



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



Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

LAA NEWSLETTER

Serial 36

July 2003

ROYAL AIR FORCE LOCKING
APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER

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NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE RAFLAA

The Chairman opened the meeting at 13.30 and welcomed the members and guests. The Chairman read the Apprentice Prayer and then invited the President to address those attending the meeting.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS AND RAFLAA TROPHY PRESENTATION

The President welcomed everyone and stated how pleased he was at the level of turn out. The President then paid his respects to a departed member namely

Dougie Banks 96th Entry

The Association was also made aware of the passing of George Birnie (75th Entry) in February 2003.

Air Commodore Palmer went on to thank the Chairman and his committee for their efforts over the year. He welcomed the reformation of No1 RS at RAF Cosford and looked forward to forging stronger links with the school. He said that he hoped that efforts would be made to cement links between our Association and those of Cranwell and Halton.

The President then presented the RAFLAA Trophy to Chief Technician Jon Lawrence together with a citation and cheque for £50.00.

Ch/Tech Lawrence replied saying that during his three and a half years instructional duties he, along with others, had noticed deterioration in

the moral standards and lack of support for the ethos of the RAF amongst the trainees. Following a meeting of staff it was decided to do something about it and the concept of the reformation of No1 Radio School was born. Ch/Tech Lawrence said that it had been a very worthwhile and enjoyable project the success of which could be judged by the 200 guests at the reformation ceremony.

He wished the Association well and looked forward to continuing his contact despite having moved on to RAF High Wycombe.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman thanked the President for his address and presentation. He went on to thank the committee for 'protecting' him during his year of deputising for Bert Davies, and looked forward to his period in office.

The chairman then referred at length to Bert's enthusiasm and service to the Association. Bert had suffered considerably from ill health as had his wife, but he had shown considerable resolve in trying to overcome his difficulties and still doing his best as our Chairman. It was with great regret that we heard of the passing of Bert's wife Dorothy only a few days before this meeting.

The Chairman referred to the Reformation of No1 Radio School with par-

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THE



NEWS

AGM 2003 RAF Cosford ?

Stories for the Newsletter

RAFLAA COMMITTEE

Appointment	Name	Address	Tel/e-mail	Re-Election	Entry
President	M a r t i n Palmer				91 st
Chairman	“ T i n y ” Kühle	22 Tavistock Close Woburn Sands Milton Keynes Bucks MK17 8UY	(01908) 583784 Hans.Kuhle@t-mobile.co.uk	April 06	87 th
Secretary	Dave Gunby	23 Toynton Close Gregg Hall Estate Lincoln Lincolnshire# LN6 8AL	(01522) 525484 Davegunby@btinternet.com	April 06	72 nd
Treasurer	Tony Horry	Hillside Cottage Kewstoke Road Kewstoke W-S-M BS22 9YD	(01934) 628383 horrycorp@aol.com	Apr 06	76 th
Membership Secretary	John Farmer	8 Glenmore Road Minehead Somerset TA24 5BQ	(01643) 705443 RAFLAAMS@aol.com	Apr 06	77 th
Service Rep	Joe Holroyd	Well Cottage 36 High Street Guilden Morden Royston SG8 0JR	(01763) 853742 p a t a n d j o e h o l - royd@tesco.net	Sep 05	85 th
AA Rep	Charles Hart	9 South Road W-S-M BS23 2HA	(01934) 621969 charhart@supanet.com	Sep 05	71 st
General	Vic Gibbs	8 Old School Road Royal Lane Hillingdon Middlesex UB8 3WE	(01895) 235 076 Gibbsvic@aol.com	Mar 04	88 th
Craft Rep	G r a h a m Beeston	87 Hornbeam Road Havant PO9 2UT	(023) 92346242 Work 0778 8795358 mapleoak@newnet.co.uk (home)	Sep 05	209 th
Tech Rep	Andy Perkins	107 Balmoral Way Worle W-S- M BS22 9BZ	(01934)417323 aperkins@schaffner.com	Sep 05	109 th
Newsletter Editor	Colin Ingram	Fairhaven Gooseham Morwenstow Bude Cornwall EX23 9PG	(01288) 331629 cwingram@aol.com	Sep 05	88 th

NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE RAFLAA

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particular reference to the welcome extended to us. He sincerely hoped that contacts made at RAF Cosford would enable us to gather there as early as next spring for our 2004 AGM/ Reunion.

The Chairman said that progress was being made towards the provision of a display cabinet for the Association memorabilia. A drum and set of bagpipes were on display at the meeting and he hoped that someone could provide some plaids for the pipes. It is intended for the display cabinet to be housed in the RAFA Weston-super-Mare branch.

Thanks were given to the secretary for his work in producing a database of all RAF Locking Apprentices.

A social visit to Sky Television Studios had been unable to be made because of the difficulties with numbers. The Chairman asked those interested to contact the General Rep (Vic Gibbs) directly to see what could be done to enable the visit.

In conclusion the Chairman mentioned our affiliation to the Federation of Boy Entrants and Apprentices (FABEA) who's AGM it was our turn to host this year. It was decided that the Chairman and the General Member would attend the meeting in July they being the nearest geographically.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Copies of the Finances for the Year 2002/2003 are available for you.

These are the audited accounts, which are similar to those, which appeared in the last newsletter. That report was updated when the final bank statement had been received.

As we hold our AGM early in the financial year the income received runs over two years accounts. In the figure of £2715.00 there is £1131.00 balance of income received for the 2002 AGM and members had paid £1584.00 towards bookings for today's AGM. This tends to inflate the actual final balance that we carry forward at the end of the FY.

Income from membership subscriptions has increased slightly over last year includes 220 members paying through the Standing Orders. I am sure that John Farmer will remind us all of the benefits of paying by Standing Order - it saves the reminders which he has to send out, so saving on the expenses of the Association. As we get older we become more forgetful.

I draw your attention to the following points:

- **Social Event – St Clement Danes** – Here the income was £273.00 against a cost of £325 as we invited two guests to join us.

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We also made a donation of £100 to FABEA towards the event.

• **AGM 2002** – The overall cost of the AGM held at Dauncey's Hotel last year cost the Association £143.25 when all expenses were taken into account.

• **Other Expenses** of £252 during the year were for the pipes (£200) and the five Side Caps (£52).

• **Direct Expenses** are self explanatory – Refunds included £22.50 due to one bank who wanted to pay a members' Standing Order monthly instead of annually!

• **Printing & Postage** continue to be a large part of our expenses, but again this is bound to be the case by the very nature of the organisation, which seeks to remain in touch with its membership, scat-

tered across the globe.

It will be noted that there has been a saving on printing over the year, due to the policy of e-mailing copies of newsletters to members. Last October only 270 hard copies were printed you will note that the overall saving for printing and postage is £332.42

To aid the production of the newsletter the Committee approved the purchase of a copy of Adobe Acrobat V.5 for use by the membership secretary. (£199.99 included under stationery. This becomes an asset of the Association.

The Committee does need replace its stock of ties (See item 10) and is discussing having a display cabinet built - but has no further plans for any large expenditure that cannot be covered by our healthy balance. Therefore it is recommended that the subscription rates should remain at £7.50 per year.

BALANCE SHEET	2002/2003	2001/2002
CURRENT ASSETS		
Business No Notice account	£6,907.72	6875.56
Current account	£3,178.15	2577.75
Petty cash	£32.47	33.77
NETT CURRENT ASSETS	£10,118.34	£9,487.08
CURRENT LIABILITIES	£0.00	£0.00
FINANCED BY		
Brought forward balance	£9,487.08	£7,222.20
Profit and loss account	£631.26	£2,264.88
	£10,118.34	£9,487.08



STANDING ORDER MANDATE

Postal Address		Bank		STANDING ORDER MANDATE	
Please Pay	Bank	Branch Title (not address)	Sorting Code Number		
	HSBC	WESTON-SUPER-MARE	40	-	46
	Beneficiary's Name		Account Number		18
For the credit of	R AF LOCKING APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION		413 6 8 8 7 7		Quoting Reference
	Amount	Amount in words			
The sum of	£				
	Date of first payment	and there-after every	Due date & frequency	until further notice in writing or	Date of last payment
commencing					and debit my/our account accordingly
PLEASE CANCEL ALL PREVIOUS STANDING ORDER/DIRECT DEBITTING MANDATES					
IN FAVOUR OF:	RAF LOCKING APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION		Account to be debited	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.					

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.....

Name for Identity Badge

Membership Fee: - £10.00

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

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

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/...../.....

RAFLAA ACCOUNTS 2002/3

PROFIT & LOSS

	2002/2003	2001/2002	
SALES			
Membership fees	2,870.10	2,658.72	
Life membership	300.00	900.00	
Sales - ties, pins and videos	218.50	79.00	
Social events	273.00	550.00	
Raffle at social event	0.00	0.00	
AGM and other misc income	2,715.00	3,549.50	
Bank interest received	33.91	91.65	
		6,410.51	£7,828.87
PURCHASES			
Pins	0.00	252.50	
Ties	0.00	0.00	
Videos	53.00	0.00	
Social event expenses	325.00	829.20	
Donations and wreaths	125.00	165.00	
Name badges	24.90	29.90	
Other	252.00	247.07	
AGM and other purchases	3,397.25	2,121.47	
		4,177.15	£3,645.14
DIRECT EXPENSES			
Advertising	24.00	0.00	
Bank charges	4.00	2.00	
Auditing	50.00	50.00	
Refund	52.50	42.50	
		130.50	£94.50
GROSS PROFIT	£2,102.86		£4,089.23
OVERHEADS			
Travelling expenses	412.10	532.80	
Printing	404.80	562.13	
Telephone	74.25	41.25	
Postage and carriage	311.83	486.92	
Stationery	268.62	201.25	
		1,471.60	£1,824.35
NETT PROFIT/LOSS	£631.26		£2,264.88

NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE RAFLAA

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

General — Membership has remained fairly stable over the last year. There has been an increase in numbers in the active membership, which has been countered by several resignations, the death of members and a number of members who have been taken off the active list due to non-payment of dues.

Recruitment — Recruitment from the 'appbe' web site has picked up (but more of that later). There have been a few direct referrals via the member's grapevine and a few from other sources, principally the Channel 4 Service Pals teletext page.

Advertising — We are taking advantage of reasonably priced advertising in the RAFA magazine. The IPA (Independent Pilots Association) gave us free advertising for this AGM in their magazine. We have been promised that the Associations details will continue to be entered into RAF News Association Register. As in previous years advertising in other magazines and papers is proving too expensive for the return. We are always glad to hear of any possible source of (free) advertising.

Appbe Website — The Appbe website is still up and running. The

new owner says that it will continue to do so for the foreseeable future, however due to pressure of work it is very unlikely that any development or remedial work be undertaken. This means that the automatic re-router for enquiries to the RAFLAA membership secretaries e-mail address no longer functions. However I am pleased to say that enquirers are still able to download the application form. This has been the source of several new members this last year.

Newsletter by e-mail — Recent exercises have been reasonably successful. Having persuaded my service provider that I was not intent on submerging the e-world with 'spam' I have been able to get two editions of the newsletter to most people who requested that mode of delivery. Please note that the last edition (February) was not sent out by e-mail as the Membership Secretary was on holiday! Anyone who did not receive a copy please let me ASAP.

There are a few problems with sending/receiving the newsletter by e-mail:

The recipient must let the membership secretary know his e-address and any changes to it.

The recipient must have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed, as this is the format in which the newsletter will be transmitted. Efforts to send the newsletter in Word or other Word processing programmes have not been very

OBITUARIES

With regret we have been informed that Allen 'Paddy' COON of the 87th Entry died on 20th July 2002.

This information was passed on by his wife, Aileen, as a result of the Subscription Reminder sent out recently by John.

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successful.

Recipients must be prepared to col-late the document themselves. This can be quite time consuming and may result in some paper wastage.

The recipients Service provider must be prepared to allow the recipient at least 2Mb storage. This can cause problems especially with some over-seas SPs. It is up to the recipient to ensure his that SP will allow/has allo-cated sufficient storage for long docu-ments if reception of the newsletter is to be accomplished. Note that E-mail phones do not have sufficient storage to receive the newsletter.

The newsletters are sent in batches over a 4-day period but because of the large numbers of long documents be-ing sent it is not always possible to clear each batch through my SP in 24hrs. (They are then just 'not sent'). I usually check up after 3 days and re-send those that have not 'gone'. If any-one is concerned about not receiving the newsletter please get in touch.

Membership reminders by E-Mail

In a further effort to reduce costs an exercise to send membership dues re-minders by e-mail has been carried out. This was quite successful and it is hoped to develop this further during the coming year.

Life Membership and Standing Or-ders

The number of members who are taking out Life Membership of the Association continues to grow. The numbers of members paying their subscription by Standing order also grows. I would urge those of you with a commitment to the association (and those of you who like me want an easy life) to seriously consider making use of either facility.

For those of you who like figures: Membership changes:

Total Figures	Variance
• 592 Names	+16 from last year
• 394 Active	+3 from last year
• 16 New	+16 since last year
• 36 resigned	+7 from last year
• 27 Life members	+3 from last year
• 16 Passed away	+1 from last year
• 198 Non Active or Ex members	+21 from last year
• 16 Members being chased for dues	down from 29 last year
• 5 Names on the enquiry list	down from last year
• 232 Members paying by SO	up from last year

Changes of personal details:

Please keep me informed in any changes in your personal details, especially those that may affect deliv-ery of the newsletter.

To summarize:

Membership still grows. Members please spread the word wherever pos-sible.

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We are losing members through non-payment of subscriptions and resignation. Most say that they are no longer interested because they are too isolated (or old) to get much out of Association activities. They also say that the newsletter isn't interesting enough! Anyone with anything at all interesting which can be printed please get in touch with the editor or any staff member to try and stop this.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

The chairman drew the attention of the meeting to the fact that the majority of the committee were either due or overdue for re-election. There having been no volunteers it was proposed that the existing committee, with the exception of the General Rep would be voted in en bloc.

Appointment	Name	Re-Election Due	Entry
President	Martin Palmer		91 st
Chairman	"Tiny" Kühle	Apr 06	87 th
Secretary	Dave Gunby	Apr 06	72 nd
Treasurer	Tony Horry	Apr 06	76 th
Membership Secretary	John Farmer	Apr 06	77 th
Service Rep	Joe Holroyd	Sep 05	85 th
AA Rep	Charles Hart	Sep 05	71 st
General	Vic Gibbs	Mar 04	88 th
Craft Rep	Graham Beeston	Sep 05	209 th
Tech Rep	Andy Perkins	Sep 05	109 th
Newsletter Editor	Colin Ingram	Sep 05	88 th

APPRENTICE RECORDS

The Secretary addressed the meeting saying that he had enjoyed his first year in office. He said that he was particularly pleased to have completed the copying of names from the Archives to a database.

The Secretary explained that the purpose was to create a database of all the Apprentices who passed through No1 RS RAF Locking. There were 5782 names listed and any member who would like details of his entry could simply contact the Secretary and ask for the relevant list.

The Secretary stressed that all the database contained was Service Number, Surname, Initials and a short comment with reference to passing out. He thought that this information was quite sufficient to enable those members who wished to make a start on finding

RE-FORMATION AND 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF NO 1 RADIO SCHOOL

The Royal Air Force made everyone most welcome for their Open Day to celebrate the Re-Formation of No 1 Radio School and the day was run with all the expected efficiency of the Service, apart for the weather of course.

For those brave enough to join the 'Old Boys' Flight on Parade (well done Tiny) they did a memorable march past behind the horse, all in the course of duty some of us had to sit in the stand covered in blankets, to keep warm, so that we could get photographic evidence of the day.



Flowerdown Hall, the new School, is quite palatial and bore no resemblance to 3 Block but some of the equipment in the labs was familiar to even our more veteran members, some things don't change.

Later in the day we retired to the Sergeants Mess for an evening reception/buffet, where everyone exchanged tales of yore with some of the younger serving members, it's wonderful what a few free drinks from the bar will do for the memory cells.

I stayed overnight before and after the event due to the distances involved and this provided me with the perfect excuse to visit the RAF Cosford Aerospace Museum. If we have the AGM next year at RAF Cosford I recommend a visit to the Museum, but beware, it is definitely worth an all day trip – and it's FREE. They seem to have everything from a V2 up to TSR2 and beyond, something for everyone, even a sad looking Bloodhound II, Type 86 and LCP, obviously in need of some TLC.

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pline in line with their training.

In my case they certainly succeeded, I guess I've always tried when possible to live life by the book and cannot suppress a feeling of guilt if bending or breaking the rules. Perhaps I was brain washed by the system, it certainly still affects my behaviour. As an example if there is an area of mown grass, I will always use any footpaths rather than take a short cut across. On the rare occasion I do walk across, I cannot resist a furtive glance around to see if anyone is watching. I would probably break some short sprint record if anyone were to shout. My wife thinks it very strange.

Despite all the ups and downs of apprentice training it is something that I am glad that I did. It transformed me from a shy, nervous youth to a young man with confidence boarding on arrogance. Being an ex -app always made me feel a cut above the rest. It also gave me membership of an exclusive club, with a camaraderie, which those who have not shared the Locking experience might find it difficult to understand.

Mike Collier

76th Entry

Eds. Comments

Thanks to Mike our most regular contributor to the Newsletter, if anyone has happy, sad, wish I had / had not joined type of experiences during their Service career that they would like to share then let me know.

I do have one pending article – but I am still typing in the 18 pages of script it could be serialised!

ONLY IN BRITAIN

Only in Britain can you get a pizza delivered to your door quicker than an ambulance.

Only in Britain do supermarkets make sick people walk all the way to the back of the shop to get prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the door.

Only in Britain do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries and DIET coke.

Only in Britain do banks leave their doors open and chain their pens to the counter.

Only in Britain do we leave cars worth thousands of pounds on the drive and put junk and cheap lawnmowers in the garage.

Only in Britain do we buy hot dog sausages in packs of 10 and bread rolls in packs of 8.

Only in Britain are there handicapped parking spaces in front of a skating rink.

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their former colleagues.

A copy of the database and its associated spreadsheets has been lodged with the Henlow Museum and another copy is in the care of the Chairman.

The Chairman introduced a proposal from Phil Mills (90th) which was supported by David Penberthy (71st) and invited Phil to speak in favour.

Phil outlined his plan to preserve the Apprentice records at Henlow Museum by a comprehensive indexing system. He said it was our responsibility as owners of the Archives to protect them from loss or damage. He also intimated that it was necessary under the Public Records Act of 1958.

The Chairman replied that the records were not owned by the Association, merely in their custody. The archives were owned by the RAF and as such could not be disclosed for 75 years. With the re-formation of No1 RS it was hoped that the three Archive filing cabinets could be moved to RAF Cosford and so releasing much needed space at the Henlow Museum.

The Chairman said that in view of the fact that a database had already been created there was no need for any further work on the Archives.

There followed a protracted debate before Joe Holroyd (85th), who had considerable historical knowledge regarding the Archives, introduced a counter proposal that the records be passed to No1 Radio School for safe keeping, and suggested that Phil Mills and Dave Penberthy could offer their services to the school.

The counter proposal was seconded by Vic Gibbs (88th) and carried by a majority vote.

Honorary Life Membership.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that in accordance with the constitution it was in the power of the meeting to appoint honorary life memberships. He said that there would be no more fitting first recipient than our retiring Chairman Bert Davies. He had spoken about Bert in his opening remarks and wished to propose him to receive an honorary life membership. This proposal was seconded by Chris Bryan (87th) and unanimously approved.

REFORMATION OF NO 1 RADIO SCHOOL

The Chairman reiterated that RAF Cosford was to be approached as soon as possible so as to maintain the momentum of the new accord. It was very much hoped that No1 RS could host our 10th AGM next year.

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NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION.

There had been some hiccups regarding the distribution of the February Newsletter. This was partly caused by the Membership Secretary being away and also the need to get the newsletter out as a matter of urgency as it contained details of the Cosford celebrations. The Membership Secretary said that he was confident that in the normal run of things those wishing to do so would receive their newsletter by e-mail and the remainder by post.

ASSOCIATION TIES.

Andy Perkins (109th) reported that stocks of Association ties had all but gone and the Association needed to buy more. The minimum order of 50 or 60 ties represented a considerable outlay for the Association, which generally takes about ten years to recoup. Andy outlined several examples, which involved an outlay from £300 to £900 depending on quality and size of material.

Peter Crowe (95th) proposed that the association order the nearest tie to the present one, and this was seconded by Dave Cheeseman (84th). All agreed.

This will mean an outlay of £318 by the Association and Andy was authorised to go ahead and make the purchase.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

There were no items for any other business.

DATE AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING.

The committee would organise the next AGM to take place during April 2004 hopefully at RAF Cosford.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 15.30 hrs.

LOCKING AND HOW I BEAT THE SYSTEM

a certificate signed by a Flt. Lt. Sandall, stating that I found a total of 72 faults in 44 hours on H2S4A. T.S.T.S again seemed only interested in knowledge rather than understanding, so I bluffed my way through the equipment's. When I got into the real world, my fault-finding technique not unreasonably was a disaster and I never really enjoyed the practical side of electronics.

Workshops was one of the few parts of the technical work I liked. I have always been quite good with my hands and things there came relatively easy. Even my superhet worked first time and I still have the BA spanners and instrument screwdrivers we made. Another passing memory here is the odd usually shorter member of a class, suspended by his overalls from the coat hooks in the Inter workshop corridors. Wally Still was our instructor and I almost got him into trouble. I had scrounged a 48 on some pretext and planned to hitchhike the 150 miles home. Wally let me off early on a Friday afternoon, but I was picked up by the snoops before I could make good my escape and sent back. Wally to his credit, shrugged it off and actually gave me a lift into Weston on the back of his motorbike.

Throughout the three years the attrition rate in the Entry was pretty high, of the original 97 at attestation only 43 passed out in December 56.

Many fell by the wayside due to illness or sports injuries but the technical took its fair share as well. Yet I do not remember any extra tuition ever being offered to anyone who was struggling. FT seemed to be the official solution to the problem.

Much to my surprise (and that of Sqdn Ldr White I suspect) I was fortunate enough to be one of the 43, in fact I finished in the top half of the entry. However although I knew a lot of technical words, I understood almost nothing and was certainly not the bright young technical young wizard ready to solve all electronic problems the RAF could present. I did not really understand electronics until a number of years after Locking when I started instructing. Then it was not only a matter of relearning all the basics but also spending countless hours working out relatively simple explanations that I could defend without getting nailed to the blackboard.

In retrospect, I have often wondered if the technical aspect was not as important as producing the archetypal military moron. After all you do not have to be very clever to change a black box or fault find down to module level, then send a duff module to the MU. Was the true purpose of apprentice training to produce people who would jump when told to do so and not come down without permission? These would then form the NCO backbone of the Service and enforce disci-

LOCKING AND HOW I BEAT THE SYSTEM

Wing goalkeeper, was invited to stay for an extra 3 months and much to my frustration, he became the obvious choice. For the summer season, having lost by a short head to the P. F.O. in the 400 yards hurdles, I became second string in the Wing 4 x 400 yards relay team. Apart from having to train before breakfast, it was quite a good "skive" and gave me a couple of trips away to Arborfield (where the food was infinitely worse than ours) and Hereford for sports meetings.

The technical work was the most serious threat to my survival, I clearly remember the first maths lesson. A shiny young Flt Lt bounced into the room and said "You have all done Logs, so we won't bother with them". Now, when I left school a month or so earlier, the height of my mathematical achievement was pounds, shillings and pence. As far as I was concerned, logs were things you put on the fire. However, there was no way that this insecure 15 year old was going to show a large group of his contemporaries, how thick he was. So I nodded sagely with the rest and as a result generated a substantial gap in my maths knowledge. An inability to use Log Tables when slide rules and pocket calculators were not common aids, presented major problems. As a secondary consequence, the Decibel concept was a total mystery. (I did not find a really sensible use for dBs until, in my mid 40's I

became a lecturer at the B.B.C. training school. At which point, I also discovered that a lot of the people who quoted things in dB's, really had no idea what they were talking about.) As far as maths was concerned, I was always struggling. Only when we got to calculus did the playing field get more level and I did not feel quite so dim. Basic Electronics in the first year was almost as difficult as the maths. Fortunately, I was blessed with a good memory and took to writing all the technical terms and their definitions in a book. These I learned like poetry. (e.g. A coupling capacitor blocks d.c. but passes a.c. – I had not the faintest idea how or why) Equally fortunately, T.S. T.S. rarely asked multi-choice questions which required understanding and rote learning kept my head above water. By the start of the Equipment phase, I had developed a crude form of shorthand. Taking down almost every word the instructor uttered and copying it up, longhand every evening. This again was learned "parrot fashion", by the time the "board" came along I knew the purpose of most all the components but had very little idea how the equipment worked. The practical side was a little easier. Setting up was a matter of memory; fault finding however was a mystery. I had become very adept at picking out newly soldered joints and missing components. It did not appear a matter of much concern that I could not explain my reasoning in finding a particular fault. I still have

RAFLAA AGM 2003 (VIEWED FROM THE 83RD ENTRY PERSPECTIVE)

This years AGM must I feel be viewed as having been a very successful and enjoyable event as far as ex members of the 83rd Entry are concerned, and our thanks must go to the committee for all the hard work that went into organising the day.

We were one of the smaller entries, with only 29 on the passing out parade, of which 19 were with the Entry from the outset.

Seven of us managed to get to Weston this year, and although one was not able to attend the AGM due to other commitments, we were able to re-unite all six original members of the Ground Wireless Class on the Friday evening. (The first time we had all been together since March 1959)



The photograph (taken by our erstwhile RAFLAA secretary Dave Gunby) shows John Aston, Brian

(Twid) Cooke, Bryan Waring, Malcolm (Jeff) Bradford, Brian (Toggy) Togwell and Malcolm (Robby) Robinson at the Wychwood Hotel.

On the Saturday, we were joined by Doug (Mac) Manocha, increasing our representation at the AGM from the five who attended last year to a total of six.

We would have been joined by another two of our number, had it not been for Mike Horlock's commitments in Turkey and the fact the Colin Cove's wife is recovering from a recent operation. I am sure that we all wish Beryl a speedy return to good health.

Five of us were able to stay on for the dinner dance in the evening, and together with our wives, we all had a very enjoyable evening.

We are all looking forward to next year's AGM at Cosford where we hope to have an even greater contingent, following our own re-union which is scheduled for 20th March 2004 to celebrate the 45th anniversary of our graduation. **(All 83rd please take note of the date)**

LOCKING AND HOW I BEAT THE SYSTEM

I guess that like many people my recollection of the Locking experience is a kaleidoscope of half remembered events, rather than a chronological sequence of memories. Above all, my lasting impression is one of a continual struggle for survival.

It did not start well. During the initial interviews at Halton, I had been told by Sqdn. Ldr White ("A" Sqdn. Commander) that he was not happy accepting me at Locking. Apparently my entrance examination results had been very poor and he did not expect me to make it through the 3 years.

When the 76th Entry was formed on 20th January 1954, I was just 15 years old, very naïve, short on self-confidence and had rarely been away from home before. My education, to say the least, was elementary. After the chaos of the first few days, it occurred to me that to survive, I had to become anonymous. In this I think I succeeded, in recent years as I have located most of the ex-members of my entry, very few could remember me. One even asked if I had actually been in the entry.

To achieve this inconspicuous state, the obvious thing to do seemed to be to knuckle under, do everything I was told to do and make every attempt to avoid trouble. Unfortunately this did not endear me to my colleagues. Particularly as I was fairly

quiet and neither smoked or drank. (Had tried smoking once and was violently ill. Didn't like the taste of beer and spirits burned my throat) additionally, I had a steady girl friend at home and did not go off camp much. (Must have got something right there, as after 44 years of marriage she is still the present Mrs. C) So, I guess I was 'different, which proved to be counter productive. A degree of harassment was the result. Not of the physical type. I was not intimidatingly large but big enough to deter violence. Rather it was of a verbal nature, regularly being accused of creeping, boot licking etc. my attempts to ignore it were largely unsuccessful. After a few weeks it was becoming a serious problem and it prompted my next step on the road to survival. We were waiting in a classroom for the instructor to arrive, the usual remarks were coming my way. Summoning up every bit of my fairly limited courage, I turned on the class and demanded to know what the problems actually were. To my surprise there was complete silence. No one was prepared to justify any accusations and face me down. From that point on, the rancour subsided and life became a little easier.

On the non-academic side, things were relatively easy. I was of average size and shape and managed to look quite smart in uniform. A number of years spent in the ATC ensured that drill and keeping my kit up to scratch were no problem. I do not remember

any irate Apprentice NCO hurling my mug the length of the billet to see if it would bounce or using a broom to push my big and small packs over the back of the large locker. Inspection faults were relatively minor and from them I learned quickly. Life became a blur of bed packs, floor pads and the bumper.

Some substantial memories emerge from that blur. The cold on the Winter and wearing either pyjamas or a track-suit under my uniform. Rushing back to the billet on sheet changing day to make sure you did not get a torn one. Taking a long hot bath on the weekend afternoons when most people were out. You could be reasonably sure then, that no comedian would hurl a bucket of cold water over the wall. Also on weekends putting to bed those that had discovered how mush 'scrumpy' could be bought for 6d. The euphoria of going on leave, the gloom of returning. The frantic march up the hill from the Tech. Blocks to try and get to the mess before anyone else. Queue bashing by senior entries, which I bitterly resented but was bright enough not to show. Plus of course, the thing that everyone remembers. The tub of scalding hot, greasy, grey water outside the mess, into which we dunked our mug and irons. I always tried to get to the N.A. F.F.I. early and out again before the senior entry grabbed you, stuck you on a table and demanded a song. The penalty for failing to comply being a cold bath or worse. One poor soul I remem-

ber was placed on a wheeled trolley and propelled the length of the N.A. F.F.I. into the glass cabinet housing the Wing trophies. I also remember our Flight Commander "Humphrey" (Flt/Lt Bobart) breaking one of my bad habits. He held a surprise parade one day and inspected everyone's nails. I would nibble mine endlessly. The loss of my P.P. for 6 weeks ensured that I never bit my nails again.

As time passed, I, like many others, tried to develop various "skives". Probably the best one I found was to join the church choir. You did not have to be a budding Pavarotti but were excused church parades. Just a leisurely stroll down to the church and return the same way. Choir practice got you out of the occasional extra "bull night" and having the padre on your side opened a few doors.

My most enjoyable areas were P.T. and the sports facilities. I was always quite fit and what I lacked in talent I made up for with enthusiasm. I was not too unhappy to fail W/O Parks one round audition. Boxing, as far as I was concerned was strictly a spectator sport. Football was my first love and was lucky enough to spend two years playing for the wing "B" team, in a local Saturday league. My big ambition was to play for the Squadron. In our last term I thought I had made it, I was the obvious choice. Then Chick Fowler (ex-75th), the