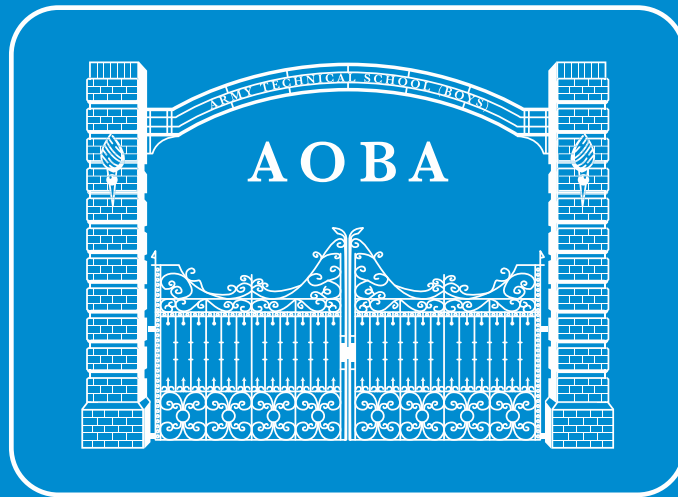


**May
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**Issue
64**

Arborfield Apprentice's Magazine



O B A N

Arborfield Old Boys Association

www.arborfieldoldboys.co.uk

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AOBA Chairman's Report



I've been spending a fair amount of time in the car lately, commuting to and from Lyneham on a daily basis to finish off the various elements of the move. Where does the time go? I remember back in 2011 being posted into

RHQ REME as the lead project officer for the closure of Arborfield and Bordon and the move to Lyneham. Back then, like many I had my doubts as to if it would ever actually happen, but as time progressed the project gained momentum and here we 5 years later and the job is done. REME training is now fully operational as is the RHQ, Church and the messes. The museum will be opening later in the year although the committee will get a sneak preview during our meeting in April. When it opens, it will be a super venue and well worth a visit.

Anyway, back to my commuting tale. I was listening to the radio and an article on apprenticeships caught my ear. As we all do, I reflected upon my own experience and realised just how lucky I was to receive such a long and detailed grounding in my chosen trade, not to mention the military indoctrination that we all went through. It seems employers are realising the benefits of putting youngsters through a detailed apprenticeship to give them the knowledge they need to excel in their chosen field. Those apprentices will continue with the company for some time and will undoubtedly do well.

Employers are investing for the future, just like the Army did in us all those years ago. Funny how things go in cycles, perhaps the decline in apprenticeship numbers we all saw in the 80s and 90s will be reversed, but I doubt they will ever reach those levels that we witnessed.

On a more serious note, I must reiterate my plea for volunteers for the committee. Since my plea in the last magazine, things have been very quiet. Our Honorary Secretary, David Schofield, is standing down after the reunion in July and we, your association, will need a volunteer to keep things going and take things forward. Other long standing committee members have also given notice, so we really are going through a 'changing of the guard' moment. The association will not run itself and if we want to keep this excellent organisation going we will need a few volunteers. If you feel you have something to offer, please step forward; simply get in contact via the AOBA website. Thanks

Finally, a look forward to the reunion where the 66ers' will be celebrating their 50th. You will have noticed a few minor changes to the day, due in part to an effort to reduce costs. The NMA is a lovely setting and we enjoy it, but it does come at a cost. I have no doubt the reunion will be a huge success and I for one am looking forward to it. Keep your fingers crossed for decent summer weather though!

Mike Tizard 76B

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 photo/images in TIFF or high JPEG formats are preferred. Photographs or diagrams must be high resolution if they are to look acceptable - aim for something at least 100kb in size.

Send article and photographs separately, please do not embed photographs within the text.

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 an annual subscription of £15.00. Application forms are available by post from the Honorary Secretary, and on the website www.arborfieldoldboys.co.uk

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Committee Members Reports



Honorary Secretary's Report

The numbers for this year's reunion are increasing as I write, with well over 100 already booked in. Like most events we always get a rush towards the end of the booking time frame,

and so I am confident plenty of letters will drop on my mat over the next three weeks or so!

I'm looking forward greatly to the reunion, as I know we all are. For me it will be the last I personally will organise and so I look forward to meeting up with everyone, especially my good friends in the 66ers who have gone to outstanding ends to encourage their year to attend. Should be great fun, and together with the 66ers we are lining up some great entertainment.

This year will also see the very first Army Apprentices Pipe and Drums lead the parade at the NMA. Yes that's correct Alex Burt 62A has generated a load of interest – mainly via our Face Book Group – from Apprentices who played in the Arborfield Pipe and Drums during their time to get together and form our very own Pipe and Drums – an outstanding achievement which I know you will want to join me in thanking Alex for all the very hard work he has put into this. During the

weekend we will also get the chance to enjoy their renditions as I understand they are going to play for us in the hotel at various times. Wonderful – can't wait!

This is my very last report in OBAN as your Honorary Secretary, and I must say it has been an honour and a privilege to have been in this role and have enjoyed the continued support and good will of all the AOBA membership. So I thank everyone for their support over the years.

I know our Chairman Mike Tizard 76B2 is seeking volunteers to take over from me following the 2016 AGM, but I understand no one has approached him yet. It's only because of volunteers we are able to continue going from strength to strength.

We have reached the time in the association for the 70s lads to step up and carry on the good work all the lads from previous decades have done since the Association was formed in August 1948....

..... So come on 70s lads.... Join Mike Tizard 76B2 and Mark Jobes 77C who have already stood up in making sure the AOBA continues to remain sustainable.

God bless

David Schofield 65A



Honorary Recruiting Sergeant's Report

I'm pleased to be able to report that recruiting continues to be healthy, with, at the time of writing, forty

six new members joining since the last reunion, half of these being from the seventies, eighties and nineties, which is very nice to see so many youngsters (!) joining. The majority of the remainder are from the sixties with three from the fifties and one from 1939C! So welcome to all our new members and hopefully you will be at the reunion.

I'm continuing to recruit through social media, Facebook and Forces Reunited, which both seem good sources for finding our 'lost boys'. I've also

produced a new leaflet that is simpler and cheaper than the previous one, and in order to publicise the AOBA they will be distributed to all the Army museums and RBL branches in the UK.

My next task is to search for the boys of '67 whose 50th is next year, at the moment I'm ploughing through their intake records and, using the internet, trying to match their names to their home towns in the hope they will have settled there after leaving the Army.

Bob Castell 64A

Front and Back Pages: From the ashes a Phoenix arises. The new buildings being erected on the site of the old Parade Square.



Honorary OBAN Editor's Report

Gentlemen, I must start with a very big thank you to all of those people who have responded to my plea for articles for the OBAN. I have not been inundated with articles, but I now have a really good choice for the next few issues.

Now you are all patting yourselves on the back. Do not forget to keep it up, the OBAN Editor constantly needs new articles, to maintain the level of quality you are use to.

Now for the bad news, very soon I am going to have pack in being the OBAN Editor. At the end of January I was 'blue lighted' into my local A&E, with one of the ambulance men having 'kittens' because of my low blood pressure. I am at present applying to move to 'warden controlled' accommodation as a precaution. I am having problems concentrating on anything due to the constantly changing pain levels I am suffering.

The job of OBAN Editor is really interesting, in that you get to learn a lot about peoples lives both during and after Arborfield. You do not have to be an expert at desktop publishing, as the programme I use highlights most of the mistakes you make. I will be more than happy to help who ever takes over. If the same printing and distribution companies are still used, I would be more than happy to continue to liaise for the association.

Take care gents,

Ray Stevens 64C



Honorary Registrar's Report

Since the last OBAN we have had the following new members.

- Scrivener K R 77B
- Collier D N 66B
- Goodison G 75C
- Waters P 75C
- Bevan P J 84B
- Cane N E 76C
- Flett T 73C
- Kirkaldy K P 78A
- Ketteringham J 66A
- Camilleri A R 76A
- Green I J 76A
- Kells W J 65C

- Bartholomew R 58A
- Cain K 76C
- Eston P J 66A
- Collings M J 84C
- McClafferty R 68C
- Knowles P 65A
- Smith D C 69B
- Webster K A G 77C
- Jobes MH 77C
- Saunders W 65B
- Stevenson D A 68B

It is my intention to retire from my post as Registrar after the 2017 reunion. It is a worthwhile job and involves very little work. Hopefully someone will volunteer to take my place by then.

Alec Powell 64C



Honorary Webmaster's Report

The creation of a new style website from an existing version is always a challenge particularly when there is so much excellent and valuable content to transfer over.

I hope that the transition has been relatively smooth for our members and that we are moving in the right direction.

The photo section of the new website was the most difficult to transfer and I hope that the membership can continue to provide images of our history to be included in this archive.

If any member has images that they wish to share with us then please contact me via the website form and I will be in touch to discuss obtaining and publishing your images. This is a very important area of the site. It is great to have articles describing "How it was in our day" by past apprentices but to see the images along with words is even better.

Just to give a few figures (not too many!) relating to the current use of the site:

- The main page has been visited 23,689 times since the site was launched
- The reunions section has been viewed by 2508 visitors
- The Roll of Honour section been viewed by 2145 visitors. The History section viewed by 1768 visitors

- The Apprentice Tradesmen awards viewed by 1573 visitors

If we look at the document download section – figures as follows:

- OBAN Magazine Issue 63 – 16 Downloads (other issues – 60 downloads)
- 2016 Reunion invitation – 475 downloads
- 2016 Reunion overseas payment – 138 downloads
- AOBA Application form – 312 downloads
- AOBA Reactivation form – 160 downloads

These are just basic figures for the most popular sections and a more comprehensive breakdown will be made in my report to the AGM in July.)

The document centre is very popular and an easy way to get forms for functions/joining/renewal etc very easy to do. The OBAN Magazine is also available on-line to members only. As can be seen by the figures not many are being downloaded from the site. Please remember that in order to download the OBAN you need to have a login to the website. This is generated by me and emailed to you once requested.

Overall I am happy with the progression so far and thank everyone for their contribution to this project and the continuing support being received.

Mark Jobes



Honorary Treasurer's Report

As most of you are aware HMRC credited our account with £5194.06 in Nov 2015 for the years 2013/14 and I also received £2550.61 in Feb 2016 for the year 2015. Most of 2016 claim is setup, only needing to adjust the totals for joiners, leavers, cash & paypal payers as they appear till the end of the year ready to put in the claim in Jan 2017.

The audit of 2015 accounts has been carried out, and I will distribute copies at the meeting

Laurie Blakley 61B

Rhymes of our Tymes

BRAVO COMPANY

If you've been to the pictures, I'll bet you've all seen

"The Red Badge of Courage" up on the big screen.

Or "The Big Red One", though it's not generally known

That the colour selected was decided upon
Because of the fame of a great Company
At Arborfield Boys School - Yes - Company "B"!

The red flash denoted the membership of
A chosen elite, elevated above
The mere ranks of squaddies not privileged to be
Chosen to reside in this aristocracy.
It was their misfortune to dwell in the shade
Of the best bunch of soldiers ever seen on parade.

Yes, I know that there'll be those who wouldn't agree
And it's really quite reasonable, as some jealousy
Is bound to occur among those who were sent
To average Companies, and therefore hell bent
On venting frustration because they were not chosen,
And consequently complained, ten to the dozen.

But 'B' Company lads understand, and are sad
That some who can't make the grade, really get mad
And hot under the collar, proclaiming their loss,
(Though it's true to say that they just don't give a toss!)
So never mind chaps, it's just one of life's jests,
In the presence of Class, there must be a second best !

COMPANY COLOURS

Blue denotes the colour of misery, it's said,
And it's understandable, they wish that it was RED.
Not for them the privilege of being the elite,
No wonder they get so depressed, they know they can't compete!

Now, Green, it stands for envy, and they have every right
To wish that they could wear the RED that

makes them so uptight.

But jealousy is negative, and they should know their place,
When in the company of those who show such style and grace.

Yellow, well, what can be said? Jaundice springs to mind,
To have to wear that awful colour really is unkind.

It's obvious, that if wearing RED, then they would be quite chuffed,
But when they try to qualify, they're all completely stuffed!

And what about the little Jeeps, as they anticipate
What colour will they have to wear, what will be their fate?
Condemned to wear the Yellow, Green, or Blue, for three long years?
They hope and pray that RED will be the colour that appears.

It's not for naught that to the REDS, the admiration flows,
Those wearing it are well aware of privilege it bestows,
For they are marked as Gentlemen, above the common herd,
Who view the rest - the second best - with pity, unreserved.

There is no triumph, wearing RED, for that's immodesty,
To show the rest benign regret, that's how it has to be,
It does not do to chortle and crow o'er all the rest,
It's there, a natural fact of life, the REDS are just the BEST!!

I'm not leaving a forwarding address!

What makes you think the editor was in 'B' Company?

Terry O'Sullivan - Still Fighting Part 3.

Terry O'Sullivan served in the Corps from 1962 to 1974. He joined the Army Apprentice School on Course 62C and qualified as a Vehicle Mechanic. He comes from a family of fighters. His father and uncles were all professional boxers and his cousin is Snooker star Ronnie O'Sullivan. Originally, Terry was involved in Boxing and Rugby but took up Karate a little later. He is now 66 and lives in Amesbury in Wiltshire. He has been practising Shotokan Karate on and off for over 30 years. He won the Gold Medal(Masters Kumite Fighting 65+)and a silver medal in the Master Team Kata, at the Shotokan(SKIF) Karate World Championships in the Olympic Stadium in Australia 2012.

Once back in Catterick, I settled in to a quiet life, I found I was good at tuning sports cars and also joined the Vehicle Inspection team, calling into different units inspecting their vehicles. I ended up inspecting the motorbikes as well and was asked if I could ride one, which I could, but wasn't asked if I had a licence ... , not one of my better decisions, I could have had a motorbike licence now.

I had passed my First Class VM Course while at 95 Commando and was thinking of becoming a 'tiffy'. I played squash a lot and got as far as the Quarter Finals in the REME Squash Championships in 1973 and from 1972 to 1974 I captained a successful 15 Field Workshop Rugby team. Looking at the old team photograph, we were a motley crew, we did ok though.

However, my wife wanted me out of the Army, so in 1974 I did my pre-release resettlement course at York Trailer's in Northallerton near Yorks. During my training a vacancy came up in Research and Development, I applied and got the job but the 'Mrs' didn't want to live in Northallerton, so I ended up joining North Humberside Motors in her village (North Cave), working on cars initially then trucks later on for more money. I didn't stay there long, the money was rubbish and we couldn't get a mortgage, so I moved to Smith and Nephew Plastics factory in Goole, on the shop floor doing a three shifts system and eventually was able to get a mortgage.

In the meantime I applied for a couple of other jobs and actually got both. The first was with BOC (British Oxygen Company) in Goole as 2IC in the truck workshop. I had been there for nine months when the chance came for a position with Crown Agents. I went for the interview in London; they were really after 'A' vehicle mechanics to work on Chieftain tanks in Tehran, but even though I was 'B' mech and had only worked on Saracens, 430's etc, I got the job. They said I would pick it up once I was there ... no pressure.

Just before going to Tehran, I met up with my Dad and brothers; Pete was fighting semi-pro at the time at Vic Andretti's club at Highgate in London, during the meeting my Dad asked why I hadn't turned pro and when I mentioned our little spar in 1964 and that I didn't think I was good enough ... he couldn't remember the occasion!!.

My brother John was unable to compete, even though he trained and sparred as well as any of them, if not better. I think he was training at Crystal Palace when his trainer tried to prove a point to John that he couldn't compete and put him with a guy who was the area champion... John soundly beat him, the trainer was so upset he jumped in the ring and put the gloves on and proceeded to try and teach John a lesson, bad mistake. John cracked two of his ribs, then he left the club, never to train again.

I arrived in Tehran in January 1976, expecting hot weather and after a long flight I woke up at Tehran Airport ...it was snowing... no one had told me they had a real winter !!!

As it turned out, the L60 engine wasn't too bad .., the lads from Leyland were a good bunch plus loads of ex-REME guys. When I completed training I was put to work training Iranian soldiers to strip and assemble the L60 engine.

Our original housing wasn't too good, I caught the Tehran trots and lost nearly two stone in weight (went down to just over nine stone). After a few months, three of us, Charlie Cochran, Colin Sparks and myself moved into a villa, with the living accommodation upstairs and a huge area downstairs. It was Colin who saw the potential of the place and before long we had converted the downstairs into an expats club for our guys. We did really well, but Colin got bored with it after some months so I took over. I arranged for a couple to open a restaurant on one side for the weekends, they were going to do that in the UK once they returned so it worked well. .

During this time I had started haircutting again, including the ex-pat wives and kids, training a couple of times a week and doing the bar, we also used to provide cooked snacks like chicken and chips during the week. We had our own Savak (policeman) as a barman, although we weren't supposed to know who he was. Now my weight was down, I decided to keep it down, I was training on my own at the Villa/Club and had a punch bag in the downstairs hallway and used the bar area a couple of times a week. I was approached by one of the ex-pat wives to take keep-fit classes, this appealed to me so I started those on a regular basis. I had an old tape recorder, as I liked to train to music and after a couple of months I had 15 to 20 ex-pat wives training with me, I didn't charge, I just enjoyed the company!

On reflection, I can't believe I didn't recognise a money making potential of the business even when it gave me a kick !!! ...In my defence, I was trying to get money together to start my own steam cleaning business when I returned to the UK. This was before all these keep fit DVD's etc though.

I was playing rugby regularly for the Tehran first 15; we were a mixture of nationalities, Swiss, French, Italian and English and had some good matches. However, as scrum half I was getting murdered on line outs, our forwards were a bit weak and after most games my knees and elbows never had any skin left.

With the skiing facilities nearby, I learnt to ski...., we could ski from November to March in the mountains which were less than 90 minutes drive away. My first experience was a bit 'iffy', a so called mate put me on a set of ski's at the very top, showed me how to snowplough and gave me a shove ... luckily I am still here to tell the tale.

By the end of the season I became a fair skier, I even organised a coach to get us up to the slopes, at the time we were all driving up there and at the end of the day driving back .. knackered, however, it wasn't to be, we are all very, very, very lucky to still be here, I had organised for one of the Iranian Military civilian bus drivers to take and bring us back from the slopes, on our very first trip, on the return journey he drove like a lunatic, the mountain roads were very narrow and very icy, to be approached with caution, not long after we set off he lost control, skidded ,over corrected and as luck would have it we went into the side of the mountain and not off it !! You couldn't see the bottom ..

My mate Ken Hodges leapt out of his seat, removed the driver from his seat, and drove us back.. we didn't bother with the coach again .

Strange co-incidence was that when I left Iran I was supposed to be going back to Yorkshire but decided to get divorced and move to

Bournemouth, I ended up living next door but one to Ken Hodges, not knowing he was in the area as he was supposed to be going back to Manchester

One of my best mates in Tehran Peter (Monty) Makin although I haven't seen him since 2013, used to come to our club at the Villa, he was a brown belt in Judo. Monty had heard about a good Karate Club at the Sports Complex in Tehran. First chance we had we went down to take a look, it was a bit awkward as we were the only foreigners there and they appeared not to speak English. We were immediately interested, the higher grade students could move their feet as quick if not quicker than I could move my hands .. very impressive

We approached the Sensei (his name escapes me) signed up and started training, I found I still had good hand co-ordination through my boxing, but struggled with my feet and the different stances. My brain struggled with the Japanese/Iranian mix but Monty took to it like a duck to water, however he always had trouble with his hips and struggled with the round house kick(mawashi geri) and side thrust kick(yoka geri kekomi).

When it came to my first grading with Monty, he passed I didn't, I was gutted, but Monty was the better student on the day, the Sensei was a shrewd guy, I was relying too much on my hands but he also saw I was very determined. Have been told since that nobody fails their first grading, well I did !!!!!

Monty and I got the use of the gymnasium at the Iranian workshop in the military compound which was great, we trained every lunch time and bought the Sensei Nakayama training manuals. We trained three times a week at the Karate club and twice a week at our ex-pat club, it seemed in no time at all we were going for our green belts (6th Kyu), we both passed. We made our own 'geti' weighted shoes (trainers with angle iron strapped to them) for kick training.. About this time I met Gerry Bartche, an Electrical Contractor, he used to fight full contact professionally in the USA using Tang Soo do (Korean martial art). He in lived downtown Tehran and Monty and I regularly trained with him on the roof top of his building, but we lost touch in the early 80's. The last time I saw him was when he came down to Bournemouth in January 1979, we trained in the snow !!!

I was more into competition than Monty, so when they were getting a team together for their National Championships I was picked as reserve for our team. We arrived at this very huge inflated dome with hundreds of competitors; never seen so many at that time. We signed in and started getting warmed up when our Sensei approached me, the Tehran Academy Karate Team were one



short for their team and would I mind fighting for them, it took me all of half a second to agree.....I just wanted a scrap..

I was a green belt (6th Kyu) then and I fought five brown belts all 3rd Kyu and above, that day, we lost in the finals. I won three, drew one and lost one to a 1st Kyu, he was waiting confirmation of his Dan grade pass, so the Academy Sensei was well chuffed. My club were knocked out in the first round so instead of me watching them, it was the other way round. After that performance the Iranian guys from my club became friendlier towards me.

During this time I had been practising the double drop kick to the chest (tobi mae-geri) followed by a right reverse punch(gyaku zuki) to the chin on my own punch bag at the villa, however, when I tried it in the dojo with one of the brown belts I didn't go in with full commitment, he swept my legs and I hit the floor with my head, I was knocked out for about a minute. Later in the week whilst training with Gerry I tried a side thrust kick which he deflected and caught me with same kick at the base of the spine... knocked out again. I had never been knocked out whilst boxing and here I am knocked out twice in four days ... I seemed to have recovered, then during one of my training sessions at our villa/club I did a reverse kick (ushiro geri) and in those days, when the kick was executed, my head was inches off the floor and my kicking leg almost straight up !!! Anyway I did this technique and had a lightning pain from my heel to the back of my head ... and yes .. knocked out again ...

I decided it was time to find out what was happening and ended up having a brain scan and being sent back to the UK for further tests at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at Chatham (now closed !!). I continued to have bad headaches for nearly a year, when I went to a chiropractor about my lower back and discovered the top vertebra in my

neck was causing the problem, so eventually I got that put right, although it still gives me twinges when I start my neck exercises.

Before I was due to leave Tehran for the QE Hospital, it was becoming very unstable and by late 1978, there were many riots and demonstrations against the Shah. I packed most of my belongings, including my karate kit but left all my tools and my equipment. I thought I was going to return as I had been offered a second contract.,

After leaving the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, I returned to Yorkshire in mid '78, but moved to Bournemouth later in the year to start again.

In January 1979 I was offered another contract by Grown Agents, on six month basis, but as it didn't seem that stable in Tehran I declined the offer. As it turned out, those who accepted didn't go back to Tehran were paid for the full six months Ooops !

Instead I accepted a job locally at *Morey's DAF Trucks*, in Ringwood as a fitter.

At the same time I found a really good karate club in Wimborne near Bournemouth , run by Glenn Hall 6th Dan, with the Chief Instructor Sensei Kawasoe.

Karate and work was going well, I trained regularly with Glenn Hall and in September 1979 I graded for my 5th Kyu with Sensei Kawasoe and he stamped and accepted my previous gradings, which made me appreciate the instruction I had with Glenn and in Tehran. I did my next two gradings with Sensei Kawasoe and in July 1980 passed my 2nd Kyu examination.

I competed in the KUGB Nationals in 1980 at Crystal Palace, didn't do too well, in fact I was disqualified in the first round due to excessive contact. The guy I fought was coming in very hard so I decided to stop him in his tracks right away; in those days you could attack straight from the bow. As we bowed he took his eyes off me and looked at the floor, when he came out of his bow I was already in the air with a double drop kick (tobi mae-geri) and a right to the chin, but I didn't make enough contact with the fist and was disappointedly not given the point, we started again he got the half point, again on this last bow he looked at the floor. This time I made sure I made contact and after the double kick I hit him square on the nose, he went down. I was disqualified. .

The episode put me off competing and I didn't compete again until 1997.

I had also started my own steam cleaning business in May 1980 (*Steamobile*) and by the following year it was becoming quite busy and it was more difficult to make training. In those days, if I couldn't train at least four times a week and give 100% commitment I wouldn't train. Now I know it is best to train when you can.

I had also remarried in 1980 and had two more sons, Richard in 1985 and James in 1987, neither of the boy's have taken up boxing or martial arts, Rich for medical reasons and James was academic. Rich was born with Aperts Syndrome (bone fusion head, hands, feet), it was touch 'n' go in the early months, we were in and out of Great Ormond Street for nearly 4 years and follow ups at Odstock Hospital, Salisbury for another couple of years, he had a major head operation at six months (reshaping the forehead) and again when he was just over three, this time swapping front to back and metal plated. He also had hand operations to try and give him fingers. After 12 operations he does now have serviceable hands,(pincer action), just to add to it when he was about five he had Perthes (crumbling of the hip bones), so he ended up in a frame and wheelchair for a while. Then he had to have a hip replacement in 2011. However, he drives a car, passing his test first time at 17 and has never been out of work, sometimes having three jobs on at once .. a real fighter, I am very proud of him.

James did well at school and before going to University he had a gap year in Swaziland with the *Project Trust* teaching young kids English and Maths. He is a very good swimmer and came 3rd in their National Swimming championships and did a bungi jump in South Africa off the Bloukrans



Terry's son Richard driving the Bridal Car at Terry and Debs wedding.

Bridge, the highest commercial jump. When he returned, he enrolled at Swansea University and achieved First Degree honours in Maths, Science and Physics. He learnt to write and speak Japanese and had another year 'off' working in Japan, teaching English to lovely Japanese girls... his words. On return he did teacher training in Bristol and was teaching locally at a boys' school, year 7's., he is looking at different prospects at the moment but keeping his hand in with supply teaching which apparently pays better and less hassle !! I sometimes do a bit of sparring with James, he has a natural flair for it. Again very proud of James as well...

There will be a further episode of Terry' article in the next issue. Ed.

AOBA Benevolence Fund.

Please remember that the **Arborfield Old Boys' Association** maintains a **Benevolence Fund**, for the benefit of any Ex Apprentice or Staff Member who may or may not be a member of the association. If you know of anyone who is having problems, and you believe a contribution from the fund can be of any help or assistance,

please contact the Honorary Secretary at the earliest opportunity.

The fund also makes annual donations to the Chairman's Charities, as voted on at the AGM.

Memories of a boy Soldier from 1958 (Part 2)

By now I had settled into the Army routine and I heard about the rackets that went on. This is what "actually" happened. You would lend one cigarette out until the following pay day but then you were paid back with two. If the payback was missed it doubled to four the next week and so on. If you tried to beat this system – well you just couldn't. The same thing applied with money and you'd be surprised how rife this was. As a way of making some extra cash and offset the cost of the extra food I was buying I went into the business of loaning. I didn't smoke so never needed to borrow myself. I started very small with a few cigarettes which you could also sell and some money. I made a couple of pounds a week which subsidised the 10 shillings a week that I received from the Army. I found it strange that the same people came back time after time until one Apprentice Tradesman in a different company said he wanted £5 very urgently as he had to see his girlfriend at the weekend. It seemed no-one wanted to lend him any being wary that they wouldn't get it back. I said that if I loaned him the money, when would I get it back. Three weeks time he said, look I'll give you £25.00 when I draw my credits (he was on a mans pay). I agreed to loan him the £5 and take a gamble. Sure enough when we all drew out our credits to go on leave back came my £5 plus the other £20 which made my leave pay in a rather healthy state as I was still on a boy's pay of 10 shillings.

What I didn't know was that as soon as you reached 17½ years old you automatically went onto a mans pay of £7.50., as you could join the Army Apprentice School between the ages of 15 to 17½ you could have someone in your intake aged 17½ earning £7.10shillings a week and yourself only getting 10 shillings for the next 2½ years. Mind you – you could always clean a lazy mates kit and get paid for doing it.

One day, after two years of queuing for what I called "terrible food", we entered the cookhouse and there were Top Brass everywhere all standing behind the cookhouse counter with all this 'Food Glorious Food'. My eyes nearly popped out of my head. There were steaks, sausages, chops, bacon, roast, everything imaginable and help yourself service. We all took too much, of course and as we went to leave the table with still some food left on our plates the C.S.M. came over and said "SIT DOWN AND EAT IT LADDIES, YOU TOOK IT – SO EAT IT". That was a lesson we never forgot. I didn't feel like eating again for a few days.

Our New C.S.M. was very keen on Tug-of-War and was determined that 'C' Company would win the Championship and I was picked with 9 other men

for the team, the maximum allowed weight for the entire team was 110 stone. In fact I found it a very skilful sport, how to hold the rope, turn sideways, look at your coach who was behind you and then act on his command. He would shout "Take the strain, dig, hold, pull, give" and all this had to be done as one person.

Most of our training was done against a massive oak tree on the sports field. When it finally came to the competition we won pretty easily.



Another one of our duties was to learn Fire Drill. This was done outside the Guardroom with a little proud sergeant called Fred Silvers. No one ever got it right and he would throw down his beret and jump all over it, swearing and cursing us all, what a fiasco.

Around this time was when I was promoted to L/cpl and still we had our Saturday morning parades with the odd occasion of marching out of the camp and along the road with the band playing at full volume then returning to camp with the rest of the week-end off.

After being at the Apprentice School at Aborfield for two years I was now 17½ and on a man's pay of £7.10 shillings instead of 22 shillings (only ever receiving 10 shillings because of the payment for barrack room damages). What a difference that made, no more lending money and as I didn't smoke or drink I could start saving in a P.O.S.B. (Post Office Savings Bank). Life was lot better now especially as I was made up to a full corporal.

It was always drilled into us that we were soldiers first and tradesmen second and part of our regimental training was Assault Course, Rifle Drill and also learning how to act when gas was detected, mainly tear gas. On one particular occasion there were thirty of us lined up into a Squad and marched down to the open playing fields where we were taken to an Ammunition Hut and each given a gas mask.

We were shown how to put the masks on and breathe properly, all our masks were checked by a Permanent Staff Sgt and as soon as he was satisfied the door of the ammunition hut was opened and in we marched. We were told prior to going in that we had to stand with our back against the wall and stay in there for several minutes. It was pitch black inside with no windows or lights on. All I could see were three very dim burning lights on the floor. I'm saying to myself, this is easy, I could breathe OK, when are they going to unlock the door and let us out. No chance of that – my mask was ripped off my face and thrown away, I began to choke and my eyes were streaming, I thought this is it. I tried to get out of the door but it was locked so I put my face next to the door crack to try and get some air. Waste of time, eventually the door was opened and out we all came rolling around on the grass choking.

Get up shouted the Sgt. You're supposed to run around the field to get the gas out of your lungs. I'm sure the idiots had put too much gas in there or kept us in there too long. It must have taken us nearly ½ hour before we could line up and march back to our Barracks. You have to do that twice before you get your 3rd Class Military Training Certificate. No bloody way I'll do that again I said to myself.

The following week the Squad was marched back to the Gas Chamber for another dose of tear gas. I thought I'd rather go to Jail first, so I got on the end of the Squad and as they turned the last corner of the Barracks I jumped out of line and hid there, sod that! I thought, luckily no one missed me or let on I was missing so I had now got my Military Training Class 3 certificate.

It was a rule of the Army Camp that no motorcycles were allowed to be owned by apprentices because two lads had been killed after hitting a wooden telegraph pole close to the camp. We had to learn how to ride a motorcycle eventually and

pass our driving test on a 3-ton truck before becoming a Vehicle Mechanic.

Several senior apprentice tradesmen had motorcycles hidden in sheds of houses at the back of the camp. As we were now allowed to have the weekend off after Saturday morning parade I thought I would buy myself a motorcycle. I was fed up with hitchhiking especially after the last lorry that stopped for me. Where are you going? he asked, East Acton, London I said. Jump in I'm going right past there. Once I got inside the smell was horrible, it was a pig Lorry destined for Wall's Factory at Acton. I was so glad when that journey was over but the smell lingered on my uniform for several days.

The next day I went off to Whitby's Motorcycle shop in Acton and got all the forms to buy a motorcycle on H.P. My older sister forged my Mum's signature of consent/guarantor so off I went to get my bike. I had chosen a Triumph 650cc Tiger 110, brand new at £350.00.



I asked the salesman how to start it and ride it. Have you ridden a motorcycle before he asked, No I said but I did have a provisional licence. He couldn't believe it and said to go and get a friend to ride it home. Back I came later with my friend who took one look and said "I

can't ride that, it's too big, I've only got a 125cc Francis Barnett". I persuaded him to ride it home in first gear with me on the back.

The next day his Dad came and showed me how to ride my bike. As there were hardly any cars on the road it was pretty safe to practice. I was on leave at the time and had all day to ride my bike. After five days of practice I rode my bike from London to Anglesey in North Wales to visit one of my Army mates (after taking my L plates off).

When my leave was finished I rode my bike back to camp and put it in a shed at the back of the camp with the house owner's permission and climbed over the back gate at the camp very early in the morning when no-one was about. I now had my own transport even though this was against Army Regulations. I had already failed my first driving test at the Apprentice School trying to drive a 3-ton truck with a crash gearbox where you had to double-de-clutch to select the gears. My truck driving instructor who was a civilian asked me if I had a car or motorcycle, No I said, he replied Only your road sense and awareness has improved since your last leave. Not long after that I passed my driving test.

Four of my mates had also bought motorcycles and kept them outside of the camp and once a month we would all ride down to Hammersmith Palais where Acker Bilk and Kenny Ball were playing at The Jazz Band Ball every first Monday of the month. This was 1960 now and it was great dancing to traditional jazz with each band playing in turn and appearing on a turnstile stage so one would be going off still playing while the other was playing coming on, they were great days with the best jazz musicians in the business playing for us kids.

I used to stay overnight at home while the rest went back to camp. One night Ginger Nobles who had a Triumph 500cc rode back and went straight across a roundabout and ended up in a flower bed wrecking his bike. The council even charged him for damaging the rose bed. Another time I was overtaking a car when the driver all of a sudden decided to turn right with no signals and I ended up crashing my motorcycle into the side of it and injuring my right leg. I couldn't get back to camp for a few days so I asked my Mum to let the camp know I had an accident while being a pillion passenger on the back of my cousins scooter. I didn't want to be thrown out of the Army. On my return to camp my C.S.M. took me to one side and said to me "You have a motorcycle, am I right", without even a blink I replied No Sir.

Next term would be my last and I was now made up to a Sergeant with my own bunk and in charge of a room full of young lads. I noticed one of the A/Apprentice Tradesmen in my room was above standard at cleaning his kit so I told him that I was making him my Batman and said "You will only clean my kit and no other person, OK", Yes Sgt.

I will also give you £5.00 at the end of term. When I gave it to him his eyes lit up, I knew the feeling of going on leave skint.



1960 A/T Senior NCO's

The hardest part of being a Sergeant was stopping all my mates from my own intake bullying and coming into my room to get their kit cleaned. They couldn't believe I would stop them. After catching four of them missing parade I put them all in front of the O.C on a charge. The word went out that I meant business and finally we were left alone.

On the last passing out parade before mine we were all lined up on the Square with the band playing when the R.S.M. came marching on looking strangely at all of us wondering why most of us had smiles on our faces and then he turned around to face the flag pole where he saw a pair of ladies undies had been hoisted up fluttering in the breeze. He went absolutely berserk, Get them things down he was screaming. I don't suppose he ever saw the funny side of this.

Just before my own passing out parade we had finished all our rifle drill training with the 303 and then within the course of a week we were told the Army had changed to the S.L.R. (Self Loading Rifle) which was carried in a different way. Now it was time for my passing out parade where my mother was invited to watch.

Luckily for me as National Service was coming to an end I had a choice whether to be posted to the Far East or Germany. After talking to a permanent Staff N.C.O. he advised me to opt for the Far East. I finally left England in February 1961 on a troop ship called The Nevasa where I served three years in Singapore, Malaya and Borneo with the Gurkha's in 31 Company GASC.



1960 On Parade with the 303 Rifle.

The Army Apprentice Sergeants who started with my intake were automatically given a L/Cpl stripe to start in the Regular Army. Looking back on those three years as an Apprentice at Arborfield, although it was pretty tough for a youngster I would still have done it all again.

This is the second and final part of Patrick's story. Which is beautifully enhanced by the wonderful photographs that are included. Thank you Ed.

Patrick Gutteridge 58A

He was a widower and she a widow. They had known each other for a number of years being high school classmates and having attended class reunions in the past without fail. This 60th anniversary of their class, the widower and the widow made a foursome with two other singles.

They had a wonderful evening, their spirits high. The widower throwing admiring glances across the table. The widow smiling coyly back at him.

Finally, he picked up courage to ask her, "Will you marry me?"

After about six seconds of careful consideration, she answered,

"Yes,... yes I will!"

The evening ended on a happy note for the widower. But the next morning he was troubled.

Did she say "Yes" or did she say "No?"

He couldn't remember. Try as he would, he just could not recall. He went over the conversation of the previous evening, but his mind was blank. He remembered asking the question but for the life of him could not recall her response. With fear and trepidation he picked up the phone and called her.

First, he explained that he couldn't remember as well as he used to. Then he reviewed the past evening.

As he gained a little more courage he then inquired of her. "When I asked if you would marry me, did you say "Yes" or did you say "No?" "Why you silly man, I said 'Yes. Yes I will.' And I meant it with all my heart."

The widower was delighted. He felt his heart skip a beat. Then she continued: "And I am so glad you called because I couldn't remember who asked me!"

A World Cruise to Arborfield.

This was to become the unintended journey being unlike the Caribbean cruises of today it would take four ships to complete during W.W.2 . It began from Scotland in 1939 where my Father was Master Gunner R.A, defense of the Forth Bridge areas. Later at a dockside somewhere we were given a guided tour on board the Queen Mary, half painted down one side in battle ship grey and with all its furniture being taken ashore. Ours was the less prestigious ship P&O. S.S. Rampura, bound for the far east. I was given a gas mask, mustard gas cape and plastic goggles which disappeared for ever. The Atlantic and Mediterranean was non stop until Port Said, exciting to me only because of the amount of ropes with attached baskets thrown on board by the locals making a sale as we moved towards the Suez Canal .

At Bombay, we became day tourists but at Ceylon only troops went ashore.

Strait settlements. Disembarking at Singapore, Kepple harbour, we took the short trip from Jardine steps across the water to our new home for nearly the next two years on the small Island of Pulau



Brani [Brave island]

Our bungalow was on the rise behind all gun fortifications which faced out to sea protecting the harbour .When ever these guns fired our window shutters were kept open for fear of being blown off. The Officers and Sgt's Mess was at the lower end together with a number of small traders and an off shore Chinese family kampong housing the tin smelting plant workers .

Today this whole island is extended as a container area.

I had great freedom to explore the island and rocks until the tide came in when swimming was confined to within the shark Pagga .

There, after once falling from the launch into the harbour ,I would be given swimming lessons until the raids began.

Singapore temperature takes some getting used to, so the afternoons meant that I was ordered to rest while hating the ceiling fan and net .

The periodic local vaccinations or injection seemed to go on for ever.

The British and Indian troops had tented camps at the fort which had deep monsoon drains in the rear although our water supply came from Singapore. Travel between islands was by official launch or by Chinese or Malay Sampan at ten or twenty cents a trip, sometimes being rowed in great panic across the harbour to avoid incoming shipping .

School up to a certain age ,was on the larger island of Pulau Blakang Mati, or 'Island of the living dead". So called because of the burial grounds .



Its original name now changed to Sentosa I suspect for the tourism.This larger island also had more fortifications and a better sandy beaches.

Singapore's sky line seemed very low level then. A place of unusual markets full of people,cars and rickshaws all rushing to somewhere.

Visits to Change Alley and its snake charmers then Raffles for a meal were best remembered.

Arh Dia, our Chinese Armah ,was quite young and I was told that in her later years she became their union leader. Our gardener moved according to the temperature but was good at climbing the coconut palm.

The raids . It was night time on the 8th. December 1941 when the raids began. From our garden ,the sound and lights seemed as though a large Chinese firework display had started all over Singapore, I didn't understand that we were at war with Japan ! I watched the explosive flashes across the harbour where Singapore was still lit up as normal although I heard bombers above.

The giant glow to the west meant that the large fuel tanks had been hit and these would burn black pillars of smoke guiding more bombers to the island on the future day raids. We sat silent with Arh Dia, she dressed in black, holding her worldly goods while muttering a string Chinese words all joined together. The next day she returned to her family in Singapore.

The raid ended and Singapore lights remained on together with the glow of fires. The future raids, usually twice a day began with half hour siren warnings from Penang. The bombers some times passed over us unchallenged and the bungalow was our only shelter.

Soon school ceased and other nationals were removed from the islands . My friends had left by ships to somewhere and my father was away .

Weeks later he returned telling my mother to go to Singapore to collect all documents from rooms beneath the Bank which was full of people sheltering from the raids. Returning to the dockside ,I saw lorries off loading live turtles and many other dead animals, all to be thrown into the harbour.

Mother thought that they were clearing the Zoo because of the bombing.

We were half way back by sampan when the Sirens sounded followed by the instant raid as we no longer had any warning from the north. Between these raids I watched the Ships arriving with the troops crowded on their decks and I heard some big guns firing from somewhere .

My mother packed the one trunk allowed and we waited on the island.

The escape .On the ,21st. January1942, my father took us to the crowded dockside where over three hundred mothers and children ,coming from all parts of the Colony, were boarding the ship " S.S. Narkunda."

We waved down to my Father and watched him walk away.

Singapore was invaded on the 8th of February and surrendered on the 15th.

On board ship we were left to ourselves to find somewhere to sleep by

climbing over groups of families ,all claiming any free space,

I ended up on a shelf near a port hole with a life jacket as a pillow when the engines began to shudder and the ship turned while in harbour before the eastern submarine net cable when I heard the sirens again. I remember the smell of so many sea sick families when out in the open sea. Below decks we wondered where we were going when soon the only gun on the ship opened fire and we heard that it was shooting at floating sea mines close to the harbour. Other ships trying to get to South Africa had been sunk but the Narkunda was destined to arrive safely to Freemantle, Western Australia,where because of a disease outbreak on board all families went ashore and most of us were transferred to the Dutch ship S.S .Oranje ,now under the command of the Australian Navy . Conditions were much better although we slept with some bedding on long fixed tables in the dining area .

Australia ,our new home 1942.

Sailing on across the Great Australian Bight to St. Vincent gulf we were soon to arrive at Port Adelaide, South Australia ,where the well

organized Australian services placed us at an old hotel within the City .



Others would sail on to Sydney where the S.S. Oranje would become a hospital ship. Two weeks later we left this peaceful place and dispersed to other towns well inland to the north.

Our small group was sent by steam train north over the plains to the town called Balaklava where the local families took us in until we could find some places of our own. It was an end of the line turn table station where the people and town cop watched our arrival . The population was composed of mainly second and third generation central Europeans .

This place could be hot and dry but cold at night. For a time the town garage owner gave us a room until we moved into an empty bakers shop having no electricity and with cellar full of paper and rats. The rat traps had to be nailed to the floor or take off with the large cellar rats attached.

When the British Government allowance came we rented a small bungalow which had a bath shed, a garden Dunn'e and some pretty good grape vines. The town was always quiet because most of its young men were away .

The only tarmac was on the main street. Although well established, it had the appearance of being a settlement in the middle of nowhere and far removed from life in Adelaide.

All other roads out were hard dirt track and the school was outside of town. The local means of travel was mainly by horse and buggy, cart or bicycle.

The stock yards and slaughter houses for cattle and sheep were near the rail head. The Doctors car had special wheel attachments so that it could be jacked up on to the rail line for places way out. The ice wagon would bring fresh fish up from Port Wakefield on Fridays.

The dried up river Wakefield only surfaced to disappear again at a place called the Rocks, so wind pumps brought the water from below ground.

These were Drought years and the sight of a dark cloud in a clear sky could mean that bush fire ash was on the move.

Any sudden rain went from the roof to our tank below ground to be worked by hand pump in the yard.

School discipline was strict where each teacher would teach all subjects. At times all the school classes would turn out, boys to burn grass areas against the bush fire problem and snakes and girls would follow with wet sacks to dampen down, giving us all an excuse to go home looking scruffy.

When Darwin was bombed, two zigzag slit trenches were dug in the school area. The only entertainments were cattle shows, local stage shows and a film railed up from Adelaide on Saturdays.

The surrounding country had more rabbits than people so with the butcher's son and I would go out setting Gin traps, although we caught more by wiring off water troughs using a funneled entrance. These were the times before Myxomatosis and his dad got a Govt payment on the total of dead rabbits tails together with his meat sales.

Soon a large group of evacuee Aborigine families arrived from Darwin. They took over the unused Balaklava race course area where tradesmen would deliver everything there for their long stay but they never came to town.

Sometimes trainer Biplanes would land on the plains outside of town.

News of our fathers left in Singapore came only after the war.

Weekend visits to Adelaide on the daily train and then by tram to the beaches at Glenelge was always a treat.

Carry on Cruising.1945. As the years went by, reports of the war got better, until we were warned of our next move when all Singapore, Hong Kong Evacuees were instructed to leave and regroup in Adelaide then board a special train returning north to Broken Hill in New South Wales to join others for the long train journey across country to Sydney where a high rise hotel was taken over for the hundreds of us awaiting our return to U.K..

Our home for the next six weeks would be on board the ship Q.S.M.V* 'Dominion Monarch' by sailing away under the Sydney Bridge on our way to England, a place I knew only from history books.

This superior cruise liner had one big gun and one anti aircraft gun.

The children's dormitories had an adults in charge so as to restrict any potential pillow fights.

Once again it's boat drill lectures with life jackets and the use of attached whistle and clip on red light, emphasizing that if we were to go over the side, the ship wouldn't stop. Many parts of the ship were explored but sadly the deck pool remained empty to preserve the life jackets against misuse.

The next six weeks would be via the South Pacific

and the Atlantic first arriving at Wellington, New Zealand with a stay of twelve days, where in groups we were taken by army trucks on visits to beaches, park picnics and a Maori museum.

This seemed a very pleasant country. Too soon our ship sailed without escort crossing a fairly calm south Pacific where the best view was always the dining hall. The adults organized daily school for reading and writing lessons until the arrival to the Panama Canal where in a crazy taxi, we visited the unimpressive Panama City. The ship was a tight fit within some parts of the canal so that I found that the electric mules towing us were much more interesting to watch.

Once free into the Caribbean, we were soon to arrive at a less glamorous dockside of New York. America and not a cowboy in site.

There for official reasons, only the adults were given I.D. Passes to visit New York City returning with a few souvenirs.

My attempt to escape down the gang plank with one foot ashore in America was met by two G.I. M.P.s. Days of dockside views were to follow until our ship sailed to joined a large convoy of Liberty boats, supply ships and Tankers crossing the Atlantic. This ocean was an unruly rocking horse and our sea legs meant nothing. At some point a terrible storm hit us and anything including a secured Piano broke loose injuring one crew member so we were mainly confined to cabins for our safety.

Boat drill groups were practiced inside and we heard that one tanker had been lost. For a time, nearer to England, a cable was lowered along side. This was to tow a mine cutter shaped like a Dolphin but having two wings.

Full circle. Our arrival at Liverpool, England some weeks before V.E day meant that we dispersed to relatives or other accommodation. My Father and other P.O.W.s returned months after V.J day on Aug.15. 1945. For time we lived in Broadlees meadow between Dover Castle, full of troops and Fort Langdon, full of German prisoners awaiting repatriation. Their also was the landing site of Louis Bleriot's 1909 X1 biplane. The nearby P.L.U.T.O ** fuel tanks were now empty. Today this meadow is now a main cliff approach for the harbour cross channel ferries. The 15 inch channel guns at South Foreland would soon be decommissioned.

In time my parents returned to Singapore but I was not invited, only directed to think about a job in life. My thoughts were "Anything except the navy," so by signing on and hoping to continue the life of travel,

I was soon to realize that this was to begin at the double with the assistance of Sgt Bill Buckley Gren. Grds inside the gates of Arborfield.

* **QSMV--** Quadruple Screw Motor Vessel.

** **PLUTO.--** Pipe Line Under The Ocean [fuel] D day+

Not forgotten ! Sgt. Buckley's opinion about our first week of drill :

"When I.. was a little boy, I.. had some toy soldiers.

But I.. lost my toy soldiers... and my Mother said to me.

"Don't worry Sgt Buckley, you'll get them back some day !"

Now... by the look of you lot, its all coming true !

"

.... plus his further words of advice

Arthur Ward 50B

Ed, The picture on the right Arthur has entitled it 'JEEP'. I did not realise that you could enlist that young in the early 1950s.



From Aircraft Technician to Cruiseaholic

Little did I know that driving through the gates at Middle Wallop at the beginning of September 1962 to join course 9A Instruments and Electrics would shape the rest of my life I was going to learn how to maintain Aeroplanes. One of the first things that happened was we had to send one of our pairs of boots in to the cobblers they come back with rubber soles and heels, gone were the leather soles, 13 studs and the metal toe and heel clips that had been part of Army life for many years that's when I knew this was going to be a whole new life for me.

Another big change from the past the instruction staff were from all three services, the first subject was of course was the theory of flight and then learning all the technical names much to my surprise they did not have wings they were main planes and the tail was the empennage and that was just the start of the new language we had to learn, The Auster was the most common aircraft in service at the time so the course was based on the Auster, the Electrical systems were similar to automobiles expect for a few major differences there was no starter motor the engine was turned either by swinging the prop or with a cartridge that when fired discharged hot gasses into the cylinders turning the engine, each cylinder had two spark plugs each set powered with its own magneto and the older Austers had a wind driven generator, basically a DC generator with variable pitched propeller in the leading edge of the right wing the

forward motion through the air turned the prop that produced the DC voltage. The majority of the instrument systems were a whole new ball game, the Pitot Static system which produced airspeed, altitude and rate of climb and decent, a hole in the front of the Pitot tube is used provides ram air and slots in the side of the pitot head or flush holes in the fuselage produce the static air pressure when they are mixed they produce the airspeed, altitude and rate of climb indications, the attitude indications are produced by gyro instruments, the instrument cases are evacuated either by a vacuum pump or a venturi tube on the side of the aircraft causing the gyro's to turn, these instruments the artificial horizon, direction gyro, and turn and bank indicator. We all passed the course but before we were posted we had to do a familiarisation course on the DH Beaver and Westland Scout helicopter, After some embarkation leave on the 24 April 1962 complete with my rubber soled boots and my pale blue beret I was on my way to 653 Squadron AAC in Aden on a RAF Bristol Britannia...

We arrived at RAF Khormaksar late in the evening stepping out on to the air stairs we were hit by the hot, still air, quite a shock to the system, I am not sure how or when I got out to 653 Sqdn AAC it was quite a long way out of Aden basically where the black top ended that's where 653 Sqdn AAC was.

. We shared Falaise camp with a cavalry squadron the 17/21 Lancers the Death or Glory boys, we did not see much of them, our lines just inside the main gate and we spent our working days out at the airstrip quite a way from the camp. We lived in quite modern huts we did have some air-conditioning and a couple of ceiling fans so we were relatively comfortable, the showers were just basic and the toilets just buckets with seats, (more about that later) our NAAFI complete with a small corporals mess, cook house, and AKC open air movie house were all close.

The work day started early dressed in shorts, boots, socks and a KD hat we got a ride to the airstrip. We had two runways about 120 degrees apart with blacktop on the thresholds and two quite new hangars complete with their offices, one used by the flights for their day to day operations the other was used by the heavy maintenance/overhaul side of the squadron where I worked. The shops in the hangar were in fact the boxes the aircraft came in, our shop which we shared with the tel mechs there was not a lot of room with all our test equipment and a office space for our leader a navy Chief Petty Officer, a really nice guy who seemed to like working with us, to this day I still think we put more hours on the instruments on the tilt table and in the vacuum chamber than they did flying. Once again like Wallop we had all three services on the squadron, our fire men were RAF Regt they were not happy campers as they thought they had been demoted as they had just been transferred from the RAF to the Regiment, our Navy support was much larger with senior and junior rates chiefs to leading aircraftsman, the navy was good to have around they organised all sorts of things from producing a snacks at NAAFI break to doing a roaring trade repairing flip flops with the vulcanising equipment they curled up like a watch spring but they were status symbol all produced curtsy the plug and tire bay to teaching us brown jobs some really over the top drinking games some of which I will never admit to taking part in. I presumed it was their time at sea that taught them how to provide their own entertainment.

I did not do any guard duties as the majority of the Sgts in the squadron were pilots with their own flying duties a few of us were put on the Orderly Sgt light duty roster. The main duty was to accompany the Orderly Officer on his dining hall appearances that was quite funny at times for two reasons, at least one of them carried a spoon with him so when there were any complaints he would bring out his spoon take some of the food and tell the complainer this was much better than they got in their mess end of conversation, the other where you lined up to get to the serving station you had to pass the Dear John notice board another Navy tradition I believe, all romantic relationships that ended by mail had to be posted

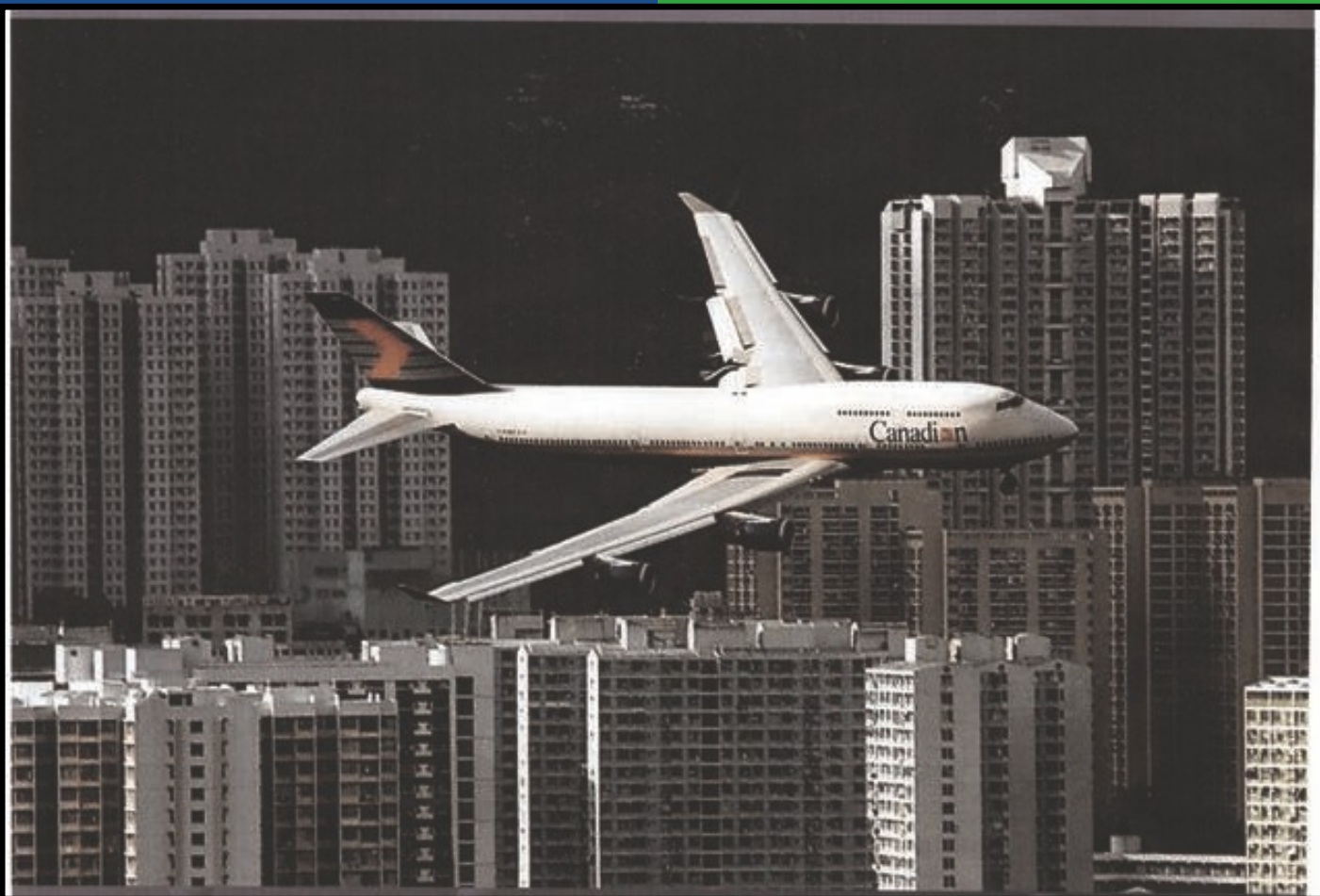
for all to see some of the officers seemed quite interested in the love life or lack of love life of the great unwashed maybe it was the added feature on the notice board, as most people had camera's and there was a dark room quite often you could see photographs of squadron members in all their glory after a skin full of Tiger at lunch time having crashed with just a sheet over their waist and too far gone to realise the sheet was lifted and the picture taken and on the notice board by dinner time no faces just question marks. You can tell we were quite a long way from civilization, there were a couple of tasks I really did not look forward to, about mid afternoon a old flat bed truck would show up at the guard room with 3 or 4 helpers their job go round all the toilets and cookhouses and remove all the waste into 40 gallon drums on the back of the truck my job was to ride on the truck just to keep a eye on them on their rounds it was common to see them carrying the buckets with its content slopping all over the place and at the next stop a cookhouse fly trap walking back to the truck eating scraps of food they found with the same hands minutes before they were carrying the buckets you had to see to believe it, the other was to clear the NAAFI at closing time the bar was open to every body in the camp mostly it was easy but sometimes with a load of want to fight drunks you had to tread softly and indicate you had a big stick it was my understanding before my time the guard had been turned out to clear the place that's what Tiger beer did for you, the final duty of the day was spend the night in the maintenance office in the hangar at first it was a little scary as the only thing that could be called security was a couple of chowkidars carrying pickaxe handles and I never did get any phone calls.

I had been there a few months when one of our Austers did not get off the ground after taking a visitor up country to monitor an exercise it ended up in a wadi, a S/Sgt and 4 of were on the way in a Beaver to rescue XP 240 it was not going to fly out of there so all we could do was to remove the wings and wait for the RAF who was going to ferry it home slung under a Bristol Belvedere, (some of the pictures I took can be found if you Google Aden and the Auster my friend John Peat Moss 55A put it together for me), the day did not end well for XP240 when it got back to our strip due to a mixed up communication between the crew on the Belvedere XP 240 was released 50/60 feet of the ground which bent the plane even more.. A few weeks after that trip I found myself on board a Hanley Page Hastings with a S/Sgt and 2 black hander's on our way up to Sharjah to change an engine on a squadron Beaver, one of the local Sheiks wanted to purchase some Beavers but hot trials had never been carried out so RAE sent a package of work and our aircraft was dispatched to do the trials, the problem was foon a pre-flight inspection, there was a crack on the blower case

on the back of the engine this occurred because much earlier the aircraft was sent on a show the flag up country, locals took some shots at the plane one of them gouged the compressor case the crack started there. When we arrived in Sharjah we were to report to the transit hut on the edge of the airfield, the thing I remember about that was the sand in front of the building was manicured with the required white painted rocks and rope but I seem to remember it had one extra touch they had bulbs planted in the sand of course they were light bulbs but a nice touch, between the Army and the Air Force they did not know what to do with us but at this point the SWO man (Station Warrant Officer) wandered in and said as we would be working out on the airfield we should be billeted in the RAF transit hut close to the field, that kept us out of the clutches of the Army just as well when we reported to work the following day we found the new engine had been bumped from the freight for that day and many more days to come so the trip turned out to be a bit of a holiday they had a pool and the food was great even though it all had to be flown in. I drank so much Vimpto cordial I nearly became addicted the days were our own, we did get one job there was a Auster out on the strip it was grounded the sun had got to the fabric and rotted it, one day they had space on Armstrong Whitworth Argosy going south so with the wings off we tried to get the fuselage into the freighter, it just would not fit we even let the tires down and removed the VHF antenna so the Argosy left and we were left with a fuselage with flat tires and a long way to go over soft sand quite a workout, the engine eventually arrived we changed it with no problems the Beaver left for Falaise we rode back in the tail boom of a Blackburn Beverly to Khormaksar.

Normal daily routine did not last long as we were to take part in a three service exercise we were going up country to support our flights taking part in the exercise, a few days before the exercise the former Aircraft carrier HMS Bulwark and now a commando carrier showed up in the waters off Aden, they made our strip a land base for operations in the area, it certainly made our evenings more lively having the extra matelot's around. One afternoon they were told of a place down the beach where there an abundance of edible shellfish so one of their helicopters went in search for the prize they came back with enough to share among the three messes that night we gorged on shell fish and Tiger beer. I was sick for a couple of days not sure what caused my problem maybe too much of both. The exercise for us started for us with a trip into Aden then up the beach at some point we turned inland that is when our easy ride sitting in the back of the RL came to an end every time the truck got bogged down in the soft sand we had to use the sand tracking, all trucks carried putting it down in front of the wheels and then picking it up after the truck

passed over it not fun, that carried on all day until someone decided that was enough for the day. I was not sure where the locals came from as we had not seen much sign of life all day but within a short time there were numerous people looking for bakshees just as well they seemed to like our hardtack biscuits that solved a problem for us and them. Now our Navy boss spent a long time looking for what he called good gonking sand for us to spend the night, he did look a little out of place dressed in his whites it was all new to him but I think he was enjoying the trip. We had been on our way for about an hour for about an hour the following morning when our convoy got a nasty surprise a navy aircraft a Sea Venom I believe, they came from behind us up the convoy strafing us with gun cameras as they went they were low enough when they pulled up some people thought they felt the jet wash, I did not see the camera film but the people that saw it said we would have been killed, we did not even hear them coming. Most of the rest of the trip was routine, compo rations, warm water that tasted like the pills we used to make drinkable and work, one good thing did happen a navy helicopter found us they had fresh food right off the Bulwark and could not find the marines they were looking for so they gave us the food. We had only been out for a little over a week but the fresh hot food and the smell of the freshly baked bread made our day, I am not sure who won the exercise we did not see any of the action, all we did was to turn around aircraft. Our trip back to Falaise was uneven full expect for our sand tracking through the soft sand it does not take long to become really old, back at Falaise it did not take long to get into the same old routine instruments on the tilt table and in the vacuum chamber. I did realise that flying in Aden was not like Europe where you could have lots of navigational aids even the ones you could see out of the aircraft once you got away from civilization all you had in Aden was your instruments to get you home. Aden was not a fun place but at least I was doing what I was trained for not like many of my previous postings and aircraft maintenance was now a part of my life. As many times in the past REME records came calling for me that meant no leave trip to Mombassa for me. My previous FCE 7 (Yellow Fever) training was wanted Krefeld Germany at 16 LAA Regt RA so on 19 June 1963 I found myself on Transport Command DH Comet on my way to RAF Lyneham but I was not alone. Story was a craftsman on the squadron had got into a row with his wife in their flat on Maala Straight something was thrown that went out the window and hurt a local on the street at his Court Marshal he was sentenced to time that meant his return to the UK, there was a senior NCO from the squadron on the flight and was detailed to escort him but we all know that stuff rolls down hill so I got the job, we stopped in Malta for fuel so we had a beer together in the terminal.



When we arrived in Lyneham we were the first through customs as the Red Caps were waiting for him.

My disembarking leave did have a big disappointment I saw a British Racing Green Austin Healy 300. It was love at first sight and I could afford it, my first thoughts were could I take it with me to Germany I only had about six months to do, get discharged in Germany and spend some time touring before I had to buckle down to my life as civilian.

My problems started when I mentioned to a friend my plans he thought insurance could be a problem it was, even the car dealer could find anybody to insure the car to a young service man to drive in Europe, without my Healy I showed up at the depot only to find most of the rest of the world had changed from battle dress to service dress the only people in battle dress were like me returning from over seas. They soon made the decision as I only a short time to do I would stay in battle dress, so on 12 August 1963 I found myself on a turbo prop plane en route to Dusseldorf we were told before we were allowed to deplane we had to attend a briefing, I think we all thought it was going to be the usual STD lecture we were all so very wrong. We were shown a lot of pictures of Russian officers in uniform and the vehicles they would be driving in. I did not realise that there were Russian military missions cruising about in the west, if we ever saw any of them we should

report it as soon as possible. I did look a little out of place still in my old battledress and rubber soled boots but they did give me a standard coloured beret, my guess would be 99 + percent all the other troops were in service dress. Being a good soldier my first thoughts were what duties or parades I could skive out of dressed as I was. The barracks at Krefeld were multi storey brick built pre WW2 German army complete with inside storm windows a first for me. We lived on the ground floor that was very important because we had a bar which we ran ourselves and as it was on the ground floor we were allowed female company in the bar another good thing about the bar was it was just across the hall from my bunk. I was just getting used to working on the computers when it was announced that the gun subs were going to spend a week at RAF Wildenrath to practice tracking aircraft in the circuit each week the guns went back to Krefeld and we stayed out and had a free week end, when we were there a Canberra squadron was part of the first response armed with nuclear bombs. The bombs were American, maintained loaded and guarded by Americans the dump was in the centre of the field. The word was don't even think about going close they shoot first and talk later when it comes to their Nukes. As usual the RAF food was really good I never did understand how they could produce a quality product compared to our food another perk they had a Ten Pin Bowling Alley, another first for me

not sure if it was courtesy the RAF or the Americans but it did make the week ends more enjoyable. When all the guns had cycled through the training it was back to Krefeld and reality, it did not take to find out what all the practice was about we were on our way to Todendorf a live fire range on the Baltic coast. At last I would see the guns fire, the trip was planned for two days mostly up the Autobahns I was in the back of the last REME truck with a couple of VM's at the back of the convoy. Not long into the trip I found myself alone as the VM's had been dropped off to help with breakdowns I had just got used to the noise made by German civvie trucks as they passed us at a much greater speed than ours, the vacuum in their wake sucked all the air out of our canopy when it rushed in it tried to rip the canopy of the truck and made a very loud whoofing sound. Two or three hours later I was still alone when I noticed a Russian jeep like vehicle coming up behind the convoy, I knew I had to do something so bored out of my skull, I noted the time I climbed over the cargo to look into the cab to check out speed so using my trusty map reading skills, I transposed $S=D/T$ so I could tell how far we were south of the next autobahn exit we passed. That bit went well so when we stopped I marched up to a couple REME officers standing around and told them what and were I saw the Russians the to a man nearly collapsed in laughter. How was I to know that Ausfahrt was German for exit not the name of the town after that I checked and every exit led to Ausfahrt. There was German AA regiment at camp the same time as we were quite a difference in the way we carried out our duties they looked and acted like real soldiers. After seeing them march every ware even to breakfast singing what sounded like patriotic songs in their jack boots, we looked like we were just playing at soldiers I consoled myself with the thought that if push comes to shove we all knew how to be real soldiers. Not only did they soldier hard they played hard, most nights in the bar in camp there was so much noise caused by the Foosball games and cheering on participation in the beer drinking boots of beer. I was really impressed by the facilities in the wash rooms they had a large sink with no strainer and strain handles on the wall, something we could have done with at many of my past postings. I am not sure how the live firing went about all we saw were the planes coming in from the sea and the guns firing we were told that the drogues had monitors in them that could count the near misses. Just as well as I never saw any bits falling that was caused by a hit. The trip back to Krefeld was long and boring, by now my German was improving I could get into town on the tram, order half a chicken and wash it down with numerous beers. On November 22 1963 President Kennedy was assonated in Dallas we went to higher alert everything packed up but we did not

bug out the skies were full of German Star fighters. I only had an AM radio that had arrived from Aden in my MFO box and BFBS had modernized to FM so I was left monitoring the situation on AFN Stuttgart American Forces radio. The regiment had a visit from a General so there was a big parade I was hoping to be told to go hide, no such luck about six of us mostly gunners were made to stand to attention at the back of the square just in case he might want to inspect us. On the 14 December 1963 I was on the move again back to the depot to this day I do not understand why I went to Germany, I was only there for such a short time they did not seem to be under staffed but that was the way my Army life had been. The next thing to go wrong after spending Christmas at home was the month long work experience to civvie life had been screwed up somewhere between Aden and Germany. All that was left for me was Army run household maintenance course it was designed for old retiring officers who were retiring to their country cottage so that they could at least perform the simplest tasks around the house. I arrived at Aldershot in the new year on the course were three troopers from an Irish Cavalry Regiment an Air Vice Marshall a dentist by trade the rest were Army and a couple of WRAC officers. I guess they did not learn anything about volunteering in their long careers they were the first to volunteer to mix cement and all the other mundane jobs. My best memory was plastering a wall we had a section each mine was next to the AVM he showed up for work every day in immaculate RAF overalls and highly bulled shoes the problem was the plaster refused to stick to the wall for him every time it fell of the wall on his shoes he was heard to say o'f--- not exactly what you would expect from a gentleman. We all survived the month at Aldershot for the first time in my career I don't think there was a pass mark, so it was back to the depot to wait for discharge. The big day arrived March 5 1964, the day before my 27th Birthday, I left with my hat badge, my hammer and tongs, two towels and my tropical PJ's anything else I was not required to hand in I left on the bed for anybody who wanted it. It was not until I was outside the gates and the barrier dropped behind me that the reality of it all hit me I was on my own for the first time in my life up till now I had a job and I knew where the next meal was coming from. Now I had all the monies the Army owed me plus some money in lieu a demob suit and 45 pounds in my POSB but I felt sure if I could survive Arborfield as a child then with my experiences since then I would survive. I did not think I could survive in the small instrument shop that offered me a job. I wandered into the main Piper agents at Oxford Airport and started work the following week. I started as an electrician and finished up doing radio installations that lasted 5 years in which I got married, bought

a small house and got then got the itch to move on. We settled on Canada so on October 17 1969, we flew to Vancouver, BC and I got a job with Pacific Western Airlines a regional carrier in the west. I was casual at first installing Cockpit Voice Recorders a little each night after the days flying. On January 1st 1970, I became a full time employee. We had B737's on the schedule flights, a couple of older B707's chartering to Europe in the Summer and sunspots in the winter, and Hercules moving/servicing rigs in the north and tramping the world in the summer. We grew with Canada, the company combined our radio and electrical trades that meant more school and soon after that Transport Canada realized that planes were getting more complicated and one trade could no longer certify the whole plane so they came up with a new licence AME-E for the electronic trades so we could certify the aircraft serviceable after work in our trade group. That meant lots more school, we continued to grow into the digital age we now had B737, B767- 300's, B747- 400's and Airbus 320's, plus all the foreign carriers we serviced in Vancouver. The larger we grew the more politics involved the less fun it was to go to work ramp maintenance, so we started to look for a retirement place in the interior. We found a small house on the edge of a canyon with 800 ft of riverfront in a small town one and a half hours flying out of Vancouver it even had a small hospital a bonus at my age perfect for us so we bought it and moved in. I lived in small apartment during the week and commuted home by air at my weekends. That lasted a couple of years until I reached my magic 80, age and years of service

to collect my full company pension. After retiring from what I called my day job I got a summer job monitoring apple orchards, that meant the winters off so I could complete my work experience by joining what we call the U I ski team Unemployment Insurance for the winter. I did go back to the coast a couple of times to work once for a year and later on a 3 month contract, I have worked on light aircraft here in the valley now no money involved now wood from the saw mill, services from the Vet and anything else that I can barter my time for.

I still get my quota of passes for cheap flights both on my own company flights but also on all the Airlines, we have reciprocal agreements with but flying is no longer fun for me so now about the only time I get on a plane is to catch a cruise ship. We are turning into cruiseaholics I like the idea going to sleep at one place and waking up at another, no driving or flying involved.

I never really wanted to be anything else other than a guy in coveralls that fixed aircraft, right up to my last day at work it still gave me a high to certify a 747 serviceable to fly to Hong Kong with 250+ passengers, and that all started at Arborfied.

Mike Jackson 53A

Three Women.

Three women go to Mexico to celebrate their college graduation.

They get drunk, and wake up in jail, only to discover that they are to be executed in the morning, though none of them can remember what they did the night before.

The first one, a redhead, is strapped in the electric chair and is asked if she has any last words.

She says: "I just graduated from Trinity Bible College and believe in the almighty power of God to intervene on the behalf of the innocent.."

The executioner throws the switch and nothing happens.

They all immediately fall to the floor on their knees, beg for forgiveness and release her.

The second one, a brunette, is strapped in and gives her last words. "I just graduated from the University of Illinois School of Law, and I believe in the power of Justice to intervene on the behalf of the innocent."

They throw the switch and again, nothing happens. Again, they all immediately fall to their knees, beg for forgiveness, and release her.

The last one, a blonde (you knew it), is strapped in and says: "Well, I'm from Ohio and just graduated from Ohio State University with a degree in Electrical Engineering, and I'll tell ya right now, y'all ain't gonna electrocute nobody if you don't plug this thing in"

Rick Smith: A Life from Furrow to Arrow.

Like many REME personnel, Rick Smith began his career in the Corps at AAS Arborfield – 64A intake – but, as the son of an Essex farmer, the early mornings may have been less of a shock to the system.

Rick trained as a vehicle Mechanic, achieved Artificer status in '76, and completed his service at Bordon as Senior Examiner Vehicles from '86 to '88. An important part of his life in the Corps was playing sport – cricket, soccer, rugby, athletics and shooting.

However, on leaving the service, Rick realised that sport had to take a back seat to the task of finding work to support his family. But he soon found that, unlike in the old days, very few jobs were for life and most were at the mercy of market forces. However, what he did discover was that most civilian employers recognise the quality of military technical training and experience. When coupled with personal standards of discipline and commitment, ex Corps personnel make good employees.

So while the following years found him working for five different companies in a range of roles, not all of them related to vehicles, each was challenging and rewarding, both financially and in terms of the people he met and the places he visited.

The link to his future interest came when he worked at the Performance Driving Centre based on an old airfield near Louth, Lincolnshire, and found that the area was also used by a group of archers, many of them disabled. They welcomed Rick and his disabled son, and he was soon involved in helping them to form the Louth And District Disabled Archery Club (LADDAC) of which he is now Chairman.

This phase of Rick's working life was disrupted when the events of 9/11 resulted indirectly in the closure of the Driving Centre. But his experience and expertise saw him gaining interesting and responsible jobs in the USA and Germany, and now he had archery to add to the sporting activities he could follow.

When he returned to work in the UK in 2006 Rick had gained experience in coaching at archery, so took the necessary course to become a qualified Level 1 Archery Coach. This coincided with a blind man asking the club to help him to try out the sport. The Head Coach asked Rick to take on the task of teaching him. The pair got along very well and,

within eight months, with Rick coaching and spotting for him, the archer came second in BBSIAC (British Blind Sports Indoor Archery Championships). Five months later he again achieved Silver, this time in the sport's Outdoor Championships.

On home ground, the club now holds range sessions twice a week, puts on a weekly lunchtime session at a local Grammar School and offers have-a-go sessions fortnightly in Burgh-le-Marsh. In all these activities the club welcomes newcomers of all abilities and disabilities to join in with existing members.

Understandably there has been local press interest and this, along with personal endorsements, is helping to spread the word about the club. Of special interest to Rick was the arrival of a new VI (Visually Impaired) archer, a service veteran who asked Rick to assist in coaching her, as she shoots regularly in competition with VI vets.

At the time of writing – January 2016 – Rick and his VI archers are going away to train with the British Paralympic Archers at Stoke Mandeville, so let's hope it's not too much to expect big things for the team. Whatever the future holds for them, Rick hopes that more people, of all abilities, will just get out and have a go at archery - or any sport - and enjoy all its benefits.





Carol's Tactile Equipment



Carol in Training



Carol, Rick, and Stuart



Stu with Spotter Rick.

Article written by Wally Barnes 51B, based on information provide by Rick Smith 64A

Revelations of a Bush Brusher

Brushing the Bush

few months after my premature exit from adventures prospecting for gold in the wastes and steppes of the Cambridgeshire Fens (see OBAN Issue 54) I still had not acquired suitable employment to keep the wolf from my irate mother's door. Most of my days were once again spent listlessly gambling for halfpennies with the 'Horse Trough Syndicate' in the salubrious surroundings of The Angel public house.

Various part time jobs had however come my way. It started in the form of welding worn track links for Caterpillar bulldozers, at which I lasted about two days. My assertions to be an excellent and experienced welder had been quickly discovered to be somewhat overstated. Next was the position of swimming pool attendant at the muddy hole in the River Ouse which served as an alternative to the Côte d'Azur. This was a summer retreat for the less squeamish of Thetford's swimmers who did not mind a wee bit of occasional raw sewage sticking in their gullets whilst bathing in the clear blue mud. The request by the management for me to kindly '**** off' was issued after my being detected blissfully asleep in a changing cubicle one sunny summer afternoon.

A local garage was the next stop where I was given the responsible task, with possible advancement to pump attendant, of a 'vehicle sanitary inspector' or, as it turned out, cleaning the local residents' shitty cars inside and out. Sometime later I had to give up this lucrative position due to lack of foam distribution and polishing enthusiasm and nearly burning the building down after toasting a sandwich on a bar heater.

Farm labourer was my next attempt at a monetary solution. This consisted of all the crappy and back-breaking jobs associated with agriculture and definitely not suited to an ex-army layabout. Having to assist the sadistic farm owner to castrate a mass of piglets I had to admit defeat after enduring the tortured screaming of those poor little piggy wigs. Even to this day I am haunted by the screeching of those wee buggers when I am forced by my dear wife to watch the candidates of the X Factor attempting to impress the judges with their musical inaptitude.

Although the musical ability of today's youth has improved mightily, together with the demand for immediate celebrity status, the youth of yesteryear Thetford also had aspirations of fame and fortune in the swinging sixties. At that point in time there was not much on offer for entertainment in the swamplands of Norfolk and

a big night out in my home town was a visit to the Young Conservatives' Club! Oh joy!

It was in this establishment that my own dream of fame and fortune at becoming a rock star materialised in the presence of the infamous group "The Five Sided Squares" (apparently this name was a play on the popular expression of being 'square'- or not 'in'). On one of my infrequent visits, these Young Turks, some of whom I had been to school with, informed me haughtily that they were going to take the music scene by storm. After hearing some of their offerings I had some serious doubts. However they mentioned that they were seeking a 'washboard virtuoso' to join their outfit.

"Would you be interested in joining us Mick?" I was asked.

Not one to be put off by an enormous challenge, I decided to give it a whirl. Needless to say after several clumsy renditions over the next few weeks I was eventually told that, although I was very adept on this instrument, my musical leanings were not in line with those of their band. What can I say? I think that "The Five Sided Squares" sank into the oblivion of the ether of Norfolk's greatest nonstarters!



The Five Sided Squares.

Readers of OBAN 54 will no doubt recall my hair-raising and unimpressive attempt, assisted by my game warden cousin Cecil, to become a member of my family's Norfolk game keeper heritage.

Sitting despondently at home one evening the doorbell suddenly rang and the sardonic features of my relation greeted me once again.

"Still working hard then Mick me boy?" he inquired.

We sat and shot the breeze for a while until Cecil suddenly announced that he had the perfect job for me. Being of a highly suspicious nature after past experience of such offers from him, I enquired with some trepidation what this 'perfect job' might be. "Brushin' Mick me boy, Brushin'" he grinned. "It's a bloody doddle an' the money's good plus you gets a free dinner." The start of the shooting season for pheasants, rabbits, pigeons and suchlike was about to begin and my dear mother, in depths of desperation, had been on the phone again to Cecil pleading for the saviour of her son's working future.

I was informed by my cousin to turn up at the meeting point a few days later dressed in the garb of the professional 'Brusher' or 'Beater'. This outfit, he explained severely, consisted of either wellies or boots and britches or trousers tied at the ankles with bits of rough string.

"To stop snakes crawling up your trouser legs," said Cecil.

"Yeh!?" said I.

Then, he advised, a stylish strong weatherproof jacket (I still had my STEWARTS donkey jacket for the use of from my Fenland adventures - thankfully), a flat cap and finally a Jesus type staff or walking stick which would then set me up a treat.

"You're then ready to go Mick me boy," he smiled gleefully.

I had all the gear he described available apart from the walking stick, one of which I was presented with from the depths of my cousins stinking Landrover, which he gravely informed me was his favourite 'bobby knocker'. Used, I was led to believe, to render dastardly poachers inoperative.



A Sibling of Cecil's Bobby Knocker

**Perhaps I should mention here that my cousin Cecil who, a few years after the above event, became very ill and somewhat of a famous personage. He was the first, or one of the first, patients to receive a double heart transplant carried out in the renowned Pappworth Heart Clinic. Unfortunately, after a long fight, his body rejected both transplants and he passed away. God bless him.*

The next morning I was dressed for my first day 'Beating and a Brushin' and looked a right nerd as I mounted my dear mother's rusty old Queen of Clubs bicycle and pedalled furiously towards my fate, hoping that there was no one around who recognised me, as, to put it mildly, I represented the bastard son of Worzel Gummidge. I need not have worried. Skidding to a stop at the meeting rendezvous I locked up my trusty steed and approached a large group standing and chattering in front of an old three ton Bedford lorry.

Spying this unruly mob, which I realised were my fellow beaters, I thought immediately of Wat Tyler's 'Peasants Revolt' from medieval times, which started in East Anglia (just thought I would throw that in for all the numerous historians amongst you and for me to appear clever once again). They were mainly 'ol Norfolk boys' of indeterminate age ranging from dead to near dead and dressed in old army greatcoats, donkey jackets, German prisoner of war blankets, frogman suits, Jack Boots, pitchforks etc. - it was quite a spectacle.

"Yew the new boy?" a red-faced 'Oberbeater' and Les Dawson lookalike enquired.

I nodded sagely. The gang of beaters then greeted me with an "Orite me boy?"

We then clambered into the back of the truck and sat on some rickety seats. Our 'Oberbeater' then informed us that we were off to a large country estate situated around a small village near Swaffham. What a coincidence. It was the hamlet where I was born and where most of my mother's large family was at home**.

***It has also suddenly crossed my mind whilst writing this document that back then I had inadvertently trodden in the footsteps of an infamous poacher relation of mine, William A....., during my brushing and beating sojourn near Swaffham. Here is a quote from an article in a booklet entitled "Sketches of a Norfolk Village" by Marion Bull.*

'William A..... played with matches when he was a child and was very badly burnt, losing all his fingers in the resultant accident. According to a local resident Colin Howlett, although he had no fingers, he was one of the top poachers in and around the area, somehow managing to use leather straps instead of fingers to pull the trigger of his shot gun.'

of his shot gun. Known to all as "Burnt Billy" he later became the local newsagent, delivering the papers from his bicycle which he rode around the village at full speed. According to a further story, mothers of that time used to keep their children under control by threatening to send "Burnt Billy" to discipline them. But it seems he was also regarded with extreme affection by all, including the children. He was killed on the main A47 road when he walked from behind a lorry only to be hit by another one.'

After a bumpy journey we arrived at our destination and were requested to line up military style with sticks at the ready in front of the outbuildings of a large mansion.

I watched interestedly as a group of gentry shooters both male and female approached us, dressed in the obligatory tweedy attire and carrying their shotguns crooked over their arms. Some of the women looked like Miss Marple clones with hints of a moustache here and there. They were accompanied by a baying mass of gun dogs that ran over and began sniffing us cannon fodder as we lined up waiting. The tweedy brigade all halted in front of us gabbling excitedly. From their midst a tall gangly apparition approached, who we had been informed was the Rt.Hon. Ponceanby-Fitztightly - Basil Fawltly to the bone! He began examining us as if we had just crawled out of a nearby sewer.

"What ho chaps? So glad you were able to join us today - what? You'll no doubt do your utmost to shoo those little birdies and bunnies out of their hideaways for us so we are able to enjoy some jolly shooting - hey? What?" he spluttered.

This bastion of the remains of the British Empire then proceeded to strut along our ragged line as if he was viewing the changing of the guard. I was close to throwing up as memories of army day inspections entered my noddle but was more astounded when some of the old codgers began doffing their caps, pulling greasy forelocks or something similar in their trouser pockets. A stupid idea flitted in my deranged mind that perhaps I should curtsy. Deciding that humour was not the order of the day I reluctantly refrained.

Inspection over, we proceeded to a nearby field where my brushing experience would begin. Deep in the back of my mind I was half expecting some kind of occult initiating ceremony where I would have to kneel in front of the 'master' and be daubed with the blood of something dead and horrible such as a mangy stoat. However no such luck as we began spreading out in a ragged line at regular intervals. We were then informed by the 'Oberbeater' to wait for the starting whistle from our gentry general. All of us then had to move forward shouting and beating our sticks in the

brush and bushes screaming like a load of demented banshees.

At first I thought it was a bit of a lark until all sorts of wild bodies started to fly and run all over the place. This however was not the worst experience, as the ladies and gents waiting in front of us started to blast with their blunderbusses at anything that moved. Dead pheasants, pigeons, jackdaws, an army deserter, a young couple in flagrante and a werewolf were all sent to kingdom come. Of course then came the 'Hounds of the Baskervilles' yowling and growling whilst looking for all the dead carnage in the undergrowth and bushes, sniffing out the dead birds to deliver them in their foaming mouths to their master (excuse the dramatics but I thought I would add a bit of pathos to the story).

We proceeded to yomp over hill and dale for the rest of the morning. My initial reaction for the day as being a bit of a laugh subsided by the minute especially as it started raining buckets. It was a nightmare as my designer brusher's outfit was soaked through. I was seriously thinking of sloping off in the manner of all professional skivers but the midday victuals were suddenly upon us. A long bench with a massive churn of hot tea and various Norfolk 'delicacies' such as bread and cheese, pickled eggs, pigs' trotters, bulls' balls in aspic etc. were available for the beaters' delight. Pushing my way through the mass of the ol' boys I grabbed what I could carry, munching hungrily and wandered off.

Meanwhile the tweedy brigade had their own large spread and was delicately shovelling twee little scrumptious sandwiches and a dram of whisky or three down their aristocratic gullets. I was a bit apprehensive seeing our sharpshooters' intake of alcohol and had visions of buckshot being removed from bits of my delicate body.

The afternoon progressed in much the same way with all our peasants' voices beginning to show signs of hoarseness. I was beginning to tire and missing my mummy's tasty afternoon tea and bun. My war wound (knee), incurred during my active army duty in Germany and various guardroom cells throughout the Cold War, was starting to swell and become very painful! Due to my extensive fitness training in the bowels and depths of various R.E.M.E. workshop canteens, NAAFIs and guardroom cells, I was bravely able to soldier on to the very end of the day. Back at base camp we were once again told to line up in front of piles of dead pheasants, rabbits etc., which had been counted by our 'Oberbeater' and the results passed on to the Rt.Hon. Ponceanby-Fitztightly chappy for assessment. Beaming contently, he approached us and gave a further speech praising our expert brushing and beating prowess, which was followed by sporadic one hand clapping from the tweedy collection.

A wooden tray was then passed to his worship piled high with our hard earned shekels. Majestically proceeding to mince down the assembled line, he began handing out small brown packets that jingled enticingly in my ears. It was a bit like receiving Maundy money in days of yore when all the paupers were given their tuppences. Of course there was again much hat tipping, forelock pulling and mumbled thanks from the grateful dead for allowing us to serve his grace. When his Lordship reached me I held out my hand expectantly already tasting my first pint that evening in The Angel. The great man stopped before me and moved in disturbingly close. I could smell his stale alcoholic breath on my face.

"Well, well what have we here? You seem a bit young to be out here 'beating' young sir. Have you been enjoying our tremendous day out in the fresh Norfolk air - what?" he chortled at the same time pressing my wages into my palm in a somewhat evocative way.

I was taken aback by this as he stared into my eyes not attempting to move on.

"Do you live around here my boy? Perhaps, if you are interested, we could employ you in some *other capacity* on the estate. I am always on the lookout for nice able bodied young men of your obvious calibre," he smiled ingratiatingly.

My other brusher buddies were now listening to this exchange intently and I was becoming a bit uncomfortable with the direction the conversation

was taking. Some of the old codgers I spied were grinning widely. Mister Rt.Hon. had in the meantime laid his sweaty hand on my arm, squeezing suggestively and waiting expectantly for my reply. I could feel my buttocks clench in disgust and, perhaps protection, before I hissed a hasty reply,

"Thank you kindly your ladyship but I am already spoken for in **that direction**."

There was a lot of stifled laughter and the "Oberbeater", standing behind the laird, nearly had a stroke as his highness stomped off muttering to himself. We were then informed that we were allowed to take two items from any of the piles of dead birds for our own use. I grabbed a brace of mangy looking pheasants and climbed thankfully into the back of the lorry. There were a lot of ribald comments about his 'ladyship' on the return journey and I was glad to leave the truck in Thetford. Peddling home again as fast as I could to avoid recognition, I had come to the conclusion that 'Beatin'an a Brushin' was not where my prospective professional future lay.

Mick Oulds 57B

AOBA Armistice Week End 7th 8th Nov 2016

Many of you may ask why I leave the week end report until the Spring issue of the OBAN. My reasoning is, this issue is distributed quite close to the Annual reunion week end. I'm hoping that having read the magazine recently, within the last couple of months, it may create an interest when it's still fairly fresh in the minds of members, who, having read the article might just say "I think I would like to join our detachment at the Armistice week end in November" That's the plan and it has been working! So here we go with November 2015 report.

First of all, let me on behalf of all the regular attendees, the old & bold, welcome all the new faces who joined the throng for the week end, or indeed the Saturday evening dinner or the parade only. We certainly hope that you did enjoy the week end and will all consider becoming regular attendees at the week end. A sincere thank you to Mike Tizard our new AOBA chairman, for taking up the job of Det Comdr for the parade after Brian Hutchins stepped down. Finally a big vote of thanks to Brian for being the Det Comdr for most of the years the AOBA have had a presence at the

Armistice parade Whitehall. We all hope that the foot does improve and of course the golf swing and handicap!

The week end was again a great success with improved numbers at the dinner (41) and a record parade attendance of 21. There was to be 22 but one of our members had to call off because of a sick relative. A great turn out for both the week end events and still more places available for any member who would like to join the happy throng. ALL MEMBERS VERY WELCOME.

Roy Hatch ex parachute training officer of 144 PFA again excelled himself in meeting the demands of members for Royal Albert Hall tickets, all requests for tickets fully met. This was for the Saturday afternoon performance which is the final dress rehearsal for the evening event, the actual service of remembrance. Roy once again on behalf of all the members a big thank you. The event certainly starts the week end off with a bang, followed by an excellent dinner that evening.

There were 41 members sat down to dinner on Saturday evening in the Trafalgar room.

Excellent venue with an in house bar which is very convenient for those attending. The numbers attending included 19 members and guests of 144 PFA (V) RAMC, most of them were young soldiers when I served as the regular training officer 1986-88 in London at Duke of York's Headquarters which was situated at the top end of the King's Road, close to Sloane Square. Now sold off and is a very large retail complex. Having the lads and their ladies from 144PFA attending the dinner adds to the convivial atmosphere. The comments and emails I receive from them saying how much they enjoy evening, especially the company of the AOBA members attending speaks volumes and is appreciated. I'm sure they will always be made welcome.

During the dinner John Dennett gave a rendition of a few verses of Tony Church's poem Farewell to Arborfield. He also gave a couple of short stories of Arborfield life which were very light hearted and brought added colour to the evening. Tony Church's poem Farewell to Arborfield is an excellent reflection of the life of an apprentice, poignant but very real. If you do get the chance and are in a relaxed mood, it's well worth a read. Again it's very pleasing to be able say "An excellent evening was had by all attending" Good food, excellent company and good dram into the bargain to finish the evening off.

Sunday morning always starts off well with the great service given by the London Black Cab companies. The free service to and from Whitehall from the club and also London railway stations is a excellent contribution by the cabbies which I was assured will continue for future years. What an excellent tribute to veterans.

It always amazes me when you approach Horse guards how organised the British legion (BL) are in the process of getting between 10,000 - 10,500 veterans, war widows and other representative organisations into a well organised pre parade muster on Horse guards. The planning is obviously a major logistic event in the BLs planning calendar. On parade for 0930hrs, march on to Whitehall commences at 1000hrs on the dot. They deserve a great vote of thanks for the excellent preparation to ensure things run smoothly for the parade attendees.

We were well forward in the parade this year, meaning a longer wait on Whitehall before the

march past. This I would say is the preferable option to being well back in the line for march past the cenotaph.

Standing on Whitehall watching all the other detachments arriving can be very sobering. When you see organisations like the Burma Star, Trucial Oman Scouts, Arctic Convoys veterans, men and women from the Commonwealth countries etc, on parade to pay their respects to their comrades no longer with us gives a great feeling of pride for those men and women who gave so much in the two worlds wars and all the other conflicts Great Britain has been involved in over the years, Korea, Malayan/Brunei Campaign, Falklands. We could go on forever. They are all there on parade respecting comrades lost in the defence of our country, Great Britain and freedom. And of course we have our growing detachment, not only paying our respects on behalf of all ex Arborfield apprentices but also to our grandfathers and fathers generations. May we ex apprentices continue to do so for many years to come.

Dennis Flaherty, on parade for the first time in his motorised invalid chair did a great job keeping det comdr Mike central to the det and not too far in front. It was excellent to see Dennis, accompanied by his brother on parade, we hope it's the first of many.

The public still continue to amaze those marching. It's a continual round of applause from the minute the parade commences until the last detachment has passed the second saluting base opposite the Guards memorial just before we turn back on to Horse guards. Certainly no cold hands about that day.

The salute at the Guards memorial this year was taken by Prince William.

Thank you to all those who attended the week end in support of the AOBA detachment, may you all continue to do so for many years to come. A great week end for a wonderful reason, our thanks to those who served and have passed on.

Any member who would wish to join is for the Armistice week end, or, just the Sunday parade, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Contact details are below:

Tel: 01324 623740

Mobile: 0776 112 1673

email: jim.gardner14@outlook.com



Bike Ride John O'Groats to Lands End.

"It always seems impossible until it is done." This is a quotation by Nelson Mandela, and was a great inspiration towards this bike ride. Very few of us can now remember the summer of 2009, in particular the heatwave in June and July. This is about 15 days during that time, and those of you particularly 60B, who had the privilege of knowing Austin (Lathe) Latham gives me great pleasure to write this article.

Our friendship began at 'Boys School' in April 60, and over the years we always kept in touch, until one day in late 2008 Lathe approached me about cycling from John O'Groats to Lands End (J.O.G.L.E.). I thought at the time that he must have been a little eccentric even thinking about it at our ages, Lathe was 65 and retired from the prison service and I was soon to retire in Jan 2009 at 65. I went along with the idea, not really knowing what was involved apart from plenty of training, and not expecting what endurance the 'nether regions' had to be put through. At the time of Lathe asking I didn't know then that he had already done the cycle ride END TO END three times, as I thought that it was only undertaken by much younger people than ourselves. As the months went by and 2008 went into 2009 we had a date to work on for the start date at J.O.G., 21st June 09.

I had no idea of how much training was involved, as Lathe lived 80 miles away in Weymouth, from me in Fareham, so it was a case of me training by myself. I had never cycled further than a few miles before, and I was preparing myself to cycle the length of Great Britain. The winter months of Jan' 09 through to March were a bit of a wash out and I started training in earnest late March. At first the daily mileages of 10-15 miles felt as if I was already cycling 60-70 miles, and I was already trying out various saddles to combat soreness. As the weeks passed I found I was able to cover 30 miles quite easily on a daily basis, but it was already May by this time and the expected average mileage for the actual bike ride was to be 65-70 miles a day. A lot of people at the time would ask me how I managed to 'dig' so deep in my enthusiasm to go out day after day in all types of bad weather, and so it's at this point I think I should mention that in the Feb just before I started training, a very good friend of mine, Barry Tofley, ex REME and ARMY footballer, passed away with Alzheimers at the age of 62. Ruth my wife said since I was doing this ride, why not do it for a good cause and raise some money for Alzheimers, so now the incentive was there to keep the enthusiasm going. The word soon got out, thanks to our daughter setting me up a "Just Giving" page on the computer, and donations soon

began to build up. Many of you reading this I have to thank for the target I reached of over £2500. June 19th came and I left Fareham at 0545 with my 'trusty steed' strapped on the bike rack, to meet Lathe at Weymouth. I must also add that another friend of Lathes from the prison service, Paul Kennedy to join us as well. We left by 8am in Lathes car and his brother Clive had agreed to join us to drive the car back from Scotland. The journey up to Carlisle was uneventful, and we stopped in a nice B&B. Next morning (Sat 20th June) we left for J.O.G., and reached our B&B in Wick late afternoon so we decided to off load our kit at the B&B and go on to J.O.G. After a few photos in the bleakness of the start point we cycled back to Wick (17 miles), which felt like a Sunday outing without our kit on the bikes. The worst was yet to come as fully loaded panniers with sleeping bag, tent, clothing, and equipment weighed in at 30 lbs. After breakfast on Sunday we set off for DORNOCH, a mere 74 miles away. The scenery was out of this world with the NORTH SEA only a matter of yards away. We made good time, even with temperatures in the high 20's. The hills in the Highlands were completely different entity and the early part of the ride merged from one day to another battling the hills and high temperatures. After Dornoch we stopped at campsites in Carrbridge, Pitlochry, Kinross, and I now move on to day 6 at Selkirk. Well as I noticed a change in Lathe when we were setting up camp, he seemed drained of energy and was soon in his sleeping bag. Paul and I went out for a meal and I brought something back for Lathe. The next morning before we left Selkirk we had breakfast in a nearby café and Lathe perked up with some food in inside of him. The headlines in the papers in the cafe were of Michael Jackson passing away. Our next step was to be Carlisle and the B&B we stayed in on the way up. We arrived at the B&B at 4 pm and it was a hard day in the hot sun, but the thought of a proper bed had spurred us on I'm sure. Mileage so far was 397. The next leg of the journey was to Carnforth, which involved going over SHAP on the A6, after a really enduring climb which seemed to last forever, we reached the layby at the summit 1350 ft above sea level. To this day I still can't believe both Lathe and I managed the climb in one, without getting off, also carrying 30 lbs of kit on the bike. I am really glad that I had done all that training with house bricks in my panniers. What made the climb so memorable was about half way to the summit the heavens opened up with thunder and lightning all around us.



Absolutely drenched the rain was head on just like needles hitting my face. I could not understand why my face felt so warm, but soon realised the sore lips from days of sunshine had split open and the blood was streaming down my chin. How Lathe made the summit amazed me but I was soon to find out. We cycled into the layby absolutely drenched, and drained of all energy, standing there in torrential rain reading the plaque at the summit, when Lathe turned to me and said 'Ron, what is it that keeps you going without so much as a moan about the hill, weather, and a really sore backside?' My reply to him was 'I think of all the people I am doing for, who have Alzheimers. I think of all the people who have sponsored me, and most comforting of all I think of my family and my young granddaughters who have sponsored me £5 each out of their own pocket money'. I then asked Lathe 'What keeps you going as some days I think you are ready to jack it in?' His reply was 'I think of god and ask him for the strength I need to keep going'. Now Lathe was never a religious person at Arborfield, and would do anything to get off church parade, so much so he even claimed he was an O.D. (other denomination). Soon after this conversation the rain, thunder, and lightning stopped as quickly as it had started. We then set off down the other side

of SHAP towards Kendall. The downhill stretch was even more daunting than the uphill climb. I was doing 37 mph at one stage and the brake blocks were beginning to smoke in stages, as the weight on the back was causing a terrible wobble. I had no choice but to try and slow down. Mile after mile I don't know how we stayed in the saddle but eventually slowed to a more sensible speed of 15 mph when we reached a dip in the road. We passed through Kendall without any mishaps and reached Carnforth late afternoon.

Ron Meatcher 60B

The final part of this article will appear in the next edition of the OBAN. I could not manage to type it all from Ron's hand written notes in one go. Two very sore fingers now.

Lathe sadly passed away on the 11th February 2011, from cancer. R I P Ed.

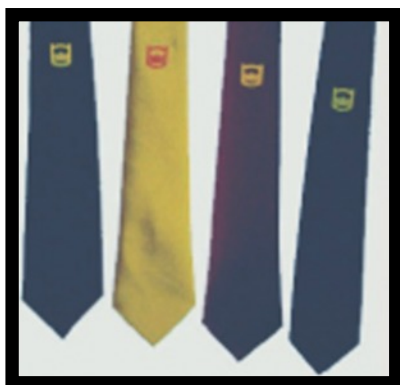


**Introduce a friend to the
AOBA and get a years FREE
Membership**

Arborfield Old Boys' Association Web Shop

Here we have a few items which we hope are of interest to you. They can be ordered and paid for using Paypal, or credit/debit card. We have added 4% to the prices to cover the cost of this service, plus £1:50 postage and packing per item. The Web Shop is run by our Honorary Treasure Laurie Blakley, and he will have items available at the reunions.

Ties



Available in original Company Colours
£8 + £1:50 P&P

Lapel Badges



Very attractive Lapel Badge in Black and Gold
Approximately 25 x 20 mm. £3.50 + £1:50 P&P

Also available are a small amount of Blazer
Badges @ £10.60 + £1:50 P&P,
Mugs with the AOB badge @ £5.88 + £1:50
P&P

Please contact Laurie for overseas postage
costs, and any other enquiries.

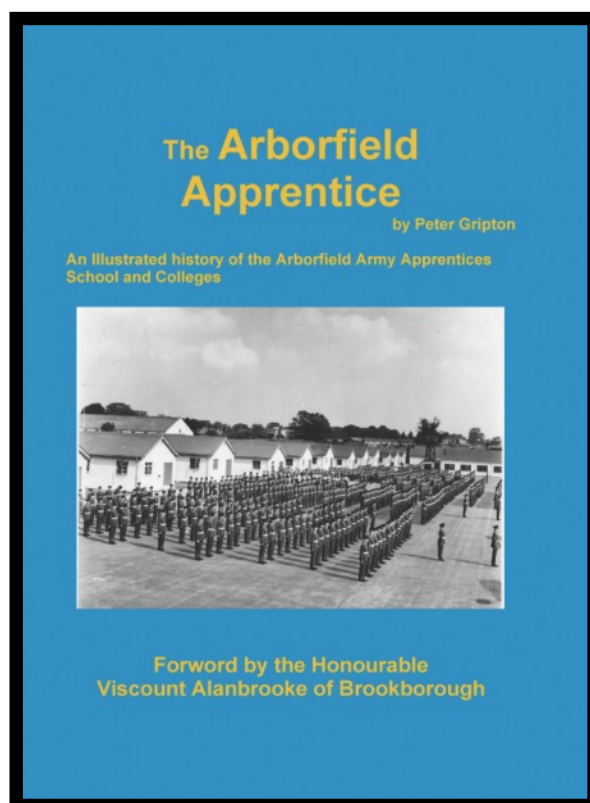
The Arborfield Apprentice. New Edition

Edition Two of the Arborfield Apprentice by Peter Gripton. An illustrated history of the Arborfield Apprentices' School and Colleges from 1939 to 2004, with anecdotes taken from countless Arborfield Apprentices down the years. Includes the 'Final Chapter' written by Peter Gripton after the college closure.

It is a MUST for all Arborfield Apprentices whether they joined in 1939 or any other time up to its closure in 2004.

Foreword by the Honourable Viscount
Allenbrooke of Brookborough

£30.00 plus postage and packing.



E-mail to the Editor.

WO1 Harris L.H. Instructor 1951-58

Good Day. As a long shot, I wonder if anyone remembers my father WO1 Harris. He was an instructor from 1951-58. I still have the controller for my Hornby Railway which he made at the school, with the help of apprentices in the autumn of 1955. Sadly, he passed away in 1997, but would have been thrilled by this site, which i found by chance. Many thanks

paul.harris.acc1@gmail.com

I have included Paul's e-mail address so that he can be contacted direct. If anyone is able to help please let the editor know. Ed

Notifying of Deaths of Ex Arborfield Boys and requests for an AOBA Remembrance Scroll

I am Roger 'Trixie' Traves, 57A, the Remembrance Officer who is responsible for recording all notified deaths and for completing and dispatching Remembrance Scrolls

My contact details are as follows:

25, Deanmead Road, Iford, Bournemouth, Dorset. BH6 5QH.

01202 471063

Rog.ski@virgin.net

Reporting Deaths

In the event of an ex Arborfield Old Boys death it would be most helpful if members could report as much of the following information to the Remembrance Officer or to any AOBA Committee member. The full name of the deceased, his intake number, and date of death. Also the full name and address of the next of kin of the deceased. Normally who ever reports the death is a friend or is known to the family and it is better that they negotiate on our behalf, not me or the committee members, with the next of kin or family to obtain the necessary information.

Note: After the drumhead service this year June 2012 a few members mentioned that some deaths were not read out and no cross planted. Although the majority of the names mentioned were found to be from the previous year and were recorded a small number were not. The reason why we miss some is because we are not informed. Members are reminded to report deaths as and when they are aware of them. If you know an ex Arborfield boy who has passed away and is not listed in the AOBA Roll of Honour (Can be seen on the AOBA Website) then please let me have the details.

Remembrance Scrolls

I would like to remind members that I do not automatically send out a Remembrance Scroll when I'm notified of a death. I only send them when requested by whoever has made contact with the family of the deceased and only then when the next of kin has confirmed that they would like to receive one. Remembrance Scrolls can be requested in the memory of deceased AOBA members and non members. The minimum information required, before a scroll s sent, is listed in sub paragraphs a & b below.

- a. Full name of the deceased, his intake number and date of death.
- b. The next of kin or family member's full name, ensuring that we have their first name, and full address to where the scroll should be sent.
- c. If a member of the AOBA, his number, if available.

When it has been confirmed that the next of kin of the deceased has requested Remembrance Scroll, I will only send one if I have all the details as listed n sub paragraphs a & b above. As you can imagine, if we get any details wrong, it can cause extra grief to the bereaved.

Note: The AOBA Committee has now agreed not to change the design and format of the current Remembrance Scroll, but they have decided that the size should be reduced from A4 to A5. It is hoped to get the new the new sized scrolls printed and the associated packaging purchased early next year 2013.

In Memoriam

Alan Rayner

Alan Rayner was born on the 29th December 1927 in Gosport, Hants, second son to Charles & Maud Rayner & brother to Philip Rayner – dec'd, (also an Arborfield Old Boy). Maud later married Alan & Philip's stepfather, Philip Downer after Charles sadly died.

Alan attended Leesland School & then The Central School in Gosport before being evacuated to Hedge End during WW2. He was only there a short time before enlisting in 1942 at Portsmouth for The Royal Signals. In 1944 he joined REME where he remained until 1953 initially learning his trade (motor vehicle engineering) at Arborfield. He served at home & also in Egypt, Palestine, Korea & Japan.

He was mentioned in despatches & remained extremely proud of that throughout his life.

After his military service Alan ran various workshops for The War Department (at Turweston/Whitfield, Northants & Bicester, Oxon), the MOD at Old Dalby, Leics & Cardington, Beds & later became a lecturer for the DOE at Cardington before retiring.

Alan married Marjorie Dell at Westbury, Bucks in 1957, having met her at Whitfield. They lived at Westbury, Bucks initially, moving to Melton Mowbray, Leics, then, to Great Barford, Beds and

to Little Paxton, Cambs in 1976 where they have lived ever since.

Geraldine, their daughter was born in 1960 & Kevin, their son in 1963. Their son in law is Andrew, daughter in law, Lorraine & grandson, Michael, born in 1998.

In Alan's discharge papers he was described thus: "S/sgt Rayner is a man of upright character, trustworthy, conscientious & technically capable." His military conduct was described as "exemplary". In many respects that also sums up his life, but I need to add his dry sense of humour, his patience, intelligence, kindness, love of nature, love of travel, interest in history, patriotism, wisdom and above all his love & support to Marjorie & his family, friends, colleagues & neighbours.

Alan died at Hinchbrook Hospital, Huntingdon on 23rd August 2015 after a short illness though he had become frail over the last few years. ***** His ashes were interred at Little Paxton.

He is greatly missed.

RIP.

Geraldine Calvert. (Alan's daughter)

Bill Taylor 56A

My brother-in-law, Bill Taylor, died on 12 January 2016, aged 75 years. I first met Bill at Arborfield in 1959 when he was in the same intake as my younger brother, Herbie. During his young life in Edinburgh, Bill found himself in Children's Homes when the marriage of his parents broke down. These experiences prepared him well for the challenges of Arborfield. He was used to living with a group and to discipline. He mixed well and enjoyed sport. He was also keen to learn and to better himself. He trained as a vehicle electrician. From Arborfield, in 1956, Bill was posted to 31 Comd Wksp in Catterick. Later that same year he moved on to Malaya where he served in a Inf Wksp, with a Ghurka Regt and, finally, joined the LAD of the Royal Dragoons. He returned to UK with the Royals, in 1962, and I caught up with him at Tidworth when I joined the same unit. He had, by this time, retrained to become a metalsmith and I worked directly with him. He was popular, good

at his job and still very keen on sport. He regularly played football and rugby. In 1963 I became his brother-in-law. Our service lives moved on and Bill went off to BAOR, I believe, still with the Royals. In 1966 and finding that the Service could not offer him sufficient prospects, Bill left the Army. He was a good "hands on" worker and soon found himself work in Industry in the North Yorkshire area. He worked at York Trailers in Northallerton where they built heavy vehicle trailers. He had a inventive brain and was soon to get himself into the "trials & experimental" department of that firm. He was, by nature, a bit restless and he eventually moved on to join Perstorp, the specialist chemical products group. He started on the ground floor and got himself thoroughly acquainted with the products: he was eventually given a managerial position. After a good spell at Perstorp Bill went into the digital sign writing business and he was very successful at this. He made his home in Darlington and finally retired at the age of 60 years. I had made my home in



Northallerton on completion of my Army service so my family and myself saw a lot Bill and his family over the last 40 years. He leaves his wife, Sue, a son & daughter as well as his extended family. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

John (Ben) Hebden 54 A.

RSM Donald McMahon MVO Grenadier Guards 1927-2016

.It is with great sadness that I report the death following a short illness of RSM Don McMahon on February 2016. Don McMahon served as the RSM of the Army Apprentices Colleges at Arborfield from 1966 to 1968. Born at Holt in Norfolk, Don had enlisted in the army as long ago as 1945. He went on to serve in North Africa, Malta, British Guinea and the British Cameroons, before Arborfield he had completed his twenty-four years of service. In his own words he had enjoyed a most varied career including several spells of public duty that included no less than four great national occasions. He was made a Member of the Victorian Order when he was in charge was in charge of the escort from Sandringham to Windsor for the funeral of King George VI. He was a member of the bearer party at the State Funeral of Queen Mary and was also on duty during the funeral of Winston Churchill in 1965.

Perhaps his happiest duty was Her Majesty Robing Room in Westminster Abbey at Queen Elizabeth Coronation in 1953. He was greatly respected by the Army Apprentice boy soldiers at Arborfield and in 1968 the Senior Division requested that he be allowed to march off with them, the very first time that an adult soldier be afforded this special honour. On his retirement he retained his links with Army Apprentice training at Arborfield and attended several Old Boys Association Reunions. Don will be sadly missed by so many veterans of both the Grenadier Guards and REME ex-apprentices. I found him a very wise caring and sympathetic man when I served with him at Arborfield in the 1960. His funeral will be held at St James Church in Finchampstead at 1430hrs. His daughter has requested that donations be made to Help for Heroes rather than flowers.

Ken Anderson 58A.

John Cassells. D.O.B. 27th September, 1934. - Deceased.13th March, 2016.

John Cassells, along with his twin, George, began his army career by enlisting as craft apprentice into the Army Apprentices School (AAS) Arborfield on the 9th September 1949.

John did not have an easy start in life, in that his father, George Wilfred, a pre-war regular soldier, was lost during the Monte Cassino offensive in Italy.

This resulted in him and George, at age nine, becoming boarders at the Duke of York's Royal Military Academy, Dover. There they remained until moving to Arborfield at age 15.

My most abiding memory of John is that he was a very good athlete, particularly at cross country running. He and I were members of the school cross country team, and I recall that in the three

years in competition with him, I never ever beat him in a race. In later years whenever we met at reunions he would always gently pull my leg about those events.

In September 1952, John joined REME and won early promotion to Cpl and was on course to a promising career. By the mid-fifties John and his brother George had been posted to Cyprus, where sadly, for the second time in his young life, fate once again intervened.

In 1956, at age 21, his twin brother George was killed in a shooting incident in Cyprus. John was devastated, resulting in a compassionate discharge from the Corps and he returned to live in Henley-on-Thames.

As a skilled craftsman John pursued a career in toolmaking and engineering with various local companies, including a time when he worked on

the development of Concorde.

Canny with his cash, he purchased a newly built bungalow in 1958 and lived there continuously until shortly prior to his demise. He did not own a car until he was in his thirties, and would cycle to work in Maidenhead, White Waltham and other venues.

John continued to participate in many sporting activities throughout his life, although his primary interest was rugby union. In 1956 he joined the Henley Rugby Club, playing for the first team until he was in his forties, notching up over a hundred appearances at this level. His sons, George and Christopher and grandsons Peter, Ollie and Michael were to follow in his footsteps at the club.

He remained a keen runner and earned many medals from runs all over the country including the London marathon, with his chosen charity being the Alzheimer's Society.

As this was not enough for any man, he was also a member of the Long Distance Walker's Association.

The get the measure of the man, on one notable occasion, he walked from Henley to Chester to join up with the Henley Rugby Club touring party on the afternoon of a match, changing into his kit, playing the full game, and then walking onto Newcastle to visit relatives. During one reunion I asked him how much did it cost for accommodation during these long walks. "Nothing" was his reply "I just roll up in a ground sheet and sleep under the nearest hedge"

After many years in engineering, John became a postman in the Henley office. These final years of his working life were perhaps his happiest. He enjoyed meeting people and making new friends, particularly on the Stoke Row round, where he was adopted as a member of the community and invited to many local events. Towards the end of his life John suffered worsening Alzheimer's disease but, with the help of medication and close support of his family, was able to continue to live at home almost to the last.

As his memory failed his chats became more repetitive, but he coped with some memory failure by calling all the girls and ladies he chatted to "Cinderella" something which many of them remember fondly.

John will be sadly missed by his sons George, Christopher, Ian, Robert, his surviving sister Patricia and all their families; and further by many, many people in the Henley area and beyond out into the military family.

He served King, Queen and Country
throughout his early years,
And learned of life, its highs and lows among
his youthful peers,
And as time passed, a bond grew strong which
time could not erase,
It was to last throughout his life, defying
memory's haze.

Gordon Bonner

Deaths Notified since last OBAN

1799	Doig	J	42B	10/11/2015
2633	Le Gall	DA	60C	11/11/2015
1975	Tozer	A C Alf	47B	24/12/2015
N/a	Taylor	WG Bill	56A	12/01/2016
7	Blakey	G Gordon	49A	12/06/2015
1929	Bradshaw	JW John	45A	03/02/2016
2003	Potter	KJ Kenneth	50B	29/12/2015
N/a	Ashworth	GJ Jim	54B	24/02/2016
2100	Foster	A Albert	60A	25/02/2016

