

BFES/SCEA Association Email Bulletin

November 2023



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

First thoughts:

It feels so much more wintery now, and with Bonfire night over, rain and floods and Remembrance Sunday - it feels as if autumn has been and gone already!! In all seriousness, we do hope that the storms and rain have not affected you, and you remain warm and dry.

As the shops all seem to be full of Christmas, it will also soon be time for us to be sending out the reminders for the subscription fee due in January. If you have a standing order (SO) or have paid ahead by cheque then you will not have to do anything. If you usually pay by cheque we will be contacting you to remind you that your subscription is due.

Many thanks to all of you for being a member of the Association and keeping the memories and history alive!



Spotlight on Members – “Hobbies”

Tim Mason took the photograph of members posed on the grand staircase in the RAF Club that appeared in the October Bulletin, and by chance we found out that he had a wonderful collection of photographs to view on Flickr. Here he gives the background to his hobby and asks the question **“HAVE YOU GOT A HOBBY?”**

“The NHS has highlighted five steps to mental wellbeing and it suggests that we should all have a hobby to help in the process. It should be a hobby that challenges, such as writing a blog, taking up a new sport or learning to paint etc.

My hobby turned out to be wildlife photography!

Like most young boys growing up in the 1950s, the **‘Observers Book of Bird’s Eggs’** was an essential item to have and I spent hours looking for nests and collecting an example from each nest I found and this led to my interest in birds. Thankfully, egg collecting is now illegal!

When I joined BFES in 1972 and moved to Lister School in Herford, I spent a lot of time exploring the huge tracts of woodland in the area, searching out new birds and I tried to get the children in school interested by setting up a **Young Ornithologists Club**, linked to the **RSPB**. It worked well and we even had a letter from a character that some members may remember called ‘Uncle Bill’. He became known through his work with the **BFBS** (British Forces Broadcasting Service) during the 1960s and 70s. He achieved a cult following due to his eccentricities and his ‘Big Wood Stories’ that he wrote himself and performed live on the radio.

One thing led to another and I soon managed to buy a decent camera and a telephoto lens and I never looked back. I was well and truly hooked! When I was at Bückeberg School I was out one day, lurking in the bushes, trying to photograph a Nightingale when I was almost arrested by the polizei. I kept my fingers crossed and tried my best German and said, ‘Ich habe ein nachtigall gesehen’ and it worked! They let me go!

My dream job came along in 2003 when I was lucky enough to spend two years as head teacher of Mount Pleasant School in the Falkland Islands. I actually went back again in 2007 for 18 months, before I retired in 2008. This was an absolute paradise for enjoying wildlife and I took every opportunity to visit various islands to photograph the wildlife.



I initially joined BFES/SCEA for 3 years but ended up spending 36 years with the system and wouldn't have missed it for the world! My wife and I recently moved to Portishead in North Somerset and I now have the Somerset Levels on my doorstep to explore and my hobby is as strong as ever!"



Photographs show:

King Penguins in the Falkland Islands

Puffins from Scotland

A Little Owl in Northumberland

And below, a Red Kite in Scotland



Photos taken in Northumberland: a tree sparrow in flight, a singing wren and a cheeky red squirrel.

The Long-tailed tits having a chat were in North Somerset.



You can see more of Tim's photographs on the Flickr website: www.flickr.com/people/birdmantim/

Poetry? No it is just a Limerick!

We recently came across an article about the poetry of Edward Lear, which included a short biography and of course, a few of his Limericks. It reminded us of the nearly-forgotten time in our childhood when writing Limericks, both daft and sometimes naughty, was a great pastime. ***So, a challenge to you all: can you write a Limerick based upon any aspect of Service Education and send it to us for the Bulletin?***

Here is one of our efforts! (*Getting the last line right was the biggest challenge, so good luck with your rhyming!*)



There was a young teacher of Gibraltar
Who ordered a glass of pink water.
It came with some gin
She shouted "chin, chin!"
Amid cheers for a "Services' daughter"!

Focus on Members: After 43 Year - some things change!!

David and Linda Greenwood sent us news of their return to Sardinia after 43 years!



David & Linda with school secretary Michelle and husband Ignazio.

In September 1980 Cagliari School, on the beautiful island of Sardinia, needed a new Head teacher and Class Teacher.

A married couple needed to apply and six couples did. Rather than deliberate on the selection process David and Linda Greenwood were the successful pair!

The old school had been closed and so a brand new building had been built in the village of Selargius which was to be shared with the German school who occupied the upper floor leaving the entire ground floor for the British children and staff.

The school was incredible with large air conditioned classrooms, a cushion floored gymnasium, offices and a floodlit palmed seating area in the centre with massive ceramic tiles of a Selargius wedding scene created by the potter Claudio Pulli. We began with a roll of 28 children which rose to 58 during our three years there (still only the two of us to teach!) Linda Greenwood was employed from Germany as a Sardinian Locally Employed Teacher (LET). Interestingly Sardinian teachers were paid a thirteenth and fourteenth month salary but unsurprisingly when I raised this point I was told by HQ that didn't apply as she was employed from Germany!!! Work that one out!

However I digress. The area around the school provided such a rich opportunity for exploring the environment and although up until this point Italian was not taught in the school we introduced it on a basic level taught by the 18 year old secretary who was bilingual having been born in Sardinia but had lived in Canada for most of her teenage years.



Sardinia was a popular island for tourists but even more so for Advisors, CEOs, Deputy CEOs, Educational Psychologists and even.....School Meals Supervisors (we didn't have school meals!!!) We were visited regularly with flights arriving on Mondays and returning on Wednesdays. A splendid meal at the Hotel Italia on the Monday evening was an event looked forward to by all! What happened in the Italia....stays in the Italia! (I could write a book!!!)

But all good things come to an end and 3 years later we left the sparkling blue ocean to fly off to Berlin.

Where the next decades disappeared we have no idea but practically 43 years to the day of our arrival on the island we decided to return. We contacted our 18 year old secretary (now 62) and met up to have a meal and

reminisce. Interesting of course to hear of the many couples who followed including an extra teacher even though the numbers had reduced to 24! That led of course eventually to the closure of the school by Lynn Marshall. Sadly the reunion of past Head teachers and staff for the closure was not mentioned to us so we were not involved but Michelle (the secretary) told us that she had received some lovely messages and gifts from everyone else.

We are attaching a number of photographs of the school on our arrival in 1980 and some of how things look today. We hope they are of interest to some who might read this.



Spot the difference! 43 years ago and now!



The next edition of the Journal – a message from Tom Nielson-Marsh:

I am currently planning articles for the Winter 2023/24 Journal - which will be published in early January.

My thinking and research has brought me to one of the most written about stories of our time: globalization, and it seems to have enveloped most of the late 20th century and all of the first two decades of the 21st. It's changing not only the culture, but equally the mentalities, of the whole of humanity. Of course, the pace of this change is different all over the planet, but the past seems to be receding from us at an ever-faster rate, and the older generation (and I am most definitely one of those) - the keepers of memory - are already confined to the outermost boundaries of society.

This, of course, is the nature of time, the nature of history - but, as in every aspect of the ongoing assault on our environment, it's the speed of change that marks our time and I wonder how much longer such memories will endure.

I have been lucky recently to delve into the past of some of the Associations' memories talking with the son of a Major who had the most amazing, amusing, valiant and varied career. Son Jeremy was born in the MRS in Bad Lippspringe (Sennelager) in the early fifties and his sisters went to school in Lipstadt. Their comments – now part of an evolving book – begin to show what keepers of memory they are, referring to such things as visiting the Mohne dam and the two minutes' silence to mark Armistice Day in the Garrison chapel. Both things just 9 years after the War's end. They of course remember many more things – including their amazement at understanding a little about BFES; being taught in English and with no other nationalities present ...

I hope to include some of their histories from the early 1950s in a future Journal – I am however still looking for other stories before the speed of change catches them out. If you have any stories about the Association's past, and the part that you played in it - please do get in touch ...

Tom Nielsen-Marsh (Journal Editor)

contact: bfes_scea_newsletter@yahoo.co.uk



In remembrance: Eddie Martin

It was with much sadness that Walter Lewis learned from Roswita that her husband, Eddie Martin, has died. Walter remembers Eddie as a delightful man; head teacher of Dalton Middle School throughout the 1980's & early 1990's, altogether a very good colleague and friend to Walter and many others. Sue Adams recalls him as being a charming and delightful man when she met him at Head Teacher conferences. Apart from teaching, Tom Nielson-Marsh remembers Eddie as an avid collector of SWATCH watches. Eddie moved on to the International School Düsseldorf (ISD).

And so, goodbye until next month:

We hope that you have enjoyed reading this month's edition of the Bulletin. We valued your comments and contributions to keep it interesting and informative. So, if you have a Limerick, or can write about your hobby or feel like putting some memories down on paper we would welcome your input. Many thanks to you all.

Hugh and Christine Ritchie, Membership Secretaries
