



## **2017 40<sup>th</sup> Reunion Report – Berwick-Upon-Tweed 26-29 May**

### **Friday:**

The advance party, Don & Jeanette Maciver, arrived Thursday night so ensuring we had a report On the bar facilities waiting for us on arrival! Parking outside the hotel was limited, although nearby parking was available at Berwick railway station, which proved inexpensive over the 3 days.

It was to prove quite a journey for some of the group, Terry & Carole Winnett, along with Bob Killey, travelled up by train. Carole said it was an eye opener, what with different accents heard as they travelled up from Gloucester, along with the behaviour of some passengers! Others in the group had a long car journey, but all arrived safely managing to quickly find the hotel bar, which offered drinks at reasonable prices and a 10% discount to our group for the whole stay.

Dave & Joyce Cutbush managed to bag the Lowry room; this is room in the hotel where the artist L.S. Lowry would stop when he took his annual (working) holiday in Berwick.

Des & Carol Haines, along with Chris & Sin Pressling (outbound from Malaysia), stopped at a nearby Premier Inn, but winded and dined with the rest of us, proving excellent company.

The evening meal was not until 2100 hrs, which was too late for many of us, especially when you added on the large portions we would be served, although all the food was first-class, along with the service.

Talk in the bar afterwards was on this day in 1960 when we took our attestation, with a national Service Pilot officer who was not quite sure where he had to sign the form when he started the process!

### **Saturday:**

After a large hearty breakfast most of the group took a walk through Berwick before finally finding ourselves visiting the Berwick Barracks, which were opened in 1721 and said to be the oldest Military Barracks in England. The Barracks were last occupied in 1963 by the Kings Own Scottish Borders, but their regimental museum thankfully remains, which is what we had come to visit. Lucky for us the Museum Director, Peter, turned out to be a former RAF Armourer who gave us a wonderful briefing, bringing alive many of the exhibits in the museum. Seemingly, he was working across the road at a Rotarian event when Des Haines and Chris Pressling mentioned there was an RAF group visiting the museum, so he then dashed across to greet us, so making the visit rather special.

After the Museum, most of us stopped in a charming Cafe nearby before heading back to get the cars for those visiting a nearby Honey Farm. The Farm was a bit disappointing, although the walk behind the farm to the Chain Bridge across the River Tweed proved a great delight when some of us walked across it and found ourselves now officially in Scotland.

It had been quite a long day, when we finally gathered in the bar before dining at 1700 hrs. The meal was once again first-class, although word has it that one of our group had ordered soup of the day

with a sausage, no names no pack drill, as they say! Still, we did get a 10% on all evening meals, with breakfast included in the price of the room. Certainly an excellent deal, with Sunday night thrown in.

As the bar was too crowded, after we had eaten, we assembled in a small room off the dining area until Paul Justice convinced everyone there was enough seats for the group to move to the bar area. Talk was of absent friends from the 40<sup>th</sup>, with others not making this reunion for other reasons. As someone remarked, we are all getting older, perhaps less motivated to make an effort at times to even do simple things. Although we were reminded that the departed Eric May had once said, you have got to keep going as long as you can, keeping the spirit of the 40<sup>th</sup> alive. It was certainly alive this night.

**Sunday:**

Breakfast was an earlier parade than Saturday, after which we departed on a road trip to the Holy Island (Lindisfarne, the site of one of the most important centres of early Christianity in England), conscious that we needed to heed the tide times, having to cross a mile causeway to the island which was quickly covered by the North Sea when the tide rushed in.

The island proved most interesting for 2 things: the Lindisfarne Priory ruins, which was once a celebrated monastic community and a van we sighted on the way back, which was parked just off the causeway, sinking in sand up to its axles with some lads valiantly trying to free it. It brought home the dangers of the Causeway, although we all got back to the mainland with good time to spare!

Some of the group went on to Banburgh Castle after this, but that proved overwhelmingly busy with the Bank Holiday crowd and resulted in a fly-by only. Others returned to Berwick to look at the Party on the Parade organised by the Rotarians, which turned out to be disappointing.

The evening saw many of us in Black Tie, with the ladies looking lovely as always. Some of the regulars in the bar were quite impressed when they saw some wearing medals and made nice flattering comments.

The evening meal was wonderful for many of us because we had ordered a small portion of roast beef; up to now we had been overwhelmed by the large portions of food served at meal times! As someone commented, as you get older you need less but more often – one lady thought that rather amusing for reasons she would not declare!

After the meal, Des Haines was called upon as the Duty Spokesman to make a short speech, which he did wonderfully well and this was followed by his wife, Carol, kindly making a collection for the staff that had been superb throughout our stay, especially the Owner/Manger, Kirsty, who proved tireless in her efforts to please us.

**Monday:**

After breakfast we said our goodbyes, with everyone agreeing it had been a wonderful weekend because of the hospitality of the Hotel, the weather and what was on offer in and around Berwick.

**Finally, thanks for your attendance and we hope you can make it next years' Reunion, which will be held in Liverpool, where fond memories of our 60s music originated. Our Web Page will soon show a nominal roll for this, so please get your names down.**

**Steve & Dave**

**40<sup>th</sup>**