
From: Membership Secretary, 7TX
Email: bfes.scememb@gmail.com

First thoughts:

Here we are in the New Year, so we wish you all a very Happy and Healthy 2023 with many good things to enjoy throughout the year ahead.



Dramatic Arts:

Both Teachers and pupils are well known for their abilities to create drama, in the classroom and elsewhere! It seems that we have many performers amongst our members, so dust off those memories and send us some photographs of plays and musicals from the past! Jean Arwel Davies did just that, sending us the photo of the production of 'Doctor in the House' – the first play that she was involved in when working at Marlborough House in Osnabruck. She remembers the fun and laughter at rehearsal and the two nights of performing to capacity audiences. Jean belonged to the Roberts Players which used to take part in Drama Competitions.



Spotlight on Members:

It is surprising –or perhaps it shouldn't be – that several members who attended Service Schools as pupils returned later in life as teachers or in another capacity! Dee Day (who was at one time Deirdre O'Rorke) sent in a couple of her photographs as evidence of this progression.

Dee attended RAF Changi Grammar School, Singapore in the late 1960s. Her class photo shows her on the far left in the second row – "I have shoulder length hair and a goofy grin" – and she remembers her form teacher at the time was Geoff Storey.



Deirdre Day (*nee O'Rorke*) with her form teacher Geoff Storey and class in about 1968 at Changi Grammar School, Singapore. (*Dee is end of middle row on R*)

Members who either taught or were pupils in Singapore will remember that there were schools for all the age groups – infant through to secondary – and during the 1950s and 60s, like many schools that first opened after WW2, the schools occupied buildings on service bases and moved when new, purpose-built accommodation was ready. Changi Grammar school was based at RAF Changi and then relocated at Selerang. There are now several websites run by ex-pupils, with lots of interesting stories – so why not go searching and find out more?



Changi Grammar School - old and new!



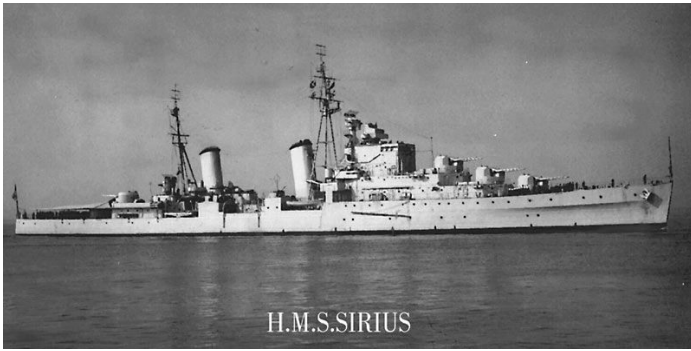
Dee's 'grown-up' photograph dates from the very short time she taught at Talavera Primary School in Werl, Nordehein Westfalen in 1986. Her husband was teaching at Cornwall School Dortmund at the same time, which was about a 25 minute drive from Werl, so after just one term, Dee transferred to Victoria School, Dortmund. This was closer to home, and her two daughters also attending Victoria School, making the commute and organisation so much easier. Dee recalls the Head, Pat Borthwick, very clearly from that time.

Deirdre Day (second from right) at Talavera Primary School, Werl (winter, 1986).



From the Archives: B is for Bermuda

Following on from last month's focus on a particular area (A = Aden) it is just coincidence that this month's interest is B for Bermuda! Now, you may be reading this, as we did, thinking "Wow! I wouldn't have minded a tour in Bermuda!" and secondly thinking, "I didn't know SCEA had schools there!" We therefore went straight to the website to look under 'locations' for Bermuda, but could not find a school listed, so there was a quick exchange of emails to the webmaster and others to engage in a quick bit of research. Sure enough, we all found that there were Service Children's educational establishments in Bermuda, but all closed some time ago, before the 1952 list of schools was drawn up that forms the basis of the Locations list of schools on the website. So, yet another 'lost' school has been found.



This leads to the other bit of the story about how we heard about the Bermuda schools, that may also make you feel envious as well as illustrating how memories are revived and the Association gets to learn about schools! Member Richard Lord emailed in November whilst cruising the West Indies aboard Britannia. He recalled that he met teachers there 50 years

ago when he was serving on HMS Sirius. He asked us if we knew when the schools closed and what happened after his visit. He then went on to tell us that his ship (HMS Sirius) was berthed in the dockyard at Ireland Island, where gravestones from the 1850s illustrated how fragile life was at that time. It must have been a very memorable trip as he also recounted how during the visit 50 years ago, the Governor of Bermuda was assassinated and the ship carried his coffin to St George's. You can see footage of the funeral, including HMS Sirius, on YouTube.



So, back to the question about the schools in Bermuda. We came upon an interesting article written in 2019 by Elizabeth Jones in the publication "The Bermudian" which offered a fascinating insight into the British Garrison and the military school. You can read the whole article online: [https://www.thebermudian.com/School Days: Life at the British Army's Garrison School](https://www.thebermudian.com/School-Days-Life-at-the-British-Armys-Garrison-School)

The article recounts that land was appropriated for military purposes in the late 1860s and the Garrison became a self-contained world, with its own hospital, chapel and school, as well as a NAAFI and barracks. It also had a guard house, with police barracks and cells which was close to a park, complete with bandstand where the army band would give a concert every Sunday after church. In the article, adults who attended the school as children in the 1940s recalled their time at the school vividly, remembering how during this time, both British and Bermudian children were taught alongside each other. One ex-pupil recalled that as a Girl Guide in the Garrison "We used to win all the competitions because the soldiers used to teach us medical aid and signals for our badges. Douglas Brewer, a soldier in the Royal Engineers, was our leader and we never felt it was odd we had a man for a leader." And another remembered a unique way of engaging in PE lessons "The teacher would tie a sneaker on the end of a rope. Then she'd swing the rope and we'd have to jump over it. If you didn't jump high enough, the sneaker would hit you!"

To close and to answer Richard's question, the Garrison school seems to have closed from the 1950s onwards. Most of the original buildings in the garrison have either been demolished or re-purposed, so very little remains of what was once a British enclave. Today, the area goes by the name 'Prospect' where a School, Police Headquarters and the National Stadium are still located, so perhaps the links to the past remain and are visible if you look closely enough.



Reunions: St George's School – Crowne Plaza, Stratford-upon-Avon, 9th-10th April

Robert Grigsby has emailed us details of a reunion for St George's School, Hong Kong, which is being organised by Amanda Stuart (the daughter of the Headmaster from the 1970/80s). The venue for the reunion is the Crowne Plaza hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon, with a dinner on the Sunday evening at 7pm. There are just 20 rooms available at a special discounted rate, so read ahead for more details from Amanda:

"At the 'Crowne Plaza: Sunday 9th April dinner, bed and breakfast £120 for single room, £155 for a double room (2 people for dinner and breakfast). Dinner is at 7pm. Monday 10th Bed and breakfast £95 single room, £105 a

double room. If you'd prefer to book a different hotel then dinner for Sunday night is £25pp. We will be given the choices of menu nearer the time to reflect seasonal local produce but will include vegetarian and vegan option.

I have only been able to reserve 20 rooms because of the discounts we have. If any rooms have not been filled by February then they will be released and you would need to book independently and it will be more expensive.

To book either a room or dinner only, please call the hotel directly on 01789 279917 or 01789 279928 and quote the following: Amanda Stuart and the code is ASM. There is a boat trip booked but will only go ahead if we have at least 22 people. The company will need our individual deposits in January so I'll get back in touch with you then."

If you would like more details about this reunion, please contact Robert or Amanda OR send your email to us and we will forward it for you.



Neighbours, everybody needs good neighbours....

Sue Adams writes: I have lived alongside a set of neighbours (Caroline and Pete Unwin) for nearly 17 years and it was only this year that I overheard Caroline remark to someone that she had attended **St. George's School in Hong Kong** in 1974-77.

Thinking of the association archive, I asked her if she had any particular memories or photographs which might be of interest for readers of the Bulletin or Journal.



Alas, her immediate reaction was that she had very few memories of school days but with a little prompting she told me of a tradition that they had at the school when somebody was due to leave. This tradition involved signing school dresses or shirts and taking the pockets off as many boys' shirt as possible – duly inscribed. Whilst Caroline has few memories, one thing she did hang on to was her signed school dress and collection of pockets.

Caroline (nee Riddick) lived in Hong Kong on 3 separate occasions – her sisters Maxine and Yvonne also attended schools there at various times also. With further prompting, Caroline said she remembered her form teacher Miss Holden, Mr. McArdle, the Headteacher and Mr. Bonham the art/music teacher. She particularly remembers a domestic science lesson which took place in a flat for 2 days where they were taught to clean, cook and invited a teacher for a meal.

Overall, there are happy memories of other pupils, some of whom she is still in touch with at small reunions. One name in particular is clearly remembered – Rico Nanty who built a shock machine and delighted his fellow classmates by giving them shocks with an electric current if they held onto the machine.

Caroline does have several photographs from her school days which show the usual form photos, drama productions with members of the cast and also her match box collection!

Beyond school her memories are of visiting neighbouring islands in the school holidays and returning back to England on cruise ships – the Canberra to name but one. One thing for sure was returning back to England and the contrast of a new school environment which was so different to her life and schooling in Hong Kong.



Future Events

A reminder of Association events and dates later this year:

Winchester Curry Lunch: Saturday 22nd April, at the Ghurkha Museum, Winchester

Annual General Meeting and Event: Saturday 22nd September, at the RAF Club, London

These dates are provisionally booked, but all events depend upon interest from members and could be affected by other matters beyond the Committee's control. There will be more information and confirmation of dates in future Bulletins but you might like to note the dates in your diary now if you haven't already done so.

As always, if you have an idea for an event or know of a venue that you would think suitable for a get-together, do let us or a member of the Committee know. Your Committee is always looking for places that are interesting or close to where members live to hold events and welcome your input and views. Also worth knowing is if there are particular times of the year that are more convenient for the majority of members to attend events. The Committee's knowledge is restricted to where we reside and where we might have connections, so the Committee really does rely on members to share ideas. Please put on your thinking caps and send us your ideas to pass on to the Committee, thank you.

And so, goodbye:

With a quick reminder that subscriptions are due (£15 per annum) for those of you yet to sort out payment. Any queries, do not hesitate to contact us and we will do our best to answer your questions.

And a big thank you to all those who have sent in payments already. We have too, really appreciated the kind comments about the Journal and Bulletin, so thank you for those positive comments.

Best wishes

Hugh and Christine Ritchie
Membership Secretaries
