



## **Blackpool 40/04 MINI-REUNION**

**Report May 2004 by [Dave Stinson](#)**

On arrival, at the Royal York Hotel, Blackpool, after battling up the M6 like a fighter pilot from WW2, I thought we would have been the first to arrive just after 1430hrs. Not so. Six couples had beaten us and already had their rooms made up for inspection! Brian Peacock had acquired the look-out post on the steps, a comfortable chair close to the main entrance and seemed to be contemplating if this position would ensure he was the billet orderly for Friday evening!

Gradually, other began arriving or having done so, just making their way down the Prom on foot towards the North Pier, which was very close by. Car Parking space was proving to be a bit of an obstacle as like most hotels in Blackpool it was very restricted: although this seemed a small challenge when compared to first arriving at RAF Cosford, all those years ago, when the real challenge was keeping your bed space clean and remembering to park all your kit in the proper locker layout!

The regulars to our Reunions, now acting like the Senior Entry, strutted around greeting all the first-timers who were certainly welcomed and added to the occasion. Don and Janette Maciver were amongst this category and had travelled down from the Western Isles by air. Thankfully, they had been re-united with the 40th through Brian Peacock and thought the whole thing wonderful.

We started gathering in the bar at 1730 hrs and it would not be too long before the sandbags were pulled up. The Rev Roger Perry, along with his wife Veronica, soon integrated themselves into the occasion and Roger's tales added a lively mix to those told by others on previous reunions. It was arranged with the Hotel that we would dine at 1830 hrs. I made the fatal mistake of introducing Dave, the General Manager, who was overseeing the Restaurant as the Manager. I was soon rebuked by him and was sharply reminded that status and rank is alive and well in civvy street, too. Having said that, he was brilliant along with all the Hotel staff during our stay - a letter will be sent to them for their great contribution.

At dinner, we had a couple of 'Absence on Parade' Walla's. Eric May had not been sighted, which was a bit puzzling as normally he is at the bar well before any of us. It was later, Eric was 'thankfully' to appear and managed to grab a sandwich from the bar, informing us all that he had obtained a discount on the price. I suppose, when you have your own business you have to keep account of these things for your accountant. During the meal Bob Killey turned up with his son and girl-friend and managed to eat before the kitchen closed down. Someone was heard to ask (was it Dave Cutbush?) had the Orderly Officer been in to check for any complaints?

Friday evening saw two groups forming, one at the upstairs bar whilst the other group decided to take on the Cabaret downstairs with a singer trying to be a comedian; especially when it was pointed out by someone we were former Boy Entrants - this seemed to amuse him and furnish him with a few jokes. Old photos from the Cosford days were revealed and some of them came as a surprise to those in them. There must be a wealth of photos still out there with others who have not been found or attended any of our Reunions 'Yet.' For some, the travelling had decided a relatively early night was in order, whilst others managed to keep going with the tales and ales.

Plans for Saturday had been formulated for one group by Elaine Justice, the Super Duper Shopafrolic from Hull. It was off to Fleetwood by the slow coach (the tram) to the Freeport shopping complex. It was admirable that Brian Peacock and Ian Duckham would travel with

four couples (the Justices, Winnetts, Lowes & Stinsons) and see and hear things that Marriage Guidance Counsellors and Psychologists never have access to. Having said that, the day was really first-class - with Brian and Ian returning well before us all for some unknown reason!

The Macivers took the opportunity to visit the George Formby Exhibition and rated it highly. The so called free jazz at the Pleasure beach was a damp squib owing to the FA Cup Final displacing the jazz venue. Others, wandered through Blackpool or onto the piers. The weather could not have been finer; as Don was to find out by the end of the day!' Steve Lister took the opportunity to visit an old friend from his Gulf Domain before returning to join us all.

Saturday night, once again it was 2 groups forming, although this time one group used the upstairs lounge and this was where the marvellous idea for a week's Reunion to be held in Cyprus (at Paphos) was conceived by Elaine Justice. After consultation with others, it was decided this would take place in 2006 as already some had made plans to visit overseas next year. Although, next years weekend Reunion would still go ahead as planned with details to be made known later in the year.

The whole weekend was a great success and it was all down to the enthusiasm of those who attended to make it so. It is gratifying to know that we can still keep the memory of the 40th well and truly alive and be aided by the lovely ladies who always add to the occasion and who are now certainly part of the mechanism for ideas and improvements to make each Reunion better than the last.