

RAFLAA Newsletter

SERIAL 59

MARCH 2011

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Editor's Notes

Hello to you all,

We are back at the Webbington again this year for the AGM and Dinner/Dance. Inside you will find details and a booking form so book your room and send your booking form to Tony!

I'm sorry the newsletter is late coming out this time. It has always been tricky to get the March newsletter out for 1st March and this year there has been a sequence of problems. Due to some of these there are no committee meeting minutes in the Newsletter this time. However, they will be published in March on the RAFLAA website and will appear in the July Edition of the RAFLAA Newsletter. We have found a way to get around these problems in future. See the notice about Committee Meeting Minutes.

Coach

*I am pleased to write that the coach from the Webbington to Bath for the ladies at our AGM will run. Sufficient people have already booked to ensure running a coach is viable. However, if your good lady would like to join the coach and you have not yet booked, do get your booking form in **now** as the size of the coach has to be set. Once set, that will limit the maximum number and, if you book late, your partner may be disappointed.*

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Please keep the comments and the articles coming! My regulars are always welcome but it would be good to hear from some new writers. Do put fingers to keyboards and let us know what it was like for YOU. Come on – give it a go!

I've read a piece in the Admin Newsletter about the bull nights with the pads and the polish. They even got us to pay for 'better' polish! Can you remember? Then tell us about it!

Ed.

Deadline for next issue - 23rd May 2011 for July 2011

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

Email: Chris@crtett.plus.com

Tele: 01908 583047

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Woburn Sands

Milton Keynes

Bucks

MK17 8PQ

NOTICES

Annual General Meeting

The 17th Annual General meeting of the RAF Locking Apprentice Association will be held on Saturday 16th April 2011 at the Webbington Hotel, Loxton Weston-super-Mare at 13:30 hours.

The Agenda will be:

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
 - a. Jim Doran as Membership Secretary
 - b. Chris Bryan as Secretary
6. Memorial Locking-Parklands/ National Memorial Arboretum.
7. FABEA
8. Newsletter.
9. RAFLAA web site.
10. Venue and format of AGM/Reunion 2012
11. Any other business (at the discretion of the Chairman)
12. Recognition of "Golden Entries 89/90/91"

If you wish to raise or discuss any other topics or issues, please contact the Association Secretary, Dave Gunby, by telephone 01522 525484 or email dpgraf72@btinternet.com by the 16th March 2011.

Election of Officers

Two posts are available for election which are the Membership Secretary and Secretary. Two members have indicated they will stand for these two posts.

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of John Farmer, our Membership Secretary, who passed away suddenly at the end of February. He was a stalwart member of your committee and will be sorely missed. His obituary is published later in this edition of the newsletter. We are very fortunate that Jim Doran of the 219th entry has volunteered to step up to this post.

Our Secretary Dave Gunby has indicated for some time that he would like to step down from the post of secretary. Dave will also be difficult to follow but we are lucky that Chris Bryan of the 87th has kindly agreed to act as our secretary.

Both of these appointments are subject to approval by the members at the AGM in April. However, in the case Jim Duran, we need a person to take up position of Membership Secretary immediately and so we have added his name to the Committee List with this newsletter.

If you would like to stand for one of these committee posts, please inform the Association Secretary Dave Gunby by telephone 01522 525484 or email dpgraf72@btinternet.com by the 20th March 2010 as a ballot may need to be arranged.

Golden Entries

The Golden Entries for the 2010 AGM are the 89th, 90th and 91st. Members of these entries that attend the AGM will be presented with a Certificate at the AGM. If you are a member of these Golden Entries, you will be invited to say a few words about your entry exploits. Please think about that and do not be shy!

Availability of Committee Minutes

It has always been difficult to get the March Newsletter delivered to you for the start of March to give members reasonable time to book for the AGM and dinner/dance. This has been because publication had to wait until the minutes of the Committee Meeting held in February were available, which in turn had to wait until the Association's year end accounts were ready.

In addition, it has been pointed out that minutes should not really be published until they are approved as a good record at a subsequent meeting. With this year's forced delay, your committee have decided that in future minutes will appear on the RAFLAA Website in the month following a meeting as Draft Minutes. They will then be published in a Newsletter when approved at a subsequent meeting. If you have any objections, please make them known to our secretary before the next AGM in April.

2011 RAFLAA Annual AGM and Dinner Dance

The Annual General Meeting and Annual Dinner for 2011 will be held at the Webbington Hotel, Loxton, Weston-super-Mare, BS26 2HU on [Saturday 16th April 2010](#).

Hotel



The Webbington is situated prominently on the southern slopes of the Mendip Hills, a short drive from 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.

For more details see the hotel website: www.latonahotels.co.uk/best-western-webbington.html

Hotel Bar

Following our tradition, there will be a subsidised bar in the Garden Suite (renamed from last year when it was the Rowberrow Suite). A special price list will apply where all drinks will be charged at a £1 less than standard hotel prices. In addition, bottles of house wine will be charged at £11.

N.B. Do not drink in the main hotel bar – you will be charged full hotel prices!

The Garden room bar will be available from 11:00 to 13:30 and again from 18:00 in the evening.

Our Event

The subsidised bar will open at 11:00 and will be followed by a lunchtime finger buffet in the dining room before the AGM.

The AGM will be held in the Garden Suite in the afternoon and will be followed by tea & biscuits.

In the evening, the Dinner/Dance will be held in the Brent Suite, the cost of which will include wine. In addition, the hotel has agreed to make the Garden Suite Bar exclusively available for the RAFLAA event. Again, the bar here will be subsidised before dinner but not during or after the meal except for additional bottles of wine.

The lunch is priced at £10 this time which will include tea & biscuits afterwards. The dinner will cost £21 but for those attending the lunch, AGM and dinner, the combination is priced for 2011 at £30.

RAFLAA Lunch and Dinner Booking

If you wish to attend the lunch and/or AGM and/or the dinner/dance, please fill in the loose leaf booking form or download and print the separate form and post to Tony Horry as per the instructions on the form together with your cheque.

Please record your menu choices when you return the form.

Hotel Accommodation Booking

[Accommodation must be booked direct with the hotel and the hotel is accepting bookings for 2011 now.](#)

Please contact:

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

Email: info@webbingtonhotel.ecilpse.co.uk

The hotel has kindly held prices again and rooms will again be charged @ £75 double, £60 single, B&B per night.

Please contact the hotel direct and **quote RAFLAA** when you book to obtain these special low rates. No deposit is required as rooms can be held on a credit card. However, all accounts must be settled direct with the hotel

Ladies Coach

Your committee is aware that the hotel is out of town. In 2011, a coach has been arranged to take wives and partners to Bath during the day. For 2011 an all day coach to Bath will be arranged. It will leave at 09:45 and return around 16:30. The charge for this will be a realistic £15

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

We are able to book coaches of various sizes and it is unlikely there will be a spare place on the day so please ensure you reserve a place on the booking form.

Directions

Directions to the Webbington were published in the March 09 Newsletter. If you require directions please look at that issue, or download them from the Website. Or, if stuck, contact the editor.

Taxis

A taxi from Weston-super-Mare train station to the Webbington will cost about £15. For those that are flying in or coming by train, here are a couple of numbers of local taxis in case you want to book in advance. Airport Taxis in particular are likely to cost a lot more.

W1XEE taxis 0777390 6318 (7 seater)

Apple Central 01934 413413

WSM cars 01934 513333

ARC Taxis 01934 412222

Worle Cars 01934 513344

Woodspring Taxis 01934 414141



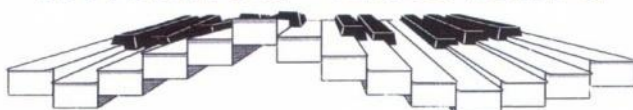
Music

Following the good reception in 2009, your committee has again engaged **Atlantic Crossing** to provide live music for dancing after the dinner. 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.

ATLANTIC CROSSING



RAF Locking Apprentices Association

Dinner Menu Saturday 16th April 2011

Leek and Potato Soup

Duo of Pate

Smoked chicken with Bacon and venison pate served with tomato and apple chutney and French toast

Asparagus & Parma Ham

Served with sun blushed tomatoes and parmesan shavings

Duo of Smoked fish

Scottish smoked salmon rolled with smoked mackerel mousse on a horseradish salad

-O-O-O-O-O-O-

Natural Haddock Fillet

Pan fried served with fennel & orange sauce

Poached Chicken Supreme

With cherry sauce

Roast leg of Lamb

Prime Lamb with rosemary and redcurrant gravy

Medallions of Pork

Slices of fillet seasoned with Cajun spices, stacked with peppers finished with tomato coulis

Roasted Vegetables in Filo Case

Topped with goats cheese

All Served with a selection of vegetables and potatoes

-O-O-O-O-O-O-

Fresh Fruit Salad

Lemon & Ginger Cheesecake

Sticky Toffee Pudding

With toffee sauce

Eton Mess

With strawberries, Chantilly cream and meringue

Selection of Cheese & Biscuits

-O-O-O-O-O-O-

Tea and Coffee Served with Mints

**APPLICATION FOR RAFLAA AGM AND DINNER – 16th APRIL 2011
DINNER DANCE AND FINGER BUFFET**

Name:

Entry No:

Address:

Date:

I wish to book both lunch & dinner for myself and/or partner: Please provide tickets @ £30 pp £.....

I wish to book the dinner/dance only for myself and/or partner: Please provide tickets @ £21 pp £.....

I wish to book the buffet lunch only for myself and/or partner: Please provide tickets @ £10 pp £.....

I wish to bring guests to the dinner/dance. Please provide tickets @ £31 pp £.....

My wife/partner would like a place on the all day coach to Bath @ £15. Please provide tickets @ £15 pp £.....

(Applications for the coach must be in by 1st April 2011)

Total £

Please complete as appropriate.

Cheques to be crossed account payee, and made out to “RAF Locking Apprentice Association”

Please **post** your application to: **Mr A Horry, Hillside Cottage, Kewstoke Road, Kewstoke, Weston-super-Mare, BS22 9YD**
Tel: 01934 628383 E-mail: horrycorp@aol.com

Please complete the **total number** of each menu choice for all your party and return with your booking form and cheque.

Member Name	Starters				Main Courses					Desserts				
	Soup	Pate	Aspar &ham	Duo Fish	Haddock	Chicken	Lamb	Pork	Filo	Fresh Fruit	Cheese cake	Stick Pud	Eton Mess	Cheese

Rooms at the Webbington Hotel For accommodation, please contact:
Webbington Hotel, Loxton, Weston-s-Mare, BS26 2HU; Tele: 01934 750100. email: info@webbingtonhotel.eclipse.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.**

Even Before the Apprentices

A First Flight

From Brian ML Davies 76th Entry

I was about 13 when I got my first flight in an aeroplane, it was 26th January 1952 and it was to be a Tiger Moth of the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, the Bristol University Squadron who normally flew DH Vampire jets.

As a young member of Britain's Air Training Corps, (2124 Whitchurch Airport Squadron) we were encouraged to have 'flying experience' and so on that Sunday morning I turned up at the RAF part of the Filton Airfield which was owned by The Bristol Aeroplane Company. I didn't expect to fly in a jet, but was a bit surprised when shown to a flimsy bi-plane which seemed to be stuck together by sticky tape. After a quick briefing, I clambered aboard into the front cockpit and sat on the parachute, which was then strapped tightly to me by a member of the ground crew.

I was shown the workings of the crude inter-cockpit intercom and off we went over the grass to turn into the wind. As we gathered speed on takeoff I was perplexed at seeing the grass through the floorboards whizzing by underneath and how fragile the whole construction seemed!

The exhilaration of flight soon took over and this 40 minute flight was so exciting that I took the opportunity for an air experience flight through the ATC as often as I could thereafter. The sheer fun of flying in a Tiger Moth and my first aerobatics including loops really hooked me on flying and many subsequent flights in DH Chipmunks, also the Avro Ansons, Vickers Valettas and Varsitys. Often at a safe height, I was allowed at the controls of these twin engine aircraft and that was exciting for a young lad.

It was mainly in Chipmunks that I was taught to fly straight and level, bank, turn flat corners, gain and lose height and airfield landing approach. It was in a Chipmunk one winter's morning that we got lost over the middle of snowbound Wiltshire. The Flying Officer pilot and I had been concentrating on flying techniques and not noticing where we were going. When asked if I knew where we were I said no, which perturbed the pilot as he said we were getting short of fuel.

On my suggestion (which was not really expected to be taken seriously) we found a railway track and followed it to a country rail station, then flew low enough to read its name on the platform. Luckily we made it back to Filton with time to spare.

An earlier springtime flight in a Tiger Moth was however a bit more serious. We had been flying at about 2000 feet for some time and I could not hear properly what the Pilot Officer pilot was saying through the intercom. He was trying to point out something on the ground and to hear his shouts over the engine and wind noise I leaned forward. Inadvertently as I did so, without noticing, my knee pushed the throttle lever to the off position. Quickly the engine misfired and cut out and we started gliding down to earth. The pilot unaware of things, could not restart the engine and shouted to me asking if I had used a parachute before!!! (I was 14 years old – come on!). Anyway soon it was too late to jump.

As we glided down towards a line of high power electricity pylons, at about 500 feet, the pilot gave a loud exclamation as he found out where the throttle was positioned and eventually restarted the engine. He did not speak to me again all the way back to base and after landing at Filton, stalked off in a huff muttering about bloody kids!

It did not stop my love of flying which still exists to today although (aged 73) the smallest I fly in now is a Boeing 737 and A320 and I love the 747, I don't particularly like the newest so far, the Boeing 777 - but that's another story.

Apprentice Days

Aircraft Apprentice Brothers

Sent in by Derek (Del) Foster 73rd Entry

Recently, the sad news was received of the death Bob Ball, a former member of the 73rd Entry from Jan 1953 to Dec 1955. He was the brother of Ken Ball who was also in the 73rd Entry. This got me wondering as to whether there have been any other instances of brothers in the Apprentices.

I myself was one of three brothers in the Apprentices. My late eldest brother, Pete Foster, was in the 63rd entry at Cranwell, I myself, Derek (Del) Foster, was in the 73rd entry at Locking and my younger brother, Edwin (Ed) Foster, was in the 90th entry, also at Locking.

- Pete joined in 1949 and served until 1983, a total of 34+ years.
- I joined in 1953 and served until 1976, a total of 23+ years.
- Ed joined in 1958 and served until 1981, a total of 23+ years
- Altogether a total of 80 years service in the RAF for one band of brothers!

Surprisingly, although we were all Ground Radar Fitters, a relatively small trade with limited scope for postings, and with our many overlapping years in the RAF we never met service wise during all those years, apart from 2 months in 1966 when Pete and myself were attending different courses at Locking. Whenever we went overseas Pete went to Germany, I went to the Far East and Ed went to the Middle East. Someone certainly wanted to keep us apart!

To add to the family tradition, my eldest son, my daughter-in-law, and my nephew, also spent several years in the RAF. Just to cap it off, my Uncle, sister-in-law, and brother-in-law all served in the RAF throughout WW2.

All together this is a family record of over a century of RAF service. I am sure that someone out there can better this record ... but certainly not many!

So, have there been other brothers in the Apprentices? If so, let us know your story.

Chalk and Cheese

Sent in by Bryan Chillery

The 87th Entry at RAF Locking in 1957 was over two hundred strong and had to be split between two flight commanders. Flight Lieutenant 'Daddy' Sachs was a real softie, in his late forties, and I think the boys felt he wanted to be their daddy; hence the nickname. Flying Officer Les Harris was quite the opposite - mid twenties and sharp, with a twinkle in his eye when he caught the boys out, smoking where and when they shouldn't for instance. He had been an apprentice himself when No 1 Radio School was at Cranwell, so he knew all the tricks. He had a nickname too, but not very flattering and I have forgotten it. It was something like 'Sneaky'. When he came to Locking he was a pilot recovering from a crash in which he had damaged a leg. One would forgive him for perhaps being a little bitter, having been grounded and sent to supervise us lot.

They were poles apart, were Daddy and Les, but each applied himself to his duty with relish, and was always there to advise and help the troubled teenager. As a sporty type, I was always conscious of their presence at games or competitions, as spectators or helpers, or even, in Daddy's case, as a boxing coach during one of our gymnasium training evenings. It did come home to him however, during that session, that he was no longer in the peak of condition, and we never saw that new tracksuit or the new trainers again!

I met them both later in my service. I was posted to Nicosia in August 1962 and Daddy followed me out there shortly after. It was his last tour of duty, so I think he must have been coming up for 55, and they gave him the job of Estates Officer as a swan song. He immediately took over the secondary duty of Officer i/c Boxing and, believe it or not, PTI Sergeant Derek Clifton was the Team Coach and trainer. Some might remember him from Locking where he was a corporal and very involved with the boxing, having been quite adept himself when younger.

Sport was taken very seriously in those days, and I remember the RAF team was coming out to take on the NEAF boxers and we had jolly fortnight training with Sgt Agutter at Limassol. The tournament took place at Episcopi just up the road towards Paphos, and we won 9-1 I think. I know I stopped my opponent in the first, just to remind him who had been the RAF Welterweight Champion before being sent abroad. Silly things seemed important in those days!

Strangely enough, much later (1967) I met Daddy's daughter while on attachment to St Athan. I was flying the local cadets around in Chipmunks for 'air experience', having just acquired my 'wings', and she (a very beautiful girl whom Daddy had obviously kept out of the reach of the apprentices) was a mum, married to an engineering officer.

Les Harris apparently went back to flying, but it was in the world of Air Traffic where we met in 1976 at RAF Shawbury when I was converting to the branch myself (they had sold my aeroplane, the Basset, from beneath me during the fuel crisis). We met in the bar after dinner and greeted each other like old friends, which I suppose we were. By this time Les's leg had been amputated and as CATCO, or Command Air Traffic Control Officer, he was on a staff visit and was surrounded by his hosts. They were visibly cringing as I, a mere student who had just arrived, spoke to Les on equal terms. When he was introduced as the CATCO, I asked him what that was exactly, and I think the Wg Cdr Air Traffic Training School nearly fainted! I didn't do very well at Shawbury, but somehow remained in air traffic for the remainder of my service until 1990.

At this meeting Les asked me where I was hoping to be posted after the course, and I told him Germany, because they badly needed a command boxing secretary, and I had been doing that sort of thing in the UK since becoming commissioned. What a dreamer! When I barely scraped through the course, I was posted to Manston and Les wrote me charming letter saying that, in the

circumstances, Manston was the closest he could get me to Europe. He certainly had a sense of humour!

I expect he would have been amused if I had had the nerve to tell him a little secret I had kept to myself since Locking. I could have reminded him that he had once given me a lift in a lovely old jalopy, a 1936 Rover 12 (for which he paid a fellow flight commander only £80), when I was walking east on the road just outside the camp, and he took me right up to Lulsgate Bottom on the A38, where I said I had a girlfriend. Actually, I then had to hitch back to Banwell where I kept my motorbike in the vicar's shed!

That innocuous little BSA Bantam gave me a lot of fun but in the end turned out to be my undoing. When I crashed into a police car, while returning late from Bristol after a grant weekend, there were repercussions. Three years of keeping my nose relatively clean (only three days' jankers), representing entry, squadron, wing and station in numerous sports, even doing some academic work sometimes, had been rewarded by promotion to SAA, but at our passing out parade, I was obliged to be one of the rank and file, albeit in a very proud assembly.

I was asked recently, "Why 'Daddy'?", and I could only postulate about the nickname, but it did get me thinking about our flight commanders and how different they were. I knew Daddy had died some years ago, the word having come to me through the boxing grapevine, but we weren't sure about Les, so we tried an old email address, and 'eureka!' – he replied! It's good to know he's still going strong and very active. And it's somehow heartening that he still has that spark of interest in the place and the characters which comprised our world fifty years ago.

Apprentices Now

RAFLAA Newsletter Classified – Lost and Found

Found – One Flight Commander (Part 2)

From Bruce Graham, 79th Entry

In a recent edition of the Newsletter I explained that a group of 79th Entry graduates had re-located their Locking Flight Commander, Flt Lt Jack Hobbs, now aged 81/2 and living in Australia.

As a follow-up to that contact (again through the good offices of Jim Ward) we discovered that he and his wife were making an extended trip to the UK in the late summer/early autumn 2010. After a lot of complicated email messages we managed to establish a date when we could possibly meet with him. Unfortunately, this was at fairly short notice and only Jim and I were able to attend the lunch we had set up at a hotel near to West Meon in Hampshire. Nevertheless, we had a fascinating afternoon reminiscing about those days. What surprised us was how much he (Jack) had hated being taken off flying and sent for a 3 year sentence to look after a bunch of awkward teenagers!! It was very interesting to hear his views of some of his contemporaries on the Permanent Staff, those that he could remember anyway.

He couldn't recall any of the names of the Entry, not even our FSAA who he put forward for a Cadetship to Henlow!! I think that he was touched when we told him of the profound influence he had on us in those formative years. The photograph was taken as we dispersed at the end of a long afternoon and shows, left to right, Bruce Graham, Jack Hobbs and Jim Ward.



96th Entry – 50th Anniversary of Attestation – 18th September 2010

Sent in by Ron Spain, compiled mainly by Dave Calvert, 96th

The Gathering. On 18 September 2010, 48 members of the 96th Entry, and 37 partners gathered at the Oxford Belfry to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our acceptance of the Queen's Shilling which, as I recall, we decided, with some prompting from Ben Burley, to spend on a haircut. In fact, most of us gathered on 17th September 2010 and spent the evening in what started as quiet conversation, but ended, as always, in a spirited shouting match. It is also true to report that far fewer required a haircut on this occasion than needed one in 1960!

The Following Day. There was clear and obvious evidence of sore heads at breakfast the following morning, but there is no doubt that everyone made it, some earlier than others. The day was spent in activities various and nefarious; though I have no specific evidence of the latter, only a certainty that leopards do not change their spots. As the evening approached excitement mounted and we gathered at 6.00pm to view the photographs of yesteryear, accompanied by the occasional tincture. The ladies could not believe their eyes, and nor could we! Did we really look like that? We gathered for a photograph and no doubt when we look at that in years to come disbelief will again be to the fore. Dinner was enjoyed, the speeches tolerated and the band struck up. We remembered the words and the dancing commenced. As always the high spot was a wonderful impersonation of Chuck Berry with "Johnny Be Good". You'll have to look at the photographs to discover the impersonator. Almost as exciting was Trevor Rodgers leading a chorus of Old King Cole (arr Burley c 1961). The band quit, the barmen went home, but not us, we stayed until errrrrrrr?



The Day After. You might think that Sunday breakfast was a sorry sight, but not at all. We are still made of the same stern stuff and came up ready for more, but thankfully none was available! So we took our leave saying how much we looked forward to the next time. And we meant it!!

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

The Hotel. We had gathered at the Oxford Belfry simply because there is no longer a venue in Weston Super Mare capable of accommodating such a large group. With the exception of a tiny niggles here and there the hotel was excellent, with a fine variety of facilities, and generally drew much praise. There is no doubt that having most of the participants staying under the same roof, with only a few yards to walk to fall into bed is a great benefit.

Help for Heroes. After the reunion surplus funds, a members' generous donation and the hotel discount on drinks enabled a contribution of £250 to be made.

Record of Events. We have much evidence of the activities at the Oxford Belfry and this evidence can be seen elsewhere on the website (if not now, then eventually) and at the following link: <http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/calvert.dt/Reunion2010#>

Next One. We left the Belfry with a fairly unanimous view that we should all meet again on our next momentous anniversary, that of our graduation in July 1963 which, 50 years on, would be 30 July 2013.

Roll Call. The following members attended the reunion, very many of them accompanied by their partners: Annear D, Ball G, Barrington B, Barrone W, Beattie N, Blake K, Branch S, Briggs H, Cahill M, Calvert D, Chapman M, Clark R, Collis D, Cooling R, Day P, Dennis P, Everett M, Farrell B, Fleming A,

Fletcher H (Fletch), Flint T, Fullylove D, Griffiss K, Hall P, Hankey C, James A, Jeffery J, Lane R, Lawson C, Marshall R, McCarthy, North H, Perkin J, Pike D, Pinn G, Pritchard I, Rodgers T, Scrivener R, Shore B, Slingo G, Spain R, Sperling G, Taylor G, Taylor J, Thompson M, Turner M, Walker E, Williams R. It should be mentioned that Dave Collis travelled from New Zealand, Phil Day from Canada, Mike McCarthy and John Taylor both from Spain.



Two Into One Might Go

Sent in by Mike Collier 76th

For some time now, I have been on very good terms with the Halton 76th. Earlier this year, they invited the Locking 76th to join them at their 9th biennial reunion in Cardiff. Circulating this information to those I thought most likely to be interested, produced mixed results. Eventually, six Entry members plus three wives (John & Jean Austin, Bill & Julia Duncan, Tony Horry, Mike & Laura Huscroft, Arthur Swain and myself), came to the Copthorne hotel on the outskirts of the city, on the 30th October 2010.

The five newcomers I suspect were a little apprehensive but delighted by the genuine warmth of the welcome they received. As I had been to the 8th, at Lincoln, I knew what to expect and was not disappointed. Prior to the event, their organizer had been extremely helpful and on the day had everything under control. Though in my experience, the organizer is always on edge, waiting for something to go wrong. I think we were very happy that there was no pressure to mingle. With everyone so friendly, the process evolved naturally. I am sure that all who attended thoroughly enjoyed the occasion.

The Halton 76th have an Entry Association and have now offered membership of this Association to any of the Locking 76th who wish to join, in the hope of bringing the two parts of the Entry closer together. I am certainly very much in favour of this. Diverse trades and training at different locations are not a barrier. The camaraderie of those who have undergone R.A.F Apprentice training and shared subsequent service experience, transcends any other imagined obstacles, as we discovered at Cardiff.

If any of those who spent time with the 76th read this and would like more information, please contact me.

Mike can be found at:

7 Willow Close
Pershore
Worcestershire
WR10 1JN
Tele: 01386 553298

Ed

No. 1 Radio School Annual Lunch & Symposium

Sent in by Tiny Kuhle 87th & Your Chairman

Your President, Martin Palmer, Dave Gunby, and myself attended the Lunch on the 7th Oct. 2010. This event continues to enable your Association to maintain excellent connections with the School, and is a very enjoyable event, at which we are asked to repeat the presentation of our award to the recipient, Sgt. Shanni Angel, in the presence of her colleagues.

Prior to the lunch, a symposium was given for all the School, covering plans for the Trade Group, and a briefing on the progress of the plan to combine the technical and engineering training of the 3 services at St. Athan. In 2007, the preferred bidder was chosen, Metrix Consortium, and the project was said to be nearing its implementation stage in early 2011; the final hurdle to be passed would be the financial approval on the 19th Oct. The plan would mean that Cosford would close, and all training transferred to St. Athan in 2012.

As we all know, the public finances of the country are in a parlous state, and it came as no (at least to me) surprise that the MOD issued the following statement:

“Given the significance of this project and the opportunity to provide a world-class training facility, the Ministry of Defence has worked tirelessly to deliver this project.

However, it is now clear that Metrix cannot deliver an affordable, commercially-robust proposal within the prescribed period and it has therefore been necessary to terminate the DTR (Defence Training Rationalisation) procurement and Metrix’s appointment as preferred bidder.

Technical training, collocated on as few sites as possible, remains in our view the best solution for our Armed Forces. Equally, St Athan was previously chosen as the best location on which to collocate that training for good reasons, and we still hope to base our future defence training solution there.”

In the mean time things will carry on as normal (plan B), until the MOD can come up with something cheaper! So Cosford and No. 1 Radio School will continue for a few more years yet! For me at any rate, it’s easier to get to Cosford than St. Athan!

The Pinjat Jasa Malaysian Medal

Sent in by Mick Rafferty 98th Entry

During 2000 the Malaysian Government approached the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to seek approval to present their new medal, known as the Pinjat Jasa Malaysia (PJM), to British veterans and others who served in operations in Malaya/Malaysia between August 1957 and August 1966. In January 2006 permission was granted for the medal to be awarded to eligible recipients.

I was made aware of the above by my father who had served in Malaya in the early sixties after he received his medal in 2008. He remembered that I had served in Borneo in 1966 and gave me the necessary details to apply for the medal. I did so in late 2008. I had forgotten about it until I received a telephone call one Friday evening asking me if I was free in two weeks time to go and receive my medal.

On Wednesday 1st December I attended a medal presentation ceremony at the Holiday Inn, Newport South Wales, where along with many others I was presented my medal by a senior Army officer from the Malaysian embassy



Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

If you served anywhere in Malaya/Malaysia between August 1957 and August 1966 you qualify for the medal. For further details and an application form contact:-

Mike Warren
189 Hawes Side Lane
Blackpool,
Lancashire
FY4 4AA
Or by e-mail mikewarren@yahoo.com



The Last Man in the Air Force

Sent in by Tiny Kuhle 87th

I'm the last man left in the Air Force!
In my office inside MoD
I've a copy of Queen's Regulations
Applicable only to me.
I can post myself off to St Mawgan,
Detach me from there to Kinloss,
Or send me on courses to Cosford,
Then cancel the lot – I'm the boss.

I'm the last man left in the Air Force!
I suppose you imagine it's great
To be master of all you survey,
But I tell you, it's difficult mate.
I inspected three stations last Tuesday
As C-in-C (Acting) of Strike,
Then cleaned out the bogs at Brize Norton
And repaired Saxa Vord's station bike.

I'm the last man left in the Air Force!
My wife says I'm never at home,
When I'm not flying kites I'm at Manston
Laying gallons and gallons of foam,
Or I'm on my marine craft off Plymouth
Shooting flares at the crowd on the Hoe,
Or I'm Orderly Sergeant at Valley,
It's an interesting life - but all go!

I'm the last man left in the Air Force!
When not ADC to the Queen
I'm Red Arrows Leader at Scampton
Or the QCS Silent Drill Team.
Tomorrow I'm painting the Guardroom
And air testing several planes,
The day after that I'm in London
Where I'm Chaplain at St Clement Danes.

I'm the last man left in the Air Force!
But I'm pensioned off before long.
There's been no talk of replacement
And I can't justify signing on.
I hope to enjoy my retirement,
I've put up a fairly good show,
I won't cut myself off entirely -
There are always reunions you know.

Following yet more cuts, I thought this appropriate -Ed

Tit-Bits

Beware of this Scam

Sent in by Andy Perkins 109th

I bought a bunch of stuff, over £150, & I glanced at my receipt as the cashier was handing me the bags. I saw a cash-back of £40. I told her I didn't request a cash back & to delete it. She said I'd have to take the £40 because she couldn't delete it. I told her to call a supervisor. Supervisor came & said I'd have to take it. I said NO! Taking the £40 would be a cash advance against my credit card & I wasn't paying interest on a cash advance!!!! If they couldn't delete it then they would have to delete the whole order. So the supervisor had the cashier delete the whole order & re-scan everything!

The second time I looked at the electronic pad before I signed & a cash-back of £20 popped up. At that point I told the cashier & she deleted it. The total came out right. The cashier agreed that the Electronic Pad must be defective. Obviously the cashier knew the electronic pad was defective because she NEVER offered me the £40 at the beginning. Can you imagine how many people went through before me & at the end of her shift how much money she pocketed?

Further, a friend went to a leading supermarket last week. She had her items rung up by the cashier. The cashier hurried her along and didn't give her a receipt. She asked the cashier for a receipt and the cashier was annoyed and gave it to her. My friend didn't look at her receipt until later that night. The receipt showed that she asked for £20 cash back.

My co-worker called the store which investigated but could not see how the cashier could pocket the money. She then called her niece who works for a bank and her niece told her this. 'This is a new scam going on. The cashier will key in that you asked for cash back and then hand it to her friend who is the next person in the queue.'

So please, please, please check your receipts right away when using credit or debit cards! This is NOT limited to that store.

I wonder how many "seniors" have been, or will be, "stung" by this one???? To make matters worse ...This scam can be done anywhere, at any retail or wholesale location!!!

BEFORE LEAVING THE CHECK-OUT.....CHECK YOUR RECEIPT!!!!!! I'VE SEEN PEOPLE DO JUST THAT. NOW I'LL START!

Pass this on to your friends and family.

N. B. The name of the store has been taken out to avoid any libel action - Ed

This was added by Graham Beaton

Another you should be aware of is that hotel electronic room keys contain all your details including Credit Card. Best advice is not to hand them back. Not sure this applies to all hotels but worth being aware of.

Manure... An interesting fact

Sent in by Phil Marston 92nd

Manure : In the 16th and 17th centuries, everything had to be transported by ship and it was also before the invention of commercial fertilizers, so large shipments of manure were quite common. It was shipped dry, because in dry form it weighed a lot less than when wet, but once water (at sea) hit it, not only did it become heavier, but the process of fermentation began again, of which a by product is methane gas of course. As the stuff was stored below decks in bundles you can see what could (and did) happen.

Methane began to build up below decks and the first time someone came below at night with a lantern, BOOOOM!

Several ships were destroyed in this manner before it was determined just what was happening. After that, the bundles of manure were always stamped with the instruction ' Stow high in transit ' on them, which meant for the sailors to stow it high enough off the lower decks so that any water that came into the hold would not touch this volatile cargo and start the production of methane.

Thus evolved the term ' S.H.I.T ' (Stow High In Transit) which has come down through the centuries and is in use to this very day. You probably did not know the true history of this word.

Neither did I.

English Signs from Around the World

From Phil Marston 92nd

In a Bangkok temple:

IT IS FORBIDDEN TO ENTER A WOMAN, EVEN A FOREIGNER, IF DRESSED AS A MAN.

Cocktail lounge, Norway:

LADIES ARE REQUESTED NOT TO HAVE CHILDREN IN THE BAR.

Doctors office, Rome :

SPECIALIST IN WOMEN AND OTHER DISEASES.

Dry cleaners, Bangkok :

DROP YOUR TROUSERS HERE FOR THE BEST RESULTS.

In a Nairobi restaurant:

CUSTOMERS WHO FIND OUR WAITRESSES RUDE OUGHT TO SEE THE MANAGER.

On the main road to Mombassa, leaving Nairobi :

TAKE NOTICE: WHEN THIS SIGN IS UNDER WATER, THIS ROAD IS IMPASSABLE.

On a poster at Kencom:

ARE YOU AN ADULT THAT CANNOT READ? IF SO WE CAN HELP.

In a restaurant:

OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK AND WEEKENDS.

In a cemetery:

PERSONS ARE PROHIBITED FROM PICKING FLOWERS FROM ANY BUT THEIR OWN GRAVES.

Over the Hill?

Sent in by Stan Murray 92nd

You may be headed over the hill if:

- You and your teeth don't sleep together.
- You try to straighten out the wrinkles in your socks and discover you aren't wearing any.
- At the breakfast table, you hear snap, crackle, pop and you're not eating cereal.
- Your back goes out but you stay home.
- It takes two tries to get up from the couch.
- When your idea of a night out is sitting on the patio
- When happy hour is a nap.
- When you're on holiday and your energy runs out before your money does.
- When all you want for your birthday is to not be reminded of your age.
- When you step off the curb and look down one more time to make sure the street is still there.
- Your idea of weight lifting is standing up.
- It takes longer to rest than it did to get tired.
- Your memory is shorter and your complaining lasts longer.
- Your address book has mostly names that start with Dr.
- You sit in a rocking chair and can't get it going.
- The pharmacist has become your new best friend.
- Getting "lucky" means you found your car in the car park.
- The twinkle in your eye is merely a reflection from the sun on your bifocals.
- It takes twice as long - to look half as good.
- Everything hurts, and what doesn't hurt, doesn't work.
- You look for your glasses for half an hour and they were on your head the whole time.
- You sink your teeth into a steak - and they stay there.
- You give up all your bad habits and still don't feel good.
- You have more patience, but it is actually that you just don't care anymore.
- You finally get your head together and your body starts falling apart.



RAF Days

Was It Something I Did?

Sent in by Brian Davies 76th Entry

Thinking back the other day whilst fondly remembering some of my many salad days in the Royal Air Force, I suddenly realised that most of the RAF Stations I had been posted to had closed down to become industrial estates, farms or foundations for motorways. These are those now to be committed to 'fond' memories.

My first posting was to Ballykelly in Northern Ireland (now an industrial estate), where the lasting memories are of the sewage farm plant located on the footpath to the work areas. The smell from this plant was quite disgusting and even more off putting than doing night guard duty with loaded sten guns. I was delighted in the aircraft that were based or visited there; Shackletons, Fairy Gannets, Corsiers and numerous others.

Another posting was to RAF St. Eval in Cornwall (now a communications station), with its five squadrons of Shackletons and the occasional Anson. Wooden billets or nissan huts were the accommodation here and no bus service to anywhere. Another pain was the taking off of numerous Shackletons at seven each night over the camp Astra Cinema that always caused a total audio blackout of soundtracks for about 15 minutes.

My next posting was RAF Christmas Island (now a land crab infested, only slightly radioactive atoll with native village and a new name - Kiritimati) Here we had Valiants, Canberras, Vulcans, and Hastings. Lots of sun and sea and the ultimate in pyrotechnics, with dead cheap alcohol were the order of the day.

RAF Locking was my home for the next 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ years (now a housing estate industrial park and potential cemetery). No aircraft but lots of totty in the surrounding towns and villages and good pubs and beer.

A later post was to RAF Muharraq (now Bahrain International Airport) Adjacent to Muharraq village, the Camp beach was also the toilet for the villagers and the smell was abominable when the tide went out and the sun cooked the excreta. Needless to say this beach was avoided by all RAF members, but the main Bahrain beaches were delightful but a bit warm in summer. The aircraft using the then joint use runway were numerous including VC-10s, Argosys, Belfasts and many foreign and exotic civilian aircraft including the Tupolev 104 jet which weekly always used every last bit of runway to take off.

RAF Thorny Island was my next posting (now a yacht marina, expensive housing estate and Vietnamese immigrant base also a Royal Artillery camp). The only UK station where they frequently used mosquito repellent clouds at night similar to those in the tropics, it had its own delightful beach and a good yacht club. Aircraft based there were Hercules C130s, Andovers, Buccaneers and Whirlwinds. Weekend trips to Gibraltar were an excellent fringe benefit.

The next of my postings to disappear was RAF Seletar, but in 1969 again no aircraft but a delightful golf course and good social life and married quarters, set right next to Jalan Kayu village. On closure and handing over to the Singapore Armed Forces I moved with my Unit to RAF Changi where there were many aircraft of different types from RAF including : VC-10,

Hercules, and many others including those from allied air forces. With its camp gates opening into Changi Village with its many delights, this Station was a place to remember. Now part of Singapore's main airport complex it continues to be an exotic experience.

My last posting to disappear was RAF North Luffenham, with again no aircraft but a posting that enabled me to have the choice to fly abroad at least three times a year. My aircraft trips were in VC 10s, Britannias and Hercules – but I did refuse a 4-day journey back from RAF Masirah in a

Belfast. A camp with no particular distinction and terrible SNCO quarters, North Luffenham was at least near to the attractive towns of Oakham and Stamford. And with a host of good beer pubs.

Now I recently hear that RAF Lyneham where I spent a hectic but enjoyable year and a half is to close in 2012, also Cottismore about the same time. Lyneham in 1965/66 was a very busy airfield with just about all the RAFs aircraft flying in at some stage, Britannias, Argosys, Beverlys, Belfasts, VC-10s, Lightnings and civilian freighters like DC-8s and the Flying Tigers' Constellation. Also foreign aircraft like the Nord Noratlas from foreign air forces. Some way from civilisation, the main attraction at Lyneham was the local pubs and work.

All these RAF camps have gone with all their memories. But my own memories and my colour transparency collection still keep them alive.

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First Posting

Sent in by Brian Colby 87th Entry

After leaving Locking's hallowed gates in the July of 1960 and had enjoyed what I considered a spot of well earned leave, I purchased a brand new scooter and looked forward to starting at RAF West Raynham, deep in the heart of Norfolk, with just a bit of apprehension at just what my first posting had in store for me.

On arrival I was shown around the Radio Servicing Flight by the WO and introduced to everyone there, naturally thinking this would be where I was going to work, but my first lesson in the wider RAF was never assume a thing, as I was immediately moved out for a 2 months stint on Station Flight.

It was in hindsight a gentle lead into squadron life, as besides re crystallising and tuning up the odd 1987 VHF radio I was introduced to the joys of helping out the airframe fitters refuelling the flights Anson and Meteors, plus occasionally even the odd visiting Spitfire. To some extent it was also like going back in time because for some reason in the corner of the hangar were stored a complete German V1 Doodle Bug and a Komet aircraft from the end of the war.

I was also surprised to find that the twin seat Meteor would always have to be fully fuelled each Friday afternoon so that a certain pilot, together with the same corporal passenger, could fly it all the way up to Scotland for the weekend. On their return I remember thinking what lucky blighters they were to be members of such a special RAF flying club and saving so much train fare into the bargain.

Tuning up a Meteor's VHF whilst the engines were running, stood me in good stead for my eventual move to 'AWFCS' the All Weather Fighter Combat School, where I joined the radio section keeping huge Javelin MK 5's up and running. At long last I was able to put my Locking trained AI-17 radar skills to use and I revelled in it, however attending any comm's problems after engine start-up was a different matter. This entailed crawling under the aircraft to undo the hatch and then stand upright inside the fuselage to reach the VHF sets, at the same time being completely deafened by the tremendous roar of the jet engines only inches away from each shoulder, altogether a far cry from working at a peaceful bench.

The hazards of front line Javelin duties was really brought home when I witnessed one of the squadrons engine fitters, who also had to stand in a similar hatch, scream in agony as one of his outstretched legs was blasted by the pilots accidental firing of the engine starter cartridge, the hot exhaust gases burning completely through the poor chaps denims to cause terrible damage.

Of course it was not all work and no play and the radio section members that I joined were a great team and we all got on well together. Some of us were regular nocturnal customers at the local Red Lion pub in East Rudham where visiting American airmen from the nearby Sculthorpe air base were naturally challenged to many a game of darts and shove-halfpenny. Enjoying great banter and swapping jokes with our friends from across the water we also had the pleasure of relieving them of many packets of 'Lucky Strike' cigarettes in the process.

At Locking I had been fortunate to be a member of the gymnastic team but with no such facilities at Raynham I joined the station basketball team instead. The training sessions had to be carried out at one end of a spare hangar which, with its hard concrete floor and numerous rain puddles, wasn't the finest of places to practice; it did however give the opportunity to visit many other RAF camps throughout East Anglia on away games.

Dave, one of the squadron's members was good enough to play for Kings Lynn Linnets football team, to whom I regularly gave a lift on his weekly training session. Partaking of a pint during one such occasion I got chatting to a noisy group of American airmen who, on finding I was a member of Raynham's basketball team, immediately threw down a challenge which was accepted.

A few days later our arrival at Sculthorpe turned out to be a real eye opener. With the roar of the resident large 4 engined 'Destroyer' bombers taking off to patrol the Russian border in the background, we were ushered into their amazing gymnasium which had a plush wooden floor, raised seating for spectators, and finished off with a large electronic scoreboard. After initial pleasantries we were then soundly thrashed 60 –nil by their 7 foot tall players who hardly broke into a sweat. It was altogether a masterful display of the sport and I guess the USAF guys had undoubtedly got their revenge for all the cigs we had removed from their comrades.

Their hospitality then extended to inviting us to their 'PX' club, the equivalent to our Naffi, where on arrival we were even more amazed to find that the Sculthorpe base was in the habit of, once a month, flying night club entertainment shows all the way over from Germany. We realised the surprising extent to what a different world those Yanks lived in compared to us.

Meanwhile back at camp, if we returned too late for the mess to provide supper, then the fall back situation was to call round Dave's local girlfriend 'Bunty', whose parents always had a welcome mat and a hot mug of cocoa with toast, the natives being very friendly in Norfolk. There were of course regular exercises, where one night with all the aircraft lined up for take-off, the Engineering Officer came along to check up on progress, just as the first aircraft suddenly started up. Unfortunately the EO had picked up a large engine intake blank as he approached which, catching the first exhaust, resulted in him running past us at a somewhat high rate of knots as he tried to regain his balance. Even more unfortunately, the poor chap then continued to hold on grimly to the blank whilst running in the wrong direction, gathering even more speed as he intersected the rest of the exhaust plumes one after the other, until fate kindly took a hand and he fell over into a small grassy gully. He was luckily unharmed but had certainly raised the spirits of the troops who witnessed his high speed antics.

Life on the Javelin squadron was hard especially heaving in and out the large units of the AI-17 radar etc, but it kept one fit, although I must admit that between sorties in the crew room I did become quite skilled at darts in the process, so it couldn't have been all that bad.

There was of course friendly rivalry between us and the adjacent Hunters of 'DFCS', the Day Fighter Combat School. The Javelin pilots often boasting that in air to air practice dog fights the Hunter could be bested by the Javelins use of its massive air brakes, causing the faster Hunter to overtake and immediately fall prey to the Javelins guns/missiles.

During NATO exercises the Hunters were also in the habit of flying over Sculthorpe and dropping the odd toilet roll to the Yanks from their undercarriages. The result was that after one such

cheeky raid, the following morning many enjoyed the spectacle of hearing a roar in the distance as 2 Destroyers, belching black smoke from their exhausts, screamed low over West Raynham and proceeded to release literally hundreds of toilet rolls from their bomb bays with the result that the hangars and airfield were completely plastered in long white streamers.

Being close, West Raynham also gave the opportunity to nip home at weekends, where I often arranged to meet up with ex 87th colleague Johnny Stevens, who had been backtracked to the 88th, where with some of his pals from RAF Honington and mine from Raynham we would hit the numerous Jazz Clubs that were then springing up in Norwich and the rest of Norfolk. Mid-week I and another colleague from DFCS would repeat the experience, visiting jazz clubs in Kings Lynn, Fakenham and even Cromer etc.

It was as can be guessed all becoming rather hectic and I was having a great time, but then like all things it came to an abrupt and sudden end one sunny afternoon.

Sat in a Javelins cockpit, idly running up the radar, a breathless airman approached to shout out that I should have cleared 3 days previous and already be down at Yatesbury on a 3 month AI-23 PG course.

Headquarters had completely fallen down on the job and from that moment on it was one mad rush to clear and head back down to the West Country once again.

I was not to know it at the time but that out of the blue PG course at Yatesbury was to alter my way of life completely, for during it I was destined to meet my future wife Brenda, and on completion the RAF in its wisdom reward me by whisking me off to far away Middleton-St-George to start work on Lightnings.

Thus although my working time at West Raynham only lasted for a short 9 months it had turned out to be a brilliant introduction to a fully operational station. In a quick learning curve I had picked up squadron routines and the responsibilities that were required in the wider RAF community and in the process early promotion to corporal. Intriguingly I had also learnt, talking to an American opposite number, that the USAF needed up to 6 airmen to keep operational their Destroyer's electronics system, employing the likes of an aerial specialists, transmitter specialist and so on, so he was completely taken aback to learn that in the RAF just one bod was needed to do exactly the same on a Javelin. It brought home in spades the realisation that our 3 years of training at Locking as radio fitters was second to none and at the same time, for the UK in general, incredible value for money.

Like a first girlfriend I guess most of us remember our immediate posting after Locking with just that extra bit of nostalgia, and with its closeness to home I certainly remember West Raynham with a special fondness.

On completion of the course I returned to say my final farewells to the many friends and colleagues I had made in that short space of time I had been there, knowing I would probably not bump into any of them again.

I left though in the knowledge that, with all the curved balls that tended to be thrown one's way, life in the RAF was going be far from dull, so as I travelled on my scooter heading north up the A1 to Middleton, the apprehension that I had felt on approaching Raynhams gates a year earlier had vanished completely, and I actually looked forward to the next stage of my RAF career with a definite sense of excitement.

The Horns of a Dilemma

Sent in by Mike Collier 76th

I never rose to the dizzy heights of Apprentice N.C.O. rank at Locking. The "powers that be" obviously considered me too young and immature to be granted that status. In retrospect, they were almost certainly correct. I am sure that the occupants of any hut of which I was put in charge, would have lynched me within a couple of weeks.

On leaving Locking, I spent a delightful four months as a J/T in A.S.F. at Bassingbourn, doing second line servicing on Canberra B2 and T4 aircraft. Then, before I had reached the ripe old age of 18 ½, my tapes came through. Unfortunately, along with this event came a posting to Gaydon.

Here I embarked on what was, without doubt, the most awful job I had in my limited R.A.F. service. It involved booking in sick items of Green Satin equipment from all over the world and dispatching repaired replacements. It was soul destroying and could easily have been done by an AC2 clerk with half a brain. As I was a one man band, there was no chance to exercise any form of command authority.

Five months of that was more than enough and I got an exchange posting (with Joe Craig ex-75th) back to Bassingbourn. On returning, I found myself on "B" Flight dispersal in the middle of the airfield, doing first line servicing on Canberra B2's. But at last, I had a man working for me. He was a deferred National Service S.A.C. Air Wireless Mechanic. He seemed a pleasant enough bloke, though he did spend a lot of time reading magazines and articles about child birth. He also tended to levitate slightly, every time the phone rang. Apparently his wife was overdue with the birth of their first child. Generally, radio problems were relatively rare, then a couple of weeks after I got there, two aircraft returned almost simultaneously, one with a wireless snag, the other with a radar fault. I detailed the mechanic to go and sort out the wireless problem. Telling him to take a spare V.H.F., as that was the most likely cause of the symptoms described. Meanwhile, I went off to fix the offending radar. This proved a little more difficult than I had expected but eventually everything functioned correctly and I headed for the small encampment to sign the 700. The "Line Chief" told me that my mechanic had fixed and signed up his fault and could I over sign it. I told him I would just pop out to the aircraft to confirm everything was as it should be.

On the way to the equipment bay, I passed the crew room. As usual my mechanic had his bead in one of his publications. He probably knew more about the topic than the local midwife. I asked if the aircraft was O.K. and had he done a radio check with the tower. Without looking up, he replied "Yes Corp. It's all fine".

Collecting a headset, I strolled out to aeroplane and opened the hatch where the V.H.F. lived. It all seemed satisfactory. The box was securely fixed in its tray, all connectors correctly positioned and tight. I levered myself into the cockpit, plugged in the headset, operated the Ground/Flight switch, checked the V.H.F. controller was set to the tower frequency and switched it on. It was certainly one of the quietest V.H.F.'s I had ever listened to. There was no other comm's traffic so I hit the P.T.T. switch "Bassingbourn Tower, "B" Flight dispersal, ground radio check, over" Absolute silence! A repeat call elicited the same response. Very strange! Switching everything off I returned to the V.H.F. equipment hatch. Undid the four knurled screws on the front cover of the box and removed it. Facing me were 20 neat little round EMPTY holes, where should have dwelled 10 crystals.

I "hit the roof", rapidly retraced my steps to the dispersal huts and hauled the mechanic out of the crew room. Fortunately, R.S.F. had not been to do their daily collection of duff boxes. I ordered him to pick up the box and follow me. On the return trip to the aircraft, I think he guessed that I

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

was not impressed by his performance. I stood over him while he pushed the crystals, one at a time into the already fitted box. Then sat him in the cockpit, where I could see and hear what he was doing. He did a hesitant but satisfactory check with the tower. Having over signed his entry in the 700, I dragged him outside, away from the dispersal huts and administered a severe b*****ing. Including that I was seriously considering charging him with "Signing a certificate relating to an aircraft without first ensuring its accuracy", contrary to the Air Force Act. He went a mite paler at that point and even more pale when I told him that I could guarantee he would get at least 14 days "jankers" from such a charge. As a parting shot, I told him I would decide what to do with him by the morning but it would be unwise to make any short term plans. I guess it was unlikely that he had ever been spoken to like that by someone at least 5 years his junior.

So here is the dilemma. On one hand, he was a National Serviceman with only a few weeks left to serve. He was somewhere he did not want to be, doing something he did not want to do. He was obviously very concerned about his wife. Only he and I knew of the misdemeanour he had committed. On the other hand, if I had gone ahead and over signed his work without checking and someone else had discovered the problem, it was possible that I could have lost my tapes or at least, got a severe reprimand on my record. Not good news for someone who at that point still considered that he had a future in the R.A.F.

I was not yet 19 years old a very inexperienced N.C.O. Should I follow the black and white principles that pertained to my Locking training? If you toed the line, did nothing wrong, you were safe. If you did anything wrong and got caught, you were charged. No shades of grey. Alternatively, should I heed the plea of Shakespeare's Portia and show mercy?

I would be very much interested to know what those in the readership think I should have done, in the circumstances described. If our worthy Editor is kind enough to publish this, he might also welcome any extra copy generated.

Do let me know your opinion please! And perhaps Mike will let us know what he did! - Ed

Humour

Three from Phil Marston 92nd

On the last day of school before Christmas break, the children brought gifts for their teacher.

The florist's son brought the teacher a bouquet of flowers.

The Sweet shop owner's daughter gave the teacher a pretty box of chocolates.

Then the off-licence owner's son brought up a big, heavy box. The teacher lifted it up and noticed that it was leaking a little bit. She touched a drop of the liquid with her finger and tasted it.

"Is it wine?" she guessed.

"No," the boy replied.

She tasted another drop and asked, "Champagne?"

"No," said the little boy.

"It's a puppy!"

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An elderly couple were having dinner one evening when the husband reached across the table, took his wife's hand in his and said, "Martha, soon we will be married 50 years, and there's something I have to know. In all of these 50 years, have you ever been unfaithful to me?"

Martha replied, "Well Henry, I have to be honest with you. Yes, I've been unfaithful to you three times during these 50 years, but always for a good reason."

Henry was obviously hurt by his wife's confession, but said, "I never suspected. Can you tell me what you mean by 'good reasons'?"

Martha said, "The first time was shortly after we were married, and we were about to lose our little house, because we couldn't pay the mortgage. Do you remember that one evening I went to see the banker, and the next day he notified you that the loan would be extended?"

Henry recalled the visit to the banker and said, "I can forgive you for that. You saved our home, but what about the second time?"

Martha asked, "And do you remember when you were so sick, and they said there was a long waiting list for the heart surgery you needed? Well, I went to see your doctor one night and, if you recall, there was suddenly an operation available."

"I recall that," said Henry. "And you did it to save my life, so of course I can forgive you for that.

Now tell me about the third time."

"Alright," Martha said. "So do you remember when you ran for president of your golf club, and you needed 73 more votes?"

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A man is stopped by the police at midnight and asked where he's going.

"I'm on the way to listen to a lecture about the effects of alcohol and drug abuse on the human body."

The policeman asks, "Really? And who's going to give a lecture at this time of night?"

"My wife", comes the reply.



SO, ... HOW'S YOUR DAY GOING?

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Love The Irish - Three from Geoff Corby 92nd

Paddy was driving down the street in a sweat because he had an important meeting and couldn't find a parking place. Looking up to heaven he said, 'Lord take pity on me. If you find me a parking place I will go to Mass every Sunday for the rest of me life and give up me Irish Whiskey!'

Miraculously, a parking place appeared.

Paddy looked up again and said, 'Never mind, I found one.'

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Paddy was in New York. He was patiently waiting and watching the traffic cop on a busy street crossing. The cop stopped the flow of traffic and shouted, 'Okay, pedestrians.' Then he'd allow the traffic to pass.

He'd done this several times, and Paddy still stood on the sidewalk.

After the cop had shouted, 'Pedestrians!' for the tenth time, Paddy went over to him and said, 'Is it not about time ye let the Catholics across?'

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Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

Gallagher opened the morning newspaper and was dumbfounded to read in the obituary column that he had died.

He quickly phoned his friend, Finney. 'Did you see the paper?' asked Gallagher. 'It says I died!!'

'Yes, I saw it!' replied Finney. 'Where are ye callin' from?'

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Father Murphy walks into a pub in Donegal, and asks the first man he meets, 'Do you want to go to heaven?'

The man said, 'I do, Father.'

The priest said, 'Then stand over there against the wall.'

Then the priest asked the second man, 'Do you want to go to heaven?'

'Certainly, Father,' the man replied.

'Then stand over there against the wall,' said the priest.

Then Father Murphy walked up to O'Toole and asked, 'Do you want to go to heaven?'

O'Toole said, 'No, I don't Father.'

The priest said, 'I don't believe this. You mean to tell me that when you die you don't want to go to heaven?'

O'Toole said, 'Oh, when I die , yes. I thought you were getting a group together to go right now.'

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An Irish priest is driving down to New York and gets stopped for speeding in Connecticut . The state trooper smells alcohol on the priest's breath and then sees an empty wine bottle on the floor of the car.

He says, 'Sir, have you been drinking?' 'Just water,' says the priest.

The trooper says, 'Then why do I smell wine?'

The priest looks at the bottle and says, 'Good Lord! He's done it again!'

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Paddy staggered home very late after another evening with his drinking buddy. He took off his shoes to avoid waking his wife, Kathleen.

He tiptoed as quietly as he could toward the stairs leading to their upstairs bedroom, but misjudged the bottom step. As he caught himself by grabbing the banister, his body swung around and he landed heavily on his rump. A whiskey bottle in each back pocket broke and made the landing especially painful.

Managing not to yell, Paddy sprung up, pulled down his pants and looked in the hall mirror to see that his butt cheeks were cut and bleeding. He managed to quietly find a full box of Band-Aids and began putting a Band-Aid as best he could on each place he saw blood. He then hid the now almost empty Band-Aid box and shuffled and stumbled his way to bed.

In the morning, Paddy woke up with searing pain in both his head and butt and Kathleen staring at him from across the room.

She said, 'You were drunk again last night weren't you?'

Patton said, 'Why you say such a mean thing?'

'Well,' Kathleen said, 'it could be the open front door, it could be the broken glass at the bottom of the stairs, it could be the drops of blood trailing through the house, it could be your bloodshot eyes, but mostly it's all those Band-Aids stuck on the hall mirror.'

Obituary

John Lawrence Farmer - 77th Entry.

12th June 1937 - 14th Feb. 2011

It is with great sadness that we record the tragic and sudden loss of John, who had been the Membership Secretary of the Association since 2000. He was a life member of the Association.

John passed out from the apprentices in 1957 and served on tours in Malaya, Borneo and Aden. On leaving the RAF in 1967, he joined IAL (International Air Radio) and stayed with them, serving on many contracts overseas; IAL was eventually swallowed up by Serco, and he retired in 1997. John was born in Kent, but made his base in Minehead where he lived with his wife Anne, sons Paul, Neil, and daughter Sarah. John died of a heart attack on Monday 14th February which was completely unexpected as he was in buoyant health. Some years ago a minor stroke occurred which was the only indication that all was not well. This left him with a slight abnormality in his sight from which he recovered very quickly, and recently he had a hip replacement. Otherwise he was a very fit 73 year old. John was also a keen member of the West Somerset Railway, and had been the Station Master at Minehead.

John was a quietly spoken man; very patient with a wicked sense of humour. He served on the RAFLAA Committee for 11 years and was very committed to keeping our membership data in meticulous order. He worked extremely hard at recruiting new members and in this he was most successful. His loss is a blow to our organisation and he will be missed by many.



Closing Thought

Philosophy for Old Age

From Chris Lewis 92nd

Do you realise 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 ageing that you think fractions. 'How old are you?' 'I'm four **and a half!**' You're never thirty-six and a half. You're four and a half. That's the key

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 gonna be 16! And then the greatest day of your life ... You **become** 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony.

But then you turn 30. Oooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk! He **TURNE**D; we had to throw him out. There's no fun now. 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! So you **BECOME** 21, **TURN** 30, **PUSH** 40, **REACH** 50 and **MAKE** it to 60. You've built up so much speed that you **HIT** 70!

You **get into** your 80's - things begin to change. Before you know it, you are to 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!!



HOW TO STAY YOUNG

Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight and height

Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.

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**.

Enjoy the simple things.



Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.

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.

Surround yourself with what you love whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. **Your home is your refuge.**



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.

Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the shops, even to the next county; to a foreign country but NOT to where the guilt is.

Tell the people 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

Appointment	Name	Address	Tel/email	Re-Election	Entry
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The Apprentice Prayer

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

Amen
