



SIDMOUTH REUNION REPORT - 2009

Friday

When Rose and myself arrived, just after 1400hrs - closely followed by Steve Lister, already the hotel terrace (with its wonderful view overlooking Lyme Bay and nearby thatched cottages) was occupied by earlier arrivals. In fact, Don and Jeanette had arrived late Thurs evening - they even reported into me by txt messaging at 2330 hrs, just as we were getting into bed to inform us they had ordered a drink from the night porter and the hotel had passed muster!

Some of the early arrivals had even been into Sidmouth town for a look around the shops. The Winnett's, ourselves and the Maciver's decided to follow in their tracks. Rose quickly popped into Boots the chemists for a comb, although someone suggested it was for a pregnancy testing kit for the weekend!

The hotel receptionist kept me informed of arrivals and gave me early warning that Paul and Elaine Justice would be late for parade and would not arrive until later in the evening - in fact, they arrived around 2100 hrs, after making good time by travelling at 95mph nearly all the way - Paul's words. The delay was the result of visiting their newly arrived grandchild. Congratulations on that, and to think grandad is a speed merchant who sports a false beard!

The evening meal started at 1900 hrs with the seating arrangements splitting us onto two long tables in the dining room. The whole meal was accompanied by a lone pianist. Bob Killey did ask for the wedding march when we entered the dining room on account of two of the lads sharing a room - although this arrangement saved them a single room supplement of £35 each. You just never forget the POSB days of Cosford, where every penny counted!

The meal, although excellent, was dwarfed by the superb service on offer. It was during the meal that Dave and Joyce Cutbush arrived. Although not stopping in the hotel (it was declared full when they decided to attend the reunion), they stayed in a nearby Guest House. They made the arrangement of dining with us on the Saturday, although they waited for us in the bar area until we finished our meal.

After dinner, the group split into 3 seated groups in the bar area and the talk was of the Cosford days, and naturally the 50th reunion - along with who was now getting the State Pension, or when others would be awarded this half-jar of honey (as somebody rightly commented!). It was strange, as some of us said, that at the 40th Reunion talk was still of careers, possible job changes, new grand-parenting, all a million miles away from State Pensions and retirement!

Most of the group retired by 2359 hrs, with a couple of stalwarts (Steve and Eric!) doing the night shift!

Saturday

The plan was to ETD at 0930 for the nearby fishing village of Beer. It was gone 1000 hrs when the last of us all left in our cars. The weather, although dry, was rather cold. Beer, although a small fishing village, had a unique history (as I found out reading a framed historical note on the wall in the Captain's Cottage Cafe) of producing more Sea Captains than any other village in the England. It was icy cold walking down onto the shingled beach and so we did not dally too long before going off in small groups to look for a tea-shop/cafe.

Some of us decided to head for nearby Branscombe beach where in January, 2007, the cargo from the stricken MSV Napoli, a 66,000 ton container ship came ashore. It was said scavengers overran the small village for two days taking away everything from BMW motor

cycles to cat food! One of the four anchors from the Napoli (which weighed 14 tons!) was presented to the people of Branscombe and can clearly be seen close to the beach with suitable inscription.

We eventually arrived in Lyme Regis and by now the weather was slightly improved. A stroll round the famous Cobb (harbour wall) then saw most of us heading to nearby cafes and pubs to take refreshments. The town tested our fitness as in many places it is quite a steep climb as some of us found out taking a short cut through the gardens overlooking the harbour.

In the evening we assembled once more for dinner, this time more formally dressed than the previous evening. Barry Mayne was smartly on parade in Black tie (No 1s) and the suggestion came forward that this would be the preferred dress for the final night of the 50th Reunion. Well done Barry, we will take it on board for the 50th Joining Instructions. Jan, Brian Peacock's partner, kindly did a collection for the waiting staff after a suggestion by Don Maciver. Jan has now got herself elected as the chief Raffle seller for the 50th bash after the sterling job she did in getting money out of us all! Sadly, Brian & Jan left after dinner to head for another commitment, but thankfully will be back with us next year.

After another first-class dinner we retired to the bar area, split into two seated groups. Once again, talk was of old, with Eric May and Vern Phillips exchanging stories, or was it insults? The ladies slowly disappeared leaving a few die-hards (Steve, Vern, Don, Eric, Paul, Lloyd and Dave Lowe, with me bringing up the rear - sorry Eric and Steve, no pun intended!

The conversation soon went into overdrive (translate into smut!) with stories mainly from Eric and Vern, with others adding their own comments. This final get-together summed up all that is good about our reunions, and why we must continue with them well into the future..

Sunday

It was departure morning for most, apart from the Macivers and us who had opted for a further night at the hotel. During breakfast, the Menzies quickly departed for Sheffield and these were followed by others - after much kissing, hugging and promises of meeting for the big 50th Reunion in 2010. Everyone agreed that we will all have to try and establish the whereabouts of other 40th lads who perhaps may be encouraged to attend our 50th Reunion. In addition, getting those who have already attended earlier reunions to return for this most special of occasions.

A passing idea for a future reunion came from Shirley Lowe who said a few of them had been reminiscing about the wonderful Cyprus reunion and thought now that most people are about to retire in the near future (with some already!) it would be an idea to consider another overseas reunion. This idea will be looked at closely in the near future with a view to going to Malta or Northern Cyprus - provided the support is there.

The whole weekend, despite the sometimes cold weather, was a success. Perhaps the only thing lacking was some evening entertainment on Saturday night - although, Eric and Vern made up for that. For the 50th, we will ensure that a Disco will be booked for Saturday in our function room..

Plans for the 50th reunion are well under way, so please ensure you keep a look-out on our Web Page for more details on this and the early deposits that will be necessary to ensure we get our chosen venue on the dates already decided.

Once again, thanks for all your support, without which the 40th Entry (RAF Cosford Boy Entrants) reunions would not take place.

Dave Stinson/Steve Lister.