

BFES/SCEA Association Email Bulletin

October 2023



From: Membership Secretary
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First thoughts:

Welcome to this edition of the Email Bulletin - as usual, we hope that you find something to interest you in these pages.

We would like to bring to your attention the date for Lunch and AGM in 2024 – **20th September** at the National Arboretum. Put the date in your diary to keep this date free if you want to join us all next time!



Report from the Lunch and AGM in London:

Our 2023 AGM and Association Lunch at the RAF Club in Piccadilly on 22nd September was attended by 42 members and guests and was much enjoyed by all.



Photograph, courtesy of Tim Mason.

A virtual bouquet and grateful thanks go to our secretary, Lynn Marshall, who on this occasion managed almost all the arrangements at the club and for the day. Lynn had fitted all this in alongside a very special birthday year for her, so we are especially grateful. The RAF Club provided a magnificent background and fine dining room for what was an excellent lunch. Lynn & Glyn Marshall, between them also presented a fascinating pocket history of the club itself (Lynn) and of the Bomber Command Memorial nearby (Glyn).

The AGM resulted in no committee changes, although new volunteers were encouraged. Next year's AGM and lunch was confirmed as 20th September at Staffordshire's National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) and this event is being co-ordinated by Bill and Janet Bowen, who have been liaising on our behalf with NMA. Jane Tull reported on April 2023's Winchester Curry Lunch and suggested the next be held in 2025; members' feedback during the day indicated how much the lunch would be missed if not held in 2024, so Jane is set to see if a date this coming April is possible.

The agenda item about GDPR (that's members' data and e-security) was summarised by Ken Jones, after discussions with Tom Nielsen-Marsh, our Journal editor. It was agreed that our approach is sound and that we will reaffirm the position for members in a future bulletin.

As Chairman. I'd like to use this space to thank everyone who attended for ensuring that we all enjoyed such a good humoured and pleasant event. Thank you also, to all the BFES-SCE Committee for your continued efforts for the association. Thank you especially, to Tom for his efforts on the Journal and to Christine and Hugh for the Bulletin and Facebook group. Walter's work on the Archives will outlive us all (especially if members keep sending material in) and Janet's calm efficiency keeps the finances on track. Malcolm Brooke is not a committee member (we keep asking him), but it is his vigilance and tenacity that has made www.bfposchools.co.uk such a valuable resource.

Mike Chislett 4th October 2023



C is for Cyprus – a 'lost school'?

As is often the case, last month's entry about Cyprus was followed by more information about Cyprus and news of a 'lost' school! Our archivist, Walter Lewis, receive a plea for information from Clare Holland about her mother's time at the Karoalas Army School in Cyprus in 1956-58. Clare's mother was named Souzy Lacey at the time and her parents were Venitia and Michael Lacey; her mother was a Cypriot and her father in the British Army. Souzy met Derek Holland, an officer in the RAF in Cyprus during his posting there between 1957 and 1960. Clare is looking for any photographs or documents from that time that illustrate her mother's time there at school. Do you have any by chance?



Karoalas Army School was close to Famagusta in Cyprus and the camp area had a chequered history. The camp had been used as an internment camp during WW1 for Turkish prisoners of war, and then later notably as an Internment camp, complete with barbed wire fences and gates, for Jewish refugees waiting to find a permanent safe home. After the Jews left in 1948/9 to make homes in newly-formed Palestine the camp was empty until again used by the British Army. The story of the Jewish internment camp and the struggles of the Jewish people was made into the film "Exodus" in 1960 which starred Paul Newman. Many ex-pupils remember the film being made judging by the comments made on the Karaolas Army School Facebook page – many remembering the blue-eyed Paul Newman!

The school was opened about 1953 and took children of soldiers on National Service as well as regulars and closed in about 1964, with children being moved to other schools in Cyprus.



Spotlight on Members: 50 years ago – a Malta reunion!

Tom Jordan sent this report about a reunion in Malta to celebrate the 50 years anniversary of teachers going to the island again after the British and Maltese governments signed a new agreement in 1972.



Photo: Matthew Mirabelli

“After many years of educating the children of British forces personnel in Malta, all Service schools on the island finally closed their doors in 1978 and all of the staff were dispersed- to Germany, Hong Kong, Brunei, and Cyprus whilst others returned to the UK. Despite the passing of years, a close family bond has survived and many Malta reunions have been held throughout the UK and in 2012, thanks to the skills and expertise of Chris and Mike Ford, we all assembled in Malta for a “Rare Old Time”.

Sadly, Christine is no longer with us but her legacy lives on and when Christine and Hugh Ritchie mooted the idea of another Malta reunion in 2023, the response was amazing, despite the fact that all of us are now in our seventies and eighties!! Hotels were booked, flights arranged sun factor 50 purchased and we were ready to rock! (Figuratively speaking)

25 of us have just returned from another memorable visit to our beloved Island, the land where many of our own children were born, the country in which some of us met our husbands/wives and a nation close to all of our hearts. Many mini-reunions were held throughout the week, culminating in a superb lunch, enjoyed by all in the Palace hotel, Sliema on Tuesday, 19th September. As the chat developed, so did the years roll back and



Photograph of the 2012 Malta reunion, with thanks to Mike Ford:

soon we were re-living “Saturday Night Fever” all over again.

Despite the fact that Malta has stepped into the 21st century in style, with a highly efficient urban motorway system, high rise flats everywhere and a myriad of hotels, bars and restaurants, the warmth and generosity of the Maltese people remains the same. They even covered our visit with photographs and an article in “The Times of Malta.” Finally, we enjoyed it so much, that many of us are ready to sign up for Malta 2024!”

There will be more about Malta schools, and more about this reunion, in a future edition of the Journal.



From the Archives:

Whilst in Malta, we were visiting the War Museum at Fort St Elmo when one of the displays caught our attention. Aware that Malta and its people were awarded the George Cross medal in 1942, we did a search using the wonder of Google, to see if there was a connection, and more details were found about the Head of St Andrew’s School in the photo and her set of war medals.

“Ms Marie Cecilia Clark. OBE.
Headmistress of St Andrews Army School, Malta.



Supplement to the London Gazette dated 7 March 1944:
“CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.
St. James's Palace, S.W.I. 7th March 1944.

The KING has been graciously pleased to give orders for the undermentioned promotion in and appointments to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, for services to the Forces and in connection with Military operations.

To be Additional Members of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire
Miss Marie Cecilia Clarke, Queen's Army Schoolmistress, Headmistress, Garrison School, St. Andrew's, Malta”.

The following extract is taken from an article written by Captain Mike. F. Law in 1978 which may be found on this website: <http://www.talhandaqnostalgia.org/memoirs/history.htm>

“No account of Army schools in Malta would be complete without a reference to those mainstays of Tommy Atkins' Children's education, the Queen's Army Schoolmistresses, who often provided the backbone of the school staffs, sometimes in circumstances much more difficult than those of today. At least one former QAS and former Headmistress of Tigne School, Miss M C Clark MBE, is still living in Malta today, and with Miss J Yule MBE (former Senior Mistress of Tal Handaq) and Miss L Harris-Candey (who not only taught at the Dockyard (later RN) Children's School but was educated there, her father having joined the staff in 1902, later becoming Headmaster) provide a seemingly inexhaustible fund of information and personal reminiscence”.


It would be interesting to find out more about Miss Clark and her war time experiences in Malta or any other war time stories from serving teachers at the time. These would be stories worth sharing.

Last month's Quiz – the answers!

The quiz last month was loosely based upon the sea, so coming across this article in a yellowed copy of the Times of Malta seemed to be an appropriate item to share with you all. The article dates from the mid-1970s; as the 5th ship bearing the name HMS Hampshire was decommissioned in 1976 and finally broken up in 1979.

HMS HAMPSHIRE'S FAREWELL TO MALTA

The guided missile destroyer HMS Hampshire and the anti-submarine frigate HMS Keppel sail today following a four day visit to the island. This was the Hampshire's last visit to an overseas port before she returns to the UK for disposal. Completed in 1963, she was the second of the County Class destroyers to be built for the Royal Navy and is currently commanded by Captain M C Henry, RN. The Hampshire has a complement of 495 officers and men. HMS Keppel, a Blackwood Class frigate of 1400 tons, is commanded by Lieutenant Commander M J Larmouth, RN, and has a ships company of 130 officers and men.



HMS Hampshire

Quiz answers:

- (1) Jules Verne wrote "The Mysterious Island" (1875).
- (2) Horatio Nelson said, "I see no ships"
- (3) Wagner's opera was "The Flying Dutchman" / Der fliegende Holländer.
- (4) "Commander" is the rank between Lieutenant Commander and Captain.
- (5) The largest is the "Colossal Squid"
- (6) Sir Francis Drake – of course!
- (7) Calico Jack/ Jack Rackham designed the pirate flag.
- (8) Sir Alex Rose sailed the Atlantic.
- (9) Brunel built the SS Great Britain, which is now in Bristol Docks.
- (10) And Robert Falcon Scott/Scott of the Antarctic sailed aboard the RRS Discovery

And so, goodbye:

From a warm and sunny Kent!

If you have any contributions for the Bulletin, please send them to us at the address on the front of this Bulletin. Post or email both welcome!

Best wishes

Hugh and Christine Ritchie
Membership Secretaries
