

Bradbury Mercury
1960s 16 Signal Regiment Reunion Club



Issue Number 29

Compiled by Iain Haldane

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The Waverley in the photograph was built on the Clyde in 1947 - She was to replace the original Waverley that sunk off Dunkirk in 1940. This Waverley was originally built to sail only between Craigendorrnan & Arrochar in West Scotland. She was bought for a £1 in 1974 and up till the end of 2011 she was sailing around Britain offering regular trips on the Clyde, the Thames, South Coast of England and the Bristol Channel with other calls at various ports & piers throughout the UK. 2003 saw the completion of a major restoration project, which returned the Waverley to the original 1940s style with which she was built.

Our Front Page:

The Waverley Paddle Steamer docked at the Science Centre Glasgow.

On behalf of Sue & I and possibly many others, I would like to give a vote of thanks to Gwen & Ted Theis for their sterling work that they carried out, on our behalf, in the production of the Mercury.

I do know that many of the membership look forward to receiving their copy and I know that at times, Gwen & Ted have been under enormous pressure to meet the Mercury's deadline.

So thank you very much for the years that you both spent as the Mercury's editor and not once can I remember one issue, being anything other than wonderful !

Let us now welcome Iain into the job and hope that he gets the support in its production that he deserves and that can only come from its membership.

Reme Harper.

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Our Chairperson's Letter



Well Christmas is over the fattened goose is eaten; I hope you all had wonderful time and that 2012 proves to be a great year for all of you.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank your committee for the work they do on your behalf and for the support they have offered me throughout the year.

As you know Sheila Abbott stood down from the two-year tenure as secretary in October, a role she took seriously working continuously keeping membership details up to date and generally keeping the committee focused and organised. Many thanks from us all Sheila for a job well done. Then our brave new member Beverley Robb stepped into the breach and how wonderful to see such enthusiasm for the 16ers. With fresh ideas and new approaches, I am sure Beverley is going to be a great success and shake us up a bit. Welcome aboard Beverley it is great to have you with us.

Peter Crane agreed to continue as Treasurer for another term and was duly elected, which is wonderful news, as he understands finances better than most of us. I believe we are in a much better financial position now thanks to Peter's control of the purse (I wonder if he controls Nicole's so effectively!). Thanks Peter, you are also appreciated.

Ted and Gwen have handed the Mercury over to Iain Haldane and I couldn't possibly let them both go without acknowledging the amazing work they have done over many years. The Mercury has developed into a publication that is informative, engaging, amusing and valued by us all. So I want to say a huge thank you to Ted and Gwen on behalf of all the 16ers. Ian has a hard act to follow and I am so looking forward to seeing the first edition of his Mercury.

At the last AGM it was agreed that Dave Aldous, who has been the backbone of the 16ers entertainments for many years, be made a committee member. It makes perfect sense and I am only sorry we did not consider this before. I hope that you will all continue to support his endeavours; he works hard for you all and needs ideas from everyone.

Having mentioned most of the committee I could not leave out Pete Weedon, he has been an invaluable vice chair and has stepped into the breach without hesitation when needed. I am sure you will all appreciate how difficult last years reunion was for me and my two sisters-in-law coming so soon after Dixie's death. Pete had great trepidation about the jobs he was coerced into taking over but I am sure you will agree he managed with great aplomb. Thank you so much Pete.

Those of you who attended Oxford will know that Tom and Ann Watt did a splendid job and the Reunion was a great success. I think each year cannot be surpassed and then it is, so I am looking forward to Disley with huge expectations. Ted and Gwen are working hard with organisation and need your support with booking early or we will lose the discounts they have achieved for us. So anyone who hasn't booked by now needs to get on with it right now.

Some of us are going to Disley the first weekend in March to help finalise plans for next October and we may find some time to have some fun. If any of you have any ideas for October in the way of entertainment or organisation let one of the committee have the details asap.

It may surprise you all to hear that Dixie and I used to watch University Challenge regularly (no comment Reme!), obviously I always supported Oxford teams and Dixie supported anyone who wasn't!! We would compete to see which of us could get the most questions right and we did both manage one or two!! You will be wondering why I mention such trivialities but this week I was horrified by the lack of knowledge of those undergraduates who are to be our leaders in the future. The question that upset me was on army insignia and those brainy boys recognised the badges of the Engineers, the Tank Corps and the Artillery but they did not know Certa Cito or that it indicated the Signals – can you believe it?! I think they should be sent down in disgrace!! I am sure Disley will know who Certa Cito is by the time the 16ers leave in October.

Continued on page 9.

The Ladies who still have IT.

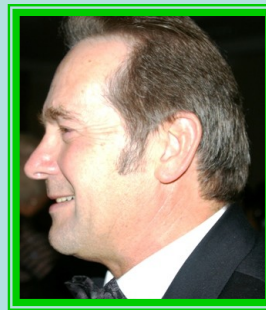


Ted is on two pages as he supplied Gals and a Hunk

And the Guys who are not Sure



From body beautiful to large body!



And a couple who still have some hair



Ted is on two pages as he supplied Gals and a Hunk

Civvie Mates - versus - Military Mates

It's true what they say! What do they say? Read on.....

Civvie Mates: Get upset if you're too busy to talk to them for a week.

Ex-Military Mates: Are glad to see you after years, and will happily carry on the same conversation you were having last time you met.

Civvie Mates: Never ask for food.

Ex-Military Mates: Are the reason you have no food.

Civvie Mates: Call your parents Mr. and Mrs.

Ex-Military Mates: Call your parents Mum and Dad.

Civvie Mates: Might bail you out of prison, but then lecture you on the rights and wrongs of what you did.

Ex-Military Mates: Would be sitting next to you saying, "Bloody hell...we mucked that one up!"

Civvie Mates: Have never seen you cry.

Ex-Military Mates: Cry with you.

Civvie Mates: Borrow your stuff for a few days then give it back.

Ex-Military Mates: Keep your stuff so long they forget it's yours. You have to borrow it back.

Civvie Mates: Know a few things about you.

Ex-Military Mates: Could write a book with direct quotes from you.

Civvie Mates: Will leave you behind if that's what the crowd is doing.

Ex-Military Mates: Will get annoyed that someone was even considering leaving you behind.

Civvie Mates: Would knock on your door.

Ex-Military Mates: Walk right in and say, "I'm home!"

Civvie Mates: Are for a while.

Ex-Military Mates: Are for life.

Civvie Mates: Have shared a few experiences...

Ex-Military Mates: Have shared a lifetime of experiences no Civilian could ever dream of...

Civvie Mates: Will take your drink away when they think you've had enough.

Ex-Military Mates: Will look at you stumbling all over the place and say, "You better drink the rest of that pal, you know we don't waste good ale...that's alcohol abuse!!" Then carry you home safely and put you to bed...

Civvie Mates: Will talk crap to the person who talks crap about you.

Ex-Military Mates: Will not allow anyone to use your name in vain.

Civvie Mates: Will ignore this.

Ex-Military Mates: Will forward this to other **Ex-Military Mates:**

Nuff Sed

Royal Signals White Helmets Motor Cycle Display Team
at
The Great Dorset Steam Fair Thursday 1st September 2011.



Well, just how lucky was I? Talk about timing.. Here I was (with Kim of course) returning to the GDSF after a lapse of some three years, only to find that the White Helmets were appearing in the 'action ring' (which also featured the 'Monster Truck Show), for *the very first time - ever!*

The GDSF is held annually at Tarrant Hinton, Blandford, from the end of August to the beginning of September on a 500 acre approx: site, which is literally the Royal Sigs' 'back garden'. There has, to my

recollection of past stays on site, always been a Royal Signals presence with recruiting staff (I will note here that I remember that the WRAC were never, ever permitted to drink, eat or smoke whilst wearing the beret or forage cap.), situated amongst the vintage army exhibits (no, I didn't stand for long here!) and as you can see this year was no exception. Blandford is of course the home of the White Helmets.

Thinking back, I last saw the White Helmets in action, whilst Trade Training at Catterick. On the lines, 24 Signal Regt: was hosting a "Royal Signals At Home", day some time in 1968. I would like to add in here that the very cruel Lynn Welham and Jan Mason PTIs, choreographed a WRAC contribution with us performing an exercise routine to Cliff Richards' "Congratulations" in full PT kit consisting of white canvas plimsolls, white cotton ankle socks, green wool skirts, light green aertex tops (commonly referred to as polo-shirts now), and heavy green elasticated legged bloomers - all in the light of day - for all to see!

Today however, was definitely a bit special. A very nice Team Snr. NCO by the name of Sgt Nick Pallis, gave me a lot of his time fielding questions about today's White Helmets. The current Team is headed by a female OC, Capt: J Hollins, who has nearly completed a 2-year tour and is leaving the army at the end of her engagement to become a paramedic. Sgt Pallis has already done a four-year tour with the White Helmets and has returned for a further four years as Team Senior NCO. His other tour of duties have included JACUNI, 3 Div and Canada.

Coming to the end of this year's itinerary, Sgt Pallis will head up a two-week selection course in October at Blandford. As you may well know, recruits come from all branches and trades of the Royal Signals, but all applicants have to be Class II trade to apply. This will be a 3-year posting, and recruits do not have to even be able to ride a bike! There are no female riders in this squad, but to date Sgt Pallis recalls there being four female riders since 2003, who do absolutely everything the men do because they

would have faced and passed the same rigours of training and present the same qualities of discipline, integrity, loyalty, team work, and watching each others' backs.

After selection, recruits are RTU'd until being called forward in January. This enables the necessary forms and chitties to find their way through the system (is the white parchment tape signal still used, or is it all email nowadays?). The White Helmets are always looking for recruits, as plenty show interest; there is a chance that some may not make it in at this stage due to operational commitments etc.

For existing Team members, November time sees essential maintenance of their Triumph Tiger TR750s. Each bike is the sole responsibility of whom it has been issued (as in any piece of kit), but when bikes are shared, as with the Kawasaki's, they are jointly looked after.

Unusually this year the White Helmets' season has been extended to December, as they will be appearing at the British Military Tattoo, Earl's Court. Normally all leave is taken in December ready for the new season beginning in January. Prior to the Tattoo, they have performances at Bulford and Hereford.

In the New Year, the Team embark to their annual training camp at RAF St Mawgan, where the new recruits are inducted. The culmination of the hard training is a show for the SO in C in March, and where new riders are presented with their White Helmets. Everyone who earns their White Helmet gets to keep it in perpetuity.

From here, the Team embarks on their scheduled shows around the country; these are booked by a civilian back at Blandford camp. More details of their programme can be found at www.thewhitehelmets.co.uk.

The New Year will also see the Royal Signals White Helmet Display Team celebrate their 85th year in existence. They are the premier motor cycle display team in the world and are in the planning stages of a big show as part of these celebrations that will be held at Blandford.

The Team is self-funding through sponsorships, donations and memorabilia sold at their stand at shows. They have very kindly donated one of their 'goody bags' to the 60s-16ers raffle at Oxford this year.

Although bikes have never been 'my thing', I thoroughly enjoyed the show and have total admiration for how it was executed superbly professionally, in searingly hot weather, in wool uniforms, boots, big socks, and helmets.

Some of the stunts may be the same, for us, but for those exponents, it is all so very, very new. Sgt Pallis had the new recruits - the first season riders, do the fire jumps on this particular day, and you would not know they had not done it before such was their skills and their all round commitment to the 'Team'.

Other observations?

Excellent turnout, men and equipment - par for the course.

Exceptional teamwork and Esprit de Corps - par for the course.

Maintenance of standards - par for the course.

Sense of humour - par for the course.

There was an absolutely huge crowd around the arena that particular show, and Sgt Pallis informed me that each show had been the same, with wonderful feedback from the public afterwards, interestingly, not only our generation and older, but the youngsters too.

I think the R.S.W.H.D.T imparted a little 'something' through their demonstration of skills, discipline, team work, responsibility, courage, loyalty and reliability, which may well set seed in a few young people.



Finally, I cannot believe these lads were old enough to be in the army let alone riding bikes and performing stunts, Was it really 43 years ago I watched that other Team at Catterick? Tempus Fugit - Certa Cito indeed!

Laurie Forrie-Moore

Continued from Page 3

I really need to remind you that the position of Chairman and Vice Chair come up for re-election this year. So you should all be thinking about suitable candidates and come to Disley with some ideas (and agreement from anyone you propose).

Finally, I would like to say a personal thank you for all your support since Dixie died and to assure you that I am starting to pick up the pieces and get on with life as he would have wished. He was extremely fond and proud of his association with the 16ers and would not have been at all surprised to see how well I have been supported and cared for.

Take care of yourselves, see you in Disley. *Noreen*

Sheila & Chris Abbott Honeymoon in South Africa

We arrived in Cape Town to be greeted by a beautiful sunrise over the ocean, followed by wall to wall blue sky and the day ended as it had begun, with a gorgeous sunset – what a start to a wonderful holiday! Sadly we were about to experience some rather inclement weather during the coming days – well it was South Africa’s winter time. On the second day we took the opportunity to explore the area surrounding our apartment, which was about 150 yards from the ocean and well serviced by shops, laundrettes, bars, cafes, restaurants etc.

The following day we decided to try out our hire car and headed in the direction of Cape Point. The route took us along Chapman’s Peak Drive which winds its way between Noordhoek and Hout Bay. This fantastic 9km route, with its 114 curves is situated on the Atlantic Coast, at the south-western tip of South Africa, and must be one of the most spectacular marine drives anywhere in the world. The views are so breathtakingly stunning which words can’t describe and photographs wouldn’t do justice. We learned that the road had been cut into the cliffs during the Second World War by Italian prisoners and it’s a magnificent feat of engineering. The stormy weather alternated between sunshine and showers and the ocean which was wild and rough created fantastic, white, rolling waves.



We spent the next three days at Club Mykanos which is situated at Langebaan about 130Km north of Cape Town. It’s a nice Greek style holiday resort with whitewashed kalivas dotted around. Ours, being on the first floor, was blessed with good sea views allowing us to sit peacefully watching the waves roll in and surfers trying their luck. The main attraction of the Club was the casino, which neither of us were interested in, but the location of the resort allowed us to explore other areas beyond Cape Town.

Over the next couple of days we drove around sightseeing. Saldanha, a small coastal town, was the first stop then we carried on to Paternoster – a pretty little fishing village with its beautifully kept, whitewashed houses and nice beach where we watched fishing

boats being towed ashore and a couple of young lads collecting mussels from along the shoreline. We then took an un-metalled road to Stompneus Bay, which was rather like driving along corrugated iron, then carried on to St Helena Bay and Velddrift where the salt factory is sited and flocks of Flamingos had taken up residence on the salt lakes. We went a little further east taking in Hopefield, Malmesbury and Darling which are all located in a very agricultural area so there wasn't really much of interest to see.



We were taken to the Stellenbosch wine region by Chris's brother, Jimmy, and his partner, Deanna, where we called into "Villiera" for wine tasting then went



onto the eco friendly "Backsberg" winery which we thought was the better of the two. We ate lunch at the "Hillcrest Berry Farm" where we sampled the local speciality of "Babotie" – a spiced mince dish served with rice, relish, salad and sour cream – very tasty. It was a lovely day with the temperature around 26°C. The mountains made a beautiful backdrop as we sat out on the terrace soaking up the sunshine.

The next day started off bright but the cloud soon thickened and another wet day meant looking for an indoor activity so we decided to visit the Aquarium. We spent a rather interesting 20 minutes or so looking at minute marine creatures through a microscope while a young lady enlightened us as to what they all were. We weren't that impressed with the Aquarium as a whole and felt that the small tanks were overcrowded.

We used Chapman's Peak Drive again as we made our way down to Cape Point National Park via Nordhoek and Fishhoek. Fortunately for us there weren't too many visitors due to the time of year and the weather so we were able to drive along the quieter side roads and managed to spot several species of wildlife including ostriches, baboons, eland and a bontebok. The highlight of the day occurred while we were taking lunch in the Cape Point restaurant when a baboon managed to gain entry and proceeded to raid the sweet jar, spilling the contents all over the floor before the waiting staff managed to chase it out.

Making our way back to Cape Town, we followed to coastal road along False Bay stopping at Boulders to watch the penguins in their natural habitat on the beach. The smell was a bit off-putting but they were cute to watch.



Jimmy and Deanna had made a booking for us at the Caledon Hotel in Caledon, a two hour drive eastward, for the weekend. The weather was cold and dull, but dry, as we took the N2 route through Somerset West and up Sir Lowry's Pass through the mountains, then down Houwhoek Pass on the other side. We arrived at the hotel and spent the evening warming ourselves by the lovely log fire in the terrace bar. The following day we drove down to Cape Agulhas, the southern-most point of Africa. In Struis Bay we noticed a tiny whitewashed church with a thatched roof which made it stand out. We



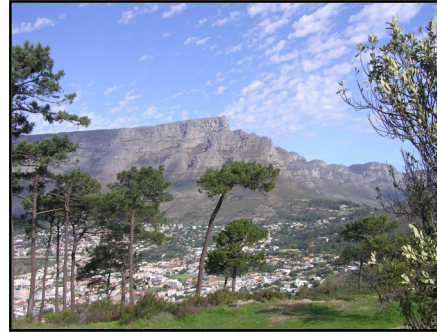
passed numerous thatched roofed houses of various sizes and descriptions in this area, which we hadn't been expecting to see, reminding us of the west country villages back home. The sun was shining and Cape Agulhas was stunning as the Indian Ocean crashed against the rocks. It really did feel like we were at the end of the earth, with the ocean stretching as far as the eye could see.

We took a longer route back to Caledon via Onrus and Botrivier rather than risk using Shaws Pass which could have been a tricky drive in the fading light as there had recently been several heavy rain showers. We did, however, brave it the following day and it proved to be quite a challenging drive for our little Honda Jazz – easy to see why there were so many 4 x 4 owners around! We took the coastal road through Hawston and Kleinmond down to Betty's Bay. We continued westwards towards Pringle Bay and Rooiels. Between Rooiels and Gordon's Bay (which we renamed Reme's Bay) where we managed to spot seals and a school of dolphins from one of the many whale watching points. Unfortunately it was too early in the year for us to see whales as they don't start to arrive until July.

We left Gordon's Bay and travelled back to Caledon and, as it was a beautiful evening, we decided to avail ourselves of the hotel's hot spa pools which nestled nicely into the gently sloping hillside. Each pool was fed by a waterfall from the one above and was a different temperature, with the top pool being the hottest at over 50°C (too hot for us). It was heaven and we regretted

not having been brave enough to try them out before. Afterwards we sat in the Zen garden listening to gentle music and the falling water to complete our chill-out. Fantastic!!

Leaving Caledon behind us, we journeyed back towards Cape Town passing the shanty towns which seemed to stretch for miles. We felt sorry for the folks living there but then noticed that quite a few shacks had satellite dishes. Can't be all bad then. As it was another beautiful day we decided to take a trip up Table Mountain and experienced some amazing views from the cable car and viewpoints at the top of the plateau. We were surprised at how calm and warm the weather was as we had gone prepared with warmer clothing which we ended up having to carry.



We couldn't go to Cape Town without taking the ferry across to Robben Island where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated from 1967 until his release in 1984. We were given a guided tour by an ex-political prisoner who was able to describe the experience first-hand. Life was very difficult for the detainees as they were given a mat and four blankets for bedding and only allowed cold water for washing, also the food rations were very meagre and they weren't permitted to study. Following the intervention of Amnesty International and the Red Cross, conditions improved and the men were given bunk beds with mattresses, pyjamas to sleep in, better food and hot water which made life more bearable for the prisoners. Some of the detainees came from professional backgrounds and as conditions improved they were allowed to study enabling many of them to gain degrees.

We had been told that afternoon tea at the Mount Nelson Hotel was not to be missed and, as we had returned the hire car, we walked from Sea Point into the city. We arrived at the hotel too early for afternoon tea but ate lunch instead. We did, however, see the magnificent, mouth-watering spread that had been laid out in preparation. Unfortunately we had arranged to dine with Jimmy and Deanna that evening at the best steakhouse in Cape Town, Nelson's Eye, so were unable to sample the delights.

Unfortunately, and despite being very aware of the high crime rate and being forever vigilant, on our way back to Sea Point Sheila was mugged and received a nasty gash to her arm requiring the skills of a plastic surgeon. The attention and treatment at the Christian Barnard Hospital was second to none and although the incident put a damper on the holiday it has not put us off returning sometime in the future. South Africa is a beautiful country which has much to offer and is well worth visiting.



60s-16ers Oxford 2011

On a beautiful Saturday night in October the members assembled in the gardens of the Hotel for our annual photographic experience. The Sun had just set over the trees so provided enough light to show all of us in our glorious finery. The camera was placed on a tripod set about 30 feet away from the delightful gathering of potential and actual retiree's. I had 12 seconds from the moment I pressed the shutter release to get myself back into position to face the camera. On the second try I managed to give the crowd a view of kilt acrobatics. I managed to slip as I turned around, the camera took the picture as I endeavoured to stand up. This of course was the cause of much hilarity amongst the assembled company. See picture on right.



Remember Ladies, This is all in fun. Don't KILL THE MESSENGER!

WHY MEN ARE NEVER DEPRESSED:

Men Are Just Happier People!

What do you expect from such simple creatures?

Your last name stays put.

The garage is all yours.

Wedding plans take care of themselves.

Chocolate is just another snack.

You can never be pregnant.

Car mechanics tell you the truth.

You never have to drive to another petrol station toilet because this one is just too icky.

You don't have to stop and think of which way to turn a nut on a bolt.

Same work, more pay.

Wrinkles add character.

Wedding dress £3000.

Dinner Suit rental £100.

New shoes don't cut, blister, or mangle your feet.

One mood all the time.

Phone conversations are over in 30 seconds flat.

You know stuff about tanks.

A five-day vacation requires only one suitcase.

You can open all your own jars.

You get extra credit for the slightest act of thoughtfulness.

If someone forgets to invite you, he or she can still be your friend.

Your underwear is £8.95 for a three-pack.

Three pairs of shoes are more than enough.

You almost never have strap problems in public.

You are unable to see wrinkles in your clothes.

Everything on your face stays its original colour.

The same hairstyle lasts for years, maybe decades.

You only have to shave your face and neck.

You can play with toys all your life.

One wallet and one pair of shoes -- one colour for all seasons.

You can wear shorts no matter how your legs look.

You can "do" your nails with a pocket knife.

You have freedom of choice concerning growing a moustache.

You can do Christmas shopping for 25 relatives

On December 24 in 25 minutes.

No wonder men are happier.

Men Are Just Happier People.

NICKNAMES

- If Laura, Kate and Sarah go out for lunch, they will call each other Laura, Kate and Sarah.
- If Mike, Dave and John go out, they will affectionately refer to each other as Chalky, Woody and Shorty.

EATING OUT

- When the bill arrives, Mike, Dave and John will each throw in £20, even though it's only for £32.50. None of them will have anything smaller and none will actually admit they want change back.
 - When the girls get their bill, out come the pocket calculators.

MONEY

- A man will pay £2 for a £1 item he needs.
- A woman will pay £1 for a £2 item that she doesn't need but it's on sale.

BATHROOMS

- A man has six items in his bathroom: toothbrush and toothpaste, shaving cream, razor, a bar of soap, and a towel.
- The average number of items in the typical woman's bathroom is 337. A man would not be able to identify more than 20 of these items.

ARGUMENTS

- A woman has the last word in any argument.
- Anything a man says after that is the beginning of a new argument.

FUTURE

- A woman worries about the future until she gets a husband.
- A man never worries about the future until he gets a wife.

SUCCESS

- A successful man is one who makes more money than his wife can spend.
 - A successful woman is one who can find such a man.

MARRIAGE

- A woman marries a man expecting he will change, but he doesn't.
- A man marries a woman expecting that she won't change, but she does.

DRESSING UP

- A woman will dress up to go shopping, water the plants, empty the trash, answer the phone, read a book, and get the mail.
 - A man will dress up for weddings and funerals.

NATURAL

- Men wake up as good-looking as they went to bed.
- Women somehow deteriorate during the night.

OFFSPRING

- Ah, children. A woman knows all about her children. She knows about dentist appointments and romances, best friends, favourite foods, secret fears and hopes and dreams.
 - A man is vaguely aware of some short people living in the house.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

A married man should forget his mistakes. There is no use in two people remembering the same thing! **SO**, give this to the women who have a sense of humour and who can handle it **and to the men who will enjoy reading it.**



My Thoughts of Oxford 2011

Anne Hodkin

Well guys another year and another brilliant weekend, so what can I say?

FRIDAY P.M. We met up at an excellent hotel, the Four Pillars in Oxford. It is always great to see everyone again and find out what has been going on. Well let's start with our arrival at the hotel, as John and I got out of the car we spotted Tom outside on his phone. We then we went inside and checked in at Reception. Then we saw Ted and Hazel Hebden coming through the doors, much hugs and kisses. We looked over to the Bar and saw everyone else sat round chatting, (and well I never drinking ha ha) of course this led to more hugs and kisses. John went to the bar to get a Bacardi and Coke and a Tonic £9:95!! After that we went to our room it was excellent (I would say one of the best we've been in). We have no complaints about the hotel (wait for it) apart from the price of drinks but we got round that mmmmmmm!!! It was especially lovely to see Lorri and glad she is on the mend, and of course, it was a late night for some of us.

SATURDAY TRIP A very interesting day at Bletchley Park, we arrived at this big house and met with a guide, he was very good. I took some of it in but afraid a lot of it went over my head (having not been in the Army). What stuck with me most was when he told us about five bombs were dropped towards the house but missed. They landed either side and one went under a hut with some ladies inside. All it did was lift it up and it landed on its side but no one was hurt. Now that was amazing.

SATURDAY NIGHT First photo shoot well-done Iain another great photo. The gala dinner was again a really good night, the duo entertainment were excellent as was as always the company, lots of booze and laughter, photos and dancing oh and the raffle. We had visitors from the RAF who could not believe what a great night we were having and they stayed with us until late.



SUNDAY 16TH AGM meeting we had 4 proposals for next year's reunion, most voted for Stockport Disley on the 12th October. We had a minutes silence for Ricky Gordon and Dixie. I did not know Ricky I am sure all of you did give condolences to his family, but I knew Dixie god bless him and he was a big part of the reunion with his funny remarks always making us laugh he will be sadly missed by us all our hearts go out to Noreen and family.

After the meeting we had free time to do what we wanted some of us walked into the centre of Oxford, it was a lovely walk alongside the river watching the eight's rowing along. We also passed the University where Morse was filmed, the whole place was brilliant.

SUNDAY NIGHT What a sight we must have looked (ha ha). I do not know what the waiters and waitresses thought, I think we made their night. Those of us in fancy dress well done to you all, they all looked great, for those who weren't you still looked great. After dinner it was karaoke time, we did ok might not be X-Factor material. Then the piece de resistance, the defuzzing of our beloved Reme. Well what can I say the pictures speak for themselves, we raised £108 from the shave for our funds (nice one) and we had a mini raffle.



The best fancy dressed female won by Cruella DeVille (Jane Sparks) and the best fancy dressed male won by the Big Bad Wolf (John Aldridge).

We were later joined by some ladies from a netball team and because we know how to have a good time they wanted to join us. In addition, the RAF guys joined the company again.

Once again most of us away to bed and some of us late nighters (oh dear !!)

MONDAY 17TH Monday morning what a quick weekend they always say time goes fast when you're enjoying yourself well let me tell you it sure does what do say guys !! Time to say Goodbye for another year (boo hoo) hope I have not bored you with this and god willing hope to see you all next year.

Take care Love *Anne Hodkin*.

**Things Kids Say
by Jo Teague**

Conversations between with Joe and Laura Nov 2011.

Joe a 3 year old going on 75 and he is Jo and Tony Teague's Grandson.

Laura is Joe's Mum.

This is what happens when a "detail-oriented" person watches In the Night Garden with a three-year old...

Laura: Well, that's just wrong. That's a physical irregularity.

Joe: [silence]

Laura: Look, the Pinky-Ponk is the same size as Upsy-Daisy and Iggle-Piggle is the same size as Upsy-Daisy but Iggle-Piggle can ride in the Pinky-Ponk, that's not right. That's a physical irregularity.

Joe: Now they're having a cuddle and a kiss mummy and the irregularity is over.

When walking to preschool on Tuesday...

Joe: Do you take the lift at work?

Laura: No, my office is only one floor up.

Joe: But sometimes you take the lift at work.

Laura: No, I walk up the stairs.

Joe: But sometimes you take the lift at work.

Laura: No, I walk up the stairs.

Joe: But once you took the lift at work and you got stuck in the lift.

Laura: [realising that he is in fact correct and has picked up on this random snippet of information from several weeks ago and stored it up until now to ambush me] Well, yes, that's true. Once I did take the lift in the building I was teaching in and it got stuck for a few minutes.

Joe: Were you scared?

Laura: No.

Joe: I went in the lift by myself when I was a baby.

Laura: Yes, darling, you did. [He accidentally went in the lift by himself when we were staying in a hotel in Germany last year because he pressed the button to close the door while I was still on the outside and it was an old-fashioned lift without sensors to stop it.] That was a big adventure, wasn't it?

Joe: No mummy it was scary and reckless.

Laura: [silence]

Sitting over lunch one day...

Joe: Can we read that book today?

Laura: Sure. Which book?

Joe: The one about fish.

Laura: Fish?

Joe: Yes, mummy, fish. They swim and live in the ocean. Fish.

Laura: [silence]

Medium-sized boy: Why are they all going to bed in the Night Garden?

Husband: They time it so they all go to bed at the same time as you.

Medium-sized boy: But I'm a grown-up.

Husband: Really? Show me your driving license.

Medium-sized boy: Here it is. It's really real but I did a magic trick on it and made it disappear so now you can't see it any more but you can still feel it.

Remembrance Sunday 2011, George Square, Glasgow.

I have only recently joined the RSA and I have never been a member of any other ex-service related organisation, except for a year in a local British Legion. Because of this, Rita and I have always made the effort to attend a Remembrance Service wherever we were. This has normally been the Parade on Remembrance Sunday in George Square, Glasgow. We did attend one in Taunton a few years ago.



What we have noticed over the last 20 plus years is the change in attendance at this event. The Parade forms from around 10:15 in the morning with Ex-Mil Associations forming up on the left of the Parade with the Armed Forces Contingent, Police, TA and Cadets forming on the right. The spectators are all round the parade behind the barriers. Our first memories of these Parades were we, the spectators, were no more than four deep. At the end of the Parade, we would watch the march past led by the Veterans followed by the rest of the contingent. A few years ago, we

saw the first changes; first, we noticed that more people were attending the parade, and then when the Veterans marched off the onlookers started applauding by clapping them as they passed by.

This year 2011, we got to George Square around 10:20 a wee bit later than usual. We noticed many bikers parked inside the barrier. They were part of the parade. As we got close, we saw that



they had some flags and many of them had Badges on the backs of their leather jackets.

"Ride with Pride" and "Veteran"

Rita was making valiant efforts to get through and have a chat any of them with to find out more information about their group. Then they

started up the engines and after they did their Ride Past the Saluting Dias, they shot off down a side street and that was the last we saw off them.

After we got home we Googled them and their web site is:-
<http://www.armedforcesbikers.co.uk/>



Remembrance Day in Belgium

By Reme Harper

My village of Hatfield, Nr Doncaster is now officially twinned with Merksplas a town in Belgium, North East of Antwerp. The reason for this is due to my relative Cpl John William Harper V.C. who has become the catalyst.



John was killed on 29th September 1944 just outside Merksplas in an area known as the “Depot De Mondécite”. His actions and that of his men were the breakthrough in the town being liberated the next day by the 1st Polish Armoured Division. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.



To this day all schools in Merksplas are taught about John Harper, from the age of 6 upwards and the townsfolk erected a Monument in Johns memory. The children find it an honour to take it in turns, by classes, to ensure the Monument is kept clean throughout their allocated responsibility.

This year on Remembrance Sunday (13th Nov) I was invited along with the Hatfield Band and 2 of our councillors to spend 3 days as the guests of the town, and I was invited to take part in the Service at John Harpers Memorial. Numerous townsfolk, including their children were in attendance and



the speech I gave was partly in Flemish, but mostly in English. Being a Yorkshire man, I found the Flemish quite difficult and the English just about manageable! However, all in all it went very well and our band played the Last Post and Reveille.



Anyone having been to Belgium at this Special Time of year will know already just how serious they take the whole Remembrance occasion. In fact the 11th of the 11th is a public holiday throughout Belgium. This has been my 4th visit and any of our members who find themselves anywhere near Merksplas try to find time to visit! You will be made most welcome and if possible visit Johns Memorial.

Reme's home Town is Hatfield, near Doncaster. It is twinned with Merksplas in Belgium. A School Teacher from Merksplas, Diane Roelen, decided to write to H.M the Queen informing her of what these towns had done and relating to the Catalyst, John Harper V.C. who lost his life prior to the Liberation of the Town of Merksplas. Bearing in mind that they had been under German occupation for over 4 years.

Much to their surprise, they received a reply on the Queen's behalf from the Palace and duly sent copies over to the Twinning Committee of which Reme is a member.

The twinning has grown enormously, relations between these towns could not be better, and regular exchanges are now taking place.

The letter from Diane Roelen has been reproduced along with a photocopy of the reply from Buckingham Palace.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

24th February, 2011

Dear Mrs Roelen,

The Queen wishes me to write and thank you and your two colleagues, Mrs An Govaerts and Mrs Ann Huet, for the letter you have written to Her Majesty.

The Queen thought it so kind of you to tell her about your village of Merksplas and the two monuments it has built in tribute to peace and to Corporal J W Harper, VC, who bravely died in action during World War II.

Her Majesty was very interested to hear of the successful links you have established with Corporal Harper's home town of Hatfield and, although unable to reply to you personally, The Queen was pleased to know about your teaching projects and the enjoyable exchange programmes you have organised between your schools.

I am to thank you once again for writing such a thoughtful letter to Her Majesty.

*Yours sincerely
Mary Morrison*

Lady-in-Waiting

Mrs D Roelen

Her Majesty The Queen
Buckingham Palace
London
SW1A 1AA

Merksplas, 10th of January 2011

Your Majesty

I'm a teacher from Merksplas, a village in Belgium. I'm writing in the name of 3 teachers: 1 from another school in Merksplas (An Govaerts) and 2 from our school (Ann Huet and myself). We're all teachers at a primary school (year 5 and year 6).
I'll try to explain the reason from this writing.

During World War II, a part of Merksplas has been liberated by soldiers from the U.K. One of the soldiers, corporal J.W. Harper, has given his live during a fight, a fight where in the corporal has been very heroic.

Afterwards, he posthumously received the VICTORIAN CROSS !

Merksplas didn't forget what he had done. A couple of years ago, Merksplas built a monument for him. When the monument was exposed, his family and some members of the council from Hatfield were invited.

Contacts, thankfulness and friendship took place.

In order of the remembrance of 65 year liberation, we wanted to make a great celebration and a great remembrance for all villagers, also for our children.

We (the teachers from two different schools) wanted to work together, with our pupils. The mean idea was: never forget the soldiers, keep on respecting them, don't let there be war ever again.

We started to adopt two monuments: a monument of peace and the monument of corporal Harper.

Several times during the school year, we go to the monuments and take care of it.

Then we started to learn about the two wars, we learned about corporal Harper, about Hatfield.

At this moment, our two villages are conciliated. We have a project between our two schools and one school in Hatfield (The Woodhouse Primary School). Nowadays, we are working together to work out a Comenius Regiopartnershap project that will last for 2 years. We are planning to have several interchanges between teachers of both countries. This way of working will give us the possibilities to learn from each other.

The contacts that we have with the people of Hatfield are very warm and enjoyable. Our children are proud to have friends overseas!

What we both are trying to do is to learn our children to respect all the people who fought for the freedom of our country. And not only respect the people who were killed in war but also learn to respect the world that we have nowadays, respect the live that we are having now. We learn them that, despite of something bad like war, something good like our friendship can grow!
We want to assign the message of respect and peace.

With this writing, I only wanted Your Majesty to know that, after all the years, we still remember what the soldiers did to liberate our country. And we want our children to remember them too.

I remain,
with the sincerest loyalty and respect,

Diane Roelen
Leopoldstraat 23
2330 Merksplas
Belgium

Diane Roelen

Ann Huet
Schoondreef 10
2330 Merksplas
Belgium

An Govaerts
Ploegstraat 9
2330 Merksplas
Belgium

How to Unwind after the Reunion Weekend

by Audrey and Dicky Grainge



It is nice to get back home after the reunion weekend and put ones feet up and have a well-earned rest. Except now, the hard work must begin, as Audrey and Dicky now have the unenvying task of preparing for the annual POPPY APEAL. The left over stock from last year, the trays for holding the poppies, the collection boxes, must be taken down from the rafters in the garage, while we await the arrival of this year's stock.

The collecting trays have to be made up, the collecting boxes have to have their security labels put on, after the name of the collector or the name of the premises has been written onto the label, and the serial number recorded onto the master lists. We then have to fill the trays with poppies, wooden crosses, car window stickers, pins and the collector's information sheets and collectors I.D. cards.

The next step is to go around the village delivering the trays ,collecting boxes and wreaths to there assigned locations which is a two day task. We can now have a short beak before we have to go back and collect the trays and boxes back in. Now the important bit begins counting the monies up and recording the amounts in each collection box and of course the daily trip to the post office to pay it into the RBL account. Audrey also has to fill out and deliver a thank you card for each collector or collecting piont and put on the amount collected in their box and the overall amount collected in the village. Dicky now has the task of sorting out the unsold stock into boxes for storage till next year and fold the trays back up for ease of storage, remove all this years info off of the collecting boxes, ready to be put back up in the rafters. So next year when you return from the reunion just spare us a thought when you sit down and unwind from the week end, our yearly chore is just beginning.



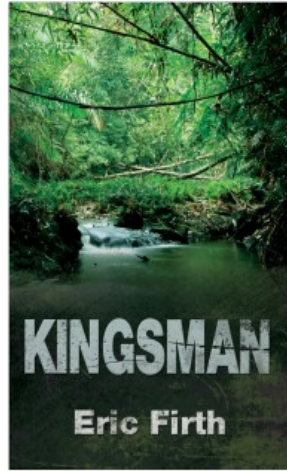
The Veterans



*They ask us why we do it
Why we still parade
Now that we are getting older
And just a little frayed,
It's not for the sake of glory
Or the medals on our chest
It's simply that we are comrades
Who stood the final test.
On the 6th of June that fateful day
A day we will not forget
Many a lad laid down his life
And paid the final debt,
So when you see a Veteran
Give the man your hand
For the medals on his chest
Were won in foreign lands.
And when God asks the question
Who are you my man
I will proudly answer
Sir, I am a Veteran.*



KINGSMAN by Eric Firth



The story is shaped by political unrest in India and neighbouring countries. It ranges from the burning heat of riot-torn India to the chilling austerity of post-WW2 Britain.

July, 1946. Sergeant Harding of the Royal Signals returns from an undercover mission on the Assam/Burma border. His assignment: to gain co-operation from tribal headmen in reporting sight of Indian National Army stragglers. He has been advised of unidentified aircraft using an abandoned airfield at Tamu.

A chance encounter with the young wife of a missing tea planter, Mark Erskine, results in his being invited to the tea estate, where his suspicions are aroused by the behaviour of the manager and the apparently strange circumstances surrounding Mark's disappearance.

A detailed recce of Tamu airfield reveals a Junkers 52, a Dakota DC3 and a conclave of unknown men. Harding must return to the chilling austerity of post-WW2 Britain and work with Army Intelligence to identify the men and uncover all the secrets Tamu has to hide.

Much of **KINGSMAN** is constructed against real events and personal experience, when Eric was a sergeant serving in India. Sadly, Eric passed away before seeing his book in print.

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 August 12 edition please submit by 30th June 12.



The 1960s 16 Signal Regiment

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