



BFES SCEA Association

SUMMER 2017

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NEWSLETTER NUMBER 37

Chairman's Summer Message

I am absolutely delighted, following the disappointing news in our last Newsletter, to confirm that the Association's Germany Reunion is definitely taking place in June 2018.

As the remaining schools close and the MOD withdraw from Germany this will be the last occasion for BFES/SCEA Members to experience a Dinner Night at the Officer's Mess, of 26 Regiment RA Gütersloh .

Events like this require a considerable amount of organisation by your Committee. However, we have been ably assisted by two individuals, whose input has made this Reunion possible.

In particular, **Ken Jones**, ex Head of King's School and ex Principal of Welbeck College, has committed a significant amount of time and effort to meeting key people on the ground in Gütersloh and using his knowledge of matters military and his contacts to make this possible.

Germany Reunion 2018

School Visits & Dinner Night - 5th to the 7th June 2018.

Officers' Mess - Mansergh Barracks – Gütersloh

Many members of the SCE/BFES Association will have very fond memories of life in Germany. The opportunity to teach in Services schools and live, work and socialise alongside Army/RAF personnel gave all of us unique experiences.

With the imminent closure of the remaining schools in British Forces Germany and the final withdrawal of the Army in 2019, a **reunion** visit is being planned from the **5th to the 7th June 2018**.

The focus of this reunion is **school visits**, a **regimental visit** and a **dinner night** in the Officers' Mess at Mansergh Barracks in Gütersloh. During this visit there will be a chance to visit a **choice** of schools. This could well be the last chance any of us will have to experience such a dinner in an Officers' Mess.

To achieve these joint aims **Ben Turner**, Headteacher of Haig School Gütersloh has agreed to co-ordinate the school visits and 26 RA Regiment, based in Gütersloh, has agreed to host a regimental visit and a dinner in the Officers' Mess, Mansergh Barracks.

The **PROPOSED PROGRAMME** is as follows:-

TUESDAY 5th JUNE

Private travel arrangements to Gütersloh.

WEDNESDAY 6th JUNE

Morning

Presentation on the changing role of the Gunner Regiment, meet serving officers and soldiers, some ex-service school pupils, tour of the regiment and its varied equipment.

Afternoon

First visit to your choice of school

Evening

Pre-dinner drinks and a four-course dinner, with wines and port.

THURSDAY 7th JUNE

Morning

Visit to an alternative school

Afternoon

Visit to a third choice of school, proceed back home or extend your stay.

SCHOOL DETAILS

The schools which remain open with pupil numbers as of summer 2017

Bielefeld Primary 110 pupils: **Haig Primary** 215 pupils: **Bishopspark Primary** 380 pupils: **Attenborough Primary** 380 pupils this is the former Robert Browning and William Wordsworth schools combined: **John Buchan Middle** 300 pupils: **Kings Secondary School** 300 pupils.

Contd ...

Ben Turner's efforts in Gütersloh on behalf of the Association's Committee are proving to be essential to the success of this event. Ben was Headteacher of **Blankenhagen School** until its closure last July and is now the Head of **Haig School**, Gütersloh. Ben and Ken managed to meet up to discuss details on Ken's recent visit to Germany.

My personal thanks go to everyone involved in making this event possible and I am sure that it will prove to be an excellent occasion.

Glyn Pascoe



Ian Mitchelson CBE
First Chief Executive
of SCS(NWE) and
SCE.

It is with great regret that we learn of the death of **Ian Mitchelson**, former Chief Executive of SCS(NWE) and SCE.

He died on Sunday 18th June after a short illness and our sincere condolences go to his wife Beth and their family.

They had lived near Northallerton in North Yorkshire since he retired in 1996. Ian had been Deputy Chief Education Officer of North Yorkshire before moving to Germany in 1991 to become the first chief executive of

MINIMUM NUMBERS

To cover the costs associated with the meal, including labour in the Mess, we need a minimum of 40. One member plus one guest each. A reserve list will be held.

OFFICERS MESS DINNER

The evening will commence with pre-dinner drinks followed by an excellent four-course dinner, featuring a Beef Wellington fillet as the main course, with a vegetarian option, choice of red or white wine, bottled water and finishing with port. The full menu will be shown on the booking pro-forma to be issued later this year.

The total cost for this unique dinner is £35 per person and dress is lounge suits for men.

CHOICE OF HOTELS

This is to be a personal choice for those attending, but due to the very close proximity of the railway station it is suggested that members consider booking either the **Hotel Stadt Gütersloh** which is just a 5 minute walk from the station or the more expensive **Park Hotel**, the top hotel in Gütersloh which is just 2 minutes further on than the first hotel. To get to either of these hotels it is just a matter of turning left after you leave the station.

Both hotels offer underground parking for those who choose to drive to Gütersloh and it is a very easy short walk into the lovely town centre from either hotel.

If you choose to drive, take the second Gütersloh exit from the autobahn exit 24, drive straight into the town and once you go through the tunnel under the railway, turn left at the first traffic lights and you will quickly find both hotels on the right.

TRANSPORT

If you choose to fly it is possible to get a train directly from Dusseldorf Airport straight to Gütersloh and they go twice every hour. If you catch the one which goes just after the hour there is no need to change.

During your stay in Gütersloh minibuses will be hired to transport you to the various venues. Details of transport costs etc will be notified on the Booking Forms

If you have any questions about the visit or the venue please feel free to email Ken Jones at jkenrickjones@hotmail.com or telephone him on 01691-828468 .

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST/RESERVATIONS/BOOKINGS

If you feel you would like to join us on this trip down memory lane, please contact **Sue Adams** to confirm your interest by **Tuesday 31 October 2017**. Sue can be reached on **(telephone) 01823 663195** or email buckwell.adams@gmail.com .

When you come to complete your booking form for the visit (which will be distributed with the Winter Newsletter) you will be asked to indicate which schools you wish to visit. On the form you will also be able state any dietary/vegetarian requirements. **Booking forms are to be returned to Sue by 31 January 2018.**

BFES SCEA Association Curry Lunch

The Gurkha Museum Winchester - Saturday 3rd June 2017 by Jane Tull

This year 39 members and their guests attended the Curry Lunch at the Gurkha Museum. I expected 38 people but one member cancelled due to ill-health. Then at the last moment two members arrived and said as they were in Winchester could they stay for lunch? "No trouble", said **Bindhya** who was doing the catering. As well as welcoming the unexpected guests I was delighted to welcome both members who had attended last year, and quite a few members who had not been to a Curry Lunch before. I was amazed that members had travelled from all parts of England and Wales to attend the lunch and meet up with friends.

Judging from the chatter and laughter it was clear that members enjoyed meeting

Service Children's Schools (NW Europe). He joined at a time when successive waves of "drawdown", presaging the gradual withdrawal of British troops from Germany and consequent drastic reductions in pupil numbers, needed skilled and sensitive management. He went on to lead an amalgamation with schools beyond Germany that brought about the world-wide organisation, ***Service Children's Education***.

He was awarded a CBE shortly after he retired. Those who knew him as a family man saw a gentler side than might be presumed from the tough persona he sometimes presented professionally. He will be greatly missed by family, friends and former colleagues.

Closure

As we fast approach the final closures in Germany it is perhaps appropriate to reflect upon the words penned by ***Field Marshal Viscount Slim*** to the headteacher of ***Slim School***, in the ***Cameron Highlands*** in the long distant summer of 1964 ...

It is sad to think that this is the last Speech Day that the Slim School will hold,

their friends, talking about old times and meeting new acquaintances – who invariably knew someone they knew! In fact at about a quarter-to-four I had to politely, well I hope it was politely ask people to leave to allow the Gurkha Museum staff to set up the room for the next function.



The ***McDonald Gallery*** looked at its best with the museum silver on prominent display. Set out with three tables, the room allowed groups of friends to sit together and Bindhya and her staff served starters, deserts and tea/coffee at table – guests collecting the main course of three curries, Daal, rice and poppadums from the servery. There was plenty of food. I apologise if the curries were a little bland, I was frightened that they may have been too spicy and asked Bindhya not to put in too much spice. This will be rectified if there is another curry lunch next year: I am quite prepared to arrange one.

Bindhya is quite prepared to make a salad for people who are not too keen on curry. Unfortunately the price will have to be the same because of the cost of hiring the room. I really enjoyed the afternoon. Meeting old friends, making new ones and as guests left they said "see you next year". So they must have enjoyed themselves too!!

Cambridge Reunion Lunch

Corpus Christi College – Cambridge - 1st April 2017

Our Cambridge re-union lunches have been very popular over the last few years and once again we were able to offer the chance to dine in one of the University's finest colleges; Corpus Christi. Situated in the centre of Cambridge and dating back to 1352; the College, boasts many fine buildings and grounds which members were

but we must not be too depressed about it. After all the School does not die because changes in national administration close it. The School still lives on in all those boys and girls who have passed through it into the world and who carry with them the traditions and standards that they have learnt here.

Schools are like men; it is not so important how long they live but what they do with the years they are granted and Slim School has achieved a great deal. I have been very proud to have given my name to the school and to have known its achievements. I give every one of you my very best wishes for happiness and success in the future.

Diary Dates

Saturday

14 October 2017
Reunion Lunch at the
Royal Naval College
Dartmouth

**Spring /Summer
2018**

Germany Reunion

Winchester Reunion

**A warm welcome to
new members**

Benet Waterman,
who taught at
Hampshire School in
Monchengladbach
from 1974 to 1979.
Benet now lives in
Cumbria.

able to explore. This year's re-union in Cambridge was as popular as ever with a number of new faces joining the regulars at our new venue, Corpus Christi College. After an excellent meal and as a tribute to Christine Ford, our sadly departed former Events Secretary, her tradition of distributing sweets was resurrected. Many members lingered until late afternoon enjoying the College's hospitality and its historic surroundings, some extending their day by attending the local comedy club (which is organised by Nessa Ward one of our new members).



Due to refurbishment we are unable to return next year but have been invited back in 2019 if members wish. We were also provided with contacts that could make Dover Castle and Eltham Palace possible future venues if sufficient interest is expressed.

The 2017 AGM (and Reunion Lunch)

Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth – Saturday 14th October 2017

You are cordially invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Association at the Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth.

At the meeting a new committee will be elected. All posts are available for election. Should you wish to nominate/second someone please either email: lynnmarsh6@aol.com or write to Lynn Marshall, Wilton House, Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood, Reading RG7 1PH. (0118 3274128) The posts available are - Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Archivist, Events Organiser, Membership Secretary, Web Manager and 2 committee members.

Contd overleaf

Vanessa Ward, who taught in Cromwell School, Osnabrück from 1976 to 1979, and then Charlottenburg School, Berlin from 1979 to 1983. Vanessa lives in Cambridge.

Welcome back to **Judith Mellody**, who taught at St Andrews School, Malta from 1972 to 1978, and then at Lister School, Herford from 1978 to 2002. Judith lives in Milnthorpe in Cumbria.

Margaret Thorpe taught in St Christopher's School in Gibraltar from 1978 to 1981. Margaret lives in Plymouth.

Departed Friends

Christine Ford

14th February 1948 to 27th February 2017.

Christine died in hospital having suffered from lung cancer over an eighteen month period.

Christine's funeral took place on 14th March 2017 at Cross Lane United Church, Newton-le-Willows. The day started off wet, but soon became beautiful and sunny with a bright blue sky. The church was full, extra chairs had to be brought in and some mourners had to stand at the back.

The atmosphere, despite being sombre, was warm,

The agenda will be:-

Welcome- Chair: Apologies: Minutes from the previous meeting: Correspondence: Reports: Elections of Committee: Election of deputy chair: Future Newsletters: Germany 2018: Future Events: Membership: Members questions - given to the secretary before the meeting.

I look forward to welcoming you to the meeting.

Lynn Marshall – Secretary

NB Whilst all members are invited to attend the AGM there are now only two places left for the lunch. If you are interested in these last two places please get in touch with **Sue Adams** immediately and certainly not later than September 1st 2017. The cost per head for the lunch is £40 per person. A reserve list will be held if necessary. Coffee and tea will be available on arrival and the AGM will commence at 11.30 hrs.



An Adventure Abroad in Germany (1965 - 1981)

From the Memoirs of Peter Hall ACP- 2016 School is Everywhere - Part 2

*"As a former **archivist to the Association** I was overwhelmed by the great quantity and variety of the hundreds of items donated by former teachers following an exhibition mounted during one of our reunions held at the Cafe Royal. A former School Meals Adviser, Arabella Kurdi, who was in Germany in the late 1940s had encouraged me to have our archives deposited at the **Institute of Education at the University of London**. Having received so many items over the years, I felt duty-bound to write my own memoirs, **excerpts of which you may now read in this and subsequent editions of the Newsletter**.*

Peter Hall – March 2017"

At my interview I'd had to admit that, although my initial application had stated that I was married with two offspring, I had now become, only a few days before, the father of a third child, for which I was duly congratulated.

By November plans for the approaching upheaval had to be put into operation: my resignation as a Churchwarden; handing in my notice as a member of the Village Hall committee; reminding someone to take over my work on making a training film for the local Schools' Rounders' Association; not to mention making arrangements for a family get-together for the baptism of our third infant and decisions about what and what not to take to Germany and the storage of what we would be leaving.

We'd decided to sell our bungalow and, fortunately, some close relatives were in need of temporary accommodation just then and came to live in it until it was sold. The War Office letter had requested my attendance for a medical examination at the famous Netley Hospital, over-looking Southampton Water, where Florence Nightingale had worked. So it was a thrill to be going there, yet disappointing to find that the Royal Army Medical Corps was housed in a dilapidated hut nearby. I also had to obtain a certificate of dental health from my dentist and arrange for inoculations.

Early in December a huge Army truck arrived with a supply of six heavy wooden crates which had to be filled, the contents listed, lid secured and the bases and lids screwed on (twenty-four" screws to each crate!) and the lengthy address painted on. Ours was not a large bungalow so the crates took up a lot of space; in fact I remember having meals on top of one of them during that time as they were not going to be collected until a few days after Christmas.

welcoming and full of love. Michael, Christine's husband had planned the funeral down to the finest details - it was a service of thanksgiving, full of many personal memories giving a lovely picture of Christine throughout her life. A long term friend told everyone about Christine's life as a child. A cousin talked about her youth and Peter Rawcliffe made us laugh, telling everyone about her time in Malta. Lynn Marshall ended the service outlining the wonderful work Christine had undertaken as events' organiser of the BFES/SCEA Association. Interspersed throughout the service were hymns and pieces of music which were special to Christine. Michael provided the tender and sensitive dialogue that linked each part of the service.

The Service was led by Reverend Gary McGowan and the organist was David Chapman. Both were dear friends of Christine and Michael. The "ladies" of the church, all friends of Christine welcomed everyone warmly and tended to all their needs including drinks and food following the Committal at Howe Bridge Crematorium.

There were many wonderful and interesting things said about Christine during the service. We learned that as a child she went to church four times a

I had received a War Office letter requesting my presence at a briefing session at **Eltham Palace**, the then **Headquarters of the Royal Army Education Corps**, on the 28th December 1964 and that my posting was fixed for the 6th January 1965. I duly attended and learned all that I needed to know about life as a teacher in BFES, about living accommodation and other documentation details. It was amazing to be in such a historic place where the likes of King Henry 8th and other famous personages had dwelt. We were a large group attending the briefing, some of whom were destined for such far-off places as Singapore and Hong Kong. Some of the Scots in the group had learned that their flights to the Far East were scheduled for 31st December and were not very happy about celebrating a "Flying Hogmanay".

Part of the briefing session was taken up with rehearsing the filming for the proposed documentary: **"School is Everywhere"** which was being made to promote enthusiasm for teaching within the British Families' Education Service. It is a film which still can cause excitement for viewers with a wanderlust and also nostalgia for those who had taught in British Forces Schools. Copies are held by the **British Film Archive** and in the archives of the **BFES/SCEA Association** at the University of London's Institute of Education. Fortunately I had just a week in which to go shopping in Southampton for a travelling trunk; I'd received a cheque for £5 'trunk allowance'! and found one for just that price. At the briefing session I'd been advised that, on posting to Germany I'd be living, initially, in an Officers' Mess and would need to be suitably attired for Mess functions.

The January sales were in full swing and I was lucky enough to find, in Moss Bros., just what was required for attending Mess dinner nights.

I had received my flight documents and ticket and was to fly from Gatwick airport on the 6th January. My wife, Janet, and the three children, Janet's sister and her husband all came to see me off at Southampton Central Station no doubt wondering what I was letting myself in for and whether or not it was a good career move.



I was happy and confident that Janet, with her sister's help, would cope with the three infants and the packing in readiness for the move to Germany. It would be three weeks before Janet's flight which was to be from Luton to Düsseldorf, so I had time in which to settle myself into a new life and job. I decided to stay the night before my flight with a friend in London. His mother asked me if there was any music I might like to listen to before setting out on my expedition. I pointed out that I was only flying to Germany - not the end of the world! I chose to listen to Gilbert & Sullivan's "The Yeomen of the Guard", which seemed appropriately patriotic. It was played on a vinyl record which produced a somewhat scratchy sound but nevertheless appealed to my British loyalty.

To reach Gatwick I took the Underground to Victoria where, in struggling with my two large and heavy suitcases and reaching the top of an escalator, I let go of one of them and was appalled to see it slither ominously down the upward-travelling escalator. I was horrified lest it should crash into any ascending passengers but by a stroke of luck there were none and eventually my case became stuck and gently made its way back to me. At Gatwick I checked-in and found a seat, glad to be rid of my luggage. As a teenager I had often suffered from a 'wobbly' tummy when travelling alone. Now, on visiting the toilet in the departure lounge, I heard on the intercom : **"This is the final call for the flight to Gütersloh. Please proceed immediately to the departure gate"**.

day each and every Sunday. She married her teacher (Michael was the teacher of the SEN diploma course Christine studied for whilst in Germany.) She died two days before her 31st wedding anniversary. Christine's laughter, honesty, friendliness, energy and commitment to her family and friends were recurring themes throughout the service.

As the Association's events' organiser Christine planned, organised and managed many fabulous lunches in some very special places. She was so successful in this role because of her excellent organisational skills and attention to detail, her constant and consistent hard work and dedication, her high standards and her tenacity. She would never settle for second best and had no fear of asking awkward questions and telling staff exactly what she expected. She was fulsome in her praise when events went well and staff had worked hard and given of their best.

Throughout every event Christine smiled and laughed and at the end "chucked" chocolates onto the tables. It was always a source of much amusement and served as a hidden message!

THANK GOODNESS -
ANOTHER
SUCCESSFUL MEAL -
NOW I CAN RELAX.

If you would like to donate in Christine's

I'm glad to say I made it just before the gate closed.

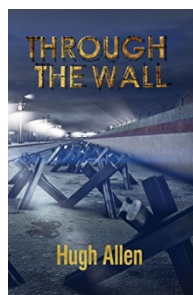
I'd never flown before and found the experience exhilarating.

Night had fallen by the time we landed and, together with several others destined for BFES, we were shepherded to a khaki-coloured Army bus which took us to **Windsor Secondary Girl's Boarding' School in Hamm**. On that journey it was a thrilling sight to see so many Christmas trees decorated with white lights and I remembered that it was Epiphany and that, as in England, Christmas lights and decorations remained until Twelfth Night, although, being British, I had been accustomed to coloured lights on Christmas trees.

We were well-received at the school by staff members who welcomed us and joined us in a much-appreciated meal. In due course we were escorted to the girls' dormitory where I shared a double bunk with **Warren Cantelo**. The male members of the group were advised that, as this was a girls' school, there were no urinals in the dormitories and were told to ignore notices about the correct disposal of sanitary towels. The next day we were taken on a tour of the BFES Supplies' Department where we learned of the excellence and variety of school equipment available. One teacher in the group was an expert puppeteer and he and I gave a brief show to the other members of the group. I guessed that he was going to be a popular member of staff to whichever school he was appointed.

Under the kindly guidance of **Frank Buckley**, Assistant Director, whom I recognized as having been on the interviewing board at my interview in London, we were told details of the various schools to which we were being posted. I already knew that mine was to be at **Hilden** but didn't know its location. Fortunately a map was provided and I discovered that it was near Dusseldorf. **Archie Eastcrabbe**, the head, was a well-travelled family man who had served in Hong Kong and, more recently, at Krefeld in Germany. Using the antiquated military telephone apparatus with its little winding handle and speaking to a disgruntled-sounding Army operator (probably a lance-corporal nearing the end of his day's duty), I managed to contact Archie and he arranged to meet me at Dusseldorf railway station the next day. He asked how to identify me. I told him I was slightly balding, carrying two out-sized suit cases and wearing an extra-large and shabby, ankle-length overcoat. Frank Buckley escorted a group of us to Hamm station advising us that, as a once-only special concession, we would be travelling first-class. I was on my way to what? At least Archie sounded cheerful on the 'phone, but what was the school like? I was soon to find out. Archie immediately identified me at the station amongst the throng of smartly-dressed Germans and he manfully carried one of my cases wondering "what on earth lumps of rock are in this case?" I had, in fact, brought, amongst other items of teaching equipment, a few **geological specimens** which I had often found to be useful classroom aids.

To be continued.



Meeting with a new author - Hugh Allen

By Sue Adams

It was quite by chance that someone told me of a new book that had just been published – a fictional story set in **Berlin**, written by someone who lived locally. I was curious to find out more as my fascination with Berlin has never left me since teaching there at **Charlottenburg School**.

Following a few emails and phone calls I met up with Hugh to hear how he came to write his book. It transpired that Hugh was in Berlin in 1947 as a baby aged two years old. His memories of that time are obviously limited but he recalled that the family lived in **Reichsportfeld Strasse**. His father was later posted to Bad

memory, cheques should be made payable to:

"The Christie" and sent to:- The Christie Charity, 2-4 Candleford Road, Withington, Manchester, M20 3JH

Barry Corless

Barry was appointed to teach Biology in Kings School in 1979 and remained there until his retirement in 2012 during which time he was promoted to Head of Year.

On Facebook there were many fond recollections of him as a teacher, with many comments about his wry sense of humour. He retired to Derbyshire and sadly died on the 31st May 2017.

Warren Cantelo

It was with sadness that the association was informed of the death of Warren Cantelo.

Warren died on 1st October 2016 at the age of 88. Since his wife's death in November 2015 Warren had lived in a nursing home.

He served in Detmold, Germany from Christmas 1965. He moved to Hubblerath in 1967 and ended his service days in Alexandria School in 1976. He was headteacher at his last two schools.

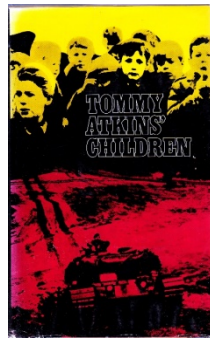
Warren was a kind man, a true gentleman, full of fun and a very dedicated professional. In each school he always strove to achieve and encouraged others to achieve

Salzuflen, Koln and then back to Berlin. From 1954-58 the family lived in **Stallopuner Allee**.

Hugh was able to recall going to school and described a villa in the Grunewald. In particular he remembered working with raffia and lots of paper folding! His uncle, **Ralph Mills**, was a teacher there. His two elder brothers were also at the school and members of the Wolf Cubs. He also remembered the **Mayor of Charlottenburg** coming to the school and sweets being given at Christmas.

Perhaps it was these early memories of Berlin and Germany that later influenced Hugh to join BFES in 1976 and teach in **RAF Laarbruch** at the Middle School. He taught there until 1979 when he returned with his family to England and decided to attend the Theological College in Salisbury. He subsequently became the Rural Dean of Exmoor – but now is retired.

The story he has written undoubtedly is influenced by what he knows of German history and in particular Berlin but by conversations he possibly overheard as a child. I have enjoyed reading it very much. If anyone remembers Hugh from **Laarbruch** days, I know he would like to hear from them. He can be contacted through his email address hallenarkwood@yahoo.co.uk .



Tommy Atkins' Children

Foreword by Maj General HH Evans – Director of Army Education – London 1970

"This brief account of 300 years of education provided by the Army for its children tells of Army schools supported officially, at home and abroad, before the State made similar arrangements for its own children. It records much the Army has pioneered in children's education and periods when the Army arrangements have lagged behind those provided by the State.

It is most appropriate that this story should be written in 1970, the 50th Anniversary of the foundation of the Royal Army Educational Corps. The Jubilee year was graciously marked by Her Majesty the Queen with a visit to **Eltham** palace, the home of the RAEC and the base from which 500 teachers leave annually for the Services' children's schools abroad.

The author, Col. N.T. St John Williams, has many claims to write this account. He joined the RAEC in 1947, after war-time service in Europe with the Sherwood Foresters and in the Far East with the Intelligence corps. In his first RAEC appointment he was concerned with the re-opening of the children's schools in Singapore after the war. He has served the schools on the staff in Germany and as commandant at the Institute of Army Education. Recently, as the Director of Army Education's principal staff officer for children's schools, he had a world-wide responsibility for them. He had much to do with the formation of the new tri-Service Children's Education Authority. Now, as chief Education officer, Far East, he has the task of closing down many of the schools he once helped to found.

In commending this book to all who study the history of children's education, I wish to pay tribute to the many thousands, both civilian and military, who over the years have made possible this story of massive achievement often in the most difficult of circumstances".

Closure of SCEA Schools in Hong Kong - July 1996

By W. L. Warren (Rtd.)

When Headmaster, Martin Cater, lowered the Union Jack on the last day of the last term at St. George's School in Kowloon Tong on July 14th this year, it was an event

their very best.

He will also be remembered for taking the single girls under his wing and acting as a father/family figure. In addition he was very handy with a screwdriver!

Warren was a thoughtful and respected member of the committee from 1996 until 2001

Our thoughts and sympathies are with Warren's family and friends.

Did you know ...

Mansergh Barracks was named after **General Sir Eric Carden Robert Mansergh**, Royal Field Artillery.

He was born in South Africa and educated at the Rondebosch Boys' High School in Cape Town and at the **Royal Military Academy, Woolwich**.

He was commissioned into the Royal Field Artillery in 1920. He served with the **British Military Mission to Iraq** between 1931 and 1935, being awarded the Military Cross in 1932.

During World War II, he served with the Royal Artillery in Eritrea, Abyssinia, the Western Desert of Libya, the Middle East, Persia, Iraq, Arakan, Assam and Burma. Having been promoted acting Major-General in 1944, he commanded the 11th (East Africa) Division and the 5th Indian Infantry Division.

considered newsworthy not merely by the local press and TV, but also by UK reporters. The occasion was seen to presage the much grander ceremony to take place on June 30th next year, when the Crown Colony of Hong will become a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

St. George's Secondary School stood on its Kowloon Tong site, directly under the final approach of aircraft descending into Kai Tak, for forty-six years. In its heyday in the early 70s, the roll was over 1200 pupils, bussed in from the RAF base in Sek Kong in the New Territories; from the Army Garrison at Stanley Fort and from Stonecutter's Island (no longer an island and soon to be the People's Naval Base). In the days before modern roads and tunnels, Sek Kong and Stanley Fort had been "all-through" schools.

In recent years falling rolls saw St. George's accepting up to 25% 'non-entitled' pupils - mainly Japanese, Korean and local Chinese, but also from many different countries and taking on an International aspect. Gurkha pupils, of course, were also strongly represented.

After an excellent final year with whole-school participation in a host of events, those staff not fortunate enough to be eligible for premature retirement, were perhaps equally lucky to be offered inter-command transfers to Cyprus or Germany. Many ex-SCEA teachers continue to work in the English School Foundation and other Hong Kong Schools, so our link with this fascinating place will remain.

The Party's Over

By Wilma Simpson – formerly Headteacher of W Wordsworth School - Sennelager

On the evening of Saturday 8th July a number of past and present colleagues gathered together in Bob's Den, Catterick Barracks, Bielefeld to bid farewell to a stalwart and long standing member of SCE, **Paul Niedzwiedzki**.



After a curry, the evening started off with Paul's wife, Lena singing a farewell rendition based on 'The Party's Over' by Noel Coward. This was then followed by **Brenda Titley** reading out a farewell message from DCYP's director Mike Cooper thanking Paul for his twenty two years of service. **Kathryn Forsyth** then detailed Paul's early days in the organisation from 1995 to the present. She referred to a number of humorous anecdotes as well as recognising his dedication and commitment over the years to the schools and

ultimately the children of the organisation. His great ability to remain calm no matter what, as well as his great skill at knowing just what to say when all around were at a loss for words. Finally Wilma Simpson on behalf of head teachers past and present thanked Paul for his tremendous appetite for hard work, professionalism and integrity in supporting the running of the schools and in particular the guidance advice given to head teachers. In 1994/95 there was outing of a unique and entertaining after dinner speaker who thereafter made the annual HT conference dinner an event not to be missed as well the appearance of Paul's alter ego in the form of Elvis. had to be seen to be believed!

Wilma presented Paul with an award in recognition of being the 'Worldwide HTs' Champion'.

Finally the evening continued in a style we had become accustomed to at



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Promoted acting lieutenant-general in 1946, he commanded the 15th Indian Corps and was then appointed Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces in the Netherlands East Indies.

Gen **Mansergh** later served as Military Secretary from 1948 to 1949, Commander of British Forces in Hong Kong from 1949 to 1951, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces Northern Europe from 1951 to 1953, **C-in-C Allied Forces Northern Europe** from 1953 to 1956 and C-in-C UKLF from 1956 to 1959.

Gen Mansergh also served as Colonel Commandant of the Royal Artillery and the Royal Horse Artillery Regiments.

Schools remaining in Germany (Autumn 2017)

Paderborn

Bishopspark First School
John Buchan Middle School
Attenborough School

Attenborough School was formed by the amalgamation of William Wordsworth and Robert Browning Schools in September 2016.

Gütersloh

Haig School
Kings School

Bielefeld

Bielefeld School

Ramstein

St David's School (this will remain open after the closure of BFG).

Headteacher Conference dinners; being entertained by the Crystals. This time around it was **Annwen Parry, Claire Sell and Kay Turner**. A quickly reinstated band of **Christopher Spencer, Mick Brookes** and Paul, and last but not least Elvis himself!

The end of an era it has to be said.

Malta Memories: a sunshine childhood

By Sue Adams



I was fortunate to be in Malta on two separate tours with my parents. The first was from 1951- 54. We sailed on the "Empress of Australia" from Liverpool. I was not at school initially and attended a morning session at a playgroup which was run by a kind lady known to all as "Auntie Beacon". I cannot recall very much about her but assume that she was a widow of a serviceman who decided to make Malta her home.

When I became of school age I attended the Sacred Heart Convent in Sliema and spent about a year there before we returned to England. I do not have many memories of these early days at school other than that I was taught by nuns. Seeing nuns was a very common experience – Malta is an island of strong Roman Catholic faith. In fact I became very used to firework displays as Saint Days were celebrated with great gusto all over the island almost every week.

We lived in a very spacious flat near Sliema seafront and had many British and Maltese families as neighbours and friends. Nearly all Maltese people could speak English and hence being able to make friends with them became quite easy. They are still very welcoming to British people – although now it is mostly tourists who visit the island.



One memory does stand out very clearly from those early days and that was the visit of **Queen Elizabeth** at the start of her Commonwealth tour with Prince Philip. One of her duties was to open a brand new teacher training college attached to the convent, she was accompanied by the Governor of the island who at that time was **Earl Mountbatten**. The impression he made in his full regalia has never left me. I was fortunate as one of the youngest in the school to be in the front row of flag waving pupils and had a clear view of all proceedings.

My other memory from those early days is life out of school and learning to swim off the rocky beach in **Sliema** and the many birthday parties which seemed to be the main social event in a 5 year-old's calendar. The culinary delight was jelly and Nestle tinned cream! Nearly all food was imported to the island and the NAAFI in **Valletta** did it's best to feed families with traditional fayre.

Swimming was almost a daily event in the summer and I was lucky enough to learn to swim from an early age – and to snorkel. This was particularly useful when trying to avoid stepping on sea eggs with their prickly spines. Jelly fish were quite common when the sea was rough and any stings were given a "rub it better" treatment. More serious ailments were treated at the R.N. hospital Bighi, overlooking Grand Harbour. I can't imagine a better view than that to aid recovery.

Travel to and from Malta in those days was by troop ship – it must have felt like a cruise to many parents but the downside was that there were an awful lot of



Membership of the Association is currently £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, or is serving, with BFES, SCS(NWE) or SCE or in one of the remaining MOD schools.

The membership year runs from 1st January to 31st December and payment can be made by Standing Order or cheque. Membership fees can be paid up to 3 years in advance.

A membership form is available to download from the Association website a

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

If you wish to pay for Association Lunches by **Electronic Transfer** 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.

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children on board who had to be occupied and it was not uncommon for the ship's crew to be organising team games to keep us entertained. Three years later we returned to Malta, again on a troop ship, "MS Devonshire", with many other families. One of the highlights of this voyage was to go ashore in Gibraltar and spend a day seeing the sights, in particular the apes at the top of the rock. One lady visitor had her handbag snatched from her and that was the highlight of the visit.

My parents commented that Malta had not really changed in 3 years but to me it was a whole new experience in contrast to Cornwall which we had left. No longer walking to school as before, I was transported to Verdala School by bus along Sliema seafront past Msida Creek with HMS Forth anchored there nearly filling the whole creek and then Pieta Creek which was full of Royal Naval vessels, past the dockyard and through into the old ramparts on the outskirts of Valletta. Coming home from school was a different matter – when all the children were on the buses and ready to leave there would be much cheering if you were the first to leave the bus park and much agitation that you kept this place and NOT overtaken by any other buses. The poor drivers must have dreaded these journeys. Perhaps it was understandable why the driver's cabin would have a prominent statue of Our Lady and a rosary bead to hand.

The school environment didn't surprise me even though classrooms were in old colonial style sandstone buildings and Nissan huts – I suppose I just accepted that everything in Malta would be different because it wasn't England. It took me a while to realise that it was a Royal Naval School with a headmaster who was a serving



Naval Officer (Commander Brookes). I don't remember having any difficulty in settling in – I soon made friends and joined in the many extra-curricular activities. For me it was ballet and the choir. There was an entry test for junior aged children arriving at the school to assess which class you would go to. I remember having to write a composition on "My journey to Malta". On reflection, this must have been a fairly tedious marking activity since all children would have come by sea and

the stories must have been very similar. Old school records show that in 1960 there were 1,200 children at the school although it never seemed like that.

Many memories of **Verdala** are rekindled fairly regularly with Verdala reunions, often held in Malta and we always go to visit the school – little has changed really. The large playground is still there but the climbing frame has gone. Playtime was obviously a favourite part of the school day and I can well remember the marble matches which used to take place and the energetic "British Bulldog" game but also quite a lot of kiss-chase too! I don't remember any wet playtimes but there must have been some. It really now is just a very sunny memory. My old classroom is still there and I can see the rows of desks in my mind – sitting in pairs and Mr. Jenkins with his desk at the front in front of the blackboard attached to the wall. One of the pupils in the class was Anne Mintoff, the daughter of **Dom Mintoff** who was later to evict the British from Malta.

It was only on going to the secondary school RN School Talhandaq that you became more aware of the other services in Malta because Talhandaq served all secondary aged children regardless of which service their father was in. I was only in **Talhandaq** for a short while – the change to a secondary curriculum was quite a shock – homework, detentions and of course separate teachers for every subject. I can recall trying to learn a lot of Latin verbs, nouns and genders.

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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.

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Thank you.

If you would you prefer an electronic version of the Newsletter please get in touch.

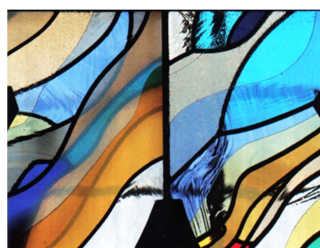
The teaching staff were not serving personnel, my teacher at Verdala was Mr. Jenkins who taught me in 3A and 4A. The whole class loved him. (Many are still in touch with him today.) He took us through the 11+ which the whole class passed and from there it was to Talhandaq. I can remember the build up to the 11+ as the whole class worked through a series of books called "Progress Papers". After the exam, we were set the task to make a book about Malta – which I still have today.

Beyond the classroom there were many amenities to enjoy – I joined the Brownies and then the Guides, learnt to ride at the RN stables, went to confirmation classes and was confirmed in St. Paul's Co. Cathedral, Valletta, where the Bishop of Gibraltar came to take the service.

Weekends were usually spent going to different places around the coast and finding access to places for bathing which were not so well known. This often involved carrying picnic and swimming gear down a rather perilous path to find a suitable spot. One such place was Delimara Point (now a military firing zone) and another Fomm-ir-Rih. Here, my brother and I found many fossils in the exposed cliffs and to come home with a prehistoric tooth was a real trophy. Whilst going to these places I can remember seeing donkeys working with farmers, prickly pears and cacti growing out of stone walls, salt pans, disused military towers from Napoleonic times and wonderful views of the sea. At the end of the day it would be time to go home – parents would listen to the news (BBC World Service) and the theme of "Lillibullero" would perhaps remind them of the other home back in England. We didn't have the sophistication of TV networks that exist today – but it didn't seem to matter, life always seemed busy and very happy. Above all, it was a very safe place to live. Crime was relatively low partly because Malta is a small island and is populated with people of strong faith. Hence you walked a lot - passing cafes on Sliema seafront you could hear jukeboxes belting out the latest pop tunes – "Volare" and "Sailor stop your roaming" spring to mind – also popular tunes on "Forces Favourites".

One of the best accounts of childhood memories in Malta, rather surprisingly, is written by Keith Allen (aka Sheriff of Nottingham) in his biography "Grow Up". He describes life as the son of a Petty Officer and going to Malta and Verdala. His recollections are spot on and it is to his credit, that despite his later life styles he remembers so much so clearly. It is a hilarious read.

For him and for me – and many others too, it was a sunshine childhood.



SAS Memorial in Hereford Cathedral

If you worked with or lived alongside members of the SAS and their families you may be interested to learn of the SAS Memorial in Hereford Cathedral. The SAS commissioned artist John Maine RA to create a sculpture and stained glass window for Hereford Cathedral. It was installed earlier this year and like the Cathedral itself is well worth a visit. Another stained glass window in the Cathedral – commemorating Thomas Traherne (designed and created by Tom Denny and dating from 2007) is also well worth a visit. Traherne was a 17th Century English poet, clergyman, theologian, and religious writer. Little information is known about his life but he is known for his publication "Centuries of meditation" containing the words

"The corn was orient and immortal wheat ...".

Thanks: Ian Forrest former ACX(QA) SCE for Ian Mitchelson's Obituary

Where to buy: Through the Wall - www.austinmacauley.com