



103rd Entry Association

Newsletter

Issue 29
August 2008



Entry Window
Re-dedication

Editor's comments & Editorial

Hello Readers,

Welcome again to another 103rd Entry Newsletter. I hope you enjoy all the contributions from around the world as well as local.

It is with sadness that I report on the death of Alan Milne. His eldest son, Richard, has written a fitting tribute which you will find on page 3.

I received two very interesting letters this time. A long letter from Richard (Dick) Horton who now lives in the Philippines and one from Alan (Tiny) Cowsill on his day out to HRH's garden party. (See Letters to the Editor on

page 6.) They are both a very good read

Don't forget, articles are still urgently required for the Newsletters so please sort out an old photo or a memory you are willing to share.

Send anything for inclusion into the Newsletter to me either by e-mail or by letter if you prefer to actually put pen to paper. It doesn't have to be RAF related; maybe you have had an interesting experience that you remember.

See the back page for where to send your article, comment or memoir. *Ed*

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Entry Window Re-Dedication Weekend May 2008 – Les Garden

Saturday turned out nice as we left for Aylesbury and our get together. We decided that we would lunch at a local pub and after a few abortive attempts, finally found a quite canal side pub where we had a substantial lunch. We would realise later on in the day how lucky a decision this was.

Booked in, got our room sorted out and proceeded to the bar where we found Kev and Rebecca Sheehan. Did the usual and caught up with what was happening and then more turned up. Eventually, saw this old gentleman wandering

through the bar and introduced myself to Peter Ayerst. The group grew as more members and wives gathered round and swapped stories. Carole had had mixed feelings about coming but after listening to Peter Ayerst recounting the tale of the Decoy (Spirit of the Blue), she was hooked. As the evening progressed, some of our long missing turned up. Bob Peele, Willy Wilson – CJW has lost his “has not changed crown” to Willy - Pete Callus, Tiny Cowsill, Tom Maxwell from Australia. Al Milne's son and partner {*James & Sarah*} had been invited and

had soon mixed in like we were all old friends – perhaps that is the secret of a reunion.

As is usual, we reverted to 18 year olds as stories of where we had been, done etc were swapped. Peter Ayerst and Ernie Fox, the guests of honour, were in great demand with everyone, especially the wives! By about 9 pm, it was in full swing with groups drifting in and out of the bar – Dinga holding forth on PC and other curses of this age. Highlight of the night was Peter Ayerst and his stories told naturally with no

pretension. Really Boys Own stuff. Low point of the evening was the quality (and quantity) of the buffet. We have received a partial refund so enough said.

Sunday morning and breakfast enjoyed by all with no visible signs of the consumption of the previous night. Arrived at Halton House to be met by Dennis O'Brien from the HAAA who was to be our guide round the house. This was my third time round it and every time I find something new. There is an Open Day in September so if anyone is in the area please visit - you will be amazed. Incidentally, we visited Sandhurst last month and the RMA does not have the charisma of Halton House.

After coffee and an introduction to the house by Dennis, we were free to roam and explore. Then to the church for the rededication. We were piped in by the Golden Oldies and we rededicated our window. Barry did the address and we then

proceeded to the Tribute, led by the GOs, to lay wreaths to those departed. This was the most poignant of moments with the pipe major playing Flowers of the Forest and the trumpeters with Last Post / Reveille. I defy anyone to stay dry eyed.

Wreath layers were Barry for the Entry, Mo Eades, for Rick, Ann Bayes for Chris and myself for John Brom's mum. First time that I have done this, very moving.

From there up to 1 Wing for lunch. We did this the easy way - by car. Despite all the years, not much had changed - the band still went to the front of the queue. The GOs abetted by Ken on Bass Drum played for us at lunch and sterling job they made of it - only a few younger than Ken, most well over 70 ! They are always looking for active pipers and drummers - interested ? - contact KB.

Then to the museum and its impressive collection on Halton memorabilia. If you have anything to give, then do so - listening to

members recounting to wives about bull nights / bed packs / test jobs / parades and all the other 1001 things which made our life hell or pleasurable, depending on your view.

Slowly, we gradually drifted off back home after what I thought was a particularly good event. I had had reservations after our abortive attempt to organise a previous reunion but seeing the pleasure from those who attended made it so much more worthwhile.

Historically, we can say that we were started in life by a squadron commander who had contributed greatly to the 39 - 45 war and that we may have inherited some of his values. Thanks to all who attended and to Jeff, Tom and Michelle, thanks for travelling the distance. A final thank you also to Michelle for taking the group photo - for those of you who were not there, she could have been a D.I. !!

Les Garden

DVD of May 2008 Weekend

We have produced a DVD which has photos and video clips of the occasion and is now on sale. It only costs £4.75 inc. p&p for Association members and £5.75 inc p&p for non Association members. (Overseas P&P on application) If you would like a copy of the DVD (*and we hope you do*) to remind you of the great weekend we all had then please send a

cheque/ Postal order (made payable to '103rd Entry Association') along with the address to where you would like it posted,

To:

**Chris Wales, [DVD Offer],
230 Runnymede Avenue,
Bournemouth,
Dorset,
BH11 9SP .**



Alan Milne's Funeral – Chris Wales

On a sunny afternoon of the 22nd April 2008 the funeral for Alan Milne took place at Exeter crematorium, St. Peter's Chapel. He was well represented by his wife May & family and friends as well as four members from the 103rd Entry (*Barry Neal, Gary McMenemy, Chris Lacey and myself*).

The service was a simple and moving non religious affair commemorating Alan's colourful life.



A befitting Eulogy was read by Alan's eldest son, Richard, (see below). The Association provided a wreath (see photo above) on behalf of the Entry.

Afterwards we were invited back to Alan's village of Silverton (just north of

Exeter) and his 'local' for a bevy and eats with his family and friends to celebrate his life. We all mused about Alan's great 'cannon' escapade from the barrack room window in 2 Wing. His family had heard about it but not in any detail.

Another sad loss from the Entry.

Chris Wales

Alan Milne, 1946 – 2008 by son Richard

Thomas Alan Milne, born on the 6th of February 1946 to Thomas Scott Milne and Elizabeth Telfer Milne at the family home of 153 Wanlip Lane in Birstall, Leicestershire. He was the youngest of three, and he was very close to his sisters Anne and Jean as he grew up. My father always told me that Thomas was a very common name in their street and one shout of "Thomas!" got many replies and much confusion, hence he became known more by his middle name Alan. Sadly he lost his father to cancer at the age of 11 and the closeness and support of the family was made hugely evident in the way Auntie Anne's husband, Uncle Ken, became such a strong influence in his life and a surrogate father to him. Those who were lucky enough to know Uncle Ken and our father would find the likeness remarkable and realise how much Uncle Ken's influence contributed to the well-balanced and good natured man he came to be.

At 15 he passed his first 'O' level, in Technical Drawing, the next summer English Language, Mathematics, Metalwork and Engineering Drawing 'O' Level joined his certificate list and he signed up to join the Royal Air Force serving his Aircraft Electrical Fitters Apprenticeship at No. 1 School of Technical Training, Halton, with the 103rd Entry, between January 1963 and December 1965. He passed out as a Junior Technician on Friday the 17th of December 1965 at 10.30 hours. His Royal Air Force apprenticeship certificate remarks that he was the second best tradesman. What it doesn't

mention (but he would) was that but for an unfortunate incident involving experimental gunpowder foolishly rammed home by his good self down a piece of copper piping he would have been first. His right index finger was never quite straight again but he often remarked it had taught him a valuable lesson.

In 1966 Alan married Phyllis Hooley and their first child was born. They had four children; Richard, Samantha, Jo-anne and Amanda. Sadly life in the Royal Air Force did not suit Phyllis and respecting her wishes my father left the Royal Air Force on the 5th of February 1976, despite his desire to serve longer. Despite his sacrifice their marriage was not to survive and it is a testimony to our father's character that he gained custody of us during the divorce.

Our Father undertook the task of single parenting with a remarkably forward thinking attitude, but by a twist of fate that brings soul mates together he met May and they were married on the 13th of May 1978. He was no longer alone and we gained Angela and Mark as much loved sister and brother. James was born in 1979 and Robert in 1980. Sadly Robert was not long on this Earth and Mum and Dad felt the loss keenly, as did we all.

Though we had a large family by most peoples standards, this did not stop Mum and Dad's nurturing nature from extending the family umbrella beyond we eight. I know many people came to regard them as surrogate parents, for when they found themselves at need my Mum

and Dad would always offer support and advice. We were lucky enough to grow in a loving and loved family.

As we all gained partners in life and some of those partners had children of their own it was ever apparent that those children were very much a part of our family. To me it was such an inspiration and indication of the open-heartedness that both our parents nurtured in us all. They were grandparents to 18 children in all; Matthew, David, Zak, Amelia, Gary, Kyle, Lauren, Holly, Morgan, Adam, Rachael, Lee, Kerry, Georgia, Emily, Andrew, Kaitlin and Josh.

I remember well the look of shock on his face when I told him that my first son, (his first grandson) was to be born and he uttered that he was too young at 40 to be a grandfather. Needless to say he enjoyed his grandchildren greatly over the years and welcomed every new arrival with loving open arms.

Over the course of his life he had a copious amount of jobs, willing to do anything in order to make ends meet when times were hard. He was ever conscientious regards his duty as a husband and father to provide for his family's needs, for which we were ever grateful. Everything from bar-keeping to working in the nuclear power industry. I think he was at his happiest when working with his real passion – aircraft. He loved his time in the Royal Air Force and he always spoke with pride when he saw a Tornado fly, as he used to help build them at Warton. I know he enjoyed his time at Farnborough greatly, even his nickname of the 'Dungeon Master', given because of an uncanny resemblance to a wise but diminutive cartoon character by his co-workers. But of all of his aeronautical loves the Vulcan stood out above

all others and it was poignant to see the recently rebuilt XH558 fly on the 18th of April, just a week after he passed away. Eleven years ago our parents moved to Silverton. After a brief two year 'sabbatical' where our father contemplated what he would like to do to earn his crust he chose to become a driver for First Red Bus and then Stagecoach UK Bus. He loved the change of pace and social aspect of driving, making many friends amongst drivers and passengers alike.

Nobody would paint our father a saint. He drank, swore and took the mick mercilessly at times, but his lust for life and good living was for me an example of how to enjoy your time on this earth. I believe his greatest happiness was with our mother May, seldom do two people meet so well balanced for one another. I know the loss of such a uniquely perfect partner is going to weigh heavy on her heart, but our father left many things to help her at this time of need. Not least a family that loves her greatly.

It was our Mum's birthday two days before our father passed away. Our Dad was no poet, but he spent quite some time scouring the 'net to tell our mother how he felt and I like to think the sentiment was well timed as was his last night spent in the company of two close family friends (Pete and Pauline), indulging in his favourite past times of being with Mum, drinking and picking well natured arguments that no man but he would have the audacity to claim he was right in.

I shall share his chosen poem to our mother.

Richard Milne

Poem read from Dad to Mum

There are things I would like to say
to you my love on your special day:
I am forever thankful God sent you my way.
Like a gift from up above,
you showed me how it is to feel real love.
I know many mountains we've had to climb
and sometimes forever has seemed like a very long time.
Yes, we've endured our share of pain,
but together we have so much to gain.
Bigger mountains may lie ahead,
but together there is no hill we cannot tread.
So always remember my love for you
and there is nothing together we cannot do.
I'll be here forever,
My Love is True.
The person beside me,
that would be You.

Letter from our Cyprus Correspondent - Jeff Lloyd

Water, water everywhere...but not a drop to drink!



Global warming: is it a myth or reality? Maybe it is Climate change, whatever, Cyprus has experienced the driest winters on record for the past four consecutive years, combined together they do not total the amount of water that flowed in to the islands dams in the winter of 2003/4. In fact the amount of rainfall this winter is less than 20% of the required amount.

As I write (early August) the largest Dam on the island, Kouris which holds more than 40% of the Island's water when full, has only 1.1% of its total storage (see photo below.)



And this is what the same dam looked like in March 2003



The distribution of water throughout the island is unbalanced with two thirds of the island's water resources located in the western (Paphos) end of the island. This leaves the three largest cities of Nicosia, Larnaca and Limassol with precious little water.

There are two water de-salination plants in the Larnaca district, but these are unable to provide sufficient water to meet demand. Another two were planned to be built about 5 years ago, however after three winters of sufficient rainfall, the Cyprus Government postponed the plans indefinitely.

Now we find ourselves 'importing' water in giant tankers from Greece. This is not without its problems though. The first tanker

arrived a month ago only to find that the rapidly built pipeline to transfer the water ashore was too short! It took a couple of weeks to extend the pipeline, by which time the water was unusable for anything other than irrigation purposes. Happily the second tanker has now arrived with better results, however, the Island needs three tankers a week to quench the thirsts of its inhabitants.

If you are considering a holiday in Cyprus this summer, don't worry, the Island's Tourist Board has secured assurances that the Tourist hotels will not be affected by the water cuts that the locals have to endure. Keo 'may' be in short supply but there will definitely be enough wine for all!

Yia mas!

Jeff Lloyd

Your Committee & its Deliberations - Ken Bannister

I just thought I'd put pen to paper and give you a quick run down on what we - as your committee - get up to on your behalf.

We normally hold meetings three times a year and choose a different location or venue

for each meeting. Just recently we have been as far afield as North Devon where Barry Neal has hosted us on two occasions at his house just outside Torrington. He also hosted a meeting at RAF Bentley Priory, the Headquarters of Fighter Command during the

Battle of Britain and the rest of World War II. One of our other meetings was held in the Bar of the Officers Mess at Halton House the evening before the 2007 Triennial reunion. So you can see, we get around the country a bit.

For our most recent meeting on 28th June, I arranged the use of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight aircrew crew room in the hanger at RAF Coningsby. The meeting was arranged to coincide with an Open Weekend at the Flight so the committee were able to see a few aircraft movements including a flypast by a Spitfire MkIX two-seat aircraft.

Before our meeting, I attempted a guided tour of the hanger, which houses 2 Hurricanes, 5 Spitfires, 1 Dakota, 1 Lancaster and 2 Chipmunks. This proved rather difficult as Brian, Barry and Les kept wandering off (like little boys in a sweetie shop) so I had to be content giving the tour to Carole and my wife Margaret. It was a journey back in time for Brian as he had worked on the 2 MkIX Spitfires when the Flight had been at Coltishall.

For our meeting we had four members in attendance so we were 'quorate' as the saying goes as that is the

minimum number required under our constitution to hold a meeting. Barry Neal had driven up from the depths of Devon and had stayed with me on the Friday night. The other two members were Brian Lee and Les Garden. Les had taken the opportunity to take a few days holiday and had trailed his caravan, Carole and the two dogs from Hampshire to a site close by Coningsby. Also present was Chris Fair who had expressed an interest in attending to see what goes on at the meetings. As he lives close by at Manby he didn't have too far to travel. By the way, if there is a meeting taking place near you, you are more than welcome to come along. Meeting details are posted on the website and in the newsletter. At a recent one held at Mick Woodhouse's place, Dave Post came along as an observer.

Once the meeting was over, we went for lunch at the Petwood Hotel in Woodhall Spa. This hotel

was used by 617 Squadron as their Officers Mess from 1943 to 1945. Of great interest was the Guy Gibson Bar in the hotel. It was full of photographs and memorabilia from that era and the day we were there it was laid out for a wedding breakfast. When lunch was over, we parted company and went our separate ways. I considered the day successful as I received very favourable comments from the rest of the committee members. As an afterthought, we did discuss the recent reunion we had in Aylesbury and laid plans for the next one.

So, there you have it - a brief résumé of a day's committee meeting. Remember, if there's one in your area, come along and join in, you'll be more than welcome.

Ken Bannister

Deputy Chairman

103rd Entry Association
Committee

Letters to the Editor

(This long and interesting letter came to me from Richard (Dick) Horton via website e-mail 15/1/2008 -Ed)

I am starting my third year of living in the Philippines and thankfully don't regret my decision to move. I have three grown up sons in the UK and had spent the last six months there looking after my mother before she died. Dad had died 21 years previously.

In 2005 I decided that my time was now for me. My funds were limited (retired and divorced) so the choices for my kind of lifestyle seemed to lie in the east where life is cheaper so I sold up and moved to the sun. I chose the Philippines as being

a lifestyle completely different from what I had been used to. Although most British people know of the Philippines through the unique Jeepney and for news items about the terrorist problem in the south, it has not yet become a firm holiday

destination for Brits primarily because of its distance and lack of non stop flights. Let me give you a taster of what I found. The Philippines is made up from over 7,100 islands split into three regions. Luzon is to the north which includes Manila, Mindanao region to the south with its capital Davao, and Visayas which includes Cebu in the middle. The land is volcanic in nature and sits in some of the deepest water in the world. I currently live on a small island off Cebu called Mactan. The city on Mactan is called Lapu-Lapu, so named after the local tribal chief who killed Ferdinand Magellan when he tried to conquer the islands for Spain. Spain and subsequently the USA have had the most influence in shaping the culture of today. The country was conquered by the Spanish for many centuries and introduced to the ruling families' style of government. The Philippines was then sold to the USA who introduced the Filipino to their own particular styles of living before independence. The result has been described as an almost schizophrenic culture. Technically the Philippines is a Republic.

The first thing a Westerner has to get to grips with is to accept that you are in a third world country. One example of the many effects of this is that the Philippines, an island race which have a population greater than the UK, has only three qualified Volvo Marine engine technicians. There are two in Manila and one in Cebu - bad news for boatmen like

myself. Secondly understand that you are in an Eastern culture where many things that the westerner takes for granted as "normal" are decidedly "un-normal" from



Dick & Gina with son Mark

the eastern perspective. I have watched many an American noisily bursting a blood vessel trying to get something done whilst the Filipino just smiles back at him with shoulders shrugged. (It is considered bad manners to lose ones temper or shout.) One has to accept that the Filipino is probably doing his best to help with the limited resources available to him. This is sometimes quite difficult for the westerner to understand. You can imagine how the westerner feels when his car is clouted by a taxi and the offending driver gets out of his car smiling! The smile (whilst sometimes infuriating) is the Filipino attempt at diffusing a tense situation.

The so called East/West divide seems to be not about what you do, but more how you do it. Thirdly, never try to achieve more than one job a day. You will end up like the apoplectic American. It's the Philippine Way.

There is (allegedly) much corruption in government, legal and police services although there are moves to reduce this led primarily by the media. As well as paying the statutory fees it is best to pay the service provider for his/her trouble or pay for the "express lane" when renewing a visa.

The majority of Filipinos are very poor, as is the country. The economy is helped tremendously by the vast numbers of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW's) who send their money back

to their families in the Philippines. Extended families are very close, with each family helping the other when food or money runs out. Filipinos eat rice with every meal however there are a growing number of stores catering for western tastes.

Filipinos hate to obey rules. No where is this more visible than on the roads. The strictly Catholic Filipino crosses himself before starting any journey. You will soon understand why. In an effort to get to grips with this fact I sat down one evening and, with tongue in cheek wrote down my own understanding of their traffic laws. As I say, it was all for fun but here it is.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Size matters. A large vehicle always has right of way over a smaller vehicle. Also, foreigners are automatically the guilty party in any traffic incident that they are involved in. (They will be the only ones with insurance cover.) 2. A manoeuvring vehicle has right of way over a vehicle on the road. Joining, and turning round traffic require you to give way. 3. Although it is generally considered that people drive on the right hand side, it is OK to go the wrong way up a dual carriageway if it shortens the journey and no policeman is watching. 4. On a single carriageway, the best position is in the centre of the road. It is acceptable to try to bluff oncoming traffic that you do not intend to move over. 5. It is never acceptable to try to bluff Jeepney (public transport) drivers. You will die in the attempt. 6. If a vehicle is coming towards you on your side of the road but larger than you it has right of way. Slow down, stop or get off the road to avoid a head on collision. 7. If it is a Jeepney, it is best to go onto the dirt track at the side of the road. Jeepney drivers only slow down to pick up passengers. 8. If a Jeepney is moving from the outside lane to the kerb on a two or three lane carriageway to pick up a passenger, he will expect you to avoid him. 9. There is not right of way at roundabouts. Rule 1 applies. 10. There is no right of way at crossings and T junctions apart from pedestrians and tricycles who should give way to motorised vehicles. Otherwise Rule 1 applies. 11. When stationary at any traffic light (that is still working,) all available road space should be filled irrespective of the number of lanes. It is acceptable to block the exit route of other adjacent road users, just for a laugh and to gain positional advantage. 12. Headlights, tail lights and indicators are purely optional and for decoration only. All lights can be of any colour depending on your vehicles colour scheme. (I have seen blue, green and white tail and stop lights.) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. During daylight hours, the use of lights is prohibited. During the hours of darkness they are optional, but their use demonstrate a lack of manliness on the part of the user. 14. During the hours of daylight <u>and</u> darkness, lights are strictly prohibited for tricycle and motorcycle drivers. 15. There is no requirement to indicate your intention to join the traffic (even if your indicators are serviceable.) Other traffic should be aware of your intention to join the road when your wheels start to go round. However for drivers of a nervous disposition e.g. foreigners, Rule 1 should be applied. 16. To cross a busy highway, you should position your vehicle so as to completely block the traffic flow that you wish to cross. When the centre of the road is reached, this is then repeated for the opposite traffic flow. 17. For motorcycle and tricycle users it is acceptable to indicate your intentions to turn with your feet if you have the time and spare mental capacity. 18. Tricycle, taxi or Jeepney drivers can stop anywhere without giving warning to pick up passengers or to chat with pedestrians. 19. Single and double yellow lines in the centre of the road are only to indicate where the road goes next. Apart from Rule 20 which states that: 20. Single and double yellow lines are accurately straddled by Jeepney drivers when not picking up or setting down passengers. In this instance Rule 7 applies. 21. Vehicle horns are mandatory and should be tested every 30 seconds whether moving or stationary in a traffic queue. They are the prime means of announcing your presence, communicating your mood, signalling your intention to or displeasure with other road users. (When I bought my car, Toyota advised me to fit louder horns "or you will be ignored.") I did. 22. Drivers of tricycles without horns should hiss loudly to announce their presence. Whistling is an acceptable alternative. 23. Two blasts on the horn or flash of oncoming headlights (if serviceable) indicates that the Filipino driver is about do something dangerous or suicidal. Stay alert! |
|---|---|

The Philippine islands are linked by an integrated road/ferry network. Outside of the cities the country is breathtakingly beautiful with high mountains and white sand beaches. Many of the 7,100 islands are uninhabited and whole islands can still be bought here. Although many Americans, Germans and an increasing

number of Brits are buying up land here, there remains a vast display of tropical trees and plants to see. The people here are extremely friendly and typically laid back. Nothing seems to faze them. They are charming, happy people with an almost child like view of life. They accept that life is probably the way it is supposed

to be and just get on with being as happy as possible. They have a smile for everyone and gratitude that you should take time to visit their country. Filipinos have a great respect for the Westerner. If the westerner returns the compliment by trying to adopt some of the customs and traditions of their country then

their respect for you increases however they are tolerant of your ignorance in such matters. Nevertheless I have not found the need to "go native" as some would say. We have a western style home with house helpers (cleaning, laundry etc.) to assist.

So why did I chose the Philippines? Firstly, I suppose because I could! Secondly because it is so completely different from anything I have experienced before. I seem to be the type of person who finds

difference and diversity interesting and exciting.

Since leaving Halton in 1965 we have all held positions of uniformity, responsibility, accountability, orderliness and therefore stress. The Philippine way of life is a far cry from all that as long as you accept their way of doing things. I am also aware of the growing list of our friends sadly no longer with us. I just want to experience as much of life as I can before it's my turn to go. There is so much

Richard (Dick) Horton

more to life in the Philippines but it must wait for another time maybe. Let me end by saying that I have remarried and (at 61) am the proud father of a lovely 4 month old [*now 1yr-Ed*] baby boy called Mark (much to the understandable frustration of my three grown up sons in the UK.) In my free time I lecture at the local university; fish and cruise the 7,100 islands in my boat Startech.

Here are photos Dick sent:



Startech



Beach Resort



Fiesta time



The Jeepney



Sunset



Dinner



Cebu



Dinner



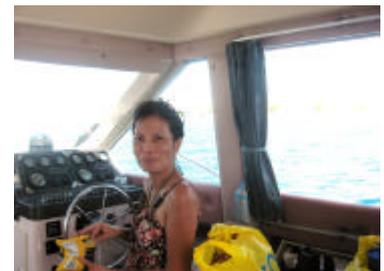
Cebu



Richard in his element



The new Mr & Mrs Horton



Mrs. Horton (Gina)

Letter from Alan Cowsill

(Editor's Note:

Alan's wife Bette, was invited, along with Alan, to the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace this year for her charity work over the last 25 years. Bette, was chosen to represent Barnardos Yorkshire Region as one of five chosen throughout England

Bette has worked for this organisation for many years, initially as a volunteer befriending young people with learning difficulties, and for the last 25 years in a paid capacity. In her volunteering days she & Alan had met Princess Diana when she visited a Barnardos home in Harrogate. She retired from Barnardos last Christmas (2008)

after working at Springhill School in Ripon for 25 years.

Bette qualified as a Social Worker and took up a post at Springhill in 1983, firstly as a Field Worker, visiting and working with the children placed there and then after about 5 years became a Unit Manager at the school, running a cottage for up to 12 young people and 20 staff.

Approximately 10 years ago she took on the post of Head of Care at the school, responsible for all aspects of the school's care work for 45 young people and 80 staff.

The school itself is a speciality school catering for young people throughout England who have

learning difficulties and associated challenging behaviours. Young people only came her way when all else had failed.

A very challenging place to work which Bette loved. She got so much from working with these children, moving them on, and seeing the successes made it even more worth while - a great credit to her for all her charity work with Barnardos.

This is Alan's account of their special day - Ed.)

Chris and Heather,

The visit to the "Palace" was amazing. Once you had walked into the front of the building you came into a centre courtyard. The ground was covered with red coloured chippings and then you entered the main building onto the proverbial red carpet. We then walked through this area which was lined with Beefeaters into the garden area which was about 5 acres and as far as you could see were people, thousands of them. If you can imagine a sea of posh hats, I think that's about the best way to describe the scene. Apparently there were about 5 thousand people there.

I had a wonderful view - I could look over this sea of hats without a problem. Bette on the other hand was struggling to see a few feet in front of her.

The Queen and Duke eventually came out into the garden

closely followed by Charles and Camilla, Duke and Duchess of Kent and a few others Royal hangers on.



Alan & Bette outside Buckingham Palace

After a rendering of "The Queen" by the band of the Household Cavalry the Royal Party came down to speak to us minions. I think the nearest we got to her was about ten feet away. Between us and them are a ring of Royal Protection Police Officers. You can always tell them apart from the rest of the throng - they're facing the

wrong way. In other words watching the crowd not the Royal Party.

After 20 minutes of pushing and shoving in the crowd, Bette and I decided to retire to the Tea Tent. Bette needed to sit down urgently and the only seat available was next to this Air Vice Marshal and his wife, and a very young looking Wing Commander. They very nicely offered the spare seat for Bette and we spoke to the lady. She explained that her husband was the Queen's duty Surgeon/Doctor and the Winco was his Anaesthetist. Whilst sitting there a S.A.C.

came up to the AVM and spoke with him and offered him a handshake. I was astounded. I later explained to the AVM and his wife my roots within the RAF family. I said to him that in my day, back in the Dark Ages we would never dream of speaking to any officer especially one of Air Rank - They were way up there, sitting next to God. Ah!

Well. Times change - never for the better.

I didn't see any of your relations there, William or Harry **WALES**.

Later, after the cucumber sandwiches, Petit Fours and a cup of Tea we had another go at getting near to a Royal with no luck again. We got close so it's possible she saw the tie (*CJW Loaned Alan his Entry Association tie for the occasion - Ed.*) but not close enough to speak to their regalships so to speak. I do think however, that I got close enough for HER to see the TIE.

We were at the Palace until 6pm when it was time to take

our leave of the great event. We headed for the exit and if you can imagine a scene best



described as 15 lanes of a

motorway going into 2 lanes: People racing up the outside in an attempt to get through the door quicker. Funnily enough after one got through that first door everything was quite orderly until you exited the Palace grounds and then you were back with the rat race. We then had a short walk back to the Hotel where we had a nice long, cool pint or three. Then taxi back across London to Holland Park where our son and daughter-in-law have their house and collapse into their settee.

Again thanks for the TIE.

Best wishes.

Alan & Bette.

Miscellaneous Section

The Repairman!

Mrs Davidson's dishwasher stopped working, so she called a repairman. He couldn't accommodate her with an evening appointment, and since she had to work the next day, she told him, "I'll leave the key under the doormat. "Fix the dishwasher, put the bill on the counter, and I will mail you the cheque. "By the way don't worry about Spike, my Doberman. He

won't bother you. But whatever you do, do NOT, under any circumstance, talk to my parrot!"

When the repairman arrived at Mrs Davidson's apartment the next day, he discovered Spike, the biggest and meanest looking Doberman he had ever seen. But just as she had said, Spike just lay there on the carpet, watching the repairman going about his business.

However, the whole time he was there, the parrot drove him nuts with his incessant yelling, swearing and name-calling. Finally the repairman couldn't contain himself any longer and yelled,

"Shut up, you stupid bird!" To which the parrot replied.....,

"Get him, Spike."

CJW

Competition – NL29

Come on all you Beatle fans. This one is just for you.

What musical instrument is George Harrison holding on the cover of the 'Sgt. Pepper Lonely Hearts Club Band' LP?

Send your answers along with your name and address to the editor at either of the addresses below by Monday 28th April 2009. The first correct answer drawn from the hat will win £10 worth of gift tokens.

Answer to competition - NL28

You had to give this question a little thought but nothing that would cause those little grey cells from burning out:

The bronze guns captured by the British from the Russians at Sebastopol in 1855 were melted down and used over a period of time for a very special purpose. What purpose?

The winner was Alan (Tiny) Cowsill with the correct answer:

Victoria Cross.

Alan wins the £10 gift voucher. Congratulations on his successful entry.

Did you know...

The average person will spend about 2 weeks during their lifetime waiting for traffic lights to change?

Dates for your Diary

Next Committee Meeting:-

29th December 2008 – Mick Woodhouse's House. - 11:00hrs.

Possible date for next Entry event

May/June 2013 at Halton Grove, Armed Forces Memorial at the National Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffs.(Watch this space!)

Committee Members:

Barry Neal, Ken Bannister, Les Garden, Mick Woodhouse, Chris Wales, Malcolm Watts, Brian Lee, Les Shardlow.

103rd Entry Association Newsletter

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C. J. Wales

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