



THE BEVIN BOYS ASSOCIATION

FOUNDED 1989

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NEWSLETTER FOR SPRING 2014.

Chairman's Message.

As I put together this short note on the last day of March 2014, it has been sunny and warm, hopefully it is the forerunner of good weather to come. It will at least give the opportunity to everyone whose homes have been flooded earlier this year to dry out, and to get back to something like normality.

Enclosed in this issue you will find two reports from Bevin Boys, namely Peter French and Mel Harris. I hope you will find them an interesting read, as I did.

Regards,
Alan. (Lane)

It is with great sadness I have to report that Alan died suddenly on Wednesday 2nd April at 3 am.
Anne.

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY.

Where Are You Now?

At last sunshine and dry days to tell us Spring really has arrived. Thank you to the members who keep in touch with news.

John Etty writes of the talk he gave at the National Coal Mining Museum Wakefield on 4th October 2013 called "A Bevin Boy Remembers". It was part of the opening day at the Exhibition to celebrate the contribution Bevin Boys made to the World War 2 effort, The talk was well received by the hundred or so who attended including David Hinchliffe ex M P for Wakefield, who himself had been a miner. John Etty who as many of you will know was presented with the Rugby League Challenge Cup winners' medal by her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second in 1960, an occasion of which he is still justly proud.

There is also a summer exhibition at the National Mining Museum Wakefield from 2nd June To 28th September 2014 entitled "Courage, Camaraderie and Community" which will include a small section on miners memorials from World War 1 & 2, so perhaps anyone in the area or further afield may be interested to go and see it,

Sarah Patterson at the Imperial War Museum has informed me of a leaflet called "Family History" in which the Bevin Boys Association will be mentioned, another useful source for research.

Robin Bailey has written requesting help from any of our members who may recall a Philip Smeeton and the conditions surrounding his death during his Bevin Boy service? He was killed on May 27th 1946 in a Midlands pit accident. The following is from a note written by a friend also a Bevin Boy, at that time.

"Runaway tubs (underground) were not infrequent especially on the drifts and in fact PHILIP SMEETON, a boy from our school and a friend of mine, was killed in a Midland pit when the tubs

ran away down a drift (slope). He heard a shout of warning and stepped out of the way, not into a refuge, but into an area of catch points, which he didn't notice in the dark, an area where the rails were bent into a semi-circle to act as buffers and catch the runaway tubs. I don't think I need explain further."

As the writer cannot be contacted (possibly passed on) Robin is trying to trace the Midland pit concerned and if possible where Philip is buried, so his name with details, can be included on a Roll of Honour of World War 2 that is being updated at his old school. It is a long shot, but if anyone does remember the incident, please ring me on 0151 342 3703, so I can pass on any information.

On Saturday January 4th The Times newspaper published an article under the heading "When the front line was underground" sub headed In "Britain's coalmines, the Bevin Boys made a contribution to the war effort that went unrecognised". Tom Montgomery who wrote the article was very interested in the information I was able to give him about the Association so we are keeping in the public eye.

To answer your queries as to the whereabouts of the Bevin Boys Association Banner I can now report the following:-

We have been informed that it is at present located at the Stoke -on -Trent Museum and Art Gallery. We are now pressing for its return to the custody of the Bevin Boys Association.

**Here to help,
Best wishes,**

D. Elizabeth Todd (Liz)

Bevin Boy's Reception at the Welsh Assembly.

On July 16th 2013, the South Wales members of the Bevin Boys Association and their families accepted their invitation to a Reception at the Welsh Assembly in Cardiff.

The invitation came from Dame Rosemary Butler, the Presiding Officer of the Assembly. She acted as our hostess for the event.

In her welcoming speech she expressed how the Assembly appreciated the worthy and valued contribution of the Bevin Boys during the dark days of 1943 – 47. She regretted the limited appreciation and recognition given to the Bevin Boys for the vital work of men directed to work in coal mining.

Over thirty members and relatives attended the Reception. We enjoyed a fine Buffet refreshment. Other members of the Assembly joined us, and all were voicing their appreciation of the value and importance of our contribution to the War Effort.

It was heart warming to meet so many Bevin Boys – to feel the camaraderie, exchange memories and compare experiences. There was a very happy atmosphere and all present were delighted with the event.

A vote of thanks was heartily expressed to Dame Rosemary Butler for giving us such a worthy reception and we all went home happily enriched by the event.

Mel Harris.

MESSAGE from the HON.TREASURER.

As the National Committee has postponed its first meeting until 29th June 2014, I have been unable to present a Financial Report covering the first half of this financial year, for approval.

Also, any resolution of two matters reported at our A.G.M. i. e. The Bevin Boys Association Banner and Bigbury Mint, could affect our financial situation.

Harry P.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT.

We have again received a great many letters saying how much you all look forward to reading the Newsletters and for your committee to 'keep up the good work'. Although we do seem to be dwindling each day! Please would you write, telephone or e-mail me, as Membership Secretary, 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,
Alan.

Reunion last October in Norwich.

Approaching on the leafy avenue from the south we reached the City Gate and joined the rush hour, recalling the mantra... 'left, fourth roundabout, fourth offtake into Whitefriars'. Peace and calm et voila, The Maids Head; a warm welcome, as we ducked under the scaffolding outside and stepped into tranquillity, prospect of dinner and a feather bed. Hello Everybody!

Taxis awaited us next morning to thread through the traffic and the 'roman-fret' route to City Hall (1930's Deco), the Mayor's Parlour and an audience with Lord Mayor Keith Driver: and his Sword Bearer. Over coffee and 'chockybits' we surveyed the view from his balcony over the coloured roofs of the market stalls below, to the Cathedral and the Norman Keep on the hill beyond, whilst the Mayor removed his gold chain of office and allowed our Treasurer to weigh it in his cupped hands. Retrieving it in time for a group photograph, the Mayor talked to everyone in our party and we left knowing there are only eleven cities in the UK with a Lord Mayor. He left knowing how to 'shieldie yr'oil lamp, maura'.

With the rest of the day free, some brave hearts took the bus from Castle Meadows to Cromer to savour the crabs; but in Norwich there was a newly opened exhibition at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, sited at the green edges of the City. Flashing our (London) bus pass, a short ride brought us to 'Masterpieces of East Anglia', 270 works from 65 collections ranging from the 700,000year old Happisburg Hand Axe (knapped polished flint) to Henry Moore's 1930 reclining figure carved from an ironstone pebble he found on the same beach. We marvelled at the treasures and art works so competently displayed.

The coach outing day took us to Sandringham, the country house of the Royal Family, where we wandered through wonderful rooms full of interesting arrangements of priceless ceramics, jade, clocks and furniture, until not least, a display of unusual photographs of Her Majesty's engagements, followed by a collection of greeting cards made and sent by Her Joyous Subjects young and old. Within the estate, St.Mary Magdalene Church offered the amazing sight of an altar frontal depicting the Royal Arms of King Edward VII in solid silver, a gift made on his accession.

Shopping Thursday gave us time to enjoy the Art Nouveau Royal Arcade and visit the Mustard Museum before assembling at the Hotel for the 25th AGM of the Bevin Boys Association. Here we remembered, with sadness, the passing of Gordon Todd (Chairman) and strengthened our love and support for Liz in her loss: and where now she stood and delivered her role as Secretary to the Association, aided by the Committee. Our appreciation was apparent; and she went on to elucidate such problems as we still have in determining the

future of the Association in the wake of events twelve months earlier at Llandudno. In this she was supported by a newly confirmed chairman, Alan Lane – and on a brighter note, ‘Our Harry’ (the Treasurer) enthralled the meeting, with graphic hugs, how the Dedication at Alrewas was an all time high. The Raffle was a wiz too!

A Gala Dinner later that evening saw our guests the Lord Mayor and his Consort, joined by our Chairman Alan Lane, draw swords and perform the cutting of three iced cakes decorated ‘7’ and ‘0’ to mark the Anniversary of the first Ballottees in 1943, and a replica, in colour, of our Veteran Bevin Boy Badge awarded in 2008. The applause and our grateful thanks are appropriate at this point and offered to Margaret Rose who masterminded the whole week’s events, the cuisine, the feather beds and all the comforts for our stay at the Maid’s Head – and she probably made the cakes too! ...3 cheers for Margaret: Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

The Reverend Andrew King brought the evening to a close with kind words and prayers for the Bevin Boys and the Association.

We have enjoyed this venue on three occasions now and our Reunions continue to be central to our diminishing family of people with a similar, though distant, experience – we are all pleased to be here: it is the whole charm of the thing.

Peter and Rosalind French.

Sales.

Total Sales for Postal & the AGM Reunion last year were £260.59p. 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
Maroon Tie	@ £10.00	The Forgotten Conscript	@ £10.00
Digging Up the Past	@ £10.00	Bevin Boy Banner Postcard	@ £0.20

2 different Black & White postcards of prints from A Bevin Boy Remembers @ £0.20 each & 2 colour & 2 black & white prints of A4 size from A Bevin Boy Remembers @ £0.20 each

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

Anne.

National Reunion & AGM

How the time speeds by! Our message is that we hope that you are all keeping reasonably well and mobile. Life has not been too good at this end, but we are now gradually getting our daily routine and life back.

In January we visited a hotel which is our hopeful venue for week commencing October 6th 2014. By the time you respond, all details will be available in print, including cost. It has been so difficult to find a pleasant and suitable venue with a nice outlook, on the flat, clean etc. and good food. I think ‘this is it’.

The hotel in mind is The Clarendon Hotel, Blackheath, London SE3. All rooms are accessible by lift. The food was excellent on our unannounced visit and everywhere was clean and tidy. The front of the hotel looks over the heath. (A large expanse of mown grass), a short bus ride to Greenwich Park and beautiful Greenwich.

Our AGM will either be on Wednesday 8th October or Thursday 9th October 2014.

Please send your SAE for full details. I have to confirm the booking by 21st April 2014.

We look forward to another happy and informative gathering. If you prefer, you can telephone me for details. I am so sorry for this long delay,

Please note the hotel will accept cancellations up to 14 days before visit. ie. 21/9/14

Yours,

Margaret R. Tel. 01328 863986.

REUNION DATES for 2014.

Sunday June 8th - a Carvery Lunch at the same venue as last year. Please ring **Margaret Rose** Tel: 01328 863986. by May 10th if you are interested.

Wednesday June 11th - **Cheshire, Lancs & North Wales Group** at Thornton Hough, Wirral. Please ring **Liz Todd** on Tel: 0151 3423703)

Monday June 23rd - **South West Area**. Please ring **Anne Lane** on 01275 463703 if you are interested.

July - **Eric Johnson** hopes to arrange a reunion in the Ilford area in July with details to follow. If anyone wants a chat they can always give him a ring on **01206-384077**.

Wednesday August 6th – **Home Counties Group** – Lunch at Royal Mid – Surrey Golf Club. Ring **Bob McKenzie** for details on 020 8948 5538.

6th - 10th October - AGM & Reunion at The Clarendon Hotel, Blackheath, London SE3. (Margaret Rose Tel: 01328 863986.)

BEVIN BOYS REMEMBERED.

Since the end of summer 2013 I have been involved at the National Mining Museum for England at Caphouse Colliery, Wakefield, Yorkshire. The BBC Inside Out team filmed me in the underground workings to show the sort of work undertaken by Bevin Boys from the pit bottom to, coal face and stables with a lifesize model of a pit pony. Much more docile than Lion, who I worked with when a Bevin Boy ganging material up to the coal face.

I was invited back to Caphouse to attend the opening on the 14th October 2013 of an exhibition of work by artist Martin Hill "A Bevin Boy in Yorkshire". Along with a few other Bevin Boys and families present, we heard from speaker Mr John Ety a Bevin Boys Association member who had worked at Shawcross colliery and later became a Rugby League player and had the honour to play for England.

On Armistice Day I laid a wreath to remember Bevin Boys. at former Calverton Colliery Memorial. Next week I speak to a group of Local Authority Employees .A few weeks later to University of the Third Age members.

Since the dedication of our National Memorial.at Alrewas, I believe we Bevin Boys are now recognised for our contribution to the 1939 / 45 war.

The National Mining Museum has updated its archives with photographs and voice recordings of the personal memories of a Bevin Boy.

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 subs. Please go to:- <http://www.bevinboysassociation.co.uk> or to email the committee bevinboys1943@gmail.com 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 Also, when you have a moment look up www.thurcroftcolliery.weebly.com if you know of any Bevin Boys connected to Thurcroft Colliery, or have any information, they will be pleased for you to contact them.

Anne.

National Service Conscripts Annual Reunion

I am planning to organise a representative group of Bevin Boys to join me with other National Service Conscripts from the Fighting Services at the Annual National Service Conscripts Reunion on Sunday 29th June 2014 as part of the Armed Forces Weekend at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas near Burton on Trent, Staffs.

Starting at 1.45pm with an open air Service of Remembrance.

Sounding the Last Post and Wreath Laying

Ending with a parade of Armed Forces and Bevin Boy Conscripts, passing our new Bevin Boys Memorial.

If you are a Bevin Boy willing and able to walk approx. 200yds will you join me and other members of our committee at the Ceremony to represent " The Bevin Boys" .

If interested please contact me for further details.

All Bevin Boys, their families and friends are welcome to attend the ceremony as visitors. NO booking Required Free entry. Small charge for car parking.

To contact me Telephone 01158 465354 or email: ha.parkes@virginmedia.com

For postal reply, please enclose SAE.

Harry Parkes.