



RAFLAA NEWSLETTER

SERIAL 70

NOVEMBER 2014

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Gentlemen welcome to the November edition of the Newsletter, I trust you have all had a pleasant British Summer and now having a relaxing autumn.

Part of my summer was spent in a pilgrimage to the East Anglia and looking at a few old haunts.

My first visit was to Orford Ness, although stationed locally at RAF Bawdsey I knew nothing of the goings on over there, it is all on the Internet now, of course, and there are several books about its history.

"The Hidden History of Orford Ness" by Paddy Heazell, describes how the site is just the right place for keeping secrets. The site has been in irregular use since WW1, initially in the development of bomb aiming, this continued through WW2 and on to nuclear armament being 'environmentally tested' and again being flight testing.

The development of RADAR by Watson-Watt was started here before moving to Bawdsey, more recently UK/US radio development was trialed here. It seems that we radio/radar types have a lot to thank Orford Ness for, and now it is owned by the National Trust as a wildlife protection area. It would be interesting to hear from anyone who had a posting to Orford Ness.

I recommend a trip there either to see the wildlife or look at what is left of the old buildings – it certainly has the feel of a Hollywood war zone.

My second visit was to RAF Bawdsey the World's first operational radar station, Bawdsey radar made way for Bawdsey Bloodhound and now apart from an International School all that now remains is the original wartime Transmitter Block Museum and a lot of very enthusiastic volunteers.

We took a trip across the River Deben to the Ferry Boat Inn, although the boat has changed since the 1960s the Ferryman hasn't – still the same man. Which reminded me of the 'Brinkley Earthing Stick' named after Charles Brinkley, one time Ferryman on the Deben.

The last part of my pilgrimage was to RAF Neatishead the RAF Air Defence Radar Museum, displaying the history of radar with lots of equipment to look at and well laid out showing development from WW2 to current systems, proper radar none of this lightweight stuff. (<http://www.radarmuseum.co.uk>)

I have received several complimentary messages about the Newsletter, so gentlemen your articles are well read and appreciated – keep them coming.

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Deadline for next issue – 18th January 2015 for March 2015 edition

Please send all comments, contributions, ideas and feedback to the newsletter editor. Soft copy preferred!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE FUTURE OF OUR ASSOCIATION

Sorry to interrupt the flow of articles about what I did when I was an Apprentice/young man in the Royal Air Force but we need to think about the future.

The RAF Cranwell Apprentices Association is no more – the youngest eligible member now being aged 78+. Similarly, the Halton Association has changed its name (as pointed out by our Chairman) from the Halton Aircraft Apprentices Association to just the RAF Halton Apprentices Association. This may give them a few years of breathing space as a form of Apprentice training continued at Halton until the mid-90's. This was not the case at Locking where Apprentice training (Aircraft, Technician, Craft and Mechanic) ceased in 1976.

So, what of the future? The median entry in terms of the current membership of the RAFLAA is the 91st. All of them are now in their seventies. If the Association is to continue, recruitment must come from the Entries from the younger age groups and it has been encouraging to see some results in this regard.

However, all Associations such as ours face an inevitable decline in numbers simply because the root (Locking) becomes extinct.

Associate Membership, an admirable initiative, is irrelevant to Association membership. Once the Committee has determined on the definitive wording of the change to the Constitution and advised the membership accordingly we can vote on the matter at the next AGM and, hopefully, gain some distinguished new members. As an aside, the committee may wish to consider offering Associate Membership (ex officio) to any person who held the post of OC No 1 Radio School

At the last AGM the sentiment was expressed that the word "Locking" was key to our continued existence. Absolutely true, so how do we manage the route from now to oblivion?

Bruce Graham, 79th

BAWDSEY RADAR

Bawdsey Radar is a Trust dedicated to the conservation of the Bawdsey Transmitter Block and to the stimulation of public interest and understanding in the development of radar.

Bawdsey Radar began as Bawdsey Radar Group in September 2003 following a weekend in July when the somewhat derelict Grade 2* Transmitter Block on Bawdsey Manor Estate was opened to the public and an amazing 950 people queued to see inside. The Transmitter Block at RAF Bawdsey was the prototype for Chain Home.

Inclusion in the 2004 BBC2 Restoration series created further public interest.

Bawdsey Radar managed to raise sufficient funds to reconnect the electricity and water supply and the Block has been opened to the public for the last ten years with the *Magic Ear* exhibition as the core to various displays.

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grants have enabled us to carry out an oral history project, *Shout & Whisper*, and commission the writing and production of a play, *First in the Field - The Secrets of Radar*. In 2013 a Stage 1 application to HLF was successful. This enabled us to appoint a Project Manager, a Lead Consultant, an Exhibition Designer, a Structural Engineer and a Quantity Surveyor who are working together to

prepare the Stage 2 bid. If this is successful, work to conserve the Transmitter Block and to develop a new exhibition will start in 2015. It is hoped that the work will be completed by 2016.

A Bawdsey Reunion Association lunch is still held each year in Bawdsey Manor. For more information see www.bawdseyradar.org.uk or ring 07821162879.

BLOODHOUND II RESTORATION

Following a two year restoration programme the BMPG have restored the Bloodhound simulator in their MK2A* LCP (Ser. No. 1022). The restoration has returned the LCP's Argus computer system and the Technical Supervisors and Engagement Controllers display console to their original condition.

After twenty three years an RAF Bloodhound MKII simulator is once again running exercises. The exercises available are those distributed to RAF Bloodhound units from 1986 to disbandment in 1991 and would be familiar to any 'L' man, T/S or E.C. who worked with the MK2A* LCP from 1986.

* The MK2A LCP was a major Ferranti upgrade to the LCP from 1986 when the Argus computer was upgraded from a 200 to a 700 with the T/S and E.C. displays being digitised.

BMPG's MK2A LCP Display Console showing the simulator running

If you are not able to view the image, please email me and I'll send a copy as an attachment

The BMPG are also restoring a Type 86 with the following completed:

- *Repaint of the cabin*
- *Restoration of the aerial brakes (so the aerials can be moved)*
- *Restoration of the internal lighting*
- *Manufacture of new wooden walkways for the cabin roof.*

The BMPG have not been alone in restoring functionality to RAF Bloodhound MKII items. The Bristol Aero Collection Trust (BACT) at Filton has restored their Bloodhound MKII launcher, see: www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8OEXq1vv0s

Also of significance is BACT's Bloodhound MKII missile at Filton which is the only missile in the UK fitted with Fuze aerials. The BMPG work closely with BACT and have secured parts for their launcher and missile.

RAF Cosford Airshow – 8th June, 2014: Last year the BMPG exhibited a T86, LCP and missile at the RAF Cosford Airshow. Unfortunately we will not be attending this year due to circumstances beyond our control. We will concentrate on 'open days' as an alternative. Information about open days will be emailed at a later date.

Members of the BMPG Yahoo Group will be aware of the T86 and LCP restoration progress made as regular reports are posted on the Group, see:

https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Bloodhound_Missile_Preservation/info

Why not join the Group? Membership of the Group is open to all who worked with Bloodhound in the RAF, or for a manufacturer.

If you have any questions regarding our work, or items we are restoring, then drop me an email. Also, if you can help in any way please get in touch, there's plenty to do.

Finally, the BMPG could not have achieved the simulator restoration without the support of the many organisations and individuals who have made it happen.

Pete Harry email:pdh@imtex.co.uk

(Bloodhound Missile Preservation Group)

RAFLAA NEW MEMBERS

A WARM WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS TO RAFLAA

Entry		
83	Richard	Dawson
82	Gordon	Wharrie

Look forward to some stories especially from 'Down under'!! Ed.

NOTICES

NEXT REUNION AND AGM

The Annual Reunion and Annual General meeting of the RAF Locking Apprentice Association will be held on **Saturday 25 April 2015** at the Webbington Hotel, Loxton, Weston-super-Mare.

It will follow our usual format with the AGM in the afternoon and a dinner in the evening. The hotel rates will be: **£80** B&B for a double or twin room (double occupancy) for a 2 night stay (Friday & Saturday), **£65** for a single occupancy. For the Saturday night only the rates are **£90** B&B for a double or twin room (double occupancy) and **£70** for a single room.

Rooms can be booked now so call The Webbington Hotel, Loxton, Weston-s-Mare, BS26 2HU Tel: 01934 750100 Or Email: sales@webbingtonhotel.ecilpse.co.uk Remember, these rates include the ability to cancel up to two days before the event without penalty so book now.



PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

FROM THE CHAIRMAN:

At the AGM on the 26th April 2014, we discussed the change to our Constitution in order that we could invite Associate Membership to a wider number of people. We had discussed the changes during the AGM of 2013, which had sought to enable ex members of the Cranwell Apprentices Association to be admitted to our Association, as their Association had ceased to exist after Sep. 2013. The Committee also felt that we should be able to admit people who had a strong connection to No. 1 Radio School. The amendment was voted upon, however, a member did point out that as we had not given 28 days' notice to the membership, we could not pass the proposed amendment. The Committee therefore give notice that para 8 of the Constitution should be amended to read as follows:

*'Membership of the Association is open to all apprentices of the Royal Air Force and other Air Forces who underwent all or part of their training at the RAF Locking. Associate Membership may be offered to those former apprentices who have been members of the Cranwell Apprentice Association. Additionally Associate Membership may be offered in selected cases to individuals who had a close association with the training of Apprentices at RAF Locking, or who made significant contribution to the training at **No 1 Radio School.**'*

I believe that this also follows in the spirit of sub-para 8e.

This amendment will be proposed and voted upon at the AGM, so I hope that as many of you can attend on the 25th April 2015. If you cannot attend, you may, however, make your opinions known to the Secretary:

NIGEL LODGE,
9, BROADMEAD GREEN
THORPE END
NORWICH
NORFOLK NR13 5DE

Alternatively you can vote via our web site: www.raflaa.org.uk.

✂

VOTE FOR CHANGE TO CONSTITUTION

Name:

Entry No:

I agree / disagree to the proposed change to the RAFLAA Constitution as notified in the Newsletter and on the RAFLAA Website.

Please cut out the form and return it to the Secretary – Nigel Lodge

LIFE AFTER LOCKING

HOW DID THEY DO THAT

On the 20th January 2014, the 76th celebrated the passing of 60 years since their arrival at Locking. The anniversary reminded me of something I have pondered over for some time. Nothing of great importance but very annoying when memory refuses to yield the information.

Spool forward three years to 18th December 1956, the day of our passing out parade. At some point in the next 36 hour or so before we left Locking, 69 sets of Apprentice insignia had to be removed from our working and best blues. To be replaced by J/T's, or in some cases Cpl's tapes, plus "sparks" badges. Additionally, wheels gave way to stripes on our greatcoats. I do not recall doing any sewing, so I assume it was done by the Station Tailor. The logistics of how this was achieved I find intriguing.

Initially I thought that perhaps we stayed an extra day, after the remaining entries left for Christmas leave. Thus allowing time for the transformation. However, when I consulted a member of our entry who kept a diary (which he still has), his written record indicated that we left Locking on the 19th. To try and explain the sequence of events, I have formulated a theory.

Working blue is easiest to explain. These could have been collected after breakfast on the 18th and taken to the Station Tailor. The Tailor would almost certainly be familiar with and adept at, this type of exercise and would have the appropriate machinery. With that level of skill, I would guess each change might take about 10 minutes. Based on this, 69 sets would take very approximately 12 hours. If there were at least 3 other similarly competent people working with the Tailor, the task could have been completed in about 3 hours. The working blues could then have been returned to our huts around lunch time. I am fairly sure this happened, as I stuffed as much of my kit as possible into my kit bag and my parents took it home on the afternoon of the 18th. Leaving only a few small items to carry home in my small pack, the following day. Certainly no room in there for my working blue!

As it was a winter pass out, the greatcoat is slightly more difficult. I have a photograph showing that we wore them in 3 block Assembly Hall, for the presentation of our Apprenticeship Certificates. Followed almost immediately by lunch with our guests in No.1. Wing N.A.F.F.I.. Hence, the Tailor would probably not receive our greatcoats until after lunch. This job should have been a little easier, as in most cases it only required the short 8BA bolt to be undone and tapes to be sewn on. Apprentice N.C.O.s taking marginally longer.

Best blue was a bigger problem, as we wore it, with all its Apprentice badges, to our dinner/dance that evening, at the Grand Atlantic. In the whole 3 years, I do not remember seeing anyone in J/T's uniform at breakfast on the day after a passing out parade. So it is possible, that to maintain a tradition that No.1. Wing Mess was for Apprentices only, we were require to wear best blue to breakfast. Alternatively, it could be that we, as passing out entry, did not go to breakfast until other entries had finished. Which might also have helped with any residual hangover. Either way, the Tailor would not receive our jackets until after that meal. By this time, the other entries would be preparing to leave and board the special trains at W-S-M Locking Road station. As we were now effectively regular airmen, I assume we would not be permitted to travel on these trains, even if time had allowed.

At some point on that morning, our blue hatbands must have been exchanged for black but again I cannot remember the process. Additionally, we would be required to

surrender the remaining trappings of Apprentice life, rifles, bayonets, bedding, permanent passes etc.. Possibly our 1250's were inscribed with our new rank. Rail tickets for our journey home issued. Plus railway warrants for our 4th January 1957 journey to our new postings. In my case this would have been almost farcical, as my new unit was R.A.F. Bassingbourn. Only 16 miles from my home but with no direct rail link. A rail journey could have involved a 50 mile trip to London, another 40 or so to Royston, with a further 3 miles, by road, to the camp. Fortunately, my parents kindly transported me there.

After the return of our greatcoats and best blue tunics, I guess we were taken to W-S-M station to go our separate ways on normal service trains. Sadly, in some cases never to meet again.

If anyone can recall the exact sequence of events, I would be most interested to know if my theory is anywhere near accurate.

Mike Collier 76th

BATTLE OF BRITAIN!!!

Asked recently by one of my cheeky grandsons what it was like in the Battle of Britain, I of course answered truthfully that although a bit silver haired nowadays I was far too young to have served my country in such a manner. I did go on to explain that although having done my bit in defending the country during the Cold War as a ground crew member on regular QRA alerts in the 60's, the nearest I had got to the Battle of Britain was the annual 'Open Days', that many RAF stations held on or about the 15th September each year.

What led to this were visits to nearby RAF Horsham -St Faith on its Open days as a teenager in the early 1950's and witnessing a black Hawker Hunter fighter break the sound barrier above the runway, together with watching airmen going about the business of fixing the various Meteors and Vampires in the hangars, with the ever-present smell of burnt aviation fuel wafting by. It all held a fascination for the family and myself in particular, and little did I know that just a few years later I would be leaving RAF Locking and involved in many similar station activities?

Training as an Air Radio Fitter had the benefit of guaranteeing a posting to operational or training airfields where, besides the joy of normal working activity on the likes of Javelins and Lightning's etc., it opened up the opportunity to be involved when the camps opened their gates to the general public to celebrate that momentous time in Britain's history. Of course as well as the actual day itself, there was a lot of hard work leading up to the event to make the day as enjoyable for the visitors, with the recompense that it provided a break from normal routines.

My first experience of what could be involved during these activities occurred arriving at Middleton St George as a lowly Corporal, the day before their Open Day, and being immediately inveigled into helping out serving on a 'hot dog' stall of all things. Enconced at one end of a large tent with cooks from the mess frying onions and sausages by the hundred just feet away, getting well kippered in the process, I initially kicked myself for not timing my arrival till just a bit later.

The day in fact turned out to be a brilliant experience and a way to meet so many people from the station as well as civilians from the surrounding locale in a short space of time, and although an eye watering start to that particular posting, had the inevitable result that I couldn't look at a sausage for many a month after.

The following year I helped out directing traffic and collecting car parking fees, but between shifts it gave plenty of time to wander around the station and take in the atmosphere, look at the various items which were thrilling the thousands of visitors and

at the same time marvel at the ingenuity and efforts put in by so many airmen of different trades on the camp.

Besides the usual static display of various visiting aircraft, there were numerous activities going on in one of the hangars, such as kids and parents having a go at landing a model aircraft onto a mock up aircraft carrier. It was all reminiscent of days at Horsham, but this time the grand finale of the day was the tremendous roar of nine Lightning's of 226 OCU putting on a magnificent flying display. Through sheer engine power and pilot flying skills alone they kept it mainly within the confines of the airfield and with the crowd gasping and clapping in obvious admiration I was so chuffed that I was now in a position to be involved in such activities.

Preparation for such days could however unfortunately also lead to tragedy, for it was a few years later, whilst stationed at RAF Leuchars, that members of 74 Squadron watched Flt Lt Phil Owen climb into his Lightning XP704 and proceed to carry out a brilliant practice air display above the airfield, for which virtually everyone on the station turned out to watch in awe at his flying skills.

Suddenly without warning half way down on his final loop his aircraft stalled and with no chance of recovery his Lightning in full re heat powered straight into the ground killing him instantly. Within the blink of an eye the Squadron had cruelly lost one its most experienced pilots, the tragedy compounded by the fact that his wife and children had been watching in full view from the control tower.

A somewhat sombre mood hung over the squadron during the following months, with a deeper acceptance by everyone and especially ground crew that knew him, that pilots and aircrew of every persuasion certainly earned their flying pay.

Thankfully such incidents were few and far between and Station Open Days were always great fun requiring the majority on the station to be involved in the activities, with each having their part to play, ranging from the usual routines of keeping the aircraft serviceable, to putting on displays of various kinds throughout the camp, down to more mundane tasks such as crowd control etc., all of course in the aid of raising money for charity. It was normal practice that weeks prior to the event, each section would be asked to come up with any bright ideas to be used on the day.

Returning from an overseas posting a few years later I rejoined 226 OCU again, which had by then moved to RAF Coltishall and, as NCO i/c the radio section, had to juggle the manning requirements to cover both day and night shift.

As it was a training Squadron only, I introduced a probably quite illegal rota system, whereby depending on the flying schedule, I regularly allowed one of the day shift to take the afternoon off, giving the individual time to go shopping with the wife etc., whilst the rest of us covered for him. This unusual way of running a section was naturally much appreciated but of course it had the proviso that, prior to the 5pm handover to the night shift, I would nominate any number of the day shift to stay behind to give a hand for a couple of hours. This allowed the total on full night shift to be kept to a minimum, but had the advantage of tackling the inevitable bunching of aircraft problems that occurred at the end of a busy flying day.

The system in fact worked a treat, I had a happy bunch of techies, and the Squadron radio section kept everything running as smooth as clockwork.

With another Open Day approaching the usual request for suggestions came round and knowing that a number in the section surprisingly owned a selection of bows and arrows, I suggest that perhaps it would be good idea to set up an archery stall.

Eventually allocated a large corner of an adjacent hangar it then took many trips to local farmers for the stall to gradually take shape, the guardroom staff wondering what the heck was going on when car after car drove past with straw bales piled high on the roof racks over a number of days. With parachutes finally added to give a colourful

backdrop together with numerous targets of every description we all had a friendly practice to make sure the set up was safe, and wondered just how the crowd would respond to our efforts the following morning.

In fact we needn't have worried at all for with the bright idea to add coloured balloons as additional targets, creating more noise to catch people's attention; the stall did a roaring trade. With children pestering their parents, teenagers showing off to girlfriends and father's ready to prove they were latter day Robin Hoods, we were in business and the queue for our Archery Stall extended well outside the hangar doors.

With such amazing popularity we also managed to squeeze in a couple of judicial incremental price increases and the money just kept rolling in, to such an extent that at the end of what seemed a very long day we were informed that we had made more cash for the RAF Benevolent Fund than all the other station activities put together. Naturally then, with a bit of a spring to our step we gratefully returned the straw bales to our helpful farmers over the following days and each of us in the radio section felt justifiably proud of what our joint efforts had achieved.

However as we all know, RAF life was always full of surprises and within a week or so of our Archery success my time at Coltishall came to a sudden end. My application to extend my service to 22 years was finally accepted accompanied with a change in posting to faraway RAF Sealand, where a spell of 3rd line servicing awaited; the ups and downs of service life eh.

So as it turned out, at the stations Guy Fawkes Night celebrations I said my final farewells to the families and members of the squadron radio section whom I had enjoyed working with so much, and the following morning, with no further Battle of Britain open days in the offing, headed west with the family to faraway Chester.

Over the following years, the work at various Maintenance Units presented its fair share of unique challenges, all of which in hindsight stood me in good stead for eventual civilian life, I did however continue to miss working on aircraft and all that came with it.

I enjoyed every aspect of my time in the RAF but it was possibly all about satisfying a boyhood dream as to why without doubt I definitely look back on the first 12 years as giving the greatest satisfaction. Working on a squadron or even in the Radio Servicing Flight of a flying station, meant there was always plenty of action, terrific detachments to all parts of the world, the feeling of doing ones bit during many QRA duties, all accompanied with the added thrill of listening to the roar of jet engines in the distance and that ever present aroma of aviation fuel as a backdrop, great stuff.

I look back on the numerous Battle of Britain Open Days that I was privileged to be involved in, as well of course many other events, with a lot of nostalgia. I know full well that if I had not signed on with my 87th Entry colleagues way back in 1957 I would have missed each and every one of them, and of course been the loser for it.

We all have our own individual memories but for me it was the sheer variety of events which made RAF life so interesting and which, except for the tragedies, I wouldn't have missed for the world.

NOTE:- There is an interesting film of RAF Coltishall's Battle of Britain Open Day, including a tour of the radar bay working on AI 17 and AI 23, missile section, as well as a 23 Sqn Javelin scramble I would suggest Googling 'RAF Coltishall Lightning's', then select 'East Anglian Film Archive' Spitfire to Lightning 1962 Coltishall Norfolk. Or go to <http://www.eafa.org.uk/catalogue/204879> It may revive a few memories

Brian Colby 87th

SLEEPING DUTY

During my tour in Ground Radio Flight at RAF Lyneham, I thought that I should sit my next promotion examination before I forgot all the basic radio theory and formula ingrained into us as Apprentices at Locking. I had no problems with the RAF organisation part of the examinations so off went my application.

I had enjoyed the rapid promotion to Cpl. Tech. (with its welcome increase in pay) and had been a Sergeant for two years, twice fighting off my c/o's efforts to go for officer selection. I rather fancied being a Chief Technician.

Now the examinations were to be held in July, about the time my wife was expecting our first baby. And they were actually held a week or so after my wife came home from Wroughton Hospital with our new bundle of joy. The new addition then kept me awake for the next few weeks, helping with midnight feeds and nappy changes. I cannot say I was 100% efficient at work at this time due to the considerable lack of sleep, and it didn't help the flight being 40% under manned.

Off I went on the day, to the Education Section, and sat with about 15 others. There was only the front corner seat free so I sat at the desk there.

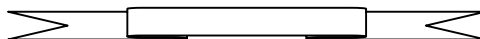
The technical papers were dealt out and I happily whisked through them, with less trouble than expected – I did not seem to have forgotten much in the last 9 years. Then the General Service papers (the guess from four answers type) were issued. It was a hot July and within moments of receiving the exam papers I had fallen asleep.

The next thing I knew was the invigilating officer saying to us that there were just 5 minutes left, and this woke me up. My answer paper was blank, and I had just enough time to rapidly fill in the squares in pretty patterns before the papers were collected.

When I got the results of the examinations, I found that I had passed the difficult tech paper and badly failed the 'easy' one. No surprise however to me; my c/o was surprised though and when I explained what had happened he thought it quite funny.

I easily passed the test paper the next time around.

Brian Davies 76/77th Entry



THE SMALLEST MARCH-PAST

In 1963 I was a sergeant at a Bloodhound II station at Woodhall Spa in Lincolnshire. The entire head count of station personnel couldn't have numbered many more than 120 officers, NCOs and other ranks. Despite our low head count we were still subjected to that ritual known as the AOC's annual parade and inspection.

There wasn't a lot of room to stage the traditional march-past on a Bloodhound site; the missiles got in the way. The only suitable location was on the road opposite station headquarters, near to the site entrance. Marching in-line was out of the question; it had to be a column-of-route affair.

A few days before the AOC's parade the C.O. decided we should have a rehearsal or two. The rehearsal march-past was to be led by a particularly humourless Flight Lieutenant, let us call him Flight Lieutenant Pompous, followed by myself and two flights of airmen. The C.O. would play the part of the AOC on the dais. The plan was that we should march past the saluting base, out through the main gates, wheel round and do another march past coming back from the other direction.

The first march past went to plan and we duly proceeded past the saluting base and on through the gates in the direction of the main public road. I must confess that I was a somewhat bored with the whole thing and I was preoccupied with more interesting thoughts. Just through the gates the Flight Lieutenant suddenly went off to the right. 'He's going to halt us', I thought, completely forgetting that we were supposed to wheel.

So I carried on leading my two flights towards the main road, still lost in thought. We marched on, and on ... and on ... and on ...and Then I became conscious of the sound of barely suppressed mirth coming from behind. At that moment I mentally rejoined the real world and realised that the command to halt was an awful long time coming.

Then I heard it - a faint yell from behind us. "Follow me-e-e ..." it went, like a banshee on the wind. Again it came "Follow me-e-e ..." I broke off to the right to see what was going on. Then I saw it; there in the distance was Flight Lieutenant Pompous scurrying towards us from the far side of the saluting base like a demented crab. By now the suppressed mirth of the troops had given way to open hilarity.

Evidently Flight Lieutenant Pompous had wheeled according to plan. He'd headed back past the saluting base convinced that one sergeant and two flights of airmen were behind him. Still unaware he was totally alone, he commanded "Eyes left!" throwing up his best salute - and proceeded to march past, a resplendent but solitary figure.

Having completed the march-past he moved from the head of the 'parade' to halt his men. But there weren't any men - they were fast disappearing towards the main road led by one Sergeant Gumbrecht. Flight Lieutenant Pompous had just taken part in the smallest march past in the annals of RAF history. A ceremonial march-past of one!

Now when you have lost your dignity to a non-malicious mistake, I've always found that the best way to recover some composure is to laugh along with the crowd. However, Flight Lieutenant Pompous didn't subscribe to this point of view, not one iota. He wasn't at all grateful that I'd given him a place in RAF folklore. As he reached me he was near purple with rage. He could hardly spit the words out.

"Sergeant Gumbrecht", he spluttered. "You deliberately ... wantonly ... ignored my orders. You intentionally set out to make a fool of me". Now this chap was quite capable of making a fool of himself without any assistance from me. Wasn't it he who, taking his Orderly Officer's duty to test security a touch too far, had one night, ended up caught by the goolies on the barbed wire at the top of the security fence. It hadn't helped that one of the SP dog handlers let Fido off the lead in response to the commotion. But that's another story.

So as Pompous ranted and raved I felt the laughter welling up inside me. My body started quaking and tears began to trickle down my face. I hoped he would think I was crying with remorse. He didn't.

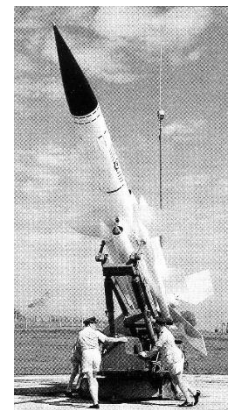
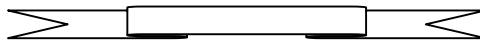
"Sergeant, if you don't stop laughing I'm going to have you court-martialed." That just made it worse. He continued to become more and more agitated and I found it harder and harder to control my mirth. Threat built upon threat. According to him a court-martial was too lenient. I don't think he actually mentioned a firing squad, but he was pretty close to it. I'm glad we weren't on active service; given a service revolver he might have shot me on the spot.

Pompous' reaction hadn't helped the C.O.'s cause either. Our Squadron Leader C.O felt obliged to back up his brother officer by appearing to take the whole thing seriously. And the other mess members felt obliged to emulate the C.O. So when we finally marched back past the saluting base and gave an 'eyes-left' we were greeted by the sight of a red-eyed C.O., the sternness of his countenance belied by the tears running down his face, shoulders heaving with silent laughter.

Just behind the saluting base other officers were doing a far less sterling job of concealing their glee. Even the SWO had a stupid smirk on his face. Seeing that lot immediately triggered gales of laughter among the troops and rehearsals were disbanded for the day.

After that I became something of a local hero to all ranks from the C.O. down, and the firing squad idea was quietly forgotten. It appeared that Pompous was not much liked in the officer's mess either. And that's why I'm around to write this today.

Alex Gumbrecht 75th Entry



TALES FROM THE FAR EAST

LIFE AND TIMES AT RAAF BUTTERWORTH 1967 – 1970

Part 2. 33 Squadron and all that.

I had been posted to 33 (SAM) Squadron at RAAF Butterworth. The Squadron was situated at the south end of the old Japanese runway and was reachable only by the roadway that ran from the gate adjacent to the golf club and around the west end of the main runway. On route you had to pass the remains of the Gloucester Javelin that had been left behind by the RAF for fire practice plus the many packs of wild dogs that roamed the area with their leader, nicknamed 'Tunku'. The 'singlies' travelled in by three ton truck while those 'scalies' from the island travelled by 'luxury' coach from the ferry terminal. The squadron flew the RAF ensign on their flagpole, a bone of contention with the RAAF, but a source of pride with all the troops.

33 Squadron 'flew' Bloodhound Mk2 Surface to Air missiles and comprised of four Missile Launch Control Posts (LCP) and eight missiles (*for each LCP and Missile Section*) on their own launcher. The theory of the job was that Western Hill passed the co-ordinates of the 'target' aircraft to the LCP, this in turn aligned the TIR (*Target Illuminating Radar*) to the general area where it searched for the target. When the radar had locked onto the target the details of height, speed and direction of travel were passed back to the LCP and confirmed with Western Hill. If a positive match was achieved the missiles were turned to the target and a lock achieved. At this point everything was ready to fire!

I worked in MS3 with 'Ginge' Shores, with John Paull and Geoff Morris in the LCP. Wally Watson and Norman Nunn were in MS1, 'Chunky' Andrews and Dave Croft in MS2

and Dave Birchall and Bryn Baker were in MS4. Len Wood and the Armourer's were in the hanger and looked after the missiles (they were NOT rockets!). That took care of the business end of the Squadron.

As we were not at war with anybody in the Far East at the time we had no real targets so we had to make do with playing the game with any aircraft that were in the range of Western Hills radars. This meant the daily Bristol 'Frightener' from Changi was used as a test aircraft most mornings as was the MSA Fokker Friendship from Singapore. If the passengers on these flights had been aware of 32 missiles locking on to them they might have had a few bad moments. After the morning checks were complete it was fair game to search out the Super Sabres flown by the RAAF – much more fun. They used to call us the 'Petrified Forest' but secretly they hoped we stayed that way.

During the many exercises held in the Far East – Red Flag (Eastabout) and Bersatu Padu, 33 Squadron came into its own.

This was the time when the Vulcans came out to Singapore or Butterworth and Victor tankers kept them in the air, and C130s, Belfasts and Britannia aircraft ferried thousands of airmen from the UK to all points east from Hong Kong to Singapore. Everybody was divided up into the Red Force or the Blue Force and we played war games to our hearts content. If the Vulcans were based in Singapore they made a fine sight with their vapour trails all over the Malaysian sky and good targets for us. We went through our search and lock procedures and when everything was ready we all shouted 'BANG' together and pretended to shoot them down. At the same time they pretended to drop their bomb loads on Western Hill and Butterworth so it took the adjudicators to decide who had won. Unfortunately we never found out the final result so it was all a bit confusing really.

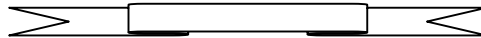
On a more serious note we did have one nasty incident which resulted in a 24 hour curfew being imposed. Naturally we did not know anything about this until there was no breakfast (the local cooks were still at home) and it was a very hungry bunch of 'singlies' who arrived at the Sqdn for work. When we found out we were the only ones who were coming in as the 'scalies' were stuck on the island as the ferries were not running, it was a very unhappy bunch of boys who were allocated out for guard duty. For some strange reason I was sent with six airmen to guard the main bomb dump. We did not know our way around the area, none of us were armourers, so we were not happy. As we were also armed I was a little concerned for our safety so insisted the magazines were not fitted while we were out on patrol. I was issued with a piece of paper on which was written a challenge in Bahasa Malay – the only bit I remember was 'Berhenti' - but it was totally useless so we decided to shoot first and ask questions later if necessary. Luckily everything went well although we did nearly shoot a cow which was scratching itself on the fence during the first night. We were relieved after 48 hours when the curfew was lifted and life returned to normal.

With all the Hindu, Muslim and Christian festivals, plus the many national holidays (including ANZAC Day) and annual leave, it was a bit of an event if you had to work a five day week. We did fill in our time in meaningful employment during 1967 and 1968 but when the British Government decided in late 1968 to start pulling out the troops in the Far East to save a few quid it all changed. The Malaysian government voted not to buy the Bloodhound system so it was off to Prai docks to meet the RFA Stromness which brought the boxes for us to pack it all up. It took a lot of effort to strip all various elements down to the basic parts, pack them into boxes and ship it all home but it did wonders for our suntans. It appears our association Chairman was also involved in his capacity of O.C. Supply but I do not remember him. The pack up did offer the opportunity to get flights home to the UK and I spent 7 days in the back of a Belfast while escorting five missiles home. We were due to land at RAF Lyneham but due to inclement weather we finished up at RAF Waddington. At that time I was very glad I still had my greatcoat but the drive to RAF North Coates in the back of a landrover was very, very cold. When I arrived back at Butterworth the lads had packed up two

complete Missile Sections so it was a very sad time for me to put my own radar into boxes. Everything was gone by late 1969, several people had gone home and some had been posted to 65 Squadron at RAF Seletar, Singapore so we were down to trying to fill in time.

I was lucky enough to be detached to 65 Sqdn to help them hand over the whole system to the Singapore Armed Forces. I met up with 'Ginge' Shores, Bryn Baker and Geoff Morris again and we managed to get all three Missile Sections handed over by February 1970, just in time for my return to the UK. I flew from Changi to Butterworth in a VC10 (a lot better than the usual 'Frightener') where I joined the remaining members of 33 Sqdn on the flight to Brize Norton. I had been involved in the disbandment of two Squadrons in 12 months, but I did get a lot of golf in and my handicap had reduced greatly, but that is another story.

Don Donovan 91st



VISITING OLD HAUNTS AS A CIVILIAN.

I left the RAF in 1974 and after a short period working for Hawker Siddeley Aviation, changed career direction and became a teacher. The RAF was of the past and my future was to be in teaching, and so it was to be until I moved into a teaching laboratory with the radars of RAF Staxton Wold in view in the distance....on a clear day! Slowly the RAF (of the past) started to creep back into my life, teaching the occasional 'RAF' child, air cadets etc. So this state of affairs remained when I embarked on visit with my wife to Singapore and Penang in 1991. We did the usual tourist 'things' when in Singapore, finishing our visit there with a superb chicken curry in the hotel before leaving for the airport, perhaps the best I have ever tasted. On Penang we stayed at a small colonial style hotel at Batu Ferringhi, a delightful place next to the beach where on 'buffet' nights, vegetarian chicken was on the menu! I personally had to visit George Town to view the sights from the late 60's, among them the Chow Rastra Market where in earlier years I used to look through the fish species, and the fire station and ferry terminal. On this occasion, outside the fire station, a young Malay started chatting to me, eventually asking if I would like to meet his mother (definitely not his sister this time). When I recounted this to my wife and others, why did they burst into laughter? Perhaps the 'country boy' wasn't as streetwise as he thought he was?

On return to the UK, life proceeded steadily until the day a slip of paper with the address of the RAF Seletar Association was passed to me. A similar thing happened later with the RAF Butterworth and Penang Association. I was later to become the archivist and newsletter editor of the RAFBPA and renewing friendships made when on 33 Squadron at Butterworth (the RAF Element left in 1971). Missing an association organised trip to Penang shortly afterwards due to inflexibility of school term times and holidays, I was in a position to join a later visit in 2010 following retirement.

First stop on the 2010 trip was KL, somewhere I hadn't been before. After the daily tourist visits, our group (wives included) would seek out a bar/restaurant and have a

pleasant meal out on the street. At our favourite 'watering hole', so to speak, to use the toilets involved a walk through the lengthy interior of the building to the facilities which were separated from the public by a piece of cloth discreetly positioned so anyone passing could see it was occupied. On one occasion, returning to the group I ran the gauntlet of the 'ladies of the night' offering me all sort of pleasures at good rates....again why did the wives of our group think it hilarious when I arrived back at the table in haste? Leaving KL the group flew to the east coast and we were 'shipped' to Redang Island for a few pleasant stay at the holiday resort. A disappointment about the island being teetotal was soon overcome by finding we could buy (Tiger) beer at the resort, but nowhere else. During our short stay on Redang, the group was chanced upon by Pete Harry (ex- Locking Apprentice) and his wife, both visiting the area completely separately from our group. Pete briefly made mention of the Bloodhound Missile Preservation Group he was in the process of forming before leaving the next day for Penang. Meanwhile we settled back to the frantic life of eating, sun bathing, swimming, drinking, eating (again) and drinking (continuing from where we left off) until it was time to leave for Penang.

As in 1991, we found ourselves at Batu Ferringhi as being the next 'port' of call, but it was a totally different resort to the one we had known then. Gone were the colonial style buildings as I seemed to recall, including our small friendly hotel of 1991, the place was covered in hotels and condominiums. However, a visit to TUDM (Royal Malaysian Air Force) Butterworth had been arranged by Laurie Bean, ex-RAF and 'Our Man in Malaya' member of the RAFBPA. The visit was centred on the area that was 33 Squadron when operational, the building that now houses the five nation defence group was the original Squadron HQ and from it we were able to look across to where the Bloodhound missiles had sat on their launches all those years ago. Now it was all overgrown with nothing to show what it has been like when operational.....except a small white building which, with excitement (I don't know why), I recognised as the toilets/shower block at the end of the line of T87 radars. It was this very important building I was able to point out to the TUDM CO when he was presented with a framed aerial photograph of the squadron in its operational days. What I didn't explain was how it became the practice at the end of the working day for personnel to cycle to the block, have a shower, and then cycle back to the radars with shorts etc slung over the handlebars...in other words stark naked! Not a pretty sight I admit. The visit also included a visit to the domestic site where the Memorial to *John Hoggan & Wife* is sited and fenced off between the airmen's accommodation blocks. This memorial, despite the number of stories as to why it is where it is, goes back much further than WW2 and might be linked to the once thriving leprosy colony said to be have been on site. The domestic site also had a shop where a number of us bought *Tiger Beer* sweat shirts to add colour to our annual RAFBPA Reunion group photographs.

Our final destination was Singapore where our host was Kuan Joo, at one time CO of SAF Seletar (post 1971) and very pro-RAF. A better host you couldn't wish for, not only did he arrange tours of Singapore that were really superb visits, he also fixed it for the group to visit a part of Seletar that is still recognisable from the early years of the base- the Sunderland slipway and Yacht Club building, still in use today. This was an area we used to pass on the way to 65 Squadron and it brought back memories, as also the previous RAF corporal's club and SHQ, and naturally instant recognition of 'B' Block where I had resided in 1967. The transport was stopped to allow me to get out and take a photograph, meaningful only to me...and I was very happy!

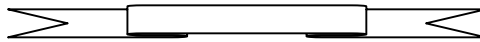
Singapore, as many are probably aware, has totally changed out of recognition from the last days of the RAF on the island. It is very different and there is a pride in what has been achieved, but occasional glimmers of the past can still be found, but perhaps not precisely in the context experienced so long ago. Bugis Street, the street of Trans-women, pimps and prostitutes is still there in name but not exactly in the same place, or in nature! It is now a respectable shopping area but maybe there was perhaps, in my

mind, still a bit of the old Bugis Street lingering on behind the curtained cubicles that I noticed in several 'shops'. I don't know!

The penultimate night in Singapore was spent at the officers' retirement complex close to the previous British Military Hospital. At the poolside, courtesy of Kuan Joo, we spent a super evening dining on a variety of local dishes and enjoying, again, plenty of Tiger beer. Perhaps, not surprisingly, we left the party fairly well 'oiled' but also sober enough to take the SMRT bus back to the hotel...I mention this because it was mentioned later that another ex-RAF group occasionally entertained there when visiting Singapore have to be poured into taxis at the end of the evening. At least we in the RAFBPA know how to behave in public, although I had to be helped to use my SMRT card by the very helpful bus driver as I couldn't get it right.

Finally, I did miss that wonderful pungent smell that I experienced on first arriving in Singapore in 1967. Singapore has been cleaned up, and from the different points of view, is a good thing, but I still missed the smells. But at least I didn't leave the Far East without experiencing it as part of George Town still obliged. Hopefully, George Town, being a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the smells of the past will still be included for future visitors to enjoy?

Dave Croft 98th



RAF DAYS TALES OF THE FAR EAST- SELETAR 66-69

After struggling all the way from Scotland and settling in for take-off in a VC10 on my way to the Far East, I was surprised to say the least to be chucked off at the last minute to make way for another family who had just arrived. On what must have been a wasted journey, from Lyneham all the way back to Leuchars I was but half way through my arrival procedure when I immediately had to start clearing again, this time making my way to Heathrow for a flight in a Britannia of 'Eagle Airways' .

With that aircraft full of wives and children on the way to join their husbands' any single travellers like myself were allocated a family to help out as necessary, which was no problem on the first leg to Bahrain, but turned into a bit of a nightmare after taking off from Colombo during a violent storm. With children as well as many adults steadily getting air sick by the dozen, the atmosphere became somewhat overwhelming, with most of us who were still capable, ending up cradling a sickly child for the remainder of the journey. It was a relief when the doors opened to allow the fetid atmosphere to be exchanged for the strange smells of Singapore.

Arriving in November 1966 as a temporary stop over on my way to Kuching in Borneo on a 9 month unaccompanied, as can be imagined I was mightily pleased to be told on the coach that everything had changed completely and I was now heading for Seletar for a full tour, and most of all I would be able to put in a 'call- fam' straight away, what a turn up for the book, the RAF had surprised once again.

After a few days in transit I was moved across the runway to West Camp to spend the next 3 months living with the single chaps of a helicopter servicing unit, which also included a couple of married men who you had to feel sorry for, as each of their wives had inexplicably refused to leave the UK at the last moment.

Stuck on a full tour Tony, one of the airframe fitters, had made the most of the situation by taking up with a Chinese girl whom he had befriended in one of Singapore's many 'dance parlours'. Warned by many in the block, he continued the association with the inevitable result he was a regular passenger on the 'Changi Flyer', a special coach that took those with unmentionable diseases, to be treated at its sick quarters, the bugger persisting all the time that I knew him.

On promotion to sergeant I joined 52 Squadron, as NCO i/c the radio section, where I was delighted to meet up with a number of ex apps, Dave Bickerton, Mick Gandy and 87th Entry chum Dave Ecclestone, where we proceeded to keep its 6 Andover Mk1's in flying condition.

With my wife Brenda suffering a bad bout of quinsy's, which required an operation, she and our son Gary eventually arrived from the UK 3 months later, and my life as a singly came to an end. It had all been an interesting episode, with many temptations put my way, at one stage cajoled to visit the famous 'New Zealand' bar where with will power alone I declined, the inhabitants atrocious bad breath certainly helping in the situation (I guess it was the garlic), but at long last it was great to be a family again, where we lived some 10 miles from the camp at the 'Sembawang Hills' estate.

The estate was unusual as it had a mixture of Navy, Army and RAF personnel living alongside the locals; our immediate neighbours to our right were a lovely Indonesian family who cooked some marvellous curry's and to our left was RAF Corporal Jimmy Walls with his wife Jess and next door to them was a Navy chap John and Margaret.

We all kept ourselves incredibly fit playing badminton each evening across the garden fences, naturally finishing off with a 'Tiger' beer to quench our thirsts, and when at work, once the aircraft had been seen off, the first line lads had set up a net for

games of volleyball, then at lunchtime many made our way to the swimming pool to cool off. In the tropics you either gained or lost weight, so I was not surprised when after all this exercise my weight gradually went down to just a tad over 8 stone even though I was in the habit of nipping over to East camp for a regular Malay dish of 'makhan'.

With the Andover's having come straight from the UK after build, most of us were unfamiliar with its range of electronics such as Cloud Collision Warning, Decca Navigator, Rebecca Mk4 and VOR/ILS so it was a matter of out with the Air Pubs, get genned up and get on with it. The aircrew often reported that the Decca Navigator had the bad habit of losing lock every time when flying over the sea, plus they suffered exasperating noise breaking through on the intercom at odd occasions.

It took a while but when an aircraft came in the hangar for a major service, Dave and I set about a thorough investigation. With the use of a scope we located an unused lead in a cable that was injecting noise into the Decca's scanner system, plus incorrect wiring of the mics/tels at the navigators table was the sole cause of the i/com problems, the same 2 faults present on every aircraft.

With a number of proving flights around Singapore as our reward, our Locking training had proved its worth once again.

The Squadron had a variety of tasks, including transporting tool kits to Nepal for retiring Gurkha's, where we were surprised to meet a number of American servicemen gambling away in the hotels casino, they were on R/R in Kathmandu from the Vietnam War. Regarding the yanks I remember having a meal down the famous Bugis street with Brenda when we got into conversation with 2 Australian on sick leave, with one of them scarred down his leg as a result of a hand grenade attack.

He revealed that the Aussies had learnt to their cost not to go on patrol with any Americans as at that time they had no jungle fighting skills whatsoever, the Vietcong could smell them from miles away due to their habit of using aftershave, which travelled far in the jungle, plus they blared out personal radios to all and sundry.

The wild life proved interesting, with once a large spider found on our bedroom wall which when thumped with a flip flop caused hundreds of little blighters to scurry all over the place, but the funniest was when Sgt Mike Jackson had a call from his wife that a 'chit chat' was in the toilet and just wouldn't go away

To everyone the 'chit chat' was a small gecko that scurried across walls and ceilings and keeping flies and mossies down to a minimum, so Mike told his wife to just shoo it away. After another call from his wife he suggested using a broom, to which she eventually called back crying that the chit chat was now hissing menacingly at her and wouldn't let go of the broom!!.

Mike downed tools to rush home and returned later slightly ashen faced revealing that on opening the toilet door he was confronted not by a friendly 'chit- chat' but a monster 4 foot lizard of some description, which even he was reluctant to tackle. Luckily after hearing the commotion his Chinese neighbour came to the rescue and with a large 'panga' pushed past Mike to quickly chop off its head. Mike and his wife were then even more shocked when the neighbour proceeded to hoist the body under his arm indicating it would be feeding his family that evening. Yes 'Singers' was full of surprises, with the jungle obviously providing cheap meals for the locals at times.

Probably because everyone was away from their own families and some feeling a bit homesick, 52 organised numerous barbecues at Seletar's brilliant outdoor pool, allowing the officers and men with all the wives plenty of time to get to know each other socially, which all made for a great squadron atmosphere. On a number of occasions Brenda and I were also even invited to attend Army and Naval do's. With John our Navy friend often months away on exercises, Brenda and Jess made sure that Margaret

wasn't lonely, by taking her out shopping together and accompanying us when going to the cinema or out for meals. On Johns return there was of course the inevitable party and on one occasion he took Jim and I to the huge Naval base which included a tour round a couple of ships, all great eye opening stuff.

Jim and I didn't waste time either, as we both took City & Guild's correspondence courses, and to help in our respective RAF promotion exams brought home numerous exam papers which we studied assiduously plus, in the process of taking his Private Pilots Licence Jim took Brenda and me on a couple of flights around the Island.

With an Overseas allowance and a monthly beer ration, the Singapore Grand Prix race circuit held just a short distance from the estate, able to watch visiting UK football teams occasionally, plus after watching a film at the 'Orchard' cinema the ability to tuck in to sizzling prawn or chicken Satays in the numerous street restaurants after, we considered we lived the life of old Riley, it is no wonder that everyone thought this was the best of postings. But with Dennis Healey announcing in Parliament the rundown of Britain's Far East Air Force, the writing was on the wall.

One aspect of working with Andovers was that a radio man had to be on board when doing engine runs, to keep in touch with the control tower, this being the result of a Wessex helicopter being blown over and seriously damaged on a previous run. The routine was also to check the cabin pressurisation with the result everyone sweated so profusely that when I carried out this duty I was left literally standing in a puddle of water, no wonder I looked a skinny wretch. On completion of the run the pressure was then dumped with the humidity causing the whole length of the aircraft to instantly fog up to such an extent that it was difficult to see more than a few feet away.

After a couple of years of living and working in such conditions it was inevitable that many went down with a dose of Tinnea and I was no exception. Calling in at Sick Quarters to get some cream for my toe, I was gobsmacked to be immediately admitted for 2 weeks and kept in an absolutely freezing air conditioned ward, where with high doses of penicillin injected in the backside into the bargain I couldn't sleep, so I was forced to ask Brenda to bring in the thickest pullover she could find, would you believe it, in sweltering Singapore!

It was nice after release to get back to the normal heat, able to visit the local Friday night markets, where the stalls would sell anything from across the East, with an amazing amount of Chinese toys, especially at Xmas. It was lovely to hear all the different dialects of the shoppers and on the way back sometimes we would stop to watch a Chinese 'street opera' with its garishly dressed, high pitched, screaming characters. It was amusing to see what appealed to the locals, but of course it was all part of the different rich and colourful atmosphere which, with its range of religious festivals, went to make life in Singapore so different ; but it was all about to change.

The run down hit home when the adjacent Blackburn Beverley squadron was suddenly disbanded and its aircraft started to be broken up at a ferocious rate. Within a few months the Singapore Air Force began moving in to form a training facility in the vacant hangar and in no time at all it was time for us as family to begin our own packing for our return to the UK.

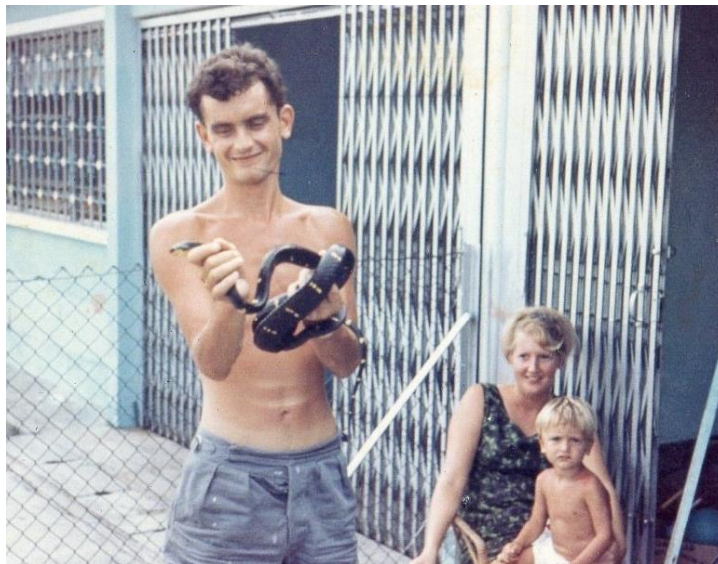
Just prior to our departure we had the fortune to be visited by a travelling snake charmer and invited him in to put on a show for our son Gary. Our scruffy little Indian guest proceeding to pull all manner of things from his writhing sack of goodies, including a fat black and yellow striped lizard, which I always understood was nature's danger sign, as well as a range of snakes which, from his Pidgin English, I understood were all harmless- although they certainly didn't look it at the time.

Then with the celebrations of Xmas 68 over, the time to say goodbye to Jim, Jess and all our other neighbours came round far too quickly and then we were looking back

from the taxi as we made our way out of Sembawang for the last time heading for Changi and our flight home, this time travelling together on an RAF VC10.

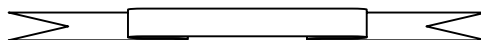
Years later, after obtaining a copy of 'Seletar-Crowning Glory' by David Taylor, we learnt our stay in the far East had indeed been fortuitous, for soon after our return to the UK in the Feb of 1969, the Andover's of 52 Squadron were re deployed to Changi, where just 11 months later it was disbanded. Just a year and a bit later, on 30 March 1971, Seletar camp itself closed and, after virtual continuous occupation by the Royal Air Force since 1928, was transferred to the Singapore Government.

It had been a privilege working alongside the members of 52 Squadron and both Brenda and I are grateful we made it to Singapore at just the right time, before everything changed and it was all consigned to history.



Snake charmer visit at 49 Jalang Chengham, Sembawang 1968
(Now have I got the right end?)

Brian Colby 87th



APPRENTICE DAYS

APPRENTICE SKIVING - AN ARTFORM

Skiving in the Apprentice Wing at Locking, was the ability to generate effective work avoidance, that as long as it did not affect other Apps. was well accepted by our contemporaries. In fact it became almost an art form! In fact during our three years or so of training many of us honed the ability to a fine art.

My contribution to the 'art' was quite modest compared with some of my fellow apprentices.

As a member of a junior entry we were considered fair game by our senior entries to do much of their 'bulling' activities. Many a time we were subject to raids by the senior entry (in my case the 70th entry), it was similar to the procurement of slaves in Africa to work in America's cotton plantations. We would be shepherded to their billets and set to work usually polishing the floors to the highest shine, before being allowed free to return to our hut to do our own bulling. I soon developed an excellent hiding place from the seniors, which succeeded more often than not.

In the central communal ablutions block, there was a row of open topped WCs with cut off bottom portions to the doors. I would hide in the end WC, behind the open door, balancing on the door stop and breathing very softly as the seniors scoured for any apps. hiding in the toilets. After they left I would casually retire to my bed space for a quiet read of my Air Pictorial magazine. The system worked well for over a year.

Another good skive was to be 'selected' by a senior CAA or SAA as a bunk boy. In these modern times the term 'bunk boy' would raise eyebrows, but in those days it simply meant you were under the protection of your apprentice NCO. Your task was to dust, polish and keep tidy the NCO's bunk and that excused you from other cleaning duties. In return you were under his benevolent protection. I was lucky to be selected by CAA Smith of the 70th - our A Squadron senior entry. He was a large amiable chap, excellent at sport who as long as the cleaning was done properly, was very friendly. It also served me well during the senior's lightning strikes on our huts to collect junior entry 'cleaners'.

Probably my best skive was to join the C of E church choir, which enabled me to avoid going on the church parades which ended in the 'T' Block theatre for the service. Dressing up in a white cassock was no problem for the advantage gained. And in those days my singing voice was reasonable, before roughening it with too many raucous songs, whisky and beer!

More importantly being in the choir enabled me to get a head start ahead of others on getting a hitch-hiking lift down to the Borough Arms, where I would walk a little up the road to hitch a lift to out of bounds Bristol. Later I would return on the last Bristol-WSM bus and walk to Camp from the Borough Arms. (Great to be young and fit). As a Bristolian, in my young mind I did not see why I could not frequently visit my family in the city on weekends or a Sunday?

These visits did rebound on me one weekend. Walking down the road from the News Theatre in central Bristol. I espied coming towards me two Tech Officers from Locking. My Basic Radio and English teachers (F/Os Barret and Wales). No escape, I was in uniform with the grey C Squadron hat band (I had just been F.T. d), so I strode past them, giving my best salute, and saying "good afternoon, sirs". They were dumbfounded and I quickly got out of sight, glad to have escaped. Wrong!

Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

On the following Monday I was summoned to the Squadron Office and placed in a chair in the Squadron Leader's Office, and subjected to an hour of ranting and abuse from our fiery Irish Squadron Leader and the Flight Sergeant. When I failed to promise not to break bounds to Bristol again, the Sqdn Ldr tried blackmail and said I would not be made a LAA if I did not succumb. I remained an AA for the rest of my time as an apprentice! After a few weeks, I resumed my furtive sorties to my Bristol home, being careful not to frequent places my superiors went. If I had stayed on Camp during these weekends, I could have swotted up on my tech. work instead having to cram during the last six months prior to the Final Exams.!

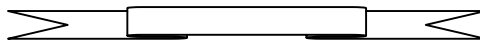
Another good skive was when I decided although I loved football, I just was not good enough to succeed as a player – so decided to train to be an FA Referee (one gets a much better view of the action in mid-field). This enabled me to leave Camp during weekday evenings accompanied by a sergeant (who was a qualified Ref), for instruction at the Referees Association in Weston Super Mare. There was a bar at the Association and the sergeant (Bill Barrass) and I would carefully return to Camp on the meeting evening, usually the worse for wear from too much Pale Ale.

This skive eventually rebounded on me after I passed my Referee Exams., as I was 'requested' quite often at weekends to referee or run the line at football matches on Camp. I must admit I did enjoy them though.

The skiving activities of apprentices was wide and wondrous, showing imagination and application (which must have been a feature in their original apprentice application acceptance). Many other lads had their own skiving activities, but mine provided brief interludes of relief in the somewhat oppressive discipline which our masters felt (correctly) that apprentices needed to be kept in order.

Later life in the RAF after passing out, did not give much opportunity (or need) for skiving, as the needs of the job usually took precedence.

Brian Davies ex 76/77 entry



HUMOUR

A FEW GOOD SENIOR MOMENTS

An elderly gentleman had serious hearing problems for a number of years. He went to the doctor and the doctor was able to have him fitted for a set of hearing aids that allowed the gentleman to hear 100%

The elderly gentleman went back in a month to the doctor and the doctor said, 'Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again.'

The gentleman replied, 'Oh, I haven't told my family yet.'

I just sit around and listen to the conversations. I've changed my will three times!

Hospital regulations require a wheel chair for patients being discharged. However, while working as a student nurse, I found one elderly gentleman already dressed and sitting on the bed with a suitcase at his feet, who insisted he didn't need my help to leave the hospital.

After a chat about rules being rules, he reluctantly let me wheel him to the elevator.

On the way down I asked him if his wife was meeting him.

'I don't know,' he said. 'She's still upstairs in the bathroom changing out of her hospital gown.'

Couple in their nineties are both having problems remembering things. During a check-up, the doctor tells them that they're physically okay, but they might want to start writing things down to help them remember ..

Later that night, while watching TV, the old man gets up from his chair. 'Want anything while I'm in the kitchen?' he asks.

'Will you get me a bowl of ice cream?'

'Sure.'

'Don't you think you should write it down so you can remember it?' she asks.

'No, I can remember it.'

'Well, I'd like some strawberries on top, too. Maybe you should write it down, so as not to forget it?'

He says, 'I can remember that. You want a bowl of ice cream with strawberries.'

'I'd also like whipped cream. I'm certain you'll forget that, write it down?' she asks.

Irritated, he says, 'I don't need to write it down, I can remember it! Ice cream with strawberries and whipped cream - I got it, for goodness sake!'

Then he toddles into the kitchen. After about 20 minutes, the old man returns from the kitchen and hands his wife a plate of bacon and eggs. She stares at the plate for a moment.

'Where's my toast?'

A senior citizen said to his eighty-year old buddy:

'So I hear you're getting married?'

'Yep!'

'Do I know her?'

'Nope!'

'This woman, is she good looking?'

'Not really.'

'Is she a good cook?'

'Naw, she can't cook too well.'

'Does she have lots of money?'

'Nope! Poor as a church mouse.'

'Well, then, is she good in bed?'

'I don't know.'

'Why in the world do you want to marry her then?'

'Because she can still drive!'

Morris, an 82 year-old man, went to the doctor to get a physical.

A few days later, the doctor saw Morris walking down the street with a gorgeous young woman on his arm.

A couple of days later, the doctor spoke to Morris and said, 'You're really doing great, aren't you?'

Morris replied, 'Just doing what you said, Doc: 'Get a hot mamma and be cheerful.''

The doctor said, 'I didn't say that. I said, 'You've got a heart murmur; be careful.''

One more . . .!

A little old man shuffled slowly into an ice cream parlour and pulled himself slowly, painfully, up onto a stool. After catching his breath, he ordered a banana split.

The waitress asked kindly, 'Crushed nuts?'

'No,' he replied, 'Arthritis.'

LIFE AFTER THE RAF

CRASH AT FIRST FLIGHT

It's not everyone who can say that they have crashed a 747 and lived to tell the tale. Not difficult to do of course, if the machine is a flight simulator.

My experience of this form of entertainment began in my last few years as an instructor at Cranebank, the British Airways training centre near Heathrow. Here, ground training and the flight simulators were housed in the same group of buildings. Somehow, one of my colleagues, the late Dave Painter (ex-73rd), had got permission to "fly" the VC.10. Simulator, which was the aircraft he taught. The device had daylight visuals, generated by cameras, tracking above a huge model countryside, adjacent to an imaginary airport. He invited me along to one of his sessions and let me try my hand. I was amazed how realistic it felt and from that point, was hooked.

It was close to the time when B.E.A. and B.O.A.C. merged to form British Airways. I have no idea what excuse he used but Dave had also wangled a similar privilege on the Trident simulator. From time to time, when we had no teaching commitments, we would drive the couple of miles to Heston. Here, in the B.E.A. training centre, we would "play" in the Trident machine. Not as advanced or realistic as the VC.10. but nevertheless a pleasant diversion. I would add that Dave, was was an infinitely better "pilot" than I was.

Back at Cranebank, we also tried, unofficially, the 707. As neither of us had any connection with that aircraft, the "flight" was a one off.

After the merger and much upheaval in the training centre, I became one of the Flight Crew avionics instructors on the 747. Once I was comfortable with my new teaching role, I asked my boss if I might operate the 747 simulator. "As I was now teaching Flight Crew, I needed to get a feel of what they were doing." It took some time to organize but eventually I was granted permission. This machine had night-time visuals and was extremely realistic. I already had a good working relationship with most of the simulator engineers. Next time there was a space in the schedule, they showed me how to operate the device, "flew" me around for a while and left me to it.

I checked "unlimited fuel" was selected and appropriate values of V1 and V2. Fortunately, the engineers had left it parked at the start of Heathrow's 28R runway. It was a remarkable sensation, sitting in the Captains seat, looking at the runway lights converging in the distance and feeling at least 3 stories off the ground, which the real 747 flight deck is. Gingerly, I opened the throttles, released the brakes and the machine appeared to surge forward. The runway lights moving past the windows with increasing velocity. I managed to keep it more or less on the runway centre line with the nose wheel steering and the rudder. At V2 I pulled back the control column and it apparently lifted smoothly into the air. Retracting landing gear and flaps allowed me to settle into a gentle climbing turn, to parallel the runway from which I had just departed. There are a number of advantages to flying a simulator as an amateur. No communications, noise abatement, looking out for other aircraft or restricted areas. So I climbed out over central London, before turning back towards the distant runway lights of Heathrow. Switched on an Autopilot, selected Autoland and Autothrottle. Lowered flaps and landing gear and watched the sequence I had talked about with trainee Flight Crew, progress for real. Culminating in a smooth landing.

I disconnected the automatics, opened the throttles and "took off" again. This time, the plan was a manual landing. Following the same procedure as before, I eventually turned back towards the distant runway lights. The larger and much heavier 747 did not respond quite as quickly as the VC.10. and it proved quite difficult to align and hold the glideslope and localiser indications, as I tended to over correct. I was now descending,

the airspeed built up, so I throttled back and lowered the landing gear. The glideslope pointer drifted towards the top of the instrument. I pulled back on the control column to compensate. It seemed to have little effect, so I pulled back further. Within a few seconds the stall warning went off and the stick shaker kicked in. Suddenly, I remembered that I had forgotten to lower the flaps. I operated the switch, opened the throttles and pushed the control column forwards. Almost immediately the monotonous voice of the G.P.W.S. chimed in PULL UP, PULL UP ----. It was at that point panic took over. I cannot remember what I did next but only a short time elapsed before there was a loud "bang" and the simulator started to bounce around like a bucking bronco. I was not strapped into the Captain's seat and was being thrown around all over the place as I frantically struggled to push the seat backwards and then towards the left side of the flight deck. This was the only way to get past the centre console. Finally I succeeded, got to the simulator control area at the rear and switched off the motion. At this point my heart was probably running at 3 times its normal rate, I was soaked in perspiration and my hands would not stop shaking. I was terrified that I might have damaged the machine. When I had calmed a little, I restarted it and much to my relief all seemed to be O.K. I concluded that I had probably "crashed" it somewhere near Hounslow high street. A most unnerving experience.

As time passed, I improved and could generally put it down in the right place and stop it before running out of runway. From time to time I would bring family or friends to Cranebank at the weekend. Show them round and take them for a "flight" in the 747 simulator. It was a wonderful, very expensive toy!

The one I used was the 747-100 series. Later B.A. bought a very up market 747-200. This was housed in a huge cube shaped room and moved away from the edge to the centre when in operation. Unbelievably realistic I was told but I left B.A. before I got an opportunity to try it.

Mike Collier 76th

ROYAL AIR FORCE LOCKING APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION

**MINUTES FROM THE 52ND COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT FLOWERDOWN HOUSE,
WESTON SUPER MARE AT 13:00 HOURS ON WEDNESDAY 20TH AUGUST 2014.**

Present:-

Committee:	Tiny Kuhle	87th	Chairman
	Nigel Lodge	91st	Secretary
	Tony Horry	76 th	Treasurer
	Jim Doran	219 th	Membership Secretary
	Colin Ingram	88th	Newsletter Editor
	Peter Crowe	95 th	Webmaster/AA Rep
	Rick Atkinson	91 st	Service Rep
	Andy Perkins	109 th	Tech Rep

ITEM 1 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies :-

Graham Beeston 209th Craft Rep.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 13.10 hrs with a greeting all members, this was followed by the Apprentice Prayer.

ITEM 2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was agreed that the minutes of the last Committee Meeting were correct.

Proposed by Andy Perkins and seconded by Peter Crowe

ITEM 3 MATTERS ARISING

Item 11. Amendment to "The Constitution" which was to be discussed later as Item 8 of these Minutes.

ITEM 4 TREASURER'S REPORT

The following accounts were presented by Tony Horry.

RAFLAA COMMITTEE MEETING – 20TH AUG 2014 TREASURERS REPORT.

Accounts as per the income/expenditure statement for Feb – Aug 2014

As reported at the AGM, the 2013 – 2014 Accounts were independently checked and found correct by Ann Cook.

DONATIONS		
Flowerdown House RAFA	£40.00	RAFLAA Cttee Meeting (30 Jan 14)
Help for Heroes	£150.00	Fund Raising at AGM - 2014

AGM	Income	Expenditure	Webbington costs
	£2741.00		53 Lunches = £477.00
Webbington		£2683.00	82 Dinners = £1599.00
Trophy Presentation		£50.00	80 Tea/Biscuits = £200.00
Trophy Expenses			40 Wine = £480.00
Bakers coach		£215.00	127 Bar = £127.00
Music (Atlantic Crossing)		£220.00	
Wordsmith			2015 - Deposit paid £200.00
Refunds (overpaid)		£73.00	
Totals	£2741.00	£3241.00	£2883.00
Refunds			
Cliff Wilkinson (97 th)		£57.00	
Clive Crosby (91 st)		£66.00	
John Trussler (87 th)		£51.00	
Ron Spain (96 th)		£30.00	
		£204.00	

AGM 2014 – cost to the Association = £500 (£811.50 in 2013)

AGM 2015 £200 Deposit has been paid to the Webbington

Outstanding Cheque Payments (AGM)

100 743	Cpl Peter Moore	£50.00	AGM Trophy Presentation
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The AGM agreed that a donation of £100.00 be paid to RAFBF.

This is yet to be paid.

Also outstanding was the repayment to The Treasurer of £40.00 in respect of the January 2014 Committee Meeting to which will be added The Treasurer's further claim for the cash payment made by The Treasurer for this meeting also of £40.00. In each case the payments made were a contribution to Flowerdown House for the use of the facilities and the provision of the buffet lunch.

A Direct Debit set up to subscribe to Freeola for Web hosting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Income/Expenditure for period Feb to Aug 2014 be approved as presented.*
- *That cheque payment (£100.00) to RAFBF be confirmed.*
- *That a donation of £40 be made to Flowerdown House for their hospitality for to-days meeting.*
- *That arrangements for AGM bar subsidy be confirmed under agenda Item AGM 2015*
- *Band booking as required for AGM 2015 (See Agenda Item 10)*

Tony Horry, Treasurer,

Aug 2014

The Treasurer's Report was accepted. Proposed by Colin Ingram and seconded by Peter Crowe.

ITEM 5 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

Jim Doran provided the following information:-

ITEM 5.1 MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

Latest Membership number used is 715 (714 at the 2014 AGM)
The new member is Richard Dawson of the 83rd Entry who resides in New Zealand.

ITEM 5.2 NEWSLETTER HARDCOPY REQUESTS

A total of 34 current active member copies of including 2 copies overseas: France and USA. I have managed to persuade the Australian resident to receive via the website.

Down to 2 copies to sister organisations i.e. Admin Apprentices Association and RAF Halton Apprentices Association. The Cranwell Apprentices Association has now folded.

Newsletters to Widows down to 6 copies in total.

Email addresses are an on-going issue to keep up to date with and since Peter put a notice on the website I have only had 1 update.

ITEM 5.3 ADVERTISING

Jim opined that advertising remains a necessary requirement in the RAFA "AirMail", not least because it serves as a reminder to readers of the continued existence of the LAA. In addition Jim also uses local area events to make the public aware of our existence.

I am also continually reminding RAFA Branches as often as I can about advertising our association for all ex apprentices.

The Membership Secretary's Report was accepted. Proposed by Rick and seconded by Peter

ITEM 6 SECRETARY'S REPORT

Nigel Lodge said that since he became Secretary there had been nothing to report.

ITEM 7 RAF LOCKING APPRENTICE MEMORIAL

Rick Atkinson reported on the current progress as follows.

The 'architect' with whom he had been in contact had let him down and he was in the throes of finding a replacement. He had contacted three persons of whom one appeared most suitable. The selected architect had been set-up in business under the auspices of The Princes Trust and was one used to liaising with Marshall's Materials. A meeting was planned for Saturday 23rd August at Locking. Tony Horry agreed to meet at the site.

A recent visit to the site by Rick had revealed that the area had been cleared and the grass had been mown.

Discussion with the architect would focus on the concept of a block weave Apprentice Wheel with the propeller being in contrasting block weave. The plinth/memorial/monument to be at 6 o'clock and set inside the rime of The Wheel.

The matter of a deposit being requested by the architect was discussed and agreed that authority of up to £400 as a deposit should be made available. However, it was also agreed that no offer of a deposit would be made in the first instance.

The report was accepted. Proposed by Nigel Lodge and seconded by Jim Doran.

ITEM 8 AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION.

This item was tabled by Tiny Kuhle in his position as Chairman. He made the following statement -

The Amendment to The Constitution had been discussed and voted on at the AGM on the 26th April 2014. The discussion had focused on changes which would enable invitations to be issued to persons who had contributed to the teaching and learning of Apprentices at No 1 Radio School. Such persons to be granted Associate Membership. The discussion had been initiated during the AGM of 2013. On that occasion there had been a proposal that members of the Cranwell Apprentices Association, which it had proposed to dissolve due to falling membership, should be admitted to our Association.

In parallel with the discussion members felt that it would be appropriate to admit people who had a strong connection with No. 1 Radio School. The proposed amendment, see below, was voted upon. However, it was pointed out that, under The Constitution, there was a requirement for the Membership to be given 28 days' notice of such proposal without which the amendment could not be passed. The Committee therefore give notice that para 8 of the Constitution should be amended to read as follows:

'Membership of the Association is open to all apprentices of the Royal Air Force and other Air Forces who underwent all or part of their training at the RAF Locking. Associate Membership may be offered to those former apprentices who have been members of the Cranwell Apprentice Association. Additionally Associate Membership may be offered in selected cases to individuals who had a close association with the training of Apprentices at RAF Locking, or who made significant contribution to the training at **No 1 Radio School.**'

It was recommended that the whole of the above should be included in the next Newsletter with member/readers given the opportunity to state whether they are 'for' or 'against' the amendment. Details of the responses will be made known at the 2015 AGM on 25th April when the amendment will be formally proposed and members given the opportunity to vote.

Those unable to attend are requested to make their opinion known to The Secretary.

ITEM 9 AGM 2015

Tiny Kuhle began with a reference to complaints that he and others had received indirectly regarding the dinner. There had been a complaint about meat being undercooked and another where the fish was still frozen. In the morning, immediately prior to this meeting, there had been an appointment with Rebecca at The Webbington and the matter of the quality of the dinner had been discussed. Rebecca, reading from her notes, said that she had been made aware of the complaint and following the 2014 AGM she had raised the matter with The Manager. This meeting was also attended by Jim Doran and Nigel Lodge.

Whilst the booking for 2015 at The Webbington had already had the approval of the AGM it was necessary that Management at The Webbington was made aware that a booking for 2016 was not a foregone conclusion.

Referring to the venue for 2015 Tiny Kuhle, during his attendance at this year's FABEA meeting, had already been sounding out what other associations were doing. He said that the Admin Apprentices moved their venue around the country and noted that at a recent event a discount of 35% had been negotiated on bar prices. If such a discount were to be possible, or even as low as 15%, this would be more cost effective than the outright subsidy given in previous years and paid for from the Association. The prospect of a discount was broached at the meeting at The Webbington but Rebecca was not able to do more than raise the matter with The Manager who was currently on holiday.

ITEM 10 AGM 2015 DINNER DANCE/BAND

There was a general discussion about whether there was a need for a dance band. Several personal comments were made about the lack of enthusiasm for a dance band based on comments at the 2014 AGM and previous about the volume. Whilst some thought the volume could be turned down previous attempts had been unsuccessful. In

addition it was not easy to control given that performers generally wear head-phones and are unaware of the level.

Tiny Kuhle had broached the matter of alternatives with Rebecca at The Webbington and had been provided with detail of some alternative.

Rick Atkinson said that all bands were too loud. However, he added that rather than a total absence of any music, in keeping with our past heady days at Locking we might consider being piped in to dinner by one or other members who had been members of the Apprentice Pipe Band.

Tony Horry suggested a 'Swing Band' might be an acceptable alternative.

Andy suggested that as background there might be Musak with a range of popular tunes.

(I did not suggest nostalgic pop music such as "hang down your head Tom Dooli")

It was agreed that the matter should receive further consideration.

Proposed Nigel Lodge, seconded Rick Atkinson

ITEM 11 RAFLAA WEB SITE

The website was thought to be working perfectly and Tiny Kuhle thanked Peter Crowe for his work. In the words of Peter, there's nowt wrong.

ITEM 12 FABEA HALTON JULY 2014.

The meeting was attended on behalf of LAA by Tiny Kuhle.

RAFLAA will be the host for 2015.

This was the first year without a representation from either Cranwell or Brats 192 following the dissolution of these two associations.

ITEM 13 NEWSLETTER

Colin Ingram reported on progress in transferring the hard copy of the newsletter to softcopy. He hoped that this would be resolved very soon and there would be a CD of the archived copies. Although all copies were available and there was some doubt as to the requirement for a CD of all copies it was felt that there could be several people who find it more user-friendly to access a CD than to chop and change on-line.

Colin regretted that there were no articles from the Heavy Radar members and hoped this would change.

There followed a discussion about the Radar Museum at Neatishead, Norfolk. <http://www.radarmuseum.co.uk/> Colin had visited the Museum and spoke well of it. Nigel Lodge who lives a few miles from the museum and is a member – though not 'heavy radar' spoke glowingly about it and a discussion then followed as to whether members would like an organised visit, perhaps in 2015.

ITEM 14 AGM 2016

Following on from discussion at FABEA, it was interesting to note, for future RAFLAA negotiations, that the Admin Apprentices had been able to negotiate terms for their

AGM venue such that although at different locations they had not had an increase in costs for the last 4 years.

Taking the above into consideration Tiny Kuhle said he had looked at costs at various Marriot Hotels of the kind that the Admin Apps used and considered that whilst Bristol's Royal Marriot and Peterborough Marriot had things to commend them the nearest in price to The Webbington was the latter.

Although the above consideration came out of discussions at FABEA there was also good reason, given a change of ownership, to reconsider The Royal at Weston-super-Mare.

ITEM 14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Andy drew to the attention of the Committee the existence of the Defence Discount Service - <https://www.defencediscountservice.co.uk/> - this is open to veterans as well as serving members of the Armed Forces.

Rick Atkinson added that there was another discount facility "Rewards for Forces" which is sponsored by The Sun - <http://www.rewardsforforces.co.uk/>

Colin Ingram asked about tickets for the Remembrance Sunday service at the Cenotaph which, this year is 9th November. Tiny Kuhle has requested 7 tickets for the parade.

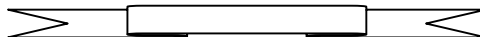
Jim Doran had received a call from?????? with an offer to supply enamel lapel badges. These badges represented the fist and sparks as worn on the sleeve of radio and radar trades, Jim said that the cost would be of the order of £5.00 with an additional charge of £1.00 to cover postage.

ITEM 16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next committee meeting would be held on Thursday 19th February 2015 at Flowerdown House Weston-super-Mare commencing at 13.00hrs.

Meeting Closed at 15.30hrs

Nigel Lodge (Sec LAA)



OBITUARIES

GEORGE RING 95TH ENTRY

It is with great sadness that we have just learned of the death of George Ring of the 95th.

George was a founder member of the RAFLAA, treasurer for many years and organised all the early AGM social events at Dance Scene. He fought a long battle with Colon Cancer but finally lost the fight.

We have all lost a good friend.

Further details will be available on the web site.

RAFLAA COMMITTEE

Appointment	Name	Address	Tel/email	Re-Election	Entry
President	Martin Palmer				91 st
Chairman	"Tiny" Kühle	22 Tavistock Close Woburn Sands Milton Keynes Bucks MK17 8UY	(01908) 583784 Hans.Kuhle@btopenworld.com	Apr 2016	87 th
Secretary	Nigel Lodge	9 Broadmead Green Thorpe End Norwich Norfolk NR13 5DE	(01603) 700 505 Nigel.lodge@btinternet.com	April 2017	91 st
Treasurer	Tony Horry	Hillside Cottage Kewstoke Road Kewstoke WSM BS22 9YD	(01934) 628383 Tony.horry@gmail.com	Apr 2016	76 th
Membership Secretary	Jim Doran	11 Saxonlea Close Rushden Northants NN10 6BF	(01933) 317357 Jimdoran12@hotmail.com	Apr 2014	219 th
Service Rep	Rick Atkinson	Gateway Cottage 1 Lake Walk Adderbury Oxfordshire OX17 3PF	(01295) 812972 rickatkinson@me.com	Sept 2015	91 st
AA Rep/ Webmaster	Peter Crowe	14 Hillview Road WSM N. Somerset BS23 3HS	(01934) 412178 webmaster@raflaa.org.uk	Sept 2015	95 th
Craft Rep	Graham Beeston	87 Hornbeam Rd Havant PO9 2UT	Home (02392) 346242 Work 07920038690 graham@mapleoak.co.uk	Sept 2015	209 th
Tech Rep	Andy Perkins	107 Balmoral Way Worle WSM BS22 9BZ	(01934) 417323 am.perkins@virgin.net	Sept 2015	109 th
Newsletter Editor	Colin Ingram	Fairhaven Gooseham Morwenstow Bude Cornwall EX23 9PG	01288 331363 colin.ingram90@gmail.com	Apr 2015	88 th

ADVERTISEMENTS

Discounts available to Serving and Veterans of the Armed Forces 'Reward for Forces'

Serving personnel and their partners of the Navy, Army, Air Force and Veterans, Service Widows/Widowers, Reservists, Cadets, MOD Civil Servants and the Royal British Legion are all welcome.

www.rewardsforforces.co.uk

'Defence Discount Service'

Who qualifies for the service?

The official Ministry of Defence discount service is available for all members of the Defence Community and you can join for free and start saving £100's a year. The Service is available for the follow:

Serving Armed Forces - Reserve Forces - Spouses/Partners of serving personnel - Forces Veterans - MOD Civil Servants

www.defencediscountservice.co.uk

The Fist and Sparks Lapel Badge/Tie



Contact

www.iolaire.co.uk/sparks.html



RAFLAA Memorabilia

RAFLAA Ties £7.50

Apprentice Wheel £2.00

Label Badges £2.00

Replacement Name Badges £2.75 (free to new members)

Coasters £2.00

p&p extra

tony.horry@gmail.com



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.

DINNER MENU SATURDAY 25TH APRIL 2015

AGM 2015 MENU

Lightly curried sweet potato & butternut soup

Smoked Salmon Salad

Baked Field Mushroom

Fan of Honeydew Melon & Orange Sorbet

Poached Salmon Fillet

Roast Topside of Beef

Supreme of Chicken Breast stuffed with Smoked Bacon

Lentil Nut Roast

Apple Crumble & Custard

White Chocolate & Fig Tart

Vanilla Cheesecake

Selection of Cheese & Biscuits

Tea and Coffee Served with Mints

APPLICATION FOR RAFLAA AGM 2015

DINNER, DANCE AND FINGER BUFFET
25TH APRIL 2015

Name	
Address	
Email Address	
Entry No.	

Description	No of Tickets	Ticket Each	Total
Lunch & Dinner		£30	£
Dinner & Dance		£21	£
Lunch Only		£10	£
Dinner Dance Guest		£31	£
Ladies Coach Trip to: Glastonbury		t.b.a.	£
TOTAL			£

Application for Coach trip to be returned by: 1st March 2015

Cheques crossed account payee, made to **RAF Locking Apprentice Association**

Return application to:

Mr. A Horry, Hillside Cottage, Kewstoke Road, Kewstoke, Weston-Super-Mare, BS22 9YD

Tel: 01934628383 E-mail: tony.horry@gmail.com

Starter	Soup	Melon	Salad	Mushrooms
Number				
Main Course	Salmon	Beef	Chicken	Nut Roast
Number				
Dessert	Crumble	Fig Tart	Cheesecake	Cheese
Number				

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

Rooms at the Webbington Hotel. Accommodation contact Webbington Hotel, Loxton, W-s-M, BS26 2HU.

Tel: 01934750100. Email: info@webbingtonhotel.eclipse.co.uk.

Rooms will be charged @£80 double, £65 single B&B per night for 2 night stay, £90 double, £70 single for 1 night stay. Please telephone the hotel direct and quote **RAFLAA** when booking to secure reduced rates. **ACCOUNTS MUST BE SETTLED WITH THE HOTEL.**