

I was approached a few months ago now by Bob asking if I would like to pen the post reunion write up, I of course agreed forgetting (doing a lot of this these days) that we were starting what was to turn out to be a 3 week tour of Englandshire. Apologies for the delay

So here goes.

50 years since graduation and I think everyone will agree the older one gets the quicker time flies, it only feels like yesterday when the last reunion took place not 2 years ago. Saying that, graduation from RAF Halton doesn't feel that far away either.

So! On Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June the old men and of course their significant others of 223<sup>rd</sup> entry RAF Halton met at the Mount Pleasant Hotel Doncaster (and jolly pleasant it was too). An excellent turn out this year of 20 on the Thursday and 17 on the Friday plus wives and partners. The main object of course being to enjoy a couple of days of reminiscing, fun and frolicking. A glass was raised to absent friends not able to attend due to ill health including Bob Wilson, Ian Hovey, Roy Davidge and Mick Carter.

The Wife and I set off from Aberdeen very early o'clock and arrived Doncaster mid-afternoon. Leaving the suitcases in the car we checked in and headed towards the noise and chinking of glasses catching the new arrivals where else but in the bar, time for a couple of beers where we pulled up our own sandbags and started swinging the proverbial lamps along with the rest of the very familiar faces (names eluding me yet again). All too soon it was time to adjourn to our rooms, freshen up, don glad rags and get ready for the evening.

The evening kicked off with a short welcome from Bob Rodham our organiser and all round good egg. We then gathered outside for the obligatory snapshot (shortest on the left tallest on the right ... number!). Returning to the bar we got stuck into a very nice buffet and I hasten to add a few more drinks after which we were entertained by a very dapper Rod Wallace who held us spell bound with stories (some true I'm sure) about some of his antics at Halton and throughout his career in the RAF.

Next up the very important matter of the Charity raffle, alcohol being the main attraction on the prize table (as usual) Our Charity of choice this year was the Apprentice Legacy Project Memorial Plaque, a very worthwhile cause I'm sure you will agree. We raised the princely sum of £245 Thank you all very much. It was at this time that we were presented by a very thoughtful Bob and Yvonne with commemorative '50 years since graduation' mugs ... thank you guys.

The remainder of the excellent evening was spent reminiscing dragging up old stories that I am sure we had all heard many times before and quaffing yet more ale. Inevitably the chairs in the Captains Lounge slowly emptied and the numbers supporting the bar top slowly increased. For me it was time to retire and leave the stalwarts with I'm sure more stories and memories into the early hours.

Friday began with a rather subdued but very nice breakfast before we all dispersed around the local area, some heading to the excellent aircraft museum others wandering around the shops and various attractions Doncaster had to offer.

The evening continued with a traditional carvery, and what has become a reunion tradition Yvonne`s Quiz. As you have probably surmised it was then back to a rather more subdued bar for more memories and promises to meet up in the near future. It only remains for me to say a massive thankyou on behalf of all attendees I`m sure, to Bob and Yvonne for organising yet again a wonderful get together for the old men of 223<sup>rd</sup> entry RAF Halton. .

Paul Hayworth