



## AGM Arrangements *by Charles Hart*

The programme for the AGM weekend is included with the Newsletter along with the customary application for Dinner Dance tickets. This year we have been requested by the RAF Locking security staff to supply a list of personnel attending together with details of the vehicles that you travel to Locking in. To this end you will find enclosed a proforma requesting these details which we ask you to post to the Membership Secretary by at the latest the 25 May 97. This will ease your entry through the main gate and allow access to 3(T) Block. Enhanced security measures are in operation on the Station and members should be aware of the requirements.

Also because the AGM is no longer tied to a Station open day there are no staff available who in the past have carried out services for us at no cost. This year things are different in that we will have to buy in services such as a refreshment point and a bar. This will have to be paid for and as a consequence we may have to make a small charge on those of you intending. No actual decision has been made on this since at this time the cost is still unknown but it seems likely that we will have to take a £1 off you at the point of entry. However it is still intended that drinks and refreshments will be on a no cost basis.

At the AGM itself it is intended that the President will present the RAFLAA Trophy to this year's awardee, SAC Lee Wilson. Cpl Wilson, as he is now, is a Statistical Clerk who formerly worked in Statistics and Records in Station HQ. He has put in an outstanding year's work on behalf of No 1 Radio School and RAF

Locking in compiling a whole suite of business results from CERT, the centralised examination results computer system installed in all RAF training schools. He has been instrumental in creating these results now available at the touch of an icon to all line managers, thus overcoming one of the major failings that the Station experienced when measuring the Unit's 5 performance against the European standard Business Excellence Model. Much of the information is in graphical form and obtained from process control data which the Unit needs in order to study and correct trends. SAC Wilson has worked tirelessly to provide management with all the statistical analysis necessary to maintain the Station's level of quality and is a worthy recipient of the RAF Locking Apprentice Trophy. It is also good that Stats and Records, an unsung section which many on the Station are unaware of, have now the opportunity to bask in the reflected glory of the award to one of their sons. Cpl Wilson

### In this issue

AGM Dinner Dance	2
Autumn event	2
Bryan Armitage	3
Commemoration of closure	3
Future re-unions	3
Where has everybody gone?	4
Places to stay in Weston	5
Blenheim Dance	5
RAF Waddington	8
News of the Mine	8
Winter fun in the sun	9
AGM Agenda	11
Reunion Programme	12

# Editorial

This newsletter was intended to be a fairly short affair, really just to get the formal stuff for the AGM out to you. However I am pleased to say that there has been a good flow of contributions and so it has grown a bit like Topsy, whoever he or she was, and so I have been able to produce an almost full version (this is to explain the blank spaces!).

This newsletter should have included a copy of the Balance Sheet. However, in these busy times it has just not been possible to get it prepared in time, and so we go to press (sounds good doesn't it?) without it. Please be assured that there is nothing sinister in this, as I say just lack of time. The balance sheet will be available at the AGM.

I still have several long articles to publish and will do so whenever possible, but in the meantime please keep the shorter snappy articles coming in — there are some very good examples of the sort of thing I am talking about in this issue. Thanks for all contributors this time around.

Regular readers will know that I usually try to squeeze a theme out of whatever turns up for publication. I was expecting to be stumped this time but, in true Mr. Macawber fashion (which has always been a guiding principle to me) there seems to be a flavour of dance in this issue.

First there is our own affair on the 7th of June, and for those that can't make it there is an alternative '40s Hanger Dance at Duxford. In the nostalgia department I have been sent some memorabilia of a dance organised by the 95th in the early '60s. You may be surprised at some of the famous names associated with that. It's all inside folks!

is now stationed at RAF Benson and will be analysing and compiling statistics for Engineering Wing on a particular type of helicopter.

We shall be reporting on progress during the year and looking for your support in the future. We shall also be seeking your approval of the balance sheet. We shall again outline our views on what to do to commemorate the closure of the Station and to this end we shall be providing a suggestion book for peoples ideas.

For those who haven't seen it, there will be an opportunity to view the "Apprentice" video and in addition we have another film

from the late '50s in which RAF Locking and apprentice training are highlighted. Both will be available to buy. The Agenda for the Meeting will be on display and copies will be available in the Theatre together with the balance sheet. Minutes of the last AGM and all Committee Meetings held since will be available for those who like to read such things. Neil Castle will again be displaying a range of interesting old photographs of Apprentice activities which hopefully some of you will be able to identify for him.

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## AGM Dinner Dance

In the evening the Dinner Dance will commence at 7-00 for 7-30pm at Dance and Partyscene, Whitecross Road. An application form for tickets, still priced at £12-50, is enclosed.

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## Autumn Social Event

We will debate whether or not to hold our Autumn Dinner Dance this year. For the past two years the numbers have fallen to the point where it is probably not a viable event. If any of you are really enthusiastic to attend such an event please let us know otherwise we shall relegate it to once every few years.

## **Bryan Armitage**

*(by himself)*

Bryan Armitage, 71 (entry not age) left the RAF when he reached thirty and for the next eighteen years earned a crust as a computer engineer working for IBM. In 1983 he left 'Big Blue' and joined a tiny company who were competing for IBM's maintenance customers. Five years later, Granada took that company over and as their plans for world domination conflicted with Bryan's, he left and started a small company of his own. It remains small — but it remains.

Bryan offers to collate the details of any ex-apprentice who tells him of their personal computer skills. The resultant data base may generate useful leads for participating members who will be the only people to receive a copy of it. Chapman Gee deals in IBM mid-range and PCs.

Contact Bryan at: Chapman Gee Computer Services Ltd., Tower Mill, Park Road, Dukinfield, Cheshire. 5K16 5LN,

Tel 0161 343 1478, Fax 343 3416 and/or E-mail 101605.2310@compuserve.com

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## **Commemoration of Locking's closure.**

As discussed in the previous Newsletter, we are still looking at ways of commemorating the closure of RAF Locking and the absorption of No 1 Radio School into 1 School of Technical Training. So far the only views we have received from you is that you are adamant that you wish the Association to remain centred on Weston-super-Mare. If you have ideas please speak up at the Reunion or enter your comments in the suggestion book.

Joe has discussed with OC AW at Locking whether it was possible for the LAA to take part in the Station's activities to mark RAF Locking's closure and possible events have been reviewed. OC AW had suggested that

Association members may like to consider being included on the final Freedom of Weston Parade when the Unit marches through the Town for the final time. Joe thought this would offer an excellent opportunity to contribute to the closing ceremonies and has informally agreed our participation.

We have also been concerned in holding on to some elements of the History of No 1 Radio School Museum which seems unlikely to be welcome at Cosford and although still a matter for the School, does affect the RAFLAA collection of memorabilia which we have a stewarding responsibility.

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## **Combined Meeting of Associations**

The RAFCLAA will host the 1977 combined Associations meeting which includes some Boy Entrant Associations. The meeting date is yet to be announced, but is likely to be in mid July. A full report will appear in the September Newsletter.

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## **Future Reunions and AGMs**

As already outlined, this June meeting could well be the last opportunity we have of holding our reunion on the Station since it may not be in a position to host us in 1998. Lack of manpower as the Unit moves toward closure could make it a close-run situation. Moreover, the MOD has decided to minimise non-official events in order to reduce the task on the Services, so the largesse we have all become accustomed to is likely to wither from now on.

Never mind, if you cannot get to the AGM there is no need to despair since we have it in mind to formerly commemorate the closure of the Station when we know for sure when it is to happen.



# Where has everybody gone?

*(A letter from Roland Higgins 95th)*

Further to the correspondence regarding Len in the January issue, I met Len at an aviation conference in Clearwater Bay, Florida at the beginning of January.

Len is working with Transport Canada, the Canadian Civil Aviation Authority and although the name looked familiar, it wasn't until we had a conversation a couple of days into the conference that we established that we were both ex-Locking apprentices.

I mentioned the Association to Len only to find that he was already aware as George Burville had succeeded in contacting him the previous week. Len indicated that he would be trying to make the June reunion this year so lets hope that he does.

On a quirky note, Len is into parrots as evidenced by his range of 'parrots rule' sweatshirts. The conference hotel, by coincidence, had a resident parrot living in the lobby, as American hotels do!! Anyway, Len decided to befriend this parrot which promptly decided it didn't approve of this particular parrot fancier and bit his finger quite severely. "Just telling me it was time for me to leave" said Len.

You called for some ideas on a name for the Newsletter back in October.

I have had some thoughts on this and I feel that possibly the name should reflect some of the weird and wonderful equipment we were taught at Locking.

In my view the enduring symbol of the fact that Locking was a radio school was the 'nodding horror' situated behind 2 Block. If memory serves it was the scanner for the system termed FPS 6, but if I am wrong then I am sure that some Ground Radar type will soon correct me. So, should the magazine be called 'FPS 6'? I think not because not only do the Ground Radar/Wireless folks seem to be pre-eminent in the association but their equipment was forever un-romantically iden-

tified by alpha/numerics.

No, maybe we should look at the somewhat exotic names given to airborne wireless/radar systems such as Red Steer, Green Palm, Orange Putter, Red Shrimp, Rebecca, Blue Saga, Arc 52 and Blue Silk amongst others. However, I would like to suggest that the magazine is called after one of the most enduring airborne radars taught at Locking, and used on a wide range of bombers and transports, known and 'loved' by thousands - GREEN SATIN. A good name for a magazine with a touch of mystique for outsiders.

One of the founders of THE INCAS was Tony Beaumont of the 95th. He arrived back after Christmas leave one year carrying an acoustic guitar which he taught himself to play in the shower rooms and ironing rooms - he was banned from the billet! He got better and educated us in the various types of guitars used by the pop groups of the time including the fabulous FENDER STRATOCASTER which he eventually managed to afford.

One of the INCAS' gigs was at the 95th Entry's end of apprenticeship charity dance at the Winter Gardens where they supported Gene Vincent and Mal Ryder and The Spirits amongst others.

I enclose a dance poster and an interesting letter received from Brian Epstein - which should bring back memories for George Ring and Pete Crowe.

I have remained in the aviation industry since leaving theRAF in 1973. At present I am with Virgin Atlantic Airways.

What I find surprising is the lack of ex-Locking apprentices still in the industry.

We seem to be swamped with ex-Halton, ex-Fleet Air Arm and even ex-Army Air Corps engineers, but I have yet to meet an ex-Locking apprentice in any airline.

The only ex-Locking apprentices that I

know are still in the industry are Ron Stoves and Jim Powell - 93rd and of course Len Kitching - 94th.

Where has everybody gone?

It's good that at last Locking has an Association. I used to feel rather left out when colleagues used to go off to the Halton reunions. In fact the latest member of my staff arrived wearing an Apprentice Wheel lapel badge, but he of course was from Halton.

sincerely,  
Roland Higgins

*Roland has posed some interesting questions – any comments/ suggestions? The letter from Brian Epstein and the dance poster are reproduced overleaf. They certainly underline how things have changed in thirty-odd years, not that most of us need reminding!*

## The Blenheim Dance

We have received a letter asking us to advertise the Ninth Annual Blenheim Dance which is being held at Duxford Airfield, Cambs, on Saturday 7th June (sound familiar?) at 8.00 pm.

This 1940's hanger dance was originally held to raise funds in aid of the restoration of the Blenheim IV which sadly crashed shortly after its twelve year restoration.

Eventually it flew again and has since attended many airshows both in the UK and in Europe. The dances have continued – due to their enormous popularity and the enthusiastic support from hundreds of people who enjoy the evocative 1940's atmosphere.

Dancing will be to the Memphis Belle Swing Orchestra. Tickets are £16.00, obtainable in advance by post only. 1940's Allied Dress is encouraged.

For further information ring 01223 836593 (day) or 01440 730737 (evening).

## Places to stay in Weston

We have had a few enquiries on where to stay in Weston so again here is some information on hotels and places where you can find good accommodation.

Firstly the Tourist Information Office address is; Beach Lawns, Weston-super-Mare. Tel (01934) 626838. It is situated close to the Grand Pier and they are an extremely helpful office who will advise and supply lists and even book accommodation for you.

Grand Atlantic, AA 3 Star (Tel (01934) 626543)  
Royal Pier, AA 3 Star, Bimbeck Road, (Tel (01934) 626644)  
Dorville, RAC 2 Star, Madeira Road, Tel (01934) 621139  
Rozel, AA 2 Star, Madeira Cove, Tel (01934) 415268  
Royal in the Town Centre, AA 2 Star, Tel (01934) 623601.

Probably the most competitive hotel strip in town is along the sea front in Knightstone Road (head toward the North end of the Town when you reach the Grand Pier). Some names to look for are:

Mentone Tel (01934) 626153      Midland Hotel Tel (01934) 621217  
Monaco Hotel Tel (01934) 621910      The Old Colonial Tel (01934) 620739

MONDAY 18th MARCH

— ★ —

THE 95th ENTRY R.A.F. LOCKING APPRENTICES

PRESENT

**GENE VINCENT**

and The Bluecaps

**MAL RYDER**

and The Spirits

**THE INCAS**

— ★ —

TICKETS 6/6 LICENSED BAR 7.30-11.30 p.m.

In Aid of Charity

— ★ —

Tickets available from the Winter Gardens or any member  
of The 95th Entry

— ★ —

WINTER GARDENS, WESTON-SUPER-MARE

# NEMS ENTERPRISES LTD

DIRECTORS: B. AND C. J. EPSTEIN

12-14 WHITECHAPEL, LIVERPOOL, 1

TELEPHONE ROYAL 7895

BE/BA:

28th January 1963

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of the 22nd instant. I would advise you that the BEATLES have no available dates until the second week in May and at present I would quote their fee for dates after that at £150. This group may not of course prove an economical proposition for your dances and in this connection I would advise you that we also direct the following artistes:

✓ GERRY & THE PACEMAKERS (Columbia)	£40
THE BIG THREE (Decca)	£35
BILLY KRAMER & THE DAKOTAS	£30

Yours sincerely,  
Brian Epstein.

*f.p.*

*B. Adams.*

R. Higgins, Esq.,  
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Room 3 K Block,  
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R.A.F. Locking,  
Weston Super Mare  
Somerset

*6 MAY 1963*



# RAF Waddington Scoops the World

by Bryan Armitage (71st)

In the late fifties at RAF Waddington I made a friend of an airframe fitter called Norman Emerson. He and I enjoyed a fearsome reputation as a Bridge pair but his early marriage and my subsequent posting caused us to lose contact and I forgot his surname. Twenty years later I remembered it and found him again after a six month search. He told me the following story.

When Norman's marriage failed he moved into the Sergeants mess at Waddington and was soon asked to take over the running of the Raven club which had been formed from an amalgamation of the NAAFI and Corporals club. Every Saturday night the Raven held a dance and Norman quickly found that he had a talent for organisation. He increased admission charges and employed a higher class of artist. The club thrived and the dance became one of the social events of the Lincoln calendar. Soon he was employing nationally known groups and when the Bee Gees ran foul of the immigration authorities, Norman staged their last performance in the UK. His swan song was almost unbelievable. He secured the signatures of both Frank and Nancy Sinatra to appear together for the first time anywhere outside the USA. All was arranged, profits were to go to charity, all tickets at £2.00 a head were to be sold to RAF personnel and the concert was to be held in one of the hangars on rented chairs. Frank was to use the airfield to land his personal plane carrying both Nancy, himself and Nelson Riddle and his orchestra. Norman believed that he had thought of everything but sadly there was one flaw in his plans. Never a person to hold much respect for the commissioned class, Norman had failed to even notify the C.O. of his plans and the Daily Mirror found out first

"RAF Waddington Scoops The World" it trumpeted on a two page spread. Chief Tech Emerson may have scooped the world but the embarrassment of being unaware of Norman's

activities was apparently too much for the CO, and the concert was cancelled.

Disillusioned, Norman left the RAF. But you can't keep a good man down. When I found him he had this quaint idea that he could hand manufacture stainless steel silencers for Volvo trucks for less than Volvo wanted for a mild steel one.

Ridiculous? Have you noticed those large stainless steel silencers fitted at the back of commercial cabs? The ones stamped Eminox? Ever wondered what the "Em" in Eminox stands for?

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## More news of the Mine

Chris, two points from the last newsletter. I see Peter Gates has been in touch regarding the St. Neots RAFA Club. I would urge local members of the RAFLAA to come along on one of the evenings, if only for the speakers who are generally of a high quality. Also I won't feel so out numbered by ex Halton apprentices. I myself am not always there as I work shift at the moment.

With regard to the "MINE" mentioned in Mikes article, I believe there is quite a history to this starting possibly with the 90th or 91st. The story I heard was that it was found during a summer camp on Dartmoor and smuggled back to become a mascot. It spent most of its days down skid row belonging to A Sqdn. and I remember we in the 97th had it for a while. In fact I believe the 99th stole it from us while we were away on Summer camp.

Gordon Shores,

*There has got to be a story or two in there — can anyone oblige? What ever the truth, I can't believe that the 99th would have done anything quite so darstedly ... although there was the incident of the "Penny Grip Machine", eh Bob?*



## APs remembered

by J M Smith (72 nd)

I enjoyed the potted -if sometimes poignant - history of Michael West (99) in Newsletter S/No 14.

One phrase made me think. Namely. "If These types of equipment were designed with humans in mind, then it would be a piece of cake.

It was a relief to find I wasn't alone in being baffled, having long suspected I was a closet dyslexic or that the video instructions were written in Klingon speak.

Oh! for the days of some of the old Air Publications. The opening paragraph of the Volume 1 of the STC6, MCVF (Standard Telephones multi-channel voice frequency) equipment springs to mind. Some ground wireless fitters will remember this.

*"Triple diversity reception is used to ameliorate the deleterious effects of selective fading."* A frustrated novelist was lurking there.

Spare a thought for Malcolm Turner (96th) probably wearing out ribbon or bubble-jet cassettes, writing the "History of Apprentice Training at Locking". There's a man with a stout heart.

Which brings me to why I picked up the quill pen in the first place.

In 1953 the whole apprentice wing had entry photographs taken on the sports arena. I've never met anybody who saw these photographs (possibly par for the course with regard to official attitudes then).

Has anyone ever seen copies of these? If they still exist are they recoverable. for for Neil Castle's archives?

I'm enquiring before the RAF is finally privatised or civilianised, and the last uniformed member disappears like the "Cheshire Cat", leaving nothing but a smile, to show that any of us were ever there.

To anyone who retorts "Nonsense", I'd ask "When did you last see an Aircraft Apprentice?"

Come to that, when did I last see a Cheshire cat?

## Anyone for Winter Fun in the Sun?

Bob Machin reports in from Spain with a suggestion for the Winter ...

Dear Charles,

Unfortunately despite getting tickets for last year's dinner dance we could not make the event as I put my back out as I was getting ready to leave for Weston that morning. We did ring the Guardroom at Locking but never knew if the message got through to anyone

Anyway I wonder if I might pass an idea by you for the future. I have just had a group of 34 retired Civil Servants out here for a two week holiday. We all belong to a Staff Association which has developed a large "retired membership. I was made redundant from GCHQ last year and in my last months was heavily involved with this group and suggested we try a winter holiday.

The upshot has been a very successful venture. It works very simply in that I arranged the accommodation here in individual houses all on the estate where we live. This is a large development of about 7,000 houses spread over several low hills. It is essentially self contained as most amenities are available on site, from Surgery to Supermarket to Restaurants to an all weather Bowling Green. There are excellent Golf facilities nearby and beautiful unspoilt beaches. We are 30 minutes south of Alicante airport. The houses are managed by a British run Company and are available in 1,2 bedroomed terraced or 2,3 bedroomed detached. All who came enjoyed an independent holiday with the option to meet up as a group when they wanted.

I am now actively looking for other groups to bring out in the winter months when flights are cheaper and all the amenities here are under used, and the weather is somewhat better than in the UK. All I've given is a brief outline but I wonder if you would be kind enough to canvass views for an RAFLAA winter fun in the sun trip. If you feel there would be sufficient interest I can give you more details and

costings this end etc. In fact I shall be in UK toward the end of July as I have to give a presentation in Cheltenham, so I would be more than willing to meet with you at that time and pass on the full information.

For my part I received an agreed fee from the group for my time both in sorting out accommodation and transport etc. and for being available for the period of the holiday to deal with any problems that arose. The airline tickets and insurance was all dealt with fby a colleague in UK.

I do hope that you will find the above of interest, and look forward to hearing from you soon. My PC is too old to be connected to the net, and since handing in my technician's handbag I have become totally disinterested in the wonders of electronics — what a relief!

Best wishes to the committee and to all members.

Bob Machin.

*If you are interested in this suggestion  
get on touch with Bob at :*

*Mr. & Mrs. P Machin  
Parque del Danubjo 24  
Urb. La Marina  
E01377 San Fulgencio  
Alicante  
SPAIN  
Tel/Fax (00 34 6) 6797613*

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This  
space  
available  
for  
your  
article!

Please send contributions to:  
Chris Horn, 464 Locking Road, Weston-super-Mare, North somerset. BS22 8QX

9 South Road  
Weston- super-Mare  
BS23 2HA

(01934) 621969

26 Apr 97

LOC/4511/10/ORG

LAA/2/CMH

All RAFLAA Members

AGENDA FOR THE FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE RAF LOCKING  
APPRENTICES ASSOCIATION TO BE HELD IN THE STATION THEATRE, RAF  
LOCKING, ON SATURDAY 7 JUNE 1997 AT 1430 HRS.

1. Presentation of RAFLAA Trophy.
2. President's Address.
3. Chairman's Report.
4. Membership Secretary's Report.
5. Balance Sheet and Treasurer's Report.
6. Election of AA Committee Members.
7. Amendments to the Constitution.
8. Subscriptions.
9. Closure of RAF Locking.
10. Members' Propositions.
11. Date of Next Meeting.

C M HART  
Secretary



# AGM AND REUNION PROGRAMME

The 4th Reunion and Annual General Meeting of the RAF Locking Apprentice Association to be held on Saturday 7 June 1997.

The programme of events is as follows:

- a. 6 Jun 97. Informal Meet and Greet at 8pm, Grand Atlantic Bar.
- b. 7 Jun 97. Reunion and AGM; from 12.30pm, 3(T) Block, RAF Locking.

## Event Programme:

- (1) 12.00 Barrier security and 3(T) Block doors open
- (2) 12.30 Members start to arrive.
- (3) 13.00 Bar and refreshments available.
- (4) 14.30 AGM commences/facilities closed down.
- (5) 16.00 AGM completed, Tea served.
- (6) 16.30 Members disperse.
- (7) 16.45 3(T) Block closed.

c. Outlets for the purchase of various items including ties and will be available. The IWM Recruiting and "RAF Apprentice" videos can be viewed and will be on sale. The Agenda for the Meeting will be on display and copies will be available in the Theatre. Minutes of the last AGM and all Committee Meetings held since last year's AGM will be displayed. Neil Castle will again be displaying a range of interesting old photographs of Apprentice activities and will be requesting aid in identification.

d. 7 Jun 97. Dinner Dance. 7-00 for 7-30pm at Dance and Party- scene, Whitecross Road. An application form for tickets, is enclosed in the Newsletter. The price maintained at £12-50 and will include wine.

e. If you are attending the Reunion and the AGM you will require a personal passes for all members of your party plus another separate pass for your vehicle. So that these documents can be prepared in advance, please complete the proforma included with the newsletter and send it back *as soon as possible* to the Membership Secretary as indicated.

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