



MORECAMBE REUNION REPORT:

THURSDAY NIGHT

Rose and I visited the hotel early evening, although we were stopping elsewhere overnight, to check on any early arrivals and last minute hitches. The advance guard (Vern & Pat Phillips, Ian Duckham and his sister Doreen - along with Don and Jeanette Maciver) was already well positioned close to the bar: our ten-minute intended stop was quickly extended!

FRIDAY AFTERNOON

On booking into the hotel, we could clearly see quite a few of our group assembled close to the bar, which incidentally would not open until 1700 hrs and this prompted a few, headed by Steve Lister, to seek out a nearby watering hole.

Meanwhile Pete and Pat Stenning along with Brian and Jan Peacock arrived. Pete was easily recognisable from his distinctive car number plate, which had the letters RAF. It was soon after this that John Bell and his partner Mary arrived: his brother, Ian, accompanied by his wife Carla, would not arrive until later in the evening because of work commitments and this would also apply to John and Sue McIntyre.

FRIDAY EVENING

We all gathered in the Lounge area, prior to dinner being served, to find John Harris, who lived nearby and only found our Web Page for the first time barely a week ago! This must be surely testament to many more of the 40th out there that have yet to find us and perhaps join us at our Reunions, we do hope so. Incidentally, John proved to be good entertainment, what with stories of his Chuckies (Chickens) – how it made Sylvia Menzies laugh!

After dinner, we slowly assembled in the function room reserved for the 40th Squad, where a singer provided the evening's entertainment – although most of the entertainment came from us! Much talk was of next year's planned reunion in Malta, the sad demise of the RAF Cosford Station Commandant, along with who have retired, going to, thinking about it, or just soldiering on.

Bob Killey kindly took up the job as duty photographer and it was good to see Mandy looking so much better than when we last saw her at the Cosford Reunion.

The long journey to Morecambe for some resulted in early bed checks, with a few holding onto the last! The Presslings, who had come all the way from Malaysia, did rather well by holding on so long. They are hopeful for the Malta trip next year.

SATURDAY MORNING

After a good buffet breakfast some of the group went to nearby Cairnforth railway station, which was the location for the filming of "Brief Encounter". It was amusing to find out that the Buffet Manager was a former RAF chap who appeared to run a smooth operation with wit, humour and strong opinions. Other in the group did their own thing. Many followed the suggested itinerary and visited Lancaster Castle for the guided tour, which proved to be a tremendous hit with everyone – apart from the car parking arrangements.

SATURDAY EVENING

This was our formal dress evening and some of the men took the opportunity to wear DJs and medals where appropriate. The ladies, as always, looked stunning. The Restaurant Manager, by prior arrangement, laid out the dining tables in three rows. Someone remarked that table 1 was see no evil: with 2 hear no evil: 3 speak no evil. John McIntyre (table 2, hear no evil) suggested I may have left the shower on in my room as there was a major leak into the bar area, how I choked on a bread roll!

It was nice that Rose Stinson's sister, Fran and husband John Nickson, joined us for the night as they had both been at Cosford as Suppliers (Fran a locally employed WRAF and John a National Serviceman) and had kitted out the 40th Entry, along with other entries. Blame John for the ill-fitting SD hats that was his main issue, although John said however the hat fitted the Corporal would always say 'that will do.'

The evening entertainment was rather good, with an organist chappy (Ian) who organised a couple of games of bingo and a short quiz - this with a game of pass the parcel on the dance floor, for those brave enough to take part. Incidentally, Des (I never win anything) Haines won a full house on one of the Bingo games.

Ian, (the organist) did tell us that this was the worst year for his advance bookings, with hotels cutting back on entertainment and other venues likewise. Ian went onto tell us that his dear mother used to frequent the Midland Hotel, when a RAF Hospital) for dance partners and would be pleased to learn that us lot were in town!

Dave Lowe kindly got up and proposed a toast to dear departed Eric, who everyone agreed was sadly missed, although some consensus was reached about the Bell Boys taking up the slack in other ways. The night was late by the time the last revellers went to bed who reported that an old chap, wearing only his shreddies wandered into the hotel foyer with no memory of whom he was or where he had come from. Must be an ex-Boy from one of our Junior Entries, someone said!

SUNDAY MORNING

After breakfast we sadly said our farewells to some early leavers (Peacocks/Presslings & the Stennings) all hopefully to see us in Malta next year. A few of the group, who did not do Cairnforth railway station or Lancaster Castle on Saturday made that visit; it did not go unnoticed that Carole Winnett and Shirley Lowe opted for a shopping trip! Terry Winnett, who was a reluctant Castle visitor, said he could have spent all day there, as the guided tour was so interesting.

SUNDAY EVENING

Another organist, who could sing a bit, provided the evening entertainment! Although we initially all assembled in the function room, one group decided to go back into the Lounge area, perhaps to better talk. It would be much later when the function room group joined them. Once again, it was a late night with lots of laughter and a philosophical discussion about the present education system.

When we finally went to bed, we found the lift inoperative, not what we wanted for the next morning when most of us were leaving with suitcases full of hotel cutlery and linen, as someone pointed out.

MONDAY MORNING

After breakfast, it was clearly a case of packing the cars and assembling in the lounge for final goodbyes, although this was not to be for the Macivers who were on holiday in Morecambe until Thursday and John Bell, along with Mary, who had decided to have an overnight stay in the Midland Hotel, as we know, used as a RAF hospital during WW2.

Overall, apart from the weather, the weekend was considered a great success. Friendships rekindled, new ones made and the spirit of the 40th obviously still intact.

Dave Lowe did suggest we hold future (UK) Reunions in June, with a view to gaining a chance of better weather; this will be something for us to ponder as quite often the hotel prices increase in June.

It was thought the extra night for the Reunion was a real bonus, however, it still all went rather too fast.

We thank everyone for their presence in Morecambe and now look forward to Malta, perhaps with a few more names added to the list in the meantime.

*Dave Stinson/Steve Lister
40th*