

British Resistance Organisation Museum Newsletter No.15 – Part 1

Editorial

The BROM newsletter caught me at a particularly busy time, midway through a series of large Auxiliary Units related projects. Therefore I called on some fellow researchers to help with the content this time and they have come up trumps. There are very few Auxiliers left now, but we are increasingly hearing from family members interested in a story that was all but unknown for many when their Auxilier relative was alive. New and interesting material continues to come to light on a regular basis.

From Nina Hannaford

Nina is the daughter and niece of Auxiliers and a researcher with the British Resistance Archive (also known as Coleshill Auxiliary Research team –CART).

The last 12 months have seen two Aux Diaries transcribed.

The first is the Roseland Diary from Cornwall which is held by the BROM. This patrol was based in Roseland Quarry near Liskeard which was owned and run by Auxilier Stafford Tucker. The diary was started by Sgt Bill Mewton, a local school caretaker. On his promotion to Lieutenant the patrol was taken over by Sgt Tom Williams and he continued the diary until September 1943. It gives a great insight into the patrol's training, covering many miles overnight, weekend training at Porthpean and even an attack in Plymouth. In local shooting competitions with St Keynes Patrol, Roseland Patrol always emerged the victor.

The second diary transcribed was the Southwick Diary from Hampshire which is now located in Hampshire Record Office. It was written by Sgt George Gatrall and shows the patrols code name was "St George", also mentioned is "St Vincent" patrol. Each entry was counter signed by Lt Robert Welch, a retired police Sergeant.

Lt Welch resigned from Aux Units just before stand down following a disciplinary hearing, though quite what happened remains unknown.

This was displayed to the public for the first time as part of a CART display at Southwick Village D-Day Revival weekend in June and roused a lot of interest from the locals.

Herefordshire

Unrelated directly to either the BROM or CART, an interesting excavation took place in Herefordshire early in 2016. Archaeologists undertook partial excavation of two Auxiliary Units OBs in Warren Woods, National Trust land, as part of a lottery funded project. This was home to "Jacob" patrol. The full report can be seen at the first link, with additional images and video at the others.

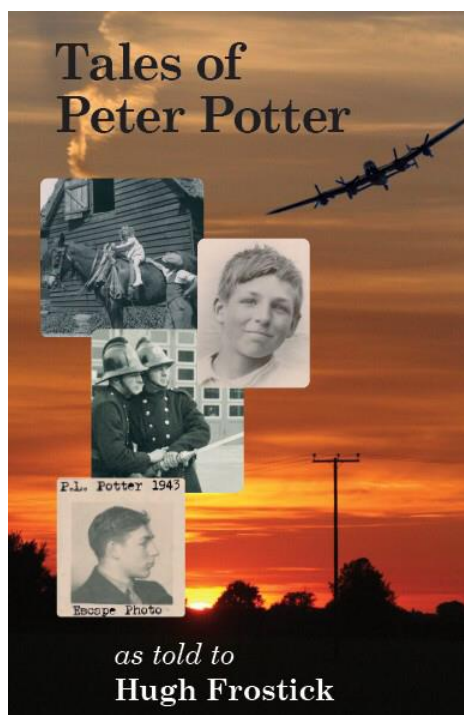
www.bromyarddowns.co.uk/media/1655/ww2-operational-bases-report.pdf

www.coleshillhouse.com/bromyard-jacob-auxiliary-unit-patrol.php

www.herefordtimes.com/news/14328550.Bunkers_used_by_Churchill_s_secret_army_uncovered/

From Hugh Frostick,

Hugh Frostick is the son of Auxilier Charles William Frostick of the Horsley Cross Patrol.



Peter Louis Potter played a part in the Fingringhoe Patrol of the Auxiliary Units in 1943, alongside his father Lou, whilst awaiting his call up to the RAF as a Lancaster read gunner. Hugh and Peter met at Boxted Airfield Museum where a mention of Parham helped them make the Secret Army connection. Hugh found that Peter only lived 3 miles away and went to interview him. Peter had long worked on a life memoir, and Hugh agreed to write it up for him. As the many interesting tales developed, Hugh decided a publishable book was a must. Two years later, as Peter celebrated his 92nd birthday, "Tales of Peter Potter" was published, telling Peter's fascinating life story in a humorous and very readable way.

Peter grew up on a farm in the Essex marshes outside London, before moving to Easthorpe and then Fingringhoe. In order to escape the reserved farming occupation and volunteer for the RAF (under age), he ran away from home. He then returned home and was trusted to fill in for an injured patrol member for a few months, and got to learn all their secrets.

He went off to complete training as an Air Gunner and survived a full tour (33 Ops total) in 626 Squadron at Wickenby. After the war he was involved in hand over of USAAF airfield to the RAF and some station closures. After demob he worked as a nurse in Colney Hatch asylum and then Severalls in Colchester. He spent a year rebuilding the sea defences around his new home on Mersea Island after the 1953 floods, and then had 19 years as a fireman based in Colchester.

If you want to get a copy of the book it is available now, priced £10 + P &P from www.frostick.co.uk A limited number of copies signed by Peter are available for extra cost. A signing by Hugh is free to Supporters – use special code PARHAM.

From Bill Ashby,

Bill is the son of Lt William Ashby, Sussex Scout Section Officer and now lives near Coleshill, and is CART's Coleshill Information Officer and a National Trust Volunteer

On 31st July 2016, Bill was witness to the devastation caused to the historic stable block at Coleshill House. A fire in the furniture shop that occupied the ground floor gutted one wing of the block, including the rooms where Auxiliars slept while attending courses. The wing to the right of the phot, which includes the Commandants offices, still with their original door labels, survived after fire crews using breathing apparatus broke through the roof and poured water in the halt the spread of the flames. The National Trust intend to rebuild the damaged block.



From Chris Pratt,

Chris is the BROM lead at Parham

Museum visitors

Martin Bowman came along to confirm that his father Herbert Philip Bowman was in the Thorpe St Andrew Patrol. This was confirmed from Nominal Roll and the CART website. He was very emotional to see a photo of the patrol albeit that his father had moved on by Stand Down.

In October 2016 personnel from RAF Chicksands visited. This site was used for Y interception of material for decryption at Bletchley Park. Today it is home to the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre. A presentation about Auxiliary Units was given to them by Chris.

Anthony Thomas, grandson of Bill Major who commanded Aux Units after Gubbins, visited in July 2016.

Events

There is an active group in the Southwest that now provide displays at various WW2 shows in the area. In 2016 this included Devon D Day 2016 which took place on Saunton Sands and featured the Devon historic flight of Austers and Cubs landing on the wide and form sandy beach to provide a static display which made a for a bit of a change. Nearby was the site of the OB for late museum stalwart Geoff Bradford, whose brother Roy had been a Scout Section Officer in Devon and Sussex, before being killed behind the lines in France with the SAS, a story featured in the display at Parham. The beach was used for training prior to D day by the Americans and the re-enactors put on a mock battle on the beach. www.northdevongazette.co.uk/news/pictures-and-video-saunton-beach-is-packed-for-d-day-anniversary-event-1-4564615



We were also at Lupton House in Devon, with a room indoors, which was a great help when the torrential downpour came! This was literally within sight of the local OB. This was well appreciated and the organisers gave the team an award as the best exhibit of the show. www.coleshillhouse.com/latest-news-and-blog/lupton-house-ww2-weekend-a-great-success

In 2017 we opened with a display at the Helicopter Museum in Weston-Super-Mare in Somerset. Combined with Tony Salter's Scallywags display, there was a large Auxiliary Units exhibit covering a dozen tables. Guest of honour for the day was actor Richard Gibson, better known as Herr Flick of "Allo, Allo". He still very much looks (and plays) the part, but noticeably stayed well clear of the Aux Units, doubtless aware of the likely response awaiting a member of the Gestapo! www.coleshillhouse.com/latest-news-and-blog/world-at-war-weekend
www.thewestonmercury.co.uk/news/helicopter-museum-world-at-war-event-in-pictures-1-4973714

Obituaries



Trevor Miners, Auxilier with Perranporth Patrol in Cornwall, died peacefully in his sleep on the morning of 4th April 2016 after a short illness at the age of 89.

In 1943 Trevor was 16 and was asked to sign the Official Secrets Act and found himself one of 3,500 volunteers recruited to the Auxiliary Units. He said, "We were sent to the Headquarters in Oxfordshire. We were trained to kill, how to use a knife to kill a man quietly. The plan was that when the invasion came our unit would hide in an underground bunker and let the Nazis roll over the top of us. Then after a month we were to come out at night and attack them, destroy their munitions dumps, railway lines, things like that." Trevor explained to the BBC in 2013.

He was told to say he was in the Home Guard when he joined the unit. "We would never talk about what we were trained to do. One of my unit was even sent a white feather by someone who thought he was a coward for not going out to fight, but we knew different."

Trevor was hugely influential in informing people of the Auxiliary Units existence both within the South West and Nationwide, telling his story on TV on BBC Spotlight, Tales from the Snug, and WW2 Experience. In 2013, 2014 and 2015 Trevor marched in the Remembrance parade past the Cenotaph. "I wish my friends could be there with me," he said.

In 2015 he was asked to open a replica Observation Post at Coleshill. He then had another tour of the site he trained at and again fired a Sten gun and Sniper rifle.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/obituaries/2016/04/08/trevor-miners-auxilier--obituary/>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-35967050>

<http://www.coleshillhouse.com/latest-news-and-blog/trevor-miners-auxiliary-unit-legend-passes-away>



We are sad to report the death of **Sydney George Adlam** from Havant (West) Patrol in Hampshire, who died on 27th May 2016. After leaving school Sydney was apprenticed as a motor mechanic and it was at this time he was recruited into the Auxiliary Units.

After the war he married his first wife Joyce, lived in Southsea and they had a son, Paul. Sadly Joyce died at an early age and Sydney later remarried to his second wife, Iris and they had a daughter, Alison.

Aux researcher Steve Mason interviewed Sydney on camera in 2013. His report and the video can be seen online at;

<http://www.coleshillhouse.com/havant-west-auxiliary-unit-patrol.php>

We also have to report the death of Auxilier **Edward James Laphorne**, always known as Jim, and formerly of Penquit. Jim was a member of the Ugborough Patrol in Devon. Jim sadly passed away on 14th September 2016 aged 93. He was the last surviving "Dartmoor" Auxilier.

<http://www.coleshillhouse.com/ugborough-auxiliary-unit-patrol.php>



Barbara Marion Culleton, Junior Commander ATS, Auxiliary Units, passed away peacefully on Sunday 19th June at Maise House, the Royal British Legion Nursing Home, Bexhill-on-Sea.

On the 9th September 1938 the 'Auxiliary Territorial Service was formed. Within two months Barbara had enlisted into Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment as a volunteer (as ATS privates were then called). The day before war was declared she was embodied into the Army and was posted to the War Station Railway Training Centre at Longmore and remembers having to help put rolling stock back on the tracks. It was in July 1941 while she was at her next posting to 12 Field Training Regiment RA at Bordon that she was first interviewed and told that she had been selected to become an officer. She was asked to consider being involved in training for 'urgent, very secret and possibly dangerous' work.

She joined Auxiliary Units Special Duties Branch as a subaltern and helped set up some of the first wireless networks. At this stage they were all above ground. In December 1941, she was posted to Coleshill House as administrative assistant to Senior Commander Beatrice Temple, being billeted at nearby Hannington Hall.

In May 1942 she was posted away from Auxiliary Units, and having sought her CO's assistance secured a more interesting posting in Combined Operations HQ. Subsequently she would serve with Movement Control section of General Montgomery's 21st Army Group, working on the plans for D Day. She was released at the end of 1945, but subsequently served in the TA until 12 December 1968 when she reached the upper age limit and so reluctantly had to leave. Barbara Culleton had served her Country for 30 years.

May they Rest in Peace