

# THE JOURNAL OF THE BFES SCEA ASSOCIATION

Issue 50 Winter 2021

## If at first you don't succeed ... by Sue Adams



Photo - Hugh Ritchie

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Following on from the successful reunion at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst in 2019, I don't think anyone could have imagined or anticipated the turmoil that the following year would bring with the Covid pandemic.

For the Association it meant the cancellation of many planned reunions such as Welbeck College and Curry lunches at Winchester. AGMs too, were cancelled but were replaced by Zoom meetings.

As we lived through lockdowns, tiers, bubbles and inoculations there was that feeling of hope – that we would all soon be back to a near normal way of life again and I optimistically wrote in the Summer 2020 journal “We will meet again”.

Plans for an AGM and reunion lunch at the Tank Museum, Bovington had started in 2020 and it has taken 4 cancellations and over 50 emails with the Events Team at Bovington to bring that plan to reality. Once the Covid restrictions had begun to ease the event sector was looking more confident but this resulted in a surge of bookings in the hospitality sector and high de-

mands for earlier cancellations to be rebooked – and just when that began to settle....another pandemic...a petrol crisis!

Thankfully on November 19<sup>th</sup> this year we did meet again.

36 members and guests arrived at the museum for the lunch and the chance to look around a very extensive, historic collection of armoured vehicles. A group photograph was taken of all attendees to celebrate that we had finally got together after many attempts before being seated for the lunch.

In the unfortunate absence of Ken Jones, Wally Lewis said The Grace in Welsh – and kindly gave a translation later to the gathering before the meal was served. Following the meal, Wally Lewis gave an appreciation of the time which Ken Jones had served as Chair of the Association, in particular highlighting his organised visit to Gütersloh and the disappointment of the cancelled Welbeck College weekend. His support to the Association, supported by his wife Brenda, was widely agreed and all at the reunion sent their best wishes for a full recovery from his recent

surgery.

Wally also gave a very kind valedictory appreciation to me, following my decision to retire from the committee after 15 years. I received the most wonderful bouquet of flowers and a lovely vase for them plus a beautifully made card with well wishes from everyone.

I should also add that 3 helium balloons adorned the table which said “thank you”.

My reply to Wally was that all events are the result of the whole committee pulling together which they have done resolutely through the pandemic and before. It has been a pleasure working with the committee and keeping this unique Association alive and relevant to all its members.

My good wishes go to Mike Chislett as the new Chair for this year and to Bill and Janet Bowen who are the elected Events Coordinators. They already have the next reunion in hand!

So, I would just like to reiterate that “We will meet again” and look forward to seeing you at future reunions.

## Hiraeth

**In which Ken Jones – who stepped down as chairman of our Association in October 2021 - concludes the story of his long and distinguished career and his interlude in the The Gladiator Suite! . It may well surprise many members who thought they knew him well .**

TNM

### **HEADMASTER KING'S SCHOOL GÜTERSLOH SEPTEMBER 1972**



Photos from Ken Jones' Archive



Iron Man meets Iron Lady  
at King's School

Winter Journal 2021



The first thing that staggered me when I arrived in Gütersloh was to see the fantastic six bedroom house, near the Stadt Park, which was the designated Headmaster's house. I have already written an article for the newsletter which highlighted some of the unique challenges of being Headmaster on a military barracks and the rest of this article will mainly focus on the internal challenges I faced in the school.

I was very conscious of the fact that in my early 30's I had taken on the Headship of a very large school, of some 1400 pupils, and that it would be a huge challenge. There is no doubt I was exceedingly nervous when I had my first meeting with all of the staff, some 100 in total. At this meeting I informed them I would like them to make individual appointments to come and see me to let me have their views on what was good about the school and what needed to change. These individual meetings gave me a good insight into each teacher and certainly proved to be the

basis of a huge action plan for what needed changing and what needed to be maintained.

The following are just some of the issues which I felt needed addressing. There was a need to move the school from being a bilateral school into it being a true comprehensive, so as to better cater for the needs of the pupils. The correct assessment and placement of each pupil on arrival needed an overhaul as well as the need to improve on reporting and communication with parents, which included a better organisation of parents' evenings. Given the continuous movement of the pupils to new schools, we needed to revamp and improve the onward documentation which went with them when they left. Communication with teachers was equally important through meetings, committees, and the introduction of a lunchtime open door policy to my study. A new school prospectus was needed, as well as the need to produce a booklet to help the orientation of new teachers to life overseas and in a services school. We introduced a better admin support for teachers in matters such as printing and photocopying by establishing a resource centre.

When I arrived in the school I inherited a 1st deputy a 2nd deputy and a Senior Mistress which to my mind was too hierarchical. I wanted all three deputies to have an equal status and for this reason I introduced the concept of Deputy (Academic ) Deputy (Pastoral) Deputy (Organisation) and to this I added the idea of role rotation for the Deputies. Along with this I established clear lines of delegated authority for not

only these three deputies but also to the heads of department, heads of house, and the head of lower school.

One of the major initiatives was to make a more logical use and numbering of all the rooms in each of the buildings, centralise departments and house areas and start using some of the surplus space in the cellars and attics which all had windows. The attics became a Sixth Form Centre and in another attic we created a Youth Centre and later a newly created Integrated Studies department also had a similar location.

There is no doubt that in the early years I set too fast a pace for the staff which I had inherited, by way of the changes I felt were necessary for the school to be truly comprehensive. As a result of this I gained a reputation for being a hard task master and inevitably mistakes were made, largely through my youth and inexperience. In the 18 years I worked in Kings I was lucky to have a succession of outstanding deputies many of whom went onto their own Headships. The school fared well in the various HMI inspections which occurred, and this led to my being invited to become an HMI, an invitation I declined as I was enjoying the challenges and rewards of life in Gütersloh . I also declined an invitation to apply for the Headship of a comprehensive school in Monmouthshire.

One particular diversion I enjoyed was performing with a small group of teachers as a musical quintet which played 1920's and 1930's music to provide entertainment in the Officers Mess, which included Scott Joplin rags on the piano, as duets with the Head of



Music. The reputation of this little quintet even led to them being invited to provide musical support for an old-style music hall entertainment in the HQ Officer's mess in Bielefeld as well as in a German restaurant. I have already highlighted in my other article the other kinds of liaison which we had with the German community where we lived.

Another diversion I enjoyed in my early years in Kings was to continue playing basketball with a staff team, as I had done in Kent School, but my days of continuing to play rugby were over as it took too long for the bruises to disappear! Away from the school I became the Chairman of the Secondary Heads Association, which involved liaison with HQ BFES and attendance at the Joint Panel. This role led to my being invited by Eric Lowe, the Director, to accompany him on a visit to the Canadian schools in S. Germany. Further to this I also became a member of the NAHT committee and for one year was the local President, which led to my attendance at the National Conference in the UK, which fortunately in my year of office was in Wales, in Llandudno, with Kenneth Baker, the Secretary of State for Education as the main speaker.

This truly wonderful time I was having in Germany came to an end by accident, with another instance in my life of somebody just passing a comment. Prior to the Head's Conference in Rheindahlen, Tim Kilbride, the Head of Kent School happened to mention "have you seen the post of Principal Welbeck College has been advertised To this I replied "No that can't be right as it is a military post". It so happened that I had been to an Open Day some years earlier at Welbeck College and I thought what a fantastic place to be a Principal. When I checked the TES the next morning I realised that Tim Kilbride was correct. Having never previously

thought about leaving Kings school, especially after the 50+ rule had been removed, I nonetheless decided to send for details about the post. Out of courtesy I informed Nolan Clamp about my thoughts about applying to which he replied "you are wasting your time as you do not have a science degree" Despite this lack of encouragement, I decided to throw my hat in the ring and I felt it might be prudent to use as one of my referees one of the former CO's of the gunner regiment on Mansergh barracks who was now back in Germany as a Major General. Having submitted my application the next thing that happened, a few weeks later, was a telephone call from the current Principal of Welbeck which was to inform me that I had been shortlisted for interview and would I like to visit the college beforehand. This visit took place shortly after the college had closed early, because of a flu epidemic, and it was a rather dark miserable day in early December. During this visit I asked the Principal if he could tell me who else had been shortlisted. I was informed that three Headteachers of independent schools had been shortlisted, as well as two Brigadiers, which left me thinking I was just a makeweight and there was no point progressing any further.

Despite these doubts I decided to go ahead with the interview, which took place in the MOD main building in London, with a total of 12 people on the interview panel, which included the Director of Army Recruitment, and the Headmaster of an Independent school sitting in as an advisor. On the trooping flight back to Germany on the next day, it so happened that in the Officer's waiting room was the Major General who was my referee. When he saw me, I was really shocked when he said "Well done, you got the job". He had just been telephoned the night before by the Director of Army Recruitment asking him to make sure I accepted the offer of the job. They just happened to be long-standing friends!

Having found this out in a most unusual way, that I had been appointed, I then had to wait three months before the official offer arrived from the Civil Service! Seemingly, the fact that I had been preceded by a serving army officer in the post had caused all sorts of problems by way of working out the terms of employment and my salary. The first attempt included a salary reduction of 30%, compared with my salary in Kings School, which they duly revised when I refused the offer.

The staff gave me the most wonderful and memorable dining out in the Officer's Mess, an occasion which still brings back fond memories. I still cherish the gifts I received as well as the two pieces of creative writing which were produced for the occasion, which were beautifully framed. One was sung by a group of teachers, to a G&S tune, with suitable piano accompaniment, which had been written by Dick Spendlove. The other was both written and delivered by Alan Jones, the former Head of Languages, who returned from the UK for the occasion, much to my surprise and great pleasure.

*Continued on page 4*

## King's School



### The Musical Quintet

Roy Watmough - Trombone  
Graham Hunt - Trumpet  
Alan Jones - Clarinet  
Ken Jones - Piano  
Dave Bremner - Drums

### Bottom

Pauline Brown (HT PRS) - Bob Parkin and wife Barbara

## Hiraeth /contd

### **PRINCIPAL WELBECK COLLEGE September 1990**

#### **A very different environment**

Having left a school housed in 1930s German barrack buildings I was now transferred to a very different life, to a college based in the grand country estate of the Portland family, housed in Grade 1 and 2 listed buildings, with the need to pay due homage to Lady Anne Bentick, who still lived on the estate. **The Principal's house** I inherited was a lovely detached Victorian house which had been the previous home of the estate manager. As well as this grand house I was provided with domestic assistance five days a week and the lovely Marie proved to be my saviour on many occasions, especially when I was expected to offer appropriate overnight hospitality to a senior visitor to the college.

#### **Taking over from a military Principal.**

Taking over from a serving military officer certainly posed problems, both for myself and the staff. This was especially true for the college Bursar, a retired Welbexian Colonel, especially when I asked him to vacate his office, which had adjoining doors to my study, so that my secretary could step in! As the staff of the college included a number of serving army personnel they too had anxieties which had to be alleviated.

The Civil Service had problems they had to resolve, over and above my contract, which largely related to my entitlements as a civilian, compared to an Army officer. Was I entitled to have the Principal's house, to have domestic assistance, and if granted, how much I should pay both for the domestic assistance and rent for the house. These problems remained unresolved when I

arrived, which meant that for my first three months in post I was obliged to live in a bed sit in the basement floor of a main college building. This accommodation consisted of one room and a very Victorian bathroom. It was appropriately named **The Gladiator Suite!**

#### **Moving in a very different world**

I quickly learned when I attended my first governors meeting in the MOD main building in London that I had moved into a vastly different world compared with King's School. There was now a full governing body with the Armed Forces Minister as the Chairman and others in attendance being the Adjutant General, the Major General commanding Sandhurst and a Major General commanding Shrivenham as well as various Brigadiers including the Director of Army Recruitment, two Independent school Headteachers and a senior civil servant.

#### **A very different kind of Headship**

The role expected of me in the college was also significantly different to what had gone before for me in my career. One example of this was that on three days in the week the college day started with a short service in the glorious Victorian church which the college had, and I was expected to sweep in, last of all, wearing my gown with staff and students standing until I sat down on my designated perch! On one Sunday a month there was also an evening service.

At the end of the academic year there was also a totally different experience with the Passing Off Parade, which was always preceded the night before with a formal dinner, with two trumpeters in attendance. At the parade I had a distinct role to play alongside the senior inspecting

officer, to the accompaniment of a military band.

On the same weekend there was a very grand formal speech day with the Senior Guest being no less than a Lieutenant-General and on two occasions we had the Chief of the Defence Staff as the Senior Guest. These occasions were quite a challenge as I was always expected to deliver the Principal's report with the governors sitting behind me.

Visits by royalty had also to be expected and on one occasion Prince Phillip was the inspecting officer at the Passing Off Parade. This visit did lead to the establishment of a new award which became known as the **Prince Phillip Medal**, and it was awarded to the student who had made the most all-round development in all aspects of Welbeck life.

The challenge in the job left me very grateful I had behind me 18 years of relevant experience as the Headmaster of King's school as much needed to be put right in the college in terms of how it was operating as an educational establishment.

In the first place I found it an interesting challenge to come to terms with teaching staff who were a mix of civilian teachers and military staff. At first, I had difficulty coming to terms with all the military staff saluting me. Secondly, the civilian staff found it strange that the new Principal asked them to come and see him, on a one-to-one basis to give him their views about what needed to be done in the college to improve it. Military Principals did not do such things!

#### **Review of the curriculum and of teaching methods**

There was an urgent need to tackle worries about the declining academic results and getting the teachers to come to terms with the fact that



Principal's House



The Grandeur that was Welbeck



Happy mother with twin sister graduates



The late Duke of Edinburgh as Senior Inspection Officer

students were now arriving with a GCSE background which many long-established teachers found very difficult. Their view was that from such a background the students were ill prepared to tackle the dominantly maths and scientific curriculum on offer at Welbeck. The view expressed by the teachers was that the serious decline in academic results was therefore inevitable and that little could be done about it. To tackle this issue I decided to buy in advisory support from South Yorkshire and assure the teachers this was a move designed to help them as they had clearly never experienced any advisors of this kind coming into the college. This led to some very helpful training days and the result was that academic results did improve significantly over a matter of

video, a different approach to liaising with the army liaison officers and we even created our own mobile marketing van. The result was that in a matter of three years we got the numbers up to the required 180.

To enhance the attractions of the college further I insisted on a total refurbishment of all dormitories and study cubicles which I viewed as so important when prospective parents came and visited.

### Student reporting and liaison with parents.

When I arrived in the college I was appalled to find out there were no parents consultation days provided and the end of term reporting was of such a low standard. This led to a total revamp of this important area with many of the staff

Wennington. This gave me a great opportunity to get to know the students better, and to achieve this I always made a point of going around the college in the evening to have a chat in the student's bed study, always making a point of knocking on the door first of all. This led to one hilarious occurrence when the response from one student to my knock on the door was to shout out "**Come in you Welsh git**"! The poor lad thought I was one of the other Welsh students. This habit of going around the college on an evening led to the students giving the nickname of "the Weave"!

They really were the most wonderful young people, and it has been a real joy to be able to follow the careers of some of them, both in the Army and in subsequent



The Passing Off Parade



Dining out by the Board of Governors

2 to 3 years, especially when I introduced a new selection system to better ascertain the academic potential of the students and after the arrival of girls.

When I arrived in the college student numbers had been declining at an alarming rate and had reached 110 set against the target of 180. I proceeded to tackle this straightaway by persuading the Army that the college should play a key leading role in this, which led to a totally different marketing strategy. We produced new marketing literature, a new college

not convinced the parents were sufficiently interested to attend parent consultation days; how wrong they were. We tied the consultation days to the summer half term break and the attendance was in the order of 90%. I also introduced the whole staff student review meeting at half term and end of term as per the procedure I had experienced in Wennington school.

My arrival in Welbeck brought me back into a Residential boarding school for the first time since my days in

careers after leaving the Army. One boy stands out in my mind who, having been recruited from a poor East London comprehensive, went on to have a stellar career which has led to him being at present the Military Attaché to the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff. Another individual, having served in the Army for ten years, has had an amazing career in finance leading to him becoming a wealthy hedge fund manager in New York!



The Gurkha Military Band at Welbeck Passing Off Parade

**Continued on page 6**

## Creating a more rounded leadership course

I quickly came to the decision that the leadership training in the college needed to be much more than just military proficiency. We widened the training to include such things as drama, community service, public speaking, group tasks in lessons and placement of weaker students on the GAP scheme in a third world nation.

The real focus was to develop team and leadership skills based on tolerance, respect and mutual support which were values that I had come to appreciate in my time in Wennington School. The moves that we made to widen the leadership training did lead to one of the Sandhurst Commandants sending the college commander of Old College up to Welbeck to see what we were doing! The work we were doing also resulted in me receiving a personal telephone call from the Adjutant General asking me to travel down to London to meet him. I was a little concerned as to why I had received the invitation, but I was relieved when he said he was wanting to review the training guidelines for Officer training in Sandhurst and wanted to share his views with me to get my thoughts on what he was proposing. This led to a later return visit to London as well as being entertained to lunch in a very smart London club.

## Changing the method of student selection.

Prior to taking up my appointment I was invited to observe a Welbeck selection board and I was astounded to see that the sum total of this was a 30-minute interview, conducted by **three old men**, and the students being asked to write an essay on why they wanted to be army officers. Added to this were reports from the school and from Army Liaison officers. Based on this evidence they then proceeded to complete a

complex matrix of the Officer qualities deemed to be necessary and I simply did not feel that they had sufficient evidence to make these decisions.

During my first year in post, I made up my mind that there had to be a serious change to the method of selecting students and I worked on this with an officer at the Regular Commissions Board in Westbury. We devised a scheme based on having the students at the RCB for 24 hours, in groups of 8, observing them working together in teams, assessing their leadership and problem-solving skills, how they coped with stress, whether they really were team players, their physical prowess and how they performed in psychometric tests of aptitude and innate ability. All the selection of the students was transferred to take place at the RCB in Westbury where I was able to work with a full colonel, a major and an officer in the RAEC with myself acting as the President of the selection board. When these new methods of selection were introduced the quality and suitability of the students for Welbeck increased significantly. The success of this new selection process led the Army to also change the method of selecting applicants for Army scholarships, to mirror what we had introduced for Welbeck selection.

## Going co-educational.

One major initiative that I also embarked on was to make a case for girls to be accepted into the college. This certainly proved to be a battle with both senior officers in the army as well as the older members of the staff in the college. One of these old members of staff stood up in the common room during one meeting and said **“how can you do that to me Principal, I don't know how to talk to girls”**. Two

years later, after the arrival of the girls, and prior to the same teacher's retirement, he stood up in another meeting and simply said “thank you Principal, the arrival of girls in the college is the best thing that has happened in my 99 terms here” When this particular teacher retired the college lost not only a physics teacher but also the church organist. I managed to recruit a new physics teacher, but my piano skills meant that I ended up as the church organist!

## Changing the student exit routes.

When I arrived in the college I was dismayed to see that decisions on the exit routes for students were based entirely on the departing entry being bussed down to Sandhurst to be assessed by Sandhurst officers. The decisions were that they were either deemed to be ready for the commissioning course or that they should undertake the three-months development course known as Rowallan company.

This was another established practice which I tackled as I felt the college staff were better suited to make judgements as to the most appropriate exit routes for the students and that they should be more varied.

This change led to students either going onto the commissioning course, going to Oxbridge on an army scholarship, to Shrivenham, on a GAP scheme in a 3<sup>rd</sup> world nation funded by the army, or to the Rowallan course if there were doubts as to their character. These decisions were based on the views of the Housemasters, military staff, both officer and other ranks, as well as me. By introducing these varying exit routes I was aiming to tackle the oft repeated view of Sandhurst staff that the students were too immature to start at the military academy. The result of this change was that the failure rate on the commission



New Student Selection Method  
Westbury with Ken observing



The New Marketing  
Approach



The Junior Year Leadership  
Camp and me observing



## Hiraeth - concludes.

course did reduce significantly.

### **Maintaining contact with Sandhurst and the various Corps.**

Having taken back the decision-making process about the best exit routes for all students, I always made a point of monitoring how accurate was our decision-making process. This meant that I regularly made efforts to attend Sandhurst field exercises so that I could observe how well the Welbexian students performed and I always attended the last Rowallan exercise which was the one when final decisions were made. I always remember one particular final Rowallan exercise, as on it was one particular student whose deep character had consistently puzzled us, and the final comment of the Rowallan commander was "glad you sent him to Rowallan as he is classic SAS material"

I naturally always enjoyed attending the passing off parade in Sandhurst simply to congratulate students on their success. These links with Sandhurst and the various Corps were also sustained by my attendance, as a guest, at dinner nights which were always fabulous occasions. In attending these Sandhurst exercises I was merely continuing what I always enjoyed in the college and that was joining the Junior entry for one week, on the two week leadership course in the Lake District in July. This was a perfect opportunity to see the extent to which the students had progressed after one year in the college in terms of their leadership skills and officer potential.

### **The final goodbyes.**

I was privileged to have been given three dining outs, one by the students, one by the teaching staff and one by the governors. When I was dined out by the students they made great play on the nickname they had given me, "the Weave" and the gifts they gave me I still

treasure now. It was a wonderful formal dinner with all students present and in the best Welbeck tradition a team of junior students did the serving at table.

When I was dined out by the teaching staff in the college the senior member of the common room gave a kind farewell speech and one phrase I will always remember is "you really challenged us greatly when you arrived Principal, but also helped us face the challenges you presented us, and you leave a common room that is far happier now than it was when you arrived".

The dining out that I was given by the governors was truly memorable as it took place in the original dining room that had been used by the Portland family and it was attended by no less a person than the Adjutant General, an officer I had known earlier as a major in Mansergh barracks.

### **A visit to Buckingham Palace**

In my last term to receive a letter from Downing Street informing me that I had been awarded the OBE for services to MOD education was a real surprise and something which I have increasingly valued as I grow older. What was most gratifying of all was that I received the award whilst my parents were still alive, so that they were able to share in my achievement, as they were the ones who had stood by in those early difficult years. What I also particularly cherished were the wonderful letters of congratulation I received from people I had worked with, especially military officers.

### **RETIREMENT 1999**

#### **Working for GAP**

*Life seemed very empty having left the college and despite having decided to retire I felt I still had something to offer. It was therefore somewhat of a relief when the Director of the GAP Organisation that had taken the students to 3<sup>rd</sup> world nations*

*telephoned me to ask whether I would like to do some interviewing for the organisation. About a year later this led to the same Director asking me to consider taking over as the project manager for the southern half of China, about which I have already written an article.*

#### **Cambridge Occupational Analysts**

*This was the company that had developed psychometric tests for the new selection procedure I introduced and they invited me to join other teams in doing handover interviews to 6th form students who had completed these tests. This led to many visits to different schools and meeting some young people with exceptional talents. I had separate invitations to do pre university interviews with sixth form students at other schools.*

#### **Joining the board of governors of an independent school.**

*Another invitation which I accepted was to join the governing body of a large independent school. This gave me an insight into the stunning remuneration package which was given to a very inadequate Headteacher who is still in post! This individual did not have a real educational background but had been appointed having previously been the director of marketing at another school! The package he received included not only the basic salary but a large, detached house, with all the utilities paid for, a free car, free education for his children in the school and a generous clothing allowance for his wife, a significant entertainment allowance as well as private health for the whole family.*

#### **Marketing Harrow International School Bangkok**

*An interesting short-term piece of work I did alongside my Gap visits to China was to respond to an invitation to market the Harrow International School in different parts of the Far East. The school had moved to a new site with a boarding wing with the aim of expanding further. This work*

*involved initially developing suitable marketing literature as well as a collapsible display screen for use in educational fairs. This led to educational fairs in Hong Kong, Taipei, Shanghai and Moscow, added to which I made liaison visits to Kuala Lumpur and Saigon as well as the Harrow School in the UK. On this latter visit I met the Headmaster Mr B Lenon as well as some Housemasters and the Director of Studies. The aim of this visit was to assess their feelings towards this initiative which the headmaster out in Bangkok was wanting to take.*

#### **Oxford International College.**

*My work with Gap in China also led me to be invited by a private tutorial College in Oxford to help them establish similar tutorial colleges out in China, by way of preparing Chinese students for British universities. I led an exploratory visit to different parts of China based on the contacts I had made during my GAP work out there. Alongside this I also worked with a private educational foundation in Shanghai, set up by a Chinese professor, to appoint senior staff for them. This led to my making different trips out to Shanghai to visit the schools and get greater clarity as to the kind of staff they needed.*

*All told I have had a very interesting life and I would not change any of it. Without doubt I know I have been extremely lucky to have had such opportunities and the support of some wonderful colleagues, both civilian and military. Many of these people came to my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party, most of whom were ex-King's School colleagues.*

#### **Back home in Wales.**

*Life has in many ways come full circle, as I have now returned to almost where it all started for me. I now live in the Tanat Valley, with Llangynog just a matter of 10 miles further up the valley. I have succumbed to what all Welsh people call Hiraeth.*

#### **Ken Jones OBE**

## The Boys of the Old Brigade and that Visit to Buckingham Palace

*A miscellany of those secondary headteachers who served across the decades in Germany*



**Ken receives his OBE for services to MOD education**



**BFES Secondary Headteachers' Reunions at Welbeck College in the Mid-Nineties**

**Back Row - left to right** - Geoff Harrison - Bert Andersen - Derek Ebbage - Hylton Thomas - John May - Mike Back Tim Kilbride and Jim Lovegrove

**Front Row - left to right** - Ron Iron - Ken Jones - Terry Kirchin - Glyn Williams

**Photo right** - Pauline Brown



## A list of Headteachers of Service Secondary Schools based in British Forces Germany

*Many thanks to all of the many people who have helped in bringing this information into one place. I am sure there must be some errors, for which I humbly apologise, and there are certainly some omissions. If you can help with information please **email the editor**, on [bfes\\_scea\\_newsletter@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bfes_scea_newsletter@yahoo.co.uk) and I will update this list. It is 'work in progress'. Brian Davies - October 2021*

**Prince Rupert School, Wilhelmshaven – opened 1947** in premises that had been a former German submarine base and then HMS Royal Rupert as part of the British Occupation Forces.

**John Sidney Herbert Smitherman** OBE Croix de Guerre 1947-1951, ex-Lt Col Suffolk Regiment, became founding headmaster at Woolverstone Hall, Ipswich. He subsequently was headmaster at St George's School, Hong Kong

1960-1963 and at schools in Germany, Pakistan, Libya and finally Goldaming, deceased 1984 Guildford.

**Hugh Edmund Pacey** CBE 1952 - 1957 - left to become Director of BFES 1957 -1966, deceased 1993 Colchester.

**Hugh Wallis-Hosken** Autumn 1957 - formerly at King Alfred School, Plön, returned to King Alfred School on learning that closure of that school had been postponed.

**John R I Sharp** 1958-1963 - became headmaster at two schools in the Lake District and Oxfordshire.

**John R Meredith** 1964-1972 - closed the school in Wilhelmshaven and opened on the new site in Rinteln.

*PRS closed on the site at Wilhelmshaven 1972, re-opened in Rinteln.*

**Continued on page 9**





## A list of Headteachers of Service Secondary Schools based in British Forces Germany

**Prince Rupert School, Rinteln – opened 1972** in a purpose built school on the edge of the town of Rinteln

**John R Meredith** 1972 - Easter 1975 - became headteacher at The Deepings School, Peterborough 1975-1988

**Brian Rigg** 1975 - acting headteacher, formerly deputy headteacher at Prince Rupert School.

**Terry R Kirchin** 1975 - 1982 - came from the UK to take up the headteacher post.

**Pauline J Brown** 1982-1987 (formerly headteacher at Windsor Girls' School 1973 - 1981).

**John C May** 1987 - acting headteacher for 6 months, formerly deputy headteacher at Prince Rupert School, became headteacher at Gloucester School.

**Jim H N Lovegrove** 1987 - 1991 - formerly headteacher at Queen's School 1976-1987, returned to UK.

**Lewis Hunt** 1991-1999 - formerly deputy headteacher at Prince Rupert School 1985-1991, retired early in 1999 but later returned to teaching at Kirby Muxloe Primary School, Leicestershire.

**Sue Marshall** 1999 - Dec 2009 - formerly head of Maths at Cornwall School and deputy headteacher at Prince Rupert School 1988 - 1999, retired to the UK in 2009.

**Alan Price** 2009 - 2015 - formerly deputy headteacher at Prince Rupert School  
*School closure 2015*

**The British School, Altona, Hamburg – opened 1948** based in a former German school building

**Peter J T Morrill** - ex-Intelligence Corps, became the first headmaster of Rickmansworth Grammar School, Hertfordshire in 1954

*School closure 1953*

**King Alfred School, Plön – opened 1948** in premises which had been German naval barracks built by Doenitz.

**Lt Col Freddie Spencer Chapman** DSO & Bar 1948 -1953 - became headmaster at St Andrew's College, Grahamstown, South Africa 1956-1961 and Warden of Wantage Hall, University of Reading 1966 - 1971. Deceased 1971.

**Hugh Wallis-Hosken** 1953-1959.

*School closure 1959*

**Windsor School, Hamm – opened November 1953** in the former Brixton Camp, Hamm .

**William Briant P P Aspinall** OBE 1953-Dec 1958 Ex Lt Col Intelligence Corps. formerly Senior Master at King Alfred School, Plön 1947-1950 and headmaster of Sutton Valence School, Berkshire 1950-1953. Went as headmaster to King Richard School, Cyprus Jan 1959 to Dec 1959. Then as Headmaster Queens, Rheindahlen Jan 1960 to 1972 .

**Trevor G Benyon** Jan 1959- July 1959 - formerly Senior Master, acting head Queen's School, working in HQ BFES and deputy head-

master at Windsor School Sept-Dec 1958

*School divided to separate Boys and Girls' Schools 1959*

**Windsor Boys' School, Hamm - opened September 1959** on gender separation of Windsor School, Hamm, opened 1953.

**Trevor G Benyon** Sept 1959 - March 1963 - left to become headmaster of a school in Harlow, Essex.

**Glyn Williams** Acting Head April 1963 - Dec 1963, left to become Assistant Director (Secondary) at HQ BFES and then headmaster at Kent School.

**Michael Wylie** Jan 1964 - Dec 1968 - formerly Deputy Director Secondary BFES. Left Windsor Boys' School to become an HMI until retirement.

**Jack R Worrall** Acting headmaster Jan 1969 to July 1969 - formerly housemaster at Bisley Boys School and worked at Prince Rupert School from 1960, deputy headmaster at Windsor Boys School, Hamm.

**Derek N R Lester** Sept 1969 to July 1972 - formerly headmaster at Elland Grammar School, Elland, near Halifax. Became headmaster Baines School, North Fylde, Lancashire.

**Jack R Worrall** Sept 1972 - 1976 - formerly deputy headteacher at Windsor Boys' School, left to become headmaster Hautlieu School, Jersey 1977-1988. Deceased 2013.

**Ken Leighton** Sept 1976 - Dec 1976 - acting headmaster, deputy headteacher at Windsor

Boys' School 1973-1982  
**Paul Gysin** Jan 1977 to July 1981 - formerly vice-principal of Tynemouth Sixth Form College

*School merged with Windsor Girls' School to become Windsor School, Hamm*

**Windsor Girls' School, Hamm - opened 1959** Windsor School, Hamm was mixed gender up to July 1959. The boys stayed on the same the site, girls went to Plön for 1 term, (September 1959 to December 1959), returning to what had been Newcastle Barracks in Hamm in January 1960.

**Miss Rosamund Willson** Sept 1959 - Dec 1962 - left to become headmistress Casterton School, Lake District

**Miss Delia Feerick** Acting Headmistress April to July 1963.

**Miss E. N Evans** Sept 1963 - July 1969 - retired to run a bookshop in Swansea.

**Miss Delia Feerick** Sept 1969 - July 1973 - formerly senior mistress at King Alfred School, Plön. Retired to Galway. Deceased Oct 1975.

**Miss Pauline J Brown** Sept 1973 - July 1981- left on the merger of Windsor Girls and Windsor Boys' Schools to become headmistress at Prince Rupert School.

*School merged with Windsor Boys' School to become Windsor School, Hamm in summer 1981.*

## **Our lives changed forever!**

**Walter Lewis**  
**Hon Archivist reflects on his translation to Hong Kong!**

*My second teaching post in the UK was one of Maths and PE coordinator at RAF Halton Junior School, Buckinghamshire, while tutoring at Grendon Underwood Prison 4 nights a week.*

*Though the children came from RAF families, there was no attempt to take into consideration their vast experiences around the world.*

*Expectation standards were carelessly low. The children, on the whole, were a delight to teach, showing a willingness to accept change, settle quickly, display warmth and enjoyed being academically stretched.*

*Our bank balance was nil but we heard that more could be earned by teaching the Forces' children in schools overseas, through an organisation, SCEA, Service Children's Education Authority. There were exciting locations all around the world; Singapore was still on the list!*

*After medicals and interviews, we woke one wet March Saturday morning in Aylesbury, to a letter appointing me to St*

*Continued on page 11*

# **A list of Headteachers of Service Secondary Schools based in British Forces Germany**

## **Windsor School, Hamm.**

The boys and girls schools merged on the site of the boys' school. The girls' school site was used as an annex.

**Paul Gysin** Sept 1980 - July 1982 - left to become headmaster at The William School, Letchworth, Hertfordshire.

**Ken Leighton** Sept 1982 - July 1983 - on the closure of Windsor School, Hamm, moved to Prince Rupert School and then returned to the UK to be headteacher of a school in Essex until he retired.

## **School closure 1983**

## **Queen's School, Rheindahlen JHQ – opened January 1955**

**George Wright** 1955 - formerly Senior Master at Prince Rupert School, Wilhelmshaven. Deceased Dec 1955.

**Trevor G Benyon** Jan - Dec 1956 - acting headteacher, had been appointed Senior Master and Head of English at Queen's School Jan 1955, joined headquarters staff at BFES then became headteacher at Windsor Boys' School, Hamm 1959 - 1963.

**J V Taylor** Jan 1957- Dec 1959 - formerly Senior Science Master at Ossett Grammar School, Wakefield, returned to England due to ill health.

**William Briant P P Aspinall** OBE Jan 1960 - 1972 - ex-Lt Col Military Intelligence, formerly Senior Master at St Alfred School, Plon, headmaster at Windsor School, Hamm 1953 - 1959 and headmaster of King Richard School,

Dhakelia, Cyprus 1959 - 1960, retired in 1972, Deceased 1988.

**R Peter Gaskell** 1972 - 1976 - formerly headteacher at St John's School, Singapore, became Deputy Director of British Families Education Service.

**Jim H N Lovegrove** 1976 - 1987 - formerly deputy headteacher at Queen's School and acting headteacher for one term on the departure of Peter Gaskell in 1976. On amalgamation with Kent School to become Windsor School, JHQ, became headteacher at Prince Rupert School.

**Kent School, Hostert – opened 1963** based in a former Franciscan priory, St Josefsheim built in 1913. The buildings had also been used by the German military in WW2 and afterwards as a British Military Hospital.

**Glyn Williams** 1963-1974 - formerly at Windsor Boys' School, Hamm, including acting headteacher role in 1963.

**Ron M Ion** 1974-1982 - formerly deputy headteacher at Bourne School, Singapore 1967.

**Emlyn Whitley** 1982 acting headteacher for two terms.

**Tim A Kilbride** 1982-1987 - school amalgamation with Queen's School to become Windsor School, JHQ, became headteacher at Windsor School.

## **Kent School building closed 1993 as part of Windsor School.**

**Windsor School, JHQ – amalgamation of Queen's and Kent Schools 1987** initially using both sites with all pupils

accommodated on the former Queen's School site on JHQ as from 1993.

**Tim Kilbride** 1987 - 1996 - became headteacher at Ratcliffe College, Leicestershire 1996 - 2000.

**Gareth Jones** OBE 1996-1997 (acting headteacher, deputy headteacher at Windsor School up to Jan 2000, became headteacher at Kingsleigh Secondary School, Bournemouth.

**Anne Farrell** 1997 - 2005 - Deceased Feb 2005.

**Karen Clark** 2005 - acting headteacher Feb-July 2005, deputy head at Windsor School 2004-2013.

**Brian Davies** 2005 - 2013 - formerly deputy headteacher at King's School, Gütersloh 1998 -2005.

## **School closure 2013**

**King's School, Gütersloh – opened 1960** on Mansergh Barracks, Gütersloh

**John Powell 'Jack' Reynish** 1960 - April 1964 - returned to the UK to become the first headmaster of Tong Comprehensive School in Bradford. Deceased Aug 1987 Sedgemoor, Somerset

**David Rooney** 1964 - 1972 - ex-military, former lecturer in history at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, in 1972 became headteacher at Neale Wade School, March, Cambridgeshire and then Warden of Swavesy Village College near Cambridge. Deceased 2017.

**Ken M Jones** 1972 - 1990 - formerly deputy headteacher at Kent School, became principal at Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College.

# A list of Headteachers of Service Secondary Schools based in British Forces Germany

Winter 2021



**Rob R McGraw** 1990 - 1995 - formerly headteacher her at St George's School, Hong Kong, became Head of Secondary at The Garden School, Ban Chang, Rayong, Thailand & Principal in 996. Retired to Windermere.

**Bryn Banks** 1995 - 1996 - acting headteacher, deputy headteacher at King's School, moved to HQ SCE 1998 as AEO.

**Sheila Hargreaves** 1996 - 2007 - formerly deputy headteacher at Hinchingsbrook School, Huntingdon 1985-1993 and headteacher at Stowmarket High School 1993 - 1996, acting Headteacher at John Buchan School Oct 2006 - 2007.

**Garry Trott** acting headteacher Oct 2006 - Jul 2007, headteacher 2007-2014 - formerly deputy headteacher at King's School 2005-2006, became principal at Westbourne Academy, Ipswich.

**Alex Foreman** 2014 - Dec 2017 - formerly deputy headteacher at King's School, became principal at Duke of York Military School, Dover.

**Emma Bryson** Jan 2017- 2019 - became headteacher at St John's School, Cyprus

*School closure 2019*

**Gloucester School, Hohne – opened 1962** in what had become the Glyn Hughes Hospital on the British Military Bergen-Hohne Training Area, a former Wehrmacht hospital.

**John L Glazier** 1962-1967 - became headteacher at the Gilberd School, Colchester. Deceased 2017.

**George Tulloch** 1967 - 1974

**Mike W Back** 1974 - 1982 - returned to the UK.

**Hylton Thomas** 1982 - 1986 - formerly taught in Castle Carey, Keynsham and deputy headteacher at King's School 1976-1982, became headteacher at Wootton Bassett Comprehensive School up to retirement in 2001. Deceased 2015.

**Pat Burnet** 1986 - 1987 acting headteacher.

**John C May** 1987 - 1992 - formerly deputy headteacher and acting headteacher at Prince Rupert School.

**Alan Pedder** 1992-2009 - formerly deputy headteacher at Gloucester School, retired in 2009.

**Lana Heath** 2009 - 2012 - formerly deputy headteacher at Gloucester School, returned to UK and worked at Millfield School.

**Michelle Strong** 2012 - 2014 - formerly deputy headteacher at Gloucester School, became principal at Caister Academy, Norfolk.

*School closure 2014*

**Cornwall School, Dortmund – opened 1962** situated just outside the perimeter fence of Sussex Barracks, Dortmund.

**Mr G Hale** 1963 - 1966 - became headmaster of Kennylands School, Sonning Common, South Oxfordshire.

**Mr Burrell** 1966 - Dec 1969.

**Victor Gane** 1970 -1978

**Chris Ashton** 1978-1979

**Geoff P Harrison** 1979 - 1991 - formerly deputy headteacher at Kent School.

**Malcolm 'Spokey' Wheeler** 1991-1994 - for-

merly deputy headteacher at Cornwall School, became Executive Member of ASCL, Ofsted Inspector and then principal of Burlington Danes Academy School.

*School closure 1994*

**Edinburgh School, Munster – opened 1962** based in a former German military barracks – Hermann Göring Barracks.

**George Tulloch** 1962 - 1967

**Mr Wintle** 1967 - about 1970.

**Cyril Reginald Westcott** MBE about 1970 - Dec 1972 - ex-Capt Royal Artillery. Deceased 1998

**Geoff Kerr** 1973 -1978. Deceased 2018.

**Bert S Anderson** 1978 - 1992

**Dave Wilson** 1992 - 1995 - became headteacher at Faringdon Community College and then executive headteacher at Faringdon Academy of Schools, Oxfordshire.

*School closure 1995*

**Havel School, RAF Gatow, Berlin – opened 1979**

The middle school on RAF Gatow was repurposed as The Havel School in 1979 to provide secondary education in Berlin.

**Mr David W Bracher** 1979-1981- formerly headteacher at John Buchan School.

**Derek A Ebbage** 1981- 1994 .

*School closure 1994.*

Andrew's Primary School, Kowloon, Hong Kong! We had to take out a schools' Philips Atlas and find that Hong Kong was a minute red spec at the other end of the world!

Four months later we packed off our lives' belongings in six tea chest size boxes. We were all vaccinated and ready to go!

Our lives changed forever!

The 24 hour VC10 flight from RAF Brize Norton stopped at RAF Akrotiri and RAF Gan in the Indian Ocean. Having not previously experienced military customs, we were bemused to learn at Brize that we were to eat our evening meal in a lounge set for officers, as I had Officer Status! What a privilege that proved to be over the next 20 years.

Our approach to RAF Kai Tak was extraordinary - flying below the level of tenement blocks and swerving in to land on a runway sticking out to sea!

Having two small children we were rushed through arrivals and met by a scrum of teachers, clad in white shorts and short sleeve shirts, ready to look after their new

*Continued on page 13*

## Whatever Became of Mansergh Barracks



**King's School Gütersloh - photo Hugh Ritchie**

### Key buildings

48 The Mess.

1 The Guardroom.

34 Regimental HQ.

35 The Church.

16 King's School and the square shaped buildings in front of 16 plus 19.

21 plus the building in front of the square shaped King's building.

Haig School occupied the buildings immediately opposite Kings School.

For members of the Association who were previously either teachers in King's School and Haig School a recent report in a Gütersloh newspaper maybe of interest. Some of the key points which came out of the report are as follow:-

1 Stadt Gütersloh is still waiting to find out from the Federal Government how much they will have to pay for the old barracks and this has held up planning and progress.

2. Based on surveys which have already been conducted they have decided that they will only retain 14 of the many buildings which are located in the old barracks. It is pleasing to see that they will retain what was the Officers Mess building which they refer to as an Officers Kasino! Further to this they are

also retaining the Saint Barbara's Church building, the guardroom, the main regimental headquarters building and some of the buildings of the former King's School and Haig School.

It may cause former King's School and Haig School teachers a degree of concern when they realise that the school buildings which the Stadt wishes to retain have to be checked out for pollutants and whether they are structurally sound!!

3 What is causing a degree of strife and disagreement within the Stadt Council, which contains members of the Green party, is exactly how many of the 1,286 trees on the barracks should be retained! As well as there being disagreement on exactly how many trees there are on the barracks, the decision as to

how many trees should be removed ranges between 221 and 472!!

4 Plans which have been drawn up, and largely agreed upon, propose that 1000 apartments should be built, retail outlets created and opportunities for small start up businesses to get established. In addition to that they plan on creating a technical college on the site as well, a Fachhochschule. Further to that they are planning on building near the entrance an Innovations Centre.

**Ken Jones Headteacher  
King's School 1972 to 1990**





*in which Monika Gruber concludes her four-part look at life in, and beyond, Berlin at the end of the Second World War.*

For the next few years every summer it was weeks and weeks of sunshine, roaming around the camp, looking for edible mushrooms, collecting one big box of pinecones every day for the cooking stove, learning how to swim with the help of an empty 5-kilo jam tin, its lid tightly closed and tied with a rope round one's body - a very helpful swimming aid in the absence of cork or any sort of inflatable gadgets.

Once in a while we would hear someone shouting "The water is boiling" (remember - Black Markets in Berlin? That call must have been traditional), then we knew some, a few, a lot of Russians were marching through the camp site in a manoeuvre, guns in hand, but smiles on their faces. They never did us any harm, but we were careful not to attract their attention too much.

One reason why we were there all summer was that though the villagers could not give us any milk or other dairy products, because they had to turn every drop in, they had plenty of fruit and vegetable in their gardens, which they were only too happy to get rid of. We on the other hand needed vitamins badly. So we children walked along the country road to the next village once a week with a fairly large handcart to pick up what had been set aside for us.

One evening in 1947, when

we ("we" always meant about 10 people, children and grown-ups) were down by the lake to wash and have an evening swim, I suddenly felt a sort of punch on the left side of my neck. It did not hurt, it did not bleed, but it was obvious to the grown-ups present that I had been hit by a bullet. Well, we knew that the Russians used to shoot ducks on our lake and we had heard several shots going off. Nothing exceptional. Since under the skin of my neck you could feel a little lump, we all thought it was a pellet, because you wouldn't shoot ducks with anything but pellets, would you? How wrong we were was found out 4 days later, when I went to Berlin with my uncle, who was a surgeon in one of Berlin's hospitals. When he saw the x-ray picture, he could not believe his eyes: I had a Kalashnikov bullet stuck in my neck, between the larynx and the main artery, neither of which had been hurt though. And I was lucky a second time: That hospital had been an American military hospital for some time after 1945. When the Americans returned it, they left their stocks of penicillin there for the Germans to use. It was the only hospital in Berlin then, which had penicillin. And I needed it badly, because I had lived, quite happily and without any pains or symptoms, for 4 days with that bullet in my neck. Without that American penicillin I would

not have survived to write this paper. Penicillin way back then had to be injected every 4 hours, day and night, so the next 3 days life in hospital had a 4-hour-rhythm. Since there was no electricity at night, not even in hospitals, I had to hold the nurse's torch at night, when she gave me my shot!

Nowadays such an incident would have consequences of course. But not then. We did not report the shooting to anybody, let alone to the Russian barracks not far from "Maerchenwiese". The chances were they would close our camp down. It was definitely an accident, they hadn't aimed at me, they were reckless, but would not aim at people, let alone children.

After 1952 it became more and more difficult for West-Berliners to go to places like Maerchenwiese in the East Zone. So I have never been back and do not want to go there any more, though it is only an easy 45-minute drive there now, because I know it is lost for ever, which makes me extremely sad, since the summers (and some winters) spent there were such happy and easy-going ones. In hindsight the sun was shining permanently, the water in the lake was always warm, we, the children, had nothing to worry about.

Shortly after the war was over, my mother bought a book for me in a make-

*Continued from page 11*

colleagues. The temperature was hot and the humidity in the 90's so we were sweating by the time an old white RAF bus dropped us off at the Grand Hotel, just off Nathan Road, in Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, a 4 star hotel, where we would stay in two bedrooms for the next month. Thank goodness for the air conditioning!

Hong Kong was the most populated place in the world. The British Forces were stationed there as an active posting attempting to stem the daily arrivals of refugees from Communist China, across a narrow border; it was the days of the "Red Guard" in Communist China.

The population was 90% Chinese and we found that our two blond haired sons (4 years and 4 months old) drew a lot of warm attention from the local people. Before term started we were taken about and cared for by Dave & Sue Cregg and Jim and Alma Rhodes who introduced us to all the complexities of settling in to working in the Colony. It was an enormous culture change. I met

the Head, John Parton, who welcomed us with "in Hong Kong you will find everything that is good in the world as well as everything which is bad".



St Andrew's Romney



Music at Gun Club



St Andrew's Pool



shift book- shop outside a ruin. It was called "Professors Zwillinge (twins) in der Waldschule" by the authoress Else Ury, who had been extremely popular for her children's books before 1933 (cf. Wikipedia), but had not survived the holocaust. In that book Die Waldschule is described, an extraordinary school near Bahnhof Heerstraße. All of you who were stationed in Berlin know the area, not far from Charlottenburg School Berlin in Dickensweg. Die Waldschule had been founded in the 1920s as a reform school, mainly for poor children from working class districts, many of whom had had tuberculosis or needed special treatment and care. It had been a day school originally with pupils staying there all day with classes out in the open, weather permitting, getting free meals and having to follow a strict plan of lessons, playing and lying down times. The school was, and still is, located in the woods, in little bungalows, sitting on the Berlin sand under Berlin pine trees.

I was fascinated by what I had been reading about Die Waldschule and got on my mother's nerves again and again, until she finally decided to find out if it still existed. Yes, it did. The trouble was I did not live in its catchment area, but still being a special school they also accepted children, who were undernourished and otherwise in need of being out in the open as much as

possible. Well, which child wasn't then! So with a doctor's certificate I managed to get accepted, and from September 1946 on until 1956, when I took my Abitur there, I was a dedicated, ardent, enthusiastic pupil of Die Waldschule.

Not far from our school were the ruins, or rather unfinished buildings, of what had been part of one of Hitler's megalomaniac projects : The Wehrakademie", a kind of military university. The outside walls were still standing as well as some indoor staircases, but no floors/ceilings apart from the iron girders had been built yet. It became a test of courage with some boys from my school to go there, climb the stairs to the top floor and walk across the girders with nothing but air beneath them! It was a very hush, hush enterprise, but amazingly nothing ever happened. The buildings were eventually filled in with rubble from Berlin's ruins and made into a "mountain" - Teufelsberg (Devil's Mountain), with a skiing slope and later on an American top secret installation for tapping telephone calls from the East. The Ex-Berliners among you must remember the place, of course.

Soon after the end of the war my school became affiliated with Radnor High School in Wayne, Pennsylvania. It was the Quakers, the American Friends Service Committee, who were the first to arrange such part-

nerships for German schools, because they believed in young people being able to overcome old enmities thus preparing a new, peaceful world.

Every year Radnor invited one student from Die Waldschule to stay in Wayne for one year. It was a one-sided exchange, for at that time Berlin was still more or less a rather ruinous city, we barely had enough room(s) for ourselves in our flats, so hosting a young American for a whole year was out of the question.

In the 1950s we did not yet travel a lot, at least not to foreign countries - no money, no opportunities. And the USA were the absolute dreamland, so wonderful, so fantastic, so inaccessible that the idea of spending a whole year there was hubris. One of my classmates had gone to Spain with her mother, who was a doctor and attended a medical congress there. We had envied her immensely for having been able to travel that far.

And by plane!

So why not apply for a scholarship in the USA with the American Field Service? I fulfilled all their requirements one hundred percent, but wasn't even considered third choice. It hurt, but I was soon told that they had not considered my application because of my grandfather (the one with whom I had stayed in the Erzgebirge at the end of the war) was living in Leipzig, i.e. in the

**Continued overleaf /**



East Zone! He could have been an ardent communist and I a communist spy. Hard to believe, but true.

So in 1954 I applied for the Radnor scholarship with my teachers and was chosen! Young people of today, who can just hop on a plane and go wherever they want to - not for the time being though with Covid 19 having put a stop to all adventures - cannot possibly imagine what going to America meant to me. Flying then was not for "ordinary" people, but I felt travelling by boat from Southampton to New York was far more exciting, an adventure in itself. It included going from Berlin to London by train - London! England! And then the boat trip on the "Georgic" / Cunard Line. I was travelling with a group of 5, all of us high school students and sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee, 2 Americans returning home after one year in Germany, 3 Germans like me setting out on an adventure called America.

It would take far too much time to describe that year here in this context. Let me just say that my year in Wayne, Pennsylvania, with my American foster family and attending Radnor High School, influenced my future life. When I came back I spoke English fluently, so it was quite clear I would study English after my Abitur, which I took in 1956 at Die Waldschule after having had extra lessons in math to make up for what I had missed at

Radnor. I knew I wanted to be a teacher of English and Latin and as such I got in contact with some of the English Service teachers much later.

Just a word or two about "the Americans" I met, stayed with, came to like, made friends with for life : 1954 was not even 10 years after WWII and I was German, a former enemy. But I never ever heard an insult, a word of slander. I was frequently invited to all kinds of meetings and conferences, private and public, even to some Jewish families and was always made to feel very welcome.

On the other hand I was not always what the Americans had expected : I did not wear a dirndl, had no pigtails, wasn't blond and wasn't sturdy like a Valkyrie (as a welcoming present my foster sister had made a bracelet for me in Lapidary Club, which was big enough to go round my upper arm, but slid from my wrist. She had expected me to be big "like all Germans"!). One classmate was quite surprised I knew what a traffic light was!

It has taken me some time to write all this down, trying to be as brief as possible, which I'm afraid I wasn't too successful in. So many memories came crowding into my mind, incidents I had not thought of for years, which I wanted to share with you. Thank you for bearing with me. I have reached a point in the story of my life now, where I think I should make a break.

After 1948, i.e. after the Berlin Blockade, the Monetary Reform and the ensuing Wirtschaftswunder" (Economic Miracle) living conditions changed for the far better, and life wasn't as haphazard any more as before. The relations to "our occupiers", i.e. the Western Allies, were slowly but gradually changing towards friendship and mutual understanding. We were still living in a bubble in West-Berlin, with political freedom and a comparatively high standard of living (never, however, as high as in Western Germany!), but surrounded by an impenetrable wall. I travelled to London, New York, the Sahara, some wonderful Greek islands, but could not go to Potsdam or Dresden or Stralsund. But inside that West-Berlin bubble I met some English teachers, among them Sue Adams. The British Education Officers used to invite German teachers of English from the British Sector to weekend-conferences, so we could meet some of the British staff and exchange views on their respective education systems and experiences with pupils etc. Both sides I think profited a lot from those meetings then, and in the long run, of course, they triggered off lasting friendships, which in my case have survived until today. It was a sad day to say the least, when we had to take leave of each other in 1994, because after the Wall had come down, the 4 Allied Forces had to leave Berlin according to the German Reunification Treaty. There was the last British Berlin Tattoo with

## Ken Jones was something else!



### Sarah Byrne (nee Daunt) taught at:

Edinburgh School, Munster:  
April 1976 – August 1981  
(Head of Girls' PE)

Kings' School, Gütersloh:  
September 1981- August 1984 (Assistant Head of House)

St John's School, Episkopi:  
September 1984 – April 1986 (Deputy Head Pastoral)

Dalton Middle School:  
Dusseldorf: April 1986 – December 1987 (Class teacher and Swimming teacher).

Joining BFES/SCEA in 1976 caused an uproar in my home village in Bedfordshire. Why would anyone be so crazy as to up-sticks and move abroad to teach?

**Answer:** because it was the best thing I could ever have done. What a wonderful environment I entered and what interesting, challenging, and exciting experiences followed.

I joined the staff of Edinburgh School just as the blazing summer of 1976 began.

*Continued on page 17 ...*

## Letter from Berlin ... concludes

### The Front Row

King's School Staff Photo  
in 1977 - bottom of page.

The front row left to right is as follows:-

Alan Jones (deceased)  
Jim Rhodes  
Charlie Lewis  
Rob Crow who left for a  
Headship in the UK  
Geoff Walker who became  
Head of St John's School  
Cyprus

The Indomitable Ken Jones  
Brenda Buswell who left for a  
Headship in the UK  
Gordon Nicholson  
David Jones (deceased)  
Mike Johns  
David Roberts

Missing from the front row is  
Hylton Thomas who went on  
to become Head of Gloucester  
School in Hohne  
(see also page 8).

**But who are the others and  
what has become of them?  
We would love to know the  
rest of their stories.**

the Queen and Prince Philip attending and that wonderful parade of the 3 Western Allies with thousands of people cheering the soldiers in their colourful uniforms marching down the avenue leading from Siegesaeule to Brandenburg Gate. And there were private farewell parties like the one on my terrace which we called "The-Wall-coming-down party". After October 3, 1990 - Unification Day - we Ex-West-Berliners were definitely not living in a bubble of whichever kind any more, the war was over for good and humanity had at last overcome enmity.

Let me finish with a last highly symbolical incident: In the American housing district near my place in

the borough of Zehlendorf there used to be a movie theatre called "The Outpost", which was made into "Das Alliierten Museum" after Unification to give proof of what the Western Allies had done for the freedom of West-Berlin. And on British Gatow Airfield there was parked an old transport plane of the Royal Airforce, which had been used in the Berlin Blockade in 1948. Somebody had the glorious idea of taking that plane as an exhibit from Gatow to Zehlendorf, some 10 kilometres away. Was that feasible? Yes, it was. The wings were taken off and put on a lorry. But the only possibility to carry the body to its new home was to ask the Russians to help out, since only they had

one of the world's most powerful helicopters in the area. So one of the most absurd stories happened in absurd Ex-West-Berlin, rich in hundreds of absurd stories anyway: The Russians helped to fly a British transport plane, which had helped the Berliners to survive in the Berlin Blockade, which again had been set up by the Russians, to a museum in the Ex-American sector, where the story of the American, British and French fight for freedom in the Cold War was to be told. I happened to see (and hear) the helicopter with its large load hanging from underneath flying above me in the sky, and somehow that almost made me cry with emotion.



A Wet Wednesday in Gütersloh in 1977 ...



# A Further Project Update: Living on a Cold War Frontier - Dr Grace Huxford

Winter 2021



Continued from page 15

Dear all,

I'm emailing with an update on the British Military Bases in Germany oral history project, which you kindly took part in between 2017 and 2020. I was delighted to have so many people come forward to speak or correspond with me or my research assistant, Dr Joel Morley. We both hope you've been keeping well since we last spoke to you. We remain so grateful for all the stories you shared with us and hope this update gives you a sense of what has happened since your interview.

We finished the interview stage of the project in early 2020, having spoken to almost seventy people about their varying experiences of living and/or working in Germany, in a mixture of individual and group interviews. We were about to embark on some more archival research and begin the 'writing up' stage of the project when, as for many people, Covid-19 altered our plans somewhat. I also welcomed my first baby (a little boy) later in 2020, so have had a period of maternity leave. Joel's role on the project sadly came to an end in 2020 too, though he continues to work as part of the University of Bristol's Public Engagement team and is working on his forthcoming book on the 'Bevin Boys' in the Second World War.

Now that I have returned to work, I am turning my attention to writing. I am writing several academic-facing papers on: British military children in the immediate post-war period; the history of the evacuation plans for British military families; boredom and the British military experience in

Germany; and something on educational "turbulence", a subject on which many of you have views and expertise.

I then plan to write a book on the varying experiences and memories of the British bases in Germany, analysing archival research and interviews, with the aim of publishing this in the next couple of years.

But your fascinating interviews have already informed some other publications, interviews or activities I've taken part in:

A Radio 3 Documentary on post-war Germany, where I discuss 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: <https://ahrc-blog.com/2019/11/08/the-fall-of-the-berlin-wall-british-residents-remember-1989/>

Our project website, featuring various blogposts on the project: <https://britishbasesingermany.blog/>

A 'talking head' on the Radio 4 programme 'Archive on 4', in a special programme on National Service, presented by Professor Richard Vinen. 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 also now supervising a PhD student looking specifically at the experiences of

British military personnel in Berlin (a place well known to many of you!) in the 1950s and 1960s, with the Imperial War Museum.

There has also been wider interest in British bases in Germany too: if you haven't had the chance to see it, the National Army Museum's '[Foe to Friend: the British Army in Germany since 1945](#)' exhibition continues until the end of the year. They also have a virtual tour on their website and Peter Johnston has written an accompanying book, **\*British Forces in Germany: the Lived Experience (2019)**.

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. I also have copies of the Recording Agreements that anyone who took part signed (stating the ways in which you agreed for your interview to be used and any conditions you wanted to set), as well as the Participant Information Sheet which again outlined how your interview would be used. I am very happy to discuss any of this further with you or to provide you with a copy of your recording. I can also give you details of support organisations, archives/libraries and interesting books if there is anything you wish to explore or discuss further yourself.

Thank you so much again, and I do hope you and your families and friends are keeping well.

With best wishes

**Dr Grace Huxford**

*\*reviewed by MKB last year*

We had day after day of glorious sunshine for the whole of the summer term. Teaching PE was a pleasure as we were able to be outside all day long. I can well remember having groups of girls playing Rounders on the parade ground dressed in swimsuits/bikinis, much to the amazement of other staff and students!

Even the boys didn't complain about having to wear swimming hats as they just couldn't wait to cool off in the local German pool. PE was fun in those days – children were able to play sports without having to stop every two minutes for 'play review and analysis'; I am sure performance was equally good in those days as it is today at school level.

Whilst in Munster I was fortunate enough to be able to teach French and Geography as well as PE. Trying to control a language lab was something of a challenge and every time I used it, I made certain the technician was at hand as I always managed to mess the system up one way or another!

I had forgotten I had taught Geography until recently when a past student posted on Facebook that my enthusiasm for the subject had encouraged him to take up Geography and become a teacher in his own right. One never knows the impact one can have on others!

Life in Munster was never dull. I was a member of the civilian mess and lived most of my time above the school, surrounded by both primary and secondary teaching colleagues. Most weekends were spent travelling around Germany with

## My Father Frank - Berlin 6th July 1945

*Bernard Allen, is the son of an army officer who served from 1914 to 1948 and who ended his service in Berlin at the war's end. Bernard 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 he left!*

Continued from page 17

friends or enjoying functions in both the civilian and officers' messes within the garrison. The Head of Boys' PE (John Rees) and myself organised several 'Snow Queen' ski trips for students, all of which were tremendous fun. A couple were particularly memorable – one because, on a return trip from the slopes one day, the air-breaks on the bus failed and we hurtled downhill and through a tunnel totally out of control. The driver did a marvellous job controlling the bus and we came through the tunnel unscathed. Nearly everyone on the bus was too exhausted to notice the drama but Brenda Rees (John's wife) and I could not down a gin and tonic quickly enough once we got back to base!

A second memorable trip was when we found water leaking through the roof of the ski hut and dripping through walls next to electricity cables. We therefore had to have someone on guard-duty every night to ensure everyone's safety.

Such fun times!

The winter of 1980-81 saw snow lying thickly on the ground for well over six weeks. One Thursday, just before the snow arrived, the school underwent its annual fire check, passing with flying colours. The next day, Friday, we arrived in school to find the gym/hall complex had been blown up by a bomb!!

What a sight, unbelievable. How does a PE department cope in such circumstances? Easily if you are a member of the BFES/SCEA team! We changed in the cellars, painted hockey balls red and played in the snow, donned ski suits and went cross-

### **Bernard Allen in Berlin 1946 – 1947**

My father Frank was one of the first members of the British Army into Berlin on July 6th 1945.

Berlin surrendered to the Soviets on 2nd May, but the Soviets denied entry to their American and British 'allies' until 4th and 6th July respectively. Berlin was divided into four sectors – Soviet, American, British and French, and completely surrounded by the Soviet zone. The British Sector of Berlin was further sub-divided into four 'boroughs', and Frank was responsible for the complete civil administration of one.

This was a major problem, because the Soviets immediately reneged on their obligation to provide food for the western zones, and refused to feed Germans outside the Soviet zone, including the many Germans being expelled from the territories occupied during the war, now returning to Germany.

The city had been reduced to rubble: 600,000 apartments had been completely destroyed; the underground system was not working – a third was full of water as a result of the Nazis having blown up the Landwehr Canal; and by the time the Americans and British arrived, the Soviets had removed 85% of all undamaged factory equipment in Berlin (not just their Sector) to Russia. So Frank had his work cut out.

As things started to get



organized, he found a house in Marienburger Allee in the Grönewald, a mile or so from his office at the top of the Kaiserdamm, and in February 1946 we (my mother, sister and I) joined him. I was not yet 12, and we had spent the war in Catterick Camp, a couple of miles from Richmond, Yorkshire. Richmondshire was a huge agricultural area, and my school in Richmond drew its pupils from miles around – many from so far that they were weekly boarders. But the school could not take permanent boarders, and we had no convenient relations with whom I could be left, so I really had to go too. Both my parents left school at 12 or so, and they probably thought the experience would outweigh the loss of formal education.

So, in the middle of February 1946 we travelled to London and on to Tilbury to board the SS *Empire Halladale* with hundreds of other families, disembarking the following day in Cuxhaven at the mouth of the river Elbe. It was exciting, and the food

on board was very different from what we had been used to – plenty of fruit, and white bread rather than the 'National loaves', for the first time I could remember. The boat had been converted, with three large 'cabins', each housing what seemed to me to be hundreds of people in tiered bunks; adults in the middle, boys at one end and girls at the other. I had not been on a ship before; we sailed past dozens of German ships in various stages of damage; and the train was very slow because the tracks were being repaired as we passed. In Bad Oeynhausen we transferred to the overnight train through the Soviet Zone to Berlin, arriving about six in the morning.

The Soviets insisted that blinds be drawn on the train through their zone, and were keen that no passengers should look out of the windows; no Soviet or East German guards were allowed to travel on our train, but train times were carefully monitored to ensure there was no stopping. It was a fine day



when we arrived at Berlin-Charlottenburg station, but really cold; my father met us and whisked us off to our new home, bigger and more comfortable than the house we had lived in throughout the war, with very effective double glazing, central heating and staff!

Once in Berlin the extent of the destruction was clearly visible. Most houses were uninhabitable, but many were only partially damaged; these were occupied by multiple families, and had makeshift metal chimneys poking out of walls and windows. Wood for fires was scavenged, and the woods, which had already suffered in the last weeks of the war, were cleared almost to extinction.

Life for Germans was basic and pretty miserable. They were cold, working mostly in the open, and underfed. Although I had lived through the war in an area which had hardly been bombed, we saw the newspapers, listened to the news on the wireless, and often saw the regular newsreels which ran alongside the advertised films at the cinema so we knew what the Germans had done to Britain and the countries they had invaded. My friends and I decided that they had got what they deserved, and had little sympathy.

Our house was a typical German house 'commandeered' with all its heavy oak furniture, cutlery, crockery, pots and pans etc from the owners, probably with no notice. It had two floors plus a full-size attic and a cellar with several rooms. The attic was floored with concrete

and had a washing-line stretching the full length. The cellar had a room for German brown-coal, furnace and hot-water tank; one with a huge copper for washing clothes; and one occupied by a Polish Putzfrau – Frau Meintz – who had fixed it up as a 'gypsy caravan', very cosy and beautifully maintained. She stayed with us for our whole tour; we also had a cook and a driver, who both lived elsewhere but came in daily; the driver, Herr Meeger had fought on the Eastern Front and lost a finger in the fan-belt of his truck. He said his hands were so cold he didn't feel the finger go until his hands warmed up! He was a bit of a crook and we learnt that he 'leant on' the cook to smuggle our rations for him to sell on the black market. Coal was delivered regularly by the British Army in the back of 3-tonners, always followed by German children with buckets, because the soldiers used to tip some coal onto the road 'by accident'. We also had our monthly 'rations' delivered by the Army, but that was more rigorously managed to the point of delivery.

Originally the post-war plan had been to leave recovery to the Germans, but the actions of the Soviets (and inactions) meant that the western allies had to become much more involved. Daily feeding of thousands of inhabitants, an increasing number because of the never-ending arrival of refugees – mostly on foot, starving and diseased – was managed using 'soup-kitchens' of which Frank had several to supply and supervise. But restoration of power supplies,

particularly to hospitals and enabling firms to find or build premises, set themselves up, find suppliers, recruit workers and create products to sell were major headaches. Only by building an economy from scratch could the West Berlin sectors become profitable; there were plenty of entrepreneurial Germans, but people like Frank had to provide the wherewithal for them to flourish.

So his days were busy, and my mother Kathleen, sister Phyllis and I were left to our own devices for much of the time. They were adults – my sister was much older than me and had been in the WRNS – and could spend their leisure time visiting the NAAFI or German shops – such as they were, sight-seeing or in the various Allied clubs and messes, using a chauffeur-driven car, but I needed to be occupied, preferably to be educated. As far as I know there was no British education available and on 3 mornings a week I used to go to a large house called the Defraschule in Lassen Strasse to be taught by an elderly – at least he looked elderly to a 12-year-old – German called Herr Doktor Doktor Wenderoth who spoke little English, with a girl called Helen Mather, just the 2 of us.

We did learn German, mostly because he didn't speak much English, but we also did some basic maths using the 4 rules – well-known in English already, but interesting as a German exercise; we read simple German books; and did a bit of German history from the mid-19th century – the Unification of

### Continued from page 18

country running/sliding, and watched lots of videos! Life was to be lived to its full and we always made every attempt to do just that. My five and a half years at Edinburgh School were wonderful.

### Transition: King's School, Gütersloh

Opportunity came in 1981 for me to step aside from PE teaching and move into the area of pastoral care. Having been previously encouraged by Ken Jones (Head of King's School) to 'man-up/get serious' and get a degree, I graduated in 1980 and was subsequently appointed as Assistant Head of House at King's School, taking up my post in September of 1981.

I have always been extremely fortunate and had excellent Headteachers to work both under and with. However, **Ken Jones was something else!**

Work hard, obey the rules, be conscientious, efficient and effective and he would always support and encourage you, he was inspirational. He, together with Russ Hibbins, my Head of House, allowed me to have three superb years in Gütersloh; their help, understanding and guidance led me to gain promotion and move to Cyprus. I am sure it is because of their support and encouragement that we remain friends and meet up on a regular basis. Gütersloh saw me teaching – or should it be trying to teach! – Integrated Studies. At the time this involved covering Geography, History, RE and English. Quite a challenge but extremely interesting. Being an Assistant Head of House was not only interesting and educational but challenging and rewarding. Helping students to cope with

## My Father Frank - Berlin 6th July 1945

Germany (1871) and the Franco-Prussian War 1870-1871 – interesting in retrospect but not at the time!

Non-school time was much more exciting. I had my bicycle, and there was never a problem getting out of the house on my own. Although the Sectors were identifiable there was no restriction on travel, and we used to explore the different Sectors, including the Soviet Sector, without undue worry. The Soviets

were anxious to stop people from 'escaping' their Sector and occasionally would continue to shoot at them even though they had crossed 'into the West' – particularly in the vicinity of Potsdamer Platz (left), so we generally avoided that. But we quickly got used to the geography, and particularly to the work being done – mostly by women, the 'Trummerfrauen' – to re-build Berlin. They would recover bricks from damaged buildings and remove the cement so they could be re-used. We never felt any fear of

the German population, and as long as we were home for meals that was OK.

But after working hours and at weekends we used to operate as a family. We would go the Officers' Club by the Funkturm for

lunch or supper and a dance – they had two resident German violinists named Franz and Josef who serenaded the tables, presumably as a reminder of the good old days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the German Confederation. German money (the Reichsmark) was worthless, and most Germans would only accept cigarettes in payment; British cigarettes were plentiful (but rationed) and cheap at about one shilling for twenty – my riding lessons in the Gr nwald lasted an hour and cost two cigarettes! After football matches in the Olympic Stadium, the tiers of seating were carefully examined by men collecting cigarette butts, which they converted into 'new' cigarettes.

We used to go out to a restaurant on the Havel lake which was a sailing club run by the NAAFI and very popular on sunny weekends, as it did fantastic teas (Indeed it still appears to be exactly where it was, though no longer a NAAFI!). And we regularly watched films at the SKC cinema or shows at the theatre, the Puck and the Jerboa – both inaccessible to Germans. And the Resi Bar was always a favourite – open to all, it had dancing fountains and vacuum tubes and telephones at the tables so you could send messages or ring people you liked the look of!

We only experienced one winter in Berlin, 1946/47, and it was bitterly cold. One advantage – as far as I was concerned – was that the Germans turned their tennis courts into skating rinks by spraying fine 'mist' onto them, which instantly froze on contact, and could

be kept permanently serviceable throughout. As a result we very quickly learned to skate and spent endless hours enjoying ourselves.

Frank's tour was cut short in the summer of 1947 by a return to Richmond to retire. A planned leave to Brussels and Paris was truncated by cutting Paris out. We travelled on a train over tracks still being repaired, which reduced the speeds, and gingerly over bridges still in a poor (but presumably adequate) state. But we made it and had an excellent week's holiday. Brussels was a real eye-opener for us all; although it had been occupied by the Germans for years the shops were full of an amazing variety of goods. It must have been Easter-time, because many shops had huge displays of chocolates, including Easter eggs in all sizes. Imports to the UK had been limited to the essentials to survive, whereas Belgium had not been similarly affected.

We returned to Richmond in Yorkshire with a year to go before my School Certificate exams were due in 1949. I didn't catch up my 'year out' in Berlin, and failed. A further interruption was caused by Frank's having to find a house and a civilian job, at a time when jobs were very scarce. As a result the family moved to Darlington, and I had to move school and repeat my time in the upper fifth form and take O Levels in 1950, before being able to enter the sixth form and start what became my A Level studies. So my school education was significantly affected during my time in Berlin, but no doubt my general education



Two dates for 2022 ...

Winchester curry lunch on  
Saturday April 2nd 2022 and  
24th September  
2022's AGM & Lunch



benefited.

How things would have altered had BFES opened an appropriate primary school in Berlin at the time is a matter for speculation. No doubt it would have had to adapt available

buildings – probably undamaged German schools – start small and grow, with odd-size classes, relatively few children and British teachers (like BFES Cologne). We would have been an experiment, and no doubt it would have

improved over time, but the first couple of years would have been difficult.

But at least we would have all spoken the same language, been taught the appropriate curriculum and been occupied for five days a week!

### *Continued from page 19*

their teenage years, guiding them to career choices and seeing them mature into delightful, responsible young adults was a joy to experience. I hope I had a positive effective on at least some of those who passed through my hands.

During my three years in Gütersloh, I lived through two bomb scares; one within the school itself when the students had to stand in the square outside the gym for over two hours whilst we waited for the bomb disposal squad to arrive from Bielefeld (I think they got lost on the way!). I felt so sorry for the poor Year 7 students who had to stand all that time, in the freezing cold, bare-footed, wearing just leotards/shorts and t-shirts; at least most members of staff gave up their coats to keep some of them warm. The second scare was in the Officers' Mess which merely meant the occupants evacuating the property until the 'bomb squad' had done a sweep and declared the area safe. We did, however, have to miss daily afternoon tea in the mess!

Recreational sport still played an important role in most people's lives: skiing in the Harz Mountains on Saturday mornings (on the slopes as they opened and off at lunchtime as the German schoolchildren descended after their morning in school), squash and tennis within Mansergh Barracks and swimming at the local Hallenbad.

Travel, was again, a large part of the lives of most teachers, with several of us spending summer holidays basking in the sun on beaches along the Costa Brava, swimming in the Mediterranean, barbecuing freshly caught sardines, playing Petanque against Spanish friends (usually after several glasses of beer or wine, so

*Concluded on page 22 ...*

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## Annual General Meeting 2021 - Lynn Marshall

The 52nd Annual General Meeting of the British Families Education Service/Service Children's Education Authority Association was held on ZOOM on 12th November 2021 at 10am.

A number of members also joined the AGM as guests.

Ken welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The main business of the meeting was electing the committee. Sadly Ken confirmed his intention to stand down, mainly due to ill health. Mike Chislett was proposed and elected as Chair. He accepted the role but said it was an interim appointment until a new chair could be found.

The role of events' coordinator was also vacant due to the resignation of Sue Adams. There were no nominations for this role, so it was proposed and agreed that a small sub-committee be convened of interested committee members headed by Lynn Marshall. Bill and Jane Bowen, Jane Tull, Mike Chislett and Ken Jones agreed to serve on this committee.

As all other committee members had agreed to stand for a further year they were unanimously re-elected. Walter Lewis

agreed to stand as the vice chair for a further year.

Mike gave thanks to Ken and said he had revitalized the association and brought to it an enthusiasm and energy which had previously been missing. He also said that Ken acted as chair in a calm, organised and relaxed way and as a result had the total commitment of all committee members. He also praised Ken for his ability to "get things done" and for his perseverance, flexibility and persistence in completing tasks. Finally he highlighted that it was mainly due to Ken that the Association had remained active throughout the pandemic. Ken was offered the opportunity to remain on the committee as a co-opted member. He agreed. Ken thanked everyone for making his time as Chair of the Association so rewarding to undertake. He had enjoyed the challenge and working with such an enthusiastic committee.

Walter gave thanks to Sue for the efficient and organised way she had handled her role as events coordinator. He praised her efficiency and persistence in securing a range of interesting and exciting venues over the last few years. Sue has new

pastures to explore so declined to be co-opted onto the committee.

The changes to Section 2 (Aims) of the constitution were accepted. These changes shorten the many names used to refer to the Association to "Service Schools (MOD Schools)." Please go to the constitution on the website to see the changes.

The healthy position of the membership of the Association was highlighted. Following the campaign of offering free membership for the year there are now 325 members. Members are asked to encourage friends to join. Members were informed that the committee was considering offering free membership to ALL members in 2022. Further discussion to take place at the next committee meeting. Mike thanked Christine and Hugh for all their hard work in this area.

Members were informed that Joan Hunt and Peter Hall had been offered Honorary Life membership. These positions were ratified by all those at the AGM.

Mike thanked all for attending and wished them well.

**The meeting ended at 11.15**

## Ken Jones was something else! Concluded...

very badly), or just relaxing and enjoying each other's company. I shall always be grateful for the three years I was able to spend at King's School. Ken, Russ and all my colleagues made my job and teaching thoroughly satisfying. I think I 'grew up' a little during that time! In the Spring of 1984, I happened to be in the staffroom and noticed a job advert for the post of Deputy Head Pastoral at St John's School, Episkopi. To apply, one had to be aged 35 by February 7<sup>th</sup>; coincidentally I was that age on that date, so things boded well and I therefore applied. Miraculously, I got the job – I still don't know how or why I was successful but, what a dream come true.

### **Onwards and upwards: St John's School, Episkopi**

So, off to Cyprus to see my teaching days out in utopia – or so I thought. Geoff Walker, my Headmaster, was a wonderful person to work with. He ran an excellent school by letting his staff manage and fulfil their roles to the best of their ability, only 'interfering' when things started to go wrong. Holding the post of Deputy Head allowed me to develop my leadership and management skills, to say nothing about my skills of diplomacy and patience, to a high level. Although I was only in post for eighteen months, I feel I made a positive impact on the school, staff and students. My other senior colleagues – Gerry Davey/Trish Smith, Richard Staunton, and Rob Cowen/John Farrar – were great to work

with, always supported me and gave me excellent advice and help. What a wonderful place to live and work! Even after all these years, I feel Cyprus is still my home. I go back every year to check the island is still OK!

Teaching in Cyprus brought its own challenges: switch the ceiling fans on to get some air circulating and everyone's papers and notes went flying round the classroom; vaccination time and march all those involved down to the medical centre, line them all up and have a mass inoculation session; arrange hockey and soccer matches, and take an overnight crossing on a Saturday to Tel Aviv, play all day on Sunday, sail back overnight and be back in school learning by 10.00am. on Monday morning. Hard work, but so rewarding.

Due to the wonderful weather, sport played a key role in many people's lives. Whether it was tennis, netball, water skiing, sailing, swimming or running, every afternoon – after a hard morning's work in school – saw colleagues put work to one side and make the most of living in such a beautiful environment. Those who have worked in Cyprus may remember the Happy Valley Hill Climb, the Island Half Marathon and/or the Troodos to Episkopi Run Down. What feats of endurance. Although never a winner, I managed to complete all three. That's probably one of the reasons I suffer now with severe osteoarthritis, but no gain without pain.

August 1985 saw my going

on a holiday to Egypt with my boyfriend Lance (at the time 2i/c of the Royal Signals Squadron in Episkopi). We got engaged in the Great Pyramid, and my fate was sealed! We got married in December and I was very honoured to have both Ken Jones and Geoff Walker fly over from Germany and Cyprus respectively to attend the wedding. I can't imagine many BFES/SCEA teachers had two headteachers at their wedding! An hilarious day from beginning to end! I returned to Cyprus until the April of 1996 as we were due to have an old-fashioned HMI inspection during the Easter term which I felt honour-bound to endure, whilst Lance headed off to Dusseldorf to take up his next posting. I then became a 'wife of' and had to follow the drum as they say.

### **From being a 'wife of': Dusseldorf to Sutton Coldfield**

Two years in Dusseldorf followed. I taught in Dalton Middle School for a term and then as I was an LET, I was made redundant but continued as the school's swimming teacher until we were posted to Celle in the January of 1988. My eldest daughter, Hannah, was born in BMH Hanover in November 1988 and we were posted back in the UK in April 1990. Our days of living and working abroad were over. My second daughter, Lucy was born in August 1990 and after postings as Training Major in Sutton Coldfield and with Strike Command in High Wycombe, Lance retired from the Army and, believe it or not, became a

geography teacher! I was able to go back to teaching once Lucy was twelve months old. I took up a post at a school in Tamworth where over nineteen years I moved from PE to Psychology, ending my career as Head of Psychology. I still work for one of the major exam boards as a principal examiner for Psychology.

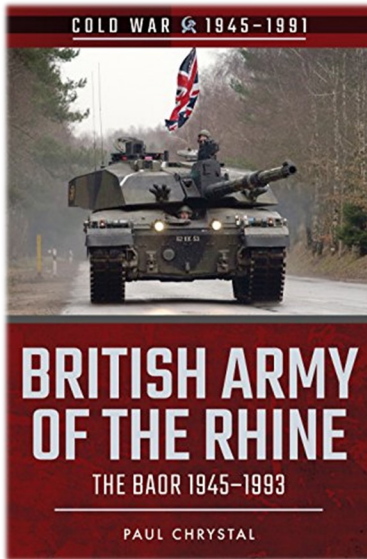
Teaching and living abroad for sixteen years were absolutely superb. I loved every minute I worked for BFES/SCEA and will be eternally grateful for the opportunities and experiences offered by working with and for the British Forces. I made numerous friends, many of whom I am not only still in contact with but whom I also see. My only regret is that things have changed so much over the past few years that neither of my daughters have had the opportunity to teach with BFES/SCEA. They are surviving the traumas of teaching in England!

Thank you to everyone – named and unnamed here – who made my time in Germany and Cyprus so enjoyable, rewarding and memorable. My motto: *Work hard, play hard and you will always be happy, especially if one is doing this with BFES/SCEA!*

### **In the Spring '22 Issue**

**Lance Byrne - A retired army officer, secondary school teacher and husband of Sarah recounts his life in**

**TEACHING – A LIFE AFTER THE ARMY?**



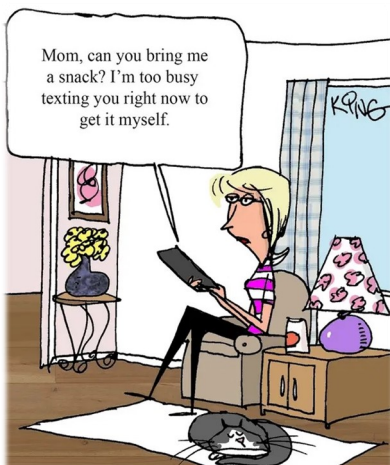
Cold War 1945 - 1993  
British Army of the Rhine  
The BAOR 1945 - 1993  
by Paul Chrystal  
128 pp ISBN 9781526728531  
Price £14.99  
Dimensions 9"x6"  
First published in UK 2018  
Pen and Sword Books Ltd.

**King of Cartoons: The Editorial Cartoons of Alan King** with preface written by Aislin & text by Jay Stone and Charles Gordon.

Alan King was an editorial cartoonist at the Ottawa Citizen for 17 years. He died in February 2021 after complications from heart surgery. This collection, lovingly compiled by former colleagues and family, shows him at the top of his form.

"Any profits will go to the World Wildlife Fund and Global Giving, two of Alan's favourite charities. It is our way of giving everyone the chance to enjoy the work of a great political cartoonist, a dear friend, and an irreplaceable breakfast companion." – Jay Stone

ISBN: 978-1-77257-305-3 (PB)



## Book Review - A Book perhaps not at bedtime?

Mike Bennett - formerly HT Shackleton School - Fallingbostel

BAOR came into existence on 25th August 1945 succeeding the British Liberation Army which had been tasked with the 1944 Invasion of Europe. There had been a BAOR after the First World War stationed in Cologne until it disbanded in 1929. This one was to last longer. NATO was founded in 1949 and West Germany became a sovereign nation in 1952 ending BAOR's role as an army of occupation. However, BAOR continued to serve in 129 locations, its function inseparable from the Cold War, which did not end until the fall of the Berlin Wall and the events of 1991. BAOR was finally wound up in 1994 becoming British Forces Germany.

This informative and well illustrated book narrates BAOR in an easy to read style not usually found in a subject of this significance. The author himself lived in Paderborn and attended King's School in the 1960's. This is one of almost a hundred books he has written. A credit to BFES. His brother a former serving officer in BAOR supplied many of the photographs.

The creation of the occupation zones in Germany is explained. We often forget that Austria was also divided into sectors after the War. Remember the Third Man? I learned of the post war involvement of not only the British Army and RAF but also of the Royal Navy who were responsible for supervising waterborne traffic east of the Elbe estuary until 1958. I was surprised to read of the ill treatment including torture suffered by suspected former Nazi and SS members as well as suspected communists. These disturbing actions took place in the commandeered Bad Nenndorf Spa buildings close to Hannover. Prisoners arrived in cattle trucks and the interrogation techniques

mirrored some of the Gestapo excesses. The International Red Cross had no access to the detention centre. Small wonder it took years for the civil population to accept our troops as 'friends' rather than occupiers.

The denazification process had consequences. Excluding 'Nazi's hostile to allied purposes' from positions of responsibility resulted in forty six miners losing their lives in January 1946 when their cage crashed to the bottom of a pit in Peine near Hannover. A month later in Unna close to Dortmund, four hundred and eighteen miners died in an explosion. The absence of experienced safety inspectors and rescuers was partly to blame. Withdrawing the licences of farmers contributed to the starvation of thousands. Yet we know that many Nazi scientists were recruited by the allies and it was not long before Alfried Krupp's coal and steel industries were handed back to him despite being initially sentenced to imprisonment as a war criminal.

The author refers to the installation at Munsterlager which had produced mustard gas, cyanide and other lethal chemicals. Since 1956 there has been extensive work undertaken to remove the pollution. I recall that part of the NATO ranges at Muensterlager had Sperrgebiet (prohibited area) signs. I was also reminded of the war time munitions factories in Bomlitz near Fallingbostel, which were never bombed by the RAF. I remember them as being occupied by Ammo Inspectorate. They still had grass growing on the flat roofs as camouflage. There are chapters concentrating on The Cold War, The Iron Curtain and Nuclear and Combat Readiness.

Fortunately this informative

and meticulously researched book has its lighter moments. BFES Radio, once BFN, Services Kinema Corporation (SKC) and the introduction of the eventually live TV link from the UK are included. He recalls 'Two Way Family Favourites' broadcast simultaneously from Cologne and UK. "What's the weather like in Cologne, Judith?" This programme with at one time twenty million listeners in the UK and seven million in Germany, only went off air in 1980. Uncle Bill and the Tales of Bigwood get a mention. How many of us remember as I do the YMCA Windmill on the E73 close to Gütersloh which provided snacks to the troops between 1946 and 1971. It was replaced by the modern Raststätte Vellern

There is a chapter 'British Families on the Rhine' which includes a piece on baggage allowances for families proceeding to BAOR in 1946. The limit of £5 per person to be converted into BAFSV's - British Armed Forces Special Vouchers - 'German and English money will be useless to you' is the message.

At the end of the book a quote from a March 2006 TES - 'Ofsted Inspectors found forty percent of the schools were outstanding'. Teachers' contracts promised rent free accommodation for the first five years'. The end was nigh. It arrived in 2019/20.

This book complements 'British Forces in Germany' which was reviewed in the Winter 2020 Journal. Once more I am reminded of the times and culture which I and so many of us were lucky to experience.

Oh, and before I forget, I think I found an error on page 106. Was BFES taken over by the army, becoming SCEA in 1951/2? I don't think so, although many at SCEA thought so.



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## We're on the Web!



LONDON ILLUSTRATED NEWS - 30 DECEMBER 1899  
HER SOLDIERS' CHILDREN - THE QUEEN DISTRIBUTING GIFTS FROM HER CHRISTMAS TREE AT WINDSOR TO THE WIVES AND FAMILIES OF GUARDS AND RESERVISTS NOW AT THE FRONT

DRAWN BY S BEGG

## Association Membership

Membership of the Association currently costs £15 per year. Membership is open to **anyone** who has served with BFES, SCEA, SCS (NWE), SCE or latterly is serving with the remaining MOD Schools. The membership year runs from 1st January to 31st December and payment can be made by Standing Order or cheque. Further information and a membership application form is available from the Membership Secretaries - 94 Headcorn Drive - Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7TX.



The website has been replaced by a very different design that I hope you will explore (thanks go to Malcolm Brooke) and the journal (thank you Tom Nielsen-Marsh) is worth the normal cost of membership and much more, providing – as it does - an enduring record for posterity. Christine & Hugh (membership) have revamped and relaunched the Facebook 'page' which now provides a forum for collecting memories and photographs as well as a means of reconnecting lost contacts.

Sue Adams' retirement from the committee leaves big boots to be filled in ensuring that we put on events that draw members in. Fortunately, Jane Tull's **Winchester curry lunch on Saturday April 2nd 2022** remains on our association menu and Bill and Janet Bowen have found and re-researched a college location in Oxford, which looks to offer a great day out for **24th September 2022's AGM & lunch**.

Wally Lewis' work with our archives represents a lasting legacy of the association. Over time, we hope to reflect and link more of the collections at the Institute of Education (who take the printed ephemera) and Chelsea Army Museum (they have school log-books) with

## Mike Chislett – a message from the chair ...

I was honoured to accept the nomination from committee colleagues to chair BFES-SCEA Association as Ken Jones stood down. Ken's four years at the helm included memorable AGM lunches at Dartmouth and Sandhurst and the marvellously successful visit to Germany in 2018.

Ken leaves the association on a firm footing and I believe we go into 2022 in a good place. Constitution changes have opened membership to anyone with an 'interest or association' with MoD Schools and membership is buoyant, compared to recent years. The 'free' membership offered during Covid has helped with that and our challenge will be to sustain numbers without draining our modest financial reserves.

the digital resources that we can now house on the web-site. Every member can help here: we need those old photographs and stories – keep them coming in through 2022, this is the year to sort out the boxes in the loft.

**Happy New Year!**

## Who is Mike Chislett?

I've been a member for a few years, and was co-opted onto the committee when I retired from MoD Schools in 2016. I'd joined in 1998 as an 'Inspector Adviser', based in Bielefeld, which was also how I finished up in 2016. Along the way, I spent a period based at SCE Episkopi, in Cyprus and undertook a couple of headships: Haig School in 2002/3 and Ark School 2010-2013.

Ark was a particular privilege – as part of the slow closure of JHQ and Rhine Garrison, the task was to form a new school from the amalgamation of St Patricks and St Andrews. By 2011, St Georges had closed as well and Ark became the only primary school in JHQ until the camp closed in 2013.

Prior to SCE & MoD Schools, I had taught in Wiltshire, with headships at Upavon and Devizes as well as working across the county as a 'General Primary Adviser' as they were known.

I'd trained as an Ofsted inspector in 1994 and MoD Schools were keen that I kept the accreditation, which meant occasional update training and inspection work in UK throughout my period with MoD.

Sue Chislett and I had met during teacher training in Bath. Sue's own career in Wiltshire included village school headships; in SCE she took on Foundation Stage leadership, including memorable periods in Fallingbostal and at Akrotiri.

Sue reclaimed our ancient stone cottage near Lacock (Chippenham) from tenants in 2015 and project-managed a lot of necessary repair and renovation, while I stayed based in Bielefeld to pay the bills.

We have three grown-up children, the youngest of whom did her whole Key Stage 4 and GCSEs at King's, in Gütersloh. Seven grandchildren, aged from a few months to 8, keep us busy and travelling regularly to London, Cornwall and Sweden.

