



Royal Air Force Locking Apprentice Association



LAA NEWSLETTER

Serial 26

March 2000

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

- **New Millennium — New Committee**
- **Y2K AGM**
- **Report on January Committee Meeting**
- **Whose Who on the Committee**
- **A Few Burbles — John Smith (72nd)**
- **Apprentice to M.P. — Charles Hart (71st)**
- **The Hunt Goes On — Mike Collier (76th)**
- **RAF Signals Museum — Dave Thompson (88th)**
- **Where Are They Now — Ken Keeling (70th)**
- **Reminders**
- **Contacts**

Inside this issue:

<i>Chairman's "hello"</i>	2
<i>Editorial</i>	5
<i>Whose who</i>	6
<i>Locking closed</i>	10
<i>Committee bits</i>	11
<i>AA to MP</i>	13
<i>Where are they</i>	14
<i>The hunt goes on</i>	15
<i>A few burbles</i>	18
<i>RAFLAA COMMITTEE</i>	23
<i>AGM</i>	24

AGM2K

The Year 2000 Annual General Meeting is to be held at RAF Henlow on Saturday 16th September.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

The Chairman Joe Holroyd and Secretary Charles Hart both relinquished their respective posts on the Committee at the January Meeting.

The Locking Apprentice Association has now achieved maturity due to the guidance and commitment of Joe and Charles. Thankfully they are still on the Committee and still willing to offer their expertise and enthusiasm.

NEW CHAIRMAN'S "HELLO"

It doesn't seem possible that nearly seven years have passed since Joe and I sat in MOD and discussed the concept of a Locking Apprentice Association. Joe had been working on the idea of forming an Association since early 1992 but it wasn't until June 1993 that he managed to orchestrate the inaugural meeting and was duly voted in as our founding Chairman. We have moved a long way since then with the membership topping 400 and the LAA gaining the acceptance of the other apprentice and boy entrant associations, not to mention the numerous social occasions that have been arranged for our enjoyment. I'm sure that many of us over the years have thought that we should have our own association but it took someone with the tenacity and drive of Joe to go the step further and make the thought a reality. Joe, I know that the committee gave you a vote of thanks for your efforts over the past 6 years, but I like to think that I speak for the whole membership when I say thank you for all your efforts to make our Association what it is today. So is it off with the old and on with the new? I don't think so!! One of the things my 38 yrs as a technician and engineer in the Service has taught me is "If it ain't broke don't fix it" and there is nothing wrong with the Locking Ap-

**Joe "thank you for all your efforts to make our Association what it is today."
"If it ain't broke don't fix it"**

prentice Association. That is not to say that we can be complacent, any association is dependant on its membership and although, regrettably, there will be no new Locking Apprentices there are many ex apprentices out there which we must reach out to. So keep spreading the word and see if we can lift our membership above the 500 mark. I am grateful for the trust you showed in me by voting me in as your Chairman despite the fact that I was unable to attend the AGM and I will make every effort to keep up the good work started by my predecessor.

The closure of RAF Locking, our Alma Mater, was a sad occasion but perhaps there could still be a silver lining. Now that we have no "home" to revisit we have the opportunity to hold our AGM and Dance at different venues around the country, hopefully on existing RAF Units.

In this way we will not only be able to give more of our members a chance of having a home match but we will also be able spread the gospel of the LAA around the country.

My replacement lung continues to improve and I am hoping to be fit enough to take part in the Nijmegen 4 Day Marches in July to raise money for the Transplant Unit at Papworth Hospital. I have already started training and can cover 10 km without a break or to much stress, given a fair

NEW CHAIRMAN'S "HELLO"

wind and gentle slopes, but I have a way to go if I am going to manage the requisite 42 km per day. Still, having completed the event 10 times in the past 11 years I do know what I'm taking on and I intend to give it my best shot. Since my first Nijmegen in 1989 I have marched 1000 miles around the Dutch countryside wearing two ranks on my uniform, my Wg Cdr slides on my epaulettes and my Aircraft Apprentice Wheel on my left arm and the Wheel does not go unrecognised among the more mature marchers. The total distance to be covered is 25 miles (42km) each day for 4 consecutive days but feel free to pledge sponsorship by the miles or days completed or just for my being stubborn enough to start, each of these eventualities will be monitored and authenticated by the Dutch authorities. If any one would like to sponsor me I assure you that all

the money that is pledged will go to Papworth, nothing will be taken out to cover expenses.

I hope you don't consider that I am abusing my position as Chairman by asking for sponsorship through the news letter. I assure you that this will be a one-off bid for sponsorship by me and that I make it as a life member of the Association not as its Chairman.

I hope to meet many of you in September at the next AGM and Dance at RAF Henlow; quite a few of you must have memories of Henlow and the REU - not that there is much evidence left of the REU - and until then may I wish you all good health, good memories and good hunting (for more members).

ASSOCIATION WEB SITES

GEORGE E.D. BURVILLE — EDITOR: RAF APPS AND BES ON THE WWW

To entice others you simply put extracts from newsletters on pages that all visitors have access to.

Take into account that if the website appeals to a bigger audience it has to get brownie points and the more brownie points the wider the appeal.

I don't think many have really grasped at the RAFLAA having a website by way of <http://www.appbe.com/raflaa> and that there is so much on offer.

I get between an estimated 800 and 4500 visitors a week, I'm sure that many of these are not Mainstream Association members and won't be unless we do more to encourage them.

In short where the web is concerned the future arrived some time ago and those who can't see it are going to be left behind.

SPONSORED WALK BY BERT DAVIES IN AID OF PAPWORTH HOSPITAL

I was fortunate enough to receive a single lung transplant at Papworth Hospital on 16th July 1999 and have been cared for as an out patient by the Transplant Continuing Care Unit since that time.

Prior to my illness my main hobby was long distance walking and road marching and I am hoping to be fit enough to take part in the Nijmegen Four Day Marches (marching 25 miles per day for 4 consecutive days) in July of this year, the 1st anniversary of my transplant. I am seeking sponsorship to raise money for the Papworth Hospital Trust as a means of saying thank you for my new lease of life. You may sponsor me by the mile or days completed or a fixed sum for being stubborn enough, or is it stupid enough, to start. Whatever your pledge, you can be assured that all of the proceeds from your sponsorship will go to the Trust with no deductions for expenses.

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY

SPONSOR	AMOUNT SPONSORED			AMOUNT COLLECTED
	PER MILE	PER DAY	TOTAL	

Please return completed sponsorship forms to the following address by 30 June 2000

Mr. A E Davies
20 Lakefield Avenue
Little Paxton, St. Neots
Cambs PE19 4NZ

If preferred, telephone pledges can be made on 01480 217243

EDITORIAL

May I wish everyone a belated Happy New Millennium, I hope the New Century brings you all Health, Happiness and good stories for the Newsletter.

COMMITTEE MEETING

I was invited along to the Committee Meeting held at the Flowerdown House in January and I can now reveal all that goes on at these mysterious gatherings of great minds.

Being non-committee I sat unobtrusively, behind the Chairman observing the goings on, first observation was the copious amounts of drink that has to be consumed, (tea and coffee of course). After the preliminaries everyone got down to work.

All the usual procedures were carried out, Agenda, Reports, Minutes and I have never seen a pen working so hard as the Secretary's, didn't miss a word, I decided it best not to say too much just in case it would be used in evidence.

I am afraid there is no gossip to pass on, the Committee debated and discussed a variety of topics during the afternoon, a précis of which is included in the Newsletter. The only criticism I had was all the coffee drunk during the Meeting and the long drive home.

NEWSLETTER

I would like to thank all those who have sent in contributions to the Newsletter I have attempted to include everything even if slightly amended, also

enclosed is the précis of the Committee Meeting plus several points that are of special interest to all.

There have been several recent changes in the Committee (see Report of Meeting) this month and it seemed an opportune moment to include a CV of each of the members.

APPRENTICE/BOY ENTRANTS WEB SITE

I have received several items of correspondence concerning the use of the Associations Web site at <http://www.appbe.com.uk>.

We are now in the world of Internet and the World Wide Web and the suggestion is should we publish all or part of our LAA Newsletter on the Web.

The web editor George Burville is all in favour, naturally, as has the correspondence so far received. The suggestion is that the highlights of the Newsletter could be published on the Web with the hope of encouraging a wider audience and hence Membership. The 'hardcopy' continuing to be published and distributed as normal.

E-MAIL

Mike West (Membership Sec.) has requested that anyone with access to e-mail facilities, please contact him on (raflaa@westma.demon.co.uk) and say "hello". Mike wants to update his address book.

WHOSE WHO – CHAIRMAN

BERT DAVIES. 79TH ENTRY"

Albert (Bert) E Davies; born in Liverpool on 21st January 1938; went to grammar schools in Liverpool and Hertford. I have been married to Dorothy for 40 years and we have been blessed with a son, a daughter and a grandson.

I joined the 79th Entry of No. 1 Radio School, RAF Locking on January 19th 1955. After the 3 years training as a Ground Radar Fitter, I spent one year at RAF Bawdsey before being posted to RAF Yatesbury to teach Basic Radio to the newly created Missile Fitters, then Locking, Malvern and Newton to teach Specialist Radar Equipment and Data Links to post graduate CR fitters. After 3 years as an Instructor, I had a tour at RAF Watton on the Tactical Control Radar (Type 82), specialising on the Data Processing and Digital Data Links before being posted to HQ Bomber Command, to maintain the southern end of the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS) Data Links and Display Systems:- probably the most boring job I had in my entire service, baby minding an over engineered and highly reliable data link system and periodically changing electro-luminescent enunciators in the displays at MOD, HQ FC and HQ BC.

"If you believe that you probably still believe in Santa and the Tooth Fairy or worked on the Air Secretary's staff."

Two good things came out of this tour; I was able to complete my ONC & HNC courses and, once academically qualified, convince my Boss to recommend me for an engineering commission. I will gloss over the 6 months assessments and OCTU and the 12 months at RAF Cranwell, suffice to say I duly left Cranwell as a Fg Off in May 1967 and started my second career in the RAF with the classic mix of R&D, Man Management and Staff tours supposedly designed to develop my character, widen my experience, further my career and hence improve my overall usefulness to the RAF (If you believe that you probably still believe in Santa and the Tooth Fairy or worked on the Air Secretary's staff.) until I retired on my 55th birthday.

That accounts for 38 years and 2 days of my life during which time I held 3 Aircraft Apprentice ranks, 4 airman/NCO ranks and 4 commissioned ranks; posted 21 times and Dorothy and I have set up home in 20 different flats or houses.

On leaving the RAF I changed from gamekeeper to poacher, spent three years as a consultant engineer/bid manager assisting Marconi and Serco prepare bids to provide ATC, Engineering and/or Support Services for the RAF and Army Air Corps. Gave up Consultancy work in 1996 but I am unlikely to seek paid work again due to my health.

WHOSE WHO

CHARLES HART - SECRETARY FROM 7 MAY 1993 TO JANUARY 2000.

Joined Service 30 April 1952. Looked forward to joining school friend at RAF Cranwell — sole reason for joining.

At medical and interview at Halton found out 71st entry were to be formed at Locking. 2 months after joining, school friend at Cranwell deemed unfit for Service life never seen again! Despite missing 18 weeks of Tech - 6 weeks for Coronation, 6 weeks directly after for RAF Review at Odiham followed by a 6 weeks with suspected scarlet fever managed to pass out on time.

Luckily, posted to 4GRSS, Chigwell lack of skills and knowledge were hidden for lengthy period among some 25 other ex-apprentices. Found myself in a dangerous place in '58 a year's holiday on Christmas Island assisting with operation Grapple Z - survived experimental special weapons — hair didn't now bald and what I have left is white.

The following period lasted some 33 years, - characterised by inaction and indecision on whether or not to leave - eventually exit point reached at entry point of old age.

Being of classical disposition have always admired symmetry — therefore delighted to finish my last three years as the first three at Locking. The comparison between the 2 periods could not have been farther apart. In 1952 it was austerity Britain. Sweets and soap

could only be purchased in the NAAFI if you had coupons when you went on leave you took home coupons attached to your 295 to buy meat, butter and eggs. Your issue of 3 shirts was complemented with 6 collars sans collar studs; these bought from the NAAFI when they had some in. The studs always broke just before parades, which for us occurred for the first time the day after we joined.

On the day before I left the Service at Locking in 1993, was on my last parade. The difference being this time I was the parade commander. In 52 a Station parade would consist of around 2000 bodies on the square in 93 around 200! On the other hand, in '93 we shared the square with around 1000 cars. In the '50s it is doubtful there were that many cars in Weston,

In 1990 was told by boss to organise the Cranwell Apprentice Association reunion and AGM Their patron having asked OC Locking if they could hold the event there. This they did for the next 3 years, being the organiser, I attended and saw what a good time they were having. Why not start your own Locking Association. Chatted with various people in particular Joe Holroyd. Appointed self as Sec arranged ad hoc committee meeting on 28 Apr 93, dinner dance arranged for 15 May an inaugural general meeting was set up a month later on 19th Jun 93.

WHOSE WHO CONTINUED

TONY HORRY – LAA TREASURER

I joined the RAF with the 76th Entry in 1954 and passed out with the Entry restricted as an Air Wireless Fitter in 1956. My first posting was to RAF Bassingbourn learned a considerable amount about the Canberras of 231 OCU. This stood me in good stead when volunteers with experience on Canberras were required for secondment to the Royal Rhodesian Air Force in 1960. When on leave, my wife and I took all the opportunities available to tour around some of the vast parts of the continent, which at that time was still coloured red on the maps.

After two years, I returned to UK to return to Locking for "instructors suitability" interview. So from 1962 to 1964 I was back in the 3(T) basic labs with the apprentices of the time (around the 97 to 102 entries, I seem to recall). By 1964 I had brought a house and the RAF decided it was time for a move. So it was back to aircraft, this time at RAF Cranwell and Barkston Heath. With promotion to Sergeant in 1965 and after becoming a parent, came a posting to RAF Cosford. Not for instructor duties initially, but after six months some mistake was detected and I was back in the classroom teaching various aircraft installation equipments.

In 1967 my 12 year engagement ended as I could not sign on in the trade. I joined the Civil Service and

carried on as a Civilian Instructor, but taking a post at RAF Locking in 1(T) Blk and learnt the ground communications systems. Eight years later I moved to the top floor of 5(T) Blk and remained there until Locking closed. In 1982 I did manage a unique five week detachment to Maryland, USA, to run some courses for the US Army. When Locking closed in 1999, my post was transferred to Cosford, so out of curiosity, I was detached to Cosford and then retired last August.

Having settled into the community of Kewstoke, I was elected to the Parish Council and the Rural District Council in 1970. The changes in local government in 1974 gave me the Chairmanship of one of the new Planning Committees, but by 1976 I was considered too independent and was de-selected from the party. I stood against the party candidate and only lost by five votes! I am still a Parish Councillor but I have found many interests within voluntary organisations. I have been Secretary of our Village Hall for 29 years and have held various posts in the Avon Rural Community Council and Avon Local Councils Association.

Having taken on the role of Treasurer of the Locking Apprentices Association in 1997 and with all my other interests and activities, there is no time to go back to work.

WHOSE WHO CONTINUED

GRAHAM BEESTON— CRAFT REP

During my tour as an Instructor at Locking I had the pleasure, if that is what it could be called, of introducing a new Radar system into the Mechanic training curriculum. The ACR 430.

Many may never have met the beast but for a 'new' Radar it used technology spanning, at that time (1980), 25 years. From rotating coil display to integrated circuits. Yes I introduced a rotating coil display into a course at the same time as Applied Principles Flight had removed rotating coil displays from their curriculum as students were not likely to meet any.

The following is as accurate as my memory but is close enough to give an idea of the radar's features.

The ACR 7D (do I hear a few groans) was gone and in its place was this new shiny version of the same, well not quite the same, piece of equipment.

ACR 430 had a rotating coil display it is true, it had a North marker to orientate the display I agree, its function was as an airfield control radar I admit, the Tx/Rx was in the rear of the scanner but there the similarity ends (and so does my memory of ACR 7D).

The antenna had two speeds, FAST and BLOODY RIDICULOUS (10 and

20 revs/min), and in a radome only about 4 feet wider than the scanner it looks faster. The range rings originated from a crystal oscillator set at a frequency so that a countdown circuit could produce accurate rings whatever the range setting, 4, 8, 16 and 32 mile ranges if I recall correctly. The same oscillator set the timebase length so for each range there was just one control to set the timebase expansion. The scanner had two waveguides, one for narrow beam and one for wide beam, both operating together and both permanently circular polarised (I think.) The scanner had two focal points, one for each beam. Two selectable receiver processes, linear and log with dicke fix and two PRFs, 1000 and 2000 p.p.s with long and short pulse widths respectively.

I believe 10 systems were bought and Locking was getting four of these. Two were full systems with the heads outside in radomes (they were in radomes on the airfields as well

so no more working on the end of a cold wet windy runway) and two systems less scanner hardware. These two systems were mounted in classrooms on benches with rotation information derived from a simulator and the RF fed to dummy loads.

If anyone is interested I can prepare something on the radar of the Nimrod Mk 3 (AEW) which Maggie scrapped in favour of the 15 year older technology of AWACS, also the systems of the Channel Tunnel

WHOSE WHO CONTINUED

PETER CROWE GENERAL REP 209TH

I have been working as an independent Electronic Consultant for the last 24 years.

I carry out contract product development using Microprocessors blending hardware and software development.

Over the last 10 years I have also moved into PC software with involvement with the NHS for GP system software.

I am widowed but living with a new partner and with 1 grown up daughter, and my main hobby is motorcycle riding and racing.

WHEN LOCKING CLOSED DOWN

DAVE THOMPSON — 88TH
e-mail – g3oxg@aol.com

When Locking closed down last year, all the items in the little museum there, were sent to a new home at RAF Henlow. The former Catholic Church at Henlow is now the location of what we hope will become "The RAF Signals Museum". The items from Locking have now been sorted and catalogued and the display is gradually being developed to show how signals systems developed from World War 1 onwards. Alongside signals, there is another section which will show some of the history of radar.

There are many gaps in the collection, so we are looking for help in obtaining any relevant equipment, information or pictures that we could make use of. Although we have an HRO and an RA17 or two, there is a space for an AR88 and certainly room for a SWB 8 transmitter if any one has one at the back of their ga-

rage! The only Tx we have at present is an 1131. We do have a lot of Creed equipment so information or manuals are what we need here rather than equipment. There is also a small collection of airborne equipment again with many gaps.

On the radar side there are quite a few models of different radar types and some consoles. We even have a 6 foot tall magnetron. But any bits and pieces and again, information or pictures would be gratefully accepted. Pictures can be copied and returned if necessary.

Equipment may loaned or donated, our budget is almost non-existent so purchasing would be difficult.

The link for signals and radar to Henlow should be obvious to all. The aim is to make an attractive display which eventually will tell the whole story to all, including the general public. We have made a start but we need your help. I can be contacted at Henlow on 01462 851515 ext. 7919, or in the evenings on 01767 260462.

COMMITTEE BITS

COMMITTEE MEETING 27TH JANUARY 2000

AGM2K

After much discussion and taking into account the feelings expressed by members at AGM99, the advantages of holding AGM2K at RAF Henlow were agreed to outweigh disadvantages. It was also necessary to avoid the RAFCAA's reunion this left only one possible date. Finally, the Chairman's thoughts on how the event might be organised were accepted and a draft programme was formulated

The Meeting agreed that the offer by Commandant RAFSEE for the Association to hold its reunion at RAF Henlow was a generous one and should be accepted.

The AGM and reunion would be held in the Officers' Mess on Saturday 16th September 2000. The Chairman and Secretary were to make the necessary arrangements.

CONSTITUTION

Members are invited to forward any proposals to changes in the Constitution by end of July 2000.

ARMISTICE CENOTAPH PARADE.

The Chairman said that there had been little appetite by the membership to take part in Cenotaph Pa-

rade; however, the numbers attending from brother organisations were sufficient to make up a reasonably sized group. The Chairman Elect who had attended along with the President and said that the moving occasion in Whitehall was a qualified success and was likely to become more popular with members in future years. He said that he had produced a video of the ceremony and if suitable arrangements could be made it would be on view at the AGM. Brats 192 had again agreed to organise the distribution of tickets for 2000 on behalf of FA-BEA and the event would have to be highlighted in the Newsletter.

AGM2K at RAF Henlow

"little appetite by the membership to take part in Cenotaph Parade"

"proposals for changes in the Constitution "

"no mid-season function"

FUTURE SOCIAL EVENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Chairman said that around 30 attended the mid-season function continuing the trend of falling numbers over the past few years. It was therefore evident that such an event was not one generally demanded by the membership and it was therefore necessary to decide whether or not to hold one in future years.

After discussion it was agreed not to hold a mid-season function this year.

HENLOW MUSEUM

COMMITTEE BITS

The Chairman Elect informed the Meeting on the progress of the Communications and Electronics Museum at RAF Henlow. He said that its title was to be the Signals Museum and that he had become personally involved in its setting up. He said that much of the material had come from the History of Radar museum at RAE Locking along with documentation of apprentice training. Discussion arose over the museum's name which seemed rather narrow in scope and it was suggested that Sparks' might be a better alternative. The Chairman Elect thought he had little influence over the matter but undertook to discuss the title with the organisers.

CHAIRMAN

The proposal by Membership Secretary, Mike West, seconded by Glyn Price, that the outgoing Chairman receive a vote of thanks was heartily agreed by the Meeting. It was noted that Joe had served as Chairman for more than 6 years, had been the original catalyst in the formation of the Association and had given the Committee outstanding support and leadership over the period.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Our current membership stands at three hundred and eighty nine, this is a decrease of seven since our last committee meeting. Eight new members have joined during this period.

At the moment thirty five members have not yet paid their subscription for 1999.

There are currently one hundred and twenty nine ex-members of the association showing on the database; this is an increase of twelve since the last meeting. These twelve have until the end of this month to pay their subscription before they are classed as ex-members.

During 1999 I have advertised for new members in Airmail and on Channel 4 Service Pals teletext page. Also George Burville's Home Pages on the WWW still continues to generate enquires.

ENTRY BOXES

The Committee has requested that a representative from each Entry 'volunteers' take charge of their Entry Box. These are foolscap size box files, empty in some cases. Please contact Peter Crowe for details.

RAF Henlow Museum to open during the AGM

"agreed not to hold a mid-season function this year"

"membership stands at three hundred and eighty nine"

AA TO MP

MIKE SMITH BY CHARLES HART

Mike "Biff" Smith alias 587884 ex-AA MA J Smith 71st entry died recently and his funeral took place on 24 January. Mike had suffered ill health over the past 4 or 5 years having had his spleen and other bits removed in a massive operation from which he never really recovered. Although not a member of the Association, he is mentioned here because of his brief period of fame in the late 1950s when he took on the Government, the establishment and the Air Staff all in one go.

Stationed at RAF Yatesbury, young Sgt. Smith was developing his entrepreneurial skills, having cut his teeth as an apprentice at Locking. "Anything you want, me boy, go see Biff. He will get it cheap for you!" Yatesbury at the time was a massive Tech Training School housing thousands of national servicemen all with specific needs. One of these was to get home at the weekend. It is whispered that SAC John Bloom (of Rolls Washing Machine fame) made his first £1 M in organising the weekly fleet of coaches to take the hoard away. "Bill" wasn't quite in this league but he had a nice little earner in the local entertainment industry. His business prospered and grew to the point where work interfered with serious moneymaking so how to put in his notice? In those days there was no such device as 'buying yourself out'.

In seeking, Biff found that an avenue

was available and, moreover, it was neatly set out in QRs. Briefly, in those days, no serviceman could sit in Parliament as an MP. On the other hand, no citizen of the United Kingdom could be denied the right to stand for office. If a serviceman stood for election they had first to become a civilian. So Biff filled in the appropriate form, enclosed his cheque for £500 (that's how rich he was) and asked Yatesbury what it proposed to do now. Naturally, the day after he left the Service he changed his mind about a political career; rescinded his application, recovered his £500 deposit and started up his business in Cirencester as Mr. Mike Smith, radio and television shop proprietor.

This deceitful scam by a member of the armed forces was big news for a time because, of course, everyone else leapt on the trolley. Moreover, it was not confined to other ranks; several officers also decided that a lifestyle as an MP was more conducive than their current employment. The Government, of course, could not allow such a system to exist and very quickly closed the loophole before the rest of us woke ourselves up and followed suite.

The law was quickly amended, the scam was stopped but Biff had got what he wanted and remained forever proud of the press cuttings and especially of his photograph in the daily papers

AA TO MP

Mike ran his business in Cirencester for more than 30 years until it was sold at the end of last year. Sadly, he was unable to experience the joys of retirement but he was a busy man all his life and would have worked just as hard at his many interests.

His wife, Val, survives Mike and his 2 sons continue in their business,

which started originally as an offshoot from their Dad's. We offer Val and the boys our sincere condolences.

94TH NEWS

PETE PURDY 94TH ENTRY.

In January 1960 a group of 68 bewildered 16 year olds arrived at RAF Locking and two days later we became the 94th Entry a part of A Squadron, little did we know just what the ensuing few weeks were to bring to bear upon us. Within a few weeks the 68 became 65 as three of our number decided that they could no longer tolerate the harsh regime to which they were being subjected.

In December the Entry graduated and on parade were 69 members, we had en-route gained 3 from the 93rd and one from the 92nd at RAF Halton. We left Locking with great hopes and expectations for the future, this part of our lives had become a closed book and many of us never expected to meet again.

In 1987, Graham Holbrook decided that he would like to try to reunite the Entry and took upon himself the onerous task of trying to contact as many members as possible,

Graham's efforts resulted in a reunion in April 1988, the venue was the Berni Royal Hotel in WSM for a weekend, attended by about 30 members and their wives. We were allowed a coach tour of Locking on the Saturday evening and this was followed by a buffet at the Flowerdown Centre, where we 'swung the lamp' and recounted our 'war stories' until the early hours. The plausibility of our stories seemed to be inversely proportional to the amount of alcohol consumed and most stated with the words 'do you remember when'. We left WSM and all agreed that we should repeat the event the following year and we have done this at various venues around the UK every year since, average attendance 25-30 plus wives.

In 1991 Pete Purdy stepped off the treadmill into retirement and then having the time, undertook the task of trying to locate those members still AWOL and by various methods (some questionable) he has accounted for all but 6 of the remainder. In 1998 he

94TH NEWS

found our Flight Commander Geoff Peters (known as the boss) now a sprightly 70+ year old, he has attended the last 2 reunions and still with a razor sharp memory, he remembers most of us by name and even the last three of some of us (many of us can't even remember our own!).

Unfortunately the 'Grim Reaper' has been active within the Entry and the following are known to be no longer with us:-

Nat Duffy (ex Halton), Joe Hall, Gus Wilson, Ron Kerr, Alan Marshall and Dave Taylor. Gone but not forgotten.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Reunion at the Grand Hotel Plymouth Hoe 31st March/1st April 2000

Arranged by John and Judith Stride.

THE SEARCH GOES ON

I am still seeking the following 6 remaining members still unaccounted for :-

- Bill Jarvis — originally from Hemel Hempstead, posted to Marham (207Sqn) on graduation.
- Wilf Pinder — from Chatham Kent.
- Tony Snell — Palmers Green London, (father believed to have been a lecturer at Glasgow University).
- John (Fess) Parker — Roundhay, Leeds.
- Christopher (Chick) Thompson — Last known to be living in Spain.
- Paul Godden (Rhodesian AF) — Believed to have worked in Switzerland for a publishing company before returning to the UK to live.

If you can help with my search or have any information (however seemingly insignificant) which may help me, I would be very pleased to hear from you.

I would also be pleased to hear from any other ex apps who know me and would like to correspond, I would also be pleased to advise any other Entry members who are considering trying to arrange reunions on methods and avenues to assist with location of personnel (Email me for my telephone number). My advice is that if you are considering it, go for it, you will not be disappointed.

Replies to Pete Purdy petepurdy@clara.net

Forthcoming events:

**Reunion at the Grand Hotel
Plymouth Hoe 31st March/1st
April 2000**

**Arranged by John and Judith
Stride.**

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

KEN KEELING 70TH ENTRY

I am searching and trying to contact ex-70th entry members (including FT's and CT's).

During conversations with contacted members, some names of bodies have cropped whose details are not officially recorded anywhere, certainly not on the RAFCAA Apprentices Database for 70th Entry.

To correct hopefully correct this, I am looking for details of the following:

- Andrews F/T'd 72nd
- Clark C/T'd?
- Irvine C/Td?
- Lambert R C/T'd?
- Lewis W F/T'd 71/72nd
- McDonald
- Nuttal C/T'd?
- Sargent
- Tunstall F/T'd 72nd

I have located and spoken to 587341 Kay Richard Air Radio Fitter who was F/Td to the 71st entry.

I have also written to John Smith (72nd Entry) with the above names to see if he can help.

Email K367KEN@AOL.COM

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

DEREK QUINN 87TH ENTRY

There are so many names on the address list that I either think that I remember or that I cannot interpret.

To save me the trouble of straining my old eyes even more I am sending out a request to anyone on the list that remembers me to get in touch. I was a member of the 87th learning (?) the intricacies of aircraft electronics (sorry Air Radio) and spent the

next 17 years service (early retirement) at Wyton with Bomber Command and then travelling round the world with Transport Command stopping at Abingdon and Lyneham.

I am now sweating over a steaming type writer (keyboard) as a technical author.

I am still in irregular contact with Alan (Kit) Blewitt who does not appear to be on the list.

I am now sweating over a steaming type writer (keyboard) as a technical author.

**A real technical author!
Ed.**

THE HUNT GOES ON

MIKE COLLIER - 76TH
(01386 553298)

With considerable interest I read of the work of John Smith and the 72nd regarding their attempt to locate the members of their entry. Sadly, I do not recognise any of the names on the list but I do appreciate the problems they face, as I am attempting to do the same thing for the 76th.

Many people are relatively easy to find because, for example, you have some vague idea where to start looking or they may have an unusual surname, unfortunately, there are also a number of difficult ones. I am often asked, how on earth did you manage to track down 'so and so' and I wondered if it might be of interest to anyone contemplating the exercise if I outline a typical search.

In 1993, when I first started to try and find this particular person, my initial information was a bit limited. I knew his surname was McKenzie or Mackenzie, his service number was unusual 589589 and had a vague recollection that at some point during our time at Locking, while making his bed, he had announced that he was "quite good at making hospital corners". Shortly after this he left to become a medic.

For almost two years, while I continued my search for the "relatively easy" ones, he was put on the pending file. In mid 1995 I had a tremendous stroke of luck. Over a period of time, I had culti-

vated a contact at Locking who at this point supplied me with an enormous amount of data about my entry. From this, I discovered that my missing person's name was Robert Mackenzie, his d.o.b., that his home while at Locking was in Anfield, Liverpool and he had remustered as a u/t Ward Assistant, posted to Warton in Sept 54. (Some eight months after we joined) At last I was getting somewhere!

The first point of call now was my local library, to scan the Liverpool telephone directories in the hope that a relative may be listed, still living at the Anfield address - no success. At that time, as I had no access to a computer to look up the B.T. listings, the next move was to manually go through all of the directories for the U.K. There were about 106 of those then but they seem to have been breeding and there are many more now. I discovered ten Robert Mackenzie's (mostly in Scotland) and too many R's to phone. (Though on at least one occasion I have called up to 28 people with the same surname and initials before finding the one I was looking for) One of the R's was in Liverpool, which was subsequently called, again with no success. The Medical Directory in the library also revealed that he had not progressed to greater things and become a Doctor. A trip to my local large library to annoy the staff there by asking to go through archive Air

THE HUNT GOES ON

Force lists also showed that he had not been commissioned. In Aug 96, I wrote to him via Records at Innsworth. They are usually quite efficient but on this occasion they lost my letter and the exercise had to be repeated in Oct. Their "confirmation of redirection" of my letter, showed that he had left the R.A.F. as a Cpl. Previous experience of this piece of information indicated that he had probably not signed on but had left at the end of his 12 (1966). More importantly, it generated a further stroke of luck. My letter was returned "Not Known" from an address in Maidenhead. This correlated with another clue I had, from an ex-76th colleague (Ron Grant), that during his service, he had played football against Mackenzie at Medmenham. So, back to the telephone directories, only one Mackenzie in the Maidenhead area -- not him. Another cul-de-sac.

Oct 98 found me at the Family Records Office in London. Because of time, cost and transport difficulties, I only had about 3 hours there but managed to establish that he had not died in England or Wales in the period 1984 to 1996. (I have since discovered that Births, Deaths and Marriages data, pre 1983, is available at my local County Records Office)

Shortly after this, Pete Kay another ex-76th colleague, called to tell me that he had acquired a computer disk which gave him the Electoral Rolls

for the whole country including names, addresses and in some cases telephone numbers. In response to my request, Pete sent a fairly substantial list of Robert Mackenzie's, 8 of whom had telephone numbers. All of these were tried without success. Assuming the rest to be ex-directory, I guessed at the most likely one and dispatched a letter with s.a.e. and awaited results. The return of the s.a.e. took about a month and after a further 4 unsuccessful attempts it was obvious that it would take a very long time to check them all. Then came a spark of inspiration. If I looked up the Maidenhead archive Electoral Rolls circa 1966, I might find a partner's name at the address previously discovered. Pete should then be able to cross-reference the names on his disk and pin point the Mackenzie I was seeking. In April 99, I drove up to the Berks County Record Office at Reading. A few minutes research revealed the Christian names of a wife and also that my missing Robert had a middle name. From this, Pete very quickly provided an address and telephone number in Yatley, Hants. With great anticipation I called the number, the response was quite a familiar one. A disembodied voice saying "the number you have dialled has not been recognised, please check and try again", very, very frustrating! Next day, back to the library, the directory for the area revealed an entirely different phone number for the R. Mackenzie that appeared to still be liv-

THE HUNT GOES ON

ing at that address. That evening I called the new number and was delighted when he confirmed his service number and we had a long chat.

However, he also had a surprise for me. During our conversation, it emerged that on leaving the R.A.F. he had joined British Airways and still worked for them, in Terminal 1 at Heathrow. Ironically, after the R.A.F. I also joined British Airways, as an Instructor in their Ground School at Heathrow. We had worked within a mile or so of each other for 14 years (68 to 82) and did not know of each other's existence.

It had taken almost 6 years intermittently, with a lot of outside help and a fair bit of luck, to locate him. Others have been much easier and the odd one or two more difficult. Why bother to go to so much trouble you may ask? I cannot really answer that, other than I started the exercise in 1993 when the L.A.A. was formed, really with a view to holding an entry reunion and since then it has become something of a hobby.

What degree of success has there been? Well, since June 93 I have ascertained that 155 people spent time with the 76th. (94 plus 3 Rhodesians in the original entry and 58 who joined us from other entries) Currently I know the fate of 143 of these (88 plus the 3 Rhodesians of the originals and 52 of the joiners) Of the remaining 12, I have quite concrete information on a further 3, hence there are 9 about

whom I have very few ideas.

With the revival of the "Where are they now" slot in the Dec. Newsletter, may I therefore make a request? Four of those on my "still missing" list I believe completed their 12

- 588814 David John BRADLEY (Air Wireless Fitter) Came from Gosport. Lived in Oakham when demobbed in 67.
- 589554 David BROKENSHERE (Air Radio Fitter) Came from Ivybridge, Plymouth. Served at Marham (early 60's) Demobbed in 67.
- 589604 Donald John PHILLIPS (Air Radar Fitter) Came from Twickenham Demobbed in 67.
- 589591 William Albert SMITH (Ground Radar Fitter) Came from Hetton-Le-Hole, Durham. May have served in Aden? Demobbed in 67.

If anyone came across any of these, either in the service or in civvy street, I would be most grateful for any information. Additionally, if anyone is contemplating going into the entry hunting business, I would be more than happy to offer free advice. I may at least be able to save you some time and effort.

A FEW BURBLES

JOHN M SMITH (72ND)

My appeal in Newsletter No 25 for the whereabouts of 72nd entry members brought responses from two 71st entry members, Dave Moore and David Penberthy. This produced positive leads on three missing members. Thank you gentlemen. It pays to advertise in the LAA Newsletter.

If Chris Horn has received any cash donations as a result of his appeal for sponsorship for my next trip to the U S A - Bozeman, Montana in April - he is being very coy on the subject.

Funny how peoples experience can follow along roughly parallel paths. While Chris was at 3ACC Hamala (or was it 3AAC), I was probably at Transmitting Station. Bahrain, Muharraq. Probably one of the better holes in that part of the world.

During the 1974 troubles in Cyprus, while Chris was digging bogs etc at The Turkish refugee camp at Happy Valley, I, having been abruptly uprooted from the sleepy hollow known as RAF Nicosia, found myself as 2 i/c a temporary refugee camp. This was at the former 264 S U at RAF Pergamos, then an army barracks and home to the 16/5th Lancers.

Life inside the wire was reasonably tranquil for us, watching the Turkish air force phantoms bombing Varosha

a part of Famagusta.

Then some khaki brained twit (I'm being polite) at Opps Dhekalis decided to unload about 30 Turkish Cypriot refugees onto us at midnight. The fact that we had 50 Greek Cypriot refugees plus various other nationalities there seemed too much for his brain to grasp. Unless he had a perverse sense of humour.

Before that little confrontation I couldn't spell 'Diplomacy.' I could afterwards. Having a company of Royal marine Commandos on call if necessary was reassuring. Fortunately the Turks were moved on the next morning I believe the army chappie spent some time asking around what ~/@* and ~&~@ was.

After a week we were obviously getting under the army's feet and a lot of people had been airlifted out, so the remainder of our people were moved a few miles down the road to the old EOKA detainee camp (I don't know if was re

opened because of the trouble). We in turn went back to Dhekalia.

By now the airlifting of people by Hercules to Akrotiri had slacked off so the flights stopped at lunchtime.

One afternoon I was in charge of not much in particular, when a Greek Cypriot wearing a pork pie hat arrived at the gate. He insisted, nay demanded that he be flown to London immediately. He wouldn't take no for an an-

" I couldn't spell Diplomacy."

"a Greek Cypriot wearing a pork pie hat arrived at the gate."

A FEW BURBLES

swer.

In the end inspite of my being able to spell diplomacy told him to go away and come back in the morning.

As a parting shot he said that he was going to write to 10 Downing Street about me. This for some reason petrified me. I told him that when he did to tell the Prime minister that John Smith from RAF Nicosia sends his best wishes.

The one memory I have of that period is the sight of Greek and Turkish Cypriots walking around like a load of western gunslingers, A UK passport in one pocket and a Cypriot passport in the other. They would whip out whichever one was advantageous at the time.

I don't know if Harold Wilson ever got my heartfelt loyal greeting. I knew a sergeant telegraphist (a peanut of the complimentary variety) who used to send a Christmas card to No.10 so that he could receive a card back from Mary and Harold. Some people have strange hobbies.

There has been much buzzing and the raising of controversial issues in recent copies of the Newsletter. This has certainly jogged my memory.

Brian Davies (76) raised quite a few points about training etc.

When I arrived back at Locking in 1959 as an Instructor, there were a lot of ex apps doing the same thing. They ranged from the 71—76th with a couple of 68 and 69th.

While people like Charles Hart and I were tootling around in Ford 100E Pre-

fects and Anglias, Brian was cruising around in a sleek Hillman Minx. (although Neil Castle (76) had a 6 cylinder low flying Vauxhall Velox).

Now that I am retired (forced, which soon drifted into enjoyable voluntary) and living on the south coast, Brian appears to be retired in Majorca. Is there a hidden agenda, I ask myself. Perhaps I ought to promise, threaten to pay him a visit the next time we're in Puerto Pollensa.

While agreeing with a lot of his reasoning, one thing caused an upset. Why did he pick on the Foster-Seeley discriminator? At the end of my stint as an instructor I could waffle for ages about it. It was a lovely circuit.

I'd arrived at Locking after 2½ years on third line servicing of H F SSB and FSK receivers and thought I knew my subject. The first lesson taking a fitters class put me right, I like to think after four years I was getting a reasonable idea about how things worked.

About the discriminator in my other life, in the early 90's I was leafing through some circuit diagrams of some dedicated test equipment due to come into use and there it was. A Foster-Seeley discriminator. Much modernised but still very recognisable. Perhaps the designer had links with Locking. Not a lot of people knew how it worked. As someone else mentioned about the circuit. They seemed scared of it.

A FEW BURBLES

Chris Horn mentioned a 20 year old teacher at Episkopi. My viewpoint formed over many years was that service schools abroad were a natural haven for remittance men and women. The idle and in many cases the otherwise unemployable. Although I did meet some excellent ones. If anyone's dearly beloved was one, please don't make abusive phonecalls, merely snub me at the next reunion. I'll understand. That was my opinion and not that of the editor.

Skills to last a lifetime were also mentioned. Some years ago I realised that due to my natural idle nature there was something lacking in my home. I didn't have any prizes or trophies. No Air Ministry blue bound leather books with gold lettered titles such as "Biggles Flies Again" or Victor Ludorum trophies rested on my bookshelves.

In a rare period of frenzied activity I set too and out of blocks of best quality aluminium I made two model cameras. Mounted them on tripods fixed to pieces of rock on a wooden base. The suitably engraved plaques read presented to me.

At that time the fitter foreman at Marconi Portsmouth was an ex REME WO. Not a lot of people know that (to quote Michael Cane) a lot of the artillery and tank models seen in army messes are or were knocked up as "Rabbits" in REME workshops. He said I was well on

the way to becoming a professional model maker. Such praise indeed. My thanks to Messrs. Turner and Crowfoot of 4 T Block. Had it been a block of brass I don't think I could have faced all that filing.

Although I enjoyed the first 12 years of the 22, I don't think I would do it again. What I'd have done instead is a mystery. When I was instructing at Locking the civilian instructors there were an excellent group of people.

When I went overseas again I had a lot of dealings with UK based civilians. When I saw the difference in treatment and their allowances I realised that we (well me) were being conned.

I think that people who left after 12 years had a good deal. The electronic industry was really open in the 60's and most people who left moved into good positions. Although some of my compatriots were put out because they couldn't extend to complete 22 years.

People who did until 55 got the full benefits, pension etc. Although some of those wish they'd left at the 22 point.

The 22 point seems a bit of a half way house. Mind it is nice to receive a monthly cheque from the Paymaster on behalf of a grateful nation. Perhaps my normal 20/20 hindsight is getting a bit blurred.

A few years ago I made a joke when the RAF was mentioned. I asked, do we still have one? The thin blue line must be stretched so thin it must be

A FEW BURBLES

virtually invisible. These days reading the press, even allowing for their hype, there does seem cause for concern.

Two years ago I was telling some North Dakota Air National Guards (mostly ex USAF) that the services in the UK only had one hospital at Haslar Gosport. They really thought that I was kidding. When They realised I wasn't they were quite astounded.

Now even that one is due to close as a service hospital, Servicemen and women are well thought of in this country.

I had a few thoughts about my early pre and service days. When I went to Halton for the selection board in 1952 two of us went to breakfast early. The dining room (or cookhouse) was empty. A short rotund greasy corporal stood at the servery. The breakfast was fried egg and bubble and squeak. The eggs looked as greasy as the corporal and the bubble and squeak was a tray of mashed potato and a dish of soggy looking cabbage. A case of mix your own. The comment about this by the other chap was met by a stream of foul-mouthed abuse from the corporal. The chap was taken aback. I was a hardened veteran of two ATC summer camps at RAF Chivenor, so I took it in my stride.

This was in complete contrast to the address we'd been given the previous evening by a smooth Flt/Lt in full mess kit. Was this all part of the selection process? The good guy and bad guy routine?

After a year at Locking, the entry assembled in the station cinema where we were allocated our trades. Mine was Air Radio. The STO, W/ Cdr McClaren had painted such a rosy life as a Ground Wireless Fitter with postings to exotic tropical islands etc (you get the picture) that I was hooked. I changed trades with Dougie Arthur who'd been allocated the Ground Wireless trade.

Later! realised I'd made a good choice when driving round the peri. track at Colerne in the signals gharry on a wet windy day I saw an Air radar friend struggling up a step ladder holding an AI21 scanner which he was going to fit into the nose cone of a Brigand.

Mind, on some freezing February mornings after cycling to the remote receiver site, having evaded the escaped bull, then wrapping newspaper around the stand pipe in a field, setting light to the paper to thaw the pipe and tap to get water for the kettle. Then smashing the ice on the water trough so those jostling, belligerent, thirsty (not thankful) cows could get a drink) I wasn't so sure. I'd like to meet up with Dougie again to compare career notes.

Shortly after passing out an announcement appeared on SROs. Volunteers required for "Operation Grapple", spend time on a tropical paradise, Christmas Island in the Pacific Ocean during the forthcoming nuclear tests. From the description

A FEW BURBLES

given a few of us were hooked (that word again).

Luckily one of the national service opps clerks had been a merchant navy officer - due to some family problems he'd left, and was immediately grabbed for national service. He'd been there and said the place was a dump with nothing of interest there. So we didn't volunteer.

Reading the papers about claims for compensation from servicemen who had been present at the tests, I think I may have had a luck escape.

Cyprus was much better, apart from the danger at times from the EOKA, the most dangerous thing was the Jungle juice (Keo beer and brandy sours).

About volunteering, some of the lads at Colerne thought about volunteering for the so-called common cold research at Porton Down. A gnarled warrant officer put them off by telling them they were crackers to even consider it. Watching a programme on the local TV station recently which featured ex RAF men who had volunteered. I think those lads were given a big favour by the warrant officer.

Nearly finished, I'm reading an excellent book at the moment. "Flowerdown Link 1918 - 1978," about Aircraft Apprentice training at Flowerdown, Cranwell and Locking. I found a few errors in the Locking section and that was without using a fine toothcomb. A very enlightening

book.

I never realised that my first CO at Locking, Grp/Cpt A T Monks was a Flowerdown Apprentice in the 5th Entry. Perhaps he'd had a rough time from the senior entry and was getting some of his own back (my dig). He must have been a very switched on man to end as an AVM without the leg-up of a Cranwell Cadetship.

A recent obituary in the Telegraph on AVM Sir Bernard Chacksfield (A former Chief Scout) stated: He rose to Air rank from humble beginnings as a pre-war RAF Aircraft Apprentice.

I appreciate the context the writer was employing when the word humble was used. I don't think I can use the adjective humble in any way in connection with any Apprentices I know. Other fitting adjectives or nouns yes.

I'm not a member because I never had anything to do with aircraft. That may be why I am only half-baked. The Britannia Association is a thriving organisation which is open to anyone who had anything to do with the Britannia aircraft while they were in the RAF.

For anyone who doesn't know of the Associations existence, the address is:

The BA Secretary, 112 Oxford Road, Calne, SN11 SAH. Tel: 01249 812216

RAFLAA COMMITTEE

Appointment	Name	Address	Tel	Entry
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RAFLAA REUNION AND AGM PROGRAMME

The following events comprise the draft programme for the Reunion and AGM of the RAFLAA for 2000. The venue is the Officers' Mess RAE Henlow, Hitchin Beds. The Telephone number of RAE Henlow is 01462 851515.

- 12:30PM MEMBERS ARRIVE.
- 1:00PM REUNION MEET AND GREET IN THE BAR.
- 2:30PM BAR FACILITY CLOSED.
- 3:00PM AGM COMMENCES IN THE ANTI-ROOM.
- 4:15PM AGM COMPLETED.
- 4:15PM TEA SERVED.
- 4:30PM MEMBERS DISPERSE/VISIT MUSEUM.
- 6:30PM DINNER IN THE DINING ROOM.
- 8:30PM DISCO IN THE MEWS FACILITY AT THE REAR OF
THE MESS.

The above programme has yet to be approved by RAF Henlow and the details and timings may be changed. Details and an application form for tickets will be enclosed in the June and August Newsletters.

THE



NEWS

- The AGM and reunion would be held in the Officers' Mess on Saturday 16th September 2000.
- The RAF Signals Museum — open during AGM.
- Requests for proposals to changes in the Constitution.
- We are now in the world of Internet and the World Wide Web and the suggestion is should we publish all or part of our LAA Newsletter on the Web.
- Mike West (Membership Sec.) has requested that anyone with access to e-mail facilities, please contact him on (raflaa@westma.demon.co.uk) and say "hello". Mike wants to update his address book.
- John Luke of the Locking Boy Entrants is organising the flight of ex-

Contact Addresses:

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AAs and B/Es to march in the Remembrance Day parade in Whitehall in November and we shall be laying our own wreath centred on a wheel. John needs to know numbers so as to obtain passes. So far we have not had many from our Association asking to attend and I would be grateful if some more would come forward. Please make an effort and let us have your names. (RAFCAA Newsletter)

FLOWERDOWN

"the latest high-tech facility to be commissioned at RAF Cosford, Flowerdown Hall represents the future of RAF technical training.

"There is a buzz about Cosford now, a feeling that it is at the cutting edge of RAF training and Flowerdown Hall really is a wonderful symbol of that atmosphere."

"Flowerdown has to be seen to be believed", the futuristic-styled building is impressive. With automatic sensors, Flowerdown opens its windows by itself if it gets too hot, and switches on its own heating if it gets too cold. (RAF News)

Newsletter Contribution to:
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