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**Issue
66**

Arborfield Apprentice's Magazine



Arborfield Old Boys Association

www.arborfieldoldboys.co.uk

ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

President

Colonel Claire Phillips ADC

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Chairman

Lt Col Mike Tizard, CEng, FIRT, (76B)

Vice Chairman

Lt Col Bill Cleasby, MBE, IEng, FIET, sq(w), (61C)

Secretary

Phil Ellaway (73C)

21, Farmington Close, Abbeymead, Gloucester. GL4 4XA

Tel: 01452 615290 E-mail philellaway@gmail.com

Registrar

Alec Powell (64C)

30, Pyrton Lane, Watlington, Oxfordshire. OX49 5LX

Tel: 01491 614142 E-Mail alecreme38@gmail.com

Treasurer

Laurence (Laurie) Blakley (61B)

47, Chaplains Avenue, Cowplain, Waterlooville, Hampshire. PO8 8QH

Tel: 02392258934 E-mail laurie.blakley@ntlworld.com

OBAN Editor

Andy Dickson (66B)

Primitive House, Goatacre, Calne, SN11 9JH

Tel: 07804 903 052 E-mail: ckmudgee@gmail.com

Webmaster

Mark Jobes

6, Donnington Close, Camberley, Surrey. GU15 3NJ

E-mail mhjobes@gmail.com

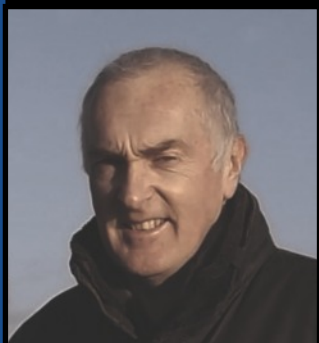
Recruitment Officer

Rob Castell (64A)

4, Grace Close, Haslington, Cheshire. CW1 5FX

Tel: 01270 258978 E-mail rsc100@hotmail.co.uk

AOBA Chairman's Report



Chairman's Report

I must open this issue with a massive thank you to our two new committee members Phil Ellaway (73C) and Andy Dickson (66B) who answered my call for volunteers in the last issue and are now firmly in the roles of Secretary and OBAN Editor.

We all owe them a huge debt of gratitude for stepping up to the plate; I wish them every success and I'm sure they will bring a fresh look to the Association.

I visited Bohunt School Workingman a few months ago and was particularly struck by the friendliness of the staff and the politeness of the children. Bohunt school is not just any school, for it's being built on the grounds of our old apprentice college and therefore it will be forever in our hearts. To give you a mental picture, the new school will be built almost directly on the previous locations of C and D Company spiders and the training buildings that were directly behind them; Blacksmithing, Hydraulics and Electrics, if memory serves. I've engaged with their head of the Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) faculty and the aim is to make an annual award for excellence. More about that in a later issue, but in the mean time I'll leave you with the school's motto; ENJOY, RESPECT, ACHIEVE. I don't know about you, but I find those words truly inspirational and when I look back to my apprentice days, they are so, so true.

At the last AGM you will recall that I discussed the potential of looking at the Constitution and Rules of the Association. Well, we have looked at them and they do need updating. Not only do they

require updates to the addresses due to the move to Lyneham, but some of the references are no longer applicable as they have been overtaken by time. With the help of Michael White (66) who has produced an initial draft, I think we are in good shape and over the next few months we will be re-working them for your approval at the next AGM. Rest assured there will be no radical changes, but they will be updated.

Planning for the 2017 Reunion has started. You will recall that we are 'contracting out' the organisation of the reunion and I'm pleased to report that Shirley from the Isle of Wight Tours is negotiating with the NMA and the hotel on our behalf. David Schofield (65A) has agreed to act as her advisor and things are progressing well enough at this stage. We are keeping a keen eye on the price and will ensure that value for money is uppermost in her thoughts.

To close, an update on the Museum; working in Lyneham I visit regularly and I'm delighted to report progress at last. The floors which have caused so many weeks of delays, have finally been refitted and the installation of the exhibits has started. The mock ups for the apprentice gate brick pillars are very realistic and will make a fitting backdrop for the original gates which are being installed in the very near future. I cannot wait to see the final product.

Mike Tizard 76B2

Your Chairman

PS - Have you seen the new book from ex apprentice Mike Sibbons? 'From the Archives' is a series of REME specific tales and is a must have for Christmas. Its available from the REME shop for £9.99 plus P&P

Andy has included an article on the book on page 10 of this edition.

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Committee Members Reports



Honorary Secretary's Report

I suppose I should start by introducing myself, and how I have ended up as AOBA Secretary. I entered Arborfield in September 1973, intake 73C, as an Apprentice VM(B), I was in 2 Squad, along with legends like Trevor Fleet. Our Squad Sgt was Trevor Goggin, who I bumped into a number of years later in BAOR he had been commissioned. From Junior Company, I went into B Company with the inspiration that is CSM Hank Mansell.

Life at the College wasn't great for me, I had to be back squaddled twice, the first time due to pneumonia and pleurisy, then the second time following a knee injury in the warm up of a rugby match; when Marty Eagles tackled me and we both fell to the ground, and my knee took all the weight. The M.O. in the M.R.S., genuinely believed my Army career was over. I spent several months in B Company office, and Hank Mansell helped my recovery by making me ride his bike everywhere; although it was too big for me, and I nearly came a cropper several times. So, I ended up leaving Arborfield in March 2006, in fact I didn't even get to pass out. Went to Bordon, where quite literally I bumped into Trevor Fleet again, well his car we were towing to the scrap yard; which he forgot to mention he had sold the brakes on, went into the back of mine, with a Police motorcyclist right behind him.

From Bordon, I was attached to the Green Howards, then 1 Queens Lancashire Regiment in Chester. Then off to Munster with 8 Regt RCT, where the knee issue resurfaced, to the point I couldn't work on the shop floor, I changed trades to Stores, and worked in the FAMTO/1098. Then a posting to Fallingbostal with 16 Tank Transporter Sqn, then a final posting to REME Tech Services in Dusseldorf. I left in March 1987.

I became AOBA Secretary at this year's AGM, unfortunately I couldn't be there, as I was at a family wedding. I answered our Chairman's plea in an OBAN for volunteers. Feeling guilty, as I have never been to a re-union; and looking at the intakes of those involved; felt it was time for some young(ish) blood to take on a role. I stepped up to the plate as they say.

I had my first meeting in October, which was held at the new REME Museum, where we got a little peek behind the closed doors, I remember the old Museum back at Arborfield, in comparison this is huge.

So I am looking forward to meeting you all, at the next re-union, I have some very big shoes to fill in my post, but I will try very hard to do so.

Phil Elleway 73C



Honorary Registrar's Report

Checking the Electronic OBAN mailing list it appears that about 50% of our members have changed their email address since becoming members. It is

important that I have the correct data whether it be snail mail addresses or whatsoever.

PLEASE LET ME KNOW ASAP, so that I can keep the database up to date.

Alec Powell 64C

New members since OBAN 65:

Rowland	AJ A-77B2-A
Sparrow	DMA-76B2-A
Rye	JG A-76B2-B
Caunter	KD A-76B2-B
Brooks	T A-67B-C
Harmer MBE	MNA-67C-C
Kipling	C A-95C-X
Butel	EA A-77B1-B
Vickers-Jones	CM A-67B-D
Senior KD	A-96A-X
Petherick	M A-75C-C
Horwood	JG A-65B-A
Taylor N	A-62A-A



Honorary OBAN Editor's Report

Well, this is a surprise, to me as well as the membership I suspect. I had been thinking about volunteering for Committee duties for some years but as we lived in Australia on and off for the last 20 years I thought it might be a stretch of AOBA resources and of my own.

My wife and I returned from Wagga Wagga last October and I think we have finished with moving to Australia and back having done it twice. The first time in 1988 returning in 2002 and then back again in 2010 and back here to the UK last October. We both became naturalized Aussies so can go back any time we want and may visit from time to time but I doubt we will be moving back for a third time.

After the last reunion, which was the 66ers 50th anniversary, if you hadn't noticed, I finally made contact with Mike Tizard and offered my services as OBAN Editor. He accepted my offer immediately, (My ego took a boost at being wanted), but then I realized that I was the only name that had been put forward so my ego was put back in its box.

This first effort of mine will no doubt have some mistakes in it, may not please everyone and be open to criticism. Never mind, I am just learning at this stage and hopefully I will get better at this publishing business over time. Any suggestions for articles or regular features are welcome.

I have not made any major changes to layout or colour schemes in the first edition of me being editor, (The 66th edition by the way, how poignant is that). I don't want to undo any of the great work Ray Stevens has done over the last few years. As he explained to us all, his health was the major reason for stepping down. Thanks for helping me out so far Ray; your assistance may be required again in the near future as I get to grips with layout, articles, printing etc.

For all readers, please send any articles and photos or anything else you would like to be considered for inclusion to the e-mail address inside the front cover. Unless you send me your stories, anecdotes, jokes etc. we won't have a magazine to publish. Any size of article is welcome. There are always small parts of the magazine that need 'fillers'.

I hope you enjoy this edition.

Andy Dickson 66B



Honorary Treasurer's Report

After submitting the paperwork for the Gift Aid to HMRC which will be sent off at the end of November, we have now moved into one of the quiet periods for the account.

If there are no other outgoings received this year we are well within our budget.

May I wish all members a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Laurie Blakely 61B



Honorary Webmaster's Report

Data from 1st June 2016-21st June 2016
(Taken from data collected in the website itself and from Google Analytics).

Documents Downloaded

2016 Reunion Invitation Form - 643 downloads
2016 Reunion Overseas Form - 221 downloads
AOBA Application Form - 510 downloads
AOBA Reactivation Form - 230 downloads

What's next?

New forms to allow Joining, renewing, and booking for reunion with payment online via Paypal.

These will all be in place as soon as they are thoroughly tested.

We constantly need to keep the site updated, so if you have any article/news/photos/stories etc. then please contact me direct and I can then add them to the website.

My thanks to all who have assisted in the creation of the new website and I hope it meets current and future needs. Development is an ongoing process.

Any thoughts or suggestions would be welcome.

'Arte et Marte'

Mark Jobes 77C



Honorary Recruiting Sergeant's Report

Ten new members have joined us since last reunion

I have continued to contact boys of '67 through 192.com and Facebook
67A - 38, 67B - 50, 67C - 136 = 224 in total
51 letters & emails sent out so far.
At the last reunion only two attended from these Divs. Maybe we can get 20 to 25 at the next reunion. To date 19 positive responses

I have posted recruiting notices on eight Facebook sites and posted notice of next year's reunion on the Forces Reunited website.

I obtained an updated Army Museums list from the Ogilby Trust and Forwarded to Ray Stevens and Andy Dickson.

I have placed adverts in the Craftsman and Royal British Legion magazines for recruiting purposes.

I had printed 5000 of the new type leaflets.

Distributed the updated '67ers spreadsheet and passed it to Nigel Wickenden and Nick Ballard

Going forward

REME Battalions to be contacted
Repeat of the Bordon event.

No replies from the Battalion colonels from letter I sent on January 15th this year.
Leaflet distributed through OBAN distribution? (Andy Dickson will explore this).
Committee members have stock.
Andy Dickson has bulk stock.

Bob Castell 64A

Xoddam Trophy - Chalky White 66C

"Bowling" - the ideal AOBA sport; it's basically an hour of drinking beer occasionally interrupted by six seconds of exercise!

Origins

By 2008 the number of 66ers arriving the day before the AOBA Annual Reunion held at Arborfield had steadily been growing and there were many posts on the 66ers forum as to what to do to fill in the time from the Morrisons breakfast until the 1700hrs reunion check-in.

Several of the more regular 66ers forum 'posters' had suggested golf and Ken Anderson 58A kindly agreed to sponsor what is now fondly regarded as the Xoddam Trophy in memory of another senior ex-apprentice who gave his time and support to the 66ers, namely John Maddox 44B.

Ken provided the Xoddam Trophy (Cup) to Phil Graham 71C A coy, a Jeep no less to the 66ers, who lives in Arborfield, originally as a golf trophy for the 2009 reunion. However, there were only about four golfers so the discussions continued on the 66ers forum trying to decide which riveting pastimes such as pub games i.e. darts, pool, cards, dominoes, shove half penny etc. to be considered for future reunions.

With no consensus in sight up stepped Dave Cosway 65C B coy, (a 66ers forum member) and suggested 'ten pin' bowling and that with most of the organizing falling to the actual bowling alley and David knowing all about bowling, scoring and the like plus an avid weekly bowler everything was set for the 66ers to agree and 'give it a go'.

History

And 'give it a go' the 66ers did, initially games were played at the Big Apple in Wokingham but now they are played at Leicester Bowl in Braunstone and form an integral part of the 66ers and friends pre AOBA Annual Reunion, held at Hinckley. As the Xoddam Trophy is now an established event not only for the bowling but also a focal point for 66ers and friends to rendezvous and meet up with their pals and take refreshment after some long road journeys and international flights from home prior to going onto the AOBA Annual Reunion on the Friday.

Other than the usual bowling rules, (whatever they are as no 66er knows them), it was decided that no one person could be the winner more than once within a five (5) year period. However, at the 2016 event, being the 66ers 50th Anniversary Reunion, there will be a team event but the Xoddam Trophy winner will be the 66er with the highest individual score, five (5) year rule waived, and in this context a 66er means exactly that, someone whose intake was during 1966.

Past Champions

2009	Ron Hooper	66C C Coy
2010	Dave Cosway	65C B Coy
2011	Mike Wherton	69C A Coy
2012	John Nicholls	66C C Coy
2013	Frank Westwood	66A A Coy
2014	Chris Peerless	66B C Coy
2015	Bernie Humphries	65C A co
2016	Ted Bulmer	66A A coy



For those that didn't know Mike Wherton, he sadly passed way - good fellow/jeep 69C who is missed along with his own brand of humour and those that met him would testify - RIP Mike

Ed's comments: This Bowling event is open to all to attend.

76B & 76B2 Mini Reunion

On 29th Jun 1976 another two squads of Apprentices entered through those hollowed gates of The Army Apprentice College in Arborfield. These boys were different, while the regular B intake started in May and did the full 14 weeks in Jepp-land, the 76B2 boys started after the half term break and only did 7. They were known as the Seven Week Wonders!

Wind on 40 years and a reunion was planned at Arborfield to celebrate 40 years to the day when we met for the first time. It was such a success that a re-run was planned in Lyneham. And so it was that 12 of the Seven Week Wonders met up on 26th Oct 16 for a tour of the museum and the schools. What a cracking day was had by all. We all made an effort to attend, but none more so than Mike Burgess who came over from Australia, where he is still serving in the REAME.

Can you spot the officers in the photo yes it's the ones without the ties!

A special mention must go to RSM Chris Kipling (95C) and Andy Nicholls (95C) who allowed us use of the Sgts Mess and hosted us throughout the visit.

A brilliant and unforgettable day all round.

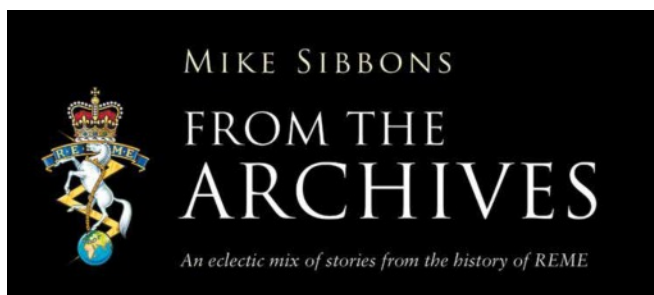


Left to Right: an Buchan, Rob Keene, Andy Langwith, Andy Nunn, Dave Nester, Mike Tizard, Steve Myers, Dave Sparrow, Mike Burgess, Andy Steele, John Rye and Michael Horsman

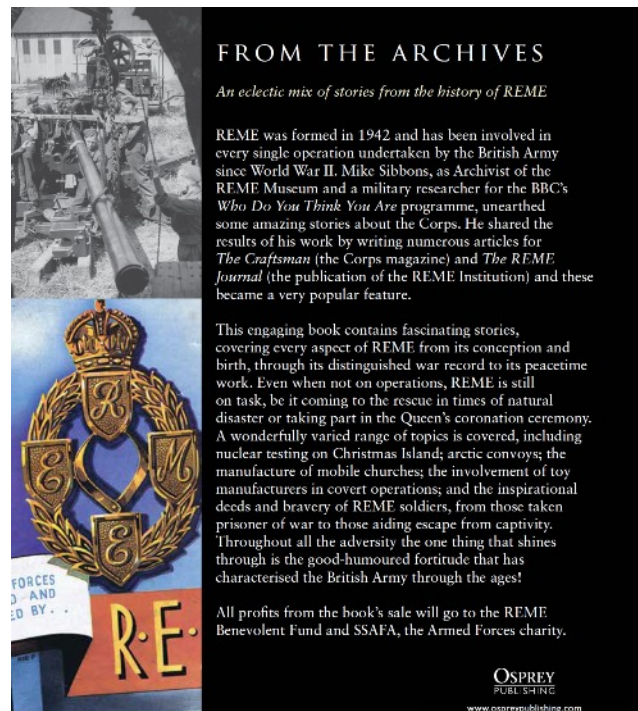
Finally ... I have pushed the advantages of AOBA membership and I'm hopeful we will see them at our reunion next year.

Mike Tizard - Seven Week Wonder (and proud of it) and your Chairman.

Arte 'By Skill'	et Twice a Professional ...	Marte 'By Fighting'
Making it work Delivering a technical solution no matter what the problem Innovative Mentally agile and technically proficient Knowledgeable Educated across the range of military technology Influential Supporting Equipment Capability at every level Engineering Leaders Professionally recognised	REME embody the ethos of the soldier/engineer. As part of a Corps forged on the battlefield we keep the ... punch in the Army's fist REME must constantly meet the twin expectations of military proficiency and engineering skill; only by doing so can REME be ... twice a professional 'Soldier First – Tradesman Always'	Combatant A Corps forged in war Operational On every operation since our formation Tactically Proficient Capable of fighting and surviving to achieve the mission Distinctive Intimate in support, distinctive in identity A Team Always loyal to the Corps but proud of those units we support



'Keeping the punch in the Army's fist'



FROM THE ARCHIVES

An eclectic mix of stories from the history of REME

REME was formed in 1942 and has been involved in every single operation undertaken by the British Army since World War II. Mike Sibbons, as Archivist of the REME Museum and a military researcher for the BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are* programme, unearthed some amazing stories about the Corps. He shared the results of his work by writing numerous articles for *The Craftsman* (the Corps magazine) and *The REME Journal* (the publication of the REME Institution) and these became a very popular feature.

This engaging book contains fascinating stories, covering every aspect of REME from its conception and birth, through its distinguished war record to its peacetime work. Even when not on operations, REME is still on task, be it coming to the rescue in times of natural disaster or taking part in the Queen's coronation ceremony. A wonderfully varied range of topics is covered, including nuclear testing on Christmas Island; arctic convoys; the manufacture of mobile churches; the involvement of toy manufacturers in covert operations; and the inspirational deeds and bravery of REME soldiers, from those taken prisoner of war to those aiding escape from captivity. Throughout all the adversity the one thing that shines through is the good-humoured fortitude that has characterised the British Army through the ages!

All profits from the book's sale will go to the REME Benevolent Fund and SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity.

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Mike Sibbons was commissioned into the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) in 1968 and held a number of key appointments, both in command and on the staff, before leaving the Army in 1994 to become a Director of The Prince's Trust. In 2007, to fulfil his interest in military history, this avid and passionate researcher became the Archivist at the REME Museum. He was a military researcher for the BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are* programme and is an expert in interpreting military records of service. In 2007 he also became a volunteer caseworker with SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, and later a SSAFA Mentor – helping wounded, injured and sick soldiers to transition from the Army to civilian life. He is currently the Divisional Secretary of SSAFA Test Valley in Hampshire.

Ed's Comments:

At the last AOBA committee meeting held at Lyneham in October, Mike Tizzard 'suggested' we all might enjoy a good read and offered this book to us all.

Sceptical as ever, I forked out the required £10.00 and took the book home to flick through.

It didn't take me long to become engrossed in this remarkable book. There are tales and stories in here that will please you all. It must have taken a great deal of time and effort to collect all the historical information and put it together so that it is so easy to read. I found I could flick back and forth to read those articles interesting to me without feeling I had missed something.

Even better, all the profits go to charity, The REME Benevolent Fund and SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity.

I recommend you spend the £10 and get yourself a copy from www.remeshop.org.uk.

Mike is one of us - 61C vintage.

Bike Ride - John O'Groats to Lands End

Part 2 - Ron Meacher 60B

Continued from OBAN 64....

The campsite was inundated with sheep dung, and the site was only used by anglers, so the facilities were next to none.

We had now covered 474 miles.

The next morning (Day 9) we headed towards Golborne to stay with Paul's relatives. On the way we stopped off at Chorley for lunch and an old chap in his 80's came over to us and said to me 'I notice you're wearing a 'T' shirt with Alzheimers Society on it? I told him what we were doing, and for what charities. He reached into his pocket and said 'I'd like to give you this donation because my dear old mum died from Alzheimers'. In his hand was £1.50 and my eyes began to well up and I felt as though I had been given a £1000. I will remember that occasion for ever more, and he certainly inspired me even more from that day on.

We reached Paul's relative after 60 miles (534 on the speedo now), and their hospitality was second to none. A wonderful meal, comfortable rooms and they gave us £100 each towards our charities. That evening we met up with another ex 60B Mike Cleary, previously arranged by Lathe.

The next day we set off for Shrewsbury, and Paul in his usual enthusiasm had gone on well ahead and Lathe and I didn't see him, and we found our next stop high in the hills, which was a YHA bunk house.

Mileage now 608.

The next day to Monmouth was a right swine of a ride, hills and more hills and by now Paul was doing his own thing.

I was stopping more often than not and giving Lathe a hand and carry some of his kit. His only response was 'I knew you'd get stronger as the days went by and I would get weaker, and couldn't ask for a better friend to help me right now.' (If the readers who didn't know Lathe's predicament are wondering why he was continually overcome with weakness, it was because he had undergone many operations and intensive treatment for cancer not that long before the bike ride).

Monmouth was a good campsite and we actually persuaded Lathe to go for a meal with us.

Distance covered now 668 miles.

The next day was brilliant sunshine and we had the Wye Valley to look forward to. We stopped off at Tintern Abbey and then encountered one hell of a hill from then on. Eventually at the top, we viewed a wonderful scene, we overlooked Chepstow racecourse and far in the distance was the Severn Bridge.

The sight of the bridge spurred us on again and it was mostly downhill from the racecourse. Cycling over that bridge was a great experience as was the Forth Bridge in Scotland. Our destination today was Burnham-on-Sea, another campsite.

Distance now was 736 miles.

We set off from Burnham on Thursday 2nd July 2009, and only 3 days to go now. Next step was Crediton and the hills seemed to be getting steeper and longer.

Saddle soreness was something I had only heard about, but I was in severe agony with mine now, and I am sure someone filled my cycling shorts with razor blades when I wasn't looking!! Crediton was another memorable evening as we up with Mike (Paddy) Davies (60B) and his wonderful wife. (I've only ever known him as Paddy so I'm not being disrespectful by not calling him 'Major').

We were treated to a wonderful meal and a charity donation each by Paddy and his wife, so if you get to read this Paddy I can't thank you enough for what you did for us, and especially the next morning when you drove up and down the road to find us on our bikes, eventually waving us on from a lay-by.

Distance covered now 795 miles.

Friday 3rd July 2009 with 2 days to go and next stop Bodmin.

We joined the A30 at Okehampton. This must be the busiest and most dangerous road for cyclist leading to the West Country. If anyone has any thoughts of doing the END TO END bike ride keep off this road and contact me for a better and safer route that I did on my second J.O.G.L.E.

Reaching Bodmin was a wonderful surprise for me as my grandson was waiting at the campsite, and had travelled from Plymouth to take some of our kit off us.

Bike Ride - John O'Groats to Lands End

Distance at Bodmin 852 miles.

LAST DAY Saturday 4th July 2009. We were up at 5 am and on our way by 6, weather wasn't that good but who cared as we were on our way to Lands End. Our panniers were nearly empty, thanks to my grandson Gareth, but Lathe was really showing his weakness now and had to keep him between me and Paul on the busy A30.

We stopped at Hayle for lunch and was soon on our way again in pouring rain. Penzance was soon reached and the sign post said Lands End 10 miles. That 10 miles was the worst we encountered as we were so hyped up, the hills felt like we were going backwards. We stopped off for a final breather, which was at the pub known as 'The First and Last pub in England', and we now had 1 mile to go. As we rode that last mile I reflected on how deeply Lathe had dug into his energy reserves. We had crossed the finish line together and the bike computer said 914.94 miles

All our families were there with banners, flags, streamers, and tears of joy. I was totally overcome with emotion, not only to see all my family again from Fareham and Plymouth, but I had achieved something very few of us get to do, particularly in retirement. I held my friend Lathe, in a quiet moment and congratulated him, as he was absolutely drained, as all the cancer treatment and operations had taken their toll.

Lathe I dedicate this article to you and that quotation by Nelson Mandela is so apt for the hardship you went through. 'It always seems impossible until it is done'.



White Goods Operative - Mike Oulds 57B

Yvonne the Luscious was waiting patiently for me on the corner by St. Peter's church. We had recently renewed our on-off relationship. During my 'illegal holidays' from the bosom of the army we had occasionally been able to achieve a drunken snog and grope. She was a lovely girl but had illusions of grandeur in the sense that she was always trying to sing - very badly - and thought she was the reincarnation of Helen Shapiro or Dusty Springfield. It drove me nuts.

I still had a few coppers left over from my brushing adventure and we were off to The Palace. This was the local cinema which bore no resemblance whatsoever to its illustrious name. In fact it was a flea-bitten, run down emporium from a bygone age. It was frequented by all the serfs and village idiots from the immediate area and, on a good night, you could just about make out the screen through the dense cigarette smoke and if lucky just about hear the soundtrack above the shouting, stamping and rolling of coca cola bottles etc. or sometimes even a fight. It was wonderful.

Its main claim to fame was the four rows of double bucket 'luxury' seats at the rear of the cinema - especially popular with courting couples for obvious reasons. They were stained, ripped and had massive holes in the upholstery. Having grandly ordered two of these seats at the princely sum of 2s/6d each, Yvonne and I headed for a pleasant evening of sexual confrontation. I usually lost as she prudishly stated that she was saving it for the right moment - apparently!!!

The film turned out to be some British comedy of the period. I think perhaps it was "School for Scoundrels" or some similar spoof. Escorting Yvonne home afterwards we stopped at the much frequented romantic venue of the pulp mill, a local factory site by the river Thet, which produced portable toilets for caravans and suchlike (still famous to this day as the Thet Potty and can be purchased in any camping outlet for those of you who occasionally get caught short).

Its dark recesses were much favoured by excited lovers for the trembling of knees and thwacking of nicker elastic. I once again expressed my dying love for Yvonne - to no avail.

However the film had somehow planted a seed of an idea in my befuddled brain - the exact content of which I was yet unsure. Spending a restless night in bed I suddenly had what I can only define as a eureka moment - not that other kind. Although on the next morning I was somewhat

sceptical at my brainwave. The film had described various forms of scams and how someone could win friends and influence people to great advantage using methods not on a strictly legal basis.

My idea was that I would kit myself out with a new 'whistle and flute'- or suit- in a sort of gentry style with a waistcoat, white crispy shirt and all the accessories. This outfit would then be topped off with my father's old Irish Guards necktie for added taste. I then intended to scan all the East Anglian newspapers for any positions that appeared beyond my capabilities and try my best to bulls**t my way into a nice cushy job. I pictured myself then, undeservedly, as being like the cool type depicted in the modern day film "Catch Me if You Can". After all I had had some practice in such tomfoolery and I was certainly a bit delusional in regard to my abilities. To enable my crazy scheme to be realised, I begged and pleaded with members of my family and friends for a loan of the necessary finance. On threat of death or banishment from the household if my plan did not work, I eventually scraped together the necessary funds.

As Norfolk was not exactly the fashion centre of England I made my way to the only bespoke tailors available to the followers of taste in Thetford - the CO-OP!! I spent a cringingly embarrassing hour being fumbled with by a short-sighted old guy with a tattered tape measure. A receipt for the collection of a new outfit, in what I thought was a snazzy navy blue colour, was due in three weeks. My quest now began.

Initially I became disheartened, for it appeared that my search was somewhat on the optimistic side as after a week or so there was absolutely nothing available within the parameters of my expectations. But then I spotted an advert in a local rag placed by the large AEI Electronics Group (White Goods Division) in Peterborough requesting a written submission for the position of trainee operative/service manager. It was worded approximately as follows - if my memory serves me correctly:

'We require, for the county of Norfolk, based in Norwich, an applicant suitable for the post of trainee operative/service manager due to the expansion of our white goods division. Previous electrical/mechanical knowledge an advantage but not essential. Full comprehensive training will be given and a company vehicle will also be provided and can be used for private purposes' etc. etc.

I had no idea what white goods were at that point in time and did not really care. Of course I did think foolishly it might have something to do with illegal substances - but in Norfolk? What a thought! The sentence that caught my attention of course was the private use of a company vehicle. To have a set of wheels in those days, especially in Norfolk where the wheel itself was considered modern, was practically carte blanche to the world of the available female gender.

Up until then I had never applied for employment in writing in my life. Approaching one of my old school pals, who had first class GCEs in gardening, needlework, patchwork quilting and nature rambling, I requested his immediate help in formulating my application. An excellent choice I decided as he was a bricklayer or something dubious by trade.

I dread the thought of having to read the blurb again today that we put together. I remember being extremely proud of our effort and thought it was a literal work of art. On completion of my application I almost ran to the post office in excitement.

There followed a period of great expectation. After a month or two however, I had not received any reply and my dreams of a cushy job and fast buck were rapidly fading. The new outfit had in the meantime arrived and I was extremely pleased with the result. To use one of today's idioms I thought I was a real dude.

A brown official letter greeted me at breakfast one morning. I wearily opened it expecting something nasty. But no - I had been invited to attend an interview and assessment in Peterborough with none other than a Mr. R.M. Crutchworthy, Service Director, R.N. Retd. (an antagonist I would cross many swords with in my future employment) for the position of trainee service manager. Panic struck. How the hell was I going to get to Peterborough which was in the depths of the dreaded Fenlands? It was only reachable by pony express.

My thoughts turned to my learned bricklayer friend who was the proud owner of a very battered and disturbingly ugly Ford Prefect.

This specimen of top British engineering ca. 1959 possessed a mind of its own and tended to wander from one side of the road to the other and had remnants of building materials splattered around its classy interior - a perfect solution for yours truly. After much cajoling and promises of liquid reimbursement, my fine bricky pal agreed to lend me his trusty automobile.



A Wonder of British Workmanship

I clutched my mother's huge packet of soggy special Norfolk pork dripping sandwiches (perhaps she thought that I was off to the war as there was a distinct tear in her eye - although on reflection it may have been relief). Waving joyously I gunned my stallion's wheels and headed off into the future in a cloud of putrid smoke.

After a horrendous journey through the Fens fighting to keep the heap of garbage on the right side of the road, I eventually arrived at the 'Hotel of a Thousand Mouse Holes'. This was the salacious gaff where I was to be bedded for my exciting adventure. I had to that date always stayed illegally, i.e. without paying, in various hotels in England. This was during my self-appointed holidays on the road away from the army trying to evade capture from the MPs (not really - thought I would add a bit more drama to the monologue), so it was a new experience for me.

"Yes Mr. Oulds you are in room 69 (again not really - just wishful thinking chaps!),. said the young receptionist. "I have also been instructed to inform you to join all the other applicants in the conference room at 6.30 this evening."

My heart sank at the statement "all other applicants". I had naively assumed that I would be the only one invited. With ever-increasing unease I went to my room and prepared for the evening's entertainment.

Looking like a dedicated follower of East Anglian fashion in my CO-OP suit, I sauntered as casually as possible to my fate, smelling heavily of the ever popular Old Vice aftershave.

A haze of cigarette smoke greeted my entrance as I spied about twenty men seated and gazing apprehensively at a small stage at the front of the conference room. I took a pew next to a young man of about my own age who was sweating profusely.

"Alan York," he murmured nervously. Later this loony would become a good friend.

Not long after two important-looking specimens in grey suits stepped onto the podium and introduced themselves as none other than Mr. Crutchworthy - Service Director and a Mr. Clutterbuck - Training Manager. There then followed a lengthy introduction explaining the interview procedures, what exactly white goods were and outlining our schedules.

White goods as it turned out were not drugs but washing machines, refrigerators, small appliances, electric motors etc., which were all produced in the huge AEI factory somewhere nearby. Apparently all the other applicants were from various parts of the UK - each one singled out for a specific county or area, depending of course on acceptance over the assessment period. I breathed a huge sigh of relief. After a bum-numbing two hours, during which I switched off completely, everyone retreated thankfully to the hotel bar where we got to know one another over a glass or two.

The next morning my first and not last confrontation was with Mr. Crutchworthy or, as I had learnt the previous evening, 'Torpedo Crutch'. This nickname had been given him by colleagues due to his service as a submariner during WW2. I can vaguely remember, after being incorrectly classed by him as a military compatriot, being asked some inane questions mainly about my army 'career' in Germany. Otherwise the interview consisted of listening to a sort of 'The Adventure' comic book stories involving attacks on German U-boats in the Atlantic. Interview over I thankfully retreated - half thinking I should either salute or dance a hornpipe as I backed out of the door on my way to my next port of call.

"Are you interested in choral music young man?" Mr. Clutterbuck enquired as I took a seat in front of the Training Manager.

"Don't suppose you can play the organ either?" he said on seeing my mystified expression. (Now dear readers as you are all ex-squaddies you will realise what reaction sprang immediately to mind on the second enquiry - but thankfully I held my tongue!).

It turned out that this dear bachelor was a closet choral music junky and seemingly made love to a giant church organ during his exciting weekend breaks. He was always on the lookout for like minded nerds. However over the next twenty minutes I was interrogated intently by him about my technical ability. I somehow managed to convince the organ grinder that I was half capable of wiring a plug and in fact owned my own

screwdriver. Thanking the God of choristers and organ manufacturers everywhere I made my hasty exit.

On completion of the appraisal procedure we were all loaded into a bus and driven to the AEI factory for a quick tour. It was very impressive but more significantly there were lots of attractive young female factory workers employed in the facility who stared at us specimens suspiciously as we wandered embarrassingly past, pretending to look intelligent. It was then back to the bar and there followed discussions amongst us as to whether we would be the proud owners of an employment contract the next morning.

We all sat nervously awaiting our fates as the two Ronnies materialised. After a short introduction about how 'bloody marvellous' we all were, Torpedo Crutch notified us that most of us had been accepted. A visible unified sigh of relief could be heard throughout the auditorium. It only remained for us to negotiate our individual contracts with a personnel manager later on. I still have mine somewhere to this day. We were all in the hotel bar swishing our goodbye pints when Torpedo the submariner approached me.

"Young man can you swim?" he enquired with a beady eye as if he was about to up his periscope. Somewhat taken aback at this strange enquiry, I slowly replied that I had briefly been a swimming pool attendant and was quite an accomplished swimmer but at the same time detecting that perhaps something sinister lay behind his question. "Excellent. Excellent," he spouted clapping me heavily on the shoulder.

My new work mates had noticed the attention I was being given and were listening intently. Torpedo went on to pronounce that as the training course for us all was planned sometime hence, various interim plans had consequently been arranged. The advertising and marketing department of AEI was soon to launch a new type of twin tub washing machine and the powers that be had requested that two of the new recruits assist with a photo shoot.

"To do the bloody dirty work no doubt," someone behind me mumbled.

This was in preparation for brochures and advertising material and the venue for this being somewhere on the south coast. Myself and none other than Alan York had been chosen, as he was from around that vicinity. Although unable to comprehend why I had been selected, I was ecstatic at the prospect as Torpedo handed me some written instructions.

I was to report to the main office in Peterborough a few days later for further information and more importantly receive a cash float advance for expenses - what pleasure - and - wait for it - a company vehicle. I was on the verge of orgasm.

Waving goodbye to my course accomplices, I wobbled a mite unsteadily towards 'The Pig', my now half affectionate name for the Ford Prefect, as I had to my shame consumed a wee bit too much of the falling down water. How I accomplished the journey back home without serious damage to yours truly after a hair-raising drive through the Fens, was quite phenomenal.

The ecstatic screams from amongst the Oulds fraternity could be heard for miles as I informed them of my new occupational status. I could not wait to enlighten Yvonne the Luscious of my good fortune and the delight she would soon experience on the back seat of my new car. Hope springs eternal!

After an ecstatic period at home showing off to my friends, I eventually arrived in Peterborough after suffering the torment of a rail journey aboard a 'Stephenson's Rocket' of the Great Eastern Railway network. I reported full of pending excitement to the head office and received my contract and monetary cash float that had been promised. Finally I was advised to report to a Mr. Singh in the Services/MT Section to collect my new love bug and equipment. Slightly unsure what was meant by 'equipment'

I sought out Mr. Singh who was a sort of Asian version of the tall supervisor from the TV series On the Buses. He was clad in the famous British brown overall and had the obligatory clip board clamped in his hand.

Now up until this point and in the euphoria of the recent past and living, as always, in 'the world according to Mick' and, as I had not paid enough attention at the introduction speeches in the hotel, I had not given a great deal of thought as to what my exact duties would entail in my new post. I had of course been blinded by the phrase - a vehicle for personal use - as described in the newspaper advert and I was not at all prepared for the forthcoming revelations that would shatter my pipe dreams.

The long brown boney finger of my new Asian brother beckoned me to follow him to a large storeroom. There a young girl assistant proceeded to dump two sky blue one piece overalls enhanced with a blue company logo, an ohm meter together with a large metal toolbox and other strange items onto the counter. I could not help experiencing a feeling of Déjà vu which caused an uneasy stirring in my bowels as memories of a similar situation

sprang to mind. This momentous occasion was when I was issued with my first WW1 army outfit on entry into the (FLC) Forced Labour Camp, AAS Arborfield in 1957. For once dear readers I was speechless.

Unsure of why I required all this gear Brother Singh, seeing my astonishment, went on to inform me that I would have to spend a few probationary weeks in the field with the company's Field Engineers to learn the ropes before becoming a trainee service manager and I would need the provided equipment. My vision of a nice padded office chair in Norwich with a few nice lady colleagues supplying tea and cakey buns disappeared in a flash. What a revelation it was for me.

However worse news was just around the corner. Clutching my armfuls of gear I was led out into the vehicle park. Halting in front of a line of what I think were small white Ford Anglia vans with large blue company logos emblazoned on the side, Mr. Singh pointed silently at a rather worn specimen of top British manufacturing.

"Your van Mr. Odolos," he said handing me a set of keys. Unable to reply to his mispronouncing my name, as I was still in shock, I peered into the van at all kinds of weird parts, having to this day no idea for what purpose they were intended. Wishing me good luck, Brother Singh wandered off. The thoughts of delicious tremblings in the back seat with Yvonne vanished in a thrice.



A Sibling and Further Wonder of British Workmanship

(Similar to Mick's Luv Bug)

Greatly deflated, I drove off toward my next adventure somewhere down on the south coast pondering what reaction I would receive from the luscious one on my return to Thetford when she spied my new luxurious vehicle.

Farewell from the Outgoing OBAN Editor.

I would like to say a very big thank you to everyone who has helped me throughout my tenure as the OBAN Editor. Particularly all of the people who have contributed articles, plus Hampshire Press, and Trojan Logistics the two companies that have produced and distributed every edition for me.

I have now handed over to Andy Dickson, I want to thank him for doing so, and wish him the best of luck. Please continue to support him as you have me. He cannot do his job if you do not provide him with enough material to do so. The more choices he has the better **your** magazine will be. Do not forget to provide photographs where possible, they really enhance the quality of any article.

Ray Stevens 64C

Ed: The handing over comment from Ray above is a bit premature. I am still having to rely heavily on his expertise and time while I get to grips with the publishing program we use and how the magazine comes together. Ray has been absolutely brilliant with advice and help whenever I needed it. This esprit de corps is exactly what the AOBA is all about.

Definitions

TESTICULATING

Waving your arms around and talking B*lllocks.

BLAMESTORMING

Sitting around in a group, discussing why a deadline was missed or a project failed, and who was responsible.

SEAGULL MANAGER

A manager, who flies in, makes a lot of noise, craps on everything, and then leaves.

ASSMOSIS

The process by which people seem to absorb success and advancement by sucking up to the boss rather than working hard.

SALMON DAY

The experience of spending one entire day swimming upstream only to get screwed and die.

CUBE FARM

An office filled with cubicles.

PRAIRIE DOGGING

When someone yells or drops something loudly in a cube farm, and people's heads pop up over the walls to see what's going on (This also applies to applause for a promotion because there may be cake.)

SITCOMs

Single Income, Two Children, Oppressive Mortgage. What yuppies turn into when they have children and one of them stops working to stay home with the kids or start a "home business".

PERCUSSIVE MAINTENANCE

The fine art of whacking the crap out of an electronic device to get it to work again.

ADMINISPHERE

The rarefied organisational layers beginning just above the rank and file. Decisions that fall from the "adminisphere" are often profoundly inappropriate or irrelevant to the problems they were designed to solve. This is often affiliated with the dreaded "administrivia" - needless paperwork and processes.

404

Someone who's clueless. From the World Wide Web error message "404 Not Found," meaning that the requested document could not be located.

BRITNEY SPEARS

Modern Slang for 'beers', e.g. "Couple of Britney's please"

Ed: Share any 'Definitions' you have with the readership. Drop me an e-mail with any you may have. (Clean ones only, please).

Memories - Army Technical School - 1939 -1945

Arborfield Garrison

"**Garrison** - a group of troops stationed in a fortress or town to defend it, and quite often the entire garrison was mustered on the parade ground; twice a week in the case of the apprentices"

Whilst we all know the 'Brams' is situated in Arborfield here are a few other abridged points of interest courtesy of the Arborfield Local History Society.

The Garrison began life in 1904 as the Remount Depot, which was actually in Barkham Parish, on land leased from the Bearwood Estate and sold to the War Office in 1911.

The Depot had strong connections with the Garth Hunt, because its point-to-point races were held there, and would have involved many Arborfield folk. The Remount Depot closed in 1937 when many local employees feared that they would lose their jobs - but it was converted into a depot for mechanized Army vehicles as part of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC).

By 1939 the site had been transformed into the Army Technical School (Boys), taking the name 'Arborfield Garrison' because the main entrance was in the Parish of Arborfield. The Guardroom and Garrison shops were on the west side of what is now Bramshill Close.

On Friday 1st September 1939, the 'Times and Weekly News' gave a good pen-picture of the new Army Technical School, just two days before censorship prevented all but the barest of detail on military developments:

The Army in the Making Activity At Arborfield Wokingham's Neighbouring Garrison

Stretches of reinforced concrete roads, rows of galvanized iron buildings and continuous building activity almost as far as the eye can see - is one's first impression of the Army Technical School at Arborfield - the boy's camp.

The first started and now complete, this school is the last word in comfort. Electric light, central heating, sprung beds - the boys' first experience of Army life is probably vastly different from what they expected.

Most of the lads are between 14 - 18 and at present there are 500 of them under training. It is understood that the full complement is 1,000 and it is expected this number will be there by the end of October.

Gymnasiums, billiard tables, football, rugby and cricket pitches - these boys have plenty to amuse them when their work is done. In course of erection is a huge building which is to be a dance hall and cinema and will seat 1,000.

Every facility for instruction is provided - the workshops and machine shops being the last word in modern efficiency. As yet there is no band at this camp and Band Marches are relayed to the large parade ground from gramophone records amplified through loud speakers. Education facilities are provided by the War Office and a well-equipped hospital attends to any minor accident or illness.

At present the A. A. Militia, comprising 1,100 men and Reservists in 4 Batteries, have not been afforded the comfort of built quarters and they are under canvas. There is however, feverish activity on the part of the contractors in erecting and completing the wooden buildings that will very shortly "house" these men, it is to be hoped before the winter arrives.

Nearing completion too are the married quarters which closely resemble a vast housing estate [Valon Road]. Officers' quarters are rapidly being built and before very long the entire camp should be completely finished and it is understood will comprise over 20,000 people. When this time comes then we expect the effect on Wokingham will be such that there will be an influx of new traders.

For the full article go to the following link:

[http://www.arborfieldhistory.org.uk/C20/memories_Army Tech School 1939.htm](http://www.arborfieldhistory.org.uk/C20/memories_Army_Tech_School_1939.htm)

For information on housing for employees and later married quarters go to the following link:

[http://www.arborfieldhistory.org.uk/C20/properties_Garrison Housing.htm](http://www.arborfieldhistory.org.uk/C20/properties_Garrison_Housing.htm)

The REME Museum web-site gives a lot of information on the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers' connection with Arborfield, go to the following link:

<http://www.rememuseum.org.uk/>

Ed's comments: Apologies if this has been published in a previous edition. I just find it very interesting.

Welsh Mini Reunion - Andy Dickson

Another Halloween passes and another mini Welsh Reunion takes place.....

This started several years ago by Bernie Humphries and a contingent of ex apprentices who lived in Wales. The offer to attend was open to all and we had some guys travelling from all over the UK to join in.

I missed out on several as I took a job back in Australia for a few years but I am glad to say that now that I am back in the UK I can attend this annual event again.

Bernie did an excellent job again this year with the hotel and we all met on October 29th in Merthyr.

Attending were: Bernie Humphries, Dave Cosway, Ray Younger, Egon Taska, Taff Southcott, Taff Shore, Tony Moogan, Bill Everett, Tony Higgins, Don McCulloch, Brian Greenhorn and myself. Brain, Don, Tony Higgins, Bill and Bernie brought their wives along too.

Ray Younger entertained us all by doing the final day of his 22-day press up challenge. Somebody got it on video and posted the event on Facebook. Well done Ray.

The usual amount of time was spent in the bar before we all went through to dinner.

We had all chosen our meals some months ago so it was only up to Bernie to make sure everyone got what they had ordered.

Post the meal, we all ended up back in the bar again. (Taff Southcott was on soft drinks as he had to drive his Jaguar back to Abergavenny!)

Brian entertained us all with a selection of his magic tricks throughout the evening and I think he even gave a few secrets away in the process.

We all started sloping off to bed well after 1.00am.

Most of us met again at breakfast and talk got around to having another reunion in the Spring to give us an opportunity to get into shape before the main event later in the year.

A few took the opportunity to visit Rev Bev during the weekend. He hasn't been feeling too good recently.

Great night, great company, lots of laughs and plenty of good food and beer. What more could you ask for?



L - R Ray Younger, Tony Higgins, Brian Greenhorn, Don McCulloch



Dinner



The Ladies



Taff Shore, Rev Bev, Sher, Egon Taska

COME ALONG ARBORFIELD OLDBOYS!



"The moment the order came to go forward, there were smiling faces everywhere."
(Extract from letter written in the trenches of the Aisne by General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien)

ENLIST A NEW MEMBER TODAY!

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

Front Cover Photograph - The Main Gates just after re-badging in 1966

Rear Cover: Collage - Junior Company 1950's (How young do these guys look?)

TC's Odes

Now and Then

I want to go back to the days of my youth,
When society's watchwords were 'honour' and
'truth,'
Where two weeks off work was all that we had,
And food was on ration, but we were just glad
Of anything eatable - didn't care what,
We'd scrump local apples more often than not.

I want to go back to the days where we knew
That if we transgressed, then with no more ado,
We'd get belted or thumped round the ear, without
fail,
And telling our parents was of no avail,
For we'd get the same from them - we didn't dare!
Yes, we learned very quickly that life wasn't fair.

I want to go back to the days that we treasured.
The days when a man's worth was publicly measured
By the way he supported his family, how
In his day to day work, with the sweat of his brow,
Didn't need help or want it, or cry. Didn't moan,
Just wanted to live life and be left alone.

I want to go back to the days, when a child
Was allowed happy carefree days, not to run wild,
But to play and experience youth's joyful bloom,
And to treasure that memory, over too soon.
Yet to learn the real rules of life, how to respect
Other persons, and not grow with conduct
unchecked.

I want to go back to the days when the law
Was supported by all, and respected. They saw
That the rights of the public were always upheld,
Armed only with truncheon and whistle, they quelled
People's fears and stood firm against crime,
So society could live without fear all the time.

I want to go back to those days that I prized,
That my father, grandfather and friends recognised,
To the land that they'd fought for at great sacrifice,
Keeping our heritage safe, at a price
Paid in suffering and sometimes with hardship and
pain,
So their children could live, enjoy freedom again.

I want to go back to the days when I thought
That our country would thrive and forever be great,
And the future would hold such fine promise for all,
We would live in a world where no harm would
befall.
But sadly, it's plain that these things cannot be,
Without changing our attitudes, ultimately.

So, here we are now, for better or worse,
There's no going back, so don't argue and curse,
The world is now what the free thinkers have
wrought,
Idealists' rule, no more 'old-fashioned' thought,
The hard world we lived in has gone, it's a shame,
For now, please yourself, you won't get the blame!

Ring in the New

The curtains close, the stage is bare,
Another year is history,
The cast remain; the players there,
Facing future's mystery.

To those whose journey left them scarred,
I wish for them a smoother road,
And, if the passage has been hard,
A kind New Year to ease their load.

And to the sick, infirm and lame
May this year now be free of strife,
And good health once again reclaim
It's rightful place, enriching life.

So, raise your glasses, everywhere,
You ex - Brats all around the globe,
May peace and joy go with you there,
And also on those whom you love!

Guards Sergeant Majors

Into us the fear of God
They put, each time we daily trod
The sacrosanct patch that they owned,
That square, where we drilled, marched and
groaned,
Even after all these years,
The memory still perseveres
Of strident roars, the loud commands,
The tramp of boots, the marching bands.

But we were boys then, young and green,
Not realising that between
Them, they were training us for life,
To face the trials and the strife
That we'd encounter on the way,
Preparing us then, for the day
When we'd eventually take their place
And like them,

Ed: In memory of RSM McMahon

Caption Competition

I have come across a large amount of photographs that date back to 1939. Just for laughs I intend to post a photo here in each edition of OBAN to see how humorous you lot can be.

I haven't sought permission from those in the photos and assume that as they are part of the AOBA archive material I can use them without prejudice.

Try and keep you comments clean and e-mail them to me at the address inside the front cover.

I will ask the committee if we can award a prize for the most humorous offering.

Andy Dickson



Caption:

Did you know....

In the 1400's a law was set forth that a man was not allowed to beat his wife with a stick no thicker than his thumb. Hence we have "the rule of thumb".

Many years ago in Scotland, a new game was invented. It was ruled "Gentlemen Only...Ladies Forbidden"...and thus the word GOLF entered into the English language.

The first couple to be shown in bed together on prime time TV was Fred and Wilma Flintstone

Every day more money is printed for Monopoly than the US Treasury.

Men can read smaller print than women can;
Women can hear better.

Coca-Cola was originally green.

It is impossible to lick your elbow.

The average number of people airborne over the US any given hour: 61,000

Intelligent people have more zinc and copper in their hair.

The first novel ever written on a typewriter: Tom Sawyer.

Each king in a deck of playing cards represents a great king in history:

Spades - King David

Hearts - Charlemagne

Clubs - Alexander, the Great

Diamonds - Julius Caesar

$111,111,111 \times 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321$

If a statue in the park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle. If the horse has one front leg in the air the person died as a result of wounds received in battle. If the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.

Q. If you were to spell out numbers, how far would you have to go until you would find the letter "A"?

A.

Q. What do bulletproof vests, fire escapes, windshield wipers, and laser printers all have in common?

A.

Q. What is the only food that doesn't spoil?

A.

Ed: Send your answers to me on e-mail

In Shakespeare's time, mattresses were secured on bed frames by ropes. When you pulled on the ropes the mattress tightened, making the bed firmer to sleep on. Hence the phrase..... "goodnight, sleep tight."

It was the accepted practice in Babylon 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the honey month, which we know today as the honeymoon.

In English pubs, ale is ordered by pints and quarts... So in old England, when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them "Mind your pints and quarts, and settle down." It's where we get the phrase "mind your P's and Q's"

Many years ago in England, pub frequenters had a whistle baked into the rim, or handle, of their ceramic cups. When they needed a refill, they used the whistle to get some service. "Wet your whistle" is the phrase inspired by this practice.

Believe it or not,you can read this:

"I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulaclyt uestdnatnrđ waht I was rdgnieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid aoccdrnig to rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the only iprmoatnt tihg is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe."

The School Award Boards

THE SEARCH FOR THE ARBORFIELD APPRENTICE SCHOOL AWARD BOARDS UPDATE

We are now in the 5th year of the search for our missing Award Boards. Not much progress has been made, since last update, lots going on in the background looking for Bob Mount who may have important information on their movement. He was the Commandant at Arborfield during the move back to Rowcroft. This is the last recorded sighting of them and we know Bob had plans to get them all back on display. Anyone who may be able to put me in touch with Bob, please let me know.

Since the last summary, dated 18th January 2016, I have a further 2 pages of bullet points listing the additional 4 contacts, 25 emails, 9 phone calls and 4 posts on social media. Again the most significant points are included in the report below.

Jan 22nd 2016:

Rec'd an email from Al White 61B (61A) with pics of two Major Award Boards found on display in Doncaster, Victoria Cross Trust Museum.

Jan 23rd 2016:

Made contact with curator of Doncaster Museum, informed me they had been in operation for 3 years but only open to the public for one year. These boards (on display in a corridor) and two others (REME, in Veterans Bar) were donated to them by Arborfield REME Museum prior to their relocation to Lyneham. I asked if they had any other Award Boards. I was asked to send photos of our missing boards and a check would be made in their stores.

Jan 23rd 2016:

Email sent to AW to thank him for bringing them to my attention and informing him I was in touch with Doncaster.

Jan 24th 2016:

PM sent to TS, any news on his visit to Lyneham.

Jan 24th 2016:

TS replied, going to Lyneham next week.

Jan 26th 2016:

Reply from Doncaster Museum curator, they have checked both catalogue and stores, no record of our missing boards.

Jan 28th 2016:

Two updates, two photos of Doncaster boards and one of SEE boards sent to RS for next OBAN edition.

Jan 29th 2016:

Phone call to a friend, AJ, who may be able to trace BM.

Jan 30th 2016:

Update and photos posted on PMC, AA School and AAC f/b pages.

Feb 21st 2016:

Phone call from AJ, unable to trace BM, needs more details, service number would help.

Feb 21st 2016:

Service details found in London Gazette.

Feb 22nd 2016:

Details sent to AJ.

Mar 21st 2016:

Phone call from AJ confirming address I have for BM is correct. Also has a phone number to contact. After trying number is out of service.

Mar 24th 2016:

Contact made with CT of HOBA, he will call at address we have for BM.

Apr 8th 2016:

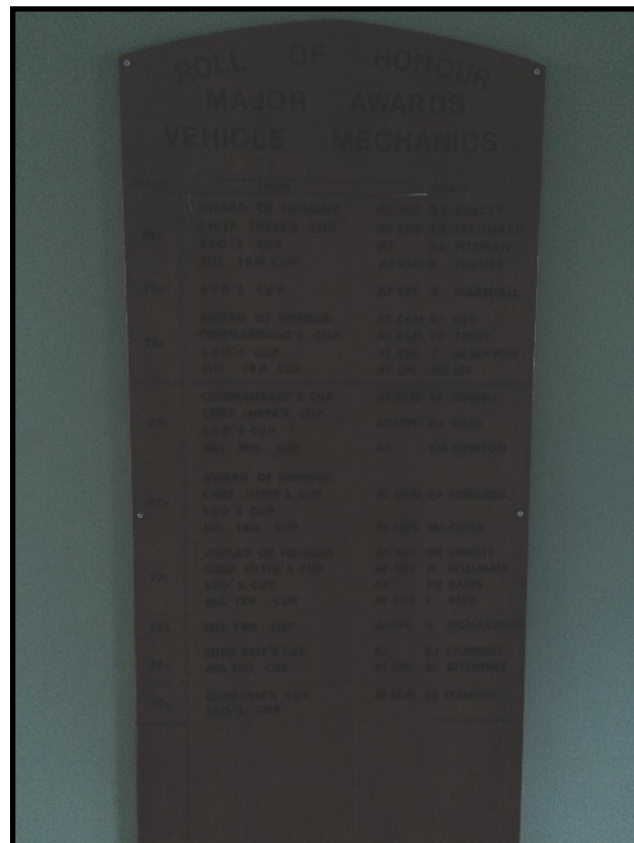
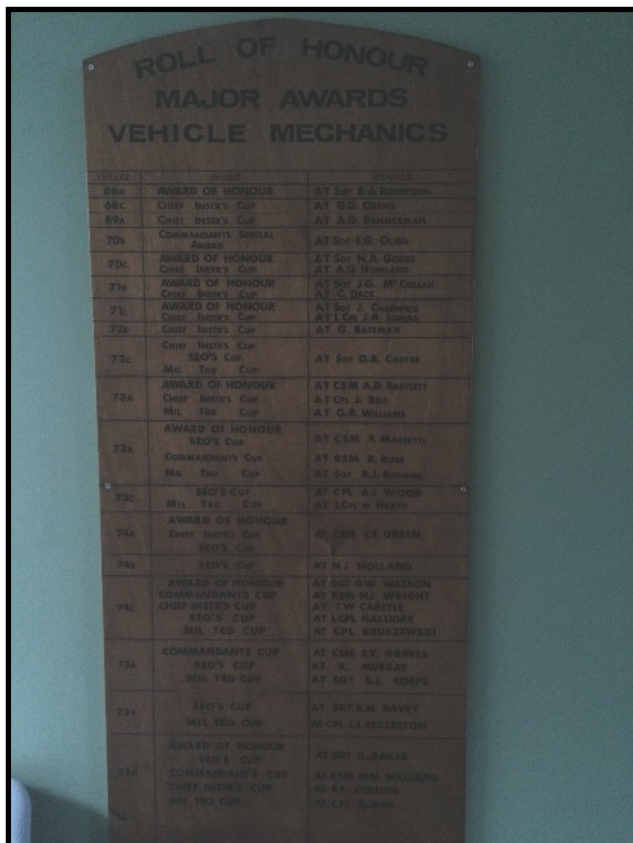
Email from CT, he called at address but BM has moved to an unknown address locally.

Aug 17th 2016:

Update on search sent to RH at REME Museum.

Sep 23rd 2016:

Contact made with SM who will arrange for someone to call at another address I have found for BM.



A group of SEE Boards found by contractors just before demolition of Rowcroft Barracks. After this near miss, instructions were given to contractors to check inside all buildings before demolition.



These two Major Award Boards were located in Doncaster Victoria Cross Trust Museum. They are on display in a corridor with two other REME boards displayed in the Veterans Bar. Al White 61B (61A) brought them to my attention, I contacted Doncaster curator who informed me, all four, were donated by Arborfield REME Museum prior to their relocation to Lyneham. The boards were part of the Vehicle Training Dept at AAC. I have sent copies to Mark Jobes, Aoba web master, to enable him to update 'Awards' section on site.

2017 Reunion - I.O.W Tours

As you know, at the last AGM, we voted to have I.O.W Tours organise our 2017 reunion as a trial. Previous reunion organisation has all be done by committee members and the toll has been substantial. Hopefully, the trial will be seamless and we will all enjoy the events as we always do. - Ed

I.O.W. Tours Limited has been established for over 27 years building up a reputation as specialists in the Association, Club and group markets. Destinations throughout the UK are featured together with Jersey, Southern Ireland and Europe for those wishing to travel further afield.

Common to all is the certainty that you will enjoy a quality holiday at value for money prices.

Director Shirley, who leads the dedicated team is very hands on in her management of the company and a firm believer that this focused, personal approach and attention to detail ensures that a perfect holiday will be enjoyed by all our customers.

Holidays offered are accommodated in hand-picked hotels and holiday centres either on half-board or full board basis, all rooms are en-suite with colour television and hospitality tray. Entertainment in the venues offer enjoyment suitable for all ages and tastes.

Over the years I.O.W. Tours has become a market leader in special interest holidays such as specialist sequence, square, ballroom and line dancing holidays, alternatively Bowls, skittles, petanque, darts, golf and fishing enthusiasts for the sports minded! All are affordable and professionally run.

We are also pleased to be involved in Reunion Holidays primarily for ex servicemen and women.

Working with the social secretaries of the associations we are pleased to tailor make each reunion to the requirements of the individual group providing elements such as room for AGM's, March Past, Remembrance Services and Gala Dinners to name but a few.

Holidays are offered with coach transport included (minimum of 10 passengers). Only coach companies handpicked for their reliability, efficiency and attitude towards good customer care are used. Excursions are frequently included in the price of the tour, as are ferry fares to the Isle of Wight, Jersey, Ireland and cross channel if appropriate. If preferred self drive holidays are also available.

We have no maximum limit on the size of group we can accommodate.

I.O.W. Tours Limited is an appointed representative of ITC Compliance Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (their registration number is 313486) and which is permitted to advise on and arrange general insurance contracts.

Our website for further information is www.iowtours.com

*Shirley Winn
Managing Director
IOW Tours Ltd
3 New Road
Lake
Sandown
Isle of Wight*

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.

Lapel Badge



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

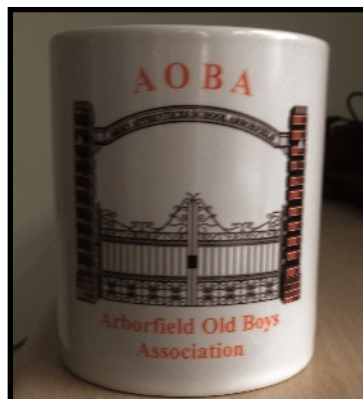
Ties



Original Company Colours
£8.00 + £1.50 P&P

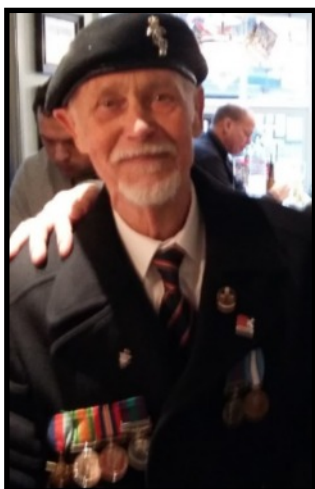


AOBA Coffee Mug
£5.00 + £1.50 P&P



Also available are a small amount of Blazer Badges @ £10.60 + £1:50 P&P,
Mugs with the AOBA badge @ £5.88 + £1:50 P&P
Please contact Laurie for overseas postage costs, and any other enquiries.

In Memoriam



Kenneth John (Kenny) Wilson
Intake 57A, Ex C Coy.
Died on 30th July 2016

Kenny joined the Army Apprentice School at Arborfield, part of The General Service Corps (GSC), on the 30th April 1957 as an Apprentice Tradesman. The trade he had chosen to study was electrician. The initial trade training period spent at the Apprentice School was 3 years. The training curriculum also included academic studies for army education certificates and plenty of sporting activities.

Having decided to join the army as a tradesman Kenny applied to take the entrance exam which he did with 6 other young lads, all aged between 14 & 15 years at the time. Entrance age limit to the Apprentice School was 15 years. They all took the exam in April/May 1956 and having passed would be called to attend an army medical board in September/October that year, for entry into the Apprentice School in February or April 1957.

This medical took place at a Ministry of Defence building on Ferry Road in Edinburgh. Quite a daunting experience for a bunch of young lads who having had a birthday were all at the grand old age of 15 years, being told to strip by a very large recruiting warrant officer! We joined a long line of National Servicemen who were having their entrance medical. You can imagine the looks of trepidation on their sweet 15 year old faces, standing naked in a room with about 60 other men, all potential national servicemen.

Kenny joined the Apprentice School on the 30th April 1957. The April intake was always known as

"The Easter Bunnies" by the lads who were enlisted 2 months before in February. Always a bone of rivalry with the Easter entry lads!

He passed out of the Apprentice School on the 17th December 1959 and after a period of leave was posted to Germany joining the British Army of the Rhine on 25th January 1960. He spent 2 years in Germany with 10th Royal Hussars, (The Shiny 10th), in Barker Barracks, Paderborn before being posted back to the UK.

During this next period in UK (1963 - 64), Kenny had to undergo a change of trade from Electrician to CET, (Control Equipment Technician), a highly complex technical trade in electronics. CETs are the experts in the guided missile systems and the tank gun electronic control systems. This change was made necessary because the trade of REME electrician was being discontinued in REME. Kenny chose to follow the complex electronic trade of CET which he excelled at.

From this course in April 1964, Kenny was posted to the 5th Royal Enniskillen Dragoon Guards, (Known as the 5th Skins), and served with the Regiment in Aden & Bahrain. He returned to the UK with the regiment and remained with them until January 1966.

His next tour of duty was in Cyprus with the United Nations Peace Keeping Force for an 8 month tour. During this period in Cyprus he was involved with Danish & Norwegian troops, which he always said was a great experience, and that it was a tour of duty he enjoyed very much.

By this time, Kenny had decided that a long military career was not for him and had decided to leave the army and seek a new career in civilian life

He left the army on the 6th November 1967 having completed 10 years 191 days with the colours. He spent a further 3 years with the Reserve Forces, a mandatory period of Reserve Service on leaving the regular army at that time.

On leaving the army Kenny trained as a TV engineer with Radio Rentals and worked with the company until he retired at age 55 years. It was also at Radio Rentals he met Lillian a receptionist with the company. They married after a short courtship.

During his 10 year army career Kenny made many friends and exceptional Army pals, most of them he kept in touch with to this day. He did this through the many Regimental and REME reunion functions he attended on an annual basis.

For many years he attended the Armistice parade at Whitehall to pay his respects to, not only the war dead, but also those old army pals who had passed on from this life in recent years.

Among his many REME pals the names that come to the fore are: John Rainey who was like a "Big Brother", (where you saw John at a reunion you would see Kenny!) Bob Bailey, John Whitehead, Tex Bradley, Sid Irwin & Jim Gardner.

His friends from 5th Skins that come to mind are: Hank Johnston, Tony Farrell, Audie Madden, Tommy Weir, Dermot McNeil & Bunny Warren to mention but a few.

Sadly the Irish boys will not be able to attend the funeral but will be there in spirit to say cheerio to Kenny. They also send their deepest sympathies to Lillian and the family. Their thoughts are with you.

From those army Lads who knew Kenny during his service. Some who served with him and some who over the years lost contact, as many do with

the nomadic army life and only saw him at reunions throughout out the year. Our message to the Lillian and the family is that we share in your great loss and will miss his presence and dry sense of humour at our future reunions.

Kenny leaves behind his wife Lillian, children Jacqueline, Nicola and James and grandson Ben. He will be sadly missed by all including his son in law Ian.



Victor Smithson 46b

Victor's son informed us as follows:

It's my sad duty to inform you of the passing of my Father this morning at the Royal Cornwall hospital after a short illness. Sgt. John Victor Smithson, 14469998, joined the Army Apprentice School in 46B intake, (33 years before me) and produced the video for OBAN, "Farewell to Arborfield" as well as being a staunch supporter of the museum.

George A. Harold 46A

It is with great sadness that we report the death of George Harold. He died, at the Royal United Hospital, Bath, on 27th July 2016 following a short illness.

George was born on 14th February 1931 in Carlisle, Cumbria. Following in his father's military footsteps (Border regiment), he joined the Army Technical School at Arborfield in February 1946, aged 15. During his time at ATS, as a member of 'A' Company, he made many lifelong friends – Norman Wright, John Beeslee, the late Roger Millard and Gerry Thompson (Tommo). Norman, John, Roger and George shared barrack rooms during their time at school, training as Armourers together. Whilst there, George also fostered his love of sport, playing cricket and football. In February 1949, along with the rest of his Intake, he left Arborfield to join REME.

During his exemplary military career with the Gloucester Regiment, George served in Korea (1950-1), BAOR (1953-4), Egypt and Cyprus (1954-7). He continued to play both cricket and football whilst home and abroad.

George met his wife, Gwen, through mutual friends in 1952, whilst stationed at Knook Camp, Wiltshire. They married in Bath on 1st January

1955, starting their life together in Cyprus where their first child, Gillian, was born.

George left the army in February 1957 and the family moved to Bath. He worked, briefly, for the Gas Board before joining Royal Mail, firstly, as a postman then moving up the ranks to management. Another daughter, Jacqui, and a son, Jonathan, completed the family. He continued his interest in sports, adding skittles and bowls to his repertoire.

George retired in February 1989, aged 58. He spent the rest of his years enjoying spending quality time with his growing family of 7 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren, having wonderful holidays, (family and sporting), both at home and abroad and playing golf.

George was a very private man and, although reticent about his army life, was always proud to attend reunions and commemorations of the Arborfield Old Boys and the Glosters, catching up with old friends and comrades and keeping up with recent events.

His funeral was held on 15th August at All Saints Church, Weston, Bath (where he and Gwen married 61 years before) followed by a reception at Lansdown Golf Club. The church was filled with family, friends, neighbours, and ex-work colleagues – a true testament to his full life and popularity.

He is greatly missed by us all.

Gwen Harold and family



Malcolm Farrell April 70 Intake

Malcolm Farrell was a man with whom I shared a common background of a very special nature. Both of us took the hard road to manhood by way of an Army Apprenticeship that saw us endure and overcome the mixed benefits that came with three years of 'boot camp' style living, while being trained as both soldiers and tradesmen.

To say that it was hard and unrelenting would not detract in any way from the lifelong effects it had on those that made it through from go to whoa! On the positive side it made us self-reliant, proficient and leaders of men, on the debit side it made us a tad cynical and bestowed us all with the inability to suffer fools gladly.

Malcolm was a standout amongst our ilk, excellent tradesman, a natural leader of men but above all, someone who never lost his innate humility and his sense of humour. His sense of humour was spontaneous, profligate, eclectic and as sharp as a razor. He was gifted in that respect and could have got a smile out of the statues on Easter Island.

Malcolm was a man whom it was easy to respect and admire, aside from his other good points he was a truly generous bloke, always ready to give something to anyone in genuine need. Not a handout he would say, rather a hand up, when someone he knew was doing it really tough. Time and again I saw evidence of this generous side to his nature and I was amazed that he could be so giving and willing to put himself out for others.

Malcolm and I shared a similar mind-set in many things, not quite everything of course but enough so that we could spar mercilessly with each other and yet not take offence, while both of us needed to truly respect another person at some level before they could be admitted into the 'inner circle' of trusted people.

I knew Mal was crook but not how ill he actually was until his beloved Ali took the time and trouble to let me know about his situation and I am forever in her debt for that kindness. Ali, myself and many, many others will be truly saddened by Mal's passing and will see the world as a duller place by far now that he is no longer sharing it with us.

Speaking for myself, I am just grateful that for a goodly time, Mal and I were mates and I tell you honestly, I would not have wanted to have missed out on that for anything, as it was a bonus I was possibly unworthy of but happy and thankful to have had.

You will be sorely missed and never forgotten by those that have been blest by your presence and your kindness Malcolm Farrell. I and others that share our background salute you and wish you well as you muster on that broad and heavenly parade ground that awaits us all.

May God bless and greet you with love.

Malcolm's final parade was at Crawley Crematorium, Sept 15th. Tony, Alex Burt and Robin Bartholomew played him off. I had the honour of also being in attendance. It was a great send off for one of our own.



Deaths Notified since the last OBAN

John Williams	51B	25th Nov 16
John Victor Smithson	46B	12th Nov 16
Kenneth Wilson	57A	30th Jul 16
Malcolm Farrell	70 (?)	26th Aug 16
Robert Dann	42C	3rd Oct 16
Ernie Cummings	39X - A	13th Nov 15
Derek Breeze	53B	16th Jul 16
George Arnold Harold	46A	27th July 16
L. V. Barnes	43B	12th Dec 16
Frank Terry	52B	12th Dec 16
Brig Edward Percival	PS 49/52	5th Oct 97
Alan Leslie Maloney	58B	20th Apr 16
Charles Patrick Hassell	54B	1st Jul 16
Brian Charlwood	May 39	10th Jun 93
Ron James Callaghan	42A	28th Aug 16
Alan Peter Castle	50	7th Jul 16
Ken Bertram Giles	42C	5th Apr 16

