



RAFLAA NEWSLETTER

SERIAL 72

JULY 2015

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Welcome to our 72nd Edition of the Newsletter and thank you for your vote of confidence in electing me Newsletter Editor for another 3 years I am sure there will be another willing 'volunteer' one day.

For those that missed the AGM here is a Summary of the event –

- *3 years and 10 minutes to amend the Constitution and just when you think all is sweetness and roses we have an issue over the venue for the next AGM, Weston-Super-Mare or elsewhere.*
- *The vote on the day was to remain where we are for another year but there seemed to be a wish to have an alternative to the Webbington. To satisfy all members perhaps we could have alternative years in Weston and create a Home and Away venue this may be one way to attract members from other geographic areas and satisfy those that consider Weston to be the 'spiritual' home of RAFLAA. As one who lives in darkest Cornwall can I suggest Newquay, I remember a very interesting Summer Camp down there, and a yomp across Bodmin Moor would do us all good! Whatever the choice – can we make a decision within the 3 years and 10 minutes timeframe*
- *The Ladies voted for Bath as their choice of day out in 2016*
- *Following a presentation by Rick Atkinson it was agreed that we should continue with the project to have a monument built outside the Station entrance. A suggestion was made and agreed that RAFLAA members could 'pledge' donations towards the cost of the Locking Apprentice Monument – check on the web site for details.*

I noticed this in a recent article "Research carried out by the air traffic control provider Nats and its partners suggests that existing TV signals could be used to track aircraft, providing a cheaper alternative to radar."

All those years of Apprentice Training blown away by television. (Ed)

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Deadline for next issue – 20th September 2015 for November 2015 edition

Please send all comments, contributions, ideas and feedback to the newsletter editor. Soft copy preferred!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE CHOICE OF AGM VENUE

At the AGM this year, there was quite a lot of discussion and two votes about the choice of venue for the annual reunion, AGM and dinner/dance.

Clearly some members would prefer to be elsewhere but, like most things in life, there are pros and cons to consider about any other venue or location. So that members can understand the difficulties, I need to explain the history of how we came to be at the Webbington.

In 2005, I was persuaded to become newsletter editor and serve on the committee. I live in Milton Keynes so always have to stay for an AGM with my wife so the standard of hotel is important to me and I have taken a keen interest in finding a reasonable venue.

HISTORY

Mid Country Locations

After some pressure from members, it was decided to hold the AGM and Reunion in another more central town. In 2003 it was Henlow and on 2004 it Cosford using a hotel in nearby Telford. I didn't go to Henlow and the hotel in Telford was reasonable. Unfortunately, attendances were well down on previous years and so the committee decided to return to Weston.

Daunceys

In 2005, we used Daunceys Hotel. It was not good. 2* is flattering. It was once several good houses now knocked into one hotel. Rooms are tiny and seemed to have been created by putting a thin partition across a larger old fashioned room so we had half a bay window. Towels and carpets were paper thin and one member told me his room shower had no shower head, just an open pipe. Food was reasonable but not great.

Because Daunceys was so poor, we decided to move to the Royal in the centre of town. It only had 45 rooms but it did have a nice room for the AGM with an adjacent bar. The rooms in the hotel were all fairly good too.

The Royal

In 2006, a group of the 92nd had a table in the restaurant at the Royal on the Friday night and the food was very good. The chef appeared to ask about our meal and we told him so. But on the Saturday night at the dinner/dance the food was cold and poor quality and a number of members complained.

On the Sunday morning, I happened to see the chef we met on the Friday and asked him what happened to the meal on the Saturday. He replied "Nothing to do with me." He told me that he cooks for the hotel restaurant but for **all functions** the food came from outside caterers and is delivered in vans. He said that the kitchens in the Royal are not big enough to cook for the restaurant and a function.

Tiny and I complained to the Royal and asked for improvements which they did promise but in 2007 it was little better. Tiny went back to ask them to do better next year, and the manager just cancelled our booking! Apparently, we complained too much!

Daunceys Again

So in 2008, we were back in Daunceys but it was no better and members were complaining again. One member told me, "If the AGM and Dinner/Dance is here next year, I'm not coming."

Webbington

So Tiny and I went searching. We are a fair sized party and to find a big hotel with a large room in the Weston area is not easy. We considered The Grand Atlantic in Weston but they cater for Shearing coach parties and were not interested. There are several reasonable looking hotels but they are all too small to cater for us.

Then we found the Webbington. Being out of town, and tricky to find, they do not get the holiday trade like Weston. They do a lot of weddings and functions like ours and have proved keen to keep our business, doing things like blocking out the Friday and Saturday for us until 1st April each year, providing a barrel of real ale in the Garden Room just for us and printing special menus at no extra charge. There is plenty of free parking and it has a pool for those that like to swim. There are multiple function rooms and they can accommodate bigger functions than ours. Some of the bedrooms are small but it does have enough for most AGMs and Dinner/dances. The food is mostly good and cooked on the premises.

For all those reasons, we have gone back to the Webbington each year since we found it in 2009.

The Future

The results of the poll and AGM vote showed a resounding preference for a venue in the Weston area rather than another part of the country. Wherever you are in the country, you are not local to all our members but Weston does have a certain historic significance.

In Weston town, there is really only the Royal. It is said to have new management but I think it would mean accepting lower quality food and the lack of rooms is likely to mean that some members will be unable to stay in the hotel. Further, last time they refused to block out the hotel for us until close to our function making the situation worse. Some of our members had to go elsewhere. At the AGM last time some members danced till midnight and some stayed in the bar reminiscing till 2 am. It's much better to stagger up to your room when it's late rather than have to have to leave that hotel and walk to another nearby.

You should also know that though it was suggested at the AGM that, if we were in Weston, we wouldn't need a coach for the ladies this is not really true. Though we have a certain nostalgia for Weston, most of our wives have no connection and would probably welcome the chance to visit a local place of interest.

That said, there are clearly members who would like to try another hotel. We could go a little further out from Weston and still be in the 'Weston area' so, if you know of a suitable a hotel with lots of rooms and a large room for the AGM and Dinner dance, do let one of the committee know.

In the meantime, we are at the Webbington next year. I hope you all understand a bit more why we currently favour the Webbington. I hope to see you there.

Chris Tett 92nd

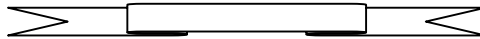
BRIAN'S BLOG

I have made a blog of articles I have written over the years (some 35+) concerning my time in the RAF, including Locking. Most have been included in the Newsletter over the years but some have been updated and names of members omitted - for obvious reasons.

If members would like to peruse them they can be found on; Ex App B.D.

View on www.brianmalcolmdavies.blogspot.ch

Brian Davies



RAFLAA TROPHY

Apologies for not replying sooner but been quite busy since returning from Las Vegas.

Ross enjoyed his visit, it was just a shame i wasn't able to pick up the award in person.

I have had a great year developing new training material to enhance the learning experience for my students, utilising modern technology enabling greater student involvement in class.

I have put many hours into this including many at home to ensure projects are completed on time.

I feel very proud to accept this award and the cheque was a nice surprise too. I would like to thank you and the RAF Locking Apprentice Association for your support and acknowledgment.

*Regards
Dave Flavell*

RAFLAA NEW MEMBERS

A WARM WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS TO RAFLAA

Entry		
219 th	Bob	Grant
93 rd	Jim	Powell
92 nd	Graham	Mackinlay

NOTICES

NEXT REUNION AND AGM

The Annual Reunion and Annual General meeting of the RAF Locking Apprentice Association will be held on **Saturday 23rd April 2016** at the Webbington Hotel, Loxton, Weston-super-Mare.

It will follow our usual format with the AGM in the afternoon and a dinner in the evening.

The hotel rates will be: £85 B&B for a double or twin room (double occupancy) for a 2 night stay (Friday & Saturday), £70 for a single occupancy. For the Saturday night only the rates are £95 B&B for a double or twin room (double occupancy) and £75 for a single room.

Rooms can be booked now so call The Webbington Hotel, Loxton, Weston-s-Mare, BS26 2HU Tel: 01934 750100 Or Email: sales@webbingtonhotel.ecilpse.co.uk

Remember, these rates include the ability to cancel up to two days before the event without penalty so book now.

MILITARY MEDAL REVIEW

By courtesy of the Admin Apps. News Letter, I have the following info that might be of interest to many of you. I think it would be useful to put it into our NL.

The Government has recently undertaken a review of the policy governing the award of military medals. Part of the review re-examined previous decisions to award medals and as a result the following changes have been made:

CYPRUS 1955-1959

Those who served in Cyprus between 1 April 1955 and 24 December 1959 should qualify for the GSM 1918-1962 with the clasp "Cyprus" if they served for 90 days or more - The qualifying period has been reduced from 120 days.

CYPRUS 1963-1964

Personnel who served in Cyprus during the period 21 December 1963 to 26 March 1964 will be awarded the General Service Medal 1962 with the clasp "Cyprus 1963-1964".

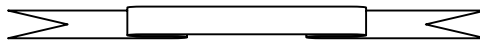
SOUTH ATLANTIC

The qualifying period for the award of the South Atlantic Medal without the rosette has been extended from 12 July 1982 until 21 October 1982.

Anyone wishing to apply for a medal should submit an application to: MOD Medal Office, Innsworth House, Imjin Barracks, Gloucester, GL3 1HW. (Email: DBS-Medals@mod.uk).

The application will need to be supported by a copy of a 'Record of Service' obtainable from RAF Disclosures, Trenchard Hall, RAFC Cranwell, Sleaford, Lincs NG34 8HB.

Tiny



RAFLAA MONUMENT

You will read in the minutes of the AGM (you do of course read them), that we've opened a page on the website where you can make a pledge towards the cost of the monument at Locking. Rick Atkinson is hoping to persuade the developers to contribute towards the cost, however, they will expect us to make a substantial contribution as well. Time is not on our side, and we need to be able to offer more than half of the cost if we are to be successful in negotiating the developer's contribution. The presentation of pledges from us will help us, and hopefully we can complete the monument designed by Rick, for completion by next year – that is our hope.

So for those of you who were not at the AGM, please go to the page on the web site and make a pledge. Some 60 people have done so already, please add your name.

Tiny

Further to the above, the Association has been offered 'Matched Funding' towards the cost of the Monument. This offer is available only until the end of this year.

To meet the deadline, those that have already offered to help are now requested to honour those pledges by sending either a cheque, to Tony Horry

payable to RAFLAA, or BACS transfer to HSBC Sort Code 40-46-18 Account Number 41368885.

Those that have yet to pledge funds towards the Monument are also asked to forward their offers as requested.

Ed.

LIFE AFTER LOCKING

A FIRST TOUR IN 1970

I heard about my first tour posting to Leeming at lunch a few days before the pass out parade. If I remember correctly Larry Hay was the bearer of the good news.

I had to ask where Leeming actually was, and mighty stunned to learn it was actually called No. 3 FTS – an airfield! Not only that, it was in North Yorkshire. 2 Years of training on Heavy Radar kit Type 80 FPS6 and Radar Office down the drain ... Thanks PMC.

Anyhow, I duly travelled to Leeming and after the usual “Arrival” - where I spent an inordinate amount of time asking people where these new sections were, I eventually found myself in Tech Control where a very nice Corporal (not used to this, at all) told me to report to OC 3 Sqdn – more consternation. It turned out that my old Sqdn Commander from Locking, Sqdn Ldr Henry Prince was the 3 Sqdn Boss. An hour later I was at 10,000 feet over the North Yorkshire moors in a Jet Provost Mk5 doing all the aerobatics the Red Arrows did when he was their No.6. And I got to drive for a bit too. Very good for day one.

After this it was back down to earth with a loud bang as the GRSF Radar section Sgt (Len Geekie) gave me a career brief of epic proportions because I was useless to the team until I could be retrained on AR1 and PAR. He later apologised and explained the reasons for the irritable greeting were medical and centred on the rear nether regions.

It turned out there were a few other ex Apps, Dave Ward and Chris Smith from 211th on the section and they soon gave me the run down on the station, but what a culture shock. Bone crunching naivety and shyness didn't help either. Plus there were WRAFs too...

The Leeming AR1 was very temperamental with MTI breakthrough being reported by Approach many times during the day and night (Leeming was a Master Diversion airfield so most technical sections were manned 24/7) I spent many “interesting hours” tweaking that beast – after suitable on-the-job training of course.

After a few months IRIS (who remembers IRIS?) turned up to do a surprise GRSF/ATC mini audit – I'd never seen so many Officers and SNCO's faces change colour so quickly. But, by all accounts things went well on the whole. Then my PAR course came up and back to Locking.

After that, due to staff shortages, I was placed in charge of C watch as a J/T. An ex App in charge of 5 much, much older and wiser SAC's is not something I would recommend. I was only 19 and learned one hell of a lot about man management in the real world, very quickly, and also about humility, strange to relate. Stuff happened and we sorted it – just as we had been trained to do. Good one Locking, the training did work. After what seemed a lifetime another Cpl arrived and took over. Oh Joy!

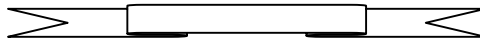
Much fun was had in a nice and relaxed section with a great bunch of guys. There was never a panic that we couldn't throw a man at and the early morning mushroom gathering up on the airfield for a section fry up was all in a day's work. Great

memories looking back. So many scams and pranks, most of them aimed at ATC - and did I tell you about handing over the watches in the Willow Tree pub in Leeming bar, just a short walk from one of the old WW2 bomber dispersals and over a 3 foot high "fence" then into the bar where the pints were already waiting. Then 3 hours later we would be picked up in the same place and poured into the back of the Signal vehicle and back to the block!

During this first tour I met a lovely young lady called Sue who duly became my wife Jan 1972 and 2 weeks later I was off to RAF Gan. Thanks PMC!

In a 23 year career I did 3 tours at Leeming and enjoyed every one. I got married there and both our children were born there. I saw Leeming transformed from a quiet Flying Training Unit to a manic 3 Squadron Tornado Main Operating Base. Would I do it again? You can bet your bottom dollar I would! Thanks PMC!

John McHugh 212th Entry



AKROTIRI CORPORAL'S CLUB

My year and a half in the 1960's as a member of RAF Akrotiri's Corporal's Club was a busy and eventful time in my excellent Cyprus tour and continued until my promotion and move to the Sergeant's mess on camp in 1964.

The Club was a focus of much of our social life, apart from many visits to the many sights and activities of Limassol and Cyprus as a whole. Floating on copious amounts of Keo beer and gallons of various spirits, we kept the profits of both the NAFFI and Keo Brewery at a very healthy level.

At this time, there were quite a few ex-Apps. there as corporals or corporal technicians including Tiny Khule, Mick Ostler, Mick Sparrow and others from the 76th entry onwards, serving on the many flying squadrons, 280 Signals Unit (ground radar), Ground Radio squadron, 103 MU, and that hush-hush place on the salt lake.

The frequent dances held almost weekly at the Club always featured a good live band or group and attracted many married couples living in town, and WRAF's from the 60 strong contingent on camp. The WRAF girls were given permanent permission to use the Club, much to the delight of single corporals.

I befriended many from the resident squadrons and units also the service police and even the RAF Regiment, and wanting to become more involved, was voted onto the Club's Committee as Entertainments Member. I enjoyed this as besides organising events, it meant hosting visiting entertainers on the shows for the troops. I still remember a bouncy Lita Rosa quaffing a pint of Keo beer in one go during a show in the Club and supplying a nervous Dicky Valentine with whiskeys before his performance.

There was an excellent spirit amongst Club members. Once after a particularly boisterous evening, we all refused to leave the Club after being ordered to by the Duty Sergeant, and caused the Orderly Officer to call out the service police with their dogs. We staged a sit-down at the Club entrance and would not move. Among the protesters were many off-duty police dog handlers, so that threat defused rapidly as

they pacified the dogs who were well known to them. The stand-off was finally amicably resolved without any unpleasant results, and without our police compatriots ending up in the cells.

During the Cypriot Greek/Turkish fighting a large deployment of the Parachute Regiment were temporarily resident at Akrotiri, with their corporals and lance corporals having access to the Club. This caused our junior technicians on Camp to query why lance corporals could use the Club while they with a similar one stripe were banned. They did not realise that a RAF J/T was not an NCO while an army L/Cpl was.

During this period after a weekend dance in the Club, I was escorting my WRAF girlfriend and other girls back to the WRAF Block, when an army corporal tried to force his intentions onto them. When I stopped him he attacked me and it took me a few minutes to subdue him and get his friends to remove him from the Club. With my split lip, I was summoned next day to the soldier's Sergeant Major to explain what happened. When I told him I had not wanted to hurt his corporal during the altercation, he went puce at the thought of a 'soft' RAF corporal besting one of his paratroopers. This was one of the very few disturbances in the Club.

While the fighting was going on in Limassol, living-in personnel were confined to Camp for safety. A few of us corporals were members of the RAOB Lodge at nearby Episcopi, and whilst confined to Camp for many weeks could not attend. This would prejudice the continuation of the Lodge, so 5 of us broke Camp with the aid of two RAF police Lodge members and raced along the roads in my new Hillman Minx to Episcopi. We only heard two gunshots and at 80 mph did not stop to see if the car was hit (it was not). We did our business at Episcopi and on return were smuggled back to Camp by our corporal police friends. No problem!

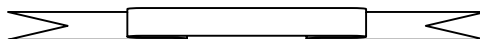
A few months before I had to leave the Corporal's Club on promotion to Sergeant, I was elected as Chairman of the Corporal's Club. This turned out to be a sensitive and political position interfacing with other station establishments and NAFFI management. Some power but at a cost!

Many memories still exist with me as a corporal in Akrotiri. Like the day they were showing 'Lawrence of Arabia' at the nearby Astra Cinema on a very hot summers evening. The heat and desert scenes caused some twenty of us to stream out at the interval for a thirst quenching pint in the Club and back again before the re-start. Both our excellent Greek and Turkish barmen (Salih) came up with the goods pronto.

Also frequent forays around the Island from the Club in Tiny Khule's BMW (a nippy two and a half seat 700 cc coupé) – especially for the rare treat of a delicious hot curry at "Mr. Irish Puddings" restaurant/house in Limassol, or the visit to Paphos's sea front restaurant with the suspended stuffed pelican, for dishes of superb crisp fried baby red mullet and local bread.

Akrotiri Corporal's Club was the recipient of much of our wages, and must have contributed greatly to the profits at Keo in beer, brandy and St Pantiliemon wine sales. But for many of us they were good times.

Brian Davies ex 76/77 entry



A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

The waxing moon reflected brightly on the tranquil waters of Aden Harbour as I sat alone contemplating the predicament of how long I was to remain bobbing about on this stricken aircraft in the middle of this shark infested sea.

The 23rd March 1964 began as another routine day (if there was ever a routine day in Aden). I was a Corporal Ground Wireless Fitter attached to No 37 Field Squadron RAF Regiment based at RAF Khormaksar and responsible for the maintenance of the squadrons' radio equipment. It had been a hectic few months with two of the squadrons flights being detached to RAF Eastleigh in Kenya to take care of a bit of bother down there and another being sent to Fort Thumeir in the Radfan to provide airfield guard against the marauding Red Wolves terrorists. But I was now back at base to resume my normal work.

After the day's work was done I was relaxing on my bed in the barrack room that I called home, taking the usual afternoon nap under the hot breeze created by the overhead fan. At about 1600 hrs. I was rudely awoken by the squadron runner who told me that I was wanted urgently at Sqn HQ. Thinking the worst I hurried to headquarters to be met by the Sqn 2 i/c to be informed that an Armstrong Whitworth Argosy aircraft of 105 Squadron had ditched into Aden Harbour whilst on a crew training exercise. There were no casualties, the crew had been rescued by the high speed launch of 1152 Marine Craft Unit (MCU) but the aircraft was floating unattended in the middle of the harbour. He informed me that I had been given the dubious honour of guarding the aircraft to prevent anyone from stealing 'fixtures and fittings'. I was to draw one of our spare personal A41 Radio Packs and collect some rations and water for a three hour duty stint. I was then to report to 1152 MCU who would transport me to the aircraft.

So one hour later here I was getting my first sight of the RAF's latest seaplane with only the wings, tail planes and top of the fuselage visible. The launch drew up alongside the aircraft and after being assured that the plane could not sink (something to do with air in the fuel tanks), and told on no account to light up a ciggy (with the all-pervading aroma of aviation fuel an action I would have been mad to contemplate) I climbed onto the wing with all my necessary accoutrements. The launch cast off with the departing message that they would be back in three hours with my replacement. As the noise of the launch faded away in the distance I was left alone with the eerie sound of water sloshing to and fro within the aircraft's cargo hold and the thought that I may never see dry land again.

Being a conscientious NCO I soon established radio contact with base who informed me that a local floating crane had been tasked with the job of coming out to secure the aircraft to prevent it plunging to the bottom of the oggin. The company owning the crane was in the process of rounding up the crew and that they expected it to be with me within two hours. So there I was with darkness falling, feeling cut off from civilization with only a packet of cheese sandwiches and a canteen of water for solace and no chance of a cigarette to calm my fears. I settled down to await the arrival of the crane and so reducing the possibility of becoming a shark's dinner.

Unbelievably, after about an hour the radio crackled into life and base told me that the crane was on its way with the salvage crew and that my solitary life would soon be over. Unfortunately they also informed me that they were unable to find a replacement guard and that I would have to transfer to the crane and wait until they could find some other poor soul to relieve me. True to their word however, within fifteen minutes I could see the lights and dim outline of the floating crane approaching. Soon they were alongside (a naval term I thought appropriate under the circumstances), and the crew set too passing steel hawsers under each wing to support the aircraft to the crane's jib. Within an hour the job was completed, the aircraft was secured and I was able to transfer myself and equipment from my precarious perch on the Argosy to the relative safety and comfort of the crane. All I

had to do now was to eat my sandwiches, get to know the all Arab crew and await my replacement, life was a peach.

I should have known that things would not be that easy. At about 2000hrs base called with the news that they had found a replacement guard and I was to be ready to return to dry land. Great I thought I might just get back in time to catch the late film at the Astra cinema. But it was obvious that the gods were against me that day, for soon afterwards the fateful message came through that the launch had become unserviceable and that they would not be able to relieve me until the following morning. I was now faced with the prospect of an uncomfortable night on board the crane without my accustomed comforts of a soft bed and cool beer, and would have to make do with cold steel deck plates and warm water.

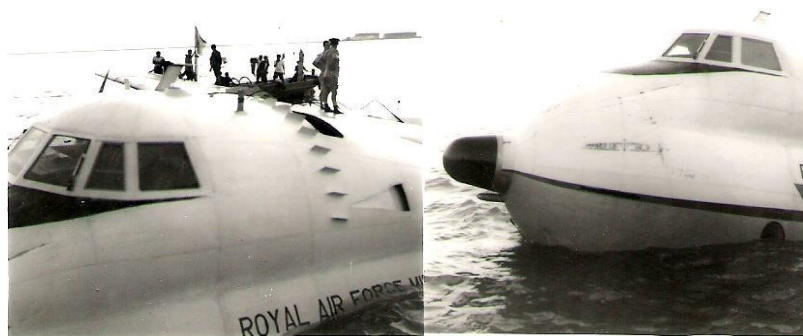
Now as I have said the crane's crew consisted of about six Arabs, none of whom could speak much English and my Arabic was only enough to ask for a cup of tea and to get my 'dhobi' washed, so it looked as if I was in for a long night.

However I was not prepared for the ingenuity of the Arab crew. Firstly to my horror, as soon as they had finished with securing the aircraft they lit up a wood fired brazier. Considering that there was still the smell of aviation fuel surrounding the rig I thought this to be a very rash move and prepared myself to be blown to kingdom come. When I attempted to air my concerns the crew just smiled, muttered something incomprehensible and set a large pan of water onto the fire. To hell with it I thought, in for a penny, in for a pound and for the first time in about five hours lit up a nerve calming cigarette. After pouring a large amount of tea leaves and a couple of tins of evaporated milk into the now boiling pan of water I was offered a cup of the warming brew. I felt that the crew were treating me as a VIP because they served my tea in a cracked (and not too clean) china mug, whilst they drank theirs from tin cans; obviously such an important guest as myself could not be offered a can of tea, and believe you me, the tea was one of the best that I had tasted since coming to Aden. After tea a big pot of something indescribable was put on to warm and one of the crew, obviously the 'ships' cook started making chapattis which to my food deprived being, smelt delicious, as did the contents of the pot. When it was ready I was given a plate of stew (which turned out to be goat) together with a fresh baked chapatti, a veritable feast fit for a king. After the meal an old greasy and damp pack of cards was produced and I was invited to participate in a card game very reminiscent of 'Find the Lady' with local variations. The only difficulty was that after a while I found that the ten of hearts was missing which made the game a bit of a hit and miss affair. Quite a camaraderie was built up between the crew and myself and together with me learning a few words of Arabic (some unrepeatable) and me teaching them some English (also some unrepeatable), as they say a good time was had by all.

It must have been after two in the morning when the card game broke up and together with the rest of the crew I settled down on the steel deck to drift off into a light sleep lulled by the waves gently lapping against the now tethered aircraft. I was awoken at about four thirty by a call from base to let me know that the launch had been fixed and they expected to be able to rescue me in about one hour. As just as dawn was breaking there came the sound of the launch's powerful engines heading towards the rig and soon it was alongside. A team of RAF aircraft riggers disembarked onto the rig looking all fit and fresh, I dread to think of what I looked like after the night I had had, dishevelled, unshaved and reeking of goat stew and oil. I said my goodbyes to my new found Arab friends and climbed onto the launch, which took off from the rig with a roar of its twin Merlin Marine engines. Looking back I caught my last sight of the Argosy wallowing in the sea with the early morning sun glinting off of its shiny white fuselage. So ended another day in the life of an RAF Ground Wireless Fitter, nothing like I had been prepared for when I joined up.

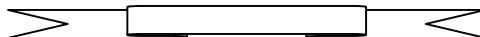
POSTSCRIPT.

I had been told that once the aircraft had been recovered to dry land, all salvageable items would be recovered and the airframe would be broken up as scrap. But it was not to be. The Armstrong Whitworth Argosy C1 - XP413 which was delivered to 105 Sqn in June 1962 was dismantled and returned to Hawker Siddeley Aviation in the UK by surface transport to be refurbished, and on the 5th May 1966 it was transferred to 242 OCU. In January 1969 it was transferred to 27 Maintenance Unit and converted to an E Mk 1. In June of that year it was delivered to 115 Sqn for use as a Radio Calibration aircraft. On the First of May 1976, a full twelve years after her accident, the old girl was struck off charge at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire and scrapped.



AW Argosy XP413 floating in Aden Harbour

By John Wells (88th)





Bloodhound Missile Preservation Group (BMPG)

Restoring and Preserving Bloodhound MKII

The story so far

Pete Harry – Founder of the BMPG

March 2015

The Bloodhound MKII missile system was a key part of the integrated UK air defences during the Cold War, a wholly British designed missile to counter nuclear armed, high flying bombers at long range. Bloodhound MKII became operational with the RAF in 1964 and continued to be improved as new technology became available with its operation role continually enhanced to include the countering of low level air strikes. Bloodhound MKII was withdrawn from RAF service in 1991, at the end of the Cold War. It is only right that such an important part of the UK's Cold War history is preserved for future generations.

The BMPG was formed with the objective of restoring items of the Bloodhound MKII missile system that are in the group's possession. Currently these are a Bloodhound Launch Control Post (LCP) and a Type 86 (T86) radar. The group's objectives also include supporting other organisations who display and restore Bloodhound missiles. What follows is a personal review of how and why the BMPG was formed and the group's restoration of a Bloodhound MKII simulator.



BMPG's Bloodhound MKII Simulator



Bloodhound MKII Missile with Radar Type 87 in the Background

How the BMPG are meeting its aims and objectives.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

I never intended to establish a Bloodhound preservation group but here I am. It all started after I visited various aviation museums and discovered the deteriorating condition of many Bloodhound exhibits. My first thoughts were; 'can anything be done to help'? Could I offer to provide a bit of TLC for the exhibits, perhaps washing the green mould from a missile, or make a donation so that such work could be done? For various reasons my enthusiasm was short lived, I found my intentions fell in to the 'too difficult' basket. Museums have rules, policies and procedures; you can't just

pitch up and clean a missile. I also realised that financial donations to a museum are usually put in a pot and the museum decides what to do with those funds, not me. Add to this the usual health and safety, insurance requirements, etc. etc. and it all becomes very difficult. One museum curator also related to me a bad experience when 'enthusiasts' became involved with an exhibit, they were full of good intent but enthusiasm soon waned leaving the museum to pick up the bits, literally. My initial enthusiasm to support Bloodhound exhibits was now somewhat dented but I did appreciate that every aviation museum curator would like to keep all their exhibits in A1 condition. Unfortunately there has to be priorities for funding and resources and Bloodhound was not necessarily a top priority. Understandable if your main reason for being a museum is based around aeroplanes.

ACQUIRING A BLOODHOUND MKII LAUNCH CONTROL POST (LCP)

During the initial period of my 'can I help' approach it became generally known that I was interested in Bloodhound which resulted in a phone call from the Bawdsey Radar Museum. An individual had been in contact with the museum offering some Bloodhound items, was I interested? Phone numbers were exchanged and after some delay I made contact. To my amazement what was being offered was a complete Bloodhound MKII Launch Control Post. The intention of the person offering the LCP was to break it up and sell the parts to electronic enthusiasts, or whoever, and then scrap the cabin. During a Sunday evening phone call I realised I could save or lose the LCP. I chose to save it. The original LCP owner more than happy that the LCP would now be preserved. I was somewhat puzzled during the negotiation for the LCP as to where it was located. I was only aware of two complete LCPs that remained; one at the RAF Museum Cosford the other at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford. The LCP I had just acquired was in fact part of the Bloodhound MKII section held by the RAF Museum at Cosford. The LCP had been disposed of by the RAF Museum and I was now to be its second private owner. The LCP was still located at Cosford but in a state that can only be described as abandoned.



BMPG's LCP before Recovery

Today the LCP is located in a storage hangar at RAF Cosford, with the kind permission of the RAF. The hangar is a secure location and provides protection from the elements. Once the LCP was recovered a survey was carried out. The external appearance was poor the cabin was sound, the internal condition being dirty, full of cob webs and with signs of rodent activity. The good news was that the computer racks, display console and other electronics were 90% complete. Unfortunately two key items were missing from the display console, the top switch panel and the Engagement Controller's key pad with its tracker ball. All other items being present, including the Castell keys for closing the firing lines to the missiles and the original, early 1960's, Hoover Dustette vacuum cleaner!



Display Console with missing top switch panel and Engagement Controller's keyboard

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH A COLD WAR RELIC – RESTORE IT!

I was now the proud owner of a Bloodhound MKII LCP but what should I do with it? As one museum curator pointed out 'it's just a box, how can you interpret that (museum speak)?' Difficult to interpret a cabin it may be, but inside is the best Cold War computer game you'll ever find. Obvious conclusion; can the LCP and more specifically the Bloodhound MKII simulator it contains be restored? The challenges were going to be many. An impossible dream? Maybe, but I was going to give it a go.

My motivation in restoring the Bloodhound simulator were many fold. I was an RAF technician who worked on the Bloodhound missile system and believed that restoring a demonstrable component, the Bloodhound simulator, would be a fitting tribute to all who were involved in the development, design and the operational deployment of Bloodhound MKII. A system that incorporated the very best of British aeronautical design, computer technology and electronic systems. The prime contractor for Bloodhound being the British Aircraft Corporation (BAC), who designed and developed the missile, while Ferranti Ltd were responsible for the computers and electronic systems. The heart of the Bloodhound LCP was initially a Ferranti Argus 200 computer, eventually replaced with the more powerful Argus 700.

A THREE YEAR RESTORATION PROJECT

The LCP and Bloodhound simulator restoration project has now taken three years and there is still a lot of work to do; but the simulator is operational once more. A period of remarkable progress with all the many challenges overcome, including the locating of missing parts. There has also been a great deal of good fortune including the recovery of the original RAF software which enables demonstrations of the actual Cold War exercises used for training Engagement Controllers. Looking back I am sure many would have said such a project was too great a challenge, there were too many 'how are we going to achieve that' questions? Reality today is that the BMPG team have successfully restored the LCP's Bloodhound MKII simulator. The simulator is operational once more, twenty three years after withdrawal from RAF service at the end of the Cold War. The details of the engineering and technical work carried out

over the past few years would fill several volumes. One day I may get around to writing such a book but not now, I'm too busy restoring.

WHAT MADE IT POSSIBLE?

The restoration of the simulator is a major achievement and has only been made possible with the commitment and support of members of the BMPG, private individuals and commercial companies. The support, donations of items and the specialist skills offered have been very generous, the restoration would not have been possible without them. All contributors to the simulator restoration project will be acknowledged and their contributions recorded in the LCP. The BMPG's 'hands on' team is mostly drawn from ex RAF technicians and Ferranti engineers who have also given generously of their time, knowledge and skills in carrying out the restoration work at RAF Cosford.



The BMPG 'Hands-on Team
L to R Pete Murray, Richard Vernon, Neil Cartman, Dave Scobbie with Pete Harry kneeling

A BIT OF BACKGROUND ON THE LCP

The restored LCP, with its simulator is a MK2A, an upgraded version of the original Bloodhound MKII LCP. The original LCP featured an Argus 200 computer with an analogue display console for the Engagement Controller (E.C.) and Technical Supervisor (T.S.). Due to the limited power of the Argus 200 the original Bloodhound simulator was located in a separate cabin. The MK2A LCP upgrade replaced the Argus 200 for the more powerful Argus 700 from 1985 onwards. The MK2A LCP provided digital displays for the E.C. and T.S. Another significant change was the incorporation of the Bloodhound MKII simulator in to the operational MK2A LCP, a selection button on the display console allowing the E.C. to choose the operational or simulator roles.

THE ESSENTIAL SPARES AND MANUALS TO KEEP THE SIMULATOR RUNNING

It can be appreciated that the LCP was not simply 'switched on' and it all worked! Many items required repair and/or replacement so the hunt was on for spares but how do you obtain spares for long obsolete equipment? The answer lies in the generosity of third parties and members of the BMPG who had contacts in organisations that may still have Argus 700 and LCP parts. We were fortunate that the Argus 700 computer, used in the Bloodhound LCP, was a standard commercial grade computer, manufactured from standard 1980's solid state technology.

I have often been asked about manuals, Air Publications (AP's) in RAF terminology as the restoration of the LCP simulator would not have been possible without them. When I acquired the LCP it contained no manuals but today the BMPG have all the manuals and original manufacturer's documents required for the restoration and future maintenance of the Bloodhound LCP and the simulator. Several museums hold Bloodhound APs, not full sets of APs but collectively it gives the BMPG all the documents needed to run and maintain the LCP and simulator.

WHAT CAME NEXT? A BLOODHOUND TYPE 86 RADAR

BMPG's Bloodhound LCP, with its working simulator, is only part of the BMPG story so far. In February 2013 the BMPG acquired a Bloodhound MKII Type 86 tracking radar which was being disposed of by the RAF Museum at Cosford. The radar needed a good home but no other organisation or museum was interested so with a lack of any other takers what was the BMPG to do? The T86 radar now stands next the LCP, under cover, and secure at RAF Cosford. When recovered the T86 looked to be in a poor condition but a survey showed the radar to be in a better condition than its general appearance would indicate. The T86 and LCP cabins are made of an aluminium alloy so there are no major corrosion issues.



Radar Type 86 as Recovered



First task – get the lights on!

While the focus has been on restoring the LCP and the Bloodhound simulator some restoration work has been carried out on the T86. The wooden decking on the radar's roof has now been replaced, the original decking being completely rotten. Inside the cabin the radar is 90% complete as several items, including the transmitter's klystron, were removed by the RAF before the T86 was donated to the RAF Museum. Long term plans for the T86 involve some functionality being returned to the radar but it will never transmit again. It is the intention to have some demonstrable functionality restored to the T86, as it has been for the LCP. Currently the LCP and T86 radar are not on public display but visits can be arranged, simply email the BMPG contact email.



LCP and Type 86 under cover at RAF Cosford

THE PROVENANCE OF THE LCP AND T86

What is known of the history of the BMPG's LCP and T86? The LCP, Serial No. 1022, was operational with 25 Squadron's B Flight, Yellow section, at RAF Wildenrath, Germany, in the 1970's. The LCP returned to the U.K. in 1983 and was again operational with 25 Squadron's B Flight, Kestrel section, at RAF Wyton. At some time between 1986 and 1989, 1022 was converted to a MK2A LCP variant and its history following the conversion is not known. The T86 radar, Serial No. 501, was originally in use with a Swedish Bloodhound unit. After returning to the U.K. it was converted to the RAF T86 standard. The T86 is known to have been operational with 85 Squadron's Yellow section at RAF Bawdsey, in the latter part of the 1980's.

BMPG'S FIRST PUBLIC DISPLAY

The BMPG took the opportunity to display its LCP and T86 to the public at the RAF Cosford Air Show on June 7th, 2013. Also displayed was a Bloodhound MKII missile, courtesy of the RAF Museum.



On public display, RAF Cosford Air Show, 7th June 2013

HOW THE BMPG SUPPORT OTHER ORGANISATIONS

What has the BMPG been doing to help others? Two examples are the recovery of two Bloodhound MKII launchers from Switzerland, one launcher going to the Muckleburgh Collection and the other to the North east Aviation Museum. The BMPG were fortunate in recovering the launchers as they were destined for scrap.



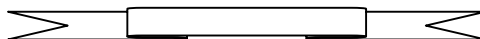
Two Bloodhound MKII launchers awaiting unloading at the Muckleburgh Collection. Courtesy of the BMPG

Support in the form of parts has also been supplied to the Bristol Aero Collection Trust (BACT). The parts allowing the Trust to restore a Bloodhound MKII launcher and complete the external presentation of their MKII missile. Fuze aerials were also obtained for BACT's Bloodhound MKII missile making it the only externally complete Bloodhound in the UK. Fuze aerials were removed by the RAF from all missiles before being donated or sold to museums.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR THE LCP AND T86

The BMPG are committed to the long term future of the LCP and T86 as items for public display and demonstration. The plan is to loan the LCP and T86 to the Bristol Aero Collection Trust for display at the new Bristol Aviation Centre being at Filton, Bristol. At Filton the LCP and T86 will join the Bristol Aero Collection Trust's Bloodhound MKII missile and launcher to create a complete Bloodhound MKII display, protected from the elements to ensure their long term preservation. Filton being a fitting location as the original home of the Bristol Aircraft Company who were the prime contractors for Bloodhound.

Pete Harry March 2015
(www.bmpg.org.uk)



HUMOUR

Two good old boys, Mick & Paddy, have been promoted from privates to Lance Corporals.

Not long afterward, they're out for a walk and Mick says, "Hey, Paddy, there's the NCO Club; let's you and me step in."

"But we're only privates," protests Paddy.

"We're Lance Corporals now," says Mick, pointing to his stripe and pulling him inside. "Now, Paddy, I'm a-gonna sit down and have me a drink."

"But we're privates," says Paddy.

"You blind, boy?" asks Mick, pointing again at his stripe. "We're Lance Corporals now!"

So they have their drink, and pretty soon one of the Army lasses comes up to Mick.

"You're cute," she says, "and I'd like to date you, but I've got a bad case of gonorrhoea."

Mick pulls his friend to the side and whispers, "Paddy, go look in the dictionary and see what Gonorrhoea means. If it's okay, give me the okay sign." So Paddy goes to look it up, comes back, and gives Mick the big Thumbs Up.

Three weeks later Mick is laid up in the infirmary with a terrible case of gonorrhoea.

Mick says to Paddy, "Why did you give me the thumbs up?"

"Well Mick, in the dictionary, it say gonorrhoea affects only the privates and we're Lance Corporals now! "

-
- *Where there's a will, I want to be in it.*
 - *Do not argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience.*
 - *The last thing I want to do is hurt you. But it's still on my list.*
 - *Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.*
 - *If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.*
 - *War does not determine who is right – only who is left.*
 - *Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.*
 - *Evening news is where they begin with 'Good Evening,' and then proceed to tell you why it isn't.*

- *To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.*
- *A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk, I have a work station.*
- *I thought I wanted a career. Turns out I just wanted paychecks.*
- *Whenever I fill out an application, in the part that says, 'In case of emergency, notify:' I put 'DOCTOR.'*
- *I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.*
- *Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.*
- *Behind every successful man is his woman. Behind the fall of a successful man is usually another woman.*

English humour at its best.

Right at the end of a programme recently, there was a discussion about the obscene cost of entry into Premiership football games, the cheapest price of £60 and £100 per game is not uncommon.

An older chap being interviewed said he could recall many years ago arriving at the turnstiles (it was probably West Ham United): "That will be ten quid, mate". What?!" the old chap said "I could get a woman for that!"

The guy on the turnstile retorted, "Not for 45 minutes each way with a brass band and a meat pie in the interval, you wouldn't!"

LIFE AFTER THE RAF

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF A DIFFERENT KIND

Some of the more interesting events, when teaching flight crew at B.A.'s Cranebank Training Centre, were heralded by the appearance of non-standard courses on the training schedule.

Occasionally, these were for a single person. One such was for a Mr. Brown. As it was for Tristar training, I was not involved. The late Dave Painter (ex-73rd) was the Tristar avionics instructor. After much secrecy, Mr. Brown turned out to be King Hussein of Jordan. At the conclusion of his course, the instructors who provided his training were lined up and he presented each with a gold watch.

On my aircraft (747) I was involved with a couple of one person courses. The first was for a "Captain Azerbaijani". A pleasant, well-spoken and reasonably competent foreign national. We had no concrete information about him but it was rumoured that his course was self-funded. If so --- a wealthy man!! It was some 25 years before 9/11 so I don't think there were any sinister implications.

The other individual course was for a Captain from the C.A.A... I cannot recall his name but subsequently he appeared occasionally on T.V. News programmes, commenting on aeronautical events. He appeared to be a quite exceptional pilot. I took him for his first visit to the 747 simulator, to demonstrate various operations. He elected to "fly" the machine, with me in the right hand seat to offer explanations. As a joke, without warning me or the C.A.A. man, the simulator engineer operating the panel at the rear, failed an engine on his first take off. If the instruments had not given warning indications, I would not have noticed. The take-off was as smooth as if all four engines had been working normally. He just called for the "Failed engine" check list. If I had been "flying", I would probably have rolled it into the ground. The three engine landing was equally uneventful. On other occasions when I was in the simulator and he was at the controls, he dealt with a problems that were presented, with no apparent effect on the stability of the machine.

One other non-standard course which stands out in my memory, was for a group of Korean Airlines flight crews. They did the avionics section of the course first. Having introduced myself and worked through an initial outline of the systems, it was time for tea break. I lead them in a "crocodile" down two flights of stairs, through a long corridor, to the in-house restaurant. Took them to the counter area and explained that this was where they got their food and drinks. Saying that I would see them back in the classroom in 30 minutes, I turned round and headed for the Radio Instructors crew room. Halfway down the corridor, I could hear footsteps behind me. When I turned around, the whole "crocodile" was still following me. I had to usher them all back and dream up an explanation as to why I did not use that facility. The rest of the day went reasonably well, though slower than normal. Their English was not good but infinitely better than my nonexistent Korean. The following morning, as I stepped onto the dais, there was a chorus of "Harrow Mitter Corrier". I thanked them and asked what I might say in Korean as a response. The general consensus appeared to be "An yong hasim nika" (spelled phonetically). I had no idea how it should be written or even what it meant. They told me that a rough translation was "Hello, how are you". Thus we greeted each other every morning and they all laughed when I did my bit. Either my pronunciation was odd or it did not mean what they said it did! Later in the week, a couple of them approached me and asked "Where we see dagish?" In the context of 747 avionics, it took a while to determine what they wished to know. Finally, it transpired that they wanted to see the Liverpool footballer, Kenny Dalglish play. I promised to see what I could find out. Luckily, Liverpool were playing Q.P.R. on the coming weekend. I loaned them my London A to Z with the position of the ground marked on the map. They found it, Dalglish had played and they were very happy.

When my part of the course ended, the group presented me with a "kujule pan" (phonetic again). An octagonal, black lacquered dish with mother-of-pearl inlaid into its lid. Internally divided into compartments, containing packets of ginseng tea.

Some years later, the Russians shot down a Korean Airlines 747. I wondered then, with some sadness, if any of those I had helped train were in the flight crew.

After I retired from the B.B.C. in 1993, I returned weekly to the library at Wood Norton, to collect my free copy of the Radio Times. On one of these visits, the librarian told me that they currently had a Korean student there on a course, who was a keen cyclist. Knowing that I also did a lot of cycling, she asked if I would meet him and offer advice on good local rides. I agreed and later she introduced us. Hoping for the best, I rattled off the phrase I had been taught. He looked very surprised and returned a couple of sentences in Korean. I then had to confess that I had exhausted my complete vocabulary. He was kind enough to confirm that the phrase did mean what my B.A. students had told me and they were not having a laugh at my expense.

Mike Collier

ROYAL AIR FORCE LOCKING APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION

President: Air Commodore Martin Palmer RAF (Ret'd)

MINUTES FOR THE 21st ROYAL AIR FORCE LOCKING APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WEBBINGTON HOTEL, LOXTON, WESTON-SUPER-MARE

SATURDAY 25th APRIL 2015 AT 1330HRS.

Present: -	Air Cdre Martin Palmer	91st	President
Committee:	Tiny Kuhle	87th	Chairman
	Nigel Lodge	91 st	Secretary
	Tony Horry	76 th	Treasurer
	Jim Doran	219 th	Membership Secretary
	Colin Ingram	88th	Newsletter Editor
	Peter Crowe	95 th	Webmaster/AA Rep
	Andy Perkins	109 th	Tech Rep
	Graham Beeston	209 th	Craft Rep
	Rick Atkinson	91 st	Service Rep

There were 55 members in attendance.

ITEM 1 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies :-	Bruce Graham	(79 th)
	Mike Hill	(91 st)
	Doug 'Mac' Manocha	(83rd)
	Roy Mortlock	(87 th).
	Harry North	(72 nd)
	Jim Powell	(76 th)
	Charlie Tyler	(91 st)

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 13:30 with a reading of the Apprentice Prayer. There followed a minute's silence in memory of:-

Mike Horlock	(83 rd)	
David Kitching	(94 th)	
George Ring	(95 th)	
Geoff Sperling	(96 th)	
Dave Penberthy	(71 st)	Non member

Chairman then briefly referred to the items that had been most pressing during the year past, namely: change to The Constitution; future location for the AGM and decision on the proposed Locking Parkland Commemorative Monument to RAF Locking and the No 1 Radio School's role in training Apprentices. These items were dealt with in greater detail as separate items, see below.

Greetings to you all, and a special greeting to Mike Keen (78th) who has travelled from Australia, on this ANZAC day.

This, being our 21st AGM - in the past considered as coming of age - got me thinking about why I find this Association of ours, so important to me. It's the sense of comradeship that one experienced all those years ago, which is more difficult to experience now, and being in the company of like-minded folk with which to reminisce over the years, and which had great bearing on one's future. Personally, I also feel it an honour to serve as your Chairman. A job I couldn't do without the support of a hardworking and dedicated committee.

We have quite a lot of business to go through today, one item being the Locking Parklands memento - Rick Atkinson is very keen to call it that rather than memorial - he's done a lot of work in progressing the design, which he'll explain in more detail later. One point that we do need to consider is funding for this project. Whatever we do it's going to be costly, and we have in mind to ask our members to contribute a sum, of their own choosing, to towards this memento. We have already received £179 from a member of the 79th, who wished to remain anonymous, this was received in 2007. At the AGM of that year we voted for a sum of £5000 to be used for such a project, however, due to the delays in development of Locking Parklands, we went ahead with a stone at the NMA, which took some £3700 out of the sum authorised by you. The letter from 'One of the 79th' also envisaged what the memento could look like, I quote;

I can appreciate the conundrum facing the committee when trying to determine the final form for the Locking Tribute. My flight of fancy sees that semi-circle of grass, which stood between the hutted Station Headquarters and the main gate, carrying two markers - one for RAF Locking itself and the second for the Apprentice Wing.

A quite presentable idea, but Rick Atkinson will have further ideas for us to consider.

As you know, we have a stained glass window in the church at Halton. And a problem has arisen. Some of the lettering has fallen off the window, not just ours but several others for other Associations and entries. I have been in contact with the lady who made the window, and Min Larkin of the Halton Association, on behalf of FABEA members has also registered the problem. The problem will be sorted, but how long it will take, has not yet been confirmed. A visit to the church is highly recommended, combined with a visit to the Trenchard museum; a call to the Halton Association (01296 696896 Tues. & Thurs.) is recommended to arrange access.

We have responded to a request by a member, to see if we could hold the AGM & reunion at a venue further north, to perhaps encourage those members living further north, to attend. A suggestion was for a hotel near Derby, we also looked at a hotel near Peterborough, which has been used by the Admin. Apps. Association very successfully for their AGM & reunion. There have been some 60 replies to our request for choice of venue, and I'm sure the discussion will be interesting. We did have a number of 'Anywhere' replies, which is actually encouraging, because it's nice to know that people will come for the occasion, not just where it's held.

Our request for votes on the change to the constitution, has so far only produced 3 responses, all in favour, which will be added to the hand count when we discuss it. Hopefully we can now make this simple change a formality.

As you can see, we're a very progressive lot, by having the agenda and some report summaries up on the screen, we're doing our bit for the environment, and saving trees! Many thanks to Jim Doran for producing the presentation, which I hope

will help those who are hard of hearing at the back, but I also hope that some of you also went to Specsavers.

With that, I'll hand you over to our President, who will make the presentation of our trophy, not to the actual recipient, but a proxy, because Mr. Flavell is out of the country at this time. I'm sure though that Sgt, Ross Copner will give us some insight into the acronyms in current use!

ITEM 2 PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS AND PRESENTATION OF RAFLAA TROPHY.

In presenting the RAFLAA Trophy the President made reference to the tremendous changes that had been effected since the days when the Radio School was based at RAF Locking. Those subject to the training regime were often from a different learning environment and the core curriculum was much changed, in fact barely recognised. We are in an information technology world, a world of electronic data, a world where the security of such data and the defence against those enemies of the State was no longer solely the bomb and the bullet but one of interference with information. We are now living in a world where the term "Cyber Warfare" has become pre-eminent.

The Citation, copied below, and the response from the recipient of the Award contained many acronyms with which we were never familiar with in our days as servicemen and we expressed gratitude for the explanation and a copy of the report is attached at the end of the Minutes.

The President also referred to the change in approach between ranks. Whereas our days at Locking had been a world in isolation with the wider world at Graduation something of a shock this was no longer the case. Such is the level of expertise of today's apprentice and graduate that the most senior officers from Air Staff Officer in J6 are given to visiting and learning at first hand both from today's trainee and apprentice alike.

The downside, he implied was that the graduate apprentice is a much sought after 'commodity' who readily finds employment in the civilian sphere

ITEM 3 TREASURER'S REPORT.

A copy of the Accounts and Balance Sheet for the year ending January 2015 is available for each member. The full accounts are here if anyone wishes to inspect them. These accounts have been audited and have been declared as a true and fair view of trading for the year and that the Balance Sheet is an accurate reflection of the Association's affairs at 31st January 2015.

The balance sheet for the Association now shows assets of £6,946.03, which is a surplus of income over expenditure of £32.00 for the year. Again we have not had any large capital expenditure as in 2011/12 when the Memorial to RAF Locking Apprentices was installed at the National Arboretum.

ITEM 3.1 AGM 2014

The total cost of the AGM 2013 is shown as £3,472.50 which includes the cost Webbington (£2683.00 including cost of wine and bar subsidy); coach (£215); Music (£220); annual award trophy donation of £50.00; other small expenses together with the deposit for today's event (£200). The cost of the AGM to the Association was £500 (£811 in 2013)

ITEM 3.2 EXPENSES

In accordance of the decisions made by the Association in 2012 no donations in memory of individual deceased members.

The 2014 AGM approved a donation of £100 to the RAFBF

The 2014 AGM dinner raised a donation of £150 for Help for Heroes.

We make a donation to Flowerdown House for the use their hospitality for when we hold two Committee meetings held during the year.

ITEM 3.3 OVERHEADS

These are much on a par with the previous year.

Direct Debit of £10.80 per quarter as payments for website cost. This is to ensure that we do not have a problem as occurred many years ago due to the death of the webmaster and the disabling of access to the website.

PROFIT & LOSS			
INCOME			2013/2014
Membership fees	£2,177.50		£2,355.00
Life membership	£0.00		£200.00
Sales - ties, pins and videos	£51.00		£75.00
Donation (AGM fund raise)	£143.50		£135.00
AGM and other misc. income	£2,741.00		£3,369.00
Bank interest received	£3.64		£3.64
		£5,116.64	£6,137.64
EXPENDITURE			
Pins	£0.00		£38.60
Ties	£0.00		£0.00
Videos	£0.00		£0.00
Name badges	£30.75		£44.30
AGM and other purchases	£3,472.50		£4,395.49
Donations	£330.00		£215.00
Other - Memorial	£0.00		
		£3,833.25	£4,693.39
DIRECT EXPENSES			

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

Advertising	£24.00		
Bank charges	£0.00		£0.00
Auditing	£50.00		£50.00
Refund	£204.00		
		£278.00	£50.00
<u>OVERHEADS</u>			
Travelling expenses	£507.99		£653.00
Printing	£262.00		£280.00
Telephone	£0.00		£0.00
Postage and carriage	£160.20		£113.83
Stationery	£0.00		£0.00
Website (incl. DD)	£43.20		£114.15
		£973.39	£1,160.98
<u>PROFIT/LOSS</u>		£32.00	£233.27
BALANCE SHEET			
	2014/2015		2013/2014
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>			
Deposit Bond			
Business Money Manager A/C		£5,199.14	£5,195.50
Community Account		£1,722.56	£1,694.20
Petty cash		£24.33	£24.33
<u>NETT CURRENT ASSETS</u>		£6,946.03	£6,914.03
<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>			
<u>FINANCED BY</u>			
Brought forward balance		£6,914.03	£6,680.76
Profit and loss account		£32.00	£233.27
		£6,946.03	£6,914.03

ITEM 4 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT.

ITEM 4.1 GENERAL

We have had a steady year in terms of Membership numbers.

Unfortunately we have lost 4 Active members of the association

- David Kitching – 94th
- Mike Horlock – 83rd
- George Ring – 95th
- Geoff Sperling – 96th

Joiners of the Association number 7 since the AGM last year

83 rd Entry	Richard	Dawson
82 nd	Gordon	Wharrie
71 st	Geoff	Bailey
84 th	Keith	Runacres
93 rd	John	Ingham
219 th	Bob	Grant
93 rd	Jim	Powell

Entry profiles Brief:

- *97th Entry has an active number of 23 members (23 last year) and they were the biggest group of joiners a couple of years ago.*
- *87th Entry has an active group of 27 members (27 last year)*
- *And clearly again the SENIOR Entry in many ways is the 76th Entry with a steady total of 31 active members (31 active members last year).*

ITEM 4.2 ADVERTISING

The Association continues to advertise in the Royal Air Forces Association magazine. Also use of Facebook and Forces Reunited to spread the word about Locking Apprentices and the Association.

A recent addition is STREETLIFE which is a British social network for local communities. Weston is amongst the groups for this social networking route.

I will continue to use such routes and seek out new ways and routes to help keep the association alive. Please also help by taking every opportunity to enlist ex apprentices wherever they turn up.

ITEM 4.3 NEWSLETTER

The newsletter - mainly available by download from the RAFLAA website and this remains the most cost effective way for the Association to deliver this to our members. Hard copy is available upon request but please bear in mind that this is a rather more expensive way for the association to provide and I ask you to download where possible please.

Distribution routes and volumes

- *I sent out 302 (295 last year) email notifications notifying members that a new edition of the newsletter is available. A slight improvement since last year however, I still have a number that bounce back.*
- *Physical Distribution of Hard Copies is undertaken by fellow apprentice Graham Beeston, a big thank you to Graham for such a good job in producing and distributing these for the Association. A total of 42 copies (46 last year):*
- *32 Copies (31 previous year) to UK Addresses + 2 copies to overseas addresses*
- *6 copies (7 last year) to families of members who have passed away, mainly Widows*
- *2 Copies to fellow organisations.*

ITEM 4.4 LIFE MEMBERSHIP AND STANDING ORDERS

Life Membership numbers has reduced to a total of 70 (71 last year), due to the loss of 1 life member and there were no new Life Membership applications during the past 12 months.

Payment by standing order is by far the best way to pay annual membership fees and the most cost effective for the Association. Please consider converting to this method of annual membership payment if you don't already do this.

ITEM 4.5 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES SINCE THE LAST AGM ON 26TH APRIL 2014 UP TO 25TH APRIL 2015

We are currently running at 376 active members on the database.

ITEM 4.6 REMINDER. CHANGES OF PERSONAL DETAILS

Please keep me updated with any changes to your personal details especially for receipt of Newsletter notifications via email and delivery of any correspondence to your home address.

This concludes my report for Membership Matters.

ITEM 5 SECRETARY'S REPORT

This is my first year as Secretary to the Association. I have attended 3 Committee meetings at Flowerdown House. Coming all the way from Norwich and completing the return journey in one day may seem no mean feat. However, I have to say that such would not have been possible but for my being able to break my journey at the home of the Chairman and then be chauffeured from and to Woburn Sands by Tiny and accompanied by Jim. A truly economical use of funds and much comfort for myself.

In taking over from Chris I must acknowledge the help he has given to me – the requirements of Secretary to not come naturally to me and I have been guilty of much plagiarism of Chris's previous works.

Apart from preparing the Agenda for and subsequent Minutes of the Committee Meetings I fulfill the role of 'welcoming agent' for new members and providing ties, when requested, and advice to the new member of which members of his Entry have also joined the Association.

When the Association is advised of the demise of a Member it falls to me to write and express condolence on behalf of the Association. On such occasions I also offer the relative or friend the opportunity for them to seek help. It is opportune at this time to remind the relative or friend that they and not only the deceased are members of a "family" and as such that they can receive help or advice from a number of sources but especially from The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund and the Royal Air Forces Association.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the committee, who do such a conscientious job of keeping the Association together.

ITEM 6 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following stood for re-election at the end of their term:

Each agreed to stand and there being no others volunteering they were re-elected unopposed.

Peter Crowe, Web Master, expressed a wish that there should be a deputy for the position of web master. He wished to emphasise that he was not ailing but such was the importance today of ensuring that the web was maintained that even mild incapacity could otherwise bring the central core of information communication to a halt with the inevitable crippling cost of snail-mail communication.

ITEM 7 CHANGE TO THE CONSTITUTION

Changes to the Constitution had been agreed at the 20th AGM in April 2014 subject to their being no dissent from the Membership who had not been able to be present. The changes had been publicised on the RAFLAA Website and comments had been sought. Chairman had received 4 responses each of which had been positive. The vote for acceptance was then put back to the floor and was passed unanimously.

ITEM 8 COMMEMORATIVE MONUMENT AT LOCKING-PARKLANDS

Rick Atkinson (Service Rep) introduced the subject and reported on developments so far. A presentation of the plan to date was given and it was agreed the detail should be brought to the attention of the Membership through the RAFLAA Website. In brief therefore the original design had been refined and a ball park estimate of the overall cost had been calculated. The amount of around £20k was considered reasonable except that to raise such an amount could prove difficult. A revision to a 5 Metre circle would reduce the cost considerable but not so much as to halve the estimate. One of the problems was coordinating meeting with the various parties involved in the Locking Parkland Development. Time was running out as the development of Parkland was nearing completion. This aspect was important as the funding had to be found, if necessary totally from RAFLAA funds. These funds were not sufficient and in any case, apart from a residue from the previous agreed grant therefrom towards the Memorial at The National Arboretum, funds would have to be raised either from donations from outside commercial enterprises including the developers or from the Membership. More faith was put in the likelihood of members' contribution.

The President asked the floor for a show of hands as to how many would consider a donation of £50. 30 members gave support for such a sum.

The question was asked 'whether any such gift could be enhanced by being made on the basis of "Gift Aid" but this was quashed on the grounds that Gift Aid was only available for donations to a charity and the Association was not one such. Charitable status had been considered on previous occasions but had been ruled out because of the complexities of, among other factors, the problems of accountability when dealing the Charity Commission.

It was agreed that a way forward was to invite Members to make pledges and that the sum pledged would be called upon when agreement was reached on the final plan for the Commemorative Monument and the costs were known.

Maintenance of the site and the possibility of theft were discussed. Overall maintenance of Locking Parkland is the subject of a charge on all households and it was anticipated that the maintenance could be negotiated into this charge on the residents. Theft was considered unlikely. There is no use of valuable metals such as bronze and the plaque which would depict the original layout of RAF Locking was to be engraved on stainless steel and secured to the plinth. It was noted that a similar style for a plaque at the former RAF Yatesbury had been in situ for a number of years and had not been stolen or tampered with.

Consideration would be given to seeking after local support for the propose development and further discussion of this would be a matter initially for the Committee.

Publication on the website of a request for Members to "pledge" was proposed by Chris Bryan and supported by Peter Crowe.

ITEM 9 CHARITABLE DONATIONS

It has been the custom for the Association to make a charitable grant each year of £100. in memory of those who had died during the year. This year Members suggested 2 worthy charities: namely Parkinson Charity Trust and Prostate Cancer UK. It was felt that splitting the sum not ideal and a 'show of hands' in favour of one or the other resulted in 5 in favour of Parkinson's UK and 39 in favour of Prostate Cancer UK. It was agreed therefore that the donation this year should be to the latter.

ITEM 10 FABEA

The Chairman had attended the most recent meeting of FABEA which had been held on 15th July 2014. The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 7th July 2015 and would be hosted by RAFLAA. FABEA was now reduced to 4Associations to wit: Locking Apprentice; Halton Apprentice; Administrative Apprentice; Boy Entrance. The chairman reminded Members that the Association in addition to the nominal cost of hosting this annual meeting for which there would be a nominal cost the cost of provision of the Wreath at the Cenotaph would also fall to the association. In response to the question of cost Chairman replied that based on previous years and allowing for inflation the cost was likely to be about £18.

The subject of the Memorial Window which is suffering from the lettering requiring 'maintenance' Chairman indicated that the lady who designed and constructed the window had indicated that the repair would be absorbed by herself.

ITEM 11 NEWSLETTER.

Colin Ingram provided the following update: -

I have been well supported by the number of articles sent in for inclusion in the N/L, there can, of course, never be too many stories in and they are all welcome however long or short.

I consider the aims of the RAFLAA Newsletter should be to provide a platform for distribution of Association News, to provide some thought provoking memories of our time at Locking and afterwards in general Service life and also to lighten up our days with a bit of humour, but in good taste – of course. So I hope we go a little way to achieving these aims therefore I have to thank all those that have provided all the above.

I also have to thank Graham for still having to produce the hard copy version of the Newsletter, Peter for publishing it on the web site and password protecting each copy and our stalwart secretary Jim for letting everyone know when the latest N/L is available

ITEM 11.1 ADVERTISING

Over the last few editions I have added a page of Advertisements which I consider appropriate to the Association my aim is to keep it to a single page, so if anyone wishes to add any suitable Ads. Please send them in.

ITEM 11.2 THEME FOR THE NEXT FEW NEWSLETTERS

Over the last couple of years our articles have provided stories from various postings around the World and I would like to continue the journey. I am sure there are more tales of adventure from Cyprus, Malta and other exotic postings but does NOT mean that articles should have to be exclusively from those areas but include anything that Members consider of interest to everyone.

ITEM 11.3 PAST NEWSLETTERS

At the last AGM a suggestion was made that we produce a CD of all the RAFLAA Newsletters, well it is now available, I have brought along a few sample copies for sale, all money raised will be going to the Association funds, if we sell out and more are required please add your name to the list and I will ensure you get a copy.

ITEM 12 WORDSMITH AWARD 2015

INTERESTING FACTS AND FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Out of the last 6 Newsletters:

- *Entries 60 – 69 produced 1 Entries 70 – 79 produced 20 articles*
- *Entries 80 – 89 produced 13 articles*
- *Entries 90 – 99 produced 6 articles*
- *Entries 200 – xxx produced 1 article*

Was this due to postings being less interesting as time went on or 'the junior entries' lack of writing skills or maybe the 'senior entries' have more to say for themselves?

The decision for Wordsmith 2015! Quantity or quality – that is not to say quantity does not include quality, but some of the contenders for the Wordsmith Award are:-

- *A very revealing article from our Chairman about Mooning in Cyprus or was it doing a Moonie*
- *Mike Keen's fascinating article about the Apollo flights – ex Apprentices get everywhere*
- *Mike Collier having trouble sewing on his J/T stripe – what ever happened to Housewives!*

- *Alex Gumbrecht's hilarious tale of the March Past – I have an image of the Flight going one way and the Flight Commander going the other, truly a Dad's Army scenario.*
- *Peter Kay – Service Number article – and I thought they just stuck any old letter on the front, very impressed with the maths and the research*
- *Brian Davies – two articles with alcohol related themes – I am sorry Brian but there did seem a common link.*
- *Bruce Graham – TSR2 & Vulcans – aircraft that go down in history.*

So my Award for 2015 goes to: Alex Gumbrecht for that hilarious March Past”

ITEM 12 RAFLAA WEB SITE.

Peter Crowe, as Web-Master, made a plea for a deputy. He emphasised that he was not about to quit the job and allayed fears of any reason for so doing. He was, he said, being pragmatic. The web was too important a means of communication and a return to snail mail would result in significant costs to the Association. He wanted someone to be able to monitor and understand the format of the website so that there was always someone on hand who could communicate through this medium with the membership in his absence. Barry Dinnage (87th) volunteered to act as shadow and would liaise directly with Peter.

ITEM 13 VENUE AND FORMAT OF AGM/REUNION 2016

The Membership had been invited to give their opinion as to where future AGMs might be held. Chairman had previously looked at 2 locations away from Weston-super-Mare (WsM), namely Peterborough and Derby. These 2 were regarded as more central and therefore more likely to be accessible to those far removed from WsM especially as distance, cost and age mitigated against long journeys.

Chairman reported that the result of the on-line poll was as below. The meeting was then invited, by a show of hands, to indicate their preference.

Weston (not necessarily The Webbington) - web response	24	meeting	16
Peterborough	14		1
Derby	12		0
Anywhere	11		0

(A total of 61 responses via the web but a clear majority in favour of remaining in Weston overall when both responses are taken into account).

The question then arose as to where in Weston area the 2016 and future AGMs might be held. On the basis of a show of hands there was a preference for remaining at The Webbington against 'elsewhere in Weston' of 16:13.

Rick had been to The Royal in WsM and reported that under the previous management there had been problems but his more recent experience had been good. There were questions about the ability of The Royal to cope with 100+ especially as it was known that under the previous management the kitchen had had to 'outsource' some of the cooking which it was alleged had attributed to some courses not being served hot. Had the situation been resolved, had the kitchens been upgraded? Another negative aspect was the fact that the number of rooms available was only 45 and this would result in later registrations having to be housed elsewhere. Whilst in WsM this was not a problem given the amount of accommodation in the town there was some disquiet insomuch that Members liked to be together and would have no wish to traipse to another location at the end of the evening.

It was noted that there were advantages of being within WsM as there was sufficient other facilities within the town was wives during the actual AGM and therefore there might not be a need to arrange a coach trip, a facility which is generally subsidised by the Association.

Tony Horry undertook to review what other hotels were available.

The President recommended that detail of such other hotels should be made available on the website with a related questionnaire with a 3-moth cut-off.

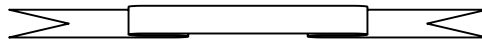
Rick undertook to draw-up the criteria for the selection of an hotel.

ITEM 14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (TO INCLUDE GOLDEN ENTRIES 101ST, 102ND AND 103RD)

There remained only the matter of the date and location for the next AGM. The date was fixed for Saturday 23rd April 2016. The location to be The Webbington subject to satisfactory negotiation with the Management. Before formal closure of the meeting there was time for the presentation from The Golden Entries but in the event a presentation was given by Glyn Price on behalf of the 102nd.

The meeting closed at 16:00.

Nigel Lodge
Secretary. 21st May 2015



CLOSING THOUGHTS

DON'T MEDDLE WITH DESTINY

In June 1959, I almost became a catalyst with the potential to cause a reduction in the world's population. A month or so earlier, I had started a one year unaccompanied tour at Hickham A.F.B. in the Hawaiian Islands. Very, very unhappy, having been parted from my wife, one week after we married.

The late Brian Barrett (ex-78th) was already there, I was his replacement. In early June he was told he was "tour-ex". Brian had no special reason to go home and suggested that he would be quite happy to endure the hardship of another eleven months there. Five minutes work every other day, the rest of the time free to do whatever you wished, in wall to wall sunshine. No station duties, one parade a year, with excellent food and medical facilities courtesy of the U.S.A.F. He would volunteer to stay and I could go home in his place.

We put the proposal to the Engineer Officer. He could envisage no problem and passed us on to the Sqdn. Ldr. i/c the detachment. His only concern was that he had a resident Air Radio Fitter. Who it was, not important, so he forwarded the request up the chain of command to the U.K.

Meanwhile, I was absolutely delighted with the idea. I wrote to my wife and started to get organized, buying gifts to take home etc... A couple of weeks later a signal arrived from Records, rejecting the request. Brian had to go and I must stay. I was bitterly disappointed and had to break the bad news to my wife, who had also cancelled projects she had planned.

In retrospect, whoever made the negative decision, did me a great favour. When Brian was repatriated, he was posted to Wittering on "V" Bombers and hated it. I would certainly have had an identical reaction. Eleven months later when I returned, I got a delightful posting to Linton-on-Ouse.

So, how could this possibly have had an effect on the population of the world? At Wittering, Brian met and married his wife Margaret. Subsequently, they produced nine children. If I had returned, instead of Brian and gone to Wittering that might never have happened!

Mike Collier

RAFLAA COMMITTEE

Appointment	Name	Address	Tel/email	Re-Election	Entry
President	Martin Palmer				91 st
Chairman	"Tiny" Kühle	22 Tavistock Close Woburn Sands Milton Keynes Bucks MK17 8UY	(01908) 583784 Hans.Kuhle@btopenworld.com	Apr 2016	87 th
Secretary	Nigel Lodge	9 Broadmead Green Thorpe End Norwich Norfolk NR13 5DE	(01603) 700 505 Nigel.lodge@btinternet.com	April 2017	91 st
Treasurer	Tony Horry	Hillside Cottage Kewstoke Road Kewstoke WSM BS22 9YD	(01934) 628383 Tony.horry@gmail.com	Apr 2016	76 th
Membership Secretary	Jim Doran	11 Saxonlea Close Rushden Northants NN10 6BF	(01933) 317357 Jimdoran12@hotmail.com	Apr 2017	219 th
Service Rep	Rick Atkinson	Gateway Cottage 1 Lake Walk Adderbury Oxfordshire OX17 3PF	(01295) 812972 rickatkinson@me.com	Sept 2015	91 st
AA Rep/ Webmaster	Peter Crowe	14 Hillview Road WSM N. Somerset BS23 3HS	(01934) 412178 webmaster@raflaa.org.uk	Sept 2015	95 th
Craft Rep	Graham Beeston	87 Hornbeam Rd Havant PO9 2UT	Home (02392) 346242 Work 07920038690 graham@mapleoak.co.uk	Sept 2015	209 th
Tech Rep	Andy Perkins	107 Balmoral Way Worle WSM BS22 9BZ	(01934) 417323 am.perkins@virgin.net	Sept 2015	109 th
Newsletter Editor	Colin Ingram	Fairhaven Gooseham Morwenstow Bude Cornwall EX23 9PG	01288 331363 colin.ingram90@gmail.com	Apr 2015	88 th

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RAFLAA Memorabilia

RAFLAA Ties £7.50

Apprentice Wheel £2.00

Label Badges £2.00

Replacement Name Badges £2.75 (free to new members)

Coasters £2.00

P&P extra

tony.horry@gmail.com



The Apprentice Prayer

Teach us good Lord, to be thankful
For all the good times we had,
The skills we have learned,
The friendships we have shared
And the companionship we have enjoyed.
May all who have served the Apprenticeship of the Wheel
Be ever mindful of the needs of one another.