



# LAA NEWSLETTER

Serial 29

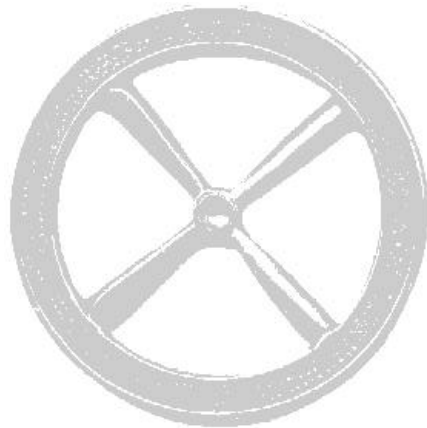
April 2001

## HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

- **COMMITTEE MEETING — JANUARY 2001**
- **APPRENTICE RECORDS**
- **OBITUARIES**
- **CONTACTS — COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

### Inside this issue:

COMMITTEE MEETING JANUARY 2001	2
OBITUARIES:- GEORGE BURVILLE & 'RIPP' RIPPON	7
WISH I WAS NOT THERE	11
PENSION ACTION GROUP —	12
HUMOUR — BOB PEARCE (100TH)	13
COMMITTEE	15
THE NEWS	17
THE APPRENTICE PRAYER	18



### 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.

Amen

## COMMITTEE MEETING — 20TH JANUARY 2001

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman opened the meeting with an apology from Joe Holroyd, who is currently on holiday. The Chairman welcomed John Farmer who is substituting as Membership Secretary until his appointment can be ratified by the membership at the next AGM.

The Chairman asked the meeting to record a vote of thanks, on behalf of the Association, to Mike West for his dedication over his period of office.

## THE LATE GEORGE BURVILLE

The Chairman told the committee that he had tried to contact Mrs Burville and left a message on the answer phone expressing the association's condolences. The Chairman has had no response to this contact and on the advice of one of George's colleagues he did not pursue the matter.

The secretary undertook to contact Colin Bell of the 90<sup>th</sup> Entry to see what arrangement they would be making and ask for some words to be written that can be read at the AGM. The Secretary was given an action to write to Mrs Burville on behalf of the association and also to inform the other associations about the loss of George.

## WEB SITE

Some discussion then took place on the possible future of any Web-site. It was felt that if a suitable Web Site manager was forthcoming from the membership we may wish to set up our own site. The Secretary undertook to sound out the views of FABEA and other associations and this was left as a possible item to be raised at the AGM.

## CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

The Treasurer was requested to produce a balance sheet for the accounts and the Chairman proposed that the sum of £50 be voted as the fee for auditing the accounts of the association. This was proposed by Charles Hart and seconded by the Secretary. The proposal was approved by the committee.

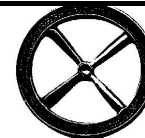
The Chairman and the committee agreed that the AGM arrangements and funding should stand as previously voted at 21<sup>st</sup> Committee Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> Jan 2000, but with the date being altered to March 31st 2001.

After discussion, the Committee decided that the AGM for 2001 would be held around Spring 2002

The Chairman proposed that the sum of £15 was voted to Kewstoke Village Hall in respect of usage of the facility. The Committee agreed to this.

*(Continued on page 3)*

THE



NEWS

THE ROYAL INTERNATIONAL AIR TATTOO (RIAT) 2001

RIAT 2001 will be held at RAF Cottesmore, Rutland during the weekend of 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> July. The event has already generated significant interest from the World's Air Arms who will come together to celebrate RIAT's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with an aviation extravaganza, paying special attention to our supporting themes of "Training 2001" and "Women in Aviation". Whilst it is too early to specify exactly which aircraft will attend, within the expected 350 aircraft will be highlights such as:

- A Tribute to 50 years of the Hawker Hunter
- The first ever appearance in the West by a Romanian Air Force IL-28
- A Pair of MIG-21 Lancers

Benefits open to FRIAT members include:

- Free entry to both Park & View areas from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> July and on 30<sup>th</sup> July.
- A dedicated FRIAT Enclosure Grandstand during the period 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> July.
- Privileged and exclusive access to the majority of the static aircraft park on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> July without any other member of the public being present.

Last year saw a great deal of negative

speculation, particularly on web-sites, about whether RIAT 2000 would be a success at its temporary venue of RAF Cottesmore. As you may have seen in the excellent media coverage of the event, it was widely regarded as a highly successful RIAT — despite the inclement weather. We are all, therefore, looking forward to a return to RAF Cottesmore for one more year before the runway at RAF Fairford returns to operational service in 2002.

Whatever your interest in aviation, I am sure that you will find something rare and fascinating at RIAT 2001, so please come and join us and share in the fun and excitement.

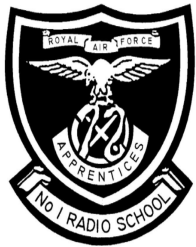
Should you have any queries with regard to membership that is not covered within the enclosed brochure, do not hesitate to contact Marion Warsop (Deputy Manager — FRIAT Admin) on +44 (0) 1285 713456 (Monday to Friday, 0900 to 1700 hours). Alternatively e-mail your query using the address detailed below.

Christina Iddon Customer Services Manager & FRIAT Co-ordinator

P0 Box 1940, Fairford, Gloucestershire,  
GL7 4NA. UK  
Teleph one: +44 (0)1285713456 Fax: +44 (0)  
1285 713999

e-mail: [triat@rafbf.co.uk](mailto:triat@rafbf.co.uk)

## ENTRY BADGES



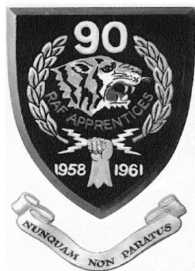
72nd Entry



78th Entry



88th Entry



90th Entry



204th Entry

## COMMITTEE MEETING — 20TH JANUARY 2001

*(Continued from page 2)*

## TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer's report was presented to the committee and a copy of the report is included at Enclosure 3a/b of these minutes.

## NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter editor said that the proposed edition was complete but that he could not get a local printer to do it as they all considered the job too small. The Chairman undertook to see this edition through and the printing master was passed to him for action. It was proposed by the Secretary and seconded by Charles Hart that a sum not to exceed £500 be voted to allow the production of this issue to proceed without delay. The committee approved this measure.

Chairman's Post Meeting Note – The printing has been achieved at the cost of the paper and a box of chocolates for the lady involved.

## RAFLAA TROPHY PRESENTATION

The presentation of the trophy to the 1999 nominee, Flt Lt Martin Gellini, was made at RAF Fylingdales by Air Commodore David Vass on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2000. The Chairman advised that he had written to RAF Cosford, in November, requesting a nominee for the 2000 Trophy. How-

ever, no nomination had been received to date and the Chairman agreed to progress the matter with the Station.

Charles Hart proposed that the sum of £50 in the way of the award and reasonable expenses (total not to exceed £100) should be voted in support of the trophy presentation. This was agreed by the Committee.

## APPRENTICE RECORDS

In response to a letter received by Charles Hart, from a David Penberthy of the 71<sup>st</sup> Entry, the situation regarding those records currently being looked after by the association was reiterated.

Three filing cabinets containing AA records are being stored at Henlow, and two boxes of unidentified photos are held by the Secretary at Gloucester. The photos will be brought to the AGM, where they will be available for inspection by members. The secretary will write to Mr Goode at MoD to seek clarification that the terms under the PRA as set out in letters March 1999 were agreed, as the association has not received any further communication from him. The Secretary will then write to Mr Penberthy with the results and suggestions for the way forward.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## COMMITTEE MEETING — 20TH JANUARY 2001

*(Continued from page 3)***ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Charles Hart informed the meeting that a Mr David Gumby had contacted him with a request for financial support in taking legal action against the MoD, in respect of the possible loss of pension rights.

The meeting decided that this was up to individual members to take up and agreed that the contact address details and the known facts about the situation should be made available to members, via the news letter.

Tony Horry agreed to pass the newsletter editor the details he already had so that they could be published

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

The new Membership Secretary expressed his thanks to Mike West for his help and to the Committee for offering him the chance to serve the association. The report that was presented is included as Enclosure 2 of these minutes.

This is my first report as Membership Secretary of the RAF Locking Apprentices Association. Before making my report I must thank Mike West for his assistance in the hand-over/takeover of the post; for the plethora of information, (the scale of which is truly awe inspiring) and for tailoring 'the system' to make the job

easy. One of these days I may actually understand how it works!

I must also thank the committee for offering me the opportunity to serve the Association.

The format of this report may be slightly different to those submitted by my predecessor but will hopefully carry the required information.

Membership of the Association continues to increase. There have been 12 new members joined and 1 rejoin since the Committee last met. I am not aware of any (formal) resignations. There has been 1 death. Active membership stands at 396.

Ex members (non paid up) number some 143. Of these 28 are being actively pursued with reminders. The others who have been sent reminders in the past but have not responded. These will be targeted again in the near future.

The Web site still continues to generate enquires. How long this will continue is uncertain. There are over 50 entries on the enquiries database of which only 10 may really be called active. (The rest are more than 4 months old with no reaction to our initial response procedure). It is my intention to re-target these.

There has been no new advertising since I took over as Membership Secretary. I shall rectify this as soon as I

*(Continued on page 5)*

## RAFLAA COMMITTEE

Appointment	Name	Address	Tel	Entry
President	Martin Palmer			91 <sup>st</sup>
Chairman	Bert Davies	20 Lakefield Ave Little Paxton St Neots Cambs PE19 4NZ	01480 217243 bertdavies @netscapeonline.co.uk	79 <sup>th</sup>
Secretary	Glyn Price	"Sentosa" 9, Blake Hill Way, Abbey Mead, Glos. GL4 4QR	01452 615265 glyprice@cituffley.demon. co	102 <sup>nd</sup>
Treasurer	Tony Horry	Hillside Cottage Kewstoke Road Kewstoke Weston Super Mare BS22 9YD	01934 628383 Horrycorp@aol.com	76 <sup>th</sup>
Membership Sec	John Farmer			77 <sup>th</sup>
Service Rep	Joe Holroyd	Well Cottage 36, High Street Guilden Morden Royston SG8 0JR	joe_holroyd@sercohenlow. com	85 <sup>th</sup>
General Rep	Peter Crowe	14, Hillview Road Weston Super Mare BS23 3HS	01934 412178 crowe_peter@hotmail.com	95 <sup>th</sup>
Craft Rep	Graham Beeston	87, Hornbeam Road, Havant PO9 2UT	01705 346242 Graham.Beeston@nats.co.uk	209 <sup>th</sup>
Tech Rep	Andy Perkins	107, Balmoral Way Worle, Weston Super Mare BS22 9BZ	01934 417323	109 <sup>th</sup>
AA Rep	Charles Hart	9, South Road, Weston Super Mare BS23 2HA	01934 621969	71 <sup>st</sup>
Newsletter Ed	Colin Ingram	Poundfield Stamford Hill Stratton, Bude Cornwall EX23 9AZ	01288 353840 CWIngram@aol.com	88 <sup>th</sup>

## HUMOUR

*(Continued from page 13)*

Flight Commander hates me and my wife hates me.

- When I see the 9 it reminds me of the number meals out in a month required to make a F7005 claim.
- When I see the 10 I think off the number of aircraft we SHOULD have put the RADAR in.
- When I see the Jack I think of the Ground Equipment keeping the Nimrod airborne.
- When I see the Queen I think of the Queen of the skies ..... AWACS.
- When I see the King I think of King William, the monarch who will be on the throne when the AEW comes into service.
- There are 2 Jokers in each pack, and they remind me of GEC for saying they could design the Kit and the AFD for believing them.
- There are 4 suits in a pack, the number I have worn out whilst being here.
- In each pack there are 52 cards, the number of weeks slippage in each year.
- When you count the number of spots on the cards you will find they total 365, the number of days it takes for a F1771 to go through.

- (on investigation it was found that the number of spots varied from pack to pack.

- CSDE Base Flight have been tasked to investigate this discrepancy).

“So you see sir, my pack of cards serve me as an AP, a dash 10 and as a means of amusing myself at progress meetings.”

The Flight Commander said, “I have never heard of such a sad story” (or words to that effect). “Tell me, what do you think of the project as a whole?”

“Well Sir, said the Sergeant, “As a hole it should be filled in.”

And finally Sir, the CSDE Base Flight report has just been received about the discrepancies, that states:- “that on the samples tested, the spot count varied by plus and minus 10 per cent around the DEF STAN requirement for spots on playing cards.

Personnel finding that they have packs that are discrepant are to arise a F760 (serious defect report) and arrange for the station quota for spots adjusted so that the specification equates to the packs of cards on inventory.

An investigation is being carried out to find the source of the ‘365’ spot packs.

## COMMITTEE MEETING — 20TH JANUARY 2001

*(Continued from page 4)*

get to grips with the procedures and make the necessary personal contacts with advertisers and other organisations.

John. L. Farmer  
Membership Secretary  
19 January 2001

### TREASURERS REPORT

As we approach the end of the Financial Year (31st January 2001) the balance of our accounts stand at £7,594.51 from figures shown on the latest bank statements. This will be subject to some small adjustments.

During the period since June, we have received payment for total of 194 renewals - (including one who has paid for next year as well) and have received 13 applications for membership.

Of the £962.50 income for the postponed AGM Dinner, which has been refunded, one cheque for £35 has not been cleared. (John Trussler).

Because of the number of cheques issued in a short period we did, unusually, incur bank charges of £7.80.

There is also a cheque for £7.50 which is a refund for a Standing Order which was paid twice which has not been cleared. (AGP Mooney)

Our greatest expenses are printing, postage and travel to/from Committee

meetings.

The state of our finances is very healthy and again I see no reason to recommend any increase in the subscriptions at the AGM

Tony Horry -Treasurer  
20th Jan 2001

### LAA MEMBERSHIP BY REGIONS

Traditionally Britain is split up into 12 geographic zones or regions:

- South West England:- Avon (South), Cornwall, Devon and Somerset
- Southern England:- Dorset, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Wiltshire
- South East England:- Kent, Surrey and Sussex
- South Midlands:- Avon (north), Gloucestershire, Hereford, Worcester, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and part of West Midlands.
- Home Counties:- Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire and Greater London,
- Eastern Counties:- Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk,
- Wales:- Clwyd, Dyfed, Glamorgan, Gwent, Gwynedd and Powys,
- North Midlands:- Derbyshire,

*(Continued on page 6)*

## COMMITTEE MEETING — 20TH JANUARY 2001

*(Continued from page 5)*

- Humberside (south), Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Salop, Staffordshire and part of West Midlands,
- North West England:- Isle of Man, Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside,
- North East England:- Cleveland, Humberside (north), Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and Yorkshire,
- Scottish Lowlands:- Borders, Central (south), Dumfries & Galloway, Fife, Lothian and Strathclyde,
- Scottish Highlands:- Central (north), Grampian, Highland, Tayside, and Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles.

Using the 1997 Membership Roll the number of LAA Members in each Region is:-

- South West England:- 56
- Southern England:- 29
- South East England:- 32
- South Midlands:- 32
- Home Counties:- 75
- Eastern Counties:- 38
- Wales:- 8
- North Midlands:- 18
- North West England:- 15
- North East England:- 16
- 11 & 12. Scotland:- 12
- Overseas:- 25

### POSSIBLE VENUES FOR AGMS

- **Weston Super Mare:**  
Convenient for regions  
1,2, 3, 4, 5, 7 & 8 — 260 members
- **Henlow:**  
Convenient for regions  
1,2,3,4,5,6 & 8 — 280 members
- **Cosford:**  
Convenient for regions  
1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9 & 10 — 287 members

### AGM VENUES ?

**WESTON SUPER MARE**

**HENLOW**

**COSFORD**

## HUMOUR

Bob Pearce (100<sup>th</sup>)

### DECK OF CARDS

Though not specifically an apprentice story, as part of my time in the service based on good Locking training I acquired computer hardware and software skills from flight simulator maintenance training and was sent to CSDE in 1977, based at GEC Marconi in Radlett on the Nimrod AEW project team. As I left in 1983 this little note was doing the rounds and I thought it may be of interest to publish in the magazine.

One day a progress meeting was held at CDSE at Hemel Hempstead and a young Sergeant was tasked to take the minutes.

While everyone was saying “nothing to report” the young Sergeant was seen to be playing with a deck of cards.

Later the young Sergeant was brought before his Flight Commander accused of playing cards at the meeting.

The Flight Commander asked “Why were you playing cards at the meeting Sergeant?”

To which the Sergeant replied, “Sir, this office can explain why the cards were on the table.”

“I hope so,” said the boss, “for if not I will extend your posting longer than any other posting has been ex-

tended.”

With that the Sergeant began his story.

“Sir, I have been on the AEW Nimrod team six years now, and I have neither AP, nor dash 10, so when I spread the cards on the table:

- The Ace reminds me that there is but one AEW aircraft at RAF Waddington.
- The 2 reminds me of the promised quantity arriving there later this year.
- When I see the 3 it reminds me of the Holy Trinity:- OC APS, OC RF and OC SF.
- When I see the 4 it reminds me of the number of seats in the Galley of the AEW Nimrod.
- When I see the 5 it reminds me of the number of aircrew fighting to get in them.
- When I see the 6 it reminds me of the six operators all dressed up with nowhere to go.
- When I see the 7 it reminds me of the minimum assessments required for CSDE employment.
- When I see the 8 it reminds me of the three Eights I got last year:-
- The Squadron Leader hates me, the

*(Continued on page 14)*

## H M ARMED FORCES PENSION ACTION GROUP

Many of you have already made enquiries with this firm in relation to the legal action which has been launched by the Action Group against the Government for lost pensions which accrued while you were in the Armed Forces between 1949 and 1975.

The Government has sought to have our Action dismissed by way of Preliminary Hearing. Last week, we succeeded in convincing the Chairman of the Bristol Employment Tribunal that this Preliminary Hearing should be converted into an Interlocutory Hearing for Directions only, whereat a timetable would be set for **various stages to be completed** within the context of the litigation. Now that a timetable has been set, this matter will progress with greater alacrity.

We need your support. If you have been "on the fence" as to whether or not to join, we urge you to join now in order that this Action may be funded to its completion. As all of you are well aware from your backgrounds in the Armed Forces, there is strength in numbers. The greater the number of people who join, the lesser the financial burden will be for each individual member.

Thus far, fully paid up members of the Action Group have contributed £185. Please send a cheque made payable in this amount to Richmonds Solicitors and Marion Frost, our

Membership Co-ordinator. will add your details to our database. Once we have received your cheque, we will send copies of our recent reporting letters which have been sent to the Action Group, together with a copy of our client care letter setting out how we charge our fees, as well as a copy of the Action Group's Constitution.

Many of you may be wondering whether or not you will stand to benefit from a favourable decision, even if you have not joined the Action Group. We cannot emphasise too strongly the fact that if a decision or settlement is reached which is favourable to the Action Group, the Government will be bound to pay out only to those members who are party to the proceedings. Anyone who is not party to the proceedings will not stand to realise any financial gain.



The letter is a summary of correspondence to one of the LAA Committee Members and has been included for information only.

Inclusion in the Newsletter does not in any way reflect the opinion or recommendation of the LAA Committee.

Ed.

## OBITUARY

### GEORGE BURVILLE

George was born 1942 eldest of 4 children (Brother-Sister-Brother)

In September 1958 he joined the 90th entry RAF Locking and subsequently passed out in August 1961.

George served his 12 years, married, became the father of three daughters, one son, and suffered a heart attack 1985/1986

Met and married his second wife Gladys

George 'was found' by the 90th Aircraft Apprentice Association and attended the 1991 reunion with Gladys, not long after suffered a serious stroke that left him partially paralysed.

Started rebuilding his life and in 1993 attended a 90th AAA gathering at Pooley Bridge in the Lake District.

At the 90th AAA reunion in 1994 where (as with most gatherings of apprentices) the discussion turned to locating missing 90th colleagues. At this reunion he was elected to the 90 AAA committee. George started a discussion about a 90th web site.

The middle of 1995 saw the first pages on-line and suitable testing and (what became a permanent task for George) redesign took place.

George soon found that although the site was being visited the intended aim of locating ex-90th was not happening.

He was finding the rest of the Royal Air Force, or so it seemed.

He considered himself to be a lucky person in that he belonged to a large entry that has a core of people who regularly met up. He felt that there were many disadvantaged ex-apprentices/boy entrants who would like to meet up with former colleagues but didn't know where to start.

Having been an early member (I'm not sure if he was a founder member, the only thing I am certain of is he didn't attend the very first Locking Apprentice meeting) it became clear that he was going to be able to provide a service to the rest of the boy service community and he set out to expand his web site.

At a 90th gathering in 1996 he bought along his redesigned web site for comment and shortly afterwards it was put on line. We know what has happened since.

He had numerous books on the Apprentices and was always on the look out for any mention of them in print.

George was a family man. His personal family came first (he has missed both 90th and LAA meetings because of family commitments) but he considered the boy service had given him a second family.

He believed in communication, not

*(Continued on page 8)*

## OBITUARY

*(Continued from page 7)*

many houses have 6 different telephone numbers. He phoned regularly and welcomed calls from friends.

A phone call to George was not something that was undertaken lightly. Invariably they took over an hour, by the time his and the callers family had been discussed there would then be a lengthy discussion on the latest RAF news. One also learnt if George called and a pressing event was likely to come up in the next couple of hours to stop him early and the call back when a long conversation could take place. He never took offence at being shut off but did not think too much of people who didn't phone back when they said they would.

He was a very practical person and would willingly spend a lot of time on the phone driving less computer literate people through the intricacies of resolving computer problems.

George died 24th December 2000 in San Diego California at the home of his sister Maureen, he was buried on the 11th January 2001 at Galston cemetery (at the back of the house George and Gladys lived in).

Leaves: Wife Gladys, three daughters and a son, ten grandchildren, two brothers and one sister, various uncles/aunts, nieces/nephews and an emptier world.

### FLT LT T A RIPPON DFC RAF (RETD)

**F**lt Lt T A Rippon DFC RAF (Retd) died on Sunday 26 November 2000 aged 84years. His funeral took place at Kettering Crematorium on 4th December. A guard comprising ten members of his entry, the 72<sup>nd</sup>, was mounted to honour the body under the command of Dennis Ward, their first drill instructor. The command 'Entry-Attention' was heard for the first time in over 48 years. During the reception held afterwards at the Red Lion, Sibbertoft, Mike Clements, the 72<sup>nd</sup> FS Apprentice, gave thanks for 'Ripp' s' life on behalf of all present and offered condolences to his widow Anne.

'Ripp' Rippon was well known to all apprentices at Locking in the early 50s. A charismatic man of impressive stature, he was the quintessential RAF Officer embodying all the qualities expected of a hero of his time. Outstandingly smart he sported the essential moustache beloved of aircrew in those days and was seldom seen out of No 1 uniform. His aircrew brevet surmounting 2 rows of medals, headed by his DFC, over his 'Pathfinders' wings only hinted at his three tours covering more than 90 operational sorties over enemy territory. Sadly, 'Ripp' emerged from WWII not entirely unscathed, having survived 3 crash landings, which left his legs and knees vulnerable over the latter years. Despite this disability, it did not deter him from becoming an

## WISH I WAS NOT THERE

*(Continued from page 10)*

particular. It was not going to be a jolly time. At the end of it I suspect they hated "Regulars" even more, especially the "jumped up" ex-Apprentice variety. Our defence system was a Bren gun --- with an empty magazine. We were supposed to set up the gun so that it pointed at the inside of the exit door. Out of idle curiosity I did strip the Bren down during the weekend and discovered that a couple of rather vital parts appeared to be missing, so our lack of ammunition was of little consequence. If we had been attacked I assume we were to have laid behind it and shouted 'bang, bang' until someone with superior fire power (a water pistol perhaps) came to our aid. The futility of the exercise coupled with the barely concealed hostility of "my men" in a very confined space, made it an extremely unpleasant two days. Immediately followed of course by another long boring week. It was time to do something before the system drove me potty.

I remembered that Joe Craig (ex-75th) was at Bassingbourn when I had left and that he came from Coventry. I decided to contact him and see if he would be interested in an exchange posting. Much to my relief he jumped at the idea. I do not know if he took

my place in Tech Records but if he did he probably soon escaped. I believe he finished his Service as a Sqdn Ldr working with NATO. My delight knew no bounds when I walked out of the gates of Gaydon for the last time. After 5 awful months I was going "home" to Bassingbourn. I did not realise at the time that Records had another extremely traumatic surprise waiting for me in the not too distant future but that's another story.

'Green Satin ??  
'jumped up ex-Apprentices  
Bren Guns and  
water pistols'

If anyone else has any worst or best case stories they wish to share please send them in.

There are no prizes for the winners but it may cheer up a few people.

ED



## WISH I WAS NOT THERE

Mike Collier (70th)

It was in the Spring of 1957 that I discovered that promotion could be a good news/bad news thing. After a few months at my first unit post-Locking, I got my tapes. As often occurred, along with this event came a posting. I had really enjoyed my time at Bassingbourn. Apart from the unaccustomed freedom, the job was interesting and I was only 16 miles from my home. At just a little over 18 years old and having spent 95% of my time at Locking on 17/6 per week, my finances did not extend to motorised transport. However, as long as I had the energy to pedal my bicycle the requisite 32 miles I could also visit my then girl friend as often as I liked.

Now it was to be R.A.F. Gaydon, 60 or 70 miles from home no way I could cycle that far. (Nowadays, 44 years older, it would not be a problem) Maybe the "V" bombers there would be interesting?

One of my first and lasting memories of Gaydon was the living accommodation. It had the longest, straight corridor I have ever seen. However, it was the job I got there that was the real problem. I have no idea how these things were decided but I found myself in Tech Records in the Electronics Centre. My sole purpose in life was to "book in" large lumps of unserviceable Green Satin equipment (Gaydon was the MU. for the gear)

and 'book out' serviceable lumps of the same equipment to various places throughout the U.K. and abroad. At that time I had no idea what Green Satin did for a living, never mind how it worked. So after 3 years of intensive technical training, I had become a glorified clerk. It was sole destroying. My one piece of luck, was that Derek Smith from my entry, was posted with me to Gaydon. I have a great deal to thank him for, Derek came from Kettering, he also owned a van. Each Friday evening I would ride with him to Kettering, get a train to Bedford and a bus home, reversing the process on Sunday evenings. After a few months life became a boring, monotonous kaleidoscope of large lumps of Green Satin, paperwork and Kettering station. The couple of weekend days helped retain my sanity.

The crunch came when I was detailed for Armoury Guard. At that time various dissident groups were making a nuisance of themselves and there was a requirement for extra security. Armoury Guard was a two-day event, Saturday and Sunday. As with all Service duties, no time off for good behaviour. On arriving at the Armoury, I found myself "lumbered" with two very 'bitter, almost time expired, National Service S.A.C.'s. My men for the weekend! These two not only did not want to be there but they hated the R.A.F. in general and "Regulars" in

*(Continued on page 11)*

## OBITUARY

expert SCUBA diver during his later years.

'Ripp's' early career in the Service naturally followed in Father's footsteps. WO Rippon senior was SWO at Halton in the mid-30s and it was shortly after this that 'Ripp' joined. He was swift to volunteer for aircrew as a young airman and was always proud to relate that for a period his pilot was Max Aitken (later to become Lord Beaverbrook) prior to the start of WWII. He was also fond of telling the tale of the day he put his foot through the side of his aircraft, a Hind, and had to withstand the verbal onslaught from the 'chiefy' rigger. 'Ripp's' flying career continued on after WWII right through to the end of his Service at Cottesmore on 115 Calibration Sqn operating the Argosy.

Ripp's major secondary duty whilst at Locking was OIC the pipe and trumpet bands. Despite a good deal of indifference from senior staff and little support in the way of cash, both bands became distinctive in uniform and enthusiastic in performance because of his ability to scrounge, charm and cajole people into helping him. The bands became well known locally and 'Ripp's' enterprise was justly rewarded when they were chosen to perform at the Royal Tournament. Ripp's bearing and outstanding smartness meant that he was always the first officer at RAF Locking to be

chosen for ceremonial duties. He was the Locking Apprentice flight commander on both the 1953 Coronation where Locking's contingent lined the route in Regent Street and later that same year when HM Queen reviewed the Royal Air Force at RAF Odiham.

'Ripp' was an outstanding fllt cdr and a tremendous role model to all the apprentices in No 1 Wing at Locking. The photograph is of 'Ripp' in 1986 when he was invited to a guest night at RAF Locking by the PMC, Charles Hart. His passing is a great loss to 72<sup>nd</sup> Entry Association of which he was president and to which he gave his whole-hearted support. The association members in their turn remember what a great influence he was on them as they passed from boyhood to manhood from 1952-1955 at RAF Locking.

