



# LAA NEWSLETTER

Serial 32

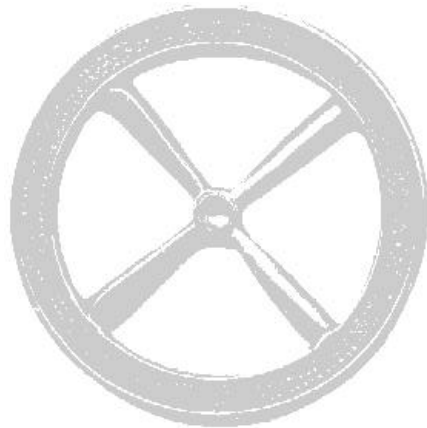
February 2002

## HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

**AGM 2002 WESTON-SUPER-MARE**  
**COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**  
**THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RAFLAA**

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### 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 — JANUARY 2002

The Secretary opened the meeting with apologies from the three committee members who could not attend. The Secretary explained that the Chairman was not of good health and after discussion Charles Hart volunteered to act as Vice Chairman pro-tem and the meeting agreed.

All actions from the previous meeting have been dealt during the period since the last meeting but it was decided that they will be recorded under their respective agenda items except for Item 11 Apprentice Archives, where the Secretary has contacted Mr Penberthy and put him in direct touch with Jo Holroyd.

The meeting agreed that the Newsletter had been successfully distributed. Jo was not present to give a report on his contact with the Brampton print manager about the costs. In line with the Chairman's proposal, the meeting agreed to publish the February newsletter using the Maple Oak Facility and the enabling Contract was agreed, signed and exchanged. The Editor advised that the closing date for copy is to be early in February. It was agreed that the format of the newsletter would be an agenda item for the AGM with advance notice of the discussion on format being highlighted in the newsletter. The Membership Secretary agreed to duplicate the distribution of the Newsletter via e-mail, in a further

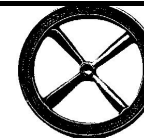
attempt to cut down postage costs. This would be accompanied by a request for an indication of the member's preference of distribution method. The Newsletter Editor agreed to produce a text version suitable for that method of distribution.

The committee was brought up to date on the resulting activity at which 44 members and guests attended. It was again felt by the committee that although all present enjoyed themselves, it was still mainly attended by members from the Weston Locality. It was generally felt that these functions are of limited benefit to the remainder of the membership and the association should try to arrange them in other areas of the country and maybe less often – every two/three years. This should be broached via the Newsletter

It was suggested that the membership should be advised via the newsletter and at the AGM that a large proportion of the current committee is due for re-election in the 2003 AGM and that volunteers will be needed. The Newsletter Editor was also requested to indicate in the newsletter that not much parking is available directly outside the hotel, and advise that some parking, albeit paying, is available not too far away. He is also to request any proposals for the AGM from the membership to be forwarded to the Secretary by the middle of March.

*(Continued on page 3)*

THE



NEWS

## GOLF

If anyone would be interested in joining an LAA Golfing Association, please contact Chris Inward on e-mail [Tristar@Engineer.com](mailto:Tristar@Engineer.com) or 01672 520300.

## AGM 2002

Saturday  
13<sup>th</sup> of April 2002  
Weston-super-Mare  
Daunceys Hotel

BOOKING FORM  
ENCLOSED

Any proposals that members wish to raise at the AGM should be forwarded to the Secretary.

## Constitution

Members are invited to forward to the Secretary any

proposals to changes in the Constitution.

At the AGM of 2001 the Chairman raised the idea of creating Honorary Membership of RAFLAA. The proposal to be decided at the AGM of 2002.

## Memorabilia

Attention squirrels and hoarders—bring out all those bits of Locking hidden in the attic and have it put on permanent display. Please contact Charles Hart for information.

## Advanced Warning

At AGM 2003 many of the Committee posts will be available for re-election, if you want to influence the way forward for the RAFLAA stand for election.

## RAFLAA COMMITTEE

APPOINTMENT	NAME	ADDRESS	TEL/E-MAIL	RE-ELECTION DUE	ENTRY
President	M a r t i n Palmer				91 <sup>st</sup>
Chairman	Bert Davies	20 Lakefield Ave Little Paxton St Neots Cambs PE19 4NZ	(01480) 217243 bertdavies@netscapeonline.co	Sep 02	79 <sup>th</sup>
Secretary	Glyn Price	"Sentosa" 9 Blake Hill Way, Abbeymead Glos GL4 4QR	(01452) 615265 glynprice@09sentosa. freeserve.co (home) gprice@technology.serco.com (work) (01452) 726300	Sep 02	102 <sup>nd</sup>
Treasurer	Tony Horry	Hillside Cottage Kewstoke Road Kewstoke W S M BS22 9YD	(01934) 628383 horrycorp@aol.com	Mar 03	76 <sup>th</sup>
Membership Secretary	John Farmer	8 Glenmore Road Minehead Somerset TA24 5BQ	(01643) 705443 RAFLAA@aol.com	Mar 03	77 <sup>th</sup>
Service Rep	Joe Holroyd	Well Cottage 36 High Street Guilford Morden Royston SG8 0JR	(01763) 853742 patandjoeholroyd@tesco.net	Sep 02	85 <sup>th</sup>
AA Rep	Charles Hart	9 South Road W S M BS23 2HA	(01934) 621969 charhart@supanet.com	Sep 02	71 <sup>st</sup>
General	Vic Gibbs	8 Old School Road Royal Lane Hillingdon Middlesex UB8 3WE	(01895) 235 076 Gibbsvic@aol.com	Mar 04	88 <sup>th</sup>
Craft Rep	Graham Beeston	87 Hornbeam Road Havant PO9 2UT	Home (023) 92346242 Work 0778 8795358 graham@mapleoak.co.uk	Sep 02	209 <sup>th</sup>
Tech Rep	Andy Perkins	107 Balmoral Way Worle W S M BS22 9BZ	(01934)417323 aperkins@schaffner.com	Sep 02	109 <sup>th</sup>
Newsletter Editor	Colin Ingram	Fairhaven Gooseham Morwenstow Nr Bude Cornwall EX23 9PG	(01288) 331629 cwingram@aol.com	Sep 02	88 <sup>th</sup>

## COMMITTEE MEETING — JANUARY 2002

(Continued from page 2)

The committee discussed the status of the proposal for the RAFLAA memorial and Charles Hart agreed to liaise with the RAFA Chairman but he explained that building was currently going to be late in completion. We are currently awaiting a response from the RAFA Chairman and the associations needs to decide exactly what items are going to be displayed, and how. It was agreed an advert should be placed in the newsletter to see if any member was interested in producing a design for and manufacturing a suitable display cabinet once contents, position and exact size have been decided. It is anticipated that a costed proposal will be ready in time for the AGM with a likely commissioning date within 12 months.

Vic Gibbs brought the meeting up to date as a result of his attendance at St Clement Danes and agreed to attend the Bedford meeting in the RAFA Club on the 21st Feb. A further advert is to be placed in the Newsletter giving fuller details of the FABEA 2002 event on the 26th April and this will also be e-mailed to members.

The Committee agreed to review the constitution and advise the Secretary of proposed changes by the end of January. The Newsletter Editor was requested to request any proposed alterations to the Constitution and to publish the proposed change to add the award of "Honorary Life Membership"

as highlighted by the Chairman at the last AGM

## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARIES REPORT

**Recruitment.** There is still a problem with the Appbe Web-site. There have been no direct enquiries since June 2001. Hopefully this may be resolved as George Burville's brother in law (Howard Maclawhorn) has/is taking over the ownership of the Appbe website as he is in possession of Georges US based computer with all of the Website software intact. I have not been in contact with the new owner directly to discuss the problems experienced to date, but initial emails have been exchanged

**Advertising** The Association continues to be advertised on Teletext re Ch 4 page 174 about 1 week in 8. (Enquiries have been filtering through as a result).

**Membership** Has not changed significantly since the last committee meeting although over the year 2001 it has fallen slightly.

Since the last committee meeting we have had: 3 new members, 3 resignations.

Currently we have:

- 574 names on the Members database
- 393 'active' Members (This is one less than previously as a 'double entry has been

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## COMMITTEE MEETING — JANUARY 2002

(Continued from page 3)  
found)

- 111 'ex' Members. No luck with the approaches for 're-join' so far.
- 69 members who have not yet paid their subscriptions for 2001. These are being 'chased'.
- 92 names on the enquiries list. I have attempted contact with the most recent 30. Very little response as yet.

**Subscriptions** The subscription 'reminder' programme has met with a good response so-far. We have about a 75% success rate on the first reminder and over 60% so far (for 2001) on the second reminder.

Members are continuing to take up Life Membership, there are currently 21 life members listed.

Standing order payment of subscriptions is increasing, there have been several new SO's started since the last meeting.

## TREASURERS REPORT

### The Social Dance in September

44 members and guests attended. Each was charged £12.50 making a total income of £550.00. The Association paid for the wine (£159.20) and the Disco (£120.00) - a total charge to the Association of £179.20. Total costs = £829.20

### Newsletter

- Printed by RAF Brampton within this period = £186.12.

- Membership list printed by RAF Brampton = £67.68
- Postage Cost + Envelopes + £207.93

### AGM—2002

- £200 deposit has been paid to Dauncey's Hotel—10 rooms have been booked for the event £1411.00 income has been received.
- The Association purchased a Samsung Laser Printer + USB cable for use by the Membership Secretary—John Farmer. Cost = £186.98.
- £2500 has been transferred from the Current A/C to the Business No-Notice A/C.
- The end of year financial year is 31st January. Accounts will be prepared in readiness for audit as soon as possible.

## APPLICATION FOR AGM 2002 DINNER/DANCE TICKETS

### DINNER DANCE AND FINGER BUFFET

Name:

Entry No:

Address:

**I will be attending the 2002 AGM and wish to stay at Dauncey's Hotel on the Friday and Saturday nights (12 and 13 Apr 02)**

- 1. Please book a double room for me at £56 per person:

Total cost £112

- 2. I wish to book both lunch and dinner:

Please provide tickets @ £20pp £

- 3. I wish to attend the dinner dance only:

Please provide tickets @ 16-50pp £

- 4. I wish to attend the finger buffet lunch only:

Please provide tickets @ £5-00pp £

\_\_\_\_\_

Total

Please delete as appropriate. **Remember – to take advantage of the special accommodation offer you must return the application by end of November.**

Cheques to be crossed account payee and made out to the RAF Locking Apprentice Association

Please post your application to:

**Mr A Horry  
Hillside Cottage  
Kewstoke Road  
Kewstoke  
Weston-super-Mare  
BS232 9YD  
Tel: 01934) 628383  
email:horrycorp@aol.com**

## STANDING ORDER MANDATE



To .....		Bank		<b>STANDING ORDER MANDATE</b>	
Postal Address .....					
Bank		Branch Title (not address)		Sorting Code Number	
HSBC		WESTON-SUPER-MARE		40 - 46 - 18	
Please Pay		Beneficiary's Name		Account Number	
R AF LOCKING APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION		Account Number		Quoting Reference	
For the credit of		Amount		41368877	
The sum of		Amount in words			
£					
commencing		Date of first payment		and debit my/our account accordingly	
		and thereafter every		Due date & frequency	
		until further notice in writing or		Date of last payment	
PLEASE CANCEL ALL PREVIOUS STANDING ORDER/DIRECT DEBITTING MANDATES					
IN FAVOUR OF:		RAF LOCKING APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION		Account to be debited	
Account Number		Account Number		Account Number	
UNDER REFERENCE No.					
Special instructions					
		Signature(s) .....		Date .....	
Note: The bank will not undertake to					
a) make reference to Value Added Tax or pay a stated sum plus V.A.T., or other indeterminate element.					
b) advise remitter's address to beneficiary. c) advise beneficiary of inability to pay. d) request beneficiary's banker to advise beneficiary of receipt					
e) accept instructions to pay as soon after the specified date as there are funds to meet the payment, if funds are not available on the specified date.					

## AGM 2002

As set out in the last newsletter, AGM2002 is to be held on 13 April 2002 in Weston-super-Mare at Dauncey's Hotel which lies on the sea-front to the North of the town. It is ideally placed close to a large car park and the side roads around about are generally light of traffic at that time of year. A map to get you orientated is included.

The hotel is family run and offers a good standard of accommodation with many rooms offering a view over Brean Down. The price of accommodation is typically £33 per person per night bed and breakfast for a room with a sea view; however, we have reserved a small number of double rooms at a special price of £56 per person for 2 nights bed and breakfast booked through the Association. If you wish to grab this outstanding offer you will have to be quick since the hotel has placed on it a deadline of 1<sup>st</sup> December. After this date the offer is withdrawn so it is first come, first served. Unfortunately, the hotel was unable to offer a similar discount for single rooms; however, if you contact the association (Charles Hart) we may be able to get a special price for those coming unaccompanied.

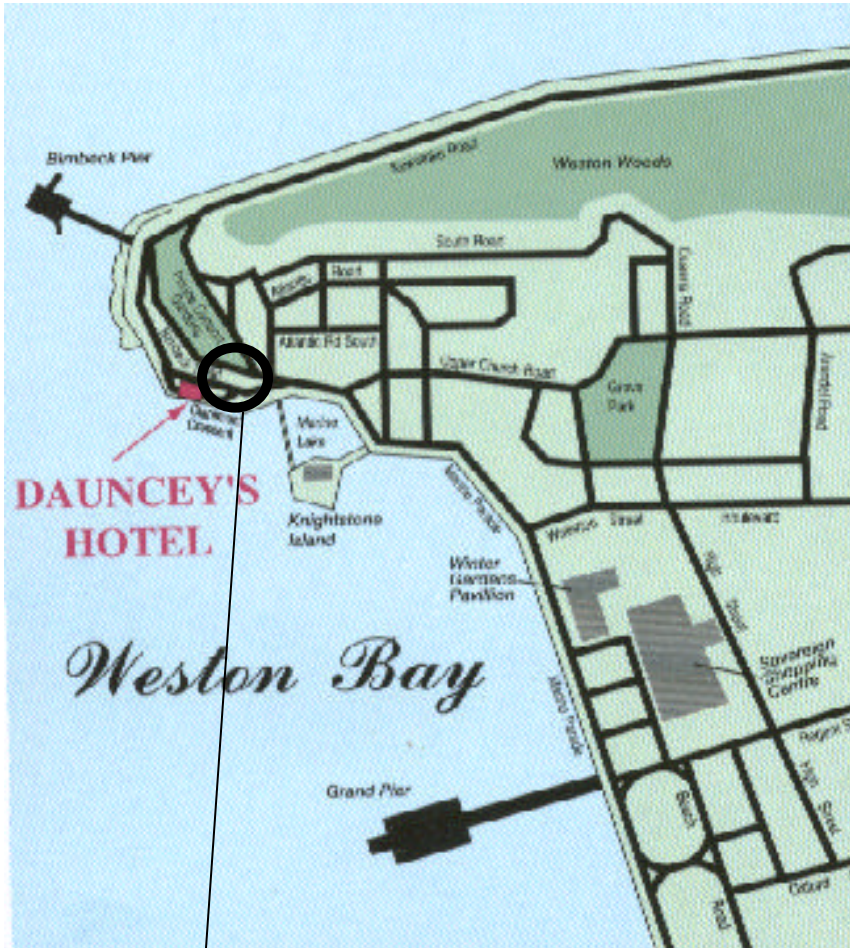
The cost of the Dinner Dance, the AGM finger buffet and tea after the meeting will cost you £20 each with all

the events taking place in the hotel. Should you wish to attend just the AGM the buffet will cost you £5 and those of you who wish to attend the dinner-dance without the preliminary events the cost is £16-50. This year we have decided to subsidise drinks purchased from the bar by charging just £1-00 a glass whatever its content.

## The timetable of events is:

- 12 Apr 02 - Informal Meet and Greet; 8-00pm, Dauncey's Bar
- 13 Apr 02 - 10-30am Members commence arrival at AGM venue - Dauncey's Hotel.
- 11-00pm - Bar facility open.
- 12-30pm. - Finger Buffet commences.
- 1-30pm. - AGM Commences with Trophy presentation.
- 3-00pm. - AGM complete. Tea served.
- 3-30pm - Members disperse
- 7-00 for 7-30 - Dinner Dance

AGM 2002



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



RAF Locking Apprentice Association

Application for membership of the Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

Name ..... Serving member HM forces. Yes/No  
 Address..... Entry Number.....

Post Code .....

Telephone No.....

E-Mail Address.....

Do you object to your details being disclosed to other organisations? Yes/No

Name for Identity Badge

Membership Fee: - .. £10.00

Do you require an LAA tie? (Cost £6 per tie - max 2 ties) (Qty) ..... £.....

Total Enclosed £.....

(Please make cheques payable to: - Locking Apprentice Association)

**Return this form together with your remittance to: -**

Mr A. Horry (RAFLAA Treasurer)  
 Hillside Cottage  
 Kewstoke Road,  
 Kewstoke,  
 Weston-super-Mare  
 North Somerset.  
 BS22 9YD

Tel. No. 01934 628383

e-mail horrycorp@aol.com

For Committee use

Comments

Membership Paid ...../...../.....  
 Database Updated ...../...../.....  
 Acknowledged ...../...../.....  
 Tie ...../...../.....  
 Badge ...../...../.....

## CONNECTIONS WITH BLUE STEEL

Bryan Armitage. 71 St

**B**ob Fairchild's article in the November newsletter stirred a few memories. Although my connection with Blue Steel was a tenuous one, I enjoyed his reminiscences of 4JSTU and in particular his photograph of the low-level drop. (Bob's phrase, not mine)

Many JSTUs (Joint Services Trials Units) started life on the far side of the A.V. Roe airfield at Woodford, on the edge of the Manchester rain forest. I was posted there in 1961. The last JSTU had packed their bags and left for Australia but a new unit had been formed, the BJTF (British Joint Trials Force) to test Skybolt a mean looking missile screwed on to each wing of a Vulcan. The plan was for us to pop over to Florida on the QE2 and potter about over there flaunting the Vulcan's virtues. We were promised a 55-foot trailer (caravan) with a loo at each end and a private mooring outside for our boats. Sadly, President Kennedy, taking his cue from the Daily Express, cancelled the trials and only the advance party made it to Florida. Sgt. Armitage was part of the rearguard.

BJTF was the last (and clearly most praiseworthy) of the sections to be based at Woodford. In 1963 I found myself still there with two Corporals as the last representatives of about

eighteen JSTU's and our own ill-fated BJTF. In addition to the corporals I also 'owned' a Land Rover, a three ton Bedford RVT and a Standard Vanguard staff car. The buildings, which were Locking style huts, were full of the detritus of the preceding years. Green Satin, NBS, ECM, Scanners, Str18, IFF, AVO 8s (sic) scopes, sig-gennies. You name it, I had at least two.

One day a letter arrived from the Air ministry, detailing the equipment that I was expected to hand in. It was wildly inaccurate. I rang the author.

"I've got eight AVOs" I told him, "not three."

"No, Sergeant," he said, "you have got three AVOs. It says so in the letter."

"How about NBS scanners?" I asked. "The letter says we only have one of those and I've counted four."

"No Sergeant," he said patiently, "you've only got one of those. My letter is correct. Just return what is on the letter and all will be fine"

His rank proved that his counting was more accurate than mine but after satisfying his demands I had about half a million pounds worth of secret and restricted equipment left over. What to do with it?

I settled down with the telephone and

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## CONNECTIONS WITH BLUE STEEL

*(Continued from page 7)*

started to ring around Bomber Command to try to find it a home. Typically, I would contact the W.O i/c a Gin Palace and ask how he was fixed for 'calc. threes' and 'calc fives'. After a sharp intake of breath I was informed how scarce they were and there was no chance on me getting one. When I made it clear that I was offering equipment rather than scrounging it his manner changed and he became very enthusiastic and offered to take all I could supply.

"I'll send it tomorrow in the RVT"

"Wonderful." Will you get your officer to sign the transfer forms?"

"Ah!"

The observant amongst you will have noticed that I did not list an officer as on of the goodies left in my care. Life was good. My married

quarter was part of a now closed station and the only real contact with officialdom was my pay. I did not really want anyone to know that they had forgotten to allocate me an officer. I hadn't got a good use for one and I didn't want to alert anyone to the fact in case they sent me one. A rethink was needed. Giving away so much equipment without paperwork to people I had never met but ensuring the security that such equipment demanded proved to be extremely difficult. The key was to call Senior NCOs on Bomber Command stations and identify those who were ex-apps. I told *those* men the truth and asked for their help. The surplus equipment disappeared like magic. No one sent me an officer.

The RVT was crammed full of NBS, Green Satin, numerous wireless units, a couple of NBS scanners in wheeled frames.



## MORE THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RAFLAA

*(Continued from page 24)*

commitments.

- Simply due to our large numbers and our relative junior entry status, the 90<sup>th</sup> Association hopefully will survive for some time to come. However, there will perhaps come a time for the few remaining in smaller and more senior entry Associations when they might seek support from the RAFLAA. It is a fact of life that in a relatively short period of time we will all be part of history!

Against this scene and within the 90<sup>th</sup> Association we have opted to sustain that that we do well, and to limit our efforts and resources to re-

contact those that have chosen not to remain in membership. We are still looking for those colleagues yet to be traced, and occasionally the unexpected happens when familiar faces are spotted when least expected. (Like the RAFLAA we missed George Burville's website whilst it was out of full action.)

I can offer no panacea for the RAFLAA and wish the Committee well with their review. But please continue with the Newsletters and once my diary commitments subside (fat chance!)

I might be able to eventually join in some of your events.

## EDITORS COMMENTS

I have to grovel to David Penberthy (71st) for not including his address (November 2001) - Heathbank, Barrack Shute, Niton, Isle of Wight. PO38 2BE. *Denzil would never lose his address (Cornish joke)*

## SOCIAL EVENTS

After the recent Social Gathering in Weston the Committee is looking for new suggestions for further events in other area—any ideas and volunteers

to organise an event near you.

## RAFLAA MEMORIAL

The Committee is looking for any Locking memorabilia to add to a display to be kept in Eagle House Weston Super Mare. If you have anything that may be suitable please contact Charles Hart.

Anyone skilled at carpentry willing to help with the Display Cabinet would also be welcome.



## MORE THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RAFLAA

*(Continued from page 23)*

of commitment and expectations. For my part I hoped to keep or make contact with those I perhaps knew from other entries and especially those worked with through my full RAF career in airborne electronic warfare. However, the reality is that I recognise few names on the database and indeed many former close working colleagues were not even trained at Locking. Others from the 90<sup>th</sup> notably our late and sadly missed colleague George Burville, along with Phil Mills and Colin Bell have offered far greater commitment to the RAFLAA, the former two especially with the website.

The reality facing the RAFLAA is that members have disparate needs and expectations.

- I suspect that many - perhaps a majority - would support the sentiments contributed by Gordon Shores in the November 2001 Newsletter where he feels the need for less formal and service orientated events and opportunities. Few of the 90<sup>th</sup> went on to full RAF careers and have spent most of their working life in other environments. Individual ranks have long been 'forgotten', as indeed have equally notable achievements in other walks of life.
- Conversely, there will be those -

perhaps a minority - that see the RAFLAA as providing some continuity of connection with their former RAF way of life and the trappings of their former respective Mess Nights and activities.

- Perhaps as within the 90<sup>th</sup> there are widely contrasting views on the need to stage events in Somerset. We have moved our Reunions to Stoke on Trent, not with the anticipated increase of uptake, but certainly with a fairer share of travel commitments and a wide range of alternative opportunities for those with other interests. We also needed to move from the Grand Atlantic Hotel at Weston Super Mare!
- Some colleagues are healthy and financially secure, whilst others are perhaps less fortunate and face over-stretched family commitments and priorities. For the former attendance at events is a valued break - but for the latter attendance is a challenge in several senses.
- Discos are a real 'turn off' especially those with hearing difficulties. Even alcohol seems to be a decreasing attraction!
- Others like myself might find our needs more than satisfied by our own Association activities and with little time to spare for further diary

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## VULCAN B1 XA903

Derek Powell 86th  
d.powell@iclwya.co.uk

I read the article from Bob Fairchild in the last newsletter with a great deal of interest. His experiences and mine have a number of coincidences. I too passed out as an ARF but with the 86th entry and left the service in the mid sixties to join ICT to become a computer engineer. At this time there were fewer than 200 computers in the entire country. I stayed with ICT/ICL/FUJITSU until becoming surplus to requirements a few years ago.

Bobs story of time spent on the trials in Australia with Blue Steel prompted me to put pen to paper. The aircraft which carried out the early trials was Vulcan B1 XA903 which I am sure he will remember. I am currently restoring the cockpit section of this aircraft at Wellesbourne Mountford near Warwick. Sadly the rest of this aircraft was scrapped many years ago. After completing the Blue Steel trials, 903 spent some time inactive before being converted to the role for which it is better known. This was as the flying test bed for the Olympus 593 engine, which was being developed to power the Anglo French Concorde. Following a number of years in this role 903 was again converted, this time to emerge as the test bed for the RB199 engine to be fitted into the Tornado.

One of the more unusual tasks carried out was the test firing of a Mauser

37mm cannon which had been fitted alongside the test engine to measure the effect on the air intake of the RB199.

In 1972, 903 was pensioned off at Farnborough to suffer numerous indignities at the hands of the Fire crews and many others before the cockpit was removed and the remainder of the historic airframe sold for scrap. Following several moves to a number of owners, 903 was brought as a totally gutted cockpit to Wellesbourne where hopefully she will receive the TLC that is so badly needed.

The answer to Bobs query about the missile which went to Brazil is that it was not Blue Steel.

Vulcan B2 XM597 had been hastily fitted with four SHRIKE radar suppression missiles loaned by the Americans for the duration of the Falklands war. The missiles were mounted on the underwing hard points originally intended for the Skybolt missiles. Flown by Sqdn Ldr Neil McDougal 597 was returning to Wideawake on mission Black Buck 6. The crafty Argentines had switched off their radars and thus escaped the attentions of 597 and crew. Attempting to refuel from a Victor tanker over mid ocean, the refueling probe snapped off and 597 had barely sufficient fuel to reach Brazil.

## VULCAN B1 XA903

*(Continued from page 9)*

In order to avoid a Diplomatic incident the crew were required to jettison the missiles way out in the Atlantic. Unfortunately no one had told the number 4 Shrike which stubbornly refused to part company from the Vulcan and resulted in red faces all round at Rio airport. 597 was duly repaired, refuelled and was flown back to Wideawake. Rumours that the Shrike is still in Baggage Claim at Rio de Janeiro airport can probably be discounted.

Still in the Vulcan theme, also resident at Wellesbourne Mountford is Vulcan B2 XM655. This is a complete airframe which is capable of performing high speed taxi runs with all four Olympus 301 engines turning and burning. After the aircraft was bought by a private owner and delivered to Wellesbourne in 1984, it entered a long period of neglect and

suffered at the hands of vandals with much of the cockpit equipment being robbed. About five years ago, a small group of volunteers got together and decided to save this charismatic aircraft from falling into the hands of the scrapman. A great deal has been achieved especially allowing that some of the group are even older than me!

We have a considerable amount of work still to do to bring the aircraft to the sort of condition which we would like but at least it keeps us out of the pub every Saturday which is our normal work day.

If you worked on Vulcans, would like to know more about 655, have a garage full of Vulcan spares or are wondering what to do with that unwanted Lottery win I would be pleased to hear from you. My email address is d.powell@iclway.co.uk

## MORE THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RAFLAA

Derick Cotton  
Chairman (for my sins!) 90<sup>th</sup> Association

**H**aving been in at the start of the 90<sup>th</sup> Association and subsequently the formation of the RAFLAA, it might be helpful to add to the ongoing debate about the RAFLAA. I must first point out that these are my own thoughts and that they stem from experiences as a long term 90<sup>th</sup> Association Committee member. I suspect that the views expressed equally apply to both Associations.

Within the 90<sup>th</sup> Association a small number of highly committed individuals have invested enormous time and effort trying to contact our 200 plus former colleagues. To their enormous credit they have traced over 75% and in doing so have encountered a wide and varied reaction to such contact. Some are delighted whilst others feel it an unwanted intrusion into their post-Locking and RAF life. Some join us for a short while only to leave and seem almost purposely then to lose contact. Even some of our most enthusiastic founders have left the scene to become untraceable for unexplained reasons. Those that remain in membership perhaps fall into one of the following broad categories:

- Enthusiasts, most with the strong support of their “other halves”, who take part in a myriad of social activities. Some events only

involve a few people, whereas others can involve many more. One group of up to 25 people meet almost every other month ranging from barbecues in Swansea and Chester, holidays in France and Germany, New Year’s celebrations in Cumbria and presently 60<sup>th</sup> birthday parties wherever they arise — Dorset and Doncaster being next in line. Ruby wedding anniversaries also feature in the near future! For these 25 or so people, the 90<sup>th</sup> Association has produced perhaps a unique grouping which stretches far beyond our original expectations and has produced family, let alone individual, bonding; a privileged situation which we all recognise.

- Those who only wish to attend an occasional full reunion — a three-year cycle meeting their needs but with a very strong and required emphasis on informality. Sadly we face diminishing numbers as colleagues die, but do hope to continue to attract between 60 and 80 people for some time to come.
- Others who want to keep in touch, but perhaps only through a newsletter or exchange of a Christmas card with individual friends.

Some of us, mainly from the group of enthusiasts, have also joined the RAFLAA, but with varying thoughts

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## THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RAFLAA

*(Continued from page 21)*

computer there, but to no avail.

I have been in touch with George's closest website friend in the States who — I am told — knows about the workings of the site. He is a website specialist too. But he could not gain access to the site either. He says that it will take hundreds of man-hours just to transfer the database info to another useable form, and George's site has seven databases.

George's widow told me in July that Howard McLawhorn — George's brother-in-law — was willing to take the site over. As he has George's San Diego computer with everything on as George left it, I thought it the best — if only — option to secure the future of the site.

I contacted Howard in late July. He responded in September saying that he would do his best, but that things over in the States after '11 September' were a bit hectic and he would contact me again in a couple of weeks. I am still waiting. Having said that, the site is paid up to run until March 2002.

Bert Davies (Chairman) has expressed personal reservations about the site going out of the country. But Howard is our only hope at present because he has all George's site software intact as George left it. He has an, 'all singing all dancing', offline desktop running facility and should

be able to overcome the password problems and restore the deleted htaccess file.

In the meantime appbe.com — as left by George — continues to operate in semi-auto mode. it still receives application data for validation and adding to the site's main databases but — as previously explained — I cannot get in to validate and process anything, including new passwords for users.

HOWEVER, APPBE.COM AUTO FUNCTIONS AND EMAIL CONTACT FACILITIES WITH THE EDITOR, OTHER ORGANISATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS STILL OPERATE. PEOPLE CAN STILL APPLY TO JOIN THEIR RESPECTIVE ASSOCIATIONS VIA THE APPBE.COM SYSTEM.

I hope this explains the website situation.

## CRIME and (PUNISHMENT?)

John Farmer (77th Entry) Membership Secretary

**D**uring my time at Locking I managed to steer clear of trouble until my last term. I don't know if it was the stress (not a word that was much used in those days) of getting ready for the dreaded 'FINALS' or a stirring of testosterone that had perhaps escaped the mess tea (with all its reported additives). It could also have been a bit of reaction against imposed authority! The recent elevation to the dizzy rank of Leading Apprentice of "Stanley", who had the unfortunate facility of getting up every one's nose as one of nature's misfits. He was the sort of chap who today would be called 'an anorak', who could not march in step, (in fact he was renowned for being the only person at Locking at that time who could march with the same arm and leg going forward at the same time as a matter of course)! Perhaps I am being a little unkind.

Anyway, I digress! One morning in our last term Stanley, who was in charge of the billet I was in, woke us all in his usual cheerful manner by banging the end of the bed frame and whinging something about "time to arise chaps". For some reason this upset me and I leapt from my bed, (graceful as gazelle and full of the joys of spring) and clasping Stanley gently by the front of his pyjama's, informed him (in what I thought was a very reasonable tone), that "if he did that again I would not be responsible for my ac-

tions" (or something in that vein)!

This did not go down well with Stanley for in very short order I was arraigned firstly before the Entry Commander, then Wing Commander and finally the Group Captain, charged with 'adopting a threatening attitude, and using threatening language to an NCO'. (Which I thought was bit hard as I was only trying to make a point)!

For my sins (which it turned out they were)! I was awarded 7 days incarceration in the Station Guard Room cells.

However, as I was in my final term (and supposedly swotting hard), I would not attend the delightful full kit tête-à-tête that the Duty Officer and his henchmen held every morning and evening at the Guardroom. I was to be given restricted fatigues (a little light dusting and perhaps a whip around with the 'bumper' on the Guardroom floor) instead. The rest of my time was to be spent with my books! Of course I did have to keep my very comfortable cell spotless and lay out all my kit every day, but then that wasn't all that much different from being in the billet.

Each morning I was marched to the Airman's Mess for breakfast, (far superior food to the Apprentices Mess I have to say)! Then I was collected by my class leader (who had to

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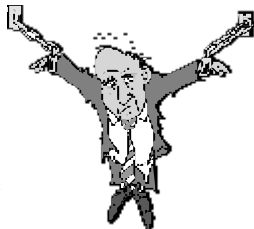
## CRIME and (PUNISHMENT?)

*(Continued from page 11)*

sign for me), to spend the rest of the morning with my class doing those things that one did in those days. A light lunch was taken in the Apprentices Mess before more classes in the afternoon. Afternoon tea was partaken in the Apprentices Mess before I was marched back to the Guard Room arriving just in time to be marched to the Airman's Mess again, this time for (proper) tea.

It transpired that my confinement was due to finish on Sunday and for some reason or other a guest of the RAF Police (I hesitate to use the word prisoner) could not be released on a Sunday so I would have to be released on Saturday (at midday would you believe)! And into the tender care of my class leader. To ensure that I did not leave the camp or misbehave myself I did have to attend the early evening Saturday 'jankers' soiree with the Duty Officer and his cohorts (but not in full kit strangely enough). The parade was well timed, as it finished just in time to allow me to change and get back the Astra for the evening performance.

Sunday I had to spend on camp. (It was Church Parade weekend anyway!) With two very pleasant visits to see the Duty Officer and the nice Policeman at the Guard Room (They



**This is how my Mother envisaged my stay as a guest of the RAF Police when she found out**

gave me cups of tea)! The weekend went very quickly and pleasantly. I even did some swotting and I certainly didn't need to do much to my kit!

In the true tradition of the "Apprentices Brotherhood" my fellow apprentices had moved all of my kit into the next billet (which was 'the' billet to be in) for me, as the Entry Commander had decided that the less Stanley I saw of each other the better. They had also had a whip round and collected enough cash to make up my pay (you didn't get paid while 'doing time').

Looking back I have fond memories of my "punishment". With the conditions we lived with in those days it must have seemed almost like a holiday!

I can also see that every one concerned did exactly what was needed. (Even Stanley).

I must have learnt something from the experience, because as far as I can remember I behaved myself thereafter and never fell foul of the "authorities" again!

## THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RAFLAA

*(Continued from page 20)*

### NO 1 RADIO SCHOOL

Reading the November 2001 Newsletter, it seems that the level of Association membership is causing concern. Sadly, none of us are getting younger. Locking has closed down and there is no younger element to come along to replace the 'oldies'.

The Cranwell Association members are older than us and must feeling the pinch a lot more.

We should not forget that the first few Locking apprentice entries moved to Locking from Cranwell. Both stations were the RAF No 1 Radio School of their time. Now that Locking has closed, why not join forces to form a single association — RAF No 1 Radio School (Cranwell and Locking Association)?

### APPRENTICE AND BOY ENTRANTS WEBSITE: APPBE.COM

Unfortunately there are several problems outstanding, which will need to be hammered out before appbe.com can operate properly again.

When George Burville died, I was asked to take over the site by his widow. The deal was that I would have the complete package to run the

site as George did. I was sent a CD with 'flat files' only and none of the site interactive software.

The site is riddled with passwords (and encryptions) that were known only to George.

For the benefit of the internet and website scientific high-fliers in the RAFLAA and beyond, EASYSPACE — the server — deleted an htaccess file when I only asked them for advice on how to overcome the password problem. This action corrupted the online admin access software, throwing up a PERL error message, which meant that I could not even try to overcome the password problem online! I asked EASYSPACE to restore the htaccess file and they said that they could not because it had been deleted with no back up.

This snookered me because I do not have a copy of the site running software. I have been denied access to George's computer to take a copy, which means that I have no way of overcoming the problem.

**IN SHORT - in this situation -I AM PERMANENTLY LOCKED OUT AND CANNOT DO ANY OF THE ADMIN FUNCTIONS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THE SITE.**

I asked George's brother-in-law in San Diego to let me have a copy of the site running software from George's

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## THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RAFLAA

*(Continued from page 19)*

fully discussed, why is there no mention of it in the minutes of the meeting?

### NEWSLETTER 31, PAGE 18: 90 A/A ASSOCIATION FULL PAGE NOTICE

The inclusion of this notice - sent in by George Burville for publication long before our October 2000 reunion - is an unfortunate feature.

It was sent in for inclusion in the June 2000 RAFLAA Newsletter but was not featured.

As you know, George died on Christmas Eve 2000. The contact telephone number on the notice is George's, which, fortunately is no longer used by his widow.

Why was it featured now?

### NEWSLETTER 31, PAGE 17: THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RAFLAA

May I say that I can relate entirely with the sentiments of Gordon Shores 97<sup>th</sup>. His letter says it all for me. I particularly enjoyed the bit about feeling quite alien. The above minute APPRENTICE ARCHIVES being an example.

All he wants is a couple of newsletters a year, etc., and a social meeting once or twice a year to get away for a

weekend with his wife and renew acquaintances. So do I.

I have never liked noise — loud noise turns me off quicker than anything.

The Meet and Greet is great. It helps some members to break the ice and ease in to the weekend.

A cozy retreat offering a relaxed atmosphere with quality light background music where I can enjoy a beer with friends, hear what they are saying and order something to eat when I want it is ideal for me.

I see no need to buy set price tickets for set price functions and my only experience of a RAFLAA dinner/dance was much too noisy for me.

### VENUES FOR RAFLAA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

I said at last years AGM that Henlow was more central for a lot of members to get to. The Henlow AGM had a good turnout and was very successful.

It is a sad fact that the vast majority of members have to travel long distances to attend RAFLAA AGMs. Locking, sadly, is no more and it should be said that Weston-super-Mare is not always convenient to get to for those who do not live there.

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## CONNECTIONS WITH RAF WILMSLOW

Bryan Armitage 71 Entry

Wilmslow is an affluent town to the south of Manchester. The camp closed about 1960 although it's married quarters remained open for several more years. In the fifties, RAF Wilmslow had an important military hospital and doubled as a training camp for National Service recruits and WAAFs. I had three experiences of the camp.

In late 1955, soon after getting my corporals stripes, I received a call from my cousin and best friend who lay in the hospital, suffering from a terminal disease. Donald was concerned that personal possessions of his lay unprotected in his billet and no one was prepared to get them. Corporal Armitage to the rescue! I identified Donald's hut and went inside. **N C O !** came the shout and the hut full of recruits sprang to attention. Donald's bedspace was pointed out and after selecting the items that he wanted in the hospital I rammed every other item of kit and bedding into the lockers and fitted padlocks. As I left I turned to the recruits and foolishly said, "If there are any questions, the name is Corporal Armitage" I said my goodbyes to Donald and left the camp.

Four years later I stayed several days at Wilmslow whilst employed at A.V. Roe where the Vulcan was made. As I signed in to SHQ the clerk noticed my name. "Armitage" he said. "The station Warrant Officer has been looking

for a corporal Armitage for years! It's a pity you missed him, he was posted last week." I agreed that it was such a pity and seeking refreshment blundered into a NAAFI that catered almost exclusively for trainee WAAFs who were still confined to camp and starved of male company. It was an interesting experience culminating in an invitation to witness a midnight knicker raid on rival huts. The girls intended to drape their trophies over another rival hut but listened to my Locking taught wisdom. "Put the knickers on your own roof" I told them "you are less likely to be suspected then" So it proved and for the remainder of my stay I was well rewarded for the advice.

In 1962 I was moved into married quarters at Wilmslow. The camp was a wilderness by then and the quarters were administered from RAF Haydock some twenty or thirty miles away. Later, during a transfer to a larger house on the site the MOD officer responsible for the house was checking the inventory of the house with me.

"Chamber pot, one" he intoned.

"Chamber pot, one" I echoed as I checked the article in question.

"Just a minute. Let me see that" he said,

The pot had a gold line around the

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## CONNECTIONS WITH RAF WILMSLOW

*(Continued from page 13)*

rim and on the side was the design of the RAF Albatross..

“That’s got a gold rim” he said needlessly. “It’s an *officers* model.

I was impressed and enquired whether all sanitary porcelain in officers quarters had such embellishments. He thought not but insisted

that I would not be allowed to keep the pot, even though I promised to salute as I used it

The following week an airman was sent in a one ton truck all the way from Haydock especially to change the prized pot for a plain white one. I had clearly met a man destined for greatness.

## ARMOURER

Bryan Armitage 71 Entry

Soon after leaving Locking in 1955 I found myself alone in a hangar at Waddington, chasing a devious intercom fault on a Canberra. Shortly after midnight the cut-out tripped on the AVO8 that I was using inside a hatch on the port side. It reset normally and I continued work but became aware of a strange feeling on my left hand. A careful search revealed a very thin stream of red fluid glinting in the torchlight. It came from a tiny hole drilled by the AVO probe in a metal pipe that disappeared in the general direction of the nosewheel. This was a situation that Locking had not really prepared me for so after wedging a container in place to catch the fluid, I set off in the direction of the billets looking for help.

Each billet had a large room for the corporal i/c that were often shared by

two. Bob and Derek shared one on the ground floor and I entered quietly and shook Bob awake. He was not exactly thrilled when I told him that I needed help in the hangar, it was well after 1AM by now, but he rose and dressed. Once outside and heading towards the hangar I asked him what colour hydraulic fluid was.

“Red”

“That’s what I thought” I proceeded to tell him about my disaster.

Suddenly he stopped, gestured me to follow and retraced his steps to his bunk. Wordlessly he undressed and got back into bed. Then he favoured me with one more look and jabbing his finger across the room to the recumbent Derek said,

“Wake him up. I’m a f...g armourer”

## THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RAFLAA

Phil Mills (90th)

### LOCKING APPRENTICE RECORDS HELD BY RAFLAA AT R.A.F. HENLOW

On November, 9 2001 I wrote to you the following letter:

*Last March at Henlow before the AGM, a few of us looked at the contents of three filing cabinets containing Locking apprentice records. Some of older records are beginning to deteriorate and it was generally felt by the privileged few who saw them that all of the records should be preserved for posterity.*

*One or two of us began to think about how this task could be best achieved. Dave Penberthy 71st and I thought that the first sensible step would be to organize haphazardly housed contents of the cabinet drawers into an orderly state, and create an index of files noting the number of pages in each.*

*In July, Dave and I had agreed to set aside the third week in October to spend a couple of days at Henlow to do this. We thought that the proposed index could be used as a basis for the costing of digital archiving to CD - a fitting legacy from the RAFLAA.*

*Dave wrote to the Committee on August, 10 2001 setting this down. I understand that it was discussed at the end of August Committee meeting and decided to write to Dave accordingly. I*

*was told a day or two afterwards to stay in, touch with Dave. This I have done.*

*To date (November, 9 2001) Dave has received nothing from the Committee not even an acknowledgment to his letter of August, 10 - and a golden opportunity for us to have a carefully considered proposal to put to the membership in good time for the next AGM has been missed*

Your prompt reply and subsequent receipt of the November 2000 LAA Newsletter both quoted the minute from the end of August Committee meeting concerning this matter:

### APPRENTICE ARCHIVES.

The Committee requested the Secretary to minute the fact that due to the availability of space, the No 1 Radio School Records held in trust by the RAFLAA are being moved from the location of the Serco Offices at Henlow to the Signals Museum (Old RC Church) where they will be stored in a secure area. The Secretary undertook to write to David Penberthy to get him to liaise with Joe Holroyd. Further arrangements will be made to sift the residue of the photographs.

There is no mention David Penberthy’s letter to the Committee or of the offer made. Was it actually discussed? If it was not, why wasn’t it? if it was

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## OBITUARY – MICHAEL JOHN DAWSON (76TH)

The 76<sup>th</sup> Entry was saddened to learn that Mike (Titch) Dawson sadly passed away on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2001 at the age of 64.

Six members of the Entry were able to join Margaret, family and friends at the funeral. Neil Castle spoke on behalf of the Entry.

“I first met Mike on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 1954. We were among almost a hundred teenagers to join the Royal Air Force as apprentices that day.

RAF Locking was covered in a blanket of snow and it was bitterly cold. After collecting what seemed a mountain of personal kit – best blue and battledress uniforms, hats, boots bedding etc – we were crammed into a 3-ton truck and taken to our billet.

The tailgate was dropped and under the pressure of bodies from behind plus the weight of his newly acquired gear Mike flew out of the truck and landed in a heap in the snow. He didn't seem unduly worried, just picked himself up and carried on, almost as if he was enjoying himself, (although some of us weren't so sure what we had let ourselves in for!) I remember being quite impressed by the number of swear words Mike had presumably learned in the ATC!

That was 47 years ago and having talked to Mike at our reunions in the past few years I *know* he was enjoying himself. Mike cherished the 3

years we all spent together as the 76<sup>th</sup> Entry of Apprentices and his life in the RAF. He was an integral and active part of our entry, was always in the thick of any venture (dodgy or otherwise) and especially if it confronted authority.

The old codgers of the 76<sup>th</sup> have lost a good mate and comrade but we know Mike will stand tall to pass the final inspection. Goodbye old friend.”

My apologies for the not including the Obituary in the last edition. Ed.

## AN ODD WAY TO SPEND A WEEKEND

Mike Collier (76th Entry)

In the early Summer of 1958, someone somewhere decided that the R. A.F. “should show the flag” at an Air Display in Stavanger in Norway. Bassingbourn was designated as the station to provide a Canberra B.2. to do the job. As it was a training unit, it would not detract from the defence of the Realm and a Q.F.I. would be available to fly it.

Being a lowly corporal Air Radio Fitter at the time, I was of course not privy to any of the above. Until, that is, I was approached by my section sergeant with the generous offer of an all expenses paid weekend in Scandinavia. I had never been overseas before, unless you count half an hour at Aldergrove, scrounged as a trip in an Anson from Wyton whilst in the A.T.C. Also I was quite charmed at being selected to go. It did not even occur to me that all the brighter people might already have turned down the invitation and the system was getting desperate.

In addition to the pilot and navigator, the Canberra only had two spare seats. The captain, deciding that the two most likely things to break were the engines and the radio, had accordingly, asked for representatives of those two trades to be his ground crew. The requirement to operate on oxygen for a large part of the trip necessitated a visit to the Decompression Chamber. A relatively easy operation but rather boring. However, the experience did

come in useful at a later stage of my Service career.

Our departure was scheduled for a Friday morning and I felt quite “macho” as, clutching my “bone dome” I ambled out to the aircraft in my borrowed flying kit. My older and very much wiser Engine Fitter colleague, Chalky White, opted for the seat beside the navigator. He had no view but did have an ejector seat. At 19 years old and full of youthful impetuosity, I thought it would be wonderful to sit next to the pilot on the “jump seat”. This was a contraption that folded out of the side of the cockpit and in an emergency, I would have had to perform all manner of gymnastics to get my parachute on, open the side door and fall out. I guess we all did stupid things when we young.

The first problem came just prior to take off, when the pilot told me to put my oxygen mask on, I discovered that my “mic” did not operate. I tried all of the normal quick fixes none of which worked. Very embarrassing, the only “duff” bit of radio equipment belonged to the radio man!

The first leg of the trip was a short one to Marham. While the pilot did what he had to do, I established that my mic/tel lead was u/s but on a strange unit, had no idea where to get a replacement. Additionally, I had a

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## AN ODD WAY TO SPEND A WEEKEND

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sneaking feeling that our commander would not be best pleased if he returned to find that half his ground crew had apparently deserted, when we had not even left the country yet. The leg to Stavanger, whilst very enjoyable for a novice Canberra passenger, was relatively uneventful apart from the continuing problem of replying to every instruction from the Captain with hand signals. Once we had landed and bedded the aircraft down for the night we were free to sample first of all the food, which seemed to consist mainly of fish and jam, and secondly the night life on the base. There was to be a dance that evening and Chalky was keen to go, so out of idle curiosity I went along with him. Neither of us very smart as we had a very limited range of civvy clothing with us. Unfortunately, I am of the breed lumbered with two left feet and no sense of rhythm, who never learned to dance and still cannot. I don't think it would really have mattered, it was a very strange event. Everyone stood around talking and drinking in a large hangar type structure. When the music started they seemed to grab the nearest person of the opposite gender and off they went. When the music stopped everything carried on as it was before. I retired to the safety of the nearest wall, observed for a while, got bored and returned to our living accommodation.

The following morning we had a few hours free and bought souvenirs at the equivalent of the N.A.F.F.I. shop. Early afternoon saw us down at the dispersal resplendent in white overalls, pre-fighting the aircraft. Time for our part of the display came with Chalky supervising engine start up and me frantically trying to remember how to use the fire extinguisher, should it be required. The instructions were in Norwegian. The display went well and finished in a slow fly past with everything (flaps, bomb doors, landing gear, etc.) hanging down. The aircraft disappeared and we got ready to marshal it back to the stand. It seemed to take a long time for the Canberra to reappear and when it did it made an unusually slow approach and landing, taxied to the end of the runway and for no apparent reason stopped. It eventually made a most undignified return to us behind a tractor and tow bar. A very unhappy pilot emerged to tell us that the navigator had had to pump down the important bits for landing there was a leak in the hydraulics. We had an engine fitter, a radio fitter and an airframe problem!

Now our radio queens were a pretty elitist lot, didn't mix much within the other trades, never mind enquire into what they did. As far as we were concerned, the aeroplane and its attendant parts were a convenient platform for

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## AN ODD WAY TO SPEND A WEEKEND

*(Continued from page 16)*

carrying around the important stuff which was our radio equipment. To me, an hydraulic leak might as well have been a manifestation from Mars.

Chalky however was more knowledgeable and said he would have a go at fixing it. It was not too difficult to determine where to start a pool of hydraulic fluid was already forming beneath a drip from a wing. Tools, rags and ladders were acquired and we set to work, or at least Chalky did. I felt a bit like a spare appendage at a nuptial celebration, laying on the wing, passing tools, holding things when instructed and mopping up spare fluid. Eventually, about 20 00 he declared it fit and well, just about the time the pilot turned up to see how we were getting on. He ran an engine, waggled the important bits up and down and after a further check of the offending bit, decided to give it an air test in the morning.

Needless to say, Chalky and I were there bright and early the next day to re-check everything. All looked well and the pilot was satisfied with the air test. Nevertheless, it was with some trepidation that I helped load our bags into the aircraft. The pilot elected to take the shortest route to the U.K. and we headed for Kinloss for customs clearance. I did not notice much of the approach. My attention was totally focused on checking that three little red lights turned to green. Then praying

that the undercarriage would not collapse and that our roll out would end before the runway did. The final leg back to Bassingbourn was a bit of an anticlimax, though I was not too unhappy when we rolled rather than slid to a halt outside the hanger there.

Chalky was later awarded a B.E.M. Not just for his efforts in Norway but for a number of other good things he had done. As for me, I got a good ticking off for bringing many white overalls back in such a grubby condition. I had also learned that three years at Locking did not make you a genius and that the other trades people working around me deserved a little more respect than I had previously afforded them.