

## The 25th Anniversary of the Ladies Dinner and Dance of the Suffolk Branch, The Royal Green Jackets Regimental Association, 17 March 2012

It all began on the morning of Sunday 20 March 2011 when members of the committee were adamant that for the dinner and dance in 2012 that Gordon Pilcher who had been secretary of the branch since its fruition should be recognised as such. The president of the branch (Ron Cassidy) was '*instructed*' by the committee to carry on! This he did, writing to all members and suggesting a donation for the cause, the response was overwhelming and generous.



Bugle-Major McCann and L/Cpl Brockman with Rebekah Jones granddaughter of Joe and Fee Mills on the left and Jessica Macleod granddaughter of Del and Pom Hemsley on the right, greet the guests on arrival. The girls helped with selling raffles tickets and it is no wonder that the purchase of tickets went so well!

A typical place setting on tables of ten the place mats having been purchased by the branch some years ago. On each setting for a lady there has always been a special chocolate. Each place would be named and the menu for each diner would be that which had been ordered previously. The menu choice consisted of four starters, four mains, three puddings and a cheese board. Followed by coffee, port and a slice of the celebratory cake.



Immediately after the dinner Ron thanked Serjeant Salisbury as the leader of the quintet of clarinets from the Waterloo band for their selection of music, which had been most enjoyable. He went on to praise Rachel Salisbury for her composition of High On The Hill, not normally played on the clarinet, it was first class and the quintet were encouraged later in the programme to provide an encore, it was every bit as good. He was later to find out that the Bugle-Major had only about twenty minutes of rehearsal before he and his fellow buglers sounded their bugles with the quintet, they too were first class. Both Serjeant Salisbury and the Bugle-Major are commended for their expertise.

In his speech to the 146 after dinner Ron reminded all how the Suffolk branch came into being with a meeting of Joe Mills; Gordon Pilcher, Sid Jarman, Barry Gilmore and Larry Lamb, so many more joined the team like Tom Evans and Mick Burtenshaw who over the years contributed so much. He looked back to when 3GJ, RB first arrived at Felixstowe in 1964; leaving there for a one year unaccompanied tour of Hong Kong, Malaya and Borneo, marrying no less than forty-one local girls. He spoke of the achievements of too many to recount of that battalion but mentioned George Caldwell as an internationally acclaimed author; John Powell the first Green Jacket awarded the Royal

Victorian Medal, the total of those commissioned from the battalion, those who had been chairman of the branch such as Joe Mills, Fred Edwards and John Bevan, John McMullan for travelling from the U.S.A. to be with us, the sixty plus members who had contributed such readable stories for The Last Campaign of The Rifle Brigade, some amusing, some sad but historically a book of some worth, the lasting friendships of members, wives and their families.



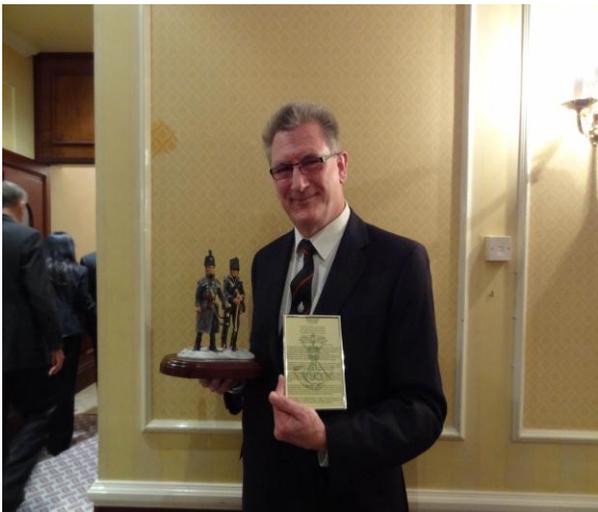
Larry Lamb supervised by George Caldwell cuts the cake, which had green, red and black piping along the top and the same colours but in dots along the base. The inscription on the top of the cake in green was: 25 Years and Onwards.

The smiles on the faces of Larry and George are an illustration of how the evening went.

Ron Cassidy continued by asking the chairman to accept the print, 'The Light Division repulse the 66me Grenadiers, Coa Bridge 24 July 1810, he also asked that at the Ladies Dinner in future years, it should be hung to remind us all of this 25th anniversary.

He went on by saying that behind every man there has been a woman who assists, guides and gives council, Janet Pilcher is such a person. He asked Joe Mills to present to Janet a plant with pot with a proviso to Janet, that annually as the flowers start to turn red; it is time for you to start assisting Gordon to prepare the Ladies Dinner Night.

He spoke on behalf of every member of the Suffolk Branch in thanking Gordon Pilcher, as our Secretary, for his dedication, commonsense, wise counselling, good humour and understanding over the last twenty-five years, long may it go on. The branch committee of John Bevan, Joe Mills, Frank Moss and Larry Lamb then presented Gordon, amid tumultuous applause, with the figurine of the Rear Guard, as a token of sincere thanks from the members of the branch.



Gordon, with the figurine depicting Captain Alexander Cameron and Rifleman Smyth as part of the Rear Guard. The scroll tells the story of the 2nd /43 rd, the 1st /52nd and 1st 95th Rifles. Cameron was one of the founding officers of the Experimental Corps of Riflemen soon to become the 95th Rifles, then The Rifle Brigade and ultimately The Royal Green Jackets.

**The branch wishes Gordon and Janet good health and best wishes for the future, we are enormously proud to have you both so dedicated to the branch.**