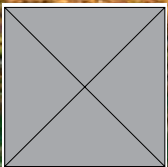


ARIES

The Magazine of RAF Shawbury

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Edition 6
2015



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General Service Knowledge – Information Fact No 6

By Cpl S JAR (Drill Instructor)

Did you know that the Remembrance Poppy is only to be worn above the right breast pocket of the RAF No1 Service Dress Jacket? On other forms of RAF dress, the poppy is worn on the corresponding position on warm-weather dress, jerseys and combat uniform. When worn with the greatcoat it is to be worn on the left lapel. In order to avoid damaging the waterproof materials, emblems are not to be worn on wet weather outerwear.

The reason that the poppy is worn on the right side of the RAF No1 Service dress Jacket is that the left side is to remain unobscured so that flying brevets displaying the Queen's Crown remain visible. On no account is the Queen's Crown to be obscured. Therefore, it was determined by the Service Dress Committee that all ranks of the RAF would wear the poppy in this uniform manner above the right breast pocket.

Only the conventional paper poppy is to be worn on ceremonial dress and on parades (with the exception of personnel on ceremonial duties at The Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday). On working dress and combat uniform, subject to working environment (such as FOD risks), a plain enamel poppy badge of dimensions not exceeding 2.5cm (1") may be worn as described in para 0135. The plain enamel badge may be worn with Mess dress at the discretion of the PMC or CMC accordingly. Only one poppy, paper or enamel, is to be worn on the outermost garment. Poppies are not to be affixed to head dress.



GET SOME IN-formation

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COVER PICTURE:

Autumnal Gate Guard, RAF Shawbury

Editor's Welcome

by Sqn Ldr Kim Leach



I would like to welcome you to Edition 6 of the Aries Magazine. This has been a very busy few months with important events such as the Aries Awards Evening, the North Shropshire Safety Scene, and Remembrance events throughout Shropshire.

We also said goodbye to the UK RAF Search and Rescue Force after 74 years of life-saving duties. Thousands of lives have been saved through rescue missions often flown in the most difficult and extreme conditions. With strong ties to the Defence Helicopter Flying School, we were honoured to witness one of the last flights as Sea King XZ590 'F' came into Shawbury for a crew change. The aircraft had been on the strength of A Flt 202 Sqn at RAF Boulmer and the departure from RAF Shawbury marked both the airframe's last ever take-off, after nearly 38 years in service, and the final take-off by a 202 Sqn aircraft.

Happy reading.

Date of next edition: Submissions in by 11th January 2016



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Foreword

by Wing Commander Nigel Ibbetson MA RAF
OC Operations and Administration Wing

It seems like only yesterday that an eighteen year old Acting Pilot Officer Ibbetson arrived at the front gates of RAF Shawbury under the shadow of a Whirlwind helicopter prior to a whirlwind six months on the Joint Air Traffic Control Course (JATCC).

In those days, alright then it was 1990, male JATCC students enjoyed the delights of portakabin accommodation (known then as moon base alpha) behind where the current gate guard is. The walls were so paper thin you could wake up to someone's alarm clock in the adjacent corridor. Happy days.

Now, some 25 years later, I am delighted to have returned to this unit which feels as inviting, exciting, and homely as it did back then. The future looks bright. We have lots to look forward to during the coming years with the Military Flying Training System upgrade to our Defence Helicopter Flying School, plus exciting developments to the delivery of Air Traffic Control, Flight Operations, Aerospace Battle Management and TG9/12 training.

It really is a great privilege to be working on a station that has such a vibrant future. It feels immediately apparent that our military, civil servant, contractors and volunteer 'whole force' team work extremely well together and enjoy strong relationships with our Shropshire neighbours. The old adage that the team is more than the sum of its parts most definitely applies. I am really looking forward to being part of that team during my tour as Officer Commanding Operations and Administration Wing. The facilities we enjoy, both in terms of domestic and leisure, are first class, especially 'the best gym in the air force'. Do you know that dependants can use the gym too (for a very small fee, £10 per year!)?

All of this will be set against a backdrop of continual improvements in the way we do our business and a continued commitment to operations. Meanwhile, individual augmentees from RAF Shawbury continue to deploy on operations and are supported by our Human Resources and Community Support staffs prior to, whilst and after



they deploy. Please spare a thought for the families and partners of those deployed; if you see them in the Mess, around the patch, in a local shop, or, importantly, notice that you haven't seen them for a while, reach out, ask them how they are. Let them know they are part of the wider RAF family. It really matters.

I look forward to working with you all.

Padre's Peace

Christmas thoughts

London Heathrow is one of the busiest airports in the world; 1400 flights taking off and landing each day; this equates to an aircraft movement every 45 seconds. Over the next few weeks thousands of people will arrive in the United Kingdom from all over the globe. Laden with gifts, the arrival of family and friends for the Christmas

and New Year will bring many different emotions to the fore, including an overwhelming feeling of euphoria and excitement as you welcome loved ones who you may not have seen for a long period of time. In many ways there is also a sense of expectation and longing at the coming of the 'Christ Child' which has been celebrated throughout the

centuries. As we enter the season of Advent and the Church prepares to celebrate the Christmas story, spare a thought for those who will find this time difficult. Amidst all the enjoyment of the festivities, it is my hope that you will also take time out to pause, reflect and discover the real meaning as we welcome Christ into our world.

Padre Alastair Bissell

Christmas Services at St Mary's Church Shawbury

20 December, Carol Service 1800

24 December Chris dingle 1800

24 December Midnight Mass 2300

For further details please contact the Padre Ext 7051



Visits to RAF Shawbury

RAF Shawbury was delighted to welcome members of the Stafford Knot Rotary Club on 21st September, and Newport Rotary Club on 28th October. The visitors enjoyed a tour of the base including a visit to the Aircraft Maintenance and Storage Unit and a brief on helicopter operations.

RAF Shawbury also welcomed veterans from the Leamington Spa Veterans' Association on 24th September, the 230 Squadron Association on 2nd October, the RAF Masirah and RAF Salalah Association on 23rd October and the Sutton Coldfield Veterans' Association on 5th November.

On 2 November, Mr Ray Owen and friends visited the base as a result of winning a charity auction prize in support of our local Shawbury Young Farmers group.

The Station Commander, Group Captain Jason Appleton, said: "Links with our community through local Clubs and Veterans' Associations are very important to us and we enjoyed



Stafford Knot Rotary Club



Leamington Spa Veterans' Association



Newport Rotary Club



RAF Masirah and RAF Salalah Association



Sutton Coldfield Veterans' Association



230 Squadron Association



Shawbury Young Farmers Charity Auction Winner



The High Sheriff and Mayor get airborne.



The High Sheriff joins in a First Aid lesson at the North Shropshire Safety Scene.

the opportunity to showcase how we deliver world-leading training to the next generation."

RAF Shawbury also welcomed the High Sheriff of Shropshire, Mr David Stacey, and the Mayor of Shrewsbury, Cllr Miles Kenny, on Wednesday 7th October 2015. The purpose of the visit was to promote an understanding and appreciation of the role of RAF Shawbury and the Defence Helicopter Flying School in delivering world leading training. The visitors also enjoyed dropping in to visit local school children at the North Shropshire Safety Scene.

Sqn Ldr Kim Leach, the Project Officer said: "It was a pleasure to be able to give the High Sheriff and the Mayor a local flight so that they could see at first hand some of the training areas that we use throughout Shropshire. It is important to us to spread our noise footprint and to minimise disturbance to the community as much as possible."

RAF Shawbury Hosts Shropshire Aircrew Association Dinner

The Officers' Mess at RAF Shawbury was the venue for the Annual Dinner of the Shropshire Aircrew Association on Thursday 17th September.

The Shropshire Aircrew Association is made up of veterans from the Second World War and later generations of Aircrew, Engineers, Ground Crew and aviation enthusiasts to make a vibrant, social community dedicated to keeping the spirit of aviation alive.

Among the guests were four World War 2 veterans, including Mr John Trotman DFC and Bar, from Marchamley Wood, near Wem. He flew 70 hazardous missions in Wellington and Mosquito bombers during the Second World War. Mr Brian Beatie was a pilot in Coastal Command flying the Hampden torpedo bomber and Mosquito aircraft in the anti-shipping role. Mr Jim Penny, was a Lancaster pilot who was shot down over Germany on his 19th mission and taken prisoner until the end of the war. His story is told in his book, Lucky Penny. Godfrey Yardley is an ex Para, of the 10th Worcester's, 2nd Oxford and Bucks, who had joined Edmond Home Guard at 17. He went

on to survive the Rhine crossings and Operation Varsity and write his memoirs, A Village Lad Goes to War.

The Dinner was hosted by Group Captain Jason Appleton, Station Commander at RAF Shawbury who said: "It was a pleasure to welcome back the Shropshire Aircrew Association and to be invited to be their President for the next year. I was fascinated to hear their stories, which were particularly poignant as we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. The young trainees of today enjoyed the opportunity to meet the Association members and to talk about their careers and their involvement in aviation and shaping history. This is especially important as we approach Remembrance Sunday."

Mr Paul Martin, of the Shropshire Aircrew Association, said: "it is a great privilege to be invited to have dinner in the Officers' Mess, RAF Shawbury, to meet the Station Commander and invite him to be our President. We had a fine meal and were looked after admirably by the Mess Staff. It was a real pleasure to be able to talk to the Staff and Students of the

CFS(H) Squadron, the DHFS and the CATCS. We are particularly grateful to Sqn Ldr Kim Leach, who made the arrangements for the visit and acted as our attentive host throughout the evening. We really appreciate the support and encouragement afforded to us by all at RAF Shawbury throughout the year".

The Shropshire Aircrew Association welcomes new members. Membership of the Shropshire Aircrew Association is open to all who show a keen interest in or affiliation with aviation, both military and civil.

For more information, please visit our website: www.shropshireaircrew.org.uk Or contact us on: info@shropshireaircrew.org.uk

Editor's Note: We are very sorry to announce that Godfrey Yardley passed away on the 21st November 2015. Godfrey was an active member of the Assault Glider Trust and Shropshire Aircrew Association. He had long links with RAF Shawbury and was a frequent visitor at the Officers' Mess. Our thoughts are with his wife Betty and his family.



Members of the Shropshire Aircrew Association outside the Officers' Mess, RAF Shawbury.

Wildcat Visits RAF Shawbury

Friday 18th September saw RAF Shawbury fortunate enough to be visited by a Wildcat HMA. 2 of the Royal Navy's 'Black Cats' display team.

This visit gave DHFS staff and students of all three services the opportunity to get up close with the Fleet Air Arm's new claws!

The Black Cat's aircrew took time to share their expertise, giving in-depth briefs on this new aircraft's capabilities. It is clear that beyond the light hearted "it's not a Lynx, honest!" Wildcat offers a step change in capability in disciplines ranging from maritime surface and subsurface warfare, through maritime counter-terrorism, to littoral strike in support of amphibious operations. Of course none of these capabilities mean much unless they're delivered by a robust, deployable aircraft, supported by doctrine which can maximise their effect. From discussion of Wildcat's inaugural deployment,



on operations in the South Atlantic and West African Coast aboard HMS Lancaster, it seems that the aircraft is performing well, and the Navy is getting to grips with just how much more capability Wildcat offers.

The crew also gave an update on the progress of the Wildcat training pipeline, which has just seen the first ab-initio crews embark on the conversion-to-type phase, and is looking forward to receiving more students in the near future.

Unfortunately the time soon came for the aircraft to depart en-route to its weekend display tasking, leaving behind it a swarm of RAF students hurriedly preparing requests to transfer to the Fleet Air Arm, and a wider audience much better educated about this exciting new aircraft in which they may be called to serve.



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Cherrington Farm Butchers in Shawbury has had a bit of a makeover, with a bright fresh new look outside, but inside the shop you'll still find exceptional quality meat reared in Shropshire.

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Whether its top quality sausages, a Sunday roast or you want to try something new, you'll find it all at purse friendly prices and if you don't have time to cook why not try one of Cherrington's ready meals.

All home cooked in Shawbury, they use meat from Cherrington or other local farms as well as vegetables from local growers. Ideal for a midweek meal or a special occasion you can choose from everything from beef hotpot and spaghetti bolognese to navarin of lamb.

Meat orders are now being taken for Christmas, so whether it's a turkey or the perfect joint of beef you're after, Cherrington's master butchers will be happy to help at 122a Church Street.

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RAF Shawbury says

Goodbye to the Ashwoods!

On Wednesday 30th September, it was with a mixture of sadness and joy that CATCS said goodbye to a legendary individual and celebrated the end of a distinguished career that began with recruit training at RAF Swindby back in 1972.

Mr Tony Ashwood, affectionately known as 'Mr A', has provided invaluable support to CATCS for the past 12 years. In 2010 he became the first civilian instructor at the school and it was as part of his beloved Ground School team that he was recognised in the 2011 New Year Honours List.

His unique teaching techniques, wonderful sense of humour and character made him a most popular instructor. On returning to CATCS, old students always made it their priority to pay him a visit in the Ground School office. His endless patience and eager encouragement ensured that he always got the best performance out of his students.

Throughout his time at CATCS, he was always there to provide his expertise and profound knowledge for the benefit of the Wing. Every OC CATCS and Executive team sought his advice and counsel. He was passionately involved at every level and in every area, and his desire for positive change remained undiminished right up until his departure. Most notably



Air Cdre Bentley, Director of Flying Training says goodbye to Tony and Lesley Ashwood.

he recently led the transition to the online Defence Learning Environment, putting CATCS well ahead of its peers and attracting high praise from various dignitaries. Outside of his work at CATCS he was committed to various fund raising activities, running a 'donation in lieu of Christmas cards scheme' that generated significant amounts of money for Station charities.

It is testament to his character that he delivered this massive contribution whilst dealing with a very serious medical condition. Following his 'near death' episode in 2011 he appreciated his life and his many loves even more.

Alongside his fantastic wife Lesley, who was also employed at RAF Shawbury, he will complete a long awaited move to a new home in Spain. They will finally be able to reap the rewards of all the hard work they have put into their new home.

Like Thierry Henry at Arsenal, Mr A will be irreplaceable at CATCS. And it is not just because of his excellent work ethic but mostly just because he was such a lovely person to work with. We wish him well for his Brandy and Rioja fuelled retirement and hope to be hugely jealous with the pictures he posts on Facebook at his new abode!

Lesley Ashwood

Behind every good man, so the saying goes, is a good woman – and that certainly applies to Tony and Lesley Ashwood. As Tony marked his departure from CATCS so his wife, Lesley, also took her leave of Cobham and RAF Shawbury.

Lesley joined Tony on CATCS in April 2009 as the Administrator for the civilian Flight Simulator Operators. From the outset it was evident that her forthright and determined approach to life was balanced by her ability to break out in shrieks of laughter as she recounted a legion of funny stories, normally at Tony's expense. Her extremely efficient and dedicated approach to her job was recognised

by Cobham HR who took her on for a short-term task, which lasted for two years!! Her selfless work ethic meant that tasks, although unfamiliar, were carried out to an extremely high standard with minimal fuss. However on occasion, if you listened carefully Lesley could do a passable impression of Dick Dastardly's dog, Mutley. Fortunately it was Lesley's strong character that stood her in good stead, when the unthinkable happened in 2011 and Tony suffered his "episode". Throughout those difficult weeks and months Lesley dealt with this traumatic event with fortitude and the very obvious love for her "Tone". Thankfully, Tony made a steady

recovery and Lesley became focused more and more on their retirement home in Spain. Indeed in her list of priorities this ranked alongside, in no particular order: Tony; her daughter, Claire; Tony; her granddaughter, Holly; Tony; Friendships; Tony; dining out; Tony; her diary/journal; and Michael Bubl .

As we bid "Adios" to Lesley and Tony it is fair to say she has left her mark on the FSO Section and as her Supervisor, Joanne, said: "Although we will be replacing her post, Lesley herself is irreplaceable and words cannot express how difficult it is to lose her, both as a work colleague and more importantly as a friend".

RAF Shawbury Hosts Safety Scene

RAF Shawbury has hosted an important community safety event, in partnership with the West Mercia Police.

The annual, week-long North Shropshire Safety Scene got under way on Monday 5th October and ran until Friday 9th October to promote various forms of community safety to youngsters from virtually every primary school in North Shropshire. Nearly 650 ten-year-olds from Years 5 and 6 from 20 North Shropshire primary schools visited the event, held in the Roland Wycherley Force Development Centre at RAF Shawbury.

The Safety Scene has been running since 1997 and was the brainchild of ex-Market Drayton Police Officer, Mr Glyn Teggin. It takes place in a theatrical village as the basis for various scenarios to "play act" safety messages to the young schoolchildren.

Through his efforts and the support of the local community, the North Shropshire Safety Scene is now firmly established and has provided all types of safety tuition to around 12,500 schoolchildren since its inception.

RAF Shawbury's Health and Safety Officer, Mrs Jan Sheffield said: "We are very pleased to be able to once again support this important initiative which plays such an important part in developing awareness of hazards both inside and outside the home".

The children are able to experience many different safety scenarios including: drugs and stranger danger awareness from the police, fire safety



and hoax calls from Shropshire Fire and Rescue, water safety from the Canal and River Trust, bonfire and fireworks safety, safety in the kitchen and home from the Rotary Clubs of Wem, Ellesmere, Market Drayton and Whitchurch, dog safety from Shropshire's dog wardens, how to contact the emergency services, First Aid, building site safety, road and farm safety, electrical danger, cyber-bullying and race and religious discrimination.

Mr Glyn Teggin said: "The project deals with the day to day dangers young children of North Shropshire are likely to come into contact with during their daily lives. It gives them a hands-on opportunity to learn about these

dangers in a safe environment. Use of the theatrical village also brings an element of fun to the serious messages we are putting across. It also develops good citizen skills".

The Station Commander of RAF Shawbury, Group Captain Jason Appleton said: "Safety sits at the centre of everything we do and the Station has developed significant expertise in that area. We are delighted to use that safety expertise, together with our facilities, in educating young people in our local community. This project could not take place without the fantastic volunteers who give up their free time to deliver these important safety messages".



RAF Shawbury Personnel Receive Honours and Awards

The Officers' Mess at RAF Shawbury was the venue for the latest presentation of Honours and Awards to military and civilian personnel. Family and friends gathered to see the awards presented by Air Commodore Cooper, CBE, the Joint Force Air Component Commander.

The first award presented was the Deputy Commander's Commendation, awarded to personnel who have maintained a high level of excellence, over and above the norm, in their primary duties and other activities. This was awarded to Cpl David Lawrence who has displayed the utmost dedication to uphold the heritage and

ethos of the Royal Air Force. After joining the Royal Air Force in 2006, his passion for the Battle of Britain developed during a tour at RAF Northolt, where he impressed as a volunteer guide within the Number 11 Fighter Group Operations Room, known as "The Bunker", at RAF Uxbridge. His off-duty time was devoted to volunteer work at The Bunker and he was soon able to provide tours alongside the resident team of military historians and scholars.

While on his recent tour at RAF Valley, he delivered several Force Development speeches and presentations to Station personnel which focussed on key aspects of Service ethos. He also acted as a guest speaker to various Battle of Britain dinners, including the 72 (Reserve) Squadron Association, the Aviation Society and the Ship's Company of HMS Neptune. Every note of feedback



Award winners with Air Cdre Cooper

Children of Chernobyl Visit



Mr Les Goodchild, OC Support Wing for RAF Shawbury recently hosted children from schools in Belarus near to the site of the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl on a station visit. The children got the opportunity to visit AMSU and sit in a Red Arrows Hawk and view the various aircraft as well as visit a cross section of departments across the station.

Thank You to all those that gave up their time to make it a day to remember for the children.

By Les Goodchild, OC Support Wing



commented on his passion and outstanding performance.

The next award presented was the Air-Officer-Commanding Number 22 Training Group Commendation. This is awarded to personnel who have demonstrated a high level of excellence, over and above the norm, in their primary duties and other activities and was presented to Mr Alistair Reid. An integral part of the Defence Helicopter Flying School since its formation in April 1997, he has served as a civilian Qualified Helicopter Instructor for more than 18 years in direct support of Defence's rotary wing flying training output.

Previously an A2-category Qualified Helicopter Instructor in the Royal Navy, Mr Reid served for 16 years as a Cold War anti-submarine pilot, serving his country in the first Gulf War in 1991 and taking up an exchange post in the German Navy. He has flown over 5000 instructional hours and has been personally responsible for training and mentoring over 300 aspiring military aviators, easing their path to front-line

operational squadrons with his vast knowledge and experience.

The second AOC Number 22 Training Group Commendation was awarded to Cpl Andy Dale. Cpl Dale has displayed outstanding commitment, efficiency and initiative during his two and a half years as Junior NCO in Command of Flight Planning at RAF Shawbury. Having identified a gap in Flight Safety information, he investigated the issue on his own initiative, then proposed and subsequently implemented a new process to address the identified Flight Safety risk.

The next award was the Air-Officer-Commanding Number 22 Training Group Team Commendation. This is awarded to teams who, again, have demonstrated a high level of excellence, over and above the norm, in their primary duties and other activities.

This award was presented to Sqn Ldr Evans, Sqn Ldr Keogh, Flt Lt Quartermaine and Flt Lt Trenholm. This

was the team behind the successful first Awards for Recognition of Innovation, Excellence and Service that took place on 9th October 2014. Through meticulous planning, they executed a hugely successful event which undeniably lifted the spirits and morale of Station personnel.

The next awards to be presented was the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. This is awarded in recognition of 15 years of exemplary service and irreproachable behaviour and was awarded to FS Blake and Cpl Ryan.

The final award was that of Royal Air Force Colours. The Colours are awarded for representing the Royal Air Force at the Inter-Service Championships and are considered the pinnacle of Service sporting achievement. The sports colours were presented to Cpl Booth who was selected to represent the Royal Air Force at cycling in 2014, in the Inter-Service Road Race Championships, competing against 45 of the best riders across all 3 Services.

Junior Youth Club says good bye and thank you to MAcr Diabile

MAcr Dave Diabile has officially handed over the reins of OIC RAF Shawbury Junior Youth Club to FS Barry Wilson.

Whilst the OIC for the last 6 years, Mr Diabile has worked tirelessly to transform the facilities and dynamic of the Club to a safe, clean and thriving place for young people to meet up and socialise in.

Due to be posted in spring next year, he has sought a willing replacement with whom it can be left in safe hands and importantly, continue to take the Club forward - FS Wilson fits the bill nicely!

The Club is always looking for willing volunteers to help out and staff the evenings which are every Tuesday 18:15 – 19:45 during term times. It is fun and rewarding and a chance to get involved with an aspect of the station you may not have considered before.

FS Barry Wilson can be contacted on 7311 for more details.



Red Carpet Awards

at RAF Shawbury

WITH the stage in place and the red carpet laid, the ARIES Awards came to RAF Shawbury on Thursday 8th October 2015 for the second awards evening, presenting Awards for Recognition of Innovation, Excellence and Service (ARIES).

The ARIES Awards Evening is named in tribute to one of the great moments in aviation history when a Lancaster PD 328, known as ARIES, left Shawbury on 21st October 1944 under the command of Wing Commander D C McKinley DFC AFC with a crew of nine. The mission was to fly around the world and return to RAF Shawbury, and in so doing, became the first British aircraft to fly round the globe.

Over a period of 2 months, the crew covered over 36,000 nautical miles and flew a total of 202 hours, returning to Shawbury on 14 December. This was an extraordinary feat, not least because they crossed enemy territory, unarmed at a time when the threat was still present and V2 rockets were falling on London, but also because it was a flight into the unknown, never having been done before.

The ARIES awards have a lot in common with the ARIES mission of 1944 and the qualities exhibited by the ARIES crew in completing the mission are the same qualities that were recognised by the ARIES awards - commitment, determination, a capacity for innovation when faced with a challenge, and a dedication to duty which puts the Service before oneself.

The Station Commander, Group Captain Jason Appleton was delighted to welcome honoured guests including Mr John Giffard CBE QPM DL Master Draper of the Worshipful Company of Drapers, London, Mr Roland Wycherley, Chairman of Shrewsbury Town Football Club, Mr Peter Ackerley, Head of National Football Development for the Football Association, Mr Richard Cox, Manager of the Shropshire Cricket Board, Mr Micky Mellon, Shrewsbury Town Manager and Mr Keith Riches, Cobham Base Manager.



Aries Award Winners. Back: Mr Wilkinson, Mrs King, Mr Kinchley, Flt Lt Stewart, Maj McBride Front. Cpl Williams, Cpl Dale, Flt Lt Jordan, Mr MacGregor

The winners were announced and presented with their awards.

Flight Lieutenant Fay Jordan was awarded the Sporting Achievement Award. She competes in the Enduro World Cycling Series and is currently ranked 21st in the world. Fay also races for a team of select elite riders at the very forefront of the sport's development. After competing in 4 out of 5 rounds, she is also currently ranked 5th in the UK National Series.

Mr Tony Kinchley was nominated as the Fundraiser of the Year. Mr Kinchley is a founder member of the RAF Shawbury based charity "Taking Football to Africa and Beyond", which has distributed almost 120,000 items to 50 countries. He regularly participates in the annual "Great North Run" in support of the "Get Kids Going" charity, which provides manual wheelchairs for children with disabilities, and he recently cycled coast to coast (Whitehaven to Tynemouth) in support of Breast Cancer, raising over £2000.

Mr Robin Wilkinson was presented with the trophy for the Most Outstanding Contribution to Defence (Civilian), awarded to a civilian employee who through innovative thinking has inspired change, resulting in a significant improvement to the output of their Squadron. Since taking on the

role of the Squadron Assistant Training Officer, Mr Wilkinson has provided first class support to his Squadron's busy training cell ensuring that the high quality of training has been maintained.

Corporal Andy Dale was awarded the Most Outstanding Contribution to Defence (Military). This is awarded to a military employee who through innovative thinking has inspired change. Corporal Dale improved the way that locations of new obstructions and hazards within RAF Shawbury's Low Flying Area are reported to aircrew, the Defence Geographic Centre and the Low Flying Operations Squadron.

The Special Achievement Award was presented to Major Dan McBride, an individual who has overcome adversity to inspire others through his achievements. Major McBride is the Shropshire Co-ordinator for the Walking With The Wounded Charity and dedicates much of his spare time to increasing the awareness of, and raising funds for this cause.

The Unsung Hero Award is awarded to the person who has made a substantive yet unrecognised contribution that has not been formally acknowledged. Mrs Jill King has been employed in the Officers' Mess at RAF Shawbury for over 35 years. Primarily responsible for the 'Silver Room', Mrs King is meticulous

in her attention to detail and management of what is considered to be a very valuable historical collection.

The Station Commander's Award was presented to the individual who the Station Commander chose personally to recognise from the nominations received. Flight Lieutenant Ken Stuart has been an outstanding teacher at the Central Air Traffic Control School for decades. He has stood out for all the best reasons and has made a significant contribution to the successful graduation of many hundreds of students.

The Commandant Defence Helicopter Flying School (DHFS) Award was awarded to the individual who Commandant DHFS chose personally to recognise from the nominations received. Mr David Evans has had an outstanding career as a Qualified Helicopter Crewman Instructor amassing over 9000 flying hours. Retiring after 35 years of courageous and dedicated service, he leaves a real legacy behind.

The Most Outstanding Individual Award was awarded to the individual who has made the most outstanding contribution to RAF Shawbury and the surrounding area over the past year. Cpl Gregg Williams has developed into an outstanding instructor. He is also extremely active in the community as the Station's engagement representative to the Stoke-on-Tern Parish Council. In addition, he has set up a Food Bank at RAF Shawbury in support of a local church initiative.

The final award presented was the Lifetime Achievement Award, awarded to an individual to recognise contributions over the whole of a career. Mr Tony MacGregor has had an extraordinary career as a pilot and Qualified Helicopter Instructor spanning more than 50 years. Mr MacGregor has flown an unprecedented number of aircraft types including: Whirlwind, Sioux, Gazelle, Wessex, Seaking, Puma, Chinook, Griffin, Bell (205, 212 and 222), Hillier 12, Hughes (269 and 500), Sikorsky S76, Mi (2, 8 and 17) and AS350. During his career he has amassed more than 12300 flying hours of which more than 7800 are instructional. A true gentleman, he has for decades calmly encouraged and mentored generation after generation of student pilots. His talent for teasing the absolute best out of his students is unsurpassed and has gained him the uttermost respect across the aviation community. It is not an exaggeration to say that every helicopter operator in the whole of the RAF today has in some way directly benefitted as a result of his experience and expertise.

Group Captain Jason Appleton said: "I was hugely impressed by the number of nominations submitted, all of which were reflective of the many highly motivated and talented people who work at RAF Shawbury. Whilst all are deserving of recognition, my congratulations to the worthy winners of this year's Awards. I would also like to thank our Sponsors, the Drapers' Company, ISS Facility Services (Defence), and Cobham Aviation Services for making this ARIES Award Evening such a special occasion."



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RAF Shawbury Plays a Major Role in Remembrance Day

Servicemen and women from RAF Shawbury played a major role in the Remembrance Day commemorations across Shropshire on Sunday 8th November 2015.

The unit provided personnel for the Shrewsbury Service at St Chad's Church and the associated parade through the town.

The Parade Commander was Squadron Leader Mark Jones who is an instructor at the Central Air Traffic Control School, at the airbase. The parade included tri-service personnel from the unit and the Defence Helicopter Flying School. Music was provided by the West Mercian Wg (Air Cadets) Band.

The RAF Shawbury wreath was laid by the Station Commander, Group Captain Jason Appleton and the wreath laying ceremony in the Quarry Park was led by Reverend (Wing Commander) Alastair Bissell. The parade was organized by the



Gp Capt Jason Appleton, Station Commander RAF Shawbury lays the wreath at The Quarry, Shrewsbury.

RAF Shawbury Station Warrant Officer, Warrant Officer Adam Cook. Personnel from the airbase also attended services throughout Shropshire.

The Station Commander, Group Captain Jason Appleton said: "Personnel at RAF Shawbury are proud to be able take part in Remembrance events across the county and are honoured to be able to parade and attend church services which remember the fallen throughout history, including those lost in recent operations worldwide."



Military personnel march through Shrewsbury.

Defence Helicopter Flying School Assist In Premier League Remembrance Event

A Griffin helicopter of No (60) Squadron of the Defence Helicopter Flying School, based at RAF Shawbury, assisted Leicester City in their Remembrance Day event at the KingPower Stadium on Saturday 7th November. The Squadron has a long association with this Premier League club and dropped the official match ball at the fixture against Watford FC. Leicester City were the first club to feature the poppy on the match day shirts. All football clubs in the top four divisions now wear the poppy to show respect and the shirts are then signed and auctioned with the proceeds going to the Royal British Legion (RBL). At the KingPower Stadium, local RBL groups and veterans paraded around the pitch before the match and at half time. Leicester City won the match 2-1 to stay third in the Premier League.



Armed Forces Match Day Kicks Off With Huge Success

Shrewsbury Town Football Club was the venue for the 2nd Armed Forces Match Day and Fan Park on Saturday 10th October at the Greenhous Meadow, Shrewsbury.

Giant trucks, a climbing wall, a firing range and a static Squirrel helicopter display provided the backdrop to the activities as footballers, members of the public and military personnel mingled before kick off. Many supporters turned up early to meet members of the Armed Forces and to see a little bit of what life in the forces is really like. Ahead of their League One clash with Colchester United, Shrewsbury Town officials, management and players were all involved in meeting military personnel as well as taking part in some of the many activities on offer.

The event was the brainchild of Shropshire

Council and Shrewsbury Town Football Club to promote the Armed Forces Corporate Covenant, which both Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Football Club have signed. The club had also offered free match tickets to serving military personnel and their families.

In preparation for the event, Liam Lawrence the Shrew's Captain and Mark Ellis visited RAF Shawbury and dropped in at 60 (R) Squadron where they were shown around a Griffin helicopter.

The match ball was dropped into the Greenhous Meadow Football Stadium by a helicopter from the Defence Helicopter Flying School, RAF Shawbury just in time for the kick off. David Fairclough, the Community Officer for

" The day ended happily with a crucial 4-2 victory for Shrewsbury Town against their rivals Colchester United. "

Shropshire Council is delighted that the Armed Forces and the football club are continuing their long tradition of working together. He said: "We are delighted that Shrewsbury Town Football Club and the Armed Forces are continuing their excellent partnership.



Shrews Players visit RAF Shawbury



Shrewsbury Town players are briefed on the Squirrel

The Armed Forces Fan Park has grown since its inception last year and we are delighted that so many members of the public so many members of the public enjoyed meeting forces personnel and learning about their unique roles".

with other members of the community. We would not be able to deliver the high level of flying training without the support of the Shropshire community, which was evident today."

Group Captain Jason Appleton, Station Commander of RAF Shawbury said: "This has been a fantastic day and a unique event which has been an excellent opportunity for the Armed Forces of Shropshire to come together



A Squirrel helicopter from the Defence Helicopter Flying School, RAF Shawbury drops the match ball.



Shrewsbury Town personnel reach new heights!

RAF Shawbury's Learning Centre holds Open Day!

One of my goals as OC Personal Development Flight was to ensure that within my first year of tenure people from within the RAF Shawbury community were offered the chance to maximise their Personal Development opportunities and what better way of achieving this than holding a Learning Centre Open Day. Fortunately, Universities, Colleges and Learning Providers from all over the country were able to support this event along with the Career Transition Partnership who were on hand to offer advice and information to Service personnel making the transition to civilian life.

The event was well attended (could always do with more!) and created interest from a wide cross section of the station. It was great to see people engaging in the lifelong learning initiative – there is always room for development and you're never too old to learn.

Education is constantly developing bringing new opportunities and this is why it is crucial that we maintain our links with Universities and Colleges to keep abreast of the changes and funding opportunities in order to pass this information on. The Open Day provided an ideal opportunity for personnel to speak direct to the



OC FDS Sqn Ldr Cawthray chats to Learning Providers.

experts in their field and find a learning package/course/business opportunity suitable for their individual needs. My team and I are actively working with Learning Providers to explore and promote a variety of initiatives for all our people, some are listed below.

RHG Consult provide Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Level 2 Award in Leadership and

Team Skills and ILM Level 3 Award in Coaching (in the workplace not sport) as well as many others but these two courses are only 1 or 2 days and provide an ideal opportunity for Service personnel to use their Standard Learning Credits to fund the majority of the course.

Stafford University offer RAF personnel who have undertaken WSOP training accreditation of prior learning (APL) of 165 credits towards a Foundation Degree in Applied Aviation Studies. This means that completion of the programme is possible in 36, 42 or 48 weeks.

Bucks New University offer RAF personnel in the Air Traffic Control, Flights Ops and Air Battlespace Management branches and trades APL towards BA (Hons) Degree in Organisational Capability Development (OCD). This shortens the study time and lessens the financial burden of gaining a degree.

Best Practice, North Shropshire College and Babbington Group provide of level 2 and 3 government funded apprenticeships for MOD civilians, contractors and dependants in work in a variety of subjects from Business



Stn Cdr Group Captain Appleton meets Learning Providers.

RAF Shawbury drops in to Thomas Adams School, Wem, on **Red, White and Blue Day!**

Administration and Customer Service to Warehousing & Storage and Hospitality and many more.

North Shropshire College also offer dependants funded (subject to eligibility) employability skills courses/ taster sessions which can include, career planning, CV workshop, IT, resilience building and 5 ways to well being.

Wolverhampton University provide a free Business Start Up Course and Mentoring Programme' Supporting the 'Unsung Hero' for dependants of Armed Forces personnel, Veterans and Reservists from all three services. The 10 month programme equips participants with transferable skills and support required to start and maintain a business that will not be restricted to a geographical area, allowing families to become more financially stable and break the cycle of being unable to work. The next cohort to be held in Wolverhampton will be 13 -14 Jan 16.

It goes without saying that all the other Universities and Colleges continue to provide high quality tuition and support to our people and there are numerous initiatives that I could write about but we'll be here all day! The best advice I can give is to sign up to the RSS feed on the Personal Development page on MOSS where new initiatives/opportunities are posted. Or call into the Learning Centre next time you are grabbing a coffee from the Aries Club. We are just upstairs and would love to see you.

I would just like to thank the Station Commander who took time out of his busy schedule to open the event, my team for all their hard work, the providers and all those of you that attended on the day. Together it turned out to be a great success and I look forward to inviting you to next year's Learning Centre Open Day.

**By Julie Chadburn
OC Personnel Development Flight**

Friday 9th October saw Thomas Adams School in Wem, hold its annual "Red, White and Blue Day" to raise funds for The RAF Benevolent Fund, The Soldiers' Charity and The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

To support this event, staff and students attended school wearing clothing featuring red, white and blue colours in return for a contribution of £1 towards the nominated charities. A number of students also attended in their cadet uniform.

Max Turner who co-ordinated the event said: "There was a fantastic effort from all pupils and Citizenship captains also helped boost funds by offering face and nail painting and selling Red, White and Blue lollies".

Every year Thomas Adams puts flags and bunting out to support the event and this year the school were extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to host a static display by a Griffin HT1 helicopter, flown in from the Defence Helicopter Flying School at RAF Shawbury especially for the occasion. The clear blue sky and bright sun made for an impressive backdrop as the helicopter, piloted by Flt. Lt. Nigel Thorpe and his crew of Fg. Off. Tron Warburton and Sgt. Chris Parker, flew in low over the school buildings and made a text

book landing in the centre circle of the football pitch.

During the static display in the hour that followed, a large number of students had the chance to sit inside the Griffin and ask the crew questions about the helicopter, its abilities and the technical/scientific aspects of rotary wing aircraft. Flt. Lt. Thorpe and his crew then took off, bidding the student's farewell with a dip of the helicopter's nose in salute.

Headteacher, Elizabeth Dakin, said "We are indebted to RAF Shawbury, and 60 (R) Sqn. in particular, for facilitating this exciting educational visit for our students. It was fantastic to hear so many thoughtful and interesting questions and the helicopter crew were brilliant in engaging with the youngsters. The visit was the talk of the school for the rest of the day".

Thomas Adams has over 60 Service Children attending the school and has a history of students that have gone on to careers within the Armed Forces. Senior Teacher, Tom McAleavy, said "The close relationship the school has with RAF Shawbury allows our students to gain invaluable experiences including information, advice and guidance on careers in the Armed Forces.", before adding "It also helps us embed our core values that all students, whatever their story, achieve their potential and are ready to contribute to their families, community and society".

**By Stuart C. Boreham
Business Manager, The Thomas
Adams School, Wem**





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For many people on camp the day after the Battle of Britain Officers Mess Dinner Night might have been a bit of slow starter; however, this was not the case for the members of the Central Flying School (Helicopter) Squadron.

Early on Friday 11th September, the majority of the Squadron 'turned to' (Army parlance for 'rocking up' or parading) at Buller Barracks Clay Pigeon Shooting Range. The range is located just North of Donnington and consists of a very well maintained series of eight shooting points. There is a varied system of clay traps, which provide clays in a number of ways which appeal to the beginner while also testing the more proficient shooters. The range is run largely by ex-military personnel, which means that while safety is always paramount, there is also a good mix of pragmatic information and instruction with a blend of easy going humour and banter.

The CFS(H) team split into 2 groups largely based upon who had shot before and who had not. The range staff consisted largely of Max and Charlie who led the groups through the operation of 12 and 20 bore shot guns and then chaperoned and instructed the groups through the various stands. There was a good mix of clays and friendly competitive humour. The clay pigeon shooting

CFS Team Building Day Clay Pigeon Shooting

lasted about 3 hours under gloriously sunny conditions, which saw some very good results. Nearly all the people attending hit more than they missed and Lt Cdr Nick Bane, CFS(H) 2IC, turned out to be the dark horse and managed to get the highest score of 18 out of 25 clays.

The Buller Barracks setup is an ideal venue for Team Building events and

can ideally cater for groups of up to approximately 20 people. At a cost of only £12 per person, which includes cartridges, clays and use of the one of the club guns it also represents great value for a good day out. For further information you can contact Max McNamara at 'maximacc@hotmail.com' or Charlie at 'cwsm@freenetname.co.uk'.

By Maj Dan McBride



Survival Equipment Section Receive Level 2 SPIRIT Award

The Survival Equipment Section at RAF Shawbury has recently been awarded a Cobham Level 2 SPIRIT award from Cobham CEO Peter Nottage. SPIRIT in COBHAM Grp represents Safety, Performance, Innovation, Relationships, Integrity and Trust.

This busy section is manned by Cobham staff (all former Royal Air Force SE FITT personnel) who look after Aircrew Equipment Assemblies and Survival Equipment utilised on the Squirrel / Griffin Aircraft types. They also look after Aircrew and equipment for a

variety of Voluntary Gliding Schools.

In the early part of last year SES staff had the need to move from one section to another. The move took a huge effort by all concerned posing many challenges, none more so than the challenge of maintaining an uninterrupted service to their customers. SES staff carried out this self-move virtually single-handedly, "humping and dumping, and decorating" as necessary. They have since made abode in new surroundings, encumbering few, at a

negligible cost and most importantly; no tangible disruption to their customer.

All staff continue to demonstrate high "SPIRIT" and look forward to the new challenges of MFTS. They would also like to take this opportunity to thank Supply and MT for the use of vehicles which spared many a tired body and to the many customers who have been complimentary towards the section and its achievements.

Just please - don't ask them to move again.....For a while anyway!



Front row from left to right; Ian Stobart, Dan Southwick, Don Caldwell, Penny O'Gara and Pete Gibson. Rear; Chris Pringle, Moggy Rees, Mike McCloy, Merf Williams, Steve Wilson and Tony Pierce.

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No 92 Flight Operations Assistant Course (Reserve)



No 404 Joint Air Traffic Control Course



Flight Operations Assistants Course 1047



No 1048 Flight Operations Assistants Course



Joint Air Traffic Control Course 403



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705 NAS Land Away

On 16th September, 10 members of 705 NAS (7 students with 3 instructors) conducted a land-away to Redford Barracks in Edinburgh. The land-away was conducted as part of the Single Engine Advanced Rotary Wing course run by the Defence Helicopter Flying School, with the aim to expose the students to both medium and low level navigation outside of the familiar area surrounding RAF Shawbury.

Despite the weather forecast in the preceding days being far from optimistic, the clouds and rain held off for long enough for the aircraft to get away and fly north into clear skies and glorious sunshine. Leaving the Shawbury area allowed the students to experience several new types of flying including crossing through the controlled airspace of regional airports (Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Newcastle), low level flying and navigation through the hills and valleys of the Lake District, and

making use of a variety of different Helicopter Landing Sites at hospitals and barracks around the country. Talking afterwards about the sortie, one of the students Lt Shaun Bending RN said: "We are used to flying around the fairly flat, rural area around Shawbury, and as you'd imagine you learn to recognise features in the local area making navigation that bit easier. Planning and flying a sortie outside of the area was a great chance to learn about flying over different types of terrain and areas with more complex airspace. It also puts your navigation to the test that bit more, with no local knowledge to fall back on, forcing you to rely much more on the techniques we have been taught. For me the low level navigation through the valleys of the Lake District was some of the most enjoyable flying I have done to date. Flying around below the tops of the hills with the beautiful scenery passing by was exhilarating."



One aircraft leads another into Edinburgh prior to landing at Redford Barracks



One of the students gets some low level handling in the Lake District, whilst the instructor navigates



The crew of one of the aircraft enjoys the view over Ullswater, Lake District

Winter Operations

After a particularly dry and warm year it always takes a while to come to terms with the cold winter weather. For most of us it's simply a case of turning up the thermostat or putting an extra layer on. Unfortunately, for the guys flying the helicopters, it can be an issue if they don't go prepared. The temptation is to go on a trip with the expectation that they will be returning in an hour or two and will have a nice hot cup of tea. For 99% of the time that is the case but what about the other 1%?

What if the aircraft has a problem or a birdstrike and a landing in a field is called for? What if it's the middle of January and the engineers are unable to get to you for a few hours? This is when preparation comes to the fore. A daysack containing a warm layer or two, a pair of gloves, a woolly hat and maybe a flask of coffee would be most welcome. One might get cheesed off with carrying the daysack out to the aircraft each time but, on the occasion that you need it, you will be very glad you did.

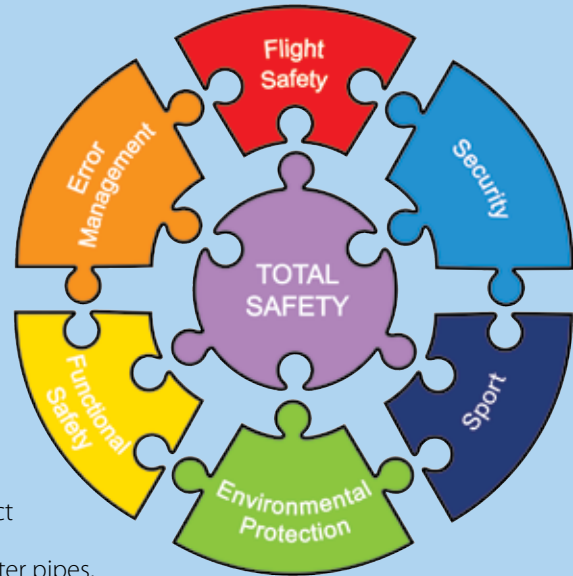
The temptation is to dress for the crewroom rather than the field or the terrain you are flying over. While a flying suit is obviously acceptable wear at most occasions, it doesn't offer any thermal properties, hence the issuing of Cold Weather clothing. Thankfully we do not have the sort of temperatures of Siberia but we have been known to have temperatures as low as -25.2 degrees Celsius on 13 December 1981; the 3rd lowest temperature in the UK since records began! But even on an average cold winter day the effects of the cold can be exaggerated by Wind Chill.

Wind Chill is the temperature it "feels like" outside and is based on the rate of heat loss from exposed skin caused by the effects of wind and

cold temperatures. As the wind increases, the body is cooled at a faster rate causing the skin temperature to drop. Wind Chill does not impact inanimate objects like car radiators and exposed water pipes, because these objects cannot cool below the actual air temperature.

But why should someone sat in a helicopter worry about wind chill? If you are walking out to the aircraft while it is rotors running then you will feel the effects of wind chill thanks to the downwash. The effect is more widely felt if you are playing the role of the hooker on the underslung load park. A fully laden Chinook, for example, can produce wind speeds of over 100 mph when hovering over a load. That is part of the reason why the hookers wear smocks and scarves in Afghanistan.

It is important that as a crew you are aware of the contribution of downwash to the wind chill and keep an eye on your colleagues as well as consider whether the support staff such as the refuellers, aircraft handlers and hookers are suitably dressed. The line managers should have provided suitable thermal clothing but it is a vital part of Total Safety that we keep an eye on each other.



Of course the cold weather affects aircraft performance and flying altitudes. It also affects aircraft dispersals and your routes to and from work. On a daily basis during the colder months a team is working hard behind the scenes to ensure that RAF Shawbury can achieve its output to the front line. The Met Office monitor the temperature and inform Ops who then coordinate the OP BLACKTOP work which involves the MT drivers operating the ploughs and spraying vehicles, and the SWO Gang clearing and gritting footpaths.

In an ideal world with unlimited manpower and resources the entire station would be clear of snow and ice but we are all aware of the restraints in all areas. The other major constraint is that RAF Shawbury is limited by the Environment Agency as to how much anti-freeze can be used each year, which is why you may only see the most essential parts of dispersal cleared.

Even with best of preparation, there may still be times when we get caught out or there are areas that are particularly icy. If you encounter any areas that are dangerous then take responsibility and spread some grit or, at the very least, inform the SWO.

Have a safe winter and let's hope we don't break any records or bones!



No 92 Flight Operations Assistant Course (Reserve)

Personnel on Flight Operations Assistant Course (Reserve) (FOAC(R)) 92 graduated on 20th Oct 15. This was the first course of its kind to be undertaken by Flight Operations Training Flight (FOTF). Friends and family were invited to celebrate the occasion, and with a triple graduation, the occasion couldn't have been much bigger! The graduates' RAF career began 18 months ago attending RAF Halton for 2 weeks of weapons training, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence, and basic military skills. Following this, they each committed to attending a training weekend every month, held at their Sqn, to complete the theory phase of FOAC(R), culminating in a simulator phase at FOTF, RAF Shawbury. This is no mean feat for the students. The reservists have a total of two years to complete both phase 1 and phase 2 training, but when training is broken up into monthly weekend meets, and

the resources and support of training staff available to their regular counterparts aren't accessible, it requires a substantial amount of personal sacrifice.

Throughout the duration of their phase 2 training at FOTF, FOAC(R) students are exposed to the same pressures and timeframes as regular students on FOAC. Some might say even more pressure, as they will have never encountered the simulator environment prior to arriving for Day 1 of the course and by day 5 they commence the first of 6 simulator examinations. However, reservists are expected to perform to the same exacting standards as FOAC students, who have the advantage of being slowly introduced to the simulator injects and environment throughout their theory phase of approximately 7 weeks. Also, consider the adjustments needed to

alternate between civilian life and operating effectively in a military setting, such as parading each morning for inspection and marching everywhere, the learning curve for reservists is less of a gentle climb out, and more a vertical take-off! However, as FOAC(R) 92 course staff discovered, personnel from civvy street do share the military's fondness for cake. LAC Chambers' box of French Fancies did not go unnoticed by Cpl Williams, and he was heard uttering the words "This is one is my favourite, which I will now devour. I am well pleased with you, Chambers. Now plot and address that flight plan!"

Through their own valiant efforts, all students that started the course graduated and LAC Aitchison was awarded the Tanat Trophy for demonstrating the highest standards of practical and theoretical knowledge across the Operations, Flight Planning, and Military

Skills elements of the Flight Operations Assistants Course (Reserves) as well as displaying high levels of self-motivation, teamwork and Service ethos.

The students come from a variety of backgrounds such as a fire and security systems engineer, sponsorship manager for Liverpool Football Club, quantity surveyor and a British Gas field engineer. We must thank their civilian employers who share the sacrifices, without which military life would not be possible for our graduates. If this were the case our service would have missed out on their individual experiences, and remarkable 'can do' approach.

All graduates will now return to 611 (West Lancashire) Sqn, RAF Woodvale, and all staff at CATCS wish them the very best for the future, and hope all can be mobilised soon, putting into good use those new professional skillsets.

Graduation photograph to be found on page 26.

Coastguards Train at CATCS!



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That wasn't quite how it began but I think you will understand how these things can begin and how the initial conversation ends up as a lot of hard work being produced to enable the end result to be what the customer wanted.

Now, hands up who knows who runs the Aeronautical Rescue Co-Ordination Centre at RAF Kinloss? Answer: The

RAF. Now, hands up who knows who will be running it next year? No, you're not sure? Well let me tell you. Next year the Coast Guard will be responsible for what was known as the ARCC but from a building in Fareham, Hampshire. So what has that got to do with CATCS you may ask? Well let me tell you more. The Coast Guard is very experienced

at guarding the coast around the UK but less so at looking after things in the sky that may be operating over the land. We here at CATCS are very experienced at teaching people about things in the sky and the majority of staff at Kinloss would have been taught at CATCS at some point so who better to train the Coast Guard about becoming Air aware?

Meetings were arranged and subject specifications were agreed and lessons written. How many to be taught came as a shock...28...at the same time. 28! Where were we going to put them all? What grade are they? For ease it was decided to keep them together and a big thank you must go to Lesley and her colleagues in the Officers' Mess for finding the



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space to host the course. September saw what may have appeared to be a RN tribute act as 28 white shirted, white hatted delegates arrived at CATCS to begin 2 weeks of training. A good percentage of those attending were ex service personnel. A percentage of those ex service personnel were ex Shawbury students and the course was further split to the haves and have nots. The haves were refreshing their knowledge, the have nots were being taught from scratch. A mixture of subjects were delivered by CATCS staff replicating the same training that is delivered day in and day out to the ATM cadre. Tests were held along the way to ensure it was being picked up sufficiently to allow the Coast Guard to operate

in the New Year. Andy Freshwater covered the Met and how it changes over hills and down dales, something that, tsunamis aside, the sea doesn't worry too much about. The final day saw a written exam which produced a 100% success rate at first time of asking. Testament to the quality of instruction from all who delivered coupled with an audience who soaked up what was being taught. Well that is my opinion anyway! And that was that. Months of hard work and preparation ending with two weeks of delivery and it was as if they had never been here. Was it worth it? Yes. Could CATCS do it again? Of course we can. Next.....! Next.....! Next.....!

By Sgt Rob Viney

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Ex Flanders

Day 1

After a busy working day, there is nothing like putting your feet up and having a well-earned rest. Instead, 7 CATCS members braved the busy motorways between RAF Shawbury and RAF Manston, as they headed off on Ex FLANDERS, a staff ride encompassing various campaigns in Belgium and northern France.

Day 2

An 0900hrs ferry crossing meant an early start, which was not easy after a late arrival at Manston, but since everyone was excited about the trip ahead and most of us had our passports, we reloaded the bags onto the wagon and set off for Dover!

With a couple of hours to kill crossing the channel, it seemed the perfect setting for Flt Lt Paul Milne to deliver his stand on the 1941 Cross Channel "Circus" Operations, examining how they compared to the Battle of Britain and how the objectives could be achieved in the modern day. Thankfully the weather was pleasant on the upper deck and with France looming in the background, it really made for a great start to the trip.

As the ferry docked, we boarded the minibus and we were soon on our way to the beautiful town of Ypres, Belgium, which is home to the "In Flanders Fields" Museum. After a look around the exhibits, we decided to have a coffee in the museum courtyard, overlooked by

a breath taking clock tower. It seemed a fitting location for the next stand which was delivered by Cpl Michelle Coupar, about the evolution of the Air Power roles and tactics on the Western Front in WW1 and how they have shaped Air Power in the modern day.

After a quick look around the rest of the town, which included a visit to the Wipers Times – an establishment named after a newspaper created by British Forces to keep spirits high during the war, and the "Tommy" slang for Ypres - we met back in Ypres Market Square for the final stand of the day which was delivered by FS Clive Halliday. This stand examined how the Royal Flying Corps and German Air Services differed in their approach to gaining Air Superiority on the Western Front, what impact the ethos and experience had on post war doctrine and what effect this had going into WW2.

This took us nicely up to the last visit of the day, the Last Post Ceremony at Menin Gate. This has been a daily tradition since 1928, when a number of prominent citizens in Ypres felt that some way should be found to show gratitude and respect for those who fell in an effort to give the Belgian nation their freedom and independence. It is a truly remarkable ceremony, involving hymns and wreath laying. Hundreds of people gathered to hear the tribute to the chosen soldier. It was a very humbling and proud moment as we discovered that this ceremony was a tribute to a British Soldier and spoken in



Flanders Field Museum and Clock Tower

English. The ceremony was beautifully closed with the Last Post and Reveille and we took a look around the surrounding gardens where thousands of names of fallen soldiers with no known grave are carved into the walls of the monument. All that was left was to travel to our accommodation for the night in Kortrijk and find somewhere for dinner before a much needed sleep.

Day 3

Yet another early start, the team grabbed a quick breakfast before heading off to meet with our Belgian colleagues at Belga Radar as they held their families Open Day. We were shown around the Belgian Air Traffic Control School and the Belga Radar Facility and received an informative briefing on their operations. We were



Menin Gate Ceremony



also fortunate enough to be able to go inside the Radar Head which had been turned off for the day, as well as view some impressive aerobatics from the Belgian Air Force. The day ended back in Kortrijk with dinner and a few drinks as we took in the scenery in the picturesque town.

Day 4

Ursel Air Force Base was our next stop and we were again treated to an air display along with a number of historical aircraft exhibits and stalls. However, with more stops to make, after a couple of hours we were back on the bus and headed to "La Coupole" (The Dome) situated in Pas-de-Calais, Northern France.

La Coupole, built in the side of a disused chalk quarry, was created by Nazi Germany Forces for the production, storage and launch of V2 rockets. Heavily bombed by Allied Forces during "Operation Crossbow", no rockets were ever launched, however it was home to many prisoners who were taken from the concentration camps to work on the V2 production line. The exhibits in the dark and cold railway tunnels that led to the main dome told a harrowing tale of the life and workings of La Coupole. It seemed almost unbelievable that people had lived and worked in the very tunnels we were walking through. As we re-grouped, La Coupole made a perfect backdrop for the next two stands, the first of which was delivered by Sgt Ben Waring. This examined the V2 programme and its effectiveness as a weapon of war. We also examined the V2 in comparison to the V1 and as luck would have it a V1 launch rail,



St Omer, Memorial du Souvenirs at Longuenesse

which had actually been donated to La Coupole by RAF Cosford, was situated nearby. We then moved on to Space Power in the modern day with WO Dave Nevins delivering his stand on how Space Power is used, constrained and regulated in modern military operations. We also examined how this capability could be attacked and how this could be countered. Once the stand was finished, we set off to our new home for the night in St Omer, stopping on the way at Longuenesse (St. Omer) Cemetery to pay our respects to the fallen. The number of graves for unknown Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the British Forces really brought home how many gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Day 5

The last day saw us cram in one last visit before boarding the ferry back to Blighty. This time we visited Dunkirk, famous for "Operation Dynamo" which was the code name for the evacuation of Allied Forces from Dunkirk, having

been surrounded by the German Army during the Battle of France. The final stand, delivered by Lt Cdr Ben Cottee and FS Jen Ibbs, examined the constraints of Air Power for both Allies and German Forces during Operation Dynamo and explained why the RAF at that time were referred to by troops on the ground as the "Royal Absent Force" (because they were further afield protecting the evacuation lanes). We also looked at the decisions made by the leadership at the time and the effectiveness of those decisions on the operation. The stand was followed by a look around the small, yet very informative Memorial du Souvenirs Museum before it was time to head back to Calais for the ferry home.

As we reflected on our trip it was evident that, despite the sombre mood brought about by some of the moving stories we had read and heard over the last few days, everyone had enjoyed the visits and we were left with a thirst for seeing and learning more.

Cpl Michelle Coupar, FOTF.



La Coupole - The Dome

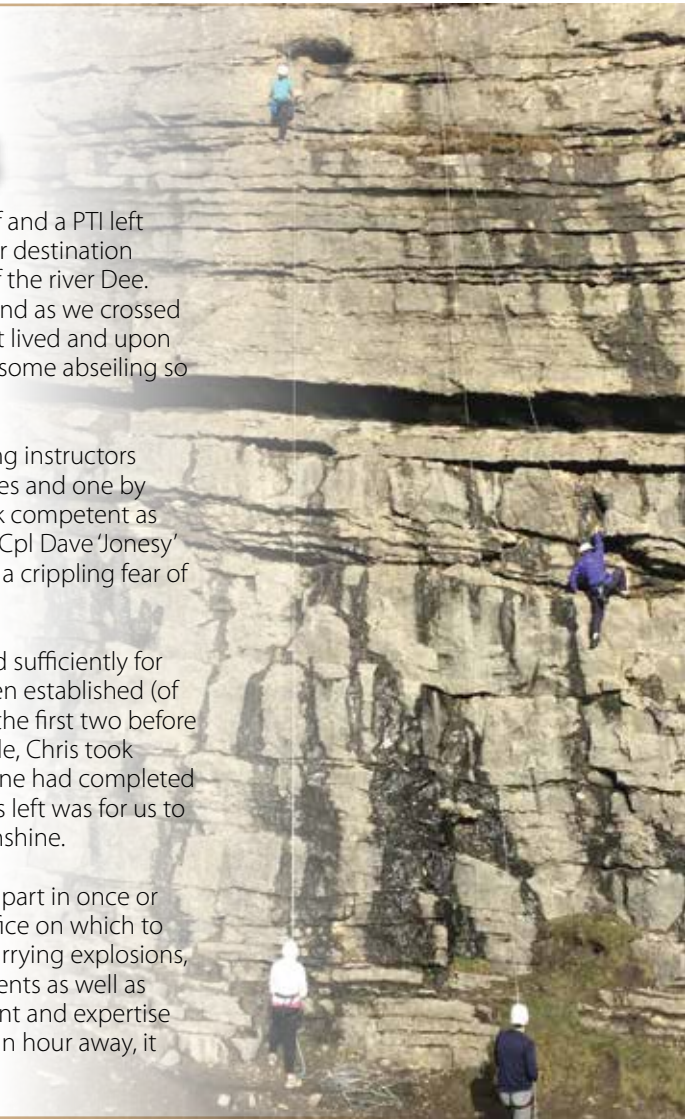
CATCS personnel scale new heights

On a wet and blustery October morning, six intrepid CATCS staff and a PTI left Shawbury and headed to north Wales for a spot of climbing. Our destination was the former quarry above the village of Trevor and in sight of the river Dee. Despite a favourable weather forecast, Wales didn't disappoint and as we crossed the border the heavens opened. Thankfully the rainfall was short lived and upon arriving at the quarry it was decided that we should begin with some abseiling so as to allow the rock face time to dry out.

Flt Lt Paul Milne and Cpl Chris Smith, being the qualified climbing instructors amongst the group, rigged up the necessary ropes and harnesses and one by one we backed over the cliff edge, doing our best efforts to look competent as we bounced down the rock face. A special mention must go to Cpl Dave 'Jonesy' Jones of FOTF who completed a descent despite suffering from a crippling fear of heights!

Once the abseiling had been completed, the rock face had dried sufficiently for the first two climbers to begin their ascents. Two routes had been established (of differing difficulty) and myself and Flt Lt Charlie Gawne tackled the first two before Flt Andy Mortimer and Lt Dawn Tingle took their turn. Meanwhile, Chris took Jonesy to a more accessible climb nearby. In short order, everyone had completed both climbs, as well as putting in belaying shifts, and all that was left was for us to eat our packed lunches and head home in the now glorious sunshine.

For almost all of us, climbing was something we had only taken part in once or twice before and the rock face at Trevor quarry was an ideal edifice on which to develop our climbing ability. With the rock face the result of quarrying explosions, there were plenty of hand and footholds to allow for simple ascents as well as those of a more challenging nature. With all necessary equipment and expertise available from the PEd Flight, and with excellent climbing only an hour away, it makes for a superb day of FD.



Flight Operations Assistants Course 1049 Community Project at St Peters Church, Stoke-On-Tern

FOAC 1049 recently completed their community project, the idea of which is to give something back to the local area that serves RAF Shawbury and those who live there.

The Parish Council had requested assistance in their fight against the damp that was taking hold of the church. Before any further works could be approved and financed, the

congregation and Church Warden Jan needed to arrange for a trench to be dug around the external walls so it could be filled with special damp proofing shale.



The Church Wardens Jan and Sandra organised tools and wheel barrows and on Sat 24th October FOAC 1049 arrived to start digging. Heavy rain had been forecast for the afternoon so they elected to get straight down to business.

AC Jones lead the way as self-elected 'head digger'. As his father was a builder, this gave him all the skills necessary to make good headway – unfortunately a second team headed by the unflappable AC Wilkes was despatched to clean up after him!



CATCS Velodrome Day 2015

On 23rd October, 10 staff from CATCS accompanied by Flt Lt Jordan from the PEd section spent a challenging and exciting force development day at the velodrome. After establishing, for some members of the group, that Telford doesn't have its own Velodrome, we set off for Newport (South Wales), heeding good advice from the PEdO not to eat all our sandwiches just before we arrived - we would be working very hard on the track from the start.

As well as being very physically challenging, the track cycling provided much opportunity for force development and teamwork. On arrival we were all provided with a bike and led into the velodrome.

AC Cox was put in charge of wheelbarrows and she was determined to move the full ones, no matter how heavy they became, showing that the PT sessions she has taken part in whilst on the course have been worthwhile.

Towards the middle of the morning the Course were treated to home baked scones from Church Warden Sandra. This replenished their energy enough to continue with their very effective method of dividing into teams to cut turf, empty the trenches of soil and remove the dirt.

By mid-day the course had completed the task through their hard work and organisational skills. This was just as well as 10 minutes after clear up, the heavens opened and the forecasted heavy rain arrived.

Well done FOAC 1049.

By Cpl Louisa Booth

For those who hadn't been to the velodrome before, the first challenge of the day was getting over the very uneasy feeling of being strapped to a bike with no brakes and therefore no obvious or quick way of stopping. Track bikes are fixed wheel, single speed, which means, similar to a spinning bike, you cannot stop pedalling. If you try and stop pedalling your knee will get pushed up by the wheel regardless - an uncomfortable, potential painful experience that you won't repeat. To stop you need to gradually slow down and then come off the track and grab the railing.

The beginners to the velodrome were put through their paces by a resident coach and gradually built up the confidence to move off the base of the track, known as the Cote D'Azur, onto the angled part of the track. The majority of the track is at an angle of 42 degrees and the key to not sliding off, is keeping your speed up. The faster you go, the further up the track you can safely ride. Any nerves had to be overcome quickly as speed and confidence were a must.

Once it was established that we could hold our own and ride safely in a line, the more experienced riders joined us and we began to test our teamwork and communication skills. We rode in a line with no more than a metre between each bike - teamwork was required to trust that the rider in front would stay steady and constant and not cause you to crash. We were instructed to ride at a gentle pace and at the blow of the whistle the lead rider would sprint off the front until he caught up with the back of the line again. It was key that the

group communicated and maintained a gentle pace and that the sprinter checked his/her closing speed in time to close onto the back of the group without crashing into the rear rider.

The day ended with a time trial event which introduced a bit of healthy competition amongst the group. After a one-lap warm up, we each performed a timed 500 metre sprint, which left the legs and lungs screaming. With timings ranging from 36 sec to 45 sec it was the ever modest Flt Lt Tom Hammond who took the victory. However we were all put to shame by British Team Cyclist Tom Baker who, following recovery from injury, had joined us on the track that day. He could achieve a faster time than any of us from a standing start - but he did have quads the size of tree trunks.

The velodrome provided an excellent medium for force development. Even the most confident of riders were put into stretch as they conquered the 42 degree bank of the track. Communication and teamwork were paramount to ensure we rode safely as a group, all whilst working very hard physically.

By Flt Lt Paul Milne





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

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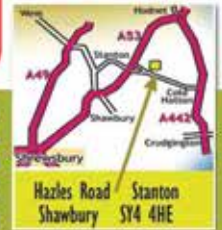
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Pictured are the members of CFS(H) and 368 QHI Cse with Mr Scott Booker (left) and Maj Dan McBride (right)



The Question Is 'Quantity' Or 'Quality?'

In any organisation where milestones can be acknowledged by the accumulation of time and experience in performing a task, this question could be reasonably asked of any individual, whether quantity or quality is important? In the helicopter flying field this is especially important, as most people will know that a helicopter, if left in the wrong hands will naturally want to screw itself into the ground. Also in accumulating hours of experience, the pilots will have started flying in machines, which may not have been as airworthy or trustworthy as today's modern machines. It was, therefore, a good day of celebration for CFS(H) Squadron to acknowledge two of the instructors as they passed significant milestones in their helicopter aviation careers.

Mr Scott Booker and Maj Dan McBride passed 8,000 and 4,000 hours respectively. Both have had similar service in terms of time but with different paths along the way, which are similar to some of the career considerations that our budding ab-initio/trainee aviators may consider.

Having joined the Royal Navy in Feb 86, Scott trained as a helicopter pilot and joined the front line as an Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Sea King pilot in 1988, serving in Cornwall and a variety of HM ships and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries. His first visit to Shropshire was to complete the Qualified Helicopter Instructor (QHI) course at CFS(H) in 1992, after which he taught Basic Helicopter Flying on the Gazelle for two years back in Cornwall, including a Summer in the Sharks Display Team for the 94 Season. A short term on the staff course at Greenwich, was then followed by a return to the Sea King, teaching in a variety of roles and ships, including a two and half year exchange tour 1997-2000 with the Royal Australian Navy at Nowra in NSW. In 2001 he returned to RAF Shawbury for his first experience of the Squirrel helicopter and living in Shropshire, joining the staff at CFS(H) for his final job in the RN. In 2004, contrary to all his best laid plans, he joined what was then FBHeliservices for 'a couple of years'. Seven years of flying the Squirrel on 705NAS followed, and then a unique opportunity arose when

the military finally decided to allow a civilian contractor QHI to join the staff at CFS(H). Scott was lucky enough to be selected, and was then joined in March of this year by a second ex-RN Cobham instructor, Donny Gamble. With 4500 Squirrel flying hours, Scott passed the 8000 rotary hours milestone whilst instructing an International Defence Trainee from Kuwait on the QHI Course.

On the other hand, Maj Dan McBride attended and commissioned from RMAS Sandhurst in Dec 87. Initially becoming a subaltern (junior officer) in the Kings Regiment he served as a infantry officer in UK, West Germany and West Berlin. He was also fortunate to spend 5 months with the 6th Royal Australian Rifles in Brisbane and on deployment to the Northern Territories. It is worth reminding 'junior readers' that 'back in the day' the main purpose of having our Armed Forces was to protect us from attack from a then perceived aggressor, the Soviet Union. Which bearing in mind that we were never attacked seemed to have been a reasonable

plan. However, it was whilst digging 4 man linear trenches in Northern Germany that Dan became aware of helicopters and the Army Air Corps (AAC); not least because at the time the helicopter crew got to sleep in a barn whereas the infantry slept in or next to their trenches in temperatures down to minus 15 degrees. In 1991 Dan graduated from the Army Pilots Course as a qualified Gazelle pilot serving first in 4 Regt AAC based at Detmold, Germany and then subsequently in Northern Ireland (NI). Unfortunately, while conducting a task on night vision goggles (NVG) in NI, Dan was involved in a helicopter mid-air collision over a security base, resulting the loss of 4 lives on the RAF Puma and extensive injuries to himself and lucky escape for his other crew-member. Bearing in mind that at approximately 40ft off the ground, the rotor blades came off the Gazelle, it was effectively an 'Engine On and Rotors Off' landing and both were extremely fortunate to be alive.

Following the accident Dan spent nearly 12 months in hospital and rehabilitation at Headley Court and despite initial medical prognosis of never regaining flying status, he was ultimately successful and 'regained' full flying grade. Once back to flying, he then converted to the Lynx helicopter initially flying Mk1 and Mk7 Lynx in the anti-tank role, Dan then subsequently converted to the Lynx Mk9 air mobility helicopter specialising in formation flying on NVG. Tours included Europe and Former Republic of Yugoslavia/Bosnia before attending Junior Division Staff College and subsequently the CFS(H) QHI Cse. Service since then has included DHFS both as Squadron Commander and then as Deputy Chief Instructor. More recently, following further operational tours Dan has joined CFS(H) as an instructor and like Scott is thoroughly committed to teaching future QHIs some of whom they taught as ab-initio/trainee pilots.

Two very diverse military careers with one still happily serving in the military and one happily serving alongside, albeit in a military environment. It goes to show to some of the 'would be aviators' on Station that there are challenging career paths ahead for all our Services, which all have interesting operational and non-operational tours. A consideration might be that if you are wishing to seek promotion then an unfortunate side-effect, is that you will not amass as many hours, as you complete command and staff/desk tours. Alternatively, if you wish to remain in flying post there are also alternative career paths to remain in the cockpit, which now exist in all 3 Services. Ultimately, the choice is up to the individual and whereas Dan can also spin dits about Australia, Scott goes quiet when talking about conducting rotors off landings!

By Maj Dan McBride, CFS (H)

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Birmingham Poppy Day 2015

RAF Shawbury was dressed in its finest autumnal clothing as the 0600 alarm was greeted with unusual excitement. A seven strong team were setting off for the Birmingham Poppy Day event in support of the Royal British Legion's annual appeal. Battling through the mist and persistent drizzle the one hour commute during rush hour saw them safely delivered to the Birmingham AFCCO headquarters for the event. With the "Time on Target" successfully achieved (Sqn Ldr Jones was denied his Grande Latte with sprinkles en-route) they awaited the Army led brief and were swiftly despatched (45 mins later) to pound the streets of a cold and damp "Second City". Throughout the day the team displayed great courage in adversity, a sense of purpose and direction (avoiding the numerous coffee shops) and fully engaged with the general public wherever they could be found. Their return to HQ some 8 hours later



saw the bedraggled group clutching four buckets (not quite overflowing but a decent effort in the climatic conditions) and the possible start of mild hypothermia. During the return journey Sqn Ldr Jones finally got his Latte and declared the day a resounding success.

On a serious note, the team worked extremely hard engaging with the general public on a very quiet and miserable day, used initiative finding a better location surrounded by office blocks and worked long through the lunch time period to maximise fund raising. Whilst the final figure raised has

still to be calculated, they have undoubtedly made a valuable contribution to the overall outcome.

Thank you to the participants who volunteered their support, Sqn Ldr Jones, WO Fisher, FS Halliday, FS McPhillips, LAC Money, AB Kirk, AET Armstrong

MacMillan Coffee Morning

If there's one thing that we can depend on at RAF Shawbury, it's that people will always support a good cause.... and when cake is involved, it is guaranteed to be a winner!

A Macmillan coffee morning was held on Tuesday 22nd September in the Aries Club and managed to raise a very respectable £351.62

A massive thank you everyone who supported the event especially those of you who baked, set up, sold cakes, bought cakes and helped out. Without the generosity and kindness from our community, it would not have been such a success. Looking forward to next year already!

**By Nicky Jones,
Emma Smith and Emma Foxall**



Central Registry Staff Donate Books to St Mary's Primary School

A company called The Book People have been bringing books to Central Registry in SHQ since 2010. Commission from the book sales are used to buy books for donation across various departments on the Station and within the local community.

Ann Lewis who runs the book club in Central Registry at Shawbury with assistance from Frank Young is pictured here with Gail Moore, RAF Shawbury Community Development Officer, Miss Joe Leach the Deputy Head of St Mary's School and some of the children accepting donated books from RAF Shawbury.

A lot of the children at St Mary's are dependants of RAF Shawbury personnel and we hope to long continue our association with St Mary's in continuing to donate books to the school in the future.

Ann Lewis



Service Footballers Assist Shirts Charity

Footballers at the RAF stations at Odiham (Hampshire), Valley (Anglesey) and Shawbury (North Shropshire) have assisted a charity which collects and re-distributes football kits to the needy across the world.

RAF Odiham personnel visited the Headquarters of Hampshire FA to collect a huge amount of football kits that the County FA no longer need. Hampshire FA offered the kits to Wing Commander Neil Hope MBE, who runs the RAF backed Taking Football to Africa and Beyond Charitable Appeal. The Appeal is operated from RAF Shawbury and collects donated unwanted footballing items which they then distribute to the needy across the globe. To date the Appeal has delivered over 117000 items, including over 39000 football shirts to 50 countries, with the vast majority going to Kenya, in East Africa.

The Hampshire kits were collected by Sergeant Jason Kehoe and members of the RAF Odiham football team. Jason runs the successful Station team at the Hampshire Airbase. Following collection Jason and his team travelled to RAF Shawbury to play a pre-season friendly football match against the RAF Shawbury and RAF Valley joint team.



Match Action – Shawbury/Valley in Blue, Odiham in Red/Blk.

Jason said: "We were very pleased to be able to assist the Appeal in interacting with the Hampshire County FA and we are grateful to them for providing the kits." At the match the Appeal was also presented with a football strip by Sergeant Jason Lee and the RAF Valley football team".

Neil said: "All of the donated items will be sorted and stored at RAF Shawbury until they can be delivered to the needy across the world. I am very thankful to Hampshire FA, RAF Odiham and RAF Valley for their kind assistance".



Presentation of a football kit donated by RAF Valley – (l-r) – FS Danny Jackson (RAF Shawbury), Flt Lt Piers Dudley (RAF Valley), Wg Cdr Neil Hope MBE (Appeal Organiser), Sgt Jase Lee (RAF Valley).



Hampshire kit in the appeal store – far left Wg Cdr Neil Hope MBE, centre blue shirt Sgt Jase Kehoe (RAF Odiham organiser), far right FS Danny Jackson (RAF Shawbury) with the RAF Odiham team.

RAF Shawbury support Walking With The Wounded WALK OF BRITAIN



As most people on Station at RAF Shawbury will know, we have been proud to support the activities of the Walking With The Wounded (WWTW) Charity for the past 18 months.

The charity conducts high profile funded events to showcase the amazing capabilities of our wounded in service (WIS), who despite physical and/or cognitive disability are still capable of extraordinary acts. It should be noted that these events like Walking to the North and South Poles are externally funded and every pound of sponsorship and funding raised goes directly to the WIS.

WWTW aims to re-train and re-educate our servicemen and women, both veterans and those leaving the Armed Forces today, to finance new qualifications, education and training programmes for those who are injured to help their career transition. This enables the blind, the burn victims, the mentally injured, the amputees and all other wounded to rebuild their lives and to return to the work place with dignity and respect.

The latest expedition is the 1,000 mile Walk of Britain. This walk is being conducted by six wounded veterans – four British and two American former soldiers and marines. Disabilities include lower leg amputations, blindness, multiple body injuries from helicopter crashes to deafness and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following being blown up or shot in past recent conflicts. It was, therefore, a huge honour for myself and RAF Shawbury to be invited by the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Ed Parker (co-founder of the charity) to accompany the 'WWTW Trekkers' on the 28th September 2015.

The Shawbury Team was made up of myself (obviously Army), Lt Cdr Nick Bane (RN from CFS(H), Flt Lt Jenny Boyd (RAF from DHFS) and Fg Off Alice Hamling (RAF from ATC). We met the 'Trekkers' at Ellesmere College as they were about to start their 38th day of walking, which would end with them completing their 536th mile of their quest at Shrewsbury. The day started with a presentation of a cheque for £5,319 to Walking With The Wounded from RAF Shawbury. The cheque represents the fund raising efforts of the Station over the past 18 months, from the various events and entries into competitions and was received with huge thanks and appreciation from the charity. For information the Station has a Charities Committee, which coordinates funding events throughout the Year and donates half the proceeds to a local charity and half to a national charity.

The day started off quite foggy and so getting an aerial shot of the walkers was not possible but many thanks to the DCFI and Station Photographer for attempting to assist on the following day. The walk has been planned by Matt Fisher who is one of the four soldiers taking part in the walk. Matt had his left leg amputated 12 months after he was shot in the foot while patrolling in Afghanistan on Boxing Day, 2009. He now uses a prosthetic/false lower leg and during the day had a choice of 3 different alternatives. He had to alternate between the different options due to the fact that each one has a slightly different socket and mount, which meant that he had to change them regularly to prevent getting too many pressure sores as he walked the 22 mile route from Ellesmere to Shrewsbury. As he said to the Mayor as the team arrived in Shrewsbury: "I am very sore but very willing to carry on and looking forward to getting to the end. We just

want to raise awareness and funds, as all the funds are used for programmes that are working with the wounded” The four British ex-soldiers and former marines are joined by two former US Marines, Kirsten Ennis and Andrew Emmett. While Andrew suffers from PTSD, Kirsten was a helicopter crewman serving in a CH53 which crashed in 2012 in Afghanistan and suffered a catalogue of injuries. Indeed, for her like all the others taking part, the walk represents a form of therapy and she stated “If I cannot serve in the military in the capacity I wanted to, then I still want to care for my military brothers and sisters”. It was noted that surgeons wished to remove her left leg 4 weeks prior to the walk, however, she has elected to retain it in order to complete the 1000 mile walk rather than be in rehabilitation. On completion of the walk she will return to the US to have the leg removed.

For myself and my 3 colleagues it was a great opportunity to share this phase of the walk and provide a chance to support and assist the WWTW Walk of Britain Team. It provided the team with a bit of tri-Service banter and humour that they are used too, and a chance to give some local knowledge as the team approached Shrewsbury with regards directions and locations. The walk ended with tea and cake with the Mayor in the town square, followed by a very well attended evening presentation at Shrewsbury School. The WWTW Team were also very appreciative of the warm welcome they have received throughout Shropshire, from organised support to people beeping horns and waving to some stopping and making a donation.

If you would like to show your support the Walk of Britain or just get involved with some of the many initiatives conducted by WWTW, like the Walk to Work Scheme or the Cumbria Challenge, then more information can be found at ‘walkingwiththewounded.org.uk’ or contact the author on ‘dan.mcbride330@mod.uk’

By, Major Dan McBride, AAC



Many attend ‘A Brew for The Few’

On Thursday 29th October, the ladies from the Thursday Coffee Morning Group got together and ran a very successful coffee and cake sale in support of the RAFA Wings Appeal. Through the generosity of everyone at Shawbury who donated or bought cakes an impressive £209.37 was raised for this important charity. The children present also enjoyed getting into the spirit of Halloween by carving pumpkins under the careful supervision of Emma Smith. Special thanks must go to ISS for providing tea and coffee, which boosted the amount raised, and to the Community Support Team. The Thursday Coffee Mornings take place between 0930 and 1130 in the Community Centre each week – everyone is most welcome to drop in for a cup of tea or coffee and a chat.

By Erica Hewitt



Exercise 'Welsh Pipe II'

Whilst on a training sortie on the 6th Feb 1945, Lancaster NE132 crashed into a remote location in the Rhinogau mountains in Snowdonia, killing all of the crew. A veteran aircraft of World War II, it was concluded that NE132 had flown into a cumulus nimbus cloud and suffered such catastrophic icing that it led to the aged airframe breaking up mid-air. And so it was that the focus for the next 'Welsh Pipe' adventurous training intervention was chosen.

Whilst working as an instructor at the Force Development Training Centre Fairbourne in 1994 I was given a book called Wings of War Over Gwynedd. It detailed several World War II allied and German crash sites in the mountains of Snowdonia. The book piqued my interest and the crash sites often became the focus if I was on an overnight expedition. I would set about trying to locate them as the process proved to be a useful exercise in navigation for the students and each wreck had its own interesting though often tragic story to tell. However, despite extensive searching in the wrong area due to an incorrect grid reference, one wreck eluded me, that of Lancaster NE132. As is often the way in life I found it several years later when I wasn't trying to find it. During a mountain day in the Rhinogau and not wanting to deviate off a bearing in particularly poor weather, I jumped over a low wall and landed with a metallic clang. I immediately knew the cause of this alien sound and in an instant the riddle of a protracted quest was solved. Since then I have often gone out of my way to revisit the site both to pay my respects and to share NE132's story with others.

The concept of combining Adventurous Training with Force Development is not new. One of the training objectives of the Force Development's Generic Education and Training Requirement is to research the history of the RAF. As was demonstrated by locating the resting place of NE132, the two strands often go hand in hand. Following the successes of the first 'Welsh Pipe' expedition, this blended approach became the format for 'Welsh Pipe II', another overnight expedition to the rugged, stunning and rarely visited

Rhinogau of south Snowdonia.

A trawl for interested personnel saw representatives from several sections from RAF Shawbury departing early on a damp Thursday morning for mid Wales. My confidence in modern Met Office forecasting soon proved well founded as one hour into the drive we emerged into the clearer weather behind a cold front and into a ridge of high pressure that provided a small window of near perfect weather for the duration of the expedition. The plan was for two groups to park up and start in different locations either side of the Rhinogau, converge on a single location for a night stop together before walking out of the hills to the other group's van. Within these two days, each group would visit the final resting place of NE132.

Led by Cpl Adam Roberts, the group I was working with arrived at the crash site only a couple of hours after leaving the van. Without prompt there was a tangible change in the group's mood, it becoming both respectful of where we treading and introspective. After a while discussion developed and the group learned that FS Clive Halliday's grandfather was a tail gunner on Lancasters during the war. Amazingly, whilst on a mission to Germany his aircraft was damaged such that the crew were forced to bail out once back over Blyth. Half the crew survived and in doing so Clive's grandfather earned membership to the exclusive Caterpillar Club. As if that wasn't remarkable enough, it transpired that Clive's grandfather had changed his trade after the war to that of Air Traffic Controller



and incredibly Clive had discovered his photo displayed on a wall in CATCS only two weeks prior to Welsh Pipe II. Eventually it was time to leave and the group took in the summit of the nearby Rhinog Fawr followed by negotiating an 'interesting' gully descent before the final climb to the bivvy site.

That evening whilst sat atop Rhinog Fach we watched the sunset over the Irish Sea, our tents nestled invitingly far below on a platform next to Llyn (Welsh for 'lake') Hywel. A drop in temperature accompanied the sun's departure and prompted a careful retreat to the tents and a hot drink. I rose the next morning as the sky lightened to the east to find the moon reflected defiantly in the jet black water of Llyn Hywel. Movement in the nearby tents indicated that others were readying themselves for the day

ahead and before long Rhinog Fach and Llyn Hywel were left to stand stoically once more as both groups turned their backs and threaded their way out of the mountains.

Lancaster NE132 along with the remains of Fg Off Evans and Sgt Gash still lay on the slopes of a remote mountain in Snowdonia. It is perhaps timely that so close to Remembrance Day we remember the seven who lost their lives on 6th February 1945.

In memory of:

- Fg Off David Henry Robert Evans, RAAF, Pilot
- Fg Off Maxwell Walter Moon, RAAF, Navigator
- Sgt Charles William Souden, RAF, Bomb Aimer
- Sgt George Edward William Hodge, RAF, Flight Engineer
- Sgt Arthur David Gash, RAF, Air Gunner
- Sgt Harold Nielsen, RAF, Air Gunner
- Sgt Alfred Ernest Oliff, RAF, Air Gunner/Wireless Op

by Sgt 'Stick' Ballard, Physical Education Flight.



LEJOG Challenge

8 bikes, 7 riders, 900 miles, 40,000ft, 2 support drivers, 336,000 calories, 3 countries and countless tubes of chamois cream!

The Land's End to John O'Groats (LEJOG) cycling challenge is not to be underestimated and is a rite of passage for any serious cyclist. The record for completing the LEJOG challenge on a conventional cycle is just over 44 hours, however our team of 7 (mainly RAF Shawbury personnel and a cameo appearance from an RAF Swanwick team member would attempt the journey in a more sedate 8 days, nevertheless this would still be an arduous task as a typical cycling time is between 10 – 14 days for the route that we were intending to complete.

LEJOG conjures up a variety of images, an escapade, a challenge, hard work, a puncture or two, stunning scenery and a tremendous sense of achievement. Since the 1960s the End to End has become a firm favourite with the British people. Experience suggests that the best way to traverse the length of the country is from south west to north east. The rationale behind this choice revolves mainly around the predominant wind direction.

Resident cycling guru Flt Lt Paul Milne, veteran of a previous successful LEJOG attempt suggested that the tour is suitable for somebody with a good level of fitness and that if you did plenty of training beforehand you should have no problem completing the ride. The group interpreted this advice in many different ways and only the ride itself would prove just how prepared we actually were!

The weather on day one was kind with bright sunshine and clear skies. We left our salubrious accommodation of Boscowan block at RNAS Culdrose and made the short journey to Land's End to begin the challenge. Day 1 actually ended up being significantly more difficult than anybody expected - a combination of 113 miles, almost 10,000ft of climbing and over 7 hours spent in the saddle had all the team considering whether they had bitten off more than they could actually chew! However the team arrived safely at Okehampton which would act as the first night stop. The accommodation however was located at the top of a



Lands End.

20% gradient slope that was almost 2 miles in length (Okehampton Army Camp, elevated high on Bodmin Moor), fortunately this did not count as part of the LEJOG route and the support driver (Sgt Ben Waring) kindly volunteered his services as a shuttle bus.

Day two would offer some respite after the initial shock of the previous day's strenuous activity and would see the group finish in the centre of Bristol on a Friday evening. The distance covered today was just shy of 100 miles and we climbed less than half of the gradient from previous day. However we still spent over 6 and half hours in the seat and by this stage a number of niggles had developed but unbelievably no mechanicals had been encountered.

The standard of the accommodation in Bristol was questionable (not that we were expecting 5 star hotels) but the location could not have been more central, irrespective of this fact we couldn't agree which establishment to visit in order to replenish the ample amounts of energy burnt during the previous two days. We calculated that in order to effectively complete the challenge we would need to consume 6,000 calories per person, per day. To ensure that sufficient energy was taken on board each participant would carry numerous cereal bars, fruit, nuts, jelly, sweets and energy gels during the cycle with further sustenance provided by the support vehicles who would meet us at predetermined locations.

Day 3 provided arguably the best scenery (crossing the Severn Bridge, cycling the Wye Valley, passing through

Monmouth, Hereford, Leominster, Ludlow and Craven Arms) before arriving back at base for a night stop at RAF Shawbury. Prior to returning to Shawbury we needed to complete 120 miles, climb over 5,500ft and spend nearly 7 hours on the bikes. Again the weather was kind and with a steady tail wind picked up from Little Stretton the group easily averaged over 22mph for the last 15 miles of the route.

Our luck was soon to run out with regards to the weather and Sunday morning saw the first rain of the expedition, today would also see us complete the longest leg to date covering 125 miles, climbing 3,500ft and riding for the equivalent of a working day, we would also need to tackle the conurbations of Warrington, Wigan and Preston as these major cities are unavoidable as you transit along the West Coast of England, the complicated navigation and numerous red lights also hampering progress. The route would eventually parallel the M6 and finish at Kendal (fortunately East of the Lake District and sufficiently far enough from any of the major hills). By this stage the group of seven had split with the 3 faster riders all competing for a stage win, crossing the finish line opposite Kendal Backpacker's! In typical British fashion as soon as all riders had completed today's route the rain stopped. Again the evening consisted of the consumption of numerous calories and the odd sociable drink. A theme was also developing during the evening meal whereby a member of the team would inform the proprietor that it was Flt Lt Will 'Proud Mum' Mason's birthday (even

though it wasn't) and following the meal Will would be presented with a cake, candles and be serenaded with 'Happy Birthday to you!' This joke would continue throughout the event and never got tiring!!

Day 5 would see us cross the border into Scotland and our target for the day was the Student Village at Galashiels. Unfortunately we awoke to torrential rain and all of the group were reluctant to start. Eventually setting out 1 hour later than usual we were immediately faced with the prospect of Shap Fell. A climb of almost 9 miles from our start point in Kendal with an average gradient of 3% it isn't the most torturous hill climb, however with the weather conditions and given the fact we had already covered 450 miles over the previous 4 days tempers were definitely fraying. Flt Lt Scott 'I can manage another 40 miles' Boland was also suffering from the early signs of hypothermia, luckily the excellent support drivers were on hand to offer Scott some much needed encouragement and warmth. The rain was so severe at points that a boat would have been more practical than a bike and spray from the cycle ahead meant that at certain points on the route you were blind, trusting the rider ahead to warn of any dangers. As expected the rain cleared when we were 10 miles from the finish and the group eventually checked into the pre-booked accommodation along with a 'class of '70 reunion party.' Even though these individuals were significantly older than us they were definitely more agile after our broken bodies dismounted from the bikes.

Day 6 would see the group cycle the outskirts of Edinburgh, via the airport, Queensferry and the Forth Bridge. We would also eventually enter 'The Kingdom' of Fife and see the group collect an avid fan following. The fan club actually consisted of Flt Lt Craig Sweeney's Mother, Father and Grandma who kindly provided the group with Scottish delicacies (which of course were laden with sugar). The total distance covered to reach our destination at Pitlochry was 111 miles, over 5,000ft of climbing and 7 hours in saddle and in a turn of fortunes on arrival the heavens opened as we sought shelter in a hostel located in the centre of town.

The route continued through the Cairngorms National Park, winding under and over the A9 and running in

parallel to the River Garry. By this stage of the route we hadn't seen another cyclist for quite some time, however we did pass the distillery of Dalwhinnie and the group were hugely disappointed when we realised that there wasn't an associated café or gift shop. Eventually the route picked up the River Spey and passed through the town of Kingussie. Aviemore would act as the lunch stop at just over halfway of the planned 'easy' 89 mile route. Today's activity would act as somewhat of a recovery cycle and was completed in just shy of 5 hours. The last section of the route was truly spectacular with a rapid dash across open moorland and passing by Culloden Battlefield. It was here that the Jacobite army fought to reclaim the throne of Britain from the Hanoverians. The evening accommodation would be found at Fort George, claiming to be one of the most outstanding fortifications in Europe and was built in the wake of the Battle of Culloden. Fort George is still an active military base and is home to the 3rd Battalion, the 'Black Watch,' Royal Regiment of Scotland. The only problem is that Fort George is a considerable distance from any kind of civilisation.

The final push would not only be a physical challenge but also one of logistical difficulties. Fort George was some 10 miles from the start point and the last thing that any of the group fancied was an extended warm up to the 130 miles that we already had planned. With the bikes, spares and supplies perfectly stacked in the rear of the MT Transit van there was hardly an inch to spare. Spirits were relatively high and this was surprising given that not only did we have to cycle from Inverness to John O'Groats but we would also have to travel back exactly the same route as we would be returning to the home of the 3rd Battalion for another night stop. Things didn't start well with the navigator missing the intended breakfast stop,

not normally an issue however in Northern Scotland food stops were few and far between. There was also a noticeable shift in the wind direction and the usual tail wind had taken a distinct turn, nevertheless progress was steady and the group was spurred on by the fact that the finish was so close. The route followed the Cromarty Firth, skirted Tain Range, Dunrobin Castle, Brora and eventually the agreed respite stop at Wick. By this stage Flt Lt Nic 'Bike Safety' McNamee required some encouraging words and the occasional opportunity to draft and take advantage of the heavily set FS Clive 'Frogman' Halliday. The section from Wick to John O'Groats passed quickly mainly thanks to a drastic change in the wind direction helping to push the team over the line and the consumption of numerous energy drinks. Ironically enough John O'Groats isn't that dissimilar from Land's End and the group was questioning whether they had simply completed a giant loop! After the obligatory 'selfie' and group shot next to the John O'Groats signpost we started the long trek back (in the comfort of van).

To conclude, the riding journey was what I can only describe as a fantastic experience and one which we shall never forget. Thanks go out to Flt Lt Fay Jordan and Stan's cycles for supplying spares on a sale/return basis as without their support, assistance and encouragement we would not have had the ability to complete the challenge. In conducting LEJOG the team also managed to raise over £1,000 for charity.

As I write this article I'm still keen as ever to 'get out on the bike' and complete a 50 mile training cycle 'just for fun.' For more information on cycling activities on Station, cycle shops in town please contact the Gym ext 7248 or Stan's Cycles www.stanscycles.co.uk - 01743 343775

by Flt Lt Tom Hammond



Final Destination.

Inter-Service Canoe Marathon Championships



The Inter-Service competition is an endurance discipline of canoeing, over 6 miles on a flat water river, with a mass start and then 2 laps of the course (think 10,000m athletics although our 'course' is on the river and only 2 laps paddling up and down stream).

I've been out of top level canoe slalom competitions since I retired from the Great Britain team in 1997 so you wouldn't think that I would still be worried or nervous about a canoe marathon race this year but I was scared of knowing if I failed I should have done better because I had put a lot of work and training sessions in before the race. I was as ready as I could be, but could I deliver? It was the Inter-Service competition and the Army had two really good female paddlers in the event; additionally the RAF was without their Number One lady who was only able to give quiet and confident advice

on the bank side - sitting this one out as she was due to have a baby in two weeks!

I had a successful start where I was able to sprint ahead and take command of the race; this gave me the confidence to know I could lead the pack around the course and hopefully control the race. That was my plan, and unlike most of my plans this one survived first contact. For one hour, it was a game of cat and mouse knowing that one of the Army girls was just behind me. She was wash-hanging, which is just a little bit like slipstreaming, so all around the course I was trying to think ahead and be able to counter any tactics that she employed.

For over 55 minutes I was in front and actually starting to enjoy myself, within the pain of an anaerobic threshold! However, while paddling under the last bridge on the River Trent I knew this would be a sprint finish... and she was off employing a sprint break away to the right of the river! But I was

on my toes (metaphorically speaking) and I was able to respond. This time it was my chance to wash-hang off her canoe and have a few seconds 'rest' before picking up the pace and with 100m to the finish, we started to sprint neck and neck. In my head my mantra was 'This is mine This is mine' and so with the belief in myself- it was - by a second. It wasn't an international result with crowds and flags flying but to me it was a great sense of achievement of completing a good race, helping the team with some points, and all in all not a bad day at the office!

So what's next? We all work as one team and enter the Hasler Final (the National Championships for marathon canoeing) as the UK Armed Forces, vying for a good result at the event. The Hasler Series is named after Herbert "Blondie" Hasler, who led Operation Frankton, a WW2 commando raid in double kayaks on the port of Bordeaux. The story of this raid was made into a 1955 film, *The Cockleshell Heroes*.

By Sqn Ldr Joan Cawthray, OC FDS



RAF Saddle Club Inter-Station League

September saw the RAF Shawbury Saddle Club compete against the RAF Valley, RAF Cosford and RAF Linton-on-Ouse clubs in the Inter-Station League. The competition involved a dressage test and a full course of show jumps. It was a successful day for the team's 3 riders - Flt Lt Jenny Boyd, Flt Lt Stef Pearce and Flt Lt Crosby-Jones - who rode into the sunset with a First Team rosette for their match against Linton, as well as a bundle of individual placings across the tournament. The

day was CJ's final appearance for Shawbury before his defection to RAF Odiham, after 2 years as Saddle Club leader. He finally justified the years of heckling from his 60 Sqn comrades as they spotted him sneaking out the gate in jodhpurs and a silly hat by emerging triumphant with an Individual First. The rest of the team will be coming up with some effective methods of sabotage before he competes against them for Odiham next year!

By Flt Lt Jenny Boyd

COs Cup News

Racket Sports

On Thursday 29th October, 705 NAS mustered its finest sportsmen to attend the 'Racket Sports' competition.

On arrival, we were straight in as one of the first squadrons to play. Our star racket-ball player, Mr Witcombe, started out very strongly winning the first game by a large margin. We also had some great success on the Padder tennis court, despite our player Lt Robinson never having played before.

Having lost the first game of squash to 660 Squadron AAC, our team quickly rallied and proceeded to win the remaining squash games. Our badminton team had some tough games but played to a high standard throughout.

Overall we performed very strongly in all four sports. With strong play across the board 705 NAS managed to win the competition. We look forward to the next CO's cup event.

By Lt Kate Jacka AAC



Cross-Country

660 Sqn AAC came into this month's CO's Cup Cross-Country with a 6 point lead. Feeling the pressure, the Squadron ramped up the PT sessions with multiple 'Strava' hits being noted in the local area. Knowing that we had a few strong runners in our Squadron, based on their respective 1.5 mile run times, we decided to adopt a spear head approach and nominated this event to play the 'Joker' (effectively doubling the points of whatever result we would get).

With 173 Course in sight of their FHT, the demands of the final stages of the course meant only one member was able to compete. This left 175 Course, Instructors and the fresh-faced 177 Course to prove that they were up to the challenge. Fortunately for the Squadron, there were ample volunteers for the event including Marathon runners, an Iron Man competitor and the rest able to achieve a respectable sub-9 minute, 1.5 mile time. This enabled the Squadron to enter 2 full teams to give the assurance of securing the win.



The two teams started the race well, with our A and B teams in third and fourth respectively after the first lap. The teams were calm and kept to their game plans and lap by lap the A team increased their position to 2nd. On lap 3, OC 660 Sqn took up his usual position of leading from the front with an outstanding run to put us in the lead. From then on, the remaining team members stretched their legs and increased the lead further and further until finally crossing the line over a minute ahead of the next team. The B team also put in a bold effort to come 4th of the 8 teams taking part.

Playing the 'Joker' before the event doubled our winning score to 24 points, pushing 660 Sqn AAC further into the lead. With a 26 point overall lead at this stage of the year, it is fair to say we have given ourselves a reasonable, if not rather favourable chance at retaining the Station CO's Cup for a third year running. With spirits high, 660 Sqn AAC are looking forward to the challenge that faces them in the racket sports and superteam events in order to preserve their dominance in the Station CO's Cup.

By Lt Bennett AAC, 177 Cse, 660 Sqn AAC



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