

RAFLAA Newsletter

SERIAL 48

JULY 2007

IN THIS ISSUE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	3
Minutes of the 13 th AGM of the RAF Locking Apprentice Association.....	3
Stan Murray	10
NOTICES	11
Advance Warning - AGM Date.....	11
Cenotaph Tickets.....	11
HM Armed Forces Veterans Badge	11
Pensions for All.....	11
AFPG and CAFF	12
Radio Apprentices (Flowerdown) Tie	13
APPRENTICE DAYS	14
Advertisement 1962.....	14
You can only go so far	15
Life in the Pipe & Trumpet band, from an 87 th perspective.....	18
I Wonder Why.....	19
Contacts and Other Reminiscences	20
HUMOUR.....	21
Extras	23
THOUGHTS ON AGEING	27
Getting Old	27
And they ask why I like retirement....??????	28
Our Ageing Brains are Better than Some Younger Brains	29
RAF DAYS AND AFTER	32
I Shouldn't Haveas a Cpl/Tech (1962/64).....	32
What Do I Do Now?.....	33
Me & Politics.....	34
Books on Radar.....	36
DAYS OUT- HELICOPTER MUSEUM.....	37
AIRFIELD CHARITY SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED	38
OBITUARY	39
CLOSING THOUGHT.....	40

EDITORS NOTES

Hello to you all.

As I stated at the AGM, thank you for all the copy you send. Bruce Graham writes in Contacts and other Reminiscences that he loves the "the reminiscences that have appeared in the pages of the Newsletter" and I know he is not alone. At the AGM, in the bar, I overheard laughter as someone recounted a tale of apprentice days. You all have memories so please put finger to keyboard (or pen to paper) and send them to me so we can all share the memories.

I was pleased to award the annual Wordsmith award to Mike Collier at the AGM. Mike has been a regular contributor for many years. I hope to continue the award at future AGM's.

We have the usual mix of notices, reminiscences and jokes. The disgrace about service pensions continues to stir up correspondence and we have a new section about getting old. We have featured the Helicopter Museum under 'Day's Out' again as there is a special exhibition. There must be more events or places of interest to members, so if you know of any, please write in.

One last point, if you send in something, please do write it up as an article. If you just send a few notes I cannot really turn that into prose and be sure to get your meaning into the article. Nevertheless, I do appreciate all that you send me. Thanks to you all and if it does not appear, as ever, it is stored for future consideration.
Ed.

Deadline for next issues

To allow for printing and distribution, each newsletter needs to be completed well ahead of the nominal month of issue. If you have a contribution please ensure it reaches the editor before the date set below.

23rd September for November 07

23rd January for March 08

23rd May for July 08

All comments, contributions, ideas and feedback to the newsletter editor:

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Soft copy preferred!

Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the 13th AGM of the RAF Locking Apprentice Association

From Dave Gunby (Secretary)

Venue: The Royal Hotel, Weston super Mare

Date: Saturday 14th April 2007 at 13:03 Hrs

Present:-

Air Cdre Martin Palmer	91 st	President
Tiny Kuhle	87 th	Chairman
Dave Gunby	72 nd	Secretary
Tony Horry	76 th	Treasurer
John Farmer	77 th	Membership Secretary
Peter Crowe	95 th	AA Rep/Webmaster
Andy Perkins	109 th	Tech Rep
Chris Tett	92 nd	Newsletter Editor
Graham Beaston	209 th	Craft Rep
Rick Atkinson	91 st	Service Rep
Vic Gibbs	88 th	General Rep

ITEM 1 (Chairman's Address)

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a reading of the Apprentice Prayer. There followed a minutes silence in memory of those who had passed away since the last AGM. He then addressed the AGM thus :-

We've had an interesting and busy year, with the major event being the dedication of our stained glass window at St. Georges Church. I'm sure you've seen the video, which was produced by Barry Dinage, which for those of you that couldn't attend, shows how truly relevant the church is to the commemoration of Apprentice training. I believe it was money well spent, and I encourage all to visit the church to view the window, because the pictures don't do it justice. I'd like to give my thanks to Dave Gunby for his work in progressing the design, and its manufacture. You'll also hear from our treasurer, Tony Horry, that we were inside the budget that we had set. We were fortunate with the weather, and lunch in the refurbished Airman's mess was excellent. We were pleased to see representatives from other Associations, including the Polish AA, Boy Entrants, and of course our hosts, Halton AA. The day finished off with a visit to the Apprentice museum, which is run by the Halton AA, and very well worth seeing. The Halton AAA would be able to give advice on opening times etc. and can be contacted on 01296 696896.

The original plan was for a combined service of dedication with the Cranwell AA, however, their design 'approval process' has slipped a bit, and I'm not sure when they have it in plan now, but I'm sure we will be able to support their service of dedication when that arises.

We now need a project to further the Association, and that will be raised at item 6 on the agenda, but I'd like to set the scene, and get you to think about the topic. We have some options to consider, and, though I hesitate to use the phrase, we have a 'prudent' treasurer (not Chancellor!), we therefore also have some funds available.

ROYAL AIR FORCE LOCKING APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION

This is our second time here at the Royal Hotel, and it was not an easy decision to book here again this year because of the number of complaints. We carried out a survey of last year's event to gauge the membership's view of the venue. Thanks to all of you who replied to the questionnaire. The results were published in the Newsletter, and the results presented to the hotel management, who acknowledged the value of the feedback, and have promised to do better this year. I hope so, but I'm sure you'll let me know if not - I was never issued with flak jacket, so be gentle! One of the comments made by several people, was that the disco was always too loud, and that they had stopped coming to the evening event because of that, but they still gave a figure of merit (or de-merit). Actually I thought the volume just about right, and I'm usually one of the complainers! I hope that the DJ pays attention again this time.

Before I hand you over to our President, I'd like once more to thank all of the committee for the hard work they put in voluntarily on your behalf to keep this Association going.

Your committee has, as ever, done some sterling work to ensure that the Association is kept in fine shape. I'm indebted to them, and it's reassuring to know that the money is looked after very well, that our membership is maintained, newsletters produced and distributed, merchandise maintained, and the AGM venue booked and organised.

The Chairman then introduced the President of the Association, A/Cmdr Martin Palmer.

ITEM 2 (President's Address)



The President presented the RAFLAA Trophy, a framed citation and a cheque for £50 to Miss Debbie Sowerby (Instructional Officer and Radio Operations Subject Matter Expert) at No1 Radio School. The Citation was read out, and the President handed over the awards to Miss Sowerby who was accompanied by her parents.

The President continued by thanking the Committee for their hard work during the year and pointed out that he took a keen interest in their activities through the minutes.

The Chairman thanked the President and invited the Treasurer to present his report.

ITEM 3 (Treasurers Report)

I hope that you each have sight of a copy of the Accounts and Balance Sheet for the year ending January 2007. The full accounts are here if anyone wishes to inspect them.



These accounts have been audited and have been declared as a true and fair view of trading for the year and that the Balance Sheet is an accurate reflection of the Association's affairs at 31st January 2007. This year our net surplus of income over expenditure is £887.19

Income

Due to your decision at the 2006 AGM, annual subscriptions were raised from £7.50 to £10.00 and the membership joining fee was raised from £10.00 to £15.00. The first changes to be made since the inauguration of the Association in 1993.

The changes to Standing Order Mandates have generally gone smoothly, thanks to the work put in by your membership Secretary, your co-operation and not too many problems with the various banks. Many of you chose to pay the extra £2.50 by cheque in 2006, so there are a number of mandates still to come into force. Strangely, my own mandate was changed by remote control by the Charing Cross Branch of Lloyds, when a member of the 91st Entry was changing his mandate!

One spin off from the change in subscriptions has been the increase in Life Memberships taken out – it has been 19 in the last twelve months whereas it was one in 05/06. The odd figure of £1912.17 reflects one payment being Australian \$.

Expenditure

The major expense in 2006 was the Dedication of the Locking Apprentices Window now installed in the Church at RAF Halton. The cost of design and making the window by Karen Newby was £847.00. The enjoyable dedication Service and Lunch and transport cost £340 which was covered by your generous donations of £245 and the charge of £5 per head for those attending the event. The overall cost to the Association was £737.00.

The other major expenditure to the Association is the production and distribution of the newsletter. But this is a necessary expense as it is our main communication link with the membership. The cost of production rose sharply this year, mainly due to the cost of using a commercial firm for the March 2006 edition – it cost a total of £855.58 (Print = £656.80; Postage = £198.78) In June we once again benefited from our member Graham Beeston being able to produce the newsletter at £395.43 (Printing and Postage) and again the December edition for printing and postage cost £419.67. The Committee and the membership really do thank Graham most sincerely for his contribution to the Association.

Other costs to the Association continue on a par with previous years.

The AGM for 2006 shows an income of £2491.50 against an expenditure of £3188.27 but that expenditure includes £200 deposit to the Royal Hotel for to-day's event, so the cost to the Association for the AGM 2006 was £496.77. This covers the cost of wine and all expenses including the award of the Trophy to Ken Hanniford

I propose that the Accounts for the year 2006/07 be adopted

Acceptance of the report was proposed by Charles Hart (71st) and seconded by Harry North (96th). There was unanimous approval.

The Chairman thanked the Treasurer for his efforts and then invited the Membership Secretary to present his report.

ITEM 4 (Membership Secretary's Report)

General

The year 2006/7 has been a good year as far as membership numbers are concerned. The number of new members joining has been constant, averaging 1 a month. Members joining exceeds those leaving resulting in an increase in the number of active members. The number of members taking Life membership last year is well up on previous years, (perhaps the new membership subscription rate has something to do with it.) Numbers of members paying their dues by Standing Order Mandate has also increased, (perhaps for the same reason!) There have been some resignations (mainly due to changes in circumstances.) 3 members have passed away.

Advertising

The association continues to advertise in the RAFA magazine and on Teletext Channel 4. The IPA (Independent Pilots Association) continues to give us free advertising for the AGM in their magazine. The returns from this advertising (especially the RAFA magazine) continue to be encouraging. Advertising in other magazines and papers continues to be too expensive (for the anticipated return).

We are always glad to hear of any possible source of (free) advertising.

Newsletter by e-mail

The Newsletter continues to be distributed by E-mail. Not so many problems with E-address changes, I am glad to report that changes are now being advised in good time.

A copy of the Newsletter is also published on the RAFLAA Website. I have been polling members with E-mail with regard to finishing the individual copy service to E-mail equipped members. (To be discussed as an agenda item later in the meeting.)

Life Membership and Standing Orders

Currently there are 15 members who have failed to update the subscription amount paid by their bank (to £10.00). If any member has not done so please do it as soon as is possible. If you prefer you can do it on-line with most banks, (or even walk down to your bank and arrange it in person.) However, if you do it that way please let me know so that I can update the database. Forms, SOM payment dates etc are available from me should you need them.

Membership changes since the last AGM (up to the 1st April 2007)

- We now have 639 names on the database.
- 13 new members have joined.
- 5 members have resigned.
- 3 members have passed away.
- There is an increase in (active) membership to 365. This year there are only 3 members who have not paid their subs for 2005 and who must be considered 'doubtful'. In addition there are 2 members who have 'disappeared off the map' (they both have long standing, Standing Order Mandates in still operation which is doubly puzzling!)
- 17 more members have applied for life membership giving a total of 54 life members.
- There are now 223 Members paying by SO, this is down from 238 last year but as most of them have taken out life membership (I think they can be forgiven!)
- There are 84 members still not paying by SO.

Changes of personal details

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

Acceptance of John's Report was proposed by Joe Holroyd (85th) and seconded by Vic Gibbs (88th). There was unanimous approval.

The Chairman thanked John for his report and introduced the next item on the Agenda.

ITEM 5 (Election of officers)

The only officer of the Association due for re-election was Vic Gibbs the General Rep. This was an office instigated in the early days of the Association and was meant to be filled by someone who still had a strong service presence. However, there was no one in such a position now and as Vic had never known what his duties were, after a brief discussion it was decided to discontinue the post.

The current committee members are listed inside the back cover of this newsletter.

ITEM 6 (Memorial Locking/Arboretum)

The Committee would make the provision of a Memorial to RAF Locking Apprentices their project for the coming year.

The Secretary outlined the costs involved in providing a Memorial at the National Arboretum. Basically a large donation was required to the British Legion (> £5000) for the use of a 10m square plot on which to place a Memorial (Tree, Seat etc).

The Treasurer outlined progress with regard to the redevelopment of the RAF Locking site and the planned inclusion of a Memorial of some sort. He displayed plans drawn up by the SWRDA which showed 2 possible positions although there was no indication of what form the Memorial should take.

ROYAL AIR FORCE LOCKING APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION

Following a discussion it was decided to discount the Arboretum and concentrate on the RAF Locking site. The Committee would do all it could to retain the Church and surrounding land which was under threat of demolition. Co-incidentally the Locking parish church was seeking land for a burial site as its current Cemetery was full.



It was proposed by Brian Davies (76th) and seconded by Glynn Price (102nd) that members support the Committee in their fight with the South West Regional Development Agency. All agreed.

Peter Minter (106th) proposed that a sum of £3000 be set aside for the provision of a Memorial at the RAF Locking site. The proposal was seconded by Harry North (96th) and all agreed.

Tony Horry will be our local contact who will attend meetings as necessary to ensure that we give maximum support to the Locking Parish Council in their quest for more land.

ITEM 7 (Newsletter Production)



Editor Chris Tett thanked members for their support and said that he would welcome constructive comments. He thanked members for their input articles and went on to announce the winner of this year's "Wordsmith". The award went to Mike Collier (76th) a prolific provider of tales from the past.

Chris Tett proposed that the Newsletter be provided on the Association web site. He said that the Newsletter would be password protected and only be available to paid up members. A limited trial of a proposed system had taken place within the Committee which was successful. Dave Gunby (72nd) seconded the proposal and all approved.

ITEM 8 (RAFLAA Web Site)

Webmaster Peter Crowe reported that the web site was working satisfactorily and it had received around 1700 'hits' to date.

ITEM 9 (Golden Entries 77, 78 & 79)

- a) John Farmer spoke for the 77th Entry. He gave the numbers of Beginners (80) and the Passers Out (49), and went on to describe how undistinguished his entry was! Or did he say it was the best entry to pass through.



- b) Richard Putnam spoke at length for the 78th. He recounted many tales of what would now be called bullying. He described in detail the painting and re-painting of a door. His most criminal act appeared to be stepping off a floor pad. Beginners (113) Passers out (33) although there were probably more.

- c) Ken Toogood spoke for the 79th. Ken is a relatively new member of the Association and was suffering from ill health. He announced how proud he was to be a member and what a good foundation for adult life the Apprenticeship Scheme had been. Indeed his Father was a 6th Entry Halton Apprentice and still lives aged 98.

ITEM 10 (Venue and format of the AGM/Reunion 2008)

The meeting felt the Committee should decide the details of next year's reunion. They would be discussing this at their July meeting in the meantime the Royal Hotel had been provisionally booked for AGM 2008 on April 26th.



ITEM 11 (Any other business)

The only subject brought up was that of pensions for those who served less than 22yrs before 1975. Richard Putnam updated members on the ongoing fight . He is a member of the Armed Forces Pension Group (AFPG) and he outlined their activities together with a mention of (CAFFUK) Combined Armed Forces Federation. No one should hold their breath over this issue but despite many appeals failing the fight goes on. Details of AFPG activity were available at the meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1530hrs.

Addendum

As a result of the Heads/Tails + stand up/sit down game during the evening function the sum of £100 was raised for charity to be split evenly between RAFA Branch W-S-M and Flowerdown House W-S-M.

Stan Murray

Stan Murray came all the way from Scotland to attend the 92nd Reunion and the RAFLAA AGM and Dinner /Dance. Some of you may be aware that Stan was taken ill early Saturday morning with chest pains.

He was taken to Weston General Hospital and kept in for tests. He was transferred to Bristol Royal Infirmary the following Wednesday for further tests but kept in. He was then given a triple bypass operation on Wednesday 2nd May and is now doing well and back home in Falkirk.

His wife, Kathleen, stayed with in Bristol with Stan and asked me thank everyone for all the messages and cards. Stan had lots more cards than anyone else!

Notices

Advance Warning - AGM Date

Last year, deliberations and representations about the quality of the food took some months and, consequently, the committee were unable to book the preferred date for the 2007 AGM as the Royal Hotel was already booked. The next AGM has been provisionally booked at the Royal Hotel for Saturday 26th April 2008.

Cenotaph Tickets

Every year the RAFLAA is given tickets to the Remembrance Day service and parade in Whitehall. The RAFLAA marches with representatives from the other RAF Apprentices and Boy Entrants.

If you would like to join other members, please contact Dave Gunby Tele: 01522 525484 or email: dpgraf72@btinternet.com

HM Armed Forces Veterans Badge

The Veterans Badge is a small lapel badge surmounted by a crown and with 'Veteran' underneath. It can now be issued to men and women who served in HM Armed Forces up to and including 31 December 1984.

The badge can also be issued posthumously to War Widows or Widowers receiving a War Widows or Widowers pension provided the deceased served before 1984.

For more details and an application form, please contact:

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency,

Thornton-Cleveleys,

Lancashire, FY5 3WP

Tele: 0800 169 2277 (free UK only) or +44 1253 330561

Email: help@veteransagency.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.veteransagency.mod.uk

Pensions for All

The article on the pension injustice has stirred up more! Ed.

Petition

From Ian Davis 91st

Following the article in the RAFLAA Magazine I wrote without much success to my MP Liam Fox. Subsequently I have raised a petition on No10's website. This is the web address:

<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/1975RAFPENSION/>

The petition reads:

We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to give the same pension benefit rights to servicemen who left the services prior to 1975 as those who left after that date. Prior to 1975 RAF servicemen had to serve for 22 years before any pension was payable. This is unlike other public servants who received a pro-rata pension after only a few years. I, like many other servicemen, served for 13+ years and now have a gap in my pensionable years. During the 60's it became the industry norm to have pension and redundancy

rights. I left the RAF in 1972 and it is unfair that the rules were changed to cure this anomaly in 1975 without regard for those who had served before. Also a severance payment on leaving was greatly increased to reflect the redundancy rules of the time. Please make use of the forthcoming Pension Bill and the Early Day Motion 67 to restore our pension rights.

Please consider signing this petition.

AFPG and CAFF

From Tom Comer (73rd)

I am writing in response to your article *Pensions for All*, published in the Newsletter No 47, March 2007, whilst helpful and supportive, is inaccurate in some important respects. This letter has been cleared by AFPG.

Your article correctly rehearses the long-standing injustice concerning the lack of pension rights of servicemen who served for fewer than 22 years and were discharged before May 1975. You go on to report that the injustice was taken up by the Combined Armed Forces Association UK (CAFF UK), who had found a sympathetic MP, who, in turn, tabled an Early Day Motion (EDM 67). In fact, the injustice has been pursued vigorously by the Armed Forces Pension Group Ltd (AFPG) over many years. This organisation, of which I am a member, has lobbied MPs, taken the case to the High Court, the House of Lords and the European Court of Human Rights. This has cost the membership of AFPG more than £1.5 million. I am aware that CAFF UK supports the case in general terms but I am not aware of any specific legal action that it has taken in pursuit of the case. It was not CAFF UK, as you report, which contacted Mr Colin Challen MP about the injustice, but AFPG. Mr Mike Steel of AFPG wrote to Mr Challen's agent, Mr David Langham, with the result that a meeting was arranged with Mr Challen in Leeds. Subsequently, Mr Challen tabled the EDM, which now has the support of more than 135 MPs of all parties.

As part of the campaign, the case was publicised on the BBC's programme *The Politics Show*, Yorkshire Region, on 4th March this year. A similar programme is to be broadcast on *Look East* on Sunday 25th March, 2007. An article outlining the injustice was also published in the Yorkshire Evening Post on 19th March. The AFPG plans to lobby Parliament on 17th April 2007 and a large number of members are travelling by bus to Westminster from around the country.

I urge all readers who have an interest in this matter to look up AFPG Ltd on the website <http://www.afpg.info> This website contains the history of the campaign and details of prospective action to be taken. If readers wish, they may contact AFPG by writing, email or by telephone, as follows.

Mike Steel, PO BOX 8151, MANSFIELD, NG210ZA

TEL: 01623 402290, Email: info@afpg.info

or Mike Steel miverost@ntlworld.com

or Barry Wells wellsbjaw@aol.com

Radio Apprentices (Flowerdown) Tie

From Brian Cooke 83rd
Tel: 01522 882146
e-mail: b.cooke703@ntlworld.com



You may recall that when we graduated from the Apprentices, we were entitled to purchase the tie as shown on production of proof that we had successfully passed our final exams.

I have been trying to obtain a replacement for my rather ancient one, and have now managed to contact a company that manufactured them in the past, and although they no longer have stock of the material, they would be prepared to manufacture a minimum order of 100 ties.

At this stage, I would like to assess the level of interest to see if it would be worth ordering them.

The cost of the tie would be about £22.00 plus post and packing.

Would anyone interested please let me know as soon as possible, with their address and contact details.

If there is sufficient interest, I will place the order and confirm details with all parties.

Apprentice days

Advertisement 1962

From Ian Davis 91st



Security. First class training. A well-paid post **FOR THE MAN ON THE GROUND**

In the R.A.F. the man on the ground plays an essential part in the smooth running of the service. There are 22 trade groups and nearly 200 trades. Every one of them offers good prospects of promotion to the right man, and the first class training will fit you for senior N.C.O. rank or for a good post in civilian life should you wish to leave the Service after a period. The minimum engagement for which you may volunteer is 3 years. The pay is good at all levels—many airmen own their own cars and if you are married you will receive extra pay. If you are accepted for a life career, you will retire at 55 with a pension of over £13 a week and a tax-free gratuity of up to £2000.

These are the trade groups for which you may apply: Aircraft Engineering, General Engineering, Airfield Construction, Ground Signalling, Medical Supply, Police, Air Defence Operating, Electrical and Instrument Engineering, Air Traffic Control, Safety and Surface, Dental, Catering, Music, Radio Engineering, General Service, Photography, R.A.F. Regiment, Accounting and Secretarial. If you would like more information, send for the illustrated book 'The Man On The Ground'. Write to R.A.F. Careers Information Centre (BBP8), Victory House, Kingsway, London WC1.

OVER 15? WHAT CAN AN R.A.F. APPRENTICESHIP OFFER YOU? Most civilian apprenticeships take 5 years: an R.A.F. apprenticeship takes only 3 and the training is among the best in the world. During your apprenticeship you live well

and you are well paid: you can earn up to £8.18.3. a week. You have generous holidays and free travel between your home and the apprentice school. When you complete your course you can have qualifications that are recognised by the Trade Unions and accepted for National or City and Guilds certificates. You



FLYING AS AN N.C.O. With G.C.E. 'O' level in two subjects you can fly as sergeant aircrew: either as an air quartermaster taking part in supply drops, organising para-troop operations, dealing with freight and passengers on flights with Transport Command; or as an air signaller operating wireless, radar and other equipment. The pay is good—over £15 a week all found. The minimum engagement for which you may apply is 8 years. There is a chance later on, of commissioned service as an officer.

have an outstanding chance of reaching senior N.C.O. rank later on, and if you are exceptional you may be accepted for a cadetship at Cranwell or Henlow. To enter an apprentice school you must pass an exam, selection test and interview, but G.C.E. in certain subjects carries exemption from the exam. You should be between 15½ and 17½.

BOY ENTRANT SCHEME To enter the R.A.F. as a Boy Entrant you should be 15½—16½. You do not take an examination, but you will have to pass an elementary education test and an interview board. You will be given 18 months training in one of the engineering or non-technical trades of the R.A.F. and at 17½ you may become a leading aircraftman doing a man's job, earning a man's wage. A Boy Entrant has a good chance of promotion through the N.C.O. or technician ranks.

For further information on any of the ground trades, N.C.O. flying duties, apprenticeships or Boy Entrant schemes, write, giving your date of birth and details of education to R.A.F. Careers Information Centre (BBP8) Victory House, London WC1.

Top left: An apprentice trains to be an electrical fitter. Centre: A fitter carries out a ground test on a Victor Bomber. Top right: The R.A.F. has clubs for every sport and interest. Lower right: One aspect of the work of Royal Air Force Police.

You can only go so far

Ken Toogood 79th

To the casual observer, the concept that one Wing Commander, three Squadron Leaders, ten junior officers, one Warrant Officer and six senior NCOs can control nine-hundred plus teenagers is impressive. We all know better. Much of the 24/7 working of No.1 Apprentice Wing was down to the NCO apprentices who managed much of Wing routine.

But there was another, greater, power at work which did not need to emerge often. But when it did, it was devastating - unbeatable. This power can be identified as Wing Consensus; alternatively you could call it the Apprentice Veto, because it could be invoked at Wing, Squadron or Flight (Entry) level. Let me give you a few examples:

I am sure 1955 to 1957 was not unique in Cranwell/Locking history. So let us all remember the number of times when detergent was added to the fountain at Weston seafront, odd things got suspended from the parade ground flag mast, the "Beware Apps" sign on the Banwell road was refreshed - causing the traffic flow to slow then speed up again. All sort of objects appeared somewhere different to where they had been left the night before. Entry numbers appeared on the side of the station pigs and in all sorts of other places - you've got the idea.

We would be called to parade in front of the "A", "B", and "C" Squadron huts and the squadron NCOs would fuss and cuss as they got us lined-up and smartened up for the inevitable. Round the corner would come our very own Radio School "little and large" couple - Wing Commander Linnard and W.O. Percy Parkes. They would halt, facing the gap between "A" and "C" Squadrons and Percy would step a few paces closer. We knew the routine - somebody, somewhere had committed a despicable act (fill in detail), they were bringing the Wing into disrepute (fill in detail), all sorts of terrible punishments would be inflicted on those responsible (fill in detail). All this was leading ponderously but inexorably to the word of command we were all expecting;

"Those responsible for this outrage, take one pace forward - MARCH!"

There were only three possible outcomes; a large flight, a whole squadron or the entire Wing would advance "1-2". The Apprentice veto at work - you can't put 70 or 300 or 900 of us all on jankers!

"As you were! I said all those responsible for this outrage take one pace forward - MARCH!" ordered Percy.

And the same thing happened again. Give the order twice more and everyone is on the grass of the Arena. If the whole Wing was advancing, soon "B" squadron would collide with "C", and "A" squadron would collide with the pipe band. Impasse.

ROYAL AIR FORCE LOCKING APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION

More blood curdling threats were issued against the offenders; we all knew that they would never be found. The next order would be for us to dismiss or march down to Tech school. Apprentices -1: permanent staff -0. Or was it? What did those guys think and say when they got back to Wing headquarters? To get such a display of Entry, Squadron or Wing solidarity for the price of a harmless prank - might even be a price worth paying (but not too often).

-----00000-----

Can you remember the time when the Apprentices got fed up with having catering complaints ignored? Word passed round the wing and one morning the catering staff attended, prepared 800+ breakfasts and not a soul turned up. They saw us, a little later, assemble and march off the Wing - but not a word was said. The NAAFI van did a roaring trade and sold out mid-morning and we were all so ravenous we would have eaten cooked boots for lunch - but the point got home. We were consulted and changes were made.

-----00000-----

There was another occasion, I remember, while waiting in the NAAFI queue at No.1 Wing, we were bemoaning our lot when a guy from "B" squadron asked what had happened. We explained that there had been an extra squadron bull-night the previous evening and it had been judged as not-up-to-standard and we now faced a repeat this evening.

"Have you got chairs in your billet?" he asked. "And have you got a sixpence?"

We said, "Yes."

"Then you don't have a bull-night!" He declared decisively.

We were taken aback and ask for clarification.

"You stand on a chair with a sixpence; your mate switches off the corridor lights. Then you take out the bulb, put the sixpence across the contacts and stick it back in the socket. Your mate switches on the lights and - Bingo - no bull night. You either blow the fuse for the squadron or the entire wing. By the time it has been fixed by the duty electrician, it will be time for supper. No time to clean anything. Don't forget to recover your sixpence and put the chair away."



Planning is important

From Ken Toogood 79th

A Boy Entrant entry, becoming senior on the Wing, decided that it was time that they made their mark. They wanted to show the School that they were becoming a force to be reckoned with and to impress the sprogs in the junior entry, all in one fell swoop.

They had decided to paint their entry number on the roof of a Technical block so that all could gaze upon it and be filled with admiration.

A plan was developed and spies despatched to check on the routine movements of station police night patrols. Another team were tasked with locating a suitable ladder; a third was detailed off to "obtain" the paint and brushes.

On the appointed night, twenty or so lads assembled all togged out in denims, pumps and the mandatory towel around the neck (I never understood that bit - did you?). Then at 23.30, an hour or so after lights out, furtive scurryings could be seen at different locations on the school site as the task force assembled at the foot of the targeted building. They waited in the shadows and listened to hear the approach of plimsolled feet as the ladder party arrived; with a certain amount of puffing and heaving, the ladder was erected and extended so that the route to the roof was open.

Brushes and paint and the all-important screwdriver were rushed to the roof by a dozen or so lads who worked quickly to outline the characters of the entry number then more frantic brushing filled in the numbers until they shone in the light from the stars.

Collecting everything together, they returned to the ground. The ladder party attended to its safe return; they disposed of the paint and brushes and then the lads returned to their billets to remove every trace of paint from their hands before retiring for the night.

There was much excitement, within the entry, at the Working parade the following morning. Their flight was towards the back of the parade so a number of junior entries ahead of them would be able to admire their handiwork as they wheeled right on the march to morning classes. "That'll, show them who are the senior entry!" More and more flights turned to the right until, finally, the senior entry saw the building come into view. But what was this? Nothing there!

They pondered during the rest of the march but couldn't understand how they had been outsmarted. Then someone asked the crucial question and discovered that they had used the same colour as the roof had already been painted. Hey Ho!

Life in the Pipe & Trumpet band, from an 87th perspective.

Barry Dinnage – 87th

It was towards the end of our first term, in December 1957, that I recall the visit to our billet of members of the band recruitment team. They said 'Anyone like to join the Pipe and Trumpet band?' They proceeded down each row of beds, interviewing prospective candidates as they went. It seemed that the drum team went down one side and the pipers down the other. That must be the reason I chose the pipes, because if I had the nerve to speak out I probably would have chosen to be a drummer. There were promises of evading parades and other tempting goodies if we joined, so I along with around eight others of the 87th joined the band. Having been signed up, I waited until the next term to start learning the pipes.

What we didn't really think of then was the fact that we would move to the B Squadron band billet, which also had 80th and 83rd senior entries in. The first shock came moments after arriving in Hut 319, the B squadron billet. The LA in charge, one Harry Hawks, said, 'Who is going to be my kit boy?' Well the silence was deafening, so the next thing Harry said was, Well If I don't get a volunteer I will appoint one. For some unknown reason I felt my hand go up, and I was duly appointed as Harry's kit boy. As it happened this was no bad thing for a sprog, I then found I was under protection from other less friendly characters from other senior entries. During one trip to the NAAFI there were senior entry guys grabbing sprogs to 'perform' on tables in the NAAFI. Harry told them to 'clear off, he's my kit boy' and I went on my way. I should mention that Harry was a rather tough nut being a black belt at Judo, and nobody wished to argue with him.

Once we had settled in, and staked our claim to the vacant bed space, life continued without too much hassle from the 'seniors', in fact as time went on we became good friends and the entry differences seem to matter less and less.

Now we got down to learning the various instruments of our choosing. I started to learn the pipes on a pipe practice chanter under the instruction from 'Robbie' Robinson of the 83rd, and to my surprise I took to it like the proverbial 'Duck to Water'. Meanwhile the other 87th guys learned the side drum or the trumpet. With the exception of John Denman who became the trainee Pony Boy, looking after LAA Hamish McCrackers.

As time went by, it became more apparent of the advantages of being in the band. We were engaged to perform at outside events, which was great fun. We got to visit some pubs, which would otherwise not be possible. I am sure the officer i/c was a nervous wreck but for some reason allowed us to indulge.

I remember my first ever public performance. It was on stage the Colston Halls, Bristol. It was for some charity which I cannot remember. Later we were to perform at the Royal Tournament, now sadly discontinued. This was a much looked forward to event, Apps let loose in London, so many pubs and so little time.

But we did our best to visit as many as possible.....

Then came the day when we had to leave the band, as finals approached we returned to our squadron billets. Some were wondering who these 'new' guys were, I was unknown to many of the 87th apart from my tech class, nobody had any contact with me.

At that time I had little idea that joining a pipe band would have such an impact so many years later. To this day I still play in a pipe band, although I now play the snare drum, and have travelled much of Europe playing at various events. I am most grateful to the RAF Apprentices for granting me the opportunity to join the band. To give something back I am now a civilian instructor to the ATC teaching drums to cadets.

I Wonder Why

From Mike Collier 76th

1. The Locking A.A. Entry sequence was disrupted by the 77th Entry?

70th - "A" Sqdn.
71st - "B" Sqdn.
72nd - "C" Sqdn.
73rd - "A" Sqdn.
74th - "B" Sqdn.
75th - "C" Sqdn.
76th - "A" Sqdn.
77th "C" Sqdn. ???

2. If you did not complete your Apprenticeship but moved to men's service, your service number was unaltered. If you were commissioned or became aircrew, you kept the same service number. However, if you started as a Boy Entrant, then transferred to A.A. training, you got a new service number???

3. I have two copies of the L.A.A. Newsletter, both annotated Serial 12. One dated May 96 and the other Aug 96, each containing different information and articles???

Any answers? Please let me know. Perhaps the next article has a clue to 1. Ed.

Contacts and Other Reminiscences

From Bruce Graham 79th

Some Entries seem to have been extraordinarily successful in maintaining contact with their graduating classes – the 76th seems to head the list. In my case, when I passed out from Locking with the 79th Entry in December 1957 the contact with other members of the Entry was, to put it mildly, minuscule. Of the 56 graduating apprentices (4 had failed on finals, including one of our SAAs!) I believe I only had contact with two. One of these I met at RAF Idris when he was in transit with his Shackleton squadron, and later at the 50th anniversary of RAF Apprentice training at Locking in 1972, and the other was our late Association chairman, Bert Davies, who was at OCTU at the same time as me and subsequently at Cranwell. I certainly met up with people from entries surrounding the 79th but that was the limit of my contact with my fellow graduates. Perhaps other people had different experiences.

I love some of the reminiscences that have appeared in the pages of the Newsletter. “Old men forget” as Shakespeare has it in Henry V but sometimes old men like to remember things that might have happened. Earlier we had a story about the availability of food from the Apprentice Mess kitchen in the early hours of the evening (why didn’t the rest of the Wing know about it???) and now we have the lovely story of the B Squadron people able to “bunk off” church parade by being at the back of the Wing and somehow meandering back to their huts.. One snag – there were, I think, NCO Apprentices as guides and markers at the back and front of each flight so they might just have noticed.

I’m sure that many of you will have thought about this but I wonder how the distribution of entries among the Squadrons came about. Did it originate at Cranwell? I think it probably must have, but it obviously put C Squadron (at Locking in the 1950’s) in a prime position with two summer and one Easter entries and B Squadron at a disadvantage with two Easter and one summer entries. A Squadron, with three winter entries was sort in the middle.

Going back to the subject of contacts from Locking days there were, of course, other people involved. Some of you from the mid-50s may remember an Education Officer, Sqn Ldr Claxton, in 3 TT Block. When some years later I was fortunate enough to be selected for the TSR2 project team working at the BAC factory at Weybridge , Maurice Claxton (by then a Wg Cdr) was appointed as Team Leader and subsequently CO of RAF Hemswell – as a Gp Capt. Only politics intervened to cancel the entire project. So you see, it wasn’t just your fellow apprentices, or instructors, who could influence your life but also people around you who regarded the products of Locking as their progeny.

Humour

Breakdown

From Mike Collier 76th

A couple had their car break down in a supermarket car park. The man told his wife to carry on with the shopping, while he fixed the car in the car park. The wife returned later to see a small group of people near the car. On closer inspection, she saw a pair of male legs protruding from under the chassis.

Although the man was in shorts, his lack of underpants turned private parts into gloriously public ones. Unable to stand the embarrassment, she dutifully stepped forward, quickly put her hand up the leg of his shorts and tucked everything back into place. On regaining her feet, she looked across the bonnet and found herself staring at her husband, who was standing idly by.

The car mechanic, however, had to have three stitches in his forehead.

I believe this incident actually happened in America and was reported in a local newspaper.

Two Blind Pilots

Brian Garratt, 87th.

Two blind pilots. Two blind pilots were both wearing dark glasses. One is using a guide dog and the other is tapping his way along the aisle with a cane. Nervous laughter spreads through the cabin, but the men enter the cockpit, the door closes and the engines start up. The passengers begin glancing nervously around, searching for some sign that this is just a little practical joke. None is forthcoming.

The plane moves faster and faster down the runway and the people sitting in the window seats realize they're headed straight for the water at the edge of the airport. As it begins to look as though the plane will plough into the water, panicked screams fill the cabin. At that moment, the plane lifts smoothly into the air. The passengers relax and laugh a little sheepishly and soon all retreat into their magazines, secure in the knowledge that the plane is in good hands.

In the cockpit, one of the blind pilots turns to the other and says, "Ya know, Bob, one of these days, they're gonna scream too late and we're all gonna die."

Cyanide

From Phil Marston 92nd

A lady walks into a Chemist and tells the pharmacist she needs some cyanide. The pharmacist said, "Why in the world do you need cyanide?"

The lady then explained she needed it to poison her husband.

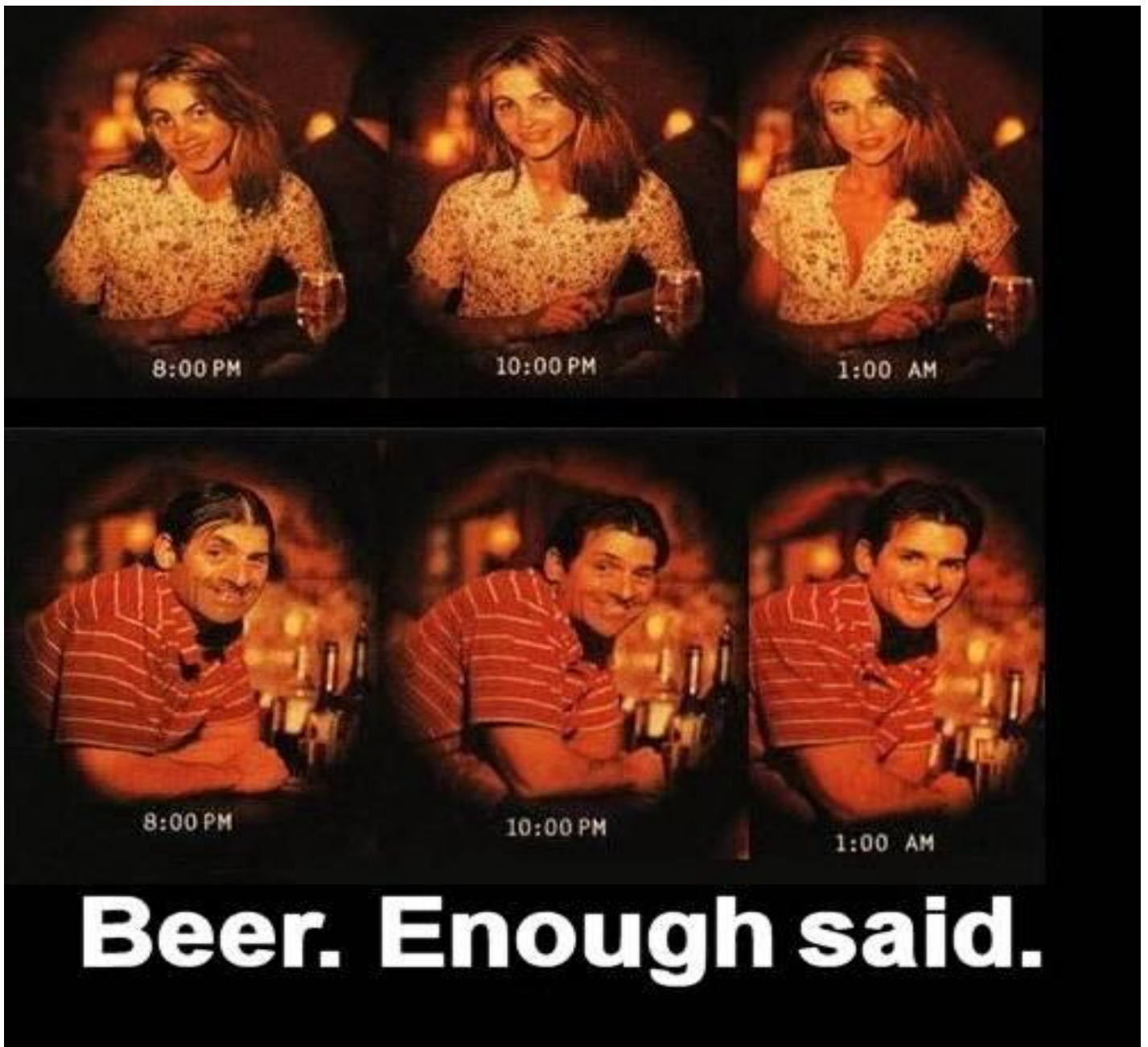
ROYAL AIR FORCE LOCKING APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION

The pharmacist's eyes got big and he said, "Lord have mercy." I can't give you cyanide to kill your husband! That's against the law! I'll lose my license, and they'll throw both of us in prison and all kinds of bad things will happen! Absolutely not. You can NOT have any cyanide!"

Then the lady reached into her purse and pulled out a picture of her husband in bed with the pharmacist's wife.

The pharmacist looked at the picture and replied, "Well, HELL, you didn't tell me you had a PRESCRIPTION!"

The Power of Alcohol



Extras

New element!!!!!!!!!!!!

Governmentium

From Tiny Kuhle 87th

A major research institution has announced the discovery of the heaviest element yet known to science - "governmentium." It has 1 neutron, 12 assistant neutrons, 75 deputy neutrons and 111 assistant deputy neutrons for an atomic mass of 312. These 312 particles are held together by forces called morons that are further surrounded by vast quantities of lepton-like sub particles called peons.

Governmentium has no electrons and is therefore inert. It can be detected however since it impedes every reaction it comes into contact with. A tiny amount of governmentium can take a reaction that normally occurs in seconds and slow it to the point where it take days.

Governmentium has a normal half life of three years. It doesn't decay but "re-organises", a process where assistant deputy neutrons and deputy neutrons change places. This process actually causes it to grow as in the confusion some morons become neutrons, thereby forming isodopes.

This phenomenon of "moron promotion" has led to some speculation that governmentium forms whenever sufficient morons meet in concentration forming critical morass. Researchers believe that in Governmentium, the more you re-organize, the morass you cover.

Can Statistics lie?

Regardless of where you stand on the issue of the U.S. involvement in Iraq, here's a sobering statistic. There has been a monthly average of 160,000 troops in the Iraq theatre of operations during the last 22 months, and a total of 2,867 deaths. That gives a firearm death rate of 60 per 100,000 soldiers.

The firearm death rate in Washington D.C. is 80.6 per 100,000 persons for the same period. That means that you are about 25% more likely to be shot and killed in the U.S. Capital than you are in Iraq.

Conclusion:

The U.S. should pull out of Washington.

Anagrams

From Geoff Corby 92nd

This has got to be one of the cleverest E-mails I've received in awhile. Someone out there either has too much spare time or is deadly at Scrabble.

DORMITORY:

When you rearrange the letters:

DIRTY ROOM

PRESBYTERIAN:

When you rearrange the letters:

BEST IN PRAYER

ASTRONOMER:

When you rearrange the letters:

MOON STARER



DESPERATION:

When you rearrange the letters:

A ROPE ENDS IT

THE EYES:

When you rearrange the letters:

THEY SEE

THE MORSE CODE:

When you rearrange the letters:

HERE COME DOTS

SLOT MACHINES:

When you rearrange the letters:

CASH LOST IN ME

ANIMOSITY:

When you rearrange the letters:

IS NO AMITY

ELECTION RESULTS:

When you rearrange the letters:

LIES - LET'S RECOUNT



MOTHER-IN-LAW:

When you rearrange the letters:

WOMAN HITLER

SNOOZE ALARMS:

When you rearrange the letters:

ALAS! NO MORE Z 'S

A DECIMAL POINT:

When you rearrange the letters:

IM A DOT IN PLACE

THE EARTHQUAKES:

When you rearrange the letters:

THAT QUEER SHAKE

ELEVEN PLUS TWO:

When you rearrange the letters:

TWELVE PLUS ONE

AND FOR THE GRAND FINALE:



PRESIDENT CLINTON OF THE USA:

When you rearrange the letters

(With no letters left over and using each letter only once):

TO COPULATE HE FINDS INTERNS

Thoughts on Ageing

Getting Old

A very elderly gentleman, (mid nineties) very well dressed, hair well groomed, great looking suit, flower in his lapel smelling slightly of a good after shave, presenting a well looked-after image, walks into an upscale cocktail lounge. Seated at the bar is an elderly looking lady, (mid eighties). The gentleman walks over, sits alongside of her, orders a drink, takes a sip, turns to her and says, "So tell me, do I come here often?"



An elderly gentleman had serious hearing problems for a number of years. He went to the doctor and the doctor was able to have him fitted for a set of hearing aids that allowed the gentleman to hear 100%. The elderly gentleman went back in a month to the doctor and the doctor said, "Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again." The gentleman replied, "Oh, I haven't told my family yet. I just sit around and listen to the conversations. I've changed my will three times!"



Two elderly gentlemen from a retirement centre were sitting on a bench under a tree when one turns to the other and says: "Slim, I'm 83 years old now and I'm just full of aches and pains. I know you're about my age. How do you feel?" Slim says, "I feel just like a new-born baby."

"Really? Like a new-born baby!?" "Yep. No hair, no teeth, and I think I just wet my pants".



An elderly couple had dinner at another couple's house, and after eating, the wives left the table and went into the kitchen. The two gentlemen were talking, and one said, "Last night we went out to a new restaurant and it was really great. I would recommend it very highly. The other man said, "What is the name of the restaurant?" The first man thought and thought and finally said, "What is the name of that flower you give to someone you love? You know... the one that's red and has thorns." "Do you mean a rose?" "Yes, that's the one," replied the man. He then turned towards the kitchen and yelled, "Rose, what's the name of that restaurant we went to last night?"



Hospital regulations require a wheelchair for patients being discharged. However, while working as a student nurse, I found one elderly gentleman, already dressed and sitting on the bed with a suitcase at his feet, who insisted he didn't need my help to leave the hospital. After a chat about rules being rules, he reluctantly let me wheel him to the elevator. On the way down I asked him if his wife was meeting him. "I don't know," he said. "She's still upstairs in the bathroom changing out of her hospital gown."

And they ask why I like retirement....??????

From Stan Murray 92nd

Question: How many days in a week?

Answer: 6 Saturdays, 1 Sunday

Question: When is a retiree's bedtime?

Answer: Three hours after he falls asleep on the couch.

Question: How many retirees to change a light bulb?

Answer: Only one, but it might take all day.

Question: What's the biggest gripe of retirees?

Answer: There is not enough time to get everything done.

Question: Why don't retirees mind being called Seniors?

Answer: The term comes with a 10% percent discount.

Question: Among retirees what is considered formal attire?

Answer: Tied shoes.

Question: Why do retirees count pennies?

Answer: They are the only ones who have the time.

Question: What is the common term for someone who enjoys work and refuses to retire?

Answer: NUTS!

Question: Why are retirees so slow to clean out the basement, attic or garage?

Answer: They know that as soon as they do, one of their adult kids will want to store stuff there.

Question: What do retirees call a long lunch?

Answer: Normal.

Question: What is the best way to describe retirement?

Answers: The never ending Coffee Break.

Question: What's the biggest advantage of going back to school as a retiree?

Answer: If you cut classes, no one calls your parents.

Question: Why does a retiree often say he doesn't miss work, but misses the people he used to work with?

Answer: He is too polite to tell the whole truth.

Our Ageing Brains are Better than Some Younger Brains

Number One Idiot of 2006

I am a medical student currently doing a rotation in toxicology at the poison control centre. Today, this woman called in very upset because she caught her little daughter eating ants. I quickly reassured her that the ants are not harmful and there would be no need to bring her daughter into the hospital. She calmed down and at the end of the conversation happened to mention that she gave her daughter some ant poison to eat in order to kill the ants. I told her that she better bring her daughter into the emergency room right away.

Number Two Idiot of 2006

Early this year, some Boeing employees on the airfield decided to steal a life raft from one of the 747s. They were successful in getting it out of the plane and home. Shortly after they took it for a float on the river, they noticed a Coast Guard helicopter coming towards them. It turned out that the chopper was homing in on the emergency locator beacon that activated when the raft was inflated. They are no longer employed at Boeing.

Number Three Idiot of 2006

A man, wanting to rob a downtown Bank of America, walked into the Branch and wrote "this is a stick up. Put all your munny in this bag". While standing in line, waiting to give his note to the teller, he began to worry that someone had seen him write the note and might call the police before he reached the teller's window. So he left the Bank of America and crossed the street to the Wells Fargo Bank. After waiting a few minutes in line, he handed his note to the Wells Fargo teller. She read it and, surmising from his spelling errors that he wasn't the brightest light in the harbour, told him that she could not accept his stick-up note because it was written on a Bank of America deposit slip and that he would either have to fill out a Wells Fargo deposit slip or go back to Bank of America. Looking somewhat defeated, the man said, "OK" and left. He was arrested a few minutes later, as he was waiting in line back at Bank of America.

Number Four Idiot of 2006

A motorist was unknowingly caught in an automated speed trap that; measured his speed using radar and photographed his car. He later received in the mail a ticket for \$40 and a photo of his car. Instead of payment, he sent the police department a photograph of \$40. Several days later, he received a letter from the police that contained another picture, this time of handcuffs. He immediately mailed in his \$40. Wise guy.....

Number Five Idiot of 2006

A guy walked into a little corner store with a shotgun and demanded all of the cash from the cash drawer. After the cashier put the cash in a bag, the robber saw a bottle of Scotch that he wanted behind the counter on the shelf. He told the cashier to put it in the bag as well, but the cashier refused and said, "Because I don't believe you are over 21." The robber said he was, but the clerk still refused to give it to him because she didn't believe him. At this point, the robber took his driver's license out of his wallet and gave it to the clerk. The clerk looked it over and agreed that the man was in fact over 21 and she put the Scotch in the bag. The robber then ran from the store with his loot. The cashier promptly called the police and gave the name and address of the robber that he got off the license. They arrested the robber two hours later.

Idiot Number Six of 2006

A pair of Michigan robbers entered a record shop nervously waving revolvers. The first one shouted, "Nobody move!" When his partner moved, the startled first bandit shot him.

Idiot Number Seven of 2006

Arkansas: Seems this guy wanted some beer pretty badly. He decided that he'd just throw a brick through a liquor store window, grab some booze, and run. So he lifted the brick and heaved it over his head at the window. The brick bounced back knocking him unconscious. It seems the liquor store window was made of Plexiglass. The whole event was caught on videotape.

Golfing as you get older

How was your game, dear?" asked Jack's wife Tracy.

"Well, I was hitting pretty well, but my eyesight's gotten so bad I couldn't see where the ball went," he answered.

"Well you are 75 years old, Jack!" admonished his wife, "Why don't you take my brother Scott along?"

"But he's 85 and doesn't play golf anymore," protested Jack.

"But he's got perfect eyesight. He would watch the ball for you," Tracy pointed out.

The next day Jack teed off with Scott looking on. Jack swung and the ball disappeared down the middle of the fairway. "Do you see it?" asked Jack.

"Yup," Scott answered.

"Well, where is it?" yelled Jack, peering off into the distance.

"I forgot."

Getting Married Again

Bob, a 70-year-old, extremely wealthy widower, showed up at the Golf Club with a breathtakingly beautiful and very sexy 25 year-old blonde who knocked everyone's socks off with her youthful sex appeal and charm. She hung onto Bob's arm and listens intently to his every word.

His friends at the club were all aghast. At the very first chance, they cornered him and asked, "Bob, how did you get the trophy girlfriend?" Bob replied, "Girlfriend? She's my wife!" They're amazed, but continued to ask, "So, how did you persuade her to marry you?"

"Well, I lied about my age," Bob replied.

"What, did you tell her you were only 50?"

Bob said "No, I told her I was 90."

Healthy Eating

A Doctor was addressing a large audience in an old peoples home. "The material we put into our stomachs is enough to have killed most of us sitting here, years ago. Red meat is awful. Soft drinks corrode your stomach lining. Chinese food is loaded with MSG. High fat diets can be disastrous, and none of us realizes the long-term harm caused by the germs in our drinking water.

But there is one thing that is the most dangerous of all and we all have, or will, eat it. Can anyone here tell me what food it is that causes the most grief and suffering for years after eating it?"

After several seconds of quiet, a 75-year-old man in the front row raised his hand, and softly said, "Wedding Cake."

Travel broadens the mind

An elderly gentleman of 83 arrived in Paris by plane. At the French customs desk, the man took a few minutes to locate his passport in his carry-on bag.

"You have been to France before, monsieur?" the customs officer asked, sarcastically. The elderly gentleman admitted he had been to France previously. "Then you should know enough to have your passport ready."

The gentleman replied "Well, the last time I was here, I didn't have to show it."

"Impossible. Travellers always have to show their passports on arrival in France!"

The elderly man gave the Frenchman a long hard look. Then he quietly explained, "Well, when I came ashore at a Normandy Beach on D-Day in 1944 to help liberate this country, I couldn't find any Frenchmen to show it to."

In Church

An elderly couple was attending a church service. About halfway through the minister's sermon, the old lady leaned over and said, I just let out a silent fart. What do you think I should do?"

Her Husband replied, "Put a new battery in your hearing aid."

RAF Days and after

I Shouldn't Haveas a Cpl/Tech (1962/64)

Brian Davies 76/77th

During heavy fighting between Cypriot Greeks and Turks, driven from Akrotiri to Nicosia and back to get spares for the essential FBS transmitter on camp that I looked after. My driver and I were each armed only with a 303 rifle and a 5-bullet clip of ammunition.

During the Greek/Turk fighting, walked the length of Limassol town bypass in the dark by myself as many machine guns, rifles and mortars were being discharged in the side streets.

Stood on top of Akrotiri airfield Control Tower checking the aerals as a Shackleton did a 'high speed' power dive at the tower to show he was as good at it as the Canberras. The noise and slipstream as the plane pulled out of the dive at a very low level parted my hair.

While snorkelling off RAF Akrotiri, not notice the wind and waves had picked up, and I had been swept out to sea. The choppy waves swept off my mask and I spent half an hour getting back to the beach, some quarter of a mile away. I had never been able to swim further than 50 yards from shore before that.

As Chairman of the Akrotiri Corporal's Club, one evening in my best suit, fought off a paratrooper in field kit (and winning). He wanted the girlfriend I was with at the Club dance that night.

Driven my new Hillman Minx at speed through the Greek Cypriot armed roadblocks between Limassol and Akrotiri without stopping and shouting 'Kala Mera', rapidly moving out of sight before they took their rifles off their shoulders.

Tried to teach my female J/T to drive a Land Rover on a remote part of Akrotiri airfield. Failed severely, as many small trees and bushes got mangled.

Played 'chicken' with the Cypriot busses on the then main single track roads, in the Ground Radio Flight's Bedford 25 cwt van. (the 'chicken' moved at speed off the tarmac to the rough bits). I managed 2 and a half years in Cyprus driving without a scratch.

When only 'living in' personnel could get to work at Akrotiri during the Greek/Turkish fighting, working at least 18 hours a day for nearly 3 weeks and twice touching high voltage points through fatigue as I carried out trouble shooting on airfield equipment by myself at night.

Chatting up the Station Commander's Flt. Lt P.A. in competition with pilots. Nearly won, but didn't.

Ahh the foolishness of youth!!!

What Do I Do Now?

From Mike Collier 76th

Early in my instructing career at Yatesbury, I was allotted the dubious pleasure of explaining the mysteries of the S.T.R. 18 airborne H.F. wireless equipment, to a group of foreign national officers. A comedian somewhere had drawn together a class of seven lieutenants of Arab extraction, a large number of whom were Iraqis and one Israeli major.

All seemed to be going well, until we reached the Aerial Tuning Unit. At the end of this section I posed my usual "Any questions?" One of the Arab gentlemen replied, "I am not understanding this". "O.K., no problem, I will go through it again". On this occasion much more slowly and deliberately. At the end, the same gentleman "I still do not understand". So, into a third explanation, splitting it into small sections and trying to elicit a positive response at the end of each. Ultimately, the same outcome, "I do not understand". At this point the Israeli jumped to his feet, pointed at the Arab, proclaimed "You are thick!" and stormed out of the room.

Now, excellent though it was, two weeks on the Instructional Techniques course at Uxbridge, does not prepare you for this sort of situation. As a Cpl. Tech., I figured my chances of successfully ordering the major back into the classroom were pretty slim. I visualised newspaper banner headlines, R.A.F. N.C.O. SPARKS INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT.

In the end I opted for the path of least resistance. I tried to pretend that nothing untoward had happened and launched into explanation number four. At the end of this, I think the Arab was probably still in the dark but too embarrassed to admit it and nodded his understanding. Or of course, it could have been that it was his turn that day to provoke the Israeli but I did not think of this until a long time afterwards

I went out into the small annex which separated the Yatesbury classrooms from the outside world. The major was leaning against the wall, smoking. "I think we are ready to proceed now sir". He rolled his eyes skywards, extinguished his cigarette and came back in. That was one of a very few classes, in thirty years of teaching, that I was truly glad to say goodbye to.



Me & Politics

From Brian Davies 76/77 Entries

I started life for the first 8 years as a sturdy blond haired lad. Not knowing any better, there was a man in Germany at the time with a funny square moustache extolled the virtue of such beings. I rapidly went off him as incendiary and high explosive bombs went off around me in the Bristol of the early 40's.

I was brought up as a strict socialist, educated in politics by my father as to the great advantages of a socialist government. By my teens I had been made aware that Churchill, capitalists and the Conservatives were the country's evil. However there was a problem with this, as I had identified that all the best girls went to dances at the Conservative Clubs and I started to attend to them there, even helping to distribute leaflets.

It was not until I joined the RAF as an aircraft apprentice in the 50's rather than to the Bristol Aeroplane Company as an apprentice, that all thoughts of politics deserted me. However in 1960 I did give my father my proxy vote and therefore found that I had contentiously voted Lord Stansgate in as MP for Bristol West.

I have always considered that politics awareness should have been taught during the apprentice years at Locking, not pushing a particular code but a general awareness. It may have stopped the most of us entering the adult RAF as semi-fascists just left of Genghis Khan in our outlook. I consequently started voting Tory, encouraged by the military life and the girls at the Conservative Clubs!

On my first posting in 1957 (to Northern Ireland) as the IRA upsurge was intensifying, I became aware of Irish politics and how real was the joke that "If we ever find an answer to the Irish question, the Irish will change the question". It was a restart of shootings and blowings up of things military and Unionist. Again the RAF gave no political guidance except to say 'stay out of Londonderry during political parades'.

It was during this time that I got a lift back to camp (Ballykelly) from Derry with a Catholic priest. He took the opportunity to give me the Catholic side of the Northern Ireland problem which included the Unionist majority prevention of a franchise for non property owners – mainly the Catholics. This did not help my knowledge of the situation whilst I carried my sub-machinegun at work near the border for protection.

A little later as I spent a tipsy few hours on a Derry kerbstone waiting for friends, I met a man who had been severely pistol-whipped by the RUC earlier that night and wanted company. He spent the time telling me the IRA points of view, which I did not seek but got all the same. Decent political briefing for airmen would have stopped my confusion on this Northern Irish situation. Luckily my promotion quickly came through and I left the province for Cornwall before keeping a date in Dublin with a lovely blond girl met at a Borderland dance. That could have confused me even more.

Soon the British Socialist Party fell into further disrepute with me following a 10 month tour in the Pacific at Christmas Island. Here thousands of us were exposed to three large H-bombs and two 'small' A-bombs with no specific care, aftercare or follow-up health checks – even to this date.

ROYAL AIR FORCE LOCKING APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION

During an extended tour as an instructor at Locking, I had a further brush with the political left wing on unwittingly attending a jazz session at what later turned out to be Bristol Communist Party HQ . Here they (not knowing that I was RAF) tried to enrol me for the season of CND marches. As I was instructing on secret cryptographic equipment at the time, "this was not a good thing".

During the early 60s in Cyprus I again saw a different aspect of politics with the Cypriot Greek/Turkish conflicts. Again the services saw fit not to tell us of the Cypriot political situation and its history other than a short familiarisation lecture on the tap water, money health. And when the Turks revolted in 1962 things got nasty.

I had a delightful Greek Cypriot girlfriend who told me how villainous the Turks were and some Turkish friends who over late night Turkish brandies told me the other side of the story. It did not help when I believed that a corporal friend was helping to smuggle arms for the Turks and using WRAF girls to carry messages through Greek lines. I angrily confronting him with the girls bit, afterwards he disappeared for a few weeks and was sent back to the UK as he was on the Greek Cypriot elimination list.

My return to UK from Cyprus in 1965 was not without political associations, as (with RAF approval) I spent 5 days aboard a Russian ship to Istanbul with an obvious lady spy attached to me, then three days in Communist Yugoslavia. Here the political difference between the people in the north and south of Yugoslavia was amazing. It was almost like three or four very different countries. No wonder the Baltic wars happened.

My Conservative leanings (the best I thought of a bad lot), was not changed even after a long chat with the Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer at night in Gibraltar; he was drunk, dishevelled and lost. (The date is left obscure to avoid his recognition) In the late 70s and 80s I thought Margaret Thatcher was the saviour of the UK. Until she ran out of ideas and started ruling by dictate. Since, I have met some six different party leaders and many leading lights of the parties, before deciding on the Liberal Democrats for my next affiliation.

Actively campaigning for them after leaving the RAF, I later employed part-time the local Council Leader – the fact that I had a contract on a £350 million business development with a London company as a client was (honestly) quite coincidental. In fact the Leader proved to be one of the few really honest people I have met in politics, but he was helpful in advice.

Eventually I was invited to stand as Councillor in my Ward as Lib. Dem. in a Liberal Democrat majority Metropolitan Council, but had to refuse as I was moving to live in Mallorca in the next year. My replacement won with a landslide. Needless to say in Mallorca I got involved with local politics helping the local version of the Liberal Democrats to control the local Council. Politics there is much more 'flexible' than in the UK.

I still hold that if we had had political awareness training in the RAF and particularly at Locking during apprentice training, I and a number of others would have seen things in life more clearly instead of finding out the hard way!

Books on Radar

From Ian Davis 91st

If you are interested in early RADAR, here are a number of interesting titles.

The one I am reading at the moment is a bit like a textbook of world-wide radar developments and I am finding it hard going.

A Radar History of World War 2 - Technical and Military Imperatives 1 999 Institute of Physics Publishing Bristol and Philadelphia	Louis Brown
Echoes of War - The Story of H2S Radar	Sir Bernard Lovell

A good personal & 'political' background of the early days of airborne interception radar and the introduction of the magnetron to America is:

Radar Days	E G Bowen
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Other titles that I have not read but are listed as related are:

GEMA: Birthplace of German Radar and Sonar	Harry von Kroge
Boffin: A personal Story of the Early Days of Radar and Radio Astronomy and Quantum Optics	R Hanbury Brown
Operation Epsilon: The Farm Hall Transcripts	Sir_Charle.sFrank
Electronic Inventions and Discoveries	G W A Dummer

A little lighter reading is a book by John Cunningham's Navigator :

Night Fighter	C F Rawnsley & Robert Wright
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If you are interested, you can probably order these at your library.

Days Out- Helicopter Museum

The Helicopter Museum at Weston-super-Mare featured last year in the July 06 edition. This year they have a special exhibition.

Call for more details on 01934 636227



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Airfield Charity Successfully Launched

The Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust created history at the RAF Museum in Hendon on June 1 2006 by formally appearing as a national charity.



AIRFIELDS
OF BRITAIN
Conservation Trust

ABCT's Director General and major British private businessman Kenneth Bannerman gave the main speech at this evening event.

What winners and achievers our airfields are', stated Mr Bannerman, "yet winners should be treated like winners with all the respect they deserve - and this just isn't happening with especially our disused airfields.'

In many ways, airfields remain Britain's best kept secret. We all rely upon them; we all could not survive without them. Yet far too many people still cannot see the real value before their eyes. Time to unlock that potential.

Since 1909, the airfields of Britain have proved to be the greatest assets this country has ever seen. Phenomenally brilliant places which **have** benevolently revolutionised everyday life. Massive winners and achievers, endlessly **fascinating** and important beyond all belief. **But where** is the recognition?

Now at long last a brand new charity is in action to counter this sheer unfairness. The Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust is designed to reverse this trend and honour in constructive ways our premier historical sites. Memorials will be erected at disused airfields. Information will be gathered and made available to boost existing airfield history. Education support will be provided to help enthusiastic young people secure airfield or aviation-related employment.

The objectives are to advance the education of the public in the history of British Airfields by:

- The establishment of museums
- The preservation of historical details and records of airfields.
- The erection of monuments at sites of National and historical importance

If you are interested in the work of the Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust, please get in contact.

Website: www.abct.org.uk

Email: info@abct.org.uk

Tele: 0141 225 6278

Address: ABCT, PO Box 26319, Glasgow G76 6AH

Obituary

Terry Press 90th

Non member – forwarded by Dave Gunby

I am writing to inform you of the death of my father, Terence Patrick Press (Terry) (B0912864), who was on 90th Entry at Locking.

My father talked fondly of his time in the Locking Apprentices (indeed, he returned as an instructor and I was born in W-S-M in 1968). You may wish to use your newsletter as a vehicle to let others know.

His funeral was held at Christ The King RC Church, Thornbury, South Gloucestershire, on Monday 30th April 2006 at 1430 hrs.

James Press

Closing Thought

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE KIDS WHO WERE BORN IN THE

1930's, 40's, and 50's!!

First, we survived being born to mothers who smoked and/or drank while they carried us.

They took aspirin, ate blue cheese dressing, tuna from a tin, and didn't get tested for diabetes.

Then after that trauma, our baby cots were covered with bright coloured lead-based paints.

We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors or cabinets and when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets,

We drank water from the garden hosepipe and NOT from a bottle.

We shared one soft drink with four friends, from one bottle and NO ONE actually died from this.

We ate cakes, white bread and real butter and drank pop with sugar in it, but we weren't overweight because.....

WE WERE ALWAYS OUTSIDE PLAYING!!

We fell out of trees, got cut, broke bones and teeth and there were no lawsuits from these accidents.

We would spend hours building our go-carts out of scraps and then ride down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. After running into the bushes a few times, we learned to solve the problem

We did not have Playstations, Nintendo's, X-boxes, no video games at all, no 99 channels on cable, no video tape movies, no surround sound, no cell phones, no text messaging, no personal computers, no Internet or Internet chatrooms

WE HAD FRIENDS and we went outside and found them!

We played with worms and mud pies made from dirt, and the worms did not live in us forever.

Made up games with sticks and tennis balls and although we were told it would happen, we did not poke out any eyes.

We rode bikes or walked to a friend's house and knocked on the door or rang the bell, or just yelled for them!

Those who didn't get what they wanted had deal with disappointment. Imagine that!!

The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. **They actually sided with the law!**

Yet this generation has produced some of the best risk-takers, problem solvers and inventors ever!

The past 50 years have been an explosion of innovation and new ideas.

We had to face up to life and learn everyday skills

And YOU are one of them!

CONGRATULATIONS!

You might want to share this with others who have had the luck to grow up as kids, before the lawyers and the government regulated our lives for our own good.

and while you are at it, show it to your kids so they will know how brave their parents were.

PS - The BIG type is because your eyes are shot at your age

RAFLAA Committee

Appointment	Name	Address	Tel/e-mail	Re-Election	Entry
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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
