



# The Bond

February 1991 Volume 5 Issue 2

The Newsletter of the  
Customs & Excise Retired Staff Associations



## Thoughts for 2000 AD.....

Over the past 8 months since taking on the job as editor of this newsletter I have, I hope, learned a few lessons which will assist in producing a useful and worthwhile communication tool for the Federation.

It is a great privilege to have sight of the many local newsletters which are sent to me regularly, which gives me an overall view of what individual groups require and use for their own purposes, and all of which are produced in individual styles.

Some are produced as, literally, a letter, some in a similar format to that used for *The Bond*, and some in a very professional, admirably "slick" style of very high publication and print qualities. Some of the production qualities are undoubtedly dependent upon what facilities are available, from typewriter through word-processor to state of the art computers and publishing skills.

The content has many similarities throughout the range, with activity programmes common to all. In many, reports are made of the walks, visits, sporting events and entertainments in which members have been involved. There are those with "hatch, match and despatch" features (obviously, the balance among these three subjects is somewhat weighed toward the latter) and from time-to-time old friendships are re-established after periods of detachment.

There are pen-portraits of members, sometimes with photographs, and reports of magnificent world tours stemming from our members reaping the rewards of hard-worked careers in the Department.

Fascinating stuff to read: I always enjoy opening mail to find a copy of some editor's or secretary's hard work producing these very important instruments of communication. Sadly some information which would provide useful copy for publication in *The Bond* does not arrive in time for inclusion due to the fact that it has to be "put to bed" one month before the date of issue. I hope secretaries and organisers

would note this, and send in information which requires publication as soon as possible, even though this may be earlier than their own deadlines.

Comment has been made that the balance of articles leans too heavily to sporting activities of the "hearty" sort. Well, the answer is plain. The contributions have in the main come from contributors who are most enthusiastic about their interests, and unfortunately it is not possible to include articles about the many other activities in which CERSA members participate without contributions from the groups involved. It is also of some concern that there is not a geographical spread. Nor is there any apparent participation by the "lower grades" (I am certain this is a false impression, judging from the membership of my local CERSA, which is NERO) even though retirement would surely have the effect of levelling out all, and allowing previously hidden talent to emerge.

Let's have a look at what might help to improve matters.

I know that bridge groups exist; bowlers - indoor and outdoor - enjoy the click of hardwood; sailors sail; fishermen fish; artists paint; actors act; wine and beer manufacturers ferment, brew (and perhaps distill!) Perhaps your talents extend to drawing original and pertinent cartoons - heaven knows we can use as much humour as is available. Can you produce an appropriate crossword? - perhaps the committee could be persuaded to cough up for a prize now and then.

There is a mass of fascinating information out there which would be stimulating for all to read about, **if the participants would only spend a few minutes putting pen to paper on a weather-bound day**, and spend 19p on a second-class postage stamp!

*Come on, lads and lasses - let us see what we can do!*

Happy New Year!

# The Bond

## London CERSA History & Activities

John Wright writes:

The London Area branch has grown from its foundation level of 20 former C&E staff to over 100 members. This means that we can rely on a good turnout (between 20 and 30) for almost all our gatherings. Being based in London, we have an limitless choice of places to go and things to see.

There had been no London branch before 1995, possibly because people commute into town from many parts of SE England and are unwilling to stay on for evening gatherings. What helped to get us launched in 1994 was the big clear-out of people below normal retirement age. It seemed opportune to set up a CERSA branch then, and half dozen individuals were forthcoming to form the first provisional committee under Colin Coventry's chairmanship. Most of us are still there! We were fortunate to be able to tap into the newly-formed Federation of CERSAs and received valuable help from Ron Sanders and his committee from the outset. We affiliated to the Federation and now take a full part in the increasing range of events they organise.

Our first programme included a few pub lunches, which were mainly attended by the committee plus a few other members; only when we started venturing out for weekday visits to country houses and parks did we begin to attract other family members. Our first gathering was on a snowy day at the Beefeater Gin Distillery in London - an appropriate setting for many from a Department like HM Customs & Excise. Then we visited Denbies Winery near Dorking, and after a tour of the winery we rambled along the neighbouring paths in beautiful Spring weather. We've since been to Knole Park, Syon House, Kew Gardens, Wisley, Hommans Museum; Tallow Chandlers Hall, Clapham Common, Regents Park, Southwark, the Inns of Court and Highgate. We visited Hampton Court Fullers Brewery, the Tower of London and HMS Belfast and have

been as far afield as Hatfield House, St Albans Abbey, Down House, and Greenwich. All our visits are led by members and we benefit from their goodwill in researching suitable locations.

We are fortunate that our connections with serving colleagues are maintained. Our constitution encourages staff to join us in their final months of service and we have also supplied speakers for pre-retirement courses. The constitution also specifies that our Hon President should be a senior serving member of the Department. Our first Hon President, Sandy Russell CB, Deputy Chairman, has himself recently joined the ranks of the retired. His successor is Mike Norgrove. We hold our AGM in one of the main conference rooms in London. Our quarterly newsletter, which is our main way of communication, is printed and distributed for us. Many of us attend the annual Riverites reunions, though we don't always understand the latest jargon which features in the speeches and irreverent entertainments.

Our small committee meets quarterly and its main function is to plan the future programme, taking account of the feedback from members surveys. We have not (yet) had any theatre trips or other evening events (except for the Riverites) or weekend meetings. A cross-Channel trip is on the cards for later this year. We keep the formal AGMs short, having adopted our constitution early on.

We try to support any members who are facing ill-health or are in any other need, partly through a telephone cascade system. This welfare aspect of CERSA is something that may well develop further, since - sadly - the Department cannot offer the services of its staff assistance officers to retired staff. But mainly, as this account of our branch shows, the accent is on informality and fun - otherwise what's the point of being retired?

**Dates for your 2000 diary:**

Tuesday 28 March: RAF Museum, Hendon

Thursday 18 May: walk round Little Venice and pub lunch

From the October issue of London Area CERSA:

### The Millennium approaches

This will be the last newsletter of 1999. We are already booking dates in the year 2000 (see this page). With less than 70 days to the new Millennium (unless you are a purist), these are times when some are looking back to the achievements and events of past centuries. Others will be looking forward to the marvels of technology still to come. For me it is an opportunity to celebrate my own experiences in this incredible and exciting century.

War, with its rationing and subsequent austerity, left me largely unscathed both at home and in school. The II+ was a greater challenge. Camping and climbing were unrestricted joys. Foreign travel was a rare privilege. I enjoyed my National Service, which was then a more common ritual than University. Wanting a 'good' job and a pension attracted me to the safety of the civil service. Television brought us the miracle of space exploration. By then, like many, I had married and started a family. My first car cost £50 and my first house £2,300. In HMC&E, the VAT expansion meant a new start and better promotion opportunities. We moved up and down the country. IT transformed many jobs, including mine. Retirement came earlier than expected, opening up new opportunities, including CERSA. Our first grandchild was born. How was it for you? I think Harold Macmillan was absolutely right: we had never had it so good.

What do you hope the new Millennium will bring? I'd like to see a renewal and sharing of faith and less materialism. For all CERSA members and their families I hope it will be a time for rich rewards, especially in time spent in congenial company at interesting places.

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## The Sheffield/Chesterfield Golf Society.

**Paul Houghton** writes:

Hugh O'Neill and I, both retired, are Vice Captain and Captain of the Sheffield Customs and Excise Golf Society for the Millennium Year. The Society Meets once a month (April-September) at Golf Courses from Sheffield down to Derby. A normal day is 9 in the morning and a Competition over 18 holes in the afternoon. Green Fees range from £20/25 for the day sometimes with food thrown in. If you'd like to play or like a copy of the programme for the year give me a call or Tony Frisby (the Society Secretary 01246 501016). In addition we manage to field a couple of Teams in the C&E National KO and also play qualifying Competitions for the National Championship this year at Camoustie in August. Club handicaps are accepted but if you haven't got one we give Society Handicaps up to 36!! Look forward to seeing you if you can make it.

## TENBY

### Liverpool CERSA

**Les Carney** writes:

11 of us enjoyed a 4 night break at the Heywood Hotel, Tenby. The hotel was very comfortable, the food varied and plentiful, the bar well-stocked and the "apres-ski" room (room 2, bring your own glass) was great!

The weather started off very well, but gradually an easterly wind settled in. However, rain did not arrive until late Thursday. Our energetic walkers took the Pembrokeshire Coastal Path to the east and west and the Miners Path from Saundersfoot. I believe there were some spectacular views from a narrow path near Manorbier, with a cliff face on the right, a sheer drop to the left, a gale-force

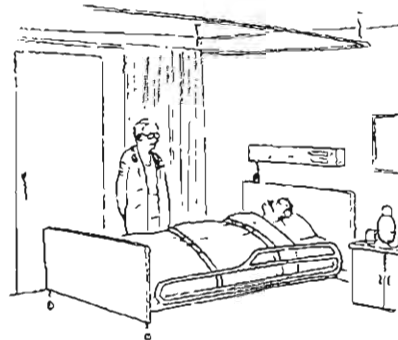
to the available confections.....Our only disappointment was failing to get to Caldey Island due to strong winds, but we all expressed our thanks to Reg for arranging a very good holiday.

Following last year's successful weekend at The Castle Hotel, Conway, Tony Cross-Rudkin is organising another stay there. The dates are 2nd to 4th March and the cost is £29 per person per night for half-board, including wine and dinner. Tony's 'phone number is 0151 632 5612.

*I am being admitted to hospital for surgery on 4th January, so this is being put together earlier than usual. I hope to be able to edit the next issue under normal rules.*

*Happy New Year!*

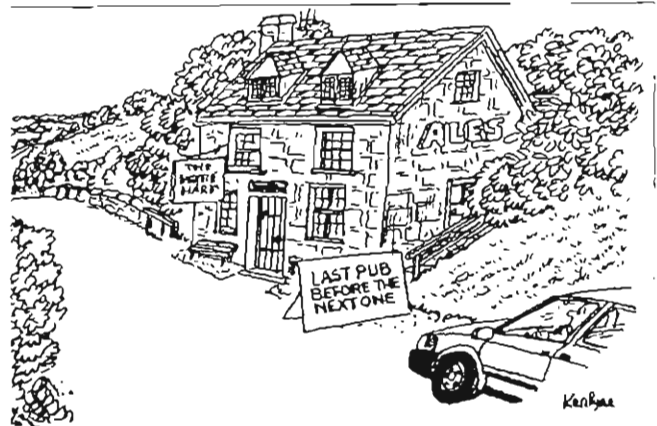
*Dave Taylor, Editor*



"The restraints are for your own protection, Mr Taylor. We're concerned that if you ring the nurses desk once more, they'll strangle you."



wind and a public notice proclaiming "CLIFFS CAN KILL"! However, all our walkers returned safely to base, suitably refreshed. We less energetic, meanwhile, enjoyed sight-seeing tours of North and South Pembrokeshire, a truly most scenically attractive county, and having filled the car boots with the products of a garden centre, ended the tour at a Chocolate Farm - yes, I said FARM. I won't try to describe the reactions of our ladies



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Dave : if not too late would it be possible to put an "emphasised" item in saying that

## Treasurer's Report for the Year ending 30th September 1999

To the Committee Meeting of the Federation of CERSA's in November 1999 and to the AGM in Bournemouth in May 2000.

Accounts for the year have been examined by the appointed Examiners and certified as satisfactory. Copies have been forwarded to the National Sports Club Treasurer, our Chairman, Secretary and the Editor of the Bond for publication to the wider membership.

The policy of supporting C&E Sports Club Members taking part in Sports Club, local Cersa and Federation of Cersa events has continued through 1998/1999. So that the accounts are more informative I have introduced a column showing the number of Sports Club Members taking part in each of the events. It is worth noting the variety and extent of participation, which has overall increased.

The level of support has in general been in line with the Sports Club Guidelines. However I could foresee because of extended membership participation in events potentially an overspend for the year if the guidelines on travel were strictly followed. I accordingly decided to reduce the mileage rate to 10p a mile and limit the amount paid to an individual for travel to £20.00 and a limit on overstay to one night also at £20.00. I have not received any complaint on this approach.

If the level of rebate from the Sports Club remains the same in 2000 then it should be possible to maintain current policy on payments. Under the present that the affiliation fees remain at £25.00 as they provide a sufficient income to fund what might be perceived as Federation as opposed to Sports Club activity.

On a personal note I wish to let you know I intend to stand for re-election at this AGM, but if re-elected would wish only to serve until the completion of the Accounts to 30th Septem-

ber 2000. This would be my 4th year-end. I thank the Accounts Examiners Les Ashplant and Peter Bown for the prompt attention they have given to processing the Accounts and also to my second signatories for their support.

## London Marathon April 16th 2000

**Gordon Hodson** writes:

At the time of writing I am only aware of 2 retired staff who have been accepted for this event Nick Pugh:(London Area CERSA) and myself. Dennis Thompson did not get a place but is still in with a chance when his running club holds a raffle for the 2 or 3 places allocated to all affiliated clubs. If there are any other accepted runners or any using a Charity place I would be pleased to hear from them particularly as we will probably all be setting off from the Green Start at Greenwich and may be able to get a photo!



## URGENT

*If there are any Retired Sports Club members who wish to go to the reunion they should contact me IMMEDIATELY.*

*So far I only have 3 Sports Club applicants!*

*On a lighter note:*

A few anagrams seen recently in a classic car club magazine :

**Tony Blair MP** (I'm a Tory Plan B)

**Virginia Bottomley** (I'm an evil Tory bigot)

**Michael Heseltine** (Elect him he's alien)

**The Houses of Parliament** (Loonies far up the Thames)

**Francois Mitterand** (Mad strain of cretin)

**Performance Related Pay** (Mere end of year claptrap)

**Madonna the material girl** (Real dim man-eating harlot)

**Irritable Bowel Syndrome** (O my terrible drains below)

**Mother in law** (Woman Hitler)

**Boddingtons the Cream of Manchester** ( Boddingtons, stomach ache fermenter)

**Stella Artois, reassuringly expensive** (pint o'lager virtually erases sexiness)

**A decimal point** (I'm a dot in place)

**Eleven plus two** (Twelve plus one) and , finally

"To be or not to be that is the question, whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune " (In one of the Bards best thought of tragedies, our insistent hero, Hamlet, queries on two fronts about how life turns rotten).

*(The Editor disclaims all responsibility for any*

*Items for April issue should be sent to the Editor by*

## 5th MARCH