



Black Ants 51 Newsletter

This is the second newsletter for Black Ants 51. I have attempted to write this over about one month so that ideas could be put to paper as soon as they come up. Trying to get everything down in a short period of time seems to mean I lose the ideas I get on the spur of the moment. Old age is catching up and I seem to forget things almost as quickly as I think of them.

I get some very informative emails from time to time so the plan from now on is to incorporate them in to the newsletter (with the permission of the people concerned of course).

Some of the lads have been around a bit and most have had interesting jobs so it should be worth putting the details down on paper for posterity.

The Jalan Kayu Trail

This is a copy of an email from Daniel Lim who I have been in contact with as I try to find out what is happening to Seletar.

He lives in Jalan Kayu and is part of the school history project for the Village.

I logged on to the Jalan Kayu trail website and ended up sending him some photos from our time there

***Dear Alan,
The pictures were wonderful.***

The Seletar camp isn't going to be totally demolished. The government of Singapore has decided to preserve part of the camp.

***You can read the report here in our blog:
<http://jalankayutrail.blogspot.com/2007/06/jalan-kayu-and-seletar-camp-are-set-to.html>***

In a nutshell, the place will still maintain some of its old charm but it will be completely commercialised for the area near the airstrip and the area where the black and white bungalows stand. Many aerospace companies like Eurocopter will be setting up their Asian operations here at Seletar.

A part of the camp will still be out of bounds because it is occupied by the Singapore military. I believe that would be the area where the

Seletar Sailing Club used to be. So that area is out of bounds to all civilians.

Do take a look at the link above.

Best Regards,

Daniel Lim

News from Round and about

Gareth Davies

I got a phone call from Gareth (Taff) Davies. He was working in India and I lost contact with him for a while because he had changed jobs. He went to Huston for a while but he has now moved to Singapore for nine months. I hope to meet up with him when I go for my Holiday in November.

Trying to find Jeep Jackson

I have been trying for some time to find (amongst others) Jeep Jackson.

During a conversation with Frank Hughes we sort of came to the conclusion that Jeeps real name was Stan. After finishing the conversation I did the usual (for me) check of the phone listings. I discovered that there were at least two pages of S Jacksons in the lists. So rather than plough through this I looked up the local news/radio for the Wythenshawe area of Manchester and left an email at each one I found.

The result of this was a live interview with one of the presenters. If anything comes of this I will let you all know.

I search websites, check phone books and look into family names on genealogy sites to check on names we are looking for. It takes time but I enjoy doing it. Sometimes it is frustrating when I think I have found some one and it turns out to be an old lady who tells me her life story. I do enjoy chatting to people but it sidetracks me from the main objective.

John (Nobby) Clark

John and his wife went to Singapore at the beginning of June and managed to get what may be the last look at the old Seletar. A Singapore Engineer Officer escorted him round the camp. The Officer wine and dined John and his wife in the Officers Mess later. The Officers mess stands where the old RAF yacht club used to be.

John sent me this account of his visit .

On arrival at Seletar, The Singapore Army Forces guardroom is a long way down Piccadilly Road from the original guardroom as we know it, incidentally the old guardroom come fire

piquet is not being knockdown, nor the admin block next to it, at this moment it time it's going to part of the history of Seletar.

One of the eye openers is between Jalan Kayu & entering the gate of Seletar, you have two lane express motorway which is underneath a large roundabout build I think on a bridge, mind bogging!

On arriving at the guardroom my wife & I are asked to show our passports & hand over our camera's plus do some admin before we are allowed in. It must have been our lucky day, apart from the fact it was June very hot & even the locals don't like it because the sergeant on duty was able to get someone to take us around the camp in a car, this gentleman was the maintenance camp commandant.

Of the buildings still standing that I saw as of 1968 are The Medical Office, still used as a medical office,

the cinema, Block B & D, Cook House still used as it was built for, Malcolm Club use now by the local military for their recreation. The yacht club now has been rebuilt as the officer mess, my wife & I were invited in for cold drinks, we met the military commander of Seletar & the military commanding officer of the Bridging Engineers, we were most welcome. The sports ground is a little smaller than it was, the swimming pool I'm sorry to say is in a bad state, wired fenced around & decaying rapidly. The church that most people got married in, including myself still stands but I don't know what it's used for.

I would have liked to have stayed longer but didn't want to impose ourselves on the generosity on the gentleman as it was his dinner break, so we left & went to Jalan Kayu.

One other thing I forgot to say, outside of the military section of Seletar there are building & roadwork's on the Piccadilly Road, so this could be in preparation of the large construction & demolition to come of Seletar.

I would suggest to anyone who went to Seletar before the end of the year, to take a camera in with your escort & take as many photographs as you can, because this was my great mistake, as I was allowed to have a camera but being taken around in a car didn't have the opportunity to take any.

Taken from an email from John Clark June 09

Below are two of the photos John emailed to me.



Paul Coddington



This is the picture I got off the councils web site of paul.

I managed to track Paul down after a few leads from John Farrow. We exchanged emails and this is an extract from Paul's email to me.

I left Waterbeach in 1969 and went on to Barton Stacey with the specialist teams. Managed to avoid Long Kesh and elected to go to Germany again - having just got married!

Left the Army in 1971 and moved back to my hometown of Doncaster. Went to Leeds University and then joined the Probation Service retiring early at the age of 56 some 9 years ago. I still do some counselling work in schools and I visit Doncaster Prison as a part-time chaplain!

In 1999 I was elected as a Councillor in Doncaster, and, from May 2008 to June 2009 (last Friday actually) was the Civic Mayor of Doncaster! Quite an elevation for a Sapper!

We had some fun dining in with "B" Battery Royal Horse Artillery officers at Larkhill a few months ago. My Civic chauffeur was a Sgt in the RHA so it was great having him to drive us for the year in office! Still a councillor and recently elected to become leader of our Liberal Democrat group on Doncaster Council.

I sent a few email addresses to Paul and I think he is now busy renewing old acquaintances.

Black Ants 51

The membership has grown to 19 members with promises of more to come. To be honest I did not expect too much when I started "***Black Ants 51***" as most people do not really like things that entail cash payments of any kind. It's a built in mechanism that keeps most of us solvent and able to pay our bills. So I have been impressed by the response so far. It will all help with the payments for the hotel venue for the reunion.

I hope that the membership cards I have sent out do not look too amateurish.

Latest additions to our contacts list

I have at last managed to contact Pip Harris thanks to some help from Len Millward. I spoke to him on the phone and he seemed quite chirpy considering he is a bit older than some of us. He says that all being well he will be at the next reunion.

During a telephone conversation with Bill Renton he mentioned that he might be able to contact the following people, Jock Hogan, Ricky Richardson and Alan Warne. So with a bit of luck we will have a few more contacts for the next newsletter. I know from conversations at the reunion that these are lads that several people would like to connect up with

I had an email from the USA. It was Tony Allen's Son. He was trying to get his Dad into computers and in the process of showing him what could be done with a computer they came across the web site. Tony was staying with his Son in America at the time but is now back in UK. I have spoken to him on the phone and he seems in fine spirits. As of yet he is not on line but I have a phone number and address if any one would like to contact him. Tony was a Cpl on MT when we were in Singapore but left the Army when we came back to Waterbeach.

Spot The Difference

I have long been a fan of this kind of thing when I have time to waste in doctor's waiting rooms or for interviews. They will usually have some thing like it in the cheap magazines or newspapers. Some things are a bit harder than others to spot but there are 5 differences.

The original photo on the left is from Taff Fisher's photo collection. It was taken at the end of our trip in the Malayan Jungle.



A few notes

This is the end of our second newsletter and I hope it has been worth reading and looking at.

I am not the world's best writer so there may be those of you out there who can do a better job or, at least contribute a few stories that would help make future letters a little more interesting, please feel free to submit stuff for publication. If you have something to add but do not want to write long stories etc, just send me a few facts and I will pad them out for the newsletter.

Any ideas for the future newsletters would be welcome.

During the time I have been putting this together there have been quite a few lads in Killed in action. My heart goes out to their Families. I feel myself torn between what a good job the lads are doing and the question of us being there in the first place. As usual British troops work with less than adequate equipment while politicians speak platitudes and shed crocodile tears while denying them the money to do a better job. We need a few more politicians that have forces

experience before things can change. You will notice that very few (If Any) politicians have Sons or Daughters who are in the front line.

I am not sure when the next news letter will be published as it depends largely on what new material I can come up with. I will try to do something every two months or so as long as I have something to write about.

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