



LAA Newsletter

SERIAL 47

MARCH 2007

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Hello to you all.

I much value all the copy sent to me and I am particularly pleased that some members continue to send me lots of copy. Without what you send me, we would have no newsletter. This is why I instigated the annual Wordsmith award presented at the AGM.

I was sad therefore that a writer was stung by a criticism and on reflection; I should not have allowed it. Sorry Mike.

Mike Collier sent this:

Ref. Ser N° 46 Nov 2006 P.17

Dear Bryan, my thanks for your comment
I'll have to get out of the habit
But I am sure you must know
That if copy is low
A bull's much more use than a rabbit.

Honour is now satisfied and this shooting range is now closed. Ed

Please keep all your reminiscences, stories, photos, notices and jokes coming. If you send me some copy, it is never discarded and may be used in a later issue.

Details of the next AGM and Dinner Dance are included again, so if you have not done so, please get your bookings in now!

Deadline for next issues

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

23rd May for July 07

23rd September for November 07

23rd January for March 08

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

Chris Tett

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Mob: 07796 428663

45 Chapel Street

Woburn Sands

Milton Keynes

Bucks

MK17 8PQ

Email: Chris@crtett.plus.com

Soft copy preferred!

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

37th Committee Meeting of the RAF Locking Apprentice Association

From Dave Gunby (Secretary)

Venue: Flowerdown House, Weston super Mare

Date: Thursday 15th February 2007 at 13:03 Hrs

Present:-

Tiny Kuhle	87 th	Chairman
Dave Gunby	72 nd	Secretary
Tony Horry	76 th	Treasurer
John Farmer	77 th	Membership Secretary
Peter Crowe	95 th	AA Rep/Webmaster
Andy Perkins	109 th	Tech Rep
Chris Tett	92 nd	Newsletter Editor
Graham Beeston	209 th	Craft Rep
Rick Atkinson	91 st	Service Rep

Apologies: -

Vic Gibbs	88 th	General Rep
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The Chairman opened the meeting at 13.03 with a greeting to all followed by a reading of the Apprentice Prayer.

ITEM 1 APOLOGIES.

Apologies had been received from Vic Gibbs.

ITEM 2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.

The Committee reviewed the minutes of the 36th Committee meeting and found them acceptable. It was proposed by John Farmer and seconded by Rick Atkinson that the minutes of the 36th Committee Meeting in July 2006 be accepted as a true record. All agreed.

ITEM 3 MATTERS ARISING.

The Chairman thanked all those members of the Committee who had been involved with the organisation of the window dedication at RAF Halton in October. Other matters arising were either dealt with by confirmed completion of action points or were to be covered later in this meeting agenda.

ITEM 4 TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer presented his report.

The accounts are as per the income/expenditure statement.

The Bank statement for period Jan-Feb 2007 has been received. The End of Financial Year has been checked and balanced. Balance Sheet for FY 06/07 now stands at £9,800.42. This represents an excess of income over expenditure of £887.19 for the year (£4.19 in 05/06).

Income: Period July 06 – Jan 07 shows four new members and 10 members have become "lifera" (that makes a total of 16 for the year).

ROYAL AIR FORCE LOCKING APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION

RAF Halton Window – Capital Cost and Dedication Event. £240 has been added to the £210 donations received at the AGM, making £450 income. The Window itself cost £847, payable to the engraver artist, Karen Newby. The cost of lunches and coach hire was £340.00. The cost to the Association was £737.00, which I believe is well within our budget.

From the Annual Balance sheet we see that the major change from the previous year was the cost of printing - doubled at £1288 compared with FY05/06 of £653.40. This was due to the use of City print for the printing and postage for one newsletter.

However, overall our income has exceeded the expenditure, due to the increased subscriptions as they become due and the increased income from Life membership.

A donation of £50 was given to Flowerdown House in recognition of their service to this meeting.

PROFIT & LOSS

<u>SALES</u>	2006/2007	2005/2006
Membership fees	3,216.50	2,354.58
Life membership	1,912.17	100.00
Sales - ties, pins and videos	179.40	121.00
Window + Dedication Event	450.00	0.00
Raffle at social event		0.00
AGM and other misc income	2,491.50	3,895.00
Bank interest received	160.55	171.40
	8,410.12	6,641.98
<u>PURCHASES</u>		
Pins	270.25	0.00
Ties	0	0.00
Videos	0	0.00
Window + Dedication Event	1,187.00	0.00
Donations and wreaths	100.00	125.00
Name badges	33.50	28.00
Other		30.74
AGM and other purchases	3188.27	4,820.77
	4779.02	5,004.51
<u>DIRECT EXPENSES</u>		
Advertising	44.50	0.00
Bank charges	14.00	7.00
Auditing	50.00	50.00
Refund	196.00	55.50

ROYAL AIR FORCE LOCKING APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION

	304.50	112.50
<u>GROSS PROFIT</u>		£1,524.97
<u>OVERHEADS</u>		
Travelling expenses	399.30	377.00
Printing	1,288.30	653.40
Telephone	8.00	34.80
Postage and carriage	601.91	396.38
Stationery	141.90	59.20
	2,439.41	£1,520.78
<u>NETT PROFIT/LOSS</u>	£887.19	£4.19
BALANCE SHEET		

	2006/2007	2005/2006
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
Business No Notice account	7493.81	£7,334.07
Current account	2059.14	£1,540.69
Petty cash	129.97	£38.47
<u>NETT CURRENT ASSETS</u>	9682.92	£8,913.23
<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>		
<u>FINANCED BY</u>		
Brought forward balance	£8,913.23	£8,909.04
Profit and loss account	£887.19	£4.19
	£9,800.42	£8,913.23

Peter Crowe proposed and Andy Perkins seconded the acceptance of Tony's report and the donation, all agreed.

ITEM 5 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Membership Secretary presented his report.

Membership numbers!

Since the AGM the association has gained 11 and lost 7 members (4 resignations and 3 deceased).

There are now 636 names (past and present) on the database. 354 are considered to be 'active.' There is some doubt about 22 members who have failed to pay their subscriptions due in 2006. This is under investigation.

There are two members who have moved and have failed to let us have their new address. Let's hope that they will get in touch as they both pay their subs by Standing Order Mandate (SOM)! The number of members paying their 'subs' by SOM is now 219. 10 members have

changed to this method of payment since the increase in subscriptions. 81 members still pay by 'other' means.

There are now 52 life memberships (including 2 Honorary Life members). 16 of the new life memberships have been taken out since the increase in subscriptions.

Increase in subscriptions

The increase in subscriptions has been a lot more time consuming (and expensive) than had been anticipated. At the end of January 2007 there were still some 13 with problems. In general they have not actioned the increase (and are underpaid) or their banks have not 'followed through' implemented the increase. One or two have still not filled out the new forms correctly.

Newsletters by E-mail

Nearly 200 copies of the last edition of the newsletter were sent out successfully by e-mail. This includes 7 for other Apprentice based organisations and 14 to widows. A couple of requests for back numbers by E-mail have been received and processed.

Newsletter by mail.

Address lists in required format supplied to the provider of NL by post service.

General

The Golden Years Certificates for 2007 are being prepared and will be dispatched after the AGM in April.

Acceptance of the Membership Secretary's report was proposed by Chris Tett and seconded by Rick Atkinson all agreed.

ITEM 6 SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Secretary reviewed the correspondence since the last committee meeting, which mainly concerned matters of condolence. There had been little reaction to the Associations invitation to No1 RS to nominate a recipient for the RAFLAA Trophy. The Chairman had received an acknowledgement of our invitation but no further progress had been possible. The Chairman will progress this issue as a matter of urgency. Acceptance of the Secretary's report was proposed by Graham Beeston and seconded by Peter Crowe all agreed.

Action: - Tiny Kuhle

ITEM 7 CHARITABLE DONATIONS

The Committee decided to make the death of John McKenzie (76th) a special case in contravention of our rules of acting retrospectively. John's family have asked the Committee to make a donation to A Children's Hospital or Cancer Research. The Chairman proposed that £50 be donated to a suitable charity. This was seconded by the Secretary and all agreed. John's family had been a long time replying to our letter of condolence.

Action: - Tony Horry

ITEM 8 SWRDA

Tony Horry reported that he was not aware of any progress with regard to the siting of a memorial to the RAF Locking Apprentices. However Andy Perkins had seen a report in a local paper showing a site map which included a depiction of the Apprentice wheel with a legend saying 'RAF Memorial'. Tony agreed to make further enquiries.

[Since this item was discussed local enquiries have revealed that a meeting will take place in the Locking village Hall on March 8th involving all parties concerned in the redevelopment. Tony or a representative of our Association will attend and report back].

See also later item 'Plans for Locking Camp' Ed

Action: - Tony Horry

ITEM 9 AGM 2007

All arrangements were in place for this years AGM/Reunion at the Royal Hotel, Weston-super-Mare on April 14th. The Chairman and Chris Tett had visited the hotel prior to this meeting. The cut-off date for the reservation of rooms is March 16th. Members will be reminded of this in the next newsletter.

The chairman agreed to provide 60 bottles of wine for the evening meal and presentation to the 'Golden Entry' speakers if any.

The secretary to invite the Chairman of Cranwell AA and Halton AA to the Meet & Greet Bar and Buffet Lunch at the Associations expense and also to the dinner/Dance in the evening at a cost of £20.00.

In the next Newsletter Chris Tett will invite attending members of the 77th, 78th and 79th Golden Entries to say a few words at the AGM when they would receive their certificates.

Chris will also include these minutes in the next Newsletter and also the proposed agenda for the AGM. These items to be with the Editor by 24th Feb 2006.

A DVD has been made by Barry Dineage (87th) of our window dedication service at St George's Church, RAF Halton. It will be shown at the AGM and copies will be available.

The Treasurer had received a booking from a member for an abnormal number of guests (4) to the evening function of the AGM. Following a discussion it was agreed that the four guests could attend but would be charged an extra £5.00.

Action: - Tiny Kuhle, Dave Gunby, Chris Tett, John Farmer

ITEM 10 RAFLAA WEB SITE

The webmaster Peter Crowe reminded the Committee that the two year licence would expire in April. It was decided that the address www.raflaa.co.uk would be discontinued as it had not been accessed and the www.raflaa.org.uk address would be the sole access address.

Dave Gunby proposed and Andy Perkins seconded that the licence renewal fee of £18.08 be paid when due and all agreed.

Feedback from members to be invited in an agenda item for the AGM.

Action: - Peter Crowe, Tony Horry

ITEM 11 NEWSLETTER

The Editor suggested that new members Name, Entry and Town be published in the Newsletter. All agreed.

Action: - John Farmer, Chris Tett

The Editor stated that he had received requests to write obituaries but had referred the enquirers to those who had known the deceased.

The Editor reported that the "Wordsmith" plaque had been purchased and a small engraved shield was displayed. This would be presented at the AGM to the "Wordsmith" of the year. Furthermore he suggested that the Association set aside the sum of £20 annually to provision the award in the future. This was proposed by Dave Gunby and seconded by John Farmer and all agreed.

Action: - Chris Tett, Tony Horry

The Editor also reported that he had been presented with his "Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal" at a ceremony at RAF Halton which covered applicants from Buckinghamshire. The presentations are taking place all over the country.

The editor further requested that the minutes be promulgated ASAP so as to be included in the next Newsletter.

Action – Dave Gunby

ITEM 12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

John Farmer said that he would send a "Newsletter on the website now" to e-mailable members.

The Chairman suggested, due to the healthy state of the accounts, that the Committee take another look at the provision of a memorial at the National Arboretum. The Secretary reminded the meeting that only 12 months ago a decision was taken to shelve such a provision in the light of the possible provision of a memorial at RAF Locking site. Although the provision of the latter is some way off it may still be the case that the RAFLAA prefer to wait for such an opportunity. However, the Secretary will re-visit the costs at the National Arboretum and report. It was thought that members may have something to say on the subject and so the Secretary will put the item on the AGM Agenda.

Action: - Dave Gunby

ITEM 11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Committee meeting to be held on 12th July at RAFA Weston Branch at 1300hrs. Tony Horry will liaise with RAFA Weston re the reservation of a room for the meeting.

Action: - Tony Horry

The meeting closed at 14.50 Hours.

NOTICES

For those attending the next AGM

Golden Entries

The Golden Entries for the 2007 AGM are the 77th, 78th and 79th. If you are a member of these Golden Entries, you will be invited to say a few words about your entry when you receive your certificate at the AGM. Please think about that and do not be shy!

Car Parking at The Royal Hotel

The Royal Hotel has a car park but it is a public 'Pay & Display' car park. As guests, you qualify for free parking but you must collect a token from the hotel reception on arrival and display that in your car.

AGM Agenda

The 13th Annual General Meeting of the RAFLAA is to be held at 13:30 on 21st April 2006 at the Royal Hotel, Weston-super-Mare. The agenda is as follows:

1. Chairman's opening remarks (Apprentice prayer and Apologies)
2. Presidents Address and Presentation of RAFLAA Trophy
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Membership Secretary's Report
5. Election of Officers.(General Rep)
6. Memorial Locking/Arboretum
7. Newsletter Production
8. RAFLAA web site
9. Recognition of 'Golden Entries 77/78/79'
10. Venue and format of AGM/Reunion 2008
11. Any other business

Repeat Notice - AGM and Dinner Dance

Our 2007 annual reunion and AGM are to be held on 14th April 2007 in the Birnbeck Suite, Royal Hotel, Weston-super-Mare.

Provisional timetable

Friday 13 th April 07	18:00	Meet & Greet at the Aperitif Lounge Bar
Saturday 14 th April 07	10:30	Members arrival at Royal Hotel
	11:00	Bar facility opens – Aperitif Bar
	12:30	Finger Buffet commences
	13:30	AGM commences – Birnbeck Suite
	15:00	AGM complete. Tea served
	15:30	Members disperse
	19:00 for 19:30	Dinner Dance – Aperitif Bar & Birnbeck Suite

Accommodation Booking

All Booking of accommodation is being handled by the Royal Hotel, 1 South Parade, Weston-s-Mare, North Somerset, BS23 1JP

Tel: 01934- 423100 Fax: 01934 415135

Net: www.royalhotelweston.com email royalwsm@btopenworld.com

Please quote: "RAF Locking Apprentices Association Reunion AGM" when making reservations. Accounts must be settled with the hotel. All 37 rooms have been booked off for Friday 13th and Saturday 14th April.

NB Rates per room per night have been reduced to these conference rates since the last newsletter. Our thanks to Stan Murray and John Hall.

Room Type	Bed & Breakfast
Standard Single	£36.50
Single (non smoking)	£41.50
Standard Double	£66.50
Double (non smoking)	£81.50
Twin (non smoking)	£81.50
King Size (non smoking)	£96.00
Four Poster (non smoking)	£96.00

Members are reminded that the cut-off date for reservation of rooms is March 16th. After this date, rooms are released for general booking.

Just in case the Royal is fully booked, here are two other hotels in Weston-s-Mare with rates and distance to Royal.

The Arosfa 01934 419523 www.arosfahotel.co.uk 100 yards.
Room rate with breakfast. Single £55.00; Double £79.00; Triple £89.00

The Old Colonial 01934 620739 600 yards.
Room only. Single £59.00; Double £69.50.

APPLICATION FOR AGM – 14th April 2007

DINNER DANCE AND FINGER BUFFET

Name: _____ Entry No: _____

Address: _____

I wish to book both lunch and dinner
Please provide tickets @ £29.00 pp £.....

I wish to book the dinner/dance only:
Please provide tickets @ £20.00 pp £

I wish to book the buffet lunch only:
Please provide tickets @ £10-00 pp £

I wish to bring dinner/dance guests.
Please provide tickets @ £25.00 pp £

Total £

The dinner/dance is £20 per person for the RAFLAA member and partner. Members may invite guests to attend the dinner dance but at an extra cost of £5 per person.

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

Post your application to: Mr A Horry, Hillside Cottage, Kewstoke Road, Kewstoke, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 9YD Tel: 01934 628383:
E-mail: horrycorp@aol.com

Again it has been decided to subsidise drinks purchased from the bar by charging just £1-00 a glass whatever it's content. Wine will be provided at the dinner.

Please complete and return with your booking form. See full description of choices below.

Initials	Starter			Main Course			Sweet		
	Tomato soup with croutons	Pan Fried Wild Mushroom	Chicken & Avocado Salad	Poached Plaice Fillet	Grilled Turkey Escalope	Vegetable Basket	Brandy Snap Basket	Strawb-erry Tart	Apple & Rhubarb Crumble
1									
2									

Menus

The committee have expressed our concerned to the management at the Royal over the quality of the food at last years AGM and Dinner dance. The menus for the dinner and lunch are shown below and we expect that these will be an improvement on last year.

Dinner

Starters

*Tomato & Basil Soup with Croutons
served with a crusty roll & butter*

*Pan-Fried Wild Mushroom
In a garlic and basil butter*

*Chicken & Avocado Salad
With a calvados dressing*

Main Course

*Poached Plaice Fillet
Stuffed with prawn and dill moose, served with watercress & lime sauce*

*Grilled Turkey Escalope
Topped with cheddar cheese and honey glazed ham, with mustard sauce*

*Vegetable Basket
Filled with asparagus, mixed peppers & potatoes with a pepper dressing*

Desserts

*Brandy Snap Basket
Filled with fruits from the forest*

*Strawberry Tart
Served with clotted cream*

Apple & Rhubarb Crumble

Lunch finger Buffet

Chicken Satay

Herb Cocktail Sausages

Cocktail Sandwiches

Selection of Vol-au-Vents

Crispy Fried Mushrooms

Spicy Tomato Dip

Garlic Bread

Crisps

Membership Changes

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined the RAFLAA since February 2006. Names compiled by John Farmer, 77th.

Entry	Initials	Name	Location	Joined
69 th	P	Cunningham	Derby	November 2006
82 nd	G J	Hubbard	Swansea	May 2006
85 th	W	Pye	Lutterworth	April 2006
87 th	S M A	Phillips	Aylesbury	November 200
90 th	T	Vellacott	Loughborough	September 2006
91 st	RA	Fewster	Filey	September 2006
96 th	J H	Perkin	Wylam	June 2006
96 th	G	Sperling	Thackenham	January 2007
97 th	D M	Starr	Weston-super-Mare	March 2006
99 th	M	Thompson	Huntingdon	February 2007
210 th	P	Bartlett	Aylesbury	January 2007

If you would like to get in touch with any of these new members, please contact the membership secretary; John Farmer (01643) 705443 or email: RAFLAAMS@aol.com

Members Wanted

From Dave Gunby 72nd

Bob Copping (56th Halton) invites ex-Locking apprentices in the Peterborough area to contact him with a view to joining the Peterborough branch of the "RAF Halton Apprentice Association". He can be contacted on 01572-812468.

That their branch is running out of bodies would seem to be the reason.

Pensions for All

Last newsletter we highlighted the fact that many of us has served less than 22 years and did not qualify for a pension. This was in spite of the fact that other public servants would have qualified for a pro rata pension and many were refused permission to sign on for more years after they served the first 12.

As highlighted last edition, this injustice has been taken up by the Combined Armed Forces Federation UK (CAFF). They have found an MP to table an Early Day Motion (EDM 67) in Parliament. On 19th December 06 CAFF reported that EDM 67 had been signed by 45 MP's. Looking at the Parliamentary website today in January, the motion has been signed by 91 MP's. Clearly support is growing and it enjoys cross party support with some 49 Labour MP's, 19 Liberal Democrats and 15 Conservative MP's having signed.

The government's response is that the contract has been honoured and that each other public scheme had it own rules. This has been tested in court but the court found in the governments

favour i.e. it is acting within the law. The fact remains that a civil servant who served for 12 years would qualify for a deferred pension whereas ordinary servicemen needed 22 years.

We need your support to write this wrong. Please write to your MP and complain that many ex-servicemen have missed out simply by leaving the service before 1975 and many face hardship with no pension. A sample letter similar to the one I wrote to my MP is below. Feel free to plagiarise this as much as you like. Writing to your own MP and asking them to support service pension for all of us in general and ED67 in particular, may still win the day.

You can see if your MP has signed EDM 67 by going to:
<http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/Default.aspx> selecting current EDM's and searching on 67. You can also find the name of your MP at the same site.

To contact CAFF go to www.caffuk.co.uk or write to the membership secretary Frank Rixon, 10 Nepaul Road, Tidworth, Hampshire SP9 7EU. Tel: 01980 842402

Sample Letter to an MP

Mr or Ms *your MP*
Member of Parliament*your constituency*.....
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr/Ms xxxx,
Service Pension Injustice

The Queens Speech announced that there is to be a new pensions bill. I would be grateful if you can assist in rectifying an injustice that affects the pension of many thousands of ex-servicemen, like myself, who do not qualify for a pension for the time they served their country.

I, and many others, joined the armed services during the fifties and sixties. Personally, I joined the RAF in 1959 and left in 1973 after nearly 15 years service.

In spite of 15 years service, I have no RAF pension. This is not the case with other public servants as civil servants, police officers, firemen, etc would all qualify for a preserved pension if they served only a few years during that time. RAF servicemen needed to serve 22 years before qualifying for a preserved pension. This anomaly was changed in 1975 when a pension bill ensured that those who left the services after 1975 would qualify for a pro-rata pension at retirement age even if they left the service after only a few years. However, it was not made retrospective.

It is particularly galling as many service personnel were not allowed to sign on for more years and so they had no chance to complete 'pensionable' service of 22 years. They were effectively made redundant but without compensation and, worse, without any accrued preserved pension. Personally, I joined a large company and now draw a company pension but I did not have enough years to qualify for a full company pension as my early years were spent in the RAF.

I am sure you will agree that this is a shabby way to treat those who have risked their lives for their country. It has left many of them in undeserved hardship. I must ask you to take up this matter with the government. I believe the new pensions bill could be used to right a wrong.

Thank you very much. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

-

Window Dedication Video Available on DVD and VHS

The details of the Dedication Service of the Commemorative Window held on Sunday 15th October at St. George's Church RAF Halton were covered in the last Newsletter.

The stained glass window was dedicated to the fact of the training of Apprentices at RAF Locking. The window was specially designed to the Association's specification, and joins many others in St. George's Church at RAF Halton, to commemorate entries, and other organisations, that were part of the RAF Apprenticeship schemes.



The video records the service of dedication, which was attended by some 150 people from the Association, and representatives of other Apprentice Associations, including the Polish Apprentices.

Barry Dinage (87th) has produced the video. There is no commentary, but the main content is spoken by the Padre and guest speakers, plus singing. The run time is approximately 30 minutes.

The cost will be £5 for DVD or VHS and £6 for S-VHS.

Copies will be available from Barry directly at the AGM, where it is hoped to make the video available for viewing. If you think you might like a copy, please let Barry know what format you prefer.

It is also available by post. Please contact:

Mr B Dinage
6 Fairways,
Two Mile Ash
Milton Keynes
MK8 8AJ
Tele: 01908 568760
Email: bcjd@btinternet.com

If sending a cheque, please make cheques to me "B. Dinnage" and add £2.25 for post and packing.

Barry is also considering reworking the "Last Freedom of Weston" video onto DVD if anyone is interested.

Plans for Locking Camp

Members will probably know that Locking ceased to be an RAF Station some time ago. It is now considered a brown field site and will be redeveloped and renamed as Locking Parklands. English Partnerships and SWRDA are now seeking for a development partner for the employment and residential development for the Locking Parklands site.

Two memorial sites are included - one on the "Square" the other opposite the guardroom.

Note also that the Church is shown with a proposed cemetery. See more details at:

<http://www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/lockingparklands.htm>

A copy of the plan has been included with the Newsletter for those not receiving it via email.

Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal

In the July 06 newsletter, there was a small article on page 26 about the above medal. The medal is offered by the Malaysian Government to all those who served from August 1957 to August 1966 and helped defend Malaysia. The medal is presented in special ceremonies by representatives from the Malaysian High Commission. It is given in a case as shown below with the following citation:

THIS MEDAL IS AWARDED TO THE PEACEKEEPING GROUPS AMONGST THE COMMUNION COUNTRIES FOR DISTINGUISHED CHIVALRY, GALLANTRY, SACRIFICE OR LOYALTY IN UPHOLDING PENINSULAR OF MALAYA OR MALAYSIA SOVEREIGNTY DURING THE PERIOD OF EMERGENCY AND CONFRONTATION.



Medals are still available.
Contact the
Veterans
Agency on
0800 1692277

Or web:
www.nmbva.co

APPRENTICE DAYS

Memories

Mike Keen 78th, now in Australia

The Dreaded Tinea Rash

Some of us suffered from the horrible tinea rash caused by rough RAF clothing and when one could not tolerate the itching any longer, one reported sick. After a visual inspection of the infected area (usually in the crotch) it was off to join the queue in the treatment room. This was a large room containing a few chairs and a jar of ointment placed on a table in the centre, the ointment was administered by hand to the affected area which stung so much that I'm sure others knew where you had been by the way you walked.

Skiving off Church Parades

If you did not wish to participate in church parades, and not get charged for being absent, the best squadron to be in was B squadron (HUT 385). Squadrons marched off led by A then C and finally B. Fortunately all the officers and NCOs were at the front of each squadron, so as our flight passed Hut 385 numerous religious apprentices peeled off and scampered back to conduct their own service in Hut 385.

'How much? A whole forty quid?'

John Cross 88th (HO)684111
(now retired in SW France) jfcross@wanadoo.fr

Someone had said that there was this quite large 1939, 21 horsepower Wolsley (in black of course, even though it wasn't a Ford) for sale somewhere in a dark back alley of WSM. I won't mention the car's (admittedly pinched/copied) nickname; just suffice it to say that it started with 'for' and ended in 'torium'. One could hardly reach the back of the front seats from the copious rear bed seat with ones feet. Oh AND there were some leather hand grasp 'straps' suggested asno, I certainly won't be going there either!!

£40. Goodness knows how I managed to gather that much together mid-1960 in the 88th's last year with our measly whatever-it-was-in-those-days weekly so-called 'salary'. More like pittance, methinks.

'CROSS?'

'SIR, TREBLE ONE'

Good job my 'last three' was easy to remember else I would never have been paid. Anyway - cough up the readies and away we go. Licence? What licence would that be, then? We didn't need one in those days, did we? It was just the same with such other mundane things as insurance and road tax. After all young people don't have accidents; that's left to the old, slower and less skilled drivers, isn't it? Certainly no change in view there then! Anyway as I had started driving lessons in Weston I DID have a provisional licence so that was 'close enough for government work' as they say.

Back to **FKO 149** as it was officially known. Could not take it back to camp – well, quite frankly I didn't have the nerve so it was left in the alley. I must admit to not remembering it having many trips out under my auspices, maybe a little guilt feeling? Nah, a shortage of petrol money more likes.

Now comes the 'delicate' part of the story and, because the other 2 members of the 88th concerned have not become members of this august group, I shall simply use their initials - J (not me, fortunately or unfortunately as the case maybe, judge for yourself) and D.

It was a weekend I think, probably a Saturday, me in camp (like I said- probably short of pennies) but J and D not. J appears back in our billet.

'John, can I borrow your car, please? (very polite and well spoken as he was - and hopefully still is)

'Why is that then?' (silly boy)

'We want to take 2 young ladies out' (I use the word 'ladies' advisedly)

'Oh. Don't know why you need my car (J kept his own Armstrong Siddley Sapphire parked on the National Service side of RAF Locking, crafty s*d) **but OK then'**. I was nice - and naïve in those days.

(Same scene, sometime later that evening- stage left- LOUD)

'CROSS! Guardroom NOW'

Whoever it was might have had the decency to refer to me as 'L.A. Cross -' after all I HAD reached those dizzy heights. In fact I think I was the longest standing on the Wing at that time - shows how progressive I was in those days - not!
Whoops. Wonder what's up.

'Told to report here, Corporal'

'You Cross?' (Didn't have the nerve to offer the obvious smart-a*se reply)

'Yes, Corporal'

'You (sic) got a car?'

'Er....(hesitates, wondering what's coming...but bites the bullet) yes'

'Right. IN HERE NOW. You're in trouble (or words to that effect)'

It then came to light that my 'friends' had been parked up somewhere at the back of Weston with the aforementioned girls, car all steamed up, when local copper, probably arriving on a (silent running) bicycle, shines his Eveready through the misty window.

'Ello,'ello. What's going on here, then?' Sharp as a razor, those local cops. **'You Aps?'** noticing age and haircuts no doubt.

'Er.... Yes'

'You ain't allowed cars' Damn, how astute and on top of information. **'Right, number, rank and names. I'm calling Locking'**. Bugg*r.

To cut a longer story short all 3 of us were hauled in front of the Winco (sorry, can't remember his name) and given 28 days inside. Now that automatically meant Cosford and not Locking, as the Winco pointed out. Hmm. Last term as well. Could end up being FT'd.

So we do the necessary escorted rounds, particularly to Sick Quarters and the Doc.

'Why are you here?' One of us explains, I think it was me as it was my car. **'and you have to spend the 28 days at Cosford just for owning and using a car, nothing else?'**. We confirmed and what the Winco had said.

'Right, I'll state that you are unfit to travel!' Good man, that Doc.

Just at that time his 'phone rings. It's the Winco and we are to report straight back to his office. Apparently the Air Com had pointed out the danger of the FT situation to the Winco and had strongly suggested that it would be more 'cost effective' for us to 'do the time' at Locking.

And that's how it was that I managed to start and finish my thesis because I doubt I would have done any other way - lastminute.com had nothing on me.

J, being tall, well spoken and impressive, managed to con some of the other minor miscreants who joined us inside at various times into bulling boots - and I seem to remember that bed packs even came into the frame! Don't know what else D gained from the experience.

Bit more to the story- in the few days before coming up in front of the Winco with the view that we couldn't be any worse off by continuing to use the car, that's what we did. Well, why not!

The only down side was that the big ends (and I'm NOT referring to J and D!) in the engine proceeded to give up the ghost. Fortunately J was a car enthusiast so he carefully drove it down to Taunton where he lived for us to work on. When the 24 days (4 off for good conduct!!!) were over we obtained a w/e pass from our Flt Lt Fish (sorry sir) Salmon, ostensibly to go to Bristol for suit fitting but actually to fix the car in Taunton.

And who should see the 3 of us from his car, hitching a lift on the A38 towards Taunton instead of Bristol? Yup. Mr Salmon.

When he next saw us he asked why we were heading in that direction. When we told him it was to fix the car in Taunton he asked why we had not requested a pass to Taunton. We replied that we did not think he would have approved one. He replied 'Damn right!'

Immediately after the 88th pass out, because we had not had the time to fix my car, J kindly lent me his Armstrong - complete with pre-select gearbox but with a stick that would come out of its socket if one were not careful! Like most other of the entry members my parents had come to Locking so my father was able to be the 'licence holder' for my 'L' plates. Upon returning the Armstrong to Taunton, Dad and I returned via rail, leaving my forty pounds (or much less!) worth of **FKO 149** for J to do with as he pleased.

For me these were nice times.

HUMOUR

An Elderly Witness

In a trial, a small town lawyer called his first witness to the stand. The witness was a grandmotherly, elderly woman.

He approached her and asked, "Mrs Jones, do you know me?" She responded, "Why, yes I do know you, Mr. Williams. I've know you since you were a young boy, and frankly, you've been a big disappointment to me. You lie, you cheat on your wife, you manipulate people and talk about them behind their backs. You think you're a big shot when you haven't the brains to realise you never will amount to anything more than a two-bit paper pusher. Yes, I know you. "

The Lawyer was stunned. Not knowing what else to do, he pointed across the room and asked, "Mrs. Jones, do you know the defence attorney?" She again replied, "Why yes, I do. I've known Mr. Bradley since he was a youngster, too. He's lazy, bigoted and he has a drinking problem. He can't build a normal relationship with anyone and his law practice is one of the worst in the entire state. Not to mention he cheated on his wife with three different women, one of them was your wife. Yes, I know him." The defence attorney almost died.

The judge asked both counsellors to approach the bench, and in a very quiet voice, said, "If either of you bastards asks her if she knows me, I'll throw you in jail for contempt."

An old Cowboy

From Mike Hill 91st

An old cowboy sat down at a bar and ordered a drink. As he sat sipping it a young woman sat down next to him. She turned to the cowboy and asked "Are you a real cowboy?"

He replied "Well, I've spent my whole life breaking colts, working cows, going to rodeos, fixing fences, pulling calves, bailing hay, doctoring calves, cleaning my barn, fixing flats, working on tractors, and feeding my dogs. So I guess I am a cowboy!"

She said "I'm a lesbian! I spend my whole day just thinking about women. As soon as I get up in the morning, I think about women. When shower, I think about women. When I watch TV, I think about women. I even think about women when I eat. It seems that everything makes me think of women. The two sat sipping in silence.

A little while later, a man sat down the other side of the old cowboy. He asked, "Are you a real cowboy?" He replied, "I always thought I was, but I just found out that I'm a lesbian!"

Flying is interesting

From Stan Murray 92nd

A businessman boards a flight and sees a gorgeous woman coming down the aisle who then sits next to him. After they take off, he notices she is reading a book entitled 'Six Myths'. He asks her about it and she replies, "This is a very interesting book. It says that while American Negroes think they are the most well endowed men in fact, American Indians have the longest penises. And Italian men pride themselves on thinking they are the best lovers but surveys show that Greek women are the most satisfied by their men. By the way, my name is Jill. What's yours? "

"My name? My name is Tonto - Tonto Papadopoulos, nice to meet you."

Deadlier than the Male

From Stan Murray 92nd

The FBI had an opening for an assassin. After all the background checks, interviews, and testing were done there were 3 finalists. Two men and a woman.

For the final test, the FBI agents took one of the men to a large metal door and handed him a gun. "We must know that you will follow your instructions no matter what the circumstances. Inside the room you will find your wife sitting in a chair. Shoot her!". The man said, "You can't be serious, I could never shoot my wife".

The agent said "Then you are not the right man for the job. Take your wife and go home".

The second man was given the same instructions. He took the gun and went into the room. All was quiet for about 5 minutes. The man came out with tears in his eyes, "I tried, but I can't kill my wife." The agent said, "You don't have what it takes. Take your wife and go home."

Finally, it was the woman's turn. She was given the same instructions, to shoot her husband. She took the gun and went into the room. Shots were heard, one after another. They heard screaming, crashing, banging on the walls. After a few minutes, all was quiet. The door opened slowly and there stood the woman. She wiped the sweat from her brow.

"This gun was loaded with blanks" she said. "I had to beat him to death with the chair."

Burglar

From Phil Marston 92nd

A burglar broke into a house one night. He shined his flashlight around, looking for valuables, and when he picked up a CD player to place in his sack, a strange, disembodied voice echoed from the dark saying, "Jesus is watching you."

He nearly jumped out of his skin, clicked his flashlight out, and froze. When he heard nothing more after a bit, he shook his head, promised himself a vacation after the next big score, then clicked the light on and began searching for more valuables.

Just as he pulled the stereo out so he could disconnect the wires, clear as a bell he heard, "Jesus is watching you."

Freaked out, he shone his light around frantically, looking for the source of the voice. Finally, in the corner of the room, his flashlight beam came to rest on a parrot. "Did you say that?" He hissed at the parrot. "Yep," the parrot confessed, then squawked, "I'm just trying to warn you."

The burglar relaxed. "Warn me, huh? Who in the world are you?" "Moses," replied the bird. "Moses?" the burglar laughed. "What kind of people would name a bird Moses."

"The kind of people that would name a Rottweiler Jesus!"

In a Pickle

From Stan Murray 92nd

Bill worked in a pickle factory. He had been employed there for a number of years when he came home one day to confess to his wife that he had terrible compulsion. He had an urge to stick his penis into the pickle slicer. His wife suggested that he should see a sex therapist to talk about it, but Bill said he would be too embarrassed. He vowed to overcome the compulsion on his own.

One day a few weeks later, Bill came home. His wife could see at once that something was seriously wrong. "What's wrong, Bill?" she asked. "Do you remember that I told you how I had this tremendous urge to put my penis into the pickle slicer?"

"Oh, Bill, you didn't." "Yes, I did." "My God, Bill, what happened?"

"I got fired." "No, Bill. I mean, what happened with the pickle slicer?"

"Oh...she got fired too."

TRIFLES

How Things Change

I remember reading about who reads what newspaper in 1965.
Here is a new list

READERS OF NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS 1965

The Times: Read by the people who run the country.

Daily Mirror: Read by the people who think they run the country.

The Guardian: Read by the people who think they should run the country.

Morning Star: Read by the people who think we should be run by another country.

Daily Mail: Read by the wives of the people who run the country.

Financial Times: Read by the people who own the country.

Daily Express: Read by the people who think the country should be run as it used to be run.

Daily Telegraph: Read by the people who think it still is.

The Sun: Read by the people who don't care who runs the country as long as she's got big breasts.

READERS OF NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS 2007

The Times: Read by the people who think Rupert Murdoch should run the country.

Daily Mirror: Read by the people who think they should run the country.

The Guardian: Read by the neo-socialists who actually do run the country.

Morning Star: Read by the people who think we should be run by any country other than America.

Daily Mail: Read by the people who pay for the country.

Financial Times: Read by the people who *should* pay but keep their wealth out of the country.

Daily Express: Read by the people who think the country should be run by pressure groups and think-tanks.

Daily Telegraph: Read by the people who know that it is.

The Sun: Read by the people who still don't care who runs the country, as long as she's got big breasts.

New scam

From Ian Huff 92nd now is Australia.

The latest scam from the Melbourne area which happened to me at the Chadstone Shopping Centre. Two good looking 18 year old women with wet T-shirts approach while you're still in the car.

One starts wiping your windshield with a Squeegee, the other comes to your window saying 'Hi' while bending over with her breasts almost coming out of her blouse, impossible not to look.

When you offer \$2 for the screen-clean they say no and ask for a ride to another Shopping Centre. You agree and tell them to sit in the back.

On the way they start having Lezbo sex in the back seat. Then one of them jumps to the front seat & starts to perform oral sex on you, while the other one steals your wallet.

I was robbed last Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, but I couldn't find them Saturday or Sunday.

Consider yourself warned Be careful.

Actual call centre conversations!

From Tiny Kuhle 87th

Customer: "I've been ringing 0700 2300 for two days and can't get through to enquiries, can you help?". Operator: "Where did you get that number from, sir?".

Customer: "It was on the door to the Travel Centre".

Operator: "Sir, they are our opening hours".

Samsung Electronics

Caller: "Can you give me the telephone number for Jack?"

Operator: "I'm sorry, sir, I don't understand who you are talking about".

Caller: "On page 1, section 5, of the user guide it clearly states that I need to unplug the fax machine from the AC wall socket and telephone Jack before cleaning. Now, can you give me the number for Jack?"

Operator: "I think you mean the telephone point on the wall".

RAC Motoring Services

Caller: "Does your European Breakdown Policy cover me when I am travelling in Australia?" Operator: Doesn't the product give you a clue?

Caller (enquiring about legal requirements while travelling in France):

"If I register my car in France, do I have to change the steering wheel to the other side of the car?"

Directory Enquiries

Caller: "I'd like the number of the Argoed Fish Bar in Cardiff please".

Operator: "I'm sorry, there's no listing. Is the spelling correct?"

Caller: "Well, it used to be called the Bargoed Fish Bar but the 'B' fell off".

Then there was the caller who asked for a knitwear company in Woven.

Operator: "Woven? Are you sure?"

Caller: "Yes. That's what it says on the label; Woven in Scotland".

On another occasion, a man making heavy breathing sounds from a phone box told a worried operator: "I haven't got a pen, so I'm steaming up the window to write the number on".

Tech Support: "I need you to right-click on the Open Desktop"

Customer: "OK".

Tech Support: "Did you get a pop-up menu?"

Customer: "No".

Tech Support: "OK. Right-Click again. Do you see a pop-up menu?"

Customer: "No".

Tech Support: "OK, sir. Can you tell me what you have done up until this point?"

Customer: "Sure. You told me to write 'click' and I wrote 'click".

Tech Support: "OK. In the bottom left hand side of the screen, can you see the 'OK' button displayed?"

Customer: "Wow. How can you see my screen from there?"

Caller: "I deleted a file from my PC last week and I have just realised that I need it. If I turn my system clock back two weeks will I have my file back again?"

There's always one. This has got to be one of the funniest things in a long time. I think this guy should have been promoted, not fired. This is a true story from the WordPerfect Helpline, which was transcribed from a recording monitoring the customer care department. Needless to say the Help Desk employee was fired; however, he/she is currently suing the WordPerfect organisation for "Termination without Cause".

Actual dialogue of a former WordPerfect Customer Support employee. (Now I know why they record these conversations!):

Operator: "Ridge Hall, computer assistance; May I help you?"

Caller: "Yes, well, I'm having trouble with WordPerfect.

Operator: "What sort of trouble??"

Caller: "Well, I was just typing along, and all of a sudden the words went away."

Operator: "Went away?"

Caller: "They disappeared."

Operator: "Hmm. So what does your screen look like now?"

Caller: "Nothing."

Operator: "Nothing??"

Caller: "It's blank; it won't accept anything when I type."

Operator: "Are you still in WordPerfect, or did you get out??"

Caller: "How do I tell?"

Operator: "Can you see the C: prompt on the screen??"

Caller: "What's a sea-prompt?"

Operator: "Never mind, can you move your cursor around the screen?"

Caller: "There isn't any cursor: I told you, it won't accept anything I type."

Operator: "Does your monitor have a power indicator??"

Caller: "What's a monitor?"

Operator: "It's the thing with the screen on it that looks like a TV. Does it have a little light that tells you when it's on?"
Caller: "I don't know."
Operator: "Well, then look on the back of the monitor and find where the power cord goes into it. Can you see that??"
Caller: "Yes, I think so."
Operator: "Great. Follow the cord to the plug, and tell me if it's plugged into the wall."
Caller: "Yes, it is."
Operator: "When you were behind the monitor, did you notice that there were two cables plugged into the back of it, not just one??"
Caller: "No." Operator: "Well, there are. I need you to look back there again and find the other cable."
Caller: "Okay, here it is."
Operator: "Follow it for me, and tell me if it's plugged securely into the back of your computer."
Caller: "I can't reach."
Operator: "Uh huh. Well, can you see if it is??"
Caller: "No."
Operator: "Even if you maybe put your knee on something and lean way over??"
Caller: "Oh, it's not because I don't have the right angle -it's because it's dark."
Operator: "Dark?"
Caller: "Yes - the office light is off, and the only light I have is coming in from the window." Operator: "Well, turn on the office light then."
Caller: "I can't."
Operator: "No? Why not??"
Caller: "Because there's a power failure."
Operator: "A power..... A power failure? Aha, Okay, we've got it licked now. Do you still have the boxes and manuals and packing stuff your computer came in?"
Caller: "Well, yes, I keep them in the closet."
Operator: "Good. Go get them, and unplug your system and pack it up just like it was when you got it. Then take it back to the store you bought it from."
Caller: "Really? Is it that bad?"
Operator: "Yes, I'm afraid it is."
Caller: "Well, all right then, I suppose. What do I tell them??"
Operator: "Tell them you're too f*%king stupid to own a computer".

Worst Spelling ever

I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacilty uesdnatnrd waht I was rdgnieg - THE PAOMNNEHAL PWEOR OF THE HMUAN MNID. Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are. The olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

So why do we spell check if that is the case?

RAF DAYS

The Ten Commandments of the Royal Air Force

From Ken Farmer 75th

1. Though shalt not take the Flight Sergeant's name in vain lest thy name be inscribed on a 252 and a course of endurance prescribed for you.
2. Thou shalt not scrounge or swing the lead lest thou be called upon to repent in the Sergeant's Mess midst many dishes.
3. Honour thy pay book and thy accounts officer all the days of thy service so that thy credits may be as even as the sands in the desert.
4. Though shalt not borrow or take unto thyself any of thy comrades kit in his absence lest thy sins be thrust upon thee by the quickness of the hand that blackens the eye.
5. Thou shalt not fritter away thy worldly goods by brag, pontoon or poker lest the voice of authority shall say unto thee "Render thy name and numerals, and let thy shekels remain in bondage."
6. Thou shalt not consort with publicans and sinners lest thou filleth thyself to overflowing, for it is written – 'He that drinketh shall surely have bed and break fast in the guardroom.'
7. Thou shalt not line thy purse with the illicit sale of NAFFI fags lest thou incur the wrath of the powers that be and there by abide in the house of the glass roof forever.
8. Six days shalt thou labour and on the seventh thou shalt work twice as hard.
9. Thou shalt not kill if the cook grieveth thee but make thy complaint though the usual channels whereof ye expect little and receive even less.
10. And it shall come to pass when thou shalt at last come into the street called civvy and take upon thyself many strange garments then study well the dole and the drawing there of hence forth and forever more.

AMEN

I Shouldn't Have.....as a Corporal (1957/62)

From Brian Davies 76/77

- # While fitting a new Pye transceiver into a fire tender in the middle of RAF St Eval airfield not realised that some fire tenders had a positive others negative earth – this Pye set had the wrong earth configuration: Result one dead fire tender causing a hazard to landing Shackeltons .
 - # Broken a date with a nurse at Truro hospital and two weeks later finding she was the one at that hospital giving me a Yellow Fever jab. It hurt!
 - # On detachment to Gibraltar in 1957, tried to stop a 1 ton SWB transmitter slipping from a sling. Result a big tear in my hand palm – I still have the scar now.
 - # Again at Gib., shouted instructions to aerial riggers from a rock shelf a sheer drop 800 feet above North Front hanging onto the rock with my toes. Mad.
 - # Been happy to be told I was posted to Christmas Island. Really insane!
 - # During the important pre-operation (H-bomb explosion) shift, turned up at the JOC Transmitter site as drunk as my shift mate (also ex-76th). We had confused whose turn it was to stay sober that night. Frequency changes took 15 minutes instead of the usual 5. We got away with it, but I never drank on duty again.
 - # Had Air Marshal Sir Harry Broadhurst, circling the Christmas Island inter-command transmitter station for 15 minutes in his Vulcan bomber waiting for us to get an HF high power voice link to him. We had been told it would never be used. He unhappily used morse on his flight to Hawaii.
 - # As an instructor at Locking in 1960, stood in at 4T-block for two months teaching apps., mechs and fitter courses workshop techniques such as soldering and filing. When I passed out at the end of apprentice training, I had barely achieved a pass in workshops.
 - # As an instructor in the secure Locking Crypto classrooms (1960), being taken by Bristol friends to an underground jazz club in that city. On coming out I found it was the offices of the Communist Party and most attending were CND activists. Next day I quickly reported my error to my Flt.Lt.
 - # I was attending a Russian language course in the Locking Ed. Section and during morning break in the Cryptographic equipment classroom showed students how their names looked and sounded in Russian. On entering the classroom my Flt Lt was rather surprised to find the blackboard covered in Russian writing!!!
-

I'M Glad I Was Posted There

Mike Collier 76th

Life was good again in April 1960. I was on disembarkation leave, having just returned from one year unaccompanied overseas. The next posting was awaited with considerable interest. When the information eventually arrived, it was to be R.A.F. Linton-on-Ouse. My first reaction was where the blazes is that! At that time, we were living in a small town in the then Huntingdonshire, through which flowed a river Ouse but there was no Linton-on-Ouse in the area. The railway warrant to York gave a clue, an O.S. map the location. I was not happy, in 13 months since we married, I had spent less than 3 weeks with my wife and now I was going to be 150 miles away. My sole transport, a pedal cycle.

On the appointed day, I set off for Linton. I got my first good news on arrival. Technical ranks did not do station duties. Reporting to R.S.F., a collection of huts near the end of the secondary runway, gave even better news. I was to run the Air Radar Bay. A 21 year old Cpl/T and I had my first empire! Admittedly, it was not much of an empire. A bench at one end of a large room, for servicing Rebecca 8, the only air radar equipment on the station. Plus a large copper mesh cage, halfway down the room, to allow checking of aircrew life jacket SARAH beacons but it was all mine. My staff, an extended National Service J/T, who turned out to be very good at his job. Perhaps as well, as I had never seen Rebecca 8 or SARAH before.

After spending a few Friday evenings hitchhiking down the A.I., I found a flat in York and my wife moved up. A short time later we bought our first car (Austin A.30.) The work was easy, the camp pleasant and the surrounding area a delight. Life was very good!

The N.C.O. i/c R.S.F. was a F.S. Simpson, a tall garrulous Scot. Too long away from the technical side of the job, he was an administrator who wanted nothing more than a quiet, untroubled life. If I wanted to keep my empire, it would certainly do no harm to stay in his "good books". A first opportunity to impress came a couple of months after I arrived.

The N.C.O. i/c the Electrical Section, an irascible F.S. Stephens, had a fearsome reputation for guarding his empire and protecting his men. He was also not favourably disposed towards those who practised the black art of radio. One day, F.S. Simpson was bemoaning the fact that the aforementioned F.S. Stephens appeared to be holding up progress on a radio job. Entreaties from our F.S. seemed to have made no impression at all. Tentatively, I offered to try and mediate. He looked at me as though I might be mad but probably figured that there was nothing to lose, other than having a badly chewed up Cpl/T on his hands and wished me luck. My knock on F.S. Stephens office door was answered by a curt "Enter". On opening it I was greeted by "Come in Michael my boy. What can I do for you?" What my boss did not know and I failed to tell him, was that F.S. Stephens was the upstairs neighbour in our flat in York. His wife and mine, had become firm friends in the short time we had been there. We were also his baby sitters. In response to my request, he picked up the phone and the job we needed doing, was started before I left his office. Without explanation, I told F.S. Simpson that the problem was sorted and got the impression that I had performed some sort of minor miracle. For the rest of my time there, I was the "Mr Fixit" when electrical work was required.

The principle task at Linton, was to provide basic flying training for Navy pilots. A further chance to enhance my reputation arose, when there was a requirement to "air test" some radar gear. I suspect that a student pilot had made a mess of an exercise and blamed the radar. The ground crew could find no fault but aircrew management were unwilling to trust the aircraft again, until it had been checked in the air by an "expert". The problem was, that flying in the Vampire or Jet Provost aircraft required the use of oxygen, so the "expert" needed to have been through a decompression chamber. Fortunately for me, I not only loved flying but was the only radio bod on the station to have been decompressed. A few more Brownie points with F.S. Simpson! Particularly as I was Air Radio, so he did not need anyone else if there was a wireless problem. Snags requiring an "air test" seemed to occur quite regularly and it turned into a wonderful official skive. I always flew with a Q.F.I, and only when the weather was good. To give a system a good check we invariably did some aerobatics. The pilots were rarely in any hurry to return to base and quite often let me fly the aircraft. I don't ever remember being able to reproduce the reported fault.

About the time of my second or third "air test" we bought a caravan and moved onto the site on camp. One pound per week for ground rent, electricity and water, plus a further five shillings to rent a garage. Five minutes cycle ride from home to work. Most every weekend out into the delightful Yorkshire countryside. Life got even better!

The Ground Wireless Bay was attached to my domain. They always seemed to be busy and quite often there was no one at home. I would answer their phone and leave them notes. One day I took a call from an obviously irate F.S. i/c one of the Flight Dispersals, complaining that his field telephone to the aircrew Ops Room was u/s. I left my usual note. Not long afterwards, F.S. Simpson appeared. He had received a call from the same line chief, who had been less than complementary about the efficiency of the radio section. Acknowledging that it was not my trade, he asked if I could go and try to fix it. My knowledge of field telephones was about nil but I agreed to have a go. F.S. Simpson, happy to have passed the "buck", headed for his office. A quick search of the Ground Wireless Bay failed to reveal a spare phone. To at least look professional, I grabbed a few tools and an AVO. At the Dispersal the F.S. was not interested in subtle differences within the radio trade group. As far as he was concerned, if you had sparks on your sleeve you should be able to fix anything. When I headed for the field telephone, he snapped "Don't waste your time with that, it's a break in the line somewhere, it's always a break in the line".

Thanking him, I made a rapid exit from the hut, found the cable and followed it to the edge of the taxi way. From the other side of this, it continued to the foot of a metal ladder running vertically up the side of a hangar. The cable then disappeared from view onto the hangar roof. I had a reasonably good head for heights and after a seemingly endless climb, made it to the top of the ladder. About a quarter of the way across the roof a cable join had parted. I re-connected it and taped it up. Returning to the top of the ladder, I realised that the views were superb. The Dispersal F.S. muttered "About time" when he checked the now serviceable system. F.S. Simpson was much more complementary. I omitted to mention that his Dispersal counterpart had virtually told me where the fault was. I did convince him that it might be a good idea to check the cable regularly and renew suspect joins. Subsequently, I spent a number of warm sunny afternoons, sitting on the hangar roof watching the aircraft take off and land and admiring the view. Another great official skive.

Winter produced a further pleasant diversion. The Navy personnel had their sports afternoon on Thursday and their football team was short of a goalkeeper. I managed to persuade my Flight Commander that a little co-operation might foster good inter-service relations. For quite a while I played for the station team on a Wednesday and the Navy on Thursday. Fortunately the two never played each other.

Time passed and I realised that despite regular assessments of three 8's (courtesy of F.S. Simpson) and having a great time at Linton, promotion and more money were not keen to find me. In an attempt to move ahead, I applied for aircrew training. I remember little of the couple of days at Biggin Hill. Apart from the embarrassment of an exercise, of which I was supposed to be i/c, ending with me and my group clinging to each other on top of an unstable oil drum, in the middle of an imaginary chasm. Plus a disaster in the coordination test in their Link Trainer. It had not occurred to me that all my "flying" at Linton, had been dictated by a Q.F.I, saying turn left or right, pull back or push forward. I had paid scant attention to the instruments. The weather was always good and it was relatively easy to orient oneself with respect to the view outside the cockpit. Shortly after returning to base, a letter — offering training as an A.E.O. arrived. I had long think before decided that if I could not drive, I did not want to play and turned it down.

About this time, a decision was made in the higher reaches of the service, that some "on station" basic radio training should be given to mechanics, prior to attending a fitters course. Obviously, I was right at the top of F.S. Simpson's list to deliver this training. Now, my understanding of basic radio at Locking had been, to say the least, fragile. After six years of rarely requiring to use it, it was just about non-existent. Fortunately, I still had all my notes and with great difficulty managed to cobble together some lectures, which were almost certainly appalling. I had no instructional training and was definitely not the most extrovert person in the world. However, it did occur to me that the obvious way to pass a Snr Tech board was to become an instructor.

When I applied, I did not think for one moment, with my abysmal basic knowledge, that there was any chance of success but they must have been desperate and I was accepted. It turned out to be one of the most important decisions I have ever made. A first step on the ladder, to a career I enjoyed for the rest of my working life. So, in the Summer of 1963, with a heavy heart and some trepidation I bade a sad farewell to Linton-on-Ouse and headed for Yatesbury.

Posted....But Where?

From Stan Murray 92nd

Having read with great interest the contribution in the November issue by Brian Davies, I realised that it seemed to be the plan for all of us to be messed about by the Movements people throughout our career. Here is the first instalment of my RAF life, six weeks after passing out.

One Friday afternoon, in early June, 1962, I was lying on my pit at about three o'clock, having had an early morning start to my day - and also it was POETS day, and all the National Servicemen had pissed off home for the weekend. I was disturbed by the SWO's runner who advised me that I was required in the Admin. Office immediately. I was informed that I had to pack my bags and catch the five o'clock train to London, where I would be met by an RAF Movements Officer.

On arrival I was put on another train to Gloucester, and, along with six or seven other airmen I arrived late Friday night at RAF Innsworth. In those days we all had to go to Innsworth to be "processed" before going abroad. So, I worked out that I was going abroad - nice to have been told!

Those of us who had arrived were issued with a pillow, two sheets, two blankets and a bed in the transit block. No information was forthcoming, and no questions answered.

Onto Monday - the gang, now twenty five or so, some of whom had been at Locking with me, were gathered together and marched to stores, where a clue to the final destination leaked out - we were issued with tropical kit. At least we knew it was going to be warm.

Some of you may remember the tropical kit scenario – a pair of extremely baggy, extremely long, and extremely wide shorts were flung across the counter at you. And that was it – no choice, until the whole designer outfit was selected.

As each day passed, another task was completed, then, everything seemed to stop, and our merry band spent most mornings painting or polishing anything that didn't move, and in the afternoons played football or basketball till we became extremely good. By now, three weeks had passed, and all was about to change. Our lads were summoned to the parade square, and told they were to be ready to leave first thing next morning – but not to where, or why.

The journey, by wooden - seated RAF coach took us from Innsworth to Luton Airport – where we boarded a Bristol Britannia and started what was to become a four day journey. Of course we still did not know where we were going – or why!!

On the way to - wherever we were going - we tasted the delights of free booze at 20,000 feet for the first time, and as you can imagine, we had a difficult time acclimatising to the situation, but we persevered. Four days in the sky with nothing to do but drink! I would add that occasionally the plane landed and everyone had the opportunity to perform the normal ablutions.

At last, on arrival, tired and hungover – the group, now 32 assorted airmen, discovered we were in Singapore. To this day I can remember my amazement when I got to the aircraft door. The humidity was something I could never have imagined, and the smell of what seemed to be sweet vegetation, just hung in the air. By the time I reached the bottom of the aircraft steps, my clothes were saturated with sweat - I thought to myself - what sort of place is this, I'll never be dry again. We were sent to transit accommodation at RAF Changi and left for 3 more days.

The lads of course thought this was great. Straight to the poolside to ogle at the teenage daughters – and in some cases, the mothers, who were making the best of the facilities.

Unfortunately, in those days there was no warning of the “ozone layer” or advice about “factor 25”, and by the end of day one, the “moonies” which was the name given to new arrivals, looked more like Red Indians. Anyway, at night there was always “down town” Singapore City – where we could sample local culture – commonly known as “Tiger Beer”. In the short time I was in Singapore, I am told I did all the usual things expected of a 19 year old and a few stick in my memory.

I mentioned the smell of Singapore, but it was nothing compared to the smell on a Sunday morning in the billet. After a night on the town we all usually ended up in Changi Village on the way back to camp, and, as is customary, even in those days after a bucketful of lager we all went for a curry. (I think it was called Roti Kima). These were served wrapped in large banana leaves, and carried back to the billet for consumption. The leaves were then left overnight on the table! Need I say more?

The variety of shops and stalls in Changi Village was amazing, and I could not believe the service the Indian and Chinese shopkeepers gave us. Anyone who has been out there will probably remember the ritual of tea or Coca Cola while being served, and the haggling to get the price down from a level that was already a bargain. For my first time out of the UK, still not 19, it was like a fantasy for me.

Away from the village, when we ventured into Singapore City, it was always an adventure to go shopping in Bugis Street, the equivalent at the time to “The Barras” in Glasgow, or Petticoat Lane in London, only a lot more colourful. A bargain was never what it seemed to be, but it never stopped us from buying the rubbish. I remember the number of times someone thought they had got a classy watch, only to find it had stopped next morning. Of course, on returning to Bugis Street to get one's money back, the trader had moved on - will we ever learn? Obviously not as I seem to remember I bought at least three.

Eventually someone in authority remembered that there was a group of 32, with nothing to do – so – to cut a long story short – the good times were over – and we were sent to various RAF outposts throughout Singapore. I was sent to a very small unit called Chi Keng which was the Receiver station for RAF Singapore, which meant that all the messages coming into Singapore over the airwaves were routed through there. I enjoyed my short stay, and made friends with one or two guys who had been on the island for some time. It made my stay very enjoyable and I even got invited to a Chinese wedding and had a game of football for the unit.

I remember one particular episode at Chi Keng which seemed to typify the Brit Serviceman abroad. After a night in the City, a few of us were returning in a taxi, and on arrival at the gate the driver seemed to pull up very close to the kerb so that no one could get out on the left hand side of the car, unless of course they were willing to drop 10 feet or more into a monsoon ditch.

Obviously the driver had been done out of fares in the past, with the guys "legging" it as soon as they got out of the taxi. Believe it or not, most of us realised his tactics and accepted defeat, paid up and went to bed. But, as you know, the drink does strange things to some people, and one of the boys opened the rear left door and jumped out, thinking all he had to do was run. After the drop, and the pain caused by a broken ankle, I suppose he got the message.

Another of my fading memories of Chi Keng was that I used to waken up every morning clean shaven, and I had no memory of doing it myself. Apparently a young Indian Boy had the job of tidying the room and shaving those who needed one. The deal was, if he woke you up he didn't get paid. He never woke me up. I'm just glad I never fell out with the boy.

Have you been counting? – Well – since day 1 at Cranwell – four weeks have elapsed, and although I and my new mates are now on the other side of the world – we still do not know why!!!

But at last – the secret is about to come out – we would be flying out next day – to Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand – to join the Australian, American and Thai Air Forces along the North Thai Borders. We were told it would be for a maximum of three months – it was now getting on to the end of June!

We were all loaded onto an ancient Hastings aircraft the next morning to start the long flight to our new home. There we were, in nets hanging from the side of the aircraft, dressed in the "beautifully tailored" and highly starched, tropical kit, flying off for a new adventure.

After what seemed like an eternity in the noisy interior of the old aircraft, the pilot informed us that because of an engine problem we would be landing for a stop in Bangkok. In those days it meant very little to the younger ones amongst us, but the older troops let out a big cheer.

On arrival at the airport it dawned on us that this was perhaps not an engine problem, but a pre-planned stop by the crew for a bit of fun in this amazing city. As we stepped off into the heat, sweating profusely in our uniforms, including the ubiquitous beret, we noticed that the crew were all dressed in beautifully cut silk shirts and light weight trousers, ready for a bit of R and R.

We arrived after a drive through what was, even then, horrendous traffic and noise, at the King's Hotel in the centre of the city and booked into our rooms. I shared a room with a "Geordie" Corporal in the Royal Corp of Transport, who seemed to know an awful lot about what was available in Bangkok.

There was no real opportunity to see the city but after a shower and a bit of smartening up (meaning we got out of those horrible uniforms), we all ended up in the bar for a drink before dinner. When we sat at the table it occurred to me that there were an awful lot of

very pretty young women hanging around and chatting to the guys, who seemed to be quite friendly with them (God, was I really that naïve?)

One by one these ladies sat at the table with us and ordered drinks. None of them joined in the meal, but when we were finished eating, they disappeared with the fellows who had been sitting next to them. It still hadn't clicked! After a few more drinks, and the onset of tiredness, I went up to my room, only to find the door locked.

Geordie finally let me in but made it clear he wasn't too happy about my return. When I entered the room I realised why, yes, a beautiful young Thai woman was sitting in his bed, awaiting his return. I sheepishly climbed into mine, pulled the sheet over my head, and tried, unsuccessfully I may add, to get some sleep. My first lesson on what life was all about.

Next morning we were up early to continue our journey, in what was now a perfectly serviceable plane, funnily enough, the fault had simply cleared itself, and we arrived in Chiang Mai in the late afternoon.

Chiang Mai then was very different to what it is now. The runway was just that – a runway – no airport – just a shell of what would eventually become the control tower and arrivals building. Tents were pitched at one side of the runway and four aircraft (Hawker Hunters) sat at one end of it. In total there were now approximately 150 assorted airmen, most of whom were with 20 Squadron, based in Singapore, and detached to Chiang Mai with their aircraft. Those of us from the UK made up the support staff such as signals, catering, fire service and admin.

In the signals section it was just like being back at Locking with Chief Tech Johnstone in charge of the servicing team. He had been one of my ILS instructors. There was also a selection of guys from the 90th and 91st Entries – Trevor Beech, Chalky Whyte and Alan Jones to name those I can remember.

In later years when I watched the series M.A.S.H. on TV, it reminded me so much of my time in Chiang Mai. We lived in tents pitched along the side of the runway and we had to dig little ditches around the tents. These ditches were never deep enough to do the job they were meant to, which was to stop the tents from being flooded when it rained. Anyone who has served in the Far East will know what I mean. After only a short rainstorm everything just floated away. Many was the time we woke up, put our feet out of the camp beds we slept in and found we were up to the ankles in water.

The tented area was named after Singapore streets, I lived in No1 Bugis Street.

The toilets were holes in the ground, planks of wood over the holes, beautifully shaped by the carpenters for comfort purposes, with a shelter built around the area for privacy. It really was, just like in M.A.S.H. The showers were beautifully constructed, again very like those in M.A.S.H, and, because of the searing temperatures, always gave us warm water. True to the British class system there were two showers, one for officers and one for the airmen. Even with the ratio of 130 or so airmen to 20 or so officers, the system was cast in tablets of stone.

It was amazing how our presence gave some locals the opportunity to go into business. Before we knew it we had a little shack of a place, built with leaves and bits of wood,

where a young Thai girl supplied us with ice cold, non- alcoholic drinks during the hot afternoons.

We sat around for hours playing cribbage and generally passing the time of day. I had never played the game before I went to Thailand, nor have I played it since. I also often wonder what ever happened to that happy, hard working young Thai, who I think was about thirteen years old. Although I cannot spell her name, it was pronounced Wan Whitlai. As I write this she is probably a millionaire entrepreneur in the catering business - she deserves to be.

There are many stories I could tell of life in Chiang Mai but I'll leave that for another issue - even getting back to Blighty was a cock-up. So, stay tuned, there's more.

All Men Home-Going

From Taff (Glyn) Price 102nd Reproduced from The RAF Gan Newsletter 1966)

IMPORTANT NOTE: In order to avoid embarrassing situations when the "tour-ex" gannet finally arrives home, it is suggested that the following instructions be placed in a sealed envelope and forwarded to his relatives in the "youkay"

R0688516 J/T PRICE D.G. - Ground Wireless Fitter (G) - ex 102nd Entry

Very soon, the above named man will once more be in your midst, dehydrated, canned and demoralised, yet eager to resume his place in society as a human being, fully entitled to liberty and justice, whilst engaged in a somewhat delayed pursuit of happiness.

In making your joyous preparations to welcome him back to civilisation you should allow for the environment which has been his unfortunate lot for the past "lost" 12 months. In brief he may be a little Maldivian in his outlook on life, so show no alarm if he has a fit at the sight of a coconut.

Take no notice if he wears only a towel when visiting a neighbour; runs and greets any postman and liberally showers the neighbour's roof when annoyed. Be not perturbed if he regularly throws his mattress, bedding and bed into the garden, as he is only taking precautions against the dreaded bed-bug.

Be well prepared when it rains, or he may well run into the street for a shower, having long forgotten the meaning of exposure. If you live in a busy road however, it is advisable to inform the police so that they can make the necessary traffic diversions. Also do not be alarmed if he runs into the street, frothing at the mouth, every time he hears an aircraft passing overhead, with yells of "themailkitesin" or "go home filthy moonies". Use psychology, kick him in the teeth, but don't laugh. In consideration for his feelings **DO NOT** suggest a holiday by the sea.

His diet at first should consist of only watered-down tinned milk, jungle juice, dehydrated potatoes, canned vegetables and vast quantities of stale eggs (not less than three years deep freeze) in various cooked or half-cooked states. Fresh or rich food, especially milk, should be avoided for the first few weeks and then introduced gradually into his diet. You may find that he prefers corned beef to chicken or turkey. Fish is an unmentionable word. Fill your fridge with cold beer, whisky, rum and other beverages, but do not, repeat do not, put canned beer in sight, as this may cause an epileptic fit on the part of your beloved. Take no notice when, after a meal, he proceeds to the front door and throws away half a mug of coffee; kindly inform the neighbours of this. It's just one of his mannerisms.

His language at first may be a little embarrassing and will undoubtedly include words and phrases, which are meaningless to you, but with a little patience, he can be taught to speak good, plain, if less picturesque, English again.

Do not think he has a ulterior motive if, when he goes to the cinema he may take with him two bottles of lemonade and two cheese and onion rolls, as this is the practice on this frantic island,

which he is about to leave. Do not be angry with him when he shouts words like 'focus' and 'sound' as this is the only way he can show his appreciation.

For the first few months, until he has been properly house trained, be particularly watchful when he is in the company of women, especially young and beautiful ones; after seeing glamorous, young maidens being wooed by handsome young men, on the camp cinema screen, he imagines that he is an unchallengeable master of fine technique. His intentions are sincere but dishonourable.

In conclusion; providing; you treat him with kindness, tolerance and a quart of whisky (daily) you will be able to rehabilitate that which is the hollow shell of the happy man you once knew. Just bear in mind that beneath his tanned and rugged exterior, there beats a heart of gold. Treasure this. It is the only thing of value he has left after his hard work and well-earned venture on Gan.

DAYS OUT

Visit to the Arboretum

From John Birch 81st

Following in Dave Gundy's footsteps in trying to find RAF Locking's tree in the National Arboretum, my wife and I also traipsed round just after Christmas. Dave spoke to the man behind the desk, I had to make do with the man in the office who produced a copy map/plan with tree 72/1200 highlighted. This is progress I thought. The map/plan was explained and directions given with reference to an aerial photograph hanging on the wall on how to get to the RAF station plot. All very straight forward.

It took about 30 minutes to get to the right area and a further 10 to 15 searching when my wife yelled out, pointing to a small plastic sign "Planted for RAF Locking Oak". It was hanging from a stake in a plastic tube, I was looking for a tree! I did not photograph the plastic tube.

The reason Dave and his wife failed to find the tree is the location is nowhere near where the map/plan says it is! The man in the office explained afterwards that there had been some replanting in that part of the plot. Great! Anyway, Locking's tree exists, albeit very small and not visible, but in good company among other familiar station names.

The whole Arboretum covers 150 acres with many dedicated plots/memorials. There is a memorial plot to The Cranwell Apprentices, one to The Halton Apprentices and even one to The Boy Entrants! What one has to do to get a dedicated memorial/plot I do not know. Is this a subject for discussion?

There are few laid paths so anyone visiting the Arboretum during or just after inclement weather should take some wellies but the nice thing is that entrance is free.

The Arboretum is located between Lichfield and Burton on Trent, just off the A38 on the A513 sign posted for Tamworth. Open 10am to 5pm Tele: 01283 792333.

website: www.nationalmemorialarboretum.org/index.asp

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OBITUARIES

Pete Hill 76th Entry

After a long and valiant battle with Multiple Sclerosis, **PETER NORMAN HILL** died on the 9th November in Lincoln County Hospital. Members of his family and friends attended his cremation. Brian Batt and Peter Cornforth represented the Entry.

On leaving Locking Peter spent 2½ years in Singapore, where he met, Barbara, his wife to be, and a further 3 years at RAF Cosford. He left the Air Force in 1963 moving into industry, first in Manchester and then in Chatham. During this period further study was undertaken in Management and Quality Assurance. After completing his studies Peter and family moved to the N.E. of England where he was employed as QA Manager for Electrosil.

It was during this period of time that M.S. was diagnosed, but a full and active life was still possible. In 1989 Peter set up his own QA Business, in the Sunderland area, which continued until 1994 when he was forced to stop working.

Peter and Barbara moved to Lincoln in 2001, but the M.S. was now progressing at a faster rate, and during the past few years he was hospitalised a few times. He was admitted to hospital for the last time at the end of June and remained there until his death. Peter leaves Barbara, his wife of 47 years, 2 sons and 4 grandchildren.

Peter Cornforth

John (Mac) McKenzie 76/77

John died suddenly in Sydney, Australia on 19th December 2006 leaving 2 daughters and 5 grandchildren, his wife Sybil having died in 1991.

John started his RAF Apprenticeship with the 76th in January 1954 but realising the error of his ways he later joined the 77th with whom he passed out as a Ground Radar Fitter in April 1957.

His first posting was to RAF Chigwell but within a few weeks he was back at Locking on a 14 month course with 4 others from the 77th who had also been posted to Chigwell. RAF Norton was next then Yatesbury for an abortive re-muster to N.B.S. Then it was back to Norton, then Finningly and Cyprus.

On leaving the RAF in 1968, John & his family emigrated to Australia where it is believed he worked for D.H. Australia until his retirement in 2005. John's hobbies were being an instructor at dog obedience classes and diving. He was planning a diving holiday before his sudden death. Also in planning was sister Mary's move to Australia from the UK.

The funeral was held on 28th December and was well attended by family, diving friends, dog obedience trainees (humans & dogs) and the young mums he met while collecting his grandchildren from school.

Farewell old buddy.

Dave English

LES HARDY 78th

It is always sad to record the death of a member especially one who is well known to the writer so the news that Les Hardy had died in late September last year was both a shock and a particularly sad event. Les was a member of the 78th entry so arrived at Locking whilst I was just about to pass out so we did not meet until my arrival at RAF Kuching, Sarawak, in May 64. This was at the start of 'Confrontation' – Sukarno's last gasp attempt to bring together the corrupt and chaotic island nation of Indonesia. Incursions into Singapore and the newly formed Malaysia had prompted the British Govt into rapid action which meant many of the 'mob' including Les and self being deployed (with a fortnights' notice) to sunny rain-forested Borneo.

There we were both employed at 487 SU located on Kuching Airport maintaining a mobile Rotor set up of Type 14 and 15 search radars, a height finder Type 13 plus numerous Ops and support vehicles with inadequate air conditioning known collectively as a T Convoy. Never mind the discomfort, remember the fun. Because of the massive British Force build up no serious attacks manifested themselves and the nearest that we got to mud and bullets at Kuching was just mud. Nevertheless, we were on 'active service', life was serious, and, having been torn away from our young families for 12 long months, morale was, at best, average.

This was where Les came to the fore for he was a fine natural presenter with a great gift for words. He persuaded the Sarawak Broadcasting Organisation that he was the man to front a record request programme for the whole of the British armed forces in Borneo during that period. Few knew who Les was but as 'David James,' he will be remembered with much affection by many hundreds of guys who served in the region. His request programmes played a large part in the maintenance of morale of all servicemen in the northern part of Sarawak. Just about every minute of his free time was spent on organising, writing, thinking about and arranging the programmes and he developed a further series based on the 'desert island' format so he was always looking around for interesting people to interview and select their favourite tunes. No doubt he was enjoying himself but his sustained investment in time and expense was truly outstanding. Sadly, despite prompting from several directions his contribution was never officially recognised probably because those in authority never knew who 'David James' really was.

I have many fond memories of my year away thanks to Les even though it was a generally miserable time for our families at home and, indeed ourselves; it was a privilege to know him and he will always remain in my memory. To his widow, Joyce and his children we send our condolences; Les and Joyce's marriage was a happy one as evidenced by their large family who will all miss him very much.

Charles Hart.

CLOSING THOUGHT

Crackpot

From Phil Marston 92nd

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which she carried across her neck. One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the woman one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house." The old woman smiled, "Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side?" "That's because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you water them."

"For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house."

Each of us has our own unique flaw. But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding.

So, to all of my crackpot friends, have a great day and quit looking at 'perfect' pots with envy (you is what you is, so be the best you can be) and remember to smell the flowers on your side of the path.

RAFLAA Committee

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Chairman	"Tiny" Kühle	22 Tavistock Clse Woburn Sands Milton Keynes Bucks MK17 8UY	(01908) 583784 Hans.Kuhle@btopenworld.com	April 10	87 th
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The Apprentice Prayer

Teach us good Lord, to be thankful
For all the good times we had,
The skills we have learned,
The friendships we have shared
And the companionship we have enjoyed.
May all who have served the apprenticeship of the Wheel
Be ever mindful of the needs of one another.

Amen
