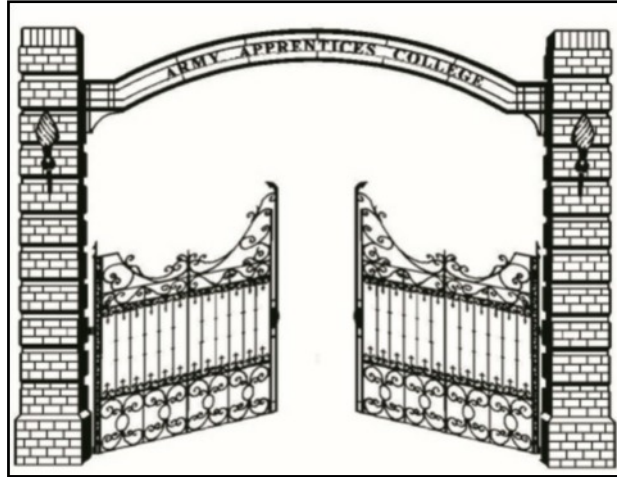


**Apr
2023**



**Issue
85**

Arborfield Old Boys Association Newsletter



www.arborfieldoldboys.co.uk

ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION



President

Colonel Jason Phillips ADC

Vice Presidents

All past Commandants

Chairman

Geordie Wright-Rivers
(77C)

Committee Advisor

Bill Cleasby
MBE, IEng, FIET, SQ(W) (61C)

Treasurer

Bob McKeegan-Brown (Retired) - (69A)

Recruitment Officer

Bruce Leslie (75C)

Bereavement Officer

Roger Traves - (57A)

Cenotaph Officer

Steve Thornes (77C)

Secretary

Nigel Canning (77C)

Vice Chairman

Mike Tizard
CEng, FIET, (76B2)

Webmaster

Mark Jobes (77C)

Database Manager

Jeff Baker (65C)

Membership Secretary

Robert Cassidy (65B)

Editor of the Association Newsletter

Andy Dickson (66B)

Committee Meetings are held at least twice a year in addition to the AGM that is held during the reunion weekend.

If you have any points you would like raised at these meetings, please contact the Secretary at least two weeks prior to the meetings.

The meeting dates and contact details for all Committee members can be found on the AOBA website.

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Front Cover: RQMS (WOII) John Robertson (Ray) Pittendriegh Who passed away on 4th Feb 2023

Rear Cover: C Squad 63B with Sgt Ray Pittendriegh

Members Passed since OBAN 84

Name	Intake	DoD	Info Received From
Peter Douglas Gripton	56B	5 Aug 22	George Vince
Stuart Vasepuru	72C	28 Jul 22	David Loxley
Peter Finn	82C	11 Ju 2022	Nicholas Molloy
Kevin J (Mitch) Mitchell	43A	30 Nov 2022	Tom Hastings
Richard George Crane	67C	20 October 2022	Widow Marella Crane
George Arthur Roberts	57A	15 Mar 2021	Widow Cilia Roberts
Frank Walter William Townsend	52B	12 Nov 2022	David Townsend
James Harrower	66A	07 Jun 2005	Peter Harrower (Belated entry)
Derek Kirkpatrick	44B	22 Jan 1900	Son Ian Kirkpatrick
Ronald Thomas Janes	42B	14 Dec 2022	BACs
Brian Ventress	60B	14 Dec 2022	Daughter Claire Ventress
Arthur Menzies Meek Gibson	57A	28 Dec 2022	Charlie Brown
Geoffrey Martin	62B	12 Jan 2023	Ted Stanford
David St John Weyers	73A	09 Sep 2012	Ian Reay 73A (Belated entry)
Ronald Pearshall	73A	28 Jul 2018	Ian Reay 73A (Belated entry)
Peter Priddle	73A	11 Jul 2005	Ian Reay 73A (Belated entry)
Joseph Harold Young	48B	29 Dec 2022	Daughter Kathleen Argyle
Paul Michael Kambanis	78B	16 Jan 2023	Widow Lisa & son Liam Tate-Kanbanis
Phillip Odling	81C	01 Jan 2023	Andrew Dickson
Trevor J Taylor	60C	Jan-23	Ted Stanford
Keith Hankin Smith	55B	06 Jan 2023	Daughter Joanne Forde
Michael A Poffley	63C	20 Jan 2023	Greg Peck
Trevor Charles Stubberfield	52A	02 Jan 2023	Andy Dickson
Leonard Michael Keetley	56B	24 Dec 2022	Widow Pamela Keetley
Raymond Vincent Evans	42B	26 May 2022	Partner Margaret Hammonds
John Robertson (Ray) Pittendreigh PS	1960-68	04 Feb 2023	Daughter Pam
Charles George Ashdown	42A	15 Feb 2022	Son Charles P Ashdown
William (Bill) Parker	46A	19 February 2023	Pete Elrick
Griag Featherston	58B	01 February 2023	Andy Cameron 58B
Ross William Kearns	74C	06 October 2022	Marford Vaughan 74C
Arthur A G Hodgkins	53B	26 February 2023	Tony Church
George S Fleck	51B	10 March 2023	Graham Goodwin 51B

Stand Easy - By TC

No need at last to turn out more than the usual 'five minutes before'
 No final rub with yellow duster assembling for the morning muster,
 Duties now are in the past it's time for you now to 'stand fast',
 You did your time, you gave your best, and now you've more than earned your rest;
 So sleep your sleep Old Soldier - Friend, contented, knowing in the end,
 That all your friends will pause awhile and fondly think of you – and smile.

AOBA Committee Succession Plan

Appointment	Name	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Remarks
Chairman	Geordie Wright-Rivers							Appointed July 9 th 2022	
Vice Chairman	Mike Tizard							Appointed July 9 th 2022	
Committee Advisor	Bill Cleasby							At AGM	
Secretary	Nigel Canning							Appointed June 2022	
Treasurer	Bob McKeegan-Brown				Appointed Jul 19			At AGM	
Membership Secretary	Robert Cassidy							Appointed Feb 2023	
OBAN Editor	Andy Dickson	Appointed Sep 16						At AGM	
Webmaster	Mark Jobes					Appointed 2020		At AGM	
Database Manager	Jeff Baker							Jul 2022	
Recruiting Officer	Bruce Leslie		Appointed 1st Sep 17					ASAP	Soonest
Bereavement Officer	Roger Traves							ASAP	
Standard Bearer	Dave Merrick				Appointed Nov 2019			At AGM	
Cenotaph Officer	Steve Thornes						Appointed July 2021	At AGM	

We are very happy to announce a change to the committee. Roger Traves will step down from his role as Bereavement Officer and will be replaced by Ian Scurr (68B) at the Annual General Meeting in June. We are always looking for new Committee members and if you feel inclined to help the Association please get in touch with me via the AOBA website Contacts page.

Geordie Wright-Rivers - AOBA Chairman

AOBA Chairman's Report



Hey Folks,

I hope you are all in fine fettle and well into your recovery plans to shed any excess pounds gained over the winter period! Personally, I'm trying but struggling!

As I write, although we are approaching the spring, I am currently looking out of my window at a snow-covered Lyneham. Here at the RHQ, we are building up to, and preparing for, the flurry of events and activities that accompany the onset of this 'warmer' time of year.

The AOBA Reunion is of course one of those, and in looking at last year's event, which I was unable to attend, it struck me with real sadness when I read the list identifying the 144 of our number lost in the preceding dark period between reunions. But isn't it fantastic, that we have an organisation such as ours that can put an arm around the friends and families of those who have left for their 'final postings' and offer them some comfort?

This year's AOBA 23 Reunion is at an advanced stage of planning, and I am very pleased to report that we currently have 130+ attendees so far. I'm sure that you will enjoy the new venue which has also been extensively renovated since we first engaged. There's a very real chance that we will have an ex-apprentice senior officer in attendance too this year, so fingers crossed for that. Be sure to book soon and please spread the word!

Each time I receive OBAN magazine, it genuinely amazes me how good it is and how much natural diversity we have in our generations, personalities, lifestyles and experiences. I read with immense pride of the courageous efforts of our 77C member who braved those early days of the Russian invasion of Ukraine to lead a small team of heroes providing essential aid and relief to the impoverished and embattled civilian population. That not all of the team survived, speaks of the horrors and difficulties he encountered over there.

May I also, shamelessly, take this opportunity to remind everyone to join REME Connect. There is much to enjoy on there and some very useful links and information for anyone seeking guidance, help or assistance. Our 'What's on Your Mind' initiative is achieving some first-class feedback from those who have been in touch. Take a look.

Enjoy the rest of this edition and please reach out to our amazing editor, Andrew Dickson 66B, who somehow never fails to deliver time and time again. He desperately needs us all to provide material, comment and experiences to fill the pages. If everyone does one small article or photo a year he would be very happy indeed!

And in mentioning one committee member, I must of course, on your behalf, offer our thanks to all of the others for their hard work and perseverance in ensuring that we remain the strong and robust organisation that we are. Each of them is a volunteer giving freely of their own time for our benefit and in keeping with our key tenets of:

Friendship

Esprit de Corps

Comradeship

Tradition

Relief and Benevolence

Arte et Marte

Geordie Wright-Rivers 77C
Chair Arborfield Old Boys Association

Secretary's Report



Spring greetings from Cornwall

Christmas has come and gone and the red suit is now stored away, boots polished and bells jingled ready for the next one.

In OBAN 84 I wrote that the bringing of the spirit and joy of Christmas became very important for me and now, as we head into Spring that philosophy remains, if anything even more strongly.

We seemed to be faced with so much negativity from all sources, telling us, almost daily that we must be angry about this thing or that thing and trying to force us into binary decisions or viewpoints. Reinforcing that view on one of our Facebook groups recently someone said that just because they weren't sad did not automatically make them happy, as if only those two opposite emotions were permissible.

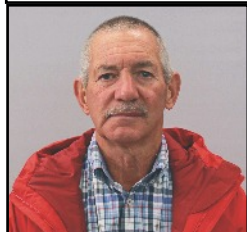
Recently I attended with many others the funeral of Paul Kambanis, one of our members and brothers where those two emotions were in sharp focus and yet conflicting. Happy to see old comrades and friends, sad for the reason we were there. Yet in the grief and sadness there was laughter, whimsical reflection and, dare I say it love for Paul's family and for each other. The strength in us to be together and united overcame anything else. We were happy, sad and other emotions in between.

My hope in this season of new growth is that we, this amazing and wonderful collection of human beings united by a combination of one, two, three or all four of the words; Army, Apprentice, Arborfield and REME can accept and celebrate differences that appear on any platform and work together for the future of our organisation.

Cornwall's motto is "Onan hag Oll" which means "One and All". That seems appropriate!

Nigel Canning 77C

Treasurer's Report



The accounts remain in a healthy state with approx. £18,200 in the Current account, £57,500 in the Business Account and £500 in our PayPal Account.

The charitable donations which were agreed at the last AGM have been paid and Defence Medical Welfare Services and Forces Online both received £1000 each.

January produced the usual concerns with members having changed their bank details and not informing us. Thus, there were numerous Direct Debits which were rejected and the members concerned had to submit new Direct debits as a consequence. The "lesson learned" is that it is easier to amend bank details than it is to resubmit a Direct Debit application. Please submit any changes through the website to me.

As a registered charity we are in a position where we can request exemptions from certain charges and the Committee are now engaged with both Microsoft and PayPal to ascertain whether we can obtain their services at reduced or no cost. Wait out for the results.

Given the healthy state of the accounts I believe that this year's Reunion will be, financially, as well supported as last year's and should be a great experience for all involved.

Bob McKeegan-Brown - 69A

Recruitment Officers Report



Dear All,

Concentrating first on the 73ers for this year's AOBA Reunion. We have seen a small increase in AOBA membership numbers, up to a total 17, as well as the 73C Facebook group, which now has around 42 members, 20% increase on my last repost. I am hopeful that numbers for both the AOBA and Facebook membership will continue to grow over the next few months. We are hopeful that any increase in numbers on the Facebook site will be reflected in the numbers of 73ers attending the reunion in June.

As well as this years reunion, I will be starting to look at recruitment for intakes from the Foundation college(s) as we have very little membership from the beginning of the 2000. I am aware that a large number of our members join from their mid-50s, but it would be great to at least sow the AOBA seeds as early as possible, if anyone has any ideas about how to kick this initiative off, or would like to assist in the process, please reach out via the contact methods mentioned below.

My contact details are either via the AOBA website, select Recruitment Officer, or by using the email address below.

bruceleslie1959@gmail.com

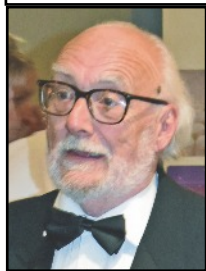
Let's continue to grow our Association and increase attendance at our next reunion and, the Cenotaph parade in London in November 2023, following a very successful weekend in London for this year's parade.

Remember that this is OUR association, so to all of you, please take every opportunity to spread the word to keep our membership numbers up.

Please also take any opportunity to advertise the, recently refurbished, AOBA website at <https://arborfieldoldboys.co.uk/>

Bruce Leslie - 75C

Data Protection Officer/Database Officer Report



Hello, members.

We have had no concerns about the security of our members' personal data.

We hold all information under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the EU GDPR of 2018.

The EU GDPR was amended as part of the Brexit negotiations and the UK retained GDPR 2020 was introduced on the 31st Dec 2020. This was accepted by the EU as suitable for data movements across EU borders.

Confused!! It goes on.

The government wanted to amend the retained GDPR legislation to make it less complicated. They introduced the Data Protection & Digital Information Bill in July 2022 to start this process. This was due a second reading in parliament on the 5th Sept 2022 to become law. This reading was cancelled on the 5th Sept 2022 after Liz Truss became PM. This bill now appears to have been cancelled.

The government introduced the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill on the 22nd Sept 2022. This bill is set to completely reform the Data Protection requirements in the UK.

Currently there is no date for a second reading, but the legislation based on this bill is expected to come into force 31st Dec 2023. It remains to be seen what the EU response to this will be.

The current UK GDPR is a "one size fits all" document and very bureaucratic. It is to be hoped that the government's efforts do make compliance by small groups like ours easier.

I will follow the government's actions over the next 9 months and ensure our Data Protection Procedures comply with any changes that they may introduce.

DPO/DBO
Jeff Baker- 65C

Membership Secretary's Report



Hello Everyone.

I guess first off I should introduce myself as I have just taken over the role of Membership Secretary. Looking at the last copy of OBAN it seems that I am the 'old man' of the committee. My intake was 65B which seems so long ago now. After learning how to put one foot in front of the other, which Corporal of Horse O'Connell seemed to think was the most important skill we had to learn, I trained as a Telecomms engineer (or 'wobbly' as my predecessor reminded me during our handover). After 3 fantastic years I passed out as A/T CSM of Junior Company. It was interesting to see the new sprogs trying to make sense of what they had let themselves in for, just like me only 3 years before.

After college I served in Leicestershire, Scotland, Cyprus and Germany. I decided to leave in 1976 and pursue a career in computers which were becoming more and more universal at that time. I managed to eke out a living as a Projects Manager/Director in a company providing industrial control and monitoring systems to many different industries. I have lived in the north Midlands, half way between Stafford and Stoke on Trent, for the past 45 years so I guess you could say I have settled here.

I joined AOBA in the year 2000 and to be honest I have not been an active member of the group, although I always enjoyed receiving the OBAN and hearing the many stories, anecdotes and jokes from ex apprentices. Reading about the plea for new members for the committee I decided to put my head above the parapet and have volunteered as the new Membership Secretary. I would like to thank Dave Sparrow for a smooth handover, despite the fact that he was in the throes of moving house and had some difficulties with Broadband. Also thanks go to the committee members that have supported me during the first few weeks, gently correcting my odd mistake.

Best Wishes
Bob Cassidy 65B

Webmaster Report



Hello to all.

There are no current issues with the website currently.
We have 664 registered Members on the AOBA website.

There have been issues with PayPal paying Members forgetting to renew their subscriptions as the Treasurer may point out. As we only have a 1 off payment via the presently installed PayPal module there has been no option to take annual subscription fees.

There is however, now a newly released PayPal Business module that allows us to take the annual payments automatically unless cancelled by the subscriber in the same way a Direct Debit works.

There are a couple of setup steps to go through with the Treasurer and some amending of text on the forms to inform Members/Prospective Members of this function, but I would recommend we take this step to avoid a great deal of work on the Treasurers behalf chasing unpaid subscriptions in future.

I will make the necessary changes to the forms on the AOBA website.

I am also supporting Andy Dickson in his efforts to decide how we proceed with the arborfield-september49ers.co.uk website that Andy saved from oblivion. No doubt you will hear more of this project over time.

Mark Jobes - 77C
Webmaster

OBAN Editors Report



Hello to you all.

Look back at OBAN 84 on page 21 for the "Before and After" article. So far I have had no photos from the membership. Does that mean you are all worried about how you look either then or now? Come on guys. Send me your photos. Don't be shy.

Also, if you refer to the article on the Ukraine and seen the sad news on the BBC and on Facebook regarding the deaths of Andrew Bagshaw and Chris Parry. Both these gentlemen were peaceful volunteers and it is such a shame that having given so much they have now paid the ultimate price. RIP guys.

I have been struggling with back pain for the last few weeks. It started when we had some nice weather and I decided to was my car. I think I got cold in my lower back and it has been pretty sore for a few weeks now. I thought I was through the worst until I was putting some trousers on this morning and I got another huge twinge. I have resisted going to the doctor so far but after a month I think I might have to make the call.

I intended putting an article together about the ages and upcoming birthdays of our active members but didn't get around to it before I filled all these pages. I did manage to put something together on the Committee Members tenure which is on page 16 of this edition. It is interesting seeing how long some members have been looking after our interests. Particularly, Roger Traves who has been doing an outstanding job for almost 16 years. What an outstanding effort. Ian Cribbes will be taking over from Roger in June and we wish him luck in this important role but I think Roger deserves our thanks and appreciation for all his hard work.

I will reiterate that when anyone hears of the passing of an ex apprentice it is important that Roger (Ian Cribbes) gets informed and with as much detail as possible. The AOBA like to send the next of kin a Remembrance Scroll but to do this we need the date of passing and family contact details. I see plenty of notifications on Facebook that ex apprentices have passed and those that post the information seem surprised when I ask for more detail.

I would ask you get the basic information and pass it onto Roger (Ian Cribbes) as soon as possible.

I will miss the reunion this year as I had a holiday booked before the dates were changed and I can't get out of it. I will miss all you guys but feel sure it will be a success in the new venue. I will be there next year.

I will make the normal request for articles for OBAN here as I won't be at the AGM in June. Filling these pages is difficult and each time I start a new edition I fear I may have to reduce the number of pages due to lack of material. This edition was no exception. The problem is that I have now run out of lengthy stories that I can spread across several issues and fear that OBAN 86 may be reduced in size, unless I get some input from the membership. Please think about contributing, long or short stories are welcome.

I hope you all enjoy the reunion weekend. I will toast you all while on my holiday.

Andy Dickson - 66B

Memoirs of George Scurr - 19th December 1924 to 28th April 2004

Ian Scurr - 68B (Continued from OBAN 84)

On May 1st 1939 when I was fourteen and a half years old, I again went to York with my dad for my final medical and signed on for an apprenticeship at Arborfield Army Technical School until I was eighteen, then for eight years with the Colours and four years on reserve. I was to be trained as a fitter. Once I had sworn in I received the King's shilling, a railway warrant and instructions as to I was to travel to Arborfield. My pay would be 11d a day.

On the morning of May 3rd 1939, along with my mother and dad, I left my home in Stillington carrying my little suitcase. We caught the 8.15am bus to York. At the railway station I had to catch the train which went direct to Reading West. Whilst waiting on York Station we met another boy, along with his dad, and he was also bound for Arborfield. His name was John Smith and he came from Billingham-on-Tees. We became friends right away. As the train came in my mother started crying and my dad had to comfort her - (Bear in mind, I was an only child, 14 years of age, leaving home for a long journey south and a war was imminent. There were no mobile phones or even a telephone in our house!) We said our goodbyes and they that I would write as soon as possible to let them know how I was getting on.

I don't remember much about the journey but I remember place names like Doncaster, Nottingham, Leicester, Oxford and then Reading where a big army truck awaited our arrival. We were loaded on with several others who had been travelling on the train and taken to Wokingham Station where we picked up more boys for the Army Technical School (Boys) at Arborfield. Here there was a brand new barracks made up of corrugated iron clad huts in the form of spider blocks consisting of six huts and a central ablutions area.

I was given the number - 168 - and allocated to room B4 'A' Company. The floor of the hut had been treated with something like creosote. The beds were in two parts, one which was pushed under the other. The mattress consisted of coil filled biscuits; we were given three or four blankets all dark brown, woolly and scratchy and a pillow.

Our Sergeant was Ozzane from Jersey and our Corporal was Salter, - both from the Hampshire Regiment. We were shown how to make our beds then taken for something to eat. We were given a pint pot mug and a knife, fork and spoon which we had to keep. We were all tired and probably homesick. Lights out was at 9.30pm and the bugler played the 'calls' at various points. Reveille sounded at 6.00am the next morning, followed by a visit from the Sgt and Cpl who told us to get washed etc.

The ablutions facilities were lovely, especially the showers, which I had never seen before! At about 7.00 am we were taken to breakfast. This was a real treat for there was a choice of cornflakes or porridge followed by something cooked, bread and butter and a mug of tea. We sat at tables which seated sixteen, the same number as slept in a room. We sat at the same table every meal.

Two boys were detailed as Mess Orderlies and had to go to the counter to collect a dish with sixteen rations on it. They then had to serve out the food. After breakfast we went back to our room where we were given the program of events. Then we started to be soldiers! We had to sweep out the room and then go out onto the Square where we were put into squads and started to do drill. In the middle of the morning we had a break and given a small bottle of full cream milk. We carried on doing drill, then physical training, education classes and Religious Instruction.

After a few days we were issued with our Army Numbers, mine was, 7595004. Then we went to the Quartermasters Stores for the first issue of kit. We were given items we would never use but they were items that had to be polished for inspections! We were soon shown how to polish boots to a very high standard and to burnish buttons and badges. Next we were shown how to lay out our kit for daily inspection and for full kit inspection which were usually held once a week. I found it rather amusing to have three of most items (one at the wash, one on and one stacked in the locker. It was the first time I had owned under pants which they called 'drawers', they were cotton cellular and about three sizes too big! Shirts were collarless and very rough for our young skins. We had one pair of brown plimsles for PT.

Our programme soon became routine and for six weeks we practiced our drill etc. At the end of the six weeks we were introduced to our workshop staff and started training as fitters. We were each issued with a set of tools and then we were taught how to use the various tools by filing pieces of metal to very flat surfaces, then drilling holes and tapping threads, then filing pieces of metal to make one piece fit into another. Chipping metal to a smooth surface became very painful as the hammers used weighed one and a half pounds (about three quarters of a kg.). We used the hammer to hit the chisel and hence cut the metal.

After several months we were classified according to our skills and the most efficient to be trained as Fitter General and the less efficient were to be trained as Fitter - Motor Vehicle. Our day usually split into work in the Workshop, Technical Education, and Education, which included English, Maths, Geography, Map reading, Imperial Military History, Current Affairs and PT. After a period of time we sat examinations. On the technical side we were taught engineering, drawing and a lot of theory about various types of equipment. During our apprenticeship we still did drill etc. Our drill instructors were very good and we soon learnt. Occasionally the R.S.M. (Ben Crook) of the Grenadier Guards would take us on parade. He had a fierce voice, but I admired him. He could remember names better than anyone I have ever known.

On one occasion I remember being taken by coach to Windsor where Ben took us to Guards Barracks, Windsor Castle and Eton College. A good day was enjoyed by all. During the summer of 1939 the last Aldershot Tattoo was held at the Rushmore Arena. We were there as ushers. This was quite a spectacle. In those days soldiers wore their Regimental dress. There were also displays by the Calvary Regiments which were very impressive. Later on, during the war this arena became a compound where vehicles commandeered from the public were stored until needed. We had a few of these vehicles at Arborfield for us to strip down and rebuild.

I had my first leave in August - the whole month! This went down very well! During the month I went to Sherburn to visit my grandparents and to show off my uniform! Unfortunately this was the last time I saw my Granny Scurr as she died shortly afterwards.

On returning from leave at the end of August we were put to work filling sand bags with earth and walls were built around the Guard room, the Colonel's office and a few other places. Plywood shutters were made to put up over the windows of all the rooms as a BLACKOUT precaution.

We were put into new Companies as more boys were expected from Fitters Training Branch at Bramby, Didcot, Hilsea (Portsmouth) and the RASC Boys School in Jersey. I went to D Company Room B4.

Our Company Sergeant Major was from the KOYKI (CSM Cantrell) our Sgt was Sgt Auld (KOSB) and our Corporal still Cpl Salter. The Company Commander was Major Johnson a very nice man. Company Quartermaster was from the Yorks and Lancs Regt. - Colour Sgt Lord. I was promoted to Boy Lance Corporal.

On Sunday 3rd. September 1939 we attended Church Service in the Camp Hall. At 11.00am the Commandant (Colonel F A Hillborn MBE) turned on a radio and we heard the Prime Minister declare that we were at war with Germany. This frightened quite a lot of us as the Colonel told us that we were now on active service and could be expected to defend our country. We had no idea what this meant.

Soon we found that some of the permanent staff was changed around and Reservists were brought in and some men went back to their regiments. We lost Sgt Auld and he was replaced by Sgt Elmore (Royal Scots). Another new Sgt was Sgt Hostler (Royal Berks). Our Education Corp Staff increased. I remember in particular Sgts Pettit and Armstrong. Armstrong was very tall, about 6ft 6ins and taught Maths. He came from York and I saw him a few times on the train when we were going home on leave.

Changes were also taking place in the Workshops. We had a lot of civilian instructors, some had been wounded in France and invalided out of the Service and so came to us. Our instructor was Mr. Parmentier. I didn't like him and I think the feeling was mutual. Our Workshop SSgt was S/Sgt Borely who was later promoted to WO1 and moved on. Our Technical Drawing Instructor was S/Sgt Hyde.

During the apprenticeship I learnt blacksmithing, welding, tin smithing, electrical and all ancillary trades.

Time came for us to sit the Army Certificate of Education 2nd. Class. I passed in Maths, English, Geography and Map reading. Practical map reading was done in the Barkham area. We took compass readings on church spires. Then we started studying for our 1st Class Certificate. I passed in all subjects except English which I did not pass until I was stationed in Cyprus.

As one of our war efforts, under the supervision of Ben Brooks who had been commissioned and was Quartermaster and Agricultural Officer we dug up the areas between the huts and planted potatoes and vegetables. Ben acquired a horse (Gilbert) and various pieces of waste ground were cultivated and provided a fair amount of food. Ben was awarded an MBE for his war efforts. Having been brought up in a farming area I soon became one of Ben's helpers.

As we settled down to the war time routine we became an integrated unit. The room members were mixed up - Arborfield, Branily, Didcot, Hilsea and Jersey. Some of the senior boys had two or more years' service and some were boy NCOs. As a Boy L/Cpl, in charge of the room, I had a few bolshy boys who made barrack room life difficult. I had to make out a duty roster for the various room jobs which had to be done. Some of the senior boys wouldn't do their jobs - so I had to do them!

D Company's sports afternoon consisted of seasonal games. I was not much good at any so I took up cross country running which I became quite good at and which I enjoyed. The incentive to get back early was to have a nice warm shower. The School had a very good rugby team run by Victor Pike, our Chaplain and an Irish International. He later became Chaplain General to the Forces in the 1950s. Boxing was compulsory for all to find out who had talent. I failed at the first attempt.

I did not have to go to lessons anymore and I became one of Ben's BOYS FOR WORK. We either worked around the camp or Ben loaned us out to local farmers. We were paid a little but I cannot remember how much. The time came for a group of us to pass out of the School. This was quite a ceremonial affair and was quite nostalgic. I was posted to York to 57 Section R.A.O.C. in the Calvary.

This was very exciting because I was being posted near to my home. However on the first morning in York I was interviewed and I was to be posted to Leicester, to a new workshop which was expanding. I was on my way immediately. On arrival in Leicester I was taken to Brentwood Road, a Territorial Drill Hall where there a large piece of ground on which the workshop was being built, certain sections were already in use, so was the drill hall. Our CO was Major Tate (in later years he was my Uncle Bill's boss at a garage in Scarborough). I soon settled in and was given driving instruction and later a test on a 6 wheeled Crossley truck. When I had passed the test I was put in a recovery crew working 12 hour shifts: 8am - 8pm. or 8pm - 8am. I liked this because I was out on the road quite a lot.

There Was a Military Staging Camp at Lutterworth where conveys moving up and down the country would stop overnight. Usually there were several vehicles which had broken down en-route and we would collect them and their driver and take them back to the workshop for repair. I soon learned to tow with 2 or 3 vehicles behind. I had to move into a room and sleep where there were people who worked odd hours cooks, regimental police etc. so we always had a good feed when we got back at night and a good cup of tea in a morning.

Unfortunately this all came to an abrupt end as I was to trade test as a Class Two Vehicle Mechanic as on October 1942 the REME was being formed which took in fitters MV From the RAOC and having been apprenticed trained I was ideal material. I passed the test and within a few weeks promoted to L/Cpl and a short time later was sent to the Ford Works at Dagenham to do a course on Ford engines, followed by courses at Vauxhall Motors (Bedford Trucks), Austin Motors, Gus(?) Motors and Morris Motors at Oxford. I think in all six weeks. When I got back to Leicester I was moved to the Armoured Vehicle Section which was in the old tram sheds at the end of Painter Street. This was good because we lived in a house which had been taken over by the Army. It was in Belgrave Road, nice and handy for the pubs! One pub in particular was the Telegraph and that was where I met Alma and her Mum and other relations. The relationship soon developed.

There were not many of us in the workshops - S/Sgt Dunse and Cpl Andrews were two that I remember. One of my jobs was to road test Bren gun Carriers. This entailed driving along a tram lined street, along Abbey Park Road to an area near the Dog Racing Stadium where there was a piece of waste ground where we had a lot of fun and some near misses! During the time I was stationed there I went home on leave and developed yellow jaundice and I was admitted to the Military Hospital in York. I was put on a terrible fat free diet which consisted of mainly steamed fish and steamed potatoes. I lost a lot of weight going from 14st 4lbs to 12st 7lbs. It took me quite a while to get back to 13st 7lbs. where I remained for many years.

On my return to Leicester I found changes had taken place. Painter Street Workshops were being closed and I was posted to Catterick. This did not seem too bad as my Uncle Harold and Auntie Gwen lived in Richmond, only a bus ride away so I would be able to visit them. The workshop was Number 1, Command Workshop, one of the biggest in the country and employed civilians as well as servicemen. One civilian employed there was my uncle's next door neighbour, who was the workshop foreman. I was put to work in the tank shop where the work was hard and dirty. I didn't like it.

On parade, one morning, the Sgt (known as Coat Hanger Joe, due to the shape of his shoulders) asked for volunteers for a special job. Several of us stepped forward - to get out of going to the workshop! We reported to the office, had a medical inspection, returned to the office and were informed that we would be joining a Special Brigade at Wrexham in N. Wales.

We were soon on our way and arrived at Hermitage Camp. The sign outside said "HOLDING OPERATION COMMANDO". What had we volunteered for?

Once in the camp we were put into a squad - all REME personnel. On the first parade we were informed what would be expected of us and if we did not like it we could return to our units. No one dared to step forward! Each morning we were asked if we wished to carry on with the training or RTU. i.e. return to units. We were put on a training programme which was pretty arduous; it included night exercises in the Ruabin Mountains. After a few weeks we were sent by train to Fort William in Scotland and then to Spean Bridge which was a Commando training area. There we did certain training but not the full course as the Infantry men did but it was still hard. Once this was completed we were classed as trained men and given our GREEN BERETS.

I was then sent to No. 4 SS Brigade (SS Special Service) LAD, (Light Aid Detachment), at Midhurst in Sussex. From there we did various exercises which took us up and down the country as far as Black Isle in Scotland. We were on a ship in Moray Firth where we spent Christmas. We went to Fort George for Christmas dinner. The weather was so rough that the waves were coming up over the cliffs and it was very cold! A piper played in the dining room the meal.

To be continued

Ian Clark - 62A

As you are all probably aware, Ian suffered a stroke a couple of years back.

He has been battling the resultant restrictions since then with remarkable stoicism. I keep in touch with Ian weekly via e-mail and he has more recently obtained an iPad and is now communicating more widely and he even called me on FaceTime recently. That was a surprise I can tell you!

The photos below were taken at the 2022 Reunion and I include them here to show how perseverance pays off.

I would never have guessed Ian would have been able to get to the reunion after all he has been through. My thanks go to Chris, his friend and partner, who has stood by him through these difficult times and managed to get Ian to join us last year.

Nice photos, Ian.

Andy Dickson 66B



Data Up-keep - Andy Dickson 66B

As part of my role as OBAN editor I have joined several Facebook pages just to keep in touch with ex Apprentices. These Facebook pages are sometimes very general and others a very Div specific. (Great that you guys have your own Facebook pages to keep in touch with all your mates). When a significant anniversary comes around you have the perfect tool for getting your Div motivated to come to a reunion.

In all these Facebook pages I keep coming across messages about ex Apprentices that have passed away. Where possible, I contact the person who posted the information and ask that they collect as much detail of the NOK and I pass this onto our Bereavement Officer, (Roger Traves). Roger then does his thing and contacts the family to see if they would like to receive a scroll on behalf of the AOBA.

It would make it a lot easier if the person posting the information made contact with Roger via the AOBA Website Contacts Page and provided the available information directly.

I have posted this message on several Facebook sites some time ago but it seems the message is not getting through and I still end up chasing details.

Also, I still get OBAN's returned to me, sometimes months after the mailing. In one recent case the newsletter went all the way to the USA and then back to me.

In some cases this is inevitable when someone passes away but in other cases it is just that the member has failed to tell us that they have moved house!

C'mon guys. It is not complicated. Just go to the AOBA website and tell us you have moved and save us some postage.

Andy Dickson 66B

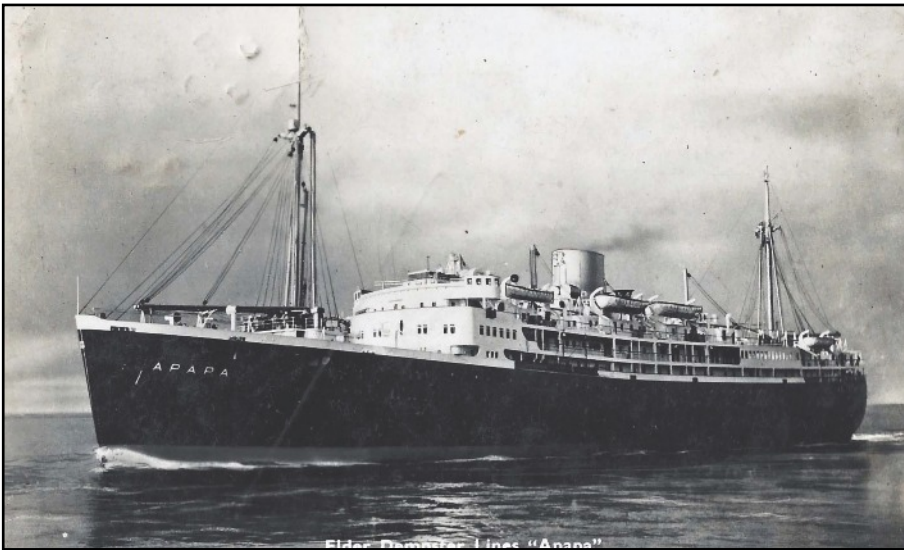
Out of Africa - Rob Castell 64A

In August 1948, just before my first birthday, my father, then a REME staff sergeant, was posted from Warley in Essex to No1 Command Workshops, Yaba, Nigeria in what was then called British West Africa.

Almost a year later, in July 1949, my mother and I travelled by train from Essex, where we were living with my grandparents, to Liverpool. Here, along with 291 other passengers, we boarded the Elder Dempster Line 11644-ton MV Apapa, captained by JJ Smith.

On July 29th we left for the two-week voyage through the Bay of Biscay and around the west coast of Africa calling in at Las Palmas, Bathgate, Freetown and the Gold Coast, on our way to eventually dock in Lagos and join my father in Nigeria.

The journey was not without incident and tragically one of the other children travelling with us was lost overboard during the voyage.



MV Apapa

The MV Apapa was named after the suburb of Lagos in which we would eventually live and was built in 1947, along with her sister ship the Accra, specifically for the Liverpool to West Africa journey. She was eventually sold in 1968 to a Hong Kong company for use on the Hong Kong to Penang run.

Interestingly, on the Apapa's return trip to Liverpool from Nigeria in August 1948, she brought with her the Nigerian national football team, the first team ever to leave West Africa to play anywhere abroad. The team played nine matches in five weeks against amateur teams in the UK, winning only one. The team was notable for insisting to play all their matches barefoot, and there is a

film on YouTube of them being coached by Tom Finney and then going on to play against Marine Crosby F.C., a team which still plays in the Northern Premier League.

Our first quarter was in a large detached house in Yaba which we shared with a french family. A short time later we moved to our new quarter, which was in Apapa, and was a large colonial style detached bungalow with a long drive and extensive grounds.

As much as I can remember there was an active social scene for my parents and life was generally good. We would regularly go to the beach, either Victoria or Tarkwa Bay which was reached only by army launch.

We had servants, who lived in accommodation in our grounds, to help round the house and I would join in with their children's games. On one occasion my mother had reason to sack one of the servants for a major misdemeanour and he felt this to be unjust, whether it was or not I don't know, but he set the local 'Juju' man on us. He came up the drive to our bungalow singing and chanting dressed in his witch doctor outfit ready to put a curse on my mother, who promptly set our corgi on him whereupon he fled. You didn't mess with mum, although only aged 25 she was a tough Welsh woman from the Valleys.

Mostly the Nigerians were very friendly and well disposed towards having the British in their country and my mother and I would travel to Lagos to go shopping in Kingsway, a large department store. On one of these trips, when we missed the army transport home, we had to cross the lagoon between Lagos and Apapa during a storm in a canoe paddled by one of the locals and then walk the rest of the way to our bungalow.



Juju Man

This was the time of post-war rationing and hardship in the UK and every now and then my mother would send to my grandparents a foot square Huntley & Palmers biscuit tin packed with non-perishable food items that were in short supply, this package would have to be sent by sea.

I started school while in Nigeria, being taken there and back daily in an Army three-tonner, a QL I believe, with all the other kids.



G-AHOY

We returned to the UK several times on leave while in Africa but after four years there my father was eventually posted to Shoeburyness in Essex and our final trip home was in 1953. We flew in a Hunting Air Vickers Viking 1, which was a development of the Wellington, the war time twin engined long range medium bomber. The registration was G-AHOY and it carried a crew of five and twenty-one passengers. G-AHOY was eventually scrapped at Manston in Kent in 1968.

Although the aircraft was described as 'long range' it was definitely not, and the journey from Nigeria took three days, whereas today it takes little over six hours by passenger jet. We flew at an airspeed of 185 to 200 mph and a height above sea level of between 8000 and 10500 feet, although when we were flying over the Atlas Mountains in Morocco this was reduced to only 4000 feet above ground level. The captain of the aircraft was called Blackett and he would every so often pass round to the passengers handwritten flight information slips.



Luxurious Seating

HUNTING AIR TRAVEL LIMITED		HUNTING AIR TRAVEL LIMITED	
Flight Information		Flight Information	
From Captain	BLACKETT	From Captain	BLACKETT
Aircraft	Viking G-AHOY	Aircraft	Viking G-AHOY
Position at	16.14 G.M.T. 17.14 Local Time	Position at	17.00 G.M.T. 18.00 Local Time
will be	Over the Atlas Mountains	will be	Spanish Coast. 3000 ft
Height above sea level	10500	Height above sea level	2500
Height above ground level	4000	Height above ground level	3500
Air speed	185 mph. Ground speed	Air speed	200
We are	15 minutes ahead of British schedule	We are	30 minutes ahead of British schedule
Estimated time of arrival at	GIBRALTAR	Estimated time of arrival at	BORDEAUX
to	16.55 G.M.T. 17.55 Local Time	to	02.45 G.M.T. 03.45 Local Time
Remarks	We will be able to refuel at Moroccan Coast. 5000 ft. West of the Bay of 16.57 G.M.T. 17.22 Local	Remarks	
Please pass to other passengers		Please pass to other passengers	

My father kept some of these and a record of our stops and flight times between them. These show that we took off from Ikeka in Nigeria at 1pm, and two hours later landed in Kaduna in Nigeria for refuelling. Then off to Kano Nigeria for an overnight stop. A day's flying and we were not even out of Nigeria yet! The next day we took off at 5am for Gao in Mali to refuel, refuelled again at Awlef in Algeria and then flew on to Gibraltar for another overnight stop, staying at The Rock hotel. The next day we took off at 6.47am for Bordeaux, refuelled and then finally landed at Blackbushe in Hampshire at 1.45pm. This was a total flying time of over twenty-nine hours in a three day period.

I can distinctly remember that the air hostess, because it was around the time of the Queen's coronation, made us children on board paper crowns, decorating them with her lipstick and nail varnish for make believe jewels.



Landing at Gibraltar

Flight Information Slips

We were then back in Blighty, with the post-war austerity and rationing of the early fifties, our adventure in Africa and all the benefits that came with it gone.

We were out of Africa.

We were back to reality, and, after a short driving holiday in the West Country, again living with my grandparents in their Victorian semi in Essex.

We were not to travel abroad again until 1962 when my father was posted to Malta.

Rob Castell - 64A



Dad in Gibraltar

Carry on Camping (1959) - Arthur Ward 50B

When returning to U.K. I joined permanent Staff of A A S, Chepstow, Mon. Oops! Most REME had moved to Carlisle so that Apprentice training at Beachly would now be for Royal Engineers.

During their summer leave some boys who had parents out of the country would stay with near relatives or arrange other directions.

One of our R.A.E.C. W.O.s called N'eddy Bedford and his wife had decided to go on a camping drive all the way to Spain. They invited my wife, Philomena, and I to join them. They were also taking four senior A/T.s who were without any leave addresses. N'eddy owned a large Van with folding seats which had room enough for tents, cases and food packs.

We decided to join this group even although camping was not one of my delights having spent too many years living in army tents. We set off early morning arriving at the Dover - Calais Ferry then to continue daily to find suitable camping sites along the way. Often, in those days the sites would be quite basic causing us to look for sites close to a village restaurant just to avoid camp cooking.

Without using the major routes south, on our journey to Spain, the views did not encourage the use of a camera so that each day we were always glad to arrive somewhere which could look much the same. The French inhabitants always seemed to be indifferent to tourists or campers by giving the impression that we were intruding.

The Van always seemed to be sentenced to hard labour, yet did not steam up until reaching the point we had to climb the Pyrenees causing it to stop twice on the way up. At the second steaming stop I would become a tourist attraction to people who were also making the climb. This was not my intention but only because while carrying my camera and walking across the high ridge above a waterfall, the camera strap broke so that it fell into the pools below. When stripping down to my shreddies,

I entered the pool diving and hoping to find the camera. Each time that I surfaced, there seemed to be more tourists taking photo's, perhaps believing that I was a local just fishing for something. At last I would redeem the camera which was quite useless having its own spirit level bubble floating inside the lens.

Later we arrived in Andorra, a picturesque small country which after a meal we were soon to enter a much harsher Spanish terrain. Our journey south within central areas through the Sierra de Gredos seemed to have its own Sahara so that we were all happy to arrive and stay at a cool hotel in Zaragoza. There, while our wives went shopping, we decided to visit the local Bull Ring to watch the Bull fights which seemed to excite only the Spanish locals but would leave me feeling that it was all a fancy dressed up butchers shop. Olay!

There being so little of other interests in the heat of that town we decided to make for the coast near Barcelona where the camping sites, being close to the beaches, had the appearance of some favourite area used for the mass escape of the tourist Lemmings to the sea.

In some parts it was hard to find the coastal road because of the continual humanity making their way to cross it. Our one day on that crowded beach together with the constantly loud camp site entertainment music was enough. It was soon time to head north on the coastal route taking us at last back to France where we intended a day visit to Lourdes.

There on every street were shops which seemed only to sell a mass of religious objects. The area had the look of one great tourist bus park. After visiting the main site of prayer we decided to leave and find some cheaper area to camp for the night.

We were now to begin our return for UK where, when arriving at a large town, we noted that there was a great church at its highest point. Our camp site was small with all the amenities so that after setting up our tents and meals, our two wives decided to settle for the evening. N'eddy Bedford, the four A/Ts and myself were to explore the town so that by first entering a bar as part of our evening route, its owner informed us that the Church priest was an Irishman. We continued walking up hill until reaching the church entrance where in the dark shadows was the priest standing as if waiting for our arrival!

We explained that we were English only to hear him reply that we must have been sent from Heaven because there was a Hearse coming from Paris and he could find no one to carry its coffin inside. We thought not to say that in truth that it was only the pub who had sent us but stood waiting with him until the mother and daughter escorting the coffin arrived. The six of us were then to reverently carry the deceased heavy coffin into this place of rest in front of the Altar where we sat quietly while a short prayer service with the family was held, after which we would later join him to visit the local restaurant for a coffee while explaining our journey and hearing his thanks. Our change to coffee was because Priests in France were frowned upon if seen drinking alcohol in town.

When returning to the camp site our wives sat for a while with expressions of some disbelief as we explained that we had only just been to church. Much of the remaining areas of our return journey to reach the Channel ferry were to become unworthy of a mention in any tourist write up. It was a journey where everyone was happy to have taken part but glad, at last, to have left it all behind. Hi dee hi!!

Arthur Ward - 50B

Committee Members Tenure - Rob Castell 64A/Andy Dickson 66B

Rob Castell contacted me, (Andy Dickson), some months back and suggested it might be a good idea to publish the tenure of all Committee Members where we had the information.

I went back over the OBAN copies I have that started with edition 1 from Spring 1992.

Green boxes indicate incumbents and I have marked in red boxes those with lengthy service to the AOBA

Here are the results:

Christian Name	Surname	Div	Position	Start	End	Years	Comments
Keith	Evans	45A	Assistant Secretary	Oct-09	Autumn 2011	1.92	
Keith	Evans	45A	Assistant Secretary	Autumn 1992	Spring 1994	1.58	
Mick T	Harold	53B	Assistant Secretary	Spring 1994	Spring 2002	8.00	
D F	Vaughn	68A	Assistant Secretary	Spring 2002	Autumn 2003	1.42	
Roger	Traves	57A	Bereavement Officer	Jun-07	14-Mar-23	15.75	Incumbent
Steve	Thornes	77C	Cenetaph Officer	Dec-22	14-Mar-23	0.25	Incumbent
Brian G J	Hutchins	61B	Chairman	Oct-09	Sep-15	5.92	
Mike	Tizard	76B2	Chairman	Sep-15	Aug-22	6.92	
Geordie	Wright-Rivers	77C	Chairman	Aug-22	14-Mar-23	0.58	Incumbent
Mike C	Dorwood	60A	Chairman	Autumn 1994	Summer 1996	1.92	
Andrew	Phillips	PS (?)	Chairman	Autumn 2003	Oct-09	6.17	
Peter H	Gibson	PS	Chairman	Spring 1992	Autumn 1994	2.33	
D A	McAvoy	74C	Chairman	Spring 2001	Autumn 2003	2.33	
Nigel	Moore	PS	Chairman	Summer 1996	Summer 1998	2.00	
Jim	Mitchell	PS (?)	Chairman	Summer 1998	Spring 2001	2.75	
Ian	Clark	62A	Database Manager	May-17	Aug-22	5.25	
Jeff	Baker	65C	Database Manager	Aug-22	14-Mar-23	0.58	Incumbent
Bob	Cassidy	65B	Membership Secretary/Registrar	Feb-23	14-Mar-23	0.08	Incumbent
Tim	Smithson	79C	Membership Secretary/Registrar	Apr-18	Aug-18	0.33	
Dave	Sparrow	76B2	Membership Secretary/Registrar	Aug-18	14-Mar-23	4.58	
Peter H	Gibson	PS	Membership Secretary/Registrar	Autumn 1997	Autumn 2011	14.00	
Alec	Powell	64C	Membership Secretary/Registrar	Autumn 2011	Apr-18	6.67	
John F	Northam	47A	Membership Secretary/Registrar	Winter 1995	Autumn 1997	1.67	
Peter	Gripton	56B	OBAN Editor	Oct-09	Mar-12	2.42	
Ray	Stevens	60B	OBAN Editor	Mar-12	Jan-17	4.83	
Andy	Dickson	66B	OBAN Editor	Jan-17	14-Mar-23	6.17	Incumbent
John F	Northam	47A	OBAN Editor	Spring 1992	Winter 1995	3.67	
Brian	Hornsey	54A	OBAN Editor	Winter 1995	Oct-09	13.83	
Fred	Mills	51B	Recruitment Officer	Oct-09	Mar-12	2.42	
Barrie	Parker	65C	Recruitment Officer	Mar-12	Jan-15	2.83	
Rob	Castell	64A	Recruitment Officer	Jan-15	Dec-17	2.92	
Bruce	Leslie	75C	Recruitment Officer	Dec-17	14-Mar-23	5.25	Incumbent
David	Schofield	65A	Recruitment Officer	Autumn 1999	Winter 2003	4.33	
L K	Anderson	58A	Recruitment Officer	Winter 2003	Oct-09	5.83	
Phil	Ellaway	73C	Secretary	Sep-16	Mar-22	5.50	
Nigel	Deacon	77C	Secretary	Mar-22	Aug-22	0.42	
Nigel	Canning	77C	Secretary	Aug-22	14-Mar-23	0.58	Incumbent
David	Schofield	65A	Secretary	Autumn 2011	Sep-16	5.08	
Larry	Le Var	47A	Secretary	Spring 1992	Spring 1998	6.00	
Bob	Hambly	64A	Secretary	Spring 1998	Summer 1999	1.25	
Bill	Cleasby	61C	Secretary	Summer 1999	Autumn 2011	12.08	
Laurie	Blakely	61B	Treasurer	Jan-14	Aug-19	5.58	
Bob	McKeegan-Brown	69A	Treasurer	Aug-19	14-Mar-23	3.58	Incumbent
Bob	Hambly	64A	Treasurer	Autumn 1997	Autumn 1999	2.00	
Mike	Davies	60B	Treasurer	Autumn 1999	Winter 2000	1.33	
Peter	A'hearne	PS (?)	Treasurer	Spring 1992	Winter 1995	3.67	
Gillian A	Apperley	PS (?)	Treasurer	Summer 1997	Autumn 97	0.08	
Graham M	Duncanson	PS	Treasurer	Winter 1995	Autumn 1997	1.67	
Terry	Knee	63C	Treasurer	Winter 2000	Jan-14	13.08	
Ian	Cooper	72C	Vice Chairman	Oct-09	Autumn 2011	1.83	
Bill	Cleasby	61C	Vice Chairman	Mar-12	14-Mar-23	11.00	Incumbent
Mike	Tizard	76B2	Vice Chairman	Aug-22	14-Mar-23	0.58	Incumbent
Brian G J	Hutchins	61B	Vice Chairman	Autumn 1994	Autumn 1999	5.00	
I	Swinton	62C	Vice Chairman	Autumn 1999	Autumn 2000	1.00	
D F	Vaughn	68A	Vice Chairman	Autumn 2003	Oct-09	6.17	
Russ A	Kenyon	77C	Vice Chairman	Autumn 2011	Mar-12	0.58	
Mike	Sibbons	61C	Vice Chairman	Spring 1992	Autumn 1994	2.33	
Terry	Knee	63C	Vice Chairman	Autumn 2003	Winter 2003	2.67	
David	Schofield	65A	Webmaster	Oct-09	Autumn 2011	1.83	
Mark	Jobes	77C	Webmaster	Jan-16	Apr-19	3.25	
Ian	Clark	62A	Webmaster	Apr-19	Jul-20	1.25	
Mark	Jobes	77C	Webmaster	Jul-20	14-Mar-23	2.67	Incumbent

Time Travel - Trevor Stubberfield - 52A

From the September 49ers Website

Observations by Trevor STUBBERFIELD (52A) in e-mails to George MILLIE (49B)

"I had a call from Ted *Fusilier* BLOWERS the other day - ain't it exciting? I send things to you today and you receive them in my tomorrow. You answer in your today and I receive them in my today with tomorrow's date on them. 'Phone Ted at the right time and today I can speak to him in my yesterday which is his today, yet he is speaking to me today in his tomorrow which is my today. Now, if we were all on the 'phone together, think of the time-span. And they say time travel doesn't exist! I hope you followed that closely, ..."

Published: 8th August 2004

"Second Thoughts"

With the demise of *Concord* we can no longer breakfast in London and fly to New York in time for another breakfast, but by sending e-mails or making 'phone calls we can still travel across time zones. It made me think when, in one day, I e-mailed George Millie in Queensland, Oz and received a 'phone call from Ted *Fusilier* Blowers in Alberta, Canada. Having read the above I thought it seemed a bit complicated - this is the simplified version.

If I e-mail George in the afternoon, I send it in my today, which is George's yesterday. George receives it in his today which is actually my tomorrow. He replies in his today - my tomorrow - and I receive it in my today with tomorrow's date on it.

If I were to e-mail Ted in the early morning I would send it in my today, which is Ted's tomorrow. He would receive it in his today, which is my yesterday, but it would have tomorrow's date on it for him. If he replies in his today - my yesterday - I would receive it today with yesterday's date on it although both e-mails were sent in one 24 hour period.

It really stretches the imagination if George e-mails Ted because other factors then come into play.

We know that in the Northern and Southern hemispheres, when you pull the plug in the bath, the water goes down the hole in different directions, clockwise or anti-clockwise depending in which half you are at the time. If there was a connecting pipe between the two holes then in the middle of the earth there would be a maelstrom as the contra-rotating waters met. I think that's where NTL, or **Nasty Telecomms Ltd**, send half of my e-mails. Obviously the time zones that e-mails cross when going from Oz to Canada depend on which way round the globe they travel. Is it quicker clockwise or anti-clockwise? I'm sure that somebody somewhere could get a Master's Degree out of this subject.

I hope this version made it easier to follow than my previous effort. Questions will be asked later.

Published: 12th September 2004

Company Colour Ties

New company colour ties are now available via the AOBA website.

Mark Jobes has put an on-line ordering system in place and all you need to do is click on the link on the opening page and fill in the form that the link takes you to.

Ties are £10.00 each and are inclusive of postage.

Here is the link:

<https://arborfieldoldboys.co.uk/new-company-ties-now-available/>

In addition, I visited the REME Museum recently and noticed that there are a selection of berets available for just under £16.00

You can order these on-line at the REME Museum Shop.



The September 49ers Website - Andy Dickson 66B

Many of you will be aware of the arborfield-september49ers.co.uk website.

The site was started quite a few years ago by George Millie (49B) and subsequently managed by a few ex boys, more recently by Trevor Stubberfield (52A).

There is/was a wealth of information held on the site and referenced both time at Arborfield and afterwards both in the Army and civilian life. The site contained over 1,230 pages and 15,665 files including many photographs.

I contacted Trevor Stubberfield in October 2017 to see if there was some way the AOBA could secure the data for posterity. (Maybe I am psychic and could see what was coming.....).

Trevor thanked us, the AOBA Committee, for our interest but felt that the site should remain independent. His reasoning was understandable but didn't take into consideration the consequences should something major occur. There was quite some bad blood about things that had happened in the past prior to my interest in the site but no amount of attempted persuasion on my part would budge Roger from his position. His comments in his e-mail to me were quote, *"Despite rumours to the contrary, neither dementia or death have had their way with me. I still have some of my faculties functioning"*.

Roll on a few years and I discovered through the grapevine that Roger passed away on January 2nd, 2022 from a COVID -19 related issue.

So, the next chapter in this saga starts.

My attempts to discover who "owned" the site and the data were getting me nowhere. I put the project on the back burner until I could work out how to proceed. It wasn't until October 2022 I found out the the fees for the site were due in December and unless I got my act together the site would close and all the data would be lost.

I finally found out who the webhost was and opened dialogue via e-mail with them. I explained that while Trevor was the current "manager" of the site he was in fact only the last in a succession of "managers" and that the data did not belong to him. This had no affect on the opinions of the people at the webhost and they asked I supply a copy of the Death Certificate of Trevor and a letter ceding the "ownership" to me. I also explained that the AOBA was a registered charity and that I was an officer of the charity. Our interest was not commercial and was only to preserve the data for the current and future members of the AOBA.

Not so easy.

I had the phone number of Trevor's widow from our AOBA records and called her.

She had no knowledge of the website and that the computer had remained turned off since Trevor had passed. And, by the way, "please don't call me again".

Back to the webhost with another lengthy explanation and e-mail exchange with no shift in the position they were taking. They suggested that I register a domain name with them so that they could give me access to the site name initially and if I managed to get what they required somewhere they could put the data.

The domain name was created and paid for.

The next issue was the death certificate.

All this time I had been in contact with Max Warwick and Greg Peck (In Australia), who both had a past interest in the 49ers website. Indeed Greg is a moderator on the 49ers Forum still today. Many e-mails were going back and forth between the three of us and Max suggested I contact the local Registry office, where Trevor had lived and see if I could get a copy of the death certificate.

This was quite an easy process. Fill in a form, pay a fee and they would send a copy to me. A couple of phone calls between me and Registry Office to clarify a few points and the next thing I know the certificate turns up in my mail box. "Ripper" I thought. Scanned it and sent it off to the webshost with high expectations. (The website was still accessible at this point but time was running out as the end of the year approached.

My hopes were dashed when the webhost insisted on the authorisation letter from Trevor's NOK.

Much gnashing of teeth and the odd swearword were uttered.

In parallel, I have been talking to Mark Jobes, our Webmaster, initially to get basic advise about the 49ers website and then later on how we could preserve the data. Mark indicated that there would need to be a lot of work if we took the website over as there were security concerns all through the site. This was also confirmed my Max Warwick when he told me that some of his photos of his time in Libya had been stolen from the site and were being used on another site.

Mark found a program that would "clone" the 49ers website and simultaneously we ran the program and downloaded what we could. This wasn't what I expected in that it just downloaded the data but with no structure. Bummer.

To try and replicate the structure I started to print to .pdf each page. This created a huge amount of files (468 Files, 2,294 pages) on my hard drive and I was hard at this task when the site became unavailable. I e-mailed the webhost and asked what the issue was and they informed me they had taken the site down as nobody had paid the fees attached.

Very frustrating! We won't give you the data and because you haven't paid the fees the site has been removed from public view. I assume there is some logic there.

I was sat contemplating the parentage of those concerned at the webhost one afternoon when I had an idea. I knew we had some members who lived close to where Trevor had lived and I knew Trevor's widow was still living in the family home. I wondered if there was a chance to get somebody to go around to his house and knock on the door!

The data files we hold showed that my old mucker Ray Younger (66B same Div as me) lived within a stones throw of Trevor's house. I contacted Ray and we exchanged a few phone calls and e-mails and he agreed that he would go a knocking. Ray had no idea Trevor lived so close and in all the years they both attended reunions at Arborfield they never realised how close together they lived.

Anyway, it turned out Ray's help wasn't necessary as the duly signed authorisation letter arrived via snail mail on January 7th. I was elated and felt that the end was in site and that the site would soon be saved for posterity. I scanned the letter and sent it off to the webhost in the best of spirits.

You guessed it! There was another hurdle. They needed proof that Trevor's wife was who she said she was and required proof. A copy of a drivers licence, passport or something similar would do.

There is an Australian term for my feelings at this point. 'Ropeable'.

I had to go somewhere quiet for a few moments to prevent me firing off a nasty e-mail to the webhost.

After some contemplation, I tried explaining again that the lady concerned was in her 80's and had already asked me not to telephone her again. They were unsympathetic and refused to move their position. (Cutting off your nose to spite your face came to mind).

The original authorisation letter came with a note attached signed by Trevor's daughter so I thought it was worth another try at getting what the webhost wanted and I penned another begging letter and posted it. (Each of my letters have included a stamped and return addressed envelope to try and make this process as easy as possible at the other end).

17th Jan - I am waiting for a response.

18th Jan 2023 - The required NOK confirmation arrived in the mail today. Duly scanned and sent off to the webhost and hey presto, I am now controlling the site and it is back live, for now.

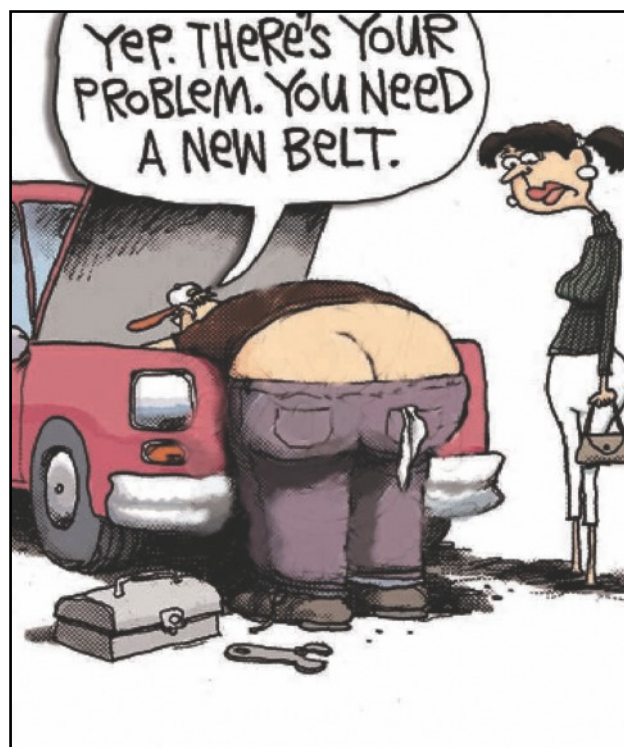
I need to discuss how we manage this site with all Committee members and this will happen at the next meeting in March. In the meantime there is a lot of background work required on what our next steps are.

Phew.....

Andy Dickson 66B

As I get older I realize:

1. I talk to myself, because sometimes I need expert advice.
2. Sometimes I roll my eyes outloud.
3. I don't need anger management, I need people to stop pissing me off.
4. My people skills are just fine. It's my tolerance of idiots that needs work.
5. The biggest lie I tell myself is, "I don't need to write that down, I'll remember it."
6. When I was a child I thought naptime was punishment. Now it's like a mini-vacation.
7. The day the world runs out of wine is just too terrible to think about.
8. Even duct tape can't fix stupid, but it can muffle the sound.
9. Wouldn't it be great if we could put ourselves in the dryer for 10 minutes; come out wrinkle-free and three sizes smaller?
10. "Getting Lucky" means walking into a room and remembering why I'm there.



THE BIRTH OF THE ROYAL ELECTRICAL MECHANICAL ENGINEERS - Felicity Medland

(From the Arborfield-september49ers.co.uk website)

L/Cpl. Felicity Joan Edwards, British Army, B Company, Auxiliary Territorial Service, contributed the following article to 'The Wartimes Memories Project', in the 'World War Two 1939 – 1945'. Section. 'The Wartime Memories Project' is a non-profit organisation, a constituted group run by volunteers. The web site can be visited here: <http://www.wartimememories.co.uk/>

The subject matter of the memoir will no doubt be very familiar to those of our readers who served in Arborfield in the early years of its development. With the future of the Arborfield Garrison in doubt, these historical musings become increasingly valuable. Once it goes, the memories shouldn't die with it.

Arborfield 1942 - 1946

Now that I am 85, and the anniversary of the outbreak of the 2nd. World War is approaching, my thoughts return to those years that followed, and to Arborfield, and wonder how many of the men and women I served with there, are still with us today.

I joined the A.T.S. at the age of 18 in 1941 and spent the greater part of my war years at Arborfield as a Cinema Projectionist in charge of training films that were constantly shown via my two 16mm Gebescope projectors. These mainly dealt with the maintenance of the Churchill, Cromwell and Sherman tanks. There was also the Coventry, and the almost obsolete General Lee.

One of the historic events that took place at Arborfield that I felt very involved in, was the construction of a long water tank with vehicle ramps at both end. This happened just prior to the invasion of Normandy. I received an American film 'The waterproofing of vehicles'. This I showed constantly during the weeks leading up to the invasion. (Lessons had been learned from the Dieppe disaster) Not only was this film shown to those passing through the various training courses at Arborfield but also to the Canadian officers and men who were camped around us in the surrounding countryside.

With their many forms of transport waiting for that significant day when they would drive onto the beaches of France, without the fear of breaking down with waterlogged engines. At one time I was taken in a waterproofed jeep, down one ramp through the water tank, and up the opposite ramp. I think I was being given a reward for the many hours I spent showing that film. I did not really enjoy it.

Those war years spent at Arborfield are very clear in my memory. I can still see Brigadier Buttonshaw taking the salute at the parade, the day that R.E.M.E. was formed, and must be now one of a very few who were there on that occasion and can still remember it. My cousin has offered to take me on a visit to Arborfield, but I doubt if I would recognise any of it now, except for the water tower, if it is still there. Army legend had it, that it would only fall when a virgin walked past.

I was posted to the Royal Army Ordnance Corp at Arborfield, Berkshire, in 1942 as a Cinema Projectionist to show training films to the Officers and NCOs. who were attending one of the 29 week training courses that were being held there, and found myself showing long, and to me, tedious films on the care and maintenance of the Churchill, Sherman and Cromwell tanks, on the 25 pounder gun and on things like the planetary gear train and synchromesh transmission and on the recovery of vehicles with a Leyland breakdown lorry. Whenever I found conversation lagging in those days, the approved method of getting a Churchill tank out of a shell hole, was always something I could fall back on. I was very conversant on that subject.

I shared an office with a chap called Joe Semp and Sergeant Major Mann. When I was not showing training films I worked with Joe amending army manuals and pamphlets with out dated text, with stickers that carried new versions. This was a tedious job which was relieved by a side-line when Joe acquired a book of blank leave passes.

We had a R.A.O.C. stamp which we used on the books and pamphlets to identify them as the property of the Royal Army Ordnance Corp. Joe and I worked opposite each other at a table between two windows When Sergeant Major Mann left the office, word would get around, and one by one chaps would begin to appear at the window on my side and ask for a leave pass.

Ever ready to oblige I would stamp one and pass it across to Joe who would add the necessary officer's signature and return it to the individual concerned through his window. Joe was very good at supplying a variety of signatures. As most of our customers had to get through main line stations which were laced with Red Caps (military police) forever eager to examine leave passes, they wanted unobtrusive signatures like Captain Simpson or Lieutenant Jones. Others who preferred to live dangerously requested the signature of Field Marshal Montgomery, General Wavel, or even Mickey Mouse. Most of us who lived in London managed to avoid the Red Caps who patrolled the mainline station at Waterloo, by jumping off the train one stop earlier at Vauxhall.

The permanent staff of this R.A.O.C. training establishment had been recruited from a variety of different regiments, as well as from the County regiments with all their proud history. It was not a happy day for Arborfield's personnel when it was decided that a new regiment was to be formed encompassing the whole establishment.

We were to become the Number 1 Training Establishment of the R.E.M.E. and the birth of this new regiment was to take place in the October of that year 1942. This meant that all the well-polished cap badges so proudly worn of the former regiments were to be handed in to the stores and exchanged for a very brassy looking new R.E.M.E. badge which was not looked upon kindly.

All regimental flashes had to be cut from uniforms. All this created a lot of disenchantment in the camp, and that was not diminished when it was learned that the new regimental march would be a mixture of the well-known 'Lillibulero' and the theme music from Walt Disney's 'Snow White and the seven Dwarfs' (Hi Ho, Hi Ho, it's off to work we go). That for some was the last straw. We members of B. Company. A.T.S. could only look on and sympathise, while also wearing our new R.E.M.E. badge above the left hand uniform tunic pocket. We were now attached to this new regiment.

These are the trivialities that I remember to the run up to the day when the whole camp was assembled on the large parade ground to celebrate the formation of our new regiment, by which time badges looked a little less brassy, and there was confidence and pride in being part of this new elite military establishment, the R.E.M.E. I remember so well marching on to that parade ground to the new regimental march which was being played for the first time. No one dared to catch any one else's eye when the 'Hi ho, Hi Ho', bit came in. We were inspected by the very top brass, and watched the R.E.M.E. flag hoisted to the top of the mast head for the very first time. It was a day to remember.

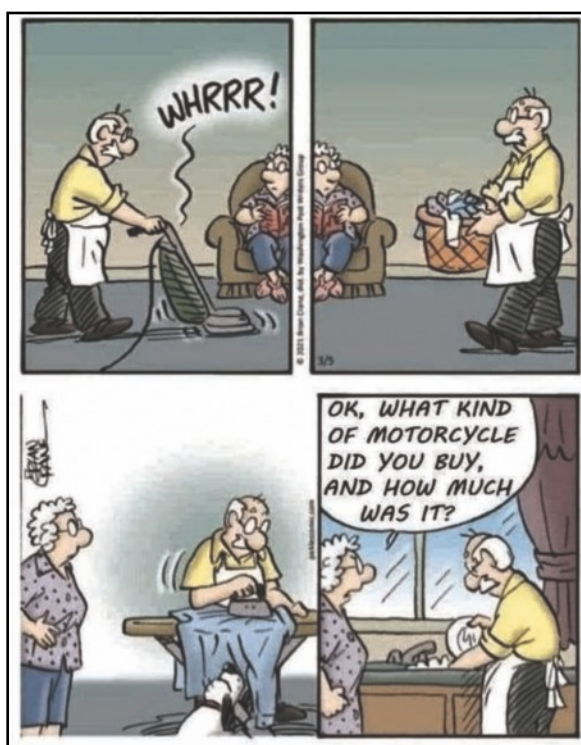
I was at Arborfield towards the end of the war, after a short posting to Derbyshire, and remember those early evenings when we stood and watched while squadron after squadron of 'flying fortresses' filled the skies, to take their part in the carpet bombing of Germany. It was the sound of war at its deadliest. The whole camp stood in silence and watched, and not even one small voice asked "What the hell are we doing?" We remembered the defenceless city of Warsaw, our cities like Coventry and Portsmouth. There were many like myself who had endured the relentless bombing of London during the Blitz, and no one said "Has Bomber Harris gone mad?"

With the distance of years; and with hindsight it is easy to make moral judgements and to campaign to take down the statue of Bomber Harris erected to honour him and Bomber Command. You really need to have stood where we were standing in our time to understand what the reality of our day was really like.

My heart will always go out and embrace the men who served in Bomber Command. Ethics are the luxury for those who have come after us. If there is anyone out there who remembers Arborfield during the war, and who perhaps remembers me as Lance Corporal, F.J. Edwards. A.T.S. please contact me.

Felicity Medland

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The Life of an Army Brat - Eric L Davies 65C

The Old Brit Brat

Just an Old Brit-Brat so what on earth's that
it's not someone you see everyday
Our lives were so different from everyone else
The Cliché ... "At Work Rest and Play"
See we were quite special all one of a kind
part of the chosen few me and you
The way things worked we all had to fit in
unlike any civy could possibly do

You can find us living all over the place
it's as though the whole world is our home
Two years until our feet start their itching
it matters not where we just have to roam

People we meet or friends that we make
sometimes they just won't understand
We are not boasting or putting them down
we lived there did that and travelled the land
Saw all those sights and joined in the fun
stories could not be made better or worse
Proud to be BritBrats every last one of us
and here to recall it all "Chapter and Verse"

Early Memory

I was born 27 Clay Street Gorton Manchester in 1950 but my earliest memory was living in a castle. My earliest recollection is looking down from a castle window at my brothers playing in the field below and wondering how I could get down there or more specifically 8 Militia Buildings Castle Esplanade Nicholas Street in Chester.



1951 - Dad sat on the kitchen doorstep to the back yard 27 Clay Street Gorton Manchester

Prior to my earliest recollections I had already lived in three places, Gorton where I was born then in February 51-June 51 living at 11a Militia Buildings, then June 51- November 51 living at No 2. Simpson Road. The Dale Camp, Chester

Militia Buildings were within the Civil Parish of Chester Castle on Castle Esplanade the second picture is inside the courtyard showing the entrances to our accommodations.



Mum (Olive) with children at King George's Park Gorton Manchester. Left to right:- Jack Albie Beryl (holding me-Eric) Ivor and David.



Militia Buildings were within the Civil Parish of Chester Castle on Castle Esplanade the second picture is inside the courtyard showing the entrances to our accommodations.



At the time my father "Albert" was a Sergeant in the Lancashire Fusiliers and worked at "Western Command" in another part of the Castle. The Castle overlooked the River Dee and the Roodee which is the oldest racecourse still in use in England. I was told by my mother "Olive" that I loved to play with the cockroaches that infested the part of the castle that we lived in. I am sure the

Roaches were well established. They had started building the castle back in 1793 and only completed it by 1822. Recent history would produce far more sinister events than my attraction to Cockroaches, I would learn that my brother Ivor had lost an eye in the castle grounds when our brother Jack was knocking down nettles with a stick and Ivor got too close to him.

We were a big family. Even at that age I had four brothers and a sister. My eldest brother John (Jack) was born in 1940 Quetta in Northern India (now Pakistan) as was my Sister Beryl in 1941 and my brother Albert (Albie) in 1942.

It was never mentioned if the births were planned or if it was just a case of "The more the merrier" The next two were born in England David in 1944 and Ivor in 1945 (post WW2) they made up eight family members in Militia Buildings.

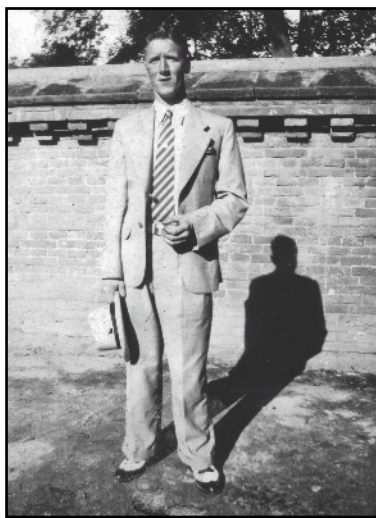
My Dad 18 March 1909 - 5 August 1992 (83 yrs) George Albert Davies

Dad was born at 20 John Street, Ancoats, Manchester during the reign of King Edward VI and became orphaned very early on in the 20th Century. I know that at five years old he lived with his parents at **104 Tipping Street Manchester** and went to Saint Thomas School in Ardwick Manchester. I don't know if his parents died or he just left home. I suppose children were rather less accountable back then when some kids lived off the streets of Manchester. My dad's father was born in Welshpool Wales. Dad never mentioned much to me about his folks or how he survived at one point he would eventually make contact with relatives on "his side" of the family though nothing factual was mentioned to me or my brothers and sisters about it.

Dad spent some years as a "Farm Hand" before in 1927 enlisting in the Army at 18 years old when he took King George V shilling and joined the **Lancashire Fusiliers**;

<http://www.lancs-fusiliers.co.uk/>

"I swear to be true to our Sovereign Lord King George, and to serve him honestly and faithfully, in Defence of His Person, Crown, and Dignity"



He would serve with the Lancashire Fusiliers in Egypt until 1929 then Gibraltar until 1930 before being posted to China in 1935. King George V died in Jan 1936 King Edward VIII briefly reigned before abdicating to marry Wallis Simpson letting King George VI take over in Dec 1936 Before dad had moved to Quetta India in 1939 he had already served under three Kings.



Dads Birth Certificate



Dad in the early days of the Army had a "Good Conduct Tape" (never been caught) on his left arm so would have served a few years before this photo was taken; He probably left some pictures with his girlfriend Olive while he was serving abroad.

Census of England and Wales 1911 showing our Welsh connection

School register of pupils. Saint Thomas School Ardwick Manchester

St Thomas's on Thirsk Street

My dad's service in China 1935-1939 is documented with his own photos. The Japanese had been at war with China ten years before WW2 broke out and my dad was there during the Rape of Nanking which started on 13 Dec 1937. During that six week period he had taken photos of the bodies piled up in the streets and on the back of trucks and carts, his album has disappeared over the years, but as kids it was of great interest to us. Great Britain was not at war with Japan back then, it must have been hard for him to watch those events taking place and not be able to do much about it. Confrontation with the Japanese troops occurred from time to time but both sides were careful not to start a major

incident. One particular case he mentioned was when he was sent with a section to pick up stores arriving by rail only to find the Japanese were trying to confiscate them. In that event the Japanese were forced to back off.



St Thomas's on Thirsk Street



SSgt GA Davies Lancashire Fusiliers in China - India

Prior to the outbreak of WW2 in 1939 Dad was posted to the **Staff College in Quetta India**. Wives and their children were called forward at this time to be shipped out to India to rejoin their husbands, He arranged for his girlfriend Olive Thompson to come out and marry him.

S/Sgt George Albert Davies - Military service dates

Date	Unit	Location	Function
1927 - 1929	1st Bn The Lancashire Fusiliers	Egypt	
1929 - 1930	1st Bn The Lancashire Fusiliers	Gibraltar	
1930 - 1933	1st Bn The Lancashire Fusiliers	Catterick	
1933 - 1935	1st Bn The Lancashire Fusiliers	Colchester	
1935 - 1939	1st Bn The Lancashire Fusiliers	China - Shanghai & Tienstin	
1939 - 1944	Staff College	Quetta, India	QM Stores
1945	Officer Selection Centre	Barton Stacey, Hants	Admin
	Unknown	Enniskillen, NI	Admin
	Lancashire Fusiliers Depot	Bury, Lancs	Unknown
1951	Artillery Testing Unit	Dunham Park, Altrincham	Unknown
1951	RAEC Remedial Education Unit	Saughton Camp, Chester	Admin
	Unknown	Dale Camp, Chester	Admin
	Unknown	Chester Castle	Admin
1954	Unknown	Blacon Camp, Chester	Admin
1954 - 1955	Staffordshire Regimental Depot	Whittington Barracks, Lichfield, Staffs	Admin
1955 - 1957	School of Infantry	Warminster	Regt Rations Senior NCO
1957	Barracks Staff	Saughton Camp, Chester	Sgt Mess Caterer
1959	Unknown	Emergency Tour - Northern Ireland	Unknown
1959 - 1962	RAPC Unit (Barrack Staff)	Fenham Barracks, Newcastle upon Tyne	Sgt Mess Caterer
1962 - 1966	HQ Penang Garrison	Penang, Malaysia	Barrack Inventory Accountant
1967 - 1968	Unknown	Warrington	To Demob

Dads Military service would overlap three sons and two sons-in-law who also joined the forces.

Other family would join-up after dad was de-mobbed

John Edward Davies 15th/19th Hussars
David Peter Davies Royal Engineers
Eric Lance Davies Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
Joseph Duhig Green Jackets (who married my sister Beryl in Penang)
Donald Scaife Special Air Service (SAS) my own brother in law who served
In Penang during Dads time there but who my dad never met

Not only was he their Dad but he also outranked them all until his demob in 1968. **(Well done Dad RIP)**

My Mum Olive (nee Thompson) Davies

My mother Olive was born 17th July 1917 at 22 Bury Street, Church Lane Gorton Manchester (1917-2003 - 86 years) she was eight years younger than my dad. My grandfather John Edward Thompson, an engineer, took his family out with him to Montreal-Quebec on the eastern side of Canada, where my mother grew up as a young girl.



Bury Street Gorton Manchester

Mum would tell us stories of the cold weather in Canada and lakes being frozen over so that even cars could drive on them. The "Thompsons" moved back to UK while mum was still very young, first to Glasgow for work for granddad and eventually back to Gorton Manchester.



Mum outside her front door in 22 Bury Street with her sister (Amelia Thompson Dob 19 Mar 1902) and brother (Albert Thompson Dob 15 Dec 1915)



Mum with pram outside her front door in 22 Bury Street with her brother (Albert Thompson (Dob 15 Dec 1915) and Dad (John Edward Thompson Dob 4 Sep 1881)

I don't know at what age my mother left school to be employed full time as sewing machinist, she talked of machines in lines in the Gorton factory with long belts running from overhead shafts driving them. Mum had a part time job at Belle Vue as a Chorus Girl. There were many attractions there, famously remembered as the Zoo, the Speedway, the Greyhound Racing and the Dance Halls.



Mum as a young girl in Canada.

It could have been Belle Vue that my Mum and Dad met for the first time. Later during 1938/9 my mother would have been "exchanging mail" with my father on their planned "Reunion/Marriage" in India. During the time leading up to WW2 Mail communication to India would have been extremely slow.

I cannot even imagine the difficulties in arranging the Voyage by Sea Convoy from Southampton Docks to India or even the "Steam Train" journey from Gorton to Southampton. Mother was a brave girl at 22 years old to undertake such a trip.

One story she told us was of opening the porthole in her cabin to see Gibraltar while their ship was cruising past it and forgetting to close it, when the sea later became rough the cabin got flooded. Another story was about the convoy being attacked a number of times and of the Barrage Balloons that they had for some protection. After arriving in India there would still be another rough journey over a week by train from Bombay to reach Quetta and her new home.

Shortly after her arrival in Quetta Mum and Dad married and were allocated a bungalow and the services of a "Houseboy"

No one can fill in the Gaps to a life in Quetta, the children were too young to recall and with an ever increasing size of family no doubt mum and dad never gave it a second thought and would be too busy to actually spend time recording details.

Mum could natter away in some "Indian Dialect" that she probably learned from the houseboy during those five years in India.

She mentioned hailstones as big as golf balls. We all just took it for granted that we were a "Normal Army Family" and everyone did the same sort of things.

They certainly enjoyed life in Quetta and on many occasions wished they were back.



Historic Army Aircraft Flight - Andy Dickson 66B

I visit the HAAF Facebook page frequently and see most of what is going on with this group. It is after all where my career started back in 1969. Not with the HAAF but with the aircraft. I am happy to say that I have worked on all the aircraft they currently operate.

I contacted Mark Meaton (The Engagement Lead of the HAAF), a few days back and asked if I could publish an article on what they do. I am happy to say that Mark was happy for me to include a story in this OBAN and hopefully more stories in subsequent OBAN's.

Mark sent me this overview:

The HAAF is a charity, and is not part of the UK military, and independently raises all its own finance through grants, donations and its own activities.

Its objective is to preserve the heritage of British Army Aviation, which is the same mission as its charity partner, the Army Flying Museum at Middle Wallop. The difference is that the HAAF is not a museum, and instead maintains a flight of airworthy vintage aircraft that it flies regularly.

Based on camp at Middle Wallop, the Flight owns a cross-section of British Army aircraft that have operated in the last 40 to 80 years, and although these aircraft are now all on the civilian register, they were all once on the military's books, and continue sporting their original paint schemes and tail numbers.

The youngest aircraft in the collection, the iconic Bell 47 Sioux and the Scout, were recently joined by the oldest, a Mark 1 Auster built in 1942, which although was flown in to the Flight, is currently being refurbished to a high standard before being displayed. It follows the Chipmunk built in 1953, which in late 2022 had completed a three-year refurbishment to full airworthy condition.

By mid 2023 the Flight will boast six airworthy aircraft, but there is also a long-term aspiration to bring its Skeeter to an airworthy state, should funds permit.



Sioux



Chipmunk

Having survived the lockdowns of recent years, the HAAF also had to cope with the huge change in organisation of UK air shows, which used to generate much of the income required to keep the Flight functioning. Gone are the days of several large air shows packing each season's calendar, as organisers find it harder to afford, insure and generate a surplus from such events.

The Flight has therefore diversified into school STEM activities, hangar tours, offering Introductory Flights to the public, and attending a larger number of smaller events, from local village fetes to Armed Forces Day weekends.

One important aspect of the Flight's work is the support of the current Army Air Corps, whether by providing fly pasts or static displays for memorial events, or running hangar tours as part of the induction for the New Officer intake and Phase 2 soldiers. There is also a commitment to lend support wherever possible to various veterans' organisations and Cadet forces.

Maintaining such a collection of vintage aircraft is expensive in terms of time, money and most importantly manpower, and the Flight draws upon the expertise of a team of around 35 men and women who are to be seen regularly attending events and/or maintaining the aircraft in the hangar.



Auster Mk9



Beaver

All volunteers are unpaid, and give up their spare time - there are 7 ex-AAC pilots, some retired, some still flying, plus 15 engineers, almost all highly experience REME aviation specialists, and a ground support & Engagement team of a dozen.

Almost all of the aircraft maintenance is done by the Flight itself in its own hangar, including major overhauls. Without the expertise of the Flight's engineers, it would be impossible to afford the costs of outsourcing such work to third parties.

Part of the plans for 2023 involve a substantial increase in the collaborative effort with Boeing and the Army Flying Museum, in order to visit as many schools as possible to enthuse the students about all things related to engineering, aviation and the military, as well as careers and apprenticeships in all those areas. Boeing recently made a substantial donation to the Flight for the specific purpose of funding the flying of the Sioux and Scout into school playing fields to spend the day giving classroom lectures and tours of the aircraft.



Skeeter

The majority of the volunteers are AAC or AAC-attached veterans, and thus the Flight also generates a charitable output by providing these veterans with an outlet to continue exercising their unique skill sets, and an opportunity to pass on their generation's heritage to the next; one of the Flight's volunteers is a recently-joined serving AAC Air Trooper.

You can visit the HAAF website here:
<https://haaf.uk/>



Scout

I hope to include more information on this unique group over coming editions of OBAN.

Any of you ex Air Techs, (Greenies or Blackies), would be welcomed by the HAAF team. I know they are always looking for volunteers. If you live in commuting distance to Middle Wallop and are looking for something to do with your retirement days I can think of worse things to do.

Andy Dickson - 66B (Ex Blackie).

A Couple from TC's Archive

Food (These Foolish Things)

Those squares of margarine afloat on water,
The scrambled eggs that we should really oughta
Have thrown in the bin, those inedible things,
With bromide filled brew.

The soya sausages that swam in gravy,
And greasy chips, stone cold all bent and wavy,
Fried bread burnt black and charred, we had it hard,
So painful to chew.

The dehydrated spuds we had to swallow,
Along with Yorkshire pudding, tough and hollow,
And, oh, those hard-boiled eggs, they were the
dregs,
Solid through and through.

But we were growing lads and always starving,
So that whatever joint that they were carving,
We ate it all, large pieces and small,
In bits or in stew.

Yet we survived the food, went on to grow up,
Although a lot of it might make us throw up,
The hunger pangs still stay in memory today,
All our life through.

In the Right

Here lie the bones of young Jim Knight,
One of those, always in the right,
Behind the wheel he'd often roam
The highways, with a gripe and moan
At others who got in his way,
A price for which he'd make them pay.

With middle finger held aloft,
Swearing and shouting, he'd accost
The luckless target of his ire
Threatening them with such dire
Remarks, they'd often run and hide,
Just to escape this ghastly snide.

Then, on one fateful autumn night,
While he, (as always, in the right,)
Sped down the road with right of way,
A driver, failing to obey
The rules, turned left, completely wrong,
While rightful Jimmy thundered on.

The moral of this sorry tale
Is plain to see, for Jim had failed
To use the common sense he had,
And failed to see, the silly lad,
That, rightful as he sped along,
He's just as dead as if he'd been wrong!

Life After BFPO 23 - 73 Aircraft Wksps, Celle - Ian Scott 67C

In April 1975, I took the plunge and left military life to see what life as a civvie had to offer. The decision had already been made to remain in Germany slightly influenced by my good lady wife, Elke, born and bred in Celle.

Luckily a good mate of mine, Barry Boswell "Boz" (68A) had already gone down this route and had been working in Celle for a while. He was working for an American oilfield service company carrying out NDT inspection on oilfield equipment. This probably leads you to ask, what on earth has the oilfield business to do with Celle. The answer is that the Yanks and Germans found oil around the same time but the major difference was that Mr. Edwin Drake in Titusville, Pennsylvania actually drilled for oil whereas the Germans discovered it when the farmers were ploughing their fields around a small village called Wietze about 20 Kms west of Celle. They were dismayed that this oily stuff was making a mess in their fields but then they discovered that this was oil sand and initially this was then mined and the oil was extracted. If you ever get to this part of the world there is a very interesting oil museum in Wietze covering the history of oil production in Germany including a 54 meter oil rig that had been drilling for oil from about 1960 to 1990.

Anyway back to the story, Boz came around to see me and partake of a beer or two and filled me in on the new job that he had just started. Also for an American oilfield service company carrying out "Fishing Operations". This confused me slightly, not difficult, all sounded a bit fishy to me until he explained that this terminology meant retrieving any objects from a well bore that was obstructing the drilling operation. Sounds unlikely but things get dropped or drill strings break off or get stuck, drill bits disintegrate whilst drilling and this junk has to be retrieved to enable the normal drilling operations to continue. This a specialised exercise carried out only by a few international fishing companies. This new company were looking for employees with a technical background and a knowledge of German so I thought that maybe this could be an opportunity.

The next day it was off for an interview only about about a five minute drive from home. My first impressions were mixed to say the least, firstly, all of the equipment in the warehouse looked very strange and looked unlikely to me that they could be put to use as described, secondly, I was confronted by an American from the "deep south" that I had to listen to very carefully to understand what he was saying. To cut a long story short, I was hired and told to come to work the next day, little did I know what I was letting myself in for.

On joining the "team" we consisted off, Boz, an ex Green Jacket, a German welder and myself all working in the warehouse servicing the fishing equipment and being overseen by a experienced guy in this field from Great Yarmouth. The rest of the company consisted of a secretary, a book keeper, a salesman and two American "Fishing Operators" who were the experts who went out to the rig locations with the equipment to resolve the problems.

This fledgling company was in competition to another American international fishing company already operating for a few years out of Celle who employed solely German employees several of which were hired from the German drilling companies.

After a short period of working in the warehouse learning about the equipment and how to service the same we were asked to carry out another task, namely, accompanying the operators to the rigs and translating. This was necessary, as as previously explained, due to the long history of the the German oilfield industry, hardly anybody spoke English on the rigs and so never having seen a rig in our lives, us translators, went off to pastures new. Like any language, ordering "zwei Bier" in German and talking specific oilfield technical Germany was not quite the same to put it mildly.

I was teamed up with Blair, a bear of a bloke from Oklahoma who was a really nice guy and it wasn't long before the first baptism of fire arose. Luckily we at least had one German/English oilfield technical dictionary available to us in the office and with about twenty, hopefully most likely required words in my back pocket, off we went, really professional, I don't think.

Our means of transport was a Mercedes 200D in the company colours orange with a black vinyl roof, some of you might recognise the colours, the company also went by the handle of "Big Orange" in the industry. This vehicle was not the nippiest of wheels and due to the fact that the company insisted in installing a mobile telephone (in 1975) didn't do much for the all up weight.

The Bosch system completely filled the boot and at the end of the day the unit looked the part but was not a lot of use as there were very few communication masts in place anywhere. The trailer with the equipment plus the fact that Blair probably weighed around 150 Kgs made sure that V1 topped out about around 80Km per hour and you needed a very long run up to reach this amazing speed.

We headed west down the B214 as my instructions were that the rig was close to Diepholz and we were to get to the location asap. By the time that we got close it had got dark and as we were approaching Diepholz I asked Blair which rig we had to go to. "Oh, I thought you knew" was his response.

Driving down the 214 we could see the lights of several rigs but which one was our destination remained a mystery, if only this wonderful mobile phone would work. Next option was to visit the nearest rig and ask a few stupid questions. I was quick to learn that a fishing company turning up at a rig site unannounced was not good karma and very frowned upon, luckily nothing broke and no major disaster occurred and their drilling operations continued smoothly.

After explaining our dilemma to an unusually friendly “Bohrmeister”, he rang around for us and located the required location, we thanked him profusely and headed off down the road again. Finally turning up at the right location we were greeted with “Where the hell have you been?” or words to that effect. Straight down to business, we got our work kit on, unloaded our equipment and explained to the boss how we were going to proceed.

Our job was to cut and retrieve 7” casing (pipe with an od of 7”) at a depth of approx 2.000 meters. The cut pipe was then to be retrieved with a fishing tool run inside of the cut casing. After three attempts to make a cut, all unsuccessful, we were told to clear off and never show our faces on this rig ever again. This I found out later, came under the terminology of being “run off”, which just meant that we had been given the boot and our competitor was probably already preparing to replace us. Not the best start in the world but for me the start of a very long and steep learning curve. Every cloud has a silver lining and when we got back to Celle and unloaded the tools, Blair signed my slip which entitled me to a 50 DM bonus payment which we as translators were entitled to for every day or part of a day that we translated. A lot of money in those days and very much welcomed.

Life went on slowly but surely and the company started to get their foot in the door and carry out several small fishing jobs lasting around two to three days.

In August I was on a rig between Brunswick and Wolfsburg and when I tried to return to Celle, there were a lot of diversions in place due to a serious forest fire. The fire broke out on the 8th of August and lasted until the 18th of August. It was only brought under control after the Bundeswehr were called in assisted by British troops from Hohn. Firebreaks were cut using armoured recovery tanks with bulldozer blades. A Canadair CL-215 also flew around the clock loading water from the Steinhuder Meer along with UH-1D helicopters. Five firemen lost their lives and a memorial was later erected to them at the site where they died.

Blair and I were called into action again to carry out work in Wilhelmshaven on the north German coast. In 1973 the oil crisis hit Germany, three quarters of their oil imports came from the middle east and the production reductions hit hard. Layoffs in industry and shortened working weeks were the result. Willy Brandt, the Chancellor, at the time, didn't waste much time to react to the situation and on the 9th November 1973 passed legislation banning the driving of cars on four consecutive Sundays in November and December, he also imposed a speed limit of 100 km/h on all motorways and fuel was rationed. Later these restrictions were eased but the Sunday driving was still restricted allowing even registration numbers on one Sunday and then uneven numbers on the next Sunday and so on. The oil price rose from three US dollars to 12 US dollars the barrel (159 litres) about 30 to 40 US dollars nowadays. Since then the price has fluctuated between 20 - 100 US dollars and is currently around 80 dollars. This oil shock in 1973 caused the German government to rethink and they decided that a federal reserve had to be set up.

Wilhelmshaven was chosen as an ideal location. In Northern Germany as there are a lot of underground salt domes which are leached to retrieve the salt leaving huge underground caverns which are geologically ideal for oil storage. Also being on the coast, Wilhelmshaven was ideal for the transport of oil from tankers to the storage site. At last a really cushy number, no more standing around in the freezing cold in the middle of the night for hours on end. A Monday to Friday job, 0800 start and 1800 return to digs and 50 DM a day bonus - heaven !!!

The week started with Blair and I leaving town at 0400 in the trusty Merc arriving on time around 0730 for the meeting with the company's engineers to discuss the coming weeks work. This consisted off cleaning up old wells to prepare them for oil storage. We worked there for three consecutive weeks until we successfully finished the operation. However when we returned to base I was in for a shock as the three-week 750 DM bonus that I was expecting was refused point blank with the explanation that 10 hours a day didn't warrant 50 DM a day, 200 DM total was all I was going to get.

Extremely miffed it turned out that this had also happened to Boz and Frank. We had a pow wow and after a lot of discussion it was decided that we, including our welder Horst, should take our grievances to the appropriate union (IG Mining and Energy). Unbeknown to our employer we made an appointment and headed off in our lunch break to their office. The guy we talked to was more than surprised to see our blank faces when he asked to see our work contracts as none of us naive lot, not even our German welder, were in possession of such documents. He then explained that this was not acceptable and if and when we became paid up members then he would take care of this for us.

More than a little wary we agreed knowing full well that Americans were not exactly enthralled with their employees getting involved with unions. To cut a long story short, we surprisingly were not laid off, contracts were drawn up and we even got agreement on our back pay that they initially refused to honour. This whole episode however changed the way that the company developed and shortly afterwards two German “Fishing Operators” were hired.

This of course meant that less translating was required and so the payment issue was no longer a problem.

Shortly after I was asked if I would take on the duties of arranging transportation and customs matters and so I moved from the workshop to the office. At this time any movement of goods abroad had to be accompanied by the appropriate customs documents and as our company provided 24 hour service to the rigs, we were given dispensation to use pre-stamped documents to move equipment out of office hours. A bonded warehouse was also set up allowing us to import high value tools from the States and use them offshore, mainly in Danish waters without having to pay any customs duty.

Christmas arrived and I was asked to go to Hannover airport to clear a shipment of goodies for our customers which was arriving by private plane from Aberdeen. I arrived around 7 pm and found the customs guys in a state of high emergency. "There is a private plane just landed and it's full off whiskey" After finding out what was going on and explaining the situation, the goods were released with the correct documents and the transport to Celle was arranged. Kept a bottle for myself which is still not opened and remains in the cellar, shame that it cannot age in the bottle as it is now over 50 years old.

New Year came around and we invited Blair to our house for a traditional, in those days, German New Years Eve meal. The table was laid with different cuts of raw meat vegetables, mushrooms etc. and the wine was poured. Elke was still in the kitchen getting the fondue pot sorted out and I could see that Blair was becoming more and more uncomfortable. Finally he came out with it. "Buddy, I can't eat raw meat !!!" After explaining that he wasn't expected to he got stuck in and filled his boots.

Later the next year around summer time, we were getting out our packed lunches and suddenly Blair comes around the corner waving a piece of paper at us. He had finally passed his Berlitz German beginners course in Hannover and was highly chuffed. We were told to forget our sandwiches and he would take all of the workshop staff and myself out for lunch. So off we went to the "Fatmans" so called for obvious reasons. The aforementioned person made several suggestions for the meal and we started out with flaming oxtail soup laced with Ratzeputz. If anyone reading this has been to Celle, they might know what I am talking about. Ratzeputz is a schnapps made only in Celle, it has 58% Volume alcohol, has as ginger base, burns with a lovely light blue flame and has it's origins as far back as 1877. Another thing to avoid in Celle is a "rusty nail". A 0,2 CL schnapps glass filled with 50% Ratzeputz and 50% Tabasco, made many a strong man wince.

Anyway back to the story, the meal continued happily along with many toasts and clinking of glasses. All of a sudden around 1500 hours an apparition appears in the room and it's our boss from Aberdeen. He was making a literal flying visit having flown his private plane from Aberdeen to Hannover. Arriving at the company premises he was surprised to find it sparsely populated and of course our secretary had to point him in our direction. Not quite sure what happened after that but Boz and I ended up at his place in a bit of a state. My wife appeared with amazing speed on the scene and I was carted off back home. The next day, not feeling too well and not even sure if we were still employed, we sloped back in to work but nothing further was said. However it was the end of the road for Blair as two days later he was posted off to Maracaibo, Venezuela as a punishment.

I kept in contact with him for many years but we never met up again.

Spring of 1978 and rumours abounded that we were about to be taken over by another American service company and sure enough the rumour became fact and a company called Tri-State Oil Tools bought out all of the European locations under the understanding that the company that they bought out would not compete in Europe for a minimum of 5 years.

One door closed and another opened.

To be continued.....

Ian Scott 67C



Beer (Continued from OBAN 77) - Kev Dyson 66B

So, maybe your interest in making your own beer has been piqued, and you want to investigate further as to how this process is accomplished.

It is at this point that you should try to find a home brewer who could become a mentor to you and share the wealth of knowledge they have accumulated. Alternatively, a brew club would welcome a newbie into their midst and bombard you with untold “do’s” and “don’t’s” for starting out. But anyway, the first objective is to make gallons of “wort”, pronounced “wert”, which is essentially a boiled barley tea, to which yeast is added and the brew fermented. Then packaged in either bottles or kegs and allowed to “condition”, or “age”.

As in almost all other things, your method will be different to everyone else’s depending on the equipment you have, or plan to get, the facilities available, granted permission from SWMBO to proceed, (most important), and all other steps you deem necessary to reach the goal, which is beer, in the shortest possible time, without making a big mess, and at a reasonable cost.

Here is what I do, right or wrong, brilliant or insane:

Because my water supply is from a well and has been laboratory tested and found to be potable, but due to suspended chalk it has a high PH of 7.3. Whereas the ideal PH for water to produce wort, is 5.2. The way I achieve this is to pre-boil 9 gallons of water in a 10 gallon Brew Kettle (BK) and use a paint stirrer on a drill to swirl it. Home brewers call this “whirlpooling”. When the water cools, the whirlpool causes all the suspended chalk and other heavy elements to collect at the bottom in the middle of the BK. Sir Isaac Newton called this action a “Centripetal Force”. Anyway, I drain off 8 gallons in a separate fermenter and pour out the solids and remaining liquor, then transfer the water back to the BK. So, now we have normalized a key ingredient that can always be reproduced whenever it is needed to start a new brew, and be able to maintain the consistency of future batches. Another 2 gallon batch of water is then boiled in a smaller pot and again whirlpooled to collect the solids, which I siphon out. This leaves conditioned water to be heated to 170f (75.5c) and used as a rinse after the wert is collected.

Base malts are packaged in 10 Lb bags, which are conveniently shipped free and delivered to my front door, along with specialty malts, usually ordered in 1 Lb bags. T

he “grain bill” I generally strive for is 10 Lb base malt and 2 Lb of crystal/specialty malts to make a batch of 6 to 7 Gallons (US). I like to include a half-pound of acidulated malt in each brew as this reduces the mash PH, a good thing in my case, but maybe not yours if you live in Burton upon Trent, home of Bass Ale, where the water is considered perfect for making beer. You may want to begin your journey by ordering a kit that takes all the guesswork out of the equation because it contains all the ingredients and instructions needed to successfully brew a batch. I encourage you to go ahead and jump in, the water’s fine.

I fly solo now and explore the world of malts, hops and yeasts, and have found there is so little time to try all the combinations, but will continue to pick and choose, and develop my own recipes.

But back to the malt; It needs to be milled, (crushed) and depending on the mashing process you adopt will depend on the “crush” the mill is set. My method of mashing is the inexpensive “Brew in a Bag” technique developed by the Aussies and now used by many a home brewer because it is quick to clean up after, uses less equipment and takes less time than the “three vessel system (3V)”, and produces good beer. Everything can be done in one pot, a fermenter, and a plastic bucket.



I start by heating 8 gallons of the cooled treated water in the BK on the gas stove big burner, drop in a false bottom to protect the bag from burning, then clip in a brew bag. I drop in a sous vide cooking stick inside a hop basket mounted on the side and set that to the Mashing Temperature I have chosen.

Then I attach the Recirculation Immersion Mashing System (RIMS) pump I made up which constantly moves the liquor from the bottom of the BK to the top BK port. This helps maintain a consistent temperature in the mash, which is most important. Some would say vital! I also suspend a thermometer in the mash to confirm the temperature is where I want it to be, (around 148f - 152f, 64.5c - 66.5c). See picture of the BK set-up on the right.

While the BK is heating up, I mill all the grains into a bucket. The mill is set to a fine crush, almost a flour, to ensure the greatest extraction of enzymes that convert to fermentable sugars from the grain, and there is no need to worry about having a “Stuck Mash” which sometimes happens if a Mash Tun is employed with a 3V system. This is the main advantage to Brew in a Bag (BIAB). By the time all the grains are crushed, (I use the drill to power the rollers too), the BK is near enough to “Mash In”, or “Strike” temperature and I begin to pour the grains into the bag clipped inside the BK, all the while adjusting the gas burner and height of the SV as the BK volume increases. The stove timer is set to 90 Minutes, and the grains stirred often for the duration, and the re-circulation system keeps chugging along keeping the

temperature steady at 152f (66.5c). Note: the standard mash temperature range is 146f to 156f (63.3c - 68.8c). The lower the mashing temperature is, the “drier” the beer will be, with a higher ABV, and the higher the mashing temperature is, the “maltier” the beer will be, with a lower ABV.

That is the mashing process.

The next step is to hoist the grain bag and let that drain. Then remove the SV, hop basket, RIMS, and false bottom and begin the boil. At this point, I put the hot grains in a 5 US Gallon pot equipped with a strainer, then pour the 2 gallons of heated treated water over the wert to rinse out more fermentable sugars. These “second running’s” are used to return the boiling volume to about 8 US gallons as the grains absorb and retain quite a bit of wert.

An interesting thing happens as the wort reaches boiling point: It tends to boil over, but just before that, the foam collecting on top disperses leaving a clear surface. This is called the “Hot Break”. Action is needed here as a boil over is the most unwanted event you can imagine but the temperature of the wort should be maintained. A spray bottle of cold water is most useful in this situation. Also, a product called “Foam Control” is well worth the investment. So after the hot break, set the timer to 60 mins and drop in the first Hop addition in a muslin bag. This will isomerize the alpha acids in the hops and impart a bitterness profile to the beer. A trick to consider at this point is to lay the mash paddle across the top of the BK and lay the lid on that to keep a slight angle on the lid. This allows you to view the boil and achieve a level of control. After 30 to 40 mins, add the second Hop addition which will impart a flavor profile to the beer. Should you invest in an immersion coil cooler, set that in the boiling wort at 45 mins to sanitize, and at 55 min add your last Hops to get some Aroma in the beer, and also add either Irish Moss or a whirlflock tablet as a clarifier. Flame out at 60 mins and chill to 75 to 80 F (23.8c - 26.6c) prior to transferring to the sanitized fermenter.

It is imperative that anything that touches the wort at this stage must be sanitized. The wort needs to be oxygenated too. I use a fish tank pump and an aeration bulb on the end of a tube held down with a stir paddle to accomplish this in about half an hour.

In order to determine what the Alcohol by Volume (ABV) of the finished beer is, it is necessary to know the Original Gravity (OG). This is measured with either a hydrometer or a refractometer before the yeast is pitched, and should be duly noted as it will be used in the calculation at the end of the fermentation process.

To begin fermentation, yeast is added to the wert.

A yeast starter is the best way to ensure the viability of the yeast proposed to ferment the wort. A starter is just a small batch of beer made up a couple of days before brew day to allow the yeast cells to multiply and ensure complete fermentation. I take 2 cups of boiling water added to 1 cup of Dried Malt Extract (DME) with ½ tsp of Diamonium Phosphate, (yeast energizer), in an ehrlenmyer flask. After cooling down to 72f (22.2c) in an ice bath, 25gm of dried ale yeast is added then set on a stir plate to aerate for two days until it is time to “pitch”.

About 2 cups of wert is added from the fermenter to the starter to equalize the temperature between the starter and the wert, then I pitch the yeast into the wort and set up the air lock in the top of the fermenter, See Fermenter set-up picture. Look for bubbles to appear in 4 to 12 hours. The bubbles should keep popping for about a week. After two weeks the beer should be ready to package. Check the Specific Gravity again to see if fermentation is finished. Experience will assure you of this, as well as the instructions in the kit (if purchased), which will provide a projected Final Gravity, (FG). The calculation used to determine ABV is:

$*(OG - FG) * 131.25$. It is always an exciting moment when the result is revealed!!

* Please note, this is the corrected formula to the one published in the AOBA #77 in July which contained a deliberate error of “132.25” to see if you were paying attention.



I use clean and sanitized bottles of various sizes, usually 12, 16 or 22 oz and pour measured amounts, depending on the bottle size, to get the proper pitch rate of simple syrup primer in each. A “Bottle Wand” is used with a length of clear tubing attached to the Fermenter drain tap to fill each bottle to capacity without (usually) any spillage. The Fermenter picture shows the bottle capper I use. Kits usually include an inexpensive “Butterfly” capper as a convenience.

In order to determine what the Alcohol by Volume (ABV) of the finished beer is, it is necessary to know the Original Gravity (OG). This is measured with either a hydrometer or a refractometer before the yeast is pitched, and should be duly noted as it will be used in the calculation at the end of the fermentation process.

The beer takes about three weeks to “condition” in the cellar. Serve chilled to 40f (4.4c) in a nucleated snifter.

Happy to answer any questions you may have.

You can contact me via the OBAN editor through the AOBA website.

Cheers,

Kevin Dyson - 66B.

Letters/E-mails to the Editor

From Dave Finch - 63A in Australia

Hi Andy.

Two photos taken at Arborfield. The first one is of 63A's Passing Out Parade, slow march past, with A/T RSM Nick O'Hara out front. I'm in the front rank, 2nd to the right of the really tall guy (Tony Hughes) all 6' 7" of him.

The second photo, is of Nick O'Hara and I, training on a Dynamometer, in I believe, 8 Div.

I think that everyone in B Squad, Junior Coy (63 A), knew that Nick was destined to be A/T RSM.

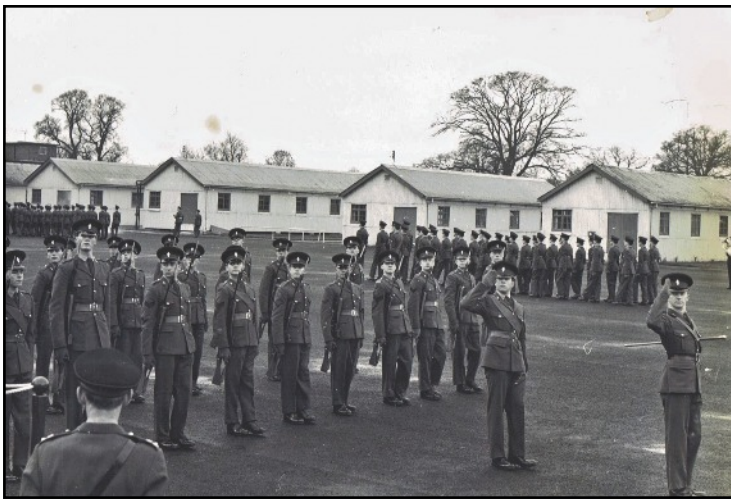
He was as we used to say, "smart as a carrot". There was something special about him.

I never saw him again after Arborfield. I believe he wanted to be attached to the Para's, and I heard it rumoured that he tried out for the SAS, but there was no evidence to back that up.

I hope you can use the photos at some time.

All the best.

Dave Finch - 63A



From Terry Hanman - Chair of the AANMT to Geordie Wright-Rivers - AOBA Chairman

The Army Apprentices National Memorial Trust (AANMT) will be holding the annual memorial service on the 14th May at the National Arboretum at 13.00hrs.

I have passed info to all 4 colleges associations.

There are many ex apprentices from the Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers that maybe unaware of our superb memorial.

In the 100 anniversary year, I would appreciate a large attendance at the memorial as possible, would you please advertise in the April wire editions and any other forms of advertising.

Our secretary is Steve Joyce Steve.joyce332@gmail.com

Thank you

Kind regards
Terry Hanman
Chairman AANMT

RQMS (WOII) John Robertson (Ray) Pittendriegh



Enlisted Aberdeen 27th August 1948
Served 37 ½ years – Discharged 1986

General Service Medal – Arabian Peninsula
General Service Medal – Northern Ireland
LSGC Medal [18 years and 15 years]
Meritorious Service Medal [27 1/2 years]

Ray was born in Gartly, Aberdeenshire on 12th February 1931, his parents John and Jane (nee Gray) had three children; James (deceased), John Robertson (Ray) and Mary (83) who still lives in Aberdeen.

Ray attended Drumblade School and his decision to join the Army was based on the influence of his two uncles who were serving in the Gordon Highlanders.

Upon hearing the REME pay was more he joined up on 28th August 1948 and proceeded to 1 ABTU, based at Blandford for his Basic Training, after which he joined REME!



After Basic Training, it was Trade Training and Cadre courses at various establishments of the time and in 1950 his first posting was to Benghazi, Libya.



Ray in Benghazi in 1953

On return from the Benghazi posting it was the time Ray first met Janetta (Jan) when on a double date with other partners, Jan's partner did not walk her home so Ray decided to, they got chatting and the rest is history, he did say he had just returned from Benghazi. After escorting Jan safely home he couldn't find his way back to the barracks at Balhousie Castle, Perth and as he was wearing only a lightweight suit (no doubt hand made in Benghazi) he recalls to this day how freezing it was and the time it took to find the barracks! Ray and Jan married on 7th November 1953 and had 5 children (4 girls and 1 boy). Ray has 13 Grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

In 1953 Ray converted to Regimental Duties and was posted to Blandford. Ray then returned to sunny climes in 1957, this time to Aden for 18 months.

Ray then returned to sunny climes in 1957, this time to Aden for 18 months.

Upon his return in 1958 Ray was posted to REME Depot and then in May 1960 he crossed the road for the next 8 years and served at the Arborfield Army Apprentice School/College, until leaving in October 1968.

Ray's first task was assisting in the setting up of Senior Company before moving to Junior Company, with C Squad, for the remainder of his time at the School/College.



When asked, Ray says he has no specific memories that stand out as there were so many, he loved his time at the School/College.

We asked two of Ray's daughters if they recalled their father's time at the School/College and they replied...

"As kids, now and again, we would find strangers being brought home for tea, they were boys from the school who were feeling extremely home sick. Dad made sure they felt part of a family to get them over their home sick blues. Mum would on many occasions wash, iron and starch collars for the boys. He really was a father figure to many at the school and a great father to us kids. Growing up with my Dad was wonderful as he has a wicked sense of humour. The best memory I have was going out to help my Dad do some gardening and just before I put my wellies on he threw a worm in one and laughed as I screamed my head off, he got into all sorts of bother from Mum for terrorising us kids but we loved it as we always ended up laughing so much. Dad still does have a wicked sense of humour and keeps me laughing with his quick witted one liners. Another memory was that of getting to be a dab hand at packing an MFO box up every two years. We as kids, never knew when we were moving until Dad gave each of us an MFO box to fill!"

Whilst all those who came through C Squad, remember him with great affection and respect, many of the other Apprentices will also recall him as he was heavily involved with Company and School/College Boxing and Athletics. One

thing Ray did admit to and that was he still remembers the complete sequence of commands for the 'Saluting Test'; which every jeep had to pass before being granted their first weekend pass!

After Arborfield, Ray and his family were on the move again where his children honed their skills packing MFO boxes!



Ray accepting the trophy for the Junior Squad Drill competition (one of many!)

1968 – 12 Armoured Workshop, BAOR/Osnabruck

1970 – 71 A/C Workshop, BAOR/Detmold

1972 – C Company, Bordon

1974 – Which Workshop, Hong Kong

1976 – Fortress HQ, Gibraltar

1978 – RAVC Dog Unit, Northern Ireland

1981 – BATUS, Canada

1984 – RMA Sandhurst – RQMS at the old College

1986 – Discharged, 37 ½ years of distinguished service to Crown, Country and Corps.



Life wasn't all Brasso, Bull and Parades for Ray and Jan!

Looks like a Fancy Dress evening at one of the many Sgt's Messes that Ray would have belonged to during his career.



After retiring from the service Ray was employed at the Royal School, Hampstead, along with Jan and enjoyed 10 years working at the school.

They both enjoyed many holidays returning to Canada to meet up with old friends and tour Canada and USA in a motor home; which they enjoyed very much.

Whist stationed in Medicine Hat, Ray enjoyed bowling and won many trophies within a team and individually and both enjoyed going to the Rodeos and the Calgary Stampede.

After moving to Glenrothes, Ray took up golf and joined the Leslie Golf Club, he was secretary at the club for several years and enjoyed the post. Ray now enjoys gardening and volunteers one day a week for a good cause and of course still enjoys the odd pint of Guinness.

Ray attended his first AOBA Reunion in July 2017 where the Membership at the AGM gave him a warm welcome and voted him to Honorary Member status.

Ray passed away on the 4th February 2023.



John Robertson (Ray)
Pittendriagh
AOBA Honorary Member



Back on Parade!

Obituary William Parker 1931 to 2023 - 46A



Bill at Duxford

William (Bill) Parker and his twin brother, John, were born on 15th May 1931 in the newly built Police house in Whaploade.

Not many people knew dad was a twin who sadly died at the age of 29 in a motorcycle accident.

Sadly, Bill's memories of his childhood were not happy ones. His father, the local policeman who was later ordained, was very strict, **"a staunch Victorian"** as Bill wrote in his memoirs.

Bill was the youngest of 5 children Geoff, Peter, Eileen and John. His mother, Florence, sadly died when he was 11 months old. When his father remarried the children were told never to talk about their mother, or speak to her family, ever again. A sister, Mary, was born a few years later.

The family moved to Cleethorpes in 1936. Bill remembers his childhood was quite difficult - as the children of the local Bobby they were not accepted at school, Mainly due to his

father often giving the kids **'clips round their ears'** if caught being wayward!

They socialised rarely. Bill had his paper round and was in the church choir. Sundays were full of church services and Sunday school and bed by 7.30 every night – no exceptions!

His memories of the war years are poignant.

"In 1940 after the start of WW2 an Anderson shelter was dug into the back garden and we spent many a night there. Mother and 6 children. We were always hygienically clean and well cared for and enjoyed, in cramped conditions, party-like games organised by mother. To the winner half a biscuit!

Father would call between air-raids, shining his torch through the door into that candle lit time underground room...wide anxious eyes peering into his face, looking for and always hearing words of comfort and encouragement. "Soon be over, they've gone across to Hull" or "Mother, we will keep the children at home tomorrow" mother knew, perhaps too many unexploded Butterfly bombs lying about"

In 1947 at 16 Bill attended Army Apprentice Training at Arborfield College in Berkshire. Where he excelled calling it ***"The best years of my young life"*** he made head cadet and was awarded the Colonel Commandants prize and the Co's Silver Cup and received his college colours in athletics, boxing and rugby. He also received the converted 'Best student/cadet for technical education' an award his parents knew of weeks before his graduation. Bill wrote

"They had lunch with the Field Marshal and generals and the odd colonel My goodness me I was full of my own etc... I was almost 18 and the date was 1st February 1949"

Bill found his new life as a Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineer quite hard. The realisation of being 'Molly coddled' at Arborfield (laundry, food, clothing entertainment, sport) sunk in as he started his new role in an arms factory in Nottingham. His promotion to Bordon Hants came quickly as did his posting as a drill instructor in Honiton, Devon where he was, in his words,

"A square peg in a round hole" he hated being an instructor as it took him away from his love of being a craftsman. He later moved to his favourite posting at Turweston airfield 2 miles from Silverston which suited his new found love of motorcycle racing over the seasons racing at Cadwell Park, Mallory Park, Snettisham and Silverstone. It was here that he was promoted to senior N.C.O, the youngest at that time. Bill wrote,

"Thinking back, it was when I joined Honiton that I volunteered for an over seas tour of duty to get away from that ghastly instructors post. Here I am at Turweston, a most excellent posting and guess what....My application was approved, overseas posting granted, although I was not aware at the time, Korea bound...ah well...that's life"

At just under 20 years of age Bill left REME Transit Camp in Berkshire in 1951 to board the HMT Lancashire in Liverpool, along with 1000 other soldiers, and set sail for the Bay of Biscay. They were told of their destination a week in to the journey – Pusan in South Korea via Port Said, Aden, Columbo, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan. They disembarked 5 weeks and 12,500 miles later.

Bill felt incredible excitement. He felt ready. Unlike the national service lads who had had a few weeks of training. He joined American troops, the first desegregated army to fight from the USA, and headed to the newly recaptured capital Seoul where they quartered in a heavily shelled disused school. They worked day and night in sometime minus 45 degrees, on the damaged troop carrying vehicles, tanks and gun carriers to make them ready to be sent back to the front line a few miles north.



Bill at 16

“Day and night deafening heavy artillery constantly pounding the enemy, we went out on patrol to clear the area of enemy gorillas. Snipers generally. The enemy infantry, particularly the Chinese, were ferocious fighters, despite relatively poor quality equipment. They outnumbered our troops many times, during direct confrontation, the Korean war was thought to be the last war where close combat, bayonet to bayonet fighting was used”

Bill was now a 7-star NCO officer and moved to south of the 38th parallel. He served in Korea for 2 years with 10 days leave, sailing back on the HMT Empire Pride calling in to Singapore surprising his brother Peter and his wife who had been posted there.

Bill remembers:

“Sailed into the Liverpool Docks disembarked, handshakes all-round, promised to keep in touch, no one ever did. Hailed a taxi asked “Where have you been soldier” Korea I answered. “Is that war still going on? Not sure where that is” he said. No answer to that I thought. The forgotten war, aptly named I think”

After a few weeks leave, where Bill only remembers sleeping, he returned to Berkshire where he was debriefed and sent to the army's top academy at Sandhurst. Here he returned to the love of sport with the excellent facilities he won the inter-college silver cup championship.

A year later he was called before the selection board for an assessment for the Supreme Head Quarters Allied Powers In Europe (S.H.A.P.E) he was offered a post in Paris where his new Boss would be Field Marshall Viscount Montgomery. 'Monty'.

Bill thrived in Paris he loved the city and being a Korean Vet, at the tender age of 23, was well respected – rarely having to buy a drink in the mess! He threw himself into the extracurricular activities of horse riding in Versailles, flying, martial arts and motor cycling. Gaining a black belt first dan in judo, his pilots license and buying his beloved a 998cc Vincent HRD. He trained hard on the track and in the gym and played rugby, on the wing, for the first team. When he had leave he would tour the French countryside for restaurants to report back to his friend the head chef in the mess for future reservations for mess members and their wives.



Bill at an Army athletics meet.



Bill on his Vincent HDR in Chatres, France

Bill's time was coming to an end in Paris, he was offered a promotion, if he signed on for another 3 years. He didn't, he remembers

“So that's it then, end of an era for me. Back to the REME camp in the UK hand back all your Army equipment, say good bye and off you go. No rehabilitation, no courses to apply for to float or sink you into the main stream of civilian life”

Bill returned to Holbeach with his father at Theological College (He would later become The Reverend George Parker and go on to become the vicar at Holbeach Church) and his first civilian job as a car sales man in Spalding where he went on to buy Commercial Road Garage in 1964.



Bill with snooker and billiards trophies

Bill married Pat Markillie in 1961 and moved to Spalding, they had 3 girls; Rachel, Rebecca and Emma.

He continued with his love of sport being the founding member of Spalding Judo Club in the Pied Calf Spalding and well as becoming Lincs County Champion in snooker; the first Spaldonian to make a century break at both snooker and billiards. He went on to become President of The Spalding and District Snooker and Billiard League in 1986 until stepping down from his role last year after 36 years. Bill also played Golf at Surfleet golf club getting his handicap down to a respectable 12.



Bill (Top Middle) Judo studio in Paris

Bill's love of horses continued with his daughters riding and both him and Pat becoming founder members of Spalding and District Riding Club. Bill went on to become a commentator and BSJA judge at many events including Sandringham Carriage Driving Trials and both Burghley and Belton horse trials.

He became chair of the Lincolnshire branch of the British Korean Veterans Association in 2002, in his words

“Linking them to the rest of the world as he was the only one to have a computer!”

Bill ‘sort of’ retired from working at the garage in his mid-80’s, though often popped in to ‘check on the lads’.

In his later years he kept himself busy with compiling the family tree –taking it back to 1564.

Bill’s health deteriorated in 2021 when he chose to enter Southfield House nursing home. He loved the staff there and was known to pop in to the office and answer the phone at times!

Bill died peacefully at the home with his family surrounding him at 12.30pm on Sunday 19th February.

Bill’s life can be summed up with his favourite quote of all time:

“Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside thoroughly used up, totally worn out and loudly proclaiming – WOW – What a ride!”

He leaves three daughters and six grandchildren who will all miss his smiling face and silly sense of humour.



Bill riding in Norfolk



Bill at the Commercial Road Garage



Bill at Ayscoughfee with his Rolls Royce Silver Shadow 1



Bill Meeting the then Prince Charles in 2003

Editors note: I don’t normally comment on obituaries that are sent to me but this is an exception. I think Bill lived up to his **“What a ride”** statement above. I am sorry I never made his acquaintance at any of the reunions. He sounds like he was a very interesting character.

Andy Dickson 66B

Obituary - David St John Weyers 73A

The below is a copy of an obituary from AARSE about Cfn David St John Weyers 73A. Died Sept 2012.

The obituary is from one of his REME colleagues and describes him well. Hope it's useful. It is with some regret that I have to, rather belatedly, announce the death of my old mucker Craftsman David St John Weyers.

I only found this out last night when I was talking to an old comrade in Auckland and we joked about David being a poor communicator and we wondered what he was up to. A quick internet search by my mate brought up the Daily Telegraph announcement of David's passing in September 2012 which was shortly after he had told us that he had got a plum job teaching in India and that he would be moving there shortly with his family.

I first met David when I was posted to 22nd Light Air Defence Regt. RA at Kirton In Lindsey in Lincolnshire in the summer of 1976. David would be proud to be called a non conformist. He had passed out from Brats School as a radar tech and his non conformist ways earned him the rank of Craftsman. A rank that he was to proudly keep until his discharge from the Corps.

He hated the army but loved music. He was the sole occupant of an 8 man room in the barracks, the reason for this being his host of musical instruments, including a piano, that he would practice on at all odd hours. He was a good mate and companion and we went to many places together including Doncaster where we manned a Green Goddess, aptly named "The Pyrotechs" during the national fireman's strike.

He had a weird sense of humour and fun as a result of which most people either loved or hated him.

Last night, after absorbing the news, I sat with a good stiff glass of falling down water and the memories of our fun together came flooding back. I lost touch for a while after my discharge or rather PVR in 1979 until a few years ago when we managed to trace him through the Internet.

After leaving the army he went into electronic design work for a while before deciding to consolidate and further his love of music. He graduated as a mature student from university and started teaching. When I last spoke to him he was a deputy director of music at a large and very posh private school. He also held a commission in the school's CCF.

He was married and had two young children. Our last conversation was about a new position that he had obtained as Director of Music at a large private school in India. He was looking forward to moving there with his family and the fact that part of the deal was free private education at the school for his two kids.

Alas this was not to be. As we used to say, life is a crap sandwich and every day is a bite. One evening whilst on firing camp prep at Rolleston Camp on Salisbury Plain David announced that he was bored. He decided to liven up the next day by getting up the following morning and playing reveille at dawn. This he duly did expecting to hear everyone moaning about it at breakfast. To our surprise everybody was talking about it but not in a bad way. "wasn't it great hearing reveille this morning" was the comment from most people "it's just like being in the real army!"

Rest in peace my dear friend. You helped me and a lot of others laugh in the face of adversity. You will be missed by many I know. David leaves a widow and two young children. He died aged 55. When I woke in the dark this morning with a bad hangover I thought for a moment that I heard the distant sound of a trumpet playing reveille.

Play on mate where ever you are. Your mate Kevin Caveney

Joseph Young - 48B

Following received from Kathleen Argyle (Joseph Young's Daughter).

Please could you tell me how I go about informing you of the sad death of my father Mr Joseph Young in order that you can publish it?

He subscribed to your magazine and was in the REME all of his working life.

He started off at 'Boy's School' at the age of 14 years and saw active service in Korea, Aden and Malaysia as well as many postings throughout the UK. He attended many of your reunions.

With kind regards
Kathleen Argyle (Mrs)

