HISTORY OF THE CADET CORPS AT CHELTENHAM COLLEGE

The Cheltenham College Rifle Corps was enrolled in September 1862, at the instigation of the boys themselves. It then numbered 110. For five years the boys provided all the officers, elected their captain and designed their own uniforms.

In 1867 the War Office ordered that a Master should be in charge, and the Corps was attached to the Gloucestershire Regiment Administration Battalion. After various changes of names and attachments, the Corps was affiliated to the Gloucestershire Regiment and was granted the privilege of wearing the Back Badge.

In 1889 the Corps title changed to the Royal Engineer Volunteer Cadet Corps and was attached to the Gloucestershire RE Volunteer Battalion. A third company was formed as numbers reached 150. In 1909 it became a Contingent of The Officers Training Corps (Junior Division) with numbers rising to 400 and was organised into four companies. By the end of the First World War there were 550 cadets.

In 1947 the Corps became the Combined Cadet Force incorporating the Royal Naval and Royal Air Force Sections. Since 1947 Cheltenham College has continuously maintained all three-service sections and all pupils in the fourth form opt to do their basic training (up to Proficiency Certificate Standard). All sections have a common core of Drill, Turnout and Shooting Test.

The Royal Naval Section specialises in boat work (both sail and power); the Army Section in tactics and fieldcraft and the RAF Section in flight training. Since 1986 the Corps has been compulsory (for all 4th formers) for one year only and voluntary thereafter. At the end of the 4th form, a cadet may leave to pursue one of the other College Wednesday afternoon options, or may decide to stay in the CCF and enter one of the specialist training sections: Naval, Army, RAF or NCO's Cadre – Advance Infantry Section. There is one condition to remaining in the Corps: before leaving a cadet is expected to attend an Annual Camp or attend one of the many military courses on offer.

On the 22nd May 1991 Cheltenham College celebrated its 150th Anniversary. Cheltenham's links with the three services are very strong. We have supplied

many thousands of officers. At the outbreak of the Second World War no fewer than twelve Major Generals in the Royal Engineers were said to be OC's.

It is very pleasing to say just how the interest in the CCF within Cheltenham College continues to grow. With this present 4th form group a large number wish to remain. Nine 6th form girls are also serving in the army section, seven in the Naval section and two in the RAF section. This is, of course, most encouraging but it does mean there is no room for complacency on part of the officers.

We have managed to maintain a healthy interest in the contingent, standards are high, and we have now introduced the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme alongside the military training.

Although we are increasing the amount of Adventurous Training on offer, we are increasingly aware that the boys and girls join the CCF to learn about the military, and they enjoy nothing better than to rub shoulders with Regular Service Personnel, or lay their hands on military hardware.

Tribute must be paid to the support College has received from the Regular Forces, particularly in the form of our affiliated Regiment – The Rifles who continue to ensure that our affiliation with the regiment is kept to the forefront. 19 Cadet Training Team, Commando Helicopter Force and RAF Brize Norton also provide magnificent help and support without which we would find life very difficult.

Common Room members within College are particulary supportive, and without their help and encouragement the task would be impossible, rather than the very pleasant one it is at the moment. Cheltenham College CCF owes its success to the willingness of all its officers within the three sections. They continue to develop interest, face new challenges and above all enable cadets to find out about themselves and develop into positive individuals who can contribute to society.

Major Stephen Clark MBE College Adjutant