

The Listening Post

The Newsletter of the Langeleben Reunion Branch, Royal Signals Association



Issue No: 5

Autumn 2010



Another Successful Reunion



Over the weekend 18th and 20th June we enjoyed yet another excellent reunion at Burleigh Court, Loughborough, although a couple of weeks later than in the past due to the unavailability of the hotel. Sadly, because of the clash with the Dannenberg reunion and the RSA weekend at Blandford some of our members had to make a personal choice and miss out on being with us this year. Even so 94 members and guests assembled over the weekend, the weather was kind, the hotel accommodation and food were as ever exceptional and the staff were as pleasant and professional as always.

Although Burleigh Court has been the favoured choice for our UK reunions over the last twelve years they are becoming more expensive each year and are in danger of pricing themselves out of our range, they will need to be far more competitive in 2012 to retain our custom.



Below:
“You haven’t changed a bit”
Peter Ellis and Keith Kerby meet again after a gap of 55 years



John Plaskitt

Inside: More photos, Clive Inman cartoon and news on page 2, Langeleben couples page 3...



Secretary's Report:

I was so pleased to see so many of our members at the Loughborough reunion in June, we were a little concerned that this years event would seem somewhat of an anticlimax after last years gathering in Königsutter (How do we follow that?), but we need not have worried as we had some 94 members and guests who joined us over the weekend and they seemed to enjoy themselves as they always do.

It was especially pleasing to welcome so many of our newer members and those older members that were attending a reunion for the first time, may it have been the first of many!

We were disappointed that our newsletter editor Marlene was unable to attend her first reunion but she was still recovering from major surgery, nevertheless she has asked me to remind you all that we need contributions of articles and photos from you our members if we are able to provide interest reading. We need to hear more of your personal recollections, of your time spent at Langeleben and of the friends you made there and perhaps people that you are trying to contact again after many years.



We are starting to look at the 2011 reunion in Germany, the Avalon Königshof hotel have already approached me as to

whether we will be going next year and have advised me that the charges will remain the same as in 2007 and 2009, not a penny increase in four years, imagine that in the UK.

We have had seven new members join us since the June reunion; it seems our fame is spreading; we will soon be signing up member number 500.

Ernie Callaghan



Aulde Spyce provided the music



Dagmar (Mrs Jim Hayes) remembers

My first memory of British troops was when I was very young and they first occupied Königsutter and used the Rathaus as their HQ. Little did we know that in 1953 there would be a camp up at Langeleben. Later when I was old enough to go out with my friends to the cinema, Eisdiele or Deutsches Haus, we not only met our local boys but also lots of 'Tommies' as we called them.

There was lots of laughter and giggles when they tried to chat up the girls, because of the language barrier. However, they soon learned phrases like 'ein Bier bitte' and 'kann ich dich nach Hause bringen'

Dancing in Deutsches Haus was great, as this was the era of Rock and Roll. Their annual dinner dances always attracted a lot of girls from all around, the first ones being held in the upstairs ballroom of Deutsches Haus and the later ones at '50 Pfennigs' in Neue-Strasse, to which I received my first invitation from my now husband Jim.

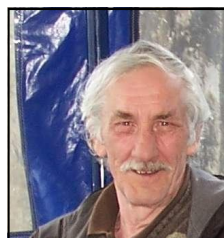
Evenings in Königsutter were very lively, especially after Thursday payday for the soldiers. Truckloads descended on the town and were dropped off at different watering holes and picked up at 'Big Schumanns' by the late night truck. Those who did not make it, either walked back the 7km to Langeleben or slept outside the taxi driver's houses (Winkler or Keller). I often passed those hungover bodies at 6.30 am on my way to work.

All in all they integrated very well and were not disliked or resented by the majority of the population apart from some of the local boys, because some of the best-looking girls were stolen. Serious friendships were forged and quite a lot of marriages resulted including my own. Jim and I were married at the Kaiserdom with a guard of honour and a best man called Ernie Callaghan. The band of the Queen's Dragoon Guards played all night at our reception.

A week later we attended the wedding of Taffy Summers and Inge. Others who married either went to Britain or stayed in Königsutter after their army service and settled in well. Many continued in the army. Then, of course, there were those who left broken-hearted and others who disappeared quickly for obvious reasons.



Forty years after meeting Marlene 'underneath the lamppost by the barrack gates' as the song goes, this year we are delighted to announce the birth of our grand-daughter aptly named Lily Marlene who is as beautiful as my lovely wife.



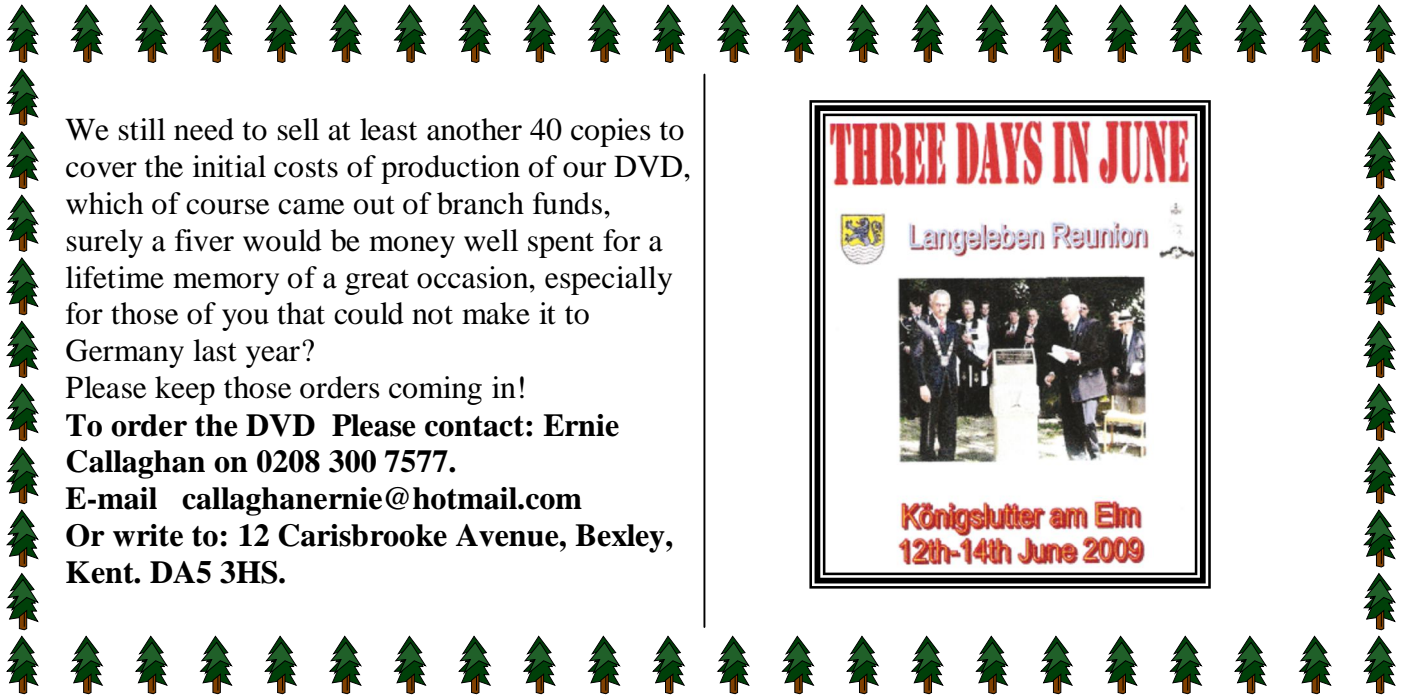
Little Lily Marlene with Nana Marlene



We were very sorry to have missed the reunion but the most important thing this year for me is that Marlene came through her operations and is safe home with me again now. All the best to all of you from both of us.

Clive Brooks.

AND FINALLY...



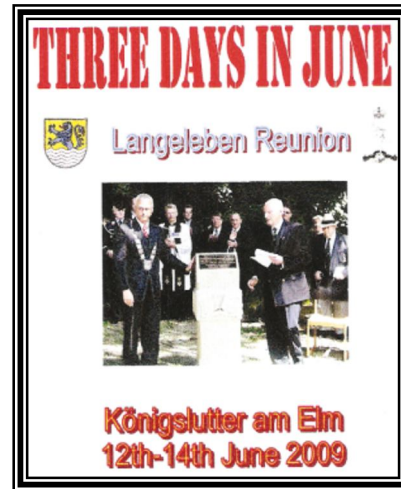
We still need to sell at least another 40 copies to cover the initial costs of production of our DVD, which of course came out of branch funds, surely a fiver would be money well spent for a lifetime memory of a great occasion, especially for those of you that could not make it to Germany last year?

Please keep those orders coming in!

To order the DVD Please contact: Ernie Callaghan on 0208 300 7577.

E-mail callaghanernie@hotmail.com

Or write to: 12 Carisbrooke Avenue, Bexley, Kent. DA5 3HS.



Coach to Königslutter

A few of us have been exploring the possibilities of getting a coach to take us across to Königslutter next year, the main push behind it being for many of our members the journey over is becoming too much of a burden and we believe that providing a door to door service would allow more members to attend; or our current participants to attend for more reunions.



I obtained prices for a combined travel and hotel package, which worked out at £325 each, the drawback with that option being the Hotel was in Helmstedt and we would have in effect two reunions, albeit combining for the various "do's". I've since got a price for just hiring a coach to take us over and bring us back; this is around £5,000. We need about 25 people to make this viable (the more we have the cheaper it will be), so far 14 have expressed an interest, what we need now is more people.

Here is the outline plan, only outline because we don't yet have the dates.

A coach leaves London on the Thursday of the reunion, travels via Dover and the channel over night arriving in Königslutter Friday afternoon. We have the reunion in whatever form it takes, then return Monday/Tuesday to London. The coach will take up to 50 passengers.

If you are interested or would like to discuss the idea further, please contact me.

David Thomas. 0117 9490840 or dt007j0550@blueyonder.co.uk or 17 Northfield Avenue, Hanham, Bristol BS15 3RB

If you don't want to use it next year but think it might be useful subsequently please let me know.

Dave Thomas

Thanks to our contributors and also a special thanks to our buddies who print and send out this newsletter to members without a computer. Without you this newsletter wouldn't be possible with rising costs etc.

PLEASE If you have received your copy from a volunteer 'buddy,' let them know so that they, and we, know you are still with us. Thank you.

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