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The Magazine of RAF Shawbury

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SHAWBURY**

Edition 1
2016



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CONTENTS



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IN THIS ISSUE...

- 5 Foreword
- 6 Station News
- 6 Flying Milestones
- 12 Station Visits
- 14 Community Project
- 16 Honours & Awards
- 20 Graduations
- 22 Drive Safely
- 24 Total Safety
- 25 CATCS News
- 26 Charity News
- 32 Features
- 36 Sport

COVER PICTURE:

A view from the cockpit of a Squirrel helicopter

Editor's Welcome

by Sqn Ldr Kim Leach



Welcome to Edition 1 of 2016. We start the year with congratulations to our recent award winners which include Sqn Ldr Jason Davenhill who received a Bronze Award from the Royal Aeronautical Society. Also, to Mr Tim Nicholas and Flt Lt Doug Brown who were both awarded Master Air Pilot Certificates recently. I would also like to say a special thank you to everyone at RAF Shawbury who have helped to support the Be Seen, Be Safer Rider Awareness campaign. Your support has enabled RAF Shawbury to be awarded the prestigious Tarquin Trophy from The British Horse Society. Also, congratulations to those who were honoured in the New Year Honours List. You can read all about these award nominations inside this edition.

Happy Reading

Submissions for Edition 2 to the Editor by 4th March 2016



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General Service Knowledge – Information Fact No 7

By Cpl S JAR (Drill Instructor)

Did you know that the decision to adopt vehicle star plates in the Royal Air Force was strongly advocated by Lord Hugh Tedder, Marshal of the Royal Air Force? He greatly favoured the American system of the stars to which he had become accustomed when he was Deputy Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces.

Star plates first came into use on 1st January 1951; they were displayed on the front and rear bumpers of vehicles carrying an Air Officer on all official occasions. Star plates had a dark blue background and a number of silver stars to highlight the Air rank of the officer. All stars were to be in the horizontal position on the star plate with one exception; the Marshal of the Royal Air Force had a circle of five stars. The number of stars denoting an Air Officer are:

One star - Air Commodore
Two stars - Air Vice Marshal
Three stars - Air Marshal
Four stars - Air Chief Marshal
Five stars (circle) - Marshal of the Royal Air Force

These days, star plates may also be displayed on a vehicle on a magnetic version of the original star plate design. All military personnel observing a star plated vehicle on base are required to salute.



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Foreword

by Mr Les Goodchild MBE, Officer Commanding Support Wing

It is difficult to comprehend that having 'joined' the Royal Air Force at the Careers Information Office in Brighton on 30th December 1974, I find myself planning retirement having completed continuous service to the MoD some 42 years later.

Somewhat ironically, I left the RAF from Shawbury in 1996 to join the Civil Service and after postings to Cosford, Abbey Wood and Brampton, found an escape route back to Shawbury in 2007. Initially recruited to the role of Officer Commanding Contract Management Team, I have now been employed in the role of Officer Commanding Support Wing for almost 3 years. There can be no doubt that it has been an interesting journey since those early days as an L Mech AR back in 1974 and as retirement beckons, I'm not sure that I would have changed any of it given the opportunity to do so. Whilst undoubtedly I could have taken career options that would have been more financially beneficial, I cannot put a price on the fantastic experiences I have enjoyed throughout both elements of my career.

My time with the RAF (not to forget my association with both the Royal Navy and Army) have been an absolute blast. Notwithstanding the Tri-Service exposure I have had at Shawbury, I also had a long association with the RN as far back as 1978 which also saw me going to sea on HMS London. More importantly, and irrespective of Service allegiance, I have had the privilege of working with some great people and I will leave Shawbury with the fondest of memories. It can be no coincidence

that so many visitors to the Station comment on what a lovely feel the place has. Inevitably the 'odd' individual has tried to break the Shawbury mould before finally succumbing to the fact that the formula works and for most, the Shawbury experience is a good one.

However, as I wrote in a previous foreword, change is inevitable and in my experience, to embrace change is usually less painful than trying to resist it. As I write, many of the moves to facilitate the Military Flight Training System (MFTS) infrastructure transition have been completed. Somehow it seems inadequate to simply say 'thank you' to all of those involved. Their forbearance as we navigated our way through what might be perceived to be chaos at times was simply remarkable when considered against a backdrop of very challenging timelines, limited funding and a mandate to maintain core output. Working with a significant number of agencies, some of which placed limitations upon us out of our control, undoubtedly presented frustrations. However, opportunity exists in chaos and collectively, I like to think that we have maximised those opportunities having delivered the initial phases of the MFTS infrastructure programme to time and cost.

There is still more to be done and early works on the ground preparation for the new 'Schoolhouse' began in early January. I anticipate that (subject to contract) major construction work on the Schoolhouse will begin in early April with further work to modernise 2 and 3 hangars following shortly



after. The programme is likely to take a further 18 to 24 months to complete and will provide first class facilities, galvanising Shawbury as a base with a future. I confess to being a little disappointed at not being here to see the final result but take some comfort in the knowledge that for most part, Shawbury has a stable future. Notwithstanding the current focus on MFTS, there is more to come as we also transition to Programme Marshall which will see updates to our airfield aids. Hot off the press as I write this foreword is news that Cobham Aviation Services have accepted an opportunity to extend their current contract with us taking our partnership to 31 March 2018 – great news!

I am hoping to escape any further requests from the Editor to write another foreword and therefore, I will leave any final farewells to my retirement beer-call programmed for sometime in December. Suffice to say, thank you all for your continued support.

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D-DAY Veteran is presented with the Legion of Honour Medal

A D-Day veteran has been presented with the Legion of Honour medal. WO Keith Martin flew as an Air Gunner on missions over France in support of D-Day.

He was presented with his medal by Colonel Jules Facer, the Commandant of the Defence Helicopter Flying School, RAF Shawbury at the Shropshire Aircrew Association (SACA) lunch, held at the Wroxeter Hotel, near Shrewsbury on Thursday 19th November.

The Legion of Honour was established by Napoleon in 1802 as France's highest award for excellence in civil or military conduct, and was awarded by President Francois Hollande to any veteran who fought on French soil, on the sea or in the sky to mark the 70th anniversary of the Normandy landings.

After training as a wireless operator, Warrant Officer Martin was posted onto Wellington bombers at RAF Seighford from where his crew flew their first operational mission, a leaflet raid to Blois in Belgium. A lucky escape followed when converting to heavy bombers, they suffered a 4-engine failure on take-off in a Halifax. Fortunately all the crew survived. A posting on operations soon followed and his crew found themselves at RAF Wickenby, flying Lancasters on No. 626 Sqn. During their time with 626 Sqn, they flew missions to bomb the

marshalling yards at Orleans, Aachen, and Terginer before D-Day. On the 5th June 1944, WO Martin's crew flew 2 missions in one day, attacking heavy gun emplacements on the French coast. Unbeknown to them, this was the start of Operation Overlord and D-Day. After a further 3 missions bombing targets in France, his crew were posted to RAF Faldingworth to reinforce No. 300 (Polish) Sqn.

As the Allies pushed towards Germany and the bombing campaign continued, his crew attacked plane construction works, marshalling yards and troop concentrations. It was on an operation to the marshalling yards at Revigny that they had a narrow escape. They had descended below the cloud base to identify the target and whilst on their bombing run at 4000 ft another aircraft with all 4 engines ablaze, broke cloud in front of them and crashed. It exploded on impact and blew their Lancaster onto its back. Fortunately, the pilot managed to right the aircraft and bring it back safely.

Towards the end of their tour, it was rumoured that replacement Polish crews were soon to arrive at RAF



WO Keith Martin receives his medal from Col Jules Facer.

Faldingworth to join No 300 (Polish) Sqn and this would mean another posting. They volunteered for every operation possible and completed their last 4 missions in one week.

Moving away from operational flying, Warrant Officer Martin joined No 3 (Pilot) Advanced Flying Unit at RAF South Cerney where he flew as the wireless operator/pilot's assistant in Airspeed Oxfords. Acting as an assistant to trainee pilots was possibly some of the most dangerous flying he did during the war! He continued to fly after the war for a short while at the Empire Test Pilot's School, Cranfield, where he flew with the legendary Neville Duke. Colonel Facer said: "It was a great privilege to be able to present WO Keith Martin with the Legion of Honour medal in recognition of the service he gave during D-Day and throughout the war. It was also very fitting to make the presentation amongst his friends and other veterans of the Shropshire Aircrew Association."

FLYING MILESTONES

Congratulations to Mr Andy Holley, Chief Pilot Cobham Aviation Services for achieving 8000 flying hours!

The photo shows Mr Holley being presented with a bottle of champagne by Mr Carl Evans.





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RAF Shawbury opens new garden of Commemoration and Remembrance

RAF Shawbury was delighted to open a new garden of commemoration and remembrance.

Located adjacent to the RAF Shawbury Church, the garden was transformed from bare turf to a beautiful area to sit quietly and reflect by members of the RAF Shawbury community.

The garden was officially opened on Friday 4th December by Group Captain Jason Appleton, the Station Commander at a special plaque unveiling ceremony.

Group Captain Appleton said: "Our history and heritage is very important to us and we wanted to commemorate both the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain and also VE Day; a garden of commemoration and remembrance seemed the perfect way to do this."



The Garden is officially opened by Gp Capt Jason Appleton.

The Station Padre, Reverend Wing Commander Alastair Bissell said: "I would like to thank everyone who helped to make this delightful garden

as it will be a lovely haven for all to use. I would also especially like to thank SSAFA who kindly sponsored this project."

Godfrey Yardley - RIP

RAF Shawbury is sad to report to readers that Godfrey Yardley has died at the age of 90 years.

Godfrey was no stranger to RAF Shawbury, having been involved in the Assault Glider Trust which built a replica Horsa Glider in Hangar 1. Many of you who visited Shawbury will remember being shown around the project by Godfrey who always managed to inspire visitors with his knowledge, enthusiasm and his incredible stories of the bravery of those involved in Operation Varsity and flying in a Horsa Glider.

On the eve of his 20th birthday, Godfrey Yardley flew into the jaws of death. The date was 24th March 1945 and he was part of Operation Varsity - the airborne forces crossing the Rhine. He lived to see his birthday but most of the colleagues travelling with him did not.

At the time, he was a Lance Corporal and it was his first airborne mission. Godfrey was in the 2nd Battalion Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire with



the 6th Airborne Division. He was in glider number 2, part of a package of 8 gliders making up a total force of 400 gliders with the target being the bridges of Hamminkelm.

On approach to the Rhine, the anti-aircraft fire started to come up and got thicker and thicker. Seconds later, his glider lost half of one of its wings. Shells were bursting all around and men were

being killed and injured. With the air brakes damaged, somehow the glider made a landing and Godfrey survived.

After the war, Godfrey settled in Lilleshall, Shropshire. He passed away on the 21st November 2015 leaving his widow Betty, daughter Elaine, granddaughter Danielle and two great-grandchildren.

*"You belong to an exclusive club -
unique in every sense
None can buy a place in the
membership - that list was closed long
since
And vacancies will not occur
(although your ranks will thin)
As times own "reaper" plucks out
random "founders" from within."*

A full account of Godfrey's life can be found at Godfrey's memoirs - A Village Lad Goes to War http://www.pegasusarchive.org/varsity/godfrey_yardley.htm

RAF Shawbury's Be Seen, Be Safer Campaign is just what the Doctor ordered!

Outstanding contributions to the equestrian world were recognised at The British Horse Society's annual award ceremony held at Saddlers' Hall, London recently.

Among the winners were RAF Shawbury who were awarded the Tarquin Trophy for the organisation which has made a significant contribution to equestrian safety in the last year. The awards were presented by the President of The British Horse Society, Martin Clunes, Star of the Doc Martin TV series. RAF Shawbury launched its Be Seen, Be Safer horse rider awareness campaign in April 2015. So far, the base has distributed over 5,000 items of high visibility clothing throughout Shropshire and the borders of adjacent counties, all of which lie within Low Flying Area 9, which is a Dedicated Helicopter Training Area.

The aim of the campaign is to promote the wearing of high visibility clothing by riders in order that they are more visible and can be seen earlier by the helicopter aircrew. Whilst high-visibility clothing may not prevent all over-flights as there may be other safety considerations, it does provide a considerable, cost-effective improvement to rider safety. Group Captain Jason Appleton, Station Commander at RAF Shawbury said: "Personnel at the base are honoured to have been awarded the Tarquin Trophy. We are delighted that our Be Seen, Be Safer horse rider awareness campaign has been so successful in our low flying training area. Working with The British Horse Society (BHS) really helps us both to



Group Captain Jason Appleton and Sqn Ldr Kim Leach receive the Tarquin Trophy from Martin Clunes, the President of The BHS.

communicate the important messages that we need to get across about the safety of horses and riders."

Lynn Petersen, the Chief Executive of The British Horse Society said: "We are delighted that we were able to recognise RAF Shawbury's important contribution to rider safety. If there is one message I would like to reinforce, it is the need for riders and their horses to be seen more easily. Wearing high visibility attire can save your life... not just on the roads but wherever you ride."

More information about this campaign is available at <http://www.raf.mod.uk/rafshawbury/>

Best Airman Award – SAC Kerry Coyne

Sixty Sqn were delighted to see SAC Kerry Coyne, Sqn Ops Assistant on Sixty (R) Sqn awarded the Best Airman Award on Wednesday 16th December.



The award was presented by the Station Commander and was kindly sponsored by The Drapers' Company.

SAC Coyne was nominated for the award for the diligence and professionalism with which she has completed her primary duties. She has ensured the smooth day to day running of the Sqn as well as preparing the Sqn for audit. She has also delivered training on new flight operations systems.

Congratulations!

Archive Corner



Sir Douglas Bader at Shawbury 1 Dec 1979.

rafshawburyarchives@hotmail.com

RAF Shawbury Hosts Senior Residents for Christmas Lunch

One hundred and thirty senior residents from Shawbury village and the local area were given the VIP treatment and a special visit from Father Christmas at their local air base on Tuesday 8th December.

Following arrival drinks in the dining room of the Officers' Mess, a 3-course lunch was served by military and civilian personnel from RAF Shawbury. The guests were welcomed to the unit by Wg Cdr Nigel Ibbetson, Officer Commanding Operations and Administration Wing and the Reverend Wing Commander Alastair Bissell who said Grace.

After the meal, a particularly energetic Father Christmas arrived to deliver a fantastic selection of presents that had been kindly donated by local Shropshire businesses. These included many from Shawbury village including The Post Office, Deb and Hair Hairdressers, Shawbury Fish Bar, The Co-op, The Great Wall Chinese

Takeaway, Lesleys Hair Fashions, Cherrington Farm Butchers, Shawbury Service Station, Sophisticutz Hair and Beauty Salon, and The Fox and Hounds Gastro Pub. Raffle prizes were also donated by Battlefield restaurants Franky and Benny's, KFC, Macdonalds', and Chiquito's as well as The Battlefield 1403 Farm Shop and Café. Prizes were also given by Booker Wholesale at the Sundorne Retail Park, Morrisons, House of Fraser and Sainsbury's in Shrewsbury.

The party-goers were also treated to a special performance by the children's choir from St Peter's Primary School, Wem.



Sgt Jimmy Brandford, the Project Officer for the event said: "We look forward to hosting this party at RAF Shawbury every year and I am delighted that so many of our local senior residents could attend. I would like to thank the Officers' Mess chefs and staff as well as all the volunteers from RAF Shawbury who helped with the invitations, transport, and serving our guests on the day without whom we would not be able to host the party."

Wing Commander Nigel Ibbetson said: "I was delighted to see so many of our local senior residents at RAF Shawbury today. This event reinforces our links with the local community and is one of our opportunities to give something back to the local people who provide so much support. Thank you also to the many local businesses who have generously donated gifts and of course to the children of St Peter's Primary School in Wem who sang so beautifully."

Mr David Miller, General Manger of ISS, who provide the catering at RAF Shawbury said: "It was a pleasure to be able to work in partnership with RAF Shawbury to deliver some festive cheer at this special time of year."



The party-goers were also treated to a special performance by the children's choir from St Peter's Primary School, Wem

The Shawbury Snake

It is not uncommon for a Police Flight or any work place to adopt a pet. We are all used to seeing a dog in the office and sometimes even a fish tank but RAF Shawbury Police have what I believe is a first! They have a 28 inch corn snake!



The reptile came into the possession of Shawbury's Police Flight while Cpl Hankinson was attending a training course at RAF Cosford in April 2015. During the course Sgt Duckett received a phone call from one of his staff. It appeared that a loose snake was reported to be roaming the Junior Ranks accommodation blocks at RAF Cosford. MPGS and RAF Police were soon at the scene and quickly had the serpent contained.

RAF Shawbury's Cpl Hankinson offered his hand to help out the Cosford Police

Flight as he is experienced in keeping snakes. Cpl Hankinson reports that when he entered the Police Flight he saw most of the staff at one side of the office and a small Tupperware box at the other side. Upon opening the box he found a very scared and unhealthy snake which resembled a pencil in size. Cpl Hankinson offered to care for the snake while the Cosford Police searched for its owner. During the first 2 weeks at Shawbury, it became apparent that the snake was not in good health. It had been severely mistreated, kept in an incorrect

environment and not fed a proper diet. The people that work at the Shawbury Police Flight gave the snake, now called Scar Face, all the care and attention they could. He lives in Lea Bodimeade's office in a lovely 3 foot vivarium, he has ample room, heat and attention and 5 months on he is a healthy 28 inches long. He eats his mice regularly and loves to come out for a cuddle. If you ever want to meet him then just pop into the Police Flt and our little miracle will be more than happy to come out and say hello.

By Sgt Parkinson
Police Flight

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Members of the Shropshire Aircrew Association (SACA) and the Shrewsbury RAFA Branch visit RAF Shawbury

On 16th November, Members of the Shropshire Aircrew Association (SACA) and the Shrewsbury RAFA Branch visited RAF Shawbury for lunch and a lecture to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

The presentation was researched and presented by Cpl David Lawrence who has become an expert on this period of history, having volunteered in the WW2 Bunker at RAF Uxbridge. Everyone enjoyed the interesting and informative brief and the audience were especially impressed by Cpl Lawrence's encyclopaedic recall of facts. Among the audience were Cpl



Lawrence's parents and sister who had travelled to RAF Shawbury from south Wales

especially for the event. They were delighted to hear him deliver this lecture as they

had not had the opportunity to hear him speak in public before.

Shropshire Magistrates visit RAF Shawbury



Eighteen Shropshire Magistrates were invited to RAF Shawbury on 17th November 2015 to see at first hand how RAF Shawbury delivers training.

The visitors were welcomed by the Station Commander, Group Captain Jason Appleton, before visiting Sixty (R) Squadron. After an excellent brief on helicopter operations in Afghanistan from Flt Lt Colin Jenkins, the visitors had a close look at a static Griffin helicopter. After lunch in the Officers' Mess, the visitors visited the simulators of the Central Air Traffic Control School.

Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Reserves and Cadets) visits RAF Shawbury

RAF Shawbury was delighted to welcome Major General John Crackett CB TD Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Reserves and Cadets) to RAF Shawbury on Monday 30th November 15.

Maj General Crackett is responsible for all MOD policy relating to the Reserves, youth and cadets and has led significant developments in both areas, most notably the issue of the Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) White Paper in July 2013.

The aim of the visit was to see at first hand the world leading training delivered at RAF Shawbury at the Defence Helicopter Flying School (DHFS) and the Central Air Traffic Control School (CATCS) as well as to see the support facilities provided to the RAF Shawbury community.

Major General Crackett was welcomed to the base by Group Captain Jason Appleton, the Station Commander. This was followed by a tour of the Defence Helicopter Flying School (DHFS), including a discussion on flying training and a close look at how training is delivered through virtual reality simulation. This method of training is common to both the training schools at RAF Shawbury. After a flight in a Bell Griffin Simulator, which included some simulated emergencies, Major General Crackett met students from both CATCS and DHFS and talked about their experiences of training at RAF Shawbury over lunch in the Officers' Mess.

After lunch, Major General Crackett was escorted on a tour of CATCS by Wing Commander Neil King, Officer Commanding. CATCS has been dependent on synthetic training since the cessation of live ATC training at Shawbury in the late 1980s. However, there are considerable advantages to the use of simulator training in the instruction of students, aside from the obvious cost savings compared to using real aircraft.

After a visit to the Community Centre, Major General Crackett visited Jubilee Hall, to see the new fitness suite and talk to the staff of the Force Development Squadron.

The Station Commander, Group Captain Jason Appleton said: "It has been a very enjoyable day for all the personnel at RAF Shawbury and an opportunity to show the ACDS (RC) some of the world leading training techniques and innovation which our personnel are developing and delivering."



Major General Crackett takes control of a Bell Griffin Simulator.

Neil 'Marvellous' Baldwin Visits RAF Shawbury



The man whose amazing life story was depicted in the BAFTA award winning film 'Marvellous', Neil 'Nello' Baldwin, has visited RAF Shawbury in North Shropshire, to discuss a future football match between the airmen and the Neil Baldwin Football Club.

Neil was joined at the Airbase by his good friend Malcolm Clarke, the Chairman of the Football Supporters Federation, who was also depicted in the hit film.

Neil has had an amazing life during which he was a clown, the kit man at Stoke City FC and played a major role in the success of Keele University. Neil's story was depicted in the film, which took the BAFTA for best film at the 2015 British Academy Television Awards.

Neil and Malcolm visited the Airbase to discuss a future football fixture between the Neil Baldwin Football Club and RAF Shawbury, a match which is pencilled in for March or April 2016 at the unit. During the visit they were shown around by Wing Commander Neil Hope MBE, who sits on the Football Association Council, on behalf of the RAF FA, with Malcolm. During the visit Neil and Malcolm flew the Bell 412 Simulator and sat in a Red Arrow at the Aircraft Maintenance Support Unit. They also looked at the Griffin and Squirrel helicopters used to train all helicopter pilots and crewmen for all 3 services, before being shown around the simulators of the Central Air Traffic Control School by Mr Tony Kinchley.

The visit concluded with lunch in the Officers' Mess with the Station Commander, Group Captain Jason Appleton and a visit to meet the Padre, the Reverend Wing Commander Alistair Bissell.

Wing Commander Neil Hope said: "it was my honour to be able to show Neil and Malcolm around RAF Shawbury and we look forward to the forthcoming football match against Neil's team".

Single Engine Rotary Wing Course 177

DIG OUT

After completing their first solo on the Squirrel, 177 Course 660 Sqn AAC gave something back to the local community by carrying out some work at St Mary's Primary School in Shawbury village.

Schools these days are struggling to afford maintenance staff so they often rely on volunteers and teaching staff to carry out some of the maintenance and husbandry that inevitably build up around the grounds. On a misty Wednesday morning in November, the 13 members of 177 Course stepped up with the Station's gardening tools in hand to help improve the image and safety of the school.



177 were put straight to work lifting and shifting while the children were occupied by the local harvest festival. One group then had the task of digging out flower beds and vegetable patches, removing the weeds and turning over ground giving the children areas to plant next spring. The second group got on with the seemingly never ending task of clearing the paths and playground of wet leaves.

The school's new play pitch was until recently the waste site left from an extension build. 177 cleared the area of rocks which were preventing the area being mowed and Lt Brownlow decided to take the opportunity to demonstrate the ancient art of 'worm charming' using his trusty pitch fork. Sadly the worms must have been on leave that day!

In true military fashion a FOD plod was carried out of the school grounds revealing quite how many sweets kids eat nowadays.

Just as the time came to head home, a fastball was thrown in to clear and turnover the vegetable patch along with clearing more leaves in another play area. The course happily rose to the task completing it in record time with their newly mastered landscaping skills.

177 course were satisfied they left St Mary's in a better state than when they found it and were happy to give something back to the local community.

SLt Rob Harris
177 Course, 660 Sqn AAC.



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RAF SHAWBURY PERSONNEL NAMED IN THE NEW YEAR'S HONOURS LIST 2016

Military and civilian personnel from RAF Shawbury and the Defence Helicopter Flying School have been honoured in the Military commendations list, announced in conjunction with the New Year Honours List 2016.

Personnel at RAF Shawbury were delighted to see a total of six awards, including one State Award, which have all been announced within the main honours list.

Squadron Leader Duncan Clarke was appointed as a Member to the Military Division of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for his exceptional performance as Officer Commanding the Search and Rescue Training Unit (SARTU) at RAF Valley, Anglesey. This Unit is a satellite element of the Defence Helicopter Flying School (DHFS) at RAF Shawbury and delivers Basic and Advanced Maritime and Mountain Flying training to pilots and aircrewmen destined for the Joint Helicopter Command, 84 Squadron in Cyprus and the Royal Navy. An experienced Search and Rescue Captain and a Qualified Helicopter Instructor, Squadron Leader Clarke has led a complete re-rolling of his Unit during a period of significant change due to the demise of military UK Search and Rescue, demonstrating outstanding leadership and vision.

Air Officer Commanding 22 Training Group Commendations were awarded to the following personnel at RAF Shawbury and the Defence Helicopter Flying School.

Mr Tony Ashwood was nominated for his innovation, professionalism and for his outstanding contribution to training at the Central Air Traffic Control School (CATCS), RAF Shawbury. Working within the School for many years, primarily as a Ground School Instructor, he single-handedly maintained the accuracy and generation of all training documentation associated with the Joint Air Traffic Control Course. Always willing to go the extra mile, he consistently volunteered to support new staff in the development of their instructional abilities, freely offering up his personal time to provide them with guidance and technical support. Recently retired from the School, Mr Ashwood's immense contribution to CATCS, RAF Shawbury and the Service is most worthy of formal recognition.

Corporal Greg Hunter was nominated in recognition of his exemplary performance in providing IT support to both the Central Air Traffic Control School (CATCS) and the entire RAF Shawbury community. Corporal Hunter's endeavours, both inside and outside of work, have directly improved the lived experience of personnel at RAF Shawbury. The depth and breadth of his IT knowledge is outstanding and he is always at the forefront of new initiatives, leading to an improvement in the way in which the Station conducts its business. A consummate professional, he has also contributed directly to the RAF Shawbury community overseeing the running of the accommodation block, serving on the Junior Ranks Club Committee, volunteering as Project Officer for the Children's Christmas Party and acting as a coach for the local Under 7's

football team.

The Air Officer Commanding 22 Training Group Team Award was awarded to the Battlespace Management Air Traffic Control (ATC) Safety Management Committee at RAF Shawbury. The team of four comprised of Flight Lieutenant Rachel Quartermaine, Flight Sergeant Paul Rowntree, Sergeant Jimmy Brandford, Sergeant Joe Lyon. Their aim was to promote a Just Culture environment and ensuring a change in perception towards Air Safety through a new and innovative approach which has had major benefits to the air safety environment at RAF Shawbury.

Within the Defence Helicopter Flying School, there were 2 Air Officer Commanding 22 Training Group commendations awarded.

Lt Andrew Westwood has been a driving force within the Defence Helicopter Flying School. As the Squadron Training Officer on 705 Naval Air Squadron, his task was the provision of Single Engine Rotary Wing training to ab-initio military pilots from all three Services on the Squirrel HT1/2 helicopter. He and his team have been responsible for the delivery of basic flying training in its purest form, at a stage which is critical to instilling correct handling techniques, airmanship, captaincy, discipline and the finest standards expected as routine from the British military rotary community.

The second commendation was awarded to Chief Petty Officer Stephen Hart who served as the Head of the Aircrewman Department within 705 Naval Air Squadron at the Defence Helicopter Flying School. Through sheer hard work and rigorous application over the last two years, he has completely transformed this critical role. Not only did he personally coordinate the delivery of Royal Navy Aircrewman Flying Training at the School, but he has also developed the Navigation Module of the Joint Aircrewman's Course from first principles. He has displayed outstanding commitment and knowledge of his subject along with the ability to work both independently and cohesively with his own and other Services.

Group Captain Jason Appleton, the Station Commander at RAF Shawbury said: "I am delighted to see the efforts of our personnel at RAF Shawbury and the Defence Helicopter Flying School recognised in this way. I am immensely proud of all the award recipients who have dedicated their time and energy to contribute directly to the world-leading training delivered at RAF Shawbury. The recipients will all receive their awards during special ceremonies to be held at RAF Shawbury during 2016 and I look forward to congratulating them and their families."

RAF Officer Awarded Royal Aeronautical Society Bronze Award

A pilot from 60 (R) Squadron, Defence Helicopter Flying School, RAF Shawbury has been awarded the prestigious Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS) Specialist Bronze Award for his aircrew performance coaching work.

Squadron Leader Davenhill is a Qualified Helicopter Instructor on No. 60 (R) Squadron on the Griffin helicopter. Since 2012, he has been an advocate and pioneer of the Aircrew Performance Coaching Scheme which he has introduced at RAF Shawbury.

Squadron Leader Davenhill explained: "Aircrew Performance Coaching was introduced into the RAF in 2009 in order to maximise the potential of aircrew, reduce failure rates, augment the investment in flying training and benefit aircrew under instruction. Performance Coaching originated in the world of sport where performance coaching is used by many elite athletes to enhance success."



He initially established the scheme at the Army Aviation Centre, Middle Wallop and developed it further on his arrival at RAF Shawbury introducing it at both the Defence Helicopter Flying School and the Central Air Traffic Control School.

His work with the Centre for Human Factors Training at RAF Cranwell and Loughborough University is helping to expand the scheme beyond simply helping failing individuals, to realise opportunities to enhance individual performance and success through coaching and self-analysis.

The Commandant of the Defence Helicopter Flying School, Colonel Jules Facer said: "There is direct benefit in examining the techniques used in professional sports coaching and transferring them to the military environment. Squadron Leader Davenhill has had a lasting and tangible effect on the training delivered at RAF Shawbury and is very deserving of this award."

Mr Les Goodchild visits Buckingham Palace to receive his MBE

Everyone at RAF Shawbury was delighted to hear that Mr Les Goodchild had received his MBE at a ceremony held at Buckingham Palace on Thursday 19th Nov.

Mr Goodchild was accepted as a Member to the Civil Division of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for his exceptional performance commanding Support Wing at RAF Shawbury. He is responsible for ensuring the safe and effective delivery of the Station's engineering support as well as overseeing the Information Management Hub.

On the welfare side, he has been personally responsible for the delivery of an all ranks dining complex, representing a generational change in living conditions on base.

A leading light in the Newport Rotary Club, he has also been heavily involved in their tremendous charity efforts. He has completed the London Marathon, ridden from London to Paris and taken part in the Prudential Ride London raising funds for a raft of good causes. His leadership, passion, drive and selflessness are an example to all and he has changed



Les Goodchild pictured with wife Diane and children Simon and Carrie-Ann.

the working and welfare environments at RAF Shawbury beyond all expectation.

Mr Goodchild said: "It was an honour to receive this award from HM Prince Charles. My family and I enjoyed the experience tremendously. I am fortunate to be surrounded by a great team of people for which I owe a debt of gratitude for their part in what has to be the pinnacle of my career supporting the Royal Air Force over a period in excess of 40 years."

RAF Shawbury pilots receive Master Pilots Awards

Two pilots from the Defence Helicopter Flying School, RAF Shawbury have been nominated by their flying peers for bringing "honour and respect" to the profession.

Flight Lieutenant Doug Brown and Mr Tim Nicholas, both helicopter instructors at RAF Shawbury, were awarded Master Air Pilot Certificates by the Honourable Company of Air Pilots at the Honours and Awards Banquet Dinner held recently at the Guild Hall, London. They were presented with their awards by the Grand Master of the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, Sqn Ldr Chris Ford MBE RAF (Ret'd). The award honours a pilot or navigator, who has in the opinion of the Honourable Company displayed qualities of airmanship and character which have brought honour and respect to the profession, especially courage, achievement and the highest standards of airmanship. It is regarded among the world's premier aviation accolades and is particularly noteworthy because the recipients are nominated by fellow pilots.

Flight Lieutenant Brown joined the RAF in 1984. He was posted to 72 Sqn at RAF Aldergrove flying the Wessex. In 1991 he moved to 28(AC) Sqn and during this tour was instrumental in rescuing 8 men from a capsized oil rig support barge in the South China Sea during Typhoon Fred; for this, he was awarded a Guild of Air Pilots and Navigators Grand Master's Commendation.

In 1992 he joined Search and Rescue (SAR) notching up 248 rescues. In 1996, his Sea King aircraft suffered engine failure during a rescue on the Isle of Skye and only his superb reactions and handling enabled the aircraft to be safely recovered.

Flight Lieutenant Brown qualified as a Qualified Helicopter Instructor (QHI) in 1998. He worked as the Training Officer on the Search and Rescue Training Unit (SARTU), followed by 2 tours at the Central Flying School (Helicopters) Sqn teaching QHIs before posting to the Central Flying School as an examiner responsible for instructional standards across the services. For his next tour, he commanded the SAR Standards and Evaluation Unit. Currently a Standards Officer for the Defence Helicopter Flying School, he now instructs on both the Squirrel and the Griffin helicopters.

Flight Lieutenant Brown has had an extraordinarily influential career, amassing over 8,100 hours on 24 aircraft types. His professionalism, dedication and high standards continue to influence and inspire the latest instructors and students. When asked about his award, Doug said: "I was exceptionally proud to be awarded a Master Air Pilot certificate. To be recognised in this way by members of one's own profession is a great honour."

Mr Nicholas has achieved 10,000 hours of military helicopter flying, since gaining his wings in 1982. He flew the Sea King helicopter all over the world for 17 years accruing 4,500 hours, serving with 819, 814, 706 and 826 Naval Air



Flt Lt Doug Brown and Mr Tim Nicholas with their Master Air Pilot Certificates.

Squadrons and 817 Squadron on a Royal Australian Navy Exchange.

In 1987 he became a Qualified Helicopter Instructor, teaching students and conducting instructor tuition at the Central Flying School (Helicopter). In this role he has passed on his passion for aviation to hundreds of helicopter instructors, gaining a high level of recognition in the instructional world.

On leaving the military he joined FB Heliservices (now Cobham Aviation Services) as a civilian instructor teaching RAF and RN students on the multi engine advanced rotary course on Sixty(R) squadron at the Defence Helicopter Flying School.

In parallel to his military career, his civilian flying exploits are equally impressive. Passionate about aviation, he has a plethora of aircraft types to his name including his self-built Streak Shadow and his Jodel. He flies today from Sleaford airfield where he has been influential in the running of the airfield and raising the standard of general aviation.

Aside from his impressive military and civilian career, it is the number of people he has influenced with his infectious enthusiasm for aviation that is most impressive. In terms of military pilots and crewmen, not including the instructors, he has instructed over 2,200 individuals. This is an outstanding contribution to military flying training and therefore to the front-line services.

When asked about his award Tim said: "This was an unexpected honour, but as you can imagine I'm absolutely delighted to have received such a prestigious award. The presentation at the Guildhall in London made it a very special occasion, which we enjoyed immensely".

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GRADUATIONS

Congratulations to the students of the Defence Helicopter Flying School, the Central Air Traffic Control School and the Central Flying School (H).



174 Single Engine Rotary Wing Course



175 Single Engine Rotary Wing Course



Flight Operations Assistants' Course (FOAC) 1049



Joint Air Traffic Control Course (JATCC) 405



Area Radar Training Course (ARTC) 284



No 368 Qualified Helicopter Instructor/Qualified Helicopter Crewman Instructor Course

DRIVE SAFELY

LOOK OUT ON

Happy New Year from the Health and Safety team! As we journey into 2016, the message about road safety and drink driving, in particular, is still one that we will be continually highlighting. Hopefully, all personnel will have seen our “crash” area on the main entrance road to the station. The star of the show has definitely been Burt (our resident jailbird and contortionist, aptly named as he was donated to us by Burtons gentleman’s outfitters) who has been found in a variety of poses during the festive period.

On a more serious note, please take a moment to consider the following information. Everyone has seen the devastating effects of drink driving and, so often, these tragedies can be avoided.

DRINK DRIVING STATISTICS

- On average 3,000 people are killed or seriously injured each year in drink drive collisions.
- Nearly one in six of all deaths on the road involve drivers who are over the legal alcohol limit.
- Drinking and driving occurs across a wide range of age groups but particularly among young men aged 17-29 in both casualties and positive breath tests following a collision. The Government’s most recent drink drive campaign aims to target this group. Detailed reporting on drink drive accidents and casualties started in 1979. At that time, there were around 1,640 fatalities in drink drive accidents in a total of 6,352 road deaths in all accidents. The total number of accidents for that year was 31,430. The total number of casualties of all types in drink drive accidents for 2013 was 8,290, of which the cause of 260 deaths was drink driving. A brilliant reduction you may say; however, that is still 260 deaths too many.
- And if you think you won’t get caught, more than half a million breath tests are carried out each year and on average

100,000 are found to be positive.

DRINKING AND DRIVING DON’T MIX

- The legal limit in the UK is 80 milligrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood. However, any amount of alcohol affects your ability to drive safely. The effects can include:
 - slower reactions
 - increased stopping distance
 - poorer judgement of speed and distance
 - reduced field of vision
- Alcohol also tends to make you feel over-confident and more likely to take risks when driving, which increases the danger to all road users, including yourself.
- There is no failsafe guide as to how to stay under the legal alcohol limit or how much you can drink and still drive safely. It depends on:
 - your weight, sex, age, metabolism
 - stress levels
 - an empty stomach
 - the amount and type of alcohol
- The only safe option is not to drink if you plan to drive. Never offer a drink to someone else who is driving.

THE MORNING AFTER

- If you’ve been out drinking you may still be affected by alcohol the next day. You may feel OK, but you may still be unfit to drive or over the legal alcohol limit.
- You could still lose your licence if you drive the next day when you’re still over the legal alcohol level.
- It’s impossible to get rid of alcohol any faster. A shower, a cup of coffee or other ways of ‘sobering up’ will not help.



On average
3,000 people are
killed or seriously
injured each year
in drink drive
collisions.



THE ROAD

By Mrs Jan Sheffield

It just takes time.

THE LAW

- Driving or attempting to drive whilst above the legal limit or unfit through drink carries a maximum penalty of 6 months' imprisonment, a fine of up to £5,000 and a minimum 12 months driving ban.
 - An endorsement for a drink-driving offence remains on a driving licence for 11 years, so it is 11 years before a convicted driver will have a "clean" licence again.
- But additionally it is not always about drink driving. Some other road safety concerns are as follows:

Rural roads not racetracks

Because there is less traffic, some drivers feel a false sense of security on country roads. However, they are statistically the most dangerous for all types of road user, accounting for six in 10 fatal crashes. Car occupants and motorcyclists are twice as likely to be killed on a country road as an urban road; cyclists are more than three times as likely.

Country roads may sometimes appear empty, but they are full of unpredictable hazards. They are shared spaces used by pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, slow farm vehicles, livestock and wild animals – all of which have a right to be there. They are often narrow with blind corners and bends, pot holes and debris, and no pavements or cycle paths. All these factors mean the 60mph limit on most country roads is too high for safety, giving drivers insufficient time to react

in an emergency. Yet country roads are plagued by fast drivers, many of who risk horrific crashes by speeding, taking bends too fast and overtaking. Drivers can help make country roads safer by always driving as though someone or something could be round every corner – that means staying well under speed limits, and slowing right down for bends, brows and other hazards, in rural communities, and whenever visibility or conditions are poor. Drivers should also avoid overtaking, unless essential and 100% safe.

WAKE UP!

Driving after little sleep, or failing to take regular breaks, can be lethal. Yet many drivers take the risk, with horrific consequences. Tired drivers are estimated to cause one in 10 fatal crashes on UK roads, rising to one in five on motorways and other monotonous trunk roads. Tired driver crashes kill at least 300 people on UK roads every year, although the true figure could be much higher as it can be hard to prove tiredness as the cause of any individual crash.

Drivers can help make our roads safer by understanding the dangers of driving tired, taking regular breaks and pulling over somewhere safe straight away if they feel sleepy at the wheel. We also need greater awareness of sleep apnoea, a medical condition which disrupts sleep, causing acute tiredness – it is thought to affect 700,000 people in the UK, and is treatable but often not recognised.

DRIVE SMART

Driving is the most dangerous thing most of us do regularly: you're operating a potentially lethal machine in an unpredictable public environment, so it requires full concentration at all times. Despite this, many drivers try to multitask – with mobile phones or other distractions such as eating – dramatically increasing their risk of causing a crash. More than two in five crashes are thought to be caused, at least in part, by driver distraction.

If you talk on a phone at the wheel – hands-free or hand-held – your risk of causing an injury or death is four times as high. Use a phone to text, email or browse the internet and the risk is much higher still. In fact, the impact of using a phone on reaction times is on a par with drink driving. Yet a huge proportion of drivers put themselves and others in danger for the sake of a call or message, whether flouting the law by using a hand-held phone or wrongly believing that hands-free is a safe alternative.

Drivers can help make our roads safer by putting phones out of sight and reach when driving to avoid temptation, ideally in the boot. On long journeys, you should take regular breaks and use these to check for messages. Phones and driving are a deadly combination, and no call or message is worth a life.

This list is obviously not exhaustive but, as we look ahead to a busy 2016 on Station, please remember that Road Safety is not just for Christmas. Keep safe, keep well.

THE LG GROVES AWARDS

By Sqn Ldr Gary James

Who was Louis Grimble (LG) Groves and what is his connection to Aviation?

A small number of Meteorological Reconnaissance Units were formed in early 1941 to help the war effort – increasing to a peak of 18 squadrons with 750 personnel. By the end of World War II over 16,000 met. sorties had been flown and 52 aircraft did not return. Most of the meteorological reconnaissance squadrons were disbanded in 1946.

Sgt Louis Grimble Groves, Met Air Observer, was killed whilst flying with 518's sister squadron, No. 517 Met Squadron, on 10th September 1945. He was the Met Air Observer in a Halifax Met Mk III X9-N aircraft (RG380) which took off from Brawdy for an EPICURE met sortie (across the Bay of Biscay to approximately 43N 14W). Bad weather at base on return caused a diversion to Weston Zoyland and the aircraft flew into high ground in the Quantock Hills. There were no survivors.

In 1946 Sergeant Groves' parents, Major and Mrs Keith Groves, instituted three prizes to be awarded annually in memory of their son. The 1946 prizes and awards, made in 1947, were the Aircraft Safety prize, the Meteorology Prize and the Award for Met Air Observers. In 1960 Major and Mrs Groves made a further donation to increase the value of the prizes and awards and set up a fourth award, named the Second Memorial Award. It is given at the discretion of the Ministry of Defence for meritorious work in any of the fields covered by the original prizes and awards, or in operational meteorology.



Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal R J Knighton MA (Cantab) MA DipFM CEng FIMechE presents the award to Sqn Ldr Leach

RAF Officer Awarded LG Groves Memorial Award for Flight Safety on the ground

Outstanding contributions to Flight Safety were recognised at a special ceremony held at the RAF Museum Hendon recently.

Squadron Leader Kim Leach from RAF Shawbury was awarded the LG Groves Memorial Award for Flight Safety on the Ground. The award was presented by Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal R J Knighton MA (Cantab) MA DipFM CEng FIMechE.

Squadron Leader Leach was nominated by the SFSO due to initiating and developing a campaign in partnership with The British Horse Society that will significantly enhance safety, especially for horse riders in Low Flying Area 9.

She said: "I am extremely honoured

to receive such a prestigious award and I feel very proud that this safety campaign has been recognised. With helicopters travelling at speeds of up to 130 mph at low level it can be very difficult to spot horse riders, despite the very best lookout. This is because horses and dark coloured clothing tends to blend into the background. Against a wood line, a cropped field or a stone wall, for example, it can be almost impossible to see the rider until the aircraft is less than a few hundred metres away. By wearing an item of high visibility clothing while on horseback, the rider gives the pilot a far greater chance of seeing them".

Group Captain Jason Appleton, Station Commander said: "Since the start of the campaign, RAF Shawbury has distributed over 5000 items of high visibility clothing to riders within Low Flying Area 9. The take-up and feedback from riders has been excellent and we look forward to building on this success in future years to ensure a safer operating environment for both aircrew and the riding community."

2016 Awards

Later this year there will be a request for nominations for worthy candidates for the 2016 LG Groves Awards which will be marking their 70th Anniversary. Please have a think if there are any worthy candidates within your section. This is definitely not limited to aircrew!

(ATM) Force Commander Visits CATCS

The Air Traffic Management (ATM) Force Commander, Group Captain Gus Wells, visited the Central Air Traffic Control School (CATCS) on Thursday 26th November to meet some of the trainees on Joint Air Traffic Control Course 409.

The trainees are currently learning basic radar controlling skills which, after a relevant theory lesson, are taught on the modern simulators at CATCS. The Force Commander also provided an updated brief about recent activities within the ATM Force to the numerous controllers and operations staff at RAF Shawbury. Air Traffic Control has been taught at RAF Shawbury since 1950 and the CATCS now teaches RAF, RN and Army personnel to manage aircraft movements both on the ground and in the air.



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Taking Football To Africa



The Appeal has Record Year in 2015

The RAF Shawbury based Taking Football to Africa and Beyond Charitable Appeal has had another record breaking year. The Appeal, run by Wing Commander Neil Hope MBE from RAF Shawbury, in North Shropshire, provides aid through football worldwide by collecting unwanted and donated football shirts and re-distributing them to the needy across the world.

In 2015 the Appeal, which is run in co-ordination with the RAF Football Association, has made 24 deliveries resulting in 27380 items of football kit and school uniform being delivered to children and adults in 15 countries across the world. The total included

7256 football shirts. The totals make 2015 the most successful year to date, since its inception in 2006.

In 2015 the Appeal made 10 deliveries into Kenya in East Africa and members of the Appeal team visited the country twice in the year. In June a team of 11 military and civilian personnel delivered over 4500 items across 32 deliveries including to schools and clubs in the huge slum areas of Kibera, Kibagare and Mathare.

Other highlights in 2015 have included the arrival of kits which started their journey in 2014 to Pakistan and to the Refugee camps on the Turkey/Syria border through its partner charity, NPAC (National Police Aid Convoys).

A ground breaking delivery also broke down the political divisions on the Gaza Strip when Flt Lt Kev Thom made deliveries and provided coaching to children from both Palestine and Israel.



Deliveries have also been made to schools in Guinea, Mexico, South Africa, Uganda, Jamaica, UAE, Nepal, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, The Gambia and Zambia.

Neil said, 'I continue to be amazed at the generosity of all of the people, clubs and school as well as those at the County Football Associations and The FA. In 2015 this generosity has meant we have been able to deliver a 'smile through football' to the faces of children and adults across the globe. As football is truly THE global sport, something which may be considered a small donation to people in the UK is a life changing gift to those with so little in places like the slum towns of Kenya and areas across the world.'



To date the Appeal has delivered 129,838 items, including 42,099 football shirts to 51 countries worldwide. The Appeal team will continue to collect and deliver in 2016 with a visit to Kenya planned for October.



~~I COULD...~~
~~I SHOULD...~~
~~I WOULD...~~
I DID.

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CFS(H) and Air Traffic Control Support Father Christmas



Staff deliver gifts to Hope House



Santa arrives at Hope House



Santa assisted by Sgt Jimmy Brandford



Santa giving presents at Hope House



Santa presents a cheque from CFS(H) to Abi

Last November, ATC started an initiative to help those less fortunate. The idea was to arrange for donations to be made by military personnel, and their families, of Christmas gifts for the children of a local hospice. The chosen hospice was Hope House in Oswestry, which is also the chosen charity of CFS (H).

Hope House provides specialist nursing care and support to young people and young adults from Shropshire, Cheshire, North and Mid Wales. Their support extends to the whole family – from diagnosis, throughout the lifetime of the child and beyond.

The RAF Shawbury community were extremely generous in their donations, with over 70 brand new Christmas toys being donated. A large portion of these gifts were selflessly donated by 660 Sqn, who opted to forego their usual 'Secret Santa' event in aid of this initiative. These gifts were then skilfully wrapped by personnel from ATC before being delivered.

As everyone knows December is always a very busy time for Father Christmas, so when CFS(H) Sqn, heard that he needed a hand for some special drops in Shropshire and North Wales the Second in Command, Lt Cdr Nick Bane jumped to the fore. Using a Squirrel helicopter piloted by Nick, the crew were also able to visit the satellite facility at Ty Gobaith, which is just to the South of Conway in North Wales. Santa's visit and few carols provided a welcome boost to the children's run up to Christmas at both locations.

Flt Lt Dave Deighton, from CFS (H) in liaison with Abi Williams from Hope House coordinated the visit, which included assistance from RAF Shawbury's Air Traffic Control who assisted Santa in delivering the presents. The visit from CFS (H) also allowed the Sqn to present a cheque, for the Sqn's efforts in collecting and donating to the Hospice.

Hope House provide a fantastic level of support to children with life limiting illnesses. They provide them with a fantastic level of inclusive support and facilities to encourage and stimulate interaction including hydro-therapy, light and sound rooms, music etc. The children are also visited once a week by Pets for Therapy in the form of a black Labrador called 'Max'. Pictured is Santa giving Max a friendly pat and special Xmas dog treat.

Hope House is the chosen long term charity supported by CFS (H) Sqn, in recognition of the valuable work they do to improve the short lives of youngsters with illness and also provide after care for the families, as and when required. For more information on the amazing work conducted by Hope House and to support a worthwhile cause please go to www.hopehouse.org.uk



By Maj Dan McBride CFS (H) and Sgt Jimmy Brandford (ATC)

First, and Possibly Last, ULTRA MARATHON

Following the tragedy of a still birth 10 months ago, I started to train for the Shropshire Ultra Marathon. My aim was to raise as much money for the charity, Still Birth and Neonatal Deaths (SANDS), which is based in Oswestry. I wanted to raise awareness of the charity, and the excellent work that is done to help support others that are suffering the same tragic loss as my fiancé and I.

Having never ran more than 13 miles, on road, on the flat, this gruelling event, following where possible the Shropshire Way, meandering over the many hills of south Shropshire, was set to be a huge physical and mental challenge.

Training throughout the summer, I was soon completing marathon type distances, over the hills, week in week out. I was coupling this with one or two smaller 12 mile runs during the week. With 3 weeks to go I set out on my first 40 miler, confident that if I could manage this then I would be able to complete the required 55 miles on the day. 10 miles in and I was suffering from an unmanageable pain resonating from my hip. Following consultation with the physio, it appeared that I had damaged my IT Band, with rest the only real cure. So no more running before the event!

Four days prior to the big day, I received a phone call advising me that due to low initial numbers, and several late cancelations, the event had been scrapped, and would no longer be taking place. Although I was still suffering with hip pain, I was devastated. Several months training,

weekends lost to running alone in the hills, and all was gone in a single phone call. I was determined not to be beaten, especially as I had raised a substantial amount of money; so I decided to run the route regardless.

I managed to track down 2 competitors that were due to run a slightly shorter version (43 miles) and convince them to join me, once I had completed the first 12 miles. At 6 o'clock on a dark and wet Monday morning, my amazing support crew (Fiancé, farther in law to be, and 2 trusty hounds) placed me at what would have been the start line, and watched me disappear in to the dark. I had pre-arranged to meet my support team at several designated spots along the route, in order for me to

re-fuel, and also to give me something to aim for. The first stop was Wem, where, along with my support I met Lee and Rachel, who would run to the end with me. Arriving at The Dog In The Lane (Near Battlefield), having completed 20 miles, I was still feeling remarkably fresh, and my hip was holding out. Lt Dawn Tingle (ATC) was waiting to join in the fun, and had prearranged to run the next leg. We arrived at Lyth Hill Country Park 2 hours later, with 31 miles complete, 24 to go. At this point things started to get difficult. The terrain changed to successive farmers' fields and dirt tracks, and the altitude changes where becoming much greater. Oh, and the chafing started.

Saying good-by to Dawn, we set off for the hills. Rattelinghope was the final stop before the last push. We were greeted there by the support crew selflessly tucking in to scampi and chips, and sampling some of the many ales that are on offer. Waving goodbye to temptation, we started the two



big climbs over the Long Mynd, and headed for the finish. The second, much steeper climb took us up to the glider school, and rather annoyingly, within a stone's throw of home. Blocking out this, and the pain of the constant chafing, we disappeared in the dusk and headed for the finish line at Craven Arms.

With head torches working overtime we arrived at the finish. 55 gruelling miles complete, and in remarkably high spirits, the feeling of self-achievement was almost overwhelming.

The previous 10 months have been extremely difficult for my fiancé and I, and all of our family. The support that we have received from all corners of the earth, including RAF Shawbury ATC, has been heart-warming. Spending hour after hour alone running over the hills certainly allows plenty of time for contemplation.

By Sgt Jimmy Brandford



A huge thank you to all that have supported me, and allowed me, to complete what for me was definitely a 'once in a life time' event raising £1,600 for SANDS.

RAF Shawbury Charities Committee *Update!*

Did you know the Station Charities Committee meets quarterly to discuss ongoing fundraising projects and consider applications for donations on behalf of the Station?

In 2015, RAF Shawbury raised £10,000 for Walking with the Wounded and £9,500 for Cuan Wildlife Rescue. The Station Charities Committee would like to thank everyone who fundraised or donated in 2015.

THE NEW CHARITIES!

Many worthy causes were put forward for consideration to be supported by RAF Shawbury in 2016, and the decision was a difficult one! Finally, it was agreed that this year RAF Shawbury will support the national charity Still-birth and Neo-natal Death (SANDS) and a local charity which supports homeless and vulnerable people - The Shrewsbury Ark.

SANDS provides support to bereaved families and works to improve the care they receive. They also fund vital research to prevent more families suffering the loss of their babies' life. Donations help towards the funding required to do this.

The Shrewsbury Ark relies entirely on generous donations to survive. Everything given is used purely to keep offering services to those who need them. The Shrewsbury Ark provides the basic things that most people take for granted. Their clients receive warm clothes, bedding, personal items and a hot meal or cup of tea and a chat when they need it. They also provide professional advice or help and give support to those who need it.

You can find more information about this year's charities at:
www.uk-sands.org
<http://www.shrewsburyark.co.uk/>

Gate Collection Success!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Children in Need Gate collection in November – you raised £218.60!

It was a chilly and rainy start to the morning but it was worth it. Thanks go to SAC Suzie Luukas for organising the event!

GET INVOLVED!

Do you have a fundraising idea?

If so, we want to hear from you! If you are fundraising for a charity, you are requested to inform OIC Stn Charities.

Do you want to help raise money for a good cause?

Then why not join the Station Charities Committee!

For more information contact via the email account SHY-CharitiesCommittee@mod.uk

Children in Need



RAF Shawbury personnel generously donated towards the Children in Need Appeal on Friday 13th November by kindly donating a grand total of £218.60 to personnel collecting at the main gate at the start of the working day.

Thank you to those that took part in the collection and to personnel on station for donating
RAF Shawbury Charities Committee

ATC Christmas Jumper Day

On Wed 16 Dec personnel from ATC got in to the Christmas spirit. For a small charitable donation dress regulations were relaxed, as members of the Sqn modelled some strong festive knits. All money raised will be donated to the Stillbirth and Neonatal Deaths charity SANDS.



Airplay Fundraiser For Children in Need

On the 11th of November, RAF Shawbury Airplay members raised £46 for Children in Need.

The evening was a great success and everyone was eager to give what they could to support the cause. Some young people came prepared with bags of coins ready to enter the different challenges and activities. There were lots of prizes too which really brought out some people's competitive sides, especially the leaders. My favourite challenge was splat the rat- much harder than it looks!

Here's what the young people had to say:
"There were lots of activities that were really fun!"

Jake Appleton (age 11)



"We did lots of different activities such as guess the name of the teddy and beat the buzzer. There was even a tombola too! I found this really good in the way it got people involved in fund raising."

Callum Smith (aged 13)

"I think that the fundraiser that we did was a great success. It was based in the youth club building at RAF Shawbury. We did several activities such as pin the bow tie on Pudsey and decorate a Pudsey biscuit. We also did a lucky dip that

seemed to be very popular. Overall I really enjoyed this it was a brilliant way to make money and a good way to bring the youth club members closer together."

Taran Lyth (aged 14)

"At the fundraiser there was a tombola, a lucky dip, a wack the rat, pin the bow tie on Pudsey and guess the teddy bear's name – it was biscuit! And also how many sweets were in the jar and you got to keep the jar. It was really fun and a lot of people came to youth club so we did really well!"

Gabriella Caldwell (aged 12)

"I found it to be an interesting time, particularly the lucrative tombola."

James Compton (aged 13)

CATCS Walk Home for Christmas

On 17th Dec 2015 instructors from the Central Air Traffic Control School (CATCS), controllers from the Air Traffic Control Squadron and some local veterans 'Walked home for Christmas' from RAF Shawbury to Wem in support of the charity Walking With the Wounded, raising £120.

This charity raises funds to help retrain and re-skill wounded veterans and support them in finding new careers outside the military. The charity has completed expeditions to the North Pole, South Pole and Everest with wounded veterans leading the charge. They encourage volunteers to take on their own smaller challenges to raise money and awareness for the charity. And so it was we departed the CATCS crew room at 1200 on our last day before Christmas with high visibility vests and santa hats sporting their logo. Special permission to cross the airfield on foot meant a 3 mile short cut that would enable us to complete our 8 mile walk in daylight. We were blessed with fine winter weather and a route over Grinshill that allowed a quick stop for refreshment in the village pub. Here the locals were very interested in our challenge and the charity we were representing, giving a generous donation for our efforts. Our second planned watering hole was unfortunately closed, so it was a long slog from Grinshill to Wem where we eventually received a warm welcome at the Tilly Raven to toast the end of our challenge.



ROYAL OFFSHORE RACING COMMITTEE

It would appear that to get the most out of life it is necessary to have a Bucket List of things that you would like to do before you depart this mortal earth or before dementia sets in and you cannot remember what you wanted to do in the first place. Well if you are a sailor then high on that list is going to be The Royal Offshore Racing Committee (RORC) Fastnet Race.

The Fastnet Race takes its name from a light house off the Southern Coast of Ireland, which acts as the turning point having sailed from Cowes, before then returning back to Plymouth. As a result the race is quite long at approximately 605 nautical miles; however, the race is made all the more testing due to the fact that you, your crew and your boat are exposed to the Southern Approaches, where the might of the Atlantic Ocean sweeps up the gap between the British West Coast and Ireland.

The race has been held every 2 years since 1925 and is notorious for being one of the more difficult short races in modern sailing. This was proved on the 28th RORC Fastnet Race in 1979, when a worse than forecast storm wreaked havoc on a fleet of 306 boats. South westerly

winds evolved around a deepening low pressure on the third day and what was forecast to Force 6-7, actually ended up being Force 10-11 (whole gale force to violent storm). The emergency services, naval forces and civilian vessels from around the West Coast of the English Channel were summoned to help in what became the largest ever rescue operation in peace-time, involving around 4,000 people. The storm resulted in over 77 boats being rolled over/capsized, 5 boats sunk and 18 fatalities (15 yachtsmen and 3 rescuers).

When the trawl for interested volunteers was put out by Major Nick Barton (2IC, 3 Regt AAC) I was amid a small and apprehensive bunch of AAC Offshore sailors who expressed an interest. The AAC had reserved the use of Redcoat, which is a Sigma

38 foot sailing boat, owned by the Joint Services Sailing Training Centre (JSASTC). It later transpired that half of those who volunteered had only just completed their basic competent crew course and were either airtroopers or lance corporals. It was also noted that none of us had any experience of the Fastnet Race. I remember thinking to myself "This is going to be fun?" as our group attended the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) courses in First Aid, Sea Survival and Offshore Survival in Jan 15. Following the 1979 fatalities, at least 80% of the crew now must have attended one of these courses and so not to be found lacking the AAC Offshore Squad attended all three en-masse.

Pre-race training on Redcoat was conducted over a number of months starting with the Army Offshore Regatta (AOR) held in May 15. This was a first opportunity for the Squad to sail together under Maj Dan McBride (Skipper for the AOR) and after 4-5 days of competitive sailing resulted in the AAC Team coming second in class and third in the long passage race. Importantly it had allowed the Team to get together, sail competitively and conduct some very important spinnaker and man overboard training. The feature of this race for the crew was being able to fly the brand new AAC Spinnaker¹, which among the very uniform Joint Services sails stood out a mile. This was then followed in June with the Cowes to St. Malo race. Organised by the RORC

and open as a qualifying race, it had far more competitors and our boat/squad was joined by Maj Nick Sharpe (Skipper for the Fastnet Race).

This race took place over a weekend and proved to be another good shakeout for the crew. It was also interesting to note that the presence of an AAC/Army yacht was also appreciated by a much larger civilian owned boat. After the race the boats have to enter St Malo Harbour via a large sea lock, which with 20 plus boats can become cramped. Once the lock was open the boats quickly moved in and Redcoat took a sensible point of clinging onto the right side of the lock. A larger British vessel then moved close to Redcoat on the left side, however, it was promptly rammed astern by a smaller French vessel. The AAC crew quickly welcomed the larger boat on our port side and held it fast, much to the appreciation of the skipper and crew of the larger vessel. This practical but small act went on to achieve specific commendation to the Army Offshore sailing fraternity.

So the AAC Fastnet crew ultimately arrived on 10 Aug 15 at JSASTC Gosport. The plan was to conduct 4-5 days of sail and race training before then competing in the Fastnet Race which started on Sun 16 Aug. The preparation varied from spinnaker to anchor drills and included lots of man over-board practice; it should always be remembered that safety is always a priority and nobody would be left behind. The crew consisted of Maj Nick Sharpe (Skipper), Maj Dan McBride (Mate), Maj Nick Barton (Watchleader and Coord), Capt Dave Macklin (Watchleader), L/Cpls Sam Hodson, Mike Ings, Atpr Josh Bulpin (3 Regt) and Atpr Max Sellin (4 Regt). As a result the



AAC AOR team with their trophies: (L-R Maj Nick Barton, Capt Dave Macklin, Atpr Josh Bulpin, L/Cpl Sam Hodson, Maj Dan McBride (Skipper) and Atpr Joe.

E FASTNET RACE

crew was evenly split both in terms of experience and rank. It should also be noted that preparation was more than just sailing around Solent Waters. It also involved taking Redcoat out of the water and scrubbing down the underside of the boat to make sure she was as quick as possible.

At 1100 hrs on Sun 16 Aug, Redcoat and the AAC Team slipped from East Cowes Marina to parade past our safety equipment check i.e. all crew on deck with life jackets and with storm sails fit to the forestay and mast. Redcoat, due to the size and year was placed in IRC Class 4 (which would be 5th out of about 6 classes to start the race). Unfortunately, due to the complete lack of wind it really did not matter which class you were in at the start as all classes just bobbed for about an hour trying to cross the line. When the wind did eventually pick up it meant that all 304 boats were in very close proximity in the Solent. Unfortunately, the Solent narrows to the West as it goes past The Needles, which made for a very 'sporty hour' as boats of all classes jostled for position. At this point we were all reminded just how unforgiving sailing can be, as a very large American boat called 'Lucky' ran aground just outside the Needles, which ended her race and forced her to withdraw many hours later.

The wind unfortunately was short lived and by the evening on the Sunday it had dropped to nothing. While the wind may drop it is always worth noting that the action of the tide and its flow can also have an important part to play. As a result in the dark it was noted that we were falling back and losing our place and so we were forced to try and anchor at a depth of 55 metres or face

going backwards on the tide. After what appeared to be lifetime, trying different anchor and chain solutions the anchor held. As dawn approached we were once more able to make progress, albeit the fleet had now spread considerably. The following 24 hours proved to be torturous due to the lack of wind, however, we had managed to claw our way along the South Coast to get to Lands End by last light on Tue 18 Aug. As we rounded Lands End there must have been a rather expensive party in the hotel complex, as our crew were treated to a very spectacular fireworks display. The triumph of achieving this turning point seemed to have been rewarded in spectacular fashion; however, there was still the looming dread of the Southern Approaches.

The outbound trip to the Fastnet Rock went reasonably well, however, after rounding things started to go quite poorly for Redcoat. The wind had now picked up to Force 6 – 7 which was quite sporty, however, it also meant that the boat was heeled over a lot more on different points of sail. The engine was being run about once every 4 hours to charge the batteries, necessary for external/ internal lighting, radios and instruments, like depth and wind. Unfortunately, we had noted that on Redcoat on a port tack i.e. the wind coming over the left bow, would pick up contaminated fuel and block the fuel lines and filters causing an engine failure. As a result our engine 'packed up' with over 2 days and nights of sailing left with no lights, radios or engines. At this point I believe that quite a few of the civilian boats might have retired, however, in the Army we are taught to improvise, overcome and mitigate risk. As a result each Watch member had their



St Malo - AAC Battle Flag and French Courtesy Flag with a Fastnet Flag in the background

allotted arcs of look out and 'actions on' in case they saw anything and we were able to conserve battery power to emergency use. During the evenings it was also noted that the helms had managed to overtake approximately 6 – 7 boats. This was no small feat bearing in mind there was minimal lighting and head torches were used for the lighting the compass and for checking the trim of the sails.

At 1620 hrs on Fri 21 Aug Redcoat approached the last leg of the race and although there were few people to witness it, the crew could not resist to raise the AAC Spinnaker once more and rejoice in the splendid sight. It was noted that at 1835 hrs the AAC Crew crossed the Finish Line after 5 days of gruelling sailing with no power, no engine, little battery power but 'With all crew firing on all cylinders'. As we berthed at 1900 hrs we were wet cold and tired but could just hear the prize giving commentator giving a prize to winner of the Sigma Class. It might have disheartened another team to know that they had not won it, however, to our crew of 'would be' sailors

and 'Fastnet virgins' we were more than happy to have finished the race knowing that we were the only truly amateur crew, with no previous knowledge who had demonstrated tenacity against every adversity and come through safely. Back slaps, beers and 'cheesy grins' all round.

From a personal perspective each member gained 901 miles sail experience over 14 days with 63 night hours. From an AAC perspective, the Corps was able to compete effectively and achieved an excellent level of representation and PR in an international arena. The crew also potentially gained 1 Yachtmaster Ocean, 2 Yachtmaster Offshore and 2 Day Skipper qualifications, along with a potential place on board the Army Offshore boat for one of the airtroopers, who despite little previous experience proved to be an excellent helm.

By Maj Dan McBride

¹ The Spinnaker is the largest sail on the boat, is the most powerful and yet made out of the lightest, normally brightly coloured fabric. As a result it can be very tricky to use correctly and can be fraught with problems which could lead to irrevocable damage to the sail.

RAF ROAD RACING Championships

I bet Team Sky don't get MT at 0530, then self drive across country through rush hour traffic to sign on for an 0830 race. Myself and Flt Lt Fay Jordan were wondering why we'd not followed fellow RAF Shawbury Cycling Club member Jamie Booth's example and spent the night over at RAF Cranwell, where the RAF Road Champs were being held, as we negotiated the UK's motorway system with one eye on the clock and another on the 'little green light of death' affixed to the dashboard.

The 3 of us were representing the Station in two races: Fay was in the Ladies' Race at 0930 (going off at the same time as the Men's Support Race for Cat 4s & racing newbies). Jamie and myself were going off at 1400 in the Senior Race. Race lengths were 3 and 5 laps respectively of an 8 mile circuit. The circuit itself was predominately fast and flat with the finish at the end of a vicious 16% climb which was short and sharp, much like a knife to the heart as it turned out!

On arrival, Fay went to sign in and refused the kind offer of an RAF Jersey to race in. I busied myself setting up her bike on the turbo trainer and making sure her race wheels were pumped up. When I'd done that, I dropped her spare wheels with the support wagon for use in the event of a puncture. There were plenty of ladies prepping bikes and warming up by gently spinning around the car park, eyeing me suspiciously. I think they all thought that Fay had brought a mechanic! Strangely, some of them had bought their parents, although we'd seen nothing in the Admin Order about parental supervision! We were now worried that Fay would receive a time penalty from the Judges as her Mum & Dad hadn't made the trip up from the Isle of White. Fay returned and hopped on the turbo for a 20 minute warm up whilst we discussed what tactics she should employ during the race. We agreed that Lap 1 should be spent seeing what the course was like as once again we differed from Team Sky in our approach to race preparation in that we hadn't carried out any sort of route recce.



Lap 2 should be spent chasing down any attacks and Lap 3 should be spent going gloriously off to the front in a race-winning solo effort. In retrospect, a little more knowledge of the finishing climb other than 'this is Lincolnshire, it can't be more than a little ramp' would have been more of a planning aid and the chest splitting, leg burning pain we all subsequently experienced would have been a little less of an unpleasant surprise.

I'll let Fay describe how her race went:

Unsure what to expect and blown away by the professional attitude of the girls preparing to race, I packed my jersey pocket with a few gels and cycled over to the race brief. It was explained that the Ladies race would take place at the same time as the Men's Support race and due to the rules laid out by British Cycling both races were required to start together. After a cycle to the start line, the peloton lined up to begin the race. Ladies mixed in with men with everybody fighting to get to the front. My game plan was to stay with the first ladies throughout the race and ignore any male riders. A good plan I thought, however once we started and the motorbike led us out onto the Lincolnshire roads, it soon became apparent to me that it was hard to spot the female riders amongst the men

as almost everybody was in RAF kit and changing position in an attempt to be at the front of the pack. After a couple of miles there were five girls in contention and I had quickly worked out that an athletic blonde female by the name of Lucy Nell was the girl that was going to control the race. From that point on I decided to change my game plan to stick on her wheel. Towards the end of the first lap we were aware the 'hill' was fast approaching. Now, I spent 4 years in Lincolnshire and the only hill I could recall was the main hill in the centre of town leading up to the Cathedral. Unbeknown to me, and many other riders, the hill we had all discounted turned out to be 16% gradient and long enough to have you gasping for air and wondering why you felt like your legs had stopped working! I managed to stay with the front pack up the hill and on Lucy's wheel in order to ensure I was in contention for the race. At this point there were now only 3 girls in the front pack and we were racing for 1st to 3rd position. The next two laps were pretty uneventful but with every break, Lucy made an attempt to stay with the leader so it turned out to be some pretty solid interval training! Nearing the end of the last lap I was aware that I would need to make a move before the hill in order to stand any chance of taking the first place position, however Lucy was looking too strong and chasing down each attack that was made. I decided to go for gold on the last hill climb but unfortunately I did not have the legs or the lungs! I managed to hold on for 2nd place to an incredible RAF Champion who most definitely showed me how road racing is supposed to be done. Collapsing over the line, I was glad I didn't have 2 more laps to do like Phil and Jamie!

Phil carries on:

Quite rightly, Fay was now able to relax over the lunchtime period whilst basking in her second place glory and selection for the Inter-Services race,

A number of lessons were learned from the day as a whole; travel up the night before, recce the course, use the showers at the stadium not the swimming pool as you'll look daft showering in your underwear, get a minibus with aircon and keep an eye on the fuel gauge.

although in actual fact she spent most of the time on the phone to her MTB wheel sponsors trying to square away a new rear wheel. I got changed and soon discovered that I was one of only a handful of entrants not wearing the new RAF kit; my all black Paramount CRT kit would stick out like a sore thumb which would hinder my ability to make any moves un-noticed quite difficult. Jamie and I lined up for our race as planned, although the blazing sunshine had raised hydration issues. Luckily Fay would be on hand at the start/finish to replenish water bottles as we went through, if required. The only potential issue with ensuring that you are properly hydrated at the start of a race is that you may need an 'admin break' in the early stage of the race. If you're the 'patron' of the 'peloton' in a 'Grand Tour' you can instruct the riders to slow down or even stop while you are taking care of the issue at hand, today it would be a case of grinning and bearing it!

The race brief was completed in the usual British Cycling manner; race smart, don't cross solid white lines, don't chuck bottles or gel wrappers and avoid the gravel on the final turn before the climb. Most amateur races in the UK take place on open roads, relying on motorcycle outriders and Marshalls on corners to ask traffic to stop as the riders come through. Although motorists have no legal obligation to stop, the vast majority do; only very occasionally do you find yourself in a potential head-on with a car. We rolled out from the start under the control of the commissaires who dropped the flag just after the first corner. Immediately the pace increased, the best place to be in a group during a race is near the front so both of us made the effort to get there. I sat in the front 5 riders for a mile or so then thought I'd have little chip off the front to see if anyone would come with me to get a breakaway going. Unfortunately, nobody seemed interested and as I didn't really fancy my chances in maintaining a 40 mile breakaway on my own, I reigned myself in and sat in at the front for the remainder of Lap 1. As we hit the hill the tempo increased as everyone jostled to be in a good position at the front as the incline increased. I knew

that if I attacked a hill like this too hard I would suffer, so I span up whilst maintaining contact with the bunch, fairly content that I would be able to chase back on easily enough as the course flattened out through the finish. This was the pattern for my race until the end of Lap 3 when it properly exploded as those with climbing ability attacked up the hill, gaining a gap of about 30 seconds on the group. About 15 riders went up the road in the selection with the intent of staying away, leaving another 12 or so of us to try and organise the chase. This attack had pretty much blown the rest of the peloton away, forcing a number of riders to either abandon or sit up and use the remainder of the race as a training ride. We could just see the tete de la course up the road, myself and Jamie realised that if we could get our group to work we stood a good chance of pulling them back, so we tried to get a chain gang together to through & off – hopefully riding at a higher tempo than the leading group! A portion of our group seemed happy to either sit in and not work or just didn't know the form, either way the Shawbury contingent certainly pulled more than its fair share of turns at the front. Just as we ran out of flat we made the catch, unfortunately I'd pretty much cooked my legs and the penultimate time up the hill left me in a small group about 20 seconds back although Jamie did well to stay with the leading group for the final time around. Again we worked hard in a paceline to get back on but didn't quite make it back on. At the hill I sat on the back of the group while they raced up amongst themselves. Luckily I was able to use the energy I saved by conserving myself (or being lazy!) up the hill to power past the now blown remnants of my little group and take a fairly credible 21st place. Not bad for my 46 year old legs on a course that didn't really suit. Jamie started hard on the final attack up the hill only to get a chronic cramp half way up which resulted in his dismounting his bike and running up the hill on his cleats and remounting at the crest to sprint in for



15th place. No mean feat after 40 hard miles.

All round a pretty good day for RAF Shawbury Cycling Club. Fay got a podium position in the Ladies Race and gained selection for the Inter Services although I'm not sure she fancies another 5 times around that circuit in September. Both Jamie and I finished strongly in the Senior Men's Race, a good result when a good third of the field climbed off and abandoned due to the heat and fast pace of the race (even though the Ladies carrying out line duties at the start/finish did their best to 'encourage' their continued participation – I'll say no more!). A number of lessons were learned from the day as a whole; travel up the night before, recce the course, use the showers at the stadium not the swimming pool as you'll look daft showering in your underwear, get a minibus with aircon and keep an eye on the fuel gauge.

Our aim is to at least double the amount of RAF Shawbury personnel at next year's event – hopefully resplendent in the yet to be designed club strip. If you are inspired to get racing by either this article or watching the slightly more glamorous Tour de France on TV, then get in touch with either myself, Fay or Jamie and we'll point you in the right direction.

WO Phil Llewellyn

Sqn Ldr Joan Cawthray paddles to victory as RAF Sportswoman of the Year 2015

An Officer from RAF Shawbury has been awarded the coveted title of RAF Sportswoman of the year, beating off stiff competition to win the title.

Sqn Ldr Joan Cawthray has dominated the sport of Service Slalom Kayaking throughout her RAF career. This year, however, has been exceptional and she has won every single Ladies Inter Service title across 4 extremely diverse kayaking disciplines against much younger opposition.

Prior to joining the RAF, Sqn Ldr Cawthray spent 8 years in the GB junior and senior Canoe Slalom Squads, rising to number 2 in the national ranking before retiring from international competition in 1994. After joining the RAF in 2000, she dusted off her paddles to win the Inter Services Canoe Slalom and remains undefeated to this day, winning every single title in the Slalom discipline.

The complete athlete, Sqn Ldr Cawthray has dedicated immeasurable

time and energy to the management of her sport, previously acting as Secretary to the RAF and UK Armed Forces Canoe Association and is presently fulfilling the roles of RAF Canoe Association Deputy Chairman and Treasurer. In the last 12 months, this talented sportswoman has added 8 Inter Service Gold Medals to her tally and is the most successful female RAF Kayaker in living memory.

The award was presented to Sqn Ldr Cawthray by Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshall Sir Andrew Pulford KCB CBE ADC RAF at a special awards ceremony at RAF Halton on 26th November 2015.

Sqn Ldr Cawthray said: "I was very honoured and shocked to be awarded the title of RAF Sportswoman of the Year; I am extremely grateful for the



Air Chief Marshall Sir Andrew Pulford KCB CBE ADC RAF presents Sqn Ldr Cawthray with her award.

continuous support given by the units I have served at, RAF Sports and the RAF Sports Lottery for allowing me the time to commit to the competitions and the provision of funding to enable the RAF Canoe Association to purchase the equipment needed to canoe at this level. All of this support has enabled me to combine my love of sport with such an enjoyable and challenging career in the RAF."

RAF SPORTS LOTTERY RE-LAUNCH

A team from the RAF Central Fund visited RAF Shawbury on 19th January 2016 to re-launch the RAF Sports Lottery.

To ensure the Fund can continue to provide financial support which underpins RAF sporting activities it is imperative that the Lottery re-launch is a success. The team made a visit to all sections on station to explain the importance of the Sports Lottery, informing personnel that the Lottery is the only fundraising asset for Central Funds and it provides the Fund with approximately 75% of the monies to support RAF Sports. Registered players have the chance to win £10,000 a week.

For those that still wish to enter you can do so by visiting the website at www.rafcf.org.uk



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2015 CO's Cup Final Report

Whilst I would enjoy taking full credit for 660 Sqn's 2015 CO's Cup win, it's fair to say that when taking over the role of Sports IC in late September, 660 Sqn AAC were already in a very good position for the win. Being over thirty points clear of any competitor, we could have just turned up to the last four events and still won the trophy!

However, in true army fashion, 660 Sqn AAC pulled together to put in maximum effort in order to win the CO's Cup by a country mile. Since winning X Country in late September, we entered teams in all further events. Achieving 1st place on the DCCT range and 2nd at the racket sports. 660 Sqn were in clear sight of the finish line with a monstrous lead. Super teams brought with it some interesting fancy dress costumes, with our team of superheroes achieving a valiant 2nd behind the villainous 705 NAS. Going into the final event, the quiz night, with the win already mathematically guaranteed, 660 Sqn



were able to sit back and enjoy the night. Entering three mixed-teams of staff and students, the quiz brought about a solid 4th which did nothing but increase our lead. With 129 points

overall and 37 points clear of 2nd place, 660 Sqn AAC attained one of their greatest CO's Cup victories yet. E COELIS AUXILIUM!

by Lt Mitch Bennett, 660 Sqn AAC.

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SUPERSTARS

The penultimate event in this year's CO's Cup saw the squadrons partake in a number of technical and physically demanding team challenges, culminating in four gruelling individual events.

660 Sqn AAC came into the Superstars as league leaders, but 705 NAS knew that a solid performance in both this and the final event would see them take the top spot.

After the late arrival of the CFS team the PTIs explained that the Superstars event would begin with five team challenges running over a set time limit; shooting hoops, rowing, press-ups, badminton serving and wall-sits. A great performance was displayed all round with 705 NAS just trailing behind 660 Sqn AAC heading into the individual challenges.

For the individual challenges, each team was tasked with selecting four 'Superstars' – fast, strong, agile and one that can fly.

The events began with the fast Superstars, each contestant had to cycle



1000m then immediately sprint 20 shuttles. This demanding challenge saw a fantastic effort from all participants but Flt Lt Patterson just pipped Flt Lt Steele to the line to edge 660 Sqn AAC a little further ahead.

The next challenge was less a test of strength and more a test of muscular endurance where the competitors were tasked with clean and jerking, farmers walks and pull ups; CATCS took this event and a solid 2nd place from AB1 Armstrong 705 NAS brought

us back into contention.

Lt Jacka was the representative for 705 NAS in the agile event and couldn't have performed better. He annihilated the competition making the rope climbs and burpees look like a walk in the park, leaving the competition wide open and taking it all the way to the final event.



The 'man that can fly' challenge was simple; run and jump on a crash mat, sliding it the length of the sports hall, drag it back to the start and repeat. A massive effort from Sub Lt Vivean saw 660 Sqn AAC finish in a commendable time but Fg Off Morris for 705 NAS crossed the line lengths ahead to secure overall victory for 705 NAS.

Every participant put in a fantastic effort displaying great physical ability and motivation in what was a very demanding event.

This win from 705 NAS has brought the CO's Cup down to the wire, now it all rests on the keenly awaited Pub Quiz.

Flt Lt Sam Morris



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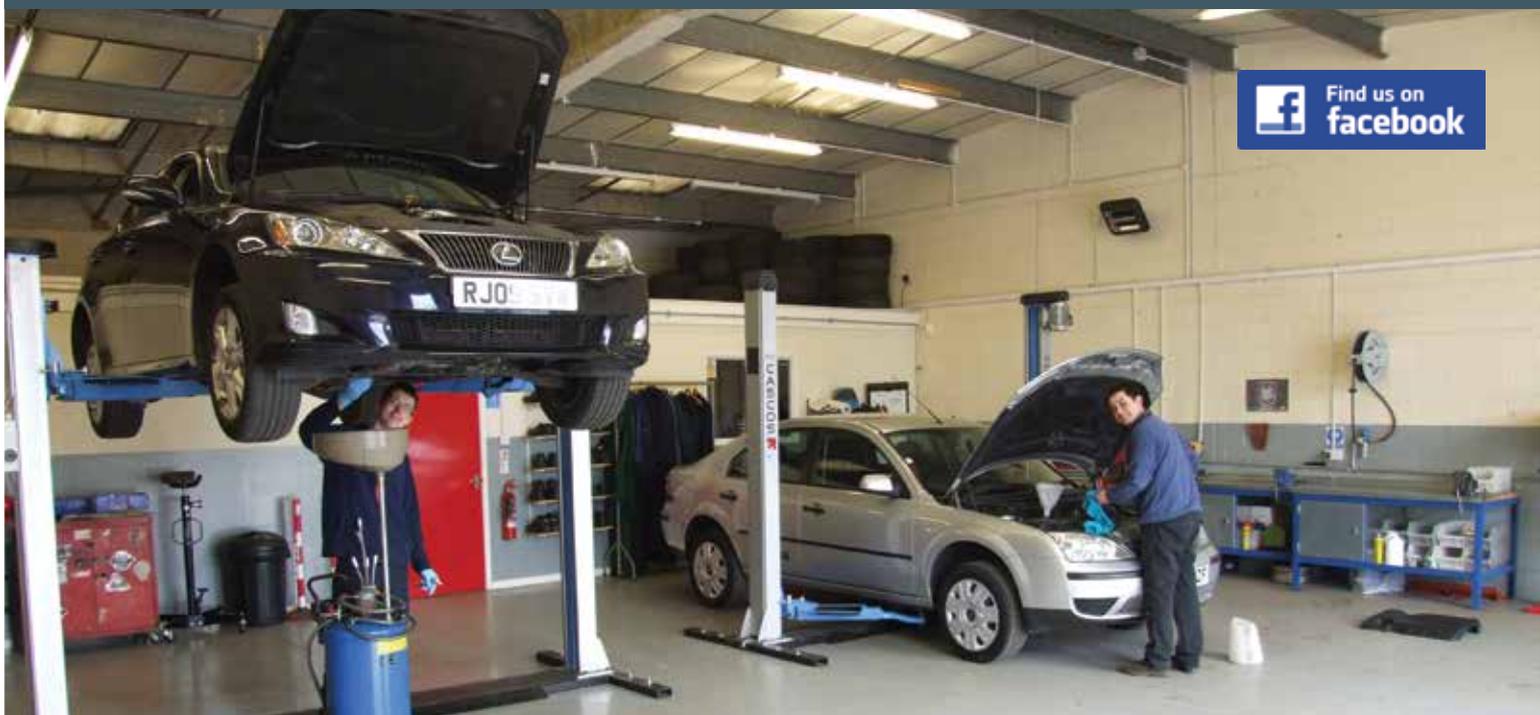
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