

ROYAL AIR FORCE LOCKING APPRENTICES ASSOCIATION



NEWS LETTER

Ser 6 Dec 94

WELCOME

Welcome to our sixth News Letter. In this issue we will be reporting on the October Committee Meeting and where we have got to with the RAFLAA Trophy which we intend to present to RAF Locking at the next AGM and we will also be mentioning several reunions that have taken place over the last couple of months. Also, since it is the last issue of the year, we take the opportunity to wish all our members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Members will be pleased to read that we are now more than 340 strong and we are well on the way to achieving the 400 mark by next June. However, as we keep on saying, new member applications depend to a large extent on you spreading the word through the personal network. In consequence, we are enclosing as usual a membership application which we would ask you to pass on after using your persuasive powers.

Since we have now reached the point where membership is too large to print a complete list of the membership with each Newsletter, we are detailing only those new members who have joined since Newsletter No 5. All new members will, of course, still receive the complete list on joining.

The reasons for not providing members' addresses are still valid and we will continue to maintain the policy. The grounds are worth going over and new members will no doubt be interested. They are 3 fold. Firstly, if we publish our database information we have to register the Association under the Data Protection Act at a large initial cost. Secondly, some members may wish their addresses to remain private and this desire must be given due regard. Lastly, security considerations still apply despite the easing of tension with the cease-fires announced by the PIRA and the Combined Loyalist Military Command especially for those members still serving and it is for this last reason that we do not include members' ranks on the

database. With the latest changes, however, we will be reviewing this policy should the new position become permanent.

If any member wishes to contact another, we will be pleased to act as a post box and pass on any communication.

THE AUTUMN SOCIAL WEEKEND

We held our 3rd Autumn Social Dinner Dance in Weston-super-Mare on the 29 October at Dance and Partyscene. Over Ninety people attended and all enjoyed an excellent dinner followed by dancing to the Richard Hopkins Disco. The raffle was well supported as usual and the main prizes this year were RAFLAA plaques.

EIGHTH COMMITTEE MEETING

The main item discussed at the last Committee Meeting was the proposed RAF Locking Apprentice Trophy which we intend to present to No 1 Radio School as a memorial to the training of Apprentices at the Unit from 1952 until 1976, a period of time just about equal in length to that of Apprentice training at Cranwell.

The design for the trophy is now being firmed up and is to be manufactured by Mr John Coombs a former civilian higher instructional officer at RAF Locking. John was, for some years, the 4(T) Block Supervisor and is one of Weston's leading model and clock makers. In the next Newsletter we should be able to publish a sketch of the final design and provide information on its title and the inscriptions that it will carry to meet the requirements of the AGM decisions.

BACK COPIES OF NEWSLETTERS

The Committee has proposed that we should offer previous newsletters to any of the new members who may wish to have a full set. Unfortunately, there are costs involved in providing back numbers since they

will have to be reprinted. However, the price will be nominal and if anyone would like to avail themselves of the offer then drop the Secretary a line.

MEMBERSHIP HANDBOOK

Also discussed was a proposal to issue a Membership Handbook. Neil Castle the Membership Secretary is to take the lead on this and he has some interesting ideas. Currently the intention is to have it ready for the 2nd AGM next June. However, this may be a tall order and we will be reviewing progress in the next Newsletter.

MEMBER'S VIDEOS

We reported in the August Newsletter that Barry Price (85th) had a colour film of his entry pass out and asked if any other members have similar film that might be used in a future video. So far only George Gooch (72nd) has responded. The Association would be very interested to hear from other members if they have any old bits of film around.

RECRUITING FILM OF APPRENTICE TRAINING

On the subject of old film, we have just received a letter from Reg Carter (1M5)(that's the 59th at Cranwell) who now lives in Ballarat, Australia. He writes that he was an instructor at Locking during the 50s teaching the H2S 4A in Room 100, 2(T) Block, and remembers that an Air Ministry film Unit spent 3 days taking shots of one of his classes. He doesn't know what entry it was but thinks it would be between the 78th and 81st. However, he says that he was at Locking over the 2 year period 1958/ 9 so the 78th might be just a bit too early.

Apparently, the film was for recruiting purposes and we will be making efforts to see if it still exists in the I of R archives. However, we need more information so if any member was in the actual class being filmed, we would like to hear from you. Does anyone recall taking part in this epic?

WHAT'S AVAILABLE

We have a revised price lists of interesting items which are available from both the Cranwell and Halton Apprentices Associations.

The following items are available from Mr T G Davies, 172 Broadway Avenue, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 4QN, Tel 0121 550 4481.

Tie tack wheel, silver, gilt plated	£7-00
AA's wheel, 35 mm, silver, gilt plated	£8-00

Cuff links, 15mm dia wheel, silver, gilt plated	£12-00
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Sparks motif, silver, gilt plated	£7-50
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Eagle unmounted head left of right	£8-00
Eagle brooch, ladies, silver, gilt plated	£13-00

Plaque with eagle, wheel, sparks and engraved RAFLAA plate	£30-00
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Silver plated AA statuette mounted on wooden base and personalised from	£30-00
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All the above prices include postage and packing.

Halton Miniatures are available from Colin Andrews, 38 Hill Road, Watlington, Oxford, OX9 5AD, Tel 049 161 3241. The miniatures are in base metal and can be ordered polished and lacquered or painted in RAF Blue with appropriate coloured hat bands including chequered ones. A choice of figures is available. The basic one is of an apprentice standing at ease, there is a bandsman (piper) and one of an apprentice in full webbing entitled 'Jankers.' Other miniatures include pilots, both past and present, and a 1960s 'Snoop' in white cap and webbing. The price of each miniature, which includes post and packing, is £7-50.

RAF LOCKING BOY ENTRANTS FORM AN ASSOCIATION

Information reached us via 2 newspaper clippings that a couple of members from one of the 10 entries of Boy Entrants who served at Locking from 1948 until 1951 were endeavouring to trace ex-members in order to form an association. On Saturday 15 October this year their success was demonstrated when 2 bus loads of them arrived at Locking to look round the Unit.

Unlike our own idyllic existence, their stay at Locking was far from ideal in those days. Bill Hughes of the 3rd entrant Electricians (they were all UT aircraft tradesmen) recalls bitter and unpleasant memories of a harsh, draconian regime which broke more than one of the lads. He describes their diet as disgraceful in both quantity and quality forcing boys to resort to drinking tepid tap water before retiring in an effort to stave off hunger pains. Come to think of it, we also drank tepid water but only because it was never hot. He goes on to say that so bad were their conditions that after one particularly brutal week some 600 of them went AWOL. This action generated an inquiry which resulted in some improvements. Moreover, none of the would be deserters were charged for what was a very serious offence so the substance of their complaint was obviously upheld.

Bill, who now lives in Northern Ireland, and a colleague Syd Quanbrough have done a sterling job in rounding up their members but they are still looking for more so if anyone remembers meeting an ex-boy who did his training at Locking, please get in touch with them. The contact telephone number is (0232) 718047.

RAF CRANWELL APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION AGM AND REUNION

The RAFCAA AGM and Reunion took place at RAF Locking on Saturday 24 October. Over 300 arrived for the event which started off with the morning's meet and greet in the Officers' Mess. Lunch was taken in the Quantock Airmens' Mess and to get there the members marched down behind the Mendip Brass, Locking's voluntary band. The AGM immediately followed the lunch and after a quick tea many of the members headed for home. However, quite a few spent the rest of the weekend in Weston and enjoyed the evening parties.

The guests included Air Commodore Mike Evans, Chairman of the Halton Aircraft Apprentices Association, and Group Captain Geof Burton, Halton's present Station Commander. The RAFLAA were represented by our Chairman, Joe Holroyd, and Secretary, Charles Hart.

72ND ENTRY REUNION

The 72nd Entry held their regular 2 yearly reunion on Saturday, 17th September. Arranged by Robbie Packham, around 20 members with their wives dined in the Sergeants Mess at RAF Locking and enjoyed a nostalgic weekend in Weston. The 72nd entry have had a strongly supported entry association since 1982 when, in September that year, they held their first celebration to mark the passing of 30 years since joining the Service.

90th REUNION

The 90th entry held their third major reunion on the weekend of the 7/9th October in the Grand Atlantic, Weston-super-Mare. Colin Bell writes that the entry wishes to record its thanks to the 94th entry for their kind thoughts which arrived in the form of card. He also noted that they shared Weston with the 96th entry who were holding their own reunion and congratulates them on 'getting it together at last.' They were pleased to welcome a number of the 96th revellers after midnight, which made a pleasant change (for them) from previous after midnight meetings. With precedents like this, the 90th can't wait for the 84th to hold a reunion and they are holding their collective breath!

96TH ENTRY REUNION

The 96th Entry held a reunion on the 8th October at Weston-super-Mare. Arranged by David Calvert, 93 members met in the Station Theatre at RAF Locking on a fine autumn afternoon many with their wives. They visited parts of 2(T) Block and afterwards walked the Station after the initial meet and greet which included a group photograph. At least 2 members turned up from overseas one of whom was here from Canada. In the evening they all attended a buffet supper and dance in Weston.

The number of entry members found says much for the effort put in by Ron Spain in going through just about every telephone book in his public library and we dare not ask David the size of his telephone bill each quarter over the last year. Just 4 members remain to be found from the Entry pass-out list.

PROPOSED 94TH ENTRY REUNION

Pete Purdy of the 94th entry is endeavouring to arrange an entry reunion in March next year. He has so far found 57 of his comrades but still has a few members AWOL and wonders if anyone can help with even the flimsiest information that might give him a clue where to start looking. The missing members are:

Al Bate, Eric Brown, Vic Clarkso n, Sandy Gibb, Tony Harvey, Bill Jarvis, Len Kitching, Fess Parker, Wilf Pinder, Tony Snell, Chick Thompson, Chippy Wood and finally Paul Godden who was ex-Rhodesian Airforce.

Pete also lists 4 of the 94th entry that are now deceased. Nat Duffy died in 1968, Joe Hall in 1991, Ron Kerr in 1992 and Gus Wilson just this year. Pete Purdy can be contacted on (0508) 570432 at any time and would be delighted to hear from anyone who served with any of the above members.

FOR THE LADIES

Sadly, we have had to shelve the idea of producing a ladies headscarf. The cost has beaten us since we would have had to commit nearly £1000 pounds of your money to purchase 100 scarves for which we have just 9 orders. The Committee considered that the commitment of such a large amount in funds was far to risky a move and outside the principles of good stewardship. To those who have ordered scarves, thank you for your support. We may find that at a later date demand will increase to the point where we can go for an order; meanwhile, we will be returning the money to you.

CHARITABLE STATUS

At our inaugural meeting in June 1993 the question of charitable status arose and after discussion we agreed that, ultimately, the RAFLAA should become a registered charity. So far, we have taken no action over this intention since there would be no advantage in view of our number. However, we have been aware for some time that our colleagues of the RAF Cranwell Association have had problems because they are a registered charity. Now they have had to redraft their constitution in order to meet the rules governing the transfer of funds to other charities. This has involved much complex work and we are carefully listening to their advice on charitable status which, at the moment, is - avoid it. Since our Constitution is very much based on the RAFCAA's we could find ourselves in the same boat so we will be taking no precipitous action. We will keep you posted on how the Cranwell Association overcomes the problems which have arisen.

ALTERNATIVE CENTRES FOR SOCIAL EVENTS

Several members have raised the question of why can we not put on reunions and social events in other areas of the Country? We have no problem with this providing someone undertakes the organising and arranging of the event. So, if there is a member who wishes to lay on a Dinner-Dance in Newcastle or Manchester or anywhere else with reasonable communications and facilities then let us have brief plan and breakdown of what it would cost and we will look on it with favour.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

The Association will again be represented at the Weston-super-Mare Remembrance Service at the War Memorial in Grove Park on the 13th November when one of the Committee will lay a poppy wreath on behalf of the RAFLAA.

FRIENDS OF EL ADEM RADIO SERVICE

We have received a letter from John Moir asking us to include a paragraph about The El Adem Radio Service or TEARS. He writes that about 2 years ago he set out with the intention of trying to trace friends and colleagues with whom he worked on TEARS. He was based there between 1967 and 69 and was able to draw up a list of 2 dozen names from memory. So far he has managed to find 18 of them but in his quest he has been in touch with a further 150 who were associated with TEARS, at one time or another, between 1958 to 1970.

Last year they held a reunion and as a result decided to form the Friends of the El Adem Radio Service

which aims to keep people in touch through a quarterly newsletter called appropriately the 'Cue Sheet' and they are naturally looking for others who were involved. So if you were at El Adam between 1958 and 1970 and were an announcer, controller, tech, librarian or even a listener, John Moir, 27 Wilton Drive, Horndean, Waterlooville, PO8 9QY, Tel (0705) 595489, would be delighted to hear from you.

PENULTIMATELY

In the last Newsletter we forwarded Simon Johnson's suggestion that members put an appeal paragraph in company house magazines in order to attract new members. Mike Strange (104th) has sent me cuttings of our plea that he has put in the BAe Dynamics, Sightline and Airbus News Mags and he will be pleased to learn that his efforts have resulted in a couple of enquiries. We have also had a call from a GEC employee at Browns Lane, Portsmouth, so the system does produce results. Has anyone else acted on the suggestion? It would be advantageous to build a list of the mags so that we could run periodic campaigns to attract new members.

FINALLY

And finally, here is a small example of the inter Unit rivalry between Locking and Halton, the former with its Shetland pony mascot, the latter famous for the goat 'Lewis.' It is from the June 1955 edition of the 'Locking Review.'

Hamish McCrackers, AA, 252.

Recently neighed the commendable view,

That goats are domestic and frightful to smell.

And in front of the band just never look well;

Only Scotsmen can march to the pipes' mighty sound,

So instead of this goat couldn't a pony be found?

Further, lest Lewis, retired, should grow fat

On tax payers money, may I suggest that

He could still take part in events on the square,

His hide as a bagpipe,- there's work for him there.



YOUR RAFLAA COMMITTEE

Appointment	Name	Address	Tel	Entry
President	Martin Palmer			91
Chairman	Joe Holroyd	Well Cottage 36 High Street Guilden Morden Royston SG8 0JR	(0763) 853742	85
Secretary	Charles Hart	9 South Road Weston super Mare BS23 2HA	(0934) 621969	71
Treasurer	George Ring	9 Milburn Road Weston super Mare BS23 3BE	(0934) 633757	95
Membership Secretary	Neil Castle	30 Sandford Road Winscombe Avon BS25 1JA	(0934) 844140	76
RAF Locking Liaison	John Hall	494 Locking Road Weston-super-Mare BS24 8QY	(0934) 517649	212
Service Rep	Doug Cornford	12 Church View Bottesford Nottinghamshire NG13 0AE	(0949) 43926	97
General	Doug Reid	7 Cadbury Close Burnham-on-Sea Somerset TA8 2UL	(0278) 795240	86
General	Peter Crowe	14 Hillview Rd Weston-super-Mare BS23 3HS	(0934) 412178	95
AA Rep	Ben Cuming	Redcar House Gilling East York YO6 4JA	(0439) 3443	73
Craft Rep	John Leaper	7 Waterside Close Andoversford Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4LG	(0242) 820137	223
Tech Rep	Andy Perkins	107 Balmoral Way Worle Weston Super Mare BS22 9BZ	(0934) 417323	109

RAF LOCKING APPRENTICES ASSOCIATION

NEW MEMBERS AS OF 18th JUNE 1994

71 Entry

D.H. Moore

73 Entry

E.F. O'Toole

76 Entry

B. Carter

B. Davies

E.M. Huscroft

M. Ward

R. Wood

78 Entry

M. Keen

D.J. Oldman

85 Entry

W. Pye

89 Entry

P. Floyd

90 Entry

K. Stevenson

91 Entry

J.D. Walker

93 Entry

J.V. Cresswell

A.F. Hatten

94 Entry

M.E. Edwards

96 Entry

D. Banks

B.R. Barrington

A.P. Bestwick

R. Boast

P.Q. Day

B.S. Goddard

P.E. Hall

T.J. Haymans

R.W. Lane

P. Marshall

P.M. Mitchell

I.W. Prichard

K.S. Shires

J. Taylor

M.R. Thompson

99 Entry

S.D. Pike

T. Wyatt

100 Entry

R. Machin

W. Ranson

101 Entry

R. Taylor

102 Entry

D. Sallitt

C. Whitfield

103 Entry

G. Mays

J. Roberts

115 Entry

D.A. Wheatley

205 Entry

W.A. Kirk

214 Entry

M.I. Stevens

216 Entry

T. Bagnall

224 Entry

M. Bonner