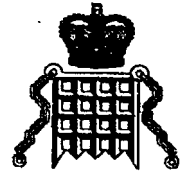


The Bond



Newsletter of the Federation of Customs and Excise Retired Staff Associations
and

The Sports and Social Club Retired Members Branch

January 2002

Volume 7 Issue 1

RECOLLECTIONS

Dear Editor,

I have been pondering Bill Gray's amusing recollection (in October's Bond) of the 'advice' given to newly promoted Unattached Surveyors, ie., 'remember all Officers are your enemy'. This was the management style, at least in the Excise and PT, until the 1960s.

I surmise that this approach went back, without a break, to the reorganisation of the Excise in 1683. Then Officers were scattered across the country, normally worked on their own, had considerable scope to take bribes from traders and could be idle and/or inefficient for years on end. The Excise Commissioners, by no means incorruptible themselves, countered this by: - making it a condition of service that an Officer put up a bond against him defrauding the Revenue; compulsory moves from one station to another every few years, discharging Officers for the slightest reason, *pour encourager les autres*; normally not permitting Officers to officiate for Supervisors (Surveyor equivalent); and directing that Collectors and Supervisors should inspect and report on their Officers. Those who discovered Officers' misdeeds were promoted.

In the mid-19th century the Civil Service was reformed substantially and the Commissioners had only staff inspection and 'no acting up' as management techniques. By and large, these were used until the 1960s despite the fact that some Officers were in larger groupings, e.g., the Purchase Tax Centres. Modern management was not in the frame. Thus almost everything that Bill Gray recollected is true.

The only exception I would make is that the largest group of Officers were not 'morons'. They may have, acted like morons but that was part of the Officers' cunning plan to put Unattached Surveyors off the scent. It was a small price to pay for mp10/pn, ep2/4, and being 'a Gentleman of the Excise'.

Yours sincerely

JOHN PINK

DO YOU REMEMBER...



...those brown pieces of toilet paper? You had to note that you didn't requisition "sheets", for a "sheet" meant 240 pieces!

...the days in the docks where the Depot Watcher, usually ex-navy, prepared the lunch in the Depot - some good, some awful. The Officer dishing out had to make sure there was enough left for him.

Bill Gray contributed these two snippets, and suggests that there may be a wealth of others such to spring memories. Please send them in! Ed.



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Editor Dave Taylor

A "HERO" RETURNS TO PAMPISFORD

I attended The World Police & Fire Games (WPFG) 2001 in Indianapolis, Indiana to swim in several races and run the half marathon. I have been participating in the WPFG for the last eight years and as they are held every two years this has meant 4 trips overseas, including Melbourne, Calgary, Stockholm and the latest in the USA.

The Americans consider Customs and Excise a law enforcement agency, and therefore, C&E staff and retirees are entitled competitors. I feel like a bit of a fraud really because all I ever did was to sit in Central London and concern myself with making sure VAT was accounted for on property transactions in the capital. When I am asked by American colleagues what sort of weapon I used to carry, I

have to explain that apart from a good supply of pens, I faced the world of London's big property companies completely unarmed. I also have to apologise for my ignorance on the subject of the homicide rate in London. But I now know the rate in Los Angeles so I will not be moving to there in the foreseeable future. The WPFG's are very big events and have grown enormously since they first started in the 1980's. There were well over 10,000 competitors in Indianapolis from all over the world this year. In 1995 Melbourne was very hot and the city put on a very warm welcome in the 1956 Olympic Stadium. It's a very interesting city, which considers itself a cut above the more vulgar Sydney. In 1997, Calgary was cooler and also very

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If you would like to join the **History Network** and receive their Newsletter, write to

John Pink
6 Ann's Court,
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(Continued from page 2)

hospitable but although a very modern city, apart from the Calgary Stampede (a very big event) it was rather boring. But they take sport very seriously and have very modern facilities. By the time I got to Stockholm in 1999 I decided that as the events were costing a lot of money to attend I would make this an economical trip. Therefore, I flew from Stansted on Ryanair for just over £100. The only problem with this is that the passengers have to push the aircraft onto the runway for takeoff. So complete with a large backpack and a small igloo tent I got to a campsite just outside Stockholm only to find that I had forgotten the hammer for the tent pegs and as the whole of Stockholm is built on rock this was a bit of a problem. Well fortunately, there were no gales during my stay and the tent just about stayed where it was. Stockholm of course is an interesting city but very expensive.

And now to Indianapolis in June of this year - once again I decided that I would keep costs down by booking my flight at the last moment. To get the best deal it is necessary to fly to "Timbuktu" before you get to your final destination. Well I arrived in Chicago, after transiting through Cincinnati, at about 5pm local time and took a train from Chicago O'Hare Airport to a very seedy station just past the centre of Chicago, called Clinton. This was so I could get to the Greyhound Bus Station for the next part of journey. The terror level in this part of Chicago is somewhat higher than central Pampisford (a very small village in Cambridgeshire) but fortunately I was travelling light with only one sports bag. When I got to the bus station, which was even seedier than Clinton Rail Station, there were security guards everywhere. There was a huge racial mix of people milling around including two groups of Amish people.

I was able to buy a bus ticket to Indianapolis for the 8.45pm coach and then had to hang about for the next two hours or so. Although the bus station was very rough I thought it wiser to stay inside rather than risk walking about outside. I thought the rolled-up umbrella might be a giveaway to the local residents. In future, I will not hear any criticism about the old British Rail food, because the food in the bus station was really appalling. As food was out, I drank large cups of coffee to keep me going.

When I finally arrived, after 4 hours on the coach, at the Indianapolis bus station it was nearly midnight but I soon found my hotel in the downtown area. Downtown in the USA, usually means a sort of ghetto area of hotels - very clean and tidy but

completely arid. If you want to find a small shop to buy something quite normal like milk sugar or sweets you can forget it.

As you are probably aware it is never a good idea to use hotel phones to make long distance calls but the Marriott Hotel where I was staying will go down in the "annuals of infamy". They charged me \$44 (£30) for a very short call home. They will be remembered! I'm surprised that colonials should treat visitors from the mother country in this way. As it was, it was all I could do, not to choke on my breakfast the next morning. As a matter of principle, I decided from then on to eat in a local diner. Of course my principles were helped considerably by the diner being much less costly than the infamous Marriott Hotel.

However, on to the swimming: I am pleased to report that I managed to get some medals in my events but I must come clean. I swim in Masters Age groups, which means I swim in a five-year age group from 60-64 years. It is my experience that in the men's older age groups, as long as you can get on the starting block, hear the gun and get to the other end you are always in danger of getting a medal. The real competition is in the younger age groups. There were banners all over the Natatorium (swimming pool) in Indianapolis welcoming all competitors as "Heroes in the Heartland". This may seem somewhat "over the top" but we were in America after all and who am I to argue with hero status? The Americans are very generous because not only do you receive a splendid medal but also a bunch of flowers each time you ascend the rostrum. The only problem here is that they must have treated the flowers with some chemical to help preserve them in the Indiana heat because they all smelt of old fish. By the end of the second day I had five bunches in my hotel room, which was making life a bit difficult in the hermetically sealed bedroom.

On my last full day in Indianapolis I ran the half marathon. This was to give some support to Daphne and Nick Pugh, Alan Hollingsworth and Jim Smith who were also competing. I like to think that being able to give them en-route advice helped them get amongst the medals. I was always very careful in the road race not to get in front of them in case this might demoralise them too much (nobody likes a know-all winning all the medals). When I finally finished (only just) the temperature was in the nineties and I was amazed to find that I had taken the bronze medal for my age group. Now this medal I really did earn, so I won't be doing this event again. Of

(Continued on page 6)

TESTING TIMES

Welcombe House,
Winterborne Houghton,
Blandford. Dorset.
DT 11 0PD.

The Editor,
The Bond.

Dear David,

CERSA (DORSET AREA).

Those were the days indeed!

The contribution from Bill Gray in your October issue was read with great delight in these parts; also the reminiscences concerning our old friend Ron Sanders.

Mindful that some of the appeal of The Bond lies in such contributions, I enclose copies of some papers which might be of general interest. They formed part of the written examination in May 1952 for the Officer of Customs & Excise entry. There were four compulsory subjects -- English, Elementary Mathematics, General Paper and Science -- and a choice of two subjects from Further Maths, History, Geography, Economics & Elementary Politics, and one of four languages. Out of 352 candidates, 165 passed the written paper, and they were whittled down to 101 successfuls after the interview. I still have these results.

The ticks on the exam papers indicated the questions I attempted. Some of these questions look dated now, but I think they give a good impression of what was expected of budding officers in those days. If you think they are worth publishing, please feel free to do so.

Also enclosed is a copy of our *Autumn Newsletter, in response to your request for such material. We have 80 paid up members on our list. Recruitment is difficult. Those who leave the department these days often do so before reaching the age of sixty, and finding other jobs to occupy themselves. Other CERSA associations are finding it harder.

Keep up the good work!
Yours sincerely,



Peter G Bown,
Hon Secretary,
Dorset CERSA.



*SEE PAGE 6.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

[ff-9712]

General Paper Time allowed, 1 hour

*Answer any THREE questions. Your answers should be concise and to the point.
All the questions carry equal marks*

- ✓ 1. Do you think it is (a) desirable and (b) possible to increase to any great extent the proportion of the population of Great Britain engaged in agriculture ?
2. Why is it difficult to raise the standard of living in this country today ?
3. What new features can you suggest for the Light Programme or the Home Service of the B.B.C., and what reasons would you put forward in support of your suggestions ?
4. What characteristics of *either* the architecture of the recent South Bank Exhibition *or* the design for the new cathedral at Coventry do you consider to be most interesting, and why?
- ✓ 5. What, in your opinion, were the main reasons for the defeat of the Labour party in this year's general election ?
6. In the United States a number of important conferences and public enquiries have been televised. What is to be said for and against televising the proceedings of the House of Commons in this country?
- ✓ 7. What advantages would result from a union of east and west Germany ? Why is it difficult to bring this about today?
8. Describe how crude oil is refined, and mention the main by-products of this process.

(C35504) 750 11/51

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

[ff-9712]

English. Paper I Time allowed, 1½ hours

Write an essay on ONE of the following subjects, and give its number on your answer form.

1. Do you think that we, as the consuming public, are sufficiently critical of what manufacturers offer?
2. ✓ Consider the attitude of a young man to National Service before and after his experience of it.
3. If happiness is a child's birthright, is the average child better off today than he was fifty years ago?
4. Would you agree that, by contrast with that of other countries, the scenery of the British Isles is unspectacular ?

(C35804) 750 11/51

(Continued from page 3)

course Daphne, Nick and Alan all benefiting from my advice had finished their races some time before me. For Jim unfortunately this was an event too far and he found this a tough finale. Of course if you do insist as Jim did, on entering as large a number of events possible, by the end of the week you are bound to be a little "cream cracked".

When I got back to the Greyhound Bus Station in Chicago on my return trip home, I couldn't remember how to get to Clinton Rail Station. However, a local in his twenties who had somehow identified me, possibly as a tourist (I now had two rolled umbrellas - the second was a gift for attending the games) insisted that he would show me the way to Clinton Station. He kept talking all the time about he earned his living "helping" people. Well after we had walked about 2-3 hundred yards, I spotted Clinton Station subway steps. My helper insisted that I should go another way to some other station but before he could "help" me any further, I gave him a dollar and quickly nipped down the steps into Clinton Station. However, on the station platform was another local resident, clearly high on drugs and abusing everyone in sight. It was at this stage I decided to get to O'Hare Airport as soon as possible rather than tour around Chicago any longer getting to know the locals. It was while I was seated in the airport food court just noshing into a Mexican meal (this was my third meal as I had just had Chinese and Turkish) that Alan Hollingsworth and his wife accosted me. I explained that I was having a last dip into American Cuisine before heading back to the UK. On the return flight, I transited through Atlanta Georgia where the airline staff were too busy discussing their social arrangements to worry about international travellers getting their flights. Needless to say my bag went missing and wasn't transferred to the aircraft taking me to Gatwick. It finally arrived in Pampisford three days later.

I now have Barcelona to look forward to in 2003. I am hoping that a certain swimming competitor from Finland who has the cheek to win every race he goes in for and who, unfortunately, will be in my age group by then, might not be as fit as he usually is. My wife who is likely to be on this trip with me (she only comes to the more desirable locations - a fair weather supporter) has been primed to trip him up at the top of any staircase he may choose to use. I shall deny all knowledge or complicity in this of course, even if it means a custodial sentence for her!

Jeffers Mayo

**CUSTOMS & EXCISE RETIRED
STAFF ASSOCIATION
(DORSET AREA)**

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER, 2001.

It is with much sadness that we have to record the recent death of Gerry Burgess. He was a founder-member of our association, and gave us much wise counsel during our formation. We have made a donation to the RNLI in his memory. We hope that Peggy will be able to rejoin us eventually, and we also hope that Alan Harding, who has not been well, will soon be back with us.

On a happier note, the Autumn Break at Sidmouth was enjoyed by all who were there. Good weather, excellent cuisine, friendly staff and pleasant company all helped towards a memorable trip. We have enquired about a return visit. The hotel is unable to provide the same dates (already booked), but have offered three nights from Friday 27 September. Rates will be only slightly increased at that time of the year, and they will be advised in January. Meantime we would be grateful to have reaction from those who went this time.

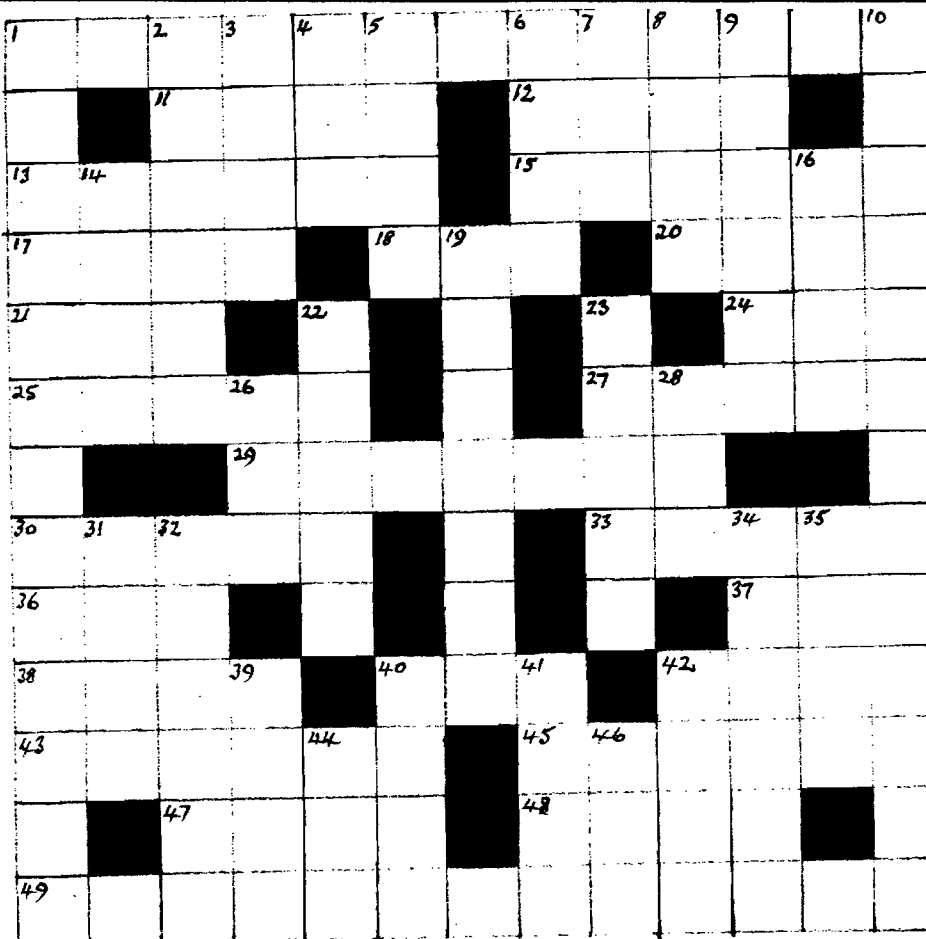
Our Autumn Lunch brought forth forty-seven members, who were given a lively and entertaining discourse on smuggling in the 18th century by Hark Bullen. He runs the risk of becoming a standing order on these occasions!

Please find enclosed a note on our Horning Quiz. In addition, we can now give notice of our next two Formal lunches, both at The Hinton Firs Hotel. The Christmas Lunch will be held on Wednesday 5 December, arriving anytime after midday for the 12.45pm meal. Guests will be welcome.

The New Year Lunch will be held on Thursday 17 January, arriving after 11.00am for a morning talk. This will be given by Hugh Jaques, From the County Record office in Dorchester: his subject will be "The work of a County Archivist". Lunch will follow as usual.

PGB

THE BOND CROSSWORD NO 11



8. Not as simple as holding a drinking cup (4)
9. It is fashionable to lose out when putting one's foot in it (6)
10. Damaged purse meant to be overlooked (13)
14. No hesitation in finding a Roman fiddler (4)
16. I hurried to the country (4)
19. Hal, I rue becoming a carrier (7)
22. Do we need lamps to read this in church? (5)
23. Sees in six different directions (5)
26. Estimate how to make a place to drive from when a mist disappears (3)
28. To weep can relax you initially (3)
31. Need to create a garden! (4)
32. Left after the match and was chased according to the report (6)
34. it back after a turn for the rodent (6)
35. Duck out late (4)
39. Slave seldom eats rich food to start with (4)

ACROSS

1. Potentially less likely than 1 down (13)
11. He is outside on a smooth stone (4)
12. Former pupil tales article in Scottish town (4)
13. Vegetables grown on ten poles? (6)
15. Chat about a sponsor at earlier baptism (6)
17. Tendency to be crooked (4)
18. Hothead has an article. Definitely! (3)
20. Painful alternative in Kent? (4)
21. Right in at the address... (3)
24. ...of the house god where the French has a right (3)
25. Chain store that sells footwear? (5)
27. I see Nye rebelled against the Romans, so it is said (5)
29. Previously a peer and I met the Queen (7)
30. Flat for the first lady in the fifties (5)
33. US marshall who was a bit showy at times (5)
36. I would take European fish (3)

37. Child's expression of surprise at seeing half a horse? (3)
38. Hardy girl in Socrates' service (4)
40. Time spent in the rain (3)
42. Force ring on an Indian (4)
43. Mean to be popular nurse (6)
45. Ought to be quiet before loud characters turn out (6)
47. Most of the dairy can be made very dry (4)
48. There's a slope in this until the end (4)
49. Strangely Sid feels as fit as one who is complacent (4-9)

40. Scandinavian books are in stilted Danish (4)
41. It's a strange Italian wine (4)
42. Club sport? (4)
44. A brownie who rejects evil in Scandinavia (3)
45. Man's historical beginning (3)

Compiled by Bob Easton

DOWN

1. I bet pro alibis are most likely to be genuine (13)
2. No, this is not a Christian belief (6)
3. Deposit left by two ducks in the road? (4)
4. Stop here for a drink in Winnipeg (3)
5. No better place in which the tribes take refuge (4)
6. The French go back in theatre box (4)
7. Language used when returning a sash (3)

CROSSWORD NO. 10 SOLUTION

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | L | E | A | S | E | C | O | M | E | I | N |
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| S | A | T | A | P | L | I | A | M | T | | |
| S | A | N | I | T | Y | M | O | D | I | S | H |
| T | I | R | E | | | S | O | S | I | | |
| H | O | M | E | R | S | N | E | W | T | O | N |
| E | V | A | | E | G | O | | L | U | G | |
| P | A | L | A | T | E | R | E | V | E | R | T |
| A | I | C | E | | | V | E | T | O | | |
| R | A | S | C | A | L | G | E | T | O | F | F |
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| E | | P | L | E | R | O | M | E | | | A |
| L | E | T | T | E | R | L | E | D | G | E | R |

THE OLD GREY SQUIRREL

A great while ago, there was a school-boy.
He lived in a cottage by the sea;
And the very first thing he could remember
Was the rigging of the schooners by the quay.

He could watch them when he woke, from his window,
With the tall cranes hoisting out the freight;
And he used to think of shipping as a sea-cook,
And sailing to the Golden Gate.



For he used to buy the yellow penny-dreadfuls,
And read them where he fished for conger-eels,
And listened to the lapping of the water,
The green and oily water round the keels.

There were trawlers with their shark-mouthed flat-fish,
And red nets hanging out to dry,
And the skate the skipper kept because he liked 'em.
And landsmen never knew the fish to fry.

There were brigantines with timber out of Norway
Oozing with the syrups of the pine.
There were rusty dusty schooners out of Sunderland,
And ships of the Blue Cross line.

And to tumble down a hatch into the cabin
Was better than the best of broken rules;
For the smell of 'em was like a Christmas dinner,
And the feel of 'em was like a box of tools.

And, before he went to sleep in the evening,
The very last thing that he could see
Was the sailor-men a-dancing in the moon-light
By the capstan that stood upon the quay.

He is perched upon a high stool in London.
The Golden Gate is very far away.
They caught him, and they caged him, like a squirrel.
He is totting up accounts, and going grey.



He will never, never, never sail to 'Frisco
But the very last thing that he will see
Will be sailor-men a-dancing in the sunrise
By the capstan that stood upon the quay.

To the tune of an old concertina,
By the capstan that stood upon the quay.

Alfred Noyes

**AGM /
REUNION /
RMB**

The AGM of the Retired Members Branch will be held at the Park Hotel Tynemouth on Tuesday 23rd April 2002 (provisional start time 6 p.m.). Motions for the agenda and nominations for committee posts should be sent to
**The Secretary,
Alan Hollingsworth, at
10, Heather Rise,
Beeston,
Nottingham, NG9 3AG
at least two months before the AGM.**