

RAFLAA Newsletter

SERIAL 54

JULY 2009

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Editor's Notes

Hello to you all,

I had a note from Don Sykes, (105th)

Enjoyed the latest edition of the newsletter which arrived the other day, especially the article by Terry Mitchell about his model aircraft. I worked with Terry at North Luffenham in the late 60's when he was building his first Vulcan. He was experimenting with a ducted fan engine, and the jet pipes were made from old baked bean tins.

I don't know what your policy is regarding the disclosure of addresses, but I would like to contact Terry again. Could you forward me either his email or house address, or failing that, if I sent you either a letter inside a stamped envelope, or an email could you forward it for me.

To get around any possible difficulties, I sent Don's note to Terry. Terry contacted Don so they are now happily back in touch. Glad to help old buddies get together - Ed

0-0-0-0-0-0

In response to the question about John Wombwell, I had two replies.

Colin Brown writes:

In Edition 52 last time, Mike Creasy was hoping someone would know the whereabouts of John Wombwell (76th). I am afraid that Mike Collier (76th) writes: "With regard to the last newsletter (ser 52) page 3. Sorry to disappoint Mike Creasy but John Wombwell was most certainly not 76th." You added: *Mike does not know which entry John Wombwell was in though. Does anyone remember?*

How about the 72nd.

588182 John Wombwell, 32 Fildyke Road, Meppershall SG17 5LT, Beds
01462-812700 email: rjwombwell@aol.com

Hope this helps

Colin Brown

3614 Santa Fe Trail, Roanoke, VA 24018, 540-774-5188. Email: copnor@myfairpoint.net

And Andy Perkins (109th) writes:

In editors note you ask about the whereabouts of John Wombwell

He runs a company called 'EMC Hire', Ivel Road, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5JU
Phone number 01462 817 111 E mail john@emchire.co.uk

I don't know what entry he was in, but it must be earlyish, I reckon he's in his 70s, or is that the entry number ???

Two chances there Mike and they may be the same person! - Ed

0-0-0-0-0-0

Peter Platt 75th writes:

Paul Kite mentioned the case of the lady SMO's missing TR2. Now I know who went for an illicit drive in that red car all those years ago and emailed him in the Algarve suggesting he should contact you owning up, but he thought it wiser to remain silent. The passenger in the TR2 I know to be a subscriber to the LAA and I bet you he has already told you the whole story. If Ken Farmer has named the driver perhaps you should censor that name? It's up to you. [Or publish, and bugger Baker! By God, you've got power there Chris!]

Wow! That's the first time I thought I had power! - Ed

Bruce Graham 79th writes:

In his reminiscences Paul Kite (81st) raises a couple of points concerning Flying Officer Rippon – Flight Commander 72nd and 81st and Wing Band President. As it was me who raised the query on the website Forum (sadly very underused) asking for someone to explain why he was still a Fg Off in 1957 yet had a DFC.

Yes, definitely a DFC, not a DFM (much narrower stripes) as is confirmed in the attached scan from The Locking Review of 1956. He may have achieved the award in the Second World War as a Master Aircrew (Warrant Officers got DFCs rather than DFMs) but if so it took him a very long time to be commissioned. Perhaps he was decorated for operational service post-2WW? Or maybe he was a re-entrant? As can be seen in the second photograph at our Christmas celebrations he was in fact an Air Signaller and not an Observer (affectionately known as “flying ar**holes) because of the design of their brevets).

Sorry but the Locking Review picture was not was not of sufficient quality to publish - Ed



Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

Victor at Weston

We have even more about the Victor.

Bruce Graham 79th writes:

Definitely not at Locking Weston in 1956 when the 76th were enjoying a hot summer. XA919 was a Mk1 aircraft. Deliveries of which began in November 1957 (to Gaydon). The first operational squadron (No. 10) formed in late 1958. By 1961 all Boscombe Down activities on the type concerned the CA Release trials on the Mk2. Landing at WSM airfield must have been interesting but at almost 3,500 feet the runway was OK-ish for landing. As has been pointed out it was never going to take off again. Later on a Mk1 Vulcan was delivered to Cosford where with 3,871 feet of runway beginning immediately after a railway embankment the landing was equally exciting.

Ian Davis (91st) writes:

I have managed to contact a member of the Helicopter Museum who is writing the history of Weston super Mare Airport. Roger Dudley is very near completing the co-authoring of a book called 'Weston Super Mare and the Aeroplane'. I will ask him to let us know for the magazine when it is published.

He says:

"A very lightened Victor XA919 flew into Weston on 16th May 1961 from Boscombe Down. Initially it was taken to the Old Mixon end of the airfield and he believes the engines were removed. It then went to the 'EMI' hangar to be used for 1st Line trade training by Locking trainees. It then returned to the Old Mixon Shop 3 and its tail and fin were removed to aid storage. When Locking had finished using it, the remains were dismantled and taken back to Radlett where it had been built."

I can remember it in the EMI Hanger when they were trying to teach me 1st line servicing. It seemed a lot less complicated and obvious years later when I did it for real.

To summarise this thread, the aircraft on Weston Airfield were:

(d/d= delivery date; f/f= first flight; s.o.c. = struck off charge; w.f.u. = withdrawn from use.

XA919 Victor B1 d/d 19/09/1957, to Locking 15/05/1961, to 7724M, to Radlett 09/1966, scrapped 07/1970

WP227 Venom NF2 To G-5-3, to 7098M 31/07/1953, s.o.c. 14/12/1956 at Locking. NF2 was a prototype aircraft which first flew on the 22nd of August 1950. Assumed scrapped.

WD936 Canberra B2 d/d 25/05/1951, s.o.c. 28/10/1963, to No.1 Radio School, Locking for G/I, 7589M 25/09/1958, s.o.c 28/10/1963, sold BAC 18/10/66 w.f.u. 10/11/67 broken up Samlesbury 1968

WD171 Valetta C1 d/d 08/02/1951, to No.1 Radio School, Locking as 7642M 24/05/1960, to Manston Fire School 24/04/1962, s.o.c. 30/12/1964 and scrapped

VP289 Shackleton MR1 f/f 25.6.51. Issued to 224Sqn 31.8.51. Transferred to 269 Sqn at Gibraltar 7.1.52, but suffered a Cat.3 flying accident 22.2.52, when the main wheels struck the top of the sea wall at the end of North Front's runway. Repairs on site were completed 11.7.52, when the aircraft returned to 269 Sqn at Ballykelly. To 206 Sqn 30.7.56 Transferred to 269 Sqn on 7.1.58 and operated from Christmas Island on detachment. Withdrawn from use and flown to Weston-super-Mare for use as a ground instructional airframe re-serialled 7730M 6.9.61. Scrapped at Weston 4.66

This seems to be the definitive answer. Thanks for all your contributions but I will draw a line after these - Ed

Feedback on Brats Museum

We have more information on the museum at Hendon.

John Birch 81st writes:

This is written with reference to Paul Kite's article under "New Recruit", specifically the last paragraph.

There is a display at the Hendon museum dedicated to the Apprentices and Boy Entrants, but it is currently not open to the public. It is in the upper gallery, half of which has been turned into open plan office space.

The lost exhibits from the gallery deal with early flight including balloons and airships also there was a display of WW1 workshops as they were in France. The "Brats" display is still intact and when I enquired as to when the untouched part of the gallery would be reopened the answer was that there were no plans to do so as yet.

I understand that if anyone visits the museum during the week it is worth approaching a member of the warding staff and requesting to see the display, he or she will take you up to see it, but I stress this would be down to their individual benevolence and work load.

I saw the display recently with the specific motive to see if it included a superhet and to see if it would be suitable to photograph. There is such an item in the display, but it is one made at Cranwell and is much larger than the Locking one. If anyone has a suitable photograph of ours please let me know.

Please keep the comments and the articles coming! It is your newsletter and I know that other ex-apps love to read about what happened to you.

Ed.

Deadline for next issue - 23rd September for November 09

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

Chris Tett

Soft copy preferred!

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Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the 15th AGM of the RAF Locking Apprentice Association

From Dave Gunby, Secretary

Venue: Webbington Hotel, Loxton, Weston super Mare

Date: Saturday 18th April 2009 at 13:30 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
Rick Atkinson	91 st	Service Rep
Graham Beaston	209 th	Craft Rep
Chris Tett	92 nd	Newsletter Editor

Apologies: -

Peter Crowe	95 th	AA Rep/Webmaster
Andy Perkins	109 th	Tech Rep
Stan Branch	96 th	
Tony Beard	84 th	
Brian Davies	76 th	
Vic Gibbs	87 th	

My thanks to Colin Hinson (89th) for the photographs - Ed

ITEM 1 Chairman's Address

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting (albeit 15 minutes late due to distance from buffet to meeting room) with a reading of the Apprentice Prayer. He then referred to those members who had sent their apologies. There followed a minutes silence in memory of:

Ken Keeling (70th) Tom Beck (72nd) Sam Allen (76th)

Mention was also made of the passing of Peter Magnall (69th) a Cranwellian who had made a significant contribution to his Association.

The Chairman then addressed the AGM thus:

This is our first time at this venue, The Webbington, and so far I've been very impressed, particularly with the leisure facilities, which will help to keep my weight down! I'm sure you will agree that for those of you staying the night, that the standard of accommodation is superior to that of previous venues we've used, without costing a lot more. I and the committee would welcome your opinions, and to that end Peter Crow has added a comments page to the web site. However, please let me or a committee member know of any concerns you may have, so that we can get the hotel management to attend to the problem. We'd also like positive feedback! One of the concerns we had is that the hotel may not be able accommodate all of us who wish to stay overnight, so that some may have to use alternative hotels, and use taxis to get here. Being out of town, walking is not an option, so it can be a problem, but I'm sure that where there are several people together, the cost of the taxi can be minimised. The hotel assured me that they would suggest some alternative accommodation not too far away.

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

During the year we have supported the Federation of Apprentices and Boy Entrants Associations, and it is our turn this year to chair and host the annual meeting of the Federation. One of the other duties is to provide and present a poppy wreath at the Remembrance Day parade at the Cenotaph. We are very fortunate in being able to rely on the skill of Fred Hoskins of the Cranwell Association, who makes the wheel for the centre of the wreath; it really makes our Federation's wreath stand out from the many others. It's amazing what other skills us radio 'fairies' possess!

Our President will shortly present our trophy for excellence to this year's recipient, which is highly regarded and appreciated by the School, and is now actually presented twice, once here at our AGM, and then again in front of the School at the annual lunch of No.1 Radio School. The CO, Wg. Cmdr. Edmundson, has asked if we could extend this presentation, in the form of a framed certificate to two other members of the staff, as 'runners up' if you like. In his words, 'to spread the idea of excellence wider'. We are most happy to do this, and have prepared a suitable certificate, which will be presented by us at the annual lunch, usually in October at Cosford. I'm sure you would all agree that we welcome this strengthening association with No. 1 Radio School. I hope that they will remain as a unit for many years, either at Cosford, St. Athan, or Blanford, who knows what the MOD's re-organisations will bring in the future - there are all sorts of rumours in the air!

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. However, please do not lose sight of the fact that some of the committee have served for some considerable time, and so I urge you to help by getting nominations for some of the positions that are coming up for re-election.

The Chairman then introduced the association President.



Left to right – Dave Gunby (Secretary), Tiny Kuhle (Chairman), Martin Palmer (President)

ITEM 2 President's address

The President welcomed our official guest Tony Voysey (69th) from the Cranwell Association. In addition he commented on the presence of Mike Keen (78th) who had travelled from Perth, Australia and of Sandy Craigmyle (36th) a member's guest.

The President read the citation of this year's recipient of the RAFLAA Trophy Mr Seamus (Saggy) Ahern. Mr Ahern then received the Trophy, framed citation and Cheque for £50.

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

Mr Ahern thanked the Association for their invitation, presentation and hospitality and went on to describe how training was delivered at No 1 Radio School. Students arrive at Cosford after 9



weeks at RAF Halton learning the basics and then embark on a 12 month Apprenticeship which does not end in qualification until a period of 18 months 'On the job' training is successfully completed. The comradeship is still evident in the modern apprentice life and the learning is intense. The different courses are differentiated by coloured tape on the shoulder but a new badge has been submitted for approval involving the different coloured tapes and the

addition of the "Apprentice Wheel".

The President thanked Mr Ahern for a most enlightening and well received address. He also thanked the Committee for their work during the year and re introduced the Chairman.

The Chairman then 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 2009. 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 2009

The balance sheet for the Association now shows assets of £12,260.58, an increase of £1561.07 from the previous year. This is largely due to a decrease in the cost of the AGM 2008 to the Association by £1117, together with an increase in Interest on our Deposit Bond.

In 2007 the AGM agreed to set aside £3000 towards the provision of a Memorial at the RAF Locking site. The Committee agreed that £5000 should be invested in the bond as we have a healthy surplus. The Bond now stands at £5,348.63 which has been reinvested for 12 months from October 2008 at rate of 4.29% gross on the advice of HSBC prior to downturn in interest rates.

£95.50 was raised for charity at the AGM dinner 2008 and Mr Nields generously donated his trophy award of £50.00 for charity. The Chairman agreed that £150 should be donated to "Help for Heroes" charity.

Other donations were made in memory of Dave Trueman, Ron Grant and Tom Beck.

£25 was donated to RAFA (Weston-s-Mare) for use of Eagle House for a committee meeting.

Expenses

The cost of the AGM 2008 at Dauncey's Hotel was £2411.00 to which we add the cost of music (£110), trophy presentation and expenses, making a total of £2802.95. The deposit for the booking of to-days event at the Webbington (£200) is also included.

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

With the agreement of the Committee, 20 coins produced to commemorate the 90th Anniversary of the RAF were purchased from Tower Mint at cost of £147.11. We still have five in stock.

Direct Expenses and Overheads

Costs have remained fairly comparable with those in 2008

PROFIT & LOSS		
<u>SALES</u>	2008/2009	2007/2008
Membership fees	£3,078.89	£3,177.50
Life membership	£1,200.00	£1,202.50
Sales - ties, pins and videos	£194.70	£95.50
Window + Dedication Event		£0.00
Donation	£80.00	£179.00
AGM and other misc income	£2,467.50	£2,875.00
Bank interest received	£323.31	£240.74
	£7,344.40	£7,770.24
<u>PURCHASES</u>		
Pins	£0.00	£44.80
Ties	£0.00	£195.58
Videos	£0.00	£0.00
Name badges	£17.90	£33.30
AGM and other purchases	£2,802.95	£3,920.89
Donations and wreaths	£325.00	
Other	£147.11	
	£3,292.96	£4,194.57
<u>DIRECT EXPENSES</u>		
Advertising	£24.00	£44.00
Bank charges	£0.00	£4.00
Auditing	£50.00	£50.00
Refund	£268.99	£320.00
	£342.99	£418.00
<u>OVERHEADS</u>		
Travelling expenses	£596.20	£472.20
Printing	£912.46	£947.50
Telephone	£88.00	£35.03
Postage and carriage	£420.35	£395.88
Stationery	£130.37	£137.97
	£2,147.38	£1,988.58
<u>PROFIT/LOSS</u>	£1,561.07	£1,169.09

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

BALANCE SHEET

	2008/2009	2007/2008
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
Deposit Bond	£5,348.63	£5,108.97
Business Money Manager A/C	£3,709.23	£2,625.58
Community Account	£3,183.39	£2,944.99
Petty cash	£19.33	£19.97
<u>NETT CURRENT ASSETS</u>	£12,260.58	£10,699.51
<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>		
<u>FINANCED BY</u>		
Brought forward balance	£10,699.51	£9,800.42
Profit and loss account	£1,561.07	£899.09
	£12,260.58	£10,699.51

Tony proposed that the Accounts for the year 2008/09 be adopted.

Charles Hart (71st) proposed acceptance of the Treasurers report which was seconded by Harry North (96th) and all agreed.

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 2008/9 has seen the recruitment rate drop to 0.75 new member/month from 0.91 new member/month. This is compared with 2006/7 when the recruitment rate was over 1 new member/month. However the number of members joining still exceeds those leaving and therefore the number of names on the 'active' list continues to grow.
- The number of members taking Life membership also continues to grow.
- Numbers of members paying their dues by Standing Order Mandate has remained essentially constant.
- There have some resignations and 4 members have passed away.

Advertising

- The association continues to advertise in the RAFA magazine. The returns from this source continue to be encouraging.
- The Independent Pilots Association continues to offer us free advertising in their magazine on a when required/space available option.
- We have had an advert in the RAF News and I hope to renew this year.
- Last year we contacted several Aircraft Museums and Aviation orientated parks and we will carry out the same exercise this year. (I have some posters with me if anyone lives near or intends to visit one and would like to take one along to see if they would put it up for us).
- Last year the 2 RAF museums told me that they no longer have a notice board where we could display a poster, but I have been told that there is still a notice board at Cosford and our poster is on it!!

- Any suggestions with regard to any other (preferably) free advertising will be most gratefully received.

Newsletter

The Newsletter is now distributed mainly by down-load from the RAFLAA web site, or by hard copy or in a very few cases by personal copy via e-mail. The system seems to be working well. We are always glad of feedback either to the NL editor or the webmaster.

- We send out 170 e-mail notifications that a new edition of the NL is available on the website
- 8 personal E-mail copies of the NL
- 163 hard copies of the NL to UK addresses
- 8 hard copies of the NL to Overseas addresses
- 14 hard copies of the NL to the families of members who have passed away
- 7 Hard copies of the NL to brother organisations

Our thanks to Graham Beeston for organising the last 4

Life Membership and Standing Orders

- Life membership continues to be attractive. The number of members paying their subs this way continues to grow. The problem with members who pay their subscription by SOM, and who have failed to update the subscription amount paid by their bank (to £10.00) is almost resolved. We have now only 4 or 5 member who for one reason or another still cannot get it sorted out. I have in the past had to terminate members for continual underpayment. We hope that you will agree that it is not fair for some members to pay at the old rate and the rest of us at the new.
- Something I have mentioned before is that we have a number of members who have 'dropped off the map'. We have no contact with them but their subs continue to be paid by SOM (at the old rate). If anyone has news of, or contact with any of the following would they please ask them to get in touch.
- Colin Hicks 99th Weston Super Mare
- Brian Farrell 96th Bury St Edmonds
- Colin Stanforth 83rd Morpeth
- Geoff Walton 100th Pettistree (last heard of in Australia)

Membership changes since the last AGM (up to the 1st April 2009).

- We now have 660 names on the database of which 355 are 'active'.
- 9 new members have joined.
- 3 members have resigned and 4 members have passed away
- 7 members have been terminated due to shortfalls in their subscriptions.
- 7 more members have applied for life membership giving a total of 61 life members.
- There are now 211 Members paying by SO and 65 members 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; (E-mail and home addresses).

This concluded John's report, which he commended to the meeting.

Acceptance of John's Report was proposed by Tony Horry (76th) and seconded by Harry North (96th). 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 officers of the Association due for re-election were Dave Gunby (Secretary), Graham Beeston (Craft Rep) and Andy Perkins (Tech Rep). Although all three were prepared to serve on the Committee for a further three years it was pointed out that it was time some of the more junior entries put members forward to serve. The Secretary said that this would be his last term of office due to advancing years. The Craft Rep said that he was in need of a replacement as he found it almost impossible to attend Committee meetings due to work commitments.

Paul Bartlett (210th) suggested that an appeal be placed in the Newsletter together with "job descriptions". The Newsletter editor said he would do that.

Charles Trussler (87th) proposed that all three officers should be re elected and Colin Hinson (89th) seconded there was no dissent. Consequently the Committee list is as shown inside the back cover of this newsletter.

ITEM 6 RAF Locking Apprentice Memorial

The Secretary reported that there has been no progress in the development of the Locking Parklands site and therefore no progress could be made with the proposed provision of an Apprentice Memorial.

ITEM 7 Newsletter

Chris Tett thanked members for their contributions over the past year and appealed for more input.



This year's "Wordsmith" award went to Ken Toogood (79th). Ken was unable to attend due to ill health and the award was accepted by Jim Ward (79th).

The Chairman thanked Chris for his work on what is an important vehicle for communication.

ITEM 8 RAFLAA Web Site

In general members were satisfied with the running of the Association web site. The member's forum section would provide a receptacle for AGM feedback. There was a suggestion that the AGM/Reunion application form could be available on the site with unsecured access. This would be considered in Committee.

ITEM 9 Golden Entries 83rd, 84th and 85th

Bryan Waring spoke for the 83rd. The entry had recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary and on reflection they thought that the 3 years they spent as apprentices was of major significance in their lives. When Brian left home his father shook his hand which he felt was odd and he wondered what he was going into. He had one travelling companion on the train from Leeds although he didn't know it until Weston was reached. Brian thought it was all going well as he was transported to Locking and issued with mug and irons. He presented himself for Attestation and then after the oath things went downhill coping with the attentions of one Cpl Rice DI. Brian felt that although

there were many ups and downs during the three years it was a part of life he would never forget. The three years culminated in a passing out parade reviewed by the Duchess of Gloucester.
See more details later in this edition - Ed

Bryan Waring was cajoled into providing the 84th's address which was sent in by Tony Beard. (Nothing like catching the speaker while he's on his feet) Tony's submission being three foolscap pages long cannot be reproduced here. Suffice it to say that it contained much of what every entry did or had done to them: bed tipping, boot stealing, parades, bull nights (and days), duplicate items of equipment for kit layouts inspections and repeat inspections, cars, motor bikes, civvies it was all in Tony's submission. In general Tony personally benefited from having been in the ATC prior to enlisting and what the ATC didn't teach him his Mother did. The 84th was initially 117 strong but only 46 made it through. (Tony had put a lot into his address and it will be filed with the hard copy of these minutes).

Barry Price then spoke for the 85th. Tony Beard's efforts were so comprehensive that Barry found little to add. The 85th did have a Flight Commander with some odd ways. He was given to cycling everywhere with entry documents in the basket on front of his bike. However he cared deeply for his charges and was looked upon more of a mascot than a flight commander. Summer camp duly arrived and a period of overlapping with the 84th a dispute over whose entry flag should fly during the duplicate week resulted in something of a mutiny. As is usual a parade was called and advice was sought from HQ (Locking) and the advice was.....dismiss the parade. Flt Commander Tony Holt duly obliged. The Chairman thanked the contributors for their efforts.

See more details later - Ed

ITEM 10 Venue and format of the AGM/Reunion 2010

Events of the day prior to the meeting and gatherings the previous night gave the impression that The Webbington was proving to be a successful venue for our needs. There was a suggestion that something could be done for the ladies re a short coach trip during the AGM. It was proposed by Glyn Price (102nd) and seconded by Rick Atkinson (91st) that the Committee should make next year's arrangements when they meet in July. All agreed. It was suggested that the evening collection for charity could be considered for the charity "Troop Aid" as an alternative to "Help the Heroes". Again the Committee will decide.

ITEM 11 Any other business

Stuart Colbourne (87th) said that he had been unsuccessful in his search for an RAF Locking Apprentices Badge. It was thought that this would be an ideal opportunity to launch a "Design a Badge Competition" This would be discussed in Committee and a competition may be announced in the Newsletter.

Tony Voysey (68th) thanked the Association for their invitation and said that he had enjoyed his day.

Before closing the meeting the Chairman mentioned that there was no "Almoner" post on the Committee and wondered if anyone would consider the function.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 15.32.

Dinner Dance

The AGM was followed by an enjoyable dinner dance in the evening.



Ready for dinner

My Thanks to Brian Chillery (87th) for this photo



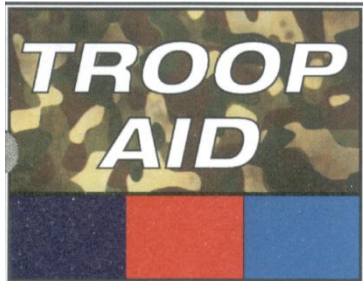
Afterwards friends chat

My thanks to Colin Hinson (89th) for this one.

Instead of a disco, this year the music was provided by a live group – Atlantic Crossing. At the end the crowd called out for more so it must have been an improvement on previous years! Ed

Feedback

Troop aid was selected as the charity for your donations at the Dinner. We had a nice letter back from the chairman - Ed



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e-mail: info@troopaid.info
www.troopaid.co.uk

31 May 2009

Mr. A Horry
Hillside Cottage,
Kewstoke Road
Kewstoke,
Weston-s-Mare,
North Somerset BS22 9YD.

Dear Tony,

Thank you very much for your generous donation of £150 to Troop Aid, please thank all members of the RAF Association.

With your help we can make life a bit more comfortable for our injured troops returning from conflict in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Your donation will go towards providing warm clothing such as Fleece, track suits, socks and trainers, toiletries etc. it will also go towards assisting families of those seriously injured whilst accommodated at the Hospital. We are currently sending our now famous individual Grab Bags with the basic necessities out to the UK Medical Stations in Afghanistan and to Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham.

Thank you very much for your support.

Kind Regards

Albert T Sutton JP
Chairman

Patron: His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales
Registered Charity No 1123888

*Supporting our
Injured Troops*

Comments

We got four favourable comments on the Dinner/dance including this one from Phil Mann 87th - Ed

Just a quick email to say how much Ruby and I enjoyed the reunion. Planning etc. was faultless and the venue great. The live music was spot on, perhaps we could book them for the 87th bash in May, also the food was pretty good. One point of dissatisfaction was the "reserving" of tables at the dinner by people putting pieces of paper on the tables with entry numbers on them - rather tacky. If it is the trend to do this, can I suggest we have sitting plans like at weddings.

Table reservation will be discussed at the next committee meeting - Ed

NOTICES

2010 RAFLAA Annual AGM and Dinner Dance

Advance Notice

Subject to confirmation at the next committee meeting, the 2010 RAFLAA AGM and Dinner/dance will be held at the Webbington Hotel, Loxton on Saturday 24th April 2010. The hotel has indicated it will be able to hold room prices the same as 2009 and is accepting bookings now. More details will follow in the next Newsletter.

The Armed Forces Pension Group (AFPG)

The AFPG asked for our support at the lunch before the AGM. It seems like a good cause so I made space for these words were sent by Nigel Lodge. - Ed

AFPG now has almost 4000 members. The aim of AFPG is to obtain payment of pensions for those years served by personnel who, having left before 1 April 1975, and who did not complete 22 years (non-commissioned) or 18 years (commissioned), have been denied any pension recognition.

The Government argument is that: to do so would require "retrospective legislation"; millions would apply; the cost would be billions and unaffordable. The Government, or at least various Ministers and other MPs, have admitted the moral argument inasmuch that they recognise how unfair it must seem. It therefore requires AFPG and others to defeat the argument about cost and retrospection and force the immorality of not paying that which is due. With the help of research carried out by the Royal British Legion we are able to prove the costs not only as erroneous but mischievously inaccurate.

On May 11th over 200 members paraded in Whitehall and then marched to the cenotaph to lay a wreath before proceeding to the Houses of Parliament to petition their MPs. This was the third occasion on which AFPG has marched and petitioned. Response from MPs has been positive but not good enough. Press cover this year was poor because of the ad-hoc demonstration by the Tamil Tigers which closed Parliament Square. The very fair campaign on behalf of the Gurkhas also had an adverse effect on publicity for the AGPG event. What is needed is even greater representation by former service personnel.

There are thousands of ex-Apps who did not complete 22 years and who, by joining AFPG and campaigning, could help sway the indecisive parliamentarians.

Did you know that assessment of service pay considered what level of pay was needed to enable Government to have the required level of manpower to defend British interests at home and abroad. Did you know that one of the assessments that helped reduce the amount was the 'benefit of a non-contributory pension scheme'? It follows therefore that each of us did contribute by this notional deduction in what was required. The matter of retrospection is a red-herring. What is needed is belated amending legislation, after all there was retrospection inasmuch that the terms of the contract for those then serving less than 22 years were amended to include their pre-1975 as eligible pensionable years.

If you want to know more, especially about how you can help, then please visit <http://www.afpg.info/>

Or contact Nigel at nigel.lodge@btinternet.co

The argument **is sustainable**.

Committee Vacancy

As stated at the AGM, there will be a vacancy on the RAFLAA Committee. Dave Gunby, our Secretary, will be retiring by April 2012 although he is willing to stand down at any intervening time. This will give whoever takes up the post an easy takeover as Dave will be around to give advice during the takeover period. Dave has given the RAFLAA six good years and thinks it is time to hand over.

Dave has kindly written the job description below. - Ed

Job Description - Secretary RAF Locking Apprentice Association.

- Time required is 1 hour per week averaged over the year.
- A degree of computer literacy is needed.
- Be a contact point for the Association.
- Maintain contact with other Associations as necessary.
- Prepare Agendas for Committee meetings (2 per annum)
- Prepare agendas for AGM (1 per annum)
- Prepare RAFLAA report for FABEA (1 per annum)
- Write and publish minutes for meetings (3/4 per annum)
- Attend Committee Meetings (2), AGM(I) and FABEA (1)
- Attend No 1 Radio School Annual Lunch when invited.
- Write letters as necessary although this is less of a chore with the advent of e-mail.
- Claim Expenses for Telephone calls (including e-mail), Stationary ,Postage and mileage to attend meetings except for RAFLAA AGM.

If you have a question or would like more details please contact Dave direct.

Tele: 01522 525484 Email: dpgraf72@btinternet.com

If you would like to apply, please contact our Chairman, Tiny Kuhle.

Tele: 01908 583784 Email: Hans.Kuhle@btopenworld.com

Request for help

The following has come in from RAF Cosford. If anyone can help I am sure any assistance will be very gratefully received. But see warning note by John Farmer at base. - Ed

From Cpl Stannard, RAF Cosford

I am writing to you in the hope that you might be able to offer me some assistance.

I work at No1 Radio School, DCAE Cosford. One of the things that I do is to promote Trade Group 4 both to the general public during trade fairs, air shows etc and VIP's when they visit the School.

As a result I have been tasked by OC No1 RS Wng Cdr Edmondson to redevelop the interior of the ground floor of the building, in particular the atrium area where visitors are first met and family and friends attending graduation parades are seated to watch the parades.

One of the focal points for the development is a timeline of the Trade from its very beginning up to the present.

I was wondering if you might have any information that I could use to produce this time line, the type of things that I am looking for are key dates in the trades history such the first use of radar, when training first began and at what stations. If you are aware of any key people from the trade that took part in important events during any conflicts, such as FS Cox who took part in the raid on the German Wurzburg radar during WW2.

Any information and/or pictures that you might be able to offer would be great.

Many thanks for your time.

Kev

Cpl Stannard

CEMF

No1 Radio School

Tel: 95561 4503

Civ: 01952 704503

Email: k8430827@cosford.raf.mod.uk

One word of warning!

From John Farmer
Membership Secretary

We had a similar request some years ago for information. I sent off several books about Locking and it was agreed that when the job was done I would receive the books back, plus a look at the finished project work.

Neither the books nor the project work copy have ever appeared. And the person I (lent) them to has disappeared into the night! If it's something you want to keep DO NOT send originals!

Reunions

92nd Entry - 50th Anniversary of "Signing-On"

From Stan Murray - 92nd

The 92nd have been having annual get-togethers for some years now, in conjunction with the RAFLAA AGM and annual reunion. A small group, with wives, has always met on the Friday night, had a few drinks, a meal and a good old "nostalgia fest".

A couple of years ago the subject of our 50th Anniversary was raised, and a decision to celebrate was taken. There was some discussion about whether we would celebrate our "signing on" or our "passing out", so it was suggested we do the signing on as a practice run, and if successful, go full out for a second mighty reunion when we would celebrate again. (Never an Entry to miss a celebration!)

There was never a question of where it would be held, and wherever the AGM was to be, then that's where we would go. Fortunately the venue chosen, The Webbington, was well known to us all, and for many of us, held wonderful memories of previous visits, either as Apprentices or in later years when back at Locking on various courses.

The task to build up the numbers began, and with the help of a group of enthusiasts, long lists of names, old addresses and national telephone directories, a total of 29 of us, plus 17 wives and partners attended on the night, including some from far off fields such as, South Africa, Cyprus, France and Unst in the Scottish Islands. To top it all off, one of our colleagues was in touch with our original Flight Commander, Les Harris, (an ex-Cranwell Apprentice), and he agreed to come along and join us.



Many met during the day but the main event started in the evening, when at 1800 hrs we met in the Rowberrow Suite for the start of what was to become a long and fascinating evening of meeting up with some who had not set eyes on each other during the 47 years since leaving Locking. Group and individual photos were taken, and at 2000hrs we all sat down for a lovely meal, and of course copious wines and ales.

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The evening was continued after the meal when Les Harris gave us an account of his very diverse and interesting career, explaining that although we as young Apprentices in 1959 thought of him as an old man, he was in fact only 26 at the time. Like all of us he hadn't changed a bit. Well, actually he had much more hair than many of us.

The evening was rounded off with the individual members relating to the others round the table, some of their more interesting experiences during and after RAF service, some which stirred memories in us all as many of the stories were common to all of us.

Many left for home on Saturday morning but the majority of us stayed and carried on reminiscing through the weekend. Some will return next year, some will not, but we now have to decide how we can beat that weekend when plans are set afoot for the next "big one" - the 50th Anniversary of "Passing Out", now that we've had the practice run.

93rd Reunion

From Ted Stickley (93rd)

I couldn't resist purchasing the attached registration when I saw it advertised in a national newspaper. A retirement present to myself, and in fond memory of my three years at Locking! I am having some difficulty in finding members of the 93rd for a possible 50th anniversary re-union this autumn. So, perhaps publishing the enclosed photos could start the ball rolling for me.

Anyone interested 93rd can contact me on (01271) 377159, my mob 07889680041 or my wife's e-address irene_costa@hotmail.com



A Different Reunion

From Mike Collier 76th

It all started in early August 08, with a phone call from Dave Gunby. "Someone from the Halton 76th wanted to make contact with the Locking 76th, was I interested?" On the following day, my positive response elicited a call from a Roger Harvey, Secretary of the Halton 76th Association.

Roger wanted my opinion on a possible joint Halton/Locking 76th reunion. Failing health and calls to the great parade ground in the sky, were contributing to a fall in numbers attending current events. My initial reaction was grave doubt but I agreed to consult a cross-section of members of my Entry. Reaction from them was broadly similar to mine. However, the more I thought about it, the more the idea intrigued me.

The next contact with Roger generated a tentative invitation for me to attend a reunion. They hold them every two years, the next was to be in Lincoln on 25th October 08. A few days later, I received a formal invitation from John Ritchie the event organizer. John is also the Association Membership Secretary and Magazine Editor. He included a copy of their most recent magazine. This is an excellent, twice yearly publication, very much on the lines of the RAFLAA Newsletter.

Again my initial reaction was negative. Do I really want to drive 120 miles to Lincoln to spend a day with a group of people I have never met and with whom, apart from being an ex-Apprentice, I have nothing in common? Pondering the problem over the following few weeks, I came to realise that I knew little of how Halton had been organized, compared to Locking and nothing at all about the Halton 76th. Eventually, curiosity overcame indecision and the invitation was accepted.

Further contact with Roger, unravelled some of the mystery of the Halton Apprentice organization. Early in 1954 it comprised three Wings.

- N°1 Wing - Red hatband and beret badge disc.
- N°2 Wing - Pale Blue hatband and beret badge disc
- N°3 Wing - Yellow hatband and beret badge disc.

Each Wing contained three Entries (all considerably larger than their Locking equivalents) and was subdivided into three Squadrons; the Squadrons being organized on a trade basis.

- N°1 Sqn - Engines (Red disc behind sleeve wheel.)
- N°2 Sqn - Airframes & Armourers (Green disc behind sleeve wheel.)
- N°3 Sqn - Electricians & Instruments (Orange disc behind sleeve wheel.)

Hence, a trainee Instrument fitter in 2 Wing would wear a Pale Blue hatband/beret disc and an Orange disc behind the sleeve wheel. A trainee Armourer in the same Entry would wear the same coloured hatband etc. but would have a Green disc behind the sleeve wheel.

Each Wing had an F.S.A.A. and each Sqn up to three S.A.A.'s consequently, at any time there could be three F.S.A.A.'s and 27 S.A.A.'s The longest serving Entry in each Wing was considered to be a Senior Entry but as by this time Halton had abandoned the "good conduct" chevrons, there was no way of identifying Entry seniority.

They also had no "permanent passes" or radius restrictions on how far they might travel when allowed off camp. There appears to have been no restriction on going off camp on any evening of the week, unless there was a "bull night". However, there was a 2200 curfew. Slashed peak dress caps were available from stores but battledress was not. They had a best blue and a working blue of the same pattern. Rifles were stored in a lockable rack at the end of the room. There were many other minor variations but perhaps, most surprising of all, they were paid differently from Locking. In the early days when total pay was 17/6 per week, we received 10/- on pay parade, while 7/6 was retained for end of term credits. At Halton, the amounts were reversed. Pay parade yielded 7/6 and 10/- was retained for credits; perhaps to place a financial constraint on travel distance when off camp?

The Halton 76th arrived on the 19th Jan 1954 and joined the 70th and 73rd in N°2 Wing. (Locking 76th arrived on 20th Jan 1954, joining A Sqn. Also with the 70th and 73rd)

Halton were 264 strong, including 4 Ceylonese and 4 Rhodesians. The training plan was for 28% Engines, 27% Airframes, 22% Armourers, 14% Electricians and 9% Instruments. (Locking 76th was 97 strong including 3 Rhodesians.)

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During the three years, Halton 76th were joined by 43 from other Entries. 15 ex-74th, 27 ex-75th, plus one from the Locking 76th. (Locking 76th gained 58 from other Entries. 2 ex-73rd, 3 ex-74th and 53 ex-75th.)

At the end of 1954, the Halton Sqdn system was reorganized. The 76th stayed in N°2 Wing but became N°2 Sqdn. (73rd became N°1 & 79th N°3) so, irrespective of trade, all of the 76th had pale blue hatbands/beret discs and green wheel discs. From this I guess, some degree of seniority might be judged.

Following a major battle between the departing 73rd and the 76th, on the formers last night at Halton, a further reorganization took place in Jan. 1956. In an attempt to dampen Entry spirit, all Entries were "shuffled". Hence, the 76th, at the start of their seventh term, were split into three parts, one third going to each Wing. There they were further split across the rooms. All other Entries suffered the same fate. This resulted in a situation where a room could contain elements from all Entries, from senior to junior. Additionally, all 76th N.C.O. Apps. were reduced to the ranks for a term, being reinstated to their former ranks at the start of their eighth term. The new system did little to quell Entry spirit but did cause considerable chaos. One person to whom I spoke at the reunion said "It had its advantages, as senior entry, if you were looking for a sprog to bull your kit you did not have to look far; there was usually one in your room."

Passing out parade for the Halton 76th was on 19th Dec. 1956. (Locking 76th - 18th Dec 56). 179 of the original 264 at Halton passed out on that day - 68%. (43 of the original 97 at Locking passed out on the 18th - 44%) Now, almost 52 years after those events, some of the participants were going to meet for the first time!

Lunch time on the 25th Oct 08 found me at The Lincoln Hotel, adjacent to a very impressive Lincoln Cathedral. Slightly apprehensive regarding the reception I might receive and very conscious that their perception of the whole Locking 76th could be much influenced by my demeanour. I soon discovered that my concerns were groundless. Once I had located my hosts, introductions were made and the afternoon ran very much as our reunions do. Inevitably there was a little light-hearted banter but they were all very friendly and curious about the differences between our two systems. They also had a room full of Halton and specific 76th memorabilia which was very interesting.

The dinner had a little more formality than its Locking equivalent. We gathered at 1900 for pre-dinner drinks. For 15 minutes or so a bagpiper played various tunes to which Halton Apprentices would have marched to their training areas. At 1930 we followed the piper in to dinner. Table seating positions had been pre-selected by the members when they arrived for the reunion. As we stood at the tables, the Association Chairman read out the names of those known to have departed in the previous two years. The piper then played a lament. A prayer and grace were, said by an ex-Entry member who had taken holy orders after leaving the R.A.F. A very pleasant dinner followed. Unfortunately, I had to leave at the conclusion of the dinner but I would guess that the remainder of the evening was very similar to a Locking 76th event.

Since then, I have had further contact with Roger Harvey. He told me a little of the conclusions reached at their General Meeting which took place on the morning of the 26th. Halton 76th are still very keen to hold a joint reunion. Their next one is scheduled for the last weekend in October 2010, at a venue to be decided. The current plan, is that it would be a Halton 76th reunion to which the Locking 76th are invited.

As far as I am aware, the Locking 76th have no immediate plans for a reunion of their own. Whether the Halton proposal will prove to be attractive, I have no idea. I can think of a number of arguments for and against but at least for me, it was a very interesting experience that I would be more than happy to repeat.

If anyone is interested in obtaining more information, the Halton 76th have a Web site at www.users.waitrose.com/brat289/index.html

Halton have one at <http://www.oldhaltonians.co.uk> with a link to the 76th site.

Tit-Bits

God's Pharmacy

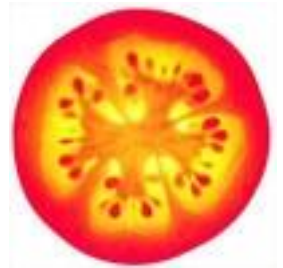
From Dave Newman 92nd

It's been said that God first separated the salt water from the fresh, made dry land, planted a garden, made animals and fish... All before making a human. He made and provided what we'd need before we were born. These are best & more powerful when eaten raw. We're such slow learners... God left us a great clue as to what foods help what part of our body!



A sliced Carrot looks like the human eye. The pupil, iris and radiating lines look just like the human eye... And YES, science now shows carrots greatly enhance blood flow to and function of the eyes.

A Tomato has four chambers and is red. The heart has four chambers and is red. All of the research shows tomatoes are loaded with lycopine and are indeed pure heart and blood food.



Grapes hang in a cluster that has the shape of the heart. Each grape looks like a blood cell and all of the research today shows grapes are also profound heart and blood vitalizing food.

A Walnut looks like a little brain, a left and right hemisphere, upper cerebrums and lower cerebellums. Even the wrinkles or folds on the nut are just like the neo-cortex. We now know walnuts help develop more than three (3) dozen neuron-transmitters for brain function.



Kidney Beans actually heal and help maintain kidney function and yes, they look exactly like the human kidneys.

Celery, Bok Choy, Rhubarb and many more look just like bones. These foods specifically target bone strength. Bones are 23% sodium and these foods are 23% sodium. If you don't have enough sodium in your diet, the body pulls it from the bones, thus making them weak. These foods replenish the skeletal needs of the body.



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Avocados, Eggplant and Pears target the health and function of the womb and cervix of the female - they look just like these organs. Today's research shows that when a woman eats one avocado a week, it balances hormones, sheds unwanted birth weight, and prevents cervical cancers. And how profound is this? It takes exactly nine (9) months to grow an avocado from blossom to ripened fruit. There are over 14,000 photolytic chemical constituents of nutrition in each one of these foods (modern science has only studied and named about 141 of them).



Figs are full of seeds and hang in twos when they grow. Figs increase the mobility of male sperm and increase the numbers of Sperm as well to overcome male sterility.

Sweet Potatoes look like the pancreas and actually balance the glycemic index of diabetics.



Olives assist the health and function of the ovaries

Oranges, Grapefruits, and other Citrus fruits look just like the mammary glands of the female and actually assist the health of the breasts and the movement of lymph in and out of the breasts.



Onions look like the body's cells. Today's research shows onions help clear waste materials from all of the body cells. They even produce tears which wash the epithelial layers of the eyes. A working companion, Garlic, also helps eliminate waste materials and dangerous free radicals from the body.



Water

From Phil Marston 92nd

One glass of water shuts down midnight hunger pangs for almost 100% of the dieters studied in a University study. Lack of water is the #1 trigger of daytime fatigue.

Preliminary research indicates that 8-10 glasses of water a day could significantly ease back and joint pain for up to 80% of sufferers. A mere 2% drop in body water can trigger fuzzy short-term memory, trouble with basic maths and difficulty focusing on the computer screen.

Drinking 5 glasses of water daily decreases the risk of colon cancer by 45%, plus it can slash the risk of breast cancer by 79%, and one is 50% less likely to develop bladder cancer.

Are you drinking the amount of water you should every day? (No kidding, all of the above is true...)

Apprentice days

83rd Golden Entry

From Bryan Waring 83rd

My thanks to Colin Hinson (89th) for the photos - Ed

This year, on the 24th March, twelve members of the 83rd Entry of Aircraft Apprentices celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of our graduation from RAF Locking. It was, as they say, an auspicious occasion, however, the actual day in 1959 was for me, tinged with sadness. I had been part of a close-knit family for almost three years; suddenly, I was on my own feeling very vulnerable. It didn't last very long, servicemen, out of necessity, made friends very easily. So, for me, certainly, and probably for all ex-Royal Air Force Apprentices, celebration of the Golden Year is really a remembrance of the previous *three* 'golden' years, commencing with the events leading up to that final 'passing-out' parade or graduation.



The birth of the 83rd Entry was on 9th May 1956, at about 10.00 hrs, the day we signed our lives away! For me, however, it really began two days earlier, whilst for others, with longer journeys, much earlier; two of our entry made the journey from New Zealand, by boat, some 6, 7 weeks previously.

So, ignoring time spent on the entrance examination taken in a Careers Office (Harrogate, I think) and a trip to RAF Halton for assessment (Catch22) and medical, my journey began on 7th May at a Leeds Railway Station with, horror of horrors, my father shaking my hand! How weird is that! Marginally better than being hugged, I suppose! The train journey was uneventful. I shared the compartment, with, amongst others, a youth of around my age, bound for the same destination – I didn't find this out until Bristol, when everyone else left the train! For the life of me I cannot remember who the lad was, or if he even survived the first three months.

Alighting at Weston, we were invited to take a seat on a RAF coach; I joined about a dozen or so ashen-faced youths, all wondering if we had done the right thing! (I understand the coach thing was sheer luxury as most made that journey in the back of a '3-tonner', a vehicle I was to become very familiar with over the next three years *and* beyond!)

A gentleman with three stripes and two others with two stripes met us at Locking. They were very nice to us, and made us very welcome; maybe this wasn't such a bad place after all! That was until the 9th May when, with our right hands held aloft, we recited something called the 'Oath of Allegiance' and signed away (or so it seemed) the rest of our lives, (*and* the twelve years didn't start until age eighteen!!) after that they weren't very nice at all – the nasty man with three stripes, seems he was a sergeant, name of Rice, threatened to stick something (memory loss, again) in our ears, in an attempt to impregnate (my word, not his!) us with some sense! And another thing, don't know about the others, but my mum and dad were definitely married!

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

Looking back to that first day, and knowing now about 'Mugs and Irons' which at that point, we didn't have, were the tables in the mess laid out with those implements? Probably not, but that bit is definitely a blur! On the subject of blurs, what did we do with the civvies we arrived at Locking in? I can remember going home the first time, in uniform; it came in very handy, the females were impressed with the apprentice wheel designating us trainee helicopter pilots!!

After that first term, the entire entry (or so it seemed!) decided to join the apprentice band! Sounds like a good skive! When eventually we were split into our respective trades, the entire Ground Wireless (83C) class all six of us were bandsmen! (We did, ultimately, get to eight with two FT's from the 82nd), both of whom, sadly, no longer with us, and in the final term yet another FT joined us.

Along with 'bodies under the pier', a Lancaster Bomber jammed between two tech blocks, a dummy bomb on a Weston bank night-safe, a notice painted over the entrance of 3-block – 'abandon hope all ye who enter here' and the inevitable soap-powder in the fountain on Weston front, (the list is endless!) we, the 83rd recommended that women should not be exempt from wearing boots. To this end we had a campaign with posters to this effect placed strategically in various shop windows around Weston. The team was spotted by the police, who followed pulling down the posters. This, however, didn't deter the back-up team sticking them back up! We also climbed the 70ft drainpipe behind the Odeon Cinema in order to erect a bed-sheet proclaiming the 'Boots for Women Week.' Checking the footwear of some young (and not-so-young) ladies today (including the feminine members of our Armed Forces) did we eventually get the message across?

Who can forget the pint sized (about 5ft) Wing Warrant Officer, Mr Parks (Percy) handing over the Apps Wing parade over to the Wing Adjutant, Fg Off Champion (around 6.5ft)! Percy had to bend his head so far back, he almost lost his SD!!

The RAF motto 'Per Ardua Ad Astra', and the apprentice translation 'Up the hill to the cinema' should serve to remind everyone, of those pleasant evenings spent in that glorious fleapit! Remember the 'Looney Tunes' cartoons directed by the immortal Fred Quimby (good old Fred) and the shouted request to the projectionist 'Focus!' and the inevitable reply from another member of the audience 'What? All of us!!'

Along with several others of the entry, mostly band members, I took up caving. I think, originally, it seemed like a good skive and took us to Cheddar, etc, and various hostelries! When I think back to the caves and underground tunnels, usually half full of running water, we crawled into in total darkness with the minimum of equipment and guidance, I think perhaps Sgt Rice did not achieve his objective previously mentioned. The same lot took up devil worship after reading Denis Wheatley, namely 'To the Devil a Daughter' and 'The Devil Rides Out' – Midnight in the band hut, pentagon chalked on the floor, candles at each pinnacle and a book of instructions! I never admitted it, but it was quite scary, particularly when one of the 'hooks' banged on the door demanding an explanation!! And if that wasn't bad enough, who can recall 'The Invasion of the Bodysnatchers' at the Astra! I don't think I slept for a fortnight!! I found wearing garlic quite comforting!

Following all these distractions, half a dozen of us had to sign SAC papers (oops!) That had the desired effect, after it was pointed out we could pass out SAC Fitter and the exam to Jnr Tech would be entirely down to us with no further course!! Time to put aside all those foolish things... Now remember the joy and elation when the finals results were published and your name was up there and you'd made it to Jnr Tech (J/T in those days)! All the chalk disappeared from the classrooms in order that the single upside-down stripe could be marked on both sleeves of our uniforms prior to strutting through all the junior entry billets on the way to the mess!! (Perhaps, turning over a few beds on the way – we had to be careful, mind, in case the entry fought back – there were not many of us!!)

When the 83rd arrived at Locking three years earlier we were a very small entry, we totalled sixty-four in number; how many opted out in the first three months, I have no idea, quite a few I understand, take away also the FT's, and CT's, it's little wonder we passed out in two ranks, (with a blank file, of course!!) all twenty-nine of us, of which only nineteen were original! We were, however, a 'Royal' entry, having HRH, the Duchess of Gloucester reviewing the graduation parade, perhaps, our only claim to fame. I returned to Locking only once in my career, twenty-five years to the day I first arrived, 7th May 1981.

I stayed with it to the end, 55th birthday! I enjoyed every aspect of my career, and, yeah, *in the same time frame*, I'd do it all again.

84th Golden Entry

From Tony Beard 84th

8th September 1956 – 28th July 1959

On Tuesday, 18th September 1956, ninety-nine young men, most straight from school, travelled to RAF Locking. The majority arrived at Weston super Mare railway station to be met by either Sgt "Stringy" Cord or Cpl Butler and then were quietly, but firmly, shepherded into 3-ton Lorries or buses for the short journey to Locking. The 84th Entry was initially billeted in huts 351 - 361 and 362 in C Sqn lines. Three other new entrants whose families lived overseas had already arrived at Locking; one being from Malta, the other 2 from Service families. Later that week, the last of the original 117 members of the 84th arrived - these being 5 ex-Boy Entrants from RAF Cosford.

The first week or so at Locking is now, unfortunately, something of a blur in the memory of this author, but suffice to say, on the 19th September, the new arrivals were duly sworn in, given the Queens Shilling and their Service number which would stay, indelibly, in their memories for the rest of their lives. We were also acquainted with the rest of C Sqn staff; Pilot Officer Scott, our flt cdr, and FS Price. The most notable personality however, was Sqn Ldr Uprichard. If you played rugby - you were in - and I was! Saturday afternoons became a little more adventurous for an apprentice in his first year as a member of the Wing 1st XV who experienced the joys of playing at various locations around the district.

After being kitting out with uniforms the 84th were introduced to the strange ways of Service life. We were, like all other Entries of this period, quickly made aware of the concept of Senior Entry and of the power and strength of the 76th. In fairness, and retrospect, I can honestly say that they were a good, fair and responsible Entry, at least to us, and they carried out their Apprentice indoctrination tasks with a mixture of apparent pleasure, thoughtfulness for our welfare and the need to cultivate the necessary esprit-de-corps in our young minds. We all learnt a great deal about life and how to overcome potential disaster in those early days. Personally, I found myself very grateful for several years' service in my school cadet force where I had successfully mastered the art of, among other things, collar studs and collar-detached shirts. My mother had also taught me how to use an electric iron and this training stood me in good stead in those early days. I was also fortunate in always carrying spare collar studs which negated having to plunge my hands into a 7lb tin of treacle to find my first set which had been placed there by kind members of the 76th! I also remember having to sort out my personal pair of boots from around 117 other pairs carefully placed in a bath - fortunately devoid of water!

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

Memories of that first year are somewhat vague but some incidents do stand out quite clearly. Who can ever forget the parades, particularly the (monthly) station parades together with what seemed to be an enormous number of airmen from the other Wings on the station. The uniforms and other dress accoutrements also remain clear in my memory. The hairy blues, the dreadful ground-sheets used as rain coats, the heavy but warm greatcoats, the endless "bull" that we all engaged in and the frequent billet inspections. These were normally followed by another trip to the NAAFI to purchase yet more tins of polish to replace ones not cleaned to the required standard and deliberately destroyed under the booted feet of the inspecting NCO. I believe china drinking mugs also frequently fell into this category. As a result of this, one of the more enterprising members of the Entry (whose uncle worked in the plating industry) came back from Christmas leave with a small quantity of chrome-plated boot polish and duraglit tins. The look on the face of the Leading Apprentice in-charge of our billet on the next inspection said it all!! I still have my two tins to this day as a reminder of the extraordinary way of life we led. It was not all bad news though; I still use my 53-year old black shoe cleaning brushes almost on a daily basis.

At the end of the first year we were re-classed into trades and began the serious business of learning about radio engineering. Some of us took to it naturally whilst others found the learning process to be a distraction from enjoying the best bits that Locking had to offer. The weekends were all most of us lived for - the trips into Weston, the rucks on the beach with the local Teds and the seemingly endless quests for girl-friends - or was it just me? Walking-out dress in those days included, of course, hairy uniforms and big black boots. What the local girls thought of this each Wednesday evening at the Winter Garden dances I dread to think but we seemed to be able to impress them no matter what the attire! Of course, after the first term we all realised that having some illegal "civvy" clothing at Locking was the answer. The previous occupants of our billets had used the very dry and dusty conditions underneath the billets to hide their "civvies" and so we followed suit. Old suitcases and other assorted containers were easily lodged in every available recess to hold the afore-said clothing. We then of course had to learn how to break-in and out of camp without being seen by either the senior entry or the DS staff -skills quickly learnt.

Sometime early in 1958 we, together with colleagues from the 85th entry, organised a large "tipping-out" raid on the 87th entry who numbered something over 200 strong and were flexing their muscles a little early in their careers. There must have been some minor injuries sustained by the 87th as word of our mis-deeds reached officialdom and consequently we were gated for several weeks. To show the rest of the Wing, and particularly the Wing NCOs and Officers that we were a mature and responsible set of young adults, we organised a day of activities on the station for a large group of children from a local orphanage during one of these gated weekends. This went down very well; at least the children enjoyed it. On another weekend, we held an inter-billet sports competition for the Entry which achieved relatively nothing other than increasing the numbers at sick parade the following Monday.

Summer 1958 brought the summer camp - we went to East Camp at Lulworth and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. As an exercise in trying to broaden our military training it achieved not a lot - there was a great deal of navigational exercises around the very pleasant Dorset countryside and if success can be judged on the number of public houses found and tested, then we did ok. The night exercises brought about a number of minor injuries and not just to the Apprentices - one or two RAF Regt corporals suffered as well - and not just their pride!

Probably one of the major escapades that the 84th planned and executed was the flag on the Odeon cinema in Weston. One of our number managed to climb onto the roof of the cinema one Wednesday evening and hoisted the Entry flag on a vacant pole. Being unable to re-enter the

cinema, he made his way across several rooftops until he managed to get to the ground in someone's back-yard. The Weston Mercury was telephoned the following day and we in due course achieved our aim of some little publicity in the next edition of the paper.

Having recently read in the RAFLAA newsletter about the exploits of the 82nd Entry in moving the Lincoln (? - or was it a Lancaster?) bomber from one of the hangars with the intention of reaching the parade square, I should add that a significant number of our Entry assisted the 82nd in this task as these aircraft were quite heavy. As I recall the incident we were only unsuccessful as roadside trees prevented further progress. It was quite amusing the following day watching the attempts by the MT section to return the aircraft to its original parking place.

Having cars and motor bikes at Locking was, of course, the big "verbotten" Needless to say we had a number of members lucky enough to own cars and motor bikes. Somehow or other, a newly built block of 5 single garages in Weston became available and were quickly filled by an assortment of old and quite unroadworthy motor vehicles. These were soon followed by an assortment of old wardrobes inside the garages holding various civilian clothing - all of which were still illegal at that time.

From the 117 original members, the Entry was progressively reduced to precisely 46 on passing out day in July 1959 plus 4 others who came down from the 83rd and 82nd. Of these 50, two were awarded cadetships at the RAF College Cranwell and one went to the Technical College at RAF Henlow. In the years after leaving Locking a significant number achieved commissioned rank both in the air and on the ground. Our most senior member retired as an Air Cdre in 1993.

Eighteen months ago, two members of this Association decided to locate as many members as possible with a view to holding a reunion this year to mark the 50th anniversary of Passing Out from Locking. To date, we have managed to locate 30 members of the Entry, 16 of whom have booked for our first reunion in the Cotswolds this summer. Despite having had minimal contact in the previous 50 years, we confidently expect to have further gathering in the coming years during which the main subject of conversation will undoubtedly be - Locking.

85th Golden Entry

From Barry Price 85th

If I use the express "Wing It" most of us present would naturally think of an aircraft's "fuselage and tailplane": but my son would more likely think of terms like "off the cuff"... "Play it by ear" etc. The latter would apply to me with just a few minutes preparation to make this "report".

Two words describe the 85th....Bunny Holt! The Flight Commander of the 85th and said to be at the time, the most senior Flying Officer in the Royal Air Force...something to do with promotion exams? Also known to us as "Wells Fargo", as he would cycle around camp on his RAF bicycle with a wicker basket on the front containing all his documents.

Actually he wasn't our Flight Commander more our "Mascot"; a more conscientious and diligent Officer would be hard to find.

Many of the items and comments given in the 83rd and 84th Golden Entry reports would equally apply to the 85th, so just a few "lighter moments" to illustrate the 85th.

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association



You heard about the summer camp at Lulworth Cove of the 84th well of course, we also went there overlapping on their 2nd week. It is here that we had our Entry Mutiny.

We could not resist raising our Entry Flag over the Guardroom (very small but capable of housing about 3 inmates) as the 84th left; directly against the instructions of our drill sergeant! He immediately paraded the Entry and ordered the culprits to take one place forward, at which point the whole Entry in perfect timing took the one place forward. The sergeant was heard to mutter "mutiny" and I will have you all in the Guardroom (much to our amusement).

Right on cue Bunny arrived to be informed that the sergeant had a "Mutiny" on his hands: - his reply- dismiss the Entry and have them parade for sports in 20 minutes. End of mutiny- we think he played a "blinder"!

You have just heard how some entries kept their "civvies" under their billets- not the 85th; - we had scrumpy fermentation plants. One enthusiastic member, who you may remember by his cycling around camp on a "penny-farthing" bicycle, was so enthusiastic in his imbibing he had to be helped down to 3T Block to sit his finals; he passed.

The 85th Entry Passed Out in December 1959 and I suspect quite rarely- we have a colour cine film of this Parade.

Graph Question

From Paul Kite 81st/82nd

The multi Entry response from some of the members is interesting. I applied for an Instructor's Post at Locking in 1965 as a Corporal (I didn't get it). Whilst there for the interview I was shown a graph by the Admin Flight Sergeant. The Graph showed the range of "pass out" marks - highest to lowest for each Entry from around the 60th to around the 100th Entry. The graph which was in the form of a broad band was stable until the 72nd entry which showed a huge peak in high to low marks which then plunged to a massive low (high to low marks) around the 81st and 82nd, forming two sets of pronounced spikes one positive the other negative. After the 84th Entry all settled down again. During my time at Locking there were large numbers being back classed each term. Of my original class (81st) of thirtyish (Air Radio), I was the only one to (eventually) pass out with the 83rd.

I wonder if that graph is still in existence.

Was It Really All That Good?

From Peter Platt – 75th

Peter puts an alternative view – was he right? - Ed

Locking, I mean. Was it really all that good? Many contributors to this Newsletter would suggest it was all halcyon honey and sun. And perhaps when I came down the steps of the footbridge at Weston station on the evening of the 9th September 1953 and saw those clouds gloriously fired red, orange and yellow high above Station Road I too thought I was in for honey and sun. But I wasn't. I was in for something nastier.

... So I did not enjoy my time at Locking and cannot pretend I ever did, despite the stews of nostalgia in which I now marinate during these autumnal years.

Sixteen to nineteen are times of excitement: one is on the threshold of adulthood with juices stirring in loin and mind, and tastes developing, falteringly at first, for women and wine – perhaps best described in those young and impoverished times as rumpy and scrumpy. But that was all to do with youth, and had nothing to do with Apprentice Wing, Royal Air Force Locking. Now there was a regime of bullying and of bullying. And of repression.

Bulling is easy: you simply spit and polish in the fond belief that it will develop smartness, character and accolade. And if you were really good at it the accolade was arbitrary 'promotion' to LA's bull-boy or CA's bunk-boy with sundry attendant perks in the form of excused billet duties. But all this bull might well have been key to developing that indefinable quality to which our entry if not all were urged to aspire: *esprit de corps*. (That the notion of *esprit de corps* was probably a ploy instigated by Napoleon to bind together the disparate nationalities of his all conquering armies is immaterial: it was judged a 'fine thing' so must be emulated in the grey band squadron, C) So we entered into the spirit of the thing perhaps thinking of Gregory Peck playing the part of MacArthur where at West Point he spoke of the honour of 'the *corps*, and the *corps*, and the *corps*.' And then in later years we saw Tom Cruise in *A Few Good Men* and wondered if *esprit de corps* was perhaps the path to bullying ...

At Locking the bullying *Men* (and *Few were Good!*) were, of course, to be found in entries more senior and especially the Senior Entry, hallowed be its name! They would grab the juniors for floor padding and galvanised bucket bullying – and their exalted position entitled them to practice the arts of queue bashing and bed-tipping. Regarding the latter skill: when practised on me I would jump out of bed and hide behind the steel locker until ordered by a member of the Senior Entry (oh God, they were all giant sized!) to return to the bed blankets for ceremonial tipping out, and, lamb like, would comply. [I am forever a coward] But on one such occasion Hugh Thompson threatened to make a dash from our barricaded hut (361) for the squadron offices to demand protection from bed-tipping bullies. "What courage!" thought I, admirably – and declined to join him. [I am forever a coward] I'm not sure that Hugh actually made the mad dash but I am sure that that single courageous thought alone ensured he passed out FSA. Well, I can think of no other reason. And had he made the dash what would have happened? Nothing, you bet! Such bullying was condoned by the authorities, doubtless in the belief that it bred that Napoleonic sentiment of *esprit de corps*.

Oh dear. I hear sounds of protest already in blimpish tones: "Bah! Never did me any harm. I was tipped out of me bed many a time. Fell on me head a couple of times. Never did me any harm!" Well, it might not have but we all knew it to be wrong: indeed in later years when I challenged those sometime n.c.o. apprentices as to their behaviour during kit inspections regarding not-quite-white pint-pot smashing or not-quite-square blanket-pack mashing, and so forth, they sheepishly agreed that their behaviour was perhaps 'not proportionate' – as the Metropolitan Police would have it. Probably, that was the main problem: we were all acting a part, behaving blindly as taught by more senior entry, by squadron staff, both DI and officer, doing what was considered proper in the eyes of authority – perhaps in pursuit of *héritage*? [Blind imitation is the DNA of discipline]

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

“OK! OK,” you say, “But the technical training was good. You've got to admit that? You've got to admit that! I mean those blokes who serviced the wireless for *Faith, Hope and Charity* in Malta during the war knew how to make condensers out of silver paper from packets of Player's, didn't they? They knew how to keep the equipment serviceable despite Jerry's total blockade. And that was only because they'd had a Flowerdown training, just like the one at Locking!” [Yeah! And we learnt about Leyden jars too]

Well, the training wasn't particularly good, not really. Overall it was — so so. Certainly it was dreadfully slow. In some ways the training might have been the inspiration for Parkinson's Law: 'work expands in order to fill the time available for its [slow!] completion' about three years! 1st term, DC theory; 2nd term, magnetism and electrostatics (Leyden jars included); 3rd term, AC theory; 4th term, valves!! [If we fight wars at this same rate little surprise there's need to call in the Yanks (and the Russians) to save air force souls]

After learning about 'valves!!' we could move to mastering equipments – which in the main *were* well taught, principally because it was hands-on – though we never worked in a true operational environment; we didn't know at Locking what we were being trained for because we never saw the real air force. During three years training my entry made but one brief visit, less than a day, to an operational station, Box, where a shiny new Hastings really looked perfected modernity – but I can't remember us being allowed to sully its interior. However, during his training a BOAC apprentice would work on real aircraft, see how accounts worked, work in the drawing office, have a few weeks in personnel and in stores. I only heard about this type of apprenticeship from a national service airman after leaving Locking, and wished I'd been BOAC! And I'm fairly certain he had a qualification at the end of his apprenticeship. We didn't! – although two or so of the very brightest in the entry (which by definition excluded me, but only because I was busy hiding my light under a bushel of scrumpy) were allowed to sit a new exam set by City & Guilds which tested the telecoms skills of GPO engineers. GPO!

Another point: none of us were allowed to choose our trades – about half our entry was ordered into air radio and the rest were dragooned into ground wireless or ground radar. Little wonder training wastage was high!

However, I must return to the Apprentice Wing proper and those who were darkly ardent in blanketing the freedom of their charges:

- Apprentices must wear uniform at all times, civvies being absolutely forbidden (except on leave when we were under parental charge)
- Motor bikes must not be ridden, regardless of the national government's ruling permitting a 16 year old so to do.
- Before learning to drive a car permission must first be gained from the flight office (Or just go and learn with peaked cap off and slunk low in the seat of a pre-war Ford to career around the streets of Weston at the very reasonable rate of 7/6d the half hour and hoping some bloody stupid squadron DI would not notice)
- Alcohol was the brew of the devil so was forbidden – yea even to those enabled by law to imbibe (there's a whiff of Calvinism there, surely?)

... And those petty restriction of 'smoking pass' and 'permanent pass' (PP). The whole nation was lawfully allowed to purchase cigarettes at 16 but we had to get written parental permission to smoke: the PP gave escape from camp (Attired in best blue didn't we look good in the guardroom mirror on our way out for anticipated rumpy!) initially for a maximum of 19 hours all at the week-end, rising to 29 hours because of mild extensions to week-end times and a special 5 hour allowance on Wednesday evenings for senior entries. Outside those hours freedom could only be obtained by special pass, signed by flight commander, provided we'd previously sought written

permission 'with honour' and which we signed, fully aware of more 'honour' in being an 'obedient servant'.

And the PP was only valid for travel up to a maximum 20 miles radius (much within that area being sea) but which excluded 18 mile distant Bristol – where one supposes it was thought our yearning parts might become permanently scarred at brothels patronised by wickedly diseased sailors? [Air lord, protect us!]

Boggies were equally unclean, thus intermingling was absolutely forbidden; for, after all, they were part of the air force. Further to that, of course, the majority were national servicemen well versed in the ways of rebellion – indeed quite a few were known to be readers of the *Manchester Guardian* and, ergo, were undoubted Commies. [Air lord, protect us!]

No! Locking scores blackly with its bulling and bullying. And its repression! (Could that be why it was knocked down?) Memory treats those ill who think otherwise. The very best time at Locking for me was being posted to the real air force at Marham. Now there is fine nostalgia that lives, *lives*, in memory and maybe that's a good thing, for I hear the place is soon to be abandoned, perhaps even knocked down! [But there, *Tread softly, because you tread on my dreams*]

Hot Shot Apprentices 1950s Style

From Brian Davies 76/77 Entry

A welcome change from the hours of technical training, bull and drill during our three years apprenticeship, was the frequent visits that we made to RAF Locking's rifle range. The sessions were administered by the RAF Regiment and generally were often looked forward to as the soft option compared to the rigours of Basic Radio classes.

We were taught at the Regiment's section to strip, clean and shoot the venerable .303 Le Enfield rifle and the formidable Bren machine gun – in the 1950s still a main front line weapon.

Attendance at the Range was usually by Class and we were instructed to hold the rifles tightly into the shoulder as we fired at the targets. Invariably this resulted in very sore and bruised shoulders after each session, but the hard men of the Regiment discouraged the use of padding to alleviate the constant pounding on our delicate bodies. Consequently many tried to smuggle our Tech exercise books in and surreptitiously place them under our shirts between the rifle butt and the shoulder before we fired - with mixed success.

As it should be on a potentially dangerous place like the Range, discipline was strict – however during one visit when we were firing the Bren machine gun an incident nearly ended in tragedy.

We had just fired off two magazines at the targets. Then we were told as usual to remove the last magazine and clear the gun, fine except the apprentice at the end of the line of shooters had jammed his magazine half off/half on. And the Regiment Corporal had not noticed as the rest of us were told to stand and run to the targets to retrieve them, while the lad – unnoticed, was still trying to remove his mag.

As we were unpinning our paper targets and the unnoticed App. was removing the errant magazine, there was a loud bang as the jammed Bren automatically fired the bullet that had caused the trouble.

Bewildered, we all ducked (too late of course) as the 303 bullet hit the brickwork above our heads.

Needlessly to say, this caused quite a few people to sweat including the Regiment Corporal, and this was not caused by the hot summer day. To my knowledge the incident was not reported – but we in Class 76C heeded the Range rules even closer after that.

Locking in the 60's

From Vic Ludlow 68th

The picture in the attachment was on the front cover of the April 1993 issue of 'Airwaves', the Station magazine of RAF Locking. It might be of interest to some of the members of the RAFLAA? The picture shows an aerial view of part of Locking as it was in the late 1960s. The Station was still largely hatted, except for the 4 T-Blocks, and Main Stores in between them, in the centre. SHQ was still in the huts above the Main Square, that ran across the straight edge of the 'D-shaped' road layout. The road cutting across the 'D' was Post Office Road - the NAAFI Shop was also in that road.

At the bottom RH corner of the 'D', and just inside it, was the Sgts' Mess, while across the other side of the road was the Station Cinema (Astra), the dark building.

The main Banwell-Weston road runs across the bottom of the image, with the road into Locking Village cutting off diagonally across the bottom RH corner. The collection of buildings set back from the main road, towards the RH side of the picture, with the little 'roundabout' in front of it, was the Officer's Mess (OM). You could drive in and out of the OM gate in those days, as you could at the Officers' Married Quarters (OMQs) that were further 'off to the right of the image'. To the right of the OM in the image are some of the Apps' Blocks - I remember being in one or other of those in that row. The Apps' Mess was off to the right of the other set of 12 huts on the RHS of the picture.

An Archive Shot of Locking



Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

RAF Locking, No 1 (Apprentice) Wing, Cricket Teams 1954-55-56

From Neil Palmer (75th)

I would like to contribute to the newsletter three photographs of the cricket teams. I have written only the surnames, as I can't remember a few first names, (I'm sorry about the two missing ones). I hope that these memories will be of interest and inspire some feedback.

1954 Bristol University



Back:
Jarrett,
Beck,
Hearnden,
Andrews,
Farrington,
Amerassinge
.
Front:
Palmer,
Lawrence,
Brough,
Upstone,
Henderson.

1955 Halton



Back:
(),
(),
Walters,
Amerassinge
Parnell,
Jarrett.
Front:
Phillips,
Palmer,
Henderson,
Farragher,
Lawrence.

1956 Locking



Back:
Dissanayake,
Jessop,
Farrington,
Shrubsole,
Cherry,
Walters.

Front:
Stuart,
Parnell,
Palmer,
Phillips,
Graves.

These are not official team photos but privately taken at various matches. I make this point because there may be certain star players who were missing on the day.

The standard of cricket was high. We had a well organised program of matches on Wednesday evenings against local clubs. The main matches were on Saturdays with memorable visits to Bristol University, Arborfield Army Apprentice School, Millfield School and Halton.

The 1954 photo was our team which played at Bristol University; such a nice venue, on high ground not far from the Clifton Suspension Bridge. Our captain was Andrews (69th).

The 1955 photo was taken at Halton. How nice to get away from Locking and to dress in our whites for breakfast, ready for this special full-day match. The captain this year was Henderson (73rd), with Tom Beck (72nd) leading us on some matches.

The 1956 photo was taken at Locking. I was captain this season. Our performances and our results were good, although Halton gave us an embarrassing beating. Unfortunately we lost all three of our matches against Halton between 54 and 56. I can't recall any big scores, but there were many good performances. The team spirit was memorable, and it was a pleasure to represent the Wing.

Besides the Wing team A, B and C Squadrons had good teams. The inter-squadron matches on the Arena were particularly hard-fought and enjoyable.

I hope that these photos and my humble scribble will be appreciated. My best wishes to all my contemporaries, and my thanks to the editor.

The Glorious Glen

From Brian Colby 87th Entry

During the summer of 1958 but still in the first year of our training we were still obliged to wear best blue uniform when venturing out of camp, which was a bit tedious on our Saturday trips to Weston. Coupled with still not officially being allowed to drink alcohol, this encumbrance on our freedom began to lose its attraction, especially with the ever present chance, while having a quiet pint together, of being apprehended by Senior Entry members, or even the odd Officer. Admittedly when groups of us were actually caught in the likes of well known watering holes such as the 'Captain's Cabin', there was usually no real fuss, but would be given a nod to drink up and leave, whereupon we would quietly slip out to find another drinking establishment. Of course this guilty routine eventually began to ire and a number of us in the billet decided to venture further a-field.

Initially reconnoitring more isolated country pubs further out in the sticks, situated down narrow roads, such as between Congresbury and Wrington., where I well remember over a number weeks the likes of billet colleagues Dave Whinray, Bryan Chillery, 'and the late Geordie' Major, amongst others, having just a few jars of the pleasant 'Scrumpy', where we felt well away from prying eyes and could relax.

We did this for a number of months but then some of us decided that with the likes of Weston and the 'Winter Gardens' beginning to pall, we would venture even further afield, and chance our arm and see what far off Bristol had to offer.

Getting there at this early stage of our training required a bit of subterfuge, but the problem was suddenly solved when our old kitbags were replaced by the new fangled 'Holdalls'. This fortunate service issue gave us the means of signing out at the guardroom resplendent in our uniform, and then changing into smuggled civvies whilst on the train. With arrival at Bristol Temple Meads railway station, the holdalls would be deposited in left luggage then, miraculously transformed into liberated civilians for a time, albeit with slightly shorter hair than the norm, we would head off into the great metropolis.

For later Entry's this exercise probably doesn't mean much, but to be away from camp and especially in 'civvies' for virtually a whole day, was for us quite an exhilarating and highly liberating experience.

Our initial forays were scouting around the Broadmead shopping centre and getting our bearings, but it wasn't too long however before we found out about the delights of the famous 'Glen', a Dance Hall situated some miles away from the Centre and up on to Bristol's famous 'Downs' and decided to give it a visit.

Soon a routine developed, of having a bite to eat for lunch in the centre of Bristol then walking the long way up to the Glen in time for the Saturday afternoon 'hop', where revelling in our far flung freedom, we would rock away like banshees to all the latest hit records. If any of us were lucky enough to meet up with any girls, then there followed an afternoon of socialising, if not all was not lost, as it was back again for another chance at the Glens evening of ballroom dancing, where resplendent in our smuggled civilian gear, we felt quite relaxed and civilised and often met up with other adventurous members of the Entry from different billets, like young Dave Wyatt and others.

Later in our second year when we were officially allowed to wear blazer and flannels, this made things much easier, and after a stint of actually attempting to learn the correct ballroom dance movements at studios back in Weston, we returned to the Glen with just that bit more confidence in our step.

The Glen had everything young lads wanted and was a real magnet, where for a few hours of a weekend, we could drink and dance as much as we liked without any interference from authority and were transported to a completely different world to the hum drum of camp life.

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

A number of us became such regular patrons of this dancing Mecca that we were lucky enough to strike up medium term relations with these brilliant Bristol girlfriends, with most of us also joining the separate Glen 'night club' facility, which required the issue of their version of a F1250 identity card, complete with photograph, to gain entrance.

Of course when the evening was over, getting back to camp was the next hurdle and a bit of a military exercise. Usually late leaving the Glen of course due to girl problems, meant a mad dash racing down past the Victoria Rooms and all the way to the City Centre and further on to Temple Meads, where we would arrive somewhat short of breath. Luckily with all the square bashing, sports and dancing all of us were very fit, which came in handy for this somewhat regular long distance run.

There was of course though many an occasion when even after all this dash and effort, coupled with the time taken to collect our gear from left luggage; a regular group of us would still end up missing the last train.

With a number of hours to kill we would while away the time drinking numerous coffees in the waiting room, pacing the many platforms trying to keep awake and chatting amongst ourselves about the evening's events, until eventually boarding the early morning milk run back to camp. Over the many months we all got to know the layout of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's' masterpiece like the back of our hands.

With eventual arrival at Weston at about 4 on the Sunday morning, the next step was to bribe the taxi driver to take us into the camp via the Officers married quarters with absolutely no stopping for any lurking security guards, until we reached the safety of the Apprentice Wing lines, where we would thankfully pay our grinning driver, and creep quietly back into the billets for a few hours of well earned sleep.

With all the many forays to the Glen the taxi drivers got quite expert at this routine and as far as I am aware not one of us was ever apprehended, but we certainly needed the Sunday morning lie in to recover from all our efforts.

We all worked hard and of course played hard, in those far off times of our youth during the time we spent at RAF Locking. I smile to myself when I think of the various antics some of us got up to all those years ago, and indeed how we even had the energy to do it all. But the trips to Bristol and the bright lights and atmosphere of Glen were very special and just the thing for adventurous young Brats, where I'm sure many of you over the years also have similar memories. They were indeed the days

After passing out in 1960 I kept my Glen ID card for many years, as a souvenir and for nostalgic reasons, but when I eventually left the service in 1976 and came back down to the West Country to join British Aerospace, I was somewhat disappointed to find out that the wonderful Glen that held so many memories for me was now sadly no more, having been converted to of all things a BUPA Hospital.

But I suppose one could say that the glorious Glen was just right for the time, and served its purpose. A marvellous Dance Hall when we needed it in our youth, and now with the passing of the years, ready once again as a hospital to look after us in our silver age.

How times change eh!

App's Summer Camp

From Brian Davies 76/77 Entry

As a young teenager I enjoyed camping out, and often went with my Boy Scout troop on forays for long weekends and even a week into the rolling countryside of north Somerset.

So it was with some eagerness that I greeted the news in the mid-1950s from our Flight Commander, P/O Champion that our entry (the 77th then), was off to Devon in the summer for a two week 'Summer Camp'. Kitted out with our overalls but no chance of smuggling civvies with us, we set off, transported in the usual discomfort of 3-ton trucks that we were by then used to.

Designed to develop our stamina and awareness of things military, we were assigned to our green canvas tents and made up our safari beds then immediately looked on the maps to find out that we

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

were some miles between Ilfracombe and Barnstable (I think it was an old army camp at Braunton Burrows). Obviously the two towns promised excitement for us band of recalcitrant teenagers.

The RAF Regiment was there to run the few exercises on handling arms in the brush land and nearby sand dunes. This included awareness of the ease of locating smokers and sentries from afar, moving in the darkness without being located, and ambush and attack methods carrying our rifles or bren guns with real blank bullets. On one night time exercise we were split into two teams, one defending a lighted lantern and one attacking to capture it. I believe the attackers won using the subterfuge seemingly inherent in all aircraft apprentices! I must admit we were given many useful tips which I used during time posted to Northern Ireland at the start of the 'troubles', Cyprus during the first civil war in 1963, and later in the Malaysian jungle. At the time though, we all moaned that if we wanted to be trained to be soldiers we would have joined the army!

Part of our duties was to help with the meal preparation for one day in the old wooden hut used as the cookhouse. The meals were excellent (much better we thought than those at Locking) and these were produced by an extremely rotund RAF cook sergeant. Mind you the hyper active time we had at the Camp did make our appetites very keen.

One memorable experience was the thirteen mile route march cross country with big-packs and carrying a .303 rifle. This proved particularly arduous especially the steep Devon hills, and crossing the streams (where our feet got wet). It especially proved hard work for the little Burmese in our Entry but not our stalwart New Zealand lads. It quietly told us that perhaps the army did perhaps get it tougher than us. We all slept well the night of the march but soon revived with the resumption of surreptitious breakouts from Camp to the local villages armed with 'packets of 3' obtained from the Camp sick quarters.

We may have been armed with this protection, but few (if any) of us got the chance we hoped for, as the local Devon damsels were not sufficiently naive to be charmed by these uniformed lads who insisted that the Apps wheel on our sleeve meant that we were training as helicopter pilots at nearby RAF Chivenor. Five of us did however get to the lovely town of Ilfracombe one evening, and had a whale of a time at the Parish dance that we stumbled upon, it was fun but dancing in our heavy boots did make the floor sway a bit. The Devon scrumpy at a nearby pub was also very palatable.

We made official visits to Barnstable town and to RAF Chivenor where we Ground Wireless Fitters experienced real RAF life and saw work in the Air Traffic Control. This last experience was invaluable, and similar visits would have benefited other apprentices during their training at Locking, but alas were not forthcoming.

On another day we were taken to Saunton Sands, a delightful beach with ridges of sand dunes set between the sea and River Taw. We were there for the swimming until a local told us that the undertow in the sea was very dangerous and a person had been drowned there the previous week. Needless to say most of us went into the water and experienced the fierce undertow for ourselves, before finding that over knee height it really was dangerous. After a couple of near misses at being dragged out to sea, even the good swimmers in the Entry gave up the idea of a decent swim.

The two weeks flew by and we returned to Locking (again in the 3-ton trucks) bronzed, fully refreshed, and with a mound of new experiences to talk about. It was really worthwhile we all thought and regretted that it was a one-off experience.

Humour

WISE INDIAN

A man is driving toward home in Northern Arizona when he sees a Navajo Indian hitch-hiking. Because the trip has been long and quiet, he stops the car and the Navajo man climbs in.

During their small talk, the Navajo man glances surreptitiously at a brown bag on the front seat between them.

"If you're wondering what's in the bag," offers the bloke, "it's a bottle of wine. I got it for my wife."

The Navajo is silent for quite a while, nods his head several times and says, "Good Trade."

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The £2.99 Special

We went to breakfast in a cafe where the 'seniors' special' was two eggs, bacon, sausage, hash browns and toast for £2.99.

'Sounds good,' my wife said. 'But I don't want the eggs.'

'Then, I'll have to charge you three pounds and forty-nine pence because you're ordering a la carte,' the waitress warned her.

'You mean I'd have to pay for not taking the eggs?' my wife asked incredulously.

'YES!!' stated the waitress.

'I'll take the special then.' my wife said.

'How do you want your eggs?' the waitress asked.

'Raw and in the shell,' my wife replied.

She took the two eggs home and baked a cake.

DON'T MESS WITH SENIORS!!!

We've been around the block more than once!

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Supposedly a true story

From Stan Murray 92nd

Outside Bristol Zoo, there is a car park for 150 cars and 8 coaches. It was manned by a very pleasant attendant with a ticket machine charging cars £1 and coaches £5. This parking attendant worked there solid for all of 25 years. Then one day, he just didn't turn up for work.

"Oh well", said Bristol Zoo Management – "we'd better phone up the City Council and get them to send a new parking attendant..."

"Err no", said the Council, "that car park is your responsibility"...

"Err no", said Bristol Zoo Management, "the attendant was employed by the City Council, wasn't he?"...

"Err NO!"

Sitting in his villa in Spain, is a bloke who had been taking the car park fees, estimated at £400 per day at Bristol Zoo for the last 25 years...

Assuming 7 days a week, this amounts to just over £3.6 million.

Fanbloodytastic...

Grandma's Don't Know Everything

Little Tony was 9 years old and was staying with his grandmother. He'd been playing outside with the other kids for a while when he came into the house and asked her, "Grandma, what's that called when two people sleep in the same room and one is on top of the other?"

She was a little taken aback, but she decided to tell him the truth. "It's called *sexual intercourse*, darling." Little Tony said, 'Oh, OK,' and went back outside to play with the other kids. A few minutes later he came back in and said angrily,

"Grandma, *it isn't called sexual intercourse. It's called Bunk Beds.* And Jimmy's mum wants to talk to you."

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Smart Arsed Answers 2008

6th Place

It was mealtime during a flight on a British Airways plane: 'Would you like dinner?' the flight attendant asked the man seated in the front row. 'What are my choices?' the man asked.

'Yes or no,' she replied.

5th Place

A flight attendant was stationed at the departure gate to check tickets. As a man approached, she extended her hand for the ticket and he opened his trench coat and flashed her.

Without blinking an eyelid she said, 'Sir, I need to see your ticket not your stub.'

4th Place

A lady was picking through the frozen turkeys at a branch of Sainsbury's but she couldn't find one big enough for her family. She asked a passing assistant, 'Do these turkeys get any bigger?'

The assistant replied, 'I'm afraid not, they're dead.'

3rd Place

The policeman got out of his car and approached the boy racer he stopped for speeding. 'I've been waiting for you all day,' the bobby said.

The kid replied, 'Yes, well I got here as fast as I could.' When the policeman finally stopped laughing, he sent the kid on his way without a ticket.

2nd Place

A lorry driver was driving along on a country road. A sign came up that read 'Low Bridge Ahead.' Before he realised it, the bridge was directly ahead and he got stuck under it. Cars are backed up for miles. Finally, a police car comes up. The policeman got out of his car and walked to the lorry's cab and said to the driver, 'Got stuck, eh?'

The lorry driver said, 'No, I was delivering this bridge and ran out of petrol!'

SMART ARSED ANSWER OF THE YEAR 2008

A teacher at a polytechnic college reminded her pupils of tomorrow's final exam.

'Now listen to me, I won't tolerate any excuses for you not being here tomorrow. I might consider a nuclear attack or a serious personal injury, illness, or a death in your immediate family, but that's it, no other excuses whatsoever!'

A smart-arsed guy at the back of the room raised his hand and asked, 'What would happen if I came in tomorrow suffering from complete and utter sexual exhaustion?' The entire class was reduced to laughter and sniggering.

When silence was restored, the teacher smiled knowingly at the student, shook her head and sweetly said, 'Well, I suppose you'd have to write with your other hand'.

Swine Flu

As the two friends wandered through the snow on their way home, Piglet grinned to himself, thinking how lucky he was to have a best friend like Pooh.



Pooh thought to himself:
“If the pig sneezes,
he’s dead”

RAF Days

Flights of Fancy

From Brian Colby 87th Entry

The opportunity for non aircrew types to fly during our Service careers was of course dependant on circumstance and for each of us our individual postings.

For the majority of Apprentices at Locking, probably the first experience of flight was during the Senior Entry time spent at Weston Airport, with the highlight being the opportunity of a trip in the slow lumbering Varsity. In our case in 1960, after being flown all over Wales and Cornwall, and for a while looking down from the bomb aimers position, some of us were given the chance to use the 'Gee' navigation sets, to guide the pilot back to Weston. I'm sure the pilots didn't really need our guidance, and it was all a confidence building exercise when the inevitable comment came over the intercom "Well done chaps, take a look over the port wing" and there of course was Weston's swimming pool, shimmering way down below. It was great fun for all of us, and being well before the start of the later packaged holidays, was a terrific introduction to seeing the ground from such a height.

The year before, in the summer of 1959, I had been lucky enough to get a flight in a Whirlwind helicopter, due to my father, a painter and decorator, having been assigned to work on the married quarters of the C.O. of the Air Sea Rescue Unit, based at RAF Coltishall. The upshot was an invite to report to the unit on my next leave. This unexpected chance to see a fully operational RAF camp, so early in my training, I knew would be fantastic, so I really looked forward to it and as a young 17 year old I remember being excited and amazed as I walked through the camp gates.

After introduction by the CO to the crew I was then warned that of course if a real emergency arose I would be dropped off anywhere, and have to make my own way back. I then climbed on board and eagerly awaited events. I was allowed to sit by the open winch door and we took off for a routine practice flight. There then followed a leisurely trip over the Norfolk Broads, with me waving exuberantly to the surprised sunbathing holidaymakers lying blissfully on the top of their boats below. This was topped off by a magnificent low level flight around the complete length of the long Norfolk coastline. It was all an experience not to be missed and made for a very unusual and special day's leave, to which I thanked my dad for being the chatterbox that he was, and giving me such an amazing opportunity.

Eventually passing out from Locking as an Air Radio fitter, of course helped in the variety of aircraft that each of us had the luck to work on, and although I didn't fly in any of them, my stints on a number of Station Flights, gave me the chance to sit in the cockpits of the usual Anson and Meteors and the odd visiting Spitfire to name but a few, as well as working full time on Javelins and Lightning's.

The chance for actual further flying experiences started at Middleton-St-George, where I met up with ex 91st Entry Ian Davis. Working in the camps Radio Servicing Flight, we shared many a weekend journeying together either on the train or alternately using our cars on regular trips down to Bristol. But on one lucky Friday I was fortunate to obtain a lift on a visiting VC10 which was on its way back to RAF Lyneham. This of course saved a few bob in train fare which, with WAAF flight attendants service, was suddenly the height of luxury travel at the Services expense which only took an hour. Unfortunately this quick journey was then followed by a further four hours, thumbing the rest of the short distance to Bristol.

The complete opposite end to luxury came during a Squadron detachment to Germany in a period when the Cold war was starting to get a bit serious. It was a freezing February morning when the ground crew and equipment were flown out in the unheated tail boom of a massive four engine Beverley transport.

Seated next to the aircrafts parachute hatch meant a very draughty cold and extremely noisy journey, with all of us wrapped up in our greatcoats for extra warmth. Unfortunately after an eventful 3 months at RAF Geilenkirchen, with nearly being decapitated by huge sheets of flying ice thrown up by Javelin exhausts as they took off to fly escort along the Berlin corridor, the journey back was a repeat and nearly as bitterly cold.

With later flights in Britannia's and VC10's, my most enjoyable flying experiences must go to the fantastic trips on the Andover's of 52 Sqdn. at RAF Seletar, where I met up with ex-87th colleague Dave Ecclestone. We had a great 3 years together as members of the squadron radio section, with an unusual number of chances to fly.

For example after we had fixed a niggling problem with the Decca Navigator, there followed many proving flights which gave marvellous views of the whole of Singapore and the Malay Peninsula. Ground crews also went to Nepal on two week detachments, delivering tool kits for retiring Gurkha soldiers to take back to their remote villages. These detachments afforded incredible views of the snow covered Himalayas, with the whole experience topped off by the necessary night stop in Bangkok, due of course to the usual engine trouble that mysteriously occurred on a regular basis.

The best flying experience however was the 3 week detachment to Australia, where the low flying height of the Andover gave unbelievably clear views of Indonesian volcanic lakes and the ever-changing graduations of sea colours around the myriad of coral atolls that we passed over. After an overnight stop in Darwin the final leg continued over the red vastness of the great Australian outback, to our destination at Rockhampton, where we stayed for 3 weeks at the local airfield, living under canvas as guests of the Aussie army.

I was amazed at the wonderful hospitality of visiting locals who made us so very welcome, with many inviting us into their homes for a meal and evening drinks.

One visitor I proudly realised was a Royal Flying Corp 1st World War veteran who, after introduction to the CO, was immediately feted by all of us and shown wide eyed around our modern Andover's; a marvellous meeting of an old Aussie volunteer.

Whilst helping to refuel a visiting Royal Navy Fairey Gannet, I had the good fortune to be able to climb up its surprisingly high-waisted fuselage and sit in the cockpit for a brief moment, but for all of this Aussie adventure I regret my camera was just not good enough to record the fantastic scenes in enough detail.

My other regret was my missed chance of a flight in a supersonic Lightning. The CO of the Squadron thought it would be great idea to offer the hard working ground crew a flight in one of the T4 dual seat trainers, and a list of over 30 eager volunteers soon went up in the crew room.

The first trip was uneventful, but in the afternoon when Sgt Hanna went off into the wild blue yonder, things went slightly awry. He recalled later the high speed low level flight over the North Sea was mind blowing, but on approaching the runway things started to go downhill when the pilot could only get 2 greens, as the port undercarriage was not fully locked down, and risked collapsing on touchdown.

The pilot then attempted a number of high speed turns and other violent manoeuvres, and when these all failed he skilfully tried a 'circuit and bump', gingerly allowing just the port wheel to touch the runway briefly, before roaring off again. After 2 more attempts and having a chase aircraft carry out a visual check, the pilot finally decided to risk it and come in for a normal landing. A great cheer went up when, after the T4 landed safely and arrived in front of the squadron hangar, a rather ashen faced Sgt Hanna was helped down the aircraft steps.

The pilot had of course done a fantastic job and he and Sgt Hanna were safely on *terra firma*, but when passing the crew room I was amazed to see that all the names had suddenly been crossed off the list, and mine was now the only one left.

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

I had suddenly moved up from my original 15th place to first, and could now have my flight the very next morning. Presented with this situation I was somewhat in a bit of a quandary, but sadly regret to inform that discretion took the better part of valour, and my cowardly hand reached surreptitiously for the biro. The opportunity was then lost forever, for the next morning, after seeing the somewhat depleted list; the CO pulled the plug on this great idea.

My final camp was at RAF Scampton, where I worked in the 3rd line servicing unit 'SADSU', which being situated in the middle of the airfield, gave an excellent ring side seat to watch the mighty Vulcan's doing their stuff.

It was entirely due to my career and experience in the RAF that I was then able to join the British Aircraft Corporation in 1976, where although I worked on a number of missile test systems for the next 15 years, I was fortunate to be given the opportunity to walk round the Concorde assembly areas, view the flight simulator, and also managed a couple of fantastic visits to Farnborough.

Thus even though I stayed as ground crew for all of my service life, I am glad I choose the Air group trade at Locking, and grateful for the subsequent opportunities of flight that my time in the RAF gave me. They were each an incredible experience, so far different from the run of the mill commercial flights, and can still visualise each and every one of them even now.

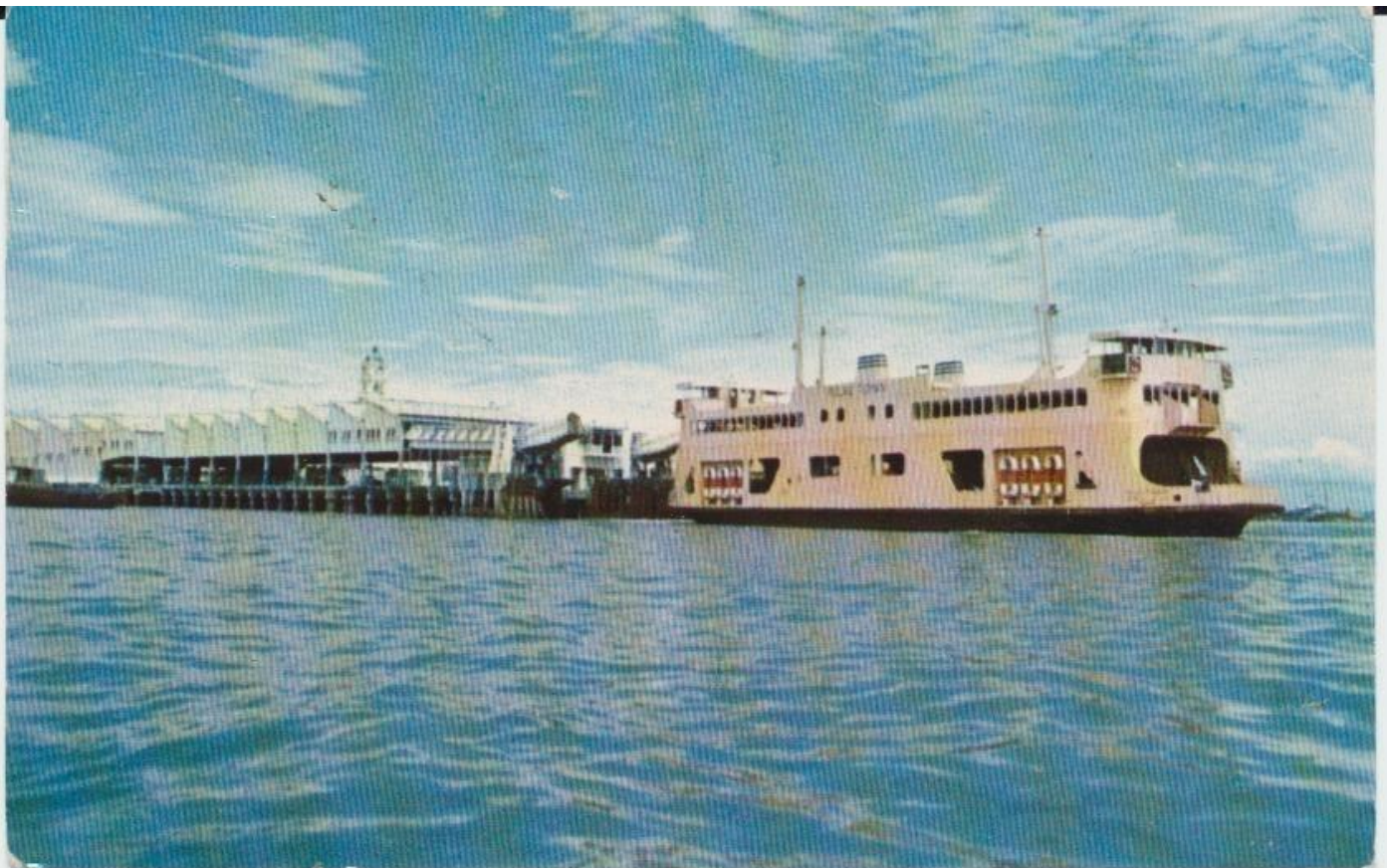
I still kick myself however for not buying a decent camera for all the time I was in the Royal Air Force, and of course missing out on that once in a lifetime chance of going supersonic.

Where is This?

From Brian Davies 91st

Herewith is a picture postcard sent to my wife in Singapore in June 1971. Can your readers guess where it is?

Answer in next edition under Editor's Notes - Ed



Unanswered Question

From Stan Murray 92nd

Whilst attending the 92nd Entry 50th Anniversary of our attestation in April at the Webbington, I thought I was going to get the answer to a mystery that has bothered me since 1963, but no, I am still in the dark, and I would like to relate the story to you.

On my arrival back at Cranwell after almost 9 months in Chiang Mai I was to discover that a new Sergeant had arrived while I was away. For some reason or other he took an instant dislike to me, and my mate in the Radar section who had been posted with me from Locking, Johnny Kitt. We believed at the time it was because he had been a Boy Entrant and hated ex-Apprentices. He decided that we did not fit in with his plans, and after only a few months back at work he moved us to Barkston Heath. For those who don't know, Barkston was, and I believe still is, a satellite of Cranwell. In 1963 many of the workforce was transported to and from the site each day, but always returned to Cranwell in the evening, as there was very little living accommodation, and what there was could be considered very basic. One good thing though was that we very rarely made it to a parade at Cranwell. For some inexplicable reason our transport would always break down on the way.

As it happened, a decision had been taken that there was a need for one Radar and one Wireless Junior Technician to be permanently based at Barkston Heath - guess who! So we packed our bags and settled into the cold, damp huts that were to become our home. We didn't have central heating just the old style coal burning stove in the middle of the hut. The camp was not on a bus route and there were no facilities of any kind within a reasonable walking distance. Grantham was about 4 or 5 miles away and Sleaford even further in the opposite direction. In today's politically correct environment I don't imagine that the place, as it was in those days, would even be considered for use to house animals, far less humans. Having said that, the other fellows who had been sent there were a great bunch and we all had a lot of fun. A lesson in making the best of what is available.

Now to the unsolved mystery which dogs me to this day.

Her Majesty The Queen Mother was paying a visit to Grantham for some reason and a lot of special events were being run, which meant that the pubs and dance halls were doing a bit of extra trade and were open till 1am. John and I were at a dance in the Drill Hall and perhaps had a little too much "fizzy water" for the good of our health. In the early hours of the morning we started the long trek back to camp, hoping that someone would be kind enough to stop and give us a lift. Luckily someone did, and dropped us off at the end of the road which separated the living accommodation from the runway and air traffic control.

As the Radio workshop was closer than the hut we lived in, and warmer, we decided to kip down in the easy chairs for the night and get some rest. When we woke in the morning it was to the sound of our colleagues coming to work.

They expressed surprise to see us, as the doors and windows were all locked and secure - and we did not have the keys which would have been needed to get in. There was no other way into the building. Believe it or not, neither of us, to this day, can tell how we got in!

I thought John would be able to enlighten me at the reunion, but sadly he had been waiting since 1963 to ask me the same question.

Is there anyone out there who may have been at Cranwell or Barkston Heath in early 1963 who has heard the story and knows the answer? If there is, please get in touch.

Quiz

Your Yearly Dementia Test

From Roger Chivall, 92nd

It's that time of year to take our annual senior citizen test. Exercise of the brain is as important as exercise of the muscles. As we grow older, it's important to keep mentally alert. If you don't use it, you lose it! Below is a very private way to gauge your loss or non-loss of intelligence. Take the test presented here to determine if you're losing it or not. **Read the questions in blue and make your own answer before reading the correct answer in the box.** OK? Relax, clear your mind and begin.

1. What do you put in a toaster?

Answer: 'bread' - If you said 'toast,' give up now and do something else. Try not to hurt yourself. If you said, bread, go to Question 2.

2. Say "silk" five times. Now spell 'silk.' What do cows drink?

Answer: Cows drink water. If you said 'milk,' don't attempt the next question. Your brain is over-stressed and may even overheat. Content yourself with reading a more appropriate literature such as Auto World. However, if you said 'water,' proceed to question 3.

3. If a red house is made from red bricks and a blue house is made from blue bricks and a pink house is made from pink bricks and a black house is made from black bricks, what is a green house made from?

Answer: Greenhouse s are made from glass. If you said 'green bricks,' why are you still reading these?? If you said 'glass,' go on to Question 4.

4. It's twenty years ago, and a plane is flying at 20,000 feet over Germany. (If you will recall, Germany at the time was politically divided into West Germany and East Germany.) Anyway, during the flight, two engines fail. The pilot, realizing that the last remaining engine is also failing, decides on a crash landing procedure. Unfortunately the engine fails before he can do so and the plane fatally crashes smack in the middle of 'no man's land' between East Germany and West Germany. Where would you bury the survivors? East Germany, West Germany, or no man's land'?

Answer: You don't bury survivors. If you said ANYTHING else, you're a dunce and you must stop. If you said, 'You don't bury survivors,' proceed to the next question.

5. Without using a calculator. You are driving a bus from London to Milford Haven in Wales. In London, 17 people get on the bus. In Reading, six people get off the bus and nine people get on. In Swindon, two people get off and four get on. In Cardiff, 11 people get off and 16 people get on. In Swansea, three people get off and five people get on. In Carmarthen, six people get off and three get on. You then arrive at Milford Haven. What was the name of the bus driver?

Answer: Oh, for crying out loud! Don't you remember your own name? It was YOU!!

PS: 95% of people fail most of the questions!!

Obituary

Michael George Barker (85th entry RAFLAA)

19th March 1940 – 26th May 2009

From John P Brooke

It is with regret we advise the sudden death of Mike Barker early on the 26th May, whilst on a visit to Eastbourne with his wife Yvonne.

Mike will be remembered and missed by many, including as a regular and active supporter of the RAFLAA, and also of our 85th entry association.

He grew up in Little Sandhurst, Berkshire and gained entry to Ranelagh Grammar school in Bracknell. At 16 years old he joined the RAF as an Aircraft Apprentice at Locking, training as a Ground Radar Fitter, and was billeted in hut 334 for the three year duration, with his old school friend Frank Samson.

In 1964 Mike & Yvonne went to RAF Seletar in Singapore, and took an active part in the Cine Club' and other Station events. They revisited there a number of times subsequently, as a "Friend of RAF Seletar". Returning to U.K he was posted to RAF Northcote, in Lincolnshire for his final tour, which was a "Blood Hound" unit.

Having completed his RAF engagement in 1970, Mike commenced his new career in industry, initially with Mullard and subsequently at BAE at Stevenage, in OSPG. However, his main civilian career was with Marconi in Leicester, where he remained until his retirement in 2004. He worked on the Radar type 40 as a technical Instructor, especially with overseas customers. He consolidated his technical knowledge and experience by studying and gaining a Science degree with the Open University.

Mike, as you may have gathered was a man of many parts and skills. His hobbies and interests covered a wide range of activates: including Family history, being a very active licensed Radio Amateur Call sign: (G6CAC), also a founder member and past President of "Raynet" (The Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network). He loved dogs and had two Labradors, and supported the charity "Hearing Dogs for the Deaf". He was also involved with the award winning Desford Village website. (Winner of the Best village website for 2009)

The thanksgiving service for the life of Michael was held at the historic 800 hundred year old "Saint Martin's Parish Church" in Desford. The service was led by the charismatic Rev'd Richard Sharpe, with some rousing hymns! The church was totally full with family and friends, also members of his 85th entry RAFLAA ,plus other service colleagues including Dave Gunby, Hon. Secretary of the RAFLAA association.

Our sincere condolences go to Yvonne, also Michael's bother, sister and family.

We also got an email from Paul and Ann Tuffery. Part is reproduced here - Ed

Mike was a real gentleman who freely gave his time to many community activities. Recently the website he helped create for Desford won the best village website award.

He will be greatly missed by all who knew him and particularly by our family as he and Yvonne are our children's Godparents.

Closing Thought

Hello

Have you ever thought what this word stands for? Read on....

Do you know that a simple "hello" has a deep meaning?

The word H E L L O means:

H = How are you?

E = Everything all right?

L = Like to hear from you.

L = Love to see you soon!

O = Obviously you are my friend so, HELLO!

It makes me smile every time I say hello.

A smile from Heaven.

One in a million shot ... A smile from Heaven...

From Rick Quinell 92nd



Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

RAFLAA Committee

Appointment	Name	Address	Tel/email	Re-Election	Entry
President	Martin Palmer				91 st
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Treasurer	Tony Horry	Hillside Cottage Kewstoke Road Kewstoke Weston-s-Mare BS22 9YD	(01934) 628383 horrycorp@aol.com	Mar 2010	76 th
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Newsletter Editor	Chris Tett	45 Chapel Street Woburn Sands Milton Keynes Bucks MK17 8PQ	(01908) 583047 chris@crtett.plus.com	Sep 2011	92 nd



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
