



Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

Newsletter

Serial 17

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Spit on a stick now Spit in the Air

FORMER LOCKING GATE GUARDIAN TAKES TO THE AIR AFTER FIFTY-ONE YEARS

The Spitfire which was mounted on a concrete plinth at the entrance of Locking, and known to later Entries as the "Spit on a stick" has been restored to flying condition at St. Athen and took to the air again on Friday November 17th.

The aircraft first saw service with 443 (Canadian) Squadron in 1944 based at Digby, where it took part in major missions including the D-Day landings.

During its service the Mk9 Spitfire, registration MK356, survived three belly landings and needed a replacement of a set of wings, before being sent to Halton as an instructional airframe.

Inevitably its useful training life expired, and it was sent to Hawkinge where it was the gate guardian until the unit closed in 1961.

The aircraft was then posted to Locking where

after a period of refurbishment at Station Workshops it was mounted on a concrete plinth in a flying attitude.

When no longer required in this role MK356 went to St. Athen as a museum exhibit, before being moved again, this time into storage at Wroughton.

A survey of remaining MK9s showed that MK356 was the only one capable of being restored to flying condition. This was largely due to its plinth mounting while at Locking, which kept most of the aircraft systems intact.

She was returned to St. Athen in 1992 when the six year restoration programme began.

MK356 is destined to join the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight at Coningsby where she is expected to join in next year's display programme.

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Editorial

Its that time of the year again – Merry Christmas and every thing you would wish yourselves in the New Year!

It is possible that by the time you receive this, Christmas will be but a distant memory of too much drink, too much pud and too much spent! The ~~excuses~~ reasons are myriad, and include teething problems in the new multi million automatic post office sorting office covering the Bristol area, overriding priorities in the Horn household, repetitive stamp licking injuries to Charles, problems in the envelope supply department (A4 needed this time) — take your pick!

Last issue's appeal for copy was reasonably productive; thanks guys for making the effort. Amongst my Christmas wishes this year is one for an abundant supply of articles next year, but you know that already ...

While I think of it, does anyone know of one Jnr. Tech. Smith, last heard of at 3ACC Hamala, Bahrein in 1970? If so could you let me know because I have a story concerning him which I wouldn't want to publish if he was going to hear about it. Suffice it to say that he finally realised a long held ambition to escape from Hamala by breaking INTO the police dog compound! This story is about a similarly reckless attempt to get away. If I don't hear from anyone I will assume all is safe and include it in the next issue.

Enclosed with this issue is a full membership list with addresses etc. I write this slightly tongue in cheek because the list is going to the printer tomorrow and Mike West has just rung me to tell me that he has another twenty or so names to add to it, i.e. there has been a flurry of recruits in the last few weeks. This is apparently due to an advert he has been running on TELETEXT Old Comrades or something of that sort – well done Mike. The new member's details will appear as an additional sheet if things work out!

I learnt about life from that ...

Dave Croft (98th) writes on the value of paperwork, discovered as a newly qualified Jnr Tech. posted to RAF Buchan.

On arrival at the complex (Ops site) Les Thorley, Jim Campbell, John Surtees and myself (all 98th) were given a lecture by the WO Tech. on the fact that we were not going to be know- it- all cocky sods, issued denims and assigned to digging out clinker from the solid fuel boilers at the domestic site, for use in making paths to the Types 13, 14 and FP 6 radars. From the air these paths were like great pointers, no low flying aircraft could miss them! However all good things must come to an end and as I was the one who moaned the loudest about being fitters and not odd job men (my wife says I still have not learnt to keep my mouth shut at!) I was consistently picked up by the WO Tech. or his Flight Sergeant henchman (in all fairness one of the best SNCO's I have ever worked with) and given any sort of job as long it was not working on the radars or consoles.

Often I would be strolling to the rest room after strenuously pushing some paperwork around only to hear a voice issuing forth from an office "Croft, come here I've a job for you." This went on for some time until I was yet once again picked up for another menial task (Three years training to be the cream!) whilst I was still carrying paperwork from the previous errand. Once it was realised that I was carrying out an errand for someone else the next poor soul to be passing by was collared instead of me.

So what did I learn from that? From that moment onwards I carried a role of paper and/or documents everywhere with me in the building and was never called upon to do petty errands again. I spent many happy hours in the rest room until the time came for to put my fault-finding skills to the test by being allowed to work on equipment.

ters ... Letters ... Letters ... Letters ... Letters .

Dear Chris,

As a new member of the Association I was delighted to receive the Newsletter, which in turn brought back many memories (some pleasant, others horrible) of my days as a Locking Apprentice. I was particularly pleased to read on page 4/5 that the balance sheet was anonymously accepted by the AGM!

Dave Croft 98th

Whoops! — mind you, the same issue did carry a piece on the unreliability of spell chequers!

Dear Ed.,

I am one of those people who continued to work (self employed) in the electronic sector. Some three years ago I undertook a project which required some fundamental research into high power electronics. How I missed the basic theory and design of inductors as it was so clearly laid out in AP 3302! Consequently, I 'ordered' a copy from H.M.S.O. I am sure you can appreciate the furore that this caused! How did a civilian find out the number of this publication? Perhaps he is a spy from Russia? The nett result was that I had to be vetted; yes VETTED. I was phoned by a S/Ldr Dave Taylor from the M.O.D. who was an ex Cranwell apprentice. He approved of my request and introduced me to the R.A.F, Locking Apprentice Association. This whole affair took several months to resolve. My excitement arose as the day approached when I could renew my acquaintance with my old friend, AP 3302. But I had a phone call from H.M.S.O. to say that the day before they were due to send out my copy, an order came from 'on high' that this publication was to be withdrawn and all copies 'Pulped'. Could anyone out there find me a copy of 3302? The part of basic electricity and magnetism is the one I most require, but any other sections, if available, would be appreciated.

Mike (Bernie) Furness 98th

(The following letter was sent to the Secretary who passed it on to me)

In his address at the AGM, Locking C.O. said that in addition to the Station Flight he was going to get a second Flight made up of serving ex-Apprentices and he hoped that there could be a Third Flight made up from ex-Locking Apprentices who had left the service.

If this did come about I am sure that it would be mainly made up by members of the RAF-LAA.

Certainly in my day (1954-56) we were very proud of our ability to out march anybody from any service, including the Guards. I am sure that other Entries thought the same about their drill abilities. In spite of the march of time, there are many of us, certainly from our era, who think that we would be just as good as ever – well almost as good! But no matter how good the "civilian flight" performed on the day, if they are not in a uniform of some sort they would not impress bystanders as much as they would like to. I am sure many of the spectators will be made up of ex-servicemen and women who would be viewing with a critical eye.

The lack of a uniform could be overcome quite easily, I think, as I am sure that most of the "ex-Apps" who are prepared to march in the "Civilian flight" have a black or navy blue blazer, white or blue shirt, an RAFLAA or RAF tie and grey or light blue trousers. I am also sure there is not one "ex-Brat" that has not got at least one pair of black shoes somewhere, so get bulling again lads! No hats to be worn, show off our grey hairs (those that still have some hair left that is), and I would suggest that we would steal the show – but only if we could still all march in step. If necessary, those who volunteered could, maybe, arrive a day early and have an hour on the parade ground just to make sure that they still remembered how to do it.

E. M. Huscroft 76th

It All Has An Effect!

by Robin White (86th), Squadron Chaplain, Air Training Corps

Reading an article in a recent Newsletter (February '97) got me to thinking about how no significant experience, however mundane it may seem at the time, is ever wasted.

The description of the parade in Weston at which Bishop Bradfield was on the saluting base made me realise how many little things happened during my time at Locking that were to have an effect on the direction of my life later on.

As well as the Bishop, I recall sitting through many 'Fact and Faith' films in the Padre's Hour, visiting the YMCA which later became the Sandes Club, and being a member of the bearer party at the funeral of Willy Scott the SASRA Reader. Also well remembered were the afternoons doing sport on the arena as part of the early introduction of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, my weekends in the Photographic Club and listening to Radio Locking in the OD Church, where it could be heard on the electronic organ when certain stops were pressed!

The weekends spent in the Photographic Club were directly responsible for me being summoned before my Flight Commander who made me an offer I couldn't refuse! Promotion and a change of trade due to the RAF running out of Photographers who at that time were all National Service which was about to end.

Some years later I found myself serving with the first International Reconstruction Team in Algeria, following the ending of the seven years fighting between the French and Algerians and the coming of Algerian independence. The photos that I took were published with an article I wrote in the 'YMCA World' and as a result I was asked to lead a group of international students on a three month educational visit to East Africa, but that's another story!

After leaving the RAF I returned home and

joined the YMCA, was put on a training course for youth leaders then eventually went to Liverpool University (my RAF Entrance Exam being recognised as university entrance!) and did a course which gave me recognition as a nationally qualified youth leader.

I began specialising in work with young offenders and eventually was advised to go into the church. I was admitted as a Church of England Reader in the Lichfield Diocese, and after a period as Warden of a number of Home Office Approved Probation Hostels in south London, and as a probation officer in Wolverhampton, I came to Frome in Somerset at the request of the Probation Service to set up a hostel for homeless ex-prisoners from Shepton Mallet prison.

As part of my work within the Diocese of Bath & Wells I found myself attending many meetings in the Bradfield Room (named after the former bishop) at the Old Deanery in Wells. I also found myself getting involved with the Air Training Corps, due to my son becoming a cadet, and was eventually approached by the Wing Chaplain and asked to become a Squadron Chaplain. I then found myself having to take Padres Hours and remembered the ones I sat through at Locking! Isn't it interesting that you can learn how *not* to do something as easily as how *to* do it? Never have I used a film as a means *not* to speak to the cadets as happened in the cinema at Locking when, after we all sat down, the Padre announced the film and then disappeared until its end when he returned and dismissed us!

When the City of Bath YMCA needed a qualified Youth Leader in Charge I was asked to take on the job which I did for four years. Memories of my afternoons at Locking came flooding back when I found myself having to organise the D of E Award Scheme in Bath

(continued from page 4)

and the experience led to me being invited to set up the Open Award Centre within the YMCA for the whole of the Bath area.

I am very conscious now of the debt I owe to my time at Locking as a raw 15 year old away from home for the first time and rather unsure as to what the future would bring. Certainly I believe that those experiences and Locking's training all combined to influence my future in a way that I couldn't even have imagined at the time.

Next year may see the closure of the camp, but it's memories and associations will stay with me for life; as I'm sure they will for all the Apprentices who have passed through its gates.

Apprentices Commemoration Stone

As reported in the last news letter, a commemorative stone is to be set in the pavement outside St. Clement Danes Church in the Strand. The unveiling will be on 19 April next year and a number of seats in the church for the Commemoration Service will be available to Association members.

Anyone wishing to attend should inform Mike West, Membership Secretary as soon as possible — seems like a good excuse for a week end in London.

Money paid in

To avoid complications in getting monies for membership fees etc. paid into the bank, could you please ensure that any money for the Association is sent by Cheque or Postal Order — but not cash — **only, to the Treasurer.**

If you send it to anyone else they only have to send it on to the treasurer any way.

Of course, a Standing Order makes things easier all round!

EuroEnglish ...

The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby English will be the official language of the EU rather than German which was the other possibility. As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling has some room for improvement and has accepted a 5 year phase-in plan which would be known as "EuroEnglish".

In the first year, 's' will replace the soft 'c'. Certainly this will make the sivil servants jump with joy. The hard 'c' will be dropped in favour for the 'k'. This should klear up konfursion and keyboards kan have one less letter.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year, when the troublesome 'ph' will be replased with the 'f'. This will make words like 'fotograf' 20% shorter.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will enkorage the removal of double letters which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horble mes of the silent 'e's in the language is disgrasful, and they should go away.

By the 4th yar, peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing 'th' with 'z' and 'wi' with 'v'. During ze fifz yar, ze unesasary 'o' kan be dropd from vords kontaining 'ou' and similar changes vud ov kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters.

After ze fifs yar, ve vil hav a reli sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubls or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi tu understand eeh ozer.

... It could happen!

Rafters and Bog Pans

by Mike Furness (93rd)

You surprise me in saying that you are short of contributions for our magazine, surely, I and my colleagues in the 93rd were not the only ones keeping permanent staff occupied or amused (I am not sure which). I have tried to consider which of the more unusual eccentricities of the Apprentices would be of interest. Any inexplicable and unusual affairs would be far more interesting than the usual gallon of Teepol in the fountain in W.S.M.

For instance; what about anyone walking around the balcony in the workshop block (4T) and wondering what the small objects are in the rafters, are they still there? Do you remember? How did they get there?

For those of you who don't remember, consider a workshop afternoon in the summer, everyone hot and bothered in their overalls, all beavering away making jobs with little bits of Paxolin and coils of wire all to an exact drawing. One member of the class is way ahead of the others, the rest are all behind schedule. The instructor (Mr Rose for 93GC2) goes out for five minutes. Minor irritations with the offending apprentice suddenly boil over; he is grabbed by the rest of the class, his legs and arms spread-eagled between the benches, vices are clamped on the loose arms and legs of his voluminous denims, totally imprisoning him airborne between the benches. Someone produces a reel of black cotton and another cigarette lighter, the victim struggles furiously knowing what is about to happen, but the grip of the vices hold him permanently clamped! A quick lookout over the top of the wall and up to the surrounding first floor offices gives the all clear. One end of the job is tied to the cotton and after maybe several attempts the cotton reel manages to go over the rafters and down the other side. The cotton is slowly wound in and the miserable

youth watches his job gradually rise into the sky. When it reaches the metal 'T' of the rafters, a sharp jerk of the cotton makes it stand on the flat of the inverted 'T' tee approx. 30 feet above the ground. The cigarette lighter is lit and the poor soul let out of the vices, as he runs to the cotton, it is lit from below and in a few seconds had burnt out of reach and right up to the rafters, thus leaving his job in the roof for posterity.

So, if there are any 'jobs' still there, we now know how and why it happened. Perhaps, if any one can get them down, they could be preserved as an example of "what we did then" (in more ways than one.)

I am surprised that no one has yet mentioned the "Bog Pans" which initially heralded the replacement of the hutted encampment with modern brick buildings and the ultimate closure of the camp. (Camps are always closed down some time after being rebuilt!)

As 'D' squadron (93rd) billets were some of the last to go, we witnessed the demise of all the other squadron accommodation first. The wooden huts were dismantled and taken away fairly rapidly, the problem being that the only "permanent" architecture were the concrete plinths which contained the ablution block. When all the woodwork and supports were removed, no one seemed to want the prewar 'Porcelain Goddesses' which perched nobly upon their Podiums. After a few drinks on a Saturday night out, the sight of the Noble Ladies shining quietly in the moonlight led inevitably to thoughts as to how the rest of the world could participate in enjoying a sight of their Maternal Splendour which for so long had been previously locked away in little cubicles.

The 92nd, I believe, "took a shine" to the cop-

per Ball Cocks and when "Out and About" in W-S-M would be prone, when asked, to open their coats and flash a highly polished copper artefact hanging from the inside, which I am sure caused great puzzlement to the local female population.

Our interest was more in the "Hardware Department"

The first recorded incident was when Taff Owen, myself and one or two others adorned the Squadron Office while the Orderly Corporal was carrying out his 'Sleeping Duties'. At the apex of the squadron office roof were four "Porcelain Ladies" with their hats (lids) raised in salute and ample 'bumf' which had unrolled down the side of the squadron office. All the signs from all the buildings on the camp were screwed to the wall (all held on with two 1" wood screws about 2" apart, so quite easy to take off and reinstall even in the dark.) I particularly remember making a special effort to screw the sign "Bulk Ration Store" under our large Flight Commanders office, FLT. LT. Beacroft, ("Beakers" to his slaves). The doorway to the squadron office was bricked up with a proper brick wall we had made ourselves from material supplied courtesy of the contractors. I am not sure how we managed all this in so short a time. I wish I could do it now!

Our activities seemed to suddenly spark a "Fashion Trend" much as the first lady to wear a mini skirt must have done. On the following Saturday, we duly marched from 'D' squadron office (below the parade ground) up to the parade ground for the monthly Wing Parade, whereupon the Wing Warrant officer was most surprised to find another unplanned parade occupying his parade ground.

All the bog pans had arrived to have their own "Passing Out Parade", all several hundred of them with "Officers in charge" and "Right Guides and Markers", already in "Revue Order" waiting serenely for the CO's inspection - he was not amused. A few days before the A.O.C's inspection, three of "The Ladies" ap-

peared on the parapet over the entrance to the 3T block. The "Powers That Be" could not work out how to get them down, they obviously did not know that you could climb up behind the stage and through a trap door onto the roof; no one who knew was going to tell them anyway!

We had a parade and were told that they must be removed immediately. The next day, they had disappeared, (merely laid on their sides below the parapet).

The day of the A.O.C's inspection dawned, the ladies were back in all their splendour with a large caption written on a sheet hanging down in front of them stating: "IT'S YOUR TURN NOW."

I have only written so many anecdotes all at once, because of their possible inclusion in "The History" I don't have too many more. Where were all of the rest of you? I am very sure that it wasn't only me and a few others that "utilised" the system fully.

Looking back, I really enjoyed most of my apprenticeship, although goodness knows how I drank so much and was involved in such mayhem, and still managed to Pass Out!

I know we only remember the best times: but if I try hard, I can remember doing drill, sometimes all day Saturday, because there was always someone in the flight who would frustrate the DI (usually by going left, right, scrape) every so often. I also remember "standing by your beds" all day Saturday for full kit inspection and being totally unfit to be with because I had actually used the kit inspection toothbrush. This was just one of the many unpleasanties thrust upon us by authority.

Who remembers being told that your "pot" mug was totally dirty and if you could catch it when the NCO dropped it (before it shattered on your bed end) that you could keep it?

Of course, when they finally let us out after intense suppression, the spring really recoiled back and then it was OUR TURN AGAIN!

Lest we forget

by Dave Croft, 98th

As a 'sprog' member of the Association I eagerly awaited my first copy of the newsletter (much like the excitement felt when first issued uniform back in those heady days of the early 60s). Reading the article "*The Incas*" by Bob Finlayson (99th) brought back many memories. I recall the forming of the group and on occasions helping out ... In those early days I wore a nylon leopard patterned jumper that crackled and flashed with static when removed in the dark of the 'lights out' room when we officially arrived back out of hours.

Although in the Apprentice Band, it took a while for my talent for playing instruments to be discovered. This was when my turn for solo on the trumpet arrived. To save face I was offered the much prized task of taking on that bad tempered mascot, the Shetland Pony, which if I recall correctly was given the rank of C.A.A. and called Hamish. I don't know which was the most preferable, the pony or some of the brutes that wore the two small stripes! Certainly reading the Newsletter brought back many memories that have laid dormant over the years the large bubbling steam heated baths we washed our 'eating irons' in, especially if you let them slip into the scalding water, the 'snap' inspections by Apprentice NCO's where 'grotty' pottery mugs were upended on bumper handles and then allowed to fall in a graceful arc towards your metal bed end, whilst you the poor unfortunate offender had to 'race' it with the consequent result that you had to fork out 2/6d for another one.

Perhaps others will remember the mass boycotting of the mess when the food was so atrocious and also the inter - entry food fights that on occasions enabled frustrated energies to be got rid of harmlessly (unless one had a local girlfriend!) Which reminds

me of the time the band was moved from the wooden huts into the new purpose built accommodation block. The poor unfortunate next to me was Gus Gillespie who experienced a leaking valve from the overhead heating system. An alternative to leaving his bed being stuck out of alignment and the dripping of water into a bucket was to cover the valve with an unobtrusive item. This we did and found the said item would hold around a gallon of water before slipping off the valve usually in the early hours of the morning.

Moving into the new accommodation blocks also enabled us to 'invent' a new game - that of 'riding the lockers' where an unfortunate soul was fastened in a locker and then the locker would be ridden stagecoach style down the stairs!

Passing out parades for senior entries were causes for great concern for junior entries. Raids and collection of sprogs for 'bulling' of kit was an acceptable practice and once the kit had been cleaned (billets were also 'bulled') the victims were usually treated quite regally, but not always! One way out of this was to get yourself on jankers' which I did, but I didn't do things by half and usually ended up with either 10 or 14 days performing regular fatigues and inspections at the guardroom ... on reflection what a drag for the permanent staff on station duties.

After Locking the next 11 years were spent at a various units Buchan, Newton, West Raynham, Seletar, Butterworth, Locking and finally Patrington (was the Air Force trying to tell me something?) On leaving the RAF I went to work for Hawker Siddeley Aviation (at long last working on aircraft!) but after a year was persuaded by a retired Squadron Leader, who I regarded as a friend, to enter the teaching profession (yes, those who knew me will find it unbelievable). For the past nineteen years my teaching laboratory has overlooked RAF Staxton Wold, so in a way I have kept in touch with those formative

years, and have also been in the privileged position of encouraging a number of my students to consider the Air Force as a career.

Apprentice Tribute

On a sunny October 31st, The Queen unveiled a sculpture at RAF Halton which was commissioned as a tribute to Apprentice training from 1922 to 1993. The ceremony was attended by Joe Holroyd and Charles Hart representing the RAFLAA.

The sculpture which stands over six feet high and is carved from Scottish Granite represents an early engineering workshop exercise — a cube with corresponding “go-no-go gauge” which was designed to test the filing ability of “Trenchard’s Brats”.

Funding for the Apprentice Tribute was raised by subscription from individuals, industry and local authorities

The sculpture is sited outside the original school building at Halton, Kermod Hall.

Flowerdown House

Architects plans are now finalised for the conversion of 55-56 Beach Road, WSM into the RAFA Convalescent Home which was reported in a previous news letter.

It has been agreed that the Association will supply an inscribed brass plaque which will be erected in front of Flowerdown House describing the origins of the name. We will also be supplying framed prints to decorate the dining room.

The home will feature a meetings room which, it has been agreed, will be used for Association Committee meetings after the closure of Locking

Locking Closure

Still no definite date for the closing down ceremonies, and hence our next reunion, but 26 September is beginning to look a distinct possibility!

RAF Changi Association

The RAF Changi Association (including HQ FEAF) now has in excess of 500 members. The first reunion held in May 1997 was an unqualified success. The Association has brought together many old friends, so if you were posted to, or served at Changi and may be looking for old friends and colleagues why not join the Association?

The RAFCA run regular events and can supply literature and video covering the history of the station. They also run trips out to Singapore to visit once familiar haunts.

Full details can be obtained from the Chairman and Membership secretary:

Mike James,
12 Shiners Elm,
Yatton,
Bristol
BS19 4BY

Poppy Day

A wreath was laid on behalf of the Association at the Remembrance Ceremony at Weston on 9 November by the Association Secretary, Charles Hart.

Food Glorious Food!

by Robin White (86th)

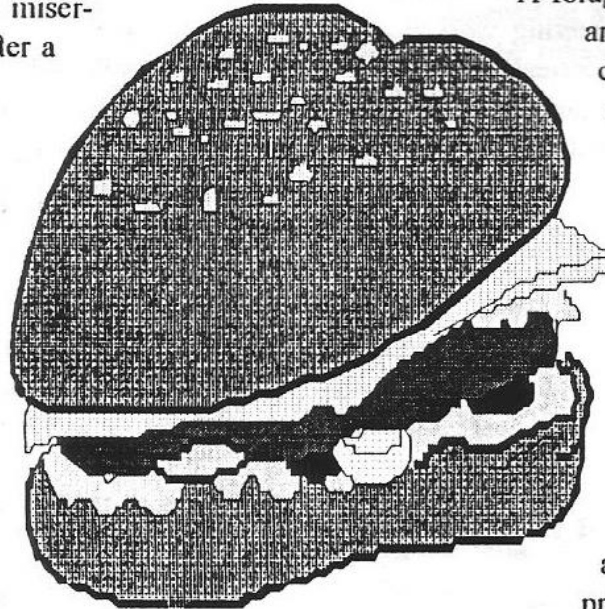
The winter of 1957 was the first away from home for the 15 year olds who made up the 86th Entry. As well as being drilled, wrestling with the complexities of Radar, seeking out girls at weekends in Weston, and spending our ever decreasing £1 weekly pay in the NAAFI our thoughts frequently turned to the subject of food. Especially on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings when funds had been absent since Sunday.

One particularly cold and miserable day, I think it was after a Tuesday morning Wing Parade on a snow covered Parade Square, the lad's in our billet were cheesed off at the thought of having to spend the evening in the billet as none of us could afford even to go to the Naafi. After discussing various ways of raising some money quickly, including selling Ginger Thompson into white slavery with the 83rd, the ideas were becoming more desperate and far-fetched by the minute.

"I know," I said, "why don't we cook supper for ourselves here in the billet?" Ducking the shower of half polished boots, button sticks and tins of blanco that rained down upon me in response to my bright idea, I outlined my plan. Each apprentice would bring back from the mess after tea something that would be put towards supper for the twenty of us in the billet. Later that evening we would commandeer the ironing room and assemble all the electric irons we could muster from around

the flight lines.

Thanks to the versatility of RAF issue coveralls and their variegated pockets, an intriguing array of supper ingredients filtered back to the billet. Loaves of bread, margarine, jam, tea, sugar, evaporated milk, and several 'plastic skins' of sausage meat that seemed to have been made to measure for the outside leg pocket of the coveralls!



A foraging party was sent out around the flight lines to collect electric irons and to the back of the mess to collect an empty 'pomme' (instant potato powder) tin. Thus the scene was set to cook supper for twenty on four electric irons!

The ironing room with its four large wooden tables made an ideal 'kitchen'. A production line was soon

set up and 'Operation Crafty Cooks' began. One lad sliced open the sausage meat on the first table and shaped it into flat round patties (beef burgers being totally unknown then) and placed them onto an upturned iron held by a second lad. The bottom of the iron had been smeared in margarine by a third apprentice, and when the pattie was placed on it a second iron was slapped on top to cook it on both sides at once!

Meanwhile on the second table the toast was being prepared by another team by the simple expedient of ironing each slice with

the iron turned up to it's highest setting. The toast was then passed to the third table where it was spread with margarine before being passed to the fourth table to await the arrival of a cooked sausage meat pattie. Cooked patties were passed to the fourth table, sandwiched between two pieces of toast and then hurried by a team of 'runners' down to the billet for distribution to the rest of the hungry apprentices.

After all the sausage meat toasts (perhaps the forerunners of the modern toasted sandwich; another first for RAF Locking!) had been distributed, and augmented by the remaining bread, marg. and jam, it was time to make the tea. The empty pomme tin was filled with water and a hot iron pushed firmly into each side and held there until the water was boiling. A handful of tea leaves were thrown into it, milk added and the whole lot stirred, not shaken! Placing several RAF issue socks (apprentices for the use of) on his hands the boiling hot tin was carried by the coolest lad there into the billet where the others were standing at the foot of their beds with mugs in hand. Preceded by one person with a 'bumper pad' to catch drips, and two lads with a freshly laundered handkerchief which was held over each mug to act as a strainer, the tin was carried to the foot of each bed and the tea dispensed without spillage. With sugar added and a handful of sultana's, courtesy of an open barrel in a store room next to the plate washer, the supper was declared the best ever!

Thus were one flight able to illustrate the excellence of the training at Locking in its ability to inculcate into young Aircraft Apprentices the traits of leadership, initiative, teamwork and the overcoming of all obstacles.

Has anyone heard of ...

Various queries have been received on the Internet for information about missing people. Can you help with any of the following (all replies to Mike West, Membership Secretary).

From Adrian (Copper) Kyte

"Another thought comes to mind, who was the chap in the 90th who lost a leg shortly after graduating?"

From Chris McBrien (99th Halton)

Someone is trying to locate a Chris D. McPhee who was at Locking in 1973

Can anyone help in locating Chris W. Stone who was at Waddington (no dates given)

Entry Associations

It has been suggested that there may be news from individual Entry Associations which would be of interest to other readers – spirit of fraternity and all that.

Perhaps some of you Entry membership secretaries could drop me a line to let us know what is happening in your neck of the woods, we wnt to know!

**Unfortunately I have run
out of copy, so this page is
intentionally Blank!**

Please send contributions to:

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