



THE BEVIN BOYS ASSOCIATION

FOUNDED 1989

CHAIRMAN Anne.E.Lane. Tel: 01275 463703.

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NEWSLETTER FOR SPRING 2017.

Chairman's Message.

Are there any more forthcoming 90th birthdays? Please send names and dates to myself or the Secretary, Liz Todd.

Any Memories you would like published in the Newsletter? Please send to myself. The other Bevin Boys especially enjoy reading these and it makes the Newsletter more interesting!!

We Also Served This Easter, the National Coal Mining Museum for England at Caphouse Colliery will be teaming up with Theatre Royal Wakefield to perform an emotive dramatisation of the nationalisation of the coal industry, seen through the lives of the Bevin Boys. The play will highlight the young men during WWII, who had hoped to join the armed services but were sent to unfamiliar communities to work in the coal mines and face a painful and unsettling life. The play has been created as part of the Museum's year long programme of activities around Nationalisation and will be performed over the Easter Weekend at Caphouse Colliery, Postcode **WF4 4RH**.

Dates: 14*, 15, 16, 17 April. **Times:** 11am, 1pm, 3pm (each performance lasts around 45 minutes) **Cost:** Tickets are FREE but need to be booked. **Booking: To book your tickets or lunch please email Booking.officer@ncm.org.uk or ring 01924 848806**

Bevin Boy Lunch 14 April * Although, you are free to book a ticket and attend any of the performances, the Museum would like to invite Bevin Boys and their families to enjoy a light lunch together at 12pm and see a performance on 14 April 2017 at 1pm. **Cost:** for lunch is £7.50 and will include a selection of sandwiches, scones, tea and coffee.

To Book please See above.

I wish you all a Happy and Healthy 2017,
Anne. (Lane)

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY.

At the time of writing, the first snowdrops and crocus are showing their heads – Welcome to the harbingers of Spring.

Where Are You Now.

I continue to send out 90th birthday cards to members, 52 sent to date. There is still time to notify me, as I still have 6 more to send. The last ballot was held in April 1945. Phil Yates from Winchester was in that last call-up. You may remember he wrote one of the early books to be published; 'The Bevin Boys Story' in 1993. The year Gordon and I joined the committee and also first met Phil.

Following my request for information regarding Jimmy Savile's claims to be a Bevin Boy; working in various pits and benefiting from a 'Rest and Recuperation' session at Crayke Castle near York; at the moment nothing positive to report. One or two members have given Gerard Tubb from Sky News, some leads that he is following up. George Morton from Grimsby sums up J. Savile's claim for 'Rest and Recuperation' with the succinct 'I should cocoa!' A lovely expression I haven't heard for some time. NO-ONE has written in with any knowledge of ever being offered 'Rest and Recuperation' as a Bevin Boy, in any location.

Derek Hallow wishes to remind members that he is still keen to receive reports of their Bevin Boys experiences, to be included in his next book. Please send to Derek Hallows, 14, Navigation Road, Altrincham, Cheshire. WA14 1NF, with permission to have them printed.

Remember any copies of these accounts, Barbara McElroy – Archivist – would be pleased to receive and place in our archive at the Imperial War Museum.

Derek recalls how he received an award for a slogan he submitted in response to a Coal Board competition for all miners, when he was a Bevin Boy. The slogan 'Out of Darkness into Light' was then translated into Latin ' E Tenebris-Lux' and recorded by the Somerset Herald of Arms.

Fortunately, I was recently able to introduce Derek Hallows to Phil Robinson, one of our newly elected committee members. Derek, originally from Warrington and Phil from Wallasey, both attended their local Grammar schools and it is possible that they may have crossed paths during a cricket match in the early forties. Derek was a Bevin Boy at Lyme Colliery in Haydock and on demob (1947) trained to be a teacher. Phil after 2 years service in Co. Durham and one year at Wood Colliery, Haydock was persuaded to take up a career in 'Mine Surveying'. Oddly enough his first appointment was as 'Surveyor for the Mine' which was in 1954 to Lyme Colliery. During the course of recent telephone conversations they have talked about people they both knew at Lyme Colliery over 70 years ago!

Frank Reed sent an account of his time at Clifton Pit, Burnley, where for a while he was the only Bevin Boy, until another one arrived, but did not return, after his first Christmas home break. A further arrival lay on the filthy floor of the double deck cage and groaned all the way down the shaft. He refused to get out at the pit bottom and the manager had to take him back up. This full account will go into the archive.

Robby Robson's notes tell of his time at Chislet Colliery, after he was disappointed that he could not take up his Engineering Cadetship, which he had hoped to be awarded after the interviews and adult courses he had attended. A story many could repeat. His time at Chislet was interesting as he later was attached to the mine safety deputy for the collection of air, dust and stone samples; which had to be analysed. Robby would like to hear from anyone who has memories of Chislet mine. He remembers in particular the following:-

Safety Deputy – Arthur Brooks, Asst: Maurice Bach

Divisional Chief for Kent – Frederick Henry Price

Head Chemist – Charles Harris

Manager – Arthur Sutton.

A recent enquiry from Gordon Carter concerns a childhood friend, Eric Dyer who became a Bevin Boy. He originally lived at Cricklewood Lane, Child's Hill, London. Does anyone remember meeting him? Also, Maurice Edgar Brand from Tunbridge Wells who possibly did his service in the Stoke on Trent area? Both have family members who would appreciate any memories or contact that Bevin Boys had had with either Eric or Maurice during their time down the mines.

Sadly many Bevin Boys were reluctant to talk of their experiences, and only now, often too late, do families find that their contribution to the war effort and memories were kept buried away, and never talked about. We still get enquiries for information, and are happy to do what we can, so please ring or write to me, and I will pass on any responses we get from the Newsletter, to those concerned.

With every good wish,

D. Elizabeth Todd (Liz)

MESSAGE from the TREASURER.

Bevin Boys Association General Fund Half Year Financial Report.

Again our expenditure is exceeding our income.

The current half year accounts show a reduction of our Bank balance, slightly more than that for the same period in 2015/16.

With the inevitable continuing decrease in Membership numbers, our Income forecast will become more significant.

That point will not become critical this year.

The AGM last year held in London on 14th September 2016 tasked our committee to review all aspects affecting the future conduct of the Bevin Boys Association and to submit a report for consideration by our members attending the AGM 2017 as is our normal practice.

Harry Parkes BEM.

ARCHIVIST

Dear Members,

I haven't got a great deal of news this time as I haven't had a chance to go back to the Imperial War Museum yet.

.My thanks to Derek Hollows for his phone calls and sending me his latest book 'Voices in the Dark'. I haven't finished it yet, but have enjoyed the book so far. I have had several phone calls from members sharing their memories. Thank you for those. They are all noted and will find their way into the archives.

I have a new phone system which is intended to get rid of nuisance calls - however I gather that some of you have failed to get through to me ! I do apologise. If you are a new caller you are asked to state your name and press the hash key which I think is the stumbling point if you have never had occasion to use it. The hash key is a button on your phone with a symbol like an empty noughts and crosses grid. If you still have problems please let Liz Todd or Anne Lane know as they will contact me and I will phone you back.

Please continue to keep in touch and share your memories. I do go round locally giving talks on the Bevin Boys and those memories make the talks come to life.

Best Wishes,

Barbara McElroy. Archivist

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT.

It is lovely to receive so many letters of support for the Association 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!

If any Bevin Boys wives, partners, sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters, nephews or nieces would like to receive the Newsletters do let me know.

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 as above.

Anne.

Sales.

Total Sales for the year 2016 were £62.10p. 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	@ £10.00	Blue Enamel Badge	@ £2.00
Miners Lamp Keyring	@ £5.00	Digging Up the Past	@ £10.00
Forgotten Conscript (1 only)	@ £10.00		

Bevin Boy Banner Postcard, 2 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

On a cold but bright sunny day with tulips in proud display, I look ahead with gold and brown tints celebrating Autumn and of course the Annual Reunion for the Bevin Boys.

In September 2016 we paid a visit to Buckingham Palace on one of the hottest days of the year and like the floral displays we wilted. How her Majesty managed to wear some of the gowns on display on some hot days I don not know. The palace was very crowded and we literally rubbed shoulders with our neighbours from round the world.

This years Reunion is to reflect our leisurely expectations. I am working hard to make our outing as enjoyable as always, probably having a coach tour ending with tea and cake bearing in mind that on our return to the hotel we shall all enjoy a good evening meal. Because I want the best value for our money, the plans have yet to be finalised.

In the meantime, here is a rough plan of our 2017 Reunion starting as usual on a Monday and ending Friday October 13th. **Please note the month.**

As times change I have booked a few less rooms, but the hotel is very helpful when it comes to cancellations.

Date Monday to Friday October 9th to 13th 2017

Venue The Clarendon Hotel, Blackheath, London SE3. with Dinner, Bed and Breakfast.

Bar snacks are always available.

The AGM is planned for the afternoon of Thursday October 12th.

The outing is planned for the Wednesday – more details will come with your enquiries.

It is good to remember the happy social occasion we all enjoy, but we must also remember the AGM which this year is an important one which needs everyone's attention. Please endeavour to attend as your vote is important.

I know that this reunion will be as happy as the previous visit. Staff and Hotel Manager, Mr Milton are eagerly waiting to greet you again, still saying that the Bevin Boys are the best bunch ever – so – keep up the good work!

For full details and all enquiries please contact Margaret Rose as soon as possible to reserve your place/ room. **Please enclose a Stamped and Addressed envelope.**

Mrs M Rose, 4 Cambria Close, Sidcup, Kent. DA15 8BW Telephone 0208 300 4511

With all good wishes,
Margaret.

AREA REUNION's for 2017.

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.

Cheshire, Lancs & North Wales. Wednesday June 7th - A lunch at 12 noon.in Heswall, Wirral.
Please ring **Liz Todd 0151 342 3703** for details.

EAST ANGLIA - Sunday June 18th meeting at 12 noon followed by a lunch at 12.30 - please ring
Margaret Rose 0208 300 4511 for details. Bevin Boys family and friends, all are welcome.

ESSEX & NE LONDON : The reunion this year will be on Wednesday 19th July from 11.a.m. at Mersea Vineyard, Rewshalls Lane. East Mersea CO5 8SX
Eric Johnson sadly is no longer able to continue as Area Rep but hopes to join us for a while. Instead it will be hosted by Les Raymond and daughter Barbara McElroy on the same basis as before (order and pay for your meals individually on the day) Please ring **Barbara** on 01728 724533 to let her know you are coming . **Please note** instructions for her phone system under her archivist report should you have difficulty getting through.

SOUTH WEST. - Monday 19th June a reunion lunch at 12 noon at The Star, with bus stops outside! Hope to see everyone again. Please ring **Anne Lane 01275 463703** if you wish to attend.

National Service Conscripts Annual Reunion

If any members would like to take part in The Annual National Conscripts Reunion and march at the National Memorial Arboretum Alrewas, Staffordshire on Sunday 25th June 2017.
Please contact Harry Parkes **as soon as possible**, so he can make arrangements with the organisers for seating etc. for you and your family/ friends, **before the end of April.**

Harry Parkes BEM. Tel: 01158 465354

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.

Robert McKenzie's Memories as a Bevin Boy Part 2

I became a good engine driver, known as 'crabbies'. The engines were stationary winches with main and tail steel cables around drums driven by compressed air, the trucks being clipped on to the cables which could be several hundred yards long to get down to the face. The cables were rove through pulley wheels fixed at the far end so that empty trucks could be pulled 'in bye' and full ones 'out bye'.

Signals from the haulage hands to the engine driver were by pulling on wires that were attached to a bell clapper at the engine end – because of the distances and the slack that developed in the wires, the signals could be indistinct, but a good crabbie knew what was likely to be required and could make the team's work a lot easier, especially by getting heavily – loaded trucks to career out at a controlled momentum over the junction points so as to transfer on to the main haulage system. Thus could be avoided a lot of sweating and

straining, particularly if a bit of clumsy engine driving had resulted in derailment. However if you did get it wrong there was a special signal being a quick two/quick three rings conveying the haulage hands feelings. Derailment of stone loaded trucks filled by road and roof maintenance ‘rippers’ was especially heinous as stone weighed twice as much as coal and it was back breaking work to get tubs back on the rails.

At my own request, I was transferred on to the coal face as a ‘filler’. The collier got the coal off the face and the filler filled the tubs – the wages being about double engine driving rates at circa £10 per week say equivalent to about £500 a week today, and for a lad at the age of 19 that was a lot of money. Very often I had the cushy situation of being put back on engine driving, which I had become quite skilled at, because of someone’s absenteeism, but was entitled to be paid at filler rates. The filler being an apprentice collier (coal face worker) earned 5/- to the collier’s 6/- and the apprenticeship lasted generally two years.

However as a filler I worked in a stall (a particular length of face) known as ‘South East 45’s’ – about a mile and a half out (part walk / part train), from pit bottom. The seam height averaged about 4’6”. This was not of great moment since you were in any case bent over undercutting the seam with the pickaxe and shovelling the coal into tubs. This was just on the era of mechanised cutters and conveyors loading belts coming in. They had in fact been introduced elsewhere in the pit but not in ‘South East 45’s’ as yet. The coalface approach was driven such that the coal could be worked at a 45 degree angle to the coal grain. If there was sufficient pressure on, the coal would come off the face easily and once undercut it almost burst off the face. If the pressure was not on (there were calls for silence to listen to the roof ‘working’) it had to be drilled and shot blasted. Once down it was broken into manageable lumps and hand loaded / shovelled into tubs which ran on temporary rails athwart the face and were twisted 90 degrees on a steel sheet to connect with the drift railway driven to be at right angles with the face. The drift roadways joined up with the main branch served by the engine referred to and this in turn gave on to the main haulage – then also a several mile long looped cable, but superceded later by diesel locos.

Pressure came on not only from the roof but thrust came upwards from the floor and sideways from the wall. Thus drift tunnels down to the face had to be ripped out an average of three times before the movement stabilised and steel arches / wooden batons could make the tunnels of semi-permanent shape and size. Similarly, as the coal face moved on there was only a narrow working area propped with steel and wood props which took the immediate weight of loosening rock – as the face advanced the back or ‘gob’ props were pulled out and the roof allowed to fall in.

Maltby, though at 700 yards rather deep for a British mine, was productive and the coal from the Barnsley seam was good quality. Factors which contributed to its survival when the 1970-1980 era saw a deep decline in British mining and closure of most pits because of the cheaper energy sources obtained from North Sea oil / gas.

Editors comment. Please note that we do not edit contributions and as some are based on recollections there may be alternative views and information.