

Reunion Report, Chester, 24-26 May, 2024.

Friday:

We arrived early to find DES & Carol Haines, along with Terry & Carole Winnett, who had beaten us to it! Much earlier we had received telephone call from Bob & Sylvia Menzies from the M62 to inform us that they had broken down with gearbox problems and would now reluctantly have to cancel. Ian Waterhouse (SqnLdr Retd) and his old Schoolfriend, Pauline, soon appeared after us. Pauline, who lived locally, would prove an asset as our tour guide, along with Ian, throughout. Lloyd & Anne Rosentall arrived late on parade after an awful 6 hour journey from Weston, with sadly more bad luck to follow for them over the weekend. A few drinks were had by all, with a catch up on all our lives.

We assembled in the Hotel at 1830 for the evening meal, with much talk of past Reunions. This was to be our 23 actual Reunion, with only one cancelled (Covid!) over the years. We reflected back to those first reunions, when we were all still relatively young, compared to this one discussing our ailments and operations! The other great change was we all retired for the night at just gone 2200 hrs – with now long gone those 0200-0300 late reunion nights when sometimes we danced the night away.

Saturday:

After breakfast in the hotel, Ian and Des kindly used their cars to take us all to Chester for the planned Boat Trip along the River Dee which proved enjoyable and informative. After this we decided on a coffee break close to the river bank and made the decision not to visit the military Museum, which was on our itinerary, and just head back to the Hotel for afternoon drinks.

We Paraded for our evening meal in the bar at 1730 hrs, and as our tradition, the men in their DJS and the ladies looking splendid. We talked of old friends, postings and our old Air Force. Sadly, Anne Rosentall, because of a sudden illness, could not join us and would miss most of the weekend confined to her room. Once again, we all retired early at 2300 hrs - Eric May, and others we had sadly lost and who were regulars at our reunions, must have been looking down in sheer bewilderment.

Sunday:

After a late breakfast, we headed for the nearby Cheshire Oaks Shopping complex, which was huge, busy and we noted very dog friendly. We were informed by Pauline that we had barely seen a quarter of it by the time we left! Next, we made a visit to the Ice Cream Farm, something recommend by Jim Edge, although not attending did live in Chester. The Farm was more a children's theme park than farm. We all ate an ice cream, which proved very tasty, then left for the Hotel for afternoon drinks.

Assembled once more for our final evening meal were much talk was of the Far East and the Air Force Signals Network in our time. Once again, it would be an early night.

Monday:

Breakfast Parade was 0830 as we were all departing for home. Agreement was reached that the Hotel was well positioned and served our reunion well. Already, those who attended were hoping they could attend our next reunion which will be held in Thirsk, the home of James Herriot, the creator of All Creatures Great and Small. Although this reunion was small in attendance, the spirit of the 40th is still very much alive and it is hoped we can have more of the 40th parading in 2025 at Thirsk.

Dave Stinson & Steve Lister
40th, Together We Served

