



BFES-SCEA Association

SUMMER 2016

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NEWSLETTER NUMBER 34

Chairman's Comments

First of all 'Hello to everyone and a very warm welcome to new members who have joined the Association since the last newsletter'

Time seems to be flying by at breakneck speed but during that time we have packed a lot in. The re-unions at Cambridge, Winchester and Weston-super-Mare have all proved to be successful and enjoyable.

You can see from this newsletter that a lot of hard work has already taken place, on your behalf, to organize, next year, what will probably be the last ever re-union in Germany.

This is most likely to be a very popular event, so as soon as booking forms become available, please grab this wonderful opportunity.

We now look forward to the re-union and AGM that will take place at the Royal York Hotel in York on Saturday the 8th October. Those of you who have not yet booked will still be able to secure a place.

See Page 4.

Cambridge Reunion 2016



Cambridge continues to be a popular venue for a reunion lunch with fifty three members and guests attending this year's lunch. The bright April sunshine and the tranquility of Christ College's grounds provided a magnificent backdrop for an enjoyable day. After drinks in the beamed Buttery Bar, lunch was served in the iconic 16th Century Hall with its stained glass, dark wood paneling and portraits of famous alumni including Charles Darwin, and John Milton. The balcony overlooking the hall provided a 'Loccum Conference' moment as Tom Nielsen-Marsh captured a group photograph (apologies to those who didn't experience Loccum for the reminiscence!). After lunch friends and colleagues continued catching up on news as they wandered in the gardens and courtyards, some even extended their visit enjoying the opportunity to stay within the College.



Attendees: Paul & Jane Macardle; Jane & David Tull; Rosemary & Peter Segebarth; Sue Royds; Tom & Maureen Nielsen-Marsh; Chris & Marie Hotham; Philip & Barbara Arrandale; Lesley & James Fleming; Fred Rose; Hugh & Christine Ritchie; George & Jean Mcleman; Ron & Jane Taylor; Christine Pay; Harvinder Manku; Janet Bradley; Josephine Burgess; John & Stephanie Tomlinson; Godfrey & Sue Hall; Jimmy Caldwell; Jan & John Benfield;

York is a fascinating city steeped in history and atmosphere and of course you will be meeting colleagues in nice surroundings to boot. I wish you all well and I look forward to meeting those of you who are able to join the re-union there.

Glyn Pascoe

Diary Dates

Wednesday

14th September 2016
Committee Meeting in Bristol

Saturday

8th October 2016
AGM & Lunch at the Royal York Hotel, York

Saturday

19 November 2016
Committee Meeting in London

Saturday

01 April 2017
Reunion Lunch at Corpus Christi College Cambridge

A warm welcome to new members

Ann Birch

Singapore, 67 – 70;
Cyprus, 70 – 74
Ann lives in Tidworth, Hants.

Angela Butt –

Gibraltar, 80 – 86;
Cyprus, 86 – 89;
Wildenrath, 89 – 2012
Angela lives in Cleveland

Frances Cole

Nicosia, 87 – 92;
Belize, 92 – 93;
Cyprus, 93 – 96;
Brunei, 96 – 98;
Shape, 98 – 2004;
Naples, 2004 – 2009;
Wildenrath, 2009 – 2012
Fran lives in Ilkley.

Paul & Margaret Spindler; Joy Harris; Nicholas & Dawn Turner; John Monkhouse; Andy Hellings; John Fielding; Joan Mchale; Lynn & Glyn Marshall; David & Carol Wordsworth; Christine & Michael Ford; Kenneth Moore; Peter & Janet Hall; John & Jenny Bastable.

Weston-super-Mare Lunch

Saturday 7th May 2016

Keen that all members have opportunities to meet up with friends and colleagues each year the Committee arranged a Saturday Reunion Luncheon in sunny Weston-super-Mare! The Beachlands Hotel is one of the best in this seaside resort and dining there was a pleasure. The Association's members who attended a very pleasant and relaxing event covered a great range of past garrisons/commands around the world. It brought together friends and colleagues from past schools in Singapore, Gibraltar, Sardinia, Hong Kong, Cyprus and of course, Germany - including Köln (Cologne!).



Attendees: Sue Adams; Mike & Hazel Harland; Walter Lewis; Lorraine Stark; Janet Bradley; Jane Tull; Joan Hunt; Lynn Marshall; Dianne Dickson; Glyn Pascoe; Bill & Janet Bowen; Mary Bailey & George Andrew.

After the high quality, and beautifully served meal, members relaxed in the sunshine

Sandra Hookway
Mauritius, 74 – 76;
Gibraltar, 76 – 80
Sandra & Brian live
in Portsmouth,
Hants

Jean Love
Rinteln, 85 – 94;
Rheindahlen, 94 –
2013
Jean lives in
Glasgow

Jane Slade
Osnabruck, 75 – 79;
Berlin, 82 – 87
Jane & Richard live
in Bury St Edmunds,
Suffolk

Ian Thompson
Dalton Middle
School, 76 – 80;
Hannover School, 81
– 85; Lancaster
School, Minden, 85
– 87
Ian & Monika live in
Ratingen, Germany

Membership of the
Association costs just
£10 per year (£12
for those who live
outside the UK and
who do not have a
BFPO address).

Membership is open
to anyone who has
served with BFES,
SCS(NWE) or SCE, or
indeed is still
teaching in one of
the remaining SCE
schools.

The membership
year runs from 1st
January to 31st
December and
payment can be
made by Standing
Order or cheque.

**A membership
application
form/membership
renewal form is
available from;**

Membership
Secretary,
94 Headcorn Drive,
Canterbury, Kent
CT2 7TX

whilst the Committee held a brief meeting to plan the way forward for the Association to hold a final "Reunion" in Germany, probably in the area of Bielefeld/Gütersloh in 2017.

Curry Lunch at the Gurkha Museum, Winchester

Saturday 4th June 2016

The Gurkha Museum commemorates the service of Gurkha soldiers to the British Crown, a relationship that has endured since 1815. It is located in Winchester and is part of Winchester's Military Museums' complex in Peninsula Barracks.



Attendees (plus guests)

Sue Adams; Barbara Beaves; Janet Bradley; Elaine Cowlam; Diane Dickson; Joan Hunt; Elizabeth Jeremy; Carole Knight; Tessa Kiely; Joan McHale; Kathy Malloy; Christine Pay; Tony Price; Alan Rhodes; Angela Rhodes; Christine Ritchie; Hugh Ritchie; Carole Stanton; Margaret Threadingham; Brian Trust; Marilyn Trust; Jane Tull; Jo Vestey; Glynis Green & Ralph Weeks.

Contact us

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We're on the Web!

<http://www.bfes-scea-association.org/>

Your comments, articles, news items, photographs, and letters would be gratefully received in electronic or hard-copy format.

Contributors are encouraged to send photographs in support of text submissions.

Find us on Facebook

Log on to Facebook and type in "British families education service association".

Annual Reunion Lunch and Annual General Meeting

Saturday 8th October 2016 at the Royal York Hotel, York.



The **BFES- SCEA Association** cordially invites all members to an Annual Reunion Lunch and **AGM** to be held on Saturday 8th October 2016 at the Royal York Hotel, in York. The **Royal York Hotel** is a magnificent Victorian building, recently refurbished to a luxuriously high standard, standing within its own beautiful grounds.

The AGM will convene in the **Minster Room** at 11.30 and will be followed by luncheon at 13.00hrs. Members and guests are welcome to remain (over coffee and tea) until 16.00hrs. Cash Bar facilities will be available.

The cost of the meal is £41 per head for members and £43 for non-members. Car parking, at £15 per vehicle, is available at the hotel.

A **revised booking form** and menu selection is enclosed with this newsletter: members are requested to make their payment by **September 1st**. Members who have already booked and who are affected by the **revised menu** will be contacted by Sue Adams shortly.

BFES/SCE Association History – in Brief!

The Association for teachers and officers, who have worked for British Families Education Service (BFES) since its inception in 1946, certainly goes back to the late 1960's. In 1981, **Nolan Clamp**, the then Director of BFES, announced that the title BFES would be replaced by **Service Children's Schools (North West Europe)** from January 1982. "This News was received with considerable regret"! The Association followed suit at its AGM in 1982 and became the BFES/SCS (NWE) Association. It was not until the AGM/Reunion Dinner of 1992, that the NWE was dropped from the Association's title so as to reflect the growing interest in joining from teachers who had taught in the more far off commands around the world.

The Association was certainly in existence in 1968 and minutes of meetings go back to that time. In 1975 **Mr Frank Buckley** (Chairman) wrote "The Origins of British Families Education Service" and quotes as follows: "Among the guests at the 1971 British Families Education Service Jubilee Luncheon were approximately 200 guests, of whom twenty-one were former BFES colleagues and members of the BFES Association (UK)."

The BFES schools, under a civilian Director, Mr J Trevelyan CBE, BA were established by Government direction, with the first schools opening in war-torn Germany on 1st November 1946. Our archives go back to that time and describe the conditions and provisions during that horrendously cold winter. The growing number of schools of BFES were restricted to Germany and the families of Service personnel in other commands, at more far-flung locations around the world, attended schools set up and run by teachers employed under the auspices of the three Service Education Corps; e.g. schools in Malta were run under Naval control; those in Hong Kong by the Army.

In the late 1960s these were brought together under the umbrella organisation of **Service Children's Education Authority, SCEA**, under the command of a military "Controller" who changed every two years and passed from one service to the next. As someone who "inter command transferred" from Hong Kong to Germany in 1976 I found that BFES & SCEA operated independently, but with the "Controller" being in charge – at least in name!

The last Director of BFES, Mr Nolan Clamp (and former **President of the Association**), retired in 1991 and was replaced by a **Chief Executive**,

Would you like an electronic version of the Newsletter? If so please get in touch.

Several members have expressed a wish to pay for Association Lunches by Electronic Transfer. If you wish to use this method please remember that your Booking Form – duly completed - will still be required by the event organizer. Please see the instruction on the Event Booking Form.

It was 10 Years Ago Today ...

Well almost ...



On 19th September 2006 **Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal**, visited the Headquarters of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps in Rheindahlen.

If you have a **Facebook page** please spread the word about the Association!!

Thank you.

Mr Ian Mitchelson, whose task it was to bring all schools around the world under one directorate, ***Service Children's Education***.

As teachers and officers left their posts abroad, amongst their leaving paperwork was an application form to join the Association. Its membership has fluctuated over the years and today stands at around **260**. They represent ex-colleagues from around the world and across the years. The Association has a Committee and a Constitution. It has an increasingly modern and interactive web-site which is updated every six weeks – BFES-SCE-ASSOCIATION.ORG

I took over the role of hon. archivist 15 months ago and have been surprised and disappointed to discover that, apart from our archives, there is no formal historical record that these schools, even garrisons and commands, existed. Our archives have come from members' memorabilia, school log books – when a headteacher of a closing school has shown the presence of mind to hang on to them. They are all stored in the Institute of Education, University of London, where two professional archivists log our contributions, store them, catalogue them and place them on-line. I have worked with the Imperial war Museum and the National Army Museum to try to discover any other deposits and, apart from ten log books from schools that closed in Germany in the 1990s, there are none. Our collection was the lead double page article in the IoE's membership Autumn Newsletter in 2015.

As an Association we are keen to improve on the process of documenting the history of BFES/SCE for research by future generations. We are keen, as an Association, that this very original delivery of education is not lost.

Walter (Wally) Lewis

Hon. Archivist, BFES/SCE Association
(ex Hong Kong, Brüggen, Dortmund & Osnabrück; from 1972 to 1992)

The Verdala Story

RN School Verdala is holding a reunion in Malta - 19-24 September 2016

The school is situated in one of the oldest historical sites of the island and its story goes as far back as the Great Siege, when the hill on which it stands served as a vantage point to the Turkish invaders to target Fort St. Michael and Fort St. Angelo.

In 1638 the first stone was laid for the Firenzuola Lines, which eventually became known as the Margerita lines, with Verdala Gate, opposite the present school entrance, being the oldest part of these walls.

In 1853 the British built the Verdala barracks behind this gate and later constructed a big fortress right across these barracks. It is on the grounds of this fortress that the school now stands. Starting out first as a state primary school (1924), then housing a dockyard class which provided students for the naval dockyard, it was later (1948) converted into a school for the children of British servicemen. Verdala's metamorphosis from a military installation to an educational one was completed when in 1972 it became The International School of Malta, catering for children of people employed overseas in the oil industry, and later also opening its doors to local students. 1984 and 1985 saw the concluding phase of this metamorphosis when the school became, first an area secondary school, and, eventually, a Junior Lyceum, named after the local naturalist and ornithologist, Guzeppi Despoti (1878-1936).

Were you there – do you have memories to share with us? If so please get in touch ...

Early Warning

Germany Reunion 2017 Bielefeld or Gütersloh

The Mess Managers at Mansergh (Gütersloh) and **Catterick** (Bielefeld) Officers' Messes have been approached and both are very willing to put the event on, subject to agreement of respective PMCs.

Mansergh Station Officers' Mess has not come back with detailed costings however it is quite likely that they would not differ greatly from those proposed by the Mess Manager at Catterick Barracks Officers' Mess.

Based on 50 attending the cost per person is €45.36 which would cover food, wine on table (half-bottle each), port, pre-drinks, all tableware and room decoration, starter, main, sweet, cheese-board, chef and waiting staff. A cash bar would be available at mess rates. This cost is based on a full evening dinner, so a lunch event might allow for some reduction (port & cheeseboard, some wine, perhaps).

The Mess at Catterick Barracks has several advantages:

It is on same camp as HQ BFG and what remains of HQ SCE in Germany.

Bielefeld has more rail links and hotel choices than Gütersloh.

The Past Shapes Us All (Part 1)

Taken from Memories of Teaching in BFES in 1954 by Peter Granville

Originally published in SCEA Bulletin number 23 – Autumn 1984.

The teaching experience of the writer, prior to service with BFES, was in no way unusual or remarkable. After **qualifying in 1947**, a little over three years were spent in the Junior Mixed department of an All Age school in a northern industrial city. These years proved to be somewhat unexciting, though they provided initial experience and allowed a modicum of confidence to develop. Changed family circumstances and a recognition of the need to broaden one's experience suggested a change of environment and a post was obtained in a two-teacher Junior Mixed school in a pleasant East Anglian village. At the end of a further period of approximately three years, during which a wider range of fruitful educational experience had been absorbed, an unusually helpful and perceptive Headmistress suggested that prolonged service in a village school, however enjoyable, was not likely to prove to be entirely satisfactory so far as a fruitful career in education was concerned. What was needed was teaching experience of a kind different again from the two contrasting periods in the North and East Anglia. The question arose as to the availability of such experience and it was at this point that **service in BFES** came into consideration.

Little was known to the writer at that time about the Service, but it did seem to be worthwhile sending off for details and when they were received and studied, it began to appear that this might well provide the additional experience felt to be necessary for someone who by now had taught for something over six years and had a desire to enjoy rather more responsibility than had so far been possible. There was, too, the attraction of overseas service in geographical environment reasonably similar to one's own, and yet which was not too far from home, should an emergency arise which necessitated a swift return to the UK.

Application was made, therefore, and before long, attendance requested at interview in London. This was followed by medical examinations at barracks nearer to home and a series of injections which were given by the local doctor and had to be endured by each member of the family, a particular hardship for two very young children, who were unable to sit down for some days afterwards and could not understand why this pain had been inflicted upon them. The selection process, although it appeared to be straightforward enough to an applicant, had evolved under the guidance of **John Trevelyan**, the first Director of BFES, who had in the early days of the Service secured a procedure separate from the Control Commission. Gerald Hankin, a former HMI, was appointed as Chairman of the **Special Teacher Appointments Board** and this meant that teachers were appointed by a Committee which was sensitive to the needs of the Service: .

Candidates, mostly women, had to be able to mix well, but not too well, in messes where 4 men predominated. They had to be prepared for improvisation in equipment and teaching material. They must have the right attitude towards parents and be prepared to play their part in the life of the community. They would have small but mixed classes and must think of their pupils as individuals.

By the early nineteen fifties, it was held that only ten per cent of applicants were accepted for service with BFES so that by this stage, the writer was pleased with the progress which had been made.

Bielefeld School is next to the mess and so a visit, perhaps on a Saturday morning might be possible.

The Mess is military / civilian (HQ civil servants).

A fellow member MoD Civil Servant working for DCYP/SCE could sponsor the event March to May 2017.

The only drawback is a 50 seat limit, since the rooms are smaller than in Gütersloh.

If you wish to reserve a space at this early planning stage please contact by **e-mail** or **letter**:

Sue Adams

s.badams@tiscali.co.uk

**Tanglewood,
21 Buckwell,
Wellington,
Somerset
TA21 8TA**

* In the writer's experience, accommodation was normally of a high standard. The first Director, John Trevelyan, had insisted at the outset that BFES teachers would have Officer Status and this was effective at all levels.



Eventually the date of travel to **Germany** was notified, documents received and farewells said to the family, which was to follow when a quarter became available. The journey to **Harwich** was brief and before long, civilian and Service personnel who were travelling to BAOR were caught up in the military machine. The overnight journey to Hoek van Holland was accomplished in a **small, crowded troopship** which hardly compared with the civilian vessels which plied the same route. The following morning, passengers were directed to the 'Red' or 'Blue' train, according to destination, and the slow journey to their posting commenced. In the case of newly arrived teachers, the group was sent first of all to Düsseldorf for an induction course of several days. During this time, the Director addressed everyone, as did the Regional Education Officers; further documentation took place and some time was allowed for acclimatization visits into the town. Even at this brief acquaintance, it began to appear as if the decision to serve in BFES had been a good one and yet one could not help but be aware of some of the likely social problems, as outlined by an earlier arrival in a letter home to her parents:

"We had a glorious time at Herford where we were treated much too well as it has spoiled us for anything that is to come. Life is much too easy out here for CCG personnel and Forces' Families and we have been warned to take a moral stocktaking of ourselves every so often; drink is very cheap, cigarettes are 1/- for 20, everyone is waited on hand and foot, transport is cheap".

It would be interesting to conjecture how such a caveat would be regarded today, thirty-five years or so after the letter above was written. Would it, in fact, be given? However, it is doubtful if thoughts such as these were uppermost in teachers' minds as they split up and departed for the particular schools to which they had been appointed. The writer was sent to a school in a large German city in the East of the British Zone and thoughts of what lay ahead were frequent as the train travelled first of all through **devastated cities**, the names of which had become household words associated with the RAF bomber offensive during the war, and later through rolling countryside towards its destination.

Upon arrival at the main station, the writer was met by the Headmaster, Supplies' Officer and locally engaged German driver and taken to the Civilian Mess where teachers were accommodated, in an attractive part of the town. A special room was provided overlooking the garden to the rear of the Mess with beyond, the garden of a small monastery wherein monks could be seen going about their daily tasks.* Gradually over the next two or three days, teachers returned from the UK or various parts of the Continent where they had been on holiday and introductions were made. The mysteries of shopping at **NAAFI** with **British Armed Forces Special Vouchers** (see illustration left) were explained, as was the system for drawing one's allowance of cigarettes and alcohol at a time when both were at low prices undreamed of by people at home. Life in such a Mess was, in the **Spring of 1954**, decidedly pleasant, for as the only male in residence at that time, the writer was exceedingly well looked after by colleagues who were most helpful and a German domestic staff whose sole ambition seemed to be to cause all males for whom they were responsible to put on a great deal of weight. Pleasant as life in the Mess undoubtedly was, it was of the utmost importance to obtain a quarter in which we could all live again as a family and to that end, the wheels were put in motion to expedite the matter.

In the meantime, a new teaching career was commencing in an old, former German school situated on the city boundary next to an extensive area of parkland.

Departed Friends

Chris Ingham sadly died on 28th March after a brave battle with cancer.

Chris initially taught in **Osnabrück** and Berlin as deputy head at **Gatow** First School before returning to UK and taking up a headship. Later, in the 80s, she returned to SCE as a primary adviser for maths and then senior primary adviser in the Eastern region.

Chris will be remembered by many primary teachers, headteachers and colleagues in the advisory service for her professional input and huge support in schools.



In the event:

*Private houses, military barracks, asylums and even stables were requisitioned for conversion into British schools. Some of the houses used as schools were lovely places with spacious grounds, lawns, woodlands and even **swimming pools**. They were not ideal as schools but they often had interesting features - rooms with plenty of space, wide staircases and ballrooms which could be used as assembly halls, and while the number of children remained reasonably small they proved adequate.*

BFES in this respect was following out the order of **Field Marshal Montgomery**, issued soon after the end of the war, that in future no schools were to be requisitioned by the Army or CCG. Those which had previously been commandeered by the German Armed Forces could subsequently be requisitioned by the British for use as schools, however, and this had become the case with the one mentioned above. There were approximately nine teachers including the Headteacher, a German secretary, caretaker and cook with a driver attached to the school. The children turned out to be lively, pleasant, good mannered and well-travelled, reflecting in their knowledge of Hong Kong, Singapore and other Service stations, a childish sophistication that was rarely offensive. There were a few children from **Canadian, American and German** sources but only ever in small numbers and normally they mixed in well. It was a happy school, though facilities were somewhat limited and eventually a move was made into a purpose-built 'British style' school, nearer to town in the developing British 'enclave'.

It would be interesting to hear the opinions of other teachers who have served in BAOR upon the subject, but to the writer the difference in teaching in the UK and BFES which was immediately obvious was the freedom from many of the constraints to which home based teachers were subjected. There was no longer a paternalistic Education Officer to whom reference had to be made before a course of action could be initiated and there were no local School Managers to be consulted about the day-to-day running of the school. These two bodies were not ipso facto inhibitors of action but they often had the effect of slowing down progress. Thus, in BFES there was generally the ability to experiment and as Head Teachers were keen for their members of staff to explore as many ways of teaching as seemed appropriate to Service children's needs, well experienced teachers were frequently instrumental in developing their younger colleagues' abilities to attempt new ways of teaching and profit from them.

It is well documented that in the early days of BFES, due to the unusual combination of circumstances prevailing in Germany in the aftermath of war, teachers were thrown upon their own resources and had to depend upon their own initiative to a much greater extent than was the case in a 'Home' Authority. From this developed the 'training' aspects of teaching in BFES and indeed, **Colonel Eric Lowe**, formerly of the RAEC and later Director of BFES, has stressed that: ...

as in the Services many of those who served in BFES were 'trainers' who were dynamic, highly motivated and highly critical and he saw this as a developmental aspect of the Service's contribution to education in England and Wales.

The writer still remembers well the feelings of pleasure at being invited by HMI's who were currently engaged upon a tour of inspection, to join in the staff room discussion and comment with other members of staff upon the problems of teaching Service children. It was many years later, and then back home in the UK as a Headteacher, before such an opportunity arose again.

To be continued /