

Bradbury Mercury
1960s 16 Signal Regiment Reunion Club



Issue Number 21

Compiled by Ted Theis

February 2008

The start of it all



The above picture shows those who attended the inaugural reunion of 1996, held in Southend

Harrogate 2006



Left: The ballroom on our dinner night.
Above: Entertainment excellently provided by members of the OMCA.

Our Front Page: A photograph of those who attended the first of many re-unions, held in Southend in 1996, and photographs from 2006 re-union at the Cairn Hotel



If you don't want to miss out this year make sure you book your place in September. Remember deposits must be in by 31st January.

Photos courtesy of Iain Haldane.



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Chairman's opening address



Our Chairman,
Syd Wilson

Dear Members,

Let me start by wishing you all a Very Happy and Prosperous New Year and I hope you had a lovely Christmas with your families, friends and loved ones.

Now, without sounding as though I am repeating myself, I would like to mention our last Reunion at Newquay. Bridget and myself thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and going by the general consensus everyone else did. So once again a big thank you to the organisers (Noreen, Laurie and Dixie) for all their hard work. Oh! And of course, not forgetting Col Bob for blowing up the balloons ha!.

Thank you also, to Terry and Andrew for their very kind gesture in presenting members with bottles of wine and I know you are all with me when I say "Terry, darling, we are with you all the way on your road to full recovery"

I am sure by now you are all aware that the next Reunion 2008 is being held in Harrogate again. This was the result of members failing to bring along information as to where the next venue should be. So on a proposition from the floor and many members saying try Harrogate, David Aldous managed to secure the Cairn Hotel from the many he approached. Admittedly the dates are not to everyone's liking, but we had to act straight away and these were the only dates available. So please try and make it and those who can't through other commitments, you will be sadly missed. Hopefully this situation will not occur again, therefore I urge those of you who wish for a venue of their choice to bring along some information for the members to see, it's better to have a dozen than none at all.

As for the 2009 Reunion it was suggested by Laurie, whilst a few of us were enjoying a drink, that it would be nice if we could hold it in Krefeld and that

she was prepared to organise it. Those who were present thought it an excellent idea. Can we please have some feed back from members and of course remember that time is marching on so fast that I personally feel that we should do it sooner, rather than later.

What was noticeably missing from the last Reunion was the members little revues (skits) that we have held for a couple of years, I am hoping that this was just a glitch and we will be putting on something for 2008, so please let's have some volunteers/ideas and a little skit from the Ladies. Remember we are all getting older, so having a bit of fun and making a fool of oneself is good for the soul.

I would now like to inform you that

1. John Deas is going into hospital in February for a triple heart by-pass.
2. Arthur Paxton has been diagnosed with angina and told to take things easy.
3. Barry Edwards has now finished his Chemo and is feeling fine and at the moment and he is enjoying a nice holiday.

On your behalf I wish them all the best and that we hope to see them all soon. That also goes for any other member who is not well at this moment in time. It only leaves me now to say, take care, stay safe and God Bless.

Syd
Chairman

Our new committee

Left to right,
Frank Del Pinto
(vice chairman),
Syd Wilson
(chairman),
Dave Aldous
(entertainments),
Martin Boizot
(treasurer) ,
Jo and Tony
Teague,
(assistant
secretary and
secretary)





Moira and Bruce Graham

Jimmy

**There is a silver statue that binds the company here
His official name is Mercury and down memory lane we steer.
To think of friends we knew before, like brothers we became
To join that special family, Royal Signals is our name.**

**To us this silver figure was a symbol of our trade
To us his name was “Jimmy” and proudly we displayed.
His manly figure, arm aloft, with wings on head and feet
Upon our hats and uniform, our pride in him complete.**

**Today he still is occupied, in battles, sad to say
We think of the men and women and we can only pray.
That Mercury, so swift and sure will help them to survive
And proud to be in Signals, to keep the Corps alive.**

By Moira Graham

Moira completed a creative writing course just last year.

A Marlene Moment
(Read out by Reme after the AGM in Newquay)

Dear Reme,

Could you please read this out for me and Ken? Please give our apologies, hope you can read this.

Hi Everybody, well I am gutted, fed up and miserable we can't manage to come this year, but I just can't make it as I am not doing so well. My sight is getting worse and I have constant infections in both eyes. They don't know why, but not to worry my gob still works. I hope you have a really fab time even though I am not there. I will miss you all but you can have a rest from me. I am going to St Dunstan's on the 14th Nov to be assessed and hopefully they will give me more information as to what is going to happen to me. I asked the Infirmary but they just palm me off, maybe they made a mistake 5 years ago with the laser, but I can't go back now.

Here are a few orders for you lot:-

- 1) No dirty stories until I am there.
- 2) Don't get drunk; get plastered.
- 3) Tweet shut up!!! I haven't finished.
- 4) Eat all your dinner up, it's paid for.
- 5) Don't dance until your legs fall off, you're too old for new ones.
- 6) Have a drink for me, (you're paying).
- 7) Just be good. (****) Booring!
- 8) Remember with age comes serenity or is it senility.
- 9) Most of all, give me a thought because I will be thinking of you lot.



I am going to miss you all, but I will find out if you behaved yourselves, (shut up, Tweet, I still haven't finished), and if you have I will be shocked because standards will be well down.

Kisses and cuddles to everyone from me, Reme, will pass them around as my arms are not long enough and anyway he loves it.

All my love,
Marlene

xxxxxx

And, I suppose, Ken. xx

It's a small world.

Having moved to the South Coast, i.e. Newton Abbot, Devon. I had, unfortunately, become disabled. When I was back on my feet and informed I couldn't work again, I was not prepared to sit in the corner, so on "good" days I volunteered to work in the local museum doing admin work for a couple of hours.

Now, here's the spooky bit the curator of the museum overheard me talking about Krefeld and stated that her dad (Major Derek Cary—photo) was our education officer, wow, and has many happy memories of the camp. Next spooky bit, her brother Andrew had just had a car accident in Cambridge, the person looking after him in the hospital turned out to be Padre Schammel's daughter, (the padre had a bad limp after the Japanese tortured him). Anyone remember him??



Maj. Derek Cary

You must do, we all went to church on Sunday!

And don't forget I am still looking for the names of the people on the photo with Liz Styles nee Parnham . Didn't recognise Cam in the back ground, but he didn't have his arm around Patsy, whoops .

Keep chugging and smiling (it always annoys someone).

Skip & Rose Harding



The Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal



The Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal was recently given to veterans of the war against communists, who fought in the jungles of Malaya in the 50s and 60s. Many thousands of British National Service men gave their lives in this forgotten campaign which was the only successful anti-insurgent campaign waged against communist forces and which was responsible for Malaya being the free country that it is today. This conflict could be seen in many ways as a start of our current, 'war on terror'.

Many years have gone by since they fought for the freedom of a country thousands of miles from home. Service personnel, called upon to show great courage, often in jungle conflict. Now their bravery has been officially rewarded by the country whose democracy they battled to save.

After many years of campaigning by the National Malaysia and Borneo Veterans' Association, Malaysia was finally allowed in 2004 to award, and British service personnel were allowed to receive, the Pingat Jasa Malaysia medal in recognition of their 'distinguished chivalry, gallantry, sacrifice and loyalty'. Great sadness for comrades lost mingled with great pride during these occasions. It has taken a long time, and a lot of hard work by the Veteran's Association to secure this medal for the veterans, who, helped secure the ongoing independence of Malaya.

The Malayan Emergency saw around 35,000 British troops and RAF personnel posted to south-east Asia between 1957 and 1966. These troops also aided Malaysia, who were in a conflict with Indonesia, over the future of the island of Borneo.

The veterans were presented with their medals from Malaysian Defence Attaché,
Col Tajri Alwi.



This photo was taken in 1966 in Elizabeth Barracks at a passing out parade.
Can you see anyone you know, or knew?

The WRAC Depot and Training Centre was opened in Guilford by H.M. The Queen on the 30th October 1964.

The function of the Depot was to accept recruits direct from civilian life for a period of five weeks basic training, before they were posted for duty or trade training to other units.

A hutted camp was originally built on this site and used as a Training Centre for the Auxiliary Territorial Service during the 1939—1945 war. Later, the camp became the Depot and Training Centre of the Corps and in 1952, to commemorate the association of H.M. The Queen (Queen Mother) with the Auxiliary Territorial Service and the Corps, the camp was named Queen Elizabeth Camp, which became Queen Elizabeth Barracks when it became a more permanent site.



Queen Elizabeth Barracks now, and a new name, Queen Elizabeth Park

IT'S CHRISTMAS DAY, ALL IS SECURE



T'WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS
HE LIVED ALL ALONE
IN A ONE BEDROOM HOUSE MADE OF PLASTER AND STONE
I HAD COME DOWN THE CHIMNEY WITH PRESENTS TO GIVE
AND TO SEE JUST WHO IN THIS HOME DID LIVE

I LOOKED ALL ABOUT A STRANGE SIGHT I DID SEE
NO TINSEL NO PRESENTS NOT EVEN A TREE
NO STOCKING BY THE MANTLE JUST BOOTS FILLED WITH SAND
ON THE WALL HUNG PICTURES OF FAR DISTANT LANDS
WITH MEDALS AND BADGES AWARDS OF ALL KINDS
A SOBER THOUGHT CAME THROUGH MY MIND

FOR THIS HOUSE WAS DIFFERENT IT WAS DARK AND DREARY
I FOUND THE HOME OF A SOLDIER ONCE I COULD SEE CLEARLY
THE SOLDIER LAY SLEEPING SILENT ALONE
CURLED UP ON THE FLOOR IN THIS ONE BEDROOM HOME

THE FACE WAS SO GENTLE THE ROOM IN SUCH DISORDER
NOT HOW I PICTURED A LONE BRITISH SOLDIER
WAS THIS THE HERO OF WHOM I'D JUST READ
CURLLED UP ON A PONCHO THE FLOOR FOR A BED

I REALISED THE FAMILIES THAT I SAW THIS NIGHT
OWED THEIR LIVES TO THESE SOLDIERS WHO WERE WILLING
TO FIGHT
SOON ROUND THE WORLD THE CHILDREN WOULD PLAY
AND GROWNUPS WOULD CELEBRATE A BRIGHT CHRISTMAS
DAY

THEY ALL ENJOY FREEDOM EACH MONTH OF THE YEAR
BECAUSE OF THE SOLDIERS LIKE THE ONE LYING HERE
I COULDN'T HELP WONDER HOW MANY ALONE
ON A COLD CHRISTMAS EVE IN A LAND FAR FROM HOME

THE VERY THOUGH BROUGHT A TEAR TO MY EYE
I DROPPED TO MY KNEES AND STARTED TO CRY
THE SOLDIER AWAKENED AND I HEARD A ROUGH VOICE
'SANTA DON'T CRY, THIS LIFE IS MY CHOICE
I FIGHT FOR FREEDOM, I DON'T ASK FOR MORE.
MY LIFE IS, MY GOD, MY COUNTRY, MY CORPS'

THE SOLDIER ROLLED OVER AND DRIFTED TO SLEEP
I COULDN'T CONTROL IT I CONTINUED TO WEEP
I KEPT WATCH FOR HOURS SO SILENT AND STILL
AND WE BOTH SAT AND SHIVERED FROM THE COLD NIGHTS
CHILL

I DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE ON THAT COLD DARK NIGHT
THIS GUARDIAN OF HONOUR SO WILLING TO FIGHT
THEN THE SOLDIER ROLLED OVER, WITH A VOICE SOFT AND
PURE
WHISPERED, 'CARRY ON, SANTA, IT'S CHRISTMAS DAY, ALL IS
SECURE.'
ONE LOOK AT MY WATCH AND I KNEW HE WAS RIGHT
'MERRY CHRISTMAS, MY FRIEND, AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT'

Though many of you may have read this poem, we thought it fitting to
represent it in our magazine.

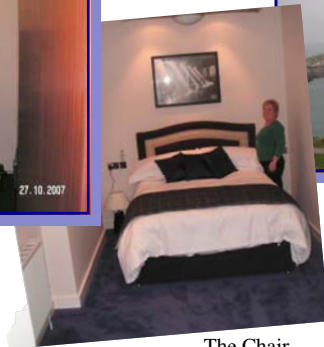
It is a poem which brings home how we all feel about our brave lads and lasses.

Newquay revisited

There were so many people missing from this year's reunion that I'm sure we all had our doubts as to how it would go. We tried, we really did, not to enjoy ourselves too much. Some of us, namely ourselves and John and Anne Hodkin, achieved a state of true misery, arriving as we did in the early hours of the morning and having to kip in the car park. We even managed the odd plummet of despair, for example, when we were given 'Le Grande Tour' of our Chairman's stately rooms.



Our room



The Chairman's bedroom in his *suite*



The view from the Chairman's balcony



The view from our window

Now, me being me and Ted having warned me to watch what I'm doing with my feet, I have to word this very carefully – we had a ball. Okay, feet out of mouth, we missed you all terribly and I lost count of the times I heard people say, 'I wish so-and-so was here', or 'pity so-and-so couldn't make it,' or 'Thank God, Tweet...' Yes, truth to tell, so-and-so was well and truly missed.

Very early on, we bumped into Shirley Pope and she definitely said that she was off to the beach ASAP to cop an eyeful of the surfer dudes. (You did, Shirley, you may not have used those exact words, but close enough). Anyhow, we heard that Bob wasn't having any of it, so we thought, what with us having the Yorkshire, Dale Surfing Champion in our midst, there might be something we could do. And we did.

Early on Sunday morning, in true SAS fashion, one of our number slid silently upstairs only to slide down again minutes later disguised as—a surfer dude. We could hear his flippy, floppy stomps as he approached the breakfast room. Everyone froze, even Ted H. stopped eating and stared at the door. Then, *he* appeared, so handsome, so muscular, so virile, and just behind him, Reme.

We hope you enjoyed your birthday surprise, Shirley, because we did.

I



hate
harp
about

t o
o n



but

Now we're talking—this is the real surfer dude, the one who lent Reme his surfing gear. This photo was taken just after he'd told Reme that he had the wet suit on back to front. Actually that does rather explain the look on Shirley's face...

Harper
could
some-
please
to him
of trav-

body Just look at Shirley's face—is that appreciation
e x - for a fantastic birthday present or what?

plain
rules

t h e

elling in a convoy—okay, I'll do it. The guy in front, that's you, Harper, must make sure that he can see the guy behind at all times, and just because he can't, doesn't mean he can swan off to wherever his naff GPS takes him. St. Ives was lovely by the way, a bit hilly, but at least it was a Harper free zone.

The Gala Dinner was, as usual, very tastefully arranged and it was obvious that a lot of hard work had gone into that arranging. A special thank you to all concerned. However, who on earth invited the galloping major? One minute all was calm and serene, and the next, the guys were up and shuffling around like demented penguins.





Left, right, left right... give it up, Dave. The spirit was willing but the flesh was weak, who said it was like riding a bike?

You can call it 'right dress'—I call it milling.

The Col. commented that their marching was decidedly average, yeah right, not being funny, sir, but was it really that good? He would also like to point out that the guy at the front, the one with hair and his own tooth, wait for it... wait for it... he should go and see his doctor, that red face and those bulging eyes are just not normal.

Sunday night, ah yes, Country and Western Night. Some people dressed up, you know who you are, but just in case here are a few piccies...



l-r 'Hissing' Syd Wilson, Annie 'Get your Gun' & Johnny 'the Big Kid' Hodkin, Reme 'Mince Eastwood' Harper, Davey 'Cwocket' Aldous, Laurie 'Calamity Jane' Moore, Graham 'the big Jesse James' Jolley.



Photo courtesy of John Hodkin

Left:
Brenda
'Pocahontas'
Joyce
and
daughter
'Minnehaha'



Bridget 'Belle Starr' Wilson and Elmer Fudd, 'Oh waaabbit...'

The night



Photo courtesy of John Hodkin

Syd & Bridget Wilson, Martin & Gayle Boizot.



Looking good there, Bill. Hope you're recovered enough to give us an encore in Harrogate.

went by in a blur and I'm not being in the least metaphorical, if you'd been sitting where I was sitting... Every time the dancers galloped down 'heart attack alley' my chair whacked into first gear and tried to do a runner. I have it on good authority that Syd Wilson's children made him write out a quick 'I leave everything to my kids' on a napkin before they let him up for another dance. Not surprising really, I saw you high-kicking up that alley, Syd, and it wasn't even in the routine.

What a relief then, when Tom 'Bob' Thornton took to the stage and slowly but surely the sounds of over exertion and the possibility of heart attacks and strokes faded into the background. Thanks Tom, you may well have saved a few lives there, mate.

Now, unfortunately we had to leave and missed, by mere minutes, the visit from our Italian friend, Giordino Harperi and the greetings he brought from his cousin. I'm sorry we missed you, Giordino, but from all of us at the reunion, our best wishes and peace on you, friend, until we meet again.

The AGM was a little surprising, to say the least, in as much as we had no venue presented for this year's reunion. Fortunately, Dave Aldous took up the slack and ultimately secured us a hasty booking at the 2006 venue in Harrogate. I don't know about anybody else but I enjoyed Harrogate immensely and look forward to going there again. To be honest, Ted and I don't really care where we go (pretty much) because we go to meet up with you all, to have a laugh and to forget for a wee while, that we're not kids anymore. Thanks, Dave. And please, if anybody has any ideas for future venues, don't hesitate, we're all ears.

At the end of the AGM and despite massive resistance we managed to inveigle two of our members to join the committee. Our thanks go to Tony Teague (secretary) and Martin Boizot (Treasurer) (and to the people who held up their hands for them).

A Cornish Story by Bridget Wilson



You all know Lorraine and Jen are true Cornish girls, but did you know their grandfather arrived in Cornwall by accident?

Whilst staying in Newquay I was made aware (by Jen) of a family event that was to take place on November 3rd. It came about when a cousin of Laurie and Jen told Laurie earlier in the year that it was 100 years since their grandfather had been rescued off the Cornish coast at Mousehole. This set Laurie into action and she set off on a mission to get as many of their family and friends together to remember the rescue that brought her grandparents together. It was decided that a plaque was to be made and erected on the old pier and Jen invited us along, unbeknown to Laurie. The events that took place 100 years ago are as follows:

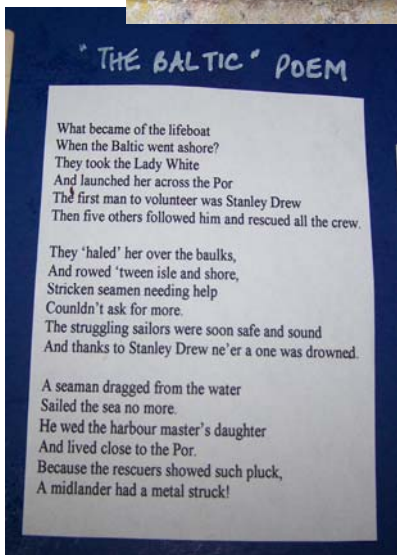
On November 1st 1907 shortly before 8pm news reached Penzance that a vessel had gone ashore on Mousehole Island. The boat was the ketch, Baltic of London, from Cowes to Newlyn, with cement for Newlyn pier. The master (Capt Thomas Langford) and his wife and daughter were on board along with the crew. The lifeboat did not get afloat for nearly three quarters of an hour due to the awkward position of the launching slip and the shallowness of the water.

Meanwhile, back in Mousehole the fishermen realised the danger that the 'Baltic' and its crew and passengers were in so a 15ft crabber the 'Lady White' owned by Mr George Laity was put at the disposal of its crew. Due to the bad conditions the crabber had to be hoisted over the pier into the sea, this was no mean feat. There were six crew men who went to the rescue. They rowed the crabber through the rough seas until they eventually landed on Mousehole Island. One of the fishermen was washed overboard into the sea, a rope was thrown to him and he was hauled back on board. The two crewmen, the Captain, his wife and daughter were all rescued and taken to safety. A week after the rescue the 'gallant six' were presented with medals for their bravery.

One of the crew, Adam Robertson Torrie, was taken to the harbour master's house to be given food and lodgings. He eventually married the harbour master's daughter Janie Blewett, they had 8 children and 17 grandchildren, Lorraine and Jen being two of the grandchildren.

On November 3rd Syd and I went along to the old quay in Mousehole to watch the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the heroism of ‘the gallant six’. It was unveiled by the eldest surviving son of Adam and Janie.

Lorraine and Jen welcomed us, with good Cornish hospitality (apple pie and Cornish cream). We met some of the their family and friends and we felt very privileged to be a part of their day for which we would like to thank them.



Friendship by Syd Wilson

We have a chain of Friendship
A bond that can't be broken
Always there in times of need
With kind words that are spoken

You welcomed us into your lives
Made us feel right at home
So much love from you all
No longer do we feel alone

Now each day begins with a smile
When we think of each of you
So many wonderful people
Friends we met after quite a while

Feeling joy in each other Hearts
Tears we cry are wiped away
Closer than most families
Look forward to sharing everyday

Thank God for you my Friends
May he bless you one and all
For all your kindness and caring
Whenever anyone may fall



Congratulations

We have received information recently (via Reme) from Angela, Trev Davies' daughter. Her sister Wendy and husband, Steve, gave birth to a baby boy 'Ewan'. This would have been Trev's first grandchild. Our congratulations and warmest good wishes go to Wendy and Steve on behalf of all our members.

Sorry we do not have any photo's.

I hated parades. Being a short-house is a definite drawback when it comes to marching and not being able to match everyone else's' pace has a severe knock-on effect. Left, right, left, skip, skip, left again, shuffle, shuffle, skip. It was awful and not just from my point of view.

During a particularly shambolic Memorial Parade at 16 Sigs., the OC WRAC asked the SSM, 'Who's the little WRAC in the middle?'

'Oh, that's W/Pte Smith, Ma'am.'

'Well, let's have her selling poppies next year, shall we, SSM?'

Yes, I was that soldier.

Oggy

Newquay 2007



**A MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER OF
SIGNALS GENERAL SIR SAM COWAN KCB CBE**



I am delighted to have this opportunity once again to send my very best wishes to you all, and to express my continuing admiration for the impressive work being done, particularly in operational theatres, by soldiers of the Corps today, including those from our vital Territorial Army component.

Your commitment and achievements, often in the face of considerable adversity, are adding even greater lustre to our name. I am very proud of you all. Well done!

My thoughts particularly are with all members of the Corps family who have lost close relatives during the year, with the injured and with all who are separated by duty from their families over this holiday period.

I send my warmest regards to all members of the Royal Signals Association, not least to repeat one of my central messages; that all those serving today greatly value and draw inspiration from the contribution you made during your own service which laid the solid foundation for the continuing success of the Corps today.

Happy Christmas and every best wish for 2008.

The above was reproduced by kind permission of the 'Wire' magazine.

Any items for inclusion in the August edition please submit by 30th June.

A big thanks, goes to Chris Gildea from 'CKG Consultancy' for printing this issue of our newsletter

Thanks Chris



The 1960s 16 Signal Regiment

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

Email: oggyandted@googlemail.com

www.the-60s-16ers.com/