

# BFES SCEA Association

## Journal & Newsletter - Spring 2020



Issue 45

### BERLIN November 1989 BULLETIN



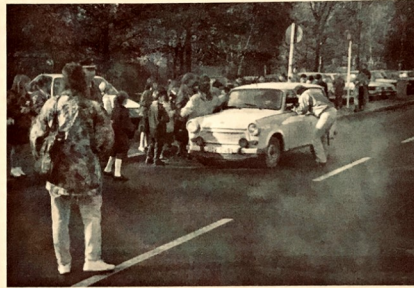
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TELEPHONE: 309 43 94

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## MOVING TIMES AT THE HAVEL SCHOOL



The events of the last few days in Berlin will be remembered for a very long time by all who are privileged to be in the city at this time. However, last Friday was a very moving experience for pupils at The Havel School.

At the beginning of the school day, over 600 pupils and staff gathered in the school hall for a Service of Remembrance. Appropriate hymns and readings took place, and a special letter from Jim Goodson, aged 105, who is a resident of The Royal Star and Garter Home, gave everyone something to think deeply and seriously about. A period of silence was observed as a memory of the freedom which we now enjoy as a result of others' sacrifices.

It is not every day that you find yourself standing in the midst of history as it unfolds around you.

The staff at The Havel School felt that the events which occurred at the end of last week presented too good an opportunity to miss, and were determined that they would do whatever possible to ensure that the children would always remember that they were among those fortunate few who were in Berlin when 'The Wall' was breached. Following a couple of telephone calls, we were grateful that 62 Transport and Movement Squadron RCT could provide us with a coach for the morning, without our normal prior booking procedures. Parties of our youngest pupils, this year called Year 5 under the National Curriculum Council's recommendations, eagerly boarded the bus. In total, over 130 children were to have an experience of a lifetime.

Pausing only to buy flowers at the Garden Centre, where a further 50 were donated to our cause by a tearful sales assistant, we were off to the Staaken Crossing Point between the GDR and West Berlin. When they arrived, their teachers described the background and set the scene. The plan was that each child would have the opportunity to present a flower of greeting to a person coming across what had been until fifteen hours earlier a closed border.

(Continued overleaf)



EARLY DEADLINE NEXT WEEK - 1200 HRS MONDAY, 20 NOVEMBER

Article concludes in right-hand column

### Moving Times - continued ...

The reality proved to provide an even more moving experience. We were privileged to witness many scenes of joy and beauty as visitors streamed across the once daunting boundary. One man stopped his car in the car park just behind where we stood - the first place he could legally stop after crossing the line. Once our children had overcome their initial reticence, he found himself swamped with flowers. And all the while he stood staring at his bleak surroundings as if he were in the finest palace saying over and over again "*This is my first time!*"

Another Trabant responded to our waves and stopped by us and as the children joyously gave their flowers, the moment proved too much for the young couple in the car, and they both wept openly."

Later we went right down to the actual crossing point and joined in the celebrations with the many Berliners who had come to meet friends and relations as they poured through.

Meanwhile, a very small number of senior pupils were taken by private car to the area near the **Brandenburg Gate**. Here they witnessed similar scenes of joy. Videos were made at both locations and these will be used as school resources for further learning.

Our pupils have witnessed extremely moving scenes as some of the residents from the GDR crossed into West Berlin for the first time in 28 years. We have precious memories which we will never forget.

Derek Ebbage November 1989

## News from the Chair

In the first place I would like to congratulate and thank our Editor, Tom Nielsen- Marsh, for putting together this jam packed Spring edition of the newsletter. It conveys not only a historical perspective on the educational service of which we were all members, but also the enjoyment we all experienced in our life overseas. This latter point is well illustrated in the last episode of Mike Bennett's wonderful account of his many years in Germany.

The focus on Berlin in the accounts written by Sue Adams, Derek Ebbage and Eileen Blackwood all convey those very special feelings when the Berlin Wall came down in November 1989. For me personally, it also brings back memories of my visit to Braunschweig on the weekend which immediately followed the Berlin Wall coming down and seeing former East Germans meeting up with friends in West Germany for the first time in many years, a truly memorable occasion

Dave Arden's account of taking pupils of the Dorset School to a Malayan Jungle Camp illustrates the sheer diversity of experiences we were offered as Service School teachers, and in Dave Arden's case ended up with him living in Mansergh Station Officers Mess, Gütersloh, what a contrast!

In the last newsletter my opening remarks focused on my pleasure at the success of the Military Academy Sandhurst reunion and the September lunch in Corpus Christi College Cambridge. By contrast, it is sad to report that the March 2020 lunch in Corpus Christi College has struggled to get the requisite numbers. As a committee we need to reflect on why this was the case.

Looking forward now to the October AGM and reunion at the Defence Sixth Form College, Welbeck.

I am delighted to report that at the dinner on the preceding night, 8th October, at the Quorn Country Hotel, a former student of mine, namely Colonel Day OBE has

## Sue Adams - Former HT at Charlottenburg First School Berlin and at Blankenhagen School Gütersloh, reflects on HISTORY in the making ...

*The fall of the wall in Berlin* came as a complete surprise and no more so for the staff of Charlottenburg First School who were due to have an HMI inspection when the news broke on BFBS radio on the morning of the 8th November 1989. You can imagine the excitement of the news, spotting Trabants on the Heer Strasse and wanting to join in the fantastic joy of East Berliners coming over the Wall but all the time remembering that an inspection was due in school!

The children were also excited and perhaps not fully appreciating the significance of what had happened - knew that something was very different in Berlin.

The inspectors couldn't believe their luck that they were in such a special place but this didn't deflect their focus of their purpose (and secretly waiting for the weekend so that they could go and join in the momentous occasion).

One of the outcomes of the fall of the wall was the schools in the Allied sectors and East Berlin made a concerted effort to liaise with each other. The outstanding memory of this liaison was a visit to the Russian school, inside their embassy on Unter den Linden.

I had passed the embassy on many occasions whilst going over to the East. It had always looked a forbidding building, very austere and certainly not welcoming. Come the day of the liaison visit, I was instructed to go to the back of the building and ring a bell to be admitted. I then went through 2 sort of cages before finally arriving in a large room which was the designated classroom.

The room had well-worn linoleum on the floor and a few charts hanging on the wall showing anatomical diagrams of the human body and in the corner a small burner burning brown coal. No bright displays double mounted here!!

However, the hospitality was generous ... large bottles of vodka and bread had been laid out for the occasion.

In conjunction with this, the school partnered the Stephanus Stiftung in East Berlin. This was a school which catered for children with special needs. The headmaster spoke very good English and spoke of the many sad stories of some of the children and the families they came from. Specialised equipment was scarce and the staff frustrated with their inability to do more with the children. Their reaction on visiting Charlottenburg School and seeing bright classrooms, generous allocation of resources, school uniform and school meals left them open-mouthed.

It was the wish of the GOC, Major General Corbett that the legacy from the British sector to the city of Berlin was to be a school which provided the National Curriculum for anticipated British business people and British Embassy staff. (the embassy would move from Bonn to Berlin). So in effect, whilst Charlottenburg School closed in name - the facilities remained and



was renamed the **Berlin British School** and still functions successfully.

The other part of the legacy from the British sector was to leave an Anglican church. The garrison church of St. George remained in place for future worship.



Maj General Corbett visits Gatow First School seen here with HT John Hancock and Jane Clarke

It was a few years after I had left Berlin that I met General Corbett again and was interested to hear his reaction to the fall of the wall. He told me that he had been at a social function when he was discreetly informed of the news. He said his first reaction was to ensure the safety of the Russian guards who guarded the Russian war memorial inside West Berlin. He feared that there might

be an aggressive reaction towards the guards. With some relief he recalled that the whole event of the fall of the Wall was a peaceful one and no aggression shown.

**His final comment to me of Berlin was "happy days".**

I couldn't have agreed more.

The fall of the wall brought many new freedoms for all personnel and the military communities. The school summer fete in 1990 was an occasion where, for the first time, a **Russian and British military band played together** at the same event. Quite unimaginable that this could ever happen six months earlier.



Photo courtesy Sue Adams Archive

It also allowed greater time to visit East Berlin, previous travel restrictions at Checkpoint Charlie were eased and eventually travel to East Germany was allowed. The sense of freedom did have a slight sting in the tail and that was the realisation that the Allied presence in Berlin was no longer required. The Berlin schools arranged a "farewell to Berlin" concert which was greatly enjoyed and teachers also began to wonder where their next posting might be ....**the drawdown process had begun.**

The freedom of travel allowed all the First schools to extend their curricular activity within the National Curriculum. In particular "Op Viking" was prepared to support the history element "Invaders and Settlers".

agreed to join us to give a brief after dinner address about his career and the role Welbeck played in preparing him for this. He is currently based in the MOD HQ in Whitehall, working with the Secretary of State for Defence. His OBE was awarded in the New Year's Honours List 2020 for his distinguished service commanding 18 Signals Regiment in the Sterling Lines, Hereford. I hope to be able to include a CV of his career post Welbeck in the next Newsletter.

All of us on the committee were very disappointed that following the closure of the schools in Germany we did not get the expected up swing in the membership numbers. This being the case can I ask current members to try and encourage former colleagues to join the Association which I do feel is well worth supporting.

Kind regards,

**Ken Jones OBE**



1989 - Maj General Corbett at Charlottenburg First School

Photos - Army Public Information HQ Berlin British Sector



### The first British Armed Forces Special Vouchers (BAFSV),

valued at just over £10 million pounds were issued on August 1, 1946. In due course the ingenuity of the local population and the troops largely circumvented the intention of the first issue BAFSV's to slow black-market activities. On January 6, 1948, the second issue was released. The third series was printed in 1948 but were not issued until 1956 for use during the Suez Canal Crisis.

The fourth issue was originally discussed in 1952 but never issued, and according to various records, the fifth series was never printed.

The sixth series, together with the 1- and 5-pound notes of the second series, were **used in Berlin** up to December 31, 1979, when they were finally withdrawn. This largely coincided with the withdrawal of FRIS (Family Ration Issue Supplement) and the removal of what was known as the "Soft Rate" of DM 40 to the £.

On February 14, 1991, The Ministry of Defence auctioned off their stock of 17 million uncirculated vouchers from the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 6th series to a consortium of dealers.

Gaye Waters (DHT Spandau First School), Heather Johnston (DHT Gatow First School) and I took cohorts of Year 4 children to a Viking village near Aarhus in Denmark where the children could experience something very similar to the life of a Viking.

The freedom of travel was of course a bonus but even before the Wall came down, all the Berlin schools played a significant part of being a core of the community. Beyond Berlin there was, of course, a wide world with other problems - in particular the Gulf war. Fortunately, the war did not last for very long but the schools, in liaison with the military community, were prepared for the worst of outcomes. All the children appreciated the security of routine within a school day.

And what routines we had! Swimming lessons in an Olympic size swimming pool at **Berlin HQ Infantry Brigade**, sports days on the Maifeld (Olympic stadium), tickets for the Berlin Tattoo (see the cover of Issue 43) extravaganza, frequent visits from military bands to name but a few - but most of all fantastic resources funded by the Berlin Budget.



## Toast to the roast that ends Berlin's lavish gravy train

... text from a 25 year-old news cutting ...

The troops are pulling out and there is not a dry eye in the house. One of the biggest and most luxurious gravy trains in the world has reached the end of the line.

Not that you will hear much talk of that when **John Major** joins Francois Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl here on Thursday for a day of ceremonies to mark the departure of their soldiers after almost 50 years.

Photo Berlin Bulletin - TNM Archive



Wreaths will be laid at a memorial to the airmen who died in the Berlin airlift, the German President will host a banquet at Schloss Bellevue, and the Bundeswehr will perform a torchlit tattoo at the Brandenburg Gate. All very poignant.

But for many British Army officers the most moving ceremony will come three days later, when the **British Officers' Club** serves Sunday lunch for the last time.



*British Officers' Club*

Elegant, a little pompous and strictly out of bounds to Other Ranks, the club formed the hub of a hectic and luxurious social life that was unique in the British Army not least because it was almost entirely funded by the German government.

Surrounded by more than 300,000 Soviet Army men,

the 12,000 British, French and American troops stationed in West Berlin represented only a token military presence. But the Bonn government was so pleased to have them there that a subsidy of DM1.4 billion (£533 million) known as the **Berlin Budget**, was approved without question every year, until the Wall finally came down.

The British share of DM450m (£176m) paid for everything in the garrison except servicemen's wages, uniforms, weapons and ammunition. The Germans seldom asked for details of how the money was spent, and few realized how much was used to fund a lavish lifestyle for the officers.

'Everything in Berlin was more luxurious than anywhere else,' recalled one former commanding officer's wife last week. 'The houses were bigger and grander, even the duck down pillows and the blankets were of a much higher quality than the usual army issue.'

Officers above the rank of major were given an entertainment allowance to help them keep up with the punishing round of cocktail parties, often as many as 10 a week. Officers were allocated a specific number of free babysitting or cleaning hours, depending on rank, so a colonel was entitled to more than 30 hours of free domestic help a week.

Social contacts between the Western allies were strongly encouraged; at a British Army dinner party, you would often find a solitary Frenchman or American lurking at the end of the table — their presence made it an Allied

## Berlin Photo Essay

### Berlin Brownies



**Berlin Middle School Christmas:**  
Typical quartering: Berlin Middle  
School Production: RMP Wire  
Trips - Photos TNM

## Berlin Photo Essay



Brandenburg Tor: Eagle at HQ  
Berlin Brigade: the Havel in  
Winter: Queen's Birthday Pa-  
rade 1978: East German Guard:  
School Wire Trip - Photos TNM

dinner, so allowing the host to claim a generous subsidy.

'It was all down to your own ingenuity,' said one officer. 'If you invited two or three it would often cover the whole dinner party. Frankly, I think if you've got to have a Frenchman to dinner you ought to be paid for it.'

Even without the presence of an ally, duty-free alcohol and half-price meat, eggs, milk and other perishables from the garrison stockpile helped to keep down the cost of giving a dinner party. Free tickets to Berlin's opera house and concert halls were snapped up by officers eager to take an evening off drinking, and half-price petrol and free travel on the underground took the strain out of getting there.

The lifestyle of the private soldier was more basic, but a generous supply of cheap drink and the promise of decadent nightlife made the city an attractive posting for all ranks. A typical squaddies' night out would begin with a few hours' drinking at the Naafi club, before setting out in a pack to hunt in the red-light district in Charlottenburg, known as 'Grotty Charlotty'.

Few soldiers spoke more than a few words of German, phrases such as 'Ein Bier, bitte' ('A beer, please') and 'Mein Freund bezahlt' ('My friend is paying').

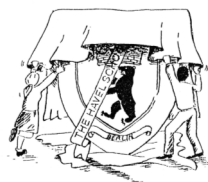
The favourite haunt was Mon Cheri on Stuttgarter Platz, a pokey bar boasting an 'erotic bath show'. The main attraction here, apart from an awkward striptease act by two grumpy matrons, is a bubble-bath customers can share with the girls.

Mon Cheri was looking gloomier than ever last week; those saying farewell to the Allied troops are likely to include a fair slice of the city's barkeepers and bordello owners.

### Denis Staunton – Berlin

Denis Staunton is now the London Editor of *The Irish Times*. He previously worked as a foreign correspondent based in Berlin, Brussels and Washington and he has reported at various times from most of the countries of the European Union and from the European institutions, parts of the Middle East and throughout North America. He also presents the *Irish Times'* World View podcast on foreign affairs.

Closure of The Havel School  
C.L.O.T.H.S.



Friday, 8th July 1994

Closing Assembly  
for Pupils, Parents,  
Staff and Guests

At its closing ceremony - which your editor was privileged to attend - The Havel School was described thus. A secondary school, catering for pupils aged 11 to 17 years; it was a **Middle School**, for pupils aged 9 to 13, until 1980, and a Secondary and Middle School, with a unique age range of children from 9-17 years until 1993. Our school is a Service Children's School, of which there are approximately 90 worldwide, organised by the Service Children's Education Authority, which is situated at Worthy Down. Service schools in Germany are administered by Headquarters, Service Children's Schools (North West Europe), situated at Rheindahlen, which is a Defence Agency. The school caters mainly for children of Service parents, who have been posted to Berlin, and stayed with us for two or

three years only. Until recently, The Havel School catered for over 600 pupils, but as a result of the end of the Cold War, and the subsequent demolition of the Berlin Wall, our numbers have steadily reduced as the Army and Royal Air Force prepare to leave Berlin.

Contd on page 7

Photo courtesy John Birks - middle row extreme right



The Staff of The Havel School - RAF Gatow - 1980



Germany Reunified



East German Currency



**The Havel School Closure**

Our teaching staff is composed of United Kingdom Based Civilians, employed by the Ministry of Defence, and other teachers who are employed locally, all of whom hold appropriate UK teaching qualifications. Standards are very high indeed, and the central philosophy of our school is care for pupils; this is very strongly stressed. Academic progress is notable, and the curriculum and organisation mirror the best practice of United Kingdom Local Education Authorities. Former barrack blocks have been extensively converted to produce superb facilities for all our curriculum areas. The National Curriculum has been introduced ahead of the pattern in the United Kingdom. Our school was inspected in November 1990 by four members of Her Majesty's Inspectorate; they commented that this was a very good school, which was well organised, efficiently managed and effectively administered. They also stated that expectations were high, and well motivated pupils responded positively to teaching of a consistently good quality. In 1990, we were delighted to receive national recognition in the form of the Schools Curriculum Award, which paid tribute to our contribution to community education. **Derek Ebbage**

**Unification** took place at midnight on **October 2nd 1990**. From that moment the "Quadrupartite Rules and Responsibilities" ended and the British Forces and Military Government ceased to be responsible for the "British Sector". The Commandant left Berlin on **3rd October 1990** and from that date **HQ Berlin (British Sector)** ceased to exist. The major change was in the status of those serving in Berlin who no longer enjoyed "Allied Status" and became subject to German Law. Another significant change was that there was no longer any requirement to "book out" of Berlin or to use the "Corridor" to Helmstedt. The British Military Train (BMT) continued to run for a while and an article on the last BMT will appear in a future issue of this publication.



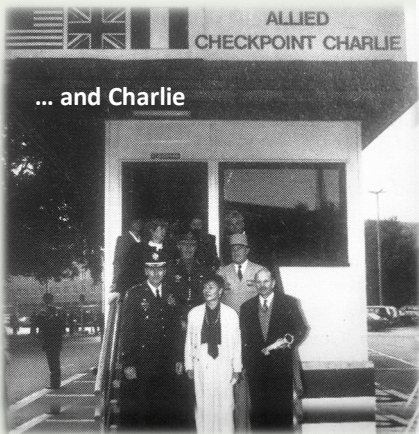
Photo tnm

Alpha, Bravo and Charlie

Checkpoint Alpha



Checkpoint Bravo



... and Charlie

The Berlin - Helmstedt Autobahn

All Allied personnel had to use the official route by road (The Corridor) when travelling to West Germany en-route to either the "Zone" or the channel ports. At midnight on Saturday, 29 September 1990 the **Soviet Authorities** withdrew from the Autobahn "Corridor" Checkpoints Alpha at Helmstedt and Bravo on the outskirts of Berlin. This in effect ended all "Corridor" controls which had been in effect since **1st July 1945**. The **NAAFI roadhouse** (a favourite of your Editor's family for Birthday celebrations) continued to offer travellers a full range of services.

Photo credit - Berlin Bulletin 5 October 1990

Photo courtesy TNM - middle row extreme right



The Staff of Berlin Middle School - RAF Gatow 1978

Photo courtesy Sue Adams - front row centre



The Staff of Charlottenburg First School - 1989

GOC Visit to Gatow First School - September 1990

Photo credit - Berlin Bulletin 5 October 1990



Autobahn Control Detachment Helmstedt - **NAAFI Roadhouse** left & military accommodation in the background.



## Concluding octogenarian Mike Bennett's romp through BFES ...

**One September afternoon when the heather was at its colourful best** a club member organised a **Kutschfahrt**.

Traditionally this is a horse drawn "carriage", but in this case it was a four wheeled cart pulled by a horse with the passengers sitting in the back facing each other. We were to go across the Heath following well-worn tracks to a friend of his who would provide food and refreshments. This was all to be "on the cheap" and wives were invited along too. Gerhard, our well-intentioned fixer borrowed a Kutsch and horse from another acquaintance, and said he would drive it himself, although he had only done it a few times. Unfortunately, the horse was equally inexperienced. We were enjoying drinking from a



**Schnapsglas brett** (a meter long piece of wood with 4 or 5 schnaps glasses inserted in holes in the wood). The trick was to sit close up to each other, holding the Brett in front of you at

mouth level and at the given signal tip it hopefully into the correct orifice). Suddenly, the horse took off at a great pace along the worn trail. Gerhard could not control it and we were lucky that the cart ended up in a thick clump of junipers. We had to walk the rest of the way and as I had told Fran we would be travelling in style, she was not wearing walking shoes. I cannot remember how we got back to Fally.

At one club we were expected to take our turn at washing the shirts and Fran dutifully supported me. It reminded me of college when two of our female supporters volunteered to launder the team's shirts, but they would not wash my personal ones. We were encouraged to play in clean boots, but I could not see the point if they were only going to get dirty again. "Your boots are dirty Mike. One Mark, please" "Sorry, my wife forgot to clean them". I'm still not sure if they thought I was joking or not. But I never told Fran. Fran did ask once why Sunday matches started at 8.30. in the morning. The answer was, "**We have to leave time for drinking the beer**". I think another reason was so they could take their wives out for coffee and cake, as a quid pro quo. On Sundays shopping centres and associated businesses did not open. It certainly meant that families had more time for each other. Germans could always find an occasion for a celebration, notably anniversaries and birthdays. For my 50th birthday we had the team round and they thoroughly enjoyed the drinks, especially the spirits. One of them was unlucky enough to be stopped by the Polizei on his way home.

In 1977 Kevin Keegan was transferred from Liverpool to Hamburg and I saw him play several times. Once I changed for a Volkslauf in the Volksparkstadion using Hamburg's excellent facilities. I hung my clothes on a peg that I was surprised to see had Kevin Keegan written above it. That was as near as I got to the great man, but twelve years later I met a teammate of his, the German international Manfred Kaltz. After changing we passed down through the luxurious bars and restaurant area with its views of the pitch where the race started. I can't imagine top clubs in England, "lending" their stadium to the general public in a similar fashion, but German clubs, as mentioned previously in Dortmund's case, see themselves as part of the community. Hamburg won the first 'Championship of the British Occupation Zone in 1947'. Sadly, they were relegated for the first time ever from the Bundesliga (the Premier League of Germany) last season. When Keegan played for them, teams were only allowed two foreign players, which probably explains Germany's success at international level. In 1986 I competed in the Hamburg Marathon which was started by Emil Zatopek, the exceptional Czech runner who broke 13 world records in his career which included gold medals in 5,000m, 10,000m and the marathon at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics. As 15,000 of us shuffled shoulder to shoulder past him standing erect on the starting ladder, we all chanted "Zatopek, Zatopek!" It was quite memorable. The **Berlin Wall** had not yet come down but some countries were beginning to give their citizens a little more freedom.

Let them eat cake



**Rosenmontag 1983** and the bedizened teaching staff and pupils were enjoying the opportunity to ignore the sartorial standards usually expected of them ...

## Jungle Risk Assessments

### MALAYAN JUNGLE CAMPS AT DORSET SCHOOL, IN 1969

It began in the Gurkha Engineers Sergeants' Mess one evening. I was Acting-Head of **Dorset School** at the time and was having a Tiger or two with one of the parents, Sergeant John Harrison (alas sadly no longer with us), when he suggested we run a jungle camp for children at the School. He worked in the stores and assured me he could borrow all the equipment needed, all I had to do was organize the children, the transport for the children and persuade a few parents to come along and help.

The children were obviously very keen, likewise, several parents expressed an interest, one being a mother who was a qualified nurse. The transport for the children was easy as I lived in the Gurkha Transport Regiment Officers' Mess along with the MTO and, at the cost a few Tigers, a bus would be supplied!

The camp site was on the east coast near the small town of Mersing; it was about 2 miles down a track and consisted of a flat area with the beach on one side, a grass airstrip with surrounding jungle and a jungle river. The camp was set up the day before, the children and male staff had small Bivouac style tents for two with blow-up mattresses and a mosquito net, the ladies had proper beds in the back of a three ton truck! Other equipment included a generator, fridge, lighting, cooking equipment complete with cook (Cpl.Green), mess tent, an inflatable boat for the beach and an assault boat for the river, complete with two sappers to work it, a Land Rover with two Gurkha drivers and an **Armalite** rifle and **Browning** pistol for security. As I'd been weapon trained during National Service in the R.A.F. I would do a familiarization course on the range before each camp, so I could use the weapons if necessary. Finally toilets had to be dug with wooden frame seating over the trench.

The children, all aged between 7 and 11, would spend three days in the camp and on arrival were split into three age groups; one day would be spent on the beach, swimming and playing organised games; one day would be spent in

I have always been interested in athletics and I once bumped into Herb Elliott in Cambridge market place. He was the Australian winner of the 1,500m gold medal at the 1960 Rome Olympics and was never beaten over that distance or a mile! I also bumped into Mary Rand when she was warming up at the European Championships in Dortmund's Westfalenhalle. She had won the long jump gold medal at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. In Dortmund, between jumps she was eating an ice-cream, and I thought "There's a natural athlete". What would critics say today of her diet? I did not deliberately collide with either star but I must admit I preferred the contact with Mary Rand.

In 1980 we returned to Dortmund for the wedding of a pupil we both taught in Victoria School. The World ice-skating championships were taking place and we found ourselves sitting next to Robin Cousins at breakfast in the hotel. He did not recognise us! That year he won figure skating golds at the Winter Olympics, World and European championships. If you have read this far, thank you and I hope my self-indulgence has not bored you. As I wrote this piece I remembered the famous sporting people I'd seen in person. Nowadays in retirement everything is vicarious pleasure via the TV. Pity.

**In 1987** back in Hamburg once more, I went to watch Hamburg in a pre-season friendly, with my father and son. The pre-match entertainment was Samantha Fox, the pin-up and sometime pop star. The security guards were kept busy chasing the squaddies away from the stage and when the teams came out to warm up, they amused themselves by stealing the footballs. All good natured. To my regret I did not bump into Samantha Fox which would have taken my breath away.

I was once asked to make up the numbers for a team from Guy's Hospital who were on tour and staying in Fallingbostel. I wore their kit and a few weeks later I had an open sore on the inside of my thigh. The MO said "Draw it out". Soon, besides feeling unwell, the wound was as large as a 5 Mark piece. Another visit to the Medical Centre solved the problem. An Orderly said he'd seen that before and it was Malayan Marsh Wart. As I had never been further than Turkey I was mystified. A different MO said the Corporal was probably right, "Better dry it up. I'm a Bart's man myself, that's what happens when you wear Guy's kit". I still have the scar to remind me.

This brings to mind a visit to BMH Hannover. Shortly after arriving in Fallingbostel, playing for Gloucester School, an opponent stood on my ankle and I tore the ligaments, or so I thought. One of my teachers, George Young, thought I'd got cramp in my foot and helpfully massaged the injured joint. He survived to become head of Iserlohn and Sardinia schools. We are still in touch and met last year. That evening we had a mess function so I hobbled down Queens Avenue and propped myself up at the bar. By Monday I was still suffering and the MO suggested an X-ray. As Fran was teaching for him and could not take me, Brian Johns the head of the adjacent Scott School offered to do the honours. The X-ray Dept of course was on the second floor and after struggling up and down the stairs I presented the X-ray plate to the female doctor who said she was not quite sure if I'd broken it or not because she was a gynecologist by training. "Why do I always get the beginners?" I said diplomatically. "What do you do?" she asked in an authoritative manner. "I drink tea all day" I replied. Realising she could not pull rank on this particular squaddie, she got her revenge by saying I needed further X-rays and it might have to be reset, which meant breaking it once more. "All that way up those stairs again?" I countered. "You can't walk on that leg", she said, "Get a wheelchair and go up in the lift" Ah, lift, what a useful piece of machinery. As it was lunch break and the X-ray Dept was closed, Brian kindly offered to wheel me to the waiting room where there was a coffee machine. As we arrived at the room my injured leg was sticking out like the bow of a Grimsby trawler and hit the closed door. Brian would have made a great Kutsch driver. Crash! The door swung open accompanied by my north of England aphorisms. A dozen pregnant women looked up from their chairs in surprise. Having presented our apologies we proceeded to make a more sedate approach to the vending machine. I leaned forward to insert my coin and the wheel chair tipped arm over elbow and Brian, who was a big man came over the top. The afternoon matinee over we apologised once more and exited stage left. The radiologist wondered why I had returned and I told him he'd X-rayed the wrong ankle. I was only pulling his leg. I explained the gynecologist wanted two more, a little higher. He said "We'll let you

know". Obviously she'd gone back to her original role. Of course I heard no more until an MO informed me in the mess that it was a clean break, and should be OK. It was, and still is.

**The Colonel of 2RTR asked if I would coach his football team**, "who were missing out" as the regiment concentrated on the oval ball. I'd never worked with adult footballers but I was flattered enough to agree. He obviously compared Shackleton's sporting success with those of his alma mater. I needed back up. Alan Buckley, the manager of Grimsby Town kindly invited me to watch some training sessions when I was on holiday. He had a reputation as a hard task master but I was impressed by his methods, founded on encouragement, even if a player made a silly mistake. I related this to myself ranting at a 9 year old in a 7-a-side tournament at Wavell School, Hohne. "Down the line. Down the line. Pass it down the line! Come here. Do you know what I mean?" "No Mr Bennett" "Never mind, go and kick it up the other end". **Bob Parkin** who was standing next to me on the touch line, was amused by my management skills. I enjoyed working with 2RTR. Once I'd got them new kit and 20 footballs out of regimental funds, they were on my side. It was a joy to tell them to "pass it down the line", and they did or tried to. "Never mind, good try". We were reasonably successful. We trained two afternoons after school and I accompanied them to away games on Saturdays, when I was not playing elsewhere myself. The Colonel never understood why I could **not go with them on Wednesday afternoons**. "You're the Officer Commanding Mike". In 1990 the **CO of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards** (Carabiniers and Greys) also asked me to train their team. This was promotion taking into account their seniority as a Regiment of the Line, but before I could help them, they deployed to the Gulf.

Also in 1990 HQ SCS asked me if I could produce an athletics team to participate in a European Schulsportsfest at the Gymnasium Luneburger Heide, in Amelinghausen. **Gymnasium in German translates as "Grammar School"** but I don't think it equated to that, its headed notepaper described it as an alternative school, which I suspect was for children who found it difficult in the state system. It was a private school owned by Manny Kaltz who had played with Kevin Keegan at Hamburg. I suspect I was invited by HQ because they could not contact a secondary head during the school holidays. The Gymnasium's children were from 11 years upwards. The other schools were International schools around the Hamburg area: Dutch, French and Spanish. Obviously Manny was after the publicity. They really looked after us, even providing 'special food' for our children who were not impressed by pea soup, cold meats and sauerkraut. Herr Kaltz approved of our personalised school kit and track suits. Interestingly, the next year staff members told me that the headteacher had got the sack, and his wife had married the former football star.

My involvement with sport helped us find our own idyllic holiday retreat in the Weserbergland. In the early 1970s I entered a race in **Hemeln** (not to be confused with the more famous Hameln). It was a tiny village close to the Weser and the lovely town of Hannoversch Munden with its timbered houses, which is where the confluence of the Werra and Fulda form the River Weser. The Weser flows all the way to Bremerhaven and over the years Fran and I together with our children must have visited every town and village on both banks, broadening our understanding of the geography and history of the region. For 15 years we had a caravan on the Hemeln campsite, very quiet, and we were the only British there; it really was a hidden gem. For many years I ran the 21km race, and even though nearly everyone in the village knew we lived in Germany, as I approached the finishing line the tannoy announced "**Here comes our international guest from Great Britain**". It was in fact a very well attended event in the Volkslauf calendar and the music and festivities afterwards in and around the village hall linger in the memory.

I felt chuffed - and puffed - at the reception and often wore the genuine GB vest which **Nigel Cooper**, a former AEO had given me when he was secretary at the British Amateur Athletic Board at the time of the Zola Budd citizenship controversy.

Unfortunately I could not get any used tennis balls for Shackleton when he had a similar position at the LTA. Apparently, they go to the schools who supply the ball boys and girls. Between 1977 and 1982 for five consecutive years, Liverpool (twice), Nottingham Forest (twice) and Aston Villa won the European Cup. We would turn up to see the final in the local Gastatte and the villagers would say good-naturedly, "Oh no, not you

the jungle on designated jungle tracks, looking out for animals, learning which plants were edible and how to get water from vines and building shelters, lunch would be delivered to a designated point by Land Rover; one day would be spent on the jungle river, taking lunch in the boat, watching out for wildlife and occasionally landing on the bank if they saw anything interesting. Usually on these river trips the noise of the boat would set up flocks of flying foxes, which was always very spectacular.

It was interesting to see how well the children adapted to camp life and to the various activities, it was surprising, too, how some of the quieter or less able children shone in this unusual environment and it definitely boosted their confidence and self-esteem.

Nights were interesting; there were always two people on guard duty throughout the night, doing two hour stints and with the weapons handy; John and I heard a tiger in the distance one night, but we could tell it was some distance away and not likely to approach the camp; however, one of the main tasks during the night was the toilet run, children of that age often need the toilet during the night, so the child concerned would shine a torch on the roof of the tent and the guards would accompany them to the toilet, with a powerful torch to watch out for snakes or scorpions. On returning to the tent the guards would make sure the mosquito net was tucked in properly; unfortunately, however quiet you tried to be another child would probably wake up and want to go, and sometimes this would develop into a procession of several children before they all settled down again.

A teacher friend asked me recently if I did a risk assessment. My reply was, "Yes, snakes, scorpions, tigers and elephants!" Obviously, the chances of a tiger or elephant were very slim, but the threat of snakes or scorpions was very real, as we found out once or twice.

On most of the jungle trips although the children were quiet there weren't many times when

## Jungle Risk Assessments

wild animals were encountered. However, one afternoon I took a group out into the jungle along with Hector, one of the sappers; we split the group in two for shelter building and Hector moved away with his group. A short time later they returned with Hector looking a bit worried but the children looking very excited; it seems that as they were cutting branches to make the framework of the shelter a large gibbon had jumped out of a nearby tree, chattered angrily at them and run off. We completed the shelters and continued the trek. I could see we were nearly at the track where the Land Rover was going to pick us up, so I decided to take the group a short way into thicker jungle. As I was hacking into the jungle the young girl behind me said, "Look, there's a snake!" Sure enough in front of me was the tail of a snake and the rest of it disappeared into the bush, it was very long but appeared to be busy with something it had caught. Naturally we backed out fairly quickly and made our way out to the track and the waiting Land Rover. On discussing it with someone who knew a lot about snakes we came to the conclusion that it was either a harmless tree snake or a **king cobra**, which is the most dangerous!

The second incident was when the children were waiting for the bus to arrive to take them home and one of the sappers discovered a snake in his rucksack. A paddle was used to shake it out of the rucksack and a fairly large cobra reared up angrily. It was dispatched by a blow to the back of the neck and one of the boys took it home to show his mother!! Not a good idea in hindsight, as I found out next time I saw her. The worrying thing about this incident was that cobras go about in pairs and it's mate would have been somewhere near, if it had been earlier in the camp it would have created quite a problem.

On one camp John brought along Ralph, a trained Army Jungle Survival expert; he'd never worked with children before but was keen to help, and duly went off into the jungle leading a party of children. When they finally returned later in the day they were chattering excitedly about their experiences; not only had they

again", inferring it would be another English win. In 1985 with Liverpool in the final again, we turned up to be greeted with, "Your fans are killing people". The tragedy of the Heysel Stadium in Belgium was happening before our eyes. Liverpool, the instigators were clashing with Juventus followers, and 39 died in the riot. Perhaps the game should not have started but it did. The locals were not unfriendly, just as stunned as we were. We did not stay long. Heysel was an aberration and I think untypical of the genuine Liverpool fan. Fran is from Liverpool and once - only once, went on the Kop with me. It was Boxing Day 1966 and we had only been married the year before. It was not the behaviour of the fans that upset Fran, it was the crush every time the crowd pushed forward. It was the days of standing on the terracing and one of the barriers had broken. Liverpool won 2-1, and I told Fran about it afterwards! Liverpool FC was supportive whenever I asked them to sign footballs I sent, which were to be raffled at our school fetes. They even donated other items as well. When I asked Nottingham Forest, they sent a price list. I wrote to Brian Clough saying Forest would never be as big a club as Liverpool. I was right but 'Old Bighead' never replied. We sent a donation every year from the money raised, to a Leonard Cheshire Home, Springwood House in Liverpool where we sponsored a resident who was able to go in a Jumbo ambulance to Austria.

**Well, dear reader you'll be pleased to know I've nearly finished.** I hope you've enjoyed my informal dissertation. I've tried to show how my time in Germany was enriched by mixing with the host nation. Initially, I could not speak a word of German, except the essential "Ein Bier, bitte" and my efforts to learn the language paid off many times. We spent most of our holidays with our children in Germany and Austria. I know more about the geography and history of these countries than I do my own, but I am trying to correct that now.

I sometimes wish I had stayed longer in Germany, but to use a football phrase, I think I left when I was winning, Like many managers today, I did not get to choose my staff, and some I did not want to leave, left on a free transfer to marry an officer who was posted - or on deserved promotions. I think I anticipated the approaching problems with the boards of directors, government guidelines, boards of governors, shortage of money, downsizing and advisors who thought they knew how to run my school (the club) better than I did. They did not.

Bill Shankly, the Liverpool manager said football was a simple game, spoilt by coaches. Teaching is similar. Yes, it was time to go and I really enjoyed the extra time which was left to me.

12 years of supply teaching, and I could blow the whistle on some of the things I saw. Perhaps material for another article?



Shackleton Staff 1984

## I Saw It — I Was There

**Eileen Blackwood** taught at Gloucester School, Hohne from 1982-1985, Cornwall School, Dortmund 1985-1991 as Head of Modern Languages and at Queen Victoria School (QVS), Dunblane 1995-2010 (QVS is a MOD boarding school).

Now retired, Eileen spent time in her *student summers* working in Woolworths in Berlin and she returned to Berlin at various intervals *between 1973 and 1989* and observed the changes in the city. Eileen was lucky to return to Berlin the weekend the Wall came down, which is the reason why the following article was written. Eileen read it a few days after 12th November 1989 as part of a school assembly at Cornwall School, and it was published in 2009 in the QVS school magazine, *The Victorian*, from which the article has been adapted.

### 1961

Were you born then? No.

The Wall was built in Berlin. It kept people from escaping to freedom in the West.

Were these houses really the border between East and West? Were people really shot trying to jump from their house windows into the freedom of what was West Berlin?

Unbelievable, isn't it? You couldn't leave your house in Bernauer Strasse without leaving your country too.

### 1973

Were you born then? No.

My first visit abroad. Berlin. I was there. To work in West Berlin. A beautiful city. So much colour. People everywhere. A magical city. A special atmosphere. So much to see.

The Brandenburg Gate. Checkpoint Charlie. Olympic Stadium. Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtnis Kirche. The East.

The East? The East? It was 1973. I was there. A bombed-out church — my first memory.

Why are there so few cars? Huge wide roads, but so few have money to buy cars. Queues in shops.

Alexanderplatz - everything brand new - supermarket — TV tower - a huge clock showing times all over the world - what use is that when people are not free to travel there?

In a back street - drab - no paint on the windows A little child tried to sell us the weeds she thought were flowers. That's not what flowers look like. Don't you know?

### 1979

Were you born then? Berlin, 1979. I was there. You were too young to know.

West Berlin — brighter, richer, more colours than before. East Berlin - that same bombed-out church. What, 54 years after the War?

Lots of cars — made of fiberglass. Don't crash one. You wouldn't stand a chance. Queues, more queues - to buy motor spares. Oh, how I laughed. We have the cars — but not the spare parts to repair them.

### 1984

Too young to remember. But I was there. Berlin. 1984. Mum and Dad, this is West Berlin. More colourful. More cheerful.

East Berlin. Why won't they do something with that bombed-out church? But look, they're rebuilding the Cathedral at last. Soldiers everywhere — East German, Russian. All so young and so stern. Don't they know how to laugh? Maybe they have nothing to laugh about.

**Alexanderplatz** - the centre of East Berlin. Yes, we can have lunch in that cafe. Look bananas. No, don't take one, Mum. They don't see bananas very often here. Watch them putting them in their bags to take home. They are almost grabbing at them. West Berlin - the WALL - covered in slogans, painted, decorated, but menacing, a barrier. Crosses for people shot trying to escape to the West. **Set free - by death.** It's very sad. I won't go back.

### 1989

You're old enough. You must remember You must take note. You have to remember.

It has finally happened. Years of lack of food, freedom to travel, freedom to choose who to vote for. The life they were living was too oppressive. Many leave. They leave their families, their houses, their jobs, their homeland. It must be bad.

**Berlin 1989 — November 9th** — It's finally happened. Barriers are beginning to crumble. I have to see. I want to be there. No flights? Not possible? Please try again. One seat left on Monday morning 7am to go back to Dortmund? Yes, please. Now just get me to Berlin. You've found a flight. Great. From Frankfurt? Fine. I'll get there.

**Frankfurt Airport 10.30** — departure Lounge - so many fellow passengers - and cameras - photos and films to record history. To say "I was there".

## Jungle Risk Assessments

drank lots of water from vines but appeared to have eaten half the plants in the jungle, all of which were edible and some quite nutritious! I asked Ralph how he'd got on, his reply was, "Bloody marvelous, they're great and really keen and they don't whinge like the squaddies do!"

We offered the camps to Service Schools in Singapore and a party of sixth formers with their teachers came up from R.A.F. **Changi Grammar School.** At that time a young Captain was living in the Mess with me and expressed an interest to come along and help as he'd not worked with youngsters before. He proved to be quite a hit (particularly with the girls!), and took several parties into the jungle, treating them more like Army recruits, which they really enjoyed. Afterwards he said he'd thoroughly enjoyed it and would like to do more work with young people.

I was fortunate to be able to see the lasting impact these camps had on children when, four years later, I was living in the Officers Mess in Mansergh Barracks in Gutersloh; I was in the bar one evening when a teacher from Kings School came in and put an exercise book on the bar and said, "Read that." I recognised the name as a girl I'd taught in **Kluang**; apparently the class had been asked to write about a true adventure and she had written about the jungle camp. It seemed to take up half the exercise book and as I read through it I was gratified to see how much she'd remembered, I'd forgotten some of the incidents. She had been on the trek with me when we'd seen the gibbon and the snake, and it was at this point that the teacher really thought she was making it up until she came across my name. I was able to confirm that the whole story was completely true, it was a brilliant piece of writing, apparently the best she had ever done.

**David Arden**

*Continued on page 19*

**Focus on John Trevelyan**  
**The origins of B.F.E.S. 1976**

*In August 1946 I became its first Director, and for a short time the only member of staff. I reported for duty at a house in Princes Gardens, Kensington, which has since been demolished. I had been told that I would be provided with adequate office accommodation and a temporary office staff. I found two empty rooms, in one of which there was a telephone on the floor. I telephoned to the person who had given me these assurances and was told in reply that I was lucky to have a telephone. I was sent office furniture and a temporary clerk; within a few days between us we had organised an office and that was the start of it all', 'I ... visited Germany in order to see what kind of problems I was likely to have. I was conducted round the British Zone by Lieutenant-Colonel F. J. Downs, Chief Inspector of Army Education (at the age of 31). In the course of our tour he told me that when he was able to leave the Army he would take up an appointment as H.M.I. for the Ministry of Education, but said that he would like to join my staff in Germany. I negotiated his release from the Army and a postponement of his work for the Ministry, and he joined me. In retrospect, I cannot imagine what I would have done without him" .*

**Before moving to Germany I had battles to fight.** *Perhaps my most important victory was when I obtained agreement to our teachers having officer status; in the Army Schools teachers were graded as Warrant Officers. Then I refused to accept the stationery offered to me by the Stationery Office since I thought it of inferior quality; I was not impressed when I was told that this was what was used in Army Schools and said so. I was then reluctantly offered stationery of a much greater quality.'*



**THE CREATION OF THE BRITISH FAMILIES EDUCATION SERVICE.**

**RESEARCHED AND PRESENTED BY PAUL A MACARDLE MA**

With the cessation of hostilities in Europe, in May 1945, Western Europe was divided into four zones of occupation, each administered by a Military Government; British, American, Russian and French.

The **British Zone** comprised three German Lande, Schleswig Holstein, Niedersachsen, and NordRhein Westfalen together with the British Sector of Berlin.



**The four Zones of Occupation**



The **Control Commission**, a section of the Foreign Office, whose staff were recruited from the British Civil Service, Foreign Office and demobbed service personnel, gradually took over the role of local government.

The austere peace that followed saw huge swathes of displaced people moving across Europe to be reunited with family and friends.

British personnel posted to Germany, to help with the process of reconstruction and restoration of order began to bring pressure through the **Overseas Reconstruction Committee** to be allowed to have accompanied postings.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> February 1946 the War Office meet to discuss these demands; the possibility of offsetting some of the costs of occupation and improving morale were crucial arguments in favour of the concept, but doubts also existed, principally relating to the education of the children who might accompany their parents. A subsequent meeting, held on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1946, decided that the Director of Army Education, Lt Col. FJ Downes, and an Assistant Secretary at the Ministry of Education, Mr WAB Hamilton should make an exploratory visit to Germany to assess the level of need and potential problems.

On their return, their report highlighted the large geographical spread of the British Zone and the huge devastation left by the conflict. They estimated that 2000 children between the ages of 2 and 5 could be expected to accompany their parents, in addition to between 2000 and 2500 children of primary school age and 500 aged between 11 and 15 who would require education\*.

They considered that the provision of primary schools, although small by UK standards, would present few problems in areas of concentrated British population; but envisaged that in areas of sparse British population greater problems would be faced: they suggested that these could be solved by transporting children for distances of up to 10 miles or by using a combination of hostel provision and billeting the children with friends of the parents. Even greater problems were envisaged in the provision of secondary education, as the small numbers and geographic spread would require the creation of boarding schools: the possibility of a 'senior form' being established in some primary schools was also mooted as parental objections were anticipated.

\*Figures taken from a personal letter from Lt. Colonel Downes to Peter Blakey, 30 Nov 1978



During a Cabinet meeting, June 1946, to discuss 'Operation Union', (the code name for accompanied postings to Germany) the Minister of Education, **Miss Ellen Wilkinson**, expressed her strong disapproval of the plan to allow children to move to occupied Germany. Despite her objections the Cabinet concluded that the moral of the Forces would be significantly enhanced if families were allowed to proceed to the British Zone. Miss Wilkinson, bound by the Cabinet's decision, successfully argued for the

insertion of a caveat that guaranteed that those children accompanying their parents would receive an education *'at least equal to the education they would have received had they remained in the UK'*.



With Cabinet approval, the Central Education Authority was quickly established to create British Children's Schools within the British Zone. Their initial priorities were to appoint a Director, recruit staff and acquire resources. The Director of Education for Westmorland, John Trevelyan MA was appointed as the first Director of British Children's Schools, British Army of the Rhine. He was seen as

an ideal candidate being forthright and used to running an education authority that catered for small rural and isolated schools as well as those of a larger size in the towns of Westmorland.

In post war Britain, resources were scarce and his new organisation was initially without influence; with the aid of Downes, Trevelyan, soon found his way around the complexities of the Civil Service and quickly gained a reputation for his ability and determination to achieve.

Trevelyan moved to Germany and established his headquarters in Hammersmith Barracks, Herford on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1946. In his first public announcement he stated that he wished to inaugurate a full system of education: nursery, primary, and secondary as soon as possible and that the organisation would be called the **British Families Education Service**. The title, B.F.E.S., appealed to Trevelyan because he had visions of creating an all-purpose cultural organisation to serve the needs of otherwise isolated individuals.

The first meeting of the **'Zonal Board of Education'** (whose task was to reflect the work of an LEA) was convened in November 1946. Its membership caused Trevelyan to comment that *'...it provided the first example of inter-service organisation in education'*. During this meeting, he argued that with the schools so widely scattered and so far apart from one another and the central headquarters the only way that a coherent service could be established was through a regionally based administration; each with a Regional Education Officer and supporting staff of administrators and specialist advisors. The regional offices would be situated in Niedersachsen, (Lower Saxony) Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Nord Rhein Westfalen and the British sector of Berlin.

The new Regional Education Officers had already been appointed: one of whom, **J. D. Hoy**, recalled in 1952, the establishment of the regional offices:

*'It was on the 10th November 1946 that four Regional Education Officers and their staffs arrived at Headquarters B.F.E.S., to receive briefing instructions*

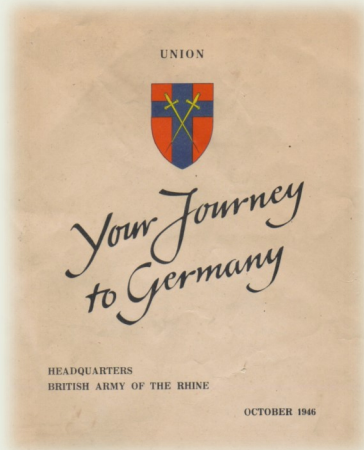
*Miss Wilkinson had a distinguished parliamentary career and was passionate about the care given to children. Following the 1945 General Election, the new Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, appointed Wilkinson as Minister of Education, the first woman in British history to hold the post. Although scarcity of funding and resources caused a number of her ideas to be abandoned, she did manage to persuade Parliament to pass the 1946 School Milk Act that gave free milk to all British schoolchildren.*

*The **Zonal Board of Education** consisted of Major General E.B. de Fonblanque (Chief Administrative Officer, C.C.G.), Major General E.M. Bastyan (Maj. Gen. [Admin] H.Q., B.A.O.R.) Air Vice Marshall T.A. Langford-Sainsbury (Air Officer [Admin] H.Q. B.A.O.R.) and Mr. John Trevelyan (Director, B.F.E.S).*

*It had been intended that each **regional 'team'** should exercise both administrative and inspectorial functions; but this combination proved impracticable. Tentative visits by **HMI CG Gill** led to the establishment of a team (**L.J. Burrows, D.T. Jones and Miss Phyllis Maurice**) who arranged to visit schools several times a year, this arrangement resulted in a very close liaison between HMI and B.F.E.S.*

*JD Hoy was the Regional Officer for Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein.*

The 1944 Education Act and the Ministry of Education's Building Regulations played a key part in the Regional Educational Officers requisitioning of school buildings.



After long months of waiting you are at last on your way to Germany. We who are there are looking forward to your arrival and we hope that you have a pleasant voyage.

This small pamphlet has been written in the hope that it will help you on your journey. It describes simply the organisation which has been set up to take you from your ship to your new home in Germany. We hope it will help to make your journey easier by giving you an advance picture of what to expect.



Hamburg

from the Headquarters staff who had already been in Germany for some weeks. I shall never forget the happy friendly way in which we were received by Mr. J. Trevelyan and Mr. J. Downes, the then Director and Deputy Director respectively, and their staff. After being thoroughly put in the picture... each Regional Officer departed with his immediate staff....: Hunt to Niedersachsen, Owen to Nord Rhein-Westphalen, Fielding-Clarke to Berlin and myself to Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein. All of us were full of hope and keenly anticipated tackling a task that was something entirely new in the annals of British education. Indeed, to start and establish schools wherever there were a few British families gathered together was an adventure in which we all felt **justly proud to participate.**

..... When my assistant, Bill Barrett, and I - later to be joined by George Pendry - arrived in Hamburg, which was to be the headquarters of our Region, we were provided with a room containing two desks and two chairs in a large ex-Wehrmacht building. In short, we had nothing save copies of the **1944 Education Act and the Ministry of Education's Building Regulations.** However, it was not long before we established ourselves in a suitable house in Klosterstern, Hamburg, which was to remain the Regional headquarters until 1951.

### THE FIRST FAMILIES ARRIVE



As anticipated, a number of families arrived in the Zone ahead of the planned opening of the official B.F.E.S. schools. One such family was that of **Control Commission Officer Mr L.C. French.** Eager to be re-united the family collected their packing boxes from the Tower of London prior to embarking on the commandeered **Empire Halladale,** which sailed from Tilbury to Cuxhaven.

The three boys, twins Peter and Paul, along with their elder brother, Ron, had seen the destruction in London prior to leaving but were shocked by the devastation they saw as they travelled first by train to Hamburg where they were met by their father in his **Control Commission VW** for the final part of their journey to a requisitioned transit hotel in Hamburg. They eventually moved to a requisitioned house in Kronshagen, Kiel. Peter, **speaking in 2007,** recalls how he arrived in Kiel to see the harbour full of destroyed ships and a huge liner lying on its side.



### Peter recalls that

'.....refugees were everywhere and the winter was exceptionally cold, which made life even more difficult for the German population. The B.F.E.S. schools didn't open

until the January of 1947, but my brothers and I enjoyed our time playing with local German children, with whom we had very good relations, and learnt to speak German quickly, partly by need as British children were few and widely scattered. There were few other dealings with German neighbours due to the existence of the **non-fraternisation laws.'**



In some areas local groups of parents established small schools in anticipation of the arrival of B.F.E.S. staff. The quality of these ‘schools’ was very variable. Hoy, in his 1952 recollections, was none too complimentary in his description of them:

*‘.....in some places (British children) had been running around wild, in other cases had been grouped together in some upstairs room in a barracks which was called locally the school, and looked after by voluntary helpers who gave them sums and kept them quiet pending the setting up of the British Families Education Service.’*

Although few of those who ran the voluntary schools were qualified, their ingenuity and determination is without question as illustrated by the work of one such group in Osnabruck:

#### **4th October, 1946**

*I pay a visit to the building which has been chosen by 16th Quartering for the British School. It is delightfully situated on the edge of the woods; but it has been left in a disgusting condition by the E.N.S.A. people. The keys are, apparently, all lost and the doors are open to the world. The place smells damp and musty. It is filthy and nothing is in working order. Nevertheless the place appeals to me. I think I can make something of it.*

#### **9th October, 1946**

*Visit 12 PCLU and explain to officer in charge that I need labour for the cleaning and running of a school...I try to find out how many children there are — impossible without visiting all Army units and CCG...Visit CCG ration store and ask how many children they are feeding—none.*

#### **14th October, 1946**

*Interview prospective workers for the school — poor lot except the teacher, who seems quite good.*

#### **15th October, 1946**

*CCG regret but they can do little to help with a ‘voluntary’ school. Visit Stadt Commander and ask him to sign authority for my drawing and cleaning material for school — does so.*

#### **21st October, 1946**

*Visit No. 9 Supply Depot and ‘scrounge’ 40 cups and saucers, a teapot, kettle, 2 scrubbing brushes, 2 long brushes, 2 mops and 3 pails, also soap and soda. Take these to school to find no cleaner. I tell the teacher to take her coat off. Together we scrub all the tables and chairs. I set the two men to clean up the grounds. 1 ton of coke arrives.*

#### **23rd October, 1946**

*Contact Army Officer in charge of food supplies to ask for cocoa, powdered milk and sugar for children’s hot mid-morning drink. No authority. Therefore nothing to be had. Assure him that my children have as much right to above as Lady X who, I hear, has had a supply for her Ladies’ tea-parties. Receive 28 lbs sugar, 28 lbs cocoa and 14 lbs dried milk — this cannot be repeated.*

#### **25th October, 1946**

*Parents’ Meeting (about 30)... Address meeting on: The fact that it will be a voluntary school until B.F.E.S. takes over Give reasons for B.F.E.S. not being able to open schools yet. Assure parents that children cannot possibly lose by coming to Germany. Children ought to be brought up with both parents.*

*Ask for as many school books as possible to be sent with children.*

*The school to open November 6th.*

#### **6th November, 1946**

*25 children arrive at the school in vehicles ranging from private cars to 5 tonners.*

#### **11th December, 1946**

*Mr. Hunt and Mr. Crump visit school. They tell me the school is to be taken over by B.F.E.S. and that a British teacher will be sent.’*

Both Peter and Paul eventually attended **Bellevue, Kronshagen and Itzehoe Primary schools** in quick succession before joining Ron at **King Alfred School Plön**. They used their linguistic skills to the full both ending their military careers as SLOs.

#### **Focus on Paul Macardle**

Paul started his career in Special and Approved Schools before joining BFES in 1975 to teach at Kent School, Hostert, where he met Jane a teacher in Rheindahlen. In 1977 he moved to Derby School, Osnabruck, as Remedial Advisor until they returned to the UK in 1980, as Paul had been appointed to a Deputy Headship. He quickly became Acting Head before being seconded to the County’s Advisory Service.

They returned to Germany with two small sons in 1986 when he was appointed Head of John Buchan Middle School, Sennelager, a post he held until 2006 when he was seconded to HQ SCE to write the Authority’s Management Handbook and organise the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of BFES/SCEA in Germany: during this time he wrote the history of Service Children’s Education in Germany.

In 2008, he retired from SCE to return to the UK where he worked with schools in difficulty, as a consultant Executive Head and as a Ministerial appointee to various IEBs. He also worked with the National Health Service to develop drug education programmes for use in challenging schools. Recently he has been a member of the Independent Monitoring Board at the Local Prison and continues to hear school exclusion and admission appeals. When he is not working, he and Jane enjoy travelling the world and being with their sons, daughters in law and new grandson.



With the spread of the **Coronavirus** causing both national and global concern, your committee has taken the decision to cancel this summer's Association Curry Lunch at the Ghurkha Museum in Winchester. The annual Association committee meeting scheduled for April 2020 has been postponed.

Further information relating to the AGM and Reunion Lunch - scheduled to take place on Friday 9th October 2020 at the Defence Six Form College, Welbeck will be published in the 2020 Summer Newsletter.

**Ian Stoter** - formerly of King's School Gütersloh - very kindly submitted a photo of the 13 Association members who attended lunch at **Corpus Christi College, Cambridge** on 14 March 2020. Several members were



Photo - Ian Stoter

regrettably unable to attend including Hugh and Christine Ritchie our **Membership Secretaries**, who found themselves unexpectedly in Australia - their cruise ship having made an unscheduled diversion as a result of the world-wide health situation. For those members lucky enough to attend, it was a most enjoyable occasion with good conversation. **Paul Macardle** the event organiser was relieved with the outcome despite wrestling with the problem of whether to cancel or not. In the end, Ian and his wife Jo believe he made the right decision.



**Münsterlager School**

Photo Credits John & Gloria Birks & Editor's Archive

## Dannenberg School



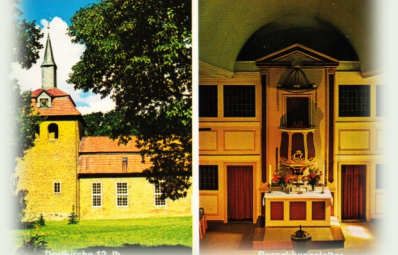
Winchester Cathedral



Schulhaus

Mühle von 1875

Grüß aus QUICKBORN/ELBE



Dorfkirche 12.-Jh.

Barockaltar

Dannenberg School was an annex of Münsterlager School located near the village of Quickborn on the (then) divided river Elbe.

If you taught in either location - Quickborn-Dannenberg or in Münsterlager School the Editor would welcome stories, information and or photographs for a future journal/ newsletter article.

## Focus on Mike Bennett

Mike started teaching in 1960 in a junior boys' school in Grimsby. Built just after World War 1, three other schools shared the site. The pupils' toilets were in a brick building on the school yard. No play-ground duty in those days, only yard duty. There were 46 boys in his first class and the teaching staff all looked as if they had been born before the school was built.

Therefore, when he moved to the newly constructed Dortmund Victoria Primary in 1963, it was a pleasant change. There were only eighteen boys and girls in a large classroom and young motivated teachers. Mike married one of the latter, Frances, two years later. In 1969 he became deputy head of Fleming School, initially housed in a barrack block in Herford and in 1974, in a brand-new open-plan build in nearby Enger. Escaping the wide-open spaces where he was always losing his cup of tea, and leaving behind a head who had had a breakdown, three months later in April 1974 he was appointed head of Shackleton Junior School, Fallingbostal. In those days you applied for a 'headship or any arising'. When the letter of appointment arrived he ran around frantically asking, "Where is F'ing B?".

Twenty years later when he took early retirement, he would like to think he had left his mark on school and town. A keen sportsman, his school came to be noted for its sporting achievements as well as highly regarded academically. He was also proud that his son and daughter had spent their entire school lives in BFES schools, culminating with A levels in PRS Rinteln, each as Head Pupil.

Mike was sorry to leave his school and Germany in 1994, but he could see changes coming, financial cutbacks, parent power and even more advisers invading his office for a cup of tea (although they seldom got any sympathy). Returning to the seaside close to Cleethorpes, he did not enjoy being retired. It had been a good life

**Tegel Airport - Berlin, 12.20.** Straight off the plane I notice the people. People everywhere. Smiling, happy. Waiting at the airport bank. East Germans - patiently standing. A welcome gift from the West Germans — DM100. Not much? That's 1,000 East German Marks — more than one month's salary in the East, but worth so little in the West.

The bus into West Berlin — packed. East Germans at every bus stop. What, they say, you can't get on the bus at the middle doors? Oh, well, here's my passport. East German. Thanks for letting us travel free. Everything is so dear here.

Look, they say, look at all the shops, the colours. Look — a fruit shop. East Germans packed into it and outside it. They've never seen such fruit before. Two men on the bus — enjoying an apple.

City centre. There's hardly room to move on the pavements. People wandering up and down, looking everywhere, at everything. In a daze. Can this really be happening? Woolworths is opening, and it's Sunday. People are pressing against the shop doors and windows. The glass almost caves in. Take your time, they're told, everyone will get a chance to come in. Cassette recorders, walkmans, that's what they want. Then watches, clocks. Hundreds of people trying to get into Woolworths.

Long queues at the Kaiser Wilhelm church. A supermarket chain is giving away coffee and chocolate to the East Germans. Show your passport. There's plenty for everyone. Free plastic bags were thrown. They caught them by the fistful. Appreciating this small gift.

Take the underground. Checkpoint Charlie. What, no maps left? I'm not surprised. On the platform. People standing six deep — all the way along. A train comes. How does everyone get on? So crushed inside, but who cares? Everyone is smiling, saying "welcome, glad you're here, so good to see you".

Checkpoint Charlie — crammed with people. Clapping, cheering — more visitors. Beaming smiles. Have some champagne. Enjoy yourselves here. Border guards — also smiling. And look, they're East German. East German guards — smiling — happy — relaxed. No guns in sight. The Checkpoint open, the barrier raised. A bunch of flowers seems to hold it open. More people coming through — on foot, on bikes, in cars — made of fibreglass.

**Walk along the Wall.** People climbing on top — sitting, proud they have conquered the Berlin Wall. I saw them. I was there. Playing a saxophone, balanced on the Wall. Hammering, hammering. A Child — forcing a hole in the Wall. It's their future. The Wall must come down. Hole in the Wall. You can see through. No guns on either side. Smiling people everywhere. No one can believe it.

Walk along the Wall. Potsdamer Platz. The Wall cuts the Square in half — but wait, why are so many people here? The Wall. It no longer divides the Square. It's been removed here. People are pouring through. Welcome. More cheers, more applause.

Everyone wants to see. The viewing platform — overcrowded. People on its supports. Get down from there, the police plead. It's dangerous. But no one moves. They have to see. To say they were there. A building site with scaffolding, full of people looking at where the Wall once was, taking photos, watching.

The Police call out greetings. A white car is coming. It's a Wartburg. More cheers. It chugs its way across the border to see the West for the first time.

Brandenburg Gate. Border guards — East German — standing on top of the Wall. Walking up and down — as if posing for people to take photos. Photos? The World press is there — German, American, French, Australian — couldn't find the BBC. Bright camera lights, satellite dishes, ready to send live pictures all over the world, waiting for something to happen.

Something has happened, though. So many things have happened in the last few days in

East Germany. A gateway to freedom has been found. Remember that. People from East Germany have achieved so many dreams in such a short time. Thanks for the visit. Come again. It's been great to see you. We'll be back again on Tuesday, but for now we're going home. I heard someone say it — smiling, happy face.

I know he said it 'cos I WAS THERE.

**And do you know what? I wouldn't have missed it for anything.**



## Contributor Focus

in Germany; the teachers were keen, the children friendly and willing, the schools well supported by HQ BFES/SCS and the military. Head teacher colleagues were at the end of a telephone and there were other perks. Come back PSA. All is forgiven!

And so Mike went where the advisers had been telling him to go for years, into the classroom. He undertook supply teaching wherever he was asked - at first! Some schools were more challenging than others. Eventually, he settled into two schools where he enjoyed the children, ethos and staff. He finally stopped at 66 years old. He had been surprised at how little interaction there was between local heads, how little competitive sport there was and how the headteacher's role had been diminished. Perhaps, at last he realised he had gone when the going was good.

For years he kept up his sport, playing league cricket with his son and running with his daughter. His last competitive run was appropriately in Germany in 2001. He also took up tennis, enjoying the company of the mothers of the children he was teaching.

Mike and Fran still miss Germany and visit regularly. They both watch German TV and Mike is addicted to German radio. Always a technophobe, he does not even own a mobile and relies on Fran to submit his articles to the magazine. Never a volunteer, he has not joined the parish council but did consider becoming a traffic warden. He reads a lot but watches too much TV. He looks forward to visiting his daughter and two grandchildren, wherever her US Army officer husband is posted. His son, daughter-in-law and other grandson live next door but one! Still competitive, he pretends to use the Tesco trollies as practice for zimmer frame races and dashes to claim the window seat, but that will never happen.

No Old Folk's Home would ever have him.

He still exercises regularly and enjoys gardening. He is grateful that he and Fran remain fit and healthy.

*Carpe diem.*

## Contact Us

### Chair

Ken Jones OBE  
01691 828468  
[bjkenrickjones@hotmail.com](mailto:bjkenrickjones@hotmail.com)

### Secretary

Lynn Marshall  
0118 3274128  
[lynnmarsh6@aol.com](mailto:lynnmarsh6@aol.com)

### Archivist

Walter Lewis  
07774 625574  
[bfesarchivist@gmail.com](mailto:bfesarchivist@gmail.com)

### Membership Secretaries

Hugh and Christine Ritchie,  
01227470763,  
[bfes.scememb@gmail.com](mailto:bfes.scememb@gmail.com)

### Treasurer

Janet Bradley  
01788 891850

### Events Coordinator

Sue Adams  
01823 663195

### Web Manager

Mike Chislett  
[mwchis@gmail.com](mailto:mwchis@gmail.com)

### Editor

Tom Nielsen-Marsh  
[bfes\\_scea\\_newsletter@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bfes_scea_newsletter@yahoo.co.uk)

### 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.**

### Find us on Facebook.

**Log on to Facebook and type in "British families education service association". If you have a Facebook page, please spread the word about us.**

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## Association Membership

Membership of the Association currently costs £15 per year.

Membership is open to anyone who has served with BFES, SCEA, SCS(NWE), SCE or latterly is serving with the remaining MOD Schools. The membership year runs from 1st January to 31st December and payment can be made by Standing Order or cheque.

Further information and a membership application form is available from the Membership Secretaries,  
94 Headcorn Drive,  
Canterbury, Kent,  
CT2 7TX

The Association Newsletter and Journal is published three times each year: spring, late summer and winter. Articles for the newsletter are most welcome and should be sent to the Editor at

[bfes\\_scea\\_newsletter@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bfes_scea_newsletter@yahoo.co.uk)

An electronic version (PDF) is also available to read and/or download from the **Association Website**: you will need the current Association password to enable you to do so. A copy of each previous newsletter is also held on the Association Website.