



The OCAAA Newsletter

Spring 2010

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

Chairman's Report

David Gale:

Unfortunately, as I start off this edition I am still in a rather sombre mood from recent events. Of course, I refer to the loss of the Royal Navy Artificer for ever. In light of a fast and constantly changing modern technical age, not to mention present and future defence needs, it is a cold, hard fact that change is inevitable. Whilst I accept and indeed welcome technical advances, I do nevertheless have misgivings about the need for some of the other changes to the young artificer training and status, which I do not see ever resulting in quite such a close 'esprit de corps' that we knew as young Tiffies in Caledonia. This carried on through our service careers and, with the help of the Association, continued well into later life. However, whatever our personal thoughts might be about the changes, for an Association having its constitution and roots based on being a Caledonia Artificer, it perhaps serves as a timely reminder for us not to lose sight as to our own future and any possible changes that we might have to make in the future to keep abreast of the times.

As to the Passing Out Parade itself, my congratulations go to those who despite the bitterly cold weather, took to the parade ground (including Ted) and did us so proud. What a poignant moment to see them take the final salute at the end the march past, something that will remain with me for many years to come. I have

now written to the C.O. expressing our appreciation for his hospitality and for giving us the opportunity to take such a high profile role on this historic day. There were moments when I wondered who the parade was in honour of, hoping that our presence did not in any way over-shadow the importance of the occasion for the young men and women who were actually passing out, and their families! Finally, a special vote of thanks to Alan Petrie for his tireless efforts in making the necessary arrangements, and for liaising with HMS Sultan on our behalf. I know it has not been easy and that he has devoted many hours to it.

So, to the future and our next event which is the Caledonia Fair. You will by now all have received details of the reunion, which are also repeated below. This is an ideal occasion to advertise the Association and needless to say we look to have strong representation on the day. Please bear in mind that the next reunion will not be until 2012, so please make every effort to come along and enjoy the weekend.

On a final note let me again thank those of the committee who work so hard in the background to keep the association going. If any of you feel able to help out with the Newsletter or the internet please contact Gil or Phil and let them know.

News and Views from Scotland

Lionel Fisher:

HMS Caledonia.

At last a new Commanding Officer has been appointed. He is Cdr. Dave Pickthall, who is currently in Brussels and will join some time in April. Meanwhile WO Ian Sutcliffe has left the service and has been replaced by WO Mike Davidson.

The Factory.

As part of the ongoing site programme to remove asbestos, the Main Factory will be demolished this year. We all have fond (or otherwise!) memories of this place and it will be sad to see it go. As soon as a start date is announced I will let you know. Perhaps a few skeletons are still hiding there!

Caledonia Fair

The Fair is held every two years to promote the Royal Navy, HMS Caledonia, and to raise funds for charity. It is also an opportunity to open the establishment to the local community and show what goes on there. The event is on one day, usually from about 11am to 4/5pm. It is held on the upper level, with a marquee, traders (food!) and stalls situated around the accommodation/office area and displays on the Parade Ground/Upper Car Park. Last time it was officially opened by the sponsor of HMS Caledonia, Lady Elgin. There is an opening and closing ceremony with guard

and band. During the afternoon various displays take place including a Field Gun Run (yes, Cale has a Field Gun Team), and the RNR and Sea Cadet units usually participate too.

Funds for charity are normally raised by charging all stall holders and traders a fee (£35 last time) to enter. Then each stall holder/trader can also donate all/or some of its profit to the charity. The Fair will nominate the charity/charities it will support, but I do not know what they are this year.

Reunion Dinner Disco

Whilst the secretary has let every member know about booking for this event, there are still places for members living locally who wish to attend the Dinner Disco but do not require accommodation. Contact Kay, or Julie at the Queensferry Hotel and book a place. Tel; 0870 1112520. The cost for the Dinner/Disco only will be £22.50 per person.

FA/OCAAA Reunion Lunch.

The next reunion lunch will be held at the Rosyth Civil Service Club at 1200 - 1600 on Saturday 1st. May 2010. Des Goodwin has posted out booking forms, but if you haven't got one and want to go please contact me. Guests are welcome.

Reunion Secretary's Report

Don Smith:

The next reunion will be held at The Queensferry Hotel on the weekend of the 19th – 20th June 2010.

The OCAAA have reserved 60 bedrooms at the Queensferry Hotel. As of Jan 31st this year 30 rooms had been taken. Any rooms not reserved by 1st May will be returned to the hotel.

To reserve your room, or book your place at the disco-dinner please call 01383 427 202 or 0870 111 2520

Or Email :- rev.queensferry@bespokehotels.com

Our main source of contact is now JULIE GUTHRIE.

The cost per couple for two nights' B&B including the dinner and disco is £210 (single occupancy £135) which also includes the use of a shuttle bus to and from the Caledonia Fair. (Please note: The dinner disco element of the total is £22.50 per head, not £35 per head as stated in a previous communication).

Reunion Programme 18th - 20th June 2010

Friday 18th June. Free day; anybody booked in for this day will be able to explore the delights of Fife and Edinburgh.

Saturday 19th June. Nothing organised during the day. At 7pm (or earlier!) meet up for pre dinner drinks. At 7:30pm please take seats for dinner disco. Let the fun commence! After dinner there will be a raffle run on the same lines as the 'Honiley Court' raffle, in other words just three main prizes. 1am lights out!!!

Sunday 20th June. Caledonia Fair. (see Lionels report for details). There will be a shuttle bus / coach service from the hotel to Caledonia throughout the day. There is no formal dining this evening.

Note: The next OCAAA reunion is planned for 2012, and will possibly be held in the Bristol area

Slops

Don Smith:-

Due to the 'Last Passing out Parade' at HMS Sultan there has been a run on ties and blazer badges. However we do have 19 V-neck jerseys in stock, and the committee has given me permission to purchase 20 polo shirts, all embroidered with the Caledonia crest.

The Association has the following for sale with the OCAAA insignia:

Ties	£9
Blazer Badges	£17.50
Polo Shirts	£9.20
V-neck jumpers	£24

Secretary's Report

Alan Petrie:

Firstly, thanks to all those who have written or e-mailed me with change/update of addresses and details since the last newsletter.

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

Rex Ward	S32 Rodney 1959	James (Ray) Nolton	Anson DO 1982 to 86
Peter (Nobby) Johncock	S22 1954	Jon Stoneman-Merret	Churchill 1974
Colin Moorcroft	Anson 1944	Ginge Gore	1953
Revd. Geoffrey Walsh	Keppel 1964	Steve Amps	1954
Willy Hanna	S31 St Vincent Jan 1959	Keith Baker	S27 1957
Stephen (Shiner) Wright	S723 Sep 1973	Robert Walker	S28 1957
Peter Davey	S732 May 1974	David Silk	1955
Bob Woodroffe	RNZN Exmouth 1956		

Where are they now?

I am still trying to locate the following who have left no forwarding address or who have not been in contact with me for some time. Any leads would be useful. Some, of course, may no longer be with us.

Gordon Clarke	Benbow 1938	Hertfordshire?	Dave Seward	Grenville 1955	Portugal?
Brian Fox	Hawke 1949		Bernard Smith	Hawke 1955	Southampton?
Ian Gordon	Hawke 1952	Co Cork, Eire?	Jeff (Jasper) Spry	Hawke 1939	California, USA?
Derrick Holdstock	Duncan 1942	Clay, New York?	I W Step		Cornwall?
Doug Horseman	Hawke 1937	Taddiport, Devon?	Alf Watts	Hawke 1943	Wiltshire?
John Leonard	Hawke 1939	Portsmouth?	John White	Duncan 1938	Belleville, Canada?
Eric Marsden	Drake 1940	Davyhulme, Lancs	Brian Willis	Instructor	Grantham, Lincs?
Sam Mullen	Hawke 1937	County Down?	Tom Hall	Hawke 1959	Fareham, Hants?
John Norbury	Benbow 1951	Colehill, Dorset?	Brian Taylor	Drake 1952	Faversham, Kent?
Peter Presley	Hawke 1937	Washington, USA?			

Pete (Dolly) Gray

Stan Porter is looking for Pete Gray (circa series 12/13). Peter relieved Stan in HMS Stubbington in October 1961.

Jock Scott

Betty Perrin, widow of John Perrin (ERA) is trying to trace his friend Jock Scott (about series 9 – 1951)

Martin Gregory

Alan Walters is looking for Martin Gregory ERA/Boiler Maker. Believed to be about Series 20. Alan served with Martin in Victorious 1959/60.

John (Ginge) Dickie

Keith Baker (Series 27) is looking for Ginge Dickie, also of Series 27.

Our Memorial Stone

By Gil Harding:

Your committee decided that we should donate two books to the stonemasonry apprentices at the City of Bath College as a token of our gratitude for the carving and installation of our memorial stone.

The books we bought from Donhead publishing were Practical Masonry by William R Purchase and Geometry of Construction by T B Nichols and N P Keep. These were computer reproductions which were perfect for apprentices.

At last, after five months, I managed to find a mutually convenient time when I could hand over the books to

the Head of Stonemasonry, Ray Sumner, for use by the apprentices. I took the books in to the college workshops at lunch time and gave them to Ray and I must admit that I was surprised at his reaction because when he opened the books at the presentation label he nearly choked up. He handed them to other members of staff and they all said that it was great to have their efforts appreciated.

Ray then went off and brought back his own copy of one of the books (second edition) and he treated it as though it was holy book. It obviously meant a lot to him.

We remember our friends who have ‘Crossed the Bar’

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

*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.*

Jim Stoneman	joined 1949
Ian Tilbury	Anson 1944
Graham Leach	Rodney 1941
Peter (Kip) Gibbons	Howe 1943
Terry Partridge	Howe 1943
Dennis Turner	Rodney 1937
Roy (Oscar) Wild	Grenville 1950
Jim Holman-	Howe 1943
Peter Barrow	Grenville 1941
Wilf Jameson	Hawke 1943

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*

Ian Jones Lt Cdr RN (Retd)

May 3 1941 – October 30 2009

By Ian’s son, Simon:

It is with great sadness that we announce his sudden passing at the age of 68.

Ian or ‘Jonesy’ joined the Royal Navy in 1958 as an ERA before being commissioned into the Fleet Air Arm as a pilot in April 1969. During his 24 year career, he served on numerous ships and air stations including: Fisgard, Caledonia, Duchess, Trowbridge, Ashanti, Vigilant, Culdrose, RNEFTS and Northolt. Ian has now set sail for the last time and he will be sorely missed by his family, friends and colleagues.

By David Thompson:-

Paddy Bookey and I, along with our wives, attended the funeral of Ian Jones. It was a humanist celebration and the crematorium was packed out and afterwards, we had the opportunity to chat with family and friends.

Ian’s son Simon came over with his wife from Canada, where he is a Royal Canadian Mounted Policeman and he wore his uniform. I wore a blazer with my OAs blazer badge and Caledonia tie.

Ian ended up flying Jumbos for British Airways and instructing at the High Wycombe Air Park. I knew him at Caledonia and on HMS Ashanti, when he was our Wasp Pilot.

Graham Leach

Graham played for Plymouth Argyle football club and the navy. He contracted polio early in his career. He emigrated to Australia and his last job was marking apprentices’ test jobs.

David John Hewlett

By David’s widow, Marion:

David was born on the 11th June 1930. His father was in the Navy and his brother was a Chief Petty Officer and his grandfather had been a Royal Marine so he seemed destined to carry on the tradition. He went to school in Portsmouth and was evacuated to the Isle of Wight and Brockenhurst during the war. His last school was Mile End Road School where he took the exams in 1946 to enter the Royal Navy as an Electrical Artificer. He joined HMS Fisgard in January 1946 and in July 1947 he was transferred to HMS Caledonia until September 1949. His first ship after passing out was HMS Myngs followed by a two and a half year commission on HMS Newfoundland. After that he served on HMS Palliser, HMS Norfolk and HMS Herald. In between sea time he spent time in HMS Collingwood, HMS Lochinvar, HMS Vernon, and a two year spell as an Instructor at HMS Nelson. He also managed to enjoy a two and a half year married accompanied spell at HMS Rooke in Gibraltar. He finally retired as a Lt Commander in 1989 having extended his time in the Navy. He spent the rest of his retirement enjoying time with his family and his many hobbies until he suffered with dementia which was a heartbreaking illness. He died on the 22nd October 2009 and is sorely missed by myself, son and daughter,

Wilf Jameson

Wilf Jameson's funeral is on the 22nd April in Worthing Crematorium and then Ferring, W. Sussex Baptist Church.

HMS Fisgard Memorial

The Fisgard Association are planning to erect a Memorial to all Artificer Apprentices who passed through HMS Fisgard at Torpoint in Cornwall. The Memorial Stone will be similar to the one at the National Memorial Arboretum and will be made out of Cornish Granite. It will be erected within the Trevol

Business Park which now occupies the land that was once HMS Fisgard.

The date of the dedication has not yet been arranged but they anticipate a date no earlier than October 2010. OCAAA members would be welcome to attend.

Treasurer's Report

Alan Williams:

Treasurer's Summary (February 2010)

The Association continues to be in a financially sound position with no outstanding debts or large expenditure on the horizon. A summary of the financial year to date is set out below. A full independent audit of association accounts for the 2009/2010 financial year will take place during the first week of April and the results placed before your committee shortly after.

As of 28th February 2010:

OCAAA Business Account-	£4666.99
OCAAA Current Account -	£820.75
Total Cash Funds	- £5487.74

Income:

Membership	- £525.00
Sale of Slops	- £767.47
Reunion Raffle	- £347.20
Sale of books	- £485.00
Hotel Refund	- £1400.00
Misc. Adjustments	- £3.69
Donations	- £75.00

Totals - £3603.36

Expenditure:

Stationery	- £35.41
Postage	- £364.15
Printing	- £178.10
Reunion Expenses-	£1427.23*
Comm'ration books-	£68.50
Slops Purchased	- £676.76
Internet	- £54.51
Audit expenses	- £18.00

Totals - £2822.66

*Including 2010 Reunion Hotel deposit

Income minus expenditure - +£780.70

Other Assets:

Reunion Hotel Deposit	- £1000.00
Slops (at cost)	- £728.86

OCAAA Website

By Phil Price:

Webmaster's Report – March 2010

I regret to report that the day job has managed to intervene and stall progress with the development of the OCAAA site for several months now, leaving many of you frustrated when you have been unable to find details that were readily available before. However, there is a light at the end of the tunnel (not a blue glow in a smoke mirror) and recent weeks have seen some newly added material and the blanks have started to fill.

Photographs are still a problem, in that those inherited from the old site are a little fuzzy and I need to get some clearer, high resolution images to replace them and add to the site. This will be particularly time consuming, though I hope to be able to speed the process in the coming year. To those of you keen and able to send pictures for inclusion on the site, please

make them the highest resolution that you can – consistent with their size not causing a blockage of mammoth proportions in the e-mail pipes!

I have also had enquiries regarding the re-instatement of the Guest Book that was previously so popular. Mindful of issues that occurred elsewhere, I consigned this one to the back burner whilst I completed the overhaul. Longer term, I hope to be able to include either a blogging link, or a guest book, to enable you to contribute and query as in the past.

One of the benefits of relocating to a new host server is that I can now offer tiffy@ocaaa.org styled email accounts (where your own name replaces the word 'tiffy', (e.g. tubal.cain@ocaaa.org) to all OCAAA members. The accounts will incur a nominal annual subscription charge to cover running costs, but the set up will allow you to add these addresses to your

normal mail application and both send and receive through your existing ISP account (wherever in the world you may be). One advantage of these accounts is that they are not from mainstream domains such as btinternet or tiscali, and consequently tend to fall beneath the radar of the scammers, spammers and ne'er-do-wells that tend to plague everyday accounts. Unless of course you use it to subscribe to an online Viagra supplier, in which case you may get more than you bargained for! Details will be advertised on the web site soon.

A look at web site activity indicates that visitors to the site have been steadily increasing over the last 5-6 months, with Sunday evening around 20:00 proving the most popular time to browse (nowt on telly then!). Interestingly, in addition to UK hits and those that we

may expect from our Kiwi and Ozzie based friends, the site is also attracting significant interest in Canada and the USA. Add to that a fair sprinkling of traffic from Germany (that will be our Chairman), the Netherlands and Spain, backed up by Russia, China and a host of middle eastern states, we are growing quite a cosmopolitan following. How many are OCAAA members though and how many are lost *boyarts*? Time will tell, I just hope that Alan Williams has a bank account that trades in roubles and splotniks etc when these guys sign up for membership.

That's the news for now. Do keep checking in to the site to see what's new and don't forget to let me have your pictures and stories for inclusion.

Phil can be contacted via artappyespyda@ocaaa.org

Life Stories/Family Research

Terry Partridge

Kathy, Terry Partridge's daughter, wants to find out about the early life of her Dad. At the end of his apprenticeship, in 1945, he married a Wren called Martha who was serving in Caledonia.

Harry Walter Burrell

By John Burrell

I have recently come across your website and wondered if you would be interested in (or may even know about already) my father, Harry Walter Burrell (1902-1988). Wally, as he was known, served his apprenticeship as a shipwright in Portsmouth Dockyard and joined the Royal Navy in 1927. He served until 1949 and retired (as far as I know) as a Warrant Officer. He moved to Rosyth Dockyard and worked as a Shipwright Instructor in HMS Artifex before moving up the hill to HMS Caledonia. In the mid-1960s he was promoted to become the first ever Superintending Civilian Instructional Officer (SCIO) for the UK. He retired in August 1967.

Perhaps you can tell me things about my father's life that I don't know!

John can be contacted by e-mail:

John.burrell@virgin.net

1914/18 War

For those of you who are researching parents'/grandparents' activities in this war the following has been recommended (payment required):

Fourteeneighteen

8 Overell Grove, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 6HP

www.fourteeneighteen.co.uk

Battlefield Tours

As part of The Royal British Legion, Poppy Travel arranges a comprehensive range of Remembrance and Battlefield Tours to all corners of the globe and to suit all tastes. Customised tours can also be created for groups with specific interests and connections.

RBL Poppy Travel can help you visit individual graves and memorials that are dear to you, or put your Remembrance into context with a Battlefield tour led by an ex-Service guide. Poppy Travel covers Western and Eastern Europe, North and South Africa, the Americas and the Far East. They are noted for including remote and complicated areas such as Libya and Burma (Chindit areas and the Arakan) in their tours. The RBL has been providing this service since 1927 and claim that no other tour operator will understand your needs as clearly or have greater sympathy with your hopes and expectations.

A free full colour brochure is produced annually which includes all destinations and other interesting information. For more information, visit the website

www.poppytravel.org.uk

or contact:

Poppy Travel
Royal British Legion Village
Aylesford
Kent
ME20 7NX

Tel: 01622 716 729

Herbert Lott Fund Prize

Tony Perrett (Jervis 45) tells of the origins of the Herbert Lott Fund:

A few years ago, I noticed a short article in the Navy News saying that Herbert Lott was a London trader who donated £25,000 in 1930 to the Royal Navy as a trust fund to reward deserving sailors. At the time of the article the fund stood at £2M with £55,000 handed out annually. A plaque to Herbert Lott is in the Whale Island church.

Considering those vast sums I am somewhat surprised that when I won this award in 1957 for 'organising a team of faked casualties in an Admiralty film on the effects of a nuclear attack at RNAS Arbroath' I received just £2 and my fellow recipient, a CPO Cook who devised field cooking equipment got £5!! I believe the average civilian wage at that time was about £12 per week so perhaps it wasn't that bad after all!

For ingenuity Colin Swann's solution to a problem takes some beating:-

In October 1961 I stood by HMS Ashanti in her final stage of building in Yarrow's yard on the Clyde. The

Ashanti was the first of the gas/steam turbine Tribal class frigates. I did the sea trials and the first commission in the Persian Gulf and left the ship in July 1964, after assisting the next commission's crew. Part of my responsibilities was the Allens 500kW Gas Turbo Alternator in the gear room whose performance suffered greatly in the tropical waters due to fouled compressor blades. To restore the performance required several hours of 'shut down' while the compressor casing was removed and all the rotor and stator blades were laboriously scrubbed with a toothbrush! I devised a way of feeding the air intake side of the compressor with broken egg shells, bird seed, coconut husks or whatever became available. The device consisted of an old Bofor shell case and a shut-off valve. Over time we achieved the correct amount of roughage that had to be sucked into the turbine's intake to restore performance.

For this idea I was awarded the Herbert Lott Prize and a cheque for £150 (I think that was the amount).

Perhaps we should have a 'Cunning Artificer' Award for stories like this!

Rabbits

By Phil Mattravers:

I believe Biro pens were invented mid 1930s but in the 1950s they were appearing in the shops at about £7.10s (when we were drawing six shillings a fortnight)

One solution to owning one, was buy a refill – not as cheap as today but considerably less than a whole pen – and make a holder. The snag was that it had a left hand thread to screw it into the barrel of the pen. In no time at all a left handed tap was made and production of various barrels in bakelite, tufnol, brass and monometal was soon underway.

I gave one to my father who said it was a 'wrist breaker' because I couldn't turn the barrel down to be suitably thin.

By Horace Polhill:

Naval Pipework – With a Difference

In 1960 – 1962 I was Senior Engineer in HMS Lochinvar, a base in South Queensferry on the Firth of Forth, Scotland. The base at that time supported four Fishery Protection Type 14 Frigates, two squadrons of Coastal Minesweepers and one squadron of Inshore Minesweepers.

Shortly after my arrival, HMS Shoulton joined one of the Coastal Minesweeping squadrons. This ship had been fitted with activated rudders for employment in a mine-hunting role. Later, this ship visited the Pool of London where the Captain paid a courtesy call on the Lord Mayor who duly returned his call. The Lord

Mayor was Sir Bernard Waley-Cohen, who, in the course of these calls remarked that he was missing his favourite pipe. It would appear that it had been damaged and had been declared irreparable. On hearing of his misfortune, the Captain asked if he could take the pipe back to HMS Lochinvar on the chance that base staff might be able to rectify the defect. The offer was taken up and in due course the pipe landed on my desk. On close examination, severe cracking near the base of the bowl was apparent, but the full extent of the damage could not be determined at this stage.

Lochinvar's workshop was in the charge of a Chief ERA and housed a few machine tools, including a couple of lathes and a milling machine. I consulted with the Chief ERA and we thought a trepanning operation would give us an idea of the total damage and he carefully carried this out with his excellent machining expertise. The only way forward then appeared to be the fitting of a metal insert to cover the trepanned area. After several unsuccessful attempts, one was finally machined, then carefully forced in to achieve a tight fit. Afterwards, a satisfactory heat test was applied. Before forwarding the repaired pipe to London, I made out a Naval Boiler Wear and Waste Test Repair Form; submitting details of the defect and subsequent repair action.

Later, Sir Bernard Waley-Cohen wrote of his delight and gratitude at being re-united with his favourite pipe.

Postcards from Ted

OA's Reunion



I had a great time at the OA's Reunion in Weymouth. The OAs were all busy swinging the lantern with each other so I looked after the girls on the dance floor. Unfortunately Pete noticed me dancing with Julie and did an "excuse me!"

Last Tiffies Passing Out Parade



My proudest moment was in the march past with Bill Brooker at the Final Tiffs Passing out Parade. It was b.... cold but we were as smart as guardsmen! I can't help thinking of all the excuses I used to make up to get out of Divisions at Calley!

Europe: Travels with Dave!

During the recent OAs reunion the discussion turned to my various trips to some very exotic places courtesy some very kind ex-Tiffs. I have been to Australia, New Zealand, America and of course Canada (where I helped (!!)) a lovely young lady to win a Gold Medal) but I had not yet managed to visit any of our neighbouring European Countries. As a Tiffy, albeit only a fifth class, we all know most

Government decisions would be better if only Tiffies were consulted, so I thought perhaps I should experience the culture of European people for myself in case the Government should call for my opinion before further talk of a combined design for Naval Warships progressed further..... We all know how modest Tiffs are!

Marilyn (Malley to her friends) Green remembered that Dave Silk (ex OA) frequently worked in Europe (that turned out to be an exaggeration – mostly driving, talking and eating) and asked if I could go with him on his next trip. So on the 1st March I was put in my travelling bag (cardboard box) leaving at six o'clock in the morning for a journey via the tunnel to a meeting near Amsterdam.

The ride to the Tunnel was uneventful but whilst awaiting the customs inspection I noticed that Customs officials were pushing a metal rod with a piece of foam on the end into odd places to check for traces of explosives. Having heard some terrifying stories regarding stuffed toys being examined internally, I decided to stay in the box until we were well into France. Wow, the mind boggles at the thought of what could have happened!

France was soon behind us as we raced through and into Belgium. (Belgium - so much traffic and all passing through, it makes one think of a comment recently made by a UKIP politician). On into Holland where we had eight different meetings which meant we were continually travelling from one end of the country and back again with not enough time to visit the sights of Amsterdam, which was my main reason for going! We have all seen the pictures of lovely traditional windmills in Holland but they seem to have disappeared. In four days we saw just two.



We did stop for some meals and one hotel had a fantastic menu. You can see the picture of me waiting in anticipation.



I selected the following:-

Beef Bouillon with cep and truffle foam

Duck Breast with warm Cumberland sauce, potato tartlet and braised chicory

Cheese Platter with craft farmer cheese bread and fig chutney

Only to be told that this food was unhealthy for bears, and as Salmon was unavailable I could only have Honey and Asparagus ugg. When will people realise I am not a bear, I am a Tiddly Tiff in disguise.

This seems a good time to say my passport is up to date and I am awaiting an offer to go on holiday with any Tiff (even non OAs). If any of you girls want a cuddle at a reunion, or want to brighten up a photo, then I'm your bear! Just ask Gil and he will give me a draft chit in your direction.

Ted

P.S. I'm off up to our old stomping grounds in Scotland for the reunion. Hope to see you all there!

A Voice from the Past – Coincidence?

John Beer, Anson 1944, tells how the comradeship of Tiffies can stretch across time and oceans:-

About eighteen months ago I received a letter from California, USA. It started: Dear Jim (my name is John) then it went on reliving experiences in Figsard to Jim. What had happened was that the writer, Pat Shasby, had mistakenly pulled my name off the Figsard Association (of which I am an Associate Member) computer list instead of 'Jim Beer'. So I wrote a jokey letter back saying that this ex-apprentice had had a 'senior moment'. Since then we have been regularly corresponding and what has evolved is amazing:

We both come from Portsmouth and went to the same Primary School at Wimborne Road. In those days he

lived just around the corner from me and it is even possible that I saw him at that time. We both then went on to the Southern Secondary School and then we both joined the Navy as apprentices. I can also remember being evacuated, and his sister was at the same school that I went to. He was four years older than me but we were both in Anson Division. However Pat did his apprenticeship at Figsard (1940 – 1944) and finished up as an OA while I went to Caledonia (1944 – 48) and became an ERA. As you can imagine, our letters contain many reminiscences both before and after the Navy and it all started with a computer error, but also due to belonging to Artificer Associations.

Is There Anything Tiffies cannot do?

By Gil Harding:

I was sitting in Wells Cathedral just before Christmas enjoying the very atmospheric 'Carols by Candlelight' service when the following reading suddenly caught my attention:-

Reading from the Epistle to Diognetus

"The Almighty himself, Creator of the universe, the God whom no eye can discern, has sent down from heaven his very own Truth, his holy Word, to be planted in the heart of the human race.

To do this, one might have imagined He would send some servant, some angel, some prince. But no, He has sent the very Artificer and Constructor of the universe, through whom the heavens were made, and the seas set within their bounds, whose word is obeyed by the very elements of creation, who assigns the sun the limits of its course by day, and commands the moon to unveil its beams by night and orders the obedient stars to circle the heavens. He is the

Ordainer, Disposer and ruler of all things, of all that is in heaven and earth, of the seas and all that they contain, of fire, and air, and the deep, of all that is above and below and in between. Such is the Messenger God sent to the human race."

After building the universe, King Solomon's temple must have been a doddle. So if anyone asks you if there is anything that Tiffies cannot do – I think the honest answer has to be "No"!

As I told the Stonemasonry Apprentices at Bath College, they taught us many things at Caledonia but one thing they didn't teach us was modesty!

Mike Kettley tells me that this is one of the epistles which was **not** selected for inclusion in the Bible, which confirms my suspicion that the executive branch was in charge of that project!

Kiwi Korner

Alan Petrie:

John Westphall has asked me to do the Kiwi Corner for the Spring issue:

On the 8th Nov. 1958 one of my classmates in S27, Nigel Spragg, a Kiwi, was killed in a motorcycle accident in Inverkeithing. A few days later he was buried in Douglas Bank cemetery in Rosyth/Limekilns with full naval honours. I have often visited his grave, as my Parents-In-Law are buried nearby. As time went on I wondered if Nigel had any living relatives in NZ and started to make enquiries through the good offices of John Westphall in Devonport, NZ, and Mike Goldsmith, Christchurch, NZ. His younger brother Roger and older Sister Sue were located in New Zealand.

On the 20th March 2010 at the RNZN and RN Art.Apps reunion in Devonport NZ, I met Roger and his wife Hope. Up until then they had never met anyone who knew his brother Nigel. Roger was delighted to meet several more ex Apps. who could fill him in on this stage of Nigel's life and short time in HMNZS Philomel and HMS Caledonia. Some were even pall bearers at the funeral. At the time of Nigel's death, his parents were devastated; however they were comforted by a letter from our DO, Robin Markes, who was a junior officer at the time. Robin (now a retired Captain) continued to write to them on the anniversary of Nigel's death and eventually became a pen pal writing to them until they died. He continues to write

to Roger and Sue to this day. A correspondence of over 50 years.



Biddy and Alan with Roger Spragg and Hope

I can report on behalf of our Kiwi representative and reunion organiser John Westphall that the lunch reunion was a great success and the Kiwis made the small UK contingent very welcome. However, when my wife Biddy was asked to draw the raffle she drew my ticket out as first prize, which was a bottle of whiskey. There were heard mutterings of "a fix" and "bloody Poms, they won it last time as well". Thanks to John Westphall and Dennis Pringle for a great time and for making us so welcome.

Alan Petrie – a visitor to New Zealand

The Last Artificers in the Royal Navy



Passing-out Parade of the Last Artificers in the Royal Navy

By John Burgess:
Farewell and Hello



I recently joined with colleagues at HMS Sultan to celebrate that great tradition which the Artificers have now passed on as a legacy to the new Engineering Technicians, and a memorable day it was too. I was reminded that this was not my first farewell to the Tiffs. In 1983 as Captain, I took the salute as the first Artificer Apprentices marched into Sultan; later I took the salute at Caledonia as the last class of Artificers marched out, and just a few years ago I took the salute from the last classes to wear fore-and-aft rig at Raleigh – they formed the guard of honour and were

the best and smartest guard I had ever seen. Not long afterwards I went back again to see out the last class of Tiffs, and incidentally the last of the Burgess Divisions. And now that piece of our history is over. So you might think that I am a Tiffs' Farewell junkie – or maybe I'm the Jonah that's caused it all! But, and it is a big 'but', inevitably I have watched at first hand the process of change in the Royal Navy which is revolutionary, and thank goodness the guys at Sultan and elsewhere have been astute and nimble enough to adjust engineering training to match the present and future needs. The new ET (Engineering Technician) system offers much greater flexibility and overall a higher level of training to the new engineers. Whilst at one time I feared that events had overtaken them, we can now be sure that the Navy's ME (Marine Engineering) teams have got it right, and impressively so. There are plenty of difficulties ahead, particularly, I think, where the Air Engineering Technicians interact with the RAF, but we old boys can be confident that the Technicians will hold our great legacy in safe hands. They will need all the support they can get and I'm sure that the Artificer Associations will give it to them.

Our Chairman, David Gale, has sent the following letter to Commodore Rymer at HMS Sultan:

Dear Sir,
On behalf of the association I am writing to thank you for allowing us the opportunity to take such an active role in the recent final passing out of artificers from your establishment. I realise that many of your staff must have been involved but in particular, I would mention the support given to us by both Lt. Paul Atkins and WO1 Peter Woods both before and during the event.
I know I speak for all the members when I say that having served as artificers has been one of the proudest achievements in our life, and whilst most recognise and

accept the need for change in the face of modern defence needs, it does little to soften the sadness that ex-Tiffies all surely feel at this moment. However, I am absolutely certain that the young and highly qualified technicians that follow in our footsteps will surely serve with the same pride and dedication. Once again, thank you to all concerned in making the day such a memorable occasion.
Yours sincerely,
David Gale,
Chairman



The ex-Artificers' Platoon



The Final March Past – An Historic Moment



It is only fitting that the last word has to go to the Petty Officer Apprentice at the rear of the Ex-Artificers' Platoon. With his red cap badge and chevron, overalls and torch, and very smart steaming bats! (I'm not too sure about the port and starboard socks) - Was he a ghost from our past? (I am informed that our 'ghost' was Ian Letts, Head of Allied Trades in Sultan.)

A report on 'The Last Day of the Tiffies' is on page 34 of the April edition of the Navy News.

A Big Thank You

The Association would like to thank Alan Petrie, Alan Williams and Don Smith for getting out the mail shot about the Last Artificers' Passing Out Parade to nearly 200 members in such a short time. HMS Sultan has apologised that they had to restrict numbers for this event but the restricted accommodation in the theatre, and seating availability for lunch resulted in a limit of forty from each of the associations (OCAAA, Fiscard Association and RNEBS) and thirty direct applications to Sultan from ex-boys, together with the families of the four passing out classes.

Artapp ye Scribe



Great Wailing was heard throughout the lands of the tribes of the Boiarts. A messenger had been sent from the great Lord of the Ad Miralty telling of the demise of Arty Ficers. Once again the great god Rue

More had been proved correct, that the skills used at the great temple of Solomon and handed down through the generations and honed to keep our Royal ships at sea, are no longer required. The tribe of Tech Nishon, who worship the lesser gods of 'Diag Nosis' and 'Re Pare by Re Placement' will henceforth take on that responsibility.

Many were the Boiarts who journeyed to the great camp of the Sultan to witness the historic moment when the last Arty Ficer would proudly earn the right to use that name. A great band of brass played

music to celebrate the success of the Arty Ficers in this last class and Ron, son of Emer, did quote the ERA's Lament. Mathew, Admiral of the Vice, did address the parade with words of wisdom until the band once again filled the air with music and the assembled ranks paid him homage. Yea even our own ancient and senior Arty Ficers did form ranks as in days of yore and did march to the band to pay homage to the great Admiral of the Vice.

The ancients were shown the holy places where the last Arty Ficers had learned their skills. New materials made from fibres of glass gave great concern, but the trusted lathes and the smell of

soogie in these temples did reassure the ancients that their skills were not yet lost, and their spirits rose.

A great feast had been prepared and the new Arty Ficers joined the ancients at this feast. And yea, our most senior Boiart from the tribe of Calley, Burgess John, Admiral of the Rear did make a great speech to welcome our new members to the tribe of Arty Ficers, and to reassure the ancients.

The ancients departed the camp of the Sultan with great concern, but it is written that the tribe of Calley will once again gather, ere three moons have passed, in its ancestral home where a great fayre has been arranged.

HMS Sultan Museum

Douglas Twitchen (Howe 1943), who lives in Portree on the Isle of Skye, has a number of test jobs and memorabilia, including magazines, from the old Majestic and Caledonia. He wishes to donate them to the Sultan Museum. If anyone is holidaying or on business in that area would they please pick them up from him and deliver them south.

HMS CALEDONIA JOURNALS 1937 – 1939

Jim Duckworth was Secretary and Founder Member of the 1937 – 39 Boys' Association whose members all did their training on board HMS Caledonia (ex Majestic). Unfortunately this Association had to be closed down when its membership dropped to six. However Jim was the custodian of the set of ships magazines which have been bound and entitled 'The journal of HMS Caledonia 1937 – 1939'. He has very kindly given this journal to the OCAAA for reference and safe keeping. At present they are in the custody of Gil Harding who will reproduce some of the articles in future newsletters, but he will take them to the next reunion for our members to see. Any member who

served on board the ship Caledonia will of course have priority. Their final destination will probably be the museum in HMS Sultan, or some other suitable resting place where they will be safe, but available for reference.

As a PS – would anyone like to make a similar journal of the Caledonia magazines 1939 – 85? (Perhaps this should have gone under the heading 'where are they now?')

THE E.R.A's LAMENT

Our President, Ron Emerson, was asked to read the ERA's Lament at the passing-out parade of the last Tiffies. Does anyone know its origin? The museum would like to know:-

Crankheads and Crossheads
 Feed Pumps and Fans
 Dynamos, Hydraulics
 Leaky Joints, Leaky Glands
 Keeping Middle Watches
 Working all day
 Oh Lord Have Mercy
 On a poor E.R.A.

Did you know?

Heroes welcome in the UK

(see www.heroeswelcome.co.uk)

Various proposals are being made to show the country's appreciation of the efforts and sacrifices being made by our servicemen. Several towns (eg Stockport) have already started a campaign by giving discounts at shops and tourist attractions. This is also open to Veterans but proof of service is required.

The Forces Pension Society has passed on the following:-

Oyster

Just a reminder that if you have a disability pension you can get a free Oyster card. Give Oyster the

reference number of your pension and bingo - a free one pops into the letterbox. And another thing - the London River Bus takes Oysters now.

By Alan Petrie:

Forthcoming attractions for those of you who live or holiday in the Portsmouth area

8 th and 9 th May:	Portsmouth Dockyard. For all Clankys: 'A celebration of Steam'
20 th June	Sultan Show
30 th July to 1 st August	Portsmouth Navy Days

Sing, Sing, or show your Ring!

By Gil Harding:

For those whose singing voice has now given up!



Hugh (Jock) Simpson qualified as an Artificer many moons ago, and on leaving the Navy he went to live in Canada. He became aware of the graduation rings, proudly worn by the Canadians and Americans, when his son became entitled to wear one.

Hugh thought about all the effort we had put into our own 'graduation' from Fisgard and Caledonia and considered that he had earned a similar symbol of his success, so he designed a suitable ring with the Fisgard and Caledonia crests and the words 'Royal Navy Artificer' engraved around a central stone. He duly had a ring made and was wearing it when he visited me several years ago.

I had spent a couple of years in Washington DC with the US Navy so I was familiar with the concept of graduation rings and I was full of admiration for what Hugh had designed. It was a truly elegant ring. Several months later, before our Ruby Wedding was due, my wife contacted Hugh and clandestinely arranged for moulds of the ring to be sent to her, and

on the day of our anniversary I was presented with this fantastic memento of my time as an Artificer.

The one remaining mould went to the back of my drawer. However, on returning from the passing out parade of the last class of Tiffs, I realised that other ex-Tiffs might like to record their part in this historic moment and to wear the ring with the same pride that Hugh and I do. I have taken this last mould to the jeweller who had arranged for my ring to be made, and he has done a feasibility study. If there is enough interest from 'graduates' of Fisgard and Caledonia then we can have more rings made.

It is estimated that each ring will cost in the order of £850 for a 9ct ct version or £1200 for a 14ct. (A donation to a Forces' Charity will be made for each ring sold)

If anyone is interested in having one of these elegant rings, please contact John Sayer of Studley Jewellers, 4-6 Broad Street, Wells, Somerset BA5 2DN
Tel: 01749 673548

E-mail: john@studleysjewellers.co.uk

And Finally.....

The Apprentices' Tools

DRILL PRESS: A tall upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flat metal bar stock out of your hands so that it smacks you in the chest and flings your beer across the room, denting the freshly-painted project which you had carefully set in the corner where nothing could get to it.

WIRE WHEEL: Cleans paint off bolts and then throws them somewhere under the workbench with the speed of light. Also removes fingertips and hard-earned callouses from fingers in about the time it takes you to say, "Oh sh--"

PLIERS: Used to round off bolt heads. Sometimes used in the creation of blood-blisters.

BELT SANDER: An electric sanding tool commonly used to convert minor touch-up jobs into major refinishing jobs.

HACKSAW: One of a family of cutting tools built on the Ouija board principle: It transforms human energy into a crooked, unpredictable motion, and the more you attempt to influence its course, the more dismal your future becomes.

VICE-GRIPS: Generally used after pliers to completely round off bolt heads. If nothing else is available, they can also be used to transfer intense welding heat to the palm of your hand.

OXY-ACETYLENE TORCH: Used almost entirely for setting fire to various flammable objects in your workshop. Also handy for igniting the grease inside the wheel hub from which you want to remove a bearing race.

BENCH MOUNTED CIRCULAR SAW: A large stationary power tool commonly used to launch wood projectiles for testing wall integrity.

HYDRAULIC CAR-JACK: Used for lowering a car to the ground after you have installed new brake pads, trapping the jack handle firmly under the bumper.

BAND SAW: A large stationary power saw primarily used by most workshops to cut good aluminium sheet into smaller pieces that more easily fit into the gash can after you cut on the inside of the line instead of the outside edge.

TWO-TON ENGINE HOIST: A tool for testing the maximum tensile strength of everything you forgot to disconnect.

PHILLIPS SCREWDRIVER: Normally used to stab the vacuum seals under lids or for opening old-style paper-and-tin oil cans and splashing oil on your shirt; but can also be used, as the name implies, to strip out Phillips screw heads.

STRAIGHT SCREWDRIVER: A tool for opening paint tins. Sometimes used to convert common slotted screws into non-removable screws and butchering your palms.

And Finally, Finally.....

If all goes according to plan, we will be sending this newsletter out to you in pdf format. If it has worked (!) then you will be reading this with better quality pictures than we have been able to send in the past.

Thanks to everyone who sent us articles for inclusion in this newsletter.

I have had an offer from a cartoonist in our ranks so if he will contact me, we can look forward to having our dull script brightened up with pictures.

Patricia Smith has kindly painted two pictures of HMS Caledonias (the sailing versions) which we will use to make notelets that will be on sale at the Caledonia Fair. Would someone like to draw/paint the two steam

CROW BAR: A tool used to crumple the metal surrounding the clip or bracket you needed to remove in order to replace a 50-pence part.

HOSE CUTTER: A tool used to make hoses too short.

HAMMER: Originally employed as a weapon of war, the hammer nowadays is used as a kind of divining rod to locate the most expensive parts adjacent to the object you are trying to hit.

STANLEY KNIFE: Used to open and slice through the contents of cardboard cartons delivered to your front door; it works particularly well on contents such as seats, DVDs, liquids in plastic bottles, collector magazines, refund cheques, and rubber or plastic parts. Especially useful for slicing work clothes, but only while in use.

“Soddit” TOOL: Any handy tool that you grab and throw across the garage while yelling “Soddit” at the top of your lungs. It is also the next tool that you will need.

versions (one ironclad and the ex-Majestic) to complete the series?

Any other help would be gratefully accepted:

Arranging for newsletters to be printed.

Stuffing envelopes and posting newsletters.

Writing Artapp ye Scribe.

Looking after Ted and getting him to as many reunions as possible. (Qualifications for Ted’s landlord include slight insanity, childishness, an understanding wife....)

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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

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

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