

Reference code: GB165-0516

Title: Charles Pirie Collection

Name of creator: Pirie, Charles (b.1943)

Dates of creation of material: 1966, 2010

Level of description: Fonds

Extent: 18 sheets, 41 slides

Biographical history: Charles Pirie (b.1943)

Born 9th January 1943 Edinburgh. Educated at Flora Stevenson School Comley Bank Edinburgh. Joined the Army Apprentice College Harrogate in April 1958 where I gained 'A' levels in English literature and Physics E&M. I was trained at the college as a telegraphist, and I passed out from Harrogate into colour service with the Royal Signals in January 1960. I was posted to Lincoln where I helped train some of the last National service recruits. Next posting was to 244 signal squadron (ASSU) Lippstadt Germany where I was working mainly with Nato Airforces as an air support signaller. Next posting 1962 was to 69 field park squadron Royal Engineers in Osnabruck and then Hamelin where I was Corporal in charge of a small troop of signallers providing comms for the Field squadron. During my time there I became involved with ocean racing in the Baltic with the BAOR Yacht club in their 30 sq meter wooden hulled yachts. In 1965 I volunteered and was accepted for a secondment to the Trucial Oman Scouts in the then, Trucial Oman, but now known as the U.A.E. 1967 saw me in Catterick for a course to upgrade me to an A1 telegraphist and then it was off to 39 infantry brigade in Lisburn N. Ireland. The end of my colour service came on the 8th January 1970. The February of 1970 saw myself and my family off to Australia where I had secured a job with their civil aviation authority as a communications officer. The next five years 6 months were spent working with the CAA in Darwin and Adelaide where my youngest daughter was born. July 1975 saw me back with the family in Scotland. We set up home just outside Edinburgh and I opened a Dry Cleaning business in Merchiston Avenue in Edinburgh. After a successful 10 years I sold up and bought a cafe which I ran for 10 years. Sold the cafe and set up as a mushroom farmer. Sold the mushroom farm in 1999 and moved to Northern Ireland. For the last 10 years I have been enjoying my early retirement and enjoying rambling, gardening, lawn bowls in summer and indoor bowls in winter. I am also involved with various charities. I also enjoy river cruising and we enjoy holidays cruising the wonderful rivers of Europe.

Scope and content: Account of Charles Pirie's tour of Oman in 1966 entitled 'Chas' Muscat & Oman Patrol with QDG' by Hugh Nicklin and 41 colour slides taken by Charles Pirie whilst on the tour consisting of images of Muscat, Nizwa and Sohar and including images of a tribal delegation going to see the Sultan, Muscat and Nizwa forts, Sultan's Armed Forces soldiers and outpost, market scenes and the Oman coastline.

Access conditions: Open

Language of material: English

Physical Condition: The slides are available for viewing via contact sheets

Conditions governing reproduction: Copyright in the slides has been assigned to the Archive. Copies of the chapter 'Chas' Muscat & Oman Patrol with QDG' can be made for private study only. Once the book by Hugh Nicklin that includes this chapter has been published then printed book copyright applies.

Immediate source of acquisition: Slides received as a gift from Charles Pirie on 30 Nov 2010. Chapter 'Chas' Muscat & Oman Patrol with QDG' received as a gift from Hugh Nicklin on 3 Dec 2010.

Related Units of Description:

In MEC Archive

The MEC Archive has many collections relating to Oman's military history in 1970s. Please consult the Guide to Collections relating to Oman for further information.

Finding aids: In Guide; Handlist

Archivist's note: Fonds, series and item level description created by D. Usher 6 Dec 2010. Biographical history and captions for slides supplied by Charles Pirie.

**SERIES AND ITEM LEVEL DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARLES PIRIE
COLLECTION**

1 Account of Oman Tour

- 1/1 Printed account of Charles Pirie's tour of Oman entitled 2010 18 sheets
'Chas' Muscat & Oman Patrol with QDG' by Hugh
Nicklin.

2 Slides of Oman Tour

Original 35mm colour slides of Charles Pirie's tour of Oct 1966 41 items
Oman in October 1966 with 'A' squadron Queens Dragoon
Guards. Captions supplied by Charles Pirie.

Biographical History: There was still an insurgency from
Yemen at this time and the Sultan had requested the British
Government to send a 'show of force' around Oman to
show the insurgents that he had powerful friends and they
would come to his aid should the insurgency continue.
Charles Pirie was serving with the Trucial Oman Scouts at
this time and the Queens Dragoon Guards had asked the
Trucial Oman Scouts to allow one of their telegraphists to
accompany them as a rear radio link back to Sharjah. The
tour of Oman covered 900 miles.

System of arrangement: As received. The photographs
taken of the journey are not in order of progress.

- 2/1 This is a tribal delegation who were making their way to the Sultan's palace for an
audience with the Sultan.
- 2/2 Same delegation from the rear.
- 2/3 The delegation entering the gate to the outer courtyard of the palace.
- 2/4 One of the two forts guarding Muscat harbour.
- 2/5 Uniformed members of palace guard Muscat.
- 2/6 Old cannon in a Muscat street.

- 2/7 Old cannon in a Muscat street.
- 2/8 Door into outer courtyard, Sultan's palace with one of the guards.
- 2/9 Soldiers of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF). Many of the Europeans serving with the SAF were seconded from the British armed forces. However there were a substantial number of 'contract' officers who served and were in essence 'mercenaries'.
- 2/10 Camel going through gate in Nizwa fort.
- 2/11 One of the gated entrances into Muscat. At 6pm each day a cannon was fired and shortly after this the gates were locked. No one was allowed in or out until they were unlocked at 6am the next day. In 1966 it was still prohibited to be out at night without carrying a lit lamp and if found in a street without one, it was assumed you were up to no good and arrested. Smoking in public was also prohibited at this time and to do so invited ones arrest.
- 2/12 An outpost of the SAF.
- 2/13 Part of the souk in Muscat. Note the English signage. There was no tourism in 1966. It might have been for the benefit of sailors of the Royal Navy who made frequent courtesy visits to Muscat.
- 2/14 Outside the Muscat city walls.
- 2/15 Sunset over the date palms Sohar.
- 2/16 A typical wadi in the Oman hinterland.
- 2/17 Cameleers preparing a camel train in Nizwa.
- 2/18 Old gun battery, Muscat harbour fortress.
- 2/19 View of harbour from gun battery of Muscat harbour fortress.
- 2/20 View of Oman coastline.
- 2/21 Cove where we swam during our stay in Muscat.
- 2/22 The second of the two fortresses that guarded the harbour. During a tour of these fortresses we were shown prison cells which consisted of a compartment six feet from the floor and approximately 8ft wide by 4ft deep. There was a male prisoner chained to the back wall and we were told that it was his families' responsibility to come each day and feed the prisoner.
- 2/23 Burami fortresses where we camped overnight before crossing the nearby border into Oman.
- 2/24 RAF aircraft that land on a gravel plain to re-supply us. I managed to get the young

boy and his donkey to stand in from of the plane and the landrover to illustrate the means of transport over the ages.

- 2/25 Inspecting the guard (Oman Gendarmes) at their headquarters in Sohar
- 2/26 Date palms in Sohar.
- 2/27 Barrack building Gendarmes HQ Sohar
- 2/28 Another view of RAF supply aircraft
- 2/29 Nizwa as seen from the fortress.
- 2/30 Muscat as seen from the fortress.
- 2/31 Another view of one of the fortresses guarding Muscat harbour.
- 2/32 View of typical Oman landscape.
- 2/33 Market day Nizwa.
- 2/34 Some of the scout armoured cars parked in date palms Sohar.
- 2/35 A gunner's view of Muscat.
- 2/36 Looking into the mouth of a bottle dungeon, Nizwa fortress. It was apparently still in use. This was confirmed by the pungent smell that emanated from it. We were told it was the families' responsibility to feed the prisoner.
- 2/37 Mounting the guard at the police barracks Sohar.
- 2/38 Another view of Nizwa.
- 2/39 Another view of Muscat.
- 2/40 Residents of Nizwa going about their daily lives under the shadow of Nizwa fortress.
- 2/41 Part of the battlements of Muscat fortress.