

Bradbury Mercury
1960s 16 Signal Regiment Reunion Club



Issue Number 28

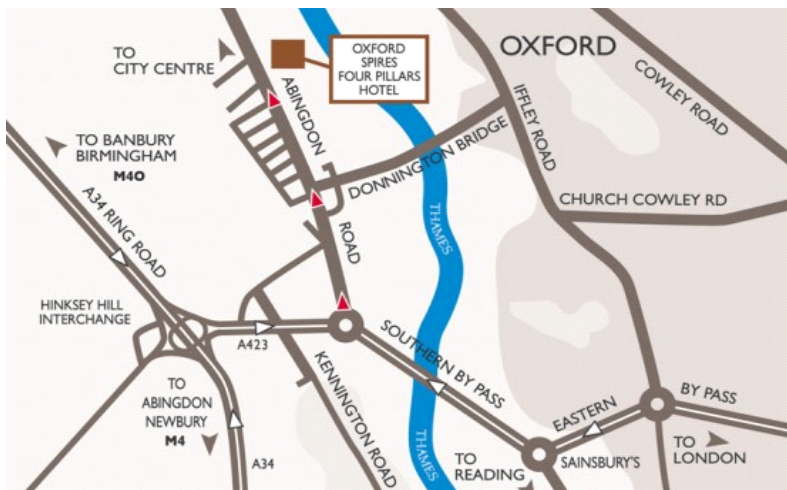
Compiled by Ted Theis
www.the-60s-16ers.com/

August 2011



Our Front Page:
The Royal Signals Memorial in Boston Lincolnshire with of course Ted H in attendance. Picture courtesy of Margaret and Charlie W.

Oxford Spires Hotel, Abingdon Road, Oxford, OX1 4PS
Tel: 01865 324324
Email: spires@fourpillars.co.uk



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Our Chairperson's Letter



I hope you are all well and enjoying the “Summer” such as it is. By the time you read this Dixie and I will have been on a Baltic cruise (my retirement treat), visiting Copenhagen, Helsinki and St Petersburg amongst other exciting places and no doubt will bore you all to tears about it in October.

We have just become grandparents again for the third time so life is full and rewarding down here in Somerset.

I thought I should let you know what your committee have been up to on behalf of the 16ers. Pete Weedon very kindly agreed to attend the RSA meeting in London to represent us and I know that he plans to report back to us all.

Regarding the Reunion this October, Tom Watt has been working very hard to ensure that we have a good time in Oxford and several of us joined him in Oxford in early June to finalise plans. I am sure that those attending will be impressed with The Four Pillars Hotel; it is friendly, comfortable and close to the city centre. Those of you who enjoy a little walk should manage the city centre in about 15 minutes but the less energetic should bring their bus passes and will find a bus stop across the road from the hotel. Driving in the centre of Oxford is something of a nightmare and I would not advise it.

Dave Aldous will inform every one of plans for entertainment over the weekend. I am sure you will appreciate his efforts on our behalf and I hope you will all join in the fun and frolics planned for the Sunday of the Reunion.

As you know we had planned to invite a guest or two to join us this year but the RSA representatives we had hoped could attend were unable to accept our invitation as the date clashed with other commitments. However, I am delighted to report that Carol Trow and her husband Mel will join us for Saturday (Carol is Chris Bartlett's daughter) I am sure you will make them very welcome. Circumstances were such that Carol did not know her father well and she would love to hear stories about him from his friends and colleagues to help build up a picture of the man he was. Eric Firth's daughters, Sue and Kath

will be with us as well and are hoping to get Eric's novel in print by October to show us all.

I am continually amazed by the feeling of belonging to a huge "forces family" and am grateful to be part of group like The 60's 16ers. Recently Dixie and I visited a National Trust property in Wiltshire and Dixie was wearing signals insignia on his sweat shirt. We passed a woman who stopped and returned to speak to us because she recognised the "Jimmy" Dixie was sporting. She explained that her husband had been in the signals and sadly had died a couple of years earlier. He had never been to Krefeld but they had spent many years in Germany and she had thoroughly enjoyed the army way of life. She told us that although she was getting on with life she missed the feeling of "belonging" that she always had whilst associated with the army. We enjoyed chatting to her and there was an obvious connection but we were left with a feeling of sadness that she did not have the equivalent of The 60's 16ers to support her.

I am looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Oxford but if you cannot make it please remember that you can voice your opinion or make suggestions at the AGM by contacting one of the Committee.

Regards to you all,
Noreen

A few scenes from Oxford.



Above—One of the bedrooms.

Below—Deacons Bar





Oxford Spires Hotel is just a short riverside walk from the magnificent **city of Oxford**, home to some of the country's finest universities, architecture and museums, as well as a diverse range of bars, restaurants and shops.

They offer fantastic **leisure club** and **gym** membership rates. As a member of **Willows Leisure Club** you will get full use of our **Oxford gym** and **leisure facilities**. Not for the faint hearted.



Oxford Weekend Entertainments

Information from our resident entertainer.

Hello Folks, Just a heads up on what you can expect in Oxford. The **Friday** evening will be the normal "loose maul", having a few!!! drinkies in the hotel or local hostelry and catching up on the yearly gossip.

On **Saturday** night at the **Gala Dinner**, we have a Boy/Girl duo, "Brilliant Disguise" who come highly recommended and I am sure we will show them what a good time is all about. :-)

This year's theme for **Sunday** is "CARTOON CHARACTERS", this gives us all loads of choice to get our teeth into (Lynnies says I don't need to dress up, just come as "Uncle Fester") very cruel.

Chris Brown, a local DJ/Karaoke guy will be in control of the music side of things and there will be a small prize, lots of laughs and HUGE bragging rights for the best dressed man & woman.

Please let's all enter into the spirit of the occasion, have a great time, a great laugh and really enjoy ourselves, is there any doubt?

If anyone has any questions/suggestions on the above please contact me at:- **aldous@talktalk.net** or 01423 507220

LORD KITCHENER MEMORIAL HOLIDAY CENTRE LOWESTOFT from Carol Birch.



I noticed an advertisement in the Legion magazine early in 2010 about the Lord Kitchener Memorial Holiday Centre and posted an item about it on the message board of the 60s-16ers. Bill and I had already planned to spend three weeks in September in East Anglia so I thought we could do worse than give it a try and then share our findings.

The Centre is a smart townhouse overlooking the posh part of Lowestoft beach – just south of Claremont Pier and with unimpeded views of the sea. There are eleven twin bedrooms so

the maximum capacity is for 22 people – the week we stayed there were 18, eight couples and two single men. One of the couples were on their eleventh visit, they live in Norwich so it is only a half hour drive for them. The other residents were mainly “our” age – the lovely Rose had been a Land Girl but most people were in their 60s. The Centre is a comfortable fifteen minute walk from the main shopping district – and a very lovely walk indeed - along the seafront to the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club. There is a minor shopping area behind the Centre with a newsagent, launderette and pharmacy. There is plenty of free roadside parking outside the front and we never had a problem when we took the car out when returning. There is a pay and display car park too but we never needed to use it.

The bedrooms are all twin en-suite and we had very comfortable accommodation. A good powerful shower over the bath, proper bedside reading lamps and plenty of space to unpack everything we had taken. We had bedside tables with two drawers each, two small three drawer chests and a large double wardrobe. The curtains were heavy jacquard material and properly lined so minimum light came through at sunrise which enabled us to sleep fairly late. Changeover day is Tuesday and the bedrooms were serviced daily except Sunday, all the linen was changed on Friday. The bedrooms are on the first and second floors but there is a small lift for which we never had to wait very long.

There are no televisions or radios in the bedrooms and no tea making facilities. However, on the ground floor there are two television lounges with big flat screen televisions and a reading room which also had a large round table and a good supply of games and cards. The dining room has a small kitchen for the use of the residents and there is an endless supply of coffee, tea and chocolate and a biscuit barrel which was refilled constantly by the biscuit fairy – I never saw it less than half full and have been reminded of such delights as fig rolls and hobnob. There is a stack of trays and a cupboard full of china mugs and residents are encouraged to take drinks to their rooms, the cleaning staff



Memorial Holiday Centre

removed our night time drink debris daily. The Centre does not have a licence but there is a fridge in the dining room for the use of residents and most people had bottles of

wine and beers in there which they replenished as and when necessary.

The food was absolutely amazing – old fashioned British cooking of the very best kind. There was no real choice as such, but it was not a problem because the day's dinner was written on a blackboard near the dining room entrance daily and the waiting staff checked at breakfast if there was anything that people did not like whereupon a substitute was agreed. Breakfast consisted of cereal/porridge/grapefruit/prunes and a choice of juice followed by full English and then as much toast as you could eat. The full English was cooked to order and Bill had the lot every day but



Sunny Days at Lowestoft.



they were quite happy to provide me with poached egg on toast, all the plates were hot and none of the food had been lying around tiredly under lamps. Dinners were three courses, sometimes soup but we also had a prawn cocktail one day and half a dozen little deep fried scampi with tartar sauce another. The main courses always had the proper vegetable accompaniments – the roast beef dinner had roasted parsnips and carrots as well as Yorkshire puddings and the baked ham had parsley sauce and steamed leeks. The vegetables were served in a chafing dish, were perfectly cooked and we never managed to finish all of them. The puddings were fabulous, a real Pear Helene one day and a delicious strawberry flan another. Because the food was so good and so plentiful we seldom bothered with lunch and made do with a little dish of seafood or an ice-cream during the day.

The Centre Manager is Steven Schofield who was incredibly helpful and a really good source of information about everything. His wife Lorraine is the cook and they employ a couple of cleaners and some young girls as waitresses. They run a very tight and exceedingly comfortable ship. There is plenty to do in the area and now we are old and have the bus passes they are rather useful.

The website is www.kitchener.lowestoft.org.uk and Steven's telephone number is 01502 573564

My Dad by Yorky Layton.

My father joined the army in 1939, and did his basic training in Dundee. He then moved to Aberdeen and joined 276 Field Co. R.E. After initial training, the unit moved to Font Hill Bks; where they carried out field work, bridging and mine laying on the river Dee. After training they joined the 51st Highland Div and moved to Orkney to build camps for troops evacuated from Norway. More training, then they received orders and were sent to the Middle East just before the battle of Alamein. Here they had the job of clearing the minefields ready for the big push and then attached to infantry patrols towards enemy lines. For most of this period he was attached to the 5th Bn Black Watch.

From here, he was recalled to the UK to make ready for D Day. He was in the second wave landing on Sword beach so the first few hours were not too bad, then came the push for Ouistreham, Ranville and Columbelles, which proved to be one of the worst battles for the Division. Later, after the breakthrough at Caen and the closing of the Falaise Gap, they had the misfortune of being bombed by our own planes and suffered many casualties. After a short rest they took part in the capture of Leige in support of the Canadians. Then it was off to Holland and building bridges over the many canals and rivers including Waal and Maas.

On the morning of the 23rd October, (the anniversary of the battle for Alamein,) his Brigade attacked the villages of Schijndel and Schutsboom, and, for his part in the battle he was awarded the DCM and he was presented with his medal by Monty himself. His Division also took a major part in the taking of the Reichswald Forrest, Kleve and Goch. In December 1944 the Division moved to the Ardennes to assist in the Battle of the Bulge. He returned to civilian life in June 1946.



Medal Citation for L\Sgt D Layton DCM.

1890359 L/Sgt Douglas Layton Royal Engineers.

On the morning of 23 Oct 44, No 1890359 L/Sgt D LAYTON was going forward with his Pl Officer on road clearance task, in the attack for SCHIJNDEL and SHUTSBOOM Map ref 398388, when the Pl Officer was wounded. L/Sgt LAYTON, in the absence of his Pl Sgt, took over command of this party. He at once dispersed the Sappers in their road clearing and marking task, and went forward with a recce party into the outskirts of SCHIJNDEL. There being slight opposition, L/Sgt LAYTON, on the spur of the moment, decided to take full opportunity to recce the route forward.

He took his recce party in a H/T right through SCHIJNDEL and SHUTSBOOM to the point which he knew was to be the limit of the Bde attack. Having marked the route open to that point, he decided to return since it was obvious that the enemy were still in the towns behind him. After passing back all the information over the air he started to make his way back when some very close fighting developed. L/Sgt LAYTON led his party in such a manner and with such encouraging example that they managed to get back and join the remainder of his road clearing party who he found fighting at the other end of SCHIJNDEL.

The enemy were beaten off and a wounded sapper recovered by L/Sgt LAYTON who then brought his entire party back, under orders from his O.C.

Information was passed back by L/Sgt LAYTON continuously throughout this exploit. It was due to his rapid snatching of the opportunity, which allowed that information to be got and passed to higher formations.

During the whole exploit L/Sgt Layton's efficiency in taking over from an officer, courage and enduring cheerfulness was a leading factor in his men achieving their success.

An EVENTFUL WEEKEND IN LONDON

By Audrey Grainge

In March we went to London to attend the AGM of the RSA, on arriving at Kings Cross we decided to make use of our bus passes and travel to Marble Arch by bus. That was our first mistake what with road closures due to the extensive work being carried out for the Olympic Games and the people arriving for the big Unite rally; London was nearly at a standstill. After 3 buses and lots of walking we eventually made it to meet up with Rae and Bill at the pub. Bill had to have an extra pint whilst he was waiting for us to arrive (ahhhh). Later we went to the curry supper laid on for us by the association, we then adjourned to the bar for a nightcap (or two), some of the members thought the drinks were too expensive so they went to the pub at the end of the road. They managed to buy their beers, just before they were asked to leave, as there was a bomb scare, so much for cheap beer. After the AGM on Saturday morning we decided to do a recce to the theatre where we had booked to go that evening, another nightmare all the buses had been taken off because of the riots and road closures. We managed to push our way past the rioters and crowds of onlookers to see the devastation to shops; windows broken and paint thrown at them and litter bins that had been set on fire. The young people were dressed all in black and a lot of them had masks on it made a very frightening scene. We finally made it back to the hotel.

We decided to go out early and get something to eat and then make our way to the theatre easier said than done because by this time the UNITE members had left their rally in Hyde Park and were out and about as well as the rioters. We arrived at the theatre via all the side streets to see the Mousetrap it was quite funny to sit watching a play that was set in the 1940s when all you could hear from outside were aeroplanes (they were helicopters really) and police sirens, talk about being transported back in time. We did make it back to the hotel ok; the buses were running again.

When we went around London the next morning it was amazing to see how quickly the streets had been cleaned up and apart from graffiti and a few banners it would be hard to imagine anything had happened. Just to make things more exiting Scotland were playing football against Brazil? on Sunday afternoon so the Tartan army were out in force.

Arriving at Kings X to travel the majority of the Scottish fans were herded on to the train before ours and everything went smoothly the police did a great job.

All I can say we were really glad to get home.

48 YEARS ON.

By Reme Harper.

February 1963, a really bloody awful year and time to be doing ones basic training, but nevertheless I found myself in Aborfield at the R.E.M.E. Depot as an 18 year old. Cold! I've never experienced anything like it.

Anyway, enough of that. Got through that and away to Borden to carry out my trade training, and wait for it, as a Vehicle Mechanic (all those who know me will be now laughing their heads off!) Found myself in a multi-million pound training set-up, the envy of all budding mechanics, already I had visions of coming out of the Army in 9 years time and setting up my own Garage and making millions with my acquired skills! Alas, I soon found out how useless I was (as my now wife will happily confirm!). Needless to say my skills weren't appreciated and all came-to-a-head when I, using expletives, told a civilian instructor, who was endeavouring to teach me to drive (what was then a 30ton vehicle) to get out and drive the '*/@% thing' himself, (I blaming the game of riding-the-clutch)!



So looking at my future I applied to transfer to the Royal signals, this was accepted and the REME'S loss was the ROYAL SIGNALS gain! (Editors note—really Reme?) Now in 24 Sigs. (Gaza lines) and selected to train as a Telegraph-operator class 3. I believe the course lasted about 10 months and during that time I had to wear my REME Forage cap and of course my REME cap-badge. Who did I find on the same course as me none other than a current member of our club, a certain Bill Robinson aka Jim or Jock; personally I can never remember what to call him! The very Bill who nicknamed me REME, which to this day, most refer to me as (my wife Sue, calls me much, much worse, from time-to-time). Passed my course and actually did well enough to get the choice of postings on offer. Me, seeing 219 signal squadron, Tripolitania, North Africa, jumped at it, this without thought of the possible dangers I might be faced with (only kidding!). Mind you with the trouble in Tripoli, at this time of writing, it is a possibility they may call me back, as when I left, being one of the last dozen, the place was calm and with a great future. My O.C. over in Tripoli, was non other that Major Bill

Pritchard, later to become my O.C. in 2 squadron, 16 Sigs. After that it was Germany, 1 Div and 16 Sigs, followed by 11 Sigs as Troop Sgt. Training recruits, followed by Sandhurst, again instructing and finally 30 Sigs. This was when my career had come to an end due to my principles, or some would say Mouth! As a result of fighting the system in Sandhurst.

Enough of all that, (Editors note: a whole page is way more than enough) which is all in the past and going back to Krefeld, 16 Sigs late 1966. A time that I have never forgotten! I enjoyed the job I was given as a Det Commander 2 squadron and working with D11s and carrying out various trials throughout my 3 years there. One mention at this point would be to say that our friends in 1 Squadron who were often referred to as Fairies! Chaps, I have always envied you since being in Civvy Street, as it was only then that I realised you were the personnel who did the job for real and all that I ever did was train, train, train. You were working in the main TRC in BAOR.

My life changed forever, in Krefeld and I met one lovely girl, Gwendoline Smith who I tried very, very hard to Woo, but alas that wasn't to be, she threw her opportunity away with complete disdain and later met and married a certain Ted Theis. Question, did she make the right choice! Well take it from someone who knows, that is yours truly, she certainly did! Despite being discarded by Gwen my life was to take a turn for the better once again and I met the lady who has been my wife for close to 43 years, a certain Sue Gallantree who has blessed me with 2



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wonderful children who are both now in the teaching profession. Sue has remained my loyal and supportive partner, and for the life of me I can't imagine life without her and would go as far to say, she is the only person on God's earth who could have put up with me, and

now I look forward to reaching 50 years of marriage. Made some wonderful friends during that time and could go on and on about them all but time and space doesn't allow. 2 names I will mention at this point, Cpl Ian Buckley and Lcpl William White who will feature later on.

Now to those who are still awake and continuing to read my rubbish! A certain Chris Bartlett in 1996 came into our lives via



Loughborough 2005

the National Press etc; and through great effort arranged the very first reunion in his home town of Southend and as we now all know, we, over the years have grown! Yes, we may have lost members over the past 17 years, but we have also gained many. Sadly, and at our time-of-life, there are natural losses through,

being called by our maker, or some deciding they have sampled what we have to offer and that perhaps it is no longer for them! That's fine, but I must say Sue and I enjoyed meeting up with you once again and who knows we may see you again, in the future.

To all who are still very much part of events. Think of all the reunions we have now had, the places we have been to, the times we have had, the memories shared, how young it has made us feel each time we meet up and most of all how we once again look forward to the next reunion, in fact, some meet up more than once a year.

I have even heard of Charlie and Margaret Wickham inviting Ted and Hazel Hebden down to stay with them!!!! Talking of which, Gwen and Ted Theis came over for the weekend a few years ago and when our daughter, Tracey, now a mother of 2 girls herself, spoke to Gwen, in front of all of us and asked "Gwen, is it right you and my Dad used to go out together" Gwen answered Yes! This was followed by a 3 second pause, before she shouted out

“But nothing happened” This, as you can imagine, brought tears of laughter! And Yes! To all you Sceptics, she was telling the truth!

We really have had some special reunions and great effort has been put in by varying committee members and of course the members themselves. Numbers attending having reached 130 plus in Loch Lomond and who will forget the late Trev Davis arranging that one, he even tirelessly ferried personnel from Glasgow airport to the Hotel. The last reunion at West Brom was superb even though our numbers had dropped. Where else, other than the 60's 16ers Reunion could you find the only person Sue says is dafter than me, namely Dave Aldous, it will never ever be too Stuffy or Serious, 3 Cheers for Army Humour.

Going back to the Regiment briefly and 1966 and looking at how some of the staff then have got on, we have the 2 squaddies I mention previously making Lt Col' (Buckley/White) some going on to make Warrant officers, one of our girls making Staff Sgt. and a few of the lads making Yeoman/Foreman. But no matter what progress was made by individuals either forward or backwards, we stay united at our reunions and no one attempts to be above the next person. Finally; How lucky we are to have our Colonel and his wife, Bob and his beautiful wife Shirley Pope, supporting his Regiment to this very day with his attendance at our reunions, and enthusiastically joining in with the light hearted, tongue in cheek humour.



Col and Mrs Pope, with Gail Boizot.

I could have mentioned 100 of you on writing this as you are all special to Sue and me.

See you in Oxford.

Gordon (Reme) and Sue Harper.

Intentional Deletion

Intentional Deletion

Intentional Deletion

If you have health problems because of being in the Armed Forces

If you have health problems because of being in the Armed Forces, you may be entitled to payments under the war pension scheme or the Armed Forces compensation scheme.

For more information about the war pension scheme and the Armed Forces compensation scheme, see *If you were forced to leave the Armed Forces because of serious injury*

This information is from the CAB advice guide for **Pension and compensation schemes for the Armed Forces, veterans and their families.** www.adviceguide.org.uk

Treasurer's Report

The White Rabbit put on his spectacles. "Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?" he asked.

"Begin at the beginning," the King said gravely, "and go on till you come to the end: then stop."

So I shall -

In 2006 we had about 180 members - just for a year. For the last three years the number has been steady at about 75. This means we have a quite different budget now to then.

It means the following:

- A tight budget for entertainment
- A tight budget for guests
- The money raised from the raffle (for the last two years it has been £300) is needed to meet our Reunion costs rather than being a donation for charity (much as we would all like it to be).
- The Mercury being available to members in electronic form instead of being printed and posted (this has halved the cost of postage and printing saving us some £350 each year).

The Budget for 2011 is:

Income

Subscriptions	750	
Raffle	300	
		1050

Expenditure

Postage & Stationery	125	
Bradbury Mercury	200	
Website	25	
Reunion Entertainment	350	
Reunion Guests	350	
		1050

Deficit for Period

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Treasurer's Report—continued

Although we have had to restrict expenditure in these last two years to keep within our income, I have not felt that this has in any way reduced the enjoyment we all get from our reunions. If your thoughts differ, please let any member of the Committee know, together with your ideas of how to improve matters. I am a firm believer that there is always room for improvement.

Also if anyone has any ideas for raising money or saving costs, they would be most gratefully received by me.

Peter Crane

Treasurer.

Two of our number,
(names not needed)
enjoying the relaxation of
a hot tub, and filling their
gut with burgers and cake.
They actually wrestled
these from Terri's
Huskies.



The words, comments and articles contained in this magazine are written by club members and 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 12 edition please submit by 31st Dec 11.



The 1960s 16 Signal Regiment

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

Email: oggyandted@gmail.com
www.the-60s-16ers.com/
Tel:07818058306