

BFES SCEA Association

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Mini Rhinos German U12 Rugby Championships held at JHQ Rheinlanden 2012 - BFG Archive

Changes Afoot

Once again, we approach a time of change in our Association's Committee, with the planned retirement, at the October AGM, of our Chair, Ken Jones OBE and of Sue Adams, our Events' Co-ordinator.

Ken Jones OBE, whilst not exactly "young blood" at the age of 80, has become the most dynamic and forward thinking Chairs the Association has experienced. He was well known and respected in Germany for his intelligent drive as Head of King's School, Gütersloh from 1972 to 1990 and becoming President of the NAHT. He displayed excellent understanding of his pupils and enjoyed great respect from the military families. He started his career in Wetherby in 1962, then, after a spell as Head of Geography in Pudsey, he joined BFES in 1968 to a similar post at Kent School, Hostert. In 1970 he became Deputy Head there and then Head of King's. He returned to the UK to the post of Principal at Welbeck College. In his continued retirement" he became the GAP Project Manager in Southern China from 2002 to 2006 and he managed a Chinese owned educational organisation in Shanghai to 2008. Some retirement!

As our Chair, Ken immediately, subtly, adjusted the direction of travel for the Association, helping it to

move further towards a greater recognition of its members' love of times working alongside the military. The exceptionally successful 2018 reunion in Gütersloh, Bielefeld and Paderborn was very much due to Ken's drive, contacts, ability to speak fluent German and his leadership. Who would have thought that, after so many years away, we could all enjoy, once again, a formal Dinner Night at the Officers' Mess, Gütersloh?

The Association will very much miss his leadership and larger than life personality when he steps down in October. All our thanks go to him, and to his long-suffering wife Brenda, for leading us into the 21st century. Ken's appointment was truly inspirational! Without his leadership we would not be in our present strong position.

Much of the Association's success has been through the membership's support for its annual functions. These events do not just happen by accident or easily – they require careful planning, good contacts, and communication. So, we turn to Sue Adams, the second, and equally important, departee from our Committee. Sue also has led us into commemorating our pleasant times working in partnership with the military – which has been at the

heart of our times with BFES/SCEA/SCE/MOD Schools.

I first met Sue in 1985 when she was Deputy Head, then Acting Head, of Wellington First School, Osnabrück. She came to BFES in 1973 as a freshly fledged teacher to Robert Browning First School, Sennelager. She went on to be Head of Charlottenburg First School, West Berlin from 1988 to 1994 then Sue became Head of Blankenhagen Primary School, Gütersloh until her retirement in 2003. She is a dynamic, personable senior educationalist. She, again, enjoyed excellent relationships with the military who were often in awe of her and who respected her greatly. In many ways, Sue was the grand epitome of a caring yet demanding Head teacher. She stood up for her teachers and her children; she was deeply respected by all but did not easily suffer fools! She joined the Association on her retirement and has been a main driving force throughout, even before becoming its Events' Coordinator.

In "retirement" Sue will continue to support SSAFA, OXFAM and the Shallowford Trust. Once the country returns to anything like normal Sue hopes to continue with her travelling abroad.

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It All Began with an Old Cardboard Suitcase - Sue Adams

In which Sue tells of her early years in BFES ...

THE ANCIENT CEREMONY OF BEATING RETREAT The true origins of this ceremony are not accurately recorded but it is believed to have evolved from medieval customs. In that age feudal Lords were Kings in their own right and held their lands by the power of the sword.

In order to protect both his lands and his serfs he built up walled townships which were in fact nothing more or less than large castles with a central Keep should the outer walls be penetrated. During the day the serfs were sent out into the fields and woods to work the land and tend their flocks usually with armed escorts who were at the same time guards and protectors against neighbouring Lords. The siting of these fortifications was either on the highest point of his lands or in the centre of a plain.

At dusk the town drummer sallied forth from the town playing a drum roll to warn the townspeople that the gates of the town were about to be closed and guards and serfs then returned to the safety of the city walls driving their flocks with them. At the same time visitors to the town were made aware that they must either depart before the curfew or remain overnight as the gates would not re-open again until the following morning.

The earliest military reference

Early days in Sennelager.

I landed at RAF Gutersloh in September 1973 in those pre-Samsonite days with a rather large, travel-worn cardboard suitcase. I was on a service flight with many other teachers who were all allocated to different schools in the area.

It had not taken long during the flight to find out where other teachers were going and it was with some relief that I met others who were going to a strange sounding place called Sennelager. All attempts to try and find Sennelager in an atlas beforehand had failed – this it transpired was because Sennelager was really a training area for NATO troops.

I had been told that I would be teaching at Robert Browning School and having landed safely, all passengers were called forward by a welcome party from the school and driven to what was to become home for several years - although initially contracts were issued for a 3-year tour.

Arriving in Sennelager was to say the least a bit disappointing - a straight road (nicknamed "the strip") with a few Gasthofs and blocks of flats. Turning into the area of the Sennelager Training Centre presented an entirely different environment. Neat rows of small army buildings with black and white notices outside to explain their purpose and some grander buildings used as Officers' messes and of course the teachers' mess. The teachers' mess was actually two separate buildings, conveniently referred to as the main mess or annexe. I was in the annexe and was given a spacious room with a bed, desk, bookcase, bed-side lamp and wardrobe. This was standard issue in all rooms. This provision of furniture was based on your entitle-

ment of rank. Teachers were given the equivalent rank of a captain, although we were not in the army. There was a laundry room and plenty of bathrooms.

The main mess had a dining room, anteroom, a bar upstairs and other rooms used for accommodation. It also had the kitchen where all meals were prepared.

Once settled into our rooms, the PMC called everyone together for a welcome chat and informed us that there was an invitation to a Roman Orgy at 45 Field Regiment on the outskirts of Paderborn the following evening.

The contents of my suitcase did not include options for a fancy-dress party but undeterred I quickly saw that the standard issue bedspreads could be easily turned into something to resemble a toga! So along with other "newies" we were transported the next evening for a lively introduction to the world of subalterns and some aspects of army life.

Despite a quick introduction to the social scene, there was still that question of what did the school look like – or indeed where was it? So, it was with some relief that the following day we were taken to see our respective schools. In 1973, there were two primary schools in Sennelager – Robert Browning School and William Wordsworth School, both on the edge of the camp. There could not have been a greater contrast in styles of buildings and were just across the road from each other.

William Wordsworth School was a modern building and Robert Browning School was a former Bundeswehr block with three other buildings, one being the dining hall, the others additional classrooms. It had an enormous play-

ground surrounded by many oak trees and a smaller one with some play equipment. Completely separate to this was another annexe about 300 yards away and out of view of the main building which was used for junior classes.

I can't remember how many pupils there were in the school, but it could be judged as a large primary school – Group 6, if I remember correctly. This was to change a few years later when John Buchan Middle School was built and the two primaries reverted to becoming First schools. The then head of Robert Browning, Brian Ward, became head of John Buchan. The next head was Gordon Tremaine and then John Tate, during my time at the school.

My classroom was not in the main building and was a very spacious room with a corridor outside with space for hanging coats and of course the toilets were there also. I was to have an infant class of 22 children. Reading the class list and the addresses of children was quite bewildering as street names were all in German and some seemed unpronounceable – Am Heilands Frieden was a bit of a challenge but Bismarck Strasse, less so. I soon learnt to admire the children who avoided any attempts at pronouncing where they lived by simply saying "down our end". A lot of children lived there!

We were of course given a tour of the whole school – the main building had mostly junior classrooms on two floors. But beneath the classrooms were the cellars where the school stationery was stored. This had the impact of walking into an Aladdin's cave – card, crepe paper, crayons, plasticene, paint, brushes,

exercise books, tissue paper, felt pens, pencils, paper clips and paper were all there in abundance and to be used when you wanted.

The staff room, Secretary's office and Head's office were also in the main block. There were long corridors enlivened with noticeboards displaying the children's artwork and some display cabinets also with children's work. All attempts to change the atmosphere of a barrack block to that of a school was well achieved.

The artwork around the school certainly reflected the availability of stock. I was later to learn that everyday commodities such as paper and pencils were ordered by the school from a huge Ordnance depot in Viersen. More precise requisitioning of classroom apparatus from firms such as E.J. Arnold or Galts were ordered by the school direct to the company. All these items were accountable and held on a huge list kept by the Q.M. of the Parent Unit (usually a regiment) who supported the school.

Each year there was a stock check undertaken by the Q. M's staff. This was not always the easiest of procedures – not surprisingly, some items such as Lego, word games, jigsaws or counters would have been lost or in some cases were broken. All this had to be accounted for and explained before it could be deleted from the Q. M's stock book.

Back in my classroom again, I arranged it for the new term and completed the register. Reading lists had been passed on to show the level of reading of the children and which scheme they were using. There was a wide range of schemes which allowed new children joining the school to be able to continue with whichever scheme they were using at their previous school. Each classroom had a Bell&Howell language master along with Stott reading cards

– a great help with teaching phonics. Maths equipment was also in every classroom – trundle wheels, metre sticks, weighing equipment, water trays for capacity and Fletcher maths books.

Preparing the classroom in anticipation for the children was an exciting challenge, the Head of Infants explained that most children would arrive by bus from differing quartering areas, though some would walk. This required another list. The bus list was to become a very accountable document at home time! Routines of the day were explained – assemblies, lunch time, playground duties and so on. Then finally that point where you realise that you can't do anymore, and you need the children to be there. So, drawers labelled, coat pegs named, it was time to leave the new classroom and look forward to meeting the children.

The significance of a child's address was important as it dictated which school the child should attend. There was no parental choice in those days. Walking home had a very different feel to it because home was now the mess. Afternoon tea was available in the anteroom and an opportunity to meet other mess members and find answers to the many questions still lingering. Then back to my room before dinner in the evening. Already the luxury of not having to cook an evening meal or even make a cup of tea was beginning to sink in.

Conversations back at the annexe were all about comparing notes – how had the day gone? What was the classroom like? Etc. Then the delight of an excellent evening meal cooked by the German staff in the kitchen who were also eager to welcome you.

And so, the first day dawned but first there was breakfast. I think slight nerves probably prevented the enjoyment of what could be consumed if you wished to. So here we were in

Germany with everything you could possibly want for an English breakfast – cereals, fruit juice, marmite, marmalade, coffee, tea, eggs any style!

A short walk to school allowed time to take in more of the surrounding area and notice that there was a Dental Centre, Medical Centre, a cinema, a Post Office and more Army buildings with initials yet to be interpreted.

And so, the day started – the children pleased to be back and talk about their holidays. The inevitable activity after that was to ask the children to write their news. The children used what were known as infant drawing books which were in fact lovely sized books with pages of cartridge paper and just right for early writing. New books, new pencils, new crayons – couldn't be better until I realised that some of the terminology the children used was a foreign language to me! This word "sssss" something kept cropping up and "NAAFI" (which I did recognise), the inevitable "down our end" but something I struggled to understand was it



turned out to be "Schloss Neuhaus" – where the NAAFI was. I think my initial input to those word books the children used would have needed correcting.

The "ssss" word turned out to be SSAFA who were responsible for family welfare, in particular helping young mums with new babies. SSAFA also came into school to carry out head inspections.

And before I knew it, it was home time and time to adhere to the bus list. This was quite

to the ceremony of 'Beating Retreat' in the Oxford Dictionary is 1753 'Retreat is a beat of the drum in the evening. at the firing of a piece called the warning piece'.

That its military origin much older is evident from the following order dated 18 Jun: 1690 'The generall to be beate att 3 clock in ye morning ye retreat to beatte att 9 at night. and take from ye gards.' It is also mentioned several times in the Duke of Cumberland's Orders in Flanders in 1745 and 1747.

Fuller details are given in 'A Universal Military Dictionary' by Captain George Smith. Inspector of the Royal Military Academy. Woolwich 1779.

'Retreat is also a beat of the drum, at the firing of the evening gun: at which the drum-major, with all the drums of the battalion except such as are upon duty, beats from the camp-colours on the right to those on the left. on the parade of encampment, the drums of all the guards beat also; the trumpets at the same time sounding at the head of their respective troops. This is to warn the soldiers to forbear firing, and the sentinels to challenge 'till the break of day, that the reveille is beat.' The retreat is likewise called setting the watch.

Grose, in his Military Antiquities. Volume 2. 1788, pages 253-254 includes 'Retreat; this is beat at sun-set in garrisons, and at gun-firing in camp; at which time the pickets are formed; in fortified places. it is a signal for the inhabitants to come in before the gates are shut'.

An Old Cardboard Suitcase - continued



daunting as there were several green buses which all looked identical except for the bus escort and number on the front. However, with other classes turning out as well, a really strict eye had to be kept on your class to ensure each child was on the right bus. It was quite a daunting experience for the younger children particularly if new to the school. (One of the drawbacks of children being bussed to school was that you did not meet parents at the school gate each day, so parents' evenings became an important focus for meeting them.) So, with children safely taken home it was time to prepare for the next day and reflect on how the day had gone. In those days, much reliance was placed on work cards which you made yourself to suit the activities organised for the children. This was not a problem due to the amount of card available. Wall charts such as calendars, flash cards, days of the week or number lines could all be easily made. A Gestetner duplicator was also available for staff to use – I became quite addicted to the smell of the duplicating fluid as you turned the handle to roll off the number of sheets you needed.

With the day ended, it was back to your room in the mess to discover that your bed had been made and room beautifully cleaned. More luxury! Gradually a routine of mess life evolved with the enjoyment of making new friends in a very comfortable environment. Soon it was the first weekend and kind fellow mess members offered lifts to the NAAFI. The NAAFI in Schloss Neuhaus was well stocked not only with food but Clarks shoes, M&S clothing, anything for musical entertainment such as LPs and other electrical items. Beyond the NAAFI, there was the town of Paderborn, and

it was really here that at last you felt you were in Germany. The contrast in those days to U.K. was very noticeable. The local population seemed to drive newer or smarter cars than in UK, department stores just had a different feel to them with better quality goods. Cafes were just too tempting with the range of confectionery and coffee and weekend markets had a variety of fruit and vegetables not yet that readily available in most UK towns. (Who had heard of Kohlrabi in those days?) There were plenty of restaurants – obviously the local Gastatte but Greek or Italian places. All this with German wines to discover!

Retail therapy over on Saturday morning (shops closed on a Saturday afternoon), it was back to the mess – another meal prepared, time to write letters home and say all was well and find out about what societies or clubs to join. There was much on offer - apart from squash courts there was riding, shooting, evening classes run by the RAEC, the gliding club, the drama club, the golf club or opportunities to help with cubs or brownies, for example.

I became involved with the Sennelager Players which had its own small theatre. This was a great way to meet other people beyond the mess and to realise how the military members could pull strings to find pieces that were essential for a stage production. I will always remember one production that we did of "Move over Mrs. Markham". The set required an oval bed which was placed on a carpet. The aim of the props department was always to be as authentic as possible, so anything Army grade was not used on stage. Somehow or other a kind R.E.M.E person managed to persuade a workshop to make such a bed and another member managed to purloin an

offcut of a blue carpet. I should add that this was no ordinary offcut – it was in fact the carpet that was used to line a bathroom for the Queen's Jubilee visit in 1977.

It would be fair to say that on most weekends there would be a party somewhere – usually another teachers' mess. Of course, we had our own parties, many of which had fancy-dress themes. Decorating the bar area was not a problem due to the generous allocation of stock in school stationery stores. Our mess was fortunate to have a cellar bar in the annexe which was open on a Sunday evening. We were also fortunate to have a barman to run the bar. Music of the 70s would be played, a bit of dancing with invited guests. And a chance to meet more people.

Disco music can be loud if allowed. There was one occasion when the Garrison Commander, who lived in a grand house near the annexe enquired if one weekend we would be having a party. He was anxious that the area should be as quiet as possible as Princess Margaret would be staying. So, the planned party was cancelled. As it happened there was the most dreadful thunderstorm that evening and I did wonder if HRH was able to sleep well that night.

After the first few weeks had passed, my MFO boxes from England arrived containing additional things I thought I would need for my time in Germany. Much to my surprise, I found that the boxes also contained liberal sprinklings of Dolly Mixtures which had been secretly put in them by friends before I left – I had a few moments of "home thoughts from abroad" remembering friends I had left behind. However, the excitement of unpacking the boxes soon expelled any further melancholy moments.

I couldn't drive when I arrived

in Sennelager, in fact there were quite a few teachers who couldn't. However, Sennelager had many military units and regiments and in particular the Royal Corps of Transport. They had instruc-

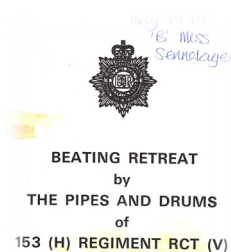


tors who were willing to give driving lessons, free of charge, provided you had your own car. So, in this rather back to front situation I ordered my first car unable to drive – a mini clubman. How proud was I? Driving tests were taken and I became the owner of a BFG driving license. I can still remember my first BFG registration number – KG271B. I was always slightly amused that it contained KGB as part of its number, particularly as we were under the threat of a Russian invasion.

Wheels of course give you freedom and half term holidays became a focus of where to go perhaps. I think most people headed for the well-known places – for me it was down to Bavaria to see Ludwig's castles and enjoy passing through Bavarian villages, staying in local Gasthofs with 'Zimmer Frei' signs and enjoying German cuisine for a change. Inevitably, one returned with a picture or two of places visited. These were hung almost like trophies in your room. "See where I have been", sort of thing. Being in Germany you were well placed for visiting so many places – Amsterdam, Paris, Berlin, all easily accessible by train. Then further afield in longer holidays and visiting Italy, Austria and even down to Spain.

At Christmas, I would return home to be with family. Christmas in Germany has

many traditions – Stollen cake, white lights for Christmas trees, beautiful Christmas decorations sold at Christmas markets to name a few. These were all so different to what was seen in UK. Hence the suitcase was again heavy returning home with as many surprises that I could pack. In 1973 I went back to Somerset with a friend who was driving and experienced the long autobahn drive to Zeebrugge and a ferry crossing to Dover with Townsend Thoreson – rough seas kept us outside the port for over 3 hours. Motorways such as the M25 or M3 did not exist then and the



journey was tedious but lovely to be eventually home and talk about all my new experiences.

With the holiday over, it was of course back to school and one term under my belt. The new term brought something I had not anticipated which was the threat of the I.R.A. One afternoon, I had just taken the class register and a staff notice came round to say that an unidentified package had been spotted in the playground and that no one was to go out for an afternoon playtime until the "all clear" had been given by the RMP who would be investigating the package. I have to say that I felt quite unnerved. Luckily another note later came to say that it was a child's lunch box that had been left outside!

Regiments going to Northern Ireland were not uncommon at that time and it was important to be aware of any children's fathers who might be away. Training for regi-

ments going to Northern Ireland had just begun on the ranges with the building of what was known as 'Tin City'. This was a mock-up of an Irish town and was used to simulate incidents which could occur during riots or protests. Apparently one of the situations which soldiers found very difficult to face was the barrage of abuse they faced from Irish women. This resulted in the training team asking if female teachers would be prepared to go to Tin City and try to breach roadblocks with a few chosen words and concealing items about their person. I went on one occasion and acted as far as I thought I should and I believe that the input given by the females who went also, did much to help with the training.

So, life was varied! In the early days of the 70s there was no access to British television but BFBS Radio provided a variety of programmes during the day and broadcast news bulletins from the U.K. One programme which featured every week was "Ulster Calling", hosted by Gloria Hunniford in Northern Ireland. This was a sort of "Families Favourites" type programme where those serving in Northern Ireland could send messages to their families or girlfriends. Contrast that to today with communication made so much easier with mobile phones. B.F.B.S. became a very integral part of community life and the presenters were often called upon to open school fetes.

Sennelager, in support of the role of the training ranges, had many different units and some permanent regiments. On the whole we did not experience the

huge changeover of a regiment moving to another garrison, but we had did have a turnover of pupils with trickle postings. It was always very important to support children going to a new school so that the transition could be as smooth as possible. Records of children's progress and a report (known as a B.Ed.6) plus all workbooks were put together in a large brown envelope for children to take with them. Most children were able to have at least 2 years in a school – some much longer. It always felt sad to see children leaving their friends.

And so, after nine years at Robert Browning School, it was time for me to leave and move – this time to Osnabrück. I too was very sad to be leaving friendships built up over the years but happily am still in touch with many of them. Many belong to the Association so we have excellent opportunities to remember and reflect on those Sennelager days. Happy days indeed!



The Laughter Deficit

In which we follow in the footsteps and through a very strict lockdown , of a former BFES pupil - who currently works as a supply teacher in a US Military Elementary School in Padua – Italy ...

officer in the U.S. Judge Advocates' Corps. After various postings in Germany and the U.S.A., she is at present in Padua with her husband and two teenage children. She enjoys supply teaching in the U.S. military schools.

COVID and lockdown have affected us all but hopefully her thoughts and recollections will strike a chord with those of us who worked in forces schools. If you would like to read more from Laura, you can find it on her blog www.mostprivelegedtourist.com.

When the children returned to my elementary school, I worried about how the transition would go. Can they make up a deficit or is it like lost sleep, lost forever? Can you re-learn how to laugh with friends? Is it an instinct? I hoped so.

These children had been out of school since February 2020 and in a strict lockdown which meant they could not

leave the house for over two months; playdates had been on hold for such a long time. The new school rules were strict - recess with masks (all day with masks), no equipment, no monkey bars, no swings, no slides. The first day was hard to endure, the younger ones especially looked lost as they wandered around not sure exactly what they were and were not allowed to do and there seemed to be a lot of not allowed.

But the next day was different. The pupils found plenty of games to play. Among us, picking daisies, a modified tag. The playground was filled with laughter again, the smiles were behind masks, but the laughter could not be contained. Together, laughter did not sound muffled. Covid compliant rules and expectations became just rules and expectations. Gel in, Gel out. Pull your masks up. Sit in your spots. All became the new norm. Sitting socially distanced three to a table at lunch the students tell jokes,

share stories, the laughter is loud and chatter louder. The laughter returned as though it had never left. This is a positive indicator for us all.

Children are resilient especially at my school - we are a military school and military children are renowned for being resilient-- they have to be. They move often, the schools, rules and friends change. They are not in close proximity to grandparents or extended family. Mothers and/ or fathers leave - sometimes for a really long time. Resilience is a great skill to have but not at the expense of laughter. Military kids learn at a young age that sometimes there is sadness, when you leave friends or they leave you, you have to leave people you love. Maybe these children know the secret is that you have to make friends fast and laugh often. Maybe they know how to switch up their hilarity dial because; "A day without laughter is a day wasted."

(Charlie Chaplin).



Laura McCracken was educated in British Forces Germany attending **Shackleton Primary School** in Fallingbostal, where her father, association member Mike Bennett, was headmaster.

After attending nearby **Gloucester School** in Hohne, her 6th Form years were spent as a weekly boarder at **Prince Rupert School** in Rinteln.

At university Laura studied Law and German and after a year as an English assistant in Gadebusch, Mecklenburg Vorpommern in former East Germany, she qualified as a solicitor from Chester Law College in 1996.

Whilst working in Stuttgart she met her future husband an

Project Update: Living on a Cold War Frontier Dr Grace Huxford (University of Bristol)

In 2018, I first got in touch with the BFES-SCEA Committee to discuss my research project, based at the University of Bristol, looking at the social history of British military bases in Germany during the Cold War. I was delighted to have so many people come forward to speak to me, or correspond with me, and am so grateful to the Committee and to all those participants who were so generous with their time and recollections.

I'm now in the 'writing-up' stage of my project and wanted to share an update with BFES-SCEA members. I had hoped to be slightly further on by now, but as for many people, Covid-19 altered my plans somewhat, as did getting married and welcoming my first baby (a little boy!) in December 2020. I'm still on maternity leave at present, but look forward to getting back to work on the project in the autumn.

In the meantime, members might be interested to see some of my publications so far, many of which are informed by my interviews with teachers and their families:

A Radio 3 Documentary on post-war Germany, discussing life on British military bases in Germany after the Second World War:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07srdmh>

An accompanying blog piece on the fall of the Berlin Wall, featuring several teacher memories:

<https://ahrc-blog.com/2019/11/08/the-fall-of-the-berlin-wall-british-residents-remember-november-1989/>

Our project website, featuring various blogposts: <https://britishbasesingermany.blog/> by my research assistant Joel Morley and I.

A participant in the Radio 4, 'Archive on 4' programme on National Service. Whilst my main focus was the Korean War here (on which I wrote my PhD), Germany is mentioned and I remain indebted to interviewees for sharing their perspectives on the military 'world' in which National Service took place: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000g520>

I am now co-supervising a PhD student looking specifically at the experiences of British military personnel in Berlin (a place well known to many of you!) with the Imperial War Museum.

When I return to work, I'm also writing several academic-facing papers on British military children in the immediate post-war period, boredom and British

military experience in Germany, conducting 'group' oral history interviews, and perhaps something on "turbulence", again a subject on which many of you have views and expertise. And I hope to write a book bringing together all my research in the next couple of years too.

Whilst I am no longer conducting any more interviews, I remain so grateful to those of you who took part and am always happy to correspond with you via email at grace.huxford@bristol.ac.uk

I also have copies of the Recording Agreements that participants signed (stating the ways in which you agreed for your interview to be used) and can send a CD copy of your own recording when I return to work in the autumn.

With thanks and best wishes to BFES-SCEA,

Grace



Defence Children Services

Following an MOD review, it was decided to divide the Directorate Children and Young People into separate policy and delivery organisations.

Policy work is now undertaken by the Chief of Defence People's organisation in the Ministry of Defence's Head Office. From 1 April 2021 the delivery of support is via a newly created organisation; Defence Children Services hosted in the Army's Regional Command.

Regional Command's role is supporting Army personnel and so the inclusion of children services is a logical step. It extends the MODs offer to a broader demographic and supports the whole of Defence not just the Army.

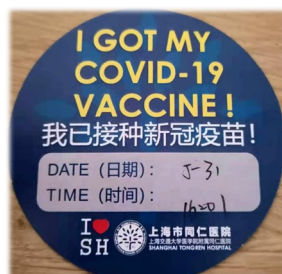
Beverley Martin takes up the role of Head of Defence Children Services in July 2021.

Beverley Martin began her teaching career in Wiltshire, originally as a primary teacher and SENCO. In 2002, she was appointed Headteacher at the school in Upavon and then promoted to Executive Headteacher of two large primary schools in Melksham, where she was awarded the status of National Leader of Education. Beverley then moved into secondary education, as Headteacher and Executive Principal of schools and academies in Wiltshire, Devon and Gloucester.



Letter from China

In which former SCEA Headteacher Paul Cunningham brings us up to date with life in Shanghai and reflects on immunisation, the summer of 1989, Manchester and Plum Rain ...



Over the past year things have steadily got better in relation to Covid in China. I take a daily look at the 'China Post' to see how many cases were reported the day before. Since July 2020 it has mainly been a downward trend in terms of reported cases and most are usually reported as imported! However, as I write this article early June, there is a worrying outbreak down in Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province. Measures have been quickly introduced to fight the outbreak as confirmed and asymptomatic cases continue to rise. To prevent and control the virus from spreading, the city government quickly put two communities under lockdown. Local government announcement on Sunday stated that residents are not allowed to leave or enter two specific communities and from the beginning of the week, people leaving Guangzhou from airports, train stations and bus stations needed to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours of departure. About 500 flights to and from Guangzhou and Shenzhen International Airports were cancelled.

These outbreaks happen now and again but there is swift movement from the authorities, no debate, no ambiguity. Like the recent announcement regarding Chinese families being al-

lowed to have three children, it is both swift and immediate, no voting, no passing to House of Lords for a second reading!!!! That's the way things are done out here. Those of us in the education Industry rub our hands in glee. More children, more schools.

4th April 2021 was a breakthrough day for myself, as I was finally allowed to receive the first dose of the Chinese vaccine Sinopharm. Foreigners in various batches had been offered the opportunity to be immunised after Chinese New Year, but up to this point the invitation reached out only to those below the age of 59 years. In China they acted differently than the UK where the older years were targeted first. In China us 'oldsters' had to wait whilst the vaccine was tried out on the main workforce, the young, fit and able. I obviously didn't fit into any of these categories so I had to wait. Eventually my time did arrive, I joined others and was welcomed in to the Shanghai Tongren Hospital car park with kind words echoing out on the public address system 'welcome foreign friends, have your passports ready, please take your place in the line'. TV cameras waltzed up and down recording the events for the local evening news. Everything was well organised, with an army of volunteers brought in from Shanghai universities, pointing, directing, making sure you had your case load of documents at easy hand. The second visit for the vaccine was less crowded, and the cameras were absent. I had waited as long as I could before having the second jab

as it evidently gave me 6 months cover in terms of the Chinese authorities and possible border re-entry. I was impressed with how the vaccine was taken from its box, shown to you to prove authenticity then loaded up in the needle. Like everything in China, the appointment had been booked on line, using the health app we all have used since late January 2020. I once again sat in the baking sun for 30 minutes under strict observation. An American guy near to me keeled over and was quickly whisked away by a pack of volunteers. I wondered whether it was the effects of the vaccine or that he'd been sat in the sun for 25 minutes?

After having the first vaccine I was once again able to travel domestically in China. Those working in the local education sector had been restricted since August 2020. All part of the extra precautions in place. In late June and July 2020 there was short period where school employees were allowed to travel but come the new academic year, things got tighter and a succession of holidays have passed; October Golden week, Christmas (Winter celebration to our parents, local authorities and government officials) and Chinese New Year, all happened without the chance to travel. Shanghai is a great place, buzzing with things to do but it is nice to get out of town and visit another province or city. International travel has been off the agenda since March 2020 and teachers understand that, but not being able to travel domestically was beginning to hurt. Having the vaccine has now allowed people to roam. Fingers crossed it will



Letter from China continued ...

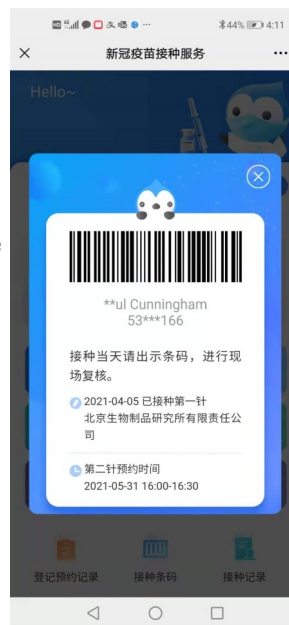
not be too long before border restrictions are eased and we can all explore the delights of neighbouring countries as well as come and go to our homes in Europe, without having to experience lengthy quarantine at both ends. Actually, coming back to China for non-nationals is extremely hard, if nigh impossible, it requires special dispensation and a personal letter of invitation from a high ranking official. If deemed a foreign expert you may get the ok for entry but this does not extend to wives and children. Our schools in the main continue to recruit new staff from within China.

In the meantime we continue to follow the 'new normality' in schools, we still get our temperature checked each morning, our health code is shown which gives our travel history and tells everyone if we have been out of Shanghai. Teachers wear masks at key times during the day but not during the main classroom time. Parent access to the campus is still limited and class carpets and rugs remain rolled up in stock-rooms. We are subject to visits from the local education bureau, police and

government officials ensuring all specified regulations are being faithfully followed.

The early summer weather in Shanghai has begun in earnest. It is a time we specifically call the 'plum rain' period, where the rain bounces in great large droplets. Very much like Manchester on the last day of an Ashes test. I used to think it was called 'plum' as the size and shape of the rain resembled small plums dropping from the sky but actually the term "plum rain" is a Chinese term for the rain in the fourth and fifth lunar month. It specifically refers to the historical belief that, when the plums turn yellow and fall at the south of the Yangtze in the fourth and fifth months, the moisture that evaporates from the plant turns into rain. And it usually gets me wet whatever mode of transport I choose to take in Shanghai from late May; metro, mobike, Didi or tram. Last year the plum rain saw the highest rainfall of this 21st century. Continuous rain for 42 days, about 19 days longer than that in normal years. With temperatures well into the mid 30's it certainly gets hot and steamy on the streets of Shanghai. Great fun

travelling to work, usually in shorts and t-shirt, before changing into a shirt or suit safely hanging in the office wardrobe. Still once we get through this, then it's the typhoon season. For those BFES/SCEA members who once worked in the Far East they will know exactly what that means!!!! I was fortunate to experience Hong Kong in the late 80's and early 90's and still remember the excitement of watching from the Royden Court balcony, as storms came in from the South China Sea. It was then a race to move all the furniture in as the ferocity of rain and wind increased and the water started to race down from the hills behind us. In summer 1989 it was a time to batten down the hatches, pour a gin and tonic, prepare for a game of 'Strategy' before mulling



over the contents of the soon to be introduced English National Curriculum.

Happy Days.

How to get the most out of a boarding school

One of our guest members for 2021 is Lt Col (ret'd) Paul French, MBE, and he has sent a copy of a letter which he had published in, I think, the Daily Telegraph, back in February 2020. We have received his permission to use the copy as we wish.

SIR - I cannot relate to the miseries of boarding school described by Dr Alex Abercrombie (Letters, February 18).

I was fortunate to board at the coeducational King Alfred School in Plön in Germany from 1949 to 1956. Surrounded by lakes and hills, it had as its headmaster the charismatic Arctic explorer and author of *The Jungle is Neutral*, Lt Col Freddie Spencer Chapman DSO. He had a clear vision of the unique opportunities that such a boarding school could bring. High priority was given to outdoor activities such as sailing and athletics, with mutual support paramount. The school had "helpers" rather than prefects.

We got involved in the local community by taking part in cultural and sporting events in the area. The school maintained a very happy environment that the 6,000 or so pupils who attended over the years carried through to later life.

It was open for just 11 years, but some 150 former pupils from around the world continue to attend the annual reunion held in London, through which many thousands of pounds have been raised for various charities. This is fitting for a school with the motto: "Let right be done." **Lt Col Paul French (ret'd)**
Andover, Hampshire

The boy who went up a hill and the man who returned from a mountain ...

In which Ken Jones – who is stepping down as chairman of our Association in October - agreed to recount the story of his long and distinguished career. It may well surprise many members who thought they knew him well ... and the story continues in the Winter edition of the Journal and Newsletter.

Paderborn Memories 1

In which Wilma Simpson recalls her time in Paderborn ...

I arrived in Paderborn for the first time in August 1994 from Werl when the barracks and Talavera School closed. I moved to Bishopspark, and the regiment at the time, also moved to Barker Barracks. Many thought I was part of the regiment! It was a mere coincidence but it did mean that many of the children who moved to Paderborn knew me! I left in January 2000 and headed to Heidelberg for an eighteen month secondment as head teacher returning as acting head teacher for a year at Bishopspark in 2002.

Paul Cunningham was able to spend a year on secondment to SCE's inspector / advisory service. Then in 2003 I was appointed as head teacher to William Wordsworth School in Sennelager where I remained until my retirement in April 2015. It amalgamated with Robert Browning a few years later and is now known as Attenborough School and remains open to this day.

Paderborn became my second home. A beautiful city amidst wonderful countryside with the Möhnesee close by as well as Dortmund and Düsseldorf airports within easy reach. In total I spent about nineteen years in the area, and have revisited every year since I left until Covid put a stop to

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When I look back on my family background and my early education, I am astounded by the career I have had. It is a career that has given me memorable experiences, many overseas and provided me with a superb quality of life so very different to my early years. In the light of this comment I feel it is important that I gave a brief description of my early life and education.

AN UNLIKELY BEGINNING – FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EARLY EDUCATION



I was born just before the Second World War started, in a small Welsh speaking village in Montgomeryshire, surrounded by the Berwyn mountains and their slate quarries. My mother was one of eight children, born and brought up on a farm not far from where I was born. She lost her father when she was four years of age as he was a victim of the Spanish flu pandemic in 1918. To support the family, she went into service at a young age in a large country house.

My father was also one of 8 children and of his own admission he hated school so much that he left at the age of 14 to work with his father who was the village blacksmith in Llangynog. To

earn some money, he started working in one of the slate quarries and soon showed his innate engineering skills repairing the broken-down machines. With the closure of the slate quarry due to the start of the Second World War his engineering skills meant he obtained work in a Merseyside shipyard and lived with his married sister.

This led to me spending many years living on my own with my mother with occasional brief visits by my father. The circumstances of the war, and the relative poverty of my parents, meant that sadly I never had a brother nor a sister. It was during these early years in the war that my mother started taking me on the back of a bike and cycling 2 1/2 miles to the next village so I could start

piano lessons. This was the start of a skill which came in useful in later life even though the early practising was done on a neighbour's piano. Our home was 2 free rooms behind the doctor's surgery, a kitchen/ living room, one bedroom and an outside toilet. My schooling was in the local primary school and the instruction was entirely in Welsh and I stayed there until the age of ten.

I moved with my mother to join my father in downtown Birkenhead, again living in free accommodation as caretakers for the Welsh Congregational Chapel. This time there were two bedrooms, a kitchen and living room, but still no bathroom and an outside toilet. My

parents finally managed to buy their first terraced house when I was 15 years of age which at last had a bathroom and an inside toilet.

The move to England was one which I found traumatic as I ended up in a different primary school totally unable to speak English. This meant I often ended up with the dunce's hat on in front of the class because I was regularly bottom of all English tests. I inevitably failed to pass my 11+ examination and ended up in a secondary modern school, where my limited English was again a constant source of embarrassment and low self-esteem, even though my skills in maths were of an acceptable standard. At the age of 13 I had a chance to transfer to a grammar school which I refused, largely for reasons of low self-belief.

At the beginning of my third year in the school there arrived a new teacher who was the first one to have a positive impact on my life, he was a new teacher of geography, a Welshman called Mr Jackson. He brought the subject to life for me and set alight a love of the subject that would ultimately lead to it being my degree choice at university. At the same time, success in playing rugby and cricket, as well as being the county champion in discus throwing, which led twice to an appearance at the All-England championships, all helped the development of my self-confidence. This was further enhanced by participating in

The boy who went up a hill contd

school drama productions. My skills as a pianist were also utilised by the school and I continued to pass a succession of piano exams up to the LRAM level which I stupidly deferred until after university but never completed.

I remained in the school after my O levels as I wanted to apply to go to a teacher training college and this meant I started A-levels. However, the departure of Mr Jackson from the school meant that my A-level geography had to be based on a postal correspondence course. At this stage the second important teacher in my life, my group tutor Mr Holden, started persuading me to think in terms of applying to go to university, which I had thought was never possible. I followed his advice and duly applied and was amazed to be offered a place at three universities namely Aberystwyth, Swansea and Leeds. Being unsure which to accept I sought the advice of Mr Holden who simply said if you think your future is in England go to Leeds if not accept Aberystwyth. I have no doubt at all that this choice was critical, as I am sure that if I had gone to Aberystwyth I would have become totally immersed in my Welsh culture, married a Welsh girl and remained in Wales for the rest of my life, missing out on all the international experience I have had.

LEEDS UNIVERSITY

I certainly did not find that the move to university was at all easy as I arrived thinking I was not good enough having come from a second-

ary modern school. I quickly realised the other students had come from either grammar schools or independent schools. The result of this was I thought the only solution was to work very hard, which is an ethic I have sustained throughout my career. This approach meant I missed out on most of the enjoyment which goes along with university life. By putting so much pressure on myself I finished up with a burst duodenal ulcer and a six-week spell in Leeds Infirmary. I was then advised to rest at home and repeat my second year at university. In the end it worked out well as I obtained a good degree and decided to remain in Leeds to do my PGCE course. For this year I also moved into a university hall of residence which led to a far better social life, and I finally replaced my motorbike and bought my first ever car, a black Morris Minor TUM 59 the cheapest car ever.!

The PGCE year involved two school placements, one in November and the other in March. The first one was in Fulneck School in Pudsey a private school for boys. At the end of the first teaching practice, I was surprised when the headmaster told me he wanted me to return to do my second teaching practice in the school. This duly happened and when this was finished, I was even more surprised when the headmaster summoned me to his austere study and told me he would like to offer me the post of head of geography when the present incumbent left, which was likely in the next two years.

With this backup in place, I then proceeded to look for a suitable post for the following September, which turned out to be another private boarding school.

WENNINGTON SCHOOL WETHERBY, SEPTEMBER 1962

My first full-time teaching post was in a small Quaker foundation, 11-18 coeducational boarding school for 200 pupils, a few of whom were children in care, paid for by local authorities. The headmaster was the founding Head,



Kenneth Barnes, who had previously taught in Bedales still the pre-eminent Quaker school. I was appointed as the geography and boys' games teacher, to which was later added Junior Housemaster.

The school was housed in a small Georgian country house, along with a mixture of coach houses, stables and hay lofts which had all been converted into classrooms and dormitories. This proved to be an ideal first appointment as the school had a holistic approach to education which I really enjoyed and this early experience certainly influenced my future views on the whole purpose and nature of education. School assemblies made much use of silent meditation and encouraging pupils to express their feelings. The

that in 2020.

With its magnificent cathedral and other historic buildings as well as being a university town it had all that you could want as a place to live; great shops, a number of markets, super restaurants and numerous pubs and drinking spots.

Every year various festivities from the Kirmes, Libori and other traditional celebrations such as Easter, the annual Anglo/German Christingle celebrations and Karneval, that there seemed to be some occasion to mark every month.

Having been away for six years I can now look back with great affection on my time in the area. One of my favourite pleasures was finishing school at Christmas, and after dotting the I's and crossing the T's at work, I would head home to my apartment on the other side of town. It was within walking distance of the Dom Platz, Rathaus and other central sites where the Christmas Market would be set up for the Christmas period. I would then wander down there and become immersed in the festive scene; colourful lights, joyful music and wonderful aromas as well as the many stalls selling numerous homemade products and handicrafts. To me it marked the beginning of my holiday period. A bowl of hot mushrooms and a Gluhwein to wash them down; bumping into many others who had remained in the area rather than return to UK amidst the cold, winter night was a delightful memory that remains with

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me to this day.

Later, as I wandered back home filled with Christmas Cheer I would have a chocolate covered grape skewer. Christmas had arrived!

Being in the centre of Germany meant that it was a great point from which to travel widely throughout Europe, and most western European countries have been visited by me and my car; Italy, France, Norway, Belgium, The Netherlands, Denmark, Czechia as well as many others. I knew how many hours it was to most places and not miles or kilometres, a feature I find familiar for those of us who travel far and wide.

In future newsletters I hope to write other features of my time in Paderborn!

Wilma Simpson



Duke of Edinburgh at Paderborn Primary



Paderborn Dom

TNM



TNM

Headmaster insisted on all the staff sitting around a very long table, at half term and end of term, to discuss each pupil to assess their level of progress and development not just academically but also in terms of social development and relationships. This was a policy I introduced some 30 years later when I went to Welbeck College.

At this time my piano playing led to another unusual experience as a colleague in the school introduced me to a nightclub in York that was looking for a pianist to join three other musicians to provide musical entertainment at the weekend. I did this for a time, when I was not on duty in the school, and for a 3 hour session on both days the pay was equal to a week's salary in the school!!

In the middle of my third year in the school, the offer arrived from the Headmaster of Fulneck school to become the head of geography which I duly accepted. In my last meeting with the Wennington Headmaster, having thanked me for what I had done he said " when you become a Headmaster I hope you will remember some of the educational philosophies you have seen at work in this school"

Needless to say, when he said that I was shocked as I never thought I would ever aspire that high.

**FULNECK SCHOOL PUDSEY
HEAD OF GEOGRAPHY
SEPTEMBER 1965**

The school had been created by the Moravian religious foundation and had a vastly different ethos to Wennington school. It was an all-boys school with a very narrow focus on academic achievement for

many boys of limited ability, who happened to have wealthy parents. As such it was an experience which I did not really enjoy after the enlightening experience I'd had in Wennington. Despite being provided with a modern three-bedroom detached house, I began to think in terms of seeking a job elsewhere and in my third year a chance comment by an older member of staff proved to be so significant. His comment was "you are young enough to look for a teaching post overseas" which was something I had never contemplated previously.

The same teacher advised me to start looking in the back of the TES, which I had never done before, and this led to me being offered two very different posts. One was at the Ikuu Secondary School in Kenya and the other was as Head of Geography in St George's School, Hong Kong. I opted for the post in Hong Kong and some months later I was most disappointed to receive a letter from the MOD informing me that I would now be going to be Head of Geography in Kent School in Germany. The parting comment of the Headmaster of Fulneck School was "you are a fool you'll be teaching in Nissen huts for the rest of your life". The last-minute change which led to me ending up at Kent School was a huge stroke of luck as I would be working with a Headmaster who was a fellow Welshman, namely Glyn Williams, a truly inspiring person.

It is most surprising, that having worked for six years in two schools which had strong links to religious organisations, the rest of my career, a total of 31

years, was with the MOD.

**KENT SCHOOL
HOSTERT HEAD OF
GEOGRAPHY
SEPTEMBER 1968**

Compared with the first two schools I had worked in I now ended up in a truly massive school with 1400 pupils. As the school had not been in existence for very long, I quickly realised there was quite a task ahead of me, but it was an opportunity to be creative and really set up the geography department which was a task I truly relished. As well as this, I was called upon to use my skills on the piano to be an accompanist for school musical productions whilst the Head of Music did the con-



Kent School @ Hostert

ducting. I also helped doing some boarding duties. At the end of my first year the Headmaster called me into his study to review the year and astounded me when he said "the deputy head is leaving at the end of the next academic year I want you to apply for the job" In the second term of my second year, the post was duly advertised and as I had been instructed I applied for the job feeling that it was perhaps a bit too early in my career. I was called forward for interview in HQ BAOR and was stunned by the composition of the interview panel, which consisted of the Command Secretary as Chairman, the Brigadier Head of Army Education, the Air Commodore Head of RAF Education and the Director of BFES, with the Headmaster as observer. I

The boy who went up a hill contd

was duly appointed and a new stage in my career was about to start.

DEPUTY HEAD KENT SCHOOL SEPT 1970

Here again I was given a chance to be creative and try different ideas in school management, timetabling and the exercise of leadership in what was a very big school with an ever increasing school population. As well as being a good delegator Glyn Williams was also frequently away on BFES duties so there were opportunities to be the Acting Head.

At the beginning of my second year in the post I was again astounded by Glyn Williams when he came into my study and said "the headmaster of King's School is leaving at the end of this academic year and you are going to apply for the job".

To this my reply was this is certainly too early as I need more experience to which Glyn simply said "no I have already told the Director you are going to apply so you must". To give me more exposure to the other Heads Glyn asked me to get ready to join them at a dinner during the next Director's conference and give an after dinner address on any subject of my choosing.

Following the submission of my application an invitation duly arrived to attend an interview, again in HQ BAOR, before the identical board which I had faced 2 years earlier. This was an elimination interview to be selected to appear before a selection board in Eltham Palace, yet again in the boardroom I where my career had started with BFES!! This was an interview against UK candidates who also applied.

Much to my surprise the application was successful and a move to a very different environment was imminent.

Read the second part of Ken's story in the December issue of the Association Newsletter and Journal.



Kent School 1971 - Hilda Stewart, Senior Mistress; Glyn Williams Headteacher; John Royle Head of Lower School and the young Ken Jones Deputy Headteacher

Kent School 1971 - Front Row L to R - Ann Joslin, Ken Jones, Glyn Williams, Hilda Stewart, John Royle, Head's PA, Warren Pope.

Second Row L to R - John Redman, Tom Dagleish, Peter Mordecai, Luke Conry, Peter Winckles, Louis Donaldson and Jim Lovegrove.

Can readers fill in the missing names ??



Trivia Corner - "Teacher's Pets: - unrepeatabe recipes"

Fund raising for various good causes, including school needs, has been something we have probably all being occupied with at some time, but do you remember the idea of creating and selling a cook book of favourite recipes?

Teaching in Malta during the 1970s such a book, entitled "Teacher's Pets: unrepeatabe recipes" was produced with all the schools on the island taking part. I still have my copy and still use it from time to time, especially when my son-in-law requests a '1970s meal' complete with orange tablecloth.

As colleagues shared their best, favourite and usually fool-proof recipe the book was a winner! Illustrations for the pages were provided by children. To help cover the cost of printing, the pages also include adverts from local stores and businesses. Whenever I browse the book it brings back warm feelings and memories from 40+ years ago and I picture colleagues and friends as I read their names under each recipe.

So, here are two recipes from the book that scream 1970s – perhaps they were your favourite recipes too.



Chicken Hawaii

4 quarters/pieces of chicken

Mushrooms, tomatoes or sliced green pepper (you choose!)

1 level tspn curry paste

1 level tbspn plain flour

1 can pineapple

1 onion

2 oz butter

(1) Fry chicken until brown (about 10 minutes) (2) make a foil dish for each piece of chicken and place chicken inside (3) Fry onion in butter in a saucepan with your choice of veg (4) add curry paste – cook 3 mins (5) add flour – cook 3 mins (6) strain pineapple, adding juice to the pan slowly and bring to the boil (7) cook for a further 2 mins (8) add pineapple to sauce with seasoning. (9) share the sauce between the 4 foil dishes with the chicken and seal all the edges (10) cook in oven for 1 hour – gas Mark 4 – and then serve with suitable veg.

Whiskied Peaches

1 tin peach halves or fresh peaches; Mincemeat & Whisky

Put the peach halves into a Pyrex dish using only a little juice. Fill the centres with a teaspoon of mincemeat. Pour ½ tablespoon of whisky over each peach. Heat in slow oven for 15 mins. Serve with cream (or ice cream).

The American Elementary School at Hemer

In which old friend of Bill Bowen - Jürgen Isken - recalls the links between the US Elementary School in Hemer and SCE's Hemer Primary School.

During the Cold War, in the mid 1970s, the US Department of Defense (DoD) decided to strengthen the defense line along the northern edge of the Sauerland mountains east of Dortmund in North Rhine-Westphalia/Germany. They decided to deploy nuclear weapons and station the troops in the Menden-Hemer-Iserlohn region.

Due to the fact that no other American bases existed in this area, and in close cooperation between BAOR and DoD, it was decided to invite the American soldiers to join the British forces at their Northumberland Barracks in Menden-Platte Heide.

The small 69th Field Artillery Detachment (US Army) moved in during the late 1970s, and the families found housing in Menden as well. Since this assignment was not classified as an unaccompanied tour, DoD had to find schooling options for the children. Originally, the administration considered one of the neighboring American schools (Bueren, Muenster, Kalkar, Mönchengladbach, or Noervenich), but the daily travel time would have been way too long, especially for young students. As a second step, DoD suggested to send the students to the British Hemer Primary School (Service Children's Schools). However, the parent community strongly disagreed. Expecting frequent moves between US bases in Germany and worldwide, they insisted in profiting from the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) curriculum of programmed learning, where all DoDDS schools used the same textbooks

and workbooks for all subject areas except the Host Country Language program. Teachers were even encouraged to make an effort and organize their units in a way that a student leaving any given school at any given time throughout the school year could immediately engage with the same units at his/her new DoDDS school, be it in Italy, Norway, the Philippines, or Guantánamo.

DoDDS had to give in and finally opened Hemer American Elementary School in the beginning of the 1978-79 school year for a student population of roughly 30 children (kindergarten through grade 8).



Older students were sent to an American boarding school in Bremerhaven, which was common practice at that time. As a sign of good NATO partnership, the British community offered three classrooms on the ground floor at their Hemer Primary School. During my time at HAES, we enjoyed continuous support from the school's headteacher, Mr. B.G. (Bill) Bowen. He also kindly suggested to move the American school to four larger rooms on the top floor of the building in 1986.

The first American principal, Mr. Robert Whitman, moved in together with his wife Nancy, and they ran the school as a teaching couple until 1985. This arrangement was quite typical

for small DoDDS schools in the 1970s and 1980s. They were supported by another homeroom teacher, a part-time teaching aid, a part-time Host Country Language teacher, and a part-time support teacher for the fine arts. As a result of this arrangement, it was essential and expected that all staff wear many different 'hats' to make the school work smoothly.

Our classrooms were divided up into a small section for the kindergarten group, a grade 1-3 homeroom, a grade 4-8 classroom, a small supply section, and a multi-purpose room. This former classroom served as the principal's office, teachers' lounge, learning support classroom, school library with roughly 5,000 media, supply office, German classroom, and, last but not least, as the school's conference room.

Bob Whitman had a great sense of humor and frequently decorated his 'principal's corner' with various mottoes suitable for this special environment, such as 'Welcome to the Augean Stable', 'Giants Come in all Sizes', or 'Bloom Where you are Planted'. Some of them were even used to decorate small gifts prepared for special guests or friends of the school.

The British community supported us greatly and shared their sports hall, their playground, their school kitchen, and other facilities with us. When I joined HAES in December 1983 as the school's local national Host Nation (German) teacher, I was immediately accepted as a colleague and member of the school family despite my rudimentary English, my

teaching credentials for German secondary schools (French and Geography) - not really appropriate for a primary school -, and my lack of experience with international assignments. It turned out to be a fantastic learning opportunity in a rather informal and extremely flexible teaching environment, completely atypical of the German school system.

Our German community used to watch us in amazement. The older generations especially were reminded of what they recalled as 'Zwergschulen' (dwarf schools) from their own childhood in the 1920s and 1930s. They were probably wondering how this old-fashioned construct could possibly work efficiently in the 1980s.

Financial support for the school came from the central DoDDS offices in Washington D.C. Due to the small size, our principal had no 'reptile fund' available, and all school supplies were ordered and shipped from the US.

The families mostly used American shopping facilities (PX) in Giessen/Hessen, approximately 90 min. away from Hemer/Menden, which was a short ride by American standards.

Smaller school orders were shipped directly to Hemer via the Army Postal system and the school's army address (APO NY 09078). Larger shipments arrived at the German freight depot (DB/German Rail) in the nearby town of Iserlohn and had to be picked up from there. We usually used the principal's station wagon and our own labor to unload the pallets and move the supplies to school.

Under normal circumstances, we received a call from

the Iserlohn train station and were kindly asked to pick up our materials 'asap'. Our principal simply informed the homeroom teachers, rescheduled my German classes for the day into the afternoon, and asked me to join him for our traditional early morning supply trip to Iserlohn.

Only three months after my start as a part-time Host Nation teacher/media clerk/music teacher, I was given another half-time position and also became responsible for ordering supplies (supply clerk). A few years later, I helped out as an English teacher for grades 3, 4, and 7 and accepted a few additional secretarial duties - many 'hats' as mentioned above.

Finances beyond the official budget were tight, and our principal thought of ways to have flexible funds available. While the British community supported us generously with transportation (regular school trips to the local swimming pool, study trips, etc.), spontaneous 'adventures' were hard to plan. Consequently, Bob Whitman created Doggie Day: a weekly informal meal for students, staff, and visitors comprised of fresh hotdogs with all ingredients necessary to meet American standards. Relish, mustard, ketchup, and sausages were available from the PX. However, the quality of frozen hotdog buns was unacceptable. Therefore, Mr. Whitman provided the local bakery Syré with the recipe for 'real' American buns, and those were delivered to school every Friday morning. Bob also donated a hot plate and over time, our principal, the Host Nation teacher, and our multi-talented caretaker Helmut Schwarz took turns in preparing the meals for our hungry clientele. Students, parents,

staff, and visitors were charged a minimally higher fee for the hotdogs, so a few extra dollars became available and could be spent on pony rides for the students, a Thanksgiving meal for the whole school, a German 'Broetchen' breakfast with butter and jam every now and then, a gigantic chocolate Easter Bunny to be shared with the students on the last day before Easter break, and other unique and memorable events.



As a perfect illustration of Bob Whitman's ingenuity, on the Wednesday before the long Thanksgiving weekend in November 1984, he brought a 22 pound Butterball turkey, frozen corn on the cob, minced meat, potatoes, milk, fresh onions, butter, American toast, spices, and other ingredients to school and spent a good hour in the British school kitchen to prepare a Thanksgiving meal for the whole school (35 students and staff). In the library, the students had already prepared bur-lap place mats for each participant, studied the history behind the public holidays, and learned how to set a table formally with plates, silverware, glasses, and even a candelabrum. By lunchtime, the turkey had spent five hours in the oven and was ready to be served with corn on the cob, gravy, and mashed potatoes. It was a true feast. After the meal, everyone helped with the clean-up, and all students

The Arrow of Time *Three BFES Experiences*

In February of this year (2021) Bernard Allen wrote briefly about his late wife (then Jean Cotterell) who taught at BFES Cologne from 1954 to 1958, and lived in the Mess in the Volkspark.

Bernard was in the army at Wahn, met Jean and married her in 1959. Jean subsequently worked as a teacher in an army school in Catterick, and in BFES Verden. Bernard had begun to write her family history, and, of course, a lot about her time as a teacher.

Your Editor Communicated with Bernard who promised to write about his and his late wife's experiences in the very early years of BFES.

Bernard now writes, "I am exploring three different individuals' experience of education in the Services, in three different time-frames:

1. Jean Cotterell, who joined BFES in 1954 and served in Cologne until 1958, and also taught (as Jean Allen) between 1970 and 1972 at the BFES school in Verden.

2. Our daughter Sarah, who was with us in Verden from 1970 to 1972, aged eight to nine and a half. To provide

The American Elementary School at Hemer continued

The Arrow of Time - Continued

continuity of education during this period, her elder brother was placed in an independent school in England from the age of nine.

3. My own. I am Bernard Allen, the son of an army officer who served from 1914 to 1948, ending his service in Berlin. I was in Berlin from February 1946 to July 1947, aged 11 to 13, and had no experience of BFES, presumably because it did not appear in BAOR before I left.

Bernard's detailed and extremely interesting account will be serialised in forthcoming issues of the Journal starting with a potted history of Jean's early life.

Jean was born in 1930, in India, where her father was serving in the British Army. The family returned to England in 1933 and settled in New Eltham, south-east London. Her secondary education at Eltham Hill school began in September 1941, by which time it had been evacuated to Abertillery in South Wales; the school re-opened in Eltham at Easter 1943, and she completed her schooling there in 1948.

She decided to become a teacher and studied for two years at St Gabriel's College in Cormont Road, Camberwell. She graduated in 1950 and taught at Horn Park

were allowed to take their place mats home at the end of the day as a small souvenir.

A creative and slightly 'illegal' exchange program was established with our next door neighbor, the British kindergarten under their head nursery school teacher Yvonne Wood. Their budget seemed to be even tighter than those of the neighboring primary/elementary schools. Hemer Kindergarten, therefore, received American art supplies from us on a regular basis and 'paid' us in internal currency (i.e. school milk) which they were given in larger quantities by the German authorities following a weekly routine schedule. The two partners kept this arrangement going until Hemer Elementary School's last day.

From my point of view, being a non-native speaker of the English language, it was in equal parts interest-



ing and amusing to watch the two English speaking communities communicate in their mother tongue(s). Differences in grammar, syntax, and vocabulary were sometimes hindering factors in everyday conversations as well as sources of hilarity. A British student may have asked her/his American playmate for a rubber, which the counterpart understood as a condom. An American

colleague may have asked a British friend whether it would be acceptable to wear pants when attending a formal event, which her counterpart understood as underwear instead of trousers. Upon hearing the term 'supply', our British friends thought of supply teachers or supply teaching, while our American colleagues had teaching materials in mind. We all experienced many opportunities to learn from and with each other in an environment of deep mutual respect and comfortable informality.

HAES contacts to the German community included the nearby German elementary school (Freiherr-vom-Stein-Schule), the local German high school (Friedrich-Leopold-Woeste-Gymnasium), a pottery, the mayor's office, and the local police authorities. Personal contacts were also used to enrich the program. A local Silesian dance group, for example, used to perform for the American and British school communities on German May Day, when they had a day off, similar to the British students, while the American school was in session. As a sign of appreciation, some of our American students performed break dance for



our German and British friends, which was quite unusual at that time.

Study trips to interesting sites in the region, including the Dechenhoehle, a cave in Letmathe, Schloss Altena, the nucleus of all



worldwide youth hostel organizations, or Luisenhuetten Wocklum, one of the first ironworks in Germany, became integral parts of the curriculum. In order to make these special events happen, the school schedule was handled as flexibly as necessary, as long as basic educational needs (Mathematics and Language in particular) could be met.

However, due to the small size of the school and the limited amount of staff positions, not all parts of the curriculum could be covered appropriately. Therefore, DoDDS hired a group of specialist teachers (Art, Music, Learning Support, Physical Education) who used to travel as itinerants from small school to small school for the day in order to support the local staff in teaching these subject areas. They also left educational materials behind to be used by the teachers until they returned for their next visit the following month. On average, we saw each of them eight to ten times per school year.

In 1988, Hemer American Elementary School celebrated its tenth anniversary. City and police representatives, the founding parents, Mr. and Mrs. Whitman, friends

from German schools in the neighborhood, as well as Hemer Primary School, joined us for the last big party to celebrate our small paradise.

DoDDS was already debating whether our school had a chance to survive or not. A year later, on June 16th, 1989, HAES closed for good.



The last 13 students came together one more time with their British and German friends in the British sports hall to wave goodbye to each other, and the



school's youngest kindergartener joined the oldest student in officially shutting the door behind the crew before the British school bus took all students home

to Menden, where the families were already packing for their next move to places unknown.

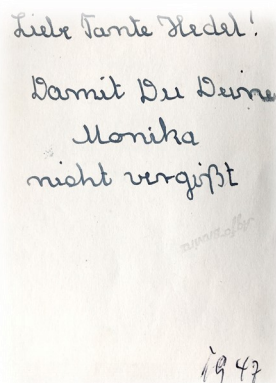
The American teachers and I (a local hire) were transferred to other DoDDS schools in Germany or other parts of the world.

In September 2001, the local Freiherr-vom-Stein-Schule organized an exhibition in what used to be the British/American school building celebrating the international heritage of the site.



Letter from Berlin - Part 3 - Monika Gruber

In which Monika Gruber continues her story of life in Allied occupied Berlin.



One serious problem was getting fruit and vegetables, especially potatoes. People went by local trains (hardly anybody had a car and if they had, they could not buy any petrol) to the countryside outside Berlin to find farmers, who would give them a few pounds of potatoes against their children's hunger and some apples against lack of vitamin C in exchange for valuables, i.e. jewelry, silver ware, precious porcelain etc. Such trips to the countryside were called Hamsterfahrten" - "hamster trips"!

Most parks were made into allotments with people trying to grow everything from cabbage to tobacco. Even Der Tiergarten, that large central park of Berlin, was covered with those small gardens after most of the trees had been destroyed during the war anyway.

Hard to believe, but there was an extreme shortage of salt, ordinary kitchen salt, in Berlin for some time. I remember that one day my mother had "heard" from a friend that another "friend" had salt to sell. Such news was always hush, hush, never public,

never in written form. So my mother and I walked some miles across the city to get 2 pounds of salt. Everybody walked a lot, since there was hardly any public transport, the underground did not yet run in many places, since the tunnels had been bombed, the S-Bahn was always overcrowded and late, hardly anybody had a bike.

What a life we were leading, positive and negative! It was a very hard one for the grown-ups as they had to provide for their families, try to feed them and make a comparatively decent living for them in all those ruins. Most of them were unemployed, but somehow, they more or less mastered it all relieved in the knowledge that the war was over, no more air-raids, no more danger of being arrested for your political opinion, your creed, your ancestors.

Gradually we children started going to school again,

The Arrow of Time - Continued

Primary School, within cycling distance of her home. The school had only been built in 1949, and on her first day as a teacher she arrived to find it was the site of an unexploded bomb. Since, being new, it had only two classes, she found herself in charge of supervising all the children while the Head liaised with the parents and emergency services.

She taught there very happily until the summer of 1954. But she saw an advert, possibly in a newspaper or possibly in Teachers' World, for teachers wanted by the British Families' Education Service, for employment with British schools overseas. In January 1954 she applied, was interviewed on 16th March, and accepted on 8th April for employment in Germany from August. On 13th May she had a medical at Millbank, involving



Am Südpark No 1 Cologne

Letter from Berlin - Part 3 continued ...

vaccination and inoculation against typhoid and tetanus, and more injections on 4th June, when she was given her medical certificate. Clearly the whole process was quick, indicating the need was urgent.

Although I was never a teacher – BFES or otherwise – I can claim to speak with some knowledge of BFES teachers in Cologne in particular and their conditions. I was posted to BAOR (Sennelager) in 1954 on first commissioning as an army officer, arriving by boat the day before Jean, and lived in Germany until Spring 1957. So I enjoyed the same sort of conditions as Jean in Germany, although I didn't meet her until June 1958 in Cologne when I was serving in the Army at RAF Wahn – now Köln-Bonn Airport – and we married when we were both back in England in August 1959.

Bernard's highly detailed, illustrated story commences in the Winter edition of the Association's Journal.

TNM July 2021.

classrooms were overcrowded (I remember 50 (sic) children to one room for some time), no school-books because the old ones from Nazi times had been confiscated by the Allied Forces, but new ones were not published yet. Most teachers were women, as so many men had been killed in action. Some teachers were extremely young like my 3rd - form teacher, who was 18 and went herself to classes 3 times a week to learn what she should teach us the next day!!

We were quite a mixed group - children from Berlin of course, but also from the so called "Ostgebiete", i.e. those areas which until 1945 had been German, like Silesia, East Prussia, Pomerania, whose German population had been evicted - like my family - and who had come flooding into those parts of Germany which lay west of the river Oder, the new border to Poland, not far from Berlin. My uncle's family, on whose farm near Breslau I had spent such wonderful days, trekked together with the villagers, blacksmith and all, across Germany to near Cologne, where they all lived in some sort of cubicles in a factory building for a few years (nowadays refugees in Berlin start complaining if they do not get enough peanut butter!!), before they managed to find a new home outside the factory.

Some of my classmates had gone through terrible times, had seen cruel and vicious deeds, had watched their mothers, sisters, aunts being raped by Russian soldiers, suffered from having been expelled from their homes for ever, had spent many a night in air-raid shelters, some had been buried alive under their houses which had collapsed in an air-raid, some had been wounded and most of us were

suffering from malnutrition. Then there were our Jewish classmates, who had survived in hiding. One girl said "Du" to all our teachers at first, since because of her Jewish mother she had not been allowed to go to school and had been taught at home. To protect those teachers, she was told they were all very close friends of the family and as such she should call them "Du".

Most of us have managed to cope with our experiences and I am extremely grateful that only once in a while I feel that some traumata overwhelm me, one example being when I hear a siren. It makes me tremble and I break out in tears if I don't watch out. But in spite of it all I had a wonderful childhood.

Every allied sector had its own radio station then, RIAS (Rundfunk im Amerikanischen Sektor) being the most popular (because of its many programmes with "pop" music). From 1946 on they also had a children's programme every Sunday at 10 o'clock, called "Die RIAS Kinder besuchen (visit) Onkel Tobias". It meant stories, singing, quizzes, Punch and Judy shows and just spending a peaceful 30 minutes, quite as popular with West-Berlin children as was the RIAS Big Band with youngsters. Some years ago I read in a text on post-war children that Onkel Tobias meant far more to the children of that time than just entertainment - he was like a rock in the troubled sea of fatherless children, of hunger, cold, darkness and sometimes despair. - I was lucky to be chosen to become a "RIAS Kind" myself, from 1947 - 52, when at last I, or rather my voice, had become "too old". I loved being on that team. In the early years it also meant a proper American meal

before the programme started, with dishes I only knew from hearsay. There was coffee to go with the meal, which we children managed to fill into bottles to take home to our families, not quite legal, but with us the American personnel made an exception.

In our free time, of which we had a lot, we played in ruined houses, though that was strictly forbidden (too dangerous), played ball games in the streets, ideal playing fields as there were no cars, sometimes helped to carry buckets of fresh water from the pump some 500 yards away before public water supply was set up again. We took home every little branch and pinecone we could find to use as fuel in the winter. Since there wasn't any central heating anymore, my mother had "organized" a stove for one small room, where we spent most of the day. Those post-war winters were extremely cold, especially the one of 1948, the "Blockade Winter" (Airlift). Though coal was flown into Berlin, it was mainly needed to run the few power stations left in West-Berlin. We had 2 hours of electricity every day, regularly, but at different times, some days during the day, but 6 days later in the middle of the night. So only then did we have the opportunity to cook, prepare hot water for washing the laundry and ourselves, to iron and listen to the radio (no battery run sets yet!). But we coped, knowing that without being brave and trusting our American and English friends we would be lost to the East. The French could not really help with the Airlift since they were involved in that war in Indochina, but they started building the badly needed 3rd Berlin airport in record time in their sector.

Letter from Berlin - Part 3 continued ...

Tegel, which by the way will be closed soon, after the new airport at Schoenefeld will eventually be opened in 2 weeks, believe it or not! (In the meantime Tegel HAS been closed for good, with a lot of people shedding a lot of tears, and our new BER was opened on October 31, 2020)

So instead of feeling bothered by planes going across our house every 3 minutes (!), by sitting in cold and dark rooms most of the winter with schools closed for lack of fuel, by feeding on mostly dried food (eggs, milk, cabbage, potatoes - all edible, we decided, except dried sweet potatoes - I am sure you can make a tasty meal even from them, but then you have to have a little butter, some pepper, some salt, other spices, some Bovril, some cream etc. none of which we had), dissolved in water, we were extremely grateful and patient. With Berlin being fenced in completely everything people needed for sheer survival was flown into the city, what I called

"organizing" further up, did not work anymore, at least not with food and fuel.

Most of you probably know all or at least a lot about the Berlin Blockade and the Airlift, but if you feel your knowledge is a bit scanty, get yourself informed in Wikipedia, it makes a fascinating read.

As I said before, until the Berlin Blockade it had been no problem to go to the surroundings of Berlin, not only to go " hamstering" (s.a.), but also to spend weekends and the summer holidays in that beautiful area with so many big and small lakes, pine forests, fields, meadows, little villages, where Berliners had always gone - and have gone again ever since the Wall came down - for recreation. My parents and some of their friends owned little huts in a private, fenced in holiday camp, called Maerchenwiese" (Fairytale Meadow), by a wonderful lake, not far from the city, but then already in the Soviet zone. To our amazement those huts were still

standing in 1946 and habitable, though completely empty, all the simple furniture etc. having been looted (not by the Russians, but by the people from the nearby villages!). So, my uncle



vintag.es

"organized" a lorry, which was then packed with everything we would need for a few weeks out in the middle of nowhere. We made it there all right, unloaded the lorry, not only pots and pans and beds and blankets etc. but also some "guests", bedbugs, nothing at all uncommon in those times and comparatively easy to get rid of with the help of some stinky ointment.

Read the final part of the "Letter from Berlin" in the Winter Journal & Newsletter available December 2021.



THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

Roger A. Traynor

has attained
THE BRONZE STANDARD
of
THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

June 1972

Windsor Boys School & the Harz Mountains

Roger Traynor ex-pupil of several BFES schools in the 1960s and 70s continues his story of life in BFG and BFES . His late father was stationed with NAAFI in Berlin between 1968 and 1972.

The journey to Windsor Boys School was an experience in itself involving travelling part of the way via the British Military Train. The Military Train journey totalled around 3 ¾ hours and happened in two stages. First, our carriages were hauled by an East German locomotive and driver which would take us from Charlottenburg Hauptbahnhof to the East/West checkpoint at Helmstedt/

Marienborn where the necessary border crossing formalities would occur. Then, after a change to a West German locomotive and driver, we would continue to Braunschweig Hauptbahnhof. There, we would transfer to a Deutsche Bundesbahn civilian train and travel on to Hamm, being bussed the short distance from the station there to WBS. The British Military Train which we had left at



WBS Hamm - Edinburgh House 1972

Windsor Boys School & the Harz Mountains continued ...

Braunschweig would then undertake the same journey in the other direction back to Berlin.

I loved my time at WBS. For me the balance between education, discipline and freedom was just right, affording personal development within a caring and supportive environment but with clear boundaries and unavoidable, appropriate consequences for those who would push them a little too far.



WBS Edinburgh House (2nd Storey)
Block Main Entrance

The school comprised six houses: Edinburgh, Balmoral, Caernarvon, Hillsborough, Sandringham and Marlborough. Mine was Edinburgh where I joined my brother who had been there for a year already. We all had house numbers, I was E90 and my brother E46. The Housemaster was Mr Thompson, a Geordie with red hair and a beard who was affectionately known as 'Thommo' (though not to his face!). I remember him as a fair and approachable man, albeit one whom you didn't want to cross. His

stock later rose in my eyes upon my hearing a rumour that a former pupil of his in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne was Ray "Jacka" Jackson, a guitarist and mandolin player with the band Lindisfarne whose 1971 album *Fog on the Tyne* was a favourite of mine. It's Jacka that you hear performing the mandolin break towards the end of Rod Stewart's hit single *Maggie May*.

Each house had a Housemaster and Deputy (ours was Mr Fox I believe), together with two Matrons, usually locally engaged German women who had rooms within the house. They were a constant stabilising influence and contributed greatly to the welfare of the boarders from administering first aid (although Sick Bay proper occupied the floor above Edinburgh House in the attic), organising and supervising the weekly laundry, performing minor sewing repairs, offering all kinds of guidance and a listening ear and probably a dozen other things that went unnoticed. Each morning and evening there would be Roll Call, which is exactly what it sounds like. Taken by either Thommo or his deputy, aside from checking that all were present this was an opportunity for many other purposes, for example pep talks for any forthcoming inter-house sporting competitions, the hair inspection (no-one liked that) a collective roasting for misbehaviour or congratulating a house member for any special social or academic attainment.

The latter would also be achieved via the weekly tally

of House Points earned by individual house members, presented as a league table and displayed on the house notice board. House points were generally only awarded singly for good work, but the pinnacle of academic achievement was to receive a 'Digniora'. I had never heard the term before WBS (it means 'Worthy' or 'Deserving' in Latin) but this was a special prize amounting to the value of 6 single house points usually awarded for a project or some other specific body of work. The term is still in common use I understand. There was a prize awarded at the end of term for the winner of the most house points, but I cannot now remember what it typically would have been. Some of us paid more attention to this league table than others, but it was harmless enough and never became an obsession for me personally.

Evening Roll Call would be followed sometime later by the arrival of Night Buns – a snack typically of a cheese straw, rock cake, sponge cake or something similar, and a hot drink, usually cocoa from an urn. These comestibles would be collected from the Kitchen/Dining Block by a couple of 'volunteers' and distributed from a table in the main house corridor. Distribution would be preceded by an enthusiastic assault on the house Fire Alarm (one of those red, wall mounted rotary things) followed by "NIIIIIIIGHT

BUUUUUUUUUNS!!!!" being bellowed down the corridor. Seems like only



WBS Edinburgh & Balmoral Block 1990

yesterday....

Aside from the academic curriculum at WBS there were plenty of sporting and other activities on offer including some sports that I had not previously had the opportunity of trying out, for example trampoline and basketball. The latter could be played at quite a good level as it was understandably popular with the American day-boy contingent whose parents were employed at the nearby DuPont Chemical and Plastics facility. Not unnaturally, they brought an international flavour to the school, and it was interesting to have their take on everything from music to language.



WBS Assembly Hall 1990

We had cinema on Saturdays (every week I think) in the assembly hall although the audience would often cheer and jeer, drowning out the dialogue. The same hall was used for occasional socials attended by Windsor Girls School pupils from a short distance away.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, the Kindness of Teachers & Time to Say Goodbye ...

Summer 2021

These were real 'dancing around the handbag' type affairs but better than nothing at all and an opportunity for a few of us to attempt some awkward interaction with the opposite sex. It was always hugely entertaining to watch one of your friends pluck up the courage to ask for a dance, only to suffer the humiliation of The Brush Off and spend the next few days being reminded of the experience until we all got bored with it and moved on.

A number of the 5th and 6th forms were decent musicians, and one school band that would occasionally play was named The Orange Box. I have no idea of the inspiration behind the name, but whoever came up with it can be proud as it has stuck in my head for around 50 years. There was also a hard core of musically orientated staff at WBS. On the ground floor of the Edinburgh / Balmoral House building was a staff mess and it was not unusual to hear impromptu sing-a-longs emanating from there of a weekend. Georgie Fame and Alan Price's 'Rosetta' was a definite favourite, so much so that I am sure most of us knew the words. One huge benefit of being thrown together with hundreds of other boys of similar age but differing tastes and backgrounds was the variety of new music that would be heard from dorms up and down the corridor. The 'Compact Cassette' format had just been launched by Philips but vinyl was still king and there was always someone with a record player

around so there was any amount of new music to discover. Focus, Van der Graaf Generator, Wishbone Ash, Steppenwolf, Spring, Yes, Jethro Tull, Iron Butterfly, Mountain, Hawkwind, The Groundhogs, T-Rex and so many others are among those era-defining bands whom I heard for the first time at WBS. In the TV lounge, we were able to watch the German TV programme Beat Club which was excellent, and every bit as influential and respected as our own Old Grey Whistle Test was later to be.

Mr Dudley, whose subject escapes me, was an accomplished drummer and central to a band that would perform occasionally in the Chapel of St Boniface within the school grounds. The school chaplain, Reverend Brindley was well respected and always able to deliver something different in the sermons he prepared for his admittedly captive audience. He was held in even higher esteem after consenting to a party of pupils redesigning and painting the faux stained-glass window at the southern end of the chapel. Although I am not sure whether he ever formally approved the not-so-subtle inclusion of the CND 'Ban-the-Bomb' symbol in the lower right hand corner, it stayed at least until my time at Hamm was over. Time passes and everyone has to earn a living, but it saddens me to advise that in 2020 the chapel building is now a car repair workshop.

Music aside, the diversity of the school population meant exposure to alternative world views, one being my introduc-

tion by a house-mate to the writings of a mysterious figure who went by the name of Tuesday Lobsang Rampa. Briefly, he claimed to have grown up in a monastery in Lhasa, Tibet and wrote prolifically on esoteric subjects including astral projection, re-incarnation, interpretation of the aura and Buddhist philosophy. I read a few of his books, there were many, and to be frank I found some of the content played quite well with my inner hippie. You can imagine my dismay some years later then when, thanks to the internet, I learnt that Mr Rampa who had somehow upset the UK media, had been as exposed even as early as the late 1950s as being Cyril Henry Hoskin(s), a high school dropout and son of a plumber from Plympton in Devon. Ah well, it takes all sorts, and at least I didn't shell out any of my pocket money for a 'Rampa Touchstone'.

School plays were also produced occasionally, usually as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme that was very active at WBS. I appeared in two myself; hamming it up as Colonel Jeffrey in Sweeney Todd the Barber (I still remember the hush that fell over the audience as I lit up a cigarette on stage as part of the character for that one), and another entitled Once Aboard the Luger which was a singing role best forgotten.



The D of E also led to annual (I think) expeditions in the Harz Mountains, where map reading, orienteering and many other

After retiring **Bill Johnston** made short celebratory videos for more than 60 schools in the UK and Singapore – and one which celebrated 25 years of SCEA's administration, which involved travelling to Gibraltar, Cyprus, Naples and Belize.

Here Bill reflects briefly on his move to BFG.

"After six years in Singapore our first winter in BAOR began in November and the snow lay on the ground almost continuously until Easter – yet at Hildesheim School I went out to do playground duty without gloves, scarf or overcoat - all that heat stored up in my body like a lithium battery!

Our daughter Kate, who was nine



when we decided to end our twelve year stint with Services schools, vividly remembers those peculiarly German fences. This picture was taken from our quarter in Beethovenstrasse in 1969 in Hildesheim."

Do you have a story to tell? Long or short? Without the extremely interesting articles sent in by members there would be no Journal and Newsletter at all and heartfelt thanks must go to all of you who have taken the time to contribute.

Hopefully this "Summer Term's publication will inspire you to put fingers to that keyboard - or even pen to paper - not forgetting those ever poignant photographs. Articles for the Winter 2021 Issue should be submitted by 30 October. Articles are very welcome at any time though.

Bill Johnston will feature in a future issue of the Journal and newsletter.

TNM - July 2021

field and survival skills were taught and tested. I ended up with the Bronze. We would receive training in first aid, how to erect an army tent, pack and wear a back rack correctly, use a map and compass, handle a gas stove safely, and a dozen other things. A couple of days prior to travelling, we would be issued with all of the necessary WD equipment. On the day of departure, we were transported by an army Austin JU 250 minibus and an old Bedford RL 3 tonner carrying our equipment and supplies to a timber hut located in an elevated woodland position overlooking a small resort named Torfhaus. We were a few kilometers south of Bad Harzburg and very close to the DDR border. Routes and rendezvous points would be planned in the evening and the following morning small groups of three would then go trekking out from there and spend a couple of nights under canvas, cooking from Army ration packs and using any available river, lake or reservoir to maintain a halfway civilised degree of personal hygiene. Our progress and locations were checked by the occasional rendezvous with either Mr Hern or Mr Roberts, who oversaw everything and knew all the dodges. Although the main purpose of the trip was the expedition, orienteering challenges were also undertaken both during the day and at night. The Harz expeditions were character building for sure but also great fun and always ended too soon; after about a week if I remember correctly.

In addition to the D of E there was an active Combined Cadet Force (CCF) at the school. I can say very little about this as I was not involved but many of the pupils were, and it was a popular facility which no doubt prepared some for a life in the military once they were eligible.

Weekends at WBS would normally involve drawing out

pocket money and a walk into Hamm. I would visit the news stand outside Quelle for a bockwurst and, subject to publication dates, to pick up a copy of the music magazine Musik Express or at a pinch the rather less 'hip' Bravo. The car magazine Deutsche Auto Zeitung was another favourite. Quelle ('source' in German) was a large national department store where you could buy just about anything. One Saturday close to Christmas, I recall spending what was to me a fair amount of money on a portable car vacuum cleaner for my father. On looking more closely at the box back at school post purchase, I discovered that in order for it to work, the car needed a cigarette lighter socket. I knew it didn't have one. Mr Fox, who lived with his wife within the block, somehow got to hear of my plight and offered to buy the vac from me for what I had paid for it. This is just one small example of the genuine kindness of the staff at WBS and I hope it serves to illustrate why for so many the school is remembered with such affection. On weekends when we remained on site either through choice or necessity, standard activities included football, table tennis, TV, reading or letter writing mainly, plus Chapel on Sunday mornings. We made our own entertainment and time passed quickly, for me at least.

Visiting weekends (known predictably as Viso) were particularly special. These were specific weekends, between formal half term breaks, where our parents would travel from Berlin by road through the corridor and visit us at the school. We were also permitted to stay off site with them e.g. at a local hotel if this was desired. The time always passed too quickly, and although I enjoyed them immensely, the Sunday morning trip out in the car, usually to nearby

Mohnesee, was always tinged with sadness at the thought of the inevitable parting later that day. Tuck parcels were distributed, pocket money and writing materials, stamps etc topped up, then came the goodbyes and a 600km plus trip into the night through the corridor for mum and dad. Our natural sadness was made worse for my brother and I by the fact that we would not know of their safe arrival until the next letter arrived.

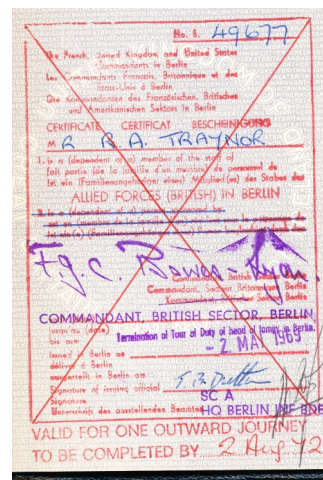


Mohnesee on Viso

And so it was between 1970 and 1972. Interspersed with term time and another way of life, holidays back in Berlin flew by as friendships were re-kindled with a new freedom that just couldn't be replicated at Hamm. Happy as I was to be home, I was unable to spend time with other new friends made at WBS, whose fathers were stationed in other parts of what we called The Zone, and simply too far away. It would have been nice to have gone swimming at Stadium Barracks with them, to have a snowball fight or go sledging during a Teufelsberg winter, or go tracking in that same area during the summer. Or, given that we were now becoming increasingly independent, to spend more time in the centre of the city. The excellent facilities that I had once taken for granted were appreciated all the more now, and being slightly older also meant that I was able to enjoy the odd afternoon unaccompanied at the British Officers Club, situated a few hundred yards from the Edinburgh House car park, but in the opposite direction to Summit House. There was an outdoor pool with a 1m diving

board, the surroundings were well tended and peaceful and you could get a soft drink whenever you wanted which was all I needed. It was at the Officers Club that I spent a lot of my time from the beginning of the Summer holidays in 1972. Things were changing.

In the early part of 1972, dad had received notification of his next posting and it was back to the UK, timed for August. Until we had our time in Berlin, I had generally accepted this kind of news with a kind of quiet excitement and begun mentally sorting out what I wanted to pack and what could be sold or given away. Now it was different. I was genuinely sad at the prospect of having to leave. Perhaps it was just that I had begun to see life differently between the ages of 10 and 14yrs and that I would have felt the way I did anyway regardless of where we were. But I don't think so. We had enjoyed so much there as a family, my brother and I had made many good friends that we now had to say goodbye to, and I had just a few months left to enjoy all of the things that had made this such a special place in which to live and grow. It was a place and time that will stay with me forever and I feel both blessed to have had such a wonderful life there and privileged to have been given the opportunity of sharing my story with you all.



An early style Berlin Travel Document - BTD

Letters to the Editor ...

Peter Hall

Hilden 1965 -1968

Detmold 1968 - 1969

Krefeld - 1970 - 1974

Sennelager - 1974 - 1981

When he returned to England from Sennelager in 1981, after nearly seventeen years' service in BFES and SCEA Peter "saw fit to join the BFES Association, as it was then called".

With wife Janet, Peter attended the AGM and reunion at Eltham Palace in October of that year. It was a reunion tinged with much sadness following the recent death of Frank Buckley who, as teacher, head teacher and Education Officer, had been such a stalwart and well-liked champion of British Forces Schools in North-West Europe. from 1946 until 1973.

Peter and Janet continued to attend reunions for as long as they were held at Eltham Palace but were disinclined to attend when Eltham Palace was no longer available. It had been such an appropriate venue. Anywhere else could not adequately recapture the memories of excitement and enthusiasm experienced at Eltham, not only by Peter but by countless others before their posting to foreign places.

In 1991 Peter re-joined the Association and, at that year's Reunion (at the Victory Services Club), experienced once again the wonderful camaraderie associated with former Forces' Schools' teachers and administrators. He found himself volunteering to join the Executive Committee. Two years later (following the success of his recruiting campaign) saw David Mills

carrying an increasing burden of Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Secretary to 800 members. So much so that Peter felt that he should volunteer his services as Secretary; there being no other nominations, he was duly elected.

And so – in 2003 - then Chair **John Monkhouse** wrote of Peter that members "all owe him a great debt of gratitude as we have depended on his wise counsel and advice for so long".

Peter had decided to hang up his fountain pen and typewriter.

In the Association Magazine for 2003 Peter wrote...

"I hope I will be forgiven for my over-wordy minutes. I know the time has come for me to step aside and make way for a successor, (I like to think that word means 'someone successful'), and so I shall be resigning at this year's AGM. I have enjoyed being your secretary and I look forward to remaining a member of the Association for as long as may be. In 1994 and 1995 I initiated the Association Newsletter which comprised three or four A4 folded sheets, stapled together. Thankfully, in 1996, Peggy Burke took over my efforts and developed them into a glossy Magazine. Thank you, Peggy, and Michael Ford who edited the Magazine last year and this. After the success of the display of memorabilia at the 50th. Anniversary Reunion at The Cafe Royal in 1996 the seeds of an Association Archive were sown. I received many contributions and, after a year or so, Brian Thornalley valiantly took on the task of listing and caring for the

mass of items sent in by members and, thanks to Brian, our Archive is now safely deposited there where items are catalogued and stored".

In 2021 almost 20 years later Peter, still an Association member, and following his recent award of **Honorary Membership**, wrote to your current Editor –

Dear Tom

I hope there may be room in the next edition ... to include the following ...

"I am proud to have been awarded Honorary Membership of the Association which I joined in 1980 on the occasion of my return to England after seventeen years of service in Hilden, Detmold, Krefeld and Sennelager. They were happy years of teaching, punctuated with a good many dramatic performances with the Detmold Troubadours, Krefeld Players and the **Sennelager Players**".

I have read the Spring edition with much pleasure and look forward to issue 49.

It has been a great pleasure to have received so many cards on the occasion of my 90th Birthday together with a party in the back garden when our local church choir came to entertain me with a couple of well-known anthems and a feast of sandwiches, cake and Champagne.

I wish all members of the Association good health and happiness for many years to come.

My state of health has become weaker and needing the help of a walking-frame for getting about but with luck, I'll survive another year or two.

With my best wishes to all the readers of The Association's Journal and Newsletter".

Peter Hall

Meg Hartnell (nee Roby)

Dear Tom,

I would like to thank the Editor and contributors to the BFES/ SCEA News letter for a very interesting and entertaining publication. It brings back many memories of my time in Hohne, Osnabruck and Nienburg. Initially with BFES and then as a Locally Employed Teacher in Osnabruck and Nienburg.

Moving from a mill town in Lancashire with 40 children in a class to Hohne in the middle of nowhere with 25 children seemed idyllic until the end of the year when only 5 of the original 25 were left.

The life style was a culture shock too, Balls and Mess Dinner Nights. Those were the days!

Fondly remembered.

Best regards,

Meg Hartnell (nee Roby)



THE LAST WORD

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We're on the Web!

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

Despite having really enjoyed my years as the chairman of the Association I have chosen to step down as of the next AGM in October. My reasons for doing this are essentially related to my age and the major problems of pain and mobility I am suffering after unsuccessful knee and hip replacement surgery.

During the time that I have served as chairman I have been blessed with the support of a wonderful committee who have continued to fulfil their various roles with distinction. We all share a belief in the importance of the Association, especially now that the vast majority of our schools have closed. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic we have been obliged to cancel many of the planned events which would have given us an ability to meet up with each other. As a consequence of this I have been concerned that members of the Association might cease to see any merit in remaining as members. For this reason, we have taken various initiatives to try and maintain contact, widen the appeal of the Association and try to attract both new members as well as younger ones.

In this respect Hugh and Christine Ritchie have played a starring role in not only suggesting ideas such as Facebook and the Voucher scheme but also doing all the time consuming follow up work. The questionnaire survey they both conducted last year brought up various ideas, one of which was that we should consider planning local hub meetings. To this

end Hugh and Christine have produced a detailed listing of the regional distribution of our members with a request that individuals step forward to become Hub Leaders. We have had a good response to this request in the majority of the regions where there are a lot of members. Currently we do not have a Hub Leader for the East Midlands region which has a large number of members living there. I would like to take this opportunity to ask for someone to consider stepping forward and volunteering to be the Hub Leader for the East Midlands region.

The monthly bulletins which Christine has started have brought forth very positive responses. This initiative was to supplement the excellent work which Tom Nielsen-Marsh does in producing the consistently interesting newsletter. We are so very lucky to have someone like Tom who has the skills needed to be the editor of a newsletter like ours.

The other means of communication which is increasingly important is the website and Mike Chislett has dedicated many hours to this task. He has also been instrumental in bringing about a redesign of the website to make it more appealing and user friendly. In addition to this, I am immensely appreciative that Mike has kindly volunteered to be the acting chairman for one year. As I write these final comments I was delighted to receive the news that Wally Lewis, the vice-chairman, had persuaded Lynn Marshall, our superb Secretary, to take over from Mike in a permanent capacity during the course of the next year. This is really

excellent news and I am truly grateful that Lynn has agreed to do this which leaves me confident that the Association is in safe hands.

When I look back on my time as the chairman the highlights for me have been those occasions when we all have all come together at a particular venue. In this respect there are, to my mind, two particular highlights one of which was the reunion which took place at the Sandhurst Military Academy which was expertly organised by Sue Adams. The other one was the three day reunion visit to Germany in 2018, based on Gutersloh, an event for which I was personally responsible. It was a visit which brought back many memories for all of us who were present.

During our last zoom committee meeting in mid-May, we decided to implement the facility we have as a committee to offer Honorary Life Membership to individuals whom it was felt had contributed a great deal to the Association. Two particular individuals were identified and I had the great pleasure of telephoning both **Joan Hunt and Peter Hall** to make this offer to them and needless to say they were both delighted to accept.

As this is the last report I will write as the chairman I would like to conclude by wishing the Association my very best wishes and all possible success in the future. At the same time, I sincerely hope that we will be finally free of the social restrictions which have been imposed on all of us by this dreadful pandemic and that all of you will remain safe and well.

Ken Jones OBE

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.