



NEWS FROM CENTRAL

Issue number 101 - January to August 2016

Sorry that this newsletter is later than the intended July issue that was due and shorter than usual but so far 2016 has been a very hectic year for yours truly. It has also been a very hectic year for Hon Vice President 8646 Andrew Field who in 2014 accepted the dauntless task of reviewing and updating the Constitution of the Regimental Association. Thanks to his extremely hard work, perseverance and tireless energy he completed this exercise earlier this year and the proposed new Constitution was forwarded to all Branches for their consideration, and was accepted. The process of forming the new College of Branches (previously known as the Central Committee) and the election of a new President is presently in progress. We owe Andrew and those that helped him in preparing the new Constitution a huge vote of thanks. As the outgoing President of the Regimental Association I wish the new President and the College of Branches every success for the future.

In January I was in Bulawayo and took the opportunity of attending a meeting of the Matabeleland Branch Committee. I received a very warm welcome (and a cold beer) from Chairman 5247 Ken Macdonald, recently back from a visit to Australia, who introduced me to committee members 9499/110890 Karl and his wife Denise Hurry, 6068 Gordon Geddes and P/R Tom Cranston. I am happy to report that the Matabeleland Branch continues to hold regular functions which included a very successful annual luncheon at the end of 2015.

At the end of last year Mike Tucker wrote to me informing me of his website www.zimfieldguide.com which is a non-commercial venture which helps to promote game lodges and charities that support wildlife in Zimbabwe. Mike writes articles on history, culture, rock art, geology and places to visit in Zimbabwe. Mike says that many local residents do not seem to get out very much so his website provides GPS details, as well as detailed instructions for those that don't have a GPS, on how to get out and visit places of interest in the country. Mike is concerned that the collective historical memory of Zimbabwe is fading quickly and by providing shortened articles that focus on places of interest with modern photographs that information will not get lost. I have visited Mike's website and I was very impressed with the amount of researched detail in his articles and the very high standard of photography. I was particularly interested with his research into the site of Fort Harding, near Goromonzi and his continuing research to find the former site of the BSA Police camp at Warrendale Farm before Goromonzi camp was established. Capt Nesbitt VC was the DC in that area at that time. During his research in this area Mike came across a local resident David Mitchell who I later ascertained was none other than 6545 David Mitchell who had served with me at Southerton in the early 1960's. It is as they say, a small world. Mike's website supports a very commendable cause and is well worth a visit.

It was with deep sadness that we read of the death on the 15th April 2016 of 4770 Hugh Phillips. Hugh was a Life Vice-President of the Regimental Association and co-author of Blue and Old Gold. Hugh will of course always be remembered at Central for the 80 Central newsletters he wrote over the period 1963 to 2003. I had the privilege of working with Hugh on various Regimental Association Committees for many years and he was always a gentleman, always ready to offer advice and assistance. He was a truly dedicated and loyal member of the Regimental Association and he will be sadly missed by his family and all members of the Regimental Association.

Sadly we also learned that 5608 Dave de Burgh-Thomas had died in Harare on the 27th August 2016. Dave was a longstanding member of the Mashonaland Branch and a very loyal and staunch member of the Regimental Association for many years. Dave was one of the regulars at our monthly sun-downers which he attended up until just a few weeks before his death and he too will be sadly missed by his family and his many friends.

Our monthly sun-downers (second Friday of every month and now held in the Biker's Club, Mount Pleasant Sports Club) continues to attract the same group of regulars but sadly attendances has dropped in recent months. It is to be hoped it was the very cold weather we have experienced in recent months that was the cause and with summer now here attendances will hopefully improve. This year in February we had visits from 8303 Rob Bristow from Natal, and the 4583 Paddy Lean from the Emerald Isle who has been a regular visitor for several years. The following local members have attended our sun-downers this year :- 5281 Peter Bellingham and daughter Sue, 8646 Andrew Field, 5917 Rod Finnigan and Laura, 7458 Mike Fox, 6262 Nigel Gabriel, 9491 Pat Hammond, 8004 Nick Harrison, 5652 Bill Linfield, 6319 Chris Looker, 8207 'Loppy' Lornie, 5927 Max MacDonald, 9406 Red O'Connell, 6007 Bob Schonken, 8746 Rick and Roz Summers, 6724/9210 John Van Zyl, and 7437 John Woodward.

On the 30th July 2016 my wife Laura and I, in the company of our dear friends 7211 Peter Biddulph and Margaret Mitchell attended the Annual Braai which was held at the Farmer's Fayre, Coventry. We arrived the previous night and stayed at the Stonely Park Lodge hotel which thoroughly deserves its four star rating. The services and food were excellent and the staff were very friendly and obliging. The hotel is conveniently situated in the same exhibition and Conference Centre complex as the Farmer's Fayre. The braai was attended by 49 members and friends and proved to be most enjoyable day with an excellent lunch. It was nice to see old friends once again, including several I had not seen some thirty years or more. Time is never a barrier at Regimental functions and we conversed with each other as if we had seen each other last week. I was honored with a free lunch and I was asked to draw the raffle tickets by the UK Branch Chairman 6737 Mike Coleman which I did, hoping of course that I did not draw tickets for just the friends on my own table. Fortunately as it turned out the prizes appeared to be quite well distributed. Apart from Chairman Mike Coleman I was also able to meet most of the of the UK Branch committee members and Trustees whilst 7359 Bertie Cubitt took the opportunity to use the occasion to do a brisk trade in selling Regimental memorabilia.

5917
Rod Finnigan
19th September 2016