

ROYAL AIR FORCE ADMINISTRATIVE APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION

"MULTUM A PARVO"

Web Address: www.rafadappassn.org



Newsletter No 101 - March 2015



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ASSOCIATION NEWS

ASSOCIATION REUNION 2015

Attendance. Full details of the 2015 Reunion at the Swindon Marriott Hotel on 12/13/14/June (including a final attendance list) will be published in the June Newsletter. There are still a number of rooms available and if you would like to attend please contact Bryan Hoare, the Social Secretary (or Bryan Schofield if Bryan H can't be contacted) **NOT LATER THAN 19TH MARCH.** As at 01 March, bookings have been made on behalf of the following members:

| <u>ENTRY</u> | <u>ATTENDEE(S)</u> |
|--------------|--|
| 2nd | S Robathan |
| 4th | R Wise |
| 5th | W Huggins, J Wilcox |
| 11th | M Heritage |
| 13th | J White |
| 14th | J Gent, B Richards |
| 15th | T Moore |
| 17th | R Blundell, B Bullivant, G Wright |
| 19th | J Evans, T Parsons, I Thomson, J Waltham |
| 23rd | P Bullock, D Marshall, R Shepherd |
| 24th | D Bulleid |
| 28th | B Kent, M Owen |
| 29th | A Bell, R Burrow, B Croucher, D Davies, G Masson, H Trumbell |
| 30th | P Reed, P Williamson |
| 32nd | D Brown, B Scott, P Wentworth, M Wilkinson |
| 33rd | R Danes, B Schofield, |
| 34th | R Orr, A Peters |
| 35th | R Dickinson |
| 36th | B Devecchis, L Porter, K Rossiter |
| 38th | M Day, D Linney, K Williams |
| 40th | M Boyle, P Charnell, W Dean, M Hamill, |
| 41st | T Jones |
| 42nd | M Frank, H Gilbert, K Green, R Hedinburgh, W Hoggarth, J Taylor |
| 44th | J Upton |
| 45th | I Hunter |
| 46th | S Foley, P Ralph |
| 301st | W Beedie |
| 304th | G McCullough |
| 305th | A Hammonds |
| 307th | B Hoare, A Hopkins |
| 318th | T McKnight |
| 330th | G Hoyland |
| Associate | B Collins, J Muirhead, S Wright |
| Honorary | Mrs S Craycraft, Mrs S Hopewell |

AGM – Resolutions and Agenda Items. Resolutions for AGM 2015 (13th June) or any items for inclusion in the AGM agenda should be forwarded to the Chairman not later than 7th April so that the AGM agenda can be finalised at the Committee meeting on 11th April and published in the June Newsletter. Bryan will acknowledge your request. You do not have to attend the AGM to submit an item for consideration but it will require a proposer and seconder on the day.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

The 2015 subscription of £10 was due on 1 January. However, at the time of going to press a large number of members have failed to pay this year's subscription. If you have yet to pay your 2015 subscription, please forward your payment to the Treasurer. If payment is not received before the issue of the next Newsletter (June) no further Newsletters will be dispatched to non-payers and their membership will be considered lapsed.

ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Your Committee will be meeting on Saturday, 11th April at Boddington, near Cheltenham, and will cover, inter alia, any propositions for the Annual General Meeting in June. If you have anything at all that you wish the Committee to discuss, please let the Chairman have your request by 7th April: telephone 01933 443673 or email chairman@rafadappassn.org. Bryan will acknowledge your request. **(Current contact details for the Association Committee and Regional Reps are attached.)**

NEW MEMBERS

591683 **Hugh J White** (54thR): Fleet, Hants:
01252 686491: No E-Mail
593633 **Terry Waine** (35th): Ampthill, Bedford:
01525 839338: terry.waine@yahoo.com
594894 **Steven Day** (304th): Sturton by Stow, Lincoln:
01427 787582: steven923day@btinternet.com
595111 **Raymond Parfitt** (305th): Frampton Cotterell, Bristol:
01454 777313: grenadier.ray@outlook.com
595807 **Kevin Parfitt** (309th): Redditch, Worcs:
01527 542211: spdl23301@blueyonder.co.uk
8000382 **Thomas S Allison** (313th): Edinburgh:
07904 234249: tomhibs@gmail.com

AMENDMENTS TO MEMBERS' DETAILS

593224 **Peter Culley** (29th): p.culley@yahoo.co.uk

RESIGNATIONS

591266 **Eric Burland** (48thR)
592404 **Ray Lynch** (8th)
593052 **Philip Homden** (25/26th)

R. I. P.

It is with sorrow that we have learned of the death of the following members:

592123 John (Joe) Green (1st)
592572 Chris Mackie (13th)
594181 Jim Butcher (44th)

and of the following non-members:

592242 C I (Ivor) Easton (4th)
594134 Rod Webster (43rd)

The Association extends its condolences to all family and friends.

OBITUARIES

JOE GREEN (1ST)

With Joe's passing, I have lost another dear friend. As a junior entrant, my contact with Joe was with the Wing Rugby XV. As a rugby back, I didn't think/know much about forwards! But playing in Wales, against good grammar schools, with better backs than us, I realised we needed the ball, via our rough, tough forwards, and here Joe stood out, he performed with vigour, and perhaps a little more! But he was a rare specimen, he could smile, a rare achievement by a prop. Looking at our Casualty List, so many of our illustrious team have moved on, and now Joe joins them. My wife and I enjoyed Reunions and meetings with Joe and Joan, for we always found plenty to talk and laugh about; we will miss them and I am sure many others will too, for friendships are not related to Entry Number. I had intended to go to Joe's funeral, but was unable to do so, however I have since had a long chat with Joan, and was pleased at how well she was, and happily remembering over 60 years of marriage. Like most of us, Joe had moved around quite a bit, amongst overseas postings were El Adem and Singapore, and others. In the UK there were tours at Mildenhall, High Wycombe, Coningsby, Duxford, Gloucester, and North Luffenham where he retired at age 55 - but returned the next day as a civilian! Vale, Joe - We'll Meet Again.

SKRYBER

ROD WEBSTER (43RD)

We signed up together on the 2nd May, 1961 and it was very soon apparent that Rod's sense of humour and optimism would all be needed in the coming months. He could be labelled the class comedian but there was a lot more to Rod than that. It was more often bending the rules rather than breaking them. How to evade Wednesday sports afternoon. We'd met a couple of shop assistants in Hunstanton who had Wednesday afternoons off. The solution was to take up cycling, put on a tracksuit and cycle about a mile or so to meet them at a local farmhouse. How to evade the morning parade. Rod put it to me that if I got confirmed (by the Bishop of Thetford) I could join him in taking communion and spend thirty minutes every morning having breakfast - only interrupted by loud shouting from the parade square! The most famous anecdote was in our last term. As we were the last entry to pass-out from Bircham the numbers of Apps was dwindling, so Griffin house was closed and we moved back to our initial accommodation in Zeebrugge Block. Our DI, Cpl Turner, was standing at the foot of the stairs (giving us a hard time no doubt) and Rod was having a fag half way up the stairs. Temptation got the better of him and the DI's beret became his ashtray. Rod left the RAF in 1974 and began working in insurance/mortgages in England but eventually returned to Scotland. Whilst at Bircham Rod was an enthusiastic participant in the Station's radio broadcasting. In Inverness he

did part-time work with a broadcasting franchise and he became a full-time Sales Manager and broadcaster. He opened Radio Border, spending ten happy years there, before becoming Managing Director in 1997 of Radio Northsounds in Aberdeen. In 2005 the company was taken over and the management team was replaced. Until final retirement he worked for a recruiting firm in Aberdeen writing CVs for those wishing to join the oil industry. I last met Rod in 2010 and - dare I say it - he hadn't changed his outlook on life one bit. He died on the 15th December, 2014 after a two year struggle with lung cancer. Particularly poignant as Rod gave up smoking 45 years ago! In true Rod style, his wife Anne informs me, he lived life to the full with holidays and fun times with family and friends.
Rick Short (43rd)

REGIONAL GROUP NEWS

CYPRUS

Cyprus Group meetings for 2015 are scheduled be held at 1230 on the following dates at the locations shown:

Mon March 2nd: Captains Bay, Pissouri
Mon June 8th: Kyrenia Restaurant, Avdimou Beach
Mon Sept 7th: Kyrenia Restaurant, Avdimou Beach
Mon Dec 7th: Captains Bay, Pissouri

Anyone visiting Cyprus at these times will be more than welcome but should contact me to confirm that the meeting will take place as we do change venues and timings to suit the situation.

Ray Burrow (29th)

Contact: raymondo@logosnet.cy.net / (00357) 99-303572 or (00357) 26 621662.

DORSET

The quarterly meeting of the Dorset Group took place on Saturday 21st February 2015 at the Heights Hotel Portland, which overlooks Chesil Beach and Verne Portland Prison! Attendees included John White (13th), Tony Richards (14th), Peter Reed (30th), Tony Peters (34th) and Shay Foley (46th) with apologies from John Gent (14th) and Mike Hamill (40th). The next meeting of the Group will take place on Saturday 23rd May, 1230 for 1300, at the Half Moon Inn, Sherborne. All welcome!

Shay Foley (46th)

Contact: heights73@talktalk.net / 01202 631652

GLOUCESTER AREA LUNCHEONS

Our first luncheon of the year will be held at our usual venue, The Royal George at Birdlip, on 31 March 2015 - 1200 for 1230. Please make contact if you wish to be included. For those coming please be prompt as I will try to organise our seating together.

Mike Day (38th)

Contact: mikeday28@hotmail.com / 01993 841026

SOUTH-WEST HERTS

Attendance at the winter reunion at the Three Crowns, Bushey Heath on 7th February was reduced to a convivial band of five, due to reported sick, holidays, weather, or family events. Jack Marshall (56R), Tony Parsons (19th), Phil Gough (31st), Brian Scott (32nd) and Peter Ralph (46th) nonetheless had a great time. Apologies were received from: Ken Roost (1st), Bob Wise (4th), Derek Hobden (19th) John Forshaw (20th), Haydn Illingworth (21st), David Marshall (24th), George Masson (29th), Peter Forster (29th), Noel Hayes (31st), John Bell (31st), Mike McCrow (36th), and Tom Price-Rees (40th). For one or two attendance remains a noble aspiration but all from anywhere are welcome. Our next reunion will be on Saturday 2nd May 2015 at the same venue.

Phil Gough (31st)

Contact: pgough@ntlworld.com / 01923 466956

SPAIN

We shall be gathering again towards the end of March 2015, again in El Campello, which is situated between Alicante and Benidorm. Should any members be in the locality around that time you would be more than welcome to join us for Lunch and a Natter. Please contact me for further details.

Frank Carroll (38th)

Contact: notreve@shariah.org.uk

ARTICLES

BIRCHAM NEWTON NEWS

RAF Heritage Room - 10th Anniversary

Details of the 2015 open days are available on the RAFAAA web site. This year sees the 10th Anniversary of the opening of the Heritage Room (HR). This will be marked on 26 July by a special afternoon of events and more info on this will appear in due course on their web site www.rafbnmp.org.uk. The staff cordially invite any ex apprentices to attend and a warm welcome is assured. There have been some interesting visitors to the HR over the years. For example, last year saw a visit by the gentleman who flew his RAF Hunter jet as a form of protest through Tower Bridge, London! I will be there on the day as our Association representative and hope to see you there.

Tony Nelson's Norfolk Air Force

In the last newsletter details were given of Tony's appearance on the BBC Antiques Roadshow with his one sixth scale model of a Stirling Bomber. The model was valued at £10,000 and flies, albeit tethered. If you did not see the show the excerpt can be seen on www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01bv1pj.

The Birches Hotel (former RAF Officers Mess)

Both wings of The Birches Hotel have now been refurbished to a very high standard. I was given a guided tour towards the end of last year. If you wish to use the facilities at any time please ask to speak to Emma Cook and mention the fact you are an ex apprentice and also mention my name. You should be given a discount on the accommodation rates.

Dixie Dean (40th) Bircham Newton Liaison Rep

50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION – 304TH ENTRY

Steve Day would like to know if anyone from 2 Sqn who trained from 9 September 1965 until 12th August 1966, would be interested in a reunion to celebrate their 50th Anniversary. Steve says he is in regular contact with Jim Barnes and Brian Dunstone and other past members of A Flt. If you were a member of this entry and would like to discuss a possible reunion, please contact Steve by email at steven923day@btinternet.com.

HM ARMED FORCES VETERANS' BADGES

Most Association members probably already have them. But if you've still not applied, just ring Freephone 0808-1914218 and have to hand (a) Your Service number (no doubt committed to memory), (b) your National Insurance number (no doubt not!) and (c) dates of military service. If their lines are busy (often are) after a while, a message is given inviting you to leave your 'phone number - and you'll be called back. Badges come free, and are replaced if they break through fair-wear-and-tear (good old service term). Also issued is a certificate thanking you for your past service. The drawback is that the word "Veteran" is on these badges...a term taken from the States...most who've served prefer to be described as "Ex-Servicemen".

Dave Ainsworth (304th)

CASH FOR EX-AIRMEN WHO CRUISE

Carnival Cruises (who own P & O, Holland America, Princess and Cunard to name but a few) will give up to £125 per person on board credit to serving and discharged military personal. This link: ask.pocruises.com/help/PO/before-you-sail/military lists the benefits of registering Military service with Carnival Cruises. You need to send scanned copies of your statement of service with your Booking Reference on an email to militarybenefits@carnivalgroup.com. If you can't find your statement of service then email (with a scanned passport or driving licence attached) to air-cospers-disclosures@mod.uk requesting statement of service. Happy Cruising!
Steve Sanders (307th)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

For personal reasons, I do not wish to continue as Newsletter Editor after the June 2015 AGM. This is a plea for someone to come forward now and volunteer to replace me, thus allowing an efficient hand-over to be accomplished.
Pete Ralph (46th)

TRIP TO THE SHARP END – BORNEO 1964

In June 1963, I was posted from Cottesmore to Tengah, Singapore. Tengah was an operational flying station with four resident squadrons – Hunter GR9s, Javelin Mk 9s, Canberra B1s and PR7s. It also had 63 Sqn RAF Regiment with 40mm LAA Bofors guns. In addition, there was a RN aircraft holding unit for Buccaneer, Sea Vixen and Gannet aircraft from RN carriers. My job was in the Electronic Supply Group up on the airfield. I was accommodated in Ward Block near the swimming pool. In December 1962, the "Brunei Rebellion" had broken out but, within a couple of weeks had been suppressed by British troops and Royal Marines flown in from Singapore. Mike Hopkins (42nd) received his Brunei GSM – one of the few awarded to RAF personnel. In early 1963, the "Borneo Confrontation" broke out when Indonesian troops attacked across the borders of Sabah and Sarawak on Borneo Island. The British Government responded quickly and despatched troops, aircraft and naval units across the South China Sea. RAF transport, fighter, bomber and reconnaissance aircraft detachments went to Labuan Island in Sabah, Kuching in Sarawak and to small jungle air strips. Tengah provided detachments of two Hunter and two Javelin aircraft to Labuan and Kuching; ground crews were eventually supplied direct from the UK and Tengah Supply Sqn provided the supply personnel on a 5-8 week tour to look after the fly-away packs. My first trip to the "sharp end" took place in April 1964 when I flew in a Valetta from Changi to Labuan to replace Des Hitch (42nd). The airfield was packed out with practically every type of transport aircraft in the RAF – Valettas, Hastings, Beverleys, Argosys and Single and Twin Pioneers. [There were also Shackletons, Whirlwinds, Beavers and Austers as well as our Hunters and Javelins. The 20/60 Sqn detachment line office and stores were housed in tents; the domestic site was at Membedai, a few hundred yards away, also in tents – not a good idea in high winds and monsoons. After completing my arrival "chit" – and being reminded that I was now in an active service area – I did the handover with Des and was shown the ropes, being introduced to the ground crews – who wanted to return me to Singapore as I didn't play bridge. Des advised me that the rig on the line was shorts, socks and sandals, then off he went to catch his flight back to Singapore. Next morning, suitably dressed, I made my way up to the flight line when the heavens opened and I was drenched. A Vauxhall Vanguard came alongside (a lift – great!) but no, I got a rollicking from the base commander for being improperly dressed – good old Des! I was threatened with a F252 – and was also threatened with a F252 from the line sergeant for being late, after I had gone back for a shirt and my beret. (A charge in an active

service area automatically carries double the punishment if found guilty. One airman went swimming off Membedai beach after curfew and was caught by a beach patrol coming ashore – not only was he done for breaking out of camp but also for breaking back in. You could also get put on a charge for wearing flip flops off camp – I don't know why as all the locals wore them; on camp, wearing flip flops resulted in stubbed toes on tent pegs. A story I heard [happened before I arrived] was of a drunk naked airman chasing a WVS lady around Membedai camp – no doubt he did a spell in Tanglin military prison in Singapore. Apart from my normal supply duties, I did guard duty, strapped in aircrew and assisted in marshalling aircraft. At "Lab", we had no airfield defence weapons for protection against attack from Indonesian aircraft but, within a week of my arrival, we were supplied with a number of 20mm Oerlikon cannon which were quickly fixed into concrete bases. They were supplied with half a dozen magazines and came from HMS Victorious, an aircraft carrier returning to the UK. I ended up as No 2 loader on the gun positioned next to our flight line tent.



RAF Labuan – April/May 1964
60 Sqn Javelin Mk 9 and 20mm Oerlikon cannon for Airfield Defence
(I was No 2 Loader on the gun)

The loss of arms and ammo was a court martial offence. At "Lab", we had a very keen security officer – a Fg Off, who made many unscheduled inspections checking on possession and storage of small arms and ammo as well as our gun and the magazines. His own personal weapon was a Sterling 9mm SMG with two magazines taped together in reverse mode (this was 1964 – years before Rambo hit our screens). One day, a couple of the detachment lads were returning from lunch and were passing his Landrover parked outside the control tower when they spotted on the passenger seat the taped magazines. Not wishing to pass up this opportunity, they removed the magazines "to a safe place". Within half an hour, the Fg Off was seen white faced and panic stricken searching high and low. Eventually, he was let off the hook – very much to his relief. Over at Tawau, another airstrip, one ex Admin Apprentice (who shall remain nameless) mislaid his bandolier of 50 7.62mm rounds – it was handed in without anything being said, again much to his relief. Before I left "Lab", I had the unforgettable experience of meeting one of nature's most dangerous creatures – a king cobra. On my way down to Membedai beach there, in the middle of the track, was this cobra which must have been over ten feet long. It saw me, started to rise up, hood out – and that was enough for me – off I went at high speed while it slithered into the undergrowth.

Mike Hamill (40th)

PS: Does anyone know what happened to those aircraft (Javelin, Spitfire, Vampire, Fieseler Storch etc) that were in the Supply training hangar at Bircham?

THE 1955 RAIL STRIKE

The articles on the 1955 Rail Strike very much reminded me of my time with an "Emergency Labour Wing". Following Apprentice Training I passed out from RAF Hereford in 1955 and was posted to RAF Little Rissington. One of the joys of being there was that was I lived in an Accommodation Block which had

individual rooms. After the wooden huts and stoves of Hereford this was luxury! At commencement of the strike the Emergency Labour Wing was formed and we were sent by road to RAF Hornchurch. Most of the party were employed on erecting beds in hangars, issuing bedding, etc, as this was to be an assembly point for those personnel stranded in London. There was a Flt Lt OIC (Ex-Indian Army) who was my Flight Commander at Little Rissington while I was the Clerk. I would take note of names, where they were going and direct them to the appropriate assembly point. One of the jobs I was given was to march some 90-odd National Servicemen to an assembly area. Thank God for my Apprentice Training! There was an Anson which regularly flew up from Little Rissington bringing mail etc. One of my more important tasks was to jump on the Anson, fly down to Little Rissington, deliver the OIC's dirty washing to his wife in OMQs and catch the next Anson flight back bringing back his clean washing and any urgent admin papers. As the strike wore on the OIC decided that I would sleep in the office each night, on a camp bed, as the BBC Home Service News would give the telephone number and tell stranded personnel to ring RAF Hornchurch. I would tell them how to get to Hornchurch. This turned out to be a very good job for a young airman - perhaps two calls a night, not one later than 2200, followed by a good night's sleep and a day off to enjoy the social life in the local area which was enhanced by the Irish Nurses from the local Hospital. Needless to say I was very sorry when the Strike was over and had to return to normal duty!

Peter Harris (20th)

THE STATION BARBER

In Newsletter No 98 (June 2014), Dixie Dean (40th) raised the question of where did the surplus haircut money go - his pay account being charged despite not having a cut and the barber not being paid? Dixie invited any former Pay Accountant colleague to answer this (apparent) conundrum. Well, I can reveal, after all these years, the accounting method applied to correct this unavoidable discrepancy and the use of the surplus money. I retained (in my archives) the copy of my pay account (Form 4074) for the final term of my time at the AATS St Athan on posting as J/T in Sep 1953. The monthly haircut charges are shown as debits at 1s (one shilling) a time. I cannot recall being taught, as part of my accounts trade training, how haircutting charges were dealt with. However, I gleaned from my SNCO instructor about a system known as the Pay Accounts Comforts Expenses (acronym: "PACE"). In those days the pay accounts (Forms 4074) were handwritten with the calculations and balances extracted using a Burroughs adding machine (remember the handle and lots of paper tally rolls?). Reconciliations were difficult to say the least and there was a margin of error allowed to authorise write-offs. The lists (from the Station barber) of haircuts undertaken never matched the total of individual charges to the Apprentice accounts, thus creating a surplus, after any small authorised write-offs for other differences, and that is where "PACE" came into play! The surplus involved was transferred to a non-public account (these ledger accounts were held within the Accounts Section in SHQ) and in particular to an account - "The SHQ Comforts Fund" which derived income from various donations albeit the largest income was sourced from the proceeds of "PACE" each accounting quarter. Usually two events took place each year – the SHQ Summer BBQ and the New Year's "Bash" - with all expenses for food, drinks, and like items being properly accounted for via bills. There were no cash transactions and no individual received any direct payments thus the Fund was cleared. The benefits of thrift and goodwill displayed by the Accounts Section were never challenged!!

Trevor Moore (15th)