



Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

Newsletter

Serial 22

March 1999

May we meet again ... on the 1st perhaps?

Charles Hart reports on an opportunity to reunite on 1st May, and advance news of AGM '99

At the recent RAFLAA Committee meeting it was agreed to hold a Dinner Dance at *Dance and Partyscene* on Saturday 1 May 1999.

This is, of course, a bank holiday weekend and therefore has the advantage of other entertainments in town being up and running, and that all Weston's hotels and guest houses would be open. The weather is also likely to be that much warmer. So what about an early weekend away?

Tickets are priced at £15 and wine is included in the price.

Booking of accommodation can be arranged through the Weston Tourist Information office, Telephone 01934 888800 or drop a line to the office at Beach Lawns Weston-super-Mare. An

application form for tickets is enclosed.

AGM

The Meeting agreed that the AGM would be held on Saturday 25 September 1999 so put it in your diary now. The event will be at 'Dance and Partyscene,' in Whitecross Road and the programme will be similar to last year's.

Briefly, the programme will run as follows; on Friday 24 September there will be the usual informal Meet and Greet in Grand Atlantic Bar at 8pm. On Saturday 25 September the reunion will commence at 11am and we will, hopefully, get permission to open the bar at 1130.

(continued over)

In this Issue

In Memorium	2
Quick Quiz	2
Committee Report	3
Bob's Filler	5
Madness at Buchan	6
Entry news	8
From the Archives	9
Chicken and Steak	10
Letters	12
Over and Out	12

In Memorium

Barry Gray, 98th Entry

It is with great regret that we have to record the passing of one of our members, Barry Gray of the 98th Entry, who died on September 18th 1998. He leaves behind his wife Rose, and two sons Kevin and Richard.

In a varied career Barry served at Bulmer, West Raynham and Butterworth on Bloodhound, Akrotiri GRF and finally Locking where he was an instructor in 2T block from 1980 until his discharge in 1984. Following his service, Barry worked for Bristol Aerojets and at Calne in Wiltshire.

Barry continued his interest in Service matters through the Association. It was his wish to march in the final Freedom of Weston Parade. When it became apparent that his illness was going to prevent this it was planned for Dougie Buttery, also 98th, to take him to watch the parade from a wheelchair. Sadly, this was not to be.

RAFLAA Secretary Charles Hart represented the Association at his Cremation at Weston-super-Mare.

(Continued from page 1)

At 1pm a buffet lunch will be served after which we shall go upstairs for the AGM which is timed to start at 2pm. At around 4pm tea will be served after which you can go and rest before the evening dinner dance.

This will commence at 7pm for 7-30. More details and an application form for tickets will be enclosed in the Summer Newsletter. The Committee decided on one change in the format. At last year's function, the lunchtime bar dispensed drinks without payment. We decided that this year we would still subsidise the bar but members will have to pay a reduced price for their alcoholic drinks. The price of dinner dance tickets which have remained stable since 1993 will also have to rise.

EDITORIAL

Here we are again, hot on the heels of the last newsletter, all the sooner because of the need to tell you about the social event in May.

An issue has arisen which I would like to raise at this point.

Sadly we have had to report the passing of another colleague. Unfortunately, although his passing was briefly reported in the President's address at the AGM, I had not received any information to produce an obituary in the last newsletter. Understandably this caused some upset to Barry's family, for which I apologise. When I thought about it a bit more, I realised that their upset was actually a tribute to the very existence the Association, and to the newsletter which is in many ways the mouthpiece for the organisation. After all is said and dusted, the LAA exists to keep apprentices in touch. I certainly know that from my own experience, to be reunited with members of my own Entry make the whole thing worth while.

Inevitably, I suppose, time is going to take its toll – even apprentices are not immortal!! So it will become increasingly important that the committee are kept informed of those passing on.

If you know of any such event, please make sure that the secretary or myself gets to hear of it, preferably with either an obituary, or failing that as much information as possible to enable one to be written.

I look forward to meeting as many as possible at the May Bash – see you there!

Quick Quiz

Most people know what a carcinogen is, but who knows what a carcinotron is?

The answer is elsewhere in this newsletter.

Committee Report

The 19th meeting of the LAA Committee was held at Royal Air Force Locking on 4 February 1999. Several items of business were discussed, highlights of which are summarised below. Report by Charles Hart

General.

The Committee held its 18th meeting at the beginning of February during which it mapped out the programme for the year. It was decided to run a Dinner Dance in May and the AGM99 and reunion was also discussed.

The Treasurer will be producing the end of year financial balance sheet shortly and despite the quite unprecedented spend of last year we are still solvent with finances in a healthy state. The balance sheet will have to be audited before we publish it so it will not appear until the summer Newsletter. Several other items were discussed including some items raised by members at the last AGM.

Amendment Proposals to the Constitution.

The AGM is as much about our Constitution as anything else and if you feel or believe that we could improve or adjust the way in which we conduct the Association, now is the time to start thinking about the changes you would like to see. Members wishing to forward proposals to amend the Constitution at the next AGM are invited to contact the Secretary. There has to be a closing date and this year it is the end of the year.

RAFLAA Trophy.

Now that the move of the Radio School to Cosford is well under way we are having to re-think how the Trophy will be presented in future. Were we to bring the awardee down to Weston for the 10 minute or less ceremony then the expense would seem to be out of all proportion to the importance of the event or at least this was how it was seen by the Committee. So we are discussing arrangements for the Presi-

dent to handover the Trophy at a suitable ceremony at Cosford. In addition, we shall be inviting OC Cosford to inaugurate the Trophy on its receipt from Locking and to agree arrangements for its presentation to the 1998 awardee.

Committee Changes.

As outlined at the last AGM, six of the Committee are required to stand down because their three year period of office will have been completed. The important posts becoming vacant are the executive ones, i.e. the Chairman, Secretary and the Membership Secretary. The Meeting again agreed that these Committee changes must be staggered and, in order to achieve a smooth transition when someone new takes over, the executive positions should have nominated deputies. Both the Chairman and the Secretary have served more than 6 years now. Being founder members they were even operating before they were elected so they ought to be replaced soon before enthusiasm and ideas wane. Volunteers are therefore urgently required to move the Association forward into the 21st century. Your Association needs you and the Secretary will be delighted to discuss the duties and responsibilities of the Committee positions with enquirers. For those who would like to assist in the running and future development of the Association a proforma is enclosed. No-one will be tossed into the deep end and you can sit by Nellie for as long as you feel is necessary before taking over. This is an important request. Please think about it – **your Association needs you.**

FABEA Meeting.

The Federation of Apprentice and Boy Entrant Associations will be holding its

annual meeting around July this year and the Committee have approved the attendance of 2 members. Last year we discussed the possibility of a mutual bi-annual social event in London and we expect to hear of the likely costs and involvement of Associations. Also discussed last year was our future involvement in the Armistice ceremony at the Cenotaph and Royal British Legion march past each November. This year the Whitehall event will be held on 14 November and the assembly will be at 9am – an early start.

A Federation contingent is being proposed as a better alternative to individual associations taking part; i.e. numbers equal clout. However, we have no idea at the moment how much interest and enthusiasm there is to become part of this fine tradition of remembering those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their Nation and enabled us to write this in English and not German.

Before making an application to the Royal British Legion we need an estimate of the number of places needed. So, again, we have included a small proforma for you to provide us with the information that you would be interested in taking part in the ceremony.

Finance.

The Treasurer was upbeat in his report to the Committee. Last year's spend was larger when compared with previous years but the funds held up well with little change in our balances. He did, however, warn us that some costs are outweighing the amounts we have forecast and therefore we would have to increase some charges for our social events. During past years we have provided 100% supplements to cover costs but from now on a charge will be applied although we shall still endeavour to provide good value. Printing and postal costs continue to rise although the reduction by a penny in the cost of second class postage in April this year will be most welcome.

Membership.

The Membership Secretary informed us that

our membership had fallen to 390 since the AGM but this was because a fairly large number of members had not paid up their annual subscriptions. Reminders have been sent to out and hopefully membership will rise again to over 400.

He is still unhappy about his lack of communication with members paying by standing order and those who are life members. He feels that address details will change of which he is unaware, resulting in members not receiving newsletters. We thought that, generally, members do keep their address details up to date and that if they found that they were not receiving their Newsletters, they would quickly write in to ask why. If you know of any friends who have not received the newsletter, do you know if they have told us so?

Information.

The sad news that No 1 Radio School came to an abrupt end on the 1 October 1998 passed everyone by, even people still employed at Locking which was why we failed to report it in the last Newsletter. The end was abrupt and without ceremony; really the best way to go.

On the 2nd of October the school officially became a detachment of No 1 School of Technical Training, RAF Cosford. Training officially stops on 31 March 1999 but little instruction is to be given at this time as more and more sections close down and equipment is transferred. The really busy personnel at Locking are the Henlow detachment responsible for the engineering transfer.

At the other end of the M5-M6-M54 link RAF Cosford is still an unfinished building site. The CETB or Communications and Electronics Training Building is still some 2 to 6 weeks from completion before it can be formally opened, but we do know that it is to be named Flowerdown Hall.

So far we are unaware that Locking is to be commemorated there but this is probably

too early yet. Work still goes on to complete a new officers' mess and until that is completed the old one cannot be used as the new sgts' mess. So Cosford remains very much a hard hat area at this time.

Role of Honour.

The Meeting discussed the proposal made at the AGM to create a role of Honour listing deceased members.

Several suggestions were mused over all with lots of difficulties but the main point was that the Committee thought it a good idea and therefore decided that the Membership Secretary would keep an up-to-date list of deceased members which would be on display at AGMs.

The other question discussed in association with the role of honour was the responsibility for including an obituary in the Newsletter. In connection with this it has to be said that in almost all cases, the news of a member's death is received too late for the Association to act in the way it would like. Seldom is there time to arrange for the Association to be represented and all too often we learn about a member's passing after the funeral has taken place.

Early information would be appreciated so that we could do properly our duty to the bereaved.

Membership Handbooks.

The vexed question of Membership Handbooks was discussed. These were produced in 1997 by the Membership Secretary and sent out in early 1998. It was not appreciated how large these booklets would be nor what the cost would be in printing and postage. When the costs became apparent the Committee decided they would be done on a one-off basis and that only additions and amendments would be sent out under cover of the Newsletter. This is now seen as totally inadequate and that the handbook would have to be reissued on a periodic basis. Thus, we have now decided that handbooks would be reissued every 3 years; they will be printed to a higher standard than the first edition and would hopefully be in A5 format. Amendments will still appear in Newsletters for those members keen to keep the document up

to date.

Final Freedom Video.

Committee member Glyn Price is not getting on very well in his efforts to produce a video of the Final Freedom of Weston Parade. Neither the BBC nor ITV can help so he is appealing for video footage from anyone who was there with their camcorder. His aim is to edit together the best bits and to add a sound track. Provided the production turns out well enough we aim to have it on sale at the AGM.

Memorabilia.

Locking's Memorabilia Committee have finished their work and have made recommendations on the disposal of artifacts. We are to receive some bits and pieces from the Museum such as the Drum Major's sash, Mascot's coat and possibly documents relating to apprentice training. If given the go ahead by MOD, the Chairman has undertaken to take charge of this material plus other items we have been allocated. Our Entry Boxes will, in the short term, be transferred to the charge of Committee member Peter Crowe who has sufficient storage space. Glyn Price has offered to take charge of all the unidentified photographs in the remaining file boxes. 'Our' Entry shields by which is meant Locking's, are destined for Cosford and will be used to decorate Flowerdown Hall, a fitting memorial perhaps to apprentice training.

Oh No! Another Bob's Filler

A psychologist got married and on his wedding night he decided to make his relationship quite clear. Removing his trousers he asked his wife to put them on. She did so but said that they didn't fit her. He smiled and said, "I wear the trousers in this house. Always remember that."

His wife looked at him adoringly, and as she did so she removed her knickers and asked him to try *them* on. He pulled them as far as his knees and said "I can't get into these." "No" she said, "and you won't until you change your attitude."

Sent in by Bob Storey (99th)

Madness at Buchan by Dave Croft (98th)

An Apprentice Mascot Major turned teacher looks back to his youth ...

Enforced idleness in the idyllic surroundings of sea, sun and rum punches of a Caribbean island is not for me, Well not for long, so I got down to writing again in my more sober moments. Unfortunately what should have been a co-ordinated, flowing text was interrupted by an ever flowing procession of bikinis and wearing dark glasses did not help!

As mentioned in an earlier newsletter my first posting was Buchan, a radar site set up on an isolated hill with the domestic site being at Boddarn village on the north east coast of Scotland some thirty miles from Aberdeen and about two miles from Peterhead, home of Crosse & Blackwell fine soups and supplier of females to the occasional dances held in the airmens' club.

On my arrival at the radar site I was put under the care of one Cpl Tom Taylor (an ex-app) who was, in due time, to teach me and others how to exist on such a small unit without becoming a nut case! Tom was an inspiration to all, he was highly respected by officers and SNCOs. As a fault finder he was superb (where others struggled, Tom solved!) and he had the knack of letting you know if you were being a prat by gently suggesting an alternative and acceptable solution to your idiocy.

On days off Tom introduced several of us to the delights of mountain walking and bird watching in the nearby Cairngorms and also took us up Ben Macdhui, the mountain peak of 4296 ft that we would align our radars on when servicing. It was shattering to watch him, always wearing desert boots, stride up the slopes without any apparent effort, whilst others like me, the recent product of nearly three years intensive gym work at Locking, (more like chasing that pony if I remember correctly, Croft - Ed!) would crawl well behind. I blamed the breathless state of my body being due to the altitude. Subconsciously I also knew that to be a load of old cobblers.

I was pleased to say I met up with Tom at Seletar some time later, and on one occasion was able to repay the kindness he bestowed on me at Buchan.

On the domestic site I shared a room with another ex-app (93rd I think!), his name escapes me but I think it was Douglas. He was unfortunate in having a hair lip, although he was one hell of a character - especially after the frequent drinking sessions in the nearby pubs. Douglas in his more sober moments enjoyed a game of golf and when drunk attempted to improve his game ... usually in the billet. A high speed golf ball travelling down the corridor when you are trying to get to the toilets is quite lethal. Douglas was so apologetic the following morning!

We were also saddled with an SAC Mech called Robbie who looked intelligent but wasn't. Robbie frequented Lenas' cafe in Peterhead with the rest of the watch when off duty, mainly to make a cup of 'espresso' last a long time and play the latest hits on the juke box. Because of the precarious state of our wealth it was often Lena who paid for the records to be played.

Lena was one of those rare people, she ran a business but her heart was in looking after the young RAF boys so far from home. We could, and did, literally get away with anything in Lena's and she would just smile. But Robbie pushed her to the limit one day. After a drinking session in the town he visited the cafe and then took exception to the plastic oranges swirling around on the surface of the orangejuice in the large transparent tank on the counter. Without hesitation he was up on the counter, removed the lid and started to fish the things out. Poor Lena, she was beside herself and kept telling us about this incident for weeks afterwards.

I found a good friend in a Cpl Wireless Fitter who, through the necessity of his watch system and remoteness of his site, was billeted in an empty block next to the 'snowdrops'. They were so popular that they were billeted away from everybody else. He was an ex-app, possibly 87/89th entry and his name was Simms. We fished together, and after an expedition would enjoy taking fish and chips back to his room. However, whereas I would demolish the food in next to no time Simms would only eat part of the meal preferring to finish them cold for breakfast the next morning!

On occasions when he was on duty and I was planning to go fishing I was given the keys to his room so that I did not need to disturb others when leaving in the early hours of the next morning. This proved to be the undoing of the 'snowdrops.' After a dance in the airmens' club one night the 'snowdrops' took it into their heads to check out the billets and round up any female guests who had accidentally wandered into the airmen's accommodation. As an aside they also made a note of the name of any airman trying to prevent the girls getting into further trouble by hiding them in their beds until the 'snoops' had left. This was one of those nights I was using Simms room as I was fishing next morning. But I overslept and was eventually woken around 0630 by the sound of female chatter and giggles as a party of Cross & Blackwells' best left the police billet to go to work!

I challenged the 'snowdrops', not hesitating to tell them what I had thought had been going on and they informed I was mistaken. They said that they were concerned over the girls safety in getting back to Peterhead at that time of night had 'coralled them in their billet sending them on their way early next morning in time for work - and before the rest of the camp had woken up!

Apart from eccentrics, Buchan also had the lecherous. My billet faced out upon the accommodation of a young WRAF Officer. She was gorgeous, a dream come true. We were mature enough to respect her right to privacy when on one occasion she failed to fully draw the curtains in her room. But not one elderly (to us) and seedy Corporal from across the other side of the site. On the pretext of being a bird watcher he moved himself into our room and set up a powerful telescope on a tripod looking directly into her room. He wasn't even a technical or operator NCO! After a while his comings and goings must have been a little too obvious as a high wooden fence was erected between her room and our billet Needless to say we were not very happy as we felt we were being blamed for this, whilst the real culprit (who used his rank unfairly) slithered off to the hole from whence he came.

Drink was our downfall on many occasions! I just don't know how I, and others got away with going on late watches after an evening of drinking, and being much the worse for wear. All I can say is that our SNCO's were very tolerant at times. But not so the Sergeant in charge of the fire picket which we were all detailed to do once in a while. This one did not like radar fitters, maybe it was something to do with our reasonably rapid promotion chain whereas in his trade promotion took a lot longer? Perhaps someone unwisely mentioned this to him one evening? Anyway I had been foolishly been drinking when I should not have been (we did a whole week on fire picket) and when it came to inspection I was no better then a slobbering idiot. I was hemmed in very tightly between two friends and passed inspection.

This brings me on to some of the operators we worked with. I was plagued by one Archie Yates, both at Buchan and Patrington some years later. Archie had a friend who eventually failed a psychological assessment and was dismissed the service (to thick even for a SWO's runner?) However both Archie and friend found themselves on fire picket together and there was an emergency call to a chimney fire in married quarters. Now Buchan boasted the latest in

fire appliances and the duty team sprang into action, getting hold of the handles of the two-wheeled fire cart and running with it to arrive at the fire in a very short space of time. Archie and friend were detailed to use the stirrup pump on the fire which they did, putting up a magnificent performance of team work and efficiency, except they forgot to fill the bucket with water! By the time this was discovered the fire had burnt its self out, fortunately without damage to anything.

Archie was the same moron who also created havoc when I was doing early morning checks on the Radar type 13 (centimetric height finder). After informing the operators I was going into the cabin to align on Ben Macdhuil and getting clearance, I switched off the safety interlocks and climbed up to the cabin. Archie was the operator assigned to the console in the building to ensure no one used the height finder during servicing. And so the every day task began – but not for long! Archie got bored and stated moving the height finder knob on the console backwards and forwards which gave me a good shaking up in the cabin. Eventually I managed to jump out of the cabin, contacted Archie and ‘politely’ asked him to cease forthwith.

On another occasion after a drinking and dominos session, we piled back to the billets in order to sleep off the excesses prior to being fit and well for work the next morning. Not so one ADO (Air Defence Operator) who decided to bed down on the pub car park. There was a severe frost that night! Next morning, there he was devouring a hearty breakfast after waking up a little ‘chilled.’ Leaving for work shortly afterwards, we gazed in amazement at the ADO’s outline in the frost covered car park.

After a short period at Buchan I left for RAF Newton, but visited Buchan several years later. On this visit I learnt that my previous accommodation block was now WRAF quarters as there had been an increase in WRAF numbers due to a new lease of life being given to the station. At the time I sincerely hoped that they would bring a sense of calmness to the station, but some how I doubted it.

Many years after leaving the service and now teaching, I learnt that the parents of one of my students had both been at Buchan at the same time as me ... her father was the Corporal Medical Orderly at SSQ and her mother a WRAF Operator.

I hoped that the passage of time had dulled their memories of what we used to get up to, but my mind was soon put to rest – they remembered!

Entry News

72nd

As reported in the last newsletter, John Smith’s account of the 72nd’s reunion last year was lost because of the failure of his paperclip due to metal fatigue. He has written in again, this time using several staples, one of which rammed itself under my finger nail. Sweet revenge!

The 72nd Entry held a reunion at the very imposing Judges Lodgings, Castle Street in Lincoln on the 12th September 1998. Thirty two members accompanied by their ladies had an excellent evening.

During the evening they were visited by the Mayor and Mayoress and a welcome to the City was extended. The theme being, that although

the 72nd Entry had no direct links with Lincoln, many of its members would have served in the area.

Dave Gunby who organised the event had the RAF Ensign flying above the building.

The next reunion is due to be held at the Forte Posthouse Crick on Saturday 18th September 1999.

From the Archives

In answer to the Quick Quiz on page 2, there are (or were in 1957, according "Macduff" in the Locking Review) three types of carcinotron. These were the O-Carcinotron, the M-Carcinotron and Double Stream TWT Amplifiers. The article is reproduced below.

Latest Developtron

(a) O - Carcinotron'

This is not, as you may imagine, an appeal to a red hot boiler, but just one more of the 'tron' family. The most common experimental type is that having an electron beam fired down a channel, passing through the middle of a wave guide-type structure which has been folded, so that its long axis has a snake ripple pattern to it. The electrons enter, emerge and re-enter the corrugated guide many times. The wave must be 'backwardly' directed to the beam, and hence the name 'backward wave oscillators.' The cumulative bunching which occurs yields excellent output powers under oscillating conditions. The major advantage of such tube design, is that the velocity of the electron beam, controlled by a single voltage variation, yields exceptionally wide electronic tuning. A recently developed type has a (tuning) range of 45,000 mc/s to 63,000 mc/s, a variation of some 37%. Note also that the actual range is about the same as the L.W., M.W. and S.W. bands put together.

(b) M - Carcinotrons.

These are basically similar to (a) but use crossed E and H fields, perpendicular to the electron motion, and in this fashion have a resemblance to T.W.'s in Magnetrons. Some of the consequent theory indicates that almost all conventional types of cavity magnetron structures are capable of yielding amplification under correct T.W. conditions.

(c) Double stream T.W.T. Amplifiers.

Here the cumulative bunching interaction takes place, not between an electron stream and a travelling wave, but between two

streams of electrons of suitably different velocities. The great advantage resulting is that the removal of the slow-wave structure, greatly reduces some of the criticality in synchronisation, input and output impedances and velocity control associated with the standard T.W.T. construction.

Last Words

For the real man of electron art, who reads B.S.T.J. and P.I.R.E. readily, and digests them with ease, these preceding paragraphs are a very rough approximation of these pearl-like texts, and no detriment is intended to the engineers who have written and worked on these ideas. The errors of oversimplification, gross at times, are all attributable to the Locking author, who feels that he may have opened the mirror for other enquiring 'Alices' into the travelling wonderland of Uff, Shuf and Eff.

MACDUFF.

If anyone can remember what on earth all that was about, or who Macduff was, I would be pleased to hear from them!

What or who is B.S.T.J. and P.I.R.E.? What's all this Uff, Shuf and Eff stuff?

Maybe its because I was a Ground Wireless Fitter, or maybe its due to the ravishes of time, but I can't remember or understand a word of it.

Am I alone??!!

Chicken and Steak

by Chris Horn (99th)

In 1974, the lovely Island of Cyprus was thrown into turmoil when the Greek factions of Makarios and Grivas supporters decided to fight it out, and the Turks took advantage of the situation to reclaim what they considered theirs. The politics are complex and play no part in this story other than it precipitated the following events.

Of course the facts to hand are a mixture of opinion, rumour and observation on the ground, and may not agree with the official version of what happened. But I know what I know.

Rumour had it that there was a threat that British Service dependants living off base would be taken hostage by the one or other of the protagonists, as a bargaining piece should the Turks decide to overrun the entire island. Whether this is true or not, the decision was taken to evacuate dependants from the towns such as Limassol onto the SBAs. Once there they had to be accommodated, and the lucky ones were billeted with families living in Married Quarters. Others were put into barracks, and the singlies were left to fend for themselves! This meant that the refugees had to be fed. So a (presumably) carefully prepared contingency plan swung into action. Cyprus was to be supplied by air. This, in turn meant that a distribution system had to be put in place at the receiving end of this new "Berlin Air Lift", which is where Sgt. Horn and his lads came in. He was put in charge of a three tonner, and together with the lads of his commcen shift, was tasked with distributing the ferried food around Married Quarters.

They soon discovered that giving away food was not as easy as might be thought. All they had to give away were frozen chickens. At first these were gratefully received and the band of famine relievers were quite popular with the refugee families and their hosts.

Having got rid of the first load they returned to distribution headquarters for new orders, and didn't like what they heard. An 'Officer i/c Distribution Party' had been appointed. Fine, you might say. After all, weren't they soldiers

of the Queen? You would expect there to be an officer in charge, wouldn't you? Well yes, a proper officer possibly. But not some still-wet-behind-the-ears 20 year old civilian teacher who happened to enjoy officer status. After all, Sgt. Horn was a roughly toughy SNCO with a whole day or so of Active Service behind him. He didn't need a civvy telling him what to do, thank you very much. There was serious war-work to be done and Sgt. Horn and his lads were the ones to do it. But the Catering Warrant Officer said the teacher *was* in charge, and that was that.

But not for long – 'cos they lost him.

They filled the three tonner up with the next batch of frozen birds and set out on their rounds.

This time their reception was not quite so welcoming. The good refugee ladies said that another three tonner had given them all the chickens they needed only an hour before. However, with a little bit of friendly banter the lads managed to off-load their cargo, and returned for further orders.

"Where is your officer I/C then?" enquired the WO.

"Dunno sir, haven't seen him for some time". Sgt. Horn replied, tongue firmly in cheek.

In fact they had left him talking to some of his pupils who didn't mind calling him 'Sir'. Seizing the opportunity, the driver slipped the hand brake and silently rolled the 3-tonner down the road and rounding a corner before firing up the engine, and scarpering.

"Right then, said the WO, get them chickens on board and take 'em round Married Quarters".

No Chance. Nobody wanted them. By now the

refugees wouldn't even answer the door, so the lads had to leave the chickens on the door steps.

The strange thing is that the Cyprus emergency seems to have triggered off an unstoppable supply of frozen chickens. They just kept coming. The lads kept loading them onto the lorry, and the bloody refugees kept refusing them, finally becoming quite threatening if they didn't "bugger off and don't come back unless you can offer anything else!"

The WO wouldn't accept any back at stores because he had to find room for the next plane load arriving from UK. So chickens had to be dumped where they wouldn't be found too quickly.

His fiasco continued for about three days until Sgt. Horn and his team were found other more militaristic tasks to do. This brought them face to face with the Turkish invaders. Or at least their relatives – refugees of a different hue.

The lads had to report to Happy Valley, now transformed into a Turkish Refugee camp of some six thousand souls. Six thousand souls means six thousand bodies, and that means a lot of S**t, and that all has to be put somewhere.

That 'somewhere' was trenches, cut into the former pristine sports fields. Trenches have to be dug, and someone decided that Sgt. Horn and his lads (some of whom now seemed to think he was a bit of a Jonah) were the very people to do it.

In the heat of the midday sun they toiled (at least the lads did, rank does have its privileges) digging out a trench, yard after laborious yard. Mind you, their efforts were appreciated. How many the happy laughing faces of the Turkish youths lounging beside the trench, lobbing in their NAFFI handout fag ends, ever be forgotten?

Shortly afterwards our SNCO hero was transferred to the relative peace of Salt Lake transmitters. Don't know why, but maybe he was due some R&R before battle fatigue set in.

Here was a whole new world. The lads here had set up a trading organisation – Salt Lake Enterprise – which acquired from the surround-

ing plantations grapes, water melons and various *vegetables in season*, in exchange for – yes you've guessed it – frozen chickens, which had to pass transmitters on the way from Akrotiri to Episkopi. Some fresh supplies were, well ... just acquired. The good refugees of Married Quarters needed fresh fruit to ward off scurvy, and the transmitter staff were in an ideal place to help them out. Naturally, commissions had to be paid to various operatives, but always in material goods such as wine and brandy – well mostly anyway.

Problems only came later when families were sent home and our heroes became a bachelor Air Force. When the loved ones were sent home, it was said to be a temporary move. It was *said* that they would all be back inside six weeks – probably before that. The families never did come back, and communications on the subject were scarce. Naturally our heroes wanted to know what was happening, and so did the folks at home who received even less information than they did, scattered as they were across the UK.

Someone in Salt Lake Enterprises invented a parody on the various United Nations acronyms; UNICEP, UNFICYP, etc. The nooky-less transmitter site became HQ MUSHFICYP (Mushroom Forces in Cyprus). The transmitter building bore the emblem, a huge day-glow mushroom. As already noted, Salt Lake Transmitters was ideally placed on the main (only) road between Akrotiri and Episkopi. A road much travelled by senior brass and media people. The day-glow Mushroom didn't survive long, but it did achieve some success because information flow soon improved.

Returning to the frozen chicken saga, it appeared that all that had happened in reality was a bit of an admin. cock-up. Sgt. Horn was relating his experiences later to a friend who had been stuck at the other end of the Island, the Western SBA.

Oddly enough he had also been in charge of a distribution party, only all he had was best steak.

He said that he would never have believed that you could get so fed up with best steak.

I could.

Letters ... Letters ... Letters ... Letters ... Letters ... Le

Re: dBs

After reading the latest newsletter I feel quite disappointed that we couldn't attend the last Freedom Parade, but that's life.

I do sympathise with Mike Collier re sound levels at dances. Has any consideration been given to forming our own band for the Reunion Dance? There are many of us who are still musically active, and it might produce the style of music which would be ideal for the occasion.

We're looking forward to this year's bash.

Bob Machin (100th Entry)

Other verbal comments received at Editorial HQ pointed out that there are two rooms in use, the downstairs one being quieter for those that would like to chin-wag – just a thought.

Bob Finlayson (99th) of 'Incas' fame has also spoken of the possibility of playing again – how about it lads?

Thanks

I requested help from members for radar/Bloodhound photographs and a 'sparks' badge.

Two members responded by telephone and I would like to thank them through the newsletter, if that's OK.

They are Alex Smith (85th) for the loan of the photograph and John Smith (72nd) for the loan of his 'sparks' badge.

Dave Croft (97th)

Feeling like one of the lads again ...

Speaking as an unwilling "medical C.T." from way back, I would like to give a slightly belated pat on the back to members of the committee who made a great job of organising the AGM and re-union last September. That was my second re-union and, as with the previous year, my abiding memory is of being made to feel like one of the lads again. Those with whom I came into contact made me very welcome and were most understanding of my position.

My only disappointment was the lack of 84th members (only met 1 in 2 reunions). I remember the 84th as being very strong on "entry spirit" and all that, so I find it strange that there are so few taking part. The 40th anniversary of their passing – out comes up this summer, I wonder if there is anything planned to observe this quite significant date. I would be very interested to find out.

Dave Stewart (84th Entry)

Over and Out

Could you please inform all your members that the RAF Locking History book

OVER AND OUT

which I was selling, has now been transferred to the RAFA, South Western Area at the following address:

Mr M Snell, Area Director, RAFA, South Western Area, 34 St Davids Hill, Exeter EX4 5DF.

Cheques should be made payable to "RAFA SW Area"

for £14.90 (£12.95 + P&P)

Iain Norris, SWO RAF Locking

Please send all contributions for publication to:

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