



The OCAAA Newsletter

Autumn 2009

Official Newsletter of the Old Caledonia Artificer Apprentices' Association – www.ocaaa.org

Chairman's Report

David Gale:

Firstly, let me say thank you for electing me to office for a further period, a task that I continue to do with great pride. However, the continuance and success of the Association must be credited to the dedication and hard work of the committee members who have supported me so admirably. I like to think that the confidence shown by you in our re-election is based on our corporate performance over the past two years, rather than in keeping to yourselves the well known navy tradition of 'never volunteering'. On the subject of which, I would strengthen the appeal of our Editor in that if any of you feel you have a hidden talent for journalism or simply a desire to help with the newsletter please let him know.

You will read in the Reunion Secretary's Report, that at our committee meeting in Rosyth, we decided to take advantage of the Caledonia Fair in June 2010 (which may be their last), to hold our next reunion on the same weekend. Not least, this was encouraged by the already considerable interest shown by yourselves in attending it. This will be an exception to the rule, as we are aware from those attending the last General Meeting that there is a general preference for reunions remaining every two years. As this will only be one year after our last General Meeting, and as the committee members and others will be busy doing other things at the Fair, I have decided, at the risk of a lower deck mutiny and walking the plank, not to hold a further meeting at this reunion. The main significance of which being that the President, committee members and myself will be required to serve for a three year period until 2012. However, if there are any lower deck lawyers amongst you who see this as

unconstitutional (see our Association Articles §11) then please let me know.

There are just a couple of points I would like to make about next year's reunion. The 2010 Caledonia Fair is an ideal opportunity for us to promote the Association, for we feel sure there will be at least some visitors who have a past history with the establishment and have yet to hear of us. So to those of you who will be there, let's see as many of those OCAAA badges on display as possible. To touch further on your emotions, if the 'Factory' is still there this will be the last occasion to see it, as I am informed that after years of indecision it will definitely be demolished next year. I will be attempting over the next few weeks to find out from my contacts within Defence Estates when this is due to happen, for there is a rumour that we may be invited to attend, and to symbolically start the demolition work. I did mention to the acting CO that it would be ideal if this could take place on the same weekend as the Fair. On a final note, to help Don in his efforts to ensure the success of the weekend, please let him know as soon as possible of your intention to attend.

Looking out of my window at the leaves falling (yet another gardening job awaits), and being in Dunfermline last week seeing the shops starting their usual all too early Christmas sales, is a chilly reminder that another winter is almost upon us, and perhaps more poignantly that another year is almost over. So being the last Newsletter of the year, unlike the shops, I have every reason to wish you and your loved ones an early but nevertheless sincere festive greeting, together with wishes for health and happiness for you all throughout the coming year.

News and Views from Scotland

Lionel Fisher:

HMS Caledonia, Commanding Officer

If you attended the Dedication of our Memorial Stone last year, or this year's Reunion, you will remember Commander Adams. He has been a keen supporter of the Association throughout his tenure at Cale. I am please to report that on 1st September he was promoted to Captain and took up a new appointment in the MOD. We congratulate him and wish him well. Meanwhile the XO, A/Lt. Cdr Steve Hazelwood, is acting CO.

Reunion Lunch

The recent Figgard Assoc/OCAAA reunion lunch took place earlier this month at Rosyth and was supported by several members. The next one will take place on Saturday 1st May 2010. More information from either Des Goodwin or your OCAAA Scottish Rep.

Caledonia Fair 2010.

HMS Caledonia will be hosting the Caledonia Fair on Sunday the 20th June 2010. This event supports a local charity and has many attractions including field gun, bands and displays. It will be held on the upper level at Caledonia and for the first time the OCAAA will have a stall at the fair. I am looking for volunteers to help me set up and man the stall. If you can/are willing to help please contact Lionel Fisher, in the New Year!

We are planning to complement this event by holding a reunion at the same time. It is to be held at the North Queensferry hotel, the same hotel we used very successfully in 2007. Please see Don's report for further details.

Captain's Gate



Finally, several members have told us about the gate made by apprentices for the old Commanding Officer's house. Well, even though the house is privately owned now, the gate, with its distinctive badge and name plate, 'Caledonia House', is still there, in use at Comely Bank, Dunfermline.

Reunion Secretary's Report

Don Smith:

During the OCAAA committee meeting held on the 21st October 2009, it was decided that the weekend of the Caledonia Fair 2010 should incorporate an OCAAA reunion. This did not come as a surprise out of the blue as some 30 OCAAA members had already expressed an interest in such an event. The reunion will be held at The Queensferry Hotel on the weekend of the 19th - 20th June 2010. There will be a dinner-disco on the evening of Saturday 19th June and the Caledonia Fair will be held on Sunday 20th June commencing at 11am and closing at 5pm. Transport will be arranged to take OCAAA members and their partners from the hotel to the fair and return throughout the duration of the fair.

The OCAAA currently has a block reservation of 50 rooms at the hotel. The venue for the dinner-disco can accommodate 120 – 140 persons.

The cost per couple for two nights' B&B with dinner disco is £210. This is broken down to double occupancy B&B at £70 per night and the dinner disco at £35 per head. There are no single rooms within the hotel and it is expected that single occupancy will attract a heavy premium, not yet known.

To reserve your room for this event please telephone 08701112520 and ask for Kay, Julie or Allison quoting OCAAA.

Any rooms not taken up by Monday 3rd May 2010 will be released back to the hotel. However this does not stop any OCAAA members booking accommodation after this date.

Treasurer's Report

Alan Williams:

Treasurer's Summary (November 10th 2009)

The Association continues to be in a financially sound position with no outstanding debts or large expenditure on the horizon. A summary of the year to date is set out below.

OCAAA Business Account	-	£5665.74
OCAAA Current Account	-	£ 392.98
Total Cash Funds	-	£6058.72

Income:

Membership	-	£ 225.00
Sale of Slops	-	£ 374.00
Reunion Raffle	-	£ 347.20
Sale of books	-	£ 205.00
Hotel Refund	-	£1400.00
Misc. Adjustments	-	£ 3.69

Expenditure:

Stationery	-	£ 20.41
Postage	-	£142.45
Printing	-	£100.00
Reunion Expenses	-	£427.23
Comm'ration books	-	£ 68.50
Slops Purchased	-	£370.76
Internet	-	£ 54.51
Audit expenses	-	£ 18.00

Totals	-	£2554.89	£1201.86
---------------	---	-----------------	-----------------

Income minus expenditure		+£1353.03
---------------------------------	--	------------------

Secretary's Report

Alan Petrie:

If you have received this newsletter by post either (a) You are not on email. (b) You are on email but do not yet have a broadband connection or cannot download the newsletter (c). You have not told the sec. of your email or new email address (d) You have opted to receive newsletters by post.

About 60% of our members are on email, which saves over £400 per year in printing and postage costs.

If you are on email and have a spam filter please enable it to accept CaledoniasecA@aol.com

Welcome to all new members who have joined since our last newsletter:

Wally Ling – Anson 1944
Mike Holt – Chippy 1953
Steve Waddington – ERA Exmouth –1956- S27
Keith Doggett – Hawke 1959- S33
Ralph Goodburn – Frobisher 1947
Mike Cocks – St.Vincent 1955
David Woollard, – Grenville S41 1962
Ted Holmes – Anson Sept 52.
David Mallett – Anson 21
Associate Member:
Sue Summerfield – widow of Tom Summerfield

Welcome back those lost members who had lost contact with us:

Ralph Lock – Howe 1943
Vic Snarey – Howe 1943

Series Numbers.

Some members are unsure of their series number for the class they joined with. If you wish to have the complete list from series 1 to the last class 83/1 with dates of joining Fisgard and Caledonia please contact the secretary who will send it to you by email or post.

The minutes of the general meeting held on the 5th July 2009 in the Honiley Court Hotel are available from the Secretary by post or email for any member who wants a copy and will be available to read on the 'members only' section of the website. Copies will also be available at the next general meeting to be held on a date to be determined.

We welcome our first Honorary Member. Teddie (Boiler) Drew who was 92 in July of this year. See para. 10 of the 2009 general meeting minutes, which explains why he is an honorary member. He says he still thinks of himself as our D.O.

Finally, I like to keep in touch with all members at least once a year by email, phone or letter. If you have not sent in an update form in the last 12 months, even if your details have not changed, would you please post or email it to me. That way I know you are still alive

and kicking and want to continue to receive newsletters and details of reunions/events.

Where are they now?

Jock Scott series 9 joined Caledonia Sept 1951.

Does anyone know the whereabouts of Tom Hall - Hawke 1959, who has moved from his address in Stubbington, Hants. without leaving a forwarding address.

The following have not been in contact with the Secretary since 2007. Would they please email or write or just leave a message on my answerphone confirming their address details: Robert Daghish, Victor Finnis, Peter Jolliffe, Wally Penfold, Jim Stoneman, Lyndon Sumner.

We remember our friends who have 'Crossed the Bar'

A prayer from the Reverend Mike Ketley:

Almighty God,

Let the pain of our grief be tempered by fond memories as we give you thanks for our loved ones now departed. May we always remember their loyalty and devotion to family, friends and nation. We rejoice to have shared this life and enjoyed their love, and leave them in your eternal love and care; through Jesus Christ our lord.

Amen

The Secretary has been informed of the following members crossing the bar since our last newsletter:

Kenneth Coleman	Benbow 1946
George Beddhall	St. Vincent 1949
Tony Callaghan	Anson 1947
Jo Warner	Benbow 1942
Patrick Tester	Howe 1943
George Mansell	Anson 1944
Bill Thomas	Benbow 1942
Tom Nevin	Benbow 1942
John (Jan) Pearcey	Hawke 1947
David Hewlett	Benbow 1947

*This commission is over and our last watch relieved.
The order came from above: "Finished with main engines, Chief!"
Our duty is done; there'll be no more strife
As we close down the engines on the ship of life.*

Bill Thomas:

Bill's wife, Joan, sent the following letter:-

Dear Ron

Many thanks for your kind letter. It has been a great comfort to receive a huge number of letters and cards, and know that lots of people thought of Bill with affection and esteem.

He, typically, wanted to leave his body for Medical Research, but unfortunately as soon as 'asbestosis' was mentioned, I was told that an inquest would have to take place, and that therefore Southampton University could not accept his body. There will be a very quiet family funeral at a later date - he didn't even want us to be there, but our son and I will go to the crematorium.

Perhaps later on I can organise some sort of get-together, just to celebrate his life. I'm afraid both of us were unable to accept religious beliefs, so a memorial service would be hypocritical.

I just think that we were very lucky to have had 53 years together, full of lots of activity, travel and fun, so I have many happy memories.

Thank you again for your condolences.

Yours sincerely

Joan

The following obituary appeared in the July edition of the Navy News:-

Rear Admiral Derek Spickernell

Trained as an Artificer Apprentice and was selected for a commission in 1939. He graduated as a Lieutenant (E) in 1942 and was appointed to Abdiel laying

minefields in the Sicilian narrows. In 1943 he transferred to the Wayland based in North Africa then volunteered for submarines. After training in the UK he joined the submarine Tally Ho at Trincomalee

taking part in successful actions against Japanese shipping and in 1944 he transferred to the Statesman as engineer officer; her patrols saw many enemy vessels sunk by gunfire; she also fired the last torpedo of the Second World War. After the war he served in submarines Telemachus, Tudor and Alcide; by 1951 was in charge of submarine refits at Portsmouth; by 1960 was Deputy Captain Superintendent of the Underwater Weapons Research Establishment at Portland. Promoted Captain 1962 he was CO of

Fisgard; 1967 – 70 deputy director of the Naval Ship Production Department at Bath; 1970 promoted Commodore and was Chief Executive of the Defence Quality Assurance Board at the MOD. Promoted Rear Admiral 1971 and appointed CB in 1974. He was Director General Quality Assurance at the MOD (Procurement Executive) until retiring 1975. May 14. Aged 87.

Our Memorial Stone

By Gil Harding:

As a token of appreciation for the support, advice and skill given to us by the Stonemasonry Department of the City of Bath College, who produced our memorial stone, the OCAAA has donated two books for use by the apprentices. These books are classics in the stonemasonry trade but have been out of print for several years, however, they have recently been reprinted and we have been able to buy 'Practical Masonry' by William R. Purchase, and 'Geometry of Construction' by T.B.Nicholls and N.P. Keep

National Memorial Arboretum

The National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) invited the OCAAA to a 'stakeholders' meeting/ presentation to tell us of their plans for the future, so last April, Ron and I went there as your representatives.



On arrival, our first stop was at our memorials where, armed with brushes, cloths and water, we weeded around the stones (Fisgard and Caledonia) and seat and gave them all a good clean. Apart from the weeds growing in the pebbles and a layer of grass clippings sticking to the stones they are both in good order. Paving slabs have been put under the seat and it is now secured in position, however there are some gouge marks on the legs (lawn mower/trimmer?) and it is slightly wobbly.

The presentation was due to take place in a marquee but due to the low temperature and rain we were herded back to the conference room for tea and sandwiches, then back to the marquee (where heaters had warmed it up) for the presentation. However, after the initial chaos the actual presentation was very professionally done and produced quite a few surprises!

Lafarge Aggregates, who own the original land which is leased to the NMA (a 1,000 year lease) will soon be closing their last gravel pits in this area and are willing to lease this extra land to the NMA. This would double the area available and obviously raises many opportunities and so a team have been looking into the possibilities. Everything is still in its formative stage so nothing has been finally decided and applications for planning permissions have not yet been made. However the ambition is for it to become a world class site. I will concentrate on the proposals that I think will affect our own memorial and our members who might visit the NMA.

Proposals:

Access to the NMA to be improved. A railway station to be built and a bridge over the road provided for pedestrians arriving by train. The entrance to be improved, car parks extended and public facilities improved. The chapel is often overcrowded so it is proposed to make one side removable to enable it to be extended when necessary but remain small and cosy for smaller gatherings. An awning will cover the area outside the public buildings which can be folded back when the sun shines.

Raised 'hills' at the edges of the NMA would enable people to climb up and look down on the whole area. Paths are to be made through shrubs and trees with the memorials close to the paths so that they are easier to see than at present. It is envisaged that the existing gravel pits will be turned into landscaped lakes and the area around them will be reserved for RN and MN memorials. Other areas will be allocated to the Army, RAF and various civilian organisations.

The downside of all this is that existing memorials and trees, probably including our own, will have to be relocated. We were assured that we would not be expected to pay for this!

Their target is to raise £8m in three years! Completion of the site will take decades.

Obviously, organisations which have established memorials will have concerns, both emotional and practical. Our greatest concern is that our memorial was installed as a test piece and was not designed to be removed. We hope that it can be done without damaging the stone and all the craftsmanship that went into it.

On the plus side, the area will be very attractive when finished and the trees, some of which are dying

Don Smith:-

The OCAAA has a number of items available for purchase by its members. These are available to purchase by making your application direct to myself. However examples of 'Goods for Sale' were on display at the 2009 Reunion. To refresh your memories the items available are:-

because they have been planted too close together, will have space to mature into the arboretum envisaged by its founder.

I think the summary would be, "watch this space". If anyone has any thoughts, observations or concerns please let either Ron or me know and we will pass them on to the NMA.

Now that we have our own memorial stone and tree in the National Memorial Arboretum, we hope that they will be visited as often as possible by members of the OCAAA. When you go there, would you please take a small brush or cloth and make sure that the stones and the seat are kept up to Tiddley Tiffies' standard.

Slops

Blazer Badges, Ties, the HMS Caledonia Book, Jumpers and Polo Shirts in Navy Blue or Royal Blue, complete with embroidered badge.

Life Stories

Many Boiarts have written their life stories for their children and grandchildren and several of the stories in our book are extracted from them. Others may be thinking about it, so Mike Ketley has written about his personal experience in leaving a record and has given some of the sources that he has found to be useful. If you have found any other sources of information please let Gil know so that we can put them in a future newsletter:

The 2009 Reunion at Honiley was very enjoyable. Well done and thank you OCAAA Committee. A remark by Chairman David Gale at the A G M that 'we are all getting on in years' (aren't we just!) prompted me to share some thoughts on the subject:

As a 'sin-bosun' I visit bereaved families to make funeral arrangements. Family members sometimes give the eulogy at the funeral service, but more often they leave it to me. When I meet people in these circumstances, I listen a lot and make notes on what they say so that the funeral is in accord with their wishes and that my address reflects accurately what they have told me about the deceased person and their life. Coincidentally, I am occasionally asked to officiate at funerals of ex-service personnel simply because of my R N background.

Sometimes I am flooded with information and have no difficulty preparing what I am going to say. On other occasions however, I am given minimal details and putting something meaningful together is more of a struggle.

Realising that my own children knew very little about my time in the R N and if asked about it would not be able to say much at all, I put together presentation folders containing a record of my service career for my two daughters which I hope they will in due course pass to my grandchildren.

Via the internet I obtained official R N photographs of all ten ships in which I served, scanned and copied them and wrote notes about my time in each one. I wrote about times ashore as well, - yes there were some!' - with copies of photographs taken around the world. *H M S Caledonia The Apprentices' Story*, the excellent book compiled by Gil Harding for the OCAAA is a great memory jogger in writing about the 'Camp of Calley' and how time in the R N began. Other sources that I used are listed below, but surfing the internet can be very rewarding.

My own father died during World War Two without my having known him. I knew little except what my mum, now deceased, had told me of him. I researched as much as I could about him and included the details in the folders, together with photographs, including some taken when I visited his grave in India in 2001.

He is buried in a comparatively small Commonwealth War Graves cemetery located well off the tourist trail and none of my family had ever been there. I was fortunate in meeting a local historian who was writing a book on the service history of all those from my dad's home town who died in the two world wars. I supplied him with some photographs and family records that he was able to use; for his part he had researched Regimental Records and Press Archives and was able to give me details about my dad and the campaigns in which he had been involved that I had known nothing about. Possible sources of information for this type of research are listed below, but again, surfing the net is very helpful.

I am aware that some who read this will have already made sure that their loved ones are properly informed about their life and career. The obituaries written by family members for the Newsletter are a good example. On the other hand, there may be some who have it in mind to put their story together but have not yet managed it – go on, get busy!

Mike Ketley

R N Ship Photographs

www.wrightandlogan.co.uk - linked to the **Royal Navy Museum HM Dockyard Portsmouth:** www.victory2005.co.uk

Own personal service records

Very useful for ships, dates and places

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

2 Marlow Road
Maidenhead
Berks SL6 7DX
www.cwgc.org

R N, R A F and Regimental Museums

Birth and Death Certificates etc. can be obtained online from the General Register Office or by post from there or from local register offices
www.direct.gov.uk

Some Census Records are available online

For Family Tree enquiries there are websites such as Ancestry who for a fee will provide detailed information

CERA Vernon (Ginger) Coles DSM

Ron Emerson:

Recently in the Daily Telegraph there was an obituary to Lt Cmdr Max Shean DSO and Bar who had been the CO of a midget submarine during WW2. The obituary also mentioned that one of his crew was ERA 4 Vernon Coles.

One of our members researches medal awards, particularly of RN personnel, and he came up with some interesting data about Vernon.

A friend of mine had Vernon Coles as one of his instructors on the Mechanician's Course and also served with him at HMS Dolphin. He managed to find a telephone number so I was able to phone Vernon at his home and during a very long and interesting conversation, which would make into a very good book, I have extracted a short summary:

Vernon was a foundling and had several foster parents whilst growing up. At the outbreak of the war in 1939 he was part way through a seven year tool-making apprenticeship when he decided to join the navy. He was accepted as a stoker but on his first ship he was sent for by his Commander 'E' who wanted to know why he had joined the navy as a stoker with his background in engineering. He was sent off the ship to do the test job and interview for Direct Entry ERA, which he passed and went to sea as an ERA fourth class.

He volunteered for submarines and from there into midget submarines and was awarded the DSM as the result of a successful raid in Bergen where the target was a floating dry-dock being used by the German navy. The X-craft passed under the dry-dock and an explosive device was planted on a merchant ship alongside the wall. The subsequent explosion not only put the ship out of action but damaged the dockside making it unusable.

The X-craft was then sent out to the Pacific where the target was two underwater cables relaying messages from Japan. If these could be severed then the Japanese would be forced to use wireless communications which could be intercepted and deciphered. A design was drawn up for a grapnel type hook to be towed under the cable so that the crew of the X-craft could cut it when out of the mud. The device was made by Vernon Coles and it worked well. Short lengths were cut out of each cable to prove to the American Admiral in charge that the cable was no longer usable. Admiral Chester Nimitz was the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Ocean Areas at this time and when he saw the midget submarines for the first time declared "these are suicide craft which had no place in the Allies' order of battle".

After the war Vernon led a more conventional role retiring as a CERA.

Bob Simpson – Hawke 43, tells of a reunion at sea:-

I recently took a cruise on MV SAGA ROSE to Greenland & Iceland and on the 5th August they had an Armed Forces Reunion on board at a spot about 70 miles from where HMS Hood sank in May 1941.

Apparently these reunions on Saga Rose were initiated when Surgeon Commander Rick Jolly (of 'Jackspeak' and Falklands fame) was on the vessel some years ago. All ex service passengers on board were invited and we had a tot of neaters at noon. The Army and RAF sipped theirs but the RN types tended to 'down it in one'!

I was in conversation with an ex Chief Stoker who had served at Caledonia as Divisional CPO to Benbow in the Fifties. He may well now seek OCAA membership as I advised that he was eligible for Associate status. I did not get his name but in the attached photograph he is the tall man standing on the right whilst my head is just visible third from the right.



The 5th August is a significant date for Hawke 43 as it was on that day 66 years ago that we joined the Royal Navy.

HMS Caledonia – 1956 to 1960

Danny Marks (then a Sub Lt) was appointed to Caledonia as Commander's Assistant and Establishment Maintenance Officer and he would like to share some of his memories of that time:

“Between 1956 and 1958 HMS Caledonia was going through a critical period. Morale among the apprentices was very low when I joined Caledonia. The large asbestos huts which housed the apprentices had been built in 1940 to last ten years and their heating systems broke down with regular monotony and the electrical systems often became overloaded with the apprentices' radios and record players. Trainees came back from the sports fields covered in mud and freezing, to find that they couldn't have a hot shower. The young men were getting frustrated and started to take the law into their own hands. To get their electrical equipment to work they resorted to tampering with the wiring, overloading the system and causing the main fuses to blow, prompting them to be replaced with nails! However the dockyard authorities would not sanction repairs after working hours so the dormitories, housing as many as thirty young men, would be kept in darkness for as long as a whole weekend.

Captain George Raper and Commander Steve Barton, an ex-apprentice himself, took on the task of turning the situation around while at the same time maintaining discipline. As the newly appointed Commander's Assistant and Establishment Maintenance Officer I was given the responsibility of carrying out the improvements in liaison with the dockyard authorities. I had to threaten the dockyard authorities that if they would not carry out the necessary improvements we

would use naval personnel to do the work. Only then were the necessary funds authorised for the dockyard to spend on the improvements and labour, including attendance at weekends when necessary.

Gradually the facilities started to improve. The showers provided an abundance of hot water and the electricity system was modified to accept the extra electrical equipment. Morale and academic standards among the trainees started to improve.

Shipwrights had carried out improvements to Nelson Hall to make it more suitable for use as a theatre and dance hall and the Welfare Committee had provided funds to buy some musical instruments. My wife, Margaret, and I became heavily involved in stage and drama and helped to form the Caledonia Amateur Theatrical Society. I was proud to be presented with the first 'CATS' award for contributions to the Society.



C.A.T.S. Bailey Trophy April 1960

On a personal note:-

I was married in St Margaret's church in Dunfermline on a Saturday and Captain Raper cancelled Divisions to allow officers to go to the wedding. A piper from Caledonia's Pipe Band attended and piped us out of the church.

Away from Caledonia, Margaret continued to perform as a leading lady and soprano at the Carnegie Hall in Dunfermline. She now sings with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Choir."

Loch Fitty

Memories of Caledonia were triggered for Mike Booth when he read a newspaper article which said that angling in Loch Fitty had ceased due to problems with restocking the fish:

Generations of boy tiffs learned to sail on Loch Fitty. The sailing centre there was stocked with Bosuns, RNSA 14s and Fireflies and the staff consisted of a Shipwright, a seaman and a civvy, who constantly repaired and kept the boats on top line for apprentices sailing in their sports afternoons, as well as some evenings and weekends. When the staff 'knocked off' at 5pm, two apprentices from the special 'Loch Fitty duty watch' were delivered by staff car, together with their evening meal rations for the night, and they provided security until the next morning when they were collected and returned to Calley (where they enjoyed a mismuster breakfast in the galley before turning-to late). The weekend duty lasted from 1600 Friday to 0800 Monday and was very popular as the boys' girlfriends used to come and visit and there was a pub at the top of the lane at Kingseat. There was no shortage of volunteers in my day, we even had a couple of Weapon Mechs who were training at Calley to fill the gaps caused by the shortage of OAs!

I was in the Caledonia dinghy sailing team and we also sailed Bosuns out of Port Edgar, especially against the Civil Service – where I met my wife in the sailing club.

We also sailed offshore in an Eventide sloop called Caluna, which was a little bilge keeler, and the ex-German STC, Sea Breeze (I think). We did a lot of North Sea races in her and were well looked after by the posh sailing fraternity from the Royal Forth Yacht Club, some of whom knew what it was like to be a young sailor as they had served in World War 2 or as National Service men.

I was also the pulling whaler coxswain for my division, something I started at Figgard under the instruction of Dickie Brunwin. We regularly raced on the Forth using whalers and cutters from the dockyard boat pound. I used to choose big, well fed Aussies and Kiwis for my crew and train them by towing a galvanised bucket as a drogue during practice (my boats always carried an extra oar because they were adept at snapping them during a start). We used to run down to the yard in the morning before classes to train - or they did - I rode a pussers red devil if I could scrounge one. They used to have great pleasure in throwing me overboard at the end if we won! As a salmon & trout fisherman, I have often fished Loch Fitty for trout over the past few years, when visiting my wife's relatives in Rosyth, and enjoyed a bacon sandwich in the old boat shed which the loch owners used as a fishing lodge and shop until its closure.

The Last Artificers in the Royal Navy

Artificer Training: The end of an ERA

John Jefferies informs us that training of Artificers will cease in the RN (HMS Sultan) on Friday 12th February 2010 when the last class of Engineering Artificers pass out of HMS Sultan and into history.

The Commodore of Sultan has apparently invited all past and present Artificers to attend this event. WO1

Woods is the parade organiser. Our Secretary is making further enquiries and will contact members nearer the time. Meanwhile, those who are RNEBS members and wish to attend can contact the RNEBS Secretary Mr Les Dancy, 30 Holbrook Road, Fareham, Hampshire, PO16 0TL man.sec@rnebs.co.uk

HMS Sultan Museum

Sam Weaver (retired SD Officer) has taken over as Curator of the Museum at HMS Sultan. His e-mail is weaverd22@talktalk.net and his telephone number is 01329841513.

He would be pleased to hear from anyone who has any artefacts from their Tiffy days that they would be willing to donate to the museum.

Artapp ye Scribe



Hearken to me, O ye tribes of Boiarts for was it not written that the Boiarts of the Clan of Calley would gather at the Court of Honiley in the Shire of Warwick ere the first week of the seventh month of the ninth year of the second millennium had passed? Yea, when all that were present had mustered, our man of the big chair, David of the High Wind did bid us to stand as our Pres-i-dent Ron, Son of Emer, and our Guest of Honour the Great Chief of Caledonia took their places at the high table, for a great feast had been arranged in the style of the Court of Honiley. This differed greatly from the 'meat and two veg' to which the Boiarts had been accustomed in the Halls of Dining in their native Caledonia. Great was the feasting and many a glass was raised to "absent friends" for had not several Boiarts travelled to do their duties in the four corners of the earth?

Yea, when the feasting was over the Great Chief of Caledonia rose from his seat and a hush descended on the assembled company. He told us of the huge ships that the Lord Puss had ordered to be built in Rosyth

and how massive cranes were being brought from China to help in their building. Many a Boiart was musing that perhaps the workshops of Calley would once again ring with the sounds of the skills of the Artificers and their passing-out test job could be 'two cranes' followed by 'two aircraft carriers'.... Their dreamings were shattered when our Guest of Honour declared that he had ordered the 'skittle alley' to be razed to the ground. Great was the wailing and the moaning, when suddenly, the local natives made music and many Boiarts swayed and moved with their ladies, while others played their favourite past-time of 'swinging the lantern' and 'do you remember old wot's 'is name?' until the dreaded words were heard: "the bar is now closed!"

At break of dawn, after our fast was broken, David of the High Wind did call a meeting of the council where there was much nodding among the elders.

Lionel the Fisher reported that the great establishment of Caledonia would have its biennial fayre ere thirteen moons had waxed and waned. Several did wonder if this could be an excuse for another gathering of the Boiarts of the Clan of Calley.....

Then the elders took counsel unto each other and decreed that all the tribes should journey far into the wilderness and await the signs which must surely come to tell the Boiarts of the place and time of their next gathering.

A Plea from Oz

This should have appeared in the previous newsletter, sorry!

As was reported in an earlier newsletter, Dick Roebuck of the RAN is researching the training of apprentices in the RAN. One of our members, an ex EA who was on exchange with the RAN in the early 60s and taught some of their apprentices, sent him an e-mail which has now been mislaid. Dick would like to make contact with him and would like to put him in contact with Keith (Charlie) Bradbury.

Dick's e-mail address: r.roebuck@optusnet.com.au

Dick goes on to say that he has found our book, HMS Caledonia – The Apprentices' Story very useful in his

research and he is amazed at the similarities. Quote: "You can almost mirror the events of the RAN apprentices. The similarities are incredible. I suppose it's understandable given our system was modelled on the RN version. Anyway, the book has given me a few good ideas upon which I can base some of my research into the RAN system of boy tiffs (They are affectionately known here as MOBIs – the Most Objectionable Bastards Imaginable)

Kiwi Korner

John Westphall:

We are having our next Ex - Artificer Apprentices Reunion Lunch Saturday 20 March 2010. Venue is Navy Sports Complex in Devonport, Auckland. Any ex-Apprentices visiting NZ will be most welcome to

attend and contact is either Dennis Pringle dennis.pringle@nzdf.mil.nz or myself: johnwesty@xtra.co.nz

Did you know?

Ordnance Artificers' Reunion

Colin Giles is arranging a reunion in Weymouth on Saturday 6th February 2010. Any OAs who would like to attend should contact Colin, whose address is: Geranium Cottage, 8 North Square, Chickerehill, Weymouth, DT3 4DX

MoD Forces Discount Scheme

This scheme has been set up for serving and veteran members of the armed forces. Over 800 companies are offering discounts via the scheme. To register, or for more information, see their web site: www.forcesdiscounts-mod.co.uk

The Veterans Concessionary Travel Scheme (VCTS) started on 2nd November 2008

David Thompson sent us the details of the London Transport Oyster card veteran's concession. He says they are easy to obtain.

The concession is available to those in receipt of an ongoing payment under the War Pensions Scheme or Guaranteed Income Payment under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme. War widows, war widowers and dependants in receipt of the same payments will also be eligible.

Eligible applicants will be issued with an Oyster photocard. This will enable you to travel free at any time within London on bus, Tube, DLR, tram and London Overground services.

This scheme is of particular benefit to veterans under 60 and those who live outside London who are not eligible for a Freedom Pass.

Helpline: 0845 331 9872 (open 09:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday)

Phone 0845 311 9872 if you are over 60 and live in London, have an armed forces war pension, or are in receipt of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme. Ask for an application form

Britain's Nuclear Tests (extracted from Legion Extra)

After a Hearing in the High Court, British veterans have won the right to sue the Government for compensation. Some 28,000 servicemen were involved in the testing programme during the 1950s, and many insist that they, their children and grandchildren, have suffered from illnesses in far greater numbers than the rest of the population. Quote: "Russia, China, Australia, USA, Canada, and the Isle of Man have all agreed to pay compensation. Just the British are left."

The MoD is to conduct an assessment of the health needs of Britain's Nuclear Test Veterans and their descendants.

Anyone who would like to participate in the study should email bntva.g2@googlemail.com or visit

<http://bntvg2.fh50.com>

ID card scheme for veterans (extracted from Legion Extra)

Forces veterans are to be issued with ID cards in an attempt to ensure they receive the priority treatment they are entitled to. This includes: easier access to housing, discounts on travel services, priority in the NHS.

HMS SULTAN – move to Wales?

A petition has been set up objecting to a proposal to move HMS Sultan to South Wales. For more information, or to take part in the petition, please use the following address.

<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/HMS-Sultan/>

And Finally.....

By Gil:

Where are the talented artists who produced all those excellent cartoons that used to appear in the Caledonia magazine? If any of you would like to see your efforts in print once again in our newsletter, we would appreciate hearing from you.

Who likes drawing ships? Pictures of the ships 'Caledonia' are few and far between. Would anyone (or more than one) like to draw/paint these bastions of the high seas which bear this noble name? We could feature the pictures on Association notecards and I am sure that the wardroom or senior rates mess in HMS Caledonia would be delighted to have the originals adorn their walls.

Would anyone like to help with the editing and production of this newsletter? Due to a drawn out spell of sickness in my family, this edition nearly didn't happen and I suddenly became aware that we needed a small team of talents rather than depending on a single individual.

If anyone has anything that they would like to be considered for inclusion in our next newsletter, please send it to Gil Harding. We are hoping to feature stories about Herbert Lott Fund prizes and 'rabbits'! Of course, stories about Caledonia and Tiffs in the Navy are always welcome.

OCAA Committee

The latest committee meeting was held in HMS Caledonia where the wardroom kindly invited us to their Trafalgar Night Dinner. I think you have to agree that they 'scrubbed up' quite nicely!



The committee, with their ever supportive and long suffering wives are, from left to right, Gil Harding, Alan Williams, Lionel Fisher, David Gale, Ron Emerson, Alan Petrie, Don Smith.

Contact Addresses

President

Ron Emerson
'The Stile'
6 Springwood Lane
Romiley
Stockport
SK6 4JL
0161 449 9259

Chairman

David Gale
Schmitterstrasse 14
41836 Huckelhoven
Germany
0049 (0) 2433958500

Secretary

Alan Petrie
'Harness Cottage'
4 Mayfield Mews
Lee-on-Solent
Hants
PO13 9HT
02392 551644

Treasurer

Alan Williams
9 Metcalfe Avenue
Stubbington
Hants
PO14 2HY
01329 668777

All the above can be contacted by e-mail via our web site: <http://www.ocaaa.org>

Newsletter Editor/ Book Sales

Gil Harding
'Wellsbury'
Little Entry
Wells
Somerset
BA5 2TP
01749 672535

Reunion Secretary

Don Smith
24 Wakefield Avenue
Fareham
Hants
PO16 7RP
01329 318440

Webmaster

Phil Price
Your webmaster can be contacted via:-
artappyespyda@ocaaa.org .

Scottish Rep

Lionel Fisher
73 East Craigs Rigg
Edinburgh
Scotland
EH12 8JA

OCAAA Member Details Update Form.

Forename/Nickname_____

Surname_____

Address

Phone No._____

Email address._____

Preferred method of newsletter delivery Post/email *

Membership No. (if you can remember it)___

Date Joined Caledonia_____

Series No_____

Specialisation/Trade_____

Ex Apprentice/Staff/Widow of ex member*_____

Wife/partner/next of kin name * _____

Please send me a membership list by email/post/ do not need one* (1st class stamp would be appreciated if you want it by post)

* Please delete as necessary

Comments

Please complete if any of your details have changed and return to:-

Alan Petrie
Secretary OCAAA
Harness Cottage,
4, Mayfield Mews,
Lee-on-the-Solent,
Hampshire
PO13 9HT
Tel.02392 551644
CaledoniasecA@aol.com