

ROYAL AIR FORCE ADMINISTRATIVE APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION

"MULTUM A PARVO"

Web Address: www.rafadappassn.org



Newsletter No 96 - December 2013



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SEASON'S GREETINGS



YOUR ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT, CHAIRMAN AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES
A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY, PROSPEROUS AND, ABOVE ALL, A HEALTHY 2014

ASSOCIATION NEWS

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Reminder for all members that 2014 membership subscriptions are due on 1 January 2014. However, no need to wait until then: cheques can be sent to the Treasurer whenever convenient. Also, members can pay for more than one year. For members paying by cheque: cheques for **£10.00** for each year payable to "RAF Administrative Apprentice Association" should be sent to the Treasurer - Garry Hoyland, Bourts House, The Bourts, Lydbrook, Gloucester, GL17 9QB - OR if you wish to subscribe by Standing Order please contact Garry.

accountant@rafadappassn.org / 01594 860644

2014 REUNION AND AGM

The 2014 Reunion and AGM will be held at the Peterborough Marriott Hotel over the weekend 13/14/15 June 2014. Full details were contained in the last Newsletter. So far we have received booking forms from 29 members, which includes 5 requests for the ladies outing; 2 to play Burnett Trophy golf at Thorpe Wood Golf Club Peterborough and also 7 apologies. A Booking Form for the Reunion is included with this Newsletter; please return your form to our Social Secretary, Bryan Hoare, by 31 Jan 2014.

ENTRY LISTS

The task of updating the entry lists has now been completed and they have been published on the Association website. However, members will note that not all first names have been listed so if you are able to provide the first names of any of those missing, please contact the website manager, Alan Bell, at administrator@rafadappassn.org. Please bear in mind that, in due course, the names shown in your entry lists will be placed in your respective Entry Photograph Albums which in turn will be kept in the archives at the RAF Museum at Hendon. As such, the more up to date these lists are before the albums are handed over to Hendon, the better.

RAFAAA (SOUTH-WEST HERTS) GROUP ROUTINE ORDERS

Watford 4th November 2013

- 592626 Trevor Moore (15th) relinquishes command of SW Herts Gp (deserted to Cornwall).
- 682880 Phil Gough (31st) assumes command of SW Herts Gp.

AMENDMENTS TO MEMBERS DETAILS

- 592500 **Antony Mitchell** (11th): ballyduff1@btinternet.com
592828 **Albert Cowan** (19th): alcowan1937@gmail.com
592875 **Antony Woodason** (20th): Newton Abbot:
01626 832033: antonywoodason@btinternet.com
593052 **Phillip Homden** (25th): Kingswinford, West Midlands
593514 **Clive Hatcher** (34th): clivehat34@gmail.com
593969 **Ian Dennis** (41st): 00357 9985308
iandennis969@gmail.com
595188 **Jeremy Fisher** (305th): fisher76@gmx.com
8000239 **Cliff Farmer** (312th): caj.farmer@btinternet.com
8000249 **Sandy Nicholson** (312th): delph888@yahoo.co.uk

NEW MEMBERS

- 593410 **Brian T. Scott** (32nd): London: 02089 596301:
irene-lee@02.co.uk
8000006 **Roy Aldcroft** (311th): Market Drayton, Salop:
01630 657096 roypodoman@aol.com
8001626 **Christopher John Cooke** (322nd): Kirkcaldy, Fife:
01592 260680: chriscooke626@hotmail.com

R.I.P.

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

593729 **Garry Keat** (37th)

OBITUARIES

BILL HANSFORD (3RD)

On 11th June 2013, our Association along with RAFA Plymouth lost a most loyal member, the Nation lost a true patriot, and I lost a dear friend with the passing of Bill Hansford. I knew Bill slightly at St Athan as an apprentice, but we really became friends when our Association was formed - when Bill immediately got in touch with West Country ex-apps and held reunions. Bill never married, but some 20 years or so ago, he met Frances, a widow and they became dear friends. Despite neither being drivers, they visited various museums and also attended parades in Devon; always sending me programmes of the events. On a visit to a Royal Marines Museum they were photographed in RM uniforms - I always smile at that one! I mentioned Bill's national pride: each St George's Day I received a card from him to mark

the day; how many of us do that? In the early days of the Association, Bill and Francis attended Annual Reunions, but later the Big C struck and they were not able to attend, but I kept him up to date on events. He never referred to his health, just got on with his life. Frances is a friendly and amusing character, as indeed was Bill; about 6 or 7 years ago Frances had a stroke, was in hospital, then several nursing homes, before being able to move back to her own home - and where she still lives! From this time, Bill became almost a full-time carer, especially since Frances has had various operations. Bill needed to take two buses, each way, to get to Frances's home. When my wife and I were in Devon, we would meet up with Bill and Frances and have lunch, it was always so obvious how Bill was treated wherever we ate, he clearly was well liked. We telephoned each other periodically, and always had a few laughs en route! Bill was a keen football supporter of Plymouth and rarely missed a home fixture; he was so looking forward to the coming season. One event he recounted several times with pride! Whilst on leave in UK, in 1966, he somehow got a ticket for the World Cup Final (older members may recall England won that one!), he really treasured this memory. I had been trying to contact him for a few weeks to get some information on another member of his Entry, but could only leave messages, then, on 1st July, I received a call from Bill's nephew Paul Jell, who had picked up my messages, and he sadly advised me that Bill had passed away. Bill was taken ill on 11th June, went into hospital where sadly he died. Paul told me that Bill had been cremated on 24th June, with a number of RAFA members in attendance, and they provided a Union Flag for the ceremony, patently, within RAFA too, Bill was well regarded. Bill was a quiet, reserved character, but with a warm sense of humour, a man who cared for his friends, and who loved his country. He was invariably polite, and I have no doubt that when we meet he will immediately say "I'm sorry I didn't call you back!" Bill will be missed by those who remember him, but he will be missed mostly by Frances, to whom we send our love and good wishes. Vale Bill, my dear friend.

Bill Huggins (5th)

JAMES RAYNER (3RD)

Our Association lost a 'character' with the passing of James aka "Duke" Rayner. When the 5th Entry arrived at St Athan, theoretically the 2nd Entry were Senior Entry, but to the 5th, Duke (and Paddy Coffey) were the Senior Entry! With their slashed peaks lined up with their nose (how they got past Chiefy Davis is a mystery), Duke and his cohort, like a couple of Gestapo Gauleiters, strode round the Wing with a proprietorial air. They did not have to bully or strike we lesser mortals, their demeanour just overpowered us! Duke attended a couple of Reunions and proved to be a normal ex-admin-app - if this is not an oxymoron - met several old mates, and really enjoyed himself, despite suffering from ill-health. He had recently moved to Weston-super-Mare, "Somewhat of a change from your old home in the 'Smoke' Duke!" Cheers, it was good to know you.

SKR

REGIONAL GROUP NEWS

CYPRUS

We held the 14th meeting of the Cyprus Group at the Kyrenia Restaurant at Avdimou Beach on Monday 3rd September 2013 on a very pleasant afternoon. In attendance today were myself, Ian Dennis and Dave Pyant which is 50% of our group. Apologies were received from Ben Casey, Phil Tobutt and Brian Granville and we hope that they can make the next meeting which is scheduled for Monday 2nd December at the Captains Bay Restaurant in Pissouri. Although it was hot it was extremely pleasant sitting in the shade clutching a cold Keo and talking about old memories whilst gazing over the bikinis on the beach in front of us. We had lunch here and that wasn't too

bad either. There was a pleasant breeze during the time we were there but it was getting quite strong as we were leaving.

Ray Burrow (29th)

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

(Sorry, Ray – no room for photo here– but it's included in the e-mail version! Editor)

DORSET

The quarterly meeting of the Dorset Branch of the Admin App Assn was held in The Ship, Christchurch on Sat 31 Aug 2013. The meeting coincided with the Bournemouth Air Festival which regularly attracts over a million visitors (because it is free) and the two members from Portland took over three hours to get to Christchurch. We had a good lunch and welcomed Tony Gent (14th) who came to keep an eye on the two Suppliers of his own entry. Our photo was taken by a member of staff and the size of the tip had nothing to do with her good looks. Apologies from Mike Hamill, Bob Mussard and Mike Heritage. The next meeting is in the Blue Boar Inn in Deer Hay Lane, Poole (BH15) at 12.30 for 1pm on 30 Nov 2013, - dress - Casual.

Shay Foley (46th)

Contact: heights73@talktalk.net / 01202 631652.



Back Row: Shay Foley (46th) , Tony Peers (34th), Peter Reed (30th), John Gent (14th). Front Row: Tony Richards (14th), John White(13th)

SOUTH-WEST HERTS

We met on Saturday 2nd November 2013 at the Three Crowns pub, Bushey Heath, with 20 members present. We were pleased to welcome the Association President Jim Wilcox (5th) and Chairman Bryan Schofield (33rd). Also present were: Jack Marshall (56th Ruislip), Ken Roost (1st), Mike Heritage (11th), John Gent (14th), Trevor Moore (15th), Peter Edmonds (17th), John Summers (18th), Tony Parsons (19th), Haydn Illingworth (21st), David Marshall (24th), Ron Anders (29th), Phil Gough (31st), Noel Hayes (31st), Brian Scott (32nd), Ray Hedinburgh (42nd), Pete Ralph (46th), David Ainsworth (304th) and Steve Sanders (307th). Apologies for absence on the day were received from: Gerry Singlehurst (15th), Peter Moir (17th), Derek Hobden (19th), John Forshaw (20th), George Masson (29th), Mike McCrow (36th) and Tom Price-Rees (40th).

Prior to lunch, we visited Bentley Priory and the new Battle of Britain Museum. We had an excellent audiovisual presentation of the history of the Battle of Britain and the Dowding room, and a tour around the various historical rooms which have been enhanced to preserve the national importance of the Priory. A donation of £80 was sent to the Museum Trust from members as the result of a raffle after lunch.

The next meet will be at the Three Crowns on Saturday 1st February 2014 at 1100 onwards with lunch from 1200. Pub details and directions at www.three-crowns.com. For any queries please contact Phil Gough at pgough@ntlworld.com or tel 01923 466956.

(This was the last appearance at a Group meet of the founder Trevor Moore who is leaving Watford to a new home in the town of Callington in East Cornwall. The baton, in the shape of "Guy" our Group mascot was passed by Trevor to Phil Gough who will carry on as the SW Herts Group organiser. It is very appropriate as Phil was one of the original "Flight" that formed in 2002 to become the present Regional Group of the Association.)

Trevor Moore (15th)



Photo taken at the Priory with Spitfire background

SPAIN

Most of the Spanish crew of the Administrative Apprentices Association together with their wives gathered in El Campello on Wednesday 25th September 2013 for our 6-monthly Lunch and Natter session. Attending were Dave & Sue Squire (44th), Allan & Judy Bacon (35th), Syd Avery (39th), Bill Laverick & Pauline and Frank & Barbara Carroll (38th). Unfortunately, our latest recruit, Roger Milsom (41st) was unable to attend. Everybody had survived the very hot summer and was in good health, bar the odd pace maker being fitted! Participation in sporting activities throughout the year seemed to be a common theme of conversation, ranging from golf and cricket, but football appeared to be for the younger generation. Of course, as with any gathering of ex-service personnel, the land-based lamp was swung for a couple of hours as reminiscences of our past lives in the forces were shared and past friends were remembered. An update of the recent Annual General Meeting at Waltham Abbey was also given. We shall be gathering again towards the end of March 2014, 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 Frank Carroll at notreve@sharjah.org.uk for further details.



ARTICLES

RECORD OF SERVICE

Would you like a copy of your Record of Service for free? First telephone Veterans UK on 0800 169 2277 and they will send you a request form which you send to:

RAF DPA, Room 15, Trenchard Hall, RAF Cranwell,
Lincs NG 34 8 HB

Good luck
Shay Foley (46th)

RAF CYCLE RIDE AROUND NORFOLK

A group of RAF personnel cycled around Norfolk visiting historical WW2 sites during the period 6-8 Sep 13. On the first day the ride ended at the RAF Heritage Centre Bircham Newton. The cyclists were met by Air Vice Marshall Matt Wiles CBE, Chief of Staff Personnel & Air Secretary. AVM Wiles is a Supply Branch officer and had intended taking part in the ride. After refreshments in the Heritage Centre, an excellent presentation was given in the The Birches Hotel Conference Room by Flt Lt Ali Morton of the RAF Presentation Team. Amongst those attending were the Mayor of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, the Chairman of Norfolk County Council, Marshal of the RAF Sir Keith Williamson GCB AFC, the RAFA Area Vice President and RAF Marham Station Commander Gp Capt David Cooper. Yours truly represented the RAF Admin Apps Assoc. The photograph shows the RAF Cyclists and VIPs prior to the RAF Presentation Team talk. The Presentation Team revealed the RAF now has a strength of just below 35000!! It appears the majority of aircraft servicing tasks etc are carried out by civilian contractors - whether this could be achieved in a total war environment such as WW2 is very questionable. The present RAF relies heavily on the RAF Reserves!! The RAF technician rank has been abolished - I spoke with the Stn Cdr RAF Marham who said he has just one J/T serving and a couple of Chief Techs. The RAF Regiment have introduced the rank of Lance Cpl to replace the rank of SAC - this is to ensure greater compatibility when on joint RAF/Army Operations. With the limited current strength of the RAF, I questioned that in the last 2 or so years I have seen 15-20, and more, promotions as **new posts** to 1/2 star rank - some of the post titles seemed to be something from Star Trek! My question was whether the RAF was becoming top heavy?! A matter raised by a senior Naval Officer some years ago who cited the RAF had 450 Group Captains!! It seem the Forces are committed to retaining a senior structure so as to maintain a 5 star Chief of Defence Staff who has direct access to Cabinet Ministers! Lets face it, what clout would the Head of the Army have if it was an RSM - I can hear your responses already!! In essence, the salami slicing starts at the bottom!! All in all, an enjoyable day/evening and the RAF personnel I met were as dedicated and committed as we were despite the present climate and pressures in the Armed Services.

Dixie Dean (40th) - RAF Bircham Newton Liaison Rep.



JOHNNIE JOHNSON'S SPITFIRE EN398 "FLIES" AGAIN

In the summer of 2012, my good friend, Brian Smith, ex-BA Captain, balloon skipper and live wire, felt the time had come to plant his feet firmly on the ground. He had paid a visit to the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) Museum in Maidenhead, *Grandma Flew Spitfires*, because a balloon event nearby had been cancelled due to bad weather. At the museum there is a Spitfire simulator that drew his attention. On the way home he suggested to his wife Cecilia, that he might like to build a simulator just like the one in Maidenhead. When he started talking to his friends about this, there was no shortage of enthusiasm and the project got under way with an extraordinary amount of local specialist knowledge and support. First came the cockpit itself. *Creative Cockpits*, based in Cumberland, provided the kit in a flat pack form using computer numerical control (CNC) cut recycled plastic for both the main frame and skin. Although not traditional material, assembly is very similar to the original method. The finished product is surprisingly strong and a great way of demonstrating aircraft construction techniques of the day. Brian lives in an ancient farmhouse with a number of out-buildings. A small barn was chosen for the project and all was set. The barn had been a family hidey-hole and took some time to clear. A local firm, *West Sussex Antique Timber*, agreed to sponsor the project and they laid a superb damp-proof solid oak floor. We covered the walls in hessian and put sticky tape criss-cross fashion on the windows in case we were attacked by the enemy! We held a number of planning meetings with half a dozen or so enthusiasts and then assembled one weekend in October last year and put the skeleton of the cockpit together in what seemed no time at all. Over the next few weeks the skin was applied, the seat fixed in place, and paint was brushed carefully over the surface in camouflage colours of dark green and grey. The inside paint was of the traditional light green shade. It was beginning to look very good indeed. While all this was going on, those in the team responsible for the hard and software were creating a specification for the computer and choosing the programs. Dell Computers built the tower and delivered it. Microsoft's *Flight Simulator X* was purchased and installed together with *RealAir's* Spitfire IX. This aircraft represents EN398, the most famous of the Spitfires flown by Wing Command J E (Johnnie) Johnson. Flying this aeroplane between April and October 1943, he shot down twelve aircraft and shared another five plus six that were damaged while he was commanding the Kenley Wing. Next we needed to install the cockpit modules; these included the spade handled control column with its support frame and adjustable hydraulic pitch & roll dampers, the rudder pedal module with cast aluminium pedals and hydraulic damper, the control quadrant with throttle, propeller pitch & mixture levers, column pitch trim module and the landing gear lever. All this came from a small manufacturer from Devon, *SpitSim*, who delivered and installed the equipment for us. Finally came the screens. It so happened that Tim Worrall., Managing Director of Airwave Europe Limited, who supply flat screen televisions to hotels and other places, heard of the project and offered his assistance. We have three 48-inch screens wrapped around the front of the cockpit, giving an excellent and realistic display. A fourth, small, screen was installed inside the cockpit providing the array of instruments. Behind the simulator, and occupying half the small barn, we have our crew-room decorated with all sorts of memorabilia, photos, and paintings, mainly of Spitfires. Hanging on nails and hooks around the crew-room are uniform jackets, caps, flying suits, leather helmets and goggles. There are contemporary log-books donated by friends whose relatives flew in the war and a couple of newspapers of the day. In one corner there is a pair of sheep-skin flying boots, on a wall a replica of an ops-room clock keeps us on time and a Tannoy box adds to the realistic setting. We have recently received a visit from a 94-year old lady who

was one of the ferry pilots of the ATA during the war, and at least two Spitfire display pilots have taken our simulator aloft singing its praises in the visitors' book. It is hard to explain to anyone who has not sat in one of these amazing cockpits. Taxiing is not easy, taking off involves full right rudder correction to combat the powerful torque delivered by the four-bladed propeller. Once in the air, among the puffy clouds, one becomes isolated from those watching with help the noisy growl of the Merlin engine vibrating the whole structure. Landing literally brings you down to earth as you line up with the runway, begin breathing rapidly, lower the gear and engage the flaps. Taxiing back to the dispersal or the refueling point tends to bring the heart rate back to normal and a feeling of great satisfaction wells up inside. This is a partially commercial enterprise, based in the picturesque village of Wisborough Green in West Sussex, providing an escapist hour or two for a lucky birthday-boy who may bring a party of up to five others to join in the fun. The RAF Benevolent Fund benefits from donations by clients who will be rewarded with a fridge magnet bearing our logo. They have helped us with the loan of a few contemporary artifacts, including a couple of telephones from the forties. Finally, a certificate, signed by one of the instructors rounds off an amazing experience. You may obtain more information about this project by ringing Brian Smith at "*The Spitfire Experience*" on 01403 700346 or me on 01403 700623.

Peter Edmonds (17th)

FROM A NEW MEMBER

Hi Guys: Just happened across the Association on the internet. Looks like a good association. Found these bits which might be of interest: one of the whole of B flight 2 Squadron at Hereford in 1968 and the other a little ditty "wot I rote" on passing out. **(Sorry, Roy, no room to publish either here- but both are included in the e-mail version! Editor)** Incidentally, we must have been one of very few entries to have a Royal Marine Band to play us past the saluting dais, and yes, they did play "A Life on the Ocean Wave"! Send me a form and I'll join up (again!). B8000006 CplAA Aldcroft R.

(Roy Aldcroft 311th)

DRINKWATER²

I was asked today if I remembered Cpl Drinkwater (my namesake) at Credenhill when I trained as an admin apprentice. The answer is of course YES I DO but let me put the meeting in context. I applied to join the RAF in January 1957 but failed the aptitude tests, but I was told that I could join as an Apprentice Supplier (*not suitable for technical training*). I did join up with the 30th Entry later that month. My meeting with Cpl Drinkwater was in the Mess when he sought me out and asked me directly if I was going to uphold the name of Drinkwater. My "off the top of my head" answer was "Well it depends on what sort of name it has already" - probably not the best way to start my Service career. Later on after enduring weeks of bin stock cards I went to see my Flt Cdr (Sqn Ldr Holland) and told him that I was like a fish out of water at Credenhill. We talked for a while and to my astonishment there was another guy called I believe, Bell, who wanted to leave Halton and come to Hereford. Sqn Ldr Holland (bless him) arranged for us to transfer - me to Halton and Bell to Hereford. To cut the story short I graduated from Halton and a couple of years later I qualified as a Flight Engineer flying all sorts of large aircraft from the Belfast to the Lancaster.(BBMF) During my time as a flt engineer I also qualified as an instructor and after some 32 years left the RAF to become the Flt Deck Training Manager with UK airlines. Sorry to hear that Reg Drinkwater has left us. I will never forget that first meeting with him. I do see that my name is still on the Entry list for the 30th.

Regards

David Drinkwater (30th)

Royal Air Force Administrative Apprentices Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND REUNION 13th– 15th JUNE 2014

PETERBOROUGH MARRIOTT HOTEL

BOOKING FORM

Return to: Mr Bryan Hoare – 60 Wordsworth Place, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 5PS

Tel: 01403 581324 or e-mail socialsecretary@rafadappasn.org

ALL BOOKING FORMS MUST BE RETURNED BY 31st JANUARY 2014

From: - Name..... (Block Capitals please)
Number..... (Check letters not required) Entry.....
Address.....
..... Tel No.....

I will/will not* be attending the Reunion & AGM 2014 and will be **Accompanied/Unaccompanied***
by..... First Name. If attending, please indicate your requirements below:

ROOM RATE - £65.00 PER PERSON PER NIGHT: SINGLE OCCUPANCY SUPPLEMENT £15.00 PPPN.

OPTION A - ACCOMMODATION FOR FRIDAY & SATURDAY NIGHT

(Includes Fri Dinner, Sat Breakfast, Reunion Dinner and Sun Breakfast) - Room Required - please tick

Double Room _____ Twin Room _____ Single Room _____

OPTION B - ACCOMMODATION FOR SATURDAY NIGHT

(Includes Reunion Dinner and Sun Breakfast) - Room Required - please tick

Double Room _____ Twin Room _____ Single Room _____

OPTION C - ACCOMMODATION FOR FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY NIGHT

(Includes Fri Dinner, Sat Breakfast, Reunion Dinner, Sun Breakfast, Sun Dinner and Mon Breakfast) - Room Required - please tick

Double Room _____ Twin Room _____ Single Room _____

OPTION D - REUNION DINNER ONLY (Saturday Evening) (£25.00 p.p.)

Number Attending _____ **DINNER ONLY. (PLEASE PAY THE TREASURER AT THE A.G.M.)**

REUNION DINNER SATURDAY EVENING

If you would like to sit at a Table with colleagues please indicate below and we will endeavour to accommodate you
.....

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS..... **Disabilities, Dietary, etc**

LADIES OUTING - SATURDAY AFTERNOON – YES/NO - (please advise)** - £5.00 per lady

** Please include £5 cheque dated 14 June 2014 with the Booking Form

BURNETT TROPHY GOLF – FRIDAY 13TH JUNE - **PLAY/NOT PLAY - (please advise)**

LADIES' TROPHY - **PLAY/NOT PLAY - (please advise)**

Please note this is a Booking Form and we will book your room upon receipt this form

N.B. ALL HOTELS HAVE NOW IMPOSED A CANCELLATION CHARGE AS DETAILED BELOW:

Over 90 days 10%; 90 to 61 days 25%; 60 to 30 days 40%; 29 to 10 days 60%;
9 to 3 days 80%; 2 days to night of 98 %

Member's Signature..... Date

It is advisable to send in your booking form as soon as possible as we cannot reserve the entire Hotel and there could be limitations on accommodation