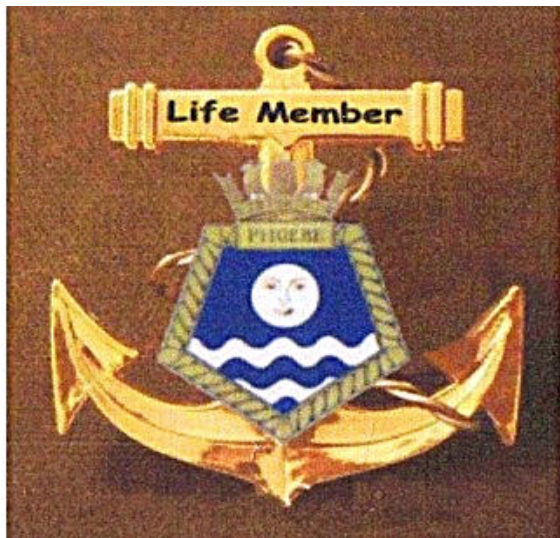


HMS Phoebe

Association

Newsletter

June 2010



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Another reunion over and pleased to say this one was like most of the other ones, a good entertaining venue. The management has asked me to thank all those who went to reception and thanked the staff for their help in making it a nice weekend.

The food was excellent, lots of different meals to choose from, mine always arrived piping hot and exactly to my order.

The entertainment was part of the package, I had no hand in it, I was surprised that Bingo was played each night, something that I always understood no one wanted, yet only a few of our members were missing when it was time for "eyes down". However I did not hear anyone complaining, and a few house were one by shipmates.

Although the rain kept away, it was rather chilly in that wind, but it did not stop anyone from venturing out. Friday night I suppose was best when Corrine Kelly and friend came up on the stage and sang, then her friend gave a song on her own, and a little later we managed to get Josie Wight to sing a number. I think most of us were surprised when Brian Holland and David Gutowska sung a duet, Dave was a bit off key but it made it more enjoyable, not that Brian's solo that followed was not good, believe me it was, so watch out for another turn by him.

Saturday and Sunday members had the chance to travel up the Gt Orme in a tramcar, tickets cost a pound from me, there were only two tickets left on Sunday evening, and they were mine, Lil was not well enough to go so we walked around town. Although the wind was strong at the top most said the view was worth it. Lil was taken bad on Friday afternoon, her Diabetes became so unstable we had to phone the emergency doctor who cut her insulin injections down, it did help and by Sunday morning Lil was back with us, not completely with it, but close.

At last it was Monday and time to say farewell to everyone, no one had made any complaints, Oh! Just one, Daphne Roper had a complaint when she arrived on Friday, 'no TV in her room', one of the staff took her up to her room to show her where the TV was, but Daphne was right it was not there, so she was given another room with a TV. Later I was told by reception some one had actually nicked it. I had one mishap on the A55 as we were approaching Llandudno Junction. There were road-works and a 50mph limit, I braked at the sign but the camera was too close to the sign, by the time I had slowed to 50mph, and passed the sign the camera flashed twice. I now await the outcome.

At the committee meeting on Friday evening, next years reunion was discussed and decided upon, the venue had already been arranged but not confirmed, I shall do that forthwith.

The date for your diary is Friday May 13th to Monday May 16th, this is the 2nd weekend after the May bank holiday, I tried to incorporate the bank holiday but the cost would have been more. The Hotel is the Hinton Firs, the cost for three nights is £135 pp. There is plenty of free on site parking in their 3 car parks, also an outdoor pool and a lovely indoor one too, including a Jacuzzi and Sauna, these facilities are included in the package. It may seem a bit pricey at the moment, but come next year it will be about the average for Bournemouth, the hotel is a 3 star, but its more like a four star hotel. There maybe a slight change in the AGM venue if the management will allow it. Instead of the usual toast at the AGM; we will hold a proper "UP SPIRITS" with rum being measured out by two tankies (dressed for the occasion), from a proper rum barrel probably Saturday evening.. There will be Sherry on hand for the ladies and "T" ratings.

The hotel has 56 rooms, our advice is to book as soon as you can. I have yet to find out if the you book straight to the hotel or through the Association, I hope to have the booking forms in the August newsletter.

For sometime the idea of introducing Life Membership has been discussed, it has now come to fruition, badges were designed and ordered. As this would be a change in our constitution it had to be put to members at the AGM, after explaining the rules for qualifying it was put to members for agreement or not, everyone was for the proposal, there were none against.

Under Section III - insert Full Membership to Life Membership:

1a ..A member reaching the age of 80 years whose record shows 10 years continuous membership shall on the recommendation of the committee be awarded Life Membership.

2b ..A member whose record shows 20 years continuous membership shall on the recommendation of the committee be awarded Life Membership.

3c ..A member who has given loyal and valued service to the benefit of the Association shall on approval of the committee have his/her name put to the AGM for Life Membership.

Shipmate Maurice Browne joined the Association at its inauguration in Nottingham in September 1996. Chairman Ian Gough presented the Life Membership badge to Maurice, a certificate will be sent to him ASAP. Two more presentations were made during the evening, one to our treasurer Lilian Pavely for her outstanding commitment to Association book keeping. And one to myself, Roy Pavely, for my work as Secretary, etc.

Lilian and I thank you all for this wonderful accolade.

There are more members entitled Life Membership now, they will be awarded as soon as we have confirmed their status, I am afraid it will be by post, but in future as members become entitled they will be awarded or named at the annual AGM.

Two more members were selected at the AGM for a special mention and a clear cut award of Life Membership.

It goes to Shipmates Ken Kent and Vic Chanter, these were the two men who instigated the first meeting in Nottingham, who expected just a couple of their Signal branch to turn up and were surprised to find twenty two men and their ladies waiting to join. It is with the greatest of pleasure we award both these shipmates Life Membership, without their endeavours in bringing us together there would be no HMS Phoebe Association

It is no trouble for us to check on whether shipmates have been enrolled for ten years or more, the treasurers books will show that, as they will also show any breaks you may have had, ie more than one year in arrears. But what we cannot do is work out how old you are, so if you are 80, or nearly 80. Please let us know ASAP. Tel: 01235 211501.

The following shipmates have been notified and will receive their award with this newsletter: A Hoyle - R Addison - R Harvey - P Forbes - D West - K Birchall - C Mayhew - J Mayer.

2012 is the 70th Anniversary of losing so many of our shipmates. I will be applying to the Lottery 'Grants For All' to finance a commemoration event, . This time we want it to coincide with Remembrance Sunday. (November). My intention is to ask for enough funding to cover the cost of a hotel in Bournemouth for two nights, either Fri to Sun or Sat to Mon. Grants are made from £500 to £10,000. I have made enquiries about this, but have been told applications for grants cannot be accepted earlier than three months before the event is due to take place. "Fingers Crossed".

PLEASE NOTE - SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Due to various increases, and the decline in donations, a proposal for an increase of £2.50 to all subscriptions was put forward at the AGM.

The proposal was unanimously carried and is as follows:

On September 1st 2010 annual subscriptions will be increased by £2.50

Full Members subs raised from £5.00 per annum to £7.50.

Associated Members subs raised from £2.50 per annum to £5.00.

We are sorry it had to be done, but it is in line with most other associations who also increased subscriptions, except our increase is half of what other associations increased by.Secretary

DRIVING LICENCE

I am not sure who it was now, but at the reunion someone mentioned that because of my age (I am 79 in August) when my driving licence runs out I would need to have a medical, my licence was due to run out in August this year, I received a reminder to renew it last Friday. In the information booklet that came with the reminder there was no mention of a medical being required, and as for reporting my medical conditions it did not apply to me as it said if my medical condition did not interfere with my driving I did not have to report it. The renewal form seemed a bit complicated so I applied via the in-ternet which was much easier, that was on Saturday, my new licence arrived on Wednesday, it is valid from 13/05/10 to 04/08/13. That is for 3 Years, I will be 82 when it runs out, so whoever said I would need a medical, and only be licensed for 1 year was quite wrong. Roy.

More info re 2011 Reunion:

We now have permission from the hotel to arrange the “Up Spirits” ceremony whenever we require it, the acceptance being not during meals. Most probably it will be after dinner on Saturday night in the entertainment room. To get over any charges etc regarding glasses for the above; we will have our own glasses by then, albeit made from Polycarbonate, it is an almost unbreakable alternative to glass, (we would like them returned)! They are washable and can be used again next time.

Dads Army'

As an ex- regular soldier, Dad volunteered to join the LDV, (later to become the Home Guard), at 9 am on the day recruitment started. For some time an arm-band was to be their on;y 'uniform', while a naive enthusiasm replaced weapons, in my dad's case he supplemented the arm-band by wearing my toy forage cap!

Eventually some weapons did arrive in the form of First World War Lee Enfield rifles, however due to the distinct shortage of bullets to go with them, the Wehrmacht, if it put in a appearance, was to be confronted by fixed bayonets and empty rifles, (this could be why they did not come, but highly unlikely).It was an accepted thing that the Germans could not pronounce the letter W and so the password of Wendel Wilkie (an American politician of that time) was demanded of anyone challenged by the sentries or patrols.

On one occasion, my dad and a colleague whilst patrolling at night in woodland near the church, spotted a suspicious figure darting to and fro between the trees, and after a good deal of shouting "Halt, who goes there" they pinned the hooded figure to a tree and asked him to say "Wendel Wilkie". He tried unsuccessfully to oblige but proved to be quite unable to say the words and was in serious danger of being skewered to the tree by a bayonet when he suddenly pulled of his balaclava to reveal himself as the Vicar, it was never clear why the Vicar was snooping about the woods at night; but as the Home Guard were using the church hall as their HQ it was probaly diplomatic not to pursue the matter.

With the imminent prospect of having to face an air-bourn assault the top brass came up with what no doubt to them was an ingenious counter-measure. A car bench seat was 'secured' in the top most branches of a large tree situated behind the HG hut, precarious access to the seat was gained by a series of ladders attached to the tree, the plan was for two physically fit men to climb up and sit on the seat all night and from the lofty position search the night sky for enemy planes dropping parachutists. But the Lee Enfield rifles the two men were armed with needed two hands to hold and fire it, and they needed one hand to hold onto something to stop falling off the seat, and the swaying of the tree made it impossible to shoot accurately.

My dad and his mates reckoned it would have been safer to have been a German paratrooper.

R Tarling.

Next Year will be my last year for organising reunions for I am standing down as your Social Secretary. It has been a enjoyable job we have got to know a lot of hotel staff and had the chance of visiting places we would not normally have. It is not a time consuming job although at times it does mean doing a bit of traveling, sometimes this means a stay at a hotel overnight usually free of charge. Is there a perks, well yes, maybe! Some hotels offer a free place to the organiser according to the number in the group. Out of pocket expenses, fuel etc, will be reimbursed. Of course if the reunions are to carry on, someone needs to take my place, so we are urgently seeking a volunteer to take over and organise future reunions. Think about it, talk it over with your wife/partner.

It does not look like this newsletter will be its usual size this time, I seem to have run out of things to write about, and there is only five days to go before publishing. All I have left is my life story or the internet, you know enough about me! so it looks like the internet. But there is one thing I was asked to report on and that is my visit to the cardiac clinic yesterday. I had a echocardiogram done which showed the wall of my heart to be thin and bulging slightly, this means that that side of the heart is not pumping correctly making the other side do extra work to compensate, but it cannot keep the pressure up to normal, hence my shortness of breath when walking and doing all sorts of normal things one does, like washing, and bending over, even dressing. I am having one of my daily intake of 19 tablets stopped, but! having two more added to help the old heart to work better, I then have to wait three months for another check to see if they have made any difference, if not, probably surgery will follow.

As the nation is remembering the evacuation of the BEF from Dunkirk in 1940 I thought the following story was appropriate to finish with. It is a far cry from what is happening in Afghanistan.

The 4th London Field Regiment Royal Artillery from Lewisham, with its 25 lb guns was dug in near Lille on 21st May 1940. Our position took a direct hit from enemy artillery. My right leg was shattered below the knee, I also had a gun shot wound in my back in the shoulder. Battery medics splinted the leg; there was no treatment to the gunshot wound, which was open and bleeding, I was taken to the regimental aid post which was evacuated that night, before leaving my treatment was a half bottle of Cognac! On May 22nd my injuries were examined at the field hospital, they were dressed and morphine tablets were administered to ease the pain, and the

First signs of gangrene began to appear. Between the 22nd and 25th May the field hospital was evacuated. During this time I received further minor injuries but no treatment except for two morphine tablets.

On 25th May I was moved to another field hospital. Gangrene had taken a firm hold and my leg was amputated above the knee to prevent further complications. 26th to 28th May treatment for the injuries consisted of more morphine tablets but no changes to the dressings. During this time I eventually arrived at Dunkirk. Whilst in the ambulance on the quay side a bomb exploded nearby. Shrapnel ripped into the ambulance severing my right arm, the ambulance then caught fire! French sailors pulled me out, but I had suffered burns to my head and face. I was embarked onto the SS Canterbury, another bomb exploded alongside the ship which listed to one side and I ended up in the water. This time the ships crew pulled me out!

On 29th May we arrived in Dover, I was put on a hospital train, destination unknown which turned out to be Blackburn. During the trip the soldier in the lower berth complained of the blood dripping from my arm onto him. The arm was treated for the first time since the injury happened at Dunkirk. Slats from a packing case was used for splints. It was only on arrival in Blackburn when the injuries were fully assessed that they found the slats had been nailed to my arm.

Epilogue:

During the next five years he underwent 31 major operations on his arm and leg, he must at times have been in dreadful pain from his injuries, but he never let the pain show. He worked until he was 65 and led as active a life that his disabilities would allow.

He soldiered on until 1985 when at the age of 75 he passed away.

No hundreds of thousands of pounds compensation for our forces in those days. Ed.

A short note now from the treasurer:

Hi Shipmates,

Sorry I did not get to talk to you at the AGM or indeed to some of you attending the reunion. Thank goodness I am feeling a lot better now; but still have to attend hospital to get my Thyroid problem sorted out.

We made £366 from the raffles and £260.90 on the sale of slops. (stock).

Which totals at £626.90. This added to what is in the bank leaves us with a very healthy bank balance.

In a later newsletter I will give details of what our entire up to date bank balance is. At the moment bank statements still include the money paid in by shipmates for the reunion hotel reservations, this money has now been paid to the hotel and will show on the next bank statement.

Thank you all for being so kind to me, and for your marvelous generosity.

Lil Lavelly