



# HIGH NOTES

Official Newsletter  
Yorkshire Volunteers Band



**Volume 1 ~ 2013**

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## Around the World in 80 Days

Castleford to Monte Carlo with the YVB





# Band Photo Album

See you on the counter-march



Above left ~ All Smiles Julie & Steph. Above right ~ Wes explains the meaning of life to Craig.

Below Left ~ Bob the Drummer, can he bang it? Yes he can!  
Below Right ~ Bandmaster "Meets and Greet".

Now where's he gone? The search for the little drummer boy continues.



Concentration in the Kitchen Sink Dept.  
Rhianon Harding & Jonathan Carr

Left ~  
Er... 'av a look at this band.  
Below ~  
Reflecting on the gig.



Right ~ Pre  
match briefing

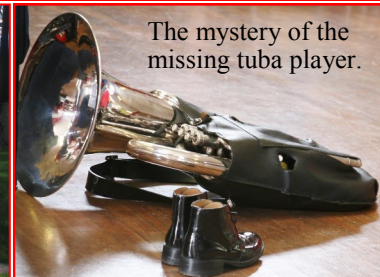


Anyone seen a band?  
Red jackets, very loud  
you know the one.



Left ~  
There's  
always one.

Right ~  
Old age is a  
wonderful  
thing.



The mystery of the  
missing tuba player.



# Bright as a Button ~ George Button Retires

After being born at a very early age, George was first introduced to a musical instrument at the age of eight years – this by his father, an established and respected bass player in the brass band world. His Father brought home (after one of his regular band practices) a battered old cornet setting in motion a playing career which was to span the next seventy years seeing George playing with a fantastic range of bands and groups all over the world.

In his teens George played largely with bands around the Wakefield area but this was to be rudely interrupted by his “call up” for national service in 1953. He was, however, determined not to let this interfere with his music more than necessary and earned himself a place in the Regimental Band of the KOYLI, (in order to do this he had to sacrifice a further year of his life by becoming a “regular” in the army. The minimum length of service for a “regular” was three years, and as the band did not accept national servicemen this became his only option).

After a very successful three years with the KOYLI seeing service in Berlin, Kenya and the UK, George decided to leave the army, this was a massive decision for any regular soldier and I have often wondered of George how close he came to staying in and making a career of it as I know at first hand how popular he was amongst his fellow KOYLI Bandsmen.

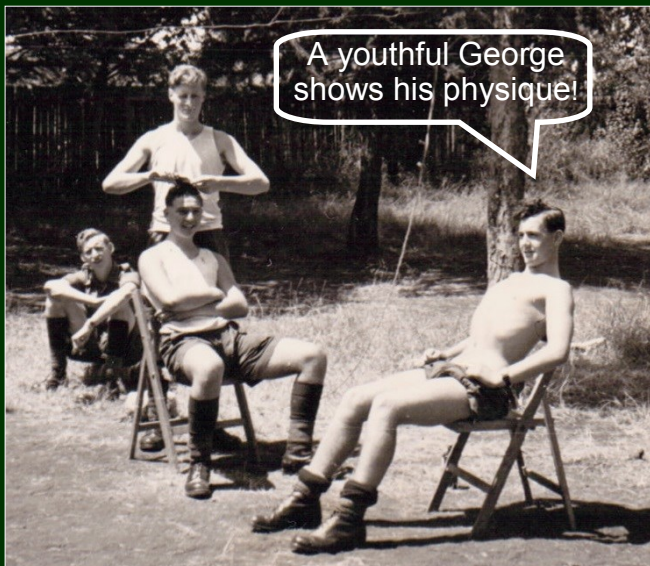
However, decision made, he re-joined one of his previous bands (now under a new name of The Lofthouse Colliery Band) and as was general practice in those days he was given a job in the colliery, however, after his exotic life in the KOYLI the pit was no place for George and in his own words he stayed there “just long enough to work out his notice”.

George’s decision to leave the pit was to have an immense effect on the rest of his life, he took up a job as a “Travelling Rep” for a frozen food company and it was as he was travelling that disaster struck when his car left the road resulting in the loss of his leg, he was very ill for a considerable length of time and counts himself lucky that he did not lose both legs, (Lucky ? this was typical of his resilience and positive outlook).

Later he formed his own business selling carpets in Wakefield and became a well-known and well respected member of the business community in the area. All the time he kept up to his “banding” and had by now become a bass player in the world renowned “Yorkshire Copperworks Band” (later to be re-named Yorkshire Imperial), with this band he won two British Open titles and the much coveted National Championship at the Albert Hall.

It was in 2001 that I invited George to take up the challenge of learning the bass clef and joining us in the “Vols”, reluctant at first because his inability to march he was eventually persuaded and started an immensely successful partnership with our resident euphonium player, thus creating the most experienced stand in the entire band! On behalf of the band I would like to thank George for his brilliant contribution over the past 11 years or so and wish him well, in the hope that he will keep in touch and visit us on the odd occasion.

*Major Jack Boden , Band President.*



# Gilbert's War

The Yorkshire Volunteers Band was contacted by Gary Myers a professional animator who was looking to purchase a Band CD to use as a backing track to the animated film Gilbert's War.



Gilbert's War is an animated short film about one young man's extraordinary rescue from no-man's land on a French battlefield during the First World War. An uplifting tale of the power of the human spirit amid the horror of the trenches, Gilbert's War will reinforce your faith in humankind.

Gary's grandfather Gilbert Myers was a rifleman with the 2/8th West Yorkshire Regiment Leeds Rifles and served in the first World War. He took part in the assault on the Hindenburg line at Cambrai on 20th November 1917 and was gravely wounded. A couple of German infantrymen found him, laying bleeding in a shell crater, took him to the allied field hospital under cover of darkness, and disappeared into the night.

If not for that act of kindness from the enemy, I would not be here. I'm a professional animator and I want to celebrate his story with a short animated film.

Gary sent the message below when he received the CD, "I've listened through and I have to say the quality in both performance and recording is wonderful. Thank you very much for allowing me to use some of it in Gilbert's War".

For more information and to watch the trailer please visit: [www.gilbertswar.co.uk](http://www.gilbertswar.co.uk)

## INSTRUMENTARIUM: THE CARNYX

The carnyx was a wind instrument of the Iron Age Celts, used between c. 300 BC to 200 AD. It is a type of bronze trumpet, held vertically, the bell styled in the shape of a boars, or other animals, head. It was used in warfare, probably to incite troops to battle and intimidate opponents. The instruments upright playing position allowed it to be heard over the heads of the participants in battles or ceremonies.

The word "carnyx" is derived from the Gaulish root, "carn-" or "cern-" meaning "antler" or "horn," and the same root of the name of the god, Cernunnos. This is the name the Romans gave to the instrument. The original Celtic name is unknown.

Carnyces were reported in the Celtic attack on the Delphi in 279 BC, as well as from Julius Caesar's campaign in Gaul and Claudius' invasion of Britain. A well preserved example is the Deskford Carnyx, found at the farm of Leitchestown, Deskford, Banffshire, Scotland in 1816. It was donated to Banff Museum, and is now on loan to the National Museum of Scotland. The location and age of the Deskford Carnyx suggests the instrument had a peaceful, ceremonial use and was not only used in warfare. Until 2004, fragments of only four other carnyces had been preserved, but in November 2004 archaeologists discovered a first century deposit of five well preserved carnyxes under a Gallo-Roman fanum at Tintignac (Corrèze, France). Four had boars heads, the fifth appears to be a serpent.





# Did You Know???

Here are some little known facts about military music, with a few facts about general music thrown in too!

Did you know that the Royal Military School of Music 'Kneller Hall' was originally called 'Whitton Hall'? The building was designed by Sir Christopher Wren for his friend Sir Godfrey Kneller. The name 'Kneller Hall' evolved through people referring to it as such.

The spin wheel manoeuvre used by the guards at the Queen's birthday parade cannot be found in any military drill books and is only ever used at Trooping the Colour.

In 1972 the Scots Dragoon Guards band hit the number one spot in the charts with *Amazing Grace*!

Malcolm Arnold took the theme from 'Colonel Bogey' and wrote a counter melody for it which later became the main theme for *The Bridge On the River Kwai*.

The Star-Spangled Banner became the US national anthem in 1931. Prior to that, it was *My Country 'Tis of Thee*, which had the same melody as Britain's national anthem *God Save the Queen*, which is based on music written by John Bull in 1619.

Our national anthem holds the record for being played the most times in a single performance. In 1909, while waiting for King Edward VII who was getting dressed a German band played the anthem 17 times!

The Ocarina, a wind instrument, is also known as the Sweet Potato.

There are 6 versions of Franz Schubert's "Die Forelle" ("The Trout"), simply because when friends asked him for copies of the song, he wrote out new copies to the best he could remember at the time.

## Drummer Robert Lewin Retires

Robert has decided to retire from the Corps of Drums after many years loyal service to the Corps. He was presented with a framed photograph and a hand made model drum decorated in YV CoD pattern by Drum Sergeant Dave Barlow. The presentation was made after drum practice in the band room. We all wish him well for the future.



Corps of Drums  
Say farewell to Robert



## Charity Dinner on behalf of MIND at the Pines Hotel in Chorley, Lancashire Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2012



Here we were again, offering our services over that historic border in the 'Red Rose' county, requested by popular demand! This time the event was on behalf of the local division of the national charity MIND. Travelling by mini-bus from the band-room we duly arrived in plenty of time and shown to our changing room. With plenty of time before our scheduled start we had a quick run-through of our extended routine and then formed up outside the rear doors ready to march in. The guests were called to their dinner table, bugle calls were sounded and off we stepped to 'British Grenadiers'. Forming up on stage we started the routine with bugles marches, jigs and the 'black light show'. When the lights came back on an invite was made to the VIP guest to join us on stage and perform the 'Victory Beatings'. What a great guy, he really took part in the whole atmosphere of the night and rounded off a fantastic performance. To the pleasure of the Corps, we were all invited to sit down to a brilliant 4 course dinner and what a lovely meal it was. All in all, a superb night WELL DONE THE BOYS! Drum Sargent Dave Barlow

CoD ~ Victory Beatings





# DRUMMERS CALL

## Help The Heroes Charity Event at Scarborough Castle Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2012



*Bugles on the Parapets  
Scarborough Castle*

The day had arrived, Friday the 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2012, a historical date in the new event in the history of Scarborough Castle.

A 500BC hill fort was originally on the site of Scarborough Castle, now a grade 1 listed building, originally built by Henry II, dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century with an incredible history including sieges, various occupations, bombed during WWI and a secret listening station during WWII. Now, something completely new to the history of this fine English castle was about to happen, the invasion, even though it was only for 5 hours, of the Yorkshire Volunteers Corps of Drums, a force to be feared whatever the period of the millennium. It is even rumoured that there are one or two of this feared Corps who were present during the famous Civil War 5 months siege in 1645, even including a 'Red Rose' tyrant and infiltrator, surely treason you may shout. In reality, a military music event, or should we say PROPER military music event by drums and bugles, had not performed within the castle grounds for over 300 years, a truly rare and indeed honoured occasion.



On arrival at the 12th century 'Barbican' castle gate, we were duly directed to a parking area on top of the 300ft cliff edge after proceeding along the incredibly steep and narrow cobbled path to the courtyard and the entrance to the original castle keep. Our changing area was high in the eaves of the 18<sup>th</sup> century 'Master Gunner's House', now restored into a museum, small cafe and shop, via 3 flights of narrow stairs. Not an easy job for such brave and fearsome warriors but hey, that's what drummers do and indeed do well!

The room itself was indeed small, just enough for three of the 'big boys' at a time, the rest forced onto the narrow landing. Interestingly the narrow window, looking over to the north of the Scarborough cliffs, appeared magically to be bigger than what it really was and seemed to draw many of the horrific warrior faces to peer pathetically through it causing panic in

the surrounding homes fearing a new invasion. Quickly the time arrived where drummers were needed, there's a rare event you musicians may cry, but needed we were. Not to start our majestic performance but to look pretty and pose for photographs with our adoring audience, AND, they even paid for the privilege with all monies going into the 'Help the Heroes' pot. Truly a difficult job having to pose at the side of beautiful ladies (and men) in their finest evening dress but again that's what drummers do but this time not too well due to having to look away once or twice, or at least pretending to look away, being proper gentlemen that is!

Very soon the guests were invited to their tables for dinner and the order was given for the bugle calls and then the march in to the 'British Grenadiers'. Lights out and the black light show started with incredible lighting being provided via our two UV strip-lights on the floor and additional two large UV spotlights, standing around 5 feet high, placed each side of stage area. What a difference they made, lighting up the UV drum-sticks and white gloves better than ever. Lights up and a fantastic applause from the guests, probably one of the best yet, if not the best. Dinner was waiting to be served so off we marched, again to incredible applause to have a welcome bite and drink provided kindly by the organisers. A fireworks display was planned after dinner and we were asked to perform the 'Last Post' to close dinner and to start the evening's entertainment. As the dinners came out from the large marquee the Corps had four buglers placed high on the walls of the castle, directly in front of a floodlit and very large 'Union Jack' (or Union Flag to be precise). What a setting, and the sound reverberated around the castle grounds, rather eerily, but what a fantastic sound it was, an brilliant job by the four buglers, Colin, Mark, Martin and Gary. Again, an incredible applause and fantastic comments came flowing from the guests, "best event ever", "awesome", "a true military night".

Heading back towards our attic changing room we were all elated and the long journey home seemed so much shorter even though we all arrived home way after midnight.

WELL DONE THE LADS!

Drum Sergeant Dave Barlow







**15th International Citroën Car Clubs Rally**  
**ICCCR UK Yorkshire 9-12 August 2012**



**Trio of Trombones**



**Louise & Claire Solo in Stars & Stripes**



**Oh là là....  
Le Grease Monkey?**





*Right ~ Driver Bill & YVB. Browns coach driver Bill is an ex Yorkshire Volunteer and now a honorary band member.*



## Blooming Good Gig

The band performed for the first time at the Taunton Flower Show "The Best in the West" in Vivary Park, Taunton over the weekend of 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> of August 2012. There was a great atmosphere at the show and our marching display was very well received although we needed to dodge the knights ball and chain on the counter march!



## Lions Club Stall Coins in Cash

Members of Ilminster Lions Club were out in force during the two days of the Taunton Flower Show.

In addition to being to being marshals and manning the ticket booths, family and friends helped out on the club's fundraising teddy bear stall.

They were delighted when three members of the Yorkshire Volunteers Band — Lynsey Kitchener, Claire Jackman and Louise Outram — tried their luck.

Over the two days the stall raised a whopping £1,560 for their on going fundraising for the Beacon Centre in Taunton.



ILMINSTER Lions hit the right note with the Yorkshire Volunteers Band at Taunton Flower Show.





*Ever Decreasing Circles*



*The Band in its natural Habitat*

*Below - Anybody seen my Band?*



*That's All For  
Now Folks!*





The Festival of Yorkshire in Scarborough ran from Yorkshire Day, 1st. August, with music and literature events, games, performances and exhibitions. The new festival was led by Scarborough Borough Council and the Scarborough Urban Area Forum as part of its arts culture and sport theme for 2012 and supported by Welcome to Yorkshire in association with a number of other partners which include The Yorkshire Society, Scarborough Spa, Scarborough Castle, Woodend Creative Industries Centre and Scarborough Library and Information Centre. The day was launched to coincide specifically with Yorkshire Day, after Scarborough was invited by the Yorkshire Society to host the main civic gathering when mayors, chairmen and other dignitaries from across the region gather together to celebrate their pride in Yorkshire and the region's unique appeal.

The Civic Day started at the iconic Spa with a procession led by the Yorkshire Volunteers band along the Foreshore. Guests were driven in vintage coaches to St Mary's Church for a traditional service before they returned to the Spa for a reception and Yorkshire celebration.



Another band first, fall out and take the cliff tramway and fall back in.



Over the bridge and down the path





## Mill House Restaurant Covenham St Bartholomew

*...and the band played on  
into the night*



*Below – Sparks fly as Jonathan Carr proves he can  
do it blindfolded - Sparks Xylophone Solo.*

Even the BM  
“Helps” by moving  
the Xylophone!



# York Minster Christmas Carol Concert

As in previous years the band performed at the annual carol concert given by the York Minster choir, however as the concerts are always a sell out, in 2012 there were two, which also both sold out.

The band was described by Vivienne Faull, Dean of York as “The magnificent Yorkshire Volunteers Band whose presence adds so much”. The celebrity guest speakers this year were:

### John Craven

Born in Leeds, John Craven started his career as a journalist - working for the Yorkshire Post. He joined the staff of the BBC and the rest is history! John Craven’s Newsround was a ground-breaking series which encouraged young people to become interested in the wider world. The programme was first aired in 1972 and forty years later, is still running (now entitled Newsround). Since 1989 John Craven has been a presenter on Country file, and in 2000 he was awarded the OBE for services to rural and children’s broadcasting.

### Kate Fenton

Kate Fenton is an acclaimed novelist whose works include *The Colour of Snow* and *Picking Up*. After graduating from Oxford in Philosophy Politics and Economics she worked as a researcher at the House of Commons and from 1978 to 1985 she worked at the BBC as a features and documentary producer. While at the BBC, she met her future husband, the renowned actor, Ian Carmichael (d 2010) who read with distinction at many previous carol concerts. Although born in Lancashire, Kate has made her home on the eastern side of the Pennines.

### Cherie Lunghi

Cherie Lunghi is a distinguished actress in theatre, film and television. She was a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company and has many film appearances to her credit including the role of Guinevere in *Excalibur*. Inevitably she is known to a wider audience through her television appearances, in particular recurring guest appearances in *Casualty*, her role as Gabriella Benson in *The Manageress*, her appearances in the highly memorable series of adverts for Kenco coffee, and a much acclaimed and long running participation in *Strictly Come Dancing*.

### Philip Serrell

In his semi-autobiographical book *An Auctioneer’s Lot* Philip Serrell points out that generations of students have cause to be thankful that he decided against a teaching career, for which he trained at Loughborough College. He is now an extremely familiar face on the television screens as an expert on *Bargain Hunt*, *Flog It* and, most recently, the very popular *Antiques Road Trip*. He presides over an Auctioneers and Value firm in Worcestershire and he specializes in fine art and antiques. In addition to his memoirs mentioned above, a second volume has been written with the intriguing title *Sold to the Man with the Tin Leg*.





# On Stage with the YVB



Jonathan Carr performs his now famous Xylophone solo "Sparks" blindfolded.

Joseph Rowntree Theatre, York  
"Last Night of the Proms"  
In aid of York Hospital  
Neurological & Respiratory  
Departments



Corps of Drums  
Take the stage



*Left & Below* ~ Concert organiser Ron Middlemass introduces a budding conductor from the audience who puts the band through its paces live on stage. Bandmaster Ritchie Howard tells one of his legendary stories, while the band takes a rest.

"Last Night of the Proms"  
Riverhead Theatre, Louth  
In aid of Help for Heroes



Fanfare Trumpet Team take centre stage



Musicians eye view.  
*Bottom right* ~ Major John Lill Ex Yorkshire  
Volunteer & concert organiser







IN SUPPORT OF  
**HELP for  
HEROES**

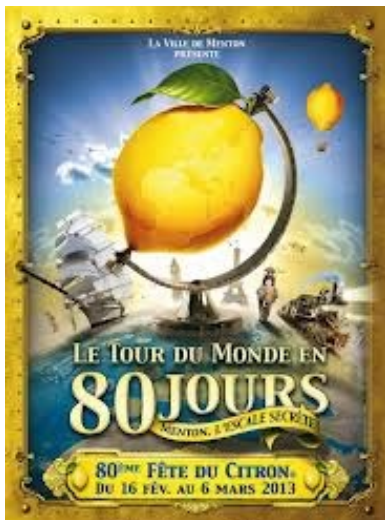
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*Above ~ Annual concert at the Riverhead Theatre in support of "Help for Heroes".*

*Below ~ Christmas Concert, Kings Hall, Ilkley "Arrival of the Queen of Sheba" with Peter & Michelle as soloists.*







# Around the World in 80 Days Menton Citrus Festival 20-25 February 2013

Having made such a good impression during our trip to Menton in 2011, I guess it was no surprise they wanted us back again for 2013.

With the memory of aching backsides from a bus ride halfway across Europe still in our memories from last time, Brown's were instructed to provide their most comfortable coach. Also it was decided to cross the channel by ferry so this would at least give a break of 90 minutes or so to stretch legs, wander around, get the circulation going and thus reduce the chances of DVT.

## Over the hills and far away.....

There is not really much that can be said about the outbound trip other than it was a very long way and seemed to take a very long time. It was 22 hours in fact, however most of us had the luxury of a double seat to ourselves and made ourselves as comfortable as possible but we were still exhausted by the time we arrived at about 09.00 am in the morning of Thursday 21/02/2013. The weather was decidedly cool and overcast and not the wonderful Riviera type we had been greeted with on the previous trip. An ominous portent of things to come as it turned out.

Our accommodation was the same 'apart- hotel' as before. Our rooms were just as bijou as I remembered them but they were clean and had all (but one) of the essentials needed for a short stay. The deficiency was that all rooms were provided with just one roll of bathroom stationery – not nearly enough by a long way. Fortunately I had anticipated this and taken extra supplies with me.

After settling in, I was billeted with Peter & Major Jack, a number of us had the same idea and popped up the road to visit our favourite bar for lunch time refreshments. Big Dave lamented at the price of the local 'Gothic' beer which worked out at £5.00 for just short of a pint. A combination of the price and fatigue from the long journey encouraged us away after a little while for some well needed kip before our first engagement that evening.



## Let's wear our capes, that way we are bound to stay dry.....

As the afternoon drew to a close the heavens opened and it absolutely bounced down. Our gig that evening turned out to be a dress rehearsal, including capes, a rehearsal that is of getting dressed. Unfortunately the gig was cancelled because of the rain. Also, it meant there was nothing for it but to get changed again and go back to the bar. A good night was I think enjoyed by all. How on earth this works I have no idea but it turned out that two ¼ litre glasses of beer were cheaper than one ½ litre. French logic I suppose.



## Echoes in eternity.....

The following morning was fresh and breezy but clear with bright sun. Some decided to take the advantage of free time during the day to pop into Monte Carlo via the wonderful railway which hugs the coastline. Whilst taking a leisurely stroll around the town Harold decided to pop into the Café de Paris for a refreshing beverage, and just to say he had been in. To his astonishment the (one and only) beer he ordered cost a whopping 14 Euros!

Film character Roman General Maximus Decimus Meridius (General of the Northern Armies and Commander of the Felix Legions) once said: 'What we do in life echoes in eternity'. Well if that is the case then Harold's echo in eternity will be 'Ow blinking much!!!!!!'





### Here we go round the mulberry bush.....

Our Friday evening engagement was a carnival parade around the town. The silly string merchants were replaced this year with confetti merchants. They were much in evidence again throughout the chilly evening. Also this year there was less of the traditional hanging around before the start and not too much stopping and starting and thankfully we were not too close to loud things. Captain Green (retired) was on the wrong side of the band as we moved into position and passed some very scantily dressed Brazilian Samba Dancers so I offered a proxy 'Ding Dong' on his behalf. It was such a cool evening and such was their state of (un)dress that it did cross my mind that it would be as well if they had chosen to wear thermal thongs.



As mentioned, the confetti brigade were out in strength. At one point I noted a very agitated Captain Green (retired) wagging an accusatory finger at a spectator. Later I discovered he (and Her Maj') had suffered the indignity of having a handful of confetti stuffed behind his medals as we paused for a moment along the way. Being an officer and a gentleman (retired) he bore the affront with a stiff upper lip.

There were two circuits of the route (mulberry bush) before the parade ended. A visit to the local estaminet was then needed in order that we could all warm up by drinking cold beer. Well, that was my excuse. Much to my astonishment I learned that a certain band member, with a reputation for having a serious case of Yorkshire man's disease (having short arms and deep pockets), had actually bought a drink for all his chums. It did strike

me that this was probably one drink and ten straws but no, it actually was a round of drinks. Big Dave arranged for us to play (blastissimo) for the bar owner and his customers. This earned us a beer each.

Peter and I shared a Pizza from a takeaway we passed on the way back to the hotel which whilst not cheap, was possibly the best Pizza either of us has ever had. Mozzarella cheese & Prosciutto ham I am sure the man said it was, with olives. It might have lost something in translation as he was an Italian trying to speak to Englishmen in French!

### Keep 'em guessing.....

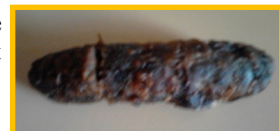
Saturday's activities involved just one engagement being a solo marching tour around the town stopping at various places to play a number or two. At one of the stops Big Dave decided to put in a couple of counter marches before bringing us to a halt.



This had two effects: 1) worrying everybody that we were about to go into impromptu display mode just like we did in Spain last year when Big Dave (showing off) took us straight from a road march into a display, 2) confusing Major Jack as to which end of the band was going to be the front and to where he should stand! The parade only lasted an hour but again it was a little cold and as a result my fingers were a little stiff. As it was not too far away, and as the sun was over the yard-arm, some of us decided to warm up again in the bar.

### Peter's sausage.....

After a couple of swift halves I left Peter & Major Jack in the bar and went back to the hotel having offered to organise a 'full English' for our lunch. I thought they might be ten or fifteen minutes behind me but no, a friendly local had engaged them both in conversation and an extra drink and so it was nearer 45 minutes before they appeared. By this time the bacon was just on the right side of burnt to be called 'crisp'. The sausages however were completely passed it, they were cremated and totally inedible. By the song and dance Peter made about it you would have thought I had ruined his most treasured possession. I have actually kept his sausage and am going to varnish it and have it mounted on a wooden plaque to go on show in the band room.





### **The referee must be English.....**

With the whole of the afternoon and evening free some took the opportunity of a sight-seeing trip over the border in Italy (about 3 miles away) others however took advantage of the time to watch the England v France Six Nations Rugby Union match. The friendly bar owner very kindly brought his own (large) T.V. from home and placed it on a table covered in a Union Flag. A sizeable English contingent assembled out-numbering the few locals in the bar. There was much friendly banter and rivalry between the nationalities. As the game progressed and England gradually edged their way to victory the French commented at every opportunity that the referee must be English.

I got chatting to the bar owner at one point, his English was very good. He explained that his pride and joy was a Jack Russell terrier which whilst having been born in France to parents also born in France and owned by a French breeder, the dog did not (refused to?) understand French. Seemingly it would only obey commands given in English!

Surprisingly, with the bar still quite full at about 11.00 pm, the owner insisted in calling last orders. A little while later a number of us gathered in the hotel lounge for a chat and to finish off some refreshments brought from home. Peter insisted on telling everybody about his sausage.

### **I have that feeling of déjà vu again.....**

The main event of the trip was the big parade on Sunday afternoon. It was much the same as the previous Friday, cold and wet. It was not actually raining before we set off so capes were not worn. This pretty much guaranteed that it would rain. If we had worn them then of course it would not have rained. The good news was however that our capes stayed nice and dry whilst we got wet. Captain Green (retired) again had on display his telescopically extending music liar. It extended so far that he should really have had a blank file in front of him for nothing other than 'elf and safety considerations of both he, and the person in front, in the event of a sudden and unexpected halt on the march.



There was a fair bit of stopping and starting and the confetti contend with. I don't think the crowds were as large as had been the case on our previous trip two years ago. This was very probably down the poor weather which just for good measure decided to add wind to the equation thus creating confetti storms to add to the challenge.

After two circuits of the mulberry bush we had just about had enough, just as it seemed we were heading for a third circuit Big Dave brought us to a halt and dismissed us. It was relief with a capital 'R'.



### **Time to go home.....**

Due to the weather the gig planned for us that evening had been cancelled and as the forecast was not good the decision was taken to leave early and set off on Sunday evening rather than wait until Monday morning. This would mean we would get home some time on Monday evening rather than Tuesday morning. The way events subsequently turned out, perhaps a goodnight's sleep in a decent bed before setting off would have been the better option-hindsight of course.

In order to avoid any fines or charges from the hotel, everybody was instructed to leave their rooms in perfect condition and be ready to leave at 7.00 pm. This gave just enough time for Peter, Major Jack and I to tidy up and pack up with enough over to pay a last visit to the bar and say our farewells to the friendly bar owner. The rain had begun to turn to sleet as we returned to the hotel.

Peter, Major Jack and I passed our 'march out' at the first attempt and assembled with everybody else outside the hotel whilst our bags were packed away. Mr Trefelli, the band agent and Simona who had booked us, turned up to see us off. He said some very positive things about us such as reliability and punctuality etc., and gave us some bottles of wine as a thank you gift. Unfortunately there were not enough for one each so it was names out of a hat. Just as the bus doors were closing, Dave Barlow said something about not having packed our passports in our bags because we would need to produce them at passport control at Calais ferry terminal. I was the only one who had forgotten about this and consequently I had packed away my passport. The thought of having to unpack the hold of the bus at some point the way home to find my bag, filled me with dread.



Time to say goodbye.  
Simona surrounded by multiple Daves.



### **You can wait ages for one and then three arrive at the same time.....**

The road out of Menton is a steep and winding one as it quickly climbs the side of a mountain range which separates that part of the coastal region from Nice. As we climbed higher the sleet turned to snow which then got thicker and thicker. By the time we reached the top it was about six inches deep or so and the carriageway was not very clear at all. With safety in mind our drivers decided it was too risky to try the steep decent into Nice until things improved. We pulled into a motorway service station and waited. There are only so many times you can look around the inside of a French motorway service station so it was not too long before we were all back on the bus watching it get worse outside.



After about three hours, salvation appeared out of the gloom in the shape of a trio of Snow Ploughs. Their formation and dressing was impeccable as they whizzed passed in a slightly staggered formation abreast so that snow on any part of the carriageway was passed between them and then off onto the hard shoulder. This was our cue to set off again for the journey to Calais.

After first light and after everybody had woken up, we stopped for a break at a service station. Whilst everybody slipped inside to grab a coffee and perhaps some breakfast, I took the opportunity to get my passport. It was an amazing stroke of luck that I only had to move three bags before I found mine. It could have been much much worse and involved unpacking the entire hold.

### **Where do I claim my benefits.....**

About 90 minutes or so after our stop we arrived at the ferry terminal in Calais. The check-in office said we could just about catch a ferry then being loaded if we looked lively and got through passport control in time. As we arrived at passport control a posse of officials were waiting. Whilst we went inside the building to have our passports checked they searched and inspected the bus. They did not however make any attempt to unpack the hold to search for 'illegals' who might have hidden under the cargo.

Harold raised a titter whilst having his passport checked in that as he approached the counter/lectern of one of the border officials he put on his best foreign accent and asked 'where do I claim my benefits?' This was quite apt actually as a few minutes later, as we were making our way to the ferry ramp, we passed by what was evidently a couple of 'clandestines' who had been apprehended by members of the border force. They were stood looking rather forlorn and miserable beside a soft sided lorry in which they had attempted to stow away.



### **There'll be Blue Birds over.....**

We just made it onto the ferry in time being the last to board. The doors closed immediately. The break in scenery and the chance to walk about a bit was welcome. The sea had quite a swell which made it quite difficult to walk about and outside on deck the wind was so strong that David Stephenson had his glasses blown off. They were only just saved from going overboard by Lynsey with an athletic rugby type dive. The only thing over the white cliffs of Dover when we arrived was rain.

### **Home James and don't spare the horses.....**

At the first service station we had a brief stop as we parted company with our duo of drivers and welcomed aboard an old friend in the shape of Graham to take us on the final stage home. By the time we arrived back in Castleford the entire journey had taken 26 hours. The relief at finally arriving was palpable.

Thereafter it was the usual frenzy of activity as everybody rushed about to retrieve their belongings and get off home as quickly as possible.

Cpl Dale Heaton – Tenor Saxophone this time.

**P.S.** Whilst it was not one of our best trips it certainly did our reputation no harm at all. I know the band agent was pleased and there was mention that he had already suggested that next year we can go to Italy again or perhaps even Shanghai. I guess we had all better get saving for that one as I am sure the band fund will not cover the full cost!

**P.P.S.** Mulberries do not grow on bushes.

**P.P.P.S.** It was the first time it had snowed in that region of France since 1956.





# Gone but not forgotten

## John Patrick Geary

13/03/1948 – 28/02/2013

It is with very much regret and deep sadness I have to announce that following a two year fight against cancer, John passed away peacefully on 28<sup>th</sup> February at Wakefield Hospice. His wife Liz was with him at his side.

I think it is safe to say that John will be greatly missed by all his Yorkshire Volunteers colleagues. We all thought a great deal about him. Not only was John a fine musician and excellent bandsman, he was a very good man. For me and others, he was also a great chum.

John was born and grew up in Norwich and attended a local Catholic school. On leaving school John joined the Royal Marines and such was his ability that after basic training he was immediately posted to a band in Arbroath as Solo Clarinet. This was indeed an acknowledgement of his ability and musicianship skills.

Time with 'the mob' as he often used to refer to it saw him travel all over the world with visits and postings including amongst them Singapore, The Philippines, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Gibraltar. John also did a spell on the Royal Yacht Britannia which I understand is itself another achievement as only the 'crème de le crème' would be offered this. In truth he hated this particular posting saying the ship was far too small and cramped and you had to get all trussed up in your best 'whites' just to go to the galley or the heads just in case you bumped into royalty!

One of these postings is itself quite interesting in that from 1967 to 1969 John served with the band of 3 Commando Brigade in Singapore. The significance of this is that every person within this brigade from cook to pay clerk to musician to soldier had to have passed full commando training. Yes, believe it or not but mild mannered unassuming man that he was, John Geary earned the accolade of a green beret and the right to count himself as one amongst one of the world's greatest military elites.

I once asked John if the Commando training was as difficult as we hear about. He said that yes it was and it very nearly killed him. It was one of, if not the most difficult thing he had ever done in his life. Had he known how tough it was going to be then he would not have volunteered for it. He said that on passing the course when everybody else was euphoric about their achievement, he was just glad it was all over so he could recuperate from a collection of strains, knocks, cuts and bruises he had acquired along the way. This is just typical of the man I came to know – never one to make much of a song and dance about anything, never one to brag, never one to boast.

His time in Singapore was clearly a pivotal point in John's life in that this is where his passion for flying was born and began to flourish. He joined the gliding club and received his licence to fly solo within six months.

One event of this time in Singapore which must be told is the episode of the monsoon drain. John spoke of this incident from time to time. The background here is that it was a parade on the day of his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. He and his chums had been in the NAAFI at lunchtime celebrating. Immediately before the parade and as they were forming up, the Bandmaster suggested to John that it might be as well to leave this one out, but with the confidence and exuberance of youth and some liquid encouragement inside him, he insisted. Here are the words of his chum Stu (Tich) McLeod who served with John in Singapore from 1967 to 1969, and was there at the time:-

"We had been force feeding him booze before the gig and we were at the rear of the parade ground just in front of a huge monsoon ditch. John and I stood together in the centre of the back row, it was at the beginning of the monsoon season and the wind was blowing up, we had been waiting for Mountbatten to arrive for about 40 minutes when John's March Cards blew away to the top of the ditch. When he tried to retrieve them he lost his footing and slid down the ditch in his full ceremonial whites. Mountbatten was approaching the band for inspection as John tried to climb out and the Sergeant at the rear of the band pushed him back down and told him to stay there until the dignitaries had moved on."

After the parade was over John was seriously worried about the repercussions fearing at best he would be charged with something or other or at worst jailed or perhaps even dismissed from the service. All that actually happened was that the Bandmaster took one look at his muddy uniform and said something along the lines of - "Told you not to do that one." That was it, it was never mentioned again.





John told me that he was once approached by the Senior Director of Music who offered to mentor him with a view to achieving a commission in all that was required including composition and arranging etc. He said he declined adding that he was a bit of a rebellious tearaway at that time (I cannot believe this was true) and had not wanted to get involved. The opportunity went instead to a colleague called Richard Waterer who ended up as a Colonel with published and acclaimed compositions to his name and an OBE. We regularly play two of these: Royal Salute & Gibraltar. On more than one occasion I heard John muse that perhaps he had made a mistake on that one.

John's thoughts at that time were not for a full 22 years of a life on the ocean wave. After leaving the Royal Marines he took a job in London in corporate insurance which after a few years saw him promoted to a senior position in the North of England branch of the company. This is where he met and married his wife Liz to whom he would often refer affectionately as 'er indoors'.

A successful career enabled John to indulge in some of his passions which included golf, horse riding but most importantly of all – flying. To his death John held a private pilot's licence which was something I know he was proud of. The company he worked for owned a small aircraft for transport purposes and John would often volunteer to pilot it with trips as far afield as Le Touquet in France. He also had for a while a share in ownership of a glider and was an active member of Sherburn Flying Club.

Regrettably, when redundancy came John was perhaps not quite at the right time of life to start afresh with a new career in a different field but he did find himself a position as the credit controller for a firm of builder's merchants in Normanton.

Many years had passed before John's thoughts turned once again to music. Despite once confiding to a former Royal Marines colleague after leaving the service that he thought he would never play again, he had kept his Clarinet over all the years. John joined The Yorkshire Volunteers Band shortly after it had ceased to be a Territorial Army band. I joined a few years later. He was very supportive and encouraging to me, not having previously played with a military band, and helped me get the knack of slow marching. We soon became firm friends and I always enjoyed it when on rare occasions John would let slip on some of the episodes of his time in The Royal Marines.

When a vacancy arose for somebody to move up to Repiano Clarinet John declined the offer saying it should go to a younger person. I got the position. He said the challenge would do me good, which it did. Again this was just typical of the man - never one to seek glory or hog the lime light, he was more than happy just to do what was needed, wherever or whenever.

It was at Otley show in 2011 when the first sign appeared of just how ill John was when he nearly passed out during the first marching display. This prompted him to seek medical attention. I know we were all horrified when, after the various options and treatments available to him fell away without success, he announced there was nothing left which could be done and it was only a matter of time.

To say John fought his illness with bravery, fortitude and dignity is a massive understatement. He never complained and he never despaired. Being the man he was, he just got on with it and accepted his fate. Towards the end he once confided in me that his ambition was draw his old age pension, even if it was just once. He didn't make it. His funeral was the day after what would have been his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday.

I was gratified with the very good turnout from the band for John's funeral which being midweek meant a lot of people had made much effort to be able to attend. This demonstrated the affection and regard the whole of the band had for him but more than that, I think we all knew that we just had to be there to pay our last respects and say farewell. It was very moving and somehow 'just right' that we played Nimrod as his coffin was brought into the church.

John's eulogist said something very fitting in that the motto of the Royal Marines is 'Per Mare, Per Terram' which means 'By Sea, By Land' yet if we were to attribute a motto to John to remember him by then perhaps a better one would actually be that of the RAF – 'Per Ardua ad Astra', which means 'Through Adversity to the Stars'.

Maybe however there can be nothing better or more fitting than the simple words of his former Royal Marines chum Len Lewry who also served with John in Singapore. He said John was 'a quiet and gentle man'. I think that says it all.

Perhaps I could take this opportunity to offer on behalf of all the Band & Corps of Drums of The Yorkshire Volunteers our deepest sympathy and most sincere condolences to John's widow Liz, and his step son and daughter, Tony and Caroline.

And finally, on a personal note: I will see you again my friend. When it is time for me to join you in that great marching band in the sky I promise I will find you out, but hopefully, not yet.

## Rest in Peace

24886735 Corporal Dale Heaton - Tenor Sax

With grateful thanks for assistance and additional material supplied by:-

PO33266Y Musician Russell Sykes - Clarinet



# John Geary Remembered...

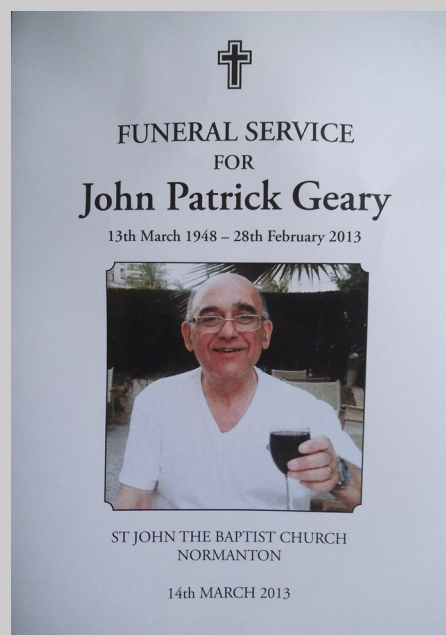


Above ~ John the Golfer (Far left).

Left ~ Junior Musician Geary J.P. 3/65 New Entry Squad, Depot Royal Marines, Deal October 1965.

Below left ~ Commandant General's Squad Training - 11/01/1966 to 30/03/1966, Depot Royal Marines, Deal.

Below ~ Funeral Service -14/03/2013



Right ~ John the Artist ~ A Still Life painting by John. In addition to John's main instrument the clarinet he also played saxophone and taught himself one of the hardest wind instruments the Oboe, which in true John style he mastered and performed at many concerts and featured on YVB CD's. As if this was not enough he also joined a Brass Band and then taught himself Bass Trombone which he played with the band at concerts.





# Charity Last Night of the Proms Concert in aid of the Prince of Wales Hospice held at Trinity Methodist Church, Featherstone



*Left ~ YV Fanfare Trumpets open up with "Jubilant" by A. Bliss.  
Below left ~ BM Ritchie entertains the audience.  
Below ~ CoD in position to join the band in "War on the Big Screen" playing from memory.  
Bottom ~ "On their feet" to close the first half.*



 The Prince of Wales Hospice



Concert organiser Ian Dransfield, Trustee and Chairman of the Fundraising Committee wrote to the band stating he had received many compliments on the music and the professionalism of the band. The concert raised over £2000.



*Above ~ "Sparks" fly as Johnathan amazes the audience with his blindfold solo.  
Left ~ Hospice official thanks the band.*



# A Menton Montage



No need for stand lights here....



Drum Major takes up the shot put....



Grand Organ ~ Monte Carlo Cathedral



No capes required



Abbey Road?





A-Band-on Ship





# Behind the Scenes



More hanging about...



Above ~ Capped Crusaders?  
Below ~ Snow where to go



Editor: David Stephenson  
8 Glastonbury Avenue  
Wakefield, West Yorkshire  
WF1 4TR  
david.stephenson15@yahoo.co.uk  
Telephone 01924 375934  
[www.yorkshirevolunteers.org.uk](http://www.yorkshirevolunteers.org.uk)

Above~ We're waiting for a train (Again!).

Right ~ How big?

