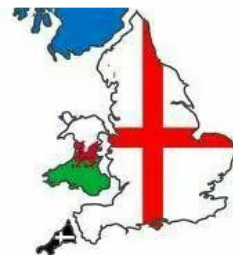


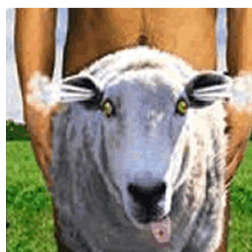
## PXR - Operation "Or The Sheep Gets It"

211 Old Comrades Club Reunion - Llandudno 6/8<sup>th</sup> May 2016



Off to foreign shores they said, well North Wales to be precise, but never the less our first trip outside England.

We also specially had the weather ordered for the weekend, after having snow the previous weekend the sun was out and the highest temperatures of the year from the Thursday throughout the weekend.



As normal there was an advanced party planned to prepare the locals for what was to come, but unfortunately it didn't quite go to plan.

Perry's journey which was estimated at 2 ½ hrs, took 7 hrs due to the MSR (the M6) being closed at junction 18, but backed up to junction 15 just where he joined it. However Stewart & Dibble did make it on time after arriving by train.

Peter was suffering slightly from travel fatigue and confusion, he posted on Facebook "**221 has arrived**". Think he got it confused with Ted Rogers and 321!

Thursday night advance party turned out to be a quick bite to eat in the NAFFI (Weatherspoon's) then back to the accommodation (Chatsworth House Hotel). The following morning was a slow start, last to surface was Stewart, this coincided with John Hughes arriving. "Then there were four", tea & coffee was ordered and consumed on the hotel patio overlooking the sea whilst the guys caught up with each other.

John commented he was sorted with his parking, he was right outside the door of the hotel with his disabled badge, "I'm all right Jack" sprung to mind.

John said don't put this in the PXR (as if I would)!

*John set off from Lincoln and drove for an hour to the M1 before realising he had left his suit at home, so John turned around to get it.*

*Well would this be the first time John had done this, of course not, John did exactly the same when we had the reunion at Litchfield in 2011*



Gary was also worried about his suit he needed to get a new pair of trousers, his suit trousers had apparently shrunk in the wash and he would need new trousers for the annual reunion dinner on Saturday.

The discussion was who was sleeping with who, Stewart said he isn't staying with Perry he snores like a wort hog, Hughes said he had no problem sleeping with him (wink), but Hughesy could also snore for England.

Next to arrive was Brian Finland, he was chuffed to bits that he knew where the small (& secret) hotel car park was. He arrived early so he get a space, he drove up the back slip road to the car park and sneaked in to the last space available. He was chuffed to bits to get a space before all his comrades.

Another "I'm alright Jack" springs to mind!!

We discovered the advanced party was depleted because Brian & John both stayed back to watch the Liverpool in the Europa League game, they won 2-0. The discussion was about the Liverpool manager's charisma and how he has brought the City of Liverpool together.



We were sorry to hear that Tom Start wouldn't be able to attend this year's reunion weekend.

We also found out that for a change the annual sports event had been announced in advance for all those who read emails, it was to be crown green bowling. This wasn't a setup or a joke.

Taxis were booked on Saturday morning for 09.30 hrs sharp. Troops were to be fed, watered and ready for the transport Brian instructed.

Early in the afternoon Reg Day arrived with his wife Margaret. Reg was pleased to have arrived and stretch his legs after a long journey, he was met by John & Brian who made him very welcome.

Reg is currently having extra drill sessions with the physio therapy department at his local hospital. The drill pig of a physio shouts at Reg. "Come on Reginald, get walking 1,2,1,2". Reg loves the style of therapy.

Margaret told us how she has to take charge of Reg ----- we can see who wears the rank slides in that household !!!

A late apology from Stu Murdoch gave Brian a bit of a predicament for the bowls competition, who was going to pair who?

Bri had a quick think and decided it was to be Gilbert & Fromson paired together and Brian would partner Geoff White. John reminded Brian that Tom won the bowls last time we played and he was quite good. to win.

No matter --- the battle lines had been drawn !!

The reunion weekend always falls around the end of the football season and often at the time of elections. Two subjects that are dear to many of our hearts.

Congratulations and recognition should go to Leicester city for doing the unthinkable and winning the Premier League this year ---- what an outstanding achievement !

The mighty Wolverhampton Wanderers were not relegated and we are now looking forward to next year when we play Aston Villa and Burton Albion and Walsall, if they get through the playoffs - the championship will have many of the midlands clubs in it, oh, and maybe some from up north!

What has happened to Newcastle & Sunderland, by the time this pxx has been finished we will know, one or both of these could be in the championship for 2016/17.

As for the elections an important date for us all in June is not far away, the BREXIT vote. Shall we stay in Europe or come out? We all have a views and how our country is managed. The policies of Europe and how these impacts on the country we love. The Country we have all served for. Let's hope it goes the right way, I'm sure we will be reflecting on how the vote has gone next year.



Ken Pepper arrived, the first one to try the pay & park off the internet. Ken was impressed but I'm not sure how many of us have the whereabouts with a computer to find a car park and pay this way, then to remember what we have done or where the car park is after we have booked it. Well done Ken for not being in the "I'm all right jack club"

Steve Terry and Jacko, the other midlands contingent were next to arrive. They swiftly moved into the hotel so they could hurry and get the car parked up for the weekend. They had taken the route down the A5 past Capel Curig, for many of us a another place with fond memories from our time in the TA, this was the adventure training area where we did First & Second Step.

The group were now getting bigger and the discussion was varied, we got around to the subject of decorating, all the boys agreed it was a job we all have to do and one that takes forever. Steve Terry had recently decorated his hall and laid a new carpet. He tacked the carpet only to put a nail through the water pipe. Steve wondered why his floor was squeaking in the one particular corner since he owned the property. It took him a little longer to complete this decorating job.

Dave Clark was next to land, after being in the country for a week he travelled on the day from Manchester. He was miffed he had left the sweltering sun in Manchester at 22 degrees and the further west he drove the colder it got. It had forecasted good weather for the remainder of the reunion weekend and if Dave didn't get enough sun as it is!

The hotel was very good value, a big hotel used by coach companies for their turkey / tinsel type breaks. A common theme for the hotels we use these days, is it because we fit in with the profile of these hotel

clients?

As the afternoon went on coach after coach pulled up and the golden oldies arrived for their weekend breaks, many struggled with getting off the coaches down the steps, just like we did. Another key characteristic of the hotels we use these days are the classic style of the lifts, classic as in antiquated. This hotel was no different and it took hours to wait for the lifts.

Ken O'Gara arrived at the same time as the old folks coach and got mistaken by the hotel staff for one of the coach party. He had quite a job convincing them that he wasn't in the over 70's club.

Ken Pepper gave us an update on Bordon development. Martinique has houses built on it, Louisburg has the diggers in and the buildings are being taken down. Havan is all fenced off ready for the developers.

### History of Bordon Garrison

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The town has been an army base with its own railway station. Bordon camp was first laid out in 1899 by the Highland Light Infantry, directed by Royal Engineers, and following interruption by the Second Boer War, was occupied by the army from 1903. The first occupants of Quebec barracks were the Somersetshire Light Infantry, returning from South Africa in April, and the 2nd Battalion Devonshire Regiment arrived at St. Lucia Barracks from South Africa in June. Bordon Camp was home to the Canadian Army during both of the world wars and the town is dotted with concrete slabs on which tanks and armoured cars were parked. Bordon was home to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME), providing trade training, both basic and supplementary, to its soldiers, supported by the School of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (SEME). The Longmoor Army Ranges, a forest firing range, is south of the town. Bordon railway station was linked to both the main railway network, and by light railway to the Longmoor Military Railway.



Must be a record for the reunion the 1st neck oil was poured at 1.58 in the hotel. This was the same time Dibble, Woody and Stewart arrived back from their morning walk , along the way they had accosted Geoff White on his way to the hotel, he took a little longer than necessary to arrive at the hotel but was quite merry when he did get there, wonder why mixing with these guys!

Woodie entered the hotel and commented "I'm being led astray" Gazzo saying "don't tell em". They lead each other astray and they don't take much leading.

The guys had a really pleasant afternoon catching up and putting the world to rights. The other big subject was the best and alternate route to this year's reunion in Llandudno, a great place and location for a reunion but the roads here were busy for all of us.

During the late afternoon John Hayley & Bob Willis arrived followed by Tom Fromson & Lenny Kniverton. We've not seen Lenny for a few years, the boys asked Lenny "has your boat sunk Lenny" he replied "no, he was up this way sailing only a couple of weeks ago". It is good to see him again.

The evening meal was booked for 1800 hrs, when the troops gathered for the first meal together as a unit for the weekend. The boys were waiting in the hotel lounge when the waitress came in and asked "Any of you in the **commandos club**", these days the boys don't go commando very often -- they are more used to wearing pads just in case.

There was silence to this question, the waitress said "are any of you soldiers" and off we went to dine.



The meal was served, Davie Woods was still on his main course when Gary was having his pudding, Davie shouted to Gary "what you got there Gazzo"? Spotted Dick Gary replied, I haven't had one of those for years was Davey's response.

After the meal the organiser and chief clerk got the attention of the men whilst he explained the arrangements for the following morning; 3 taxis will pick up 12 people at a time to take them to the bowls. The men were to be in reception ready to depart at 09.30 hrs sharp on Saturday morning.

He then went on to explain who was in which team and then asked Margaret to draw who was playing who. It was performed in the style of the FA cup draw with balls in a bag, everyone was in suspense.

After the meal the late comers arrived Bill & Tony, were welcomed then went off for their healthy meals, salad, oh and then followed by the healthy spotted dick.

The group retired to the lounge where they sat chatting and listening to the Danny Wild impersonator. After quite some time Brian found that he had left his flies undone and was relieved nobody had noticed.

" Come on Bri, Everyone had noticed but they just let you carry on so you could fit in with all the other oldies in the room "



It was soon late evening and people drifted off to bed to get rested before the big sporting event in the morning. The following morning soon came around and the majority arrived on time for breakfast at 08.00 hrs sharp. Some had been for their early morning strolls down the sea front to work up appetite others had just about managed to get themselves out of the bed. At breakfast we were reminded again about the morning arrangements, it's a shame we haven't got the memories we use to have. For the second time; 3 taxis will pick up 12 people at a time to take them to the bowls. The men were to be in reception ready to depart at 09.30 hrs sharp.

The boys departed breakfast and went to their rooms for final preparation and completed their warm ups for the sporting challenge. The troops paraded as they should 5 minutes before the reporting time. John Hughes received his orders from Brian, don't leave until everyone has got in the taxis, all were present and correct for the 9.30 taxi ride so there shouldn't have been an issue, but this didn't stop Brian panicking.

SO off everyone went to the crown green bowling venue. The weather stayed good throughout the morning activity. Then when we did get there we were 2 short John and Woody were not there and Bri was pancaking, again the plans were going tits up! but they were just doing as instructed and got the last taxi there.

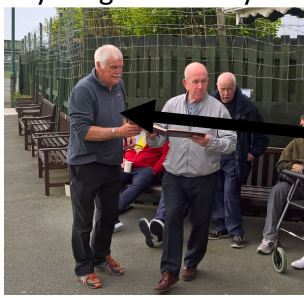
When we arrived Brian gave us all the instructions for the morning including the **safety brief**. He then went on to **trip up** the steps, which were clearly marked so nobody would trip up them.



Why would you have bright yellow edging on the steps!

The games were played in true gamesmanship style, well almost. One of the semifinal games was Gary Stewart & Woody playing Brian Finland & Geoff White. Gary said he let Brian win otherwise there would have been dummies all over the greens. You do have to feel sorry for Brian's grandchildren, I guess they are not allowed to win or come first at anything when they're with granddad. Hee Hee

Oops



We were surprised that Lenny didn't win the competition, it looked like his bigger brother was running the bowls event



The final started at the same time it just started to spit, but this was no worry to the finalists, it was between Brian (who removed his jacket for the game) & Geoff playing Tommy & Bill Gilbert. It should be noted that the two star players throughout the tournament were Geoff & Bill, who both played exceptionally well and somewhat carried their team partners.

The game was quite serious stuff, obviously that was until Brian's team went behind and from then on the crowd got behind the underdogs and like Leicester they came out on top. Tommy & Bill were the winners after reaching a score of 15.

The morning finished with the annual 211 OCC unit photo followed by a plated buffet which was ample for all. After the conclusion of the games the guys went their own ways for the afternoon free time. The football on TV was popular, Middleborough were promoted to the Premier league, Newcastle dropped back in to the relegation places from the premier league. Looks like there will be one in and one out for the north east to the Premier League.



We learnt about some bad news for our units photographer, he is greatly disappointed that his daughter has banned him from taking his camera to her wedding in July, he has to be a dad and not on the other side for a change. We wonder if she will get away without a few tricks on the day - that's "Magic Johnson" our star turn for every occasion.

Late afternoon the guys departed and put their suits on for the annual regimental dinner. At 18.30 hrs prompt the troops were in the lounge for the pre-dinner drinks. Then the unit mess photo was taken on the steps of the hotel before being seated for the meal.



Another of the members with age related problems and memory loss was Woody who had to be told to zip himself up before the photo was taken.

There were a few who took their time getting in for the meal after the photo, Brian tasked Pete Dibble to fetch them. When they came back Bri gave Peter a telling off for being late, whilst Gary sneaked in the back door, his preference these days.

Following the meal John Hayley welcomed everyone to the 24th Annual 211 OCC Reunion and congratulated the men on keeping the club going for so long. Then handed over to Brian for the annual report and presentation.

The Smile with Kyle award was this year was presented to Reg Day as a mark of his dedication and commitment to the OCC Club and the exceptional effort he makes to get to the reunions. Reg was given a standing ovation from the club members.

The winners of the bowls Bill Gilbert & Tom Fromson were presented with the trophies by the Secretary and runner up of the competition - Brian.

It was now time for Brian to get his own back and he gave the full time PXR job to David Perry, to Dave's disgust, the motion was approved unanimously ----- **Thank you guys !!!!!!!**

It was agreed that Tom Start would organise next year's reunion and the location would be Bournemouth.

The formal part of the evening was over and people retired to the lounge. Magic Johnson performed his show for the guests.

The following morning the troops had breakfast together before saying their fond goodbyes before setting off on their way home. We look forward to seeing you all next year for our 25th Anniversary reunion.

**And the sheep came out of hiding, very relieved that the guys from  
211 OCC had all gone home**

