



THE BEVIN BOYS ASSOCIATION

FOUNDED 1989

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NEWSLETTER FOR SPRING 2015.

Chairman's Message.

I have just returned from a three week cruise to the 'Garden Isles of the Atlantic' with my cousin, on board the Saga Sapphire. Excellent ship and crew, although the weather could have been better. Some of the flowers on Madeira were out in bloom, but mainly we were a little too early in the season for the flowers on the rest of the islands. So I am feeling refreshed for the year ahead! It was lovely to see the bulbs poking their heads up and starting to bloom on our return.

I wish you all a Happy and Healthy 2015,
With Kind Regards,
Anne. (Lane)

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY.

With sunshine today and the days getting longer it really feels that Spring is just around the corner. Thank you to all who keep in touch with news – letters, phone calls and e-mails.

Where Are You Now?

I had an interesting letter from Ken Porter who lives in Kent. He recalls his time as a Bevin Boy training at Cresswell. There a Greek lad, called them out on strike -- as a result they got an increase in pay of 10 shillings! Perhaps you are one of the ones who benefited? Later Ken tells of his transfer to Welbeck Colliery, Notts. His landlady was a Mrs Shaw. He became firm friends with her and her family. The contact has lasted all these years, including holidays and visits. He became godfather to their son Bob and met up with him as recently as last June 2014. It is good to hear of a happy outcome for a young Bevin Boy away from home but welcomed and looked after by the locals, many were not so fortunate!

Ronald Pearse wrote in December

I watched the T V program about Bevin Boys and I noticed that it referred to a BB living in lodgings during his time in the mines. This was not the experience I and many others had. We were housed in so called Miners Hostels.. These were laid out like army quarters -- rows and rows of Nissen huts In my case it was New Kyo miners Hostel, Anfield Plain, County Durham. I spent nearly three years there in the last part of my time. Twelve of us in one particular hut became a friendly community. I would love to know how many of those twelve are still alive. Six of us had a reunion some time after we were 'released', but I have lost touch with them since, but would welcome any news of the following:-

Geoff Barnard (who later went to Canada)
Ray Clarke (from Merton)
Doug Lowe (who sadly died some years ago)
Mike O' Donovan (who later joined the R.A.F.)

Harry Scott (from Eltham).

Ted Wickham (from Enfield)

and another Harry (surname forgotten --next bed to Ray)

Ronald would welcome any news, please e-mail him at ronald.pearse@myphone.coop or write to him at 15.Burton Street, Loughborough. LE11 2DT. Or via Liz.

Finally a long shot - the daughter of Frederick Lyndon Duffield is trying to ascertain whether her father, who has passed away, served as a Bevin Boy.on leaving school in1944. He was known as Lyndon, born in Leeds in August 1926, then went up to Oxford in 1946. There is a gap in his life between those two events which she is trying to fill in. Any help would be much appreciated. It is amazing that we are still at times able to put people in touch with each other or provide links to the past; which is now an important part of social history.

As usual I am here to help,

With all good wishes for the year ahead,

D. Elizabeth Todd (Liz)

MESSAGE from the TREASURER.

As you may be aware our Association funds are banked with HSBC. Recent news releases allege that some activities within HSBC give cause for concern. I have received comments from a few of our members as to our continuing dealing with HSBC.

My first question, are our funds safe?

I had a meeting with a senior member of staff at the local branch. He assured me that the first £85000 of our accounts is covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, which far exceeds our present funds.

He explained that the alleged irregularities are confined to a small number of accounts held in a closed section of HSBC in Switzerland. There will be no cross contamination into any other part of the Company.

I am happy to assure our Members that our funds are safe at the present time.

On the question of us remaining as HSBC customers. I shall raise this matter at our next committee meeting at the end of June.

Harry P.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT.

We have again received a great many letters of support and saying how much you all look forward to reading the Newsletters. With, of course, your subscription of £5 to continue receiving the twice yearly Newsletter! I would also like to thank so many of you who have also enclosed a little extra for the general funds!

We would like to ask if any Bevin Boys sons, daughters, grandsons or granddaughters would like to join the committee or help in any other way? The committee usually meets twice a year, once at the AGM and Reunion, and this year near Alrewas before the Forces Day.

PLEASE, do consider this.

Please would you write, telephone or e-mail me, to notify me of Change of Address and/or Telephone numbers and if you hear of any Bevin Boys, members or not, who have sadly passed away. My address and Telephone number is at the top of this Newsletter, e-mail address is alananne2749@gmail.com

Best wishes,

Anne.

Sales.

Total Sales for this year are £61.10p. For all Sales, please apply to Mrs A. Lane, Snipelands, Bourton Combe, Flax Bourton, Bristol. BS48 3QL. Tel: 01275 463703. All cheques to be made payable to **THE BEVIN BOYS ASSOCIATION**. Please add **£1 for the lighter items & £2 for the books, as they are expensive to post.**

Blazer Badge	@ £7.50	New Blue Enamel Badge	@ £2.00
Miners Lamp Keyring	@ £4.00	Ladies Brooch	@ £5.00
Digging Up the Past	@ £10.00	The Forgotten Conscript	@ £10.00

Bevin Boy Banner Postcard, 2 different Black & White postcards of prints from A Bevin Boy Remembers & 2 colour & 2 black & white prints of A4 size from A Bevin Boy Remembers
ALL POSTCARDS & A4 PRINTS @ £0.20 each

Many Thanks to all our 'customers', as always!

Anne.

National Reunion & AGM

The Reunion held in Blackheath last October appeared to be very successful. It seemed to meet everyone's expectations. Staff were excellent, food enjoyable and the Hotel Manager took it upon himself to highlight the Bevin Boy's Story. Our outing had unplanned excitement such as being padlocked inside the confines of Parliament for a short time before our coach took us across the road to the London Eye.

The AGM, which is the purpose of the Reunion, was well attended and we all felt we belonged to something special. Our evening dining with the Mayor and Mayoress of the Royal Borough of Greenwich was uplifting. Neither took their seats until they had spoken personally to everyone present. After dinner the Mayor gave an interesting talk.

Now to this year's Reunion - During the first week of November 2014 I tried to book a hotel in Buxton – all fully booked! Because it seems that the large travel groups buy up most places from one year to the next. However, having to admit defeat and time was becoming a challenge, I sought help from Airedale Tours who noted all our requirements and here is the result.

Bevin Boys Association Reunion and AGM. 5th – 9th October 2015 at **The Hallmark Hotel, Derby**. NB - NOT the Hallmark Inn.

The hotel is situated opposite the train station, which seems to have very good rail connections. It was originally the Midland Hotel. Coach and Bus station in town runs a regular bus service, which takes four minutes, to the hotel, which is straight across the road from the rail station. With adequate services there is no need to book a taxi. Just remember to bring your English Bus pass! Not knowing the area Geoff and I spent one night at the Hotel with Dinner, Bed and Breakfast. The food and service was good. The Staff are excitedly looking forward to meeting Bevin Boys!. Importantly, there is adequate free car parking to the rear of the hotel. We visited the Bus Station and were very impressed by the areas covered by public transport. One bus service offers a journey to Buxton, taking in the Derby Dales for one hour plus each way and bus passes accepted. You can also continue your journey to Manchester, or go to Chesterfield or Nottingham from the Bus station.

As Airedale Tours have assisted with our hotel booking, they also offer free insurance to cover the hotel stay – **subject to conditions**. When you send to me your stamped and self-addressed envelope, I shall forward to you a copy of their Insurance Agreement. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY. **A Deposit of £60 per.person is required to be with me by April 7th. Cheques payable to Bevin Boys Association Social.** Total cost is likely to be £344 per.person, plus a single supplement- yet to be agreed. The balance needs to be with me by July 31st.

Our week will follow the usual pattern -

Monday Oct 5th – Arrival, Registration, etc.

Tuesday - Explore the Derby area, take a train or bus ride perhaps.

Wednesday - Outing Day. Our coach will take us to Alrewas to admire the various memorials commemorating the different groups and to especially admire Harry Parkes finished product in the design of our Memorial. After refreshments at Alrewas we shall continue and visit Bakewell. Here is your chance to enjoy a taste of Bakewell PUDDING! We shall return to our hotel for dinner.

Thursday – The AGM will take place in the afternoon.

We thank Anne for her leadership during the past year and all the hard work she has put in with Secretary Liz Todd, to bring a successful conclusion by retrieving ‘our’ Banner.

In closing, I thank you for your patience and support which for me has been a difficult year – we continue to live out of packing cases/boxes as we await plans for an extension to be built to house our kitchen equipment. I have only had use of a hob since last September – No grill and No oven - yet!

As we look ahead to October, may we all be blessed with the feeling of fellowship, which has grown over the years.

Margaret.

AREA REUNION's for 2015.

If any Area Representatives would like to send in news of their Reunions or Activities - I would be pleased to publish them in the Newsletter. I would also like to thank the Area Reps, past and present, for all their hard work in arranging reunions, etc.

SOUTH WALES: Unfortunately the Area Representative, Alan Jennings has not been at all well, so consequently is unable to host a reunion.

Cheshire, Lancs & North Wales. June 10th - A lunch.in Heswall. Please ring **Liz Todd** for details.

EAST ANGLIA - Sunday June 14th a lunch in Norwich - please ring **Margaret Rose** for details.

SOUTH WEST. - Monday 22nd June a reunion lunch at The Star, with bus stops outside! Hope to see everyone again. Please ring **Anne Lane** if you wish to attend.

ESSEX & NE LONDON : In response to the vote last year, the reunion this year will be at the Mersea Vineyard on July 15th. For further information please send a SAE to **Eric Johnson**, 22 Alexandra Avenue, WEST MERSEA, Colchester. CO5 8BG.

National Service Conscripts Annual Reunion

The Annual National Conscripts Reunion will again be held at the National Memorial Arboretum Alrewas, Staffordshire on Sunday 28th June 2015 at 1-30 to 3-30pm.

Our Association Committee is planning to attend and I hope to find two volunteers on the day to carry our Banner on the short March-Past at the end of the Ceremony.

If you are a Bevin Boy or family of, and are planning to attend and want seats, please send me a name and the number of people in your group before the end of April.

The NMA have wheelchairs for visitor use for a small charge.

Further information will be posted on our web page at www.bevinboysassociation.co.uk

Harry Parkes.

Bevin Boys Association Website.

Just to remind you all that we have an **Official** Bevin Boys Association website. This contains information about the Association, pictures of the Bevin Boy's plot at Alrewas, the contact details for all the Committee. Also the Newsletter, Rules and Regulations which are password protected and only accessible to Bevin Boy members who have paid their yearly subs. Please go to:- <http://www.bevinboysassociation.co.uk> or to email the committee bevinboys1943@gmail.com
Thank you to everyone who has submitted items for the Newsletter.

If you prefer to have access to the Newsletter online or email or have any input or news items for publication please contact me on Tel: 01275 463703 or e-mail: alananne2749@gmail.com

Anne.

National Memorial Arboretum News.

Recently I visited the National Memorial Arboretum Alrewas to give a talk to a group of visitors about Bevin Boys and their Memorial.

I was pleased to see a newly sited Memorial occupying the plot adjacent to ours. Two female figures in uniform to remember the Land Army and Lumber Jills from both the 1914--18 and 1939--45 wars. The Land Army statue holds a pitchfork in one hand. The Lumber Jill carries a woodmans axe on one shoulder.

I think, very fitting neighbours!

A start has been made on the Heroes paved area. A small number of slabs carved with Regimental Emblems have been laid on the area of grass beside the Chapel. The final plan is still undecided but is likely to occupy a smaller area than the original design. The number of slabs may be restricted. I shall be monitoring the situation for our contribution.

The BBC is producing a radio programme featuring the memories of young men in wartime coming up to National Service Conscription, the effect of Ernest Bevin ballot scheme and their experiences as Bevin Boys. Three of our members have already been interviewed and when completed is planned to be broadcast on BBC Radio 4 toward the end of May 2015

Details when known will be available on our website.

Harry Parkes.

The Return of a Bevin Boy by Anne Culley (nee Cotterrell)

Osie Cotterrell (known as Len in the pits) was called up in 1944 to help keep the home fires burning and trained to be a Bevin Boy at Tunnel Pit at Haunchwood, Nuneaton – close to Coventry Colliery. After training Osie was sent to the Cannock Chase coalfields and billeted at the Bevin Boy Hostel at Wimblebury near Hednesford. He worked first at West Cannock No. 3 Plant and later at Cannock Wood. This was a far cry from living in Herefordshire and being a plasterer in the family business!

Years later my brother and I took Dad and Mum back to Hednesford and the site of the hostel where, at that time, the concrete pads were still on the ground of a very overgrown site. Dad worked out where his dormitory once stood. We now go forward, and one Christmas I was looking for a present for Dad and got in touch with the West Cannock Historical Society and this is where the "Return" begins. Explained that Dad had worked as a Bevin Boy in the area, and were there any books to buy on the two pits where Dad had worked. Alan Dean replied and said yes there were books, which duly arrived. Sometime

later, Dad contributed towards a new book that Alan was writing. When the Hednesford Mining Museum was being updated and a new Mining Gallery opened, the only Bevin Boy known of was Osie Cotterrell!

NEWS from Phil Yates

I am sorry to report the death of Brian Dibb of Winchester on 18th October 2014 aged 87. Brian attended one or two of the early reunions at Chatterley Whitfield Mining Museum, Stoke-on-Trent (1993/4). Although he was not able to take a very active part in the Association he always wanted to be kept informed of its progress. I often met him in town and had a chat with him. I did write to his widow, on behalf of the Association, with our condolences.

I was sorry to read in the Autumn Newsletter of the deaths of Brenda Thomas and Gill Holloway both of whom had connections with Winchester. Brenda, with her husband Ken, made me feel very welcome on my first reunion at Stoke-on-Trent in 1992. Chatting to my next door neighbour one day, it transpired he had a relation who lived next door to Ken and Brenda. What a coincidence!

When I wrote the first booklet about us called *The Bevin Boys Story*, which was commissioned by the Association, this was launched in November 1993 at Florence Miners Welfare Club, Stoke-on-Trent by the Lord Mayor. At the same time Gill Holloway was launching her book on the paintings by her late husband Ted, which he did whilst working down the pit as a Bevin Boy. I had a pleasant chat with her and again, it transpired that Ted came from a village near Winchester. Another coincidence!

I sympathise with Denys Owen on the time taken by the BBC on his interview with them (as reported in the Autumn Newsletter). I experienced a similar situation with ITV (South) some years ago, when they came to my house for an interview about Bevin Boys which was called *Three Minutes* (a filler-up before the ITN National news at 5.40 p.m. It took up the whole afternoon with re-takes etc., - at least they paid me £40 for the use of the electricity! Worse still, was an interview with Warwick Taylor and myself on a slag heap at Chatterley Whitfield Mining Museum in November 1993 for Channel 4. The freezing fog was coming down late afternoon – and we were still filming! Heigh Ho – those were the days!