (Chepstow)
Maurice E Hope (Arborfield)
Johnny McGahan (Harrogate)
David Cooper (Carlisle)

The following were given responsibilities as Association Representatives.

Arborfield - Maurice E Hope
Chepstow - David C Chapman
Harrogate - Johnny McGahan
Carlisle - David Cooper

The committee's next meeting is to be held at the REME Museum on the 9th of December, following which I will further update you on any developments. The task will have the project name of the Army Apprentices Memorial Project (AAMP).

Max Warwick outlined his ideas for a website, with particular interest to providing a pen picture of all four Army Apprentices Schools, with web links to each of the Association websites. This will be shortly up and running, with the domain name to be www.armyapprenticesmemorial.org.uk. Following discussions on several ideas put forward for a memorial design, the attached provisional design was agreed upon by the committee, to be circulated to three different Stone/Memorial masons for comments and costing evaluations. Any slight alterations or modifications to our design, following their input, I will relay to you in the next bulletin on progress. At that update, hopefully I can give you some basic idea on costing for a memorial, which will not take into account

Army Apprentice Memorial Project.
Steering Committee - 1st Meeting October 26th 2009
held at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Left to Right - Keith Thrower and Max Warwick (Arborfield), Johnny McGahan (Harrogate), David Chapman and David Weir (Chepstow), Maurice Hope and Gordon Bonner (Arborfield).



costs of dedication, insurance etc, which are still some way down the line. (Attached is a photo taken at the first meeting of The Army Apprentices Memorial Committee, taken on a lovely sunny day at the Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, the only nominated person absent was David Cooper, representing Carlisle.)

The management committee of the Army Apprentices National Memorial held a second meeting on Wednesday 9th of December at the REME Museum. A constitution for the project, which had been drawn up by the Chairman, David Chapman, was discussed in depth and amendments made prior to its final wording being adopted and, on the same theme, the matter of Charitable Status was discussed. Progress on the project's website is almost completed, thanks to excellent work from Max Warwick and by the time of going to press should be up and running. It is hoped

that this will help to spread the word and assist in our fundraising efforts. Major Mike Davis MBE (our AOA Treasurer) has taken on the mantle of project treasurer and has opened an account for donations, which are already starting to come in.

As for the memorial itself, the original provisional design has been discussed at length in committee and was put out to evaluation, costing etc to several stonemasons. As a result, the design has been modified to that described below, which is to be submitted to the trustees of the National Memorial Arboretum site for their (hopeful) approval. They scrutinise ours and several other proposed

memorials in the pipe-line at their twice yearly meeting on the 4th of January. If we are successful, it will mean that in just over six months since the project was discussed at our 2009 AGM, we will have moved to having a final design passed, a website up and running and fund raising already started - which reflects the work put in on the membership's behalf by the committee, representative of all four Old Boys' Associations. When the final design is passed, the preferred stonemason, 'Perfitts', who have been responsible for many other military memorials home and abroad, will be in a position to give us an accurate costing, at which point we will know what sort of target we must aim for in our fundraising activities.

The finalised design shows the following :- a 7 metre round base of segmented hard wearing stone construction, surrounded by one or more rings of 'Buy a Brick' memorials, purchased either by ex-A/Ts or their families, showing the following - the A/T's initial and surname, his School and his intake. (The purchase of these memorial blocks is designed to generate funds for ongoing annual maintenance of the site in coming years). At the centre of the base will be a raised black granite disc bearing a text about us and, around this will be engraved the initials of the technical Corps of the Army that we fed skilled soldier tradesmen into, over the years 1923 - 2004. Upon the base will be mounted four granite benches representing the four 'seats of learning', Each one sponsored by one of the School/College Associations. On the front side will be the name of the establishment and on the seat area will be engraved the relevant Association badge.

The segmented areas will be broken up by placing coloured lines across the diameter, highlighting the four compass points, which also denotes that A/Ts served in all corners of the world. The main monolith block will be of rough hewn black granite and at the front will be engraved a suitable text, as well as a raised engraved copy of the Army Apprentice cap badge with a King's crown, as issued when the scheme was formally adopted, which will be housed in a circle approximately 600mm in diameter.

Keep checking the website as it evolves for other information and details of fund raising accounts etc.

Regards, Maurice (Mo) Hope, 59B

OBAN Articles By Boys From The Late Fifties

Again, I continue the theme begun in an earlier OBAN, of listing some of the splendid contributions so far published in our magazines. This time I am listing those articles sent in from boys of intake 56B, a list long enough to stand alone.

<u>Brief Title</u>	<u>Contributor</u>	<u>OBAN</u>
Opportunity Knocks	Dave Braithwaite, 56B	33
Sailing Challenge	Dave Braithwaite, 56B	34
A Drummer's tale	Russell Dodds, 56B	34
African years	Tony Domoney, 56B	17
Life in the Band	Tony Domoney, 56B	27
Pale Blue Beret	Tony Domoney, 56B	37
Anecdotes from Arborfield	George Fleetwood, 56B	5
The rocking years	Pete Gripton, 56B	5
40 th anniversary reunion	Pete Gripton, 56B	10
RSM McNally (compilation)	Pete Gripton, 56B	13
RCM Sallis	Pete Gripton, 56B	16
The story continues	Pete Gripton, 56B	19
56B do it again!	Pete Gripton, 56B	19
Longmoor Military Railway	Pete Gripton, 56B	26
Fred Silver Provost Sergeant	Pete Gripton, 56B	29
Memories of Ben Cook	Pete Gripton, 56B	29
The last Passing out Parade (2004)	Pete Gripton, 56B	3
A spell in the TA	Pete Gripton, 56B	31
Apprentice School and afterwards	Pete Gripton, 56B	32
Civvies I have known	Pete Gripton, 56B	33
It's a small world	Pete Gripton, 56B	34
Depot Guardroom (REME Museum)	Pete Gripton, 56B	34
Rutland 2005	Pete Gripton, 56B	3
Empire Warriors	Pete Gripton, 56B	35
1977 AOBA Reunion	Pete Gripton, 56B	35
Fred Silver	Pete Gripton, 56B	35
We've come a long way	Pete Gripton, 56B	36

Ray Farran DSO MC	Pete Gripton, 56B	37
1978 AOBA Reunion	Pete Gripton, 56B	38
Serving in BAOR 1961-63	Pete Gripton, 56B	38
Top table at last	Pete Gripton, 56B	39
Fifty years in the planning!	Pete Gripton, 56B	39
Many a 'new' tune	Pete Gripton, 56B	39
Magic Moment	Pete Gripton, 56B	40
Return from Germany 1963	Pete Gripton, 56B	41
A brief history of SPEC	Pete Gripton, 56B	41
Personality slot	Pete Gripton, 56B	42
Cold War paranoia?	Pete Gripton, 56B	44
The first 'boy racer'	Pete Gripton, 56B	45
Passing-out programme July 1959	Pete Gripton, 56B	45
Arborfield anecdotes	Gerry Hincks, 56B	34
RSM McNally – life after the School	John Houghton, 56B	17
The vanishing bedspace	John Houghton, 56B	34
My first posting	John Houghton, 56B	36
2006 Reunion	John Houghton, 56B	37
Retirement	John Houghton, 56B	43
Yesteryear memories	Dave Howlett, 56B	28
More yesteryear memories	Dave Howlett, 56B	4
Even more yesteryear memories	Dave Howlett, 56B	46
Cenotaph Parade 2007	Larry Jarvis, 56B	41
We know it doesn't fit Pt1	Johnny Johnson, 56B	26
We know it doesn't fit Pt2	Johnny Johnson, 56B	30
Arborfield – the prequel!	Johnny Johnson, 56B	44
Journey to Iran	Pete Simpson, 56B	36
Imperialist Warmonger	Pete Simpson, 56B	40
A rude awakening	Keith Smith, 56B	43
Change of job	Keith Smith, 56B	46
Naughty boys!	John Stewart, 56B	31
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Once again, I must stress that the above list contains only the 'main articles' and does not include the many interesting and humorous letters that have passed across the Editor's desk during the same years! You may notice that I have tried to live up to the example set by previous Editors, John Northam and Brian Hornsey, by providing plenty of 'copy' to keep my publisher(s) happy!

Pete Gripton, 56B

Clever New Words 2

Coffee: The person upon whom one coughs

Flabbergasted: Appalled by discovering how much weight one has gained

Abdicate: To give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach

Esplanade: To attempt an explanation while drunk

Willy-nilly: Impotent

Negligent: Absentmindedly answering the door when wearing only a nightgown

Lymph: To walk with a lisp

Gargoyle: Olive-flavored mouthwash

Flatulence: Emergency vehicle that picks up someone who has been run over by a steamroller

Balderdash: A rapidly receding hairline

Testicle: A humorous question on an exam

Rectitude: The formal, dignified bearing adopted by proctologists

Pokemon: A Rastafarian proctologist

Oyster: A person who sprinkles his conversation with yiddishisms

Frisbeetarianism: The belief that, after death, the soul flies up onto the roof and gets stuck there

Circumvent: An opening in the front of boxer shorts worn by Jewish men

REME TA - Our Place In History

Scribe: Maj Bernie Pallett, SO2 (V) TA Policy

TA – a proud history - the first hundred years

The Territorial Army, originally titled the Territorial Force, was established under the then Secretary of State for War, Richard Burdon Haldane, by the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act on 2 August 1907. The Act gave control of the pre-existing Volunteer Army from 1 April 1908 to the War Office, re-organising it along the lines that are still recognisable today. The first phase of this re-organisation saw the creation of Yeomanry Brigades, together with 14 infantry divisions, each of the latter being administered by a County Association, under the Presidency of its Lord Lieutenant. By the end of the First World War, more than 700 Territorial Force battalions had been raised. These were restructured and reduced in 1920 under the new name of the Territorial Army. Further organisational changes followed World War II, the ending of conscription in the 1960s and subsequent Strategic Defence Reviews, to create the specialist and committed volunteer reserve force which serves our nation today. Territorial soldiers have served alongside our Regular forces in almost every post-1945 conflict in which Britain has been involved. Notable among these have been the Korean War, the Suez Crisis, the Balkan crisis and the present engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan. This first century has thus required the Territorial Army to be increasingly flexible in its response to new challenges, both in overseas theatres of engagement and in training.

The formation of REME TA

The Territorial Army was reformed in 1947, as Britain's part-time reserve army. The organisation and structure of the TA largely remained in being until the TA was disbanded in 1967. The TA was given three roles. The provision of reserve field formations - divisions and brigades - which had been its main purpose since

1908, was continued. Six infantry divisions, two armoured divisions, an airborne division, plus several independent brigades were formed. One of those brigades was formed in Northern Ireland - the first TA presence in that province. From 1935, the TA had provided the bulk of the forces allotted to Anti-Aircraft Command, and this commitment was continued and extended in 1947. Experience of military operations in the Second World War had underlined the need for more specialised troops at Corps, Army and line-of-communication level. For this purpose, the reformed TA provided a large number of artillery, engineers, signals and logistic units. After 1947, the TA underwent several major re-organisations. Some units had a very short existence, as the ambitious order-of-battle could not be sustained by the level of recruitment. From 1948 until 1961, TA units were made up of part-time volunteers and conscripts retained in the reserves after two years in the Regular Army.

Between 1948 and 1953, many line-of-communications units were transferred to what became known as the Army Emergency Reserve. AER units had a paper existence, as they were composed of reservists whose civilian skills and occupations could be transferred directly to military use; e.g., telephone engineers, dock-workers, policemen etc. Anti-Aircraft Command was disbanded in 1955 and this resulted in a major re-organisation of the TA in 1956. With the abolition of conscription, another major re-organisation took place in 1961. The TA was disbanded in 1967 when, in a change of policy, the British government decided that the only reserves needed were those required to fill out the Regular Army's order of battle - a force of support and logistic units rather than front-line units.

1952 saw the formation of the Headquarters Army Emergency Reserve REME, which occupied the splendid Broxhead House, at Bordon in Hampshire. Then in 1967, when the Army Emergency

Reserve and the Territorial Army were re-organised into the Territorial Army Volunteer Reserve, HQ AER REME was renamed the Central Volunteer Headquarters REME, and later HQ REME TA. In 1979, they left Broxhead House and moved into Louisburg Barracks nearby.

The role of REME in the Reserve Army from 1967 was the support of the UK-based forces under Army Strategic Command or of the British Army of the Rhine until 1972, when the United Kingdom Land Forces replaced the Strategic Command and the UK geographic commands. Reinforcements of BAOR were to become an ever more important role throughout the 70s and 80s, in support of our NATO commitment, and in 1979 the TAVR reverted to the title Territorial Army. Many of the same types of REME unit as were in the Regular Army were represented in the Reserve Army, and the TA soldiers provided the same trades and skills within those units, and were trained accordingly.

In the 70s there were over fifty LADs, regimental and squadron workshops, and more than twenty workshops and recovery companies. Some of the second-line units were Independent and some were 'sponsored' by Central Volunteer Headquarters (CVHQ), which was commanded by a Colonel of the Regular Army. In 1982, CVHQ was reorganised into HQ REME TA, with a Brigadier in command, but by 1988 that appointment had reverted to Colonel.

The effects of 'Options for Change' in 1991 redefined the role of REME TA, in that it was to provide second-line units, in the form of new REME TA battalions, increments to second- and first-line workshops, LADs and attached tradesmen. Both individual REME TA soldiers, along with units, were involved in 'Operation GRANBY' (1990-91) in the UK, and some former members of the TA joined the Regular Army on full-time

normal engagements, subsequently serving in the Gulf.

'Operation TELIC' is the codename under which all British operations of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and afterwards, are being conducted. Some 9,500 of the British servicemen and women who deployed on Operation TELIC for the invasion and its aftermath were reservists, the vast majority of them from the Territorial Army.

REME TA units have histories and roles every bit as diverse as their Regular Army counterparts. Some can trace their history back to the predecessors of the Corps, and have strong allegiances to towns or counties, where they have existed with various titles and roles for many years. The last 61 years have seen some new units join the fold, and some disband, whilst others have amalgamated or re-rolled. Each unit can boast a thousand

stories and, for those no longer with us, reunions believe it or not are still taking place - such as 210 RCZ Wksp.

(Having myself served for a few years with 9 Field Workshop as a REME 'sponsored' tradesman, this fairly recent 'Craftsman' article caught my eye, and I thought it may be of interest to many old boys. Thanks go to that magazine for their kind permission to print my slightly modified version of the article here. Ed.)

The Irish Bagpiper

As a professional bagpiper, I'd been asked by a funeral director to play at a graveside service, for a homeless man who had no family or friends. The funeral was to be held at a cemetery in the remote countryside and this man would be the first to be laid to rest there. As I wasn't familiar with the backwoods area, I became lost and, being a typical man, didn't stop to ask for directions. I finally arrived an hour late. I saw the backhoe and the crew, who were eating lunch, but the hearse was nowhere in sight. I apologized to the workers for my tardiness and stepped to the side of the open grave, where I saw the vault lid already in place. I assured the workers I wouldn't hold them up for long, but this was the proper thing to do. The workers gathered around, still eating their lunch. I played out my heart and soul. As I played, the workers began to weep. I played and I played, like I'd never played before, from 'Going Home' and 'The Lord is My Shepherd' to 'Flowers of the Forest'. I closed the lengthy session with 'Amazing Grace' and walked slowly back to my car. As I was opening the door and taking off my coat, I overheard one of the workers saying to another, "Sweet Jeezuz, Mary 'n Joseph, I have never seen or heard nuttin' like that before and I've been puttin' in these septic tanks for over twenty years".



Guess where?

I'm sure that many of you readers will recognise the splendid old building shown in the accompanying photograph? No prizes for correct responses! Ed.

Observations On life (By Some Well-Known People)

- Sometimes, when I look at my children, I say to myself, "*Lillian, you should have remained a virgin*" - **Lillian Carter** (mother of Jimmy Carter)
- I had a rose named after me and I was very flattered. But I was not pleased to read the description in the catalogue: - '*No good in a bed, but fine against a wall*' - **Eleanor Roosevelt**
- Last week, I stated that this woman was the ugliest woman I had ever seen. I have since been visited by her sister, and now wish to withdraw that statement - **Mark Twain**
- The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible - **George Burns**
- Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year - **Victor Borge**
- Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint - **Mark Twain**
- I was married by a judge. I should have asked for a jury - **Groucho Marx**
- My wife has a slight impediment in her speech. Every now and then she stops to breathe - **Jimmy Durante**
- I have never hated a man enough to give his diamonds back - **Zsa Zsa Gabor**
- Money can't buy you happiness, but it does bring you a more pleasant form of misery - **Spike Milligan**
- I don't feel old. I don't feel anything until noon. Then it's time for my nap - **Bob Hope**
- I never drink water because of the disgusting things that fish do in it - **W C Fields**
- We could certainly slow the aging process down if it had to work its way through Congress - **Will Rogers**
- Don't worry about avoiding temptation. As you grow older, it will avoid you - **Winston Churchill**
- By the time a man is wise enough to watch his step, he's too old to go anywhere - **Billy Crystal**

The Army Apprentice National Memorial

An appeal for funds

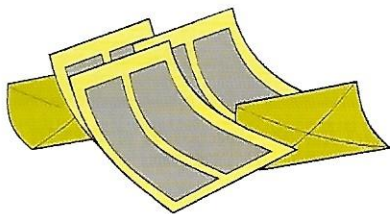
Calling all ex-boys who were graduates of the Army Apprentices' Schools, located at Arborfield, Carlisle, Chepstow and Harrogate.

A steering committee has been formed to raise funds, design and build a National Memorial, dedicated to all those boys who passed through the system in the last seventy years.

The Memorial is to be located at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alreswas, Staffordshire.

Contributions to the fund should be sent to: Major Mike Davis MBE,
Rosebank, New Buildings, Sandford, Crediton, Devon EX17 4PP
– cheques made payable to AOBA Account No.2.

***Published on behalf of Major (Ret'd) Gordon Bonner, 49B,
Secretary to the Steering Committee.***



OBAN LETTERS

Ex-Commandant Sam Roberts, e-mails:

College gates et al.

Reading the Minutes of the AOBA AGM, Item 14, Any Other Business, I was not sure as to which School/College gates were being moved. As Commandant in the early/mid 1980s, I found the original School/College gates, cut down and being used as the entrance gates to the old Sergeants' Mess in Sheerlands Road. These I had built back to their original spec by Fred Sadd in the Blacksmiths Shop and hung on the old pillars, which still stood in Sheerlands Road. Fred also cast a second education flame for the missing torch and 43 Command Workshop fabricated a new arch. (See pages 376 & 377 in *'The Arborfield Apprentice'* and page 4 of Bryn Richards' history booklet).

The more ornate main gates to Princess Marina College (PMC) were the gates made by Percy Chivers, the retired Major blacksmith instructor at the Army Apprentices' College in Carlisle, and hung at the entrance to that establishment, which closed in 1969. I persuaded Ray Eke, the Garrison architect, to build the pillars and erect these at the entrance to the new College. I was delighted when they were adopted as the College emblem. Within a week of them being

erected, a lady driver had crashed into them, which caused them to go into the Blacksmith's Shop for repair!

Also from the AAC Carlisle came the Carlisle Memorial Gates, which were to be placed at the entrance to a memorial garden. Regrettably there was a delay in the construction of the garden, during which time the gates were stolen from behind the PMC guardroom in Arthur Soar's time as Commandant. They have not been seen since. These gates were barely 3 feet high, were very ornate and incorporated the regimental greatcoat buttons of all the staff at Carlisle on its closure. (A photograph of these gates appears in Bryn Richards' history at page 8).

I'm not sure what has happened to the Woolwich bell-tower. In the old College, it was sited behind 'C' Company. When I took over as Commandant, I found the bell tower, now rotting, lying at the rear of the new buildings in Princess Marina College. As I had been at school (Brighton College) with 'Jack' Black, the Commandant at Chepstow, I was able to persuade him have a replica bell tower built. The special tarred wood for the pillar was imported from Norway - and Chepstow made a good job of it. Again,

it was Ray Eke who master-minded the digging of the foundations and the erection of the tower outside the Headquarters. (Pictures of it at the entrance to the Arsenal at Woolwich, and to the rear of 'C' Company, are on page 7 of Bryn Richards' booklet).

Other relics from Carlisle included the Scots Guards type flag, which was flown at the AAC Carlisle, and which was framed and displayed in the Headquarters building of Princess Marina College; the Carlisle pipe pennants with Hadrian's eagle on them and the beautiful silver, cross-logged bell, which was presented by Colonel Fane-Gladwin, late Scots Guards, who was the Commandant at Carlisle for the duration of its existence. On College dinner nights in the joint SEE/PMC Officers' Mess, I had that piece of silver in front of me on each occasion. I suspect that it has been swallowed up into the SEAE mess silver and needs rescuing.

I hope these relics do not disappear into the mists of oblivion.

Andy O'Neil, 56A, pleads:

Dear Editor - May I ask a favour - can you find space in the next OBAN to appeal to any members of AOBA who were in 56A intake to try to attend the reunion this year. I was the only one there last year and I felt outnumbered, although I was made very welcome. It would be very nice to see how many I recognise or how many recognise me!

(I've done my bit - over to you 56A members! Ed.)

he drove them in motor races. It was only in later years that I realised that we had been privileged to have met and spoken to Mike Hawthorn. I can still remember just where I was and what I was doing when I heard the news of his tragic death being announced on the radio.

Tony Guy, 43A, e-mails:

Darrell Thomas died on 20th November 2009. He was in 1943A intake and my best friend. After Arborfield, I only met up with him once and that was in BAOR, about 1950 time. In 1981 I tracked him down, living near Stratford-upon-Avon. It was very much later than that when I got him to join the AOBA and we were able to meet up more often at the Reunion weekends. He became a Director of *Peugeot Motors* for some years and later started a company that arranged golf tournaments around Europe. He was a VM by trade - as were all the best A/Ts at Arborfield.

Gerry Berragan, 48B, e-mailed:

It was with great interest that I read your article about Mike Hawthorn in the May edition of *OBAN*. It reminded me of a day on my driver training course at Arborfield in May or June of 1951. My civilian driving instructor lived either in or near Farnham and, after stopping for a cup of tea at his house, we drove on through Farnham town centre. We stopped at a garage on the outskirts to admire the racing cars on display in the showroom and, whilst looking, a young blonde man came over and started explaining some of their technical details. He also told us that

Tony Domoney, 56B, e-mailed:

In this far-flung corner of Africa, I recently received OBANs 43 and 44. I have read the excellent articles at least three times each, enjoying every word - they get better every issue! It occurred to me that you requested some time ago that I should explain what work I am doing. Well, here goes.

Airworthiness simply means 'Fit to fly' - not me, just the aircraft! This encompasses every aspect of design, manufacture, operation (other than the flying part) and maintenance of aircraft, including the worst scenario, i.e. accident and incident investigation. As an Airworthiness expert (ICAO definition), my job is to ensure that the civil aviation industry, in operating and maintaining aircraft, rigorously comply with the International laws and National regulations.

In principle, and as a simple analogy, a Civil Aviation Authority Airworthiness and Operations division is made up of three elements - Quality Assurance, Regulatory Officers and Educationalists. All CAA's are obligated by International law to perform Safety Oversight activities over the Aviation Industry. I manage the Airworthiness division here and have a number of Inspectors, who formally audit and informally survey aircraft and organisations regularly. We all act as Regulators, in that in our day-to-day tasks we advise Industry on regulatory requirements, if which they do not comply, we may take enforcement action against them. We also administer licenses, certification and authorities to engineers and organisations.

As educationalists, we present seminars and workshops to Industry and to the public service on airworthiness matters. This is done on a regular basis, where we present 'findings', results of audits, regulation changes and other interesting topics. Topical issues include Safety Management systems, including human factors within all sectors of Industry. In order to reach all Namibia industry means a lot of travel, as approved organisations are situated mainly in

South Africa but also in the USA, Europe and the Middle East. By law, every organisation and aircraft has to be audited annually, so that means a lot of travel and usage of resources. Recently I was required to visit Germany to investigate the failure of an engine fitted to an *Air Namibia Airbus 340*. That really got the brain cells working! Other occasions have found me investigating aircraft accidents, some of which were quite horrific.

As an ICAO 'expert', I am required to advise the Namibia Director and Ministry and also train the Inspectors on International law. That means the preparation of Power-point presentations and overseeing the Inspectors performing their regulatory tasks. My background, after leaving the Army Air Corps in 1968, has been linked to Civil Aviation maintenance, as a multi-licensed aircraft (airplane and helicopter) mechanic. After 12 years in the tech field, operating in many countries, I was invited to join the Australian Civil Aviation Authority (now called CASA) as a surveyor. It was with CASA that I learned the profession of Airworthiness Inspector. As one climbs the ladder of life, one gets involved in all aspects of their chosen career. So for me I was most fortunate in being trained and working with many highly qualified airworthiness engineers (one a Barnes Wallis apprentice) and aviation lawyers, who have been my mentors over the years and remain personal friends to this day. The work was - and still is - varied, diverse and incredibly interesting. One meets fascinating folk from all areas of the Industry and the learning curve never stops climbing. It is also at times very demanding, frustrating and stressful, but I guess that's life. You take the bad with the smooth and make the most of the pleasures. The job though has taken toll of relationships and it takes one hell of an understanding wife to put up with all the changes.

There are of course the sad aspects, particularly when accidents occur. Also, one sometimes has to deal with angry people who, financially, cannot

accommodate new regulatory requirements forced upon them by 'new' technology. They cut corners and compromise safety. One feels for them, but then one has to focus on one's responsibilities. All in all, I have had a great career in Aviation, never forgetting my fitting days at Arborfield, followed by my lucky choice of the Army Air Corps. Those days of destiny moulded me into what I am today.

I am expected to be in Namibia until May 2010. By then I will be 69 and perhaps ready to step down a little. At the moment, I am 'in the clouds' so to speak and cruising nicely! I am still scheduled to be with a few 56B boys in October and am looking forward to catching up with them and listening to their stories.

(We all look forward to seeing you Tony! Ed.)

Fred Mills, 51B, writes:

The picture shows me with a few of the twenty-five collecting boxes, filled during this year's poppy appeal. The amount of money collected amounted to over £3,500. With my wife Rosemarie's total added, it meant that we collected over £5,000 between us, our best effort in eight years of poppy appeals.



Keith Evans, 45A, responds:

Regarding John Worland's letter in *OBAN46*, I telephoned him and we had quite a long chat. The Blakang Mati Cowboys were so named because MORs (Malay Other Ranks) wore the Australian Army bush-hats. During the time I was on Pulau Blakang Mati, I was only aware of the 3.7" type 2C AA Guns.

Trevor O'Callaghan, 42C, e-mailed:

Reply to Brian Baxter, ref OBAN 46

The fitting of the machine gun on the hatch of the ARV may go back to the operation of armoured vehicles in the Korean War. The Chinese used infantry men to swarm over the armoured vehicles, to disable the vehicle. One method was to use mud etc to cover the periscopes. The Centurion tank machine gun is co-axial with the main gun. If this machine gun was used to clear the infantry from an adjacent tank, then the main gun was out of action. Thus the Army requested a machine gun to be mounted on the commander's hatch to clear the infantry. The Chinese found that using infantry men to swarm over armoured vehicles caused very high casualties and this was consequently stopped. Thus the Army requirement for an extra machine gun was no longer required. The REME considered an ARV was very vulnerable to infantry attack and this may be why the ARV had a machine gun turret fitted.

I believe the armoured plating of *Bedford* vehicles was a South African

design. The *Bedford* vehicle with armoured plate I remember was a QL. The problems of mine damage occurred in Aden and Malaya. With the IRA troubles, there was considerable research into protecting all forms of transport. An odd requirement was for protecting a few vehicles with 'no spark engines', used in hazardous environments. The war-time USA vehicles, with their long bonnets, were a better vehicle to protect the driver and crew of a vehicle.

When I was in Italy, there were many British Army vehicles with unit modifications for repair and recovery. Many units had spare vehicles. We had a *Diamond-T* and a *Mack* truck. The *Diamond-T* was used as a tug for towing tanks and in railway sidings to move the railway trucks. The *Mack* had a unit-manufactured crane. We fitted a 'A' frame on the front of a half-track vehicle, using the front winch rope for lifting, but it was not very successful. Two *Scammell* recovery vehicles had equipment I had not seen before. The story I was told was that the vehicles had been captured at Dunkirk.

The Germans had used them in the North African desert and the British had later 'recaptured' them. Except for the added equipment, the vehicles were still as captured at Dunkirk six years previously.

When I was at Tel-el-Kebir, Egypt, I was on duty when units had to hand in all spare equipment to a holding site, with no questions asked. If, after this amnesty, a unit was found with spare equipment, the CO would be held responsible. The vehicles varied from cars to armoured vehicles. A few vehicles had modifications for recovery and repair. The modifications were invariably a unit construction, hand operated. One vehicle had a capstan winch, driven by a twin-cylinder diesel engine. This suggested a marine winch. I have no record of these vehicles.

Listening to soldiers who had served in the early part of the war, fitter's vehicles and recovery vehicles were virtually non-existent and what there was locally produced.

Pete Gripton, 56B, writes on another 56B Reunion Weekend:

Joyce and I had a fairly short drive that afternoon, as we had been visiting 'Mum' in the morning, having stayed at a lovely 'b&b' the previous evening. Mum lives at Culcheth, a largish village in Cheshire, so it was most convenient that our 56B reunion was being held just outside Nantwich – also in Cheshire. We arrived at Alvaston Hall to find a few familiar faces already arrived and it was great to renew old acquaintances once again. This year was to be slightly different, as we had all booked for a 3-night stay, which was to give lots more time to catch up with everybody. It was lovely to see that Tony Domoney had made the trip over from his contract in Namibia – he hadn't seen most of the rest of us since around 1959!

Having found our rooms and settled in, there were twenty-nine of us, including the ladies, who sat down to dinner that evening, wining and dining and swapping stories once again as old friendships were remembered and renewed. When the evening meal and entertainment ended, I think I can safely say that there were quite a few weary legs that found their way back to their rooms for the night. Breakfast next

morning was a God-send for all those who can remember the grey 'scrambled' (or powdered?) eggs that Sergeant Hunt used to present on cold fried bread back at the Cookhouse in 1956! To say that we enjoyed a 'full English' is an understatement! Just a good job that the plates were no larger!

'Left to one's own devices' was order of the day, so Joyce and I decided to drive into nearby Nantwich, a town that we had never visited before. And what a pleasant surprise! It is a small market town and was bustling with a Saturday morning crowd. We took a look around the large old church (Saint Mary's) and met up with a steward named Ray, who kindly passed on directions to a few places that he thought we would find interesting. This is how we found a splendid little coffee shop at the rear end of a 'deli', which also contained a 'museum-style' old-fashioned grocer's shop, fully preserved in the manner that I certainly remembered from when Mum used to send me for the shopping as a kid! We followed that with a visit to the local museum, where we met up with the

Hudsons and the Fortunes. Brian beat me to the punch when he remarked that a museum was the place to find old relics! (*See cover photograph.*) After that, we continued walking around the town and along the River Weaver. Ray had told us of a memorial stone, erected in memory of an American airman who had crashed his *Thunderbolt* plane into the river, rather than risk the lives of local inhabitants. This incident reminded me of a similar memorial just outside my own village in Hampshire.

Having returned to our hotel, we found we still had some spare time, so we drove up to visit Middlewich. There really wasn't much on offer there, basically one main street, which we quickly exhausted! We had, however, parked in the car park of a well-known cut-cost supermarket, where we had seen the enticing poster announcing, "*Four tin pack for £1*". The goods on offer were tins of *Branston* baked beans, so we popped in and bought two packs – eight tins in all. As we paid for them at the checkout, Joyce, in all innocence, said, "*They should keep us going for a while!*" Well, I know what she meant!

Saturday evening found the 56B party back at the dining tables for another splendid meal and a stand-up comedian, who certainly kept us well entertained for the evening, even if some of his jokes were as old as us! After another gargantuan breakfast on Sunday morning, several of us joined a coach trip into the fine City of Chester. It had been many years since I had last visited Chester. It had been a favourite 'day trip' from my original home in Liverpool as a child, although Joyce and I had been there at some point in the past, though our memories let us down as to just when that was! Nevertheless, we had a long and varied walk around the city walls, visiting the racecourse and river – and 'M and S' for morning coffee!

As mentioned previously, everyone had been left to 'do their own thing' during the days, and there were various activities on hand, including an open air bowling green, archery, dancing classes and the like. I think the general opinion was that the 3-day option was definitely a good one, so no doubt I shall be making enquiries for next year for 'something similar'! Having said our 'Good-byes' on Monday morning, and well stocked up on bacon, sausages, black-pudding and all the rest, it was back into the car for the trip home. I'd decided to give the motorways a miss, instead heading across towards Wrexham to pick up the A49 heading south. Whitchurch, Shrewsbury and Ludlow were all passed by before we stopped for 'tea and tiffin' in

Leominster.

Just for the record, those guys who attended the 2009 reunion were: Johnny Bilcliff, Roger Clarkson, Ron Daykin, Russell Dodds, Tony Domoney, Brian Fortune, George Gash, Dave Howlett, Bob Hudson, Pete Langridge, Brian Mockford, Derek Newman, Keith Smith; Tony Strong and 'yours truly'. All except Tony Domoney were accompanied by 'the ladies' – Tony's wife Heather still lives in Perth, West Australia, so the logistics were a bit tough! Thanks must go to Roger and May Clarkson, who had done a 'dummy run' and recommended Alvaston Hall in the first place. I add my own personal thanks to all who turned up to make it such a memorable occasion.

Stan Bates, 43A, responds:

I write in response to the request in OBAN46 by John Worland, regarding the 'Blakmati Cowboys'. I too served in Singapore and Malaya, although a bit before his time, back in 1947-50. When we first arrived in Singapore (March '47) on the 'Queen of Bermuda', we were posted to 40 Armd Brigade Wksp (ex-Burma, Ramree Island), housed in a tented camp which had been formerly a Japanese vehicle park during the occupation. One or two relics from that time were still in evidence. We then moved to Ayer Rajah, which was to be the new site for a combined 2 Base Wksp and Singapore District Wksp. The Base Wksp at that stage was still on Lavender Street in the centre of Singapore. I'll say no more about that, although it may well have been illuminated by a red light!

With the aid of a working party every day of 200 Japanese surrendered prisoners, under the command of a Jap officer who could speak English, we erected the steelwork and rails for two 10-ton travelling cranes. When Singapore District Wksp came on stream, we were responsible for all repairs and recovery on Singapore Island. This included Blakmati and to get there was by water transport from Keppel Harbour steps. In those days, to my knowledge, there were no 3.7" A/A guns, although I think there were some twin 6-pounders, mainly used to welcome VIPs coming into Singapore Harbour by sea.

Throughout my stay, we were always busy on a wide variety of tasks. One of these was the removal of a Japanese A/A battery from the grounds of the Sultan of Johor's palace, overlooking the Naval Base at Singapore. It was hard work and was carried out in varying states of weather over about eight weeks. Shortly after 'the emergency' broke out in July '48, a detachment was sent out from District Wksp to the old match factory at Kulai, north of Johor Baru. Yours truly was then posted to the 1st/2nd Gurkhas. I joined them at Ulu Pandan in Singapore, along with three other REME – 2 VMs and an Armourer/Fitter. We then moved as a Battalion to Segamet, where we formed our Tac HQ.

The Area we covered was north of Kluang-Yong Peng Labis and Gemas. I hope the attached pictures answer the question of 25-pounders. We had this



call come through, directing us to a location north of Gemas, to recover this quad, with gun and limber, that had gone off the track. Off we went, complete with Gurkha escort – this was about November '49. All the vehicles were either American or Canadian – a Dodge 4x4 with winch and a Holmes Wrecker. I hope this helps!



John Worland, 52B, e-mails:

This was given to me when I left Malaya in 1958, as a 'joke' from the National Service (NS) Clerk in the Wksp Office. I am quite sure that everybody who served in 'Foreign Parts' can replace 'Malayanitis' with their own local name. After leaving Arborfield in 1955 and then REME in 1962, I had spent most of my service with NS and the '3-year regulars' (glorified NS), who gave me a different 'slant' on Army service. For those who are interested, either buy or borrow from your local library *'The Peacetime Conscripts'* by Charles Wheeler.

Notice of Return to U.K.

Issued in solemn warning that

Number:

Rank:

Name:

Will be returning to UK on:

Dear Sir or Madam,

Very soon, the above mentioned OR will once again be in your midst - dehydrated, demoralised and demobbed, to take his place once again as a human being, with freedom and justice for all; to be engaged in life, liberty and somewhat delayed pursuit of happiness. In making your joyous preparations to welcome him back into organised society, you must make allowances for the crude environments to which he has been accustomed for some time. In a word, he is suffering from an Asiatic disease called 'Malayanitis', a very common occurrence in this country. Or else he may be suffering from a little too much 'Yam Seng'.

Show no alarm if he prefers to squat on his haunches instead of sitting on a chair, insists on removing his shoes before entering the house or has a tendency to bow when meeting or saying 'Goodbye' to someone. Keep cool when he pours gravy on his dessert or mixes peaches and mashed potatoes together. Do not worry if he insists on using chopsticks with his soup, or if he also insists on sleeping in the nude. Be tolerant when he takes his mattress off the bed and insists on sleeping on the floor. During the night, he may toss and turn, throwing his arms into the air and using abusive words in an Oriental language. One word might be 'Mosquitoes'. A few gentle strokes across his forehead will soon remedy this.

If, on being awakened for breakfast, he uses strong, explicit language in making his desire for you to leave him alone, please do not be alarmed. Treat it as normal, as this has been his habit for the past twelve months or maybe more, and in time these effects will gradually dim. Should he however not wait for any form of awaking, but creep stealthily to the bathroom, complete a scanty toilet, rush downstairs, putting his clothes on as he goes, then stand erect on the lawn with his feet astride, gently lead him back to the house, with repeated exhortations of *'Stay in bed dear, Father does not want a parade this morning'*. Such treatment will gradually instil into his mind that such things are of the horrible past.

If sometimes, at the meal table, his method of using a knife and fork is reminiscent of navvies with a pick and shovel, pay no attention. He will soon assimilate the fact that he is once again in the presence of human beings and not in a collection of nameless numbers and ranks. If, after the evening meal, he furtively takes tea, bread and jam up to his bedroom, to be consumed whilst hunched over a magazine, please ignore him. If, whilst walking in the street, he howls wolf-like at the sight of a pretty girl, or emits a piercing whistle and commences to leer horribly when he sees a shapely leg - pay no heed, he is merely love starved.

Upon him telling a perfectly respectable shopkeeper that he is a *'barefaced robbing b——'*, explain to the shopkeeper the situation, then get him out of the shop with a minimum of force and delay. Should he at any moment drop off to sleep, clad only in a towel, and awake muttering something about the *'——— climate and cold showers'*, press on - this tendency will also pass.

If, at some time, he requests your aid in a little matter of debugging his bed, or asks for *'VIM'* to de-coke his cup and saucer, treat his wishes with respect. It must be remembered that these habits, obtained over prolonged periods of time, die hard. Never ask him why the boy down the road has a higher rank than he had. Make no flattering remarks about the Navy or RAF in his presence. If you do, he will tell you to *'Keep it out'* (meaning your nose) and follow up immediately with an attempt to put it out.

Keep a strong hand on him when in the company of the female sex, his intentions will be sincere, even if dishonourable. Keep in mind that, beneath his tanned and rugged exterior, there beats a heart of gold; treasure this, it may be the only thing of value left. Treat him with kindness, tolerance and an occasional quart of good liquor and cigarettes - you will then be able to rehabilitate the hollow shell of the man you once knew.

Yours faithfully

Distribution: Parents of Individual; Near Relatives; Welfare Officer; Parental Control Office

Bob Ward, 44B, writes:

This information may be of interest to other ex-Apprentices. Like many other ex-boys, some of my service after leaving Arborfield was spent in the tropics (Kenya), and exposure to excessive sunlight during that time resulted in me developing some 12 Basal Cell Carcinomas (BCCs) over the last 20 years. These are not life-threatening cancers, but can result in disfigurement and require removal by minor surgery (in one case I also needed a skin graft). Recently someone suggested that I could claim against the Army for disability! It seemed a bit of a long shot to me, but I decided to see what was involved and downloaded the necessary information from the *Veterans Agency (VA)*.

The first thing I had to get my head around was that I had to claim for a 'War Pension' and as my injury (if that's what it was) occurred in the early 1950s and was certainly not in a war zone. I was actually in charge of the REME Detachment in Nyali Leave Camp (myself and one African electrician).

However, it transpired that 'War Pension' covered all situations, so I completed the forms and sent them off. I imagined that the people at the VA would fall about laughing and bin my claim. But 'no', I received an acknowledgement, was allocated a 'case officer' and, sometime later, was invited to attend a medical examination. The doctor who saw me was used to dealing with claimants for DWP benefits, so he found it a pleasant change not having to work out whether or not I was really confined to crutches! He measured my scars, enquired as to whether I was left- or right handed (don't ask!) and sent off his report.

Some days later, I got a letter to say I had been awarded a four-figure sum in lieu of a pension, so the exercise had been well worth while. Looking at the problems that ex-servicemen are having in obtaining adequate compensation for serious injuries suffered in Iraq or Afghanistan, I suppose I should consider myself a bit of a fraud. But when I see what our MP s have been up to –

perhaps not! Anyone considering a similar claim can download the forms from www.veterans-UK.info, but make sure you have plenty of paper in your printer, as they run to quite a few sheets. It would also be a good idea to let your GP know what you are planning, as he or she will probably be asked to provide evidence of your treatment.

Bob (or 'Jake') Monk-Terry, 53B, writes:

It was with deep sadness that I read of the death of George Owen. We joined the AAS on the same day and served together for the best part of six years, firstly at boys' school, then 3 Trg Btn and finally at 77 Tels in Germany. After that I was posted to Kenya and lost touch – that is, until you published a photograph of George and me in OBAN43. That brought the memories flooding back, of Reading, Wokingham and Duisberg, usually with a drink in hand! I wish I'd joined the OBA much earlier and we'd have been able to get back in contact. God Bless George, old mate.

(Bob had tried to e-mail me the above, but had a problem with my address. I phoned and had a chat and it could be that he'd been using pete-gripton instead of pete_gripton, something to be aware of! Ed.)

Pete Gripton, 56B, writes:

I recently had a week's break near Filey, on the coast of Yorkshire, along with my wife, her sister and husband. We shared a really great caravan and the weather, for late September, was very kind to us. Having already driven out for day visits to Bridlington, Scarborough and then Whitby, we decided to give the cars a rest the next day. Instead we walked along the cliff-top, then down onto the beach, for a quiet stroll into the small town of Filey. We enjoyed a lovely coffee and freshly baked scone (yes, along with jam and cream!), before walking up onto the local headland, known as Carr Naze, then down onto some low-lying rocks called The Brigg. Then it was back into Filey to browse around the selection of local shops. My brother-in-law spotted one shop that sold 'memorabilia' and, there in the window, a display of old Army badges. Mike's eye was caught by the cap-badge of the Royal Berkshire Regiment, with whom he served his National Service in the mid-Fifties. Deciding to buy it for old

times' sake, he marched into the shop, with me close behind. The shop owner was very chatty and we exchanged a few tales - he had also done NS, so there was common ground!

After Mike had handed over the cash for his badge, I happened to mention that the one badge I always regretted not keeping was that of the Army Apprentices' School. Needless to say, a large cardboard box was produced and the shopkeeper's hands went deeper and deeper until the bottom layer was reached. "I knew I had seen one of those somewhere", he exclaimed - and there it was! And so, dear reader, after many a long year, I am now the proud owner of an old school badge, still with the authentic 'J R Gaunt' name stamped on the back – and well worn after many days of polishing I'm sure. The previous owner was definitely more into bullshine than me! The holiday had already proved very memorable, but that was certainly the 'icing on the cake'!

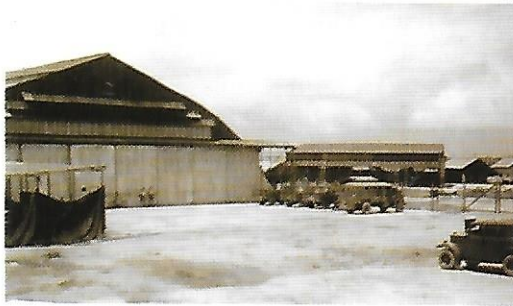
Chas Pepper, 43B, writes:

I found the OBAN46 article about 'The .303" Round' most interesting – and it ties up with a story in General 'Bill' Slim's autobiography. Sometime in the 1920s he had led an attack on Wasiri trouble-makers on the North-West Frontier and was met with some unusually poor marksmanship. Upon his return to camp, he sent a letter to the Wasiri chief, pointing this out. A courteous reply was received, with the chief explaining that the latest supply of .303" was of an improved type – and that once their rifle sights had been adjusted, they promised that the British would again get the expected hot reception. Obviously, one of those changes mentioned by Craftyman had occurred. But the strangest thing is the polite correspondence!

Keith 'Mitch' Mitchell 43A, writes:

Much water under the bridge since last July's Reunion – and what a success that was. Much appreciation and thanks to the organizing team – not an easy task. Whilst writing this, 'first footing' comes to mind, with a round of warmly shaking a few throats! Ah well, another year has flashed by and, hopefully, a happier one ahead world wide. And not too late to wish OBs, one and all, a great 2010.

It was interesting to read of 27 GW Regt Wksp exploits, which are similar to first-off-the-ground (rocket-wise too) 47 GW.



Wonder how they all fared after the 'jollies' in the USA etc – must be some good tales to tell? John Worland's question – I'm sure Stan Bates could solve it – and I wish that he (Stan) would amuse us with his steamy tales from the Mobile Bath Unit!

Reference Brain Baxter's query re the awful Bedford RL armoured sweat-box, known as 'the pig' – I remember them worked on, running repairs, in 14 Inf Div Wksp, Kluang, in July 1950. Poor strained over-weighted beasts they were! I dug out a couple of sweat-stained, well-travelled Brownie Box photo-copies. One shows my Daimler Armoured Car section, all awaiting front suspension repair – and *always* the L/H lower links. I wonder why?

Chas Pepper evokes shades of



Leslie 'Virgin Soldier' Thomas, writing as he does of Bugis Street. Next door was Muar Street, both very definitely 'out of bounds'. Likewise Lavender Street, strangely enough the site of the District Wksp, with a supplement of Jap PoW labour. Stan Bates and Fred Roberts would know!

And to finish – a bit of 'PP' – poetic (or pathetic?) poetry:

Time's Melt

From old photographs, I strain my eyes to see
Faces from the distant past, still looking back at me.
How strange to remember the 'where and when' while looking at these photographs,
Recalling long-forgotten dreams – the sadness and the laughs.

Faces oh so young still smile across the years,
Faces that evoke, for me, the laughter and the tears.
The Old Boys' get-togethers, the memory days we made,
Reunions at Arborfield – such thoughts will never fade.

For photographs in time are frozen, no growing old for them,
The young lads pictured there are now much older men.
Happy scenes of long ago, smart in Service Dress and belt,
Pictures bearing witness to time's relentless melt.
The photographs of comrades, friendships that always last,
Will help to bridge the gulf between the present and the past.

Ron Ward, 55A, asks for information:

Having noticed that on my father's Korean War Medal, Queen Elizabeth is not wearing a Crown, all my medals show her wearing a Crown. This also applies to the WW2 Defence Medal. This, I feel, is because the Korean War Medals were awarded during the period just prior to her Coronation on 3rd June 1953. At that time, my father was serving in Hong Kong and took part in the Coronation Parade. If this is correct, how many more instances are there where a Campaign award was made prior to her Coronation without a Crown?

Has anyone got, or know of, a 1918 - 1962 GSM with Malaya Clasp from this period, or any other Campaign Medal



without a Crown? It would have to be the first award of the medal, as later awards

were added to the existing Medal as a Clasp.

Im Memoriam

Deaths Notified Since Last OBAN

Brig (Ret'd) EGH 'Bill' Bailey, ex-Commandant 1970-73, died 27th August 2009 (*Craftsman* magazine)
Gerry Pursglove, 39A, died February 3rd 2010 at the Royal County Hospital, Guildford, Surrey, after a long illness
Bill Smith, 39A, died December 6th 2009 at Eastleigh, Hants, having remained cheerful through many illnesses
Eric Cook, 42A, died from complications following a heart attack at Liss, Hants on August 23rd 2009
George Houguez, 42A, passed away on 24th December 2009 at the Royal Hospital Chelsea
Darrell Thomas, 43A, died on 20th December 2009 following a long illness
Roger Millard, 46A, died at Sandhurst, Surrey, on September 6th 2009
Robin Loader, 47B, died November 13th 2009 – details to follow
John Simon, 52A, died September 2009 – reported by Trevor Stubberfield
Bob Luck, 57A, died December 21st 2009 out in Spain
Bob Sisson, 57A, died after a short illness on October 22nd 2009
Paul Hudson, 58A, lost his battle with leukemia on 29th December 2009 at Stioke Mandeville Hospital
John Holman, 59C – late entry, died August 2008 (from his obituary in *Craftsman* magazine)
Stan Blachford, 60C – no further details available
Arthur Humpston, unknown intake – has anyone any information?

Paul Hudson, 58A

It is with deep regret and sorrow that I report the passing of Paul Hudson, who like me was a 58er. He finally lost his battle with that dreadful disease, leukemia, in Stoke Mandeville hospital on the 29th of December 2009. His family was with him at his bedside.

Paul joined the Army Apprentices School at Easter 1958 (the 'Easter Bunnies' as Paul used to tell everyone). During his time there he was an active member of the Cycling Club and of the St John's Ambulance Brigade, attending, as often as he could, the local unit in Reading. His successful apprenticeship was as a VM and he ended up as a 58Ber, passing out as a VM (A). Paul was proud to serve with both 1RHA and 3RHA in BAOR in the 1960s. After his military career, he went on to become a vehicle inspector within the civil service.

Paul was a long standing, enthusiastic member of the Arborfield Old Boys Association and, to my knowledge, never missed a reunion since the day he joined. He was also a regular attendee at the annual Remembrance parade held at the Cenotaph in London. It was Paul, in his inimitable way, who doggedly tracked me down and introduced me to the AOBA, for which I am extremely grateful. In fact it was he who took the time and patience to co-ordinate and ensure all our attendances for our 50th anniversary reunion a couple of years ago. On a personal note, myself, my wife Jenny and daughter Kay, who regularly came to the reunion for Saturday morning parades and barbecues in the Arborfield parade square and mess garden, will sadly miss his company, as I'm sure all who knew him will.

Barry Lucas-Carter, 58A

Roger Millard, 46A

It is with great sadness that I report the death of Roger Millard. He died on September 6th 2009 whilst in hospital for treatment, following a fall in the garden at his home in Sandhurst, shortly before we were both due to attend the annual Reunion. Roger and I shared the same barrack rooms in 'A' Company, trained together as Armourers and became firm friends during our time at Arborfield. Another roommate from those far-off days was Norman Wright – and I was so pleased that we were there together for our friend's funeral. Roger's funeral service was at Easthampstead Park Crematorium on 17th September, followed by a reception at Wellington College. The large congregation at the service, and the tributes paid to him by neighbours, former work and ex-service colleagues, bore testament to his popularity and their respect.

Roger spent his childhood at Farnborough, Hampshire, from where in February 1946 he joined the Army Technical School at Arborfield. During his time at ATS, as a member of 'A' Company, he made many friends and was popular with both his roommates and instructors. He never attained NCO rank, being content to learn his trade and enjoy the camaraderie of his mates. However, he was always near the top of the list, whether it be at trade or military training. His chosen sport was shooting and he excelled at this, gaining his School colours, and was a valued member of School teams. In February 1949, along with the rest of his Intake, he left Arborfield to join REME.

During his Army service, Roger was never happier than when on attachment. He had some time as Armourer at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, where he met his wife Pam. He served with the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards in Korea; the Royal Marine Commando Brigade in Malta and the Far East; and, in latter years, with the Grenadier Guards.

Pam and Roger were married in 1954 and had two daughters, Shirley and Sally. After leaving the Army, they settled in Sandhurst. Roger joined the workshops of G E Fulton & Son at Bisley Camp in Surrey, so was able to continue working in his beloved trade. 'Fultons' have a worldwide reputation as top class gunsmiths and, over the years, Roger built up a similar reputation within the firm and its clientele. He was with them for over 30 years, during which time he made many friends in the shooting world. He loved his work and was always willing to give advice and help to whoever may ask, be it a newcomer to the sport or an internationally recognised shot.

Roger was a proud family man. The recent death of his daughter Shirley was a terrible loss to them all. Our sincere sympathies are extended to Pam and the family on their loss. I shall certainly miss my phone-calls to 'his lordship'. Thanks for your friendship Rog.

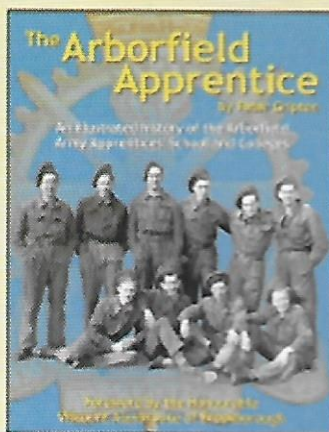
George Harold, 46A.

L/Cpl James Brandon, 28 Nov 1984-2 Sept 2009

L/Cpl Richard James Brandon was killed in Afghanistan whilst driving a *Samson* repair and recovery vehicle for 'A' Sqn Fitter Section of the Light Dragoons. Born in Kidderminster, James enlisted into the Army on 18 Dec 2001 and, after completing his training at the Army Technical Foundation College, he was posted to 215 Signal Sqn as a vehicle mechanic. After two years, he then served with 17 Port and Maritime Regt and was deployed on his first operational posting, to Iraq. He was promoted to L/Cpl in 2006 and completed his Class 1 qualification before being posted to the Light Dragoons LAD. (*Adapted from Craftsman magazine*)

THE ARBORFIELD APPRENTICE

An illustrated history of the Arborfield Army Apprentices' School and Colleges
By Peter Gripton (56B)



This important historical record written by ex-boy Peter Gripton was published in September 2003. With an introductory foreword by the Honourable Viscount Alanbrooke of Brookborough the book chronicles junior soldier tradesman training over a period of 60 years. Starting with the Army Technical School in 1939, and culminating with the Army Technical Foundation College, the book is an important archive for all those who served an Army Apprenticeship or served at Arborfield. The book is published in hard-back form and contains over 500 pages with more than 200 photographs. Peter Gripton has done a great service to all Arborfield apprentices and staff members in writing the history and he certainly deserves the accolades of the many old boys who will welcome this rendering of their story. His light and readable style gives all the appearance that he enjoyed writing this history. But, bearing in mind the dictum 'that which is written without pain will be read without pleasure' - there is ample evidence that Peter took great pains to ensure that his readers will enjoy his book. Many of his readers will have actually made the history that he has so faithfully recorded. The author has been punctilious in awarding an equal

balance to each period of time. The Army Apprentice system has been an outstanding success from its foundation. It is excellent that this chapter of a great tradition has now been recorded for posterity.

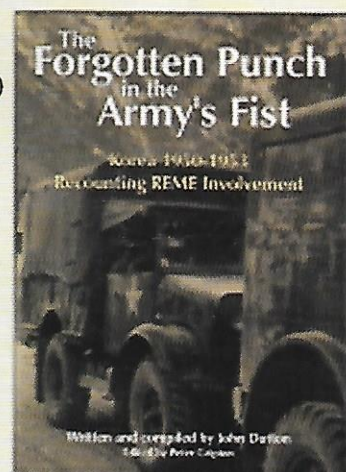
SUPPLEMENT - THE FINAL CHAPTER

A 'Final Chapter' has been written as a supplement to 'The Arborfield Apprentice' that covers the period of time encompassing the last few years of the Army Apprentice Training at Arborfield. This supplement is available free of charge to those who have already purchased the book, but we would ask for a small donation of, say, £2 or £3 to cover part of the production and postage costs.

THE FORGOTTEN PUNCH IN THE ARMY'S FIST

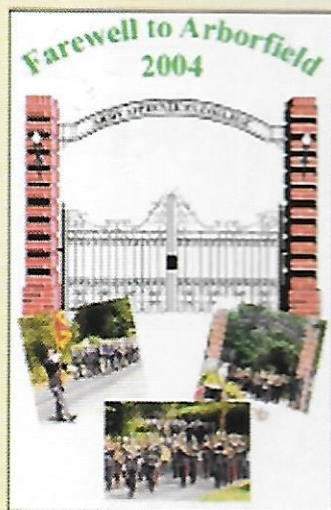
Written and compiled by John Dutton (43A) and edited by Peter Gripton (56B)

The story of the war in Korea and of the part played by the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, REME, from 1950 to 1953 as told by various individuals of that Corps, makes fascinating reading. The support and devotion to their colleagues is most apparent, but typical of the British soldier, these experiences are balanced with a sense of sympathy for the unfortunate Korean population caught up in the conflict, and it wouldn't be a true story of the British soldier without its sprinkling of 'squaddie' humour. John Dutton has provided an excellent compilation of personal accounts in this comprehensive story of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers at war, where the positioning of Light Aid Detachments and Field Workshops was just as important to senior commanders in their tactical planning as was the medical back-up of a Regimental Aid Post or a Field Ambulance.



Both of these books are available from the REME Museum Association Shop at Arborfield. Telephone: 0118 976 3223.

'The Arborfield Apprentice' is available for just £18.50 + £7.70 p&p whilst 'The Forgotten Punch in the Army's Fist' is £12.50 + £3.00 p&p. Cheques should be made payable to 'REME Corps Account No 2' and credit cards can be accepted for telephone orders.



FAREWELL TO ARBORFIELD 2004 VIDEO

Narrated by John Smithson

This video is a comprehensive record on film of the 2004 AOBA Reunion held at Arborfield in June 2004. It covers the Reunion from the Saturday morning to the Sunday church service. It does great justice to the last Reunion to be held on the Rowcroft Barracks site, with most of those who attended being recorded on film.

The film also includes a clip of the final Passing Out Parade on the 12th August 2004. To top and tail the movie, two black and white historic movie-tone clips of the early days of the Army Apprentices School are also included. The movie is available as a DVD or VHS video tape and can only be obtained from the Association Shop at the REME Museum of Technology in Arborfield. The cost of the DVD is £14.00 and the VHS tape is just £10.00. Please telephone the shop on 0118 976 3223 to enquire about postage charges and to place an order.

ASSOCIATION TIES

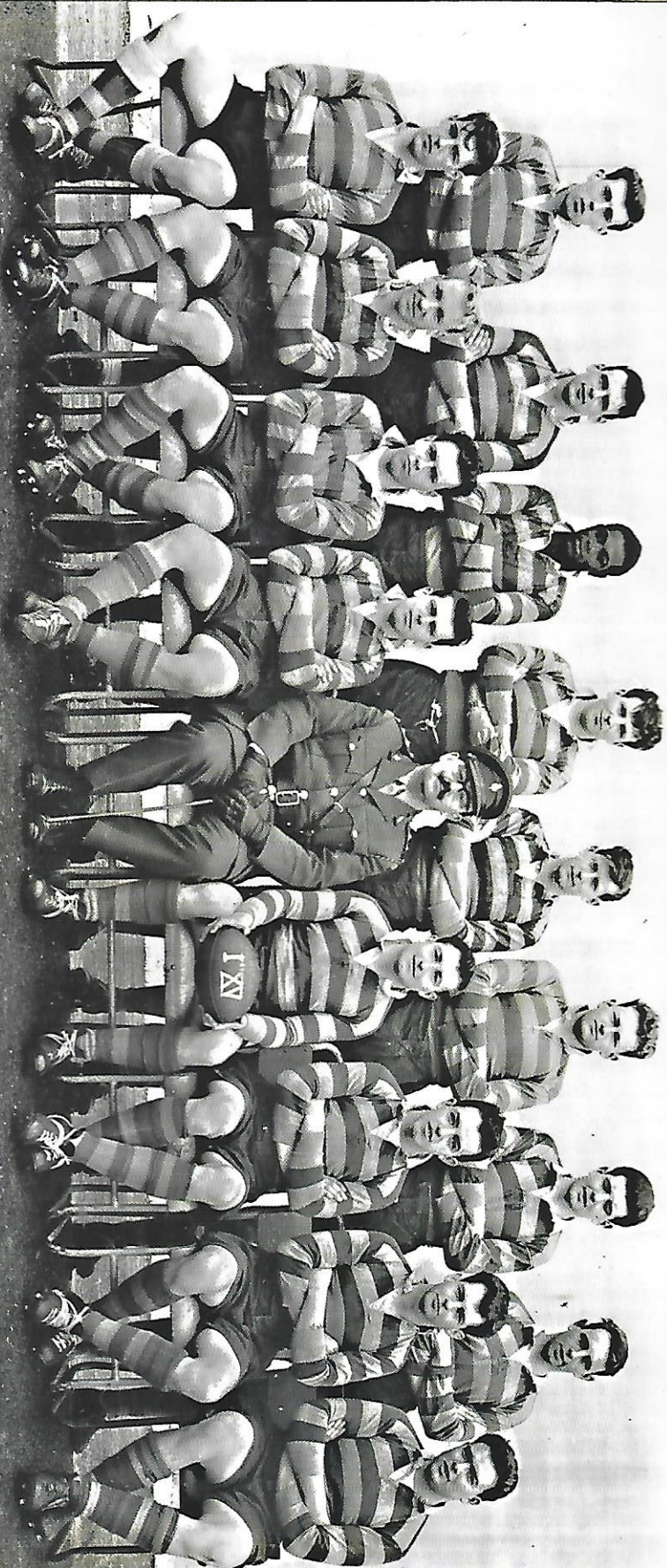
Available in the four company colours, these attractive neck ties cost just £7.50 each plus £1.00 p&p.



LAPEL BADGE

Finally we have an attractive enamelled badge at £3.00 plus £1.00 p&p from either the Museum Shop or the AOBA office.





Reader & Ward

ARMY APPRENTICES' SCHOOL, ARBORFIELD, RUGBY XV, 1961-62

A/T Cpl. Owen, A. C.,

A/T L/Cpl. Cameron, C. R. J.,

A/T L/Cpl. Browne, M. A.,

A/T Lloyd, D.,

A/T Warren, C. M. G., A/T Josselyn, J. D.,

A/T Cpl. Owen, A. C.,

A/T L/Cpl. Cameron, C. R. J.,

A/T L/Cpl. Browne, M. A.,

A/T Lloyd, D.,

A/T Warren, C. M. G., A/T Josselyn, J. D.,
A/T Ainslie, J., A/T/CSM. Barszczak, P. J.

A/T Hamilton, I. J. D.,

A/T Cpl. Chapman, R.,

A/T Wombwell, R. J., A/T Neale, K. F.,

Captain R. L. Hurley, R.A.E.C., A

T L/Cpl. Foster, A. H.,

A/T L/Cpl. McPherson, D. M. M., A/T L/Cpl. Twynning, A. V., A/T Shorthose, R. J.