



RAFLAA Newsletter

SERIAL 53

MAR 2009

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Editors Notes

Hello to you all,

Another bumper issue and it is all due to you so thanks for all the items you have sent.

I received a nice note from the USA:

Terry (Dusty) Mullett (99th) writes:

I'm out here in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, ex 99th entry and just wanted to say how much I enjoyed reading the newsletter this evening - non-stop from Front Cover to Apprentice Prayer. My thanks and appreciation to you and the contributors for some great stories that triggered fond memories of my time at Locking and subsequent career in the RAF. Most of the events described took place before my time but, save for the names and places, struck a very familiar chord. Thanks for keeping the memories and the spirit alive! As they would say around these here parts, Good Job!

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. "

Mike does not know which entry John Wombwell was in though. Does anyone remember him?

Victor at Weston

We had a good response to my question about a Victor bomber at Weston. You will recall that scepticism was expressed about whether the runway was long enough. Well:

Brian Davies 76th writes:

Thanks for picking up the incorrect name I gave the DH 110. Of course it was the Sea Vixen – must proof read my articles more thoroughly as I did as a professional writer.

On the item about the Victor landing at Weston-S-Mare airport - my memory is quite clear on this. The word had gone round the Apprentice Huts at Locking in the 1950s that a Victor bomber was due to make a landing at WSM Airport. We did not believe this as we all know the Airport has quite a short runway and the weight of the aircraft would surely make a landing perilous.

On that hot summer afternoon many of us watched as the Victor circled around for ages burning off as much fuel as possible before eventually making its final approach from the east to the Airport. We all had a good view and could hardly believe it would land safely.

Word was, that it was stripped down to save weight and had a temporary C of A for its last journey to Weston, where it would stay for instructional purposes – yes it was a one-way trip, it was never meant to take off again. The long low approach terminated in good landing which apparently took up most of the runway and with a great roar of its engines shuddered safely to a halt.

Dick Scrivener 96th writes:

Regarding the Victor, it was 1960 or 61, and I watched it from the roof of our hut make 7 ish circuits before landing, obviously to get it just right for the short runway. Taking off was never a problem as it was thereafter used for air radio fitter training, and a b***** it was to work on. I occasionally flew from that airfield as a Westland flight test engineer up till 2002.

Vic Ludlow, 68th thinks it was a Vulcan. He writes:

To the best of my knowledge, the V-Bomber that was flown into (but not out of) WSM Airport was a very much lightened Vulcan. It was brought in to provide Technician training - and was accommodated at the Airfield.

Mick Farrer 102st writes:

Just browsing the latest RAFLAA newsletter, where you were asking about a Victor at Weston airfield. There certainly was. It lived undercover with a number of other airframes, in a hanger over the far side of the airfield from the road. The air radio apprentices used it for training on.

I have no idea whether it flew in, or arrived in pieces, but I was 102nd entry, which was Sep. 1962 to Aug. 1965, and it was there for that period at least. I understand that, after a lot of very detailed preparation, and extremely skilled flying, a Vulcan was flown in to the grass airfield at Halton, so Weston doesn't sound too unlikely. The other alternative would need a very large lorry. I was ground radio, but we did a few trips to various places to see how the rest of the RAF worked, and that was one of them.

John MacKenzie 78th writes:

I first saw the Victor in December 1960 when it was in the hanger. I was on leave from Germany and my dad (Warrant Officer Bill MacKenzie) was in charge of the Air Radio Phase on the old airfield. I cannot remember the date it arrived but if my memory serves me right, it came from Boscombe Down. One of the members of the crew was 'Coull' (not sure of the surname) the Air Electronics Officer. He was ex-74th. Rumour has it that the brake chute was deployed over Yatton just the make the aircraft got in!! It was eventually scrapped on the airfield. I hope this helps.

Andy Perkins (109th) has sent in a picture taken at Weston:



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Finally, with impressive detail, Pete Crowe 95th writes:

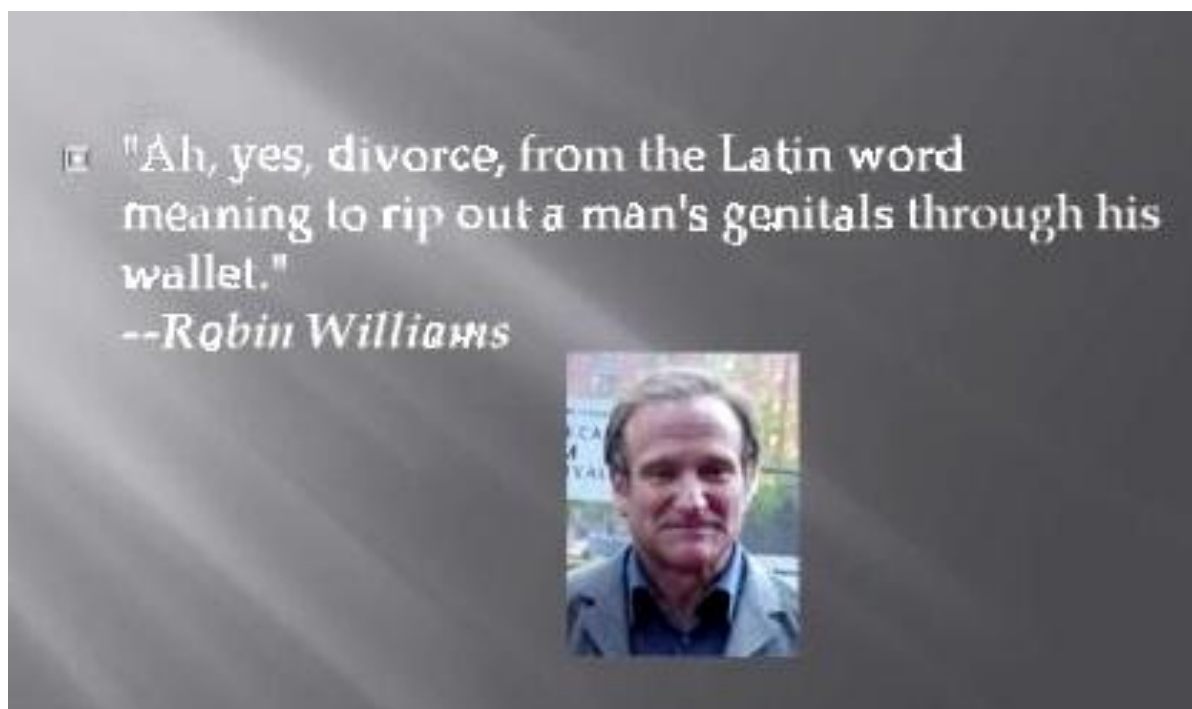
Victor Prototype XA919 flew into Weston Airfield 1961 and used for training. It came in with very low fuel and just managed to stop with 2 burst tyres. It was put into the aircraft servicing hanger together with 3 or 4 other aircraft. We had a couple of dozen lessons in the hanger changing black boxes.

So there was a V-Bomber at Weston, probably a Victor but when did it arrive? The 76th would have left around the end of 1956 (I think) which does not fit with 1960 or 1961. Can anyone else throw more light on this?

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.

Thought for the day



Deadline for next issue - 23rd May for July 09

*All comments, contributions, ideas and feedback to the newsletter editor:
Chris Tett Soft copy preferred!*

Email: Chris@crtett.plus.com

Tele: 01908 583047

45 Chapel Street

Woburn Sands

Milton Keynes

Bucks

MK17 8PQ

Committee Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the 41st Committee Meeting of the RAF Locking Apprentice Association

From Dave Gunby, Secretary

Venue: Flowerdown House, Weston super Mare

Date: Thursday 19th February 2009 at 13:00 Hrs

Present:-

Tiny Kuhle	87 th	Chairman
Dave Gunby	72 nd	Secretary
Tony Horry	76 th	Treasurer
Andy Perkins	109 th	Tech Rep
Graham Beaston	209 th	Craft Rep
Chris Tett	92 nd	Newsletter Editor

Apologies: -

John Farmer	77 th	Membership Secretary
Peter Crowe	95 th	AA Rep/Webmaster
Rick Atkinson	91 st	Service Rep

The Chairman opened the meeting at 13.07 with a greeting to all followed by a reading of the Apprentice Prayer.

ITEM 1 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Peter Crowe, John Farmer and Rick Atkinson.

ITEM 2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Committee reviewed the minutes of the 40th Committee meeting and found them acceptable.

It was proposed by Hans Kuhle and seconded by Dave Gunby that the minutes of the 40th Committee Meeting in July 2008 be accepted as a true record. All agreed.

ITEM 3 Matters Arising

All action points had been completed and there were no further matters arising that would not be covered in the Agenda

ITEM 4 Treasurers Report

From Tony Horry, Treasurer, 16th Feb 2009

ACCOUNTS AS PER THE INCOME/EXPENDITURE STATEMENT.

The Bank statement for period Jan-Feb 2009 has been received. The End of Financial Year has been checked and balanced. Balance Sheet for FY 08/09 now stands at £12,260.58. This represents an excess of income over expenditure of £1,561.07 for the year (£899.09 in 07/08)

Income from subscriptions is similar to last year and includes 6 new members. Twelve members have become life members this year.

Bank Interest has risen due to the investment of £5000.00 into a HSBC Business High Interest Deposit Bond. £5108.97 re-invested October 2007 matured in April 2008 with £128.07 interest. This was reinvested with the capital for a further 6 months and was repaid in October 08 (£111.59 interest). £5348 has invested for 12 months from October 2008 at rate of 4.29% gross on the advice of HSBC.

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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. 13 have been sold.

Refunds		
Anne Grant	Subscription	10.00

Donations		
RAFA	25.00	
RAF Benevolent Fund	50.00	Tom Beck (refund D. Gunby)

Overheads

Costs are very comparable with those in 2007/08

Update for FY 2009/2010 – not included in accounts

AGM 2009 – 32 booking forms have been received for the event – 2 lunch only, 24 dinner only, 37 lunch/dinner

Donation: In memory of Sam Allen - £50 to Peterhead Sea Cadets (see letter in Obituaries)

Website renewal: £59.22 paid to Peter Crowe

Postage: For posting coins – refund to self (£27.61)

Expenses: John Farmer (£112.61)

PROFIT & LOSS

SALES

	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

PURCHASES

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	£270.00
Other	£147.11	
	£3,292.96	£4,464.57

DIRECT EXPENSES

Advertising	£24.00	£44.00
Bank charges	£0.00	£4.00

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

Auditing	£50.00	£50.00	
Refund	£268.99	£320.00	
		£342.99	£418.00

OVERHEADS

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	£899.09	

BALANCE SHEET

2008/2009

2007/2008

CURRENT ASSETS

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	
	£12,260.58	£10,699.51	

NETT CURRENT ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES

FINANCED BY

Brought forward balance	£10,699.51	£9,800.42	
Profit and loss account	£1,561.07	£899.09	
	£12,260.58	£10,699.51	

The Treasurer sought approval of his report together with a suggestion that a donation of £40 be made to Flowerdown House for their hospitality. Andy Perkins proposed and Chris Tett seconded. All agreed.

ITEM 5 Membership Secretary's Report

From John Farmer, Membership Secretary, RAFLAA.

The period since the last Committee meeting has been reasonable as far as membership numbers are concerned. The number of new members joining has increased slightly, averaging just over 1 a month. There are a number of members who subscription payment defaults are causing problems. (Strangely enough it is those members who pay by SOM who are the problem at the moment.) There are a number of members being investigated at the moment and we still have 3 who pay £7.50 each year and with whom we have no contact. I have written to their banks but to date have had little or no response! The number of active members remains constant. The number of members taking Life membership continues to grow. Numbers of members paying their dues by Standing Order Mandate has decreased. There have some resignations and some members have passed away.

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

ADVERTISING

The association continues to advertise in the RAFA magazine and on Teletext. We will be delighted to receive ideas about or sources of (Free or cheap) advertising

NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter is now mainly distributed by down load from the RAFLAA web site, by hard copy or in a very few cases by personal copy via e-mail. The system seems to be working well. There have not been any real problems since last year. We are always glad of feedback either to me, the webmaster or to the NL editor.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP AND STANDING ORDERS

Life membership is becoming more attractive. The number of members paying their subs this way has grown dramatically. The problem with members who Pay subscription by SOM and who have failed to update the subscription amount paid by their bank (to £10.00) is gradually resolving itself. I have had to terminate some members for continual underpayment (3 years) and am investigating another 8.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES SINCE THE LAST COMMITTEE MEETING IN JULY 2008.

- We now have 658 names on the database (an increase) of which 351 are 'active' (no change).
- 9 new members have joined.
- 2 members have resigned and 4 members have passed away
- 7 members are being investigated due to shortfalls in their subscriptions.
- 6 more members have applied for life membership giving a total of 71 life members.
- There are now 210 Members 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.

This concludes my report, which I commend to the meeting.

Acceptance of the Membership Secretary's report was proposed by Hans Kuhle and Graham Beeston seconded. All agreed.

ITEM 6 Secretary's Report

The Secretary reviewed the correspondence since the last committee meeting, which mainly concerned reaction to the Associations invitation to No1 RS to nominate a recipient for the RAFLAA Trophy. The Chairman had thanked No1RS for the excellent Luncheon in October 2008 and also invited a nomination for the Association's Annual Trophy. No nomination had been received and the Chairman has written again in February 2009 to urge a nomination. The Chairman will remain in contact with OC No1RS.

Action:- Chairman

ITEM 7 SWRDA

The Secretary had queried the progress of the Locking Parklands development with the Clerk to the Locking Parish Council and found that there had been no progress of any kind. Members of the Committee had also neither heard nor seen any signs of activity. The Secretary will continue to monitor.

Action:- Secretary

ITEM 8 AGM 2009

Most of the arrangements were in place for this year's AGM/Reunion at the Webbington Hotel, Loxton near Weston-Super-Mare on Saturday 18th April. The Hotel accommodation is fully

booked and there is a waiting list. There was a lengthy discussion as to whether the Association could provide any help with transportation from Weston for those arriving by public transport. There were a couple of known attendees who might require help and they were covered by Committee member assistance. It was generally felt that the Association was limited in the help it could offer but Chris Tett was to put a notice in the next newsletter outlining Taxi availability.

The Secretary will invite the Chairman of Cranwell AA and Halton AA to the Meet and 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 to invite attending members of the 83rd, 84th and 85th 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 1st March 2009.

Action:- Secretary, Chris Tett.

ITEM 9 RAFLAA Web Site

There were no reported problems with the Association website. The Committee thanked Peter Crowe for his continued work.

ITEM 10 Newsletter

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 further stated that he would insert a piece in the Newsletter asking attendees at this year's AGM to be prompt with their comments good or bad.

The Editor asked that the minutes of this meeting be promulgated ASAP so as to be included in the next Newsletter.

Action:- Chris Tett, Secretary

ITEM 11 FABEA

The Association are the hosts of this year's meeting in rotation. The meeting will take place at RAF Halton Officers Mess on July 15th. Chairman and Secretary will attend on behalf of RAFLAA. The Secretary will send invitations to delegates and monitor acceptances. The cost of the meeting (buffet) will be borne by the Association.

Action:- Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer

ITEM 12 Any Other Business

The Treasurer said that he still had a quantity of the RAF 90th Anniversary medals and these would be available at the AGM.

Action:- Tony Horry

ITEM 13 Date of Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held on 23th July at Flowerdown House at 1300hrs. Tony Horry will liaise with the Manageress regarding the reservation of a room for the meeting.

Action:- Tony Horry

The meeting closed at 14.43 Hours.

NOTICES

For those attending the next AGM

AGM Agenda

The 15th Annual General Meeting of the RAFLAA is to be held at 13:30 18th April 2009 at the Webbington Hotel, Loxton, in the Rowberrow Suite. The agenda is as follows:

1. Chairman's opening remarks. (Apprentice Prayer and Apologies)
2. President's Address and Presentation of RAFLAA Trophy.
3. Treasurer's Report.
4. Membership Secretary's Report.
5. Election of Officers. (Secretary, Craft rep, and Tech Rep)
6. Memorial Locking-Parklands.
7. Newsletter.
8. RAFLAA web site.
9. Recognition of 'Golden Entries 83/84/85'
10. Venue and format of AGM/Reunion 2010
11. Any other business

Election of Officers

The positions of Secretary (Dave Gunby), Craft Rep (Graham Beeston) and Tech Rep (Andy Perkins) are due for Re-Election in 2009. Our Secretary and Tech Rep have indicated a willingness to stand for a further term. A volunteer is needed to represent the Craft Apprentices (200 to 226 Entries). It is not arduous so please put your name forward.

If you wish to stand for a position on the committee or if you wish to raise anything at the AGM, please contact the Secretary, Dave Gunby, or the Chairman, Tiny Kuhle, in good time before the meeting. (Contact details inside back cover)

Golden Entries

The Golden Entries for the 2009 AGM are the 83rd, 84th and 85th. 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!

Feedback Requested

We moved to the Webbington Hotel to try to find a better venue for our AGM and dinner/dance. Your committee believe that the Webbington offers much more for your Association but would welcome feedback on the chosen venue both positive and negative.

NB: at the time of writing, February 09, the hotel is fully booked. The hotel may have a few further rooms available later and is keeping a wait list. This hotel is obviously more popular than Dauncey's.

If you are in another hotel, you are advised to pre-book a taxi to take you to your hotel after the dinner as taxis are likely to be in short supply at 11:30 – Midnight on a Saturday evening.

A few local taxi firm numbers are:

- W1XEE taxis - 0777390 6318 (7 seater)
- ARC Taxis 01934 412222
- Apple Central – 01934 413413
- Worle Cars 01934 513344
- WSM cars 01934 513333
- Woodspring Taxis 01934 414141

Repeat Notice

RAFLAA Annual AGM and Dinner Dance

The Annual General Meeting and Annual Dinner will be held at the Webbington Hotel, Loxton, Weston-s-Mare, BS26 2HU on **Saturday 18th April 2009**

www.latonahotels.co.uk/best-western-webbington.html

The Webbington is situated prominently on the southern slopes of the Mendip Hills, a short drive from Junction 22 of the M5. Originally an Edwardian manor house, the hotel has been extended over the years to offer spacious grounds and accommodation, fully-equipped gymnasium, floodlit tennis courts, a heated swimming pool with adjoining sun lounge, sauna, steam room and solarium.



Provisional timetable

Friday 17 th April 09	18:00	Informal Meet and Greet at the Webbington
Saturday 18 th April 09	10:30	Members arrival commences
	11:00	Bar facility opens in Rowberrow Suite
	12:30	Finger Buffet commences in restaurant
	13:30	AGM commences in Rowberrow Suite
	15:00	AGM complete. Tea served
	15:30	Members disperse
	19:00 for 19:30	Dinner Dance in Brent Suite

Directions to the Webbington

The Webbington is situated prominently on the southern slopes of the Mendip Hills, a short drive from Junction 21 or 22 of the M5.

From Weston

Follow A370 (Beach Road) or A3033 (Drove Road & Devonshire Road) south and on to A370 Bridgewater Road heading south. After the roundabout for Weston General Hospital, (Broadway & Grange Road), follow A370 just over a mile taking the second left into Bleadon Road.

Follow this road (becomes Shiplake Road) for about 3 miles through Bleadon to Loxton.

In Loxton, turn right at the T junction on to Sevier Road and follow over the motorway. Just after a cross roads, the Webbington is on your left.

From North and East

Follow M4 from east and then M5 south and leave at Junction 21 of M5. At the roundabout, take the third exit onto A370 towards Weston-super-Mare.

Follow A370 for 1.0 miles At the roundabout, take the second exit onto Somerset Avenue A370

Follow A370 Somerset Avenue At the roundabout, take the first exit on to Locking Moor Road A371.

Follow for 0.4 miles. At the roundabout, take the first exit on to A371 towards Wells and Banwell.

Follow A371 for 5.1 miles. Pass over the M5, through Banwell and Winscombe and turn right onto A38 at traffic lights.

Follow A38 for 1.5 miles.

From Airport

Exit the airport roads until you get to the A38.

At the roundabout, take the third exit on to A38 and head towards Bridgewater and Taunton.

Follow A38 for 0.7 miles. At the roundabout, take the first exit onto A38

Follow A38 for 9.3 miles.

Turn right towards Compton Bishop and Loxton into Old Coach Road. (Also signposted to Webbington but a small sign)

Follow Old Coach Road for 0.6 miles and continue onto Webbington Road

Follow Webbington Road for 2.1 miles. **Webbington Hotel** is on your right before you cross the motorway.

From South

Follow M5 north to J22 and exit onto Slip Road for 0.3 miles. At the roundabout, take the third exit onto A38 Bristol Road

Follow Bristol Road A38 for 1.7 miles. At the roundabout take the second exit onto A38 Bristol Road

Follow Bristol Road A38 for 3.8 miles. Just past village of Lower Weare turn left onto Old Coach Road just after The Lamb public house.

Follow Old Coach Road for 0.6 miles and turn left onto Webbington Road

Follow Webbington Road for 2.1 miles. **Webbington Hotel** is on your right before you cross the motorway.

Taxis

A taxi from Weston-super-Mare train station to the Webbington will cost about £15.



Accommodation Booking

Accommodation must be booked direct with the hotel.

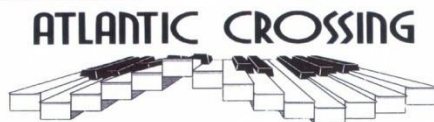
Please contact:

The Webbington Hotel, Loxton, Weston-s-Mare, BS26 2HU Tel: 01934 750100

Email: sales@webbingtonhotel.ecilpse.co.uk

Rooms will be charged @ £75 double, £60 single, B&B per night. Accounts must be settled direct with the hotel.

Please contact the hotel direct and quote RAFLAA when you book to obtain these special low rates. No deposit is required as rooms will be held on a credit card.



Music

Instead of a disco, the Committee has arranged live music for dancing after the dinner. Atlantic Crossing have been engaged. Mike & Linda have been working together professionally since 1971 and have performed in many top class venues.

With Mike on keyboard and Linda on bass guitar, the duo provide music with an individual sound and feel which is great for listening or dancing.

After the dinner, Mike & Linda will provide two one hour sessions with a break in between with taped music.

RAFLAA Lunch and Dinner Booking

Please fill out the enclosed booking form or download the separate form and post to Tony Horry together with your cheque.

The menu follows. Please record your choices when you return the form.

***RAF Locking Apprentices Association
Dinner Menu 18th April 2009***

Carrot and Courgette Soup

Lemon Blini

Served with avocado, prawn and cream cheese topping

Burgundy Pear with Stilton

Red wine poached pear grilled with a stilton crumble and laid on a garlic crouton

~*~*~

Chargrilled Tuna Steak

Finished with tiger prawns and garlic and herb butter

Pinwheel of Chicken Breast

Supreme of chicken rolled with red pepper and surrounded by creamy asparagus sauce

Cannelloni of Beef

Roast sirloin of beef rolled with horseradish cream cheese surrounded by a piquant tomato sauce

Baked Aubergine with Feta

Ratatouille with a balsamic reduction

All Served with a Selection of Chef's Vegetables and Potatoes of the Day

~*~*~

Chocolate Pavlova

Citron Tart with fresh Cream

Fruit Salad with Duo of Coulis

Selection of Cheese and Biscuits

~~*

Tea & Coffee Served with Mints

**APPLICATION FOR RAFLAA AGM – 18th April 2009
DINNER DANCE AND FINGER BUFFET**

Name:

Entry No:

Address:

Date:

I wish to book both lunch and dinner (dinner includes wine):

Please provide tickets @ £28pp £.....

I wish to attend the dinner/dance (includes wine and live music to follow) only:

Please provide tickets @ £21.00pp £

I wish to attend the finger buffet lunch only:

Please provide tickets @ £9-00pp £

Total £

Please complete/delete as appropriate.

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, BS232 9YD Tel: 01934 628383: E-mail: horrycorp@aol.com

**For application for accommodation, stating requirements, please contact:
Webbington Hotel, Loxton, Weston-s-Mare, BS26 2HU Tel: 01934 750100
Email: sales@webbingtonhotel.ecilpse.co.uk**

Rooms will be charged @ £75 double, £60 single B&B per night. Please telephone the hotel direct and quote RAFLAA when you book to secure the reduced rates.

ACCOUNTS MUST BE SETTLED WITH THE HOTEL

Please complete your menu choices (see newsletter for full description) and return with your booking form and cheque.

Name	Starter			Main Course				Dessert			
	Soup	Blini	Pear	Tuna	Chicken	Beef	Aubergine	Pavlova	Tart	Fruit	Cheese
1											
2.											

Repeat Notice

90th Anniversary of the RAF Medal

The Tower Mint has produced a 38mm solid nickel-silver medal to mark the 90th anniversary of the RAF.

It has the RAF Logo on one side and images of three planes on the reverse. These aircraft represent the 90 year period of the RAF: an SE5, a Spitfire and a Typhoon together with dates marking the 90th anniversary. It is presented in a gilded presentation case.

The medal will be on sale at the next AGM

Your Association is able to offer it to you at £8 over the counter at the next AGM or they can be posted direct to you at a cost of £8.50 including P&P. This is half the official Tower Mint price.

The medal is also available at the Tower Mint; <http://www.towermint.co.uk/shop.asp> where it is priced at £16 + £2.50 P&P so your Association offers a very good deal.

Alternatively, to purchase one of the medals please send a cheque for £8.50 payable to RAFLAA and your details to Tony Horry.



Hillside Cottage
Kewstoke Road
Kewstoke
Weston-s-Mare
BS22 9YD

Or you can contact Tony:
by email (horrycorp@aol.com)
or telephone (01934) 628383

91st Entry Attestation Golden Anniversary

From Mike Hill 91st

At around about the time of last year's AGM several of the 91st realised that Jan 21st 2009 would mark the Golden Anniversary of that momentous day when we signed on! We decided that we could not let the event go unnoticed and a get-together of some sort had to be organised. As Locking was closed, WSM as a venue was ruled out in favour of somewhere more central from a logistical standpoint.

Pins were stuck in a map and the Kenilworth/Warwick area seemed to be nice, central, and accessible from several motorways. Kenilworth was "Googled" and a number of potential venues were found and we settled on the Honiley Court Hotel near Warwick as they offered the best package. The date was fixed by history, the location by geography so the summons went out.



The initial few became ten, then fifteen and as more people surfaced who happened to know of someone else we ended up with twenty eight promises. Sadly a couple of people had to drop out due to conflict with family events (weddings in S.Africa have to take priority!!) and finally twenty five 91st and partners got together.

We met in the Bar (where else?) after lunch and, as can be imagined, much reminiscing took place as some people had not met in the 47 years since graduation. A break was taken around tea-time to settle into our rooms and unpack and prepare for the evening, re-assembling at 7.30 for pre-dinner drinks. We took over half the restaurant on 4 adjacent tables. After a very enjoyable meal, toasts to Absent Friends, The 91st, and The Ladies, the rest of the evening was very pleasantly passed in further reminiscing with a break for some team photos. The group photo attached demonstrates that we have managed to keep most of our hair and boyish figures!!

A further celebration is planned for the 20th June when we hope the weather will be more conducive to a barbecue. We are also hoping that some of the expat 91st may be tempted to return to UK at around that time and be able to come and join in. The venue will be at Martin Palmer's place near Bristol and details are on the web page <http://91stentryraflocking.com/> or contacting me: Mike.Hill@viscountalarms.co.uk Tele: 020 8439 7083 daytime.

Back Numbers of the Newsletter.

We get occasional requests for back number of the RAFLAA newsletter and at the request of members and in particular Trevor Reaynart, Peter Crowe, our Webmaster, has added an extra 'back numbers' page to the website. This contains the three previous editions of the NL.

As new editions are published on the 'current' page the old 'current' edition will be put onto the 'back numbers' page and the oldest edition will 'drop off'. Each edition will remain password protected.

Members receiving their NL by E-mail will be set a copy of the passwords with the notice that the service is now available. An updated list will be sent out with each warning that the (next) NL is available.

The passwords in use for the 4 editions of the NL currently available on the website are:

Nov 08	RASPA3/08	and RASPA3/08/1
Jul 08	INDIGO2/08	
Mar 08	SPIRAL1/08	
Nov 07	RAFLAA11/07	

Hard Copy

Graham Beaston, who produces and distributes the hard copy versions of the newsletter, has quite a few copies of the printed newsletters going back to when he started producing them. For anyone not on email or without access to website, Graham can probably provide printed back numbers (at a cost to them) if anyone would like them. Please contact him direct. (See committee page at back.)

Tit-Bits

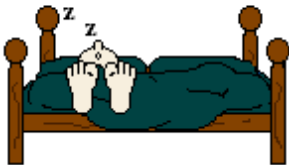
More Things you always wanted to know

The liquid inside young coconuts can be used as a substitute for blood plasma.



Donkeys kill more people annually than plane crashes.

No piece of paper can be folded in half more than seven (7) times.



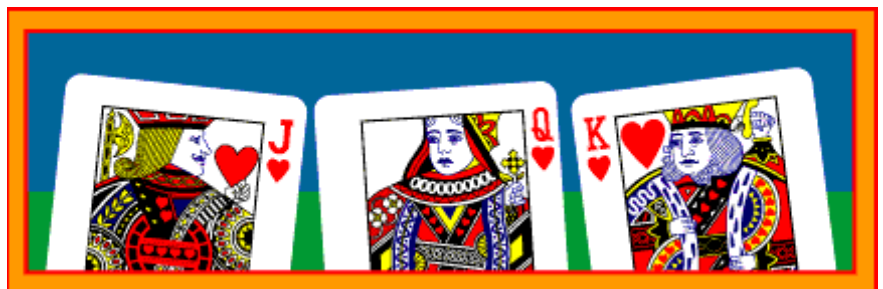
You burn more calories sleeping than you do watching television.

Oak trees do not produce acorns until they are fifty (50) years of age or older.



The first product to have a bar code was Wrigley's gum.

The King of Hearts is the only king WITHOUT a Moustache



Venus is the only planet that rotates clockwise.

(Since Venus is normally associated with women, what does this tell you!)



Apples, not caffeine, are more efficient  at waking you up in the morning.

Most dust particles in your house are made from DEAD SKIN!



The first owner of the Marlboro Company died of lung cancer.

So did the first 'Marlboro Man.'



Pearls melt in vinegar!



It is possible to lead a cow upstairs...but, not downstairs.

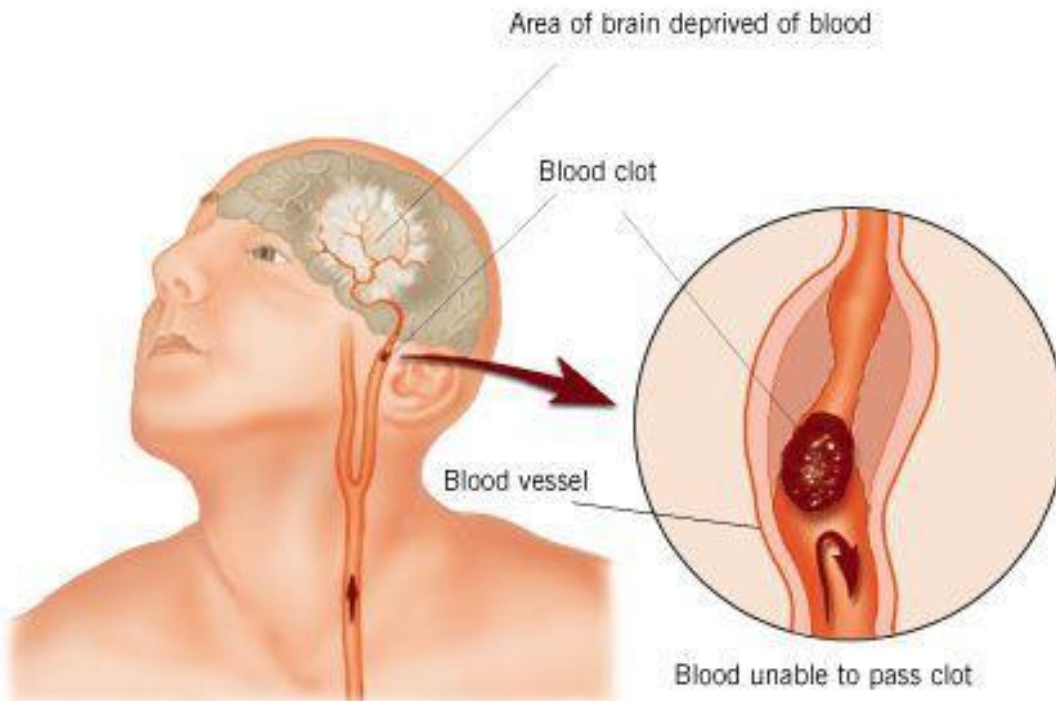
Strokes – Save a life

From Geoff Tyson 76th

My nurse friend sent this and encouraged me to post it and spread the word. If everyone can remember something this simple, we could save some folks. Please read:

STROKE IDENTIFICATION:

During a BBQ, a friend stumbled and took a little fall - she assured everyone that she was fine (they offered to call paramedics) she said she had just tripped over a brick because of her new shoes. They got her cleaned up and got her a new plate of food. While she appeared a bit shaken up, Ingrid went about enjoying herself the rest of the evening.



Ingrid's husband called later telling everyone that his wife had been taken to the hospital - (at 6:00 pm Ingrid passed away.) She had suffered a stroke at the BBQ. Had they known how to identify the signs of a stroke, perhaps Ingrid would be with us today. Some don't die; they end up in a helpless, hopeless condition instead.

A neurologist says that if he can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours he can totally reverse the effects of a stroke...totally. He said the trick was getting a stroke recognized, diagnosed, and then getting the patient medically cared for within 3 hours, which is tough.

RECOGNIZING A STROKE

Thank God for the sense to remember the '4' steps, **STRT**. Read and Learn!

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer severe brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke. Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking four simple questions. Ask the individual to:

S * SMILE. (Is the smile lopsided?)

T * TALK and SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE (Coherently) (i.e. It is sunny out today)

R * RAISE BOTH ARMS.

T * STICK OUT YOUR TONGUE. (If the tongue is 'crooked', or if it goes to one side, that is also an indication of a stroke)

If the person has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks, call the emergency services immediately and describe the symptoms.

A cardiologist said if 10 people read this, you can bet that at least one life will be saved.

Apprentice Wheel Girl

From Dave White 78/79th

The attached picture was sent to me by an ex-RAF friend, not an ex-App, who wanted to know if the Apprentice wheels in the background held any significance. He found it while trawling some dubious site or other on the Internet but couldn't remember where!

I expect we all remember tales of local young ladies/NAAFI girls who collected Apprentice wheels to keep tally of their "conquests", and this one seems to have had quite a career. I recall certain lads carrying spare wheels in case they got lucky! I have censored the original that he sent me in order not to offend the tender sensibilities of the more junior entries!



The Buffalo Theory

The herd of Buffalo can only move as fast as slowest Buffalo and when the herd is hunted, it is the slowest and weakest ones at the back that are killed first. This natural selection is good for the herd as a whole, because the general speed and health of the entire group keeps improving by the regular killing of the weakest members. In much the same way, the human brain can only operate as fast as the slowest brain cells.

Now, as we know, excessive intake of alcohol kills brain cells. But naturally, it attacks the slowest and weakest brain cells first. In this way, regular consumption of alcohol eliminates the weaker brain cells, making the brain a faster and more efficient machine, and that, my friend, **is why you always feel smarter after a few drinks!**

What is a Grandparent?

(Taken from papers written by a class of 8-year-olds)

From Phil Marston (92nd)

- Grandparents are a lady and a man who have no little children of her own. They like other people's.
- Grandparents don't have to do anything except be there when we come to see them.
- They are so old they shouldn't play hard or run. It is good if they drive us to the shops and give us money.
- When they take us for walks, they slow down past things like pretty leaves and caterpillars.
- They show us and talk to us about the colour of the flowers and also why we shouldn't step on cracks.
- They don't say, "Hurry up."
- Usually grandmothers are fat but not too fat to tie your shoes.
- They wear glasses and funny underwear.
- They can take their teeth and gums out.
- Grandparents don't have to be smart.
- They have to answer questions like "why isn't God married?" and "How come dogs chase cats?"
- When they read to us, they don't skip pages. They don't mind if we ask for the same story over again.
- Everybody should try to have a grandmother, especially if you don't have television because they are the only grown-ups who like to spend time with us.
- They know we should have snack-time before bedtime and they say prayers with us every time and kiss us even when we've been naughty.
- When asked where his grandmother lives, a 6 year old boy replied: "Oh – she lives at the airport. When we want her, we go and get her and when we're done having her visit, we take her back to the airport."
- Granddad is the cleverest man on earth! He teaches me good things but I don't get to see him enough to get as clever as him!"
- "It's funny when they bend over, you hear gas leaks and they blame their dog."

Apprentice days

Apprentice Play

From Geoff Corby and Martin Eversfield 92nd

Geoff Corby has sent in two photos and programme of a play put on by the Apprentices circa 1960. Can anyone else fill in the details?



Orchestra conducted by Flt. Lt. G. Drew

THE ORCHESTRA

Squadron Leader Tinlin: Piano

Trumpets	Saxophones
Sgt. Lees A.C. Elliott	Cpl. Brown Cpl. Thrower A.C. Kyle
Trombones	J.T. Moore, Clarinet A.C. Wilshire, Drums A.A. Grundy, Bass
A.C. Laugh A.C. Hurry	

THE CHORUS

Jeffrey Grice	Roger Chisall	Steven Wheelker
Graham Speechly	Malcolm Craft	Wilfred Hibbert
Guy Dault	John Hill	Terence Balchin
Alan Lock	Raymond Wager	Peter Fishlock
Brian Chisham	Martin Eversfield	Sam Bowen
Stanley Murray	David Hattersley	Robin Leasey
Brian Dawwell	John Phillips	Geoffrey Corby
Phillip Marston	David Cawte	

Lighting Effects by: David Williams
Michael McDonnell
Victor Gibbs
Barry Linn
John Broadhear

Set Construction by: Neville Crowson
Alan Bray
Graham Simms
Anthony Phillips

Decor. by: Kenneth Wilson
Edward Johnson

The Aircraft Apprentices' Little Theatre

presents

Appsent Without Leave

by
Fg. Off. K. L. Gardner

Tuesday, 1st December
Wednesday, 2nd December
at 7.30 p.m.

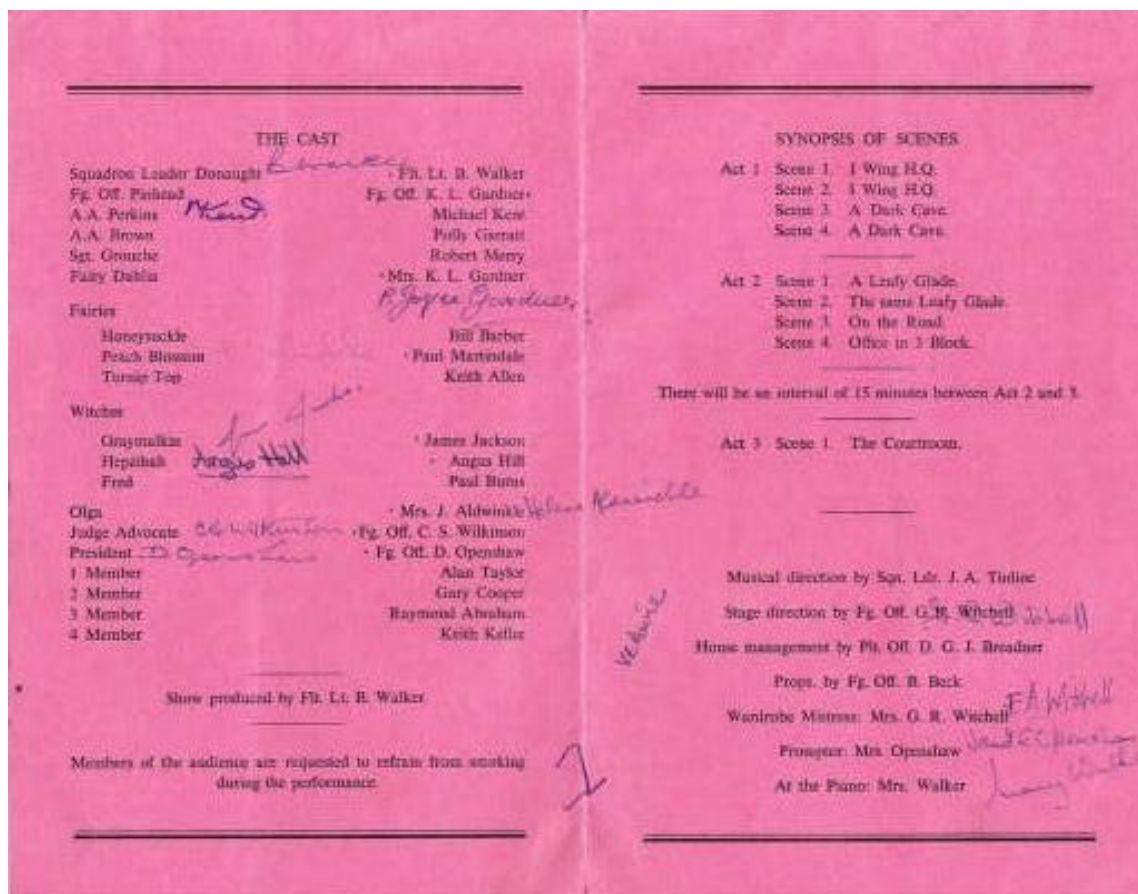
ASSEMBLY HALL
3 (T) Block

By kind permission of the Officer Commanding
Air Commodore H. G. Leonard-Williams, C.B.E.

Geoff writes:
I cannot remember the plot but do remember that it was KLUG Gardner that wrote it and he took 92B for English and you will notice most of the chorus were from our class. Somewhere I have a photo and I remember that all that the chorus had to do was loaf around looking pretty scruffy. Most of us were made for the part. Gus Hill had quite a prominent role as a witch. I think also it got us excused bull

nights but I am sure that did not influence us in any way.

Can anyone else fill in the plot?



Martin writes:
 All I remember of the plot of the musical that it was performed to the music of the Mikado and the lines "You crew, you blew Wing Headquarters to pieces, you two, surely knew that wasn't the proper thing to do" were aimed at Mike Kent and Polly Garrett who exploded a box of fireworks in the Wing HQ. As for the rest, it has disappeared in the mists of time.

I seem to remember that KLUG took us for maths where he was brilliant but useless at getting the methods across. Klug could be easily distracted by getting him to talk about the game of Chess. We could spend a complete lesson on that subject. I remember Audy Huff and Dave Buse were good at bringing the focus round to Chess.

Hope that this may jog a few memories.



Sergeant Sparky

Pete Crowe 95th sent in this clipping from the Weston & Somerset Mercury.

5th February 2009

WESTON & SOMERSET

People

Have yo

Sgt Sparky dies

Report by **SARAH WHITCHURCH**

sarah.whitchurch@archant.co.uk

THE town's most loved and remembered donkey has died.

Sergeant Sparky McDougall was the station mascot at RAF Locking for 19 years.

He was presented at two years old to Locking by the Town Mayor of Weston, Councillor RL Harrison, on May 23 1980.

Sparky represented RAF Locking at all parades, events and galas in Weston and took a starring role at the annual freedom parade through the centre of Weston, the Flowerdown Fair and D-Day celebrations.

Over the years he greeted Princess Margaret, the Princess Royal and the Queen on their visits to Weston.

Children were always his biggest fans and he was personally invited to take part in opening ceremonies and events around the town.

Sparky's career had many highlights. He travelled the country attending prestigious horse events and was promoted to sergeant after 12 years of loyal service and good behaviour.

Over the years Sparky got himself into a number of scrapes including going AWOL in 1980 after setting off



on a mission to meet a female donkey in a nearby field.

In 2003 firefighters were called to haul him out of a ditch at Badgworth Lane. Although very wet and muddy, Sparky escaped uninjured.

Sparky was pensioned off when RAF Locking closed in 1999 and he was moved to Crossways Farm at Eastertown to be cared for by Gwen Garfield.

Gwen had looked after

him at RAF Locking and had prepared him for every parade from 1988.

Gwen said: "Sparky was a real character and over the years I received letters of thanks and admiration from children and people who had met him from around the country.

"He was so friendly and he loved children, especially if they had a polo mint to feed him."

Sparky died on January 19.

All In It together

From Brian Colby 87th Entry

Reading Ray Mockford's amusing run in with Teddy Boys, during his time in the 82nd, reminded me of a couple of related incidents which happened to me during 1957 to 1960, and how grateful I was to be in that select band of lads, a Locking Apprentice.

There was of course the natural ever-present inter Entry rivalry, which although could get rather exuberant at times, all helped in each Entry's *esperit de corp*, but when any of us were away from the confines of camp there was an unwritten ethos that we were all one together, and it came natural to look after our own.

This was proved to me one Saturday afternoon in Weston -s- Mare when a group of four us called into the "Fella's" coffee shop, and as is the usual way of things, got chatting to some girls on the adjacent table. Unfortunately within a short space of time the girls suddenly seemed to go very quiet, and the four of us became aware that we had been surrounded by at least a dozen of the Teddy Boy variety "Whoops". Unknown to us we had been talking to the Ted's girlfriends, and it was pretty obvious they rather objected to it, I remember thinking to myself that we were somewhat outnumbered and we could all be in for a bit of a pasting.

Luckily we needn't have worried as reinforcements soon arrived, thankfully a member of the 'Brats brigade' had seen what was going on, and within a few minutes Fellas was completely chock a block with a sudden influx of Apprentices. With some familiar faces and others not quite so, members of all available Entry's in the vicinity had converged on the coffee shop as soon as the word got out that we were in trouble. The Ted's, realising that they were now suddenly in the minority, disappeared rather hastily, the situation had been saved and an altercation was averted and the four of us breathed a sigh of relief.

On another occasion, whilst watching a film in the cinema that was then opposite to Fellas, there was a sudden loud shout from the back "All apprentices needed at the fairground, there's trouble brewing" Immediately about twenty of us, from all over the cinema got up from our seats and rushed down the road, being joined on the way by others streaming out from Fellas and elsewhere. I remember being absolutely amazed at this quick response and how trouble was again averted when the gathering Teds, who had been menacing a small group of Apprentices, were now suddenly outnumbered and decided the wisest thing was to disappear into the night.

It was comforting to know that there were many eyes looking out for each other's welfare.

Of course it wasn't only just the times of trouble when the Entry's banded together; it was especially so when the entire various Wing sports teams formed, be they Rugby or Football etc.

We were all also encouraged to relax after a hard day's technical training, by means of physical exercise, with many doing so by making our way down the gymnasium in the evening for a game of basketball etc. In my case I was to eventually join the Apprentice Wing Gymnastic Display Team, where together with hut 375 colleague Brian Chillery, together with members from many other Entries, about twenty of us would practice our team vaulting and other skills, where many a bruise was obtained in the process. Such was the case when after we were introduced to the large trampoline, that was going to be a centrepiece of our displays, Brian was practising extra high bounces and came down rather awkwardly and badly sprained his wrist.

When it was close to the summer display season, the PT instructors arranged that on Saturday mornings we would set up the equipment on the sports field immediately in front of the Wing huts, this was so that we would get used to spectators watching the routines. Then after a final rehearsal on the beach at Weston, it was off to give displays at various functions throughout Somerset, which included Bristol a number of times and even in the grounds of the Bishops Palace in Wells. As a team we all worked hard together and these displays got us away from

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

camp and the opportunity to see much more of the area than we probably would as individuals. Another advantage of course was the chance it gave us all to get acquainted with members of the fair sex that caught our eye in the audience.

Boxing was especially the big event when the whole of the apprentice Wing would come together, to cheer on their individual Entry boxers, but on the occasions when the tournaments were against visiting teams such as the Army, then inter entry rivalry went out of the window, and the support for the boxers in the ring was from the whole range of Entry's present.

The boxing tournaments were for me fantastic evenings; when all of us from Hut 375 would be there to cheer on our own Hut boxers Brian and 'Tiny' Kuhle. The gym was always absolutely packed to the gunwales, with hundreds of Apprentices shouting themselves hoarse willing the Wing boxing team to victory. They were memorable times which we all shared together and it's a pity video cameras were not then invented to capture those occasions during our 3 years at Locking.

Destined as we all were at the end of our training to go out and join the wider RAF community, the main thing I missed after passing out was the sense of camaraderie and companionship that we had all shared together. I look back on those three years together with nostalgia and pride, as I am sure you all feel the same.

It was a privilege to be a member of the 87th and of course proud that, for three short years I was once a Locking Lad, when we were indeed 'all in it together'.

In April 2008 my wife Brenda accompanied me on a short trip down memory lane, where I managed to get onto the old Locking site, and located the position of the long gone wooden billet, that was once our Hut 375. Near the billet entrance was still the same Silver Birch tree, that in 1958 I had stood by and had a photo taken, before marching off to one of the numerous parades.



Ready for parade outside our Hut 375, B Squadron lines, No 1 Apprentice Wing, RAF Locking 1958. We would form up in flights on the road behind.

The tree had of course grown a wee bit taller by now, but in my mind's eye I could still picture all of us, trundling down the steps in our best blue and highly bulled boots, to form up outside, ready to do our stuff on the parade square. Sadly though, I have to inform you that the parade square is, except for the married quarters, the only thing still recognizable on that once proud camp.



Same road same tree 50 years later in April 2008 with all the huts gone, the silver birch and me just a bit older. (RAF Locking closed in Sep 1999 and sadly all that remains are the roads and parade square)

Flt Sgt Bettell

From Dave Thompson, 88th Entry

Flt Sgt Bettell is frequently mentioned in this Newsletter. Flt Sgt Bettell was the senior "A" Squadron discipline NCO when I started at Locking on a cold January in 1958. Although he was quite strict as you would expect him to be, he did have a softer side and would often come and chat to us in a more relaxed way. He was backed by Sgt Atkinson and Cpl Bullock as far as 88th Entry discipline went. Anyway, during 1960, the "Beetle" was posted. He was going to sort out Halton apprentices, we were told.

During the autumn of 1960, many of us were selected to man a two week exhibition to be held in the Marble Hall of Air Ministry in Whitehall. We were to be billeted at Halton for this period. In those days it didn't take that long to drive into the centre of London, I doubt if we would have been that far out if traffic was like it is now!

We arrived at Halton on the Sunday afternoon in an RAF bus but of course it was at a time when a new entry was expected. As we, being Senior Entry people, were all dressed in civilian clothes, the Halton lads thought we were the new entry! They were shouting such things as "Don't sign up mate, you won't like it!" You can imagine the deathly silence that fell over the mess the following morning when we arrived for breakfast! To a man, we either had a full set of GCs or NCO rank. Everyone just "bashed" their way to the front of the queue, as you would expect, but after that we had no more bother from these first year lads.

One evening, we were on our way to the Astra when who should be coming towards us but the Beetle! It was like we were long lost family, he greeted us with the words "Hello lads, how's it all going?" We had a long chat with him and it was great catching up with him. There was not a bit of the strict disciplinarian we had known in the past.

Below is a picture of the Whitehall exhibition, I am in it immediately behind the officer on the right side of the picture, with an instructor. I am working on a Creed 7B Teleprinter.



New Recruit

From Paul Kite 81st/82nd

It has taken some long time researching but at last I can say I have found you, ex Locking Apprentices. Evenings spent trolling through dozens of military web pages and Google'ing, looking for the "forgotten" Locking Brats because Halton dominates, turned up a goldmine, the RAFLAA website. This triggered an amazing and diverse set of memories both good and bad. As a consequence, my cheque for the enrolment fee was in the post the next morning. As I write, I have still not received my tie and wheel but had the good wishes of John Farmer - that's how new I am.

On one of the "Entry" websites I read about the Asian 'flu epidemic that hit Locking in early 1956 (was it?) and a reference made to the medical officer a "Sqn Officer". No name was given but it was in fact Sqn. Ldr. (Joan?) McCabe and she was RAF not WRAF and always at great pains to point that out. My forays with her were over tonsillitis (twice) and indigestion (mess pastry) not the 'flu which I escaped. Sqn Ldr McCabe would criticise any one she thought was a smoker, whilst holding a lighted cigarette attached to a wire loop, attached to and two inches from her little finger, then blow smoke at you during a consultation (do you remember the Smoking Permit on your Permanent Pass – was it ever signed by your Parent or Guardian?). Sqn. Ldr. McCabe bought a brand new sports car and parked it outside the Apprentice Wing NAAFI one night, whilst visiting her friend the NAAFI Manageress. Someone (probably the 75th Entry!) nicked it for a joyride and a furore ensued. I was standing in the road opposite C Sqn. Lines (the 81st in residence) listening to her conversation with a "Snowdrop". Her main anxiety was that "someone would get hurt". She said she could not care less about the new car it was the occupants she worried about. It was returned later, culprits unknown and undamaged.

Another "Entry" website referred to the Flight Commander for the 81st Entry (1955) F.O. Rippon, that he was "Pathfinder" aircrew with a DFC. The author was curious as to why "Rip" Rippon was *only* a F.O. in 1955 when he had a mass of wartime service and a DFC (maybe it should have been a DFM?). As I remember, "Rip" also wore an Observers brevet. An explanation for all this may be that he was ex SNCO Aircrew (hence my comment about a DFM). This year, I was astounded to find a group photograph showing a "Sgt Rippon", amongst WW2 RNZAF aircrew. The photo is at Wanaka (be careful how you say that. It is pronounced "Won a Car") in the RNZAF Museum on New Zealand's south Island. I am sure from the photograph that it is the same man. My regret is that I cannot remember the NZ Squadron number and have mislaid some notes I made at the time. "Rip" showed us (81st) some amazing personal photos of bombing raids he'd flown in WW2.

The latest RAFLAA newsletter July 2008 item 9 refers to, "The Golden Entries 80, 81st, 82nd". I hate to show my ignorance but why "Golden"? I joined in the autumn of 1955 with the 81st Entry, was back classed to the 82nd after the first year hurdle (too high!) and messed up one paper of my finals with the 82nd and was one of six 82nd Entry held back yet again. We hoped that after six weeks extra tuition and a re-take, to pass out quietly and sneak away. It was not to be. As explained on the 83rd website, there was a serious risk that the 83rd at Locking would be combined with the 83rd at Halton because of their small number. So "Fred" Newson, Dave Parkinson, Frank Wye and me, were held back yet again, even after passing that wretched exam, solely to bolster the 83rd. No offence fellas. Two of our company did sneak away mid term, whose names unfortunately I cannot remember. They were both Ground Radar Fitters and their presence was urgently needed due to a dearth of numbers in that trade in the wider world. This only goes to prove that the RAF then (as probably now) runs on numbers alone!

My sojourn in a blue uniform lasted for 31 years of which I am very proud. As to the lack of information on the 80th Entry (also mentioned in the newsletter: "Bill" Webber (80th) became a Warrant Officer in 1982 if memory serves me correctly. If Bill reads this, I met him one lunch time in the Sergeants Mess dining room at Marham, in 1982 and was **very** rude to him. I took my

glasses off and asked him if he remembered me? He said "No". I said "Let's keep it that way!" and walked off. This is a formal apology Bill and I would hope to repeat it in person if we meet. We were both at Marham, (207 Sqn. Valiants, 1959 to '61). Do you remember my tool bag now Bill? John Kent 79th or 80th was at Watton with me in 1968 as was George Musgraves 80th who I believe still lives in Watton. Hope this helps to jog memories.

In 1960 whilst at Marham, I won the equivalent of the football pools (as then) with a posting to Australia and Woomera and was the only Air Radio Fitter in the country. This perhaps is also an explanation for Dave Critchley, 81st Entry and also 207 Valiants, because I know he thinks I "pinched" that posting from him. Dave if you read this, it was not so. It was you, deferring your posting to get married that caused the change. One of the first questions I was asked on being told that my posting to RAF Support Unit Australia was - "Do you want to defer it?" and my answer was "No!" I had no reason to. Whilst in Australia (1963 - yes I extended for a further year, it was that good), I had a Christmas holiday in New Zealand which included a coach trip to Rotorua hot springs. The coach took us right past Dickie Dawson's (RNZAF and 83rd Entry) family Garage business. I couldn't stop to call in, because of the coach. I have visited Rotorua twice in the past four years and there is now no sign of that garage. Rotorua has grown enormously, like most towns. Dick has written a brilliant description of his journey to the UK before arriving at Locking, on the 83rd website. Again, strangely for me on my last visit there earlier this year, I discovered by chance, a second cousin, Dave Kite, living in Rotorua. Ex Merchant Navy, he jumped ship in 1969 and started a family. I now have Maori cousins in New Zealand.

I did a tour as an instructor at Cosford in the 1970's. On one class list prior to the class arriving, I noticed the name Dartnell. When the class arrived I asked the youngster. "How's Dumbo?" He blinked for a moment and I said, "Your Dad, Dumbo Dartnell, 75th Apprentice Entry at Locking, rugby player and potholer. I taught Dartnell the younger for 32 weeks on his radar technician's course but he was not the live wire his Dad was. This episode backfired on me whilst on Orderly Sergeant at Marham in 1981 when a Junior Technician, new arrival, came to the Guardroom window. "Hello Chief" he said "Dad sends his regards". A completely blank look on my face turned into a grin when he said "J/T. Dartnell? New arrival? Dumbo's lad?" He then proceeded to tell me that Dumbo had made front page on the Sun Newspaper some months before by getting stuck in a pothole in Derbyshire because he was overweight. Which contemporary of mine as an Apprentice does not remember Dumbo. He was a hero in our eyes.

And so it goes on. The comments in the newsletters and on the individual Entry websites, are full of memories. Long may that remain, in the sincere hope that the efforts of so many "Brats" over so many years, will be remembered as an important part of RAF History and not just legend or anecdote.

I paid my first visit to the RAF Museum at Hendon last year and can only find one reference to Lord Trenchard - Our Founder - and no reference that I could find to "his Brats" in any shape or form. If anyone can tell me otherwise, I would be grateful.

Paul Kite - now living comfortably, under the Tor at Glastonbury.

18th September 2008. A mere 53 years and 12 days after entering Locking's gates.

Drill Squad

From Brian Chisham 92nd

Knowing your liking for a bit of nostalgia, I thought you might like this. After I left the RAF I was an instructor for the ATC for ten years. One of my contributions was to train the Squadron Drill Squad and believe it or not the competition was held in 3T block at Locking. Going through some papers the other day I came across a scrap of paper on which I'd scribbled my thoughts. Remember this over thirty years ago. I was probably less cynical then.

This is exactly how it reads:-

I stood in the training block pictures and memories assailed my mind - distorted shapes in the gathering gloom. Classrooms quiet and deserted - corners that once knew the excited voices of young men. Men who shared their trials, their triumphs and all with a common aim.

These once friendly places now empty, deathly still and stark pushed me away and I walked along paths that once felt the tread of heavy boots and winkle picker shoes; paths now overgrown and reclaimed by creeping grass. Passed where once stood rows of green wooden huts, passed a vast expanse of concrete which once echoed to the sound of thousands of stamping feet, now only a witness to the changing underside of motor cars and out through those gates Thank God!

Rather sad don't you think, my only excuse was we'd won and I think I was feeling the celebratory drinks. I was amazed to find it tucked behind a photo of the drill squad after all these years.

Extract from Bristol Evening Mail, September 2007:

From Brian Davies 76/77

Testosterone cloud disperses

By our Weston-super-Mare Reporter

The heavy cloud of testosterone that had grown and remained stable between the Somerset villages of Locking and Banwell, has finally dispersed.

The cloud identified by the Sociomet Office in 1953, grew rapidly in intensity over a period of some 50 years and had a strange effect on the thousands of youths stationed at nearby RAF station Locking.

Highly contagious, but localised in effect, the testosterone cloud also had an unnerving side effect on young females in the locality. Investigations have shown a long lasting condition in these females but the actual cause is undiscovered.

It not presently known why, but since the dispersion of the cloud, it has been noted that staff have been laid off at the Courage and local cider breweries, also at the Weston maternity hospital, and local police force numbers have been able to be reduced in numbers.

The cause of the phenomenon is not known, but your reporter is informed that a similar cloud has started to develop near the town of Cosford in the Midlands. When asked to comment, the Ministry of Defence declined to be interviewed, just saying that it was a matter of national security.

Alien causes or UFO's are not suspected to be the cause of these testosterone clouds, but the ingestion of whale meat in the diet in the 1950s is possible.

Shocking Lab Sessions

From Brian Davies 76th

Just one of the big culture shocks that an Aircraft Apprentice in the Ground Wireless trade group would receive at Locking during the 1950's and 60's, was the introduction and training in the 'Line' equipment department. These included the ubiquitous (and complicated) Creed 7B teleprinter, tape readers, perforators and assorted other items.

Whereas we all thought that we were to be trained on communications and navigation aid radio equipment, to be introduced to the mass of (the then) sophisticated electro-mechanical on-line communications machinery was a big surprise.

There were a number of 'laboratories' (in 2T Block I believe) housing a wide range of this electro-mechanical gear with a working voltage of minus 80 to plus 80 volts (a potential difference of 180v you will remember!). Heading up these Labs was a Sgt. Bill Barrass a blond, bluff, moustachioed northerner who was generally very good at keeping unruly Apps. in order.

Our lessons were to enable us to learn the workings of these equipments and be able to strip them down, reassemble them, service them, and set up the many tension springs which they used – fiddly and complicated procedures. Often this was a daunting and difficult task.

However, the 'laboratories' must have been designed by some Machiavellian person, as all the well polished linoleum covered wooden work benches were edged by long metal edging strips. Now to an A.A., being an A.A., this was an obvious opportunity for 'fun', as these strips were not earthed but 'floating'. It was then a relatively easy job to quietly connect this metal edging to the 80/80 volt power supply.

As the class sat at the bench, ready for a lesson, those not in the plan got a sharp and unpleasant electrical shock as their bare wrists or hands touched the metal edging. It was a joke that was frequently repeated, and after a while we all learned to exist happily without touching anything metal that was not earthed. I am sure it also helped against future suffering from arthritis.

With some of the voltages that a Ground Wireless Fitter normally worked on (sometimes more than 6000v at 3A) perhaps these 180v 'jokes' taught us a good safety routine to be carried out during our work.

LAA Record?

We may have asked this before but can anyone beat this claimed record?

Dave White (78/79th) writes:

I may have some sort of Apprentice record. When notified that I had got my LAA stripe, I asked the Sqd. Ldr whether that meant I could stop doing the jankers I was on at the time! This confused him a bit as you can't have NCOs on jankers, so he decided I should finish them first. So I came back from the last parade and appeared next morning as an LAA. Forward about four months, and I stupidly left in a hurry one morning to march the junior entry down to Tech, and forgot to lock my locker. There just happened to be an inspection that morning and they found all the "civvy" clothes (banned in those days) that I was hiding for myself and four friends. Reverse the previous event, unpick the stripes and go straight back on jankers. Ah well, all part of the rich pattern of life for an App!!

A Tale of two (or three) Brats

From Ken Toogood 79th

In 1995, I spent time as a market researcher for the Gallup Organisation. Close to completing my quota for a weekly multi-topic survey, I only needed one more respondent and that had to be a male senior citizen. Visiting some recently-built retirement flats near the Shopping Centre in Yate, South Gloucestershire, I knocked on the door of one flat and an elderly gentleman answered. I explained the reason for my disturbing him and asked if he would help me complete a survey questionnaire; he agreed and invited me inside. I took him through the series of questions covering a variety of subjects and when the survey itself had been completed, I reached one of the closing pages which asked for some personal details in case the research company wanted to back-check that my interview had actually taken place.

He gave his name as George Whitlock and when I asked him what kind of work he had been doing before he retired, he misunderstood the question and started to tell me of his entire working career. I patiently listened to the list of jobs he described until eventually he told me that his final position was as an engine test engineer with Rolls Royce at Filton Airfield. I signed off the survey document and then I returned to the beginning of the jobs he had listed.

"You said that the first job you had was with the Royal Air Force. Which RAF station did you start at?"

He told me that he had done his initial training at Royal Air Force Halton.

I asked, "Well, does that mean that you served an apprenticeship at Halton?"

"Oh! Yes" he replied.

"Which entry would that have been?" I inquired.

"Sixth entry", was his response.

I had already presented my Market Research identity card once, to prove that I was a genuine research interviewer, but at this point I showed him my ID again.

"Do you recognise this surname?" I asked.

When he saw the surname Toogood, his immediate response was "Trot!"

I asked him to explain and he told me that there was another lad in his entry with my surname and that his nickname had been Trot. (For those who need this link established - at some stage in first year French, sooner or later, someone with my surname will split it into its two component parts and translate "Too" into "Trop" and "good" into "bon".

George Whitlock then informed me that his service number had been 366488 and he had been member of class or flight C2. Our conversation ended, I shook his hand and bade him farewell.

My next port of call was my father's home. Shortly after my arrival, I asked, "Dad! Before you received your new service number, as a commissioned officer, you must have had an RAF apprentice number, what was it?"

"Easy," said Dad, "366454".

"And you were in the Sixth Entry, weren't you?", I continued.

"Yes," he replied.

"And do you recognise the surname Whitlock?", I inquired.

"Yes," said Dad, "there was someone with that surname in the same billet as me at Halton."

Well now! I reckon that that was quite a long shot. Seven full decades had elapsed yet I had

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

found two ex-Halton apprentices belonging to the same entry, the Sixth, with six-digit service numbers less than 30 apart and living only half a mile from each other. I naturally put these two in touch and they had quite a long chinwag over old times.

When I reminded Dad of this story recently, another little pearl emerged. He explained that, in his day, the fourth digit of the Apprentice number was then reserved for the Halton entry number. When I showed him a picture of the granite sculpture at Halton, unveiled by the Queen in 1997, he recognised it immediately as representing a test piece he had completed all those years ago. Not only did the brass cube have to fit on the corner as shown but it also had to pass, as a tight fit in any orientation, through the open square as well. He remembered how there were many cuts, grazes and gouges incurred by apprentices training in the Workshops and how all instructors had always carried a little bottle of iodine in their coat pockets.

Mr Whitlock was not in the best of health when I visited him twelve years ago. I somehow doubt that that he is still with us. George Toogood, on the other hand, is still going strong despite falling and breaking a hip last Easter. All being well, he will be 98 in June 2007.

I asked him, a few months ago, about getting his birthday message from the Queen when he reaches his hundredth. He replied that he was up for it, always provided that her Majesty manages to last that long!

Humour

One day a man died and found himself in hell. As he was wallowing in despair, he had his first meeting with a demon. The demon asked, 'Why so glum?' The guy responded, 'What do you think? I'm in hell!'

'Hell's not so bad,' the demon said 'We actually have a lot of fun down here. You a drinking man?' 'Sure,' the man said, 'I love to drink.'

'Well, you're gonna love Mondays then. On Mondays all we do is drink. Whiskey, tequila, Guinness, wine coolers. We drink till we throw up and then we drink some more!'

The guy is astounded. 'Damn, that sounds great.'

'You a smoker?' the demon asked. 'You better believe it!'

'You're gonna love Tuesdays. We get the finest cigars from all over the world and smoke our lungs out! . If you get cancer, no biggie. You're already dead, remember?' 'Wow, the guy said, 'that's awesome!'

The demon continued. 'I bet you like to gamble.' 'Why yes, as a matter of fact I do'

'Wednesdays you can gamble all you want. Craps, blackjack, roulette, poker, slots, whatever. If you go bankrupt, well, you're dead anyhow. You into drugs?'

The guy said, 'Are you kidding? I love drugs! You don't mean....'

'That's right! Thursday is drug day. Help yourself to a great big bowl of crack, or smack. Smoke a doobie the size of a submarine. You can do all the drugs you want, you're dead, who cares!'

'Wow,' the guy said, starting to feel better about his situation, 'I never realized Hell was such a cool place!'

The demon said, 'You gay?'

'No.'

'Ooooh, you're gonna hate Fridays!'

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Bill and Sam, two elderly friends, met in the park every day to feed the pigeons, watch the squirrels and discuss world problems. One day Bill didn't show up. Sam wasn't concerned; he thought Bill might have a cold or some urgent appointment. But after Bill hadn't shown up for a week or so, Sam really got worried. However, since Sam didn't know where Bill lived (the only time they ever got together was at the park) he was unable to find out what had happened to him.

After a month had passed, Sam figured he had seen the last of Bill. On his next visit to the park, however, Bill was sitting on their usual bench waiting for him. Amazed and delighted, Sam exclaimed, 'For crying out loud Bill, what in the world happened to you?'

Bill replied, 'I've been in jail.'

'Jail?' cried Sam. 'You?! What on earth for?'

'Well,' Bill said, 'you know Sue, that cute little blonde waitress at the coffee shop?'

'Yes,' said Sam, 'I remember her. What about her?'

'Well, one day she filed rape charges against me. At age 89, I was so proud that when I got into court, I pleaded 'guilty.'

'The judge gave me 30 days for perjury.'

Nicknames

From Rick Quinell 92nd

Nicknames in use that have been given to Glasgow characters by their friends and workmates:-

Two Soups - his real name is Campbell Baxter .

Norrie Two Bonnets - the Glasgow taxi-driver who wears a wig under his cloth cap.

Colostomy - the girlfriend of a married man (ie. the wee bag on the side).

Boomerang Kid - whenever anyone at work asks a question, he always replies: 'I'll get back to you on that.'

Parachute - lets everyone down at the last minute.

Cashline - an experienced young lass who's open 24 hours a day.

Vaseline - his real name is Willie Burns .

Rembrandt - loves saying to colleagues: 'Let me put you in the picture...'

Bo Derek - a chap called Derek with terrible body odour.

Brewer's Droop - his real name is Willie Falls .

The Genie - magically appears whenever anyone opens a bottle.

Dulux - his pals reckon he's only got one coat.

Soapy - washes his hands of any problems that crop up.

Captain Hook - continually late for work, it's believed he must be scared of the alarm clock..

Yeti - always on the sick, there have been many unconfirmed sightings of this guy, but nobody can prove he actually exists.

Gas Man - he's serviced loads of old boilers.

Hostage - when anyone asks for help he always replies: 'Sorry, my hands are tied.'

Chernobyl Jannie - during the mid-Eighties this guy had a really bad complexion.

Woodpecker - he's always tapping.

Mussolini - a woman in an office in Glasgow who has rather loose morals (aka the great dicktaker)

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Two women were playing golf. One teed off and watched in horror as her ball headed directly toward four men playing the next hole. The ball hit one of the men. He immediately clasped his hands together at his groin, fell to the ground and proceeded to roll around in agony.

The woman rushed down to the man, and immediately began to apologize. 'Please allow me to help. I'm a Paramedic and I know I could relieve your pain if you'd allow me,' she told him. 'Oh, no, I'll be all right. I'll be fine in a few minutes,' the man replied. He was in obvious agony, lying in the foetal position, still clasping his hands together at his groin.

At her persistence, however, he finally allowed her to help. She gently took his hands away and laid them to the side, loosened his pants and put her hands inside. She administered tender and artful massage for several long moments and asked, 'How does that feel'? He replied: 'It feels great, but I still think my thumb is broken.'

Why We Love Children

From Phil Marston 92nd

A nursery school pupil told his teacher he'd found a cat, but it was dead.
'How do you know that the cat was dead?' she asked her pupil.
Because I pissed in its ear and it didn't move,' answered the child innocently.
'You did WHAT?' the teacher exclaimed in surprise.
'You know,' explained the boy, 'I leaned over and went 'Pssst' and it didn't move'

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A small boy is sent to bed by his father. Five minutes later.....'Da-ad....'
'What?
'I'm thirsty. Can you bring a drink of water?'
'No, You had your chance. Lights out.'
Five minutes later: 'Da-aaaad.....'
'WHAT?'
'I'm THIRSTY. Can I have a drink of water??'
' I told you NO! If you ask again, I'll have to smack you!!'
Five minutes later.....'Daaaa-aaaad.....'
'WHAT!'
'When you come in to smack me, can you bring a drink of water?'

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An exasperated mother, whose son was always getting into mischief, finally asked him 'How do you expect to get into Heaven?' The boy thought it over and said, 'Well, I'll run in and out and in and out and keep slamming the door until St. Peter says, 'For Heaven's sake, Dylan, come in or stay out!''

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One summer evening during a violent thunderstorm a mother was tucking her son into bed. She was about to turn off the light when he asked with a tremor in his voice, 'Mummy, will you sleep with me tonight?'
The mother smiled and gave him a reassuring hug. 'I can't dear,' she said. 'I have to sleep in Daddy's room.' A long silence was broken at last by his shaky little voice: 'The big sissy.'

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It was that time, during the Sunday morning service, for the children's sermon. All the children were invited to come forward. One little girl was wearing a particularly pretty dress and, as she sat down, the minister leaned over and said, 'That is a very pretty dress. Is it your Easter Dress?'
The little girl replied, directly into the minister's clip-on microphone, 'Yes, and my Mum says it's a bitch to iron.'

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When I was six months pregnant with my third child my three year old came into the room when I was just getting ready to get into the shower. She said, 'Mummy, you are getting fat!'
I replied, 'Yes, honey, remember Mummy has a baby growing in her tummy.'
'I know,' she replied, but what's growing in your bum?'

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One day the first grade teacher was reading the story of Chicken Little to her class. She came to the part of the story where Chicken Little tried to warn the farmer. She read, '.... And so Chicken Little went up to the farmer and said, 'The sky is falling, the sky is falling!'
The teacher paused then asked the class, 'And what do you think that farmer said?'

One little girl raised her hand and said, 'I think he said: Holy Shit! A talking chicken!'
The teacher was unable to teach for the next 10 minutes.

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A certain little girl, when asked her name, would reply, 'I'm Mr.Sugarbrown's daughter'. Her mother told her this was wrong, she must say, 'I'm Jane Sugarbrown.' The Vicar spoke to her in Sunday School, and said, 'Aren't you Mr. Sugarbrown's daughter?'
She replied, 'I thought I was, but mother says I'm not.'

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A little girl asked her mother, 'Can I go outside and play with the boys?'
Her mother replied, 'No, you can't play with the boys, they're too rough.'
The little girl thought about it for a few moments and asked, 'if I can find a smooth one, can I play with him?'

What Not to Say!

One year, a husband decided to buy his mother-in-law a cemetery plot as a Christmas gift. The next year, he didn't buy her a gift.

When she asked him why, he replied, "Well, you still haven't used the gift I bought you last year!"

My wife walked into the room and & asked "What's on the TV?"

I replied "Dust". And that's how the fight started.....

A woman is standing nude, looking in the bedroom mirror. She is not happy with what she sees and says to her husband, 'I feel horrible; I look old, fat and ugly. I really need you to pay me a compliment.'

The husband replied, 'Your eyesight's damn near perfect.' And that's how the fight started.....

My wife was hinting about what she wanted for our upcoming anniversary. She said, 'I want something shiny that goes from 0 to 200 in about 3 seconds.'

I bought her a set of bathroom scales. And that's how the fight started...

I asked my wife, 'Where do you want to go for our anniversary?' It warmed my heart to see her face melt in sweet appreciation. 'Somewhere I haven't been in a long time!' she said.

So I suggested, 'How about the kitchen?' And that's when the fight started...

I tried to talk my wife into buying a case of Abbot Ale. Instead, she bought a jar of cold cream.

I told her the beer would make her look better at night than the cold cream. And that's when the fight started.....

I took my wife to a restaurant. The waiter, for some reason, took my order first. 'I'll have the steak, medium rare, please.' He said, 'Aren't you worried about the mad cow?'

'Nah, she can order for herself.' And that's when the fight started....

RAF Days

V Bombers over Colerne

From Terry Mitchell, Bristol. 90th

I started aero-modelling at the age of eight when as a member of my local Chapel "Band Of Hope" I was given a rubber powered Kiel Kraft kit to build..My Grandmother then started buying me Flight Magazine knowing I would then cycle over to see her every Thursday.

At the age of twelve I lied about my age (The first time of many) and joined the Keynsham branch of the A.T.C. my first flight ever being in an Avro Anson from R.A.F. Colerne in 1956.

I applied to be a Trenchard Brat in 1958 my mother promising to by me another kit if I passed the exam.

After training ground radar with the 90th I served at Coningsby & Wittering with the V. Bombers and built my first Vulcan whilst at Wittering. We lived in a static caravan married quarter with very little space bringing up two small daughters. They still recount how mentally scarred they were after crashing into the nearly completed Vulcan and breaking the nose off. Mum thought it best to put them to bed before dad came home.



After sixteen years service we returned to Bristol. I then took a break from modelling whilst pursuing other interests, playing pub music with a duo called the Gruesome Twosome, (A legacy from playing rhythm guitar with a band we named The `G` Boys whilst stationed at 140 Signals unit in Germany) helping to run my local football club, (After thirty five years as secretary Chairman & President I still go every week..) and area rep for Avon branch of the Honda Gold Wing Club. (I had an illegal Norton whilst at Locking)

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

I re-awakened my interest in aircraft modelling with my Grandson. Every Tuesday I would pick him up spend two hours building & then took him to my Football club to have a drink & play Pool. The end result is that at the age of twenty he has no interest in planes whatsoever but drinks like a fish & is great pool player.

Pushing my preferred interest in electric flight I built a four jet Vulcan using new lightweight building materials followed by the Handley Page Victor.



Last year my Beloved wife of 45 Years Wendy was struggling with secondary Breast Cancer.

Simultaneously I went down with Bladder Cancer & had to have a Urostomy. (Both having Chemo at the same time) I recovered enough to nurse her in her

final days. Before she passed away she made me promise to build the Valiant to complete the trio and fly them together. This I did and had the maiden flight in April. I am sure Wendy was watching over me as it was the best uneventful maiden I have ever had.

With the help of two other pilots we practiced flying all three together culminating in having the centre spot at two air shows: Colerne (What a coincidence) & Basingstoke.

The Modelling press have been very interested and reported our exploits (Roly Faulk move over) and we will be attending a number of shows next year. So sleep safe in your beds, the Cold War is not over but the 90th are protecting you all.

Now how about launching a Blue Steel??????



Terry's Valiant

My Aircraft Tales (3)

From Brian Davies 76/77 Entries

My posting to busy RAF Lynham, was the time before Brize Norton became the RAF's number one transport station, and very busy working on the airfield i/c radio servicing gave many opportunities to closely observe many types of aircraft that landed there – one too close.

In the corner of the airfield near the side entrance was a small aircraft maintenance unit which did work on the Lightning fighter amongst other aircraft. One day as I was driving from Air Traffic Control towards the exit, having just crossed Lynham's little used cross runway, going home for lunch, I heard a big whoosh and saw something fast out of the corner of my eye. On returning from lunch I found out that the Lightning doing engine tests with the M.U.'s Sqdn. Ldr at the controls, had accelerated out of control across the main runway and to avoid crashing into Lynham village had taken off. The unwilling pilot had no parachute and no certification to fly Lightnings. He circled the airfield quite a few times with the airfield now on alert and landed safely. There was a full court of enquiry!

My next posting gave a delightful flight from UK to Bahrain in a VC-10, an amazing aircraft but unfortunately an engine became unserviceable on the way and we were delayed for 4 hours extra in Cyprus, where the equally delightful brandy sours gave me a two day hangover when we reached RAF Muharrak.

Being newly married, I managed two short leaves of absence in the UK during my year there. My first flight back was on a VIP Comet 4, noticeably much smaller inside than the VC-10s but very comfortable. Unfortunately four of us were off-loaded in Cyprus for a medi-vac to take our places, but we continued the trip on a Britannia two days later. My return to Bahrain was on a fare paying civilian VC-10, great but the airline coach from London to Heathrow broke down on the motorway considerably delaying passengers and I was still making my way down the aisle to my seat as we taxied to the runway.

My second trip from Bahrain to UK was in a civvy VC-10, stopping at Beirut and Frankfurt. Nice, except when we landed at Beirut airport it had just been shelled during the civil war there and we were surrounded by smoke and the sound of explosions – we flew out as soon as the aircraft was refuelled.

During my year in Bahrain at the large inter-command transmitter station on Muharrak, I needed to go down the Gulf to Sharjah to fix a radio problem there. I then had the mystical experience of a flight in a Blackburn Beverley. Very slow and bulky but with an impressive short take off run, the passengers were located on the tail boom, accessed by a long step ladder in the massive hold. The trip was fine although at fairly low level, but the toilet was at the tail end entered over two large swing freight dropping doors – but with daylight seen around the edges. It did not look safe to me so I crossed my legs for the next hour.

The RAF gets up to date

At my next posting at RAF Thorny Island, I managed to get a couple of week-end trips to Gibraltar, flying in Hercules C-130s, my first of many flights in that aircraft. Very noisy, cold if you sat in the wrong place, and with toilets that would shame an Indian shanty house. I soon found the best way to endure the second flight as I settled down in the comfort of the reclining seat of a Peugeot 505 saloon being freighted back to the UK. At other flights I squirmed like the other passengers amongst the freight on the webbing seats lining the aircraft sides.

On posting to Singapore I flew there and back, and a short compassionate UK visit in the comfort of VC-10s. On one of these trips, as we approached Gan Island from Singapore and some 400 miles from another airfield, a torrential downpour had flooded the Gan runway making it impossible to land there. The aircraft did not have enough fuel to return to Sri Lanka so had to circle Gan about an hour as the RAF personnel tried to remove the water from the runway. We eventually landed safely in a spectacular spray of water.

Later we landed at one of the Gulf states to refuel and no one was allowed to leave the aircraft due to a terrorist alert there. We were somewhat disturbed to see the aircraft surrounded by many scores of Arab soldiers with guns at the ready – to defend us we hoped. It was the quickest refuelling job I have ever seen.

Whilst at Singapore a job arose on RAAF Butterworth, at the top end of Malaya, that gave me an unexpected flying experience. I was to fly there in a venerable old RNZAF Bristol Freighter Type 170 and I am sure to this day that the fixed undercarriage collected twigs from the trees as we flew through the mountainous Cameron Highlands.

My delight with this flight was due to the fact that my father had worked on and flown frequently on the two prototypes of the Freighter at Bristol in the early 1940s. My return to Changi was more comfortable by a RAAF Hercules full of Americans X-Vietnam on R & R to Singapore.

My last RAF posting was to North Luffenham, where alas there was no airfield. The former runway was earlier used as hard-core foundation for a new UK motorway. However the job I had at Radio Technical Publications required me to fly abroad occasionally mainly in VC-10s, Britanias and Hercules aircraft. It was on a VC-10 as a member of the IRS inspection team that I experienced the amazing approach to Hong Kong's Tai Tak airfield. I was up front and peering through the cockpit windscreen as we flew at the mountain with its huge checkerboard marker, then at the last minute a steep 180 degree left bank to bring us in line with the runway and its approach very low over the crowded tenements. Quite an exhilarating experience!

The last RAF flight for me was on a return from a two-week job in RAF Masirah in the north Indian Ocean. Dressed in my best civvy suit I shared the dusty hold of a Hercules on a night flight to Cyprus sharing space with a load of sand covered Landrovers with trailers, and some dirty, rough looking army types! My sleep in the hard canvas seats along the fuselage wall was suddenly disturbed by a rough change in the roar of the engines. Looking out of the window I saw that we were flying at just a few hundred feet above the desert, low enough to see individual rocks. A crew member informed me later that the pitch on two of the propellers had accidentally been changed towards coarse and that we were taking this route as a short cut across Saudi Arabia below the radar!!

Since leaving the RAF I have flown countless thousands of miles, many long haul. My love of aircraft continues and flights have include DH Twin Otters, all marks of Boeing 737s, 727s, 747s, 757s, the 777 (which I disliked intensely), BAC 111s, Tridents, most of the Airbuses, the MD 86 and an Ilyushin twin jet airliner. During a promotion I was involved in at Manchester Airport for Renault, I managed a visit to the inside of the French Concorde we had chartered. It was particularly exciting as my father had been a Concorde planning engineer at Filton liaising between UK and Toulouse. It was exciting but the supersonic airliner was very small and cramped inside! I hope to fly in ever more aircraft types - cross fingers.

Quiz

From Stan Murray 92nd

These are not trick questions. They are straight questions with straight answers.

1. Name the one sport in which neither the spectators nor the participants know the score or the leader until the contest ends.
2. What famous North American landmark is constantly moving backward?
3. Of all vegetables, only two can live to produce on their own for several growing seasons. All other vegetables must be replanted every year. What are the only two perennial vegetables?
4. What fruit has its seeds on the outside?
5. In many stores, you can buy pear brandy, with a real pear inside the bottle. The pear is whole and ripe, and the bottle is genuine; it hasn't been cut in any way. How did the pear get inside the bottle?
6. Only three words in standard English begin with the letters 'dw' and they are all common words. Name two of them.
7. There are 14 punctuation marks in English grammar. Can you name at least half of them?
8. Name the only vegetable or fruit that is never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form except fresh.
9. Name 6 or more things that you can wear on your feet beginning with the letter 'S.'

Answers To Quiz:

1. The one sport in which neither the spectators nor the participants know the score or the leader until the contest ends: *Boxing*
2. North American landmark constantly moving backward: *Niagara Falls. (The rim is worn down about two and a half feet each year because of the millions of gallons of water that rush over it every minute.)*
3. Only two vegetables that can live to produce on their own for several growing seasons: *Asparagus and rhubarb.*
4. The fruit with its seeds on the outside: *Strawberry.*
5. How did the pear get inside the brandy bottle? *It grew inside the bottle. (The bottles are placed over pear buds when they are small, and are wired in place on the tree. The bottle is left in place for the entire growing season. When the pears are ripe, they are snipped off at the stems.)*
6. Three English words beginning with dw: *Dwarf, dwell, and dwindle.*
7. Fourteen punctuation marks in English grammar: *Period, comma, colon, semicolon, dash, hyphen, apostrophe, question mark, exclamation point, quotation marks, brackets, parenthesis, braces, and ellipses.*
8. The only vegetable or fruit never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form but fresh: *Lettuce.*
9. Six or more things you can wear on your feet beginning with S: *Shoes, socks, sandals, sneakers, slippers, skis, skates, snowshoes, stockings, stilts.*

Obituaries

Sam (Paddy) ALLEN 5895261 (1938 – 2009)

From Mike Collier 76th

It is with great sadness that I have to report the death of Sam Allen on 10th Jan. 2009. Born on 11th May 1938, Sam had two notable distinctions when he joined with the 76th Entry on 20th Jan 1954. He was the only Entry member to come from N. Ireland and he was first on our alphabetical nominal roll. He had a rather turbulent time at Locking, spending his first year with the 76th, the second with the 77th and six months with the 78th. When C.T. threatened, parental intervention saw him posted to Jurby as an officer cadet. Unfortunately, this was not completed and he moved to Yatesbury on an N.B.S. course. On posting to Cottesmore, he found himself seconded to a "V" bomber crew as a Cpl. (temporary P.O.) because he could get better results from the N.B.S. than the resident crew member and the station commander wanted to win a bombing competition. This talent provided the opportunity to train as permanent aircrew. Ill health, in the form of asthma, curtailed this venture. He was then given an intensive "sniper training course" in the U.K. and overseas, the reason for which Sam never discovered, as there was no end product. Further posting's around the U.K. saw the end of his service career.

On leaving the R.A.F. he joined Ferranti as a Development Engineer. Sam however, had other ambitions and in 1971 started teacher training. He qualified in 1975 with a specialisation in Special Needs Training. He also joined the Royal Naval Reserve and at the end of his time with them had reached the rank of Lt. Cdr. When he retired from teaching and should have been putting his feet up, Sam embarked on yet another career, by getting involved in Overseas Volunteer Aid Work in Malawi. Sadly over the past few years, ill health has taken its toll.

Sam was always a loyal Entry member, regularly attending our reunions, where his fine sense of humour and ready smile were a welcome addition to the proceedings. He was intensely proud to be an ex-brat and we will miss him very much. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his delightful wife Sena and their children, Brace, Murry and Lesley Anne.

As is our policy, your Association made a donation to a charity chosen by Sam's widow. The charity chosen was The Sea Cadets at Peterhead. They were pleased with the donation and wrote back:

Donation in memory of Sam "Paddy" Allen

On behalf of the Officers and cadets of TS Caledonia can you please pass on our sincere gratitude for the recent donation in memory of Sam Allen who died recently and will be sadly missed by all.

Sam was the mainstay of the unit from 1976 onwards up till his retirement in 1992 and he set high standards which are carried out to this day- he would certainly be proud of his legacy.

To that end we have decided to use the donation to purchase a trophy to be awarded annually in his name to a worthy recipient in the unit who displays initiative, enthusiasm and dedication in the application of his/her duties.

It is a fitting tribute to a well respected and much liked individual.

Yours Faithfully

Ian Wilson

Lt Cdr (SCC) RNR Commanding Officer
TS Caledonia: Peterhead Unit

Closing Thought

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Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions. 'How old are you?' 'I'm four and a half!' You're never thirty-six and a half.

You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead. 'How old are you?' 'I'm gonna be 16!' You could be 13, but hey, you're going to be 16! And then the greatest day of your life - you become 21.

Even the words sound like a ceremony. YOU BECOME 21. YESSSS!!! But then you turn 30. Oooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk! He TURNED; we had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're just a sour-dumpling.

What's wrong? What's changed? You BECOME 21, you TURN 30, then you're PUSHING 40. Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you REACH 50 and your dreams are gone. But wait!!! You MAKE it to 60. You didn't think you would! You've built up so much speed that you HIT 70! You get into your 80's and every day is a complete cycle; you HIT lunch; you TURN 4:30; you REACH bedtime. And it doesn't end there. Into the 90s, you start going backwards; 'I was JUST 92.' Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. 'I'm 100 and a half! May you all make it to a healthy 100 and a half!!

Ten Ways to Stay Young

1. Throw out non-essential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctors worry about them. That is why you pay 'them.'
2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.
3. Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle. 'An idle mind is the devil's workshop.' And the devil's name is Alzheimer's.
4. Enjoy the simple things.
5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.
6. The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. Be ALIVE while you are alive.
7. Surround yourself with what you love, whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
8. Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
9. Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the shops, to the next county; even to a foreign country but NOT to where the guilt is.
10. Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity.

And always remember

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

RAFLAA Committee

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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
