

BFES/SCEA Association E-mail Bulletin



May 2022

From: Membership Secretary
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First thoughts:

We would like to remind you that the date for the next **Association get-together in Malvern, is Friday 9th September**. Although the closing date on the booking form is 30th June, Bill Bowen would appreciate receiving your booking form earlier if you plan to come to this event. It promises to be a lovely lunch at a great venue – the details were included in the April Bulletin.

Any questions? Telephone: 01905 830818 or email Bill at: billandjanbowen@gmail.com



Looking ahead - Malvern Theatres.

The three evenings around our lunch in September will feature three different productions from the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company of 'The Pirates of Penzance' (Thurs 8th), 'Iolanthe' (Friday 9th) and 'HMS Pinafore' (Saturday 10th, with two performances).

Some of you may well be interested in going to one of the performances, especially if you intend to make a longer stay in Malvern.

You can read more about the shows and find the instructions for online booking at:

malvern-theatres.co.uk

The Theatre Box Office number is 01684 892277.



Last month's Quiz answers:

We do hope that you enjoyed puzzling out the answers to the 'saints' school quiz last month – the answers were:

- | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1. St Andrew | 2. St Barbara | 3. St Christopher | 4. St David | 5. St Clement |
| 6. St George | 7. St Michael | 8. St Patrick | 9. St Peter | 10. St John |

Hub Locations and Activities:

Sue Adams is planning an informal get –together for members in the South West to visit the Wellington Monument, which is set high on the Blackdown Hills. The monument has been neglected in the past but the recent realisation that it is the world’s tallest 3-sided obelisk galvanised the National Trust to carry out extensive fundraising to restore the monument and the surrounding area. It is possible to climb inside the monument, but Sue’s main aim is to enjoy the surrounding area and have a picnic lunch with those who join her.

We are looking for other Hub Leaders across the country, so if you were dithering about whether to volunteer or not perhaps you could take the plunge and become a Hub Leader in your area. It shouldn’t be an onerous task – just a way of linking members and having an occasional get together to say ‘hello’ and chat.



Just email us to say that you are interested and we will send you further details.



Winchester Curry Lunch jogs the memories:

As often happens, the Curry Lunch at Winchester revived memories and prompted members to search out items from the past. Jane Tull found this article about teaching in the Far East that was included in the 2019 Curry Luncheon Menu.

The Gurkha Children’s English School by Phil & Diane Brown

“It was a pleasant surprise to get the Headship of The Gurkha Children’s English School in Brunei, as it was called then, from 2003 to 2005. The school was very popular with Gurkha families. Most of the staff were Nepalese and one or two were British, including one who spoke Nepali. All the staff spoke English. The majority of the children spoke English except some of the reception children. The school was near the Nepalese married quarters so most of the children were able to walk to school.

The Nepalese culture was a very big part of the school ethos and the staff were able to utilise their extensive talents to impart their knowledge of dance and the arts to enable the children to gain high levels of skills. All were able



to take part in school productions and many of them performed in local schools and other evening performances.

Holidays were geared to correspond with Nepalese festivals such as the 15 day Dashain Festival. During this time, shops and offices are closed, families are reunited, stories are told about the triumph of good over evil, and offerings are made to the Gods.

Living in Brunei was a very rewarding experience and it was a pleasure to have worked with all the Nepalese children, staff and Gurkha soldiers. My family still speak of our time there with great fondness.”



Spotlight on Members:

The Committee is delighted that amongst our new members joining the Association are many ex-pupils as well as teachers. All must have interesting stories to tell about their time in school, and we would love to feature more in the Bulletin and in the Journal. So, if you were once a pupil at a Service School, get the old memories dusted off, note them down and send us your story.

This month, we have a snippet from new member **Hazel Collins**, who was at school in the 1940’s:



Hazel at Tidworth Garrison School, 1948

Hazel has many stories about her education in a range of Army and Civilian schools in the 1940s and 1950s. Hazel was born in 1937, to a father who served with 1st battalion Rifle Brigade quartered at the Winchester Barracks (close to where our Curry Lunches are held!). Her parents, Leonard and Vera Cumbers, already had one child, Rosemary, and like most serving soldiers, experienced moving from one place to another, and so Hazel’s early education was one of variation and movement. With the advent of WW2, Hazel’s life changed again when her father was killed in May 1940. She moved about the country and attended different nursery schools, or no school at all, until the war ended. Her mother then married her father’s best friend who had returned from a POW camp in Poland and as her step-father stayed in the army with the Royal Army Pay Corps, they settled in the married quarters at Tidworth Barracks when Hazel was about 8-9 years old.

The school at Tidworth Barracks left a lasting impression on Hazel, even though she was there for a relatively short time. One of the benefits of the Tidworth Army School was that it was sited directly opposite the married quarters where she lived with her family, and in between was a lovely stretch of ground for children to run and play. She remembers the big climbing frame and the wonderful sense of freedom she had, as the grounds were all open and children were able to run and play in many of the areas that today would be fenced off and considered too dangerous for children. She remembers that no-one seemed to mind if the children climbed on the vehicles or played with the army equipment. It was the sort of childhood time that everyone wishes for and authors writing at the time wrote about.

The army school at Tidworth was led by the Headmistress, Mrs A. Sadler, a civilian, but all the other teachers were soldiers in uniform. The classrooms were in a brick building and then utilised huts, and Hazel recalls that there were probably 3 or 4 classes for children of different ages. Hazel loved her time at the school, and has only good memories from that time in her life. Despite all the previous disruptions

to her education because of the war and her family circumstances, Hazel thrived and passed her 11+, which opened up further opportunities for advancement within the state grammar school system of the time. In 1948, Hazel attended South Wiltshire Grammar School in Salisbury, and as they say, the rest is history!



Do send us your school stories. They can be about an event or just memories that you have. Photographs are also welcomed, so if you have some that shows a moment in your life, do share them with other members.

And so, goodbye:

We do hope that you have enjoyed reading this month's Bulletin – we enjoy reading the titbits that are sent to us, so hope that you do too! If you have any information or short articles for the Bulletin, especially if you were a pupil in a services school, do send them to us. Likewise, if you like quizzes and want to create one for the bulletin, we would welcome them for inclusion in a future bulletin.

Please send any emails to our BFES/SCEA email address on the front page of the Bulletin, rather than to the mail delivery address that sends out the Bulletin. The mail service seems to have solved the problem of our emails being treated as 'junk mail', but we do not get any replies sent on to us if you respond directly to the mail service email. Many thanks.

Best wishes

Hugh and Christine Ritchie
Membership Secretaries