

The Listening Post

The Newsletter of the Langeleben Reunion Association,
Affiliated member of the Royal Signals Association

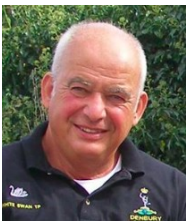


No 37

January 2020



2020 Reunion plans underway



Charlie Charlesworth writes:

Plans for the 2020 Reunion in Langeleben are well underway so if you wish to start making your travel arrangements then the outline details are as follows:

Dates: Friday 28th – Sunday 30th August inclusive. The AGM will be held early on Friday evening where the business end of the reunion will take place, monies will be collected and the outline for the weekend will be made known.

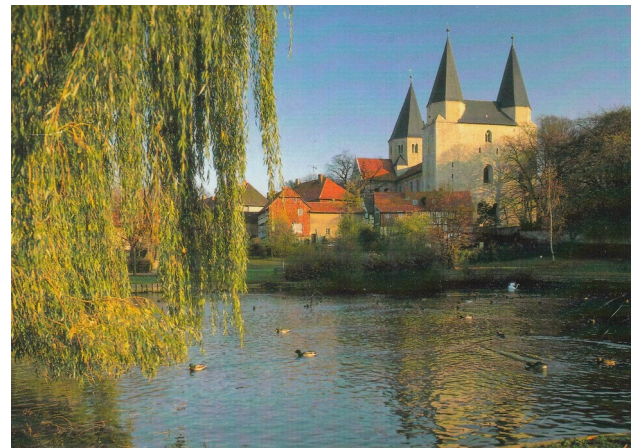
As the AGM is to be held on the Friday evening, the Saturday will be free for people to make their own arrangements. Your committee has been wondering if there might be any interest in hiring a coach to go on a short day trip to a place of interest - perhaps the Hartz Mountains or Magdeburg, or to Braunschweig for a shopping trip (the shops stay open there on a Saturday afternoon). Obviously there would be a cost involved and it would have to be economically viable. Please give this some thought and complete and return the form attached.

The year 2020 marks the 550th anniversary of the Schützengild in Königslutter and so BIG celebrations are planned. As in past years our Saturday evening will, for most of our members, be spent in the Schutzenfest Marquee in the centre of Königslutter and the same Bavarian band as two years ago will be playing. Who can forget the Padre playing the drums with the band two years ago!!

A LIFT

As we (all) get older some members, who would like to attend the Reunion, feel that they cannot as they no longer feel up to the drive or flight to Königslutter under their own steam. On the other hand, some members

travel with spare seats in their cars and might be prepared to offer others a lift. Attached you will find a response sheet for completion if this applies to you. Our desire is to pair people up but hope you will understand if this proves not to be possible.



Kaiserdom Königslutter

LISTENING POST BUDDYS

If the copy of the Listening Post you are reading has come to you by post, then a “Buddy” has sent it to you. As a matter of courtesy would you please acknowledge its receipt to your “Buddy”

LAST POST

Sadly Jeff Flockton, who served in Langeleben in 1964, passed away in December. Please remember that the Langeleben Memorial Coffin Drape is available to all members on these occasions, and can be sourced through the Secretary.

REMINDER

We have a small gathering once a month 1145-1600hrs in the Punch Bowl Wetherspoons Pub in York, 2nd Thursday of every month – all Langeleben Members welcome.

SITUATION VACANT!

At the last AGM our Chairman Rod Goddard indicated his desire to hand over the role but would continue for a further one year only if no volunteer was forthcoming. COULD THIS BE YOU?? Please get in touch with Rod if you would like more information.

ROYAL SIGNALS CENTENARY

In 2020 The Royal Signals will be marking its Centenary with a Corps Weekend at Blandford Camp on 26th-28th June. More information can be found on the Royal Signals website or through your local RSA branch.



The Whistle Cried
by Clive Sanders

**The whistle cried out early that morning,
And the men clambered up from their
bench.**

**The officers called out their instructions,
As the men marched away from the
trench.**

**The artillery barrage on the Germans,
Tore great holes in the thick heavy soil.
The sounds and the tremors resulting,
Felt like hell was beginning to boil.**

**The men held their rifles before them,
With bayonets shining bright in the sun.
They knew when the barrage was lifted,
The day of their trial had begun.**

**They marched through the gaps in the
barbed wire,
They eyes on the hell up ahead,
No words would be passing between
them,
As they marched past the living and
dead.**

**The barrage was soon past its climax,
Many soldiers sucked in their last breath,
They marched with their teeth clenched
together,
Each man now prepared for his death.**

© Copyright Protected.



Ramblings from the HF Setroom
by Rod Goddard.

WHAT NO ONIONS.

A couple of months ago there was mention on FB of Fred Simpson, a good mate from way back when. Fred managed two tours in Langeleben, one in the mid sixties, followed by another in the early seventies. Fred put character into character and as you will remember there was no shortage of competition back then. One meeting with Fred and for all the right reasons you would never forget him. A living nightmare for any RSM. In the eighties and unbeknown to me at the time, Fred decided to make a major change to his post code and moved to the South Atlantic. To be precise to live on the Falkland Islands. Like many of our readers, I was sent on detachment to the Joint Service Signal Unit Falkland Islands, (JSSU FI). It was June 1986, which was more or less mid winter down there. Needless to say the wind blew incessantly, this combined with horizontal sleet and about 4 hours of daylight made it an amazing place to be.

I had not been in JSSUFI for many days when there was an opportunity to go on a day visit to a remote settlement called Walkers Creek. During the winter months Walkers Creek was only accessible by sea, so our transport would be a small RN vessel, which had been designed for use in harbour areas. Oh my, so here we are, planning to go on a Sunday outing in this little boat on the South Atlantic. This, with a person on board who had sailed on HMS Intrepid and managed to be seasick whilst cruising around the Mediterranean in the middle of summer!! We were assured by the captain for the day, a Sub-Lieutenant or something similar that it would only be a short trip across Choiseul Sound, passing the aptly named Lively Islands. Needless to say there was a gale force wind blowing as about 20 bold sailors set off to cross the Sound. On the journey across 2 or 3 people were talking about a guy called Fred who lived in Walkers Creek. From what I could gather Fred had taken rather a liking to Carlsberg Elephant beer. Apparently the last time they had seen him he was sound asleep in a laundry basket. However, mid way across the Sound we had other things on our mind as the boat began rocking and rolling all over the place. At this point the Skipper suggest that we should all put our life jackets on and in order to help make the vessel a little more stable we should try and stand in the middle of the boat. This gave our confidence a real boost! The bold sailors had now become somewhat anxious sailors.

After what seemed like an eternity, about an hour in reality, we arrived at Walkers Creek. There were 3 or 4 Land Rovers and a small gathering of people to welcome us in. Back 1986 there were only about 18 people living

in Walkers Creek. As we approached the jetty I was sent out to throw the rope ashore, (Not sure what the technical term is for this action but there is bound to be one) a guy in a large hooded parka secured the rope and when he looked up, who should it be none other than Fred Simpson. I seem to remember a few smiles and expletives being exchanged. On this occasion it was excusable, as the last time I had seen Fred was back in the seventies in Girdwood Park Belfast. Then he resembled a Mexican cowboy, with his long locks of curly black hair and a drooping moustache. Looking the way he did, Fred would have driven even the most understanding RSM into a wild rage.

We all piled into the waiting vehicles for the mile or so journey across country to the Walkers Creek settlement. We were told that our vehicle was being driven by an Argentinean, who couldn't speak English, couldn't change out of second gear and as we quickly discovered couldn't drive. None-the-less we quickly arrived at our destination, where we were allocated to different houses for lunch. So 4 or 5 of us set off to Fred's house, where we met his wife Vera and settled down for a wonderful home cooked meal, of mutton stew washed down with Elephant beer.

Over lunch I discovered that Fred worked in Walkers Creek as the camp mechanic. I seem to remember that part of his responsibilities was the maintenance of generators, which provided electricity to all of the settlement. The timings are approximate but he had to turn them on in the morning at 0600hrs then off at 0930hrs, then on again at 1600hrs then off at 2200hrs. The rest of the afternoon's events were somewhat hazy, possible due to the large amount of elephant beer that had been consumed by all.

When it was time came to say our fond farewells and promises were made to return in a couple of weeks, I asked Fred and Vera what, if anything I could bring them back. Bearing in mind that there was little or no entertainment what-so-ever at the settlement. Their main source of communication was CB radio and if they needed to visit Stanley they had to book and aircraft to fly them there. Fred kept in touch with his mother via an HF link into some place in Scotland, which was then hooked into the BT network. So considering their frugal life style, I was thinking of videos, books etc from the camp library and of course more Elephant beer. So you can imagine my

surprise when Fred said I would like some onions, because I can't remember the last time I tasted an onion.

We did manage to visit Fred and Vera at Walkers Creek twice more, (With onions and grapes etc etc.) then the boat's driver was posted back to the UK and sadly for me anyway, there would be no more trips across the Choiseul Sound to visit Fred and Vera.



Courtesy of Clive Inman

A VIEW FROM THE PAST.

A collection of short stories and anecdotes from members.



The road to Krefeld and back. By Ken Murray

After working in the tiny workshop at the back of the comcen for quite a while I was getting a bit bored so I asked the foreman if I could do something else.

So.

Very early on a bright summer morning I reported to the orderly officer to pick up my instructions, Weapon and crypto equipment. The driver, Paddy Black and I were on our way to 16 Signal regiment. My instructions were quite clear. If anyone tries to stop you or in any way interferes with your mission shoot him. Don't just injure him because that will just make him angry. So off we went and without anything untoward we arrived in Krefeld.

After booking in with the guard commander we delivered the equipment to the appropriate department and handed the weapon into the armoury. We were pointed towards our accommodation for the night and thought "that's it, job done". After a pleasant night in the NAAFI bar we retired for the night. The next morning after breakfast we got into our old three tonner and headed for the gate. There was an obstruction so Paddy turned around to avoid it and just then we were confronted by a very angry looking gent who just happened to be the RSM. I didn't know why he was angry but it was my fault. When I was allowed to speak I explained that we were from another unit and we were trying to leave. We were directed to the gate and told never to come back again. Good. We were on our way.

When we arrived at the guardroom the RP Seargent stopped us and wanted to check our vehicle. Wouldn't

you know it. One of the back lights wasn't working. So we were sent back into the camp to have it fixed. Needless to say the RSM was walking down the road and it's very difficult to sneak by in a big green lorry so of course I had committed another crime. After he finished shouting at us, and I was able to explain our predicament, we were allowed to go to the MT section to have it fixed.

Off we went back home laughing and Joking about what had just happened at 16 Sigs.

On the way back to Langeleben we heard a wrenching sound from the engine which was a bit disconcerting but Paddy said it's ok it's only the exhaust. So on we went. After a while it got really hot in the cab so I opened the cupola cover to try to let some of the heat out and then of course it started to rain. Not a drizzle, rain, a downpour. But it was still extremely hot in the cab and that's when I saw that Paddy's glasses were slipping down his face. Apparently at one time they had broken and he had glued the pieces together. Needless to say I was pretty relieved when we arrived back. The orderly officer was the same one as when we left (extra duties?). He asked me "did you shoot anyone"? So of course I said no and he said good. So, off to the NAAFI.



An Old Soldier Remembers **By David Bowers**

Back in the dim and distant days of 1956, after many months of tripping backwards and forwards from one hospital bed to another, I made the decision not to continue to study to become an accountant, nor to spend my working life in Manchester, but to look for employment that would let me see a bit of the world.

The upshot was that at the grand old age of nineteen, I broke my Articles, joined the army and spent the next month at Maresfield Park Camp, waiting for the MoD to recruit seven other regular soldiers into the Intelligence Corps, so we could get on with basic training! As we all know, back then the standard Int. Corps intake into MI8 consisted mostly of bright university students, with a degree and a bent for languages, who could no longer find any valid reason for escaping from the dreaded National Service!

The decision to sign up for nine years upset my father, who had been proud that his working class lad was training to be an accountant. However, it all changed when I was accepted into the Int. Corps as he was even more proud to tell his pals in the office, and in the pub, that his son now worked for Military Intelligence!!

First stop after training (somewhere around Loughborough), was a posting to Mercury Barracks, 13 Signal Regiment on the Dutch border. Some of the other guys got Cyprus or the Black Forest, so I felt I had drawn the short straw.

However my time at 13 didn't last long; my theory is that at an early point in my time at Mercury Barracks, my Lords and Masters realised that although I wasn't too bad at my job, I wasn't much of a soldier. So, sometime during 1957 I was sent up country to Langeleben. Fortunately my new posting was the bedrock for lots of other terrible soldiers, so I loved it. For all those great, competent soldiers at Langeleben in 1957, no offence meant and I hope none taken. I managed to squeeze in some time in the UK before the Langy posting so, after an uncomfortable few hours on the troop ship, followed by a train journey, I was picked up by Signalman driver 'Yorkie' Banks, who didn't last too long at Langeleben before being whisked off to the Regiment to join the regimental football team. Several years later 'Yorkie' Banks metamorphosed into Gordon Banks, without doubt one of England's finest goalkeepers, particularly famous for his appearance at the 1966 World Cup and for saving a penalty from Pele! Even after 63 years, and only ever seeing Gordon again on the television, I was profoundly saddened by news of his death a year ago.

Having been dropped off at Langeleben by Yorkie I saw a guy, stripped to the waist, digging away in a grubby patch of earth running alongside what turned out to be the admin/HQ huts. I asked him for the OC's office and was directed to a door at the end of the row of huts. He said go through the door, walk up the corridor and the OC's office is on your right.

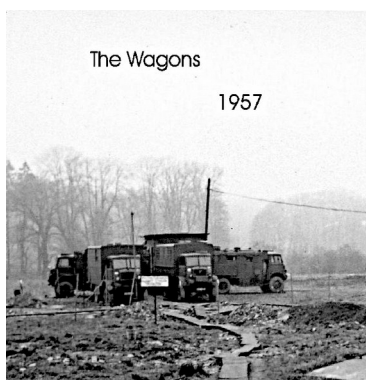
Got there, knocked on the door, received the 'enter' call and was somewhat surprised to see the gardener, still stripped to the waist but now wearing his OC's hat. I went the long way round but the OC came in through the window!

An Intelligence Corps national service soldier (for want of a better word) spent some time at Maresfield, picking up his seven shillings and sixpence a week at the weekly pay parade during basic training. Join the queue, smartly salute the paymaster with the unforgettable phrase "pay and pay book correct, sir". I never did come across a soldier who dared to lean over the Paymasters desk to question either the pay or the pay book, not even any of those First Class Honours degree soldiers who were feeling a little grieved after just returning from delivering coal to the married quarters or cleaning out lavatories!

The general opinion is that NS soldiers only ever served more than two years in uniform if they had been delayed

at her Majesty's pleasure in one of the military prisons. However, this is not quite true; it transpired that there was another way they could be extended for longer than two years and this happened to some Int Corps soldiers. The sight of growing men cry is never a happy sight but it was there for all to see on hearing the MoD announcement that National Service was to be extended in certain 'key deficiency trades' – spying on the Russians presumably being one of them! I read somewhere that the very last National Serviceman to leave the army departed from Langeleben in 1963. Maybe somebody has more on that story, but I can't be certain.

I never saw Langy under tents as a few wooden huts sprang up before I arrived, so we had proper loos and a shower. The days of tin buckets for wash hand basins, and lavatories emptied once every three days by civilian



labour, had fortunately passed! However, I did work out of a complex of wagons during 1957 and most of 1958, until the set-room was constructed in November 1958. It was like moving into the Ritz after a spell at the cheapest of budget B & Bs!

We 'electronic spies' might have spent most of our time following the antics of 3rd Shock or 20 Guards armies, but how can old soldiers at Langeleben forget the so called 'Winter Warfare' course in the Hartz Mountains. Or, indeed, the trips into Königslutter, either on recce transport or the civilian labour run, to the Deutsches Haus for a Strammer Max or a Bauernomelette, washed down with a few beers - always followed by the 1950's chart stoppers on the juke box at Schumanns! Carefree days and back then not a NAAFI in sight!

I was absolutely right to leave Manchester and the accountancy profession in order to see the world. Sixty four years after making that fateful decision I have managed to work, live or spend vacations in forty four countries, twenty three of them in Europe and the other twenty one in the Middle East, the Far East, Nepal, India, South America, North America, North Africa, South Africa and Australia. My bank manager occasionally reminds me that the life of my choice would have been far better for me financially if NatWest had influenced my career path! But, having almost reached the grand old age of eighty three, who cares!

David Bowers

21st January 2020

(Int. Corps 1956 – 1965. Langeleben 1957/1958)



Listening Post Editor Chris Jones writes:

I would like to express my thanks to members for all the favourable comments I received after the release of my first issue of Listening Post as the new editor. Most kind of you all.

I am looking to build up a collection of stories and anecdotes which I can use in future issues of Listening Post. So I would like to appeal to members to send me their recollections of their time in Langeleben, any pictures you may have will also be gratefully received. Cartoons and drawings will also be most welcome. You can send them to me at any time via langeleben@btinternet.com.

I was looking at the Königslutter Schützengilde website the other day and I notice that tickets for the evening's entertainment in the fest tent for Friday the 28th of August are already on sale. I don't know if they are expecting large crowds, but if you are interested in going here are the details:

Sweetie Glitter & The Sweethearts will be performing in the festival tent on the 28th August 2020 during the 550 year anniversary of the Schützengilde Königslutter v. 1470 e.V.



'The five musicians from Braunschweig conjure up a show that takes the audience back to the 1960s and 1970s and lets them feel love, peace and rock'n'roll. With their unique stage presence, a selection of songs to celebrate and sing along with and a

good dose of fun, the boys ensure top entertainment in all of their performances which will remain in your memory for a long time'.

Tickets are on sale now from €23.40. Follow this link for more information: KonzertKasse.de

IMPORTANT

If you received this newsletter from a volunteer buddy, please do let them know it has been received and whether you still want a copy. Please do keep your memories coming in

Editor

Chris Jones (Langeleben 1975 – 1978, 1982 – 1985)

38 Anglezarke Road, Adlington, Lancs, PR6 9PZ.

Tel 01257 483134

or email to:

langeleben@btinternet.com

Name: _____

COACH TRIP

I/we would be interested in going on a coach trip on Saturday 29 August

I/we would like to visit: (please rank in order of preference 1 2 or 3)

Hartz Mountains 1 2 3

Magdeburg 1 2 3

Braunschweig 1 2 3

Other 1..2..3

Please give this some thought and complete and return the form attached, as soon as possible, to give us an idea of the feasibility of the trip

LIFT

I/we would like to go to the reunion but would need a lift

Number of places: _____

Nearest town to where do you live? _____

I/we could offer a lift to the Langeleben Reunion

Number of places: _____

Nearest town to where do you live? _____

Please return this form to your Secretary:

Charlie Charlesworth

42 Hollins Lane

Hampsthwaite

Harrogate

HG3 2EG

01423 771935

Or free flow email to:

charlie.charlesworth@btinternet.com