

# 10th Royal Hussars PWO

Colonel.F.M.H.G The Duke of Gloucester



## SHINERS CLUB NEWSLETTER



December 2015 First Edition

### Chairmans Report

Since the Shiners club has been up and running there has been a lot of action and work going on behind the scenes. I was elected as your new chairman which I gladly excepted when I was asked. I hope during my term in office I will be able to fulfil the duties to the fullest. My Name is Tony Preston and I live in Roydon,near Diss, Norfolk . I am a former Tenth Hussar serving in B squadron,in Conqueror troop to start, where I first met Ron Fletcher in 1961. I served in 3rd Troop,5<sup>Th</sup> Troop, and also Recce Troop. I was a gunnery instructor along with Al Dutton when we converted to armoured cars. As we left Shajah and were returning home to England, I came out of the army so did not experience the amalgamation. I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the army and if I had my time again I would certainly join again. I made many friends which have lasted over the years which is one of the reasons I took on the job of chairman. Another reason I took on the job is I want to be part of the team that keep the members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Hussars informed of all the 'happenings' that are taking place and the ShinersClub will hopefully be that access to all that is happening. The news letter would like to know of any items that you think others of the regiment would be interested in. So please do keep us informed no matter how small the news might be.This only leaves me to wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE 3.....COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PAGE 4..... ARTICLE ON SSAFA

PAGE 5.....LIGHT HEARTED PIECE

Pages 6&7.LOST SOLDIERS OF THE GREAT WAR

Pages 8,9,10.....THE LANYARD

NATIONAL ARBORETUM

Page 11.....JOKES

Page 12.....Lt Col O.E.V. Holder

Page 16.....Regimental Flags

Page 17 .....Our Friends laid to rest

Page 18-22....Sporting Tours in the Army

## COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN.....TONY PRESTON

tonypreston236@tiscali.co.uk

SECRETARY.....ALAN POWNEY

alan44@outlook.com

TREASURER.....FRED MONTFORD

Webmaster/Facebook...ANTHONY McKAY

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ANTHONY MARLOW

LEE DOUGHTY

STEVE HARPER



## SSAFA

As the Shiners club has progressed over time many things have changed and many faces have come and gone. We have had problems but like true shiners we have overcome these minor and major problems.

One thing that came to my notice when a couple of members needed help was the fact of the many agencies that are out there ready and able to help. One particular agency I would like to explain the workings of is SSAFA, Soldiers, Sailors and Airmans Association.

I have first hand knowledge of the procedures within SSAFA as I was Divisional Secretary of a branch in Eastleigh Hampshire for nearly five years. In my first year I distributed £183,000 to service people in need throughout my area. I enjoyed the work very much and got a tremendous sense of satisfaction at the end of each week.

In every phonebook throughout the country there is the contact number of the SSAFA representative in your area. Those who qualify for help are ex-service men from all branches of the services. And the one thing that not many people do not realise is that the direct members of the serviceman's family can also apply for help even if that service man is deceased. As long as they have some proof of the serviceman's record and military number Help can vary from bereavement help, to purchase of wheelchairs etc. House modifications for wheelchair access to homes etc. almost anything that has to be purchased for the benefit of the person involved, help can be obtained. The way it works is you make contact with the representative in the phonebook who then organises a caseworker to call at your home. They in turn phone you and make an appointment to attend your home and talk over your problem. The caseworker then takes your case to the Divisional Secretary who decides the course of action along with the various agencies he can approach. These agencies range from the Army Benevolent Fund, Regimental funds, Social services, any past trades that the service man carried on during his working life either civilian or military that have a welfare fund that can also be approached for help. Often the work of the divisional Secretary is getting part of the finance required from

each and all of these sources eventually obtaining the whole amount for the service man or family.

So remember if you have a problem that is too big for you or your family to solve, get out the phone book and look up your local SSAFA representative and give them a ring, if the local representative cannot be found in the phone book, then there is always SSAFA headquarters in London. Don't sit at home and worry especially if you are ill, there is help out there. The above information is also true in obtaining help from the British Legion who work in a very similar way.

---

Now something a little light hearted

A guy applies for a job at a Head Office of a major international company.

The interviewer asks, "Are you disabled in any way?" "Yes!" the guy says, "...a landmine blew my testicles away, when I was in the military!"

"O.K. you're hired!" the interviewer announces, "Working hours are from 8 till 5 o'clock. Make sure you're here by 10 every morning!"

Puzzled the guy says "8 till 5, why do you want me to come in only at 10?" "This is a Head Office job," the interviewer says. "The first two hours we just sit around scratching our balls..... no point in you coming in..."

---



18 September 1964.

A signal from the 10th Hussars to the Regiment. 4RTR

"Many thanks for your good wishes and an excellent handover. Hope fire not hotter than frying pan."

**"Only RHQ knew about this message whilst we all contributed to the handover"**



## Lost Soldiers of the Great War

There have been many stories of soldiers being detached from units during the first confusing months of the Great War. The four soldiers hidden in the village of Villeret by inhabitants, before being betrayed in 1916 and executed is perhaps the most well-known. They were Private's Thorpe, Martin, Donohoe and Digby. Private Patrick Fowler, a cavalryman, hid in a wood near the town of Bertry for the winter before being discovered and taken to Madame Maria Belmont-Gobert, who had a cottage in the town. She hid him in an old oak armoire with shelves on one side and clothes hangers on the other, Fowler could just manage to conceal himself in the small space, for there were a number of German officers billeted in the cottage. He spent the rest of the war there cooped up in the dark only coming out at night as long as no soldiers were there. Private Fowler suffered from his long incamation in the wardrobe and was often ill, but the pharmacist, the only other person in on the conspiracy did his best under the circumstances. Madame Belmont-Gobert suffered many nervous attacks from the strain. South African troops entered Bertry on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 1918 and Fowler was liberated, but taken prisoner as a spy. He was being escorted by a couple of infantrymen to the village of Villeret when the frail and bedraggled soldier started jumping up and down in front of Major Francis Drake of the 11<sup>th</sup> Hussars, shouting "that's my troop officer" by sheer coincidence Maj. Drake was one of the few left in France who could have recognized him and this chance encounter may have saved his life, for he could well have been shot as a spy. Thus ended four years living in a cupboard The 11<sup>th</sup> Hussars thanked the family who helped Private Fowler, who returned later to England and lived to an age of eighty-eight. The family Belmont-Goberts fell on hard times, but when the British press recounted the heroism of Madame she was awarded the OBE, the Hussars presented her with an engraved silver plate, the War Office decreed she was entitled to Fowler's messing allowance, which was 2,000 francs the daily Telegraph set up a fund to help them out. Madame Belmont-Goberts

and her daughter came to London where “a magnificent reception was accorded them by the King and Queen, the Lord Mayor and the British public, proving to the whole of France that England knows how to honour heroism and self-sacrifice”. The nation purchased the armoire and it was displayed in the Imperial War Museum.

What has this to do with our regiment, not a lot, but the cupboard was sent to the Royal Hussars Museum in Winchester, a thing of indestructible peasant simplicity, for those of us who did not know of this story. One of our members helped out at the museum and he told me it was of great interest, mostly from the lady visitors. A visit is always worth it.

My thanks to Ben Macintyre for his book “A Foreign Field” which helped in this article.

By kind permission of Harper Collins

Written by Alan Powney

The picture below shows the people who sheltered the four soldiers mentioned at the start of the article.

Villeret, Rue D' EN Bas 1914





# The lanyard

---

Many people do not realize that the Lanyard was in fact invented by an ex 10<sup>th</sup> Hussar Officer. It was the invention of Col I.A. Brightsod who commanded the Regiment in the early 1900s. The regiment based at Lucknow Barracks in Tidworth were preparing for their move to India the following year, when it became known that all was not well. The key for the officers outside loo had yet again gone missing from its hiding place under the brick, and Brightsod was not amused when he was caught short one wet night, and had to use the other ranks bog after an officers mess dinner.

Next morning whilst having breakfast with his wife and two children, he was telling his wife about the problem, and she showed him some work that she had done plaiting string. If you tie the key to the end she said, it could be worn around the waist, but Brightsod by name and nature, rose to the occasion and said if we make it shorter we could wear it around the shoulder. His wife pointed out that, good idea that it was, she would have to make one for each officer, and that they would need keys cut for each one as well, Brightsod decided this would be a massive hit on his budget so decided that the answer was to have the one that she had made, but it could be hung on a nail above the Bog door and he would give it a weeks trial, this went off with only a slight hitch, one of the officers, was a short assed person, similar to the Gilbert Cook stature, and complained that he could not reach the key when he didn't have his riding boots on, and on a couple of occasions, had shit himself, so it was lowered. The problem then arose because it would be knocked off and fall into the mud around the entrance and yet again the bloody key would be difficult to find at night. This problem played on Col Brightsods mind, but it was while he was on annual leave, he had taken a cottage in Cornwall, near St Austell for the duration of the school holidays, that his problem yet again was solved. As many will know St. Austell is home to the clay mining industry, and Brightsods children had been outside playing and



came in covered in the white dust and crap that covered the area. He ordered the kids to parade outside where he chucked buckets of water over them to clean it off, it was a difficult task but, he saw it through, When it was done he noticed that where he had washed down the children there was now a thick white gunge, what can I do he said to himself? Mrs Brightsod had gone to the county show, and having been stood near to the pony judging area had found that a short sighted judge had awarded her second prize in the best looking pony class. She was not amused. When she returned to the holiday home, Brightsod asked if she had any ideas, and she suggested putting it onto one of her string things as she had noticed that it was going hard. On returning to the regiment he instructed that the one with the toilet key on was covered in the white gunge and the problem was solved. If the key fell into the mud it was clearly visible in all weathers and light.

On the regiments arrival in India Col.Brightsod spoke with the R.S.M. a stentorian man by the name of Day, known to all as Cloudy Day, because of his outlook on life. Historians of Military events will recognize his name as the author of the R.S.M.'s Handbook, in where he made rules for the ranks to follow in the future. Indeed our own R.S.M. was known to follow them to the T. Some that come to mind are, sneaking around the stables, or tank parks in our day and catching the other ranks as they made their way to the cookhouse then finding fault with their attire etc. another one was to make a trooper get his haircut three or four times before leaving camp, anyway I digress.

The Col mentioned to W.O 1 Day that though the key on the string was working reasonably well it needed improvement,,Day suggested to the Colonel why did he not get a key for each of the officers but the Colonel said that cost was the problem, but Mr Day suggested that he knew. a blacksmith in the village who owed him a favour and too leave it to him so hence the problem was solved. Each officer was issued with one of the keys on a rope and instructed to wear it on his right shoulder and to keep it white at all times, with the Colonels magic gunge.

It was only later that, after the key had been dropped that they noticed, that it had turned to the yellow colour so much



loved by NCOs the world over that Brightsod decided that he was on a winner. He was due to relinquish his command and return to England for Demob.

His son who had started this all off by getting covered in the stuff in the first place was having trouble, having left East Meon high School he had gone on to Guildford Technical College with the hope of going onto Sandhurst to follow his father into the Regiment. But he had failed to get decent grades, and Sandhurst would not accept him. But as luck would have it, his Father was friends with people in the know, and the qualification's he had, he was accepted by the Liberals as their candidate for the Basingstoke ward.

The Colonel sold his idea to a firm in London, and was able to retire to Cornwall a rich and happy man.

Ivor Biggun



Hello from the National Memorial Arboretum

We hope that recent visitors to the Arboretum have enjoyed exploring our autumnal landscape. This year's colourful foliage has provided a beautiful background for our events and activities, particularly our first Twilight Trek which was held on a crisp October evening - we hope that everyone who attended enjoyed this unique experience.

You will now be able to see two wonderful additions to our grounds, the Sikh and Gibraltar memorials which were recently dedicated in our grounds. On Sunday our annual Remembrance Sunday service was held at the base of the Armed Forces Memorial and was attended by more than 5,000 people.

Recent visitors will have noticed that our new Remembrance Centre building project is progressing, and we are pleased at what has been achieved so far, yet, are even more excited about the next few months. Whilst work continues behind the hoardings we will remain open.



A crusty old Sergeant Major found himself at a gala event, hosted by a local liberal arts college. There was no shortage of extremely young, idealistic ladies in attendance, one of whom approached the Sergeant Major for conversation. She said, "Excuse me, Sergeant Major, but you seem to be a very serious man. Is something bothering you?" "Negative, ma'am," the Sergeant Major said, "Just serious by nature." The young lady looked at his awards and decorations and said, "It looks like you have seen a lot of action." The Sergeant Major's short reply was, "Yes, ma'am, a lot of action." The young lady, tiring of trying to start up a conversation, said, "You know, you should lighten up a little. Relax and enjoy yourself." The Sergeant Major just stared at her in his serious manner. Finally the young lady said, "You know, I hope you don't take this the wrong way, but when is the last time you had sex?" The Sergeant Major looked at her and replied, "1955." She said, "Well, there you are. You really need to chill out and quit taking everything so seriously! I mean, no sex since 1955! Isn't that a little extreme?" The Sergeant Major, glancing at his watch, said in his matter-of-fact voice, "You think so? It's only 2130 now."

L ~ R Terry Flippence

Tony Preston

Johnny



Always said they were too heavy (bogged down Conqueror 1961)



In Memory of the late

Lieutenant Colonel  
Oliver E Holder

excerpt of article written by  
Colonel Holder for the Armor Magazine  
in 1985

The history of the cavalry regiments dates back some 300 years and they still retain their titles of Dragoon Guards, Hussars and Lancers. The name "dragoon" derives from mounted infantry of the 16th and 17th centuries, who were armed with a carbine called a dragon and who dismounted to fight.

Regiments of Dragoon Guards have fought in some of the most influential battles of the last 500 years -the Battle of Sedgemoor, the Austrian and Spanish Wars of Succession, the Seven Years War, the Crimean and Boer Wars and the Battle of Waterloo (where they were personally thanked by the Duke of Wellington). The last successful cavalry charge of



World War I was by a regiment of Dragoon Guards and in World War II they were on battlefields as far apart as Burma, the Western Desert and Normandy. Like Dragoon Guards, Hussars have a long and glorious history. They were originally expert horsemen of the plains of Hungary who were raised by the Hapsburg Emperors to guard against the Turks on the Eastern front. Their British

counterparts have taken part in the War of Spanish Succession, Battle of Culloden, the Peninsular War, the Afghan and Sikh Wars and the Boer War. In the Crimea they took part in the Charge of the Light Brigade and were among the first troops to go into France during World War I. All the major battlefields of World War I saw Hussars in action and the exploits of the 11th (now part of the Royal Hussars) as an armoured car regiment in the Western Desert are legendary. The lance was introduced into the British Regular Army in 1816-17. Several regiments of Light Dragoons changed their title, role and uniform to that of Lancers. British Lancers first charged with the lance at Bhurtpore in India in 1825 and then served in the First Afghan and Sikh Wars. They also took part in the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava and helped to suppress the Indian Mutiny. In the late 19th Century, they fought against the Zulus, took part in the Boer War and charged the Dervishes at the Battle of Omdurman. In World War I, they served in France and Flanders and their WWII actions included covering the retreat to Dunkirk, the Battle of Alamein, and the plains of Northern Italy. The Royal Tank Regiment is descended from those who manned the earliest tanks - a British invention of WWI. (The name "tank" was adopted for security reasons when the machines were reported as "water tanks for Russia" in 1915.) From 1917, this new arm was known as the Tank Corps, and it was instrumental in breaking the deadlock along the Western Front in 1917 and 1918. It became 'Royal'

in 1923 and was very largely responsible for developments in equipment and tactics for both tanks and armoured cars between the two wars. When the mechanization of the cavalry was nearly complete in 1939, all those manning tanks and armoured cars - cavalry and Royal Tank Corps - formed the Royal Armoured Corps. Subsequently the Royal Tank Corps changed its title to The Royal Tank Regiment (RTR). Royal Tank Regiments fought in every British theatre of war between 1939-1945, right up to the fall of Berlin.



The British, because of the regimental system and subsequent comparative lack of turbulence, have an advantage in crew and higher collective training. Field training, other than the annual FTX over the German countryside, is limited to the one training area at Soltau (between Hannover and Hamburg). This area (SLTA) is heavily used by

all arms and is occupied virtually year-round. Armoured regiments usually manage 5-6 weeks each year on SLTA, divided into two or three periods. Training each year progresses from troop level through squadron to BG level. Standards of training are tested by the next higher commanders, frequently culminating in a brigade exercise with two battlegroups opposing one another with the brigade commander acting as chief umpire and controller. There is no formal ARTEP, but standards of training are monitored throughout the year and all skills, including physical fitness, NBC, and first aid, are tested at least twice.

The British are fortunate to have the NATO (Bergen/Hohne) tank ranges fairly close at hand. Each regiment undergoes a closely monitored annual firing camp lasting two weeks. Although this *is* not a "test" for the commanding officer, the reputation of the efficiency and readiness of a regiment is judged during the gunnery camp. With the introduction of modern technology into gunnery training simulators, a high standard of gunnery is much easier to retain than in years past but, as with any training simulator, however realistic, it does not replace the real thing.

**Lt Col O. E. V. HOLDER**  
**10TH ROYAL HUSSARS 1961-1969**  
**THE ROYAL HUSSARS 1969- 1992**



**Centurion**



**Saladin**



**Ferret Scout Car**



**Challenger**



## REGIMENTAL FLAGS

In the last weeks of December 2011, I was asked if I could find a manufacturer of our flag, as new ones were needed and previous efforts had drawn a blank. This I did and found the original supplier to the regiment, Harrison.

I contacted them and explained who we were and what we required, the staff were more than helpful and delighted that we wished to renew interest in their products. During January and February 2012 Harrison's staff went to great lengths and came up with a hard copy of the embroidered flag from deep down in archives from 1965. After negotiations and costings and that a digital proof would have to be made, I passed this information to the acting chairman.

In autumn I renewed contact with Harrison's and explained we wished to purchase flags and during my discussions and requirements their advice and suggestions, a good friendly relationship has been established. They were most pleased to hear from me again, as the last flags and pennants were purchased in October 2012. I expressed my wish to strengthen our ties for the future.

The first of the flags we require has been delivered and a visit is planned next year to discuss other display requirements we would like. Our regiment last ordered flags from Harrison's in 1966 and were delivered in that year. They would probably have been ordered by the Officer in charge of PRI, but as we were in Münster this could have been passed to the Regimental Secretary at Home HQ in Winchester. Major Archer-Shee was the first appointment to this post, about 1962 until amalgamation in 1969. He stayed in that post in The Royal Hussars until he retired in about 1972, some members I know say he was a charming and efficient man to work with. The regiment would have known that disbandment discussions were taking place and had no wish to spend more money than required on flags, pity really as many seemed to have "gone diffy".

This gives you some insight into the work that goes on in the background and also building up a good a trusting relationship with companies that we deal with, it brings our regiment to the fore and companies can look back and recall their acquaintances with the military.

Alan Powney





**TO ALL OUR DEAR FRIENDS  
WE LAID TO REST IN 2015  
GOD BLESS THEM ALL**



<b>10th January</b>	<b>Les Chiverton</b>
<b>16th May</b>	<b>Garry Watts</b>
<b>17<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>John Spence</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> June</b>	<b>Laurence Wilson</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Anthony Russell</b>
<b>9<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>John Cooper</b>
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> June</b>	<b>Lt. Col. A E Manners</b>
<b>17<sup>th</sup> August</b>	<b>Peter Brian Spoor</b>
<b>21<sup>st</sup> September</b>	<b>Donald Flower</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>Barry Paul Dunnings</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>Lt Col O E V Holder</b>
<b>25<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>Winky Marshall</b>





## The Tankie

That dusty, crusty, grease-covered dirty, sweaty  
Bright-eyed, fuzzy-faced, haircut-needing, beer-  
drinking, under-rated, over-worked, under-paid,  
over-sexed, little shit who can take a tank and do  
more battle field damage in 2 minutes than a  
grunt squad can do all day long

DeMotivationalPics.com

### Sporting Tours in the Army.

written by Ian Clements

In October 1960 I was posted to HQ BAOR at Rheindahlen. I became involved with Garrison rugby as a player and cricket as an Umpire. In about November 1961 I went on my first rugby tour to Amsterdam, I was just over 21. I found that the Dutch knew a lot of our rugby songs and could join in using perfect English. However I soon found that there was one thing which they didn't know and I found out by accident. If anybody gets a song wrong it is normal practice for them to be called to account and then handed a pint of beer, which they are then expected to drink in one swallow. I made an accidental mistake on one song whereupon I was handed a pint, but allowed to drink it normally. After this each time my glass was empty, I made a deliberate mistake with a song and was handed a full glass. I had a very good evening



In the Spring of 1962 somebody obtained some tickets for the England v France International in Paris. We travelled by car, leaving on the Friday afternoon and returning to camp on the Sunday. This was the time of the Civil War in Algeria and the Plastic Bomb, thankfully I never saw one of these items. England did not play very well and lost. However each time play got a little quiet, someone with a French accent, shouted out "Le Plastique" and the crowd roared with laughter. What the modern security services would make of this black humour I shudder to think! On the first night we were thrown out of a pub for singing the rugby version of the French National Anthem "A Frenchman went to the lavatory" etc. On the second night we were walking between 2 pubs when we were joined by a very drunken Englishman. It transpired that he was a Travel Agent and was so drunk that he had lost the tour party which he was supposed to be escorting!

The rugby tour to Amsterdam, the following season fell foul of the very long freeze and could not be re-arranged. In the summer of 1963 I was asked to score for the Army side in the annual cricket week. We played the RAF and the Dutch and Danish National sides in two day matches. Not really a tour for me as I slept in my usual bed and had to go into my office to work on the day off in the middle of the week. However the hospitality was first rate, especially the evening provided by the Carlsberg rep when we played the Danish Team. The next rugby season was my last at Rheindahlen before I returned to the Regiment at Tidworth in February 1964, however I managed to go on two rugby tours. The first was to Amsterdam. We were entertained by the Hotel barman with tales of what happened when his wife was away and he was accosted by two whores working from the same window. Part of the old rugby song sprang to mind "Who had the right to do what and with which and to whom". Five of us were walking past a curtained window when there was a disturbance further up the street. The nosy whore opened her curtains to look, we all recognised her customer stood there in just his underpants!

The second tour was to SHAPE, about 20 miles outside Paris. Our Rugby Officer was part of the NATO Transport Company, who managed to obtain a coach and driver for the weekend.



The Officer running rugby at SHAPE was one of our former players, who obtained accommodation for us with the Americans. I can still remember my breakfasts. Steak, egg and chips, washed down with beer! On the Saturday night the coach took us to Montmartre and we were given a time and place to return to our pick up point. At the appointed time many were still missing and our star winger was very drunk. I was left in charge of the drunk, with instructions not to let him out of my sight. The others set off to round up the stragglers. A lady of the night walked past looking for trade. The drunk was feeling randy so accosted her, whilst I told her to clear off, or words to that effect! What the drunk couldn't see was that neither age nor looks were on her side. Realising that the drunk would be of no use to her, she made very coarse suggestions to me in very bad broken English. I told her where I would not even put my walking stick! Eventually most had returned and we still had our star winger. However there were still two missing, our Captain and a young player. As it was very late it was decided that the coach must leave. As the metro was shut they were faced with a walk of about 20 miles, they eventually returned as we were going to breakfast. That afternoon the young lad played very well but the skipper was unable to play as his feet were covered in blisters! Luckily for me I was told the time and place to turn up for the various tours and whether I needed to make a financial contribution. On my next tour of Germany this would all change as I would then be making the arrangements

In November 1965 the Regiment arrived in Munster, after service in Aden. I found that one of my old friends from Rheindahlen was now the other side of Munster and we discussed the possibility of rugby tours. He said the best tour was to play the German Police in Hamburg, followed by a Police tour of the red light area. However he said that as HQ and Static Units already had annual tours we would be unlikely to find any free dates. Sadly he was right

By now I had passed the first of my Umpiring exams, it seemed that I was the only Umpire in the Armoured Corps in Germany with those qualifications. This meant that I was given all of the best Armoured Corps fixtures in the 1966 and 1967 cricket seasons. I was selected to Umpire on the tour to Berlin, although my accommodation was arranged, I needed to make my own travel



arrangements and to travel through East Germany this was quite complicated. I decided to travel by car, however Chris was not allowed to travel with me. This meant that I needed to drop her at Hannover Airport where she could fly to Berlin leaving me to make the long journey on my own. Two days before I was due to travel I took my car for a service to the main Ford Agent in Munster. It seems that they let the apprentice loose on my car. He appeared to have removed a nut to drain the engine oil, but failed to replace the nut before putting in fresh oil. As the car was over the inspection pit nobody saw the fresh engine oil going straight into the pit! I collected the car and drove away. After about 2 miles the engine ceased up. I returned to the garage and they recovered me but by then they had to replace my engine. I collected my car the next afternoon but of course I had to run in a new engine at 50mph. I drove the whole way to Berlin and back with the world and his brother overtaking me. At least by the time I got back to camp the wretched engine had been run in! We did however manage to see a number of the sights in Berlin.

In the 1967 season I was again chosen to tour Berlin. Chris again had to fly from Hannover but this time I could at least travel at a proper speed and I had Smokey for company on the long and lonely journey. We went out one evening and were sat watching the Cabaret, I looked down at Smokey and saw that he was watching the dancer writhing on the floor, with very obvious excitement. Luckily he was still on a lead!

Having had two very enjoyable cricket tours and in the absence of any chance of a tour to Hamburg, I decided to make enquiries as to whether I could take the Regimental Rugby Team on tour to Berlin. Having spoken to the Adjutant I decided to write to the Brigade Major in Berlin. I struck gold as it seems he was the person who ran Rugby in Berlin. He arranged 3 fixtures for me but I was left with all the other arrangements. Leading up to the tour we realised that our team was a little weak, so Mr Pumphrey spoke to the Royal Green Jackets, on the other side of Munster and we sent a joint team of about equal numbers. This meant that all players should have had either 2 or 3 games. Having moved myself to Berlin twice, I now had to move all of our players plus some families by a mixture of car, plane and the Military train. Despite the work it was quite a challenge and I enjoyed doing it. This time John McTurk travelled in the car with myself and Smokey.



By now we also had Roma who flew with Chris and Angie McTurk from Hannover

We won the first two games, but by the third day we were exhausted and lost to the German Civilians. The ref that day was the Brigade Major so we made tentative arrangements for another tour the following season. However I left the Army in June 1968 and the tour the following year never took place. I recall exchanging rude gestures with the Russian Sentries on the other side of the Brandenburg Gate. I still have a photo of Roma on Pheasant Island, a little 6 month old bundle held in my arms.

Although I had left the Army my touring days were not over. I became Fixture Secretary of Marlborough Rugby Club and arranged 5 Easter Tours to Weymouth, Southend, Ilfracombe, St Ives and Blackpool. I then went on 3 European Tours with Swindon Rugby Club to Amsterdam twice and to Antwerp. I went on at least 8 cricket tours with Swindon Tax Office playing against other Tax Offices in Cornwall. I also had 7 seasons from 1985 to 1991 umpiring for the Fire Service National side playing against the three Services and some County second elevens. During those very enjoyable seasons an old rugby friend was the secretary of the Fire Service and he drove me to all matches. Some of these were played on First Class grounds, including the Nursery Ground at Lords

I have still not finished as I now organise the spectators mini bus to support Lydney Rugby Club at away matches. Having travelled for many years under another member's arrangements, I am now in my second season as the organiser. Usually we travel there and back in one day. However once a year we have a weekend away

Thank you for reading my rather lengthy ramblings. I have enjoyed writing this article as much as I did my touring days. It takes my mind back to when I was young and when Chris was still alive. Merry Christmas and I hope to see some of you at the Swindon Reunion on the third Sunday in May (15/05/16).

Ian Clements