



**MINUTES OF THE BLYTHE SAPPERS**  
**49<sup>th</sup> MANAGEMENT MEETING**  
**held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2008**  
**at The Army & Navy Club, London**

**Present**

<b>Sapper John Fitzmaurice</b>	<b>Chairman</b>
<b>Sapper Brian Pearce</b>	<b>Chairman Elect 2009</b>
<b>Sapper Stuart Sinclair</b>	<b>Past Chairman 2007</b>
<b>Sapper Charles Peacey</b>	<b>Honorary Auditor</b>
<b>Sapper Roy Wilsher</b>	<b>Honorary Treasurer</b>
<b>Sapper John McLennan</b>	<b>Honorary Secretary</b>
<b>Lt Col Charles Holman</b>	<b>Membership Secretary (des)</b>

1. **Introduction.** The Chairman Sapper Fitzmaurice welcomed the Management Committee with a special welcome to Charles Holman at his first meeting of this distinguished Society that was established in 1945.

2. **Apologies:** Sappers Inge, Caulfield, Hamilton.

3. **Minutes of the meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008.**

Sapper Peacey raised the matter of “The Blythe Sappers Adventurous Training and Challenging Pursuits or Other Charities Fund” -- he requested that it should be clear that this is a Blythe Sappers Fund and not one that is influenced by the Corps Treasurer.

Sapper Peacey also asked that the point be made that payment for the lunches of the Hon Sec & Hon Treasurer would remove about £350 per year from the BS charitable ability.

The Minutes were noted and signed.

4. **Matters Arising.**

There were no further matters arising.

5. **Finance.**

a. The Hon Treasurer gave his report, **attached at Annex A.**

- b. **Cost of Lunches.** Sapper Sinclair asked why there was a 10% increase in the cost of the lunch. The Hon Sec explained that he had received a quote for an amount that appeared to be inclusive of the “gratuity” and that the final contract for the day was exclusive of the gratuity. It transpired that The Army & Navy Club had recently changed its rules in that it was no longer allowed to quote a price that included any gratuity. The net result was that the price of the lunch paid in March by members before the event was 10% less than the amount billed by the Club after the lunch. It was therefore necessary for the lunch in June to be increased by 10% to include the gratuity.

The Committee expressed dissatisfaction with this situation and considered the Club had given us less than satisfactory service.

The Committee asked the Chairman to approach the Club to ask for a fairer deal in that the quoted price of £43.50 inclusive of the gratuity.

Sapper Peacey asked that whatever the final price of the lunch is that it should be rounded up to the next full pound -- agreed.

Proposal: That the £318.20 gratuity due to The Army & Navy Club be paid  
**Agreed**

6. **Corps Report.** The report was given by the Hon Sec on behalf of the Regt Col. The report is attached at **Annex B**.

7. **Blythe Sappers Casualties.**

Deceased            Sapper Beverly Harold Holloway on 11 May 08 in Geneva  
                         Sapper John Stevens died 12 Oct 07  
                         Sapper (Dr) Keith Best died 1 Jun 08  
Resignations:    Sapper Frank G Norman effective 23 Mar 08  
Total Membership: 310

8. **Nominations for new members.**

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Proposer</b>	<b>Seconder</b>
Lt Col Charles Holman	Sapper John McLennan	Sapper David Hamilton
Major John Russell	Sapper Jim Winter	Sapper Stan Huggett

**Both were duly elected.**

9. **Attendance and Arrangements for 4<sup>th</sup> June Lunch.**

There will be 53 taking lunch which includes 11 guests.

The Principal Guest **Mr John Stanion, Chief Executive, Vinci plc.**

To stand for introduction:            Sapper Andy Pope.  
   Sapper Gerald Blakey


10. **Any Other Business**

1. The Chairman informed the meeting that on behalf of the Blythe Sappers he presented the BS RE Association Football Cup to 3 RSME Regt after they had won against 59 Indep Cdo Sqn having won 2-0.
2. The Chairman informed the meeting of two lunches he attended with the Adjutant, Engr & Logistic Staff Corps & with the Director General of the Institute of Civil Engineers and is making arrangements to meet with Sappers in the City.
3. The cost of the BS Guest Night will be £53.12 (inc VAT) and accommodation at £15pp.
4. Sapper Peacey asked that the list of Members on the web be updated.

11. **Date of Next Meeting** The next BS Management meeting will be at **1100hrs on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008**. The Sept lunch will be followed by the Blythe Sappers 2008 AGM.

**Sapper John Fitzmaurice**  
*Chairman*  
*The Blythe Sappers*

*30 August 2008*



**Sapper John R McLennan**  
*The Blythe Sappers,*  
*Honorary Secretary*

*September 2008*

*Annex A to*  
***Blythe Sappers Management Mtg***  
*4<sup>th</sup> June 2008*

**Annex B to**  
**Blythe Sappers Management Mtg**  
**4 June 2008**

**THE BLYTHE SAPPERS MANAGEMENT MEETING 4<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2008 – CORPS REPORT**

1. Support to operational capability continues to be our main effort. Ops TELIC (Iraq) and HERRICK (Afghanistan) remain our main commitments but we also have soldiers on Ops in Sierra Leone, Sudan, Cyprus, Falklands, Northern Ireland (NI) and on the UK Mainland.

Operations

2. Iraq MND(SE). The UK force levels are currently under review and this will impact on the tasks and associated priorities of the Engr Regt Gp. This in turn will determine the engineer force levels which were due to reduce at the end of 21 Engr Regt's tour; however, they will now be replaced. Engineers continue to provide close support to brigade operations, infrastructure and force protection works. 21 Engr Regt Gp deployed in Nov 07 until Jun 08 and include 2 x Fd Sqns (4 and 73 Sqns), 7 HQ&Sp Sqn and half of 63 Wks Gp and 821 EOD Sqn RLC. They will be replaced by 32 Engr Regt

Gp in Jun 08 with 31 and 39 Armd Sqns and 2 HQ & Sp Sqn.

3. Southern Afghanistan. We are now at the end of the poppy harvesting season which is likely to see a surge in Taliban activity and therefore kinetic operations will increase. Engineers continue to be involved in close support of current strike operations and continue to provide the reconstruction and the development leadership focus on projects province wide. The main effort remains Force Protection tasks and winterisation of Forward Operating Bases at the back end of the summer. 36 Engr Regt Gp was replaced in Mar 08 by 23 Engr Regt Gp with 2 x Fd Sqns (9 and 51), 12 HQ&Sp Sqn and half of 63 Wks Gp and 821 EOD Sqn RLC. They will be replaced by 24 Cdo Engr Regt Gp in Sep 08.

Manning (stats are as at 31 Mar 08)

4. For 07/08 recruiting period, the Corps was recruited to 92% against a Recruiting Group target of 1479. This masks shortages in pinch point trades; Ftr ACR (39%), Ftr Gen (56%), ME Fabricator (66%), ME GEO (67%), Res Spec(63%) but the situation is generally positive. Officer recruiting was suffering (see last report) but is now recovering.

5. Officer strength is 1240 against a liability of 1208, overmanning is 2.6% or +32 officers. This hides an in-balance for DE Capt and Maj which is partially filled by LE personnel. PVR has steadied at around 3.6% which is below the Army average of 4.3%.

6. Soldier strength is currently 7202 (trained strength) against an establishment of 7874 which is a shortfall of 672 or -8.5%. The current gap includes 294 at Cpl level and 246 at Spr rank. Soldier retention has improved since the last report and is now 7.6% (Army 5.8%) with the measures to improve retention now starting to have an impact.

7. Other statistics include:

- Females now make up 0.5% of RE soldier strength (35) and 7.2% of officer strength (90).
- The RE soldier non-FD (i.e. non-Fully Deployable) rate is 18% (Army 18.9%) although this includes an element who are Limited Deployable at the medical authorities discretion.
- The non-British Component is 350 officers and soldiers which is 3.9% of our total strength (Army average is 6.6%).

Regimental Affairs

8. The Slipway Project in collaboration with Chatham Dockyard was successfully opened on 29 April 2008. In addition we have acquired a number of new armoured exhibits including TITAN and TROJAN.

9. The Corps exercised the Freedom of Medway on 17 May to coincide with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the current Borough Council.