



THE CHESHIRE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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NOVEMBER 2010

EDITORIAL

As the year grinds inexorably to its conclusion I suspect that for many the year cannot come to an end soon enough. The recession, job losses, strikes, our tragic losses in Afghanistan, the list goes on and it is not easy to detect light at the end of the tunnel. Perhaps the one highlight has been the way that the CRA has rallied around to support the soldiers and families of our 1st Battalion as they have served through one of their most difficult years in modern times. Although our soldiers must take the main plaudits, their families and all those involved in welfare support, and those that attended funerals or repatriations at Wootton Bassett, must also be congratulated on a job well done.

As I write, the effects of the Defence Review are still working their way through and we don't yet know how those at RHQ, and thereby the CRA, are to be affected. The review appears to have been carried out in a rather Heath Robinson fashion, possibly on the back of a cigarette packet and it would seem that it has been driven by financial needs rather than with any strategic planning in mind. Certainly the review was a lost opportunity for rethinking our place in the future security of the World.

I am grateful to everyone who has submitted articles for this newsletter and I apologise to those whose work may not appear due to lack of space. I particularly congratulate Peter Hennerley on all his efforts to secure a lasting memorial to the Bravest Little Street in England and I would ask you to support him by purchasing his recently released DVD.

May I take this opportunity to remind everyone that, where possible, I would prefer to receive contributions by e-mail. This also applies to photographs, although I am able to scan good quality hard copies. Old photographs, particularly those that have been photocopied, or printed onto plain paper, are unlikely to be of sufficient quality for publication purposes.

Items for the March issue should reach me by 20th February 2011. Please send your contributions to me at: **The School House, Dartmouth Road, London SE26 4RD**. My telephone number is: **020 8291 9225**. You can also e-mail me at george.szwejkowski@sky.com. Best wishes for the season.

George Szwejkowski

The link for the CRA webpage is:

<http://www.cheshiremilitarymuseum.co.uk/regimental-associations/the-cheshire-regiment-association.aspx>

The Mercian Regiment website is:

<http://www.army.mod.uk/infantry/regiments/Mercian.aspx>

The opinions expressed in the articles in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy and views, official or otherwise of RHQ or the Regiment.

The President, Chairman, members of CRAMC and all at RHQ wish all members of the CRA, their families, and all Mercian soldiers a very Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

By the time this edition of the newsletter reaches your doorstep our own 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) will be complete back from Afghanistan and will have carried out marches around the County of Cheshire as well as being granted the freedom of Cheshire East and Stockport, during these events it is planned to mark the service of G "Anzio" Company with the 22nd by awarding the Ghurkha Reinforcement Company honorary membership of the CRA. On behalf of all members of the CRA I would like to say welcome back and well done on a very difficult tour to all ranks of the battalion. At the same time, and just as importantly to me, I would like to thank the CRA for supporting 1 Mercian (Cheshire) in so many ways, I know the battalion have appreciated the support and this selfless approach has helped to ensure that the actions and activities of the association are known by many of the serving soldiers.

The highlight for the CRA since the last newsletter was the Mons Reunion and Lunch on 12th September at which we were joined by a marching contingent from 1 Mercian (Cheshire), some of those injured in Afghanistan and families of some of those killed in Ballykelly and Afghanistan. The day turned out well despite initial threats of rain and with the Regimental Band of 4 Mercian to help us along we made it to the Cathedral where the annual Mons service was held. Following the service and a brisk march back to the Castle square a fine lunch was had in St Mary's Centre, this was well received by all attending.

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CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN (continued)

A very sad occasion in September was making the trip down to The Royal Hospital, Chelsea, to attend the funeral of our last In Pensioner. The family of Lawrence Stubbs were very pleased to see so many of the CRA attending this farewell to "Lawrie" and my thanks must go to the members of both Sandbach branch and Southern Region for making the journey with me to say goodbye. Thanks also to The Hospital Sergeant Major for ensuring that the funeral was held on the 22nd, I am sure that Lawrence would have been smiling at the thought.

CRAMC continues to hold trustee's meetings quarterly to ensure that the CRA is managed in accordance with the constitution and with members' wishes and it continues to do its best for the association. A proposal for the future legacy funding has been accepted by the trustees and this will be communicated to the regimental council of The Mercian Regiment at their meeting in November. As all members will all be aware through my many updates the current rate of legacy funding, of £10,000 per year, is to be reviewed at the 3 year point and I will report back as soon as a decision has been reached.

CRAMC will shortly have a couple of vacancies to be filled and the details for the nominations and the election process will be delivered with this edition of the newsletter, please take a moment to think if you could have something to offer CRAMC and the CRA and consider putting yourself forward for nomination. It would be nice to see some younger blood putting their names forward and help to reduce the average age of CRAMC.

CRA business and enjoyment continues unabated and along with East Cheshire Reunion at the end of October many branches will be holding events and parties throughout the Christmas period and before you know it Meeanee will be upon us once more.

Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to all members of The CRA, RHQ Chester and 1 Mercian (Cheshire) from all members of CRAMC.

Peter Gresty

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME

Many people at Regimental events over the summer months have been wearing a particular rose as a buttonhole, and following some comments I have been very surprised to discover how many members of the CRA are not aware that a rose named after the Regiment is available. The description of the rose stated on the Fryers Roses website is:



The Cheshire Regiment Rose

(Fryyat) 1996 Named for the famous Cheshire Regiment. Their rose is extremely vigorous bearing a mass of beautiful, highly scented apricot salmon blooms. It is strong and sturdy with powerful, disease resistant growth and a reliable production of flowers, an appealing variety that is in great demand.

What it does not say is that it is one of the most fragrant roses available on the market today. The regimental rose is available now from Fryers Roses of Knutsford although by the time the newsletter hits the doorstep it will probably be best to wait until spring.

Peter Gresty

MONS REUNION

The following article written by Gordon Kipps appeared in his local newspaper:

For decades the Cheshire Regiment has commemorated the Battle of Mons – one of our major battle honours.

On Sunday September 12th, I attended the parade in Chester for the first time. This year the parade was extra special because we were honoured to have the presence of some of the walking wounded from the conflict in Afghanistan and also some of the families of the boys who were killed in action.

We marched from Chester Castle to the cathedral for a service. I admit to feeling quite emotional to hear the tumultuous welcome given to us by the townspeople as we marched.

After the service we marched back to the castle. Magically the crowds seemed to have doubled and applauded us all the way back to the Castle.

A big, big thank you goes out to the people of Chester and beyond for the continued support given to their own county regiment – 1st Battalion Mercian Regiment (Cheshire), formerly the 22nd Cheshire Regiment.

*Gordon Kipps
Ellesmere Port Branch*



Brigadier John Donnelly CBE, President of the CRA, leads the Parade from the Castle to Chester Cathedral

MONS DAY GREETING

The following greeting was sent to the 1st Battalion from the Colonel of the Regiment:

Greetings on Mons Day to all ranks of the 1st Battalion the Mercian Regiment (Cheshire).

You are the inheritors of the ethos that was so well understood by that valiant Battalion of 1914, who truly understood the meaning of 'Stand Firm' – holding back the tide as the BEF withdrew to safety. Your deeds of the last few months are also finding their way into the history books, and you are soldiering in the finest traditions of the Regiment, upholding that ever glorious past. Keep it up boys, we are all immensely proud of you. Stand Firm, Strike Hard.

*ARDS
Colonel of the Regiment*

MINUTES OF THE CRAMC MEETINGS

MINUTES OF THE CRAMC MEETING HELD ON 10th JULY 2010 AT RHQ CHESTER

Present: Mr P J Gresty (Chairman), Mr J Cooney, Maj J S Holden TD, Capt A W Hughes, Mr J A Jennings, Mr A Kennedy, Mr K M Parsonage, Mr M Walker, Maj T E Pickering MBE (Secretary)

The Chairman opened the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed, Mr Parsonage said that South Wirral Branch had raised over £6680 at their event in aid of Help for Heroes. Mr Parsonage then proposed and Mr Jennings seconded that proposal that the minutes as read be passed as a true record. **Carried.**

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reported that the Mercian Regiment grant will remain at £10,000.00, however the 3 year review point is coming up and he has to present a case to the Mercian Regiment Finance Committee for future grants.

He went on to express his sincere thanks and those of CRAMC and the CRA to the standard bearers who have made the trip to Wootton Bassett on so many occasions and to the funerals of the soldiers who have already been laid to rest. In particular the time and trouble being taken by people like Derek Sykes, Gordon Smith, Terry Finlay is amazing. The selfless way they are doing this duty has had a profound effect not only on the families and friends of the deceased but also on the serving soldiers.

He congratulated our President, Brigadier John Donnelly who was awarded the CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours awards and also Mr Mike Trevor Barnston on his award of the MBE for services to Charity.

He reported that Chester races in May this year saw the highest turnout yet and really placed a strain on the bars provided by 4 MERCIAN and the CRA Club. He asked members of CRAMC to give their support to some of the summer reunions and functions currently taking place.

He expressed the hope that the thoughts, prayers and sincere condolences of all members of the CRA are with the family, friends and colleagues of those members of 1 Mercian (Cheshire), and the armed forces in general, who have been killed, wounded and injured whilst doing their duty in Afghanistan.

3. FINANCE AND BUDGETS

The Secretary presented a statement of financial affairs as at 30th June which included a breakdown of expenditure. The CRA has funds of £91268 and the Club £3798. He reported that Club takings are down; this is partly due to the loss of catering income.

The Chairman reported in depth the discussion at Mercian Regimental Council with regard to the legacy funding. Major Holden expressed the opinion that we may need to consider going to the membership for financial support at some future date in order to continue providing support at the current levels.

4. FUTURE EVENTS

The list of events was discussed, there were no changes but concern was expressed at the diminishing support for the Berlin/Northern Ireland Reunion.

The Chairman reported that representations had been made to hold a 2011 Norbreck Reunion in Blackpool. A weekend has been identified (3rd-6th June 2011) and it was agreed to promote this event. A letter will be sent out in the next Newsletter.

The Secretary reported that he has been investigating a suitable Chester venue for a Diamond Jubilee Meeanee Reunion in 2012 (both anniversaries falling in the same month). There are only two venues large enough to hold anticipated numbers of 300+, the cheapest one charges a minimum £25 per head for a meal without wine at this year's prices and he felt that with the addition of wines and sundries, the end price of a ticket might be too much for some CRA to be able to afford.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Capt Hughes asked about progress of the Oak Tree and Ever Glorious. The Secretary stated that he hoped to get the Oak Tree to the printers very soon (there are still some photographs awaited) and that a proof copy of all 3 volumes of Ever Glorious has been produced and is now being checked.

Mr Cooney expressed a view that on Race Day, on the Racecourse, the price of beer in the Regimental area was too high especially as it was canned beer. He felt that canned beer was not the image that the CRA wanted to portray. It was explained that 4 MERCIAN were unable to supply soldiers or tent age free of charge and everything had to be paid for out of the bar takings, hence the higher price. A lively discussion ensued about the course of action for the future, with no firm decisions being reached.

The Chairman:

a. Drew attention to the fact that HMS Ambuscade Association was still active and they wished to hold a reunion here in Chester next year on 7th May.

b. Asked everyone to consider the needs of the CRA and Mercian Regiment Association as well as Help for Heroes in their fund raising efforts. The MRA disbursed £88k in welfare grants to soldiers and ex-soldiers of the three antecedent Regiments and the Mercian Regiment last year and there is no indication that the need for assistance will diminish.

c. Pointed out that the MRA Standard has now been dedicated and has been used at some of the 1st Battalion funerals.

d. Informed the meeting that the Serjeants' Club will not be holding a summer function this year.

e. Asked all members to be careful if approached by the media to make a statement on the current situation, if asked people to consider the feelings of relatives and friends of all soldiers serving in Afghanistan at the moment and to be supportive in their comments.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Saturday 2nd October 1000hrs. Secretaries 1300hrs (please note the earlier times, due to the need for the club to be set up for an evening function). A sandwich lunch will be provided.

MINUTES OF THE CRAMC MEETINGS (continued)

MINUTES OF THE CRAMC MEETING HELD ON 2nd OCTOBER 2010 AT RHQ CHESTER

Present: Mr P J Gresty (Chairman), Mr J Cooney, Maj J S Holden TD, Capt A W Hughes, Mr J A Jennings, Mr A Kennedy, Mr K M Parsonage, Maj J Salisbury, Mr M Walker, Maj T E Pickering MBE (Secretary)

Apologies were received from Mr D J Waring

The Chairman opened the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed; the Secretary reported that "Ever Glorious" was now on sale and that the final Oak Tree was with the printers. Mr Parsonage then proposed and Mr Walker seconded that proposal that the minutes as read be passed as a true record. **Carried.**

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reported that there have been many reunions and events during the summer in the form of Malaya and Singapore hosted by Walsall Branch, Suez hosted by Birkenhead Branch, The Boat Museum and Cheshire Copse Remembrance Services arranged by Ellesmere Port Branch, BNIR arranged by its own committee and the Mons Reunion. He congratulated the organisations on their success.

The Mons Lunch and Service on 12th September was a very good day with members of 1 Mercian (Cheshire) swelling our numbers on parade and families of the fallen from Ballykelly and Afghanistan joined us for the cathedral service and the lunch, 4 Mercian once again provided the Band to get us to and from the Cathedral. The day went very well and he thanked the Secretary. He said that the Secretary needs more support in the setting up and running of major functions in the future.

He reminded the committee that 1 Mercian (Cheshire) will be coming home this month and that they will hold a series of Homecoming Parades in the County in November. He expressed his thanks to all those standard bearers and other supporters who attended repatriation ceremonies and funerals, in particular Derek Sykes and Terry Finlay.

He attended the funeral of Lawrence Stubbs, our last In Pensioner at the Royal Hospital and thanked both Sandbach and Southern Region Branches for their support on the day which was much appreciated by his family.

He thanked George Szwejkowski for continuing to produce an excellent newsletter which, in my view anyway, has something for everybody and said that he would like to see all branches submitting articles and reports. He reminded everyone that the Newsletter would revert to a Quarterly publication.

3. FINANCE AND BUDGETS

The Secretary presented a statement of financial affairs as at 30th September which included a breakdown of expenditure.

The Chairman outlined his proposals to MRA for future funding, he said that the other two Regimental Associations had a different way of conducting business and that as a result, their attitude toward this funding was not quite the same as the CRA. There was a lively and varied discussion about the financial future and among the suggestions advanced was one that there

may be a need to subscribe to the Newsletter at some date in the future. Mr Cooney stated that he felt the suggested reductions were too severe and asked the Chairman to reconsider. Following further discussion, it was agreed by the majority that the proposal be submitted as set out.

4. AGM

In response to a question from Branch Secretaries, the Chairman invited discussion on the subject of Associate Members of CRA Branches serving on their committees being able to attend the AGM. Both Mr Walker and Maj Salisbury suggested that they be included in the Secretaries meetings and it was agreed that in future, this would happen. It was also agreed that Associate Members of a Branch holding the office of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer may attend the AGM but may not vote.

5. ELECTIONS TO CRAMC

Mr Walker's tenure as a member of CRAMC comes to an end at the next AGM, there is also a vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr Alan Rowe. It was agreed that the election of new members will take place in accordance with the following timetable:

- a. Next newsletter (26 November) - request for nominations.
- b. 17 Dec 10 – close of nominations.
- c. Early January – voting form despatched.
- d. 11 Feb – Voting closes.

Voting would be permitted by email or letter. In the event of insufficient nominations, no election will be held.

6. PRESIDENT'S AWARD / GEN MARTIN AWARD

A sub committee was formed to deliberate on nominations for the awards, it will comprise the Chairman, Secretary and one member.

7. FUTURE EVENTS

The Secretary spoke about the forthcoming Homecoming Parades and Thanksgiving Service for the 1st Bn. The formal programme will be notified in due course, he pointed out that due to the capacity of the Cathedral, it may not be possible to include the CRA in the Thanksgiving Service. It was suggested and agreed that if the CO was agreeable, CRA Standards would form a Guard of Honour at the Cathedral Entrance when the Battalion enter. The Chairman suggested that there might be a window in the week for G (Anzio) Company to be recognised as honorary members of the CRA. The subject of a suitable presentation was discussed and the Secretary was requested to arrange for the purchase and framing of a Cheshire Regiment pennant.

Reunions:

30 Oct – E Cheshire, so far there are 160 names.

5 Dec – Ballykelly Memorial – some of the families have requested that Elizabeth Crosses be presented to them during the course of the commemoration. A grant of £300 to Limavady Branch was confirmed.

19 Feb – AGM and Meeanee Supper, it was agreed to carry on with the format used last year (Meeting in St Mary's Centre followed by supper in the Club).

6 May – Race Day, subject to the approval of the Race Company.
3-6 Jun – Blackpool Reunion, the letter has been distributed and a number of people have booked. Planning will shortly begin.

MINUTES OF CRAMC MEETINGS (continued)

Centenary of the Battle of Mons 2014 – the Secretary outlined his plans to hold a Service of Commemoration in the village of Audregnies and to erect a memorial. He has been in contact with the civic authorities in Quievrain who are favourable. It was agreed to work on this venture.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman drew attention to the Mercian Marathon being run on 31st October and asked that it be given maximum support. He asked that the Secretary be kept up to date with details of

Over-90s so that they could receive their Christmas Hampers.

He spoke about Peter Hennerly's Bravest Little Street project, Mr Kennedy proposed and Mr Parsonage seconded the proposal that CRA grant the sum of £50 to assist him.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Saturday 5 Feb 2011. This meeting will be to discuss AGM business. There will be no Branch Officers (ex-Secretaries) meeting.

WORD FROM THE BRANCHES

BIRKENHEAD BRANCH

In June the branch received an invitation from the Lord Mayor of Liverpool for branch representatives to attend a civic reception in support of Armed Forces Day on 22nd June, and a service at Liverpool Cathedral the following Saturday. Branch members attended on both occasions. The cathedral service was followed by a march-past led by the band of the Parachute Regiment and the salute taken by the Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside, the High Sheriff of Merseyside and the Lord Mayor of Liverpool. Later in the day events took place at Liverpool Pier Head to highlight the important relationship between the armed forces and the Merchant Navy, and opportunity for the general public to engage with veterans and cadets of the armed forces.

On a sad note CRA members and standards attended the funerals of Pte Halliday, Sgt Horton and Pte Isaacs, our thoughts and condolences go to their families.

11th July saw members attending the Boat Museum and Whitby Park in Ellesmere Port for the annual service of commemoration. This was followed by the 13th Suez Reunion (see report elsewhere in this newsletter).

In mid August members joined with Ellesmere Port for a most enjoyable day in North Wales in the Betws y Coed area, and later down to the coast at Llandudno. September proved to be a busy month, firstly Sunday 5th saw an idea of our Branch Chairman, Geoff Hunt, come to fruition. He had for some time had the idea of a fund raising event for injured troops. This idea was enthusiastically supported by various local groups in the New Ferry area, who took it upon themselves to get things moving. Artists were booked, who gave their time and performances free, Port Sunlight RBL arranged the venue, publicity and tickets, branch members attended, along with cadets from 1 Mercian ACF, donating many raffle prizes. The event was a sell out with a waiting list for tickets. It was a first class event enjoyed by all, resulting in a cheque for £700 being sent to the Hedley Court Defence Medical Centre. A big thank you to everyone who made the event such a success. The following day a total of 26 bags of items for shoe boxes for the troops, donated by the general public, had to be collected from the RBL, which will add to the 200 plus boxes the branch has already dispatched.

The following weekend saw members in Chester for the Mons Reunion, once again an excellent day, especially having a contingent from 1 Mercian (Cheshire) taking part in the parade. This certainly seemed to improve the standard of marching by CRA members.

The third weekend in the month saw our bowls team and

supporters en route to Stockport to face the might of their bowls team in the second leg of our annual tournament. Although the weather was slightly inclement, the warmth of the welcome from our Stockport friends more than made up for any rain. Birkenhead commenced strongly, Graham Ball and John Smith making a winning start and ultimately 13 year old Sam McGloughlin assisted by his ancient and frail grandparent led to an epic victory over those two semi pro internationals Alan Massey and Brian Hannigan. The final result was a win for Birkenhead in the doubles and singles, Stockport winning the ladies doubles. A great day enjoyed by all, competition severe but fair. Thank you Stockport for a grand day.

Mid October saw members join with the RASC/RCT Association for an R&R weekend in Llandudno, enjoying good weather, accommodation and friends on a well supported break.

We now look forward to another trip up the M56 to Stockport Armoury for the East Cheshire Reunion, which always proves to be a notable evening.

Graham Ball

CHESTER BRANCH

Here at Chester we thank God that the 1st Battalion is safely returned from Afghanistan. But whilst mourning the tragic loss of twelve heroes, whom we will never forget, we are extremely proud of the manner in which today's young soldiers have performed their onerous and extraordinarily dangerous tasks. They have conducted themselves in the highest traditions of the 22nd and, in so doing, have proved themselves every bit as worthy and capable as their forbears and have earned the right to be included in the ranks of the 'Ever Glorious' forever.

On July 3rd we held our Annual Dinner/Dance at Fox Barracks, The Dale. Seventy members and guests enjoyed a delicious feast cooked to perfection and served quickly and efficiently by Sandra Slater and her magnificent staff. Following the memorable start to the evening our guest, Captain John Elms, gave a captivated audience an excellent presentation concerning life in Afghanistan as led by the 1st Battalion. I am sure that each and every person present was impressed and humbled by everything they heard. They were also still very full of Sandra's food which could explain why the dancing took such a long time to begin. On October 9th in the Regimental Club we held the Branch Annual Dinner. Fifty happy diners sat down to enjoy yet another culinary masterpiece prepared and served yet again by the incomparable Sandra Slater and her superb team. The marvellous evening got off to a flying start with everyone partaking of a welcoming glass of punch prepared by Alan Jones.

WORD FROM THE BRANCHES (continued)

After the meal Iggy had another special treat in store for everyone because, when the Loyal Toast was proposed, we were all able to hear the very rare silent version of the National Anthem. Yet again it has been proved that you can rehearse for ever but you cannot eliminate the Gremlins!

Our Christmas functions this year are being held on Sunday 12th December, which is the Christmas Lunch, and Friday 17th December when the Grand Christmas Draw takes place. Both functions are being held at the Castle with the lunch costing £10.50 and the Draw £3. Anyone interested in joining in the fun should contact us as soon as possible because the tickets will soon be in very short supply.

Finally we wish all our friends and comrades a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful New Year. Special greetings go to all ranks of 1st Battalion Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) who have earned a memorable and peaceful Yuletide celebration. We wish each and every man, and their families, the compliments of the season.

John Fairbanks

ELLESMERE PORT BRANCH

Greetings from Ellesmere Port Branch. At our last meeting we welcomed back Les Stuffin after his health problems. Whilst on the subject, we are relieved to see that Dot Steadman is recovering from her recent operation, as is our Chairman, John (Tiny) Davies. George Statham also had a nasty bout of pneumonia, but is also well on the road to recovery.

Our meetings are still well attended and I commend my members for this. At our meeting on 22nd October we mustered 25 attendees. The only problem being that our usual meeting room was not available so we crammed into what I can only describe as a "cupboard."

On 11th July we held our usual service of commemoration, a very successful event and our thanks go out to the other branches who gave their support. It was also noted that Major Eddie Pickering threw his diet sheet away to partake in the buffet afterwards.

The branch had a day out recently to Llandudno, which was much enjoyed by all, except that one member was "ripped off" to the tune of £14 for two coffees and two cheese toasties. It is rumoured that another member, dismayed by the price of a cup of coffee, assumed that the cup was included in the price! Quite a few members found their way to the local RBL Club for an enjoyable lunch.

The run up to Christmas looks like a very busy period, with homecoming marches, remembrance parades etc.

At our last meeting I updated members with my efforts to publicise the Mercian Marathon. The flyers were posted at strategic points in Ellesmere Port, with a mention on local radio Merseyside. This prompted a proposal, passed unanimously, that a donation of £50 be made from the branch. This is currently being processed by our treasurer. Perhaps other branches may feel prompted to follow suit (some already have Ed).

At this point I pay tribute to our Standard Bearer, Tom Simkins, for his sterling work at the recent funerals. Also to Mr Lewis Arrowsmith, proprietor of Sutton Executive Cars, for providing (entirely unsolicited) transport to enable members to attend.

Seasons greetings to all. See you all at Stockport on the 30th.

Gordon Kipps

KIRKHAM BRANCH

On 24th July Kirkham Branch members, family and friends arrived in Chester for the Berlin/NI Reunion, where we met up with old comrades and a good time was had by one and all. Then it was on to Andy and Elizabeth Owens' house, where we had a nice meal, drinks and a chin wag.

Our next port of call was a visit to the National Arboretum, near Lichfield. The whole memorial is magnificent and well worth a visit. Once you have been, it is a thing you will never forget, as there are over 16,000 names on the memorial.

Our next night out is the east Cheshire Reunion at Stockport, a great night which we all enjoy going to.

John Gibson

MACCLESFIELD BRANCH

After 25 years as Branch Scribe, our long time respected member, Frank Worrall has hung up his pen. Despite the age old warning "volunteer for nothing," I now find myself trying to fill Frank's boots. I'll do my best.

Well, as is the case in other branches, meetings are all too often begun with a minutes silence for either branch members who have passed away, or the sad loss of comrades in Afghanistan. I recently attended the ceremony at Stirling Lines, Hereford, for the scattering of the ashes of Derek Bache, at the request of his wife, Lillian. We were made very welcome by the SAS Regimental Association Almoner, their padre and an ex-Colonel who served with Derek in Malaya. The final farewell was at the Final Rendezvous (FRV) below the clock tower.

Along with other branch members, I have attended several ceremonies as Standard Bearer, but was unable to attend the Mons Reunion this year, although other members did, and reported that they enjoyed the day.

Our friends at Stockport Branch, who often attend our meetings (and I theirs) recently invited any bowlers from Macclesfield to join forces and play the bowls competition against Birkenhead Branch. Due to poor weather, only Dave Martin and myself attended, but we won our doubles match and I won my singles match. However, even with the undercover Macclesfield "ringers" Stockport still lost. Going to war without Stockport is like going deer hunting without a brass band! Hard luck Brian and Smudge.

On a good news note, the 1 Mercian homecoming marches are starting soon and on 8th November they march through Macclesfield at 12 noon and on 10th November in Congleton at 1500 hours.

Finally I leave you with a small quote. Do not argue with an idiot, he will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience! That's why I don't talk to Gordon Worthington. All the best.

Andy Wood

NANTWICH BRANCH

The Branch continues to attract new members, the latest addition being Malcolm Morris, of C Company, 4th Battalion TA (1961-1967). A sincere and warm welcome Malcolm. Branch meetings are always well supported, with an average attendance of some fifteen members, with much lively and humoured discussion, ably chaired by Harry Tomkinson. The suggestion by our branch secretary, Major Jim Salisbury, that all members be encouraged to meet at 7.30 (not 8pm) to socialise prior to the

WORD FROM THE BRANCHES (continued)

meeting, is working extremely well. For those members who continue to be unwell, "Thinking of You" cards are sent.

The branch held a very special service for the laying up of the old branch standard and dedication of the new one at St. Mary's Church in the centre of Nantwich. Dave Waring carried the old standard and Wilf Burgess carried the new standard. The Rev Peter Chantry took the service, which included the singing of "Onward Christian Soldiers" and "God is our Strength and Refuge." Branch members met for refreshments following the event.

Armed Forces Day in June was attended by Branch President Ray Stafford and Betty Cooke, also included was a town centre collection in Crewe, with a further collection held in Nantwich in September. Both well supported by branch members and all co-ordinated by Branch Secretary Major Jim Salisbury.

Branch members have attended many reunions, including Suez, East Cheshire, St Julien's and of course the Mons Reunion. There was a charity dance held in the Crosville Club, organised by Vice-Chairman Brian Billington, which proved to be a great success. Members also enjoyed a most successful visit to the Royal Armouries in Leeds. On Remembrance Sunday members attended the services in Crewe and Nantwich and also the "Airman's Grave" situated to the rear of Shrewbridge Road in Nantwich A wreath was laid on behalf of the Cheshire Regiment at each location.

The branch Christmas Dinner will be held on Tuesday 14th December from 7pm in Ye Olde Manor at Wistaston, Crewe. It is anticipated that some 30 people will be attending and we look forward to a great social evening, thanks to Brian Billington again for making the arrangements.

Best wishes from us all to everyone in the CRA. Merry Christmas and a healthy, happy and prosperous New Year to one and all.

Ray Stafford

SANDBACH & MIDDLEWICH BRANCH

Since the last newsletter we have lost more brave soldiers from 1 Mercian (Cheshire), and that's not counting the injured. As a branch we would like to offer our sincere condolences to all their families and support to the injured. In July we decided to donate £500 to the families fund, for which we received a nice letter of thanks from the Families Officer, Captain John Elms. We need to show our support to the 1st Battalion on their return by giving a good turnout of ex Cheshires when they march through our local towns of Cheshire, leading up to 11th November, Remembrance Day, when they march through Chester.

Onto a lighter note, our annual day out once again...Guess where? Llandudno, when a coach full of some 53 members and friends enjoyed the day, although it rained all the way there. Half an hour after arriving the rain stopped and all in all a good day was had by everyone. On 9th August Mr Charles Sullivan (ex 2nd Battalion) reached the grand old age of ninety. Since his illness earlier in the year he has bounced back to good health. We held a bit of a bash at the Crown after our meeting on 5th August for Charles and Roy Goodes, who celebrated his eightieth.

We were saddened to hear of the death of In-pensioner Laurence Stubbs at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea on 5th September. Six members from Sandbach and Middlewich Branch attended his funeral at the Royal Hospital. They were Mr T Beckett (Standard Bearer) Mr P Cooke, Mr L Batman, Mr M Cooper, Mr L Davies and Mr B Thorley. The branch paid their train fare because Laurence was a life member of the branch and

also a founder member. On Sunday 17th October we held a memorial service in his memory, for those who were unable to attend his funeral service at the Royal Hospital. The service was attended by family and friends, members of the Sandbach and Middlewich Branch and the British Legion. Mr Tony Beckett carried the branch standard, Lt Col Tom Nesbitt did the eulogy and Pastor Barry Colclough conducted the service. We would like to thank the church for carrying out the service at such short notice.

By the time this goes to print we will have attended the East Cheshire Reunion, and some will have witnessed the 1st Battalion marching through our local towns. The branch would like to wish all members of the CRA a happy Christmas and also compliments of the season to the soldiers and families of 1 Mercian (Cheshire). God bless you all and enjoy the season with your families.

Dave Beech

SOUTHERN REGION

It is with great sadness that we must report the loss of two of our members. John Hughes, aged 88, was posted to higher formation on 16th August, and our last In-Pensioner, Lawrie Stubbs left us on 5th September, a few months after celebrating his 90th birthday. Both had been active members of the branch and they will be a great loss to us.

We had a new event in our calendar this year. We saw the inaugural T20 inter services cricket tournament at Lords. The RAF were outflanked by the Army, then found themselves all at sea against the Royal Navy, making it an Army versus Royal Navy final. Unfortunately the Army did not learn from the defeat suffered in the rugby fixture earlier in the year, and once again the Royal Navy were triumphant. Nevertheless it was an excellent day out and 2011 will surely be better still, hopefully with the Army sinking the Royal Navy.

We had a good attendance at the Mons Reunion and as I write we are looking forward to the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey, a visit to HM Tower of London and of course Remembrance Sunday at the Cenotaph. Our Meeanee Ladies Dinner will take place in Knightsbridge on 12th February, as always all are most welcome to attend.

Our best wishes and admiration to all members of the 1st Battalion and season's greetings to all.

George Szwejkowski

SOUTH WIRRAL BRANCH

Greetings to all members of the 22nd/1 Mercian. I would like to take a moment to add heartfelt condolences to the families of the lads who have lost their lives in service to their country, we will remember them.

Finally we received the total sum for Help for Heroes which was the princely sum of £ 6,682,84 The SWCRA met at the Shell fun day to take the opportunity of a photo shoot ,Nigel [David Bailey] Hunt turned up with a very impressive tripod and camera for his personal photo shoot.

On behalf of our branch I would like to thank everyone who took part in the fund-raising and to all the people who donated and gave their time. Another big thank you.

Once again it was the annual camping weekend at Black Rock Sands, Portmadoc open to all members and friends, a grand total of 90 people attended and it turned out to be a very hectic fun filled weekend Myself and my able soups chef Tom slopjock

WORD FROM THE BRANCHES (continued)

Sherman catered with our wives in the role of dining room orderlies, the food and entertainment was at its normal excellence with all campers chipping in with the fatigues. Horror upon horror the ladies actually won the tug of war, as the majority of the lads were under a heavy cloud of alcohol - tut tut, Nigel ran an air rifle range for the kids and stayed at his post for 4 hours – oh! the joys of young kids covered in food pawing away at you - ha-ha, well done Nigel. It was given such a thumbs up by all they are asking for another weekend in August the answer is NO CHANCE I'm still in recovery.

The branch had a family fun day in September at the Shell Club, it was a bit soggy but worthwhile and a few extra shillings in our branch fund.

Finally the Christmas dinner night has been booked for 11 December at the British Legion in Upton, Chester and we hope to have another great night of dinner, dance and excellent company.

John Coldrick

STOCKPORT BRANCH

The 1st Battalion briefings in July, August and September were well attended by family members. Major Ron Goodwin and Captain John Elms gave us up to date news of events and operations in the field of the various companies deployed in Afghanistan. Nothing was too much trouble for them, putting the families at ease and answering fully all questions put to them. The branch kept the tea and coffee coming, plus orange juice, cakes and biscuits for the hyper active children. When the dads come home they are going to find big changes in the children that they left behind six months ago.

On Sunday 4th July 36 members and their partners attended the Crich Memorial, near Matlock in Derbyshire. We had a liquid lunch and buffet in the Black Swan in Crich, before moving up to the memorial for the dedication of the new Mercian Regiment Association Standard. There were 20 standards on parade. On a wild and windy day those standard bearers on the right of the memorial had to have a second man behind them to stop them from being blown down the hillside. After a moving service to remember the fallen of the Notts & Derbys and Worcestershire & Sherwood Foresters in every conflict since WW1, we retired once again to the Black Swan to finish off the buffet and a bit more liquid refreshment. Apart from the severe wind, a good day was enjoyed in congenial company. Crich is now on the Mercian Regiment calendar of events.

Saturday 17th July saw us once again in Ellesmere Port for the annual Suez Reunion. This event is extremely well organised by the Birkenhead Branch and though numbers are dwindling due to Old Father Time, it is still a reunion worth attending with superb smorgasboard buffet, belly dancers and Roy Porter in his arab attire.

On Sunday 1st August there was an excellent turn out for our St Julien Service at St. George's Church, Stockport. Major J S Holden TD and CRA Chairman Mr P Gresty read the lessons. 4th Battalion Mercian Volunteers formed the guard of honour for the Mayor and Mayoress of Stockport, and again at the war memorial, where the Mayor laid a wreath in the Cheshire Regiment Rose garden. Eight branch standards and the CRA standard were on parade. We then adjourned to the Armoury for the odd glass of wine or two a few scrups of ale and a super buffet laid on by the Armoury trustees.

Sunday 12th September (my birthday) saw us in Chester for our annual Mons Reunion. Members of the 1st Battalion from Catterick Garrison joined us on the brisk march to Chester Cathedral and back, where we were joined for lunch in St. Mary's Centre by family members of serving soldiers lost or injured in Afghanistan and Northern Ireland, courtesy of the CRA President, Brigadier Donnelly CBE. They were made welcome with a standing ovation. The format for the meal this year worked well and was most enjoyable. We were brought up to date with events in Afghanistan by Major Goodwin and on the injured in hospital by Captain Elms.

On Sunday 19th September we had the return bowls match at Stockport against the plastic scousers from Birkenhead. Worthy winners were Birkenhead, winning both the mens doubles and singles. Anne Beard and Hilda Hampson winning the ladies doubles for Stockport. Best young player was Tony's grandson, aged 14 years from Birkenhead. The Andy Breeze memorial trophy was presented by his father and sister to Birkenhead. Apart from the poor weather a good day's bowling was had by all. Birkenhead also won the Ken Ward memorial trophy.

On Saturday 25th September eight members attended the Friends of the Knot (STAFFORDS) regimental dinner in Burton-on-Trent, where MRA and CRA Chairman, Mr P Gresty, was guest speaker. It was an excellent meal, the wine and beer flowed well, followed by cheese and biscuits and port for the usual toasts to The Queen and the Regiment. While we made our way home, Peter and Lynne stayed overnight so that Peter, along with several others, finished off a further five bottles of port, leaving Lynne to drive them home the following morning.

On Saturday 16th October, twenty-two members and partners joined the OCA Ashton-under-Lyne (9th Manchesters) for their annual Passchendaele Dinner. Another superb dinner spent in congenial company. Branch Chairman Alan Kennedy presented a bouquet to Hazel Lomas, and husband Paul, who were celebrating Hazel's birthday and their wedding anniversary (40 years). We won't mention the lady's age. Congratulations to them both.

On Sunday 17th October branch members visited The Rifleman Public House in Stalybridge, which recently re-opened after the locals formed a syndicate, bought the pub and installed a landlady and two barmaids to run it. It also got its old name reinstated for the Guinness Book of Records, the longest named pub in England "The Thirteenth Cheshire Rifleman Astley Volunteer Inn." A good afternoon had by all. The branch presented four bottles of Cheshire Regiment wine to raffle off for Help for Heroes.

I will sign off by wishing all members of the CRA and 1st Battalion Mercian (Cheshire) a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

As this newsletter goes to press we will have had our East Cheshire Reunion and with 200 tickets sold at the moment, we look forward to another great night.

Wha wadna fecht for Charlie.

Keith Mort

TRANMERE BRANCH

Due to holidays, the "credit crunch" and attending as many Association functions as possible, at Branch level we have had a very quiet summer, hence the omission of our notes in the previous Newsletter.

At present Alan Rowe and Dave Mapley are preparing the annual coach trip to Belgium and I am going with a party of eight to join up with Stockport members in Malta.

WORD FROM THE BRANCHES (continued)

After these Remembrance trips we prepare for our Grand Xmas Prize Draw on the 11th December. With over £1000 worth of prizes, a top class act booked through an agency and a first class buffet it promises to be as successful as last year. Eddie Bottomley, who gives unstinting support to our functions and always has a great time along with many others.

It was with sadness that I learned of the deaths of two good friends, Lawrence Stubbs who attended many trips to Belgium with our Branch and was great company. Also Vic Young BEM. I served with Vic for many years in Germany and Northern Ireland, as did my brother Alan. Our condolences go to Hazel and family.

By the time you read this our lads will be home from Afghanistan and enjoying a well earned leave. We look forward to seeing them at the Sgts' Club reunion in early November.

Our message to those who have been injured during the conflict is simple, a speedy recovery to you all, we salute your bravery and you are not forgotten.

It is very good news that the Newsletter will be back to the quarterly issue next year, it certainly makes for better continuity. Our thanks to George Szwejkowski for all his hard work and a very good format.

To all members of the 1st. Battalion, the Association, and

their families, we wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year wherever you are.

Rusty

WALSALL BRANCH

It is my sad duty to inform you that we have lost another of our branch members. On 29th April Ron Abley passed away. He served with 7 Platoon, C Company from 1957 to 1959 in Malaya and Singapore. He was also a member of the Battalion boxing team. He will be greatly missed and our sincere condolences are offered to his family.

We had our AGM on 2nd September. There was a vacancy on the committee and Joe Sadler was appointed to be secretary. All other members were re-elected.

We now look forward to the East Cheshire Reunion at Stockport for a get together and sinking of a few jars with our friends. The next event will be Remembrance Sunday and hopefully all our members are in good health for the parade in Walsall. The Malaya and Singapore Reunion will be held on 14th May at Pelsall.

To all members of the 1st Battalion Mercian (Cheshire), we hope and pray for your safe return.

D J Sadler

22nd GOLF SOCIETY

Pryors Hayes, Friday 10th Sept 2010.

With record numbers of 32, the golf society of the 22nd met on a day that threatened to be pretty awful. However the almighty had a few quick words with the duty Angel and everything on the weather front was under control. It goes to show the regiment still has clout in high places!

It was a great day with the course in good condition and a starter of Bacon Baps and coffee to start you on your way.

First out were, for the first time, two ladies, Mrs. Sally Kane and Mrs. Robin French who went out with Brigadier Percival and Major Bill Jones.

There was some really good golf played on the day and the winner, Chris Whitehead came home with a 41!

George "ABC," who had not played for four years, got a nearest the pin! Trouble was it was the wrong hole for a hole in one! We are not sure which hole he was actually playing at the time but you know what Editors will do to get a story. (It was the 16th as I have regaled numerous others since. Ed)



32 Playing at Pryors Hayes

It was a great turn out and good to see so many old faces. Brigadier Prosser played after his illness, Mike Trevor Barnston was with us, and finished with a very respectable 34. Capt and Mrs. French travelled from Australia and went on to prove what good golfers they have in southern climes! It would be impossible to list all who played but it was really great to see so

many old faces turning out for a really splendid day's golf.

The prize giving was quite unique. Frank Barham kept giving his prizes to Brigadier Percival, his old company commander, and then the Brigadier started winning his own! Someone kept trying to give the crown jewels as a prize but we were a bit wary of that one!!!



Chris Whitehead with 1st prize and later best cumulative score over the season

Capt John Bigland, the secretary of 22nd Golf, laid on a really successful and enjoyable day and a very strong response came from all present for all the work Sue at RHQ and John does. More "22nd" golf hats were given out free to all who paid their

annual fees along with the first batch of golf shirts bearing the Regimental badge. Again all free! What an organizer.

There is little doubt that Pryors Hayes will see us again next year and we trust all of you out there will make the effort to get to as many games in the coming season.

Main winners (the list would be too long to include the many who received prizes)!

*1st Chris Whitehead 2nd Frank Barham
3rd Brig Percival 4th Mike Trevor Barnston*

Winner of Cumulative Comp over the season. Chris Whitehead.

Finally a very big thank you to Pryors Hayes Golf Club for a great day.

Bill Jones

EAST CHESHIRE REUNION

It was another successful East Cheshire Reunion with 185 members sitting down to supper.

It was good that Brigadier John Donnelly CBE, our Association President, Major General Keith Skempton CBE, Brigadier Mike Dauncey DSO and Mr Peter Gresty, Chairman of CRAMC were with us, as were seven WW2 veterans. The WW2 numbers are reducing each year but it is always a great pleasure to have them with us. We were also delighted that Phil Oulton also managed to make it.

This year more than ever, I thought that those attending truly represented the "Regimental Family." We had an age range from Brigadier Mike, now OC of the Nonagenarian Company, down to the 14 serving members of the 4th Battalion Mortar Platoon. As I looked round at the people who were sat at their tables I thought that probably there were representatives from every theatre that the Cheshire Regiment had served since 1939. A considerable number of the members attending were from the National Service era, who served in Suez, Malaya and Germany, but there were colleagues who served in, for example Hong Kong, Bosnia, Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Rhodesia, Oman and recently Iraq and Afghanistan.



Brigadier Mike Dauncey and Major Phil Oulton in deep conversation

Colleagues travel some distances to get here e.g. Brigadier Mike Dauncey from Dursley, Colonel David Owen from Hereford, John Ferns from Farnham, our President from Dorset, Brian Atherton from Cumbria, Ted Carrington from Lancaster, Lawrence Dunning from Dorset. As always, we appreciate the support that we get from the branches with members from twelve of them attending viz; Walsall, Birkenhead, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, Southern Region, Kirkham, Limavady, Stoke on Trent as well as our Cheshire neighbours Chester, Macclesfield, Sandbach and Nantwich. As usual the evening started with our "Lest we forget" a formal ceremony with the County Standard on parade and the turning of the pages of the Book of Remembrance by Colonel Edward Scott, Brigadier John Donnelly and Percy Cooke. Trumpeters from Bollington Brass Band blew Sunset, Last Post and Reveille and, as is the tradition, we concluded with three verses of Abide with Me. During the ceremony we remembered colleagues who had died during the past year and our 12 colleagues from 1st Battalion who lost their lives serving in Afghanistan. Before supper Derek Sykes said Grace.

After the traditional plate of Cheshire Hot Pot, followed by a selection of Cheshire Cheeses, we came to the toasts. Colonel

Edward Scott, our Presiding Officer proposed the "Loyal Toast"; Major John Holden "Our Colonel in Chief" and Brigadier John Donnelly proposed the toast to the "22nd" and also took the opportunity to update us on the 1st Battalion's recent tour of Afghanistan, which was very well received. We thank Brigadier John for attending; he is most welcome and recently he has seen a lot more of the work of the CRA in attending Wootton Bassett and the funerals of those who died. He spoke humorously of Derek Sykes and Terry Finlay attending these ceremonies in Derek's Ford car as being somewhat reminiscent of a scene from Last of the Summer Wine.



General Keith Skempton listening intently to Brigadier John Donnelly

Bollington Brass Band played during the evening, as has been the tradition for decades and this year the CRAMC authorised a financial grant to cover the cost of hiring the band. This generous gesture enables us to retain the price of £7.50 for the ticket and allows WW2 veterans free entry.

Some members left after the formal proceedings had ended as they had some distance to travel, others left to watch match of the day at home, but the stalwarts retired to the bar for further reminiscences, mindful of the fact that the clocks went back at 2 am and they would somehow regain that extra hour that they had erred and stayed in the bar.



John Fairbanks (centre), never short of a good story, regales Alan Jennings (right) and Mitch Elliott at the end of formal proceedings

EAST CHESHIRE REUNION (continued)

Brigadier John told me that he hoped to have an early night as the next day, Sunday the 31st he was running, with Pte Amir Unsworth, a marathon from Warrington to Chester Castle to raise money to help the families of the brave Mercian soldiers who were killed in action in Afghanistan. The money will also help to provide care and support for Mercian soldiers who have been horrifically injured out there. To this end Peter Gresty arranged for small Halloween buckets to be placed on each table which I understand raised some £700. Congratulations to Brigadier Donnelly, Pte Unsworth and all who participated in this very worthy cause and to our colleagues who donated so generously on the night.

As I mentioned at the beginning, it was so good to see Brigadier Mike and Phil Oulton at the reunion. Phil is still recovering from extensive medical treatment over the past year, but by just passing the word around that both Mike Dauncey and "Big Phil" would be attending added 30 tickets to the event. To me these are precious occasions in the folklore of the East Cheshire Reunion and as much we would like them to continue forever, we have to be realistic, but we sincerely hope that they will both be able to attend this event in the future.

Finally, thanks to everyone who attended the 2010 ECR. We hope to see you all next year on Saturday 29th October.

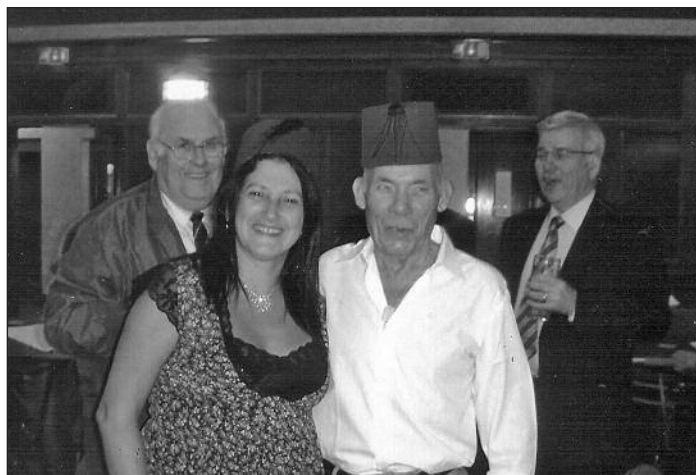
Alan Jennings

SUEZ REUNION

Saturday 17th July saw busy roads and motorways in the Ellesmere Port area as veterans of the Suez Canal Zone period 1951-1954 gathered for their 13th annual reunion. This again proved to be an excellent evening with veterans sorting through all the memorabilia and exchanging stories and reminiscences of yesteryear. A slightly worrying aspect in the run up to the reunion was the fact that it was beginning to look as though we would have more people involved in the entertainment than veterans attending the reunion. Finally the balance swung in our favour, with just over 80 attending, but this figure is now well down from 12 years ago, when we had nearly 200 attending. Unfortunately time is now catching up with us all.

The reunion evening went very well although it was disappointing that Brigadier Mike Dauncey, Lt Col David Owen and Major Mike Morgan-Wynne could not be with us owing to a misunderstanding. We were joined for the first time by Major Bill Jones and Major Eddie Pickering and again the CRAMC Chairman, Peter Gresty and his wife, Lynne, attended.

This year the entertainment was provided by "El Ghawazee," a group of ladies from Liverpool who specialise in Egyptian traditional dancing in the most colourful costumes. We also had the Band & Drums of the Moreton BB and GB from Wirral. This band has won many awards around the country and two of their young drummers have completed courses at the Royal Military School of Music. Unbeknown to us, their bandmaster had contacted our Regimental Secretary with a request for a copy of the music for our Regimental March. They were almost drowned out when they marched into the auditorium of the Civic Centre playing "Wa Wadna Fecht for Charlie" by the scraping of zimmer



John Fairbanks and Eddie Pickering in fine form while Geoff Hunt entertains Helena (Channel Isle guest)

frames and walking sticks falling to the floor as veterans hurriedly stood to attention, followed by loud cheering. Overall the reunion was a great success in spite of so many familiar faces missing.

Looking forward to 2011, the same venue has been booked, more details in the next edition of the newsletter. We must remember that 2011 will mark the 60th anniversary of the 1st Battalion being flown on its first ever air-lift from Cyprus to Port Said, so we would appeal to all Sues veterans to make a big effort for this reunion.

G.U.H. J.G.B.

NATIONAL ARBORETUM

On Saturday 11th September the Northern Ireland veterans of the CRA attended the National Northern Ireland Commemorative Parade at the National Arboretum at Alrewas, where a wreath was laid at the Ulster Stone on behalf of the Cheshire Regiment. Crosses were tied to the commemorative trees in the Ulster Grove for those who were killed in action in the Province. It was a moving parade and a chance for the veterans to meet old friends from their days in Northern Ireland. Next year's parade will be published in the newsletter for those who missed this year's event through not knowing the date.

A Gregson (Snr)

BERLIN / N. IRELAND REUNION

The fourteenth Berlin/Northern Ireland Reunion was held on the 24th July at the Castle, Chester, where 85 members attended a great night. Kirkham Branch kept up the tradition of winning on the Dutch raffle. Don't worry, they are now being closely watched.

There will be no reunion next year, as Blackpool is on again. All Northern Ireland and Berlin veterans are asked to attend Blackpool where we will meet up and join with the other branches there. Don't forget to book early to ensure your room.

A Gregson (Snr)

POTSDAM REVISITED by Peter Gresty

On one of our most recent return trips to Berlin Lynne and I decided to pay a repeat visit to one of our favourite locations from when we were posted in the city just before the final withdrawal of Russian and Allied troops. This is one of those places that the majority of people who served in Berlin during the Battalions 2 tours in the city, and before the Berlin Wall fell, will never have had the chance to experience as it was located in East Germany and as such was not accessible for many years.

Getting from Berlin to Potsdam is actually very easy and the whole journey is covered on a transport ticket if you buy the right one, if unsure ask somebody. An S Bahn (surface train) takes you from the Zoologische Gardens, or any S Bahn station on the Charlottenburg line, direct to Potsdam where a bus from just outside the station will take you straight to the Neues Palace. Entry to the parks is complimentary although donations are welcome however entry to individual palaces normally occasions a small charge.

Although Berlin was the capital city of Germany the Royal Court was located at Potsdam and it was here that the declaration of World War I was signed at the Neues Place in 1914 by the Emperor Willhelm II. The city lost its status as a second capital



Sanssouci Palace

in 1918, when Wilhelm II abdicated at the end of World War I.

At the start of the Third Reich in 1933 there was a ceremonial handshake between President Paul von Hindenburg and the new Chancellor Adolf Hitler on 21 March 1933 in Potsdam's Garrison Church in what became known as the "Day of Potsdam." This symbolised a coalition of the military (Reichswehr) and Nazism.

Potsdam was severely damaged in bombing raids during World War II and unfortunately did not fare any better when the Russians



The Neues Palace at Potsdam

occupied the area, they routinely used the palaces and surrounding buildings as training props and targets, and even went so far as to topple the statues from the buildings to stop anybody hiding amongst them and spying on them. I am happy to say though that the German government is steadily refurbishing the palaces and gardens and are doing an excellent job of it, the differences between 1994 when we left the city and now are tremendous.



Chinese Tea House

At the end of World War II Potsdam hosted the "Potsdam Conference" from 17 July to 2nd August 1945 which was held in Schloss Cecilienhof and at which the victorious Allied leaders



Schloss Cecilienhof, Setting for The Potsdam Conference

POTSDAM REVISITED by Peter Gresty

(Harry S. Truman; Winston Churchill and his successor, Clement Attlee; and Joseph Stalin) met to decide the future of Germany and post-war Europe in general. The conference ended with the Potsdam Agreement and the Potsdam Declaration.

Sanssouci Park is a beautiful setting and after wandering from one end of the park, through the palaces dotted about almost haphazardly, to the other end head for the old city of Potsdam which hosts a lively cafe culture passing through the Brandenburg Gate (This is the original gate dating back to 1770 and pre-dates the more famous one in Berlin City Centre) for something to eat and drink before heading back to the train station to catch the S Bahn back or if you are feeling adventurous even catch a bus back to Spandau and then take the U Bahn to the city centre or to wherever you are staying.

If you are thinking of visiting Berlin we strongly recommend a day trip to Sanssouci Park and the Palaces, you will not be disappointed.



Brandenburg Gate leading to the old town

YPRES VISIT – 3RD OCTOBER 2010 by Roy Banwell

Rather than staying at home and feeling sorry for ourselves after being made redundant on the 1st October, we set off for Ypres to pay our respects to the people who made the ultimate sacrifice. I would like to point out it was not just for our Regiment who have died and are still dying for the greater good. It was respect for those that have been affected by war or terrorism. People like Bridies' Grandfather whom she never met; he was a Dubliner and did not have to join the war to end wars, but did so. His reward was shellshock and the rest of his life confined to an institution. As we all know it is not just the serving that suffer, all men, women and children are touched by such events.

We, Haydn and Colin and I set off on the 3rd October. We had spent years on the same shift talking about this trip, promising one day we would do it, but work always got in the way. Colins' Great Grandfather is celebrated on the memorial at Thiepval and like so many he has no grave, his body was never found, so naturally we would visit this site along with the many others.

We travelled in my car via the Channel Tunnel; I was very impressed just how slick the reception and journey through the tunnel was. In no time we arrived at the Ambrosia Hotel in Ypres, it is well placed to visit the different areas, the Menin Gate and the mainly drinking houses we visited. Having settled in we had dinner and then attended the Menin Gate last post ceremony. Every time I have attended this ceremony I have been impressed by the large numbers of children and young people, it is very gratifying to know that it is not just people like us keeping the ceremony alive.

Day two our first port of call was to Passendale and the Tyne Cot cemetery which is the resting place of 11,954 soldiers of the Commonwealth Forces. Haydn & Colin were overwhelmed by the scale of the losses. That the rear of Tyne Cot the walls are the memorials to the missing and commemorates 34,887 names of men from the United Kingdom and New Zealand Forces and whom have no known grave. We moved on to the Hooge Crater and the Crater Cemetery containing 5,922 burials including a Victoria Cross winner, Captain Harold Ackroyd, but more interestedly for me was 6056 CSM H. G. Birkby "Cheshire Regiment." I hope our "Hod" Birkby won't mind me mentioning his Grandfather who died on the 14th October 1918, nearly 92

years from the day I stood there. Hod was surrounded by six other Cheshire soldiers. Pte A. Lawton, Qmr Sjt G.A. Brundon, Sjt F. Wall, Pte R. Snalan, Pte Frank Halton and Pte W. D. Parry. I am unaware if any Birkby's are serving today but in the past there family have contributed much to their country.

Hill 62 and Sanctuary Wood via Hellfire corner was our next port of call. At Sanctuary Wood museum we got talking to two ladies who happened to be volunteers from the original Talbot House "Toc H" in Poperinge, my memory went straight back to Berlin in 1970/72 when I would go to the Toc H in Spandau on a Sunday morning, for a mug of tea and an egg roll.

Day three, the long awaited trip to Thiepval for Colin, we had discussed this day for years while on our night shifts and the impressive monument didn't let us down. We quickly found his Great Grandfather 20656 Pte David Thomas, 13th Battalion. The King's (Liverpool Regiment) from amongst the other 72,195 names again none of whom have a known grave.

While we were in the area we also visited the Ulster Tower and Beaumont-Hamel Memorial. Beaumont-Hamel being the Newfoundland Memorial containing well preserved trench systems of both German and Commonwealth troops. We were received warmly by the young Canadian volunteers whom spend six months there out of respect to their fellow countrymen, one your lady informed us her Great Uncle had died in this area, it was most a most humbling experience.

Day four, we started the day by walking the medieval walls of the town, from the Menin Gate and ending at the Ramparts Cemetery. The Ramparts Cemetery brought out all manner of emotions in me; the setting is so wonderful, laid out on a slight incline overlooking the moat the sun shining through the willow trees on this sunny autumn day. My first emotion was "what a lovely place to be buried," an emotion that would not be shared by the 198 soldiers buried there, eleven of them being "Cheshires" or by the five men that were executed on the ramparts 1915. A trip to Ypres would not be complete without a visit to the world famous Cloth Hall, In Flanders Field Museum and the St Matins' Cathedral. In all it was an excellent trip and should be undertaken by anyone able to do so.

This was my third visit to Ypres, Colin and Haydn's first. I will never tire of visiting or paying my respects to all whom in some way had the fortune or privilege to serve their country.

WHO'S PAYING THE TALIBAN TO KILL BRITISH SOLDIERS? by Arthur Clarke

Give yourself a Kick

Do you know any drug addicts? Give them a kick. Do you know any contractors working in Afghanistan? Give them a kick as well. Do you drive a car with oil purchased from one of the Gulf States? Give yourself Ah well, you've guessed where I'm leading.

Providing the Finance

It's been kept secret for a long time but finally the truth has emerged that British drug users, and, to a lesser extent, those in Germany, France and Italy, are paying directly to supply almost 50% of the funds used to keep the Taliban in arms and equipment which are used to kill our soldiers. (American drug addicts don't use much Afghan opium, they have plenty of drugs coming in from Latin America). About another 20- 30% of the Taliban's income comes again from the West via our oil payments to the Persian Gulf countries, who pass on a percentage in assistance to the Taliban. And finally, the contractors, who are receiving billions of dollars from America and Europe for the various construction programmes, have to pay large sums in 'protection' money. This 'Protection' is negotiated between the contractors and top officials' in the Taliban, at the highest level. In other words: Who is providing the money to sustain the Taliban? Answer: We are.

You might think it ridiculous, but the West is actually funding both sides in this war but only putting in troops on one side. It would be a joke if men weren't dying.

Founding and Training the Insurgents

However, to be fair, the Clinton administration, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia created the Taliban in the first place. When the Soviet Union sent 'advisors' into the country in 1979 to assist the communist government, it was mainly the US who organised, armed and trained the mujahedeen to resist them. It was largely due to the supply of highly sophisticated US surface to air missiles, notably Stingers, that the Soviets lost so many planes and helicopters – Soviet technology was defeated by Western technology.

Britain's Drug Users

Britain has one of the highest percentages of drug users in the world.- almost half a million people in Britain are on drugs. In some prisons over 70% of the inmates are said to be drug users.

It isn't just people at the bottom of the social heap who take drugs; many users hold important positions in society, quite a few university students are drug users, a large number of celebrities, people like George Michael, Whitney Houston, Kate Moss, Ricky Hatton, John Lennon and many, many others, have admitted to it. And, from what one reads, the use of drugs, is also widespread amongst City financiers, lawyers, and, of course, people in the media, in fact 50% of all young people in the UK are said to have used drugs

I used to think, that drug users were pathetic individuals who didn't care about their own health and well being or used them to overcome some inadequacy but now I know that they are paying the Taliban to kill our soldiers I think rather differently.

What else can they do?

According to the latest UN Report, Afghanistan ranks 174th out of 178 on the UN index of the world's poorest countries; 35% have less to eat than the daily minimum requirement for health,

40% of men are unemployed, health care and education are minimal, an Afghan woman stands a 1 in 9 chance of eventually dying in childbirth, one child in four dies before the age of 5.

They haven't got any oil or, as far as we know, any other natural resources. What are they supposed to do? They have to survive by whatever means they can. Growing opium is one obvious answer – Afghanistan produces 93% of the world's opium and the great British public is only too eager to buy it. Another option offered by the Taliban is that of insurgent; the pay is \$8 a day, plus free food, clothing and accommodation, the family is also cared for. If he is wounded he receives good medical attention.

The Taliban was once very unpopular with the ordinary people. Their strict Moslem views on the subjugation of women, beheading, flogging, stoning, amputating and various other gruesome practices do not appeal to most people. In 2001 they appeared to be on the brink of defeat but since then they have recovered and, apparently, gained a lot of support. This is because, quite simply, the people don't trust the West to stay the course. They know that one day the Taliban will be back and any collaborators with the Americans will receive a short, brutal and most likely terminal punishment.

Can the West Win?

Unemployment is known as 'the mother of all problems'. Some economists believe that market forces will eventually prevail and work will be generated, the Taliban will evaporate and Afghanistan becomes a prosperous and happy country. If young men have careers and work, so they say, insurgency will not be such an attractive proposition. I am afraid that I have no such optimism: without oil, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Iraq etc would all be in the same position. It is only because they have abundant oil that they are not as destitute as Afghanistan.

Sometimes one wonders about the West's real interest in Afghanistan. I remember vaguely reading or hearing a report (it was over twenty years ago), by a highly placed defence expert in which he said, "We must keep Northern Ireland. It is the finest infantry training area in the world." (or words to that effect). The cost was around 750 military deaths and thousands injured between 1969 and 1998. Plus 2000 civilian deaths. Quite a price to pay for a good training facility.

The problem is that politicians are adept at evasion. The European Commission asserts that narcotics abuse is simply a health and social problem not a matter of security or criminality and seeks to "keep it at manageable levels."

But one high ranking NATO commander told them "I don't want my soldiers dying for the sake of a drug addict." And they are. Our soldiers are fighting an enemy being kept in the field by citizens of their own countries whose governments are in denial and refuse to face up to reality.

From what I read, it seems to me that the US Senate has already decided to pull out. They can't control the drug addicts, we need the oil from the Middle East to run our cars and our industries, and we can't secure our reconstruction programmes without the assistance of the Taliban. And we can't stay in the country for ever.

The Triumph of the Will

President Obama is a clever man, a charismatic speaker, an able lawyer, an academic, but he is no war leader and everyone knows it - Democrats and Republicans alike. He simply hasn't got the qualities or experience of a Winston Churchill or

WHO'S PAYING THE TALIBAN TO KILL BRITISH SOLDIERS? by Arthur Clarke

President Eisenhower. What he does have is an academic's ability to see both sides of a question and a lawyer's facility to be impartial in a dispute - to act for the prosecution or the defence as the occasion demands. What he lacks is fervour and the will to win. Hitler, whatever his failures, understood very well that it is the stronger will (remember Leni Riefenstahl's Triumph of the Will) which normally prevails. The troops feel it, the generals feel it and the public feel it.

Stalin also understood that ruthless domination of the battlefield was all important.

In our post modern, touchy feely, democratic, welfare states those attributes are not thought much of, and so the war, just like that in Vietnam, is defined as 'unwinnable' or, in other words, "let's call it a draw and all go home." If only the world were so simple.

JOHN FAIRBANKS WRITES – PART ONE

THE WAY WE WERE – 6

It has proved possible to decipher more information from the mouldering remains of the booklet recently unearthed in the cellars of Chester Castle. All the indications are that this publication was issued in the 1950s/60s to National Service recruits to help them adjust to their new life. Following excellent work by a local forensic science lab further extracts are now available for publication.

Anklets. Items of webbing equipment commonly known as gaiters. These are worn around the ankles and serve to protect the bottom of trouser legs from wear and tear. New recruits are instantly recognisable because for some unfathomable reason they always wear their gaiters upside down.

Answers. One of the first lessons a soldier must learn is how to respond when questioned by his superiors. It is vital to remember that all replies should be as vague and noncommittal as possible. For example when you commit an offence against military discipline (which you will, it's easily done) and the Company Commander asks "Why didn't you use your initiative?" your reply must never be "I've not been issued with one yet sir!" Such sarcasm will guarantee you a lengthy period of forced labour or some other unpleasant experience. Regrettably, during your service, you could one day find yourself lying wounded on the battlefield and a passing Colonel might enquire "Are you ok soldier?" Under no circumstances should you reply "Of course not you stupid bastard!!" That is not the way to get a mention in despatches. And never forget that when forcibly asked by an irate RSM if you are a bloody brainless idiot (or words to that effect) your response must always be "Yes I am sir!!" Any other answer is tantamount to suicide.

Battalion Orderly Officer. This is an administrative duty performed by a junior officer, usually a lieutenant, normally over a period of 24 hours. However, a young officer who in some way sins against Mess etiquette can find himself condemned to an indefinite period of duty. It all depends on how his Commanding Officer views the severity of his crime. During his term of office the Orderly Officer is required to visit the OR's cookhouse at meal times and, when requested, taste the food. He must also supervise the daily Guard Mounting ceremony, take Staff parade, close the bar in the camp NAAFI, and visit the guard during the early hours. All young officers required to perform the above mentioned duties soon learn that they can be fraught with danger. For instance tasting the OR's food is not a task to be undertaken lightly except by persons with desensitised palates. And turning off the supply of booze to the Battalion alcoholics should only be attempted with the assistance of the Provo Sergeant and some of the brawnier members of the Regimental Police.

Boards - Tapping of. Sooner rather than later during your military career, and perhaps more than once, you will find yourself required to attend a disciplinary hearing presided over

by your Commanding Officer. To begin the time honoured protocol of 'tapping the boards' you, the witnesses, and a two man escort, under the control of the RSM, are marched at 120 paces to the minute across the highly polished floorboards of the CO's office. This ancient ritual becomes intensely interesting when the RSM screams "Halt." Because it is at that precise moment that all concerned discover that polished floors and heavily studded army boots are definitely not compatible. The resultant total destruction of the office furniture brought about by numerous bodies hurtling uncontrollably across the floor might bring about a short pause in the proceedings, but it is usually the removal of one or more of the injured participants, to the nearest medical establishment, that brings a premature end to the age-old ceremony of 'Tapping the boards'.

Essential Items. There are three items absolutely crucial to the well being and correct functioning of any military unit. The infantry in particular would be unable to achieve full fighting efficiency without copious quantities of these vital ingredients being readily available. That is why the War Office has prevailed upon the NAAFI to maintain abundant supplies to units throughout the world. So successful has this programme been that NAAFI has become one of the wealthiest business organisations on earth due entirely to massive sales of Blanco, Brasso and Kiwi boot polish to the PBI.

Civilians. Unfortunates who, being unable to join the armed forces, are obliged to work for a living.

Civilian Clothes. Disguise adopted by soldiers when circumstances require them to fraternise with civilians.

Civvie Attached. The most despicable libellous insult one soldier can offer another.

Great Coat. The army greatcoat is similar in appearance to a civilian overcoat. It is made of a stiff extremely heavy, highly absorbent, woollen cloth and is festooned with a plethora of brass buttons. All infantrymen dread being ordered to parade dressed in greatcoats because, once all the buttons have been fastened, it is virtually impossible to move. When wet, the coat's weight increases dramatically and the material can harden. In such cases the greatcoat can only be removed with the assistance of a structural engineer or a garage mechanic.

Initiative. Just like Sir Lancelot eternally seeking the Holy Grail, or Australians endlessly scouring the Outback looking for the Black Stump, Officers and senior NCOs' of the British Army have for countless years been committed to a similarly fruitless quest. They are perpetually searching for a specimen of the legendary and mysterious 'initiative' reputedly possessed by every British private soldier. But alas, although years of rummaging through the small packs of countless servicemen has occasionally uncovered a Field Marshal's Baton, not the slightest trace of the elusive 'initiative' has ever been found.

THE LIGHTNING CONDUCTORS by George Szwejkowski

Over the years the regiment has acquired many nicknames, but I have always been fascinated by one in particular. The Lightning Conductors was a name given after the 2nd Battalion was struck by lightning in 1899 when marching from Limerick to Thurles in order to take part in their autumn manoeuvres.

On a recent holiday in Ireland I thought that I would try and retrace the 2nd Battalion's steps all those years ago. Although I had visited Ireland on several occasions, I still stupidly made the mistake of thinking that Ireland was a small country, and in comparison to many, I suppose it is. However staying on the south-west coast of Kerry I had miss-judged the distance that I would need to travel in order to reach my start point of Limerick. It was therefore well after mid-day that together with my current spouse, Lynne, we managed to negotiate the Irish roads and what seemed interminable road works and arrived at Limerick, better known to the locals as Stab City.

We quickly availed ourselves of the local museums and made some perfunctory enquiries about the exploits of the 22nd back in 1899, however only blank expressions met our searching gaze. It was perhaps a little foolhardy of us to expect a warm reception when speaking about the British Army, and a cursory glance around the city museum indicated that Limerick and the surrounding area was a hotbed of anti-British feeling a hundred years or so ago and unlikely to pay much attention to the woes of a few Brits who had not invested in a lightning protection policy prior to traversing the highways of Counties Limerick and Tipperary.

Those who have imparted with the requisite money (£45) in order to purchase the new editions of *Ever Glorious* can turn to page 281 of Volume 1 and learn of the events of Thursday 3rd August 1899. For those who have not yet parted with the aforementioned sum I will attempt a précis.

The Battalion left Limerick early in the morning of 3rd August, reaching Newport by 8a.m. The weather was extremely hot and so the next part of the march, some 21 miles, was carried out at night (what an awfully thoughtful CO they must have had). They duly set off at 9p.m. heading towards Upperchurch. After seven miles it began to get even hotter and the ground became extremely dusty. The Battalion shortly after reached high ground when the wind suddenly got up and cloud and rain swiftly followed. Suddenly lightning struck the column, firstly striking the Maxim gun, felling an officer and eight men to the ground. It then struck up and down the column, almost certainly attracted to the swords, rifles and bayonets carried by the men. Some had weapons struck out of their hands and many were dazed by the flashes and cracks of thunder. The men were ordered to place their weapons on the ground in an attempt to avoid the lightning, but it continued to move up and down the lines, striking individuals. The lightning ceased after an hour and the Battalion finally arrived in Upperchurch at 7 a.m. Most of those struck stayed with the column, however twelve ended up back in Limerick Hospital whilst the Battalion continued on its way to Thurles the following day.

Although it had not been a conscious decision, I suddenly realised that by some twist of fate I was following in their footsteps, almost to the day, one hundred and eleven years later.

Ever Glorious had extracted the story directly from the pages of the Irish Times, but I also had done a little bit of homework. I managed to find references to the event in the British Medical Journal (19th August 1899) and I also traced the most likely route on local maps so that I could be more precise about the exact location of the event.

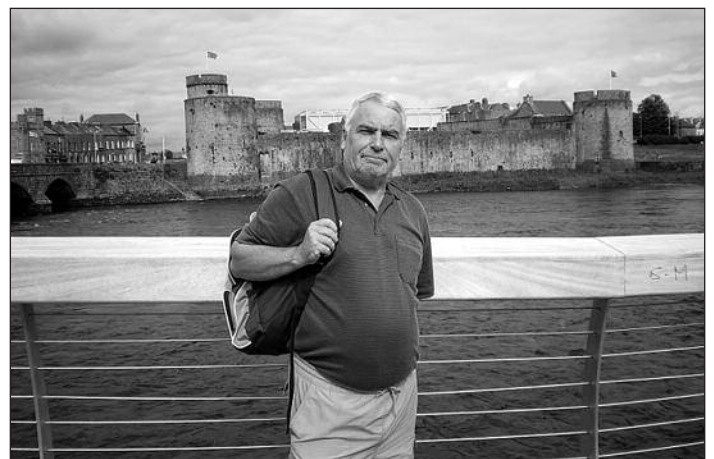
We followed the R503 out of Limerick, timing it ever so well that we were slap bang in the middle of the rush hour. It is unlikely

that our comrades from 1899 would have been perturbed by much more than the odd horse and cart and it would not surprise me that despite all our technological advances, and lightning notwithstanding, the journey was not quicker all those years ago.

We eventually reached Newport but could not easily determine where the camp might have been set up. We pressed on and began searching for the most likely scene of the event itself. Having read through the report I knew that it had occurred at least seven miles out of Newport and four hours march prior to Upperchurch. Calculating that the column was making no more than three miles per hour, I looked on the map for any high ground that occurred between seven miles from Newport and twelve miles from Upperchurch. There was one likely area and this was between Reabeg and Rearcross, even today a pretty desolate area with just the odd farm building breaking up the plethora of fields and woods. Standing on the road, I tried to imagine what it must have been like one hundred and eleven years ago, to have endured an hour of incessant storms and lightning, with nothing for miles around and no means of assistance. Some of the views were pretty spectacular, but this was something that our forebears would not have enjoyed that night, nor would they have had much time for.

We headed off for Upperchurch, a small village and probably not much different than it was in 1899, and then on to Thurles, the 2nd Battalion's destination for their manoeuvres. It was a big mistake! Unbeknown to us, Thurles is the spiritual home of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). As our luck would have it Tipperary were playing at home in their Semple Stadium that evening. It would seem that the whole neighbourhood had the same desire to watch men hit a spherical object with funny shaped sticks, from one end of a field to another (a bit like watching Watford Football Club in the early 1980s, but without the sticks). Access to the town was jammed for miles around with private conveyances seemingly abandoned as spectators walked the remaining distance to the stadium. When we finally threaded our way through to the centre of Thurles, we found a deserted town with almost everything shut. Any attempt to find further enlightenment on the Lightning Conductors was met with a closed door.

It was a long drive back to Kerry and I realised that I had not actually seen any evidence of the event that I had come to investigate. Nevertheless, I still felt a strong affinity with those members of the 2nd Battalion and that I had truly trodden in their footsteps. In an attempt for authenticity I had even asked my current spouse to shoulder one of my golf clubs (a seven iron) when we reached the most likely spot on the R503. I don't know why she complained so vociferously, as everyone knows that lightning never strikes in the same place twice!



A tanned and svelte-like Editor leaving St John's Castle in Limerick

JOHN FAIRBANKS WRITES – PART TWO

PISTE AGAIN

I spent several winters working in the Austrian resorts and what I witnessed made me realise how ill prepared your average Briton is for the myriad dangers inherent in winter sports in general, skiing in particular. To any of my intrepid countrymen who may be thinking of risking life and limb on a winter sports holiday, I feel it is the right time for me to disclose a few facts concerning some of the problems they will meet during their stay in the Alps. My aim is not to teach people how to ski, but simply to pass on information that may help them to survive some of the hazards lying in wait for the unwary would be skier. My advice is aimed at first time skiers or those of limited experience. In the Alps it is often claimed that Yodelling is done by singing and shivering at the same time, but I feel I must point out that a similar noise is often heard issuing from the throats of novice skiers who, having started on their first downhill solo effort, suddenly realise that there are no brakes. This alarming oversight by the manufacturers of skis makes it imperative that all skiers learn how to stop. In general there are two ways of doing so, these are (a) by joining a ski school and taking professional teaching of the various technical methods of slowing down or (b) learning from bitter experience. The latter is how most people learn and is the category which I will attempt to describe in order to try to slightly increase survival rates.

The Nose Dive

Though this discipline can be done deliberately it usually starts as an attempt to stop by doing a 'snowplough'. As pressure is applied to force the heels out and turn the toes in, a slight decrease in your downhill momentum is achieved. But the slowing down of the feet will not prevent the top half of your body from continuing to advance with the result that you will bend slowly but inexorably forward until your nose makes contact with the snow. The pressure of your nasal organ on the

snow will act as an auxiliary brake and bring you to an eye watering halt. Please note that should you use this method care must be taken to immediately free your nostrils from the resultant accumulation of snow and thus prevent frost bite.

The Sideways Collapse

When a skier is moving, at approximately walking pace, the only action needed to halt his steadily increasing momentum is to allow one leg to buckle, which causes the skier to fall. For best results the aim should be to collapse downhill so that the body hits the snow with maximum impact thereby producing extremely efficient brake power.

The Grab It

This method is normally used when a fairly rapid speed has been reached. All that the by now desperate skier can do is to throw away his now useless ski poles and try to grab hold of something as he flies past. This frequently works but unfortunately does have two major faults. Firstly, it is often impossible to retain a hold on whatever you are clutching at which means that you simply change direction at far greater speed. Secondly, should you in your panic grab hold of another skier, the net result is two out of control skiers desperately trying to stop.

The Alternative

When maximum speed has been reached, and when all of the previously mentioned drills have been tried, and failed, the only alternative (hence the name) left to the doomed skier is to hit something solid. This is a most effective, dramatic, but always painful method of stopping which is recognised and practised the world over. In Canada, at a popular ski-ing resort, at the bottom of the piste, there is a sign which reads 'Emergency Stopping Area'. It is painted on the gable end of a house.

BOOK REVIEW

Clay

by Gladys Mary Coles

This is the author's first published novel, although she also has ten published collections of poetry and a biography on the writer, Mary Webb, to her name.

The main reason that I am giving this novel a short review in this newsletter is because the central character, William Manderson, a poet, is depicted as serving in the Cheshire Regiment during the First World War.

The story unfolds as William Manderson, from a Welsh background, although living in Liverpool, serves on the Western front until he is gassed and, after a spell in various hospitals, is invalided out of the Army. The plot centres round his family and friends as they all struggle to come to terms with their physical and psychological injuries after the war. The events are woven around the 1919 Police strike and the civil unrest following the war. Many readers of this newsletter will be from the North-West and will readily recognise the backdrops of North Wales, Chester, Liverpool and Birkenhead. Many will not be aware that in 1917 Birkenhead hosted Wales' National Eisteddfod. Welsh migrants were a large contingent of the population and contributed to both its industrial and cultural development. This

Eisteddfod was memorable because the award of the chair to the poet, Ellis Humphrey Evans, was probably calculated to embarrass the Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, who was attending. Ellis Humphrey Evans did not come forward to accept the award, because he had been killed the previous month in Belgium. As a poet herself, this event clearly made a mark with the author and perhaps explains why an integral part of her story centres on the Birkenhead Eisteddfod. Wilfred Owen, the great World War I poet also spent most of his life in Birkenhead.

The novel also explores William Manderson's evolution as a poet and his relationships with his friend Matthew and his brother's wife, Elizabeth.

Gladys Mary Coles launched her novel at the Chester Literature Festival on 20th October. A fitting place, as some of her novel is based there and of course much of her extensive research took place in the Cheshire Military Museum at the Castle.

I have to say that I found the story a little slow to get started and it was only later on that a more robust depiction of the various relationships emerged. Nevertheless I enjoyed this novel, particularly as I was familiar with so many of the places depicted. If I have one criticism it is that I lost count of the number of times that Lime Street in Liverpool is mentioned throughout the story.

George Szwejkowski

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editor,

I served in the Regiment from April 1961 to 1971. Our CSM was Bill Helliwell and Company Commander was Peter Trueman – “Trueman’s Trotters.” I was sorry to learn of the death of Bill Helliwell’s wife, Jean. I have also just lost my brother, ex WO2 Vic Young.

The village in which I live is just a mile from the National Arboretum and if any time I can be of help in any way regarding visits the Arboretum then please don’t hesitate to contact me, especially for good watering holes!

I recently received the following from a friend of mine and thought it may be of some interest. It is a photograph of the tomb of Lord Rollo, which is situated in the Churchyard of St Margaret’s Church, Leicester. As a Lieutenant Colonel Lord Rollo commanded the 22nd Regiment and the following inscription can still be read on his tomb.

Best regards
Joe Young

Here are deposited by his express desire the remains of the Right Honourable Andrew, Lord Rollo, a Scots Peer, who betaking himself, tho’ late, to the Military Life, soon became distinguished by the exertion of every talent which constitutes the Spirited Commander; the Humane Officer; and complete Gentleman.

As Lieutenant Colonel Commandant he embarked with the 22nd Regiment, in the year 1756, for North America, from whence, after a series of the severest and most dangerous Services in the year 1761 as Brigade General, he was detached by General Amherst to reduce the Island of Dominique, which with 700 men he happily affected.

He soon after shared in the siege of Martinique, where he lost his only son, a youth of the most promising hopes, who had served the Generals Amherst and Monkton as Brigade Major.

He afterwards landed at the Havannah, where he served at the head of a Brigade till within 10 days till of the reduction of Fort Moro, when the pressure of present duty, the fatigue of past services, a broken constitution and the importunity of his General and physicians, obliged him to retire. He died at Leicester the 2nd June 1765 in the 61st year of his age, on his way to Bristol where he had been advised to go for the recovery of his health.



Lord Rollo’s tomb in St Margaret’s Church, St Margaret’s Way, Leicester

Dear Editor,

In regards to Brian “Dickie” Dales letter in issue 5, I too was on the said ship, just to remind Dickie, our first port of call was Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, next port was Aden, then through the Suez Canal, we stopped at Port Said to replenish the water, then to Gib, then Southampton to disembark. I remember it well. Sgt Bill Helliwell lost his eye at New Brighton, and the exercises were called Kape.

Regards **David “Johnny” Law**. ex 1st bn 22nd Cheshire Regt 1958-1964

Dear Editor,

Please print on your next newsletter a message for all 2nd Battalion veterans who served in Palestine 1945/8.

A drama is going out in early new year on Palestine when we were there. I sent the writers a bit of gen on it. At long last it is going out on Channel 4 BBC next year. I was in C Company until it folded, then HQ and put on MT. I wonder how many of us are left now. Hello to all who are left, and good luck.

Taffy Des Powell (from the Rhondda)

Dear Editor,

Just a couple of lines to say that I’ve just received the Ever Glorious books. In volume 1, page 472, about Captains Lane and Reed, who lost their lives in the Kasauli fire. Private Blackburn got Captain Lane away and was awarded the BEM. Did you know at the end of the 1939-45 war, the BEM was taken away from him and he was given the George Cross instead. By the way, that fire lasted for ten days and with the heat on the ground all the studs in my boots fell out.

All the best. **Les Stelfox**

THE BRAVEST LITTLE STREET IN ENGLAND FUND RAISING DVD

This DVD gives a further insight into the story of Chapel Street, Altrincham and the bravery and courage of 161 men that answered the call to arms in 1914. Once dubbed “The Bravest Little Street in England,” both King George V and later King George VI paid homage to their courage and sacrifice.

Peter Hennerley is the sole distributor of this DVD and is asking for a minimum donation of £7 per copy. Any surplus money raised will go to the CRA and the Royal British Legion.

To find out more, or to order a copy, please call Peter on 0161 491 0018.

RIDE TO THE WALL

On Saturday 2nd October several members of the CRA attended the annual Ride to the Wall (RTTW) organised by the bike riders of the Royal British Legion, to remember those who were killed on active service this year. All monies raised went to the upkeep and maintenance of the National Arboretum. Last year’s event raised over £30,000, which was passed this year by the 15,000 bikers and visitors that attended.

Twelve crosses and a wreath were laid on behalf of 1 Mercian (Cheshire) to commemorate the Regiment’s recent tour in Afghanistan. Their names will be added to the wall panels in May 2011, under the 2010 panel.

Anyone who would like to attend next year’s event will find it on the internet under R.T.T.W. 2011.

Alan Gregson (Snr)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2010-2011

2010

5 Dec Droppin Well Memorial Service, Ballykelly

2011

19 Feb CRA AGM & Meeanee Reunion, Chester

15 Apr Officers Association Lunch,
Wellington College, Crowthorne (tbc)

6 May Chester Races

3-6 Jun Grand Reunion, Norbreck Hotel, Blackpool

12 Sep Officers Association Ladies Dinner, Chester

3 Sep Mons Day Parade & Lunch, Chester

CLUB NEWS

The Club can be used for Branch Events and Private Parties by arrangement. A concessionary hire rate for CRA members' private use applies. Branches do not pay to use the Club.

Revised normal opening times are:

Monday 1200-1400

Wednesday 1200-1400

Friday 1200-1400

1900-2330

Saturday - by arrangement

Sunday 1200-1400

For all Club enquiries, contact Alan Jones on 07906753699

MONS DRAW 2010 – PRIZE WINNERS

Tickets drawn by Joe Granelli, Chris Priest and Tom Snooks of 1 MERCIAN

1st £400 Rick Burchett

2nd £250 Brian Hibbert

3rd £125 Patricia Jackson

4th £100 Dave Owens

5th £50 MK Mort

6th £50 Hannah Earnshaw

7th £25 P Oulton

8th £25 A Pritchard-Gordon

9th £10 KJ Jones

10th £10 G Statham

22 CLUB WINNERS

July

£100 JG Ball / £50 CRA Chester Branch / £25 JS Holden

August

£100 DJ Clark / £50 BJ D'Arcy / £25 DS Baddeley

September

£100 S Robinson / £50 KJ Rennie / £25 C Lane

October

£100 AP Jones / £50 JMH Owen / £25 Mrs VM Smart

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

MOD Medal Office

The MOD Medal Office has moved, the new address is;

MOD Medal Office

G36, Innsworth House

Imjin Barracks

Gloucester

GL3 1HW

Veterans Welfare Service

The SPVA Veterans Welfare Service has now completed the roll-out of the five new Welfare

Centres, providing advice and support across the UK. The contact details for each office are;

Norcross (based near Blackpool)

Tel: 01253 333494

Email: SPVA-VWSNorcross@mod.uk

Kidderminster (based in Worcester)

Tel: 01562 825527

Email: SPVA-VWSKidderminster@mod.uk

Centurion (based in Gosport)

Tel: 02392 702232

Email: SPVAVWSCENTURION@SPVA.mod.uk

Imjin (based in Gloucester)

Tel: 01452 510825

Email: Vws-innsworth@spva.mod.uk

Glasgow

Tel: 0141 2242709

Email: VWS-Glasgow@spva.mod.uk

Heroes Return 2

The Big Lottery fund is sending out final calls for Second World War Veterans to apply for funding from the Heroes Return 2 programme, which is awarding grants for them to return to the places across the world where they served, as well as to attend memorial events in the UK. Funding is still available and can be claimed up until 31 January 2011, though veterans must have travelled by 31 December 2010.

Further information or help can be obtained from the Heroes Return Helpline on **0845 00 00 121** or visit the website www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

British Forces News Website

A brand new hub for Forces news, at www.bfbs.com/news went live in August. News stories are posted throughout the day so you can go to the website at any time to get up-to-date Forces news. BFBS is the only broadcaster with video-journalists permanently based wherever the British forces are operating.

The website is a fantastic portal for all Defence news. As well as BFBS news-gathering, it aims to be an important hub for information about all three Services and local community news at garrison, airbase and dockyard level. The site will be rich in video and audio and has the scope to host longer-form versions of interviews, podcasts and useful links to further information.

Planning for the Future

The UK State Pension changed on 6 April 2010. People over 55 or who have recently retired may need to take action now to make sure they don't miss out on money for their future. For more information on how the State Pension change could affect you visit: www.direct.gov.uk/pensions

OUR INTREPID BIRDMAN

Readers will be somewhat amazed to learn that Brigadier Mike Dauncey, recently made a parachute jump. It all came about when he won a raffle prize in aid of Help for Heroes. His prize was for two people to make a free fall parachute jump with the Red Devils. So it was on the fine bright morning of 30th June 2009 that Mike and his son John (who no doubt had little say in the matter) took off in a light aircraft from Netheravon Airfield, Wiltshire.

This airfield has particular fond memories for Brigadier Mike, as it was here that he trained as a glider pilot during the war. The old Support Weapons Wing, School of Infantry, is just on the other side of the River Avon. Brigadier Mike was Commandant there in the mid 1970s. As his aircraft slowly climbed to 13,000 feet he had a clear view of both places. He had an even better view as he floated down to earth.

Rumour has it that now the coalition government is raising retirement age, Brigadier Mike is applying to join the Red Devils parachute display team as a permanent member. You just can't keep a good man down.

P. D. M-B



Netheravon Airfield – Brig Mike Dauncey DSO DL (left) and John Dauncey (right)

LAST POST

Ron Abley

Died 31 Jul 2010 served C Coy Malaya 1957-59

Ronald Bennett

Died 16 Jun 2010

Ted Brandrick

Died 9 Sep 2010

Edward Carter

Died 5 Jul 2010 aged 70 served 1960-72

Capt Mike Fryer

Died 23 Jun 2010 Ex 7 Bn TA

Reg Gardner

Died 21 Jul 2010 served 6th Bn during WW2 including the 8th Army in the desert and 56th London Division invasion of Italy, landing at Salerno

John Haspell

Died 14 Sep 2010

Jean Higgins

Died 29 Dec 2007 aged 68 wife of Sgt A Higgins

John Hughes

Died 17 Aug 2010 served 1939-50

Tom Hughes

Died 20th July 2010 aged 77. Ex 4 Bn Drums 1962 -1967. Previously served in 1 Lancashire Fusiliers.

Maj Anthony Johnson

Died 6 Jul 2010 aged 86 served 1944-78

Rfn Remand Kulung

1st Bn DOW 12 Aug 2010 whilst serving on Op Herrick 12

Thomas Lamb

Died 16 Aug 2010 aged 94 served 1934-39

Norman Lees

Died 30 Jun 2010 aged 92 Ex 4 Bn 1939-45

Dereck Mills

Died Jan 2010 served Malaya & Singapore

Tony (Taggart) Newton

Died 29 Sep 2010 1st Bn 1985-91 served in NI, Belize, Italy, Canada & Cyprus

Lt John Sanderson

1st Bn DOW 11 Aug 2010 whilst serving on Op Herrick 12

Pte Thomas Sephton

1st Bn KIA 5 Jul 2010 whilst serving on Op Herrick 12

Laurence Stubbs

Died 5 Sep 2010 aged 90 served 5th, 7th & 30th Bn

Margaret Talbot

Died 17 Jul 2010 wife of Maj Ted Talbot MM

Maj Ted Talbot MM

Died 19 Oct 2010 Ex 2Bn

Col Bob Tipper

Died 30 Sep 2010 aged 93 served 1936-67