

Touchpaper

JUNE 1992

Number 2

the waltham abbey newsletter

First let me say how delighted I am at the response to the first issue in April. An initial print run of 250 copies was rapidly exhausted as more and more people got to hear of it and a second print was necessary. To those of you who didn't receive the inaugural issue I am hoping to send out copies with this issue but only 'while stocks last'.

This issue actually contains some articles that have been sent in which I hope will prompt others to do likewise. You will also notice that the registration form has been attached again and will continue to be included for the next few issues. If you have not already done so, please fill and return as soon as possible. It will show that you are interested and at the very least tells us how many copies to print! A list of all those who have responded is recorded in the "Touch Register" which will be duplicated, with additions in each issue.

It is sad but inevitable, that there will be deletions from time to time and it with great regret that you will find such announcements in these pages.

Please keep your articles coming in even if it's just a short letter saying where you are and what you are doing.

The next issue is scheduled for September and the deadline date for your contributions will therefore be in mid- August; but you don't have to wait till then, send it in now.

Norman Paul
Hon. Editor

PUBLICATION ADDRESS:

DRA RARDE Fort Halstead

SEVENOAKS

KENT

TN14 7BP



THIS SPACE RESERVED

Touchpaper logo:

A competition was announced in the first issue in which designs for a suitable logo were invited.

A few entries have already been received and some of these look quite promising although, as yet, none really quite hit the mark.

The closing date for the competition has therefore been put back until the next issue.

To remind you of the rules:

1. Entries must be received by Mid Aug 1992.
 2. No prizes will be awarded.
 3. The Editor reserves the right to modify any entry.
 4. Designs from different entries may be combined in which case the individual entrants will share any prize or lack thereof.
 5. The Editors decision shall probably be final, even if wrong.
 6. Correspondence will be entered into.
-

LOSW

LOSW, or to give it's full title:

Last Of the Summer Wine is a group of old codgers, now gainfully unemployed who roam the countryside in the vicinity of Waltham Abbey getting up to all sorts of mischief and terrorising the local landlords.

The chief instigator of this gentle gang is one Bryan Howard (who has yet to register with this publication!).

Bryan has actually written a report for us after only 4 reminders! - here it is:-

March 5th saw the LSW meeting at The Owl when the Golden Oldies put the world to rights. Apologies were received from Geoff Colley, Alan Short, Bob Brown, Kim Henshaw and Reg Collins. The 'meeting' finally got started when Gordon Bromberger asked where Ken Bascombe was and a red-faced Bryan Howard then went to collect him, just one and a quarter hours late! Those few who did find the time to attend were; Jock McDougall, John Williams, Dick Pace, John Hicks, Ron Treadgold and Malcolm Maclaren.

As usual we overran closing time and had to placate the manager by ordering coffee. Finally the real, and only, business was tackled and after considerable debate the meeting agreed to meet again at The Owl on April 30th. This being the only agenda item the members slowly dispersed. More news next issue.

Bryan Howard

(This article was produced for the editor's convenience using a Mk IV biro on rectangular lined A4 paper format as favoured by the generation of 'Recycled Teenagers'.)

GLASCOED CALLING

Yes, the ex-Waltham Abbey refugees are alive and kicking here at RO Glascoed. Thanks for the copies of Touchpaper No.1. All of us here are keen to keep in touch with past colleagues.

Ron Hollands

Powdermill Club

No formal report, just to say the Club continues to do well with many new social events, most of which are family events at most bank holiday times.

The Club AGM is (sorry was) on May 28th and a full report will be published in our next issue. Meanwhile, if you have any queries concerning the Club please contact Bill Warren at Fort Halstead during working hours (extn 2486).

Keep In Touch

THE LONDON GROUP

Those working in London continue to meet quarterly at the Chandos pub and the last get-together was at the beginning of March. It seemed that this was not a good time for most people as the attendance was well down. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday lunchtime on June 5th - perhaps the improved weather will encourage a few more out!

It just so happens that these meetings coincide with the publication dates of Touchpaper so by the time you all receive it the meeting will have been and gone. Therefore, we can't publish the date of their next meeting which will be in about 3 months time. If, however, you would like details contact Ike on:

- direct telephone no: 071 - 921 - 2151

FORT HALSTEAD

There have been a number of changes at the Fort arising from the continued organisation of the DRA.

In line with the rest of the DRA the Fort is becoming more streamlined and indications are that in many areas it is becoming more efficient. Up until recently it has been commented that the only really efficient and reliable factor was Gravity, all else being subject to delays and interruptions - it seems that other services are now starting to catch up. Most of the new buildings which are rehousing Waltham Abbey staff are almost up and running despite the usual and frustrating snags that always arise.

Our congratulations to Geoff Hooper who, in addition to running the ET Business Unit has also been made the Senior Site Representative for the Fort. He has a similar responsibility to that at Waltham Abbey (hope he isn't going to close us down though). Geoffrey's major achievement to date has been the lowering the speed humps at the main gate; for which we are all extremely grateful (even if the suppliers of exhaust pipes are not!).

Out of Touch

STILL WAITING TO HEAR FROM YOU AT:

RO: CHORLEY, BISHOPTON
& BRIDGWATER

THERE MUST SOMETHING HAPPENING!

Old Comrades

As reported in the first issue, the Old Comrades has undergone a resurgence - at least that's what we are told although to date there has been very little response from them. We assume that they are so busy with their social programme that they have not yet found the time!

Your editor will therefore make a special effort to contact them direct and, hopefully, we will be able to bring you a full report in the next issue.

If you would like to know more and can't wait for the next issue you can always get in touch with them via the Powdermill Club. Just address your enquiry to:

**The Old Comrades
c/o The Powdermill Club
Waltham Abbey
ESSEX
EN9 1AX**

They meet on the first Thursday each month at the Club so if you are still local why not drop in on them?

ADVERTISEMENT

RGP F and RSAF

Do you have memories of the Enfield Lock Royal Small Arms Factory or the Royal Gunpowder Factory at Waltham Abbey?

If so, the Middlesex Polytechnic wants to hear from you. It is launching a community history project designed to find out more about the Lock and the Abbey factories - from the unofficial point of view.

The polytechnic is launching a new course for those who want to learn to become oral historians. It will look at interview techniques, equipment and writing up conversations.

If you want to contribute your memories of work at either the RSAF or RGP F contact Dan Weinbren at: Middlesex Polytechnic, Queensway, ENFIELD EN3 4SF or phone 081 806 3856

Touch Bytes

INFORMATION SNIPPETS:

1. Hi to all ex WA ex patriots. I got my contact through Elsa McFarlane at Bishopton. "It's good to hear that the spirit lives on!"

Laurie Nisbet

2. Am pleased to support the venture although not overflowing with immediate ideas. Currently working in NW London and travelling to the West Country each weekend. Look forward to hearing from you all.

Colin Bailey

3. It's nice to know the old Waltham spirit continues. Good Luck!

John and Val Holloway

4. Glad to hear action is being taken to keep WA'ites in touch. Best regards to everyone.

Maureen Gaughan

5. Congratulations on the launch/ignition of Touchpaper. Long may it burn and fire the enthusiasm of all those who read it and the inspiration of all those who contribute to it. I look forward with interest to the next issue. My best wishes to all EWA's.

Malcolm Maclaren

6. I'm hoping to get my known 'old comrades' to relate some remembered details of their historical knowledge of the site and produce a "sound archive" Anyone interested? Good luck to the enterprise!

Ron Treadgold

7. Foulness is much more remote and spread-out than WA. My office looks due east to the sea wall about one mile away; this is useful since it keeps back the waters of the Thames estuary as my floor is below the level of the Spring high tide. Best Wishes.

Dave Manners

THE ABOVE ARE JUST A FEW
(ACTUALLY TO BE HONEST, MOST)
OF THE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
RECEIVED ON REGISTRATION.

EVEN IF YOU CAN'T WRITE A FULL,
DETAILED, INCREDIBLY INTERESTING
OR FUNNY REPORT OR ARTICLE YOU
CAN STILL DROP A FEW WORDS TO
LET US KNOW YOU'RE THERE.

A SPECIAL SEMI - ADVERTISING FEATURE

The following advert was received under the guise of "Where we are now"
from Martin & Ann Catt

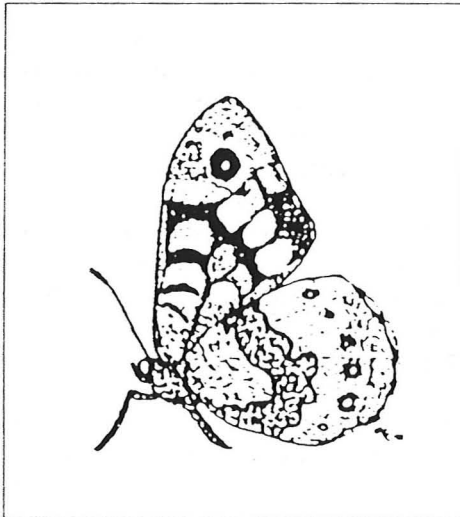
The information reproduced here is, in the editor's opinion entirely legitimate since it represents the best contribution received so far on what people are doing now.

Provision of this information does not however represent an endorsement of the product described therein and Touchpaper will deny any responsibility if you pay them a visit and it rains!

In his letter and accompanying brochure Martin tells me that he is now self-employed and that he and his wife run a series of "Nature Breaks " under the company title:

"CATT'S COUNTRYSIDE".

This is a new venture in the world of Wildlife Holidays. I have a wide knowledge of natural history from my early schooldays. When at Waltham Abbey I worked in a voluntary capacity as Secretary to the Enfield Natural History Society and also as a Conservation Officer for the Enfield group of the RSPB. Our holiday logo is the Speckled Wood butterfly and is in keeping with my roots as an Enfield-born naturalist since it was first described by Petiver in 1704 as the "Enfield Eye".



Our current programme of Nature Breaks are planned and led by myself and designed to reveal the variety and the complexity of the wildlife and habitats in the South Hams.

The area covered is relatively small, but encompasses a wide range from low-tide rock pools to granite tors on Dartmoor.

The small area around East Prawle and Prawle Point alone has a bird list of over 320 species.

Even if your interests lie in directions other than Nature Breaks we would be most happy to accommodate any ex-colleagues wishing to visit the area on a bed+breakfast basis. We are, after all a business! Alternatively if you are down this way and would like to pop in for a chew over old times (on a strictly non-paying non-consultative basis) we will make you most welcome.

**Walking &
Wildlife Holidays**

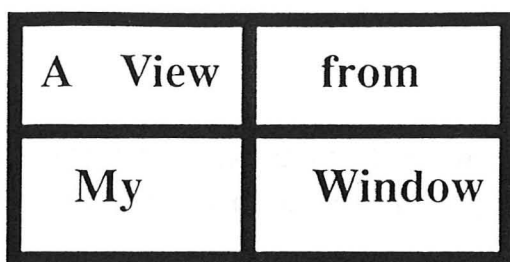
Martin & Ann Catt

Migrants Rest
East Prawle
Kingsbridge
South Devon
TQ7 2DB

tel: 054 851 443

**Catt's
Countryside**

(We make no apologies for stealing this title)



A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Some people have asked me what changes I have seen in the move from Waltham Abbey to Fort Halstead. The two major changes are the drive round the M25 each day and my office. The drive has to be suffered like everyone else but has been made simpler since the QE II bridge has been opened.

At Waltham Abbey my office always looked out on another building or a car park. My new office looks out on a hedge, moat and the Old Fort. This is far more peaceful and I have become a bit of a bird watcher during the lunchbreak. Supplying nuts and birdfood has resulted in a fascinating variety of birds. The curiously absent species are starlings and sparrows, whilst blue tits, great tits and chaffinches can be observed in large numbers. Less well known species such as the treecreeper and nuthatch (not the RO variety) can also be seen and the spotting of a different species can be quite distracting. My list currently numbers 16 varieties with a new one being added about once a month. Whilst other-things have gone downhill resulting from the move the view from my office is considerably better. Wild primroses and daffs are now out adding to the splendour. The sight of the grey squirrels throwing themselves against the windows requesting food is something else to be seen.

(If some positive change has occurred from your move from Waltham Abbey It might be nice to read about it.)

Peter Honey
RARDE Fort Halstead April 1992

Future Articles

As you can see so far the response has been very good but, as it used to say on my school reports (and my ASRs), "Could do better!"

We urgently need more contributions, more ideas and, above all, more news. I guess the trouble is, that with a quarterly newsletter, we think, "it's a long way off before the next issue so I'll do it later on" but we all know that later on means "Oh blast! Here's another issue and I forgot to write that article".

For those groups of you working in the RO's I think the answer is to appoint one of your number to wheedle, demand and collate any news and contributions from your colleagues and I shall remind you local distributors from time to time.

Now, what sort of articles do we have in mind? I can make some suggestions but really the ideas should come from you - and then you write it, or get someone else to write it.

As a general guideline I would like to see detailed reports on local happenings, snippets of news, gossip, funny incidents, humorous items, jokes, cartoons, poems, serious articles, letters, reminiscences, and achievements (if any).

DEADLINE

**THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT
ISSUE, DUE FOR PUBLICATION
IN SEPTEMBER, IS:**

MID - AUGUST

PLEASE DON'T FORGET

In Memoriam

It is with great regret that we have to announce the deaths of three of our colleagues in the last few months

Joe Eley

Joe will be fondly remembered by the longer serving of you as he worked in Admin during the 60's and 70's. He was always a quiet, unassuming character but with a strong sense of humour, serving the Establishment with great dedication, loyalty and quiet efficiency. He was a keen chess player and will be remembered by chess club members for his work for the club. Joe had been ill for some time in recent months and passed away towards the end of April this year.

Bert Betts

Bert was another long serving member of the Establishment though it has been difficult to find details of his career. This reflects somewhat on his very private nature in matters concerning himself but in contrast he was always deeply caring and concerned for the well being of his fellow workers. We remember him best perhaps for his work in latter years as guardian of our safety. In this he always managed to temper the official regulations with good humour and commonsense. Bert will also be remembered for his social activities and the effort he put into both the Social Club and the Cricket Section. He was a keen cricket player although for some years he only played once a year as captain of the President's team, a position he held for many years. Amongst his many skills and attributes he had a vast knowledge of malt whiskies and fine wines and he was always willing to assist his colleagues in the testing of these. Bert passed away in April.

Bob Tinniswood

It came as a great shock to hear of the sudden and unexpected death of Bob a few weeks ago. Bob had moved to Sudbury in Suffolk a few years ago but kept in touch with several of his colleagues. He initially started work at ERDE in the 50's as a crane driver and after a spell outside rejoined in 1972 working first in NM and then as the PR foreman. His helpfulness, humour and good plain commonsense was well known and he engendered great respect. He was always cheerful and seemed perpetually young in both looks and outlook. We send our condolences to his wife and family. A floral tribute was sent by ex-colleagues at Fort Halstead on your behalf.

IN LINE WITH THE CURRENT TREND WE PRESENT

The Touchpaper Charter

Statement of Intent

The aim of Touchpaper is to keep all those who have worked at the Waltham Abbey Establishment in touch with one another.

This it will do by the exchange of items of news and general interest.

To this end a newsletter "Touchpaper" will be issued and as far as possible this will be published quarterly in the months of March, June, September and December each year.

Initially there will be no charge for this publication but Touchpaper promises to notify those registered of any intention to levy a charge and the level of charges at least 3 months prior to such charge being imposed.

All those whose names are registered will receive copies, either directly through Her Majesty's Postal System or, in the case of groups, through a local distributor.

All registration details will be confidential and, except for the short entry as shown in the Touch Register of each issue, any other additional information will only be released with prior permission.

No liability can be accepted by the editorial staff for the non receipt of any issue but any justified complainant may, after due consideration of all the known facts, be allowed a free copy of that issue; providing always that stocks are available.

Any person or persons who feel they have just cause for complaint regarding any article or item appearing in any issue of Touchpaper will automatically have the right to the publication of an unedited discourse on that subject.

The final arbiter on any decision in dispute shall be the current editor.

dated 1st June 1992

I think that lets the Editor off the hook for just about everything!

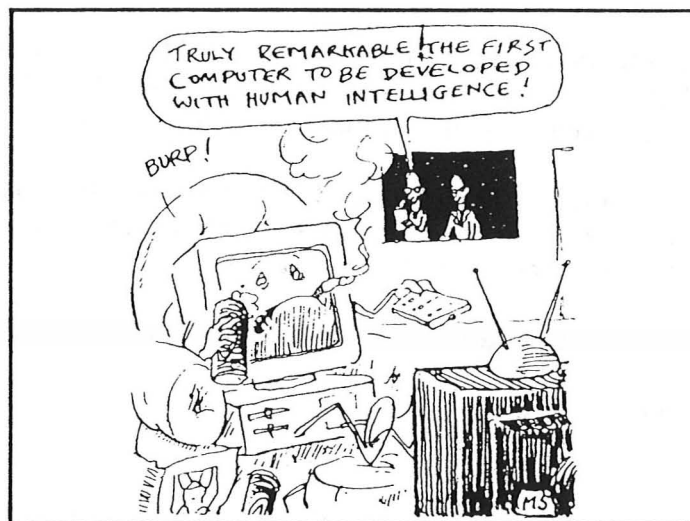
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A Lighter Touch

Herewith a couple of cartoons that you may not have seen before:



The second was sent in by Dave Salter and is a reproduction of a cartoon that his son Michael had published in a computer magazine some time ago. It is reproduced here by kind permission of the author's father.



N.B. Future articles for this page desperately needed

Touch Register

Here is the current list of all those who have registered.

IS YOUR NAME HERE

If it is, are the details correct

IF IT ISN'T PLEASE FILL IN AND RETURN
REGISTRATION SHEET TO GET FUTURE ISSUES

<u>name</u>	<u>currently at</u>	<u>WA dates</u>	<u>WA section 's</u>
Yvonne Allen	Waltham Abbey	1983 - 91	Admin. Registry
Greville Bagg	RARDE Fort Halstead	- 90	PR
Michael Bagley	Buxton		
Colin Bailey	FMBRA Chorleywood		
Susan Ball	Van Egdom Leisure WORCS	1986 - 89	P2
Ken Bascombe	Waltham Abbey	1961 - 91	Combust/Sensit &
Steve Boorer	Harlow ESSEX		
Gordon Bromberger	Cheshunt		
Hilary Brown	RARDE Fort Halstead	1983 - 91	Admin
Jim Burgess	RARDE Fort Halstead	1967 - 91	various
Richard Burlend	RARDE Fort Halstead	1980 - 89	ISRD/G/ EC4
Paul Burnham	RO Summerfield	1979 - 84	EFB/ QA
Arthur Cadman	Waltham Abbey	1979 - 84	Machine Shop
Andy Carter	Dowty Maritime Greenford	1979 - 89	PR
Martin Catt	South Devon	1974 - 89	P2/NM/PR/P1
Allen Clarke	NSW Australia		
Andy Clayton	RO Chorley	1979 - 1986	PR
Bill & Maisie Corthine	Somerset	-	-
Ron Darby	Hunstanton NORFOLK		
Sandra Day	Lowestoft	-	-
Dave Debenham	RARDE Fort Halstead	1962 - 91	too many
Ray East	Home Office LONDON	1965 - 84	SE/P2
Gladys Eckworth	National Audit Office LONDON	1972 - 84	Library/PR/P1
Harry Edwards	RARDE Fort Halstead	1964 - 89	P2/PR
Peter 'Ike' Eickhoff	DGDQA LONDON	1967 - 89	CE/PR/QA
Dave Endicott	Hertford Heath		
Mike (MEN) Evans	RO Bridgwater		PR
Davina Evans	RO Bridgwater		
Mike Farey	MOD LONDON	1954-7/67-91	SE1/PC3/NP2
Ron Fletcher	Bishop's Stortford	1988 - 91	QA & Eng.
Eddie Gallacher	Abergavenny		GC

<u>name</u>	<u>currently at</u>	<u>WA dates</u>	<u>WA section 's</u>
Maureen Gaughan	Beccles SUFFOLK		GC/NM/PA HdWA
Clive Gibbs	Darwen LANCS	1987 - 88	QA
Deidre Hallam	RO Glascoed	1986 - 89	Expl.
Brian Hammant	RARDE Fort Halstead	1961 - 89	-
Peter Hart	Empress State LONDON	1960 - 89	Combust./Prop./Ex
Mike Healey	MOD London	1966 - 86	P1/GC/P1
Eileen Henshaw	MOD Fleetbank Hse. LONDON	1969 - 91	EN6/SE/PR/PC2/P
Dave Hewkin	Empress State LONDON	1969-79/85-9	P1
Joan Hills	NSW Australia	1963 - 86	ISRG, Draw Office
Marcia Hohn	RARDE Fort Halstead	1991	ET7
Ron Hollands	RO Glascoed	1984 - 89	P2/ R2 Group
John Holloway	RO Chorley		
Val Holloway			
Peter Honey	RARDE Fort Halstead		PR/NP/ET
Geoff Hooper	RARDE Fort Halstead		/Hd WA
Diane Howse	MoD Main Buildg LONDON	1967 - 90	GC/ NP2
Steve Hutchings	RARDE Fort Halstead		
Jimmy James	Waltham Abbey		
John Kemp	Waltham Abbey	1948 - 91	ET7/ET1
Jill Kemp	Waltham Abbey	1967 - 91	PR/ET5
Eric Kendrew	RARDE Fort Halstead	1947 - 91	E Branch/ISRG
Sylvia Krelle	Clacton-on-Sea	-	-
Dave Lee	HSE LONDON	1959 - 77	P1/P2/GC
Phil Lodge	Portsmouth	1939 - 43	RGPF
Dave Manners	AWE(F) Foulness	1951 - 90	Propellants/Hazard
George McFarlane			Admin/Stores Office
Elsa McFarlane	RO Bishopton		Personnel
Malcolm McLaren	Chingford	1954 - 91	Inform./Manag Ser
Sue Morgan	Hertford	1979 - 89	PR
Dave Mullenger	RARDE Fort Halstead	1965 - 90	AS/GC/E/NP
Derek Needham	Enfield	1950 - 71	PR II/ CE
Alice Negus	Waltham Abbey	1964 - 78	Library/Stores Office
Laurie Nesbit	RO Radway Green	1979 - 84	Design Office
Ted O'Day	Empress State LONDON	1973 - 86	E/PR
Gordon Orr	RO Bridgwater	1985 - 89	P2
Suzanne Orr	RO Bridgwater	1986 - 89	PR analyt.
Norman Paul	RARDE Fort Halstead	1961 - 90	AS/GC/NM/PR/NP/
Mark Roper	RO Glascoed	1982 - 89	Eng.
John Rowley	Building Rsch		
Michael Sales	Fareham HANTS	1979 - 87	Eng/QA
Dave Salter	CBDE Porton	1958 - 90	SE1/SAI/PR/NP4

<u>name</u>	<u>currently at</u>	<u>WA dates</u>	<u>WA section 's</u>
Andrew Sanderson	NIMIC Brussels	1988 - 91	NP4/ET7
Neil Shepherd	RARDE Fort Halstead	1985 - 91	NP/ET
Alan Short	Waltham Abbey		Electronics
Dave Sims	RO Summerfield	1961 - 90	Materials
Malcolm Stewart	RARDE Fort Halstead		NM/NP/ET
Bob "Togs" Torry	RARDE Fort Halstead	1975 - 88	P2/P1/NP1
Ron Treadgold	Chingford	39-43/54-84	RGPF lab/ERDE pr
Bill Warren	RARDE Fort Halstead	1977 - 91	E/NP
I Weston	Barking ESSEX		
Arthur Whitham	Waltham Abbey	1933 - 82	Chemical Plumbers
Alan Whittaker	RARDE Fort Halstead	1960 - 91	SEI/AER/ISRD
John Williams	Broxbourne	1949 - 91	AS/GC/PC/EC/NP
Andy Wilson	RO Glascoed	1978 - 89	PR
Stephen Wood	BaE Stevenage	1983 - 89	P1/P2
John Wright	Wolverhampton	1955 - 80	NM/PR - JTTRE Au
(Dr) John Wright	OB Empress State Bdlg		
Win Yeandle	Waltham Abbey	- 89	Admin/GA Registry

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AWAITING FURTHER REGISTRATIONS

TOUCHPAPER NEWSLETTER

REGISTRATION

Please reply, even if you have already sent some details on the introductory leaflet.

Name

Address

.....

.....

.....

Tel:

Business
Address

if
applicable

.....

.....

Tel:

PERIOD OF WA EMPLOYMENT 19..... to 19.....

SECTION(s)

If retired are you a member of the Old Comrades Association Yes/ No

Tuck in Flap

FOLD 3



Norman Paul
Building A11
Defence Research Agency
RARDE
Fort Halstead
Sevenoaks
KENT

TN 14 7BP

FOLD 1

FOLD 2