



Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association

# LAA NEWSLETTER

Serial 28

September 2000

## HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

- **AGM**
- **Committee Meeting**
- **Reminders**
- **Contacts**

### Inside this issue:

<i>Chairman Report</i>	2
<i>Secretary—Contact</i>	5
<i>Committee Meeting</i>	4
<i>Squeakers</i>	8
<i>Big Boys Radar</i>	10
<i>Radar Pages</i>	11
<i>71st Reunion</i>	14
<i>Ceylon Airforce</i>	15
<i>Committee</i>	21
<i>The News</i>	23

**AGM — That nearly was.....Update**

**Henlow— March 2001**

**Committee Meeting 8th October 2000**

**Print Delay — New Print Contract**

## CHARMANS REPORT—AGM 2000

**A**s you will probably all know by now your committee felt obliged to postpone the AGM scheduled for 16 Sept. 2000. I assure you that this decision was not taken lightly but we felt that the uncertainties surrounding the national fuel crisis made it unwise for us to commit Association funds for accommodation and food with members planning to travel from as far afield as Tyne Side and Cornwall. It goes without saying that we were unable to make the decision any earlier than we did but I do apologize for the short notice and trust that those of you who had planned to attend were not too inconvenienced.

RAF Henlow could not offer us an alternative date to hold the AGM in 2000 so we tried to book the Party and Dance Scene at Weston super Mare. The only date that the Party and Dance Scene could only offer us was the 11th Nov. and your committee decided that this left us insufficient time to notify the membership and get your responses back. Consequently, we are forced to postpone the AGM until the New Year.

In an attempt to avoid the worst of the winter weather we approached RAF Henlow for a date in late March/early April and they have offered us 31 March 2001, which we have accepted. The arrangements and hopefully costings for the weekend will be similar to those we made

for the 16th Sept. AGM weekend; final details will be advised in the February News Letter. In the meantime, please put the 31 March 2001 in your diaries and plan to come and join the party.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a Prosperous and Healthy 2001. Once again I apologize for any inconvenience caused by the late cancellation of the 16th September AGM.

Bert Davies Chairman RAFLAA

### NIJMEGEN - A BRIDGE TOO FAR

As was reported in the last News Letter, I took part in the 4 Days Marches in Nijmegen to celebrate the first anniversary of my lung transplant, to increase the awareness of the transplant organisation and to raise money for Papworth Hospital Transplant Unit. Regrettably Nijmegen proved to be a Bridge Too Far for me this year. A viral infection coupled with acute anaemia resulted in me being pulled off the walk suffering from complete exhaustion after only 5 miles of the first day's march.

Prior to starting the walk I had received sponsorship pledges from friends and family in excess of £1125.00 and, despite my disappointing performance, the majority of sponsors have honoured their pledges in full. I have already collected £1,060 of the sponsorship money and passed this

*(Continued on page 3)*

## SECRETARY — MEMBERSHIP FEES

Glyn Price

Email: [glynprice@09sentosa.freemove.co.uk](mailto:glynprice@09sentosa.freemove.co.uk)

**A**t a recent committee meeting it was highlighted by the Treasurer that the fees received from overseas members are subject to both conversion and bank handling charges resulting in only about half the revenue actually getting to the association.

This has now been reduced by Tony

## SECRETARY — CONTACT

[davidglynprice@09sentosa.freemove.co.uk](mailto:davidglynprice@09sentosa.freemove.co.uk)

**A**s Secretary one of my main concerns is it can be difficult to contact people quickly as was needed for the recent AGP postponement – Still to be held at Henlow but not till late March or early April. The next newsletter will give the details.

NOTE: Newsletters for overseas member will now be sent airmail.

As the membership secretary has pointed out more than once – If you pay by Direct Debit then your details do not get checked every renewal.

- We don't always get made aware of changes of address or circum-

## NIJMEGEN - A BRIDGE TOO FAR CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 2)*

on to the Transplant Continuing Care Unit at Papworth Hospital but have kept the account open in the hope of receiving the rest.

the Treasurer reaching an agreement with the bank but it is still costing YOU – the membership. We will also be airmailing your newsletter.

I would like to re-iterate that it would be most beneficial to the association and probably to the members concerned if members located overseas considered taking out life membership.

stances

- We don't always get notice that a member has passed away within the timescale which would allow us to represent the membership at any funeral service

More and more of us are now part of the grey surfer community, if you are on the web or you know someone on the web then pass the details to Membership Secretary or me so that we can contact you if the need arises or equally importantly you can maintain your contact with the association

Try the WEB on George Burville's page at [WWW.appbe.com](http://WWW.appbe.com)

I would like to thank those of you who did sponsor me and to assure you that the total amount collected will be forwarded to Papworth Hospital as soon as I receive it all.

## COMMITTEE MEETING — 8TH OCTOBER

**T**he Chairman apologised for the short notice in calling the meeting but explained that the meeting was necessary in order to consider future arrangement for the AGM, which had been cancelled due to the national fuel crisis in September.

The meeting discussed the rearrangement of the AGM to the 11<sup>th</sup> of November at the Dance and Party Scene. This was the only venue available with a date that was free, prior to Xmas. It was felt that the time-scale involved precluded this choice and that not using RAF Henlow might put in jeopardy the future use of alternate venues.

It was proposed that the AGM be postponed to Late March or Early April 2001, with the arrangements as for RAF Henlow to stand. The Chairman undertook to approach Henlow about a suitable date. Advance notice is to be placed in the next newsletter.

Due to postponement of the AGM and the magisterial workload of the Membership Secretary, the meeting agreed that the Secretary should contact Mike and suggest an earlier transfer of responsibility to John Farmer and that this interim appointment then be confirmed at the AGM

The Treasurer will be refunding all ticket monies as soon as is possible

### RAFLAA TROPHY PRESENTATION

The Chairman advised that there have been major changes in the proposed arrangements. The presentation will be now be arranged by the Chairman, in conjunction with the CO of R A F F y l i n g d a l e s . The 1999 LAA Trophy presentation will be made by the AOC in C Strike Command during his Annual Inspection of RAF Fylingdales on 30th November 2000.

### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

#### GENERAL

**I**t is with regret that today I shall cease to be your Membership Secretary. Due to the increase of work in the Magistrates Court, caused by the introduction of the Human Rights Act and a change in the training of new and existing Magistrates. I have decided that it is now time to step down as your Membership Secretary. Therefore this is my last report to you and I thank you all for your help and support

I have been on the committee for 5 years and been the Membership Secretary for the past four years. Later at this meeting you will be asked to propose and vote for a new Membership Secretary, I would urge you to elect a Membership Secretary today as his role is one of the keystones to the association. It would be difficult for the as-

## COMMITTEE MEETING — 8TH OCTOBER

sociation to run without one for any length of time. I will now present the report.

### MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

Since 1993 the total number of ex-apprentices who have joined the Association is five hundred and fifty four (554). This represents an increase of seventeen (17) since the last AGM.

The current active membership (those members who have paid their subscriptions) is three hundred and eighty five (385) which is ten (10) down on last year.

Unfortunately one hundred and forty (140) members have not renewed their membership since joining the Association and are classed as ex-members.

Since the last AGM there has been two (2) deaths. Peter Tones of the 93rd entry and Dick Whambv of the 90th entry have passed away. Although Dick was an Ex-member at the time of his death he was an original member of the association. Their deaths bring the total number of members who have passed away since 1993 to twelve (12). Two (2) members have also resigned since the last ACM bring this total to seventeen (17).

### RECRUITMENT

Recruitment this year has largely

been due to the World Wide Web. As in previous years I have advertised the Association on Channel 4 Service Pals teletext pages and in the RAFA magazine Air Mail.

This year has seen some major changes to the Association's web site as George Burville, the editor of the web site, has revamped the site. I am once again very grateful to George for his work and help on the recruitment side of the web site.

### MEMBER'S ADDRESS DETAILS

The Membership Directory is due to be re-issued at this AGM. As I said in my reports in previous years I am concerned that members who pay by Standing Order or who are Life Members do not get the opportunity of informing me of address changes via their renewal slips. Therefore I am again asking all members to let the new Membership Secretary know ASAP if and when their address details change. This will enable him to make the necessary changes to the database and directory and ensures that we send your Newsletter to the correct address.

That is my report for this year that consists of some good and not so good news. To summaries the recruitment is still reasonable but on the down side we are losing members due to non-payment of subscriptions however we are still in good shape.

**COMMITTEE MEETING — 8TH OCTOBER****TREASURERS' REPORT**

**I** hope that you all will have seen the Annual Accounts for 1999/00 that were published in the recent Newsletter. There are also copies available for you this afternoon.

The main thing to note is that during this accounting period we have returned a net profit of £820.11 as compared with the net loss of £746.33 that we incurred during the preceding year.

The gross profit rose again. This is not due to any magical account on my part. It has been achieved by not incurring any major capital expenses such as the plaque that we donated to the newly opened Flowerdown House in Weston. Ties purchased during 98/99 gives a sufficient stock for a while yet. In 1999 we purchased the new lapel badges. We reduced the cost to the Association of the AGM and Annual Dinner by making a modest increase in the charges.

The overheads have remained reasonably static. By the very nature of the Association, with Committee members widely spread across the country travelling to meetings does incur costs. Communication with our members across the globe is an important role of the Association, although it will be noted that postage is actually reduced in the last financial

year.

The memberships secretary's report will carry details of membership movements, but I will just point to the fact that 35 more members have signed up to the Standing Order scheme. A total of 198 members pay by Standing Order. This has administrative benefits but does have a pitfall as well, which the membership secretary's report will highlight.

With the healthy state of our assets, I see no reason to recommend any increase in the annual subscription. I will however just note two points, which may impact on future expenditure:

- The cost of printing is likely to rise, due partly to Chris Horn leaving BAe, but also to changes in the Company management, which would have changed our arrangements.
- There have been a number of requests from overseas members that newsletters are sent by airmail. In a number of cases, surface mail means just that and it can take some weeks for the post to get through. The last newsletter did in fact go airmail, as we wanted to give maximum time for people to make arrangements should they wish to join us today. I would recommend that this should be the normal practice and hope that you would agree.

**COMMITTEE MEETING — 8TH OCTOBER**

Just a final note, I recently negotiated a fixed bank charge of £2 for each foreign currency cheque presented. These charges had generally been £4. This small saving will, hopefully, be reflected in this years accounts.

found to be satisfactory. I commend these accounts and report to you.

Tony Horry .Treasurer. 16th September 2000

The accounts have been audited and

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**IN THE MEANTIME,  
PLEASE PUT THE  
31 MARCH 2001  
IN YOUR DIARIES  
AND PLAN TO COME AND JOIN  
THE PARTY.**

<<<<

## SQUEAKERS

Dave Croft 97th

**T**his is a true story of a mystery that started in 1968 and has possibly only just been solved. 1968 was the year I was posted to Seletar. It was a posting that was more preferable than Aden, which I had been threatened with by a non-understanding Engineering Warrant Officer and also because there was a possibility that I could go flying in the variety of aircraft that were based at Seletar!

I was always keen on aircraft and it was, I felt, very unfair that the Air Force, in my early years, decided to keep me posted to its remote early warning stations where the only aircraft to be seen were on radar screens or as gate guardians on stations far removed from runways!!

So Seletar was a blessing. On leave I could hang around the various squadron crew rooms hoping to get experience flights or if there was a distinct possibility that flying was cancelled for the day then there was always the swimming pool. Needless to say money was always short in those days and married colleagues often came to the rescue by inviting their unfortunate single friends home for the evenings or weekends.

Now for the mystery! In mid 1968 I was kindly told to take some leave as there was quite a bit owing to me, so during this time I contacted 66

Squadron [who were flying Belvedere helicopters] to enquire about some trips. Duly I presented myself to the crew room and spent a lot of time sat around reading the usual variety of appealing literature on flight safety, flight safety and flight safety and talking to the crews. There was the usual mixture of experienced personnel and some very young, cherubic looking aircrew with unusually [I thought] high-pitched voices. I unkindly dubbed them 'squeakers'. Poor devils I thought, the Air Force is so desperate for men that they are recruiting from adolescent boys.

Anyway they were extremely pleasant and helped me where they could and I had some pleasant flights with them around Singapore Island.

There came the day though when I spotted a small card lying on the floor. Being of a curious nature I saw it had a mixture of Arabic inscription and English writing on it, so thinking it had dropped from someone's pocket I held it aloft and in a loud voice enquired if anyone had dropped the card. Now this is the strange thing! Every one of those 'boys' suddenly denied ownership of the card and the denial was with forced deep voices! Strange I thought, but then put it down to the effects of the heat, promptly forgot about it and threw the card away.

Now after some 32 years the mystery appears to have been solved. A friend of mine who was a pilot in the Middle



## SQUEAKERS

East of the 1950's gave me a card recently. The writing says:

*To all Arab Peoples .Greetings and Peace be upon you. The bearer of this letter is an Officer of the English Government and a friend of all Arabs. Treat him well, guard him from harm, give him food and drink help him to return to the nearest English soldiers and you will be rewarded.*

*Peace and the mercy of God upon you.*

*The British High Command in the East*

"So what's this?" I said. He licked his lips and with great relish said [as aircrew do when pulling a fast one on you] "that young Davy is what is known in the trade as a 'Goolie Chit.'"

"A 'Goolie Chit'. What the hell is one of those?" I asked in total bewilderment. He went on to explain that the card was carried by all aircrew operating in the Aden-Yemen regions and as over-flying the Yemen was strictly forbidden due to the Yemeni tribesmen not being particularly friendly towards the British, the card was a form of guarantee to protect the essentials of any aircrew that had the misfortune to end up in the hands of the Yemenis. He went to say that the tribesmen happily returned the grizzled old timers aircrew should they fall into their hands [not very often as they were experienced fliers] intacto, for a

guaranteed sum of money.

The same went for the young and inexperienced aircrew who also fell into the tribesmen's hands hut being mountain Arabs stuck miles away from anywhere civilised they wished to get better acquainted before handing them over to 'the nearest English soldiers'. For those young aircrew not wishing to get better acquainted they were also returned to their own side but minus two essential items.

My friend left me with the card to ponder over what he told me and as the weeks have passed so the mists surrounding the 66 Squadron crew room card and 'squeakers' has begun to clear.

In the 1960's the Aden Protectorates 'troubles' abounded and 26 Squadron was supplied with six Belvederes from 1963 to 1964 with FEAF supplying a seventh [XG 474] and crew in 1964. The helicopters did a fantastic job throughout the 'troubles' until the Belvederes were withdrawn from active service in 1965, four of them [including XG 474 and XG 457] being sent to FEAF Seletar.

Both XG 474 and XG 457 were a familiar sight to me as I hung around the 66 Squadron crew room, and I was to meet both up country in 1968, when I was posted to Butterworth.

Now about those young cherubic

## SQUEEKERS

looking squeaky voiced aircrew!

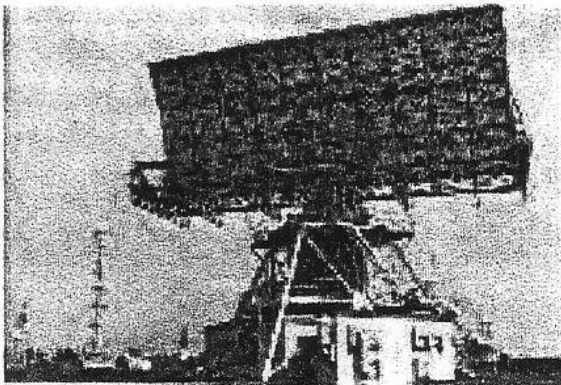
Was it possible they were with their Belvederes in the Aden Protectorates and had possibly strayed over the Yemen border at some time, landed to get their bearings from a waving, friendly looking Arab and when taken into temporary custody decided to bluff out their advances thinking relief would be at hand?

The writer of this story has asked to

remain anonymous as he feels that he was fortunate in not being posted to Aden, unlike some of the people in the story. Also he feels that now he has exposed what may have happened to some members of the RAF at this unhappy time, ex-members of 26 and 66 Sqdns may wish to make him an honorary member of their exclusive club, the Hoomegoolies club.

He doesn't think he is ready for membership yet!

## BIG BOYS RADAR—AIR DEFENCE RADAR MUSEUM



**T**he Museum, a registered charity, traces the history and development of RADAR, Air Defence and Battle Management from the mid 1930s to the modern computer technology of today.

The end of the Cold War means that the secret world of Air Defence is now open to all.

The Museum is housed in the original 1942 Operations Building at Royal Air Force Neatishead near

Horning in Norfolk and includes:

- Battle of Britain Operations Filter Room of 1940.
- 1942 GCI Operations Room.
- Overseas Radar Operations.
- The original "Cold War" Ops Room used until 1993.
- WW II ROC Field Post.
- Original Radar Vehicles
- Space Defence

### FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

Were you once involved with Radar or Fighter Control? Do you have an

interest in the Air Defence Of Great Britain? Do you wonder what part the "Secret War" played in the Battle of Britain? Then why not become a Friend of the Air Defence Radar Museum.

Please contact the Museum Manager at the address below:

Opening second Saturday of each month, Bank Holiday Mondays and every Tuesday from April to the end of September

Group Visits can be arranged outside

these times. Please contact:

The Museum Manager

RAF Air Defence Radar Museum

Royal Air Force

Neatishead

NORWICH

Norfolk. NR12 8YB

Tel: 01692-633309

[www. neatishead. raf mod. uk](http://www.neatishead.raf.mod.uk)

## RADAR PAGES

Dick Barret

Email: [dick.barrett@cwcom.net](mailto:dick.barrett@cwcom.net)

**T**his site is an ongoing project that looks at the theory and practice of radar technology. A project of this size will, naturally, take a long time to complete and, as it is after all a part time endeavour, I ask your for patience. As it appears that the pace of Radar technology developments exceeds my time and typing skills it is likely that this site will never really be completed, just like Topsy it will just grow and grow! I have made considerable use of previously published articles and such sources are duly and gratefully acknowledged. The quality of these articles far surpasses anything I could write. I justify my use of these articles on the grounds that only a foolish or ignorant person would reinvent the wheel. From time to time I have to

rearrange the site as new information becomes available. For example, much of the early Rotor equipment consisted of older radars left over from the Second World War, so there is considerable overlap between the two systems. Eventually this anomaly will sort itself out but for the time being please bear with me.

The site has several main components:

*The News* pages will keep you up to date with developments on this site, forthcoming events etc. If you have an announcement to make or wish to publicize an event such as a reunion and so on then drop me a line and I'll post it here.

The *Radar Theory* Pages are based on the R.A.F Standard Technical

## RADAR PAGES

Training Notes (STTN) AP3302 Part 3 (2nd edition), the manual used in the Royal Air Force for radar apprentice training for many years up to the early 1970's. The original document is quite out of date now, some of the symbols used are no longer in use for example and valves are mostly a distant memory. Eventually I hope to add appendices that reflect current practice but in the mean time I want to recreate the feel of the original manual.

*RAF Radar* is a data base of Royal Air Force Early Warning and Air Defence radars covering the period from the late 1930's to the 1980's. Another name for these pages might be "From Chain Home to

Linesman". To the best of my knowledge this site is the only resource on the net that describes the "Linesman" radar equipments in any detail. Some of the pages may take a while to complete; accurate and detailed data is often hard to get hold of due to the secrecy in which the systems were developed and deployed. If you can point me towards any books or technical articles that might help I would be extremely grateful.

*Radar Personalities* features the skills and tenacity of the people whose work has helped to develop

Radar in all its forms. These pages are not exclusively Radar, the early pioneers, the engineers and the scientists whose work has contributed to our radar knowledge and experience are included. If you think of anyone who should be in these pages please drop me a line with some biographical notes and I'll include them in this section.

The idea of the *Oral History* pages is to build up a collection of histories and memoirs, the experiences and recollections of those people who "were there". It matters not whether you played a pivotal role or if you were one of the countless people who "did their bit". War time and peace time, our memories will help future historians to develop the context in which the momentous events of our times took place.

Please send me your recollections no matter how mundane you think they might be and if you need any help in forming your work I'll be happy to advise you. Remember, its your thoughts and experiences I want, so write about your career, where you served, who you served with, write about the good times and the bad times, friends and colleagues you loved, hated, respected or despised (*but remember the libel laws!*). My thanks to you in anticipa-

Thanks to Dick Barrett  
The Radar Pages web site can be found at [www.radar.pages.cwc.net](http://www.radar.pages.cwc.net) or via links through the Apprentice and RAF Web sites.

Those happy days reading the AP3302—lousy ending!

## RADAR PAGES

tion of receiving your contribution.

Additionally, for light relief I have started "*Gentlemen, that reminds me...*", a page for anecdotes and jokes. Be they true or false we all need a laugh so send me those stories!

I am often adding something new, making corrections and updating the pages so come back regularly and check *The News* to see what has been happening. Major changes will be posted on *The News* pages and I'll put "updated" comments at the bottom of the other pages as I go along. If you have any ideas that could be incorporated drop me a line and I'll see what I can do. You might also find that some of the pages move about a bit; this is because the site is still evolving so I apologize in advance if this causes any confusion.

Please feel free to quote my research in your own work, as long as it is not for commercial purposes. All I ask is that you acknowledge my work or references as your source and provide a link to this site

Finally, the watch word is simplicity. That means no fancy Frames, CGI, Flash or JavaScript to get in the way or to slow things down. I may eventually succumb and install a search facility though. In order to keep the down load times reasonable I have had to compress the images considerably. I regret this, as a picture can convey so much more than words. Perhaps we'll all get E1 or T1 access one day! If you would like to receive a higher definition picture drop me a line with details of what you want and I'll see what I can do for you.

## EDITORS COMMENTS

**U**nfortunately due to our Printing Guru no longer being available the 'September Newsletter' has been delayed.

It has therefore been necessary to find an economical source to carry out the quite considerable print run of the Newsletter.

Hopefully this has now been resolved with the agreement of the Committee.



## 71ST REUNION

David Penberthy 71st Entry

### 71ST ENTRY FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY REUNION, APRIL 2002.

**I**t has been suggested that a reunion is held on the occasion of the 71st Entry's arrival at RAF Locking. However, there are still several of those who either joined or passed out with the Entry 'missing'. Some were F.T'd, others C.T.'d either after the third or fifth term Examinations.

The where - abouts and, in many cases the Christian names, of the following are sought. The information will, be gratefully received by either Charles Hart or myself.

- 794 J. T Wailing, 'Willy'
- 776 J. Newsham, 'Jim'
- 594 G.H. Smith
- 768 R.A. Hughes, 'Tony'
- 757 J. Davison
- 976 J.M. Moon
- 896 D.M. Clarke, 'Mike' (ex 69<sup>th</sup>)
- 784 T.G. Davies, 'Trevor'
- 778 Geoff G.S. Bailey
- 797 A.B. Wilson
- 816 B. Robertson
- 758 J.E. Veale, 'Johnny'

- 819 R. M. Mitchell, 'Bob' (ex BE)
- 764 F.G. Brown, 'Frank'
- 805 P.A.R. Ellis, 'Pete'
- 774 A.C. Saunders
- 341 M.R. Kay, 'Dicky' (ex 70<sup>th</sup>)
- 785 Cain, 'Pete' from I.O.M.
- 800 Wilson of Hull. 5<sup>th</sup> Term
- Salmon, 'Sammy'
- Carins

### 71st Entry 50th Anniversary Where are the Defaulters!

- Webster-Grinling
- Manning, 'Frank' ex-BE
- Baker of Reading
- Brindley, Drum Major
- Hallows, 'Doc'
- Rodgers
- Adkins, 'Ray'
- McCalpine
- D. Higgins, David

- Davies, 'Taff'
- Evans, 'Taff'
- Ling 'Tinger' FTd 72nd

David Penberthy  
'Heathbank'  
Barrack Shute  
Niton  
Isle of Wight  
PO38 2BE

## REUNION

Tim (Twy) Wyatt 99th  
twy@paganmoon.demon.co.uk

### CEYLON AIR FORCE EX APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION.

**W**e had a meeting of the organising committee last Thursday at my club, the S.S.C., remember, and decided to proceed as planned. The ticket price is fixed at Sterling Pounds 25.00 per head and the venue is the Mt Lavinia Hotel, Colombo. The date Friday 9th March 2001.

*Duncan Perera President of the Ceylon Air Force ex Apps assn.*

### THE BRAT BASH BRIEFING

For those contemplating going to the bash and have not been before this document may well help.

### SRI LANKA

I have to admit to being biased as I think it is a wonderful country with a lovely population of gentle happy people who are polite and respectful. Many regret the British leaving, but this country has stood on its feet. If you get the tourist brochures you can see for yourselves. Away from Colombo the tourist areas are very safe and it is unlikely you will come across anything warlike. But be prepared for the detritus of poverty. A rice packet (Packed lunch) costs about 9p and I got into trouble for paying my labourers £1 per day, the rate should have been 80p. You will see beggars and be approached; my advice is to keep your loose change handy. I should stress

they are not aggressive but probably hungry or drunk.

### TRANSPORT

You will not be allowed to drive over there without an International Driving licence. If you have one, I doubt if you will survive the first mile without a shunt. Their rules are simple. The white line in the centre of road is for decoration only. Traffic lights are treated as advisory rather than mandatory. The quickest way around a traffic island is just that, a straight line to your exit. On the rare occasion when stopped at a red light where there could be three lanes of traffic. The car in the left lane may want to go right while the car in the right lane wants to go left. The car in the centre may take any of the three options. If you are of a nervous disposition, then unless you have a cast iron constitution or shreddies, admire the scenery and let the driver worry about the traffic. In the four months I was there I only saw one accident and safely survived a thousand near misses.

Their speed is only about 20mph in towns and they do not suffer from road rage.

You can hire a car with driver for about £15 per day. Its safer to hire one from your hotel and just check that the tyres still have some rubber on as well!

## REUNION

### AIRLINES

I prefer Air Lanka (Now called Sri Lankan Airline) for two reasons. One they know where the Island is and two it's a one-hop flight of about 9 - 10 hours. The cabin staff are excellent and the food is very good. I prefer the Air Lanka A340 over the Emirates 777 as, call me old fashioned, it has four engines rather than two and the Indian Ocean still looks bloody big from 40,000 ft. If you go with Emirates, then they stop at Dubai on the excuse they need fuel. My wife travelled on this service and thought that it was equally as good. A video screen on the seat in front of you to watch movies and a closed circuit camera relaying the landing from the nose wheels point of view. Her seat was cheaper than that of Air Lanka but it turned out more expensive as she found the duty free gold shop in Dubai Airport.

### COLOMBO AIRPORT.

Not my favourite. When entering the country. Immigration is a pain with long queues where everybody's passport gets studied. The baggage arrives eventually on the carousel. This airport may be unique but you can buy duty free on the way in as well as on the way out. There is a small desk between Immigration and the baggage carousel.

When out on the concourse make for your relevant tour operator and

do not let anybody help you with your luggage. They will want paying. Your rep should have organised a porter. If you are being met by a brat pack rep then he will advise you.

When you come to leave the country allow plenty of time as you will go through a very stringent security check and you will get searched. They are very professional, courteous and determined. The facilities on departure are very good much better than on arrival. You have to fill out an embarkation form and pay the 500 Rupee airport tax in cash for the privilege of leaving. You can though, get a prepaid ticket from your hotel.

### HOTEL ACCOMMODATION.

Very good. While working in Colombo I lived in a five star quality hotel where the staff made me feel at home. But then I was on an Executive Floor and paying for the privilege. (US \$50 per day.) I have stayed in other hotels and they have been very good with air conditioning and very good restaurants. The staff are very friendly and show a genuine interest in you. I use to take good quality English sweets with me from Tesco's Pick and Mix. The hotel management always knew when I was back in country as the staff had selections of English sweets in their office drawers.

The Kandalama hotel at Dambulla is the best Hotel anywhere in the world for price and quality. Built into a rock



## REUNION

face looking out towards the Hill fort at Sigaria in the middle of the jungle. It's the last place you would expect to find superb ambience and excellent food. The rooms are interesting, one wall of your bedroom and on suite will be made of glass and you can look out. Don't worry only the monkey's look in though it is a bit embarrassing when you're in the middle of your S, S and S routine to find a family of monkeys looking in at you. A zoo in reverse? The restaurant here is excellent and you will be amazed at the quality and service. I could write four pages on our brief stop here but I wont.

We are staying at the Ranwelli Holiday resort at Wakkail, North of Negombo and about 1 hours drive to Colombo. This holiday complex has 84 beach side bungalows and is isolated by a river. Entry is via a punt we went there last year and enjoyed it. The holiday can be booked via "The Travel Club" of Kuoni advertised in the Telegraph magazine.

## SHOPPING

**Clothes:** Great bargains to be had with factory prices at 20% (Yes girls 20%) of UK prices. In Colombo we like Odells, there are others and the taxi drivers know where they are. We buy a lot of winter clothes there. You will be surprised by the selection. There are some more interesting outlets where I purchased two genuine Larcoste shirts with a "made in France" label and all the trimmings for

£2.50 each! As the youngsters say, Enjoy.

**Gemstones:** Some great bargains to be had, but full of traps. Only go to recognised gem dealers unless you are in the trade. Taxi drivers will take you to where they make the most commission. Be very wary of deals on the side. As I said earlier unless you are in the trade stick to reputable houses. Beware of this trick if you go on a tour to a gem factory. They will offer to clean your rings then hold onto them until you have had the full sales pitch and maybe a heavy sell.

If you want a reputable one I can recommend "Osman's Gem N Jewellery" located at 25 Dickmans Road, Colombo 4. Their salesman Wahid is a pleasure to watch in action and he wants to hope he never meets me on a dark night! Seriously though the deals I have done with this company have been authenticated in the UK as very good value.

## TOURS:

Most of these are good value but can be very tiring due to the long distances to be driven. I normally need a couple of days rest when returning from one.

My favourite is the Elephant Orphanage and I make no apologies for this. To walk among these noble creatures without fear and watch them bathe is for me magic. There is another orphanage near the main one

## REUNION

where you can get in the river and bathe an elephant. He or she will return the favour and give you a trunk full. As a way of an apology the elephant will take you for a short ride in the jungle. If you want to get some good photos of the Elephants bathing at the main orphanage give the Mahout 100 Rupees (£1) you will get some superb shots. I have one looking into the mouth of a great tusker when he had his trunk over my head. No I did not get wet. Later you can help feed the baby elephants.

### MEDICAL BIT.

Not being a medical man take advice. Be careful with bottled water. If you buy it away from the hotel make certain the top is still sealed, if not ask for another.

You are advised to take anti malarial precautions. There has been no malaria in the holiday area for years. I took the good old-fashioned Paludrin but there are dual medications now and those upset my blood pressure giving me blood shot eyes and a violent headache. I stopped taking them and relied on Paludrin. On one six-week trip I did not bother.

If like me you suffer from hangovers they have a magic cure in the form of a King Coconut. These contain a saline sugar mix and are fantastic for hangovers, the runs and sunstroke. They work instantly and

should be on the NHS! They are gold in colour and the flesh is also very good for you. I suffered on my first trip from the runs, on the second, third and fourth trips the King Coconut put paid to that problem when it arose. The first Engineer in the company to return with his Imodium seals intact!

### HOW TO AVOID THE HASSLERS SRI LANKAN STYLE.

If you find your self in Sri Lanka you will be pursued by what I refer to as hasslers. They are very experienced and multi-lingual. It starts like this:

Within five paces of leaving your hotel you will become aware of somebody tracking you from astern at about 10 to 15 paces away slowly closing on you. He will either listen to you talking to your wife, to identify your language, or he will smile and say, "Hello." If you reply he knows you speak English. Simple really.

If he knows you are staying at a certain hotel he will inform you that either his brother works there or is the head chef. It's useful to know who the hotel management are if you have answered him.

However if you keep quiet when he says Hello he may try French or German. If you keep quiet it gives him a problem and he is loosing time when he could be after someone else. I have discovered Spanish throws them off the scent.

## REUNION

His task is to get you to shop in certain stores, which are owned by his uncle, cousin, nephew etc. If you accept his offer you could end up with a hard sell once inside the shop. One thing is certain you will pay a lot more, as his commission will be added quite transparently to the price

If you know what to expect then it can be fun. I found it very frustrating during my early days there when I wanted to go for a walk. But after a while I use to tell them to go away and they did. If they find out you are a resident, they will leave you alone protesting that they only wanted to practise their English.

## TAXIS AND TOURS:

If you travel via taxi or decide to use a chauffeur driven car for a tour you will be taken to lots of shops which again the taxi driver will recommend. Most of your sight seeing tour will consist of visiting local shops. He of course gets a commission on what you purchase so be warned.

Most taxi firms are located or attached to hotels, consequently the drivers know when you are leaving the country and the sales drive kicks in. I have been offered jewellery and rare stones at very cheap prices. The sales pitch is that their relations sell these

same stones to the gem dealer at these prices, and we pay a lot more for them. In truth they are relying on you never coming back and you may well be buying gemstones or cut glass. If you go to have the stones authenticated they could easily be swapped by slight of hand and you will never have redress on the salesman again.

There are some very reputable gem dealers in Colombo my advice is to use those.

The trick I use on tours is to tell the driver he will make more out of me in a generous tip than he will from the shops. I

will then discuss with him what I am interested in buying and leave it up to him. This takes the pressure off him and you both have a more relaxed and enjoyable time.

Perhaps I was lucky in working there for four months as I had a small clique of drivers who worked for me and one volunteered to drive when my wife flew out for a holiday. He was an excellent tour guide and a very safe driver. We probably embarrassed him by insisting he ate with us in any restaurant we visited when on the road. They normally disappear into a back room and that seemed to me to be unfair, the return of the White man and his slave.

Gentlemen if you go out at night in Colombo you will get offered everything and I mean everything!

Hope this helps.

Tim Wyatt

## HUMOUR

### TECH SUPPORT HUMOUR

Tech Support: "I need you to right-click on the Open Desktop."

Customer: "OK."

Tech Support: "Did you get a pop-up menu?"

Customer: "No."

Tech Support: "OK. Right click again. Do you see a pop-up menu?"

Customer: "No."

Tech Support: "OK, sir. Can you tell me what you have done up until this point?"

Customer: "Sure, you told me to write 'click' and I wrote 'click'."  
(At this point I had to put the caller on hold to tell the rest of the tech support staff what had happened. I couldn't, however, stop from giggling when I got back to the call.)

Tech Support: "OK, did you type 'click' with the keyboard?"

Customer: "I have done something dumb, right?"

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Customer: "I got this problem. You people sent me this install disk, and now my A: drive won't work."

Tech Support: "Your A drive won't work?"

Customer: "That's what I said. You sent me a bad disk, it got stuck in my drive, now it won't work at all."

Tech Support: "Did it not install properly? What kind of error messages did you get?"

Customer: "I didn't get any error message. The disk got stuck in the drive and wouldn't come out. So I got these pliers and tried to get it out. That didn't work either."

Tech Support: "You did what sir?"

Customer: "I got these pliers, and tried to get the disk out, but it wouldn't budge. I just ended up cracking the plastic stuff a bit."

Tech Support: "I don't understand sir, did you push the eject button?"

Customer: "No, so then I got a stick of butter and melted it and used a turkey baste and put the butter in the drive, around the disk, and that got it loose. Then I used the pliers and it came out fine. I can't believe you would send me a disk that was broke and defective."

Tech Support: "Let me get this clear. You put melted butter in your A: drive and used pliers to pull the disk out?"

At this point, I put the call on the speaker phone and motioned at the other tech's to listen in.

Tech Support: "Just so I am absolutely clear on this, can you repeat what you just said?"

Customer: "I said I put butter in my A: drive to get your crappy disk out, then I had to use pliers to pull it out."

## RAFLAA COMMITTEE

Appointment	Name	Address	Tel	Entry
President	Martin Palmer			91 <sup>st</sup>
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# ENTRY BADGES



72nd Entry



78th Entry



90th Entry

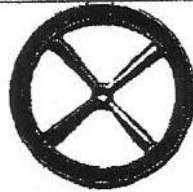


88th Entry



204th Entry

## THE



## NEWS

**F**OLLOWING the closure of Locking in 1999, the small museum attached to No 1 Radio School was transferred to Henlow, a team of enthusiastic volunteers have been creating a new museum dedicated to the history of RAF signals.

Their efforts were rewarded when the museum was opened by Air Commodore Mike Davison, the chief executive of the Defence Communications Services Agency's directorate of engineering and interoperability.

Current exhibits include radios, radar consoles, models, training aids, test equipment, teleprinters and other memorabilia as well as a small library.

The museum also tells the story of work done to counter the Knickebein radio navigation aid, the results of which enabled the RAF to turn a German bomber pilot who knew where he was going into a pilot who didn't know he was flying into trouble.

After inspecting the museum for the first time, Air Commodore Davison said: "This small team has done an excellent job and the museum will most

certainly be useful to a wide range of people.

Behind the completion of the project, which has taken just under a year is a regular team of volunteers — Tony Bourne, Dave Thompson, Mike Harrison, Vic Ludlow and others, led by Sqn Ldr. Howard Newbould. As well as building display cases, painting walls and restoring equipment, the volunteers have spent much time researching many aspects of RAF signals history.

Sqn Ldr Newbould said: "The volunteers have done a great job refurbishing and researching the exhibits. "Under the circumstances we have done well to get where we are, but the story doesn't end here and we have some ambitious plans for the future"

Appointments can be made via Sqn Ldr Newbould. OC Station Services Squadron, at Henlow Officials are always on the lookout for interesting signals related equipment to add to their collection.

Extract from RAF News August 2000

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