



# RAFLAA Newsletter

SERIAL 58

NOVEMBER 2010

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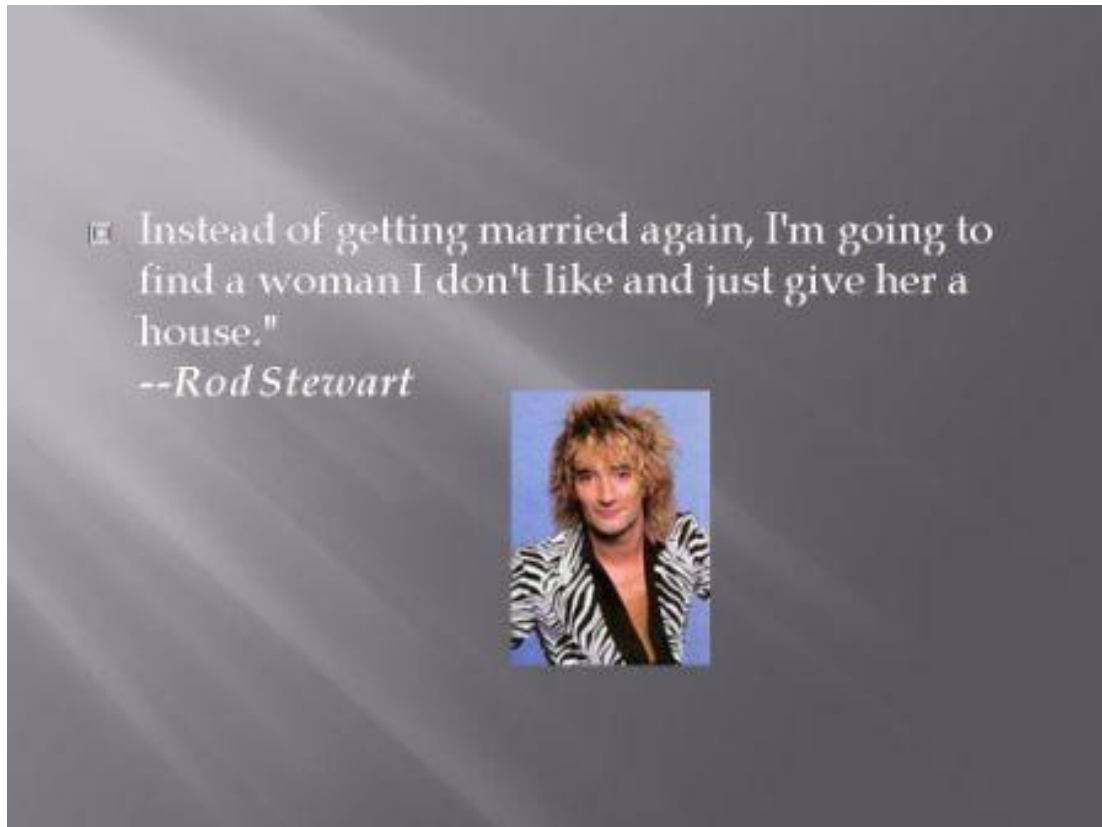
## **Editor's Notes**

*Hello to you all,*

*We will be back at the Webbington again next 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!*

*We have a very mixed bag this time. We even have an article telling you how to get the best out of your laptop!*

*Following the appeal by Mick Rush 87<sup>th</sup> we have one "weird offence" sent in by Steve Oakes 88/89<sup>th</sup>. Read about it under 'Apprentice Days'. There must be more. Do let us know.*



*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!*

*Ed.*

*Deadline for next issue - 23<sup>rd</sup> January for March 2011*

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

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*Tele: 01908 583047*

*45 Chapel Street*

*Woburn Sands*

*Milton Keynes*

*Bucks*

*MK17 8PQ*

## **RAFLAA**

### **44th Committee Meeting of the RAF Locking Apprentice Association Minutes**

From Dave Gunby, Secretary

Venue: Flowerdown House, Weston super Mare

Date: Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2010 at 13:00 Hrs

Present:

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

The Chairman opened the meeting at 13:10 with a greeting to all followed by a reading of the Apprentice Prayer.

#### **Item 1 Apologies**

None.

#### **Item 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Committee reviewed the minutes of the 43rd Committee meeting and found them acceptable.

It was proposed by Chris Tett and seconded by John Farmer that the minutes of the 43rd Committee Meeting in February 2010 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 Treasurer's Report**

From Tony Horry, Treasurer

The Treasurer reported that the **Total Balance Sheet** stands at £ 11,118.73

Start of 2010/11 = £ 12,453.44 balance is reduced by £1334.71

£5578.09 invested again for 3 months in Business High Interest Deposit Bond matured in March 2010 with interest of £4.40 and in June with interest of £4.51 £5587.00 now returned to Business Money Manager A/C – I have an appointment with HSBC next Monday.

**Notes to Accounts**

<b>AGM</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Webbington costs</b>
	£2543.00		65 Lunches = £552.50
Webbington		£3,339.55	83 Dinners = £1618.50
Trophy		£50.00	65 Tea/Biscuits = £162.00
Travelbilty coach		£175.00	60 Wine = £660.00
Music		£200.00	Bar = £486.00
Wordsmith		£20.00	B/B = £60.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>£3784.55</b>	

**Total Excess Expenditure to Association = £1,241.55**

<b>Refunds</b>		
<b>AGM</b>	dinners etc (4 cancellations)	£174.00

<b>Donations</b>		
Flowerdown House RAFA	40.00	RAFLAA Committee Meeting
RNLI (W-s-M)	50.00	Chris Horn (99 <sup>th</sup> )
Waddington Unit CTF	50.00	Brian Cooke (83 <sup>rd</sup> )
Help for Heroes	150.00	AGM Fund raising

**Overheads:** Graham has sent in his invoice for the current newsletter and informs us that the unit price is now £2.00. Total cost for printing 192 copies is £384.00. Postage is £105.65 Total = £489.65. The previous newsletter totalled £404.12

**Recommendations:**

- a. That the Treasurer seeks advice from HSBC regarding the re-investment of the High Interest Deposit Bond
- b. That a donation of £40 be made to Flowerdown House for their hospitality for this meeting.

## Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

### RAF Locking Apprentices Association Income/Expenditure Jan 2010 – July 2010

Balance brought forward from 31 January 2010 (end of FY 09-10)

Business Money Manager A/C	£	3,712.44	
Current A/C	£	3,138.58	
Cash	£	24.33	<b>£ 6,875.35</b>
Deposit Bond	£	5,578.09	
<b>Total Funds B/F</b>			<b>£ 12,453.44</b>

#### Income (Sales)

Membership Renewals			
Cheques =	11	£	120.00
Standing Orders =	120	£	1,195.00

New Members = 2 £ 30.00

Life = £ -

Sales - Video =		£	-
Sales - Ties =	1	£	7.50
Sales - Wheels/Lapel/Coins		£	-
Sales - Coasters =		£	-
AGM		£	2,543.00

Income (Feb - July 2010) £ 3,895.50

Interest - Moneymanager A/C	£	1.43
Deposit Bond	£	8.91
Current A/C	£	-

Total Income £ 3,905.84

#### Total Balance

Deposit Bond	£	5,587.00
Business Money Manager A/C	£	3,713.87
Current A/C		£1,759.53
Cash	£	24.33
<b>Total Funds</b>		<b>£ 11,084.73</b>

#### Expenditure (Purchases)

Pins	£0.00
Name Badges	£18.40
Ties	£0.00
Videos	£0.00
AGM	£3,784.55

#### Other

Donations £290.00 £ 4,092.95

#### Direct Expenses

Audit	£50.00
Refunds	£174.00
Bank Charges	£0.00
Advert	

Overheads £ 224.00

Travel	£286.30
Printing	£304.00
Telephone	£77.32
Postage	£187.58

Stationery £102.40 £ 957.60

Total Expenditure £ 5,274.55

Surplus/Deficit -£1,368.71

Deposit Bond + Interest  
**Total = £9300.87**

**A. Horry, Treasurer**

The Treasurer sought approval of his report. Peter Crowe proposed and Andy Perkins seconded. All agreed.

## **Item 5 Membership Secretary's Report**

From John Farmer, Membership Secretary

### **General**

Since the AGM in April the Association has lost several members. There have been two deaths and a resignation. Several members have been removed from the active list due to non-payment of subscriptions. There has been a resignation.

I am glad to report that the number of members still having problems with their Standing Order Mandates is down to four. The two members who have 'dropped off the map' but are (still) paying £7.50 each year are being pursued through their Banks. We will have to see if this is going to be worth-while, as one bank is intimating that there will be an 'administration fee' to pay!

### **Advertising**

The Association continues to advertise regularly in the RAFA magazine. I hope to have an advert in the RAF News in the very near future. I have sent out 10 posters to large RAFA clubs. I have been in touch with a number of Aviation related sites in the UK WRT advertising RAFLAA, but the response has been 'lukewarm' to say the least.

### **Membership figures**

No new members have joined so there are still 671 names on the database of which 351 are considered as 'active.' One member has resigned (T.Rodgers 96<sup>th</sup>) and 2 members have passed away (Derek Smith 76<sup>th</sup> and John Smith 72<sup>nd</sup>). Three more members have been removed from the active list for non payment of subscriptions.

One member has taken out life membership; there are now 76 life members.

The number of members paying by SOM has changed slightly, down by 4 to 215.

The number of members not paying by SOM has decreased by 2.

182 members receive notification that the newsletter is available on the RAFLAA website.

168 members receive their Newsletter in Hard copy format.

3 members receive their Newsletter by E-mail

There is a slight discrepancy between the numbers of 'active members' and the number of Newsletters distributed (2); this is because we send copies of the NL to the families of members who are non active for medical reasons (Alzheimer's etc.)

We send 17 copies of the newsletter to the Widows/families of members who have passed away.

Again there is a slight discrepancy between the number of 'Widows' and the actual number of NL dispatched (2); this is because we send 2 E-mail editions to the families of deceased members.

7 Copies of the Newsletter are sent to 'Sister' organisations

The Chairman thanked John for his report and Rick Atkinson proposed that it be accepted. Chris Tett seconded and 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 our AGM/reunion in April and to letters of condolence.

**Item 7 RAF Locking Apprentice Memorial**

The Secretary had progressed 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.

It had been agreed generally at the AGM that the RAFLAA should have a memorial at the NMA. In order to formalise this, the Chairman proposed that there should be an RAFLAA Memorial at the NMA. This was seconded by Dave Gunby and the resultant vote was a 7 to 2 majority in favour.

The Secretary then explained that the memorial stone would be in Grey Cornish Granite with a polished Black Granite inset on the sloping face of the stone. The inset would carry the words:-

**DEDICATED TO THE  
5791 APPRENTICES  
O  
WHO TRAINED AT  
ROYAL AIR FORCE LOCKING  
1952 - 1976**

The words would be in relief as the black granite is ground away and there would be a black border left around the words. The centrepiece will be a depiction of the apprentice wheel in gilt or brass.

In addition there will be a small plaque or smoothed area on the front of the stone on which words would be put to indicate that this Association provided the memorial. The Secretary would make contact with the stonemason with regard to the presentation of the wheel to ensure that it met with our wishes. The Secretary would prepare drawings of the memorial to submit to the NMA Trustees before their next meeting in September. The drawings would be circulated to Committee prior to this submission. The estimate for the work is £1955.10 + vat at 20% if invoiced in 2011 which seems likely. The Committee thanked the Secretary for his work to date on this project.

**Action: - Dave Gunby**

**Item 8 AGM 2010**

The Committee reviewed this year's AGM. The idea of providing a coach for guests wishing to spend the afternoon in Weston Super Mare proved to be a failure with only 4 people actually availing themselves of the facility. At a cost of £175.00 this was an expensive experiment and the Committee would review this provision at their next meeting. In the meantime Andy Perkins would look into the cost of an all day trip to Bath.



There had been some confusion with regard to the bar subsidy which meant that the cost of the subsidy was considerably more than anticipated. The Committee felt that the meet and greet subsidy should stay but the evening subsidy would be reviewed at the next meeting.

The Treasurer was requested to formally book the Webbington for the 2011 AGM on 16<sup>th</sup> April and also to confirm the entertainment. The cost of rooms would be the same as 2010 with marginal increases in the cost of food possible.

**Action: - Tony Horry, Andy Perkins**

#### **Item 9 RAFLAA Web Site**

There were no reported problems with the Association website. Peter Crowe said that he would put details of the AGM DVD offer from Barry Dinneage when details were available. The Committee thanked Peter Crowe for his continued work.

**Action: - Peter Crowe**

#### **Item 10 FABEA**

The secretary reported from last week's FABEA Annual Meeting at RAF Halton. The 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of Apprentice and Boy Entrant Training will be at the NMA and will be organised by Halton association. They have done initial costings for the event in May 2012 for 500 people. They estimate that they would provide 450 and the remainder would be offered to other Associations. The individual cost per head is likely to be around £30.

#### **Item 11 Newsletter**

Graham Beeston reported that the cost of producing hard copies of the newsletter was rising all the time and asked if some action could be taken to reduce it. It was decided that the secretary would review the list of sister organisations that receive a courtesy copy. It was also decided to review the wording of the slip that is enclosed in the hard copy to place the emphasis on not sending the issue unless requested. John, Graham and Chris would review.

The Editor asked what the response had been to the request for sporting achievement details from members. The Secretary replied that there had been 2 to date and these had been forwarded to the collator. The editor requested the secretary to provide an update in due course.

**Action: - Dave Gunby, Chris Tett, John Farmer, Graham Beeston**

#### **Item 12 Any Other Business**

- a) Andy Perkins expressed his concern that with a diminishing membership (Through Death), the practice of offering a donation of £50 to nominated charities on the death of a member is unsustainable. He suggested that it would be cheaper for the association to make an annual donation to a Charity nominated at the AGM in respect of deceased members. Although the increase in mortality was unlikely to be as fast as Andy suggested it was decided to find out how our sister organisations dealt with the passing of members if at all. The Secretary would conduct a survey and report back.

**Action: - Dave Gunby**

- b) Rick Atkinson reported that he had responded to an e-mail from the membership secretary regarding a quantity of radio equipment found in the attic of widow. Upon investigation it transpired that the equipment was little more than scrap metal and was being dealt with as such.



- c) Tony Horry wondered if anyone had seen our cabinet in the Weston branch of the RAFA as we now don't seem to hold our meetings there. Nobody had but local committee members agreed to visit.
- d) Peter Crowe asked if the "Golden Oldies" at the AGM could be moved to the end of the Agenda as the speeches had become too long. Committee decided that the orators would be asked to restrict their comment to no more than 5 minutes.( Chairman of meeting has the say)

**Item 13 Date of Next Meeting**

The next Committee meeting will be held on 17<sup>th</sup> February at Flowerdown House at 1300hrs. Tony Horry will liaise with the Manageress about the reservation of a room for the meeting.

**Action: - Tony Horry**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 15.40 hours.

## **NOTICES**

### **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 16<sup>th</sup> April 2010](#).

Webbington Hotel



### **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](http://www.latonahotels.co.uk/best-western-webbington.html)

### **Agenda**

Details of the agenda and timetable will be published in the March 2011 Newsletter. If you would like the AGM to consider any particular topics or issues, please contact the Association Secretary, Dave Gunby by telephone 01522 525484 or email [dpgraf72@btinternet.com](mailto:dpgraf72@btinternet.com)

## **Our Event**

Following our tradition, there will be a subsidised bar in the Rowberrow suite available from 11:00 on Saturday 16th where all drinks will be charged at £1. This will be followed by a lunchtime finger buffet in the dining room before the AGM.

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

The AGM will be held in the Rowberrow 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 Rowberrow Suite Bar exclusively available for the RAFLAA event. Again, the bar here will be subsidised before dinner but not during or after the meal.

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](mailto: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 2010, a coach was arranged to take wives and partners to Weston-super-Mare in the afternoon but the take-up was poor and cost the Association money.

For 2011 an all day coach to Bath will be arranged. It will leave at 09:30 and return around 16:30. The charge for this will be a more realistic £15

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.

N.B. Because of the poor take-up in 2010, the 2011 coach will only run if there are sufficient bookings.

### 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)

ARC Taxis 01934 412222

Apple Central 01934 413413

Worle Cars 01934 513344

WSM cars 01934 513333

Woodspring Taxis 01934 414141

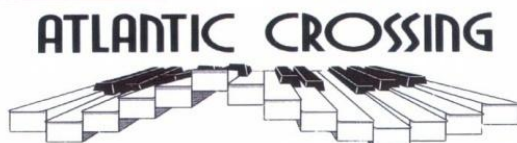
### Music



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.



**RAF Locking Apprentices Association**  
*Dinner Menu Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2011*

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**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 – 16<sup>th</sup> 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      £.....

(Coach will be laid on **only** if sufficient interest.)

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](mailto: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](mailto: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.**

## **Do You Really Need a Hard Copy of the Newsletter?**

The cost of distributing a single copy of the newsletter has risen to £2.51. The July 2010 hard copy distribution cost the Association £489.65. At the present rate it will cost £1468.95 a year to distribute the NL (and this will undoubtedly rise.) This will be unsustainable!

### ***There are cheaper methods of distributing the newsletter***

1. Members can view and/or download/print the Newsletter from the RAFLAA Website. A warning E-mail is sent to all registered members when a new edition is available.

### **This method costs the Association practically nothing!**

2. Registered members can receive an individual E-mailed copy of the newsletter. This method has a slight cost implication (pence per copy.) There are inherent problems with sending large files to certain ISP addresses. Hotmail and some overseas ISPs do not like large files (up to 4mb depending upon the type of file format.)

**Please give some thought to the use of one of these alternative methods and contact the Membership Secretary if you wish to change to either of the alternative methods of distribution.**

## **96<sup>th</sup> Golden Reunion**

From Ron Spain 96th

We of the 96th Entry had our Golden Attestation Reunion on 17th/18th September and a report and photos should hopefully appear in the March 2011 issue.

## **Repeat notice - Wanted – Details of Your Sporting Achievements**

As explained in Item 18 in the minutes of the recent AGM, the RAF Museum at Hendon are mounting a special exhibition as part of their 90<sup>th</sup> celebrations. They would like information about the sporting achievements of ex RAF Locking Apprentices during their service and civilian life at the standard of Command representation up to Olympic feats.

If you took part, and especially if you won anything, please can you provide details to our secretary: Dave Gunby,

Tele 01522 525484 Email: [dpgraf72@btinternet.com](mailto:dpgraf72@btinternet.com)

Address: 23 Toynton Close, Gregg Hall Estate, Lincoln, Lincolnshire. LN6 8AL.

## **Repeat notice – RAFLAA Secretary Committee Vacancy**

*As indicated in the last Newsletter, our secretary, Dave Gunby, will be retiring soon and we need a new secretary.*

*The duties are not onerous. They are mainly taking minutes at two committee meetings and the AGM and writing the odd letter when required. Dave kindly wrote a full description for the last newsletter or you could call him to ask what's involved. Contact Dave direct on Tele: 01522 525484 Email: [dpgraf72@btinternet.com](mailto:dpgraf72@btinternet.com). Or contact any committee member.*

**Come on! Your association needs you!**





## **Apprentice days**

### **A Day in the Life – the Middle Year**

From Mike Collier 76<sup>th</sup>

*Mike contributed 'A day in the life of a Sprog' (July 2005) and 'A Day in the Life – Senior Entry' (March 2006) Here is something about the middle years! He adds that he did eventually marry the girl in this article after 51 years, she is still Mrs C. Good for you Mike! -Ed*

Long before reveille, I am wide awake. Mounting excitement, fuelled by the prospect of seeing my girl friend again, suppressing sleep. It's the final day of our fifth term; our long summer leave begins today. Yesterday, we played our part on the 72nd's passing out parade. There was a lot of bowing and scraping, as the reviewing personage was H.R.H. the Princess Margaret. My position on the square, allowed only a fleeting glimpse of a diminutive figure in a floral dress, when we marched off.

As the duty trumpeter sounds his first notes, my feet hit the floor. A routine perfected over the last eighteen months, leaves me washed, dressed, fed, watered and now perched impatiently on the edge of my bed. The bed space looks strange; all kit packed away, lockers closed and no bed pack. The hut bubbles with light-hearted banter, as everyone prepares to depart. A further check that everything I require is in my small pack, consumes a little more time. Examining my wallet confirms my rail ticket and leave pass are in place. I feel incredibly wealthy, having received "credits" on the latest pay parade.

Eventually the order to leave is given. We form up on the Arena road, march to the square and board the transport. A short journey terminates at Weston-S-Mare, Locking Road station, where special trains are waiting. It is obviously not feasible to load around nine hundred extra travellers onto normal service trains. My interest is in the one heading east, towards Paddington. I assume equivalent ones go south/south west and north.

Quite a number from our hut are London bound and we manage to get a compartment to ourselves. I settle into my seat, eager for the journey to begin. With a shudder and jerk my wish is fulfilled and we are on our way. The distance between myself and a certain young lady at last decreasing. The train quickly establishes a steady rhythm. I have now travelled this route many times and as I gaze out of the window, my mind starts to wander.

I find it hard to believe that I am still with the 76th. The technical side of the course has been a major problem for me. With around three months still to go to reach my seventeenth birthday, I am now the youngest surviving member. We lost about half a dozen people in the first year, mainly due to ill health. Including my good friend John Robertson, one of our Rhodesians. The exams at the end of that year, precipitated a major cull in January. Seventeen or so, trading their blue hat bands for the silver of "C" squadron. In the previous August, we inherited a similar number from the 75th, a consequence of their end of year one exams. Another exam has just been completed; I have grave doubts about my future when we return from leave.

F.T. seems to be a strange process. No announcement is made but without warning, an empty bed space appears in the billet or someone disappears from the class. It is rather like a single rain drop falling into a pool. A momentary ripple, then everything returns to normal. Perhaps I blank out the event as a defence mechanism, triggered by the relief of surviving yet again. It must be pretty grim for those that succumb.

Almost coincident with our January cull, came the allocation of trades. I have no idea how these were determined but was delighted when I was designated Air Radio. I had always wanted to

work on aircraft. The subsequent trade "swaps", sanctioned at the time, held no interest for me. New classes were formed and I found myself in 76E. The classroom work assumed a pronounced bias towards airborne wireless and radar. Next term we start on the actual apparatus; beginning with the 1154/55 H.F. wireless equipment. Five others follow we are told, 1985/6/7 V.H.F. wireless, then Rebecca IV, Gee III, AI 10 and finally, H2S 4A, all radar. The prospect is both exciting and daunting. Will I be able to cope with this new dimension to our training? I am far from confident.

Summer camp was a welcome diversion from the technical bombardment we had undergone. Two weeks at Braunton Sands, enough to rest the brain and test physical fitness. Minimal "bull" and unnecessary discipline, a further bonus. Though compared to our first term, this had diminished considerably at Locking. As had the unwanted attention of the senior Entry.

My thoughts drift back to the subject which has occupied them for long periods of time, since the last half term leave. Only a few more hours and I will be with her again. I am convinced that she is the main reason I am still with the 76th. In our first six weeks, permanent staff and apprentice N.C.O's did their utmost to break our spirit and turn us into the military morons that they could then mould into fighting men. Meanwhile, the educators were trying to put into place, the foundations on which the next three years training would be built. For most people I guess, these fundamentals were largely revision. Unfortunately, I had only received a rudimentary education. For me, everything, starting from the first lesson, was new. With "bull" nights, kit inspections etc., there was no time for study in the evenings. Everyone else seemed to comprehend the educational material, why was I so thick? At weekends, what free time we had, was taken up with sport, reading, sleeping etc. No one appeared to feel the need to study and I was too shy and immature to do anything out of the ordinary. I certainly could not ask a group of comparative strangers for help. Although someone, I think it was John Austin, did show me how to use a set of log tables. So I followed the crowd and pretended that I was finding it all quite easy. It was just a facade and by the end of those six weeks, I was in despair. Totally baffled by every aspect of our technical training, nothing made sense. I was in information overload! Then, two minor miracles happened. The first was a half term leave. Going home to my girl friend was a huge boost to my morale. The second, on return, was being allowed out at the weekend. It meant that for some seven or eight hours on Saturday and Sunday, the hut was mostly empty; the occupants sampling the delights of Weston-S-Mare. With a steady girl friend at home, I did not need to seek female company and was now free to find a quiet place to study, without fear of ridicule. Very, very slowly, I started to catch up. I still did not understand very much but developed an extensive vocabulary of formulae and technical words that I could accurately define. In the first two terms, I think I only went off camp on a couple of occasions. By the start of the third term, with more free time, I was brave enough to study openly in the billet.

I drift back to the present. The scheduled four hours or so for the journey seem interminable. Some of my companions have alighted at intermediate stations and are probably already home. The train finally slows for its approach to Paddington. Within a short time, I am rattling through the Circle Line underground tunnels, en route to Kings Cross. Much to my surprise, those in authority did not question, that for this leave, I had asked for a ticket to Bedford, rather than to my home town of St. Neots. There is a more frequent service on this line and on my last day I can leave home much later.

I have not been to St. Pancras before but it is easy to locate the correct platform. A train to my destination is already waiting. In less than an hour, I am hurrying through Bedford to the departure point, for the bus to complete my journey. As it approaches St. Neots, familiar landmarks appear, heightening my excitement. At last I am walking down the High Street, my uniform attracting some minor interest. On passing the cinema, I note that the current film might be worth seats in the back row tonight. Finally I reach my home and exchange the usual

greetings with my parents. My father notices that two G.C.s now adorn the bottom of my left sleeve and asks if I have been promoted. I think he was quite disappointed, when I did not follow in his footsteps and join the Parachute Regiment. In my room, I have the pleasurable experience of legally donning civilian clothing again. There is still almost two hours, before I can meet my girl friend from work. Parental interest in my activities since last half term, consume some of the time. The conversation interrupted, by my sister arriving home from school. The general exchange of news continues but my imagination is running wild in anticipation of seeing my girl friend again. Eventually it is time, I jump onto my bicycle, heading for her work place. There is a very quiet footpath we take to get to her home. The tantalizing prospect of being alone with her this evening and all the evenings for the next few weeks, makes Locking, for the time being, a very distant memory.

### **Strange Offences**

From Steve Oakes 88/89th entry

Thanks very much for the last newsletter

Following on from Mick Rush's experience on page 3, I would like to recount my own experience of a strange disciplinary charge.

Whist in my first term, I helped myself to an extra roast potato at lunch time when the duty server was not looking. Apparently we were only allowed to have 2 pieces. However, my crime was witnessed by the Cpl Chef who descended on me like a ton of bricks and I was charged with the unauthorised handling of food'. Fair enough - but I was seriously hungry as all 16 year olds were having just enlisted, and with 6 hours having passed since breakfast.

I had heard stories about being on jankers and was not looking forward to the punishment but I was only admonished. One lad in our billet had accrued 33 days from an initial 3 as a result of inspections at the parades etc despite all of other hut members helping out with the cleaning of his kit. This was eventually rescinded with the intervention of the squadron commander and he quietly left the Wing.

## Tit-Bits

### E-Mail Tracker Programs

*The man that sent me this information is a computer tech. He spends a lot of time clearing the junk off computers for people and listens to complaints about speed etc. All forwards are not bad, just some. – Ed*

By now, I suspect everyone is familiar with [snopes.com](http://snopes.com) and/or [truthorfiction.com](http://truthorfiction.com) for determining whether information received via email is just that - true/false or fact/fiction. Both are excellent sites.

#### **Advice from [snopes.com](http://snopes.com) VERY IMPORTANT!!**

1) Any time you see an email that says "forward this on to '10' (or however many) of your friends", "sign this petition", or "you'll get bad luck" or "you'll get good luck" or "you'll see something funny on your screen after you send it" or whatever - it almost always has an email tracker program attached that tracks the cookies and emails of those folks you forward to. The host sender is getting a copy each time it gets forwarded and then is able to get lists of 'active' email addresses to use in SPAM emails or sell to other spammers. Even when you get emails that demand you send the email on if you're not ashamed of God/Jesus - that is email tracking, and they are playing on our conscience. These people don't care how they get your email addresses - just as long as they get them. Also, emails that talk about a missing child or a child with an incurable disease "how would you feel if that was your child" - email tracking. Ignore them and don't participate!

2) Almost all emails that ask you to add your name and forward on to others are similar to that mass letter years ago that asked people to send business cards to the little kid in Florida who wanted to break the Guinness Book of Records for the most cards. All it was, and all any of this type of email is a way to get names and 'cookie' tracking information for telemarketers and spammers - to validate active email accounts for their own profitable purposes.

You can do your Friends and Family members a GREAT favour by sending this information to them. You will be providing a service to your friends. And you will be rewarded by not getting thousands of Spam emails in the future!

Do yourself a favour and **STOP** adding your name(s) to those types of listing regardless how inviting they might sound! Or make you feel guilty if you don't! It's all about getting email addresses and nothing more.

You may think you are supporting a GREAT cause, but you are NOT!

Instead, you will be getting tons of junk mail later and very possibly a virus attached! Plus, we are helping the spammers get rich! Let's not make it easy for them!

ALSO: Email petitions are NOT acceptable to any organization - i.e. Local Govt. Social security, etc. To be acceptable, petitions must have a "*signed signature*" and full address of the person signing the petition, so this is a waste of time and you are just helping the email trackers.

If you forward any correspondence, PLEASE delete the forwarding history, which includes the email addresses! It is a courtesy to others who may not wish to have their email addresses sent all over the world! Erasing the history helps prevent spammers from mining addresses and viruses from being propagated.



## Railroad tracks.

From Martin Eversfield 92<sup>nd</sup>

The US standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number.

Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way they built them in England and English expatriates designed the US railroads.

Why did the English build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.



Why did 'they' use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they had used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, because that's the spacing of the wheel ruts.





So who built those old rutted roads? Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (including England) for their legions. Those roads have been used ever since.

And the ruts in the roads? Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels.



Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. Therefore the United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot. Bureaucracies live forever.

So the next time you are handed a specification/procedure/process and wonder 'What horse's ass came up with this?', you may be exactly right. Imperial Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two war horses. (Two horses' asses.)

Now, the twist to the story:

When you see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRBs. The SRBs are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah





The engineers who designed the SRBs would have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains, and the SRBs had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds.

So, a major Space Shuttle design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's ass. And you thought being a horse's ass wasn't important? Ancient horse's asses control almost everything... and CURRENT Horses Asses in Washington are controlling everything else.





## **Understanding Engineers**

Sent in by Phil Marston 92<sup>nd</sup>

*This is dedicated to all you ex-engineering types out there! - Ed*

### **Understanding Engineers One:**

Two engineering students were walking across a university campus when one said, "Where did you get such a great bike?"

The second engineer replied, "Well, I was walking along yesterday, minding my own business, when a beautiful woman rode up on this bike, threw it to the ground, took off all her clothes and said, "Take what you want."

The first engineer nodded approvingly and said, "Good choice; the clothes probably wouldn't have fit you anyway."

### **Understanding Engineers Two**

To the optimist, the glass is half-full.

To the pessimist, the glass is half-empty.

To the engineer, the glass is twice as big as it needs to be.

### **Understanding Engineers Three**

A priest, a doctor, and an engineer were waiting one morning for a particularly slow group of golfers. The engineer fumed, "What's with those guys? We must have been waiting for fifteen minutes!"

The doctor chimed in, "I don't know, but I've never seen such inept golf!" The priest said, "Here comes the green-keeper. Let's have a word with him." He said, "Hello George, what's wrong with that group ahead of us? They're rather slow, aren't they?"

The green-keeper replied, "Oh, yes. That's a group of blind firemen. They lost their sight saving our clubhouse from a fire last year, so we always let them play for free anytime."

The group fell silent for a moment.

The priest said, "That's so sad. I think I will say a special prayer for them tonight." The doctor said, "Good idea. I'm going to contact my ophthalmologist colleague and see if there's anything he can do for them."

The engineer said, "Why can't they play at night?"

### **Understanding Engineers Four**

What is the difference between mechanical engineers and civil engineers?

Mechanical engineers build weapons. Civil engineers build targets.

### **Understanding Engineers Five**

The graduate with a science degree asks, "Why does it work?"

The graduate with an engineering degree asks, "How does it work?"

The graduate with an accounting degree asks, "How much will it cost?"

The graduate with an arts degree asks, "Do you want fries with that?"

### **Understanding Engineers Six**

Three engineering students were gathered together discussing who must have designed the human body.

One said, "It was a mechanical engineer. Just look at all the joints." Another said, "No, it was an electrical engineer. The nervous system has many thousands of electrical connections." The last

one said, "No, actually it had to have been a civil engineer. Who else would run a toxic waste pipeline through a recreational area?"

### **Understanding Engineers Seven**

Normal people believe that if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Engineers believe that if it ain't broke, it doesn't have enough features yet.

### **Understanding Engineers Eight**

An engineer was crossing a road one day, when a frog called out to him and said, "If you kiss me, I'll turn into a beautiful princess." He bent over, picked up the frog and put it in his pocket.

The frog then cried out, "If you kiss me and turn me back into a princess, I'll stay with you for one week and do ANYTHING you want."

Again, the engineer took the frog out, smiled at it and put it back into his pocket.

Finally, the frog asked, "What is the matter? I've told you I'm a beautiful princess and that I'll stay with you for one week and do anything you want. Why won't you kiss me?"

The engineer said, "Look, I'm an engineer. I don't have time for a girlfriend, but a talking frog, now that's cool."

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### **Punctuation**

From Phil Marston 92nd

An English professor wrote the words:

"A woman without her man is nothing" on the chalkboard and asked his students to punctuate it correctly.

All of the males in the class wrote: "A woman, without her man, is nothing."

All the females in the class wrote: "A woman: without her, man is nothing."

Punctuation is powerful!

## **Computers 'bits and pieces': a Cautionary Tale!**

John P Brooke 85<sup>th</sup>

I have recently taken delivery of a new Notebook PC for use when travelling. I selected the Samsung Q320, for its portability and weight of 2.1 Kg but with a useable 13.4 inch screen and solid construction. Also installed is a Dual Core processor 2.2 GHZ and 4 GB of system (RAM) memory. My choice was influenced by Technical reviews and evaluations, and consideration of past experience of various models. Lastly but not least, I wanted a cost effective buy, and as this model was at 'end of production' status (at Feb 2010), I was able to secure a 25% discount.

After unpacking and initial set-up of my new Notebook, I was surprised and frustrated to find that the 'Windows 7' operating system installed was 32 bit architecture, rather than the 64 bit expected (but not specifically specified). The system (RAM) memory fitted was 4GB, but the use of a 32 bit 'Windows 7' operating system limits the amount of available useable memory to less than 3 GB, rather than the full 4GB installed.

This limitation is specific to the 32 bit version, of XP, Vista and W7: but does not apply to the 64 bit version of these operating systems. This is due to a portion of the system memory being reserved in the 32 bit version exclusively for the operating system, irrespective of the amount of memory installed.

This reduction of performance due to the 32 bit architecture and other incompatibilities of 32 / 64 bit drivers when networked to printers etc quickly prompted my decision to upgrade the PC's Window7 operating system to 64 bit. Before embarking on this substantial task, it seemed prudent to make some detailed checks to confirm that the rest of the system was 64 bit ready.

I was totally confident that the Intel dual processor was 64 bit, ready, and this was easily confirmed on the Intel website. A more comprehensive check was made using a software programme called 'Belarc Advisor' which carries out a detailed audit of all the computer parameters, with a positive result of "64 bit ready", and thus confidence to proceed.

The initial task was to reformat the 500 GB hard drive, using a Paragon software suite, and to also re-partition the hard drive into two new partitions of 250GB each, thus separation the operating system (drive: C) from the data on (drive: D.)

A 'clean' install was then carried out with the Windows 7 Premium 64 bit operating system, and the reinstallation of all the other application software. This exercise went without hitch, with Windows 7 recognizing and providing driver software mostly on demand. A rerun of the "Belarc Advisor" Profile Audit quickly confirmed all was well, and provided a five page print out the results, including all relevant software licence data.

In summary, you can take it that most modern processors are 64 bit ready. You should ensure your software is likewise, when building or installing new devices or applications. My personal preference is for a 4GB minimum of system RAM memory for Notebooks / Laptops.

My current home workstation has 8 GB of dual matched system memory, which complements the triple processor. This dates from spring 2009: I expect to replace this in 2011. The 'outline design' I have already sketched and intend installing a system memory capacity of 16 GB, which in my view should have a significant impact on performance. The processor will be at least a triple core, or perhaps a 'black edition quad'? (I doubt I will be tempted by the new AMD x6 core!). The principle design criteria I look for is reliability, quietness, and to run cool. Therefore such a 'work station' tends to be substantial in build with multiple large controlled fans running at sub 1000 rpm (typically 800 rpm).

I hope you find 'my cautionary tale' of interest of relevance to your future computer choices.

## RAF Days

### Not quite the Olympics

From Stan Murray 92nd

Reading in the latest newsletter about those who may have reached the pinnacle of their sport and represented at Command, even up to Olympic level, made me think of others, like myself, who did not reach these levels but had interesting stories to tell, and in some cases may be unique in the particular stories they have.

I would like to start a chain of articles for the newsletter because I'm sure others have stories of interest they would like to tell, and I hope they do. Here are two from my own, I believe, unique experiences while travelling the world serving my country. Many of you will remember my tales of serving in Chiang Mai in past editions; my first story is from there.

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As you would expect, no British presence abroad would be complete without the odd challenge football match – and this was no different. We had one or two games against local teams and they were played in a very friendly and sporting atmosphere, and I can't even remember the scores. From photographs I still have of the games, we even attracted big crowds, probably of two or three hundred.

After one of the games the local football officials approached us asking if any of the players were qualified referees – well, I was, I had qualified whist at Locking. I was asked if I would like to referee a game for them, and if I could, would I also provide two linesmen. It was no problem, I was looking forward to it, and so were the other two lads.

On the day of the game we were picked up in a Land Rover and taken into town. We could not believe our eyes, there were crowds heading for the main stadium and we were going the same way. When we arrived I started to get a bit worried, there were crowds everywhere, and it was the local area cup final!! I was in a daze, the biggest game I had refereed up to this time had a crowd of about fifty, and here I was in front of a full stadium of what was probably a couple of thousand.

The game was well contested and finally finished 3 – 2, after I had awarded three penalties! Would you believe there was not one bit of trouble from either the crowd or the players. Even at the reception after the game, the local people were so friendly it was hard to believe I had just refereed a major, local football match.

I know Dave Wilkinson (93rd) was a qualified referee long before me, but I often wonder if there is an ex-Locking Apprentice out there who may have refereed a Cup Final, in a foreign country, not speaking a word of the language, and awarded 3 penalties to boot. All this and I was 19 years old!

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My second claim to fame was while I served at the Institute of Aviation Medicine, Farnborough.

As well as playing for The Institute every Wednesday, I also played for a local village team, Cove, in the Surrey Intermediate League, on Saturdays. There are two things worth reporting in my season with them - first we played in the Surrey Intermediate League Cup Final, and I got another football medal. Nothing special you may say, but it was my first since leaving Locking. Secondly, I actually played in the FA Cup, even though it was only in the preliminary rounds.

Don't start checking the record books, although they will show that I played for Cove, against Walton and Hersham in 1967 and scored the first goal of the game. Sadly it was an own goal and they went on to win 8 - 1.

I don't imagine many people who were in the RAF can say they scored a goal in the FA Cup but I'm sure someone out there will tell me otherwise. If someone can, let the editor know for the next edition.

### **Rock Apes Say "The first 4 inches Don't Count"**

From Brian Davies 76<sup>th</sup> Entry

To most of us Aircraft Apprentices at the beginning of our training, the initial meeting with members of Locking's RAF Regiment flight was a culture shock. These rough tough-looking men seemed from a different race to most of us Aircraft Apprentices at the beginning of our training, the initial meeting with members of Locking's RAF Regiment (and seemed not too bright to us budding radio experts). Little did we know until later that the Regiment had been in action since formed during WWII in 1942, and had a history going back to 1921. It also had a worldwide track record of airfield defence in many countries.

At No 1 Radio School they were responsible for instructing airmen and Apprentices in the basics of fire prevention and fire fighting, but primarily in the maintenance and operation of the rifle and Bren Machine gun also the running of the station's busy shooting range. And their instruction technique was vastly different from our Tech instructors, being much less gentle and much more coarse and direct in application. Although we had already taught ourselves to pull to pieces our issued drill .303 rifles, they taught us how to do it properly. Also a much more interesting challenge was the stripping and re-assembly of the Bren Gun. All the many removable parts were removed, cleaned and put back together. Sometimes we did it in timed competitions and many could almost do it blindfolded.

One procedure however initially always caused a problem. The mating of the main gun body to the stock assembly required the knowledge that the first 10cm of the stock projection was not part of its sliding in bracket. Therefore the well hammered in hint from the Rock Apes was always that "the first four inches don't count" Its lewd connotations sat well in the young apprentice's fertile and mucky mind.

During the next few years the RAF Regiment often cropped in my RAF Career. At RAF Ballykelly during the start of the IRA confrontation in 1957, the Transmitter station I worked at was just 2 miles from the Irish border and the IRA had already tried to blow its 90-foot masts up.

So at night we had 12 Regiment guards complete with machine guns and a machinegun tower at the main transmitter site, and trip flares at the two outstation buildings 80 yards away in opposite directions. We learnt that the Rock Apes would shoot at anything that set off a trip flare and as our approach to service these outstations was usually in the dark us fitters and mechanics sometimes did just that to the almost invisible trip wires. Consequently our unofficial S.O.P. was to put a mechanic in the machine gun tower with the trigger-happy guard – it saved a few lives I recon over the months. Meanwhile on the airfield, Regiment patrols totalled a Shackleton engine and killed a cow in phantom shootouts in the blackout.

A few years later at RAF Akrotiri (mid 60s), during a defence exercise, the Regiment ringed the airfield with their Bofers 40mm A.A guns. Our resident Javelin squadron proved too fast (max speed 700mph?) as the 'enemy' targets, so they had to use the squadron's slower Meteor 8 to give the frustrated Rocks a chance. Things were the same in the RAF then as now, often the



wrong equipment for the job. The Regiment guns were to possibly protect the airfield from the Turkish Airforce jets (the potent Super Sabres max speed 900+ knots!).

It was around this time that a Rock Ape corporal friend of mine was whisked, at short notice, back to the UK. It seemed that his preference to the Turkish Cypriots led to him being suspected of arms smuggling through the Greek lines! No official proof was ever offered to this charge.

I met this Regiment lad again, we were both Sergeants and he was up from a terrorist torn Aden on R & R to Bahrain. He was a strong brave chap but when I took him for a drink through the dark back streets of Manama's souk area he was as frightened as a mouse, saying that they would never do this unarmed in Aden. His job in Aden had been attached to the SAS and included the cleaning up of terrorists in the Yemen city prior to 'Mad Mitch' and his skirling pipers and swinging kilts to arrogantly march through. I observed his 'battle fatigue' for the first time and it was most unsettling.

We may have made mock of The Rock Apes at Locking, but they are still hard at it in Afghanistan and numerous other hot spots throughout the world. Amazingly they spend much time there in armoured cars just as they did when formed in 1921

### **Trouble With the Union**

From Mike Collier 76th

One of the advantages of being in the R.A.F., as far as I was concerned, was the absence of trades unions. Although life was occasionally disrupted by their actions, we were never obliged to comply with directives they might issue.

On leaving the service however, I was immediately ensnared. A requirement to join "the union" was a condition of employment, for an instructor at B.O.A.C.'s training centre at Heathrow. Thus, I became a member of A.S.T.M.S. At this time, we were desperately trying to clamber onto the bottom rung of the property ladder and every penny was precious. I bitterly resented the regular contributions I was required to make to the Clive Jenkins retirement fund. Fortunately, industrial action rarely reared its ugly head, so apart from the contributions and the bind of attending monthly meetings, union membership had minimal impact on my first fourteen years in civvy street.

Leaving the then British Airways and joining the B.B.C., produced an even better result. Lecturers in their training department, near Evesham, were not required to join a union. There was union representation at the school but membership was optional. It must have been one of the few parts of the Corporation, where trade unions did not have a strangle hold. On the odd occasions I was required to give "on site" instruction, this was painfully obvious. One particular example stands out in my memory.

The Newsroom in Television Centre, requested two half day courses, on rigging lamps onto lighting barrels. On the appointed day, I boarded the 7 a.m. 125 H.S.T. at Evesham station. Underground from Paddington to Shepherds Bush, followed by a short walk to the "concrete doughnut". A couple of enquires lead me to the Newsroom duty managers office. Unfortunately, he told me, they could only muster six people, so one half day session would suffice. After a more detailed explanation of his requirement, he escorted me to a small news studio, where my group were waiting. Having been introduced, I asked the manager where the switches, with which I could lower the lighting barrels and lamps, were located. He looked horrified. "You can't do that; you will bring the place to a standstill". Hastily adding, that he did not doubt my competence but the barrels (long metal poles suspended between two steel cables) could only be lowered/raised

by an electrician. I was astonished; it was a simple task which I did regularly, without question, in our Wood Norton studios. The whole process was motorised and controlled by one or two switches, depending upon the system. It took fifteen minutes or so to find an electrician, before I finally had something to work with. Having completed the necessary instruction, the students practised rigging and de-rigging the lamps. They did not appear very enthusiastic. When I asked if they thought it to be a worthwhile exercise, they explained that they were classed as unskilled labour and though management wanted them to carry out these jobs, the unions would never sanction it. An even longer wait produced another electrician, to return the studio to its original condition.

Fortunately the manager was in his office. He thanked me and asked if I would like to look around the Newsroom. Always looking to broaden my B.B.C. experience, I was happy to accept. During the tour, he paused beside a T.V. monitor, resting on the floor. Apparently, the news readers wanted it suspended from the ceiling, where they could see it when they were "on air". All the fixings were in place but it could not be rigged, due to a dispute between two unions, over responsibility for the job. He tentatively asked if I might do it. I checked the fittings on the monitor, asked for some steps, which appeared as if by magic and checked the ceiling fixing point. Having rigged and connected it, a signal was provided. The duty newsreader (Moria Stewart) sat at her desk, while I set the monitor on her instructions. The whole operation took less than ten minutes.

With no afternoon class, I caught an early train. On the way home, I pondered upon the reaction of the unions, when the newly positioned monitor was noticed. I confess I was rather relieved when the B.B.C. early evening news appeared on schedule. I did no further training in the Newsroom, so the ultimate fate of the monitor remained a mystery.

In retrospect, I am sure that the only reason I was dragged half way across the country, was to rig that monitor, the course, just an excuse to get me there. I dread to think what inter departmental costs were incurred by the Newsroom for my visit. All because of a petty dispute between trades unions.

## **Transports of Delight**

From Brian Davies 76<sup>th</sup> Entry

We have all experienced the trials and tribulations of using RAF Mechanical Transport, and in the 1960s and 70s the Ground Wireless Fitter (or L Tech GC as many were known of later) possibly more often sufferers than other trade Group 2 people.

With many outstations to service, the GWF was often in charge of a vehicle supplied by the MT section, but infrequently with an MT driver, especially at night.

I did not bother to sit (and pass) my civvy driving test until I was 22 years old. But previous to that, my first service driving experience was on Christmas Island where we were always taken from Main Camp to the Joint Operations Centre Transmitter Site by the ubiquitous Bedford 3-ton truck. One night going on the night shift, unfortunately the MT driver had drunk more alcohol than usual and asked me to drive the final few miles to the Site. Regardless of having no license I did so reaching the high speed of 30 mph on the straight coral road surface. It scared me sufficiently to not attempt it again!

Consequently on the return to UK I took lessons in WSM and passed The Test on Bank Holiday Week. At Locking where I was an instructor, I did not need to drive RAF vehicles so my next experience was on being posted to RAF Akrotiri.



## Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

Here the Ground Wireless Flight was a constant pain to the MT section. Our self drive vehicles ranged from the short wheelbase Landrover, to the J2 six-seater van, a J2 RVT (a J2 with a big workshop attached) and the powerful 6-cylinder Bedford RVT. The latter was an excellent vehicle which frightened the local Cypriotes to death as it bulldozed at speed on its way to our outstations via the off-camp roads forcing them onto the hard shoulder with equanimity. The way our Fitters and Mechs. drove the latter probably was the result of it needing two new engines in two years, numerous side mirrors and a few dents repaired!

It was at Akrotiri that as Sergeant i/c servicing I came to work at 0700 one morning to see that the GW Flight had managed to close down the airfield. As many know, Cyprus in February gets a lot of rain. My fitters in the Bedford had gone to service the CADF equipment which was down a mud track off the runway, and it had bogged in. Our other night duty fitter then took the Landrover out from our ATC base to try and extricate the Bedford – and got bogged in.

The Air Traffic Control Landrover then tried to pull both vehicles out of the mud and got bogged in itself. A tug-master (the big one that was used to tow large aircraft) was then despatched by the ATC to help and it also bogged in just off the runway effectively blocking it and stopping all aircraft movements.

It took hours to unravel the situation and months to calm MT's furious thoughts of the Ground Wireless Flight.

In RAF Muharraq I had a Landrover which was used almost as a private vehicle until some joker at the MT Section decided we did not need a 4- wheel drive vehicle and swapped it for a Minivan. Unfortunately it was the week that Bahrain changed to driving on the Continental side of the road, and the Mini was no match for the locals in their big Chevvy's and Caddis. We learned to drive much more cautiously after that.

When I joined the 6 Tactical Signals Unit in RAF Seletar in 1969, we drove our smaller vehicles from our own MT Section with its fleet of Landrovers with trailers and used 3 or 10 ton trucks from the station MT as deployments required. Driving a Landrover with a half-ton trailer is an acquired skill and even more when each trailer was always overloaded to weigh about a ton. This does not help the efficiency of a Landrover's brakes especially in the heat of Singapore or Malaya. This overloading situation was normal until one day our convoy of six Landrovers and trailers en-route to mid Malaysia had a multiple pileup when the lead vehicle did an emergency stop only three miles from Camp. It ruined the deployment and luckily nobody was really hurt, but our trailers thereafter were much lighter.

During the run-down of forces in the Far East, 6-TSU also eventually reduced from a couple of hundred personnel to about 32 with myself as the Chief Tech i/c. We lost our MT capability and relied on RAF Changi for vehicles. They never realised even after many complaints that Landrovers with town tyres were not very good in the slippery Malaysian jungle tracks. Once they provided me with a Ford Zepher to go up-country which was even more ridiculous. I did use it however to visit and check on the welfare of my personnel's families when their men were on deployment and I did get the occasional salute as people thought it was the Station Commandant's car.

There are many more tales of using RAF MT, but I may bore you with them another time.

## Humour

### Darwin Awards 2010

From Ray Mockford 79th

*You've been waiting for them, so without further ado here are the 2010 Darwin awards.*

#### **8th Place**

In Detroit, a 41-year-old man got stuck and drowned in two feet of water after squeezing head first through an 18-inch-wide sewer grate to retrieve his car keys.

#### **7th Place**

A 49-year-old San Francisco stockbroker, who "totally zoned when he ran", accidentally, jogged off a 100-foot high cliff on his daily run.

#### **6th Place**

While at the beach, Daniel Jones, 21, dug an 8 foot hole for protection from the wind and had been sitting in a beach chair at the bottom, when it collapsed, burying him beneath 5 feet of sand. People on the beach used their hands and shovels trying to get him out but could not reach him. It took rescue workers using heavy equipment almost an hour to free him. Jones was pronounced dead at a hospital.

#### **5th Place**

Santiago Alvarado, 24, was killed as he fell through the ceiling of a bicycle shop he was robbing. Death was caused when the long torch he had placed in his mouth to keep his hands free, rammed into the base of his skull as he hit the floor.

#### **4th Place**

Sylvester Briddell, Jr., 26, was killed as he won a bet with friends who said he would not put a revolver loaded with four bullets into his mouth and pull the trigger.

#### **3rd Place**

After walking around a marked police patrol car parked at the front door, a man walked into H&J Leather & Firearms intent on robbing the store. The shop was full of customers and a uniformed officer was standing at the counter. Upon seeing the officer, the would-be robber announced a hold-up and fired a few wild shots from a target pistol. The officer and a clerk promptly returned fire and several customers also drew their guns and fired. The robber was pronounced dead at the scene by Paramedics. Crime scene investigators located 47 expended cartridge cases in the shop. The subsequent autopsy revealed 23 gunshot wounds. Ballistics identified rounds from 7 different weapons. No one else was hurt.

#### **Honourable Mention**

Paul Stiller, 47, and his wife Bonnie were bored just driving around at 2 a.m. So they lit a stick of dynamite to toss out the window to see what would happen. Apparently they failed to notice the window was closed

#### **Runner Up**

Kerry Bingham had been drinking with several friends when one of them said they knew a person who had bungee-jumped from a local bridge in the middle of traffic. The conversation grew more heated and at least 10 men trooped along the walkway of the bridge at 4:30 a.m. At the midpoint of the bridge they discovered that no one had brought a bungee rope. Bingham, who had continued drinking, volunteered and pointed out that a coil of lineman's cable lay nearby. They secured one end around Bingham's leg and then tied the other (!) to the bridge. His fall lasted 40 feet before the cable tightened and tore his foot off at the ankle. He miraculously survived his fall into the icy water and was rescued by two nearby fishermen. Bingham's foot was never located.

**And The Winner Is.....**

Zookeeper Friedrich Riesfeldt (Paderborn, Germany) fed his constipated elephant 22 doses of animal laxative and more than a bushel of berries, figs and prunes before the plugged-up pachyderm finally got relief. Investigators say ill-fated Friedrich, 46, was attempting to give the ailing elephant an olive oil enema when the relieved beast unloaded. The sheer force of the elephant's unexpected defecation knocked Mr. Riesfeldt to the ground where he struck his head on a rock as the elephant continued to evacuate 200 pounds of dung on top of him. It seems to be just one of those freak accidents that proves.... 's\*\*t happens'

It always seems important to thank these people for removing themselves from the gene pool!

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**Maybe the Best IRISH Joke Ever!**

Two paddies were working for the city public works department. One would dig a hole and the other would follow behind him and fill the hole in. They worked up one side of the street, then down the other, then moved on to the next street, working furiously all day without a rest, one man digging a hole, the other man filling it in again.

An onlooker was amazed at their hard work, but couldn't understand what they were doing, so he asked the hole digger, 'I'm impressed by the effort you two are putting in to your work, but I don't get it -- why do you dig a hole, only to have your partner follow behind and fill it up again?'

The hole digger wiped his brow and sighed, 'Well, I suppose it probably looks a bit odd because we're normally a three-man team. But today, the bloke who plants the trees called in sick.'

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**The Italian Secret to a Long Marriage.**

At St. Peter's Catholic Church in Toronto, they have weekly husband's marriage seminars. At the session last week, the priest asked Giuseppe, who said he was approaching his 50th wedding anniversary, to take a few minutes and share some insight into how he had managed to stay married to the same woman all these years.

Giuseppe replied to the assembled husbands, *'Wella, I'va tried to treat her nicea, spenda da money on her, but besta of all is, I tooka her to Italy for the 25th anniversary!'*

The priest responded, *'Giuseppe, you are an amazing inspiration to all the husbands here! Please tell us what you are planning for your wife for your 50th anniversary?'*

Giuseppe proudly replied, *"I gonna go pick her up."*

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**Stammerers Action Group**

A very pretty young speech therapist was getting nowhere with her Stammerer's Action group. She had tried every technique in the book. Finally, exasperated, she said "If any of you can tell me where you were born, without stuttering, I will have wild and passionate sex with you until your muscles ache and your eyes water."

The Englishman piped up "B-b-b-b-b-b-irmingham", he said. "That's no use, Trevor" said the speech therapist, "Who's next?"

The Scotsman raised his hand and blurted out "P-p-p-p-p-p-p-aisley".. "That's no better, Hamish. How about you, Paddy?"

The Irishman took a deep breath and eventually blurted out "London". "Brilliant, Paddy!" said the speech therapist and immediately set about living up to her promise.

After 15 minutes of exceptionally steamy sex, the couple paused for breath and Paddy said . . . .  
-d-d-d-d-d-d-d-erry".

**Proofreading is a Dying Art, Wouldn't You Say?**

Sent in by Martin Eversfield 92nd

**Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Expert Says**

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**Man Kills Self Before Shooting Wife and Daughter**

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**Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes Over**

What a guy!

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**Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers**

Now that's taking things a bit far!

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**Miners Refuse to Work after Death**

No-good-for-nothing' lazy so-and-so's!

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**Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant**

See if that works any better than a fair trial!

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**War Dims Hope for Peace**

I can see where it might have that effect!

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**If Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May Last Awhile**

You think?

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**Cold Wave Linked to Temperatures**

Who would have thought

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**Enfield (London) Couple Slain; Police Suspect Homicide**

They may be on to something!

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**Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges**

You mean there's something stronger than duct tape?

## **Man Struck By Lightning: Faces Battery Charge**

He probably IS the battery charge!

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## **New Study of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group**

Weren't they fat enough?!

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## **Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft**

That's what he gets for eating those beans!

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## **Kids Make Nutritious Snacks**

Do they taste like chicken?

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## **Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half**

Chainsaw Massacre all over again!

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## **Hospitals are Sued by 7 Foot Doctors**

Boy, are they tall!

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## **And the winner is.....**

## **Typhoon Rips Through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead**

Did I read that right?

## Quiz

### Riddles to Ward off Alzheimer's

Sent in by Chris Lewis 92nd

This is one of the best five riddles I have seen. The answers are at the bottom but do try to figure them out first. Riddle #5 is amazing.

It all helps to sharpen those genes in your brain and stalls Alzheimer's for years!

1. A murderer is condemned to death. He has to choose between three rooms. The first is full of raging fires, the second is full of assassins with loaded guns, and the third is full of lions that haven't eaten in 3 years. Which room is safest for him?
2. A woman shoots her husband. Then she holds him under water for over 5 minutes. Finally, she hangs him. But 5 minutes later they both go out together and enjoy a wonderful dinner together. How can this be?
3. What is black when you buy it, red when you use it, and gray when you throw it away?
4. Can you name three consecutive days without using the words Wednesday, Friday, or Sunday? (Come on: there are two answers to this one!)
5. This is an unusual paragraph. I'm curious as to just how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it. It looks so ordinary and plain that you would think nothing was wrong with it. In fact, nothing is wrong with it! It is highly unusual though. Study it and think about it, but you still may not find anything odd. But if you work at it a bit, you might find out. Try to do so without any coaching!

**Answers:**

1. The third room. Lions that haven't eaten in three years are dead. That one was easy, right?
2. The woman was a photographer. She shot a picture of her husband, developed it, and hung it up to dry (shot; held under water; and hung).
3. Coal or charcoal, as it is used in barbecuing.
4. Sure you can name three consecutive days, yesterday, today, and tomorrow and Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day!
5. The letter e, which is the most common letter used in the English language, does not appear even once in the paragraph.

**How did you do?**



## Obituary

### Derek V. Smith

From Mike Collier 76th

It is my sad duty to report that (588817) Derek V. Smith (75th/76th) died on June 13th 2010.

Derek originated from the Kettering area of Northants and in September 1953 became a Locking resident as a member of the newly arrived 75th Entry. It was not long before an opportunity presented itself for him to become a projectionist at the Astra cinema. Elevation to chief projectionist allowed him to institute the profitable enterprise of operating a clothing store for illegal civvies behind the cinema screen. The venture almost backfired when, one day down at "Tech" he received a message to say that the normal screen was being replaced by a cinemascope version. The panic that engendered can well be imagined. Fortunately, the contractors did not realise the significance of their discovery but it did subsequently take some time to sort out and reposition the clothing. This was also an era when the National Anthem was played prior to the performance and all present stood as a token of respect. Derek noticed that the opening bars of the in house copies of the National Anthem and the Dam Busters March were very similar. He often brought the audience to its feet by playing the latter piece at a time when the former was expected.

Too much attention to his cinematic activities was probably in part, responsible for his F.T. to the 76th in Aug 1954. Here, whilst continuing his Astra operation, he adjusted his priorities and passed out as an Air Radio Fitter in December 1956. His cinema experience was instrumental in providing the material for an excellent end of course thesis, for which he was commended in the Station Commanders final report on the 76th.

He spent the early part of his service career following the usual mixture of home and overseas postings. Including time at Bassingbourn, Gaydon, Luqa, Sealand, Labwan and Odiham. Having decided to extend his engagement beyond the standard 12 years, Derek became one of the first Air Radio Fitters to convert to L. Tech Air status. The remainder of his service was spent largely in Transport Command involving training and duties akin to a Crew Chief on C.130 aircraft at Lyneham.

On leaving the R.A.F. in 1977 he moved into the semiconductor industry. Subsequently forming his own company buying, selling, repairing and installing electronic equipment.

He joined the L.A.A. in September 1993 and eventually became one of the first, if not the first "Life Member". Derek was certainly not one to do anything by halves. He had an infectious enthusiasm when talking of projects with which he was involved, which made it difficult to believe that they could be anything but successful.

His final project was to help with the restoration of Britannia XM496 at Kemble. He spent countless hours working on and fund raising for this undertaking. What a great pity that he did not live long enough to see his efforts come to fruition.

Four members of the 76th attended his funeral on June 25th. Neville Brind, Neil Castle, Tony Horry and myself, along with his family and a large number of his many other friends and colleagues. Though I have been to many funerals, I had never been to one where burial was the final act. As one of the last to leave the grave side, it was a very poignant moment, to look back over a deserted hole in the ground to the beautiful views from Wroughton churchyard and finally accept that a good friend had gone for ever.



## **Closing Thought**

### **Five lessons about the way we treat people.**

From Phil Marston 92<sup>nd</sup>

#### **First Important Lesson - Cleaning Lady.**

During my second month of college, our professor gave us a pop quiz. I was a conscientious student and had breezed through the questions until I read the last one: "What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?" Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times... She was tall, dark-haired and in her 50's, but how would I know her name? I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank... Just before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our quiz grade.

"Absolutely," said the professor. "In your careers, you will meet many people. All are significant... They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say "hello."

I've never forgotten that lesson. I also learned her name was Dorothy.

#### **Second Important Lesson - Pickup in the Rain**

One night, at 11:30 p.m., an older African American woman was standing on the side of an Alabama highway trying to endure a lashing rain storm. Her car had broken down and she desperately needed a ride. Soaking wet, she decided to flag down the next car. A young white man stopped to help her, generally unheard of in those conflict-filled 1960's. The man took her to safety, helped her get assistance and put her into a taxicab. She seemed to be in a big hurry, but wrote down his address and thanked him. Seven days went by and a knock came on the man's door. To his surprise, a giant console colour TV was delivered to his home. A special note was attached. It read:

"Thank you so much for assisting me on the highway the other night. The rain drenched not only my clothes, but also my spirits. Then you came along and because of you, I was able to make it to my dying husband's' bedside just before he passed away... God bless you for helping me and unselfishly serving others."

Sincerely,

Mrs. Nat King Cole.

#### **Third Important Lesson - Always Remember those who Serve.**

In the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10-year-old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him.

"How much is an ice cream sundae?" he asked.

"Fifty cents," replied the waitress. The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied the coins in it. "Well, how much is a plain dish of ice cream?" he inquired.

By now more people were waiting for a table and the waitress was growing impatient.

"Thirty-five cents," she brusquely replied.

The little boy again counted his coins. "I'll have the plain ice cream," he said. The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. The boy finished the ice cream, paid the cashier and left. When the waitress came back, she began to cry as she wiped down the table. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were two nickels and five pennies.

You see, he couldn't have the sundae, because he had to have enough left to leave her a tip.

#### **Fourth Important Lesson. - The Obstacle in Our Path.**

In ancient times, a King had a boulder placed on a roadway, then he hid himself and watched to see if anyone would remove the huge rock. Some of the King's' wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the King for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the stone out of the way.

Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. Upon approaching the boulder, the peasant laid down his burden and tried to move the stone to the side of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded. After the peasant picked up his load of vegetables, he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the King indicating that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway. The peasant learned what many of us never understand! Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve our condition.

#### **Fifth Important Lesson - Giving When it Counts.**

Many years ago, when I worked as a volunteer at a hospital, I got to know a little girl named Liz who was suffering from a rare & serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her 5-year old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness. The doctor explained the situation to her little brother, and asked the little boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister.

I saw him hesitate for only a moment before taking a deep breath and saying, "Yes I'll do it if it will save her." As the transfusion progressed, he lay in bed next to his sister and smiled, as we all did, seeing the colour returning to her cheek. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded. He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, "Will I start to die right away".

Being young, the little boy had misunderstood the doctor; he thought he was going to have to give his sister all of his blood in order to save her.

#### **Remember**

"Work like you don't need the money, love like you've never been hurt, and dance like you do when nobody's watching."

## Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

### RAFLAA Committee

Appointment	Name	Address	Tel/email	Re-Election	Entry
President	Martin Palmer				91 <sup>st</sup>
Chairman	"Tiny" Kühle	22 Tavistock Clse Woburn Sands Milton Keynes Bucks MK17 8UY	(01908) 583784 <a href="mailto:Hans.Kuhle@btopenworld.com">Hans.Kuhle@btopenworld.com</a>	April 2010	87 <sup>th</sup>
Secretary	Dave Gunby	23 Toynton Close Gregg Hall Estate Lincoln Lincolnshire LN6 8AL	(01522) 525484 <a href="mailto:dpgraf72@btinternet.com">dpgraf72@btinternet.com</a>	April 2012	72 <sup>nd</sup>
Treasurer	Tony Horry	Hillside Cottage Kewstoke Road Kewstoke Weston-s-Mare BS22 9YD	(01934) 628383 <a href="mailto:horrycorp@aol.com">horrycorp@aol.com</a>	Mar 2010	76 <sup>th</sup>
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AA Rep/ Webmaster	Peter Crowe	14 Hillview Road Weston-super-Mare  N. Somerset BS23 3HS	(01934) 412178 <a href="mailto:webmaster@raflaa.org.uk">webmaster@raflaa.org.uk</a>	Sep 2011	95 <sup>th</sup>
Craft Rep	Graham Beeston	87 Hornbeam Rd Havant PO9 2UT	Home (02392) 346242 Work 07920038690 <a href="mailto:graham@mapleoak.co.uk">graham@mapleoak.co.uk</a>	Sep 2012	209 <sup>th</sup>
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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

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