



40/2006 REUNION PATTERDALE, CUMBRIA

Friday

Just a short summary of what was an outstanding weekend, starting on the 13th October. Arriving at 1430 hrs it was surprising to find out that the Killeys and Macivers had arrived the previous day and had sampled the local waters already - no surprise there, then!

The Winnetts arrived soon after us, followed by Dusty and Christ Millar who had been sent well and truly from Coventry! Vern and Pat Phillips came out of nowhere (Bed Pan Training, perhaps?) and had left home they said at 0500 hrs to avoid (in his words) the druggies and other bad elements around Manchester.

Steve Lister soon materialised looking rather anxious, perhaps waiting for his son Mark, who would prove over the weekend that the RAF still produces the right stuff, but not in the same quantity! At this point Ian Duckham appeared in the car park, his hair looking a bit windswept.

The Pottages had already tried a walk earlier on & reported it was not too steep either. It was brilliant to see Mike & Aileen Sixsmith. Mike has really progressed remarkably well since his health setback & went on to say that he had overcome many reservations in attending the weekend.

The Lyvers & Cutbushes were sighted at the reception looking refreshed & jolly after their journey. Never did find out if they had stopped at an Inn or A local poppy field. Des Haines arrived from nearby Penrith on his trusty motorcycle & promised to return with his wife Carol in the evening.

Eric and Jane May, along with their two lovely children arrived rather too quietly. Perhaps he had already heard he had been detailed for the corridors! Paul Justice was met inspecting the car park on foot looking for closer parking than across the road, which he found.

The evening meal saw our group sitting together on 3 tables. The food was judged to be excellent, along with the service. Bob Killey handed out 2007 calendars he had grafted; perhaps this was to ensure we did not forget next year's reunion plans? It was good to see newcomers, Ian and Lyn Hamilton, who had come down from Forres, Scotland - not forgetting Eric Walker up from Wiltshire, who had literally left his wife minding the shop!

The remainder of the evening was spent in the Hotel, one group not too far from the bar. The usual stories (missing bath plugs, utensils washed in dirty troughs), and some new ones were recalled. As usual, the ladies, got on wonderfully well with each other, along with having to listen to stories they had heard many times before, bless them. It would be after 0100 hrs before the last of us climbed our way up the stairs. Sadly, a bit of a disturbance in the hotel, resulting in the Police being called, which spoiled it for some trying to get to sleep?

Saturday

After what proved to be a substantial breakfast, most of the group elected to go on the Steamer trip some way up Ullswater. It was rather brisk heading up the lake with the one stopping point allowing keen walkers (not our group!) to get off and head towards their walking paths. After a quick turn-round we returned to our starting point. The trip certainly cleared the cobwebs away for many of us: whilst most agreed taking in the wonderful scenery all around us.

It was then that we all took different directions for the remainder of the day. Some decided upon Penrith and the Market, whilst others went to Windermere, and some even wandered off

for a challenging walk.

During another lovely evening meal, a former Halton type appeared from nowhere and congratulated us on our turn-out and the whole idea of regular reunions. At this meal we were joined by Des and Carol Haines, along with Dennis and Ann Burgess (first timers) who all lived in Cumbria. It was pleasing to see all the newcomers, along with Des and Carol, who had not been since the first reunion, enter the spirit of what these reunions is all about - not forgetting our 40th roots, remembering absent friends and having a good time in excellent company.

After the meal the whole group split into two, made necessary by the bar lounge being occupied – readied for the evenings entertainment - and the adjacent open room to the bar only accommodating 21 of us at a squeeze.

The far lounge was occupied by those who were happy to get away from the music & enjoy stories and talk about boys found, yet to be found or when found not too bothered to take up the reunion challenge – as Dusty Millar said several times throughout the weekend. Dusty and Dave Cutbush do a splendid job to try and ensure we trace lost boys and ensure they are made aware of these important reunions where everyone is made most welcome, with the important element of the lovely wife's attending, too.

The whole evening passed off with great fun and hilarity. Eric May took a vote on whether his dear wife and children should be allowed to attend Bournemouth. He seemed somewhat crestfallen when we all voted a resounding yes - so preventing him from attending on his own. Although, we all felt sure he was rather gratified at our collective warm response. Eric, along with Vern Phillips, eventually became the evening entertainment, rather than the singer in the main lounge who kindly allowed us to draw the raffle during her act, making good use of her microphone.

Elaine Justice, as per usual, did a find job on selling raffle tickets. She has made this job her own, so ensuring monies for future stationery needs, telephone calls, along with what's left over being donated to the RAF Benevolent Fund. Don Maciver, in his capacity as brew master, had now had tasted the local water to a standstill and made an admirable speech. Ian Duckham put out a challenge about finding a suitable lady partner for him, perhaps in time for our next reunion. Somebody's daughter was mentioned!

Dave & Maureen Pottage now joined the squeezed group and managed to acquire Eric's seat, along with winning a bet for this feat. The talk then turned to charges, jankers and the boys with rank at Cosford. The whole atmosphere was super-charged with laughter and goodwill, perhaps reinforcing why such reunions must continue well into the future. Sadly, we all started making our way up the stairs as tomorrow morning would see us packing our kitbags.

Sunday

During breakfast parade it was decided we would parade for roll-call at 1000 hrs in the lounge bar for final farewells. It was at this farewell roll-call where Dave Pottage kindly collected money for the hotel staff.