

## Memories of NYPOL at Coventry 2006

We stayed at the Hilton Hotel, just outside of Coventry and it was a beautiful May day. It was the first time that I had been to a NYPOL meeting, and I didn't know what to expect.

Bob and I entered the Canterbury suite, for drinks before dinner. Bob was soon talking to folk he hadn't seen for nearly fifty years. Once they had been young men who had worked, played and lived together, and now they were older and wiser. The memories and stories about how it used to be, and anecdotes and fragments of incidents with names from the past, filled the air. Wise cracks, turned to laughter as one person told a story and the rest joined in! It was wonderful to witness.

The meal was tasty, fish turned out to be chicken, never mind, it was enjoyable. We drank loads of orange juice, because it was so hot in the dining room. A tropical feel to the evening was evident, and as the night wore on, men were sweating freely, and jackets came off and ties were loosened.

Dinner completed I watched as an elderly man approached another equally elderly man, and they tentatively looked at each other. After a short while realisation dawned, and after brief introductions, they shook hands warmly, and launched into their memories, which would leap from one incident to another! Present time and place pushed aside, while they relived their time in Nyasaland. When their backs were straight, their figures slimmer, and they were more athletic, and their lives were exciting and full of action. Jumping into jeeps, dashing off down red dusty roads, taking the trusted 'askari' with you. Dealing with riots, road accidents, encounters with wild animals, witch doctors spells, and scary nights in the bush. What a time you had, and how good it is to remember it all once more.

The wives of Nyasaland police personnel had told me what it used to be like for them. They remembered the good times as well as the bad. Of course I knew nothing about this because I didn't meet Bob till he came back to the UK in 1964. Bob certainly never told me what the woman's role was out there!

With so much to catch up on, we were talking till midnight, and when we left there were still some people deep in conversations!

We all stayed in comfortable rooms at the Hilton Hotel and many of us met again at breakfast. Talking began again and more incidents came to light. (They had a lot to catch up on!)

Soon it was time for us all to go our separate ways, we said farewell, and returned to Kent. I had an amazing time and I know it made a huge impression on Bob. I've never heard him talk so much! It did him good! To sum it up, it was a marvellous experience, and Chris Bean needs to be congratulated for making it all come true.

Hopefully we will do it all again next year.....

Look forward to seeing you at the next NYPOL experience!

Bob & Kathy Carr ☺

