

*Bradbury Mercury*  
1960s 16 Signal Regiment Reunion Club



Issue Number 24

Compiled by Ted Theis

August 2009



### **In memory of Tom Thornton**

24th Dec 1946 - 21st February 2009

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Tom Thornton. Tom was an asset to our group and gave us many hours of laughter.

Tom wrote a poem that we have included on Page 5. Forgive the repeat, but we thought it appropriate, considering the message within the lines.

Our thoughts and condolences go to Moira and her family for their great loss. He will be greatly missed.

A quote from Tom's celebration of life.

"Tom talked of his fear of dying and said " If one is afraid of flying you meet it head on and get on a plane, if you're frightened of water, then you get on a boat, so what did I do? I became an Undertaker."

Keep them rolling in the Aisles, Tom.



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## **Chairman's Report**

I hope you and yours are all well and enjoying the summer weather that we are basking in as I write these notes.

We are well on the way to finalising details for the Blackpool Reunion. If you haven't already booked and wish to attend could I ask you to do so now to aid us in our planning.



### **Points for Future Consideration**

Rae and I have just returned home following a very pleasant RSA Reunion weekend at Blandford. During discussions there and earlier in the year at Torquay and Blackpool a number of concerns have been identified to me. These mainly revolve around the lukewarm support for the Blackpool reunion, the dwindling numbers attending all of our events and what action could be taken to reverse this trend, in the future.

Firstly, let me say that I'm not keen, nor do I wish to change anything but I would like to air some comments for your consideration in order that we may have a balanced and positive discussion at the AGM.

In no particular order, what would your comments or reaction be to the following:

- a. Is the current format for our reunion weekend becoming tired or repetitive and should we consider a shorter more dynamic programme perhaps only over two days ??
- b. Now more of our members have retired should we consider a midweek meeting thus avoiding the weekend crowds and costs and leaving our weekends free for other uses ??
- c. If the current format feels repetitive should we consider having a break for a year perhaps in 2010 or 2011 when we could substitute our larger reunion with several smaller ones? This is based on the success of some of the mini reunions which have already been held and could cater better for specific interests, dates or locations. Some ideas may be: Visit to Alrewas, Battlefield Bus tour, Cruise, USA (Las Vegas), Trooping the Colour, Krefeld etc.
- d. If we change anything what would happen to the AGM ?? Options could be to hold it Biennially (every two years !!) or to vote on specific proposals put forward by our committee on the website.

- e. Of course all of the above would be affected by the options proposed for 2010 at the AGM and I would still ask you to bring your suggestions and details for next year's reunion for our consideration

I realise that I will now have opened a real can of worms with some strong feelings for and against some of the above. I reiterate that we needn't change anything but I still feel it worth discussing at some stage in the future.

Could I now ask you to consider these issues prior to Blackpool then we will be in a better position to hold a balanced debate. If you would like to make any comments prior to the meeting or wish me to act as your proxy please don't hesitate to email or drop me a line with your views.

We look forward to seeing you for what I am sure will be a memorable weekend at the Norbreck Castle.

With best regards to all from Rae and myself.

*Bill*



Bumpers and Bed Packs  
by Tom Thornton

Bumpers and bed packs were all the rage  
When we were of a certain age  
Compo and cam nets and being on stag  
Were all part of our lives, but it wasn't a drag

Pay and pay-book correct is what we'd say  
As we lined up to collect our pay  
NAAFI break was a chunky steak pie,  
This was no holiday camp like 'Hi de Hi'.

We worked hard and played hard and never looked back,  
We all helped each other, no "I'm alright Jack"  
I'm sure all the lessons we learnt back then  
Have helped us in life and will do so again.

If only back then we knew what we know now,  
I'm sure that we all would have made the same vow  
Every moment was special and still is of course  
So look forward in hope, not back in remorse.

We were all pals back then and still are today  
Nothing can stop us; we all feel the same way  
So 60's 16ers keep marching on,  
We'll still be together when others have gone

It's an honour, a privilege to be part of a group,  
You make me feel proud like I did in my troop  
There's a warmth and a closeness that's hard to  
describe,  
It makes me feel special deep down inside.

Our recent reunion has only just passed;  
I hope the next one will come round as fast  
I can't wait, once again, to see you all there,  
With minds quick and active, despite the grey hair

We'll boost the bar profits and sing into the night  
There's nothing quite like it, you know it feels right.  
Our memories of Krefeld would fill a large book  
I'd love to go back there and take a last look.

**Auf Wiedersehen Freunde, Prost und Viel Gluck**



# The 'Neue Kaserne' as it is today



Photos  
courtesy of  
Iain Haldane.

## **Gwen and Ted's Big Secret**

Gwen asked the 60 Minute Team to come and help her daughter,  
But Ted said 'Don't know if it's a good idea do you really think we  
oughta?'

But Gwen was adamant that Jacquie needed cheering,  
We'll decorate the house for her, well, Ted could do the clearing

They spoke to Terry Dwyer and the 60 Minute Team,  
We need your help to make come true our daughter Jacquie's dream.

A cosy home is all she wants, to share with her two children,  
Austin and Bobbi were to have a bedroom they could chill in.

It took a lot of planning, phone calls and secrets kept,  
For Jacquie a complete surprise Mum and Dad had no regrets.

The day arrived, all hands on deck to complete the task in hand,  
So Ted showed off his painting skills and it all looked rather grand.

Jacquie returned from her birthday treat, her sister had been with her,  
To find half her house in the skip outside and Mum and Dad  
grinning at her.

A tour of the house brought ooohs and aaahs and Jacquie was elated,  
It was the new home she always wanted.

So many thanks to Gwen and Ted and the 60 Minute Team,  
Jacquie, Bobbi and Austin now have the home of all their dreams

Hazel Hebden

## OSCAR winners!



Ted and I would like to thank all those people who nominated us for the Oscar, seriously, thank you, Ted and Hazel. It's true, I did it and if you were to ask me why, I would only be able to claim temporary insanity. Usually, Ted is a calming influence and whatever hair-brained scheme I come up with he manages to gently talk me out of it, you know the kind of thing—'Are you mad woman, what the hell are you thinking?' Only this time he let me down, badly, and I found myself embroiled in a dastardly plot to let total strangers loose in my daughter's

home. They really do try to finish within the hour but in our case bad weather upset their plans and they ended up not quite beating the clock. Whether or not it was due to this, I don't know, but the next morning my daughter discovered water leaking all over the kitchen from under the sink. We phoned up the telly people and they promised to send out a plumber, which they did.

First we received a phone call from what sounded like a very bemused man, 'Hello,' he said.

'Hello,' said my daughter.

'Er, I've been asked by Granada Studios to come and have a look at your sink, something about a leak.'

'Wonderful' said my daughter.

'Er, right, then,' said the plumber, 'I'm on my way.'

A few hours (a good few hours) later, we opened the door to a cheery little chap who was full of apologies about how late he was. 'It's a right b\*\*\*\*\* to find, this place,' he said, then added, 'Are you famous, like?'

'No,' said my daughter. 'Why would you think that?'

'Well, cos Granada booked me and they want me to send them the bill, I just thought, like.'

'No, no,' said my daughter. 'Not at all, I just had a make-over.'

With that, our little plumber crept up very close to my daughter and peering intently at her face, he said, 'And a bloody good job they've made of you, an' all.'

## Surprise Surprise !

Happy, happy, birthday Evie! Would you believe it, sixty already? Hang on, if Evie Bertie (that was) has reached retirement age that means that I, oh no, no, no, I refuse to go there... Jan and the boys arranged a surprise birthday party for her. Yes, Jan actually kept a secret, but more to the point



possibly more disturbing (them having been together now for forty years)

Evie actually believed the gobbledegook he fed her about them doing nothing special. It was well worth the hair raising journey into deepest, snow covered Hereford, just to see the look of pure astonishment, quickly followed by unalloyed pleasure on her face. It was lovely to be included in such a warm and happy

occasion. Despite not having seen them for some time, they are as they have always been. Jan is still frightening old ladies and children and Evie is still flapping along in his wake, smoothing ruffled feathers and in some instances sticking them back on. It really was lovely to see them both and I hope that they will seriously contemplate rejoining 'we happy few' at future reunions.

Talking of which, a few reunions ago, I think it was Scotland, Sue Harper leant across to me and, indicating the bemused faces of other hotel patrons, she said, 'I wonder what they make of us?' I shrugged and replied, 'They probably just think we're old farts.' Well, that was only half true because a little later I overheard someone comment, as they watched Hazel Hebden and Reme dancing, that we were *brazen* old farts. The way I see it, 'our work there is done'.



Evie and her gorgeous grandchildren

see again.

And on that note, I look forward to Blackpool and all the other reunions to follow, be they small, off the cuff affairs or large Gala bonanzas. I love the camaraderie, I love the humour, especially the humour, I love making new friends and meeting up with old friends, but most of all I love being with people that I thought I would never see again, including the few that I *hoped* I would never



## Torquay

Those who

Back Row— L to R: Hazel & Ted, H, Bill W, Taff C, Charlie V  
 Centre Row—L to R: Rae W, Sandra D, Audrey G, Bridget W,  
 Front Row— L to R Margaret W, Gwen T, Sue H.



## May 2009

who attended.

lie W, Pete, W Syd W , Dixie D, Dickie G, Reme H, Ted T.  
:W, Noreen D.

## Report from Torquay by Marcol.

### 19 Go down to Devon

In the words of Frank Carson, the Irish comedian,  
“What a cracker!”



Torquay—Photo courtesy of Margaret Wickham

The cracker being the weekend we spent in Torquay. The weather was great, sunshine, though still a bit nippy at times. The company, all nineteen of us, was excellent, a very good mix.

The hotel was in a very good location, overlooking Torquay, across a bay. The view, from most of the Hotel rooms, was stunning. All the rooms were spacious (to our knowledge).

The food was good and the service from the hotel staff was excellent.

The food was good and the service

We all knew prior to the weekend that there was some building and refurbishment work going on at the Hotel, which, by the way was called The Livermead Cliff Hotel.

The work that was going on didn't detract from the weekend at all.

#### 27<sup>th</sup> February

Friday night was catch up night, most of us hadn't seen each other since September's Reunion, from the amount of chatting being done there was a lot of catching up to do!

#### 28<sup>th</sup> February

On Saturday, after breakfast, decisions were made as to what adventures we were going to have during the day. Seven of us decided to head into Torquay. Once we managed to gather everyone together we set off, Gwen, Hazel, Pete, Ted, Ted (also know as Dave) and of course ourselves. Our group meandered along the road which ran alongside (please, no visions of a road in running gear, running along beside us!) the bay.

There were people walking along the beach, yachts bobbing about in the sea just off the headland. Two very adventurous young ladies taking turns at water skiing! The lower part of their legs, not covered by the wet suits, was very, very, RED! Whilst it was bright and sunny it was still cold.

There were also lots of dogs with their owners and not all of them (the owners) were meticulous in clearing up after their dogs. Don't ask how we found this out, but if you really need to know, can I suggest that you talk to Gwen and Ted!



Gwen, Ted Theis, Charlie 'Huggy Bear' Wickham, Hazel & Ted Hebden and Pete Weedon

Our walk took us along by the harbour and marina and I was able to take quite a few good (in my opinion) photographs. It was a beautiful setting. We went into the pavilion to have a look round. Meeting up again outside we had somehow managed to lose Charlie (I promise, it was not on purpose). A phone call and we were all reunited, what did we do before mobiles?

We explored the High Street then sat outside a café in the sun, to enjoy a well earned hot drink. We spent most of the day talking, walking, looking, laughing and enjoying being together and also being outside without freezing to death. At this point, I will add, we also visited a local supermarket, the reason will be told as the story unfolds!

Time for a rest before dinner, England were playing Ireland in the Six Nations, this should give you a clue as to why we needed to rest before dinner. The TV's were in the rooms!

I had volunteered myself to take a group photograph; the time was arranged for around 7'ish before we all went in for dinner. I set the camera up on my tripod, checked the timer was on and made sure it would take three photographs in quick succession. Guess which couple was late for the photo. Anyway, the photo was taken, I was quite nervous as this was a first. A space was left for me to sit, once I pressed the shutter I had 10 seconds to get myself seated so that I could also be in the photograph. I was slightly pink by the time I sat down....worried in case it didn't work. All's well that ends well, the result, I am sure, will be seen in this issue of the Bradbury Mercury.

I titled this write up '19 Go down to Devon' in the photograph you will see 20. Taff Coles, included in the photo, joined us for dinner; it really was good to see him.

The hotel had arranged a 'Disco' for our, and the other guests, entertainment after dinner. This is where the story unfolds! As we left the dining room each of the couples carried their bottles, supposedly, with some wine remaining, through into the bar and disco area. A few drinks, beer etc., were duly purchased from the bar. Every so often, someone in the group would disappear, they would then return with what looked like heavier pockets. There weren't a lot of sales from the bar but the enjoyment, banter and noise levels continued to rise as the evening progressed. I think by now you will probably have guessed why the visit was made to the local supermarket.



Photo courtesy of Dickie Grainge

A well known fact is that Charlie is not a late party goer, so to bed. I actually went up to the room with him but just to get the key. I rejoined the party. I didn't take any photos of the evening but I am sure lots of others did. One thing that really made me laugh during the evening, one of our group went

off and when he came back his jacket was all lopsided, you couldn't tell he had a heavy bottle in the jacket pocket! Not long after that I decided it was time for bed.

I always make the wrong decisions. The next morning I was regaled with tales of the night before. Something to do with Reme, Syd, and an interpreter, lots of laughter ....you will have to ask them for a fuller explanation! The Disco ended around midnight; sales on the bar weren't good so the Hotel felt they were going to be out of pocket.

### **1<sup>st</sup> March**

Sunday we decided, after breakfast, to visit Buckfast Abbey. It was another lovely day as we, Hazel, Ted and ourselves, set out. When we arrived there was a service being held in the Abbey and none of the gift shops were yet open. We walked around the beautiful gardens (well, they will be beautiful in the summer) enjoying the sunshine. It was a very peaceful and tranquil place. There was an interesting water sculpture. It was near the water wheel. It looked a bit like Nessie...didn't see it at first but once you looked it in the eye it became apparent. It lurked behind some tall reeds. The Abbey itself is a beautiful building and we enjoyed looking around inside once the service had finished. We ended our visit by doing some shopping, most of the products on sale in their shop are made by the monks at various monasteries located in England and Europe.



From Buckfast Abbey we went on to Newton Abbott. Charlie was there during the early sixties as a boy soldier. As we were driving through he couldn't remember any of what he was seeing. It seemed to have totally changed. We decided to get out of the car and walk around. We didn't spend a lot of time looking for Charlie's old drinking haunts (unlike Ted at Harrogate) as there was only one! We

eventually found the local railway station and he was able to picture how things used to look.

We walked through a park before coming to the railway station and Hazel and I took the opportunity to take some photos. The crocuses were in full bloom. The colours were stunning; I managed to catch a bee covered in pollen on one of the flowers, good photo (again, in my opinion).

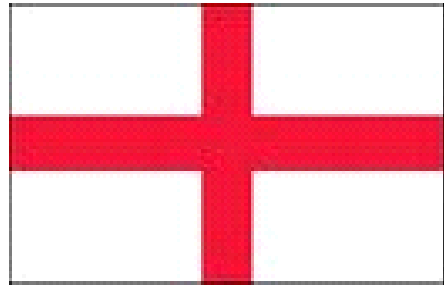
The decision was made to go out to where the camp used to be. The roads were just country lanes and we ended up at the camp which is now a prison. I'm sure they have us on camera; we drove up to their car park, did a turn and drove out. Charlie told us about the times he had to walk back along those country lanes after a night out....it was quite a way, but he was much younger then!

In the evening we all met up together again for more chat, laughter and good company. It wasn't a late night as most of us were heading home in the morning.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> March**

Thank you Noreen and Dixie for arranging the weekend, and thank you, all, for your company and your friendship. We enjoyed ourselves and said if there was another weekend arranged, we would be there. I believe we will do the same in 2010.

Have an enjoyable reunion at Blackpool      Margaret & Charlie.



**Goodbye to my England, So long my old friend  
Your days are numbered, being brought to an end  
To be Scottish, Irish or Welsh that's fine  
But don't say you're English, that's way out of line.  
The French and the Germans may call themselves such  
So may Norwegians, the Swedes and the Dutch  
You can say you are Russian or maybe a Dane  
But don't say you're English ever again.  
At Broadcasting House the word is taboo  
In Brussels it's scrapped, in Parliament, too  
Even schools are affected, staff do as they're told  
They must not teach children about England of old.  
Writers like Shakespeare, Milton and Shaw  
The pupils don't learn about them anymore  
How about Agincourt, Hastings, Arnhem or Mons?  
When England lost hosts of her very brave sons.  
We are not Europeans, how can we be?  
Europe is miles away over the sea  
We're the English from England, let's all be proud  
Stand up and be counted - Shout it out loud!  
Let's tell our Government and Brussels too  
We're proud of our heritage and the Red, White and Blue  
Fly the flag of Saint George or the Union Jack  
Let the world know - WE WANT OUR ENGLAND  
BACK !!!**

**- Anon**



**Reme multitasking?  
Reme with his two granddaughters Danni and Tianna**



**Marlene & Ken O'Hagen's beautiful granddaughter**

## **MBE for Jude Cottam**



Judith (Jude) Cottam qualified as a nurse in 1986 and was employed as a nurse in Bedford Hospital's colorectal ward in 1989. She was appointed as Clinical Nurse Specialist (Stoma Care) in 1991. In 1998, in response to the government's cancer service review, she opened up the service to patients with bowel cancer and then, in 2000, to patients with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). She was joined by another nurse in 1999 and the pair managed the service until Jude's retirement earlier this year. Between them, they dealt with up to 80 stoma patients per year, looked after 120 bowel cancer patients and managed a case load of around 280 patients with IBD.

Jude was named Nurse of the Year 2006 at the UK division conference in Leeds of the World Congress of Enterostomal Therapists and has subsequently been nominated for a number of community awards, most recently by her patients for a Pride In Bedfordshire accolade.

In an interview for her Nurse of the Year award, Jude was asked what she enjoyed most about her job. She answered: "Giving back hope to patients. Having a stoma still carries a lot of stigma and new patients feel very frightened and isolated. We do our best to dispel some of their anxieties and remind them that they are still the same person. Seeing them regain their confidence so they can go out and start enjoying a normal life again is extremely rewarding."

Jude has also led national research and audits into stoma care to improve outcome and experiences for patients, and has dedicated much of her spare time to fundraising for the patients she cared for every day, notably completing this year's London Marathon, raising over £7,000 towards new endoscopes.

Bedford Hospital Chief Executive Jean O'Callaghan, said: "There is no doubt that Jude's attitude to caring, and her dedication and professionalism, have improved the lives of hundreds of patients over the course of her nursing career.

"Jude stood out for her holistic approach in changing the lives of her patients for the better. Not only did she care for them in a clinical capacity, she pioneered research to improve the type of care bowel patients are given, and still undertakes charity work to raise money for treatment and equipment that will make a positive difference to them.

"Jude has dedicated every aspect of her life to making stoma patients better and making things better for stoma patients. She is an example to all and truly deserves this honour for her

## **Red Fridays**

**Remember to wear your RED on each and every Friday to show that you are supporting our Troops, no matter where they are.**

## **Blackpool Reunion—list of those attending.**

Lynn & Dave Aldous

Sheila Bracey

Elizabeth Gibb

Hazel & Ted Hebden

Derek Layton

Lyn & Bill Robinson

Jo & Tony Teague

Bridget & Syd Wilson

Kay & Geoff Barden

Mrs & Mr Peter Crane

Marlene O'Hagen

Mrs & Mr Tom Watt

Janis & Carl Brganza

Audrey & Dick Grainge

Carol & Bill Birch

Anne Ferrier

Sue & Gordon Harper

Gwen & Ted Theis

Arthur Paxton

Chris & Mike Sheldon

Rae & Bill White

Jean & John Aldridge

Gail & Martin Boizot

Mrs & Mr John Deas

Mrs & Mr Dave Walker

Pete Weedon

Sarah & Alan Tasker

Remember you still have time to place your booking with the Norbreck Castle Hotel in Blackpool.

The words, comments and articles contained in this magazine are written by club members are for the sole entertainment of club members and in no way reflects, the views or opinions, of the club generally or its officers.

**Any items for the February 10 edition please submit by 31st Dec 09.**



**The 1960s 16 Signal Regiment**

Please email or contact the person below with any items for future inclusion.

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