

ELEVEN EMPTY SPACES

PART OF AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT RECORDING AND REMEMBERING
THE EVENTS OF THE IRA ATTACK ON THE ROYAL MARINES SCHOOL OF MUSIC, DEAL
ON 22 SEPTEMBER 1989

*“It’s still there every day – it never goes”
– S Biddle*

2009 was the 20th anniversary of the bombing in Deal. Although many years have passed, the scars are still there and people haven’t forgotten the sadness of that time.

“I think everybody involved with that is scarred to a point. Some have managed better than others but I know for sure people are deeply scarred with this whole experience, at all sorts of levels” – J Perkins

“The parents or brothers or sisters, grandparents of those who were injured or killed; we had to deal with them ... we had to come into contact with patients who would have been severely affected ... traumatised ... it was an ongoing thing” – G Beach

“Of course years later the impact of that is diluted ... but nevertheless we talk about it from time to time ... we always get reminded of what a tragedy that was” – G Beach

“A very good friend of ours was badly injured ... he still has flashbacks. Nobody that was there will ever forget it” – R Walters

“I hope it never ever happens again to anyone” – W Walters



There is also still some anger that justice was not seen to be done.

“I just think some justice should have been done for the 11 that got killed ... no-ones ever been done for it have they” – S Biddle

“I think the only thought that I have got is it’s a great pity that nobody was ever arrested for this, or tried for it, or sentenced for it” – M Mitchell

Lt Col Richard Dixon visits the Memorial Gardens
Picture courtesy of the East Kent Mercury

“We definitely never will forget. We want to keep these men’s memory alive. It doesn’t matter how much time goes past ... they won’t be forgotten and they’ll always be appreciated and their music and what it meant to Deal” – J Duffy

In memory of

**Musician M F Ball
Band Corporal J A Cleatheroe
Band Corporal T E J Davis
Musician R G Fice
Musician R M Jones
Band Corporal D McMillan
Musician C R Nolan
Band Corporal D P Pavey
Musician M T Petch
Musician T J Reeves
Musician R L Simmonds**



Major John Perkins addresses the crowds at the start of the memorial concert on Sunday 12th July 2009 - Picture provided by Linda Mewes



The Royal Marines march along Dover Road to return to the Memorial Bandstand on Walmer Green for the second part of the 20th anniversary concert
Picture provided by Linda Mewes

The concerts at the Deal Memorial Bandstand have been extremely popular since it’s completion in 1993.

“The success of the bandstand is not necessarily about the bands but its about the people that go to those concerts, because without the people going to the concerts, without the people putting their hands in their pockets and without their donations, then the bandstand wouldn’t function at all” – B Walker

The most widely anticipated concert takes place in July each year when the Royal Marines return to Deal. This concert incorporates a memorial service where the murdered bandmen are remembered and wreaths are laid around the bandstand.

“I walk alongside the band and get people away ... I do the ceremonial stuff with the mayor, all the mayors who lay wreaths ... and the families, we still get three or four families each year, and tell them where to put the wreaths and things like that” – T Higgins

“It’s the most wonderful time in Deal. The bandstand encourages music anyway, so we still have the wonderful Royal Marine music playing” – M McNicholas



Musicians of the Royal Marines band in Deal on 12th July 2009
Picture provided by Linda Mewes

“They’ve created something which has stood the test of time and it goes from strength to strength ... this year [2009] at the bandstand on 12th July we had 12,000 people there, so that’s pretty amazing by anybody’s standards” – J Perkins

“On that day there’s people actually coming ... at quarter to eight setting up tables and chairs and then having their breakfast there and ... by 12 noon it was packed out completely” – T Higgins

“I’ve got three traditional Deal punts up on the seafront still by the lifeboat station, which is a few paces away from the memorial bandstand ... where they play ... so I’ve got ... the sea one side of me and I’ve got the marines playing the other side. On a sunny day what more do you want?” – D Goodban

“Each year they come back and the thousands that come down for that one day, to sit and listen to that band play ... just says it all” – D Goodban