

**77th Artillery Clerks' Reunion
And Association Dinner**



**Royal Artillery Barracks
Larkhill**

Friday 6th – Sunday 8th May 2011

Message from the Reunion Secretary

Capt I F Constantine RA

Welcome once again to Larkhill and the 77th Artillery Clerks' Reunion, this year taking place in the temporary Mess in Horne Barracks.

As you will be no doubt aware, suitable accommodation remains our biggest problem in Larkhill, a situation that I hope will be rectified with rebuild of the Central Sergeants' Mess which is now underway. I have endeavoured to make the best of what we've got and thank you for your continued understanding. As ever we will all have a bed for the night, which is the most important thing.

I have one or two small administrative points I would like to pass on.

- **Car Parking.** Please ensure you have parked your car in a designated Car Park.
- **Messing.** All messing will be in the Sgts' Mess, **including those staying in the Officers Mess.**
- **Mess Bills.** As previously notified, I will take care of all individual Mess Bills, so **please do not pay any bills personally.**
- **Smoking.** In line with Government and MOD policy, the public rooms in the Sergeants' Mess are **NO SMOKING.** This means that the smokers amongst us will have to retire to the outside smoking area to fuel our habits.
- **Annual General Meeting.** The Association Annual General Meeting will take place in the area of the Main Bar on Saturday at **1730 hours.** I urge all Association members to attend.
- **Photograph.** Due to a lack of suitable venues, the photo this year will be taken at the table - I will brief you all at the AGM.
- **Reunion Dinner.** We shall sit down for Dinner at 1930 hours. There will be a comfort break following the Loyal Toast. The kitchen is aware of any special dietary needs previously notified to myself. Those individuals will be placed on the seating plan.

For those that are still without, the Association Tie will be available from Roy Deal at a cost of £13.00. If you are not yet a proud owner of this "must have" fashion necessity, please come and find either Roy or myself and we will gladly relieve you of your cash.

You will find an outline copy of the programme for the weekend on the centre page of this booklet.

If you have any questions or there is anything I can help you with, you will, as ever, find me in the Bar.

I hope you all have a good weekend.

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THE ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE

Honorary President	Lt Gen Sir Freddie Viggers KCB CMG MBE DL
Chairman	Lt Col(Retd) Joe Falzon BEM
Secretary	Andy Tibble MSM – former WO1(SSM)
Assistant Secretary	Roy Deal MBE – former WO1(SSM)
Reunion Secretary	Capt Ian Constantine RA
Treasurer	Maj Paul Corker AGC(SPS)
Standard Bearer	Andrew Jones – former Sgt(AC)
Association Padre	Rev Denis Brett – former WO2(QMS(AC))
Webmaster	David Stotan – former WO2(QMS(AC))
Historical Secretary	Joe Hoggins BSc – former WO1(SMAC)
Regional Secretaries:	
North	Vince Scott – former WO2(QMS(AC))
North West	Dennis Norris – former WO2(QMS(AC))
Midlands	Steve Callaghan – former WO2(QMS(AC))
East	Capt(Retd) Chris Berry BA
South	Graham Brown – former WO1(SMAC)
West	Roy Deal MBE – former WO1(SSM)
London Area	Steve Truslove – former Sgt(AC)
Scotland	Ted Fairbrass – former Sgt(AC)
Wales	No nomination
Northern Ireland	No nomination
Germany	WO2 Ron Holmes AGC(SPS)
The Rest of the World	The Secretary

Programme of Events

Friday 6th May 2011

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1645-1730 hours | - | Dinner (Sgts' Mess) |
| 1900 hrs | - | Bar Opens
Dress: Collar and Tie |

Saturday 7th May 2011

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|
| 1000-1200 hours | - | Brunch (Sgts' Mess) |
| 1200 – 1400 hours | - | Bar Opens |
| 1730 hours | - | AGM (Main Bar)
Dress: Mess Kit/Black Tie |
| 1840 hours | - | Guests arrive (Foyer Sgts' Mess)
Met by Secretary & Reunion Secretary
Invited to Sign Guest Book |
| 1845 hours | - | Guest of Honour, President and
Chairman arrive (Foyer Sgts' Mess)
Met by Secretary & Reunion Secretary
Invited to Sign Guest Book |
| 1830-1930 hours | - | Pre-Dinner Drinks |
| 1930 hours | - | Dinner |

Sunday 8th May 2011

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|---------------------|
| 0930-1130 hours | - | Brunch (Sgts' Mess) |
|-----------------|---|---------------------|

The Loyal Toast

The following is the procedure for drinking the Loyal Toast in Messes of the Royal Artillery.

- After the port has been passed round the President will tap the table, stand up and say, "**Mr Vice - The Queen - Our Captain General**". Everyone will then stand up **with glass in hand**.
- Mr Vice will say "**Ladies and Gentlemen - The Queen**". If a band is present the National Anthem will then be played in full.
- After the Vice President has spoken or the band has finished playing, each Mess Member, whatever his rank, will say '**The Queen**' before drinking the Toast, **no other words will be added**.

The Royal Artillery Clerks' Section

Army Order 54 of 1903 authorised the formation of the Artillery Clerks Section. St John Brodrick, at "Our Court of St James's, signed it this 21st day of March 1903, in the 3rd year of our Reign By His Majesty's Command." The Army Order was the notification to the Army of the Royal Warrant that authorised this change. St John Brodrick was Secretary of State for war and was signing "At His Majesty's Command". The establishment of the RA Clerks Section did not, in itself, require a Royal Warrant, but financial provision for the change could only be achieved by an amendment to the Royal Warrant for Pay and Promotion of the Army. The Warrant clearly sets out the rank and pay of members of the Royal Artillery Clerks Section but it provides no information as to where these clerks would be employed nor is there any mention of why it was found necessary to form the Section. Presumably there were clerks employed in the Artillery before April 1903 but not in the form that was created by the Warrant. War Officer File No. 18 / Artillery 3938 might well have held some clues to this question but the file does not seem to have been preserved as a Public Record. However, there were two major changes in the organisation of the artillery in the four years preceding the Royal Warrant, which may have been the reason why the Clerks Section was formed.

Until 1899 there was, in the Royal Artillery, no higher permanent command structure than the battery. Most of the batteries existing today are part of a Regiment, which has a Commanding Officer, an Adjutant, Quartermasters and a Pay Officer with suitable staff in support. Until 1899 each battery was responsible for its own affairs under the Battery Commander and the Battery Captain with a Quartermaster Sergeant and a Pay Sergeant. The Battery Commander corresponded direct with such Departments as the Record Office, the Army Clothing Department, the Deputy Adjutant General RA, the Ordnance Department and the Pay Department on all matters to do with the discipline, pay and promotion of officers and soldiers and the clothing and equipment on charge to the battery. Wherever there were two or more batteries in a particular district Lieutenant Colonels were appointed to oversee the batteries, but these officers had no staff and no authorisation to interfere in those matters where the Battery Commander was authorised to deal with the War Office direct. It has been said that the Lieutenant Colonels could not even expect to take their batteries to firing camps. The Lieutenant Colonels were appointed each year to command practice camps but the batteries which attended might not have included any from their own districts, the batteries being simply ordered to attend a Camp of Instruction commanded by a named Lieutenant Colonel.

In 1899 this all changed. The experiences of the German and French Artillery in the Franco-Prussian war had been studied in detail in the British Service but there were as many views as there were those prepared to comment on these matters.

Furthermore the introduction of quick-firing guns had resulted in a change in the nature of the employment of field artillery and, consequently, the need for revision of drills and deployment. What slowly emerged was that there was a need for a permanent unit of field artillery of two or more batteries commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel and staff in peacetime who would train and organise the unit for war. Eventually a plan was produced to group batteries in a particular area into what were to be called brigade divisions each of three batteries. The brigade division headquarters was quite small, consisting of the Commanding Officer, an Adjutant, an Orderly Officer, a Brigade Sergeant Major (RSM of today) and a handful of batmen and horse-holders. These brigade divisions began to form as the artillery moved off to join the forces in South Africa and, indeed I Brigade Division RFA consisted of the three field batteries then in South Africa. Unfortunately the artillery which fought in the South African War were not long employed in the brigade division scheme and were soon in action as independent batteries, and indeed sections (of two guns), when the war became very mobile. There was, therefore, by 1902 very little experience of the employment of the brigade divisions in operations of war.

The problems of organising the forces which went to South Africa had resulted in the war Office accepting that there had to be a proper command structure in peacetime ready to be deployed in war, and March 1902 a Special Army Order was published setting the organisation of the field army in the United Kingdom into permanent Corps, Divisions and Brigades, each with its establishment of artillery. Commanders and staffs were authorised for the Corps and Divisional artillery and it is at this point that the need for a specialist group of clerks, Artillery Clerks, must have been perceived. In addition there was, of course, a need for such clerks at brigade division and battery level so that specialist clerks would support the whole of the staff work of the artillery in peace and in war.

It is believed, therefore, that the Army Corps Scheme, as it was called, was the reason why the Artillery Clerks Section was formed and the Section can be closely associated with the major reorganisation of 1902 and onwards, the principals of which are still with us today. One might well say that if there had been Artillery Clerks in post in 1902/3 the War Office File on the subject might have been preserved for prosperity.

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Notes

1. Buy the Reunion Secretary several pints and a small whiskey.