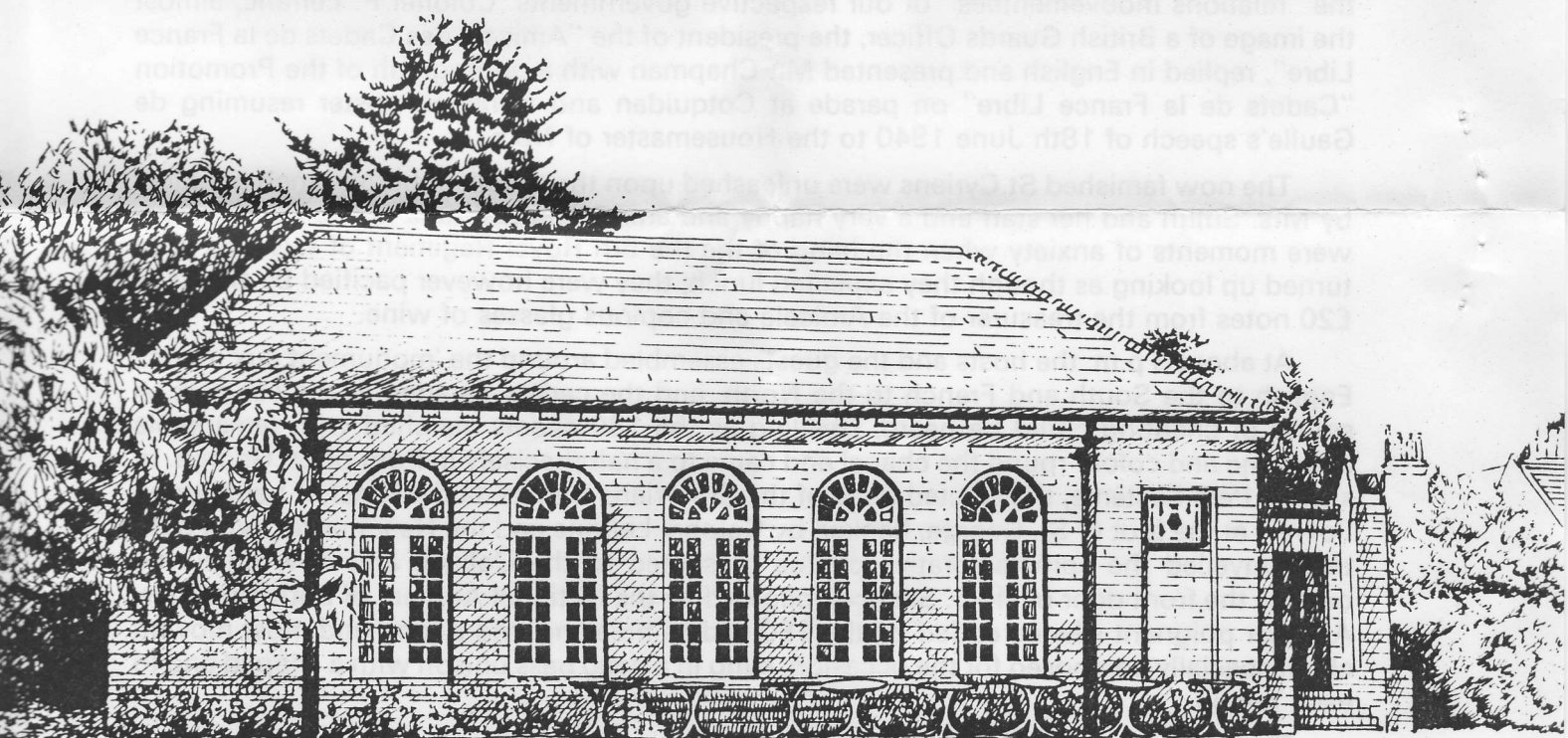


NO 11

November

1988

Old Malvernian Newsletter



CADETS DE LA FRANCE LIBRE

6th March 1988

No.5 was home to the Free French cadets after the fall of France, until their numbers grew and they moved to Ribbesford, near Bewdley. St.Cyr, the French Sandhurst, named this year's 'Promotion' (graduating class) the 'Cadets de la France Libre'. Much ensued.

Malvern has grown accustomed to the "élan" and "panache" of the Gallic spirit, but even René Filho's acquired English "sang-froid" was somewhat shattered by a telephone call in early February from a certain René Marbot who announced that 180 young officer cadets from St.Cyr were arriving for a "vin d'honneur" and lunch on Sunday, 6th March, accompanied by various delegations of "Anciens Cadets", military attachés and mayoral parties from Bewdley. A hectic three weeks ensued in which the total numbers rose to 280, advance parties came and went expecting the answers to problems within 24 hours; St. George became the "monument aux morts", a request to move all the scaffolding was politely refused and bundles of "tricolores" were sent to decorate the College.

The St.Cyriens left their headquarters at Cotquidan near Rennes at 4.30 a.m.; 140 of them parachuted into Brize Norton at 8 a.m., while another group landed at Weston-on-the-Green to travel immediately to Bewdley where they paraded in front of the town hall and presented a bronze plaque. Both groups arrived by coach in College Road to be greeted by the Anciens Cadets before filing, in their red trousers and blue tunics, through the Toppin Room, where they left their "képis" with the famous "casoars" in mounds all over the room. Those serving the "vin d'honneur" were surprised by the number of requests for "jus d'orange", but by 1.20 p.m. all were assembled in Big School with the Headmaster making a speech in French emphasising the bonds between Malvern and the Anciens Cadets despite the "relations mouvementées" of our respective governments. Colonel P. Lefranc, almost the image of a British Guards Officer, the president of the "Amicale des Cadets de la France Libre", replied in English and presented Mr. Chapman with a photograph of the Promotion "Cadets de la France Libre" on parade at Cotquidan and a framed poster resuming de Gaulle's speech of 18th June 1940 to the Housemaster of No.5.

The now famished St.Cyriens were unleashed upon the excellent buffet lunch prepared by Mrs. Smith and her staff and a very happy and animated meal took place, though there were moments of anxiety when the band of the the 5th Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (TA) turned up looking as though they expected lunch; they were however pacified by sheafs of £20 notes from the treasurer of the Amicale and copious glasses of wine.

At about 3 p.m. the hosts and the guests assembled around the 'monument aux morts', English to the South and French to the North, and the cadets paraded in the car park. A sound of chanting could be heard, swelling as the 180 cadets marched with remarkable discipline and colour round the chapel and came to a halt precisely in front of St. George. In silence Père Système, the elected head of the St.Cyriens Cadets, laid a sheaf of beribboned flowers at the foot of St. George, flanked by Colonel Lefranc and the Headmaster, who both then unveiled the commemorative plaque presented to the College and now displayed outside the front door of No.5. Silence, followed by the National Anthem of both countries. Another poignant silence ended by the 180 cadets breaking into a long and most moving chant specially composed for the occasion, sung in a deep bass unison with a clipped end to each refrain.

The formal proceedings at an end, the French went off to the theatre and to listen to a fervently patriotic lecture from Colonel d'Escrienne, formerly on the staff of General de Gaulle. Tales were told, particularly by Sergeant Fox, the only Englishman attached to the Free French in No.5 and at Ribbesford Manor during the war, of de Gaulle's astonishing memory: "Comment vont les choux, Mme Fox"; some of the French visited No.5 and the whole party left for Brize Norton at 5.30 as quickly as they had come. A memorable day for both English and French.

Georges Bap
2 rue de la Gaudinai
44110 St Aubin des Châteaux

le 26 - 12 - 88

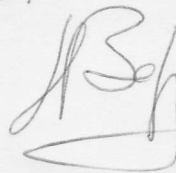
Laurie

Monsieur le Président
des Cadets de la France Libre
Institut Charles de Gaulle
rue Solferino
Paris

Monsieur le Président

Je me permets de vous
adresser le compte rendu de votre
visite à Malvern paru dans le
bulletin de liaison des Old
Malvernians.

Vous en souhaitant bonne
reception je vous prie de croire,
Monsieur le Président, à mes
sentiments distingués



Amicale des Cadets
de la France Libre
(Saint-Cyr)

Paris, le 26 janvier 1989

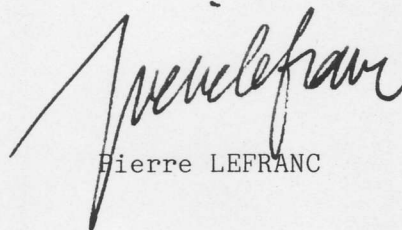
LE PRESIDENT

Cher Monsieur,

Je vous remercie beaucoup de m'avoir fait parvenir le compte rendu de la visite des Cadets et des Saint-Cyriens dans votre belle école.

J'ai beaucoup apprécié le style et l'humour de votre relation d'une journée particulièrement chaleureuse et réussie grâce à l'accueil que vous avez bien voulu nous réserver.

Je vous prie de recevoir, cher Monsieur, l'assurance de mes sentiments distingués.



Pierre LEFRANC

Monsieur Georges BOP
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