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The Magazine of RAF Shawbury

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Edition 4
2016



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Editor's Welcome

by Sqn Ldr Kim Leach



Welcome to Edition 4 of the Aries Magazine. This edition is once again full of articles and stories to show the diverse range of activities and challenges that all personnel at RAF Shawbury get involved in. I am always amazed by the number of submissions that I receive and this edition is no different. You will find stories about local community projects, charity work, Landowners' and Rider Awareness Day, the DHFS Cocktail Party and a special story on a Royal encounter!

Let us also take a moment to remember Mr Tony Crocombe, one of our engineers who was tragically killed in an aviation accident. Our thoughts are with his family and we pay tribute to Tony and his contribution to RAF Shawbury in this edition.

COVER PICTURE:

Flt Lt Jim Hobkirk, CFS Exam, RAF Shawbury welcomes HRH Prince George and the Duchess of Cambridge before viewing a Squirrel helicopter at the Royal International Air Tattoo, Fairford

General Service Knowledge - Information Fact No 9

By Cpl S JAR (Drill Instructor)

Did you know that the Royal Air Force ensign was introduced in 1921? However, before its introduction into service, there was great opposition from the Admiralty regarding the proposed design. Despite heavy Royal Navy opposition, the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Sir Hugh Trenchard went to King George V and pointed out that the red, white and blue roundel had been the emblem of First World War fliers and that he could think of no better design than an emblem against a sky-blue background. The King agreed and in turn, formally approved the design, the Royal Assent was given and the Royal Air Force had its own ensign.



Submissions for Edition 5 to the Editor by 10th September 2016



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FOREWORD

by Wg Cdr Robin D Stedman BSc MA RAF

Being invited to write the Forward for a station magazine is always a privilege, being asked to do so for the Aries magazine on your very first day in command of the School of Air Operations Control (SAOC) is doubly so, although at the same time quite daunting. So, one week into the most important 2 years of my time in the RAF so far, I find myself attempting to capture in words my thoughts, not only on what the next 2 years will bring for me and my family, but also on what I hope to achieve during my stewardship of the School.

Before I look to the future I cannot help but look back to when I attended the Joint Air Traffic Control Course here at what was the Central Air Traffic Control School. The Flight Operations branch was yet to be created and the School's instructors were firmly military. Having been away from RAF Shawbury for some time, the changes that have occurred to get us from where we were then to where we are now are both obvious and significant in equal measures. The change in name to the SAOC is the most visible evolution, and as always the most talked about. However, a name change, while better reflecting output, doesn't actually alter anything. What does is the striking change in character that is so evident, even after only a week in the office. The School's staff are now drawn from the regular RAF and RN, RAF Reserves, the Civil Service and of

course Cobham; a better realisation of the Whole Force Construct I've yet to come across. However, what has struck me the greatest is the collegiate way that the School is led and managed by an outstanding team recruited from 2 different, and at times disparate, branches, soon to be 3 with the arrival today of our first ever Aerospace Battle Manager instructor, and 2 trade groups. The old adage that if you search for differences you build obstacles, while if you search for commonalities you build bridges certainly rings true in the corridors of the SAOC.

Now looking forward, one thing I am certain of is that a significant amount of my time will be filled with ensuring that the School and its people, both staff and students, are as best placed as possible to meet the significant changes that are going to be introduced to the way that Defence delivers Air Battlespace Management in the future. While the planned creation of the new Air Operations Branch, to replace the existing Aerospace Battle Manager, Air Traffic Management and Flight Operations branches has been agreed there is a significant amount of work to be carried out to allow us to get from concept to reality. And as to be expected the SAOC, together with its sibling at RAF Boulmer, the School of Aerospace Battle Management, will inherit a substantial portion of that work, and I for one am genuinely excited by the opportunities that these efforts will offer, not only here at RAF Shawbury, but across Defence.



To those who may wish to hold on to the status quo I offer a misquote from Charles Darwin: 'It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent... It is the one that is most adaptable to change'.

A parting observation; one of the greatest gifts that your predecessor can give you is to prepare you, their successor, for success. Wg Cdr Neil King certainly measures up in this regard which is, of course, a double edged sword. On a positive note, thanks to his hard work and attention to detail I've been given the perfect start to my time as OC SAOC, on a more worrying note I really do only have myself to blame should anything go wrong.

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RAF Shawbury Personnel named in The Queen's Birthday Honours

Military and civilian staff from RAF Shawbury, the Defence Helicopter Flying School and the Central Flying School (Helicopter) Squadron have been honoured in the military commendations list, announced in conjunction with the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2016.

Personnel at RAF Shawbury were delighted to see a total of eleven awards which have all been announced within the main honours list.

Squadron Leader Kim Leach was awarded a Chief of the Air Staff Commendation for her innovative community and public relations work. This included the planning and delivery of a horse rider safety campaign in Shropshire and the borders of adjacent counties, all of which lie within low Flying Area 9. The Be Seen, Be Safer rider awareness campaign has provided high visibility clothing to local riders and has included educational visits and presentations to riding groups as well as hosting Rider Awareness Days at RAF Shawbury. The success of this campaign was recognised by The British Horse Society with the award of the Tarquin Trophy to RAF Shawbury last year and it has also now been adopted nationally by the Royal Air Force Air Safety Centre.

Warrant Officer Anita Coyles was nominated for a Deputy Commander's Commendation in recognition of her exceptional contribution to the wider community throughout the past 25 years. Her commitment to volunteering to support both the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) and the Girl Guiding Organisation has been inspirational. With 20 years of service to RIAT and 25 years as a Girl Guiding and Scouting Leader, she has consistently supported guiding units local to every station at which she has served and has been instrumental in developing young people; she also, due to the lack of other volunteer leaders, saved two scouting groups from closure by assuming the Scout Leader role.

The first of the nine Air Officer Commanding 22 Training Group nominations was awarded to **Squadron Leader Wayne Reed** who is the Site Estates' Team Leader at RAF Shawbury in recognition of his outstanding performance in this role. Primarily responsible for staffing new infrastructure requirements and ensuring that extant infrastructure is maintained to a high standard, he identified areas for improvement, streamlined practises and established new working relationships with

key personnel in order to improve infrastructure delivery. With the announcement of the new Military Flying Training System, this work has laid the foundations for future success.

Corporal Luke Davies was nominated in recognition of his initiative in overhauling and streamlining a large number of legacy human resources practices at RAF Shawbury. Employed as Junior Non-Commissioned Officer Personnel Documentation in the Personnel Services Flight (PSF), he utilised information technology to introduce innovative changes that have been acknowledged as best practice across the Royal Air Force.

Within the Defence Helicopter Flying School at RAF Shawbury, Air Officer Commanding 22 Training Group commendations were awarded to the following military and civilian personnel, including one team commendation.

Squadron Leader Alan Swan is employed as the Defence Helicopter Flying School (DHFS) Air Safety Manager. A former helicopter Weapons System Operator, he is responsible for the management and oversight of the air safety organisation, systems and processes of all helicopter flying training operations at RAF Shawbury, including coordination and integration of the School's supporting commercial contractor, Cobham Aviation Services. He was nominated for this award in recognition of the outstanding contribution and impact he has made throughout his time in this post, championing a radical, new safety management tool which has been widely recognised as an exemplar within the training environment.

Mr Tony McGregor is currently employed as a Simulator Instructor by Cobham Aviation Services at RAF Shawbury. He has had an extraordinary career as a pilot and Qualified Helicopter Instructor (QHI) spanning more than 50 years and has flown an

List 2016

unprecedented number of aircraft types. During his career he has amassed over 12,300 flying hours, of which more than 7,800 are instructional. After completing 33 years in the RAF, Mr McGregor left the RAF in 1997 to join the newly formed Defence Helicopter Flying School as a civilian Qualified Helicopter Instructor. He has instructed at RAF Shawbury for the last 18 years on the Griffin and latterly on the simulator. Drawing on a lifetime of skill and hard-won experience he has re-invigorated the delivery of Night Vision Device and Procedural Instrument Flying instruction bringing measurable improvements to student skills and safety levels, directly benefiting the output to front-line commands.

Mr Mark O'Leary is employed as a civilian Qualified Helicopter Crewman Instructor (QHCl) on 202 (R) by Cobham Aviation Services and is part the Defence Helicopter Flying School based at RAF Valley. He was nominated for this award in recognition of his tireless and selfless work to develop systems and practices, including the development and introduction of the "Parrott", a wall mounted 20 foot, static winching trainer. This facility was a major step forward in capability, enabling many key procedural as well as safety elements of the crewman syllabus to be practiced in a benign environment; the added benefit was the saving of considerable amounts of live flying hours and cost. In addition, he also took a lead role in the introduction of a Virtual Reality Trainer (VRT), dovetailing synthetic training into the crewman syllabus. His personal initiative and drive has ensured a cost-effective way of delivering vital training output.

Mr Tim Osborne is employed as the Senior Instructor Ground School Training by Cobham Aviation Services. He was nominated for this award in recognition of the pivotal role he has played in training hundreds of aspiring military helicopter pilots, Qualified Helicopter Instructors and Qualified Helicopter Crewman Instructors from all three Services as well as

many foreign nations. Mr Osborne personally led the drive for continuous improvement in all of the School's ground school course syllabi as well as championing improvements in delivery techniques. Most recently, he developed, assured finance for, and delivered a comprehensive classroom refurbishment programme within the Ground School building, ensuring the most up-to-date and effective teaching aids were acquired. His hard work and determination maximised the interaction between the instructors and students, but also the effectiveness of the instructional time to produce a streamlined solution to tri-Service aircrewman training.

Warrant Officer 1 (WO1) David King and **Mr Jason Watts**, as members of the 660 Squadron Army Air Corps Training Team were nominated in recognition of their consistently outstanding performance. Despite being just two personnel strong, they have made a significant and crucial contribution to the safe and successful delivery of training, both on their own Squadron and also across Defence Helicopter Flying School (DHFS) as a whole. They were nominated for the way that they developed and championed a training syllabus to support and mentor newly qualified instructors. Their outstanding, innovative approach has been heralded as an exemplar across DHFS and the rotary wing training community.

Within the Central Flying School (H) Squadron at RAF Shawbury, there have been two Air Officer Commanding 22 Training Group Commendations.

Squadron Leader Craig Finch was nominated for his delivery of expertly trained Qualified Helicopter Instructors (QHIs) and Qualified Helicopter Crewman Instructor (QHCIs). As the Officer Commanding, he has been responsible for a staff of circa 18 flying instructors from all Services and for delivering around 50 trained instructors every year to the Front Line and training squadrons. In addition,

Group Captain Jason Appleton, the Station Commander at RAF Shawbury said: "I am delighted to see the efforts of our military and civilian personnel from all the units at RAF Shawbury recognised in this way. I am immensely proud of all the award recipients who have dedicated their time and energy to contribute directly to the world-leading training delivered at RAF Shawbury. I am particularly grateful for the support given to all the personnel serving at RAF Shawbury by family, friends and the Shropshire community. The recipients will all receive their awards during special ceremonies to be held at RAF Shawbury during 2016 and I look forward to congratulating them and their families."

he has provided excellent support to the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Display Team throughout the display season. Squadron Leader Finch has consistently performed and delivered results in an exceptional manner, with a very positive impact on training delivery and output.

Major Dan McBride is a shining example of triumph over adversity and someone who has brought great credit to the Armed Forces through his extensive charity work in recent years. Having been severely injured in a mid-air collision in a Gazelle helicopter in Northern Ireland in 1992, he was told he would almost certainly never fly again. However, he fought to recover and did indeed regain his flying category to become a Qualified Helicopter Instructor. He has, over the last 20 years, been an unfailingly energetic and enthusiastic promoter of all aspects of military aviation and an inspiration to countless student aircrew from all three Services. Major McBride's empathy for other wounded Servicemen led him to take on the role of Shropshire Co-ordinator for the Walking with the Wounded Charity (WWTW) in 2012. He has since dedicated much of his spare time to increasing the awareness of, and tirelessly raising funds for WWTW in the local area.



RAF Shawbury says **thank you** to Shropshire landowners and **welcomes** local horse-riders

On Thursday 19th May, RAF Shawbury and the Defence Helicopter Flying School (DHFS) held its annual Landowners' Day to thank farmers and landowners who kindly allow training to be conducted in their fields, clearings and woods in the local area. This land enables essential training to take place and allows the students to practice landing in difficult and varying terrain, something that the helicopter aircrew will have to do safely and regularly when they reach their front line units.



Local horse riders and representatives from The British Horse Society (BHS) also attended, as the event included RAF Shawbury's second Horse Rider Awareness Day. RAF Shawbury launched its "Be Seen, Be Safer" horse rider awareness campaign in April 2015. So far, the base has distributed over 5,000 items of high visibility clothing throughout Shropshire and the borders of adjacent counties, all of which lie within Low Flying Area 9, which is a Dedicated Helicopter Training Area.

The aim of the campaign is to promote the wearing of high visibility clothing by riders in order that they are more visible and can be seen

earlier by the helicopter aircrew. Whilst high-visibility clothing may not prevent all over-flights as there may be other safety considerations, it does provide a considerable, cost-effective improvement to rider safety.

The day commenced with 120 landowners, family and horse riders gathered in the Station Briefing Facility for an address by the Station Commander, Group Captain Jason Appleton. The landowners were then taken on a tour of the School of Air Operations Control before viewing a static Chinook helicopter. Many of the aircrew who train at RAF Shawbury go on to fly the chinook on operational deployment and so it was an interesting experience to see the end result of the world-leading flying training delivered at RAF Shawbury. The landowners were then able to get airborne for a short flight to view of some of the fields and clearings from the back of a Squirrel helicopter.

The horse riders also got airborne

Squirrels' Nursery celebrates HM The Queen's 90th Birthday

On Monday 13th June, RAF Shawbury's very own Squirrels Nursery, decked out with red, white and blue bunting, held a Royal themed street party for the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations.



Children and staff dressed up as kings, queens, princes or princesses and paraded around the main car park behind a horse drawn carriage. Lucky "King" Thomas Dale (2) and "Queen" Fay Chew (3) had the honour of riding in the carriage, accompanied by "Princess" Jo Parry, after they won the competition by giving the best reasons for why they wanted to be King or Queen for the day!

in Squirrel helicopters and had the opportunity to spot military personnel wearing high visibility clothing from their aerial vantage point and appreciate the extra warning that high visibility clothing gives to aircrew.

Group Captain Jason Appleton said: "Today is our opportunity to say thank you to the people who have supported RAF Shawbury over the last year by providing us with the use of their land and also to work with the horse riding community. Our task is to train aircrew to be as professional and effective as possible. Low flying is essential in reducing the risk to helicopters as we have to train to fly in extremely demanding environments, whether these tasks are in support of peacekeeping, war-fighting or humanitarian relief."

He added: "This training does sometimes bring our aircrew into contact with riders and trials run in 2005, in conjunction with the British Horse Society, showed how effective high-visibility clothing is in reducing the risk to horse riders."



RAF Shawbury's campaign is also supported by The British Horse Society. Sheila Hardy, the Senior Executive of the Safety Department of The British Horse Society said: "We are delighted to attend RAF Shawbury's Rider Awareness Day once again. This

campaign has gone from strength to strength and if there is one message I would like to reinforce, it is the need for riders and their horses to be seen more easily. Wearing high visibility clothing can save your life... not just on the roads but wherever you ride."

More information on the Be Seen, Be Safer campaign is available at www.raf.mod.uk/rafshawbury

Learning Centre News

On 23 Jun 16 the Learning Centre held its annual open day. The Station Commander was first on hand to greet and thank the Learning Providers that had kindly agreed to support our event.

Universities, colleges and businesses from all over the country were on hand to promote lifelong learning and to give our personnel the opportunity to discuss their future aspiration, training and education requirements, and career prospects outside the military and civil service.

The event created interest from a wide cross section of the station, although a bit quieter than last year. This is the one day in the year that the experts in their field come to you, so please take the time to come and see them – there is always room for



The Stn Cdr opens the Learning Centre

development and you're never too old to learn!

Education is constantly developing bringing new opportunities/initiatives and this is why it is crucial that we maintain our links with Universities, Colleges and Learning Providers to keep abreast of the changes and funding opportunities in order to pass this information on. Please sign up to the RSS feed on the Personal Development page on MOSS where all this information is available along with links to mandated training, relevant forms and other useful websites.

I would just like to thank the Station Commander who took time out of his busy schedule, 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 seeing you all soon.

RAF Shawbury Best Airman

SAC Alder was nominated for this award for his exceptional performance in both his primary and associated duties, as well his contribution to the Station and wider community.

As a Flight Operations Assistant he is capable and hard-working and carries out his duties diligently and efficiently. He has been a member of the training team where he has confidently conducted training sessions, kept all training documents up to date, and efficiently disseminated Flight Safety publications.

Proactive and enthusiastic, he has successfully completed his ILM (Leadership and Coaching) Level 5 and completes a range of secondary duties to a very high standard. As the Clive Parish Council Representative, he puts his sound working knowledge and good communication skills to use, attending regular meetings in Clive village. Here, he informs the council of any scheduled events or projects at RAF Shawbury. To further his contribution to the RAF Shawbury community, he has volunteered for the role of RAF Shawbury Youth Club Treasurer. With a keen attention to detail, he accurately maintains stock levels in the tuck shop and purchases any kit the Club requires. Keeping meticulous financial records, he also works closely with OC Accounts, to ensure that all information is concise, accurate and up to date.

A keen sportsman, SAC Alder represents RAF Shawbury in both cricket and football and is the Secretary for the Station Football Club. In this role, he oversees kit, pitch bookings, organises transport

for away games and liaises effectively with the away teams, to confirm timings, venues and the availability of match officials for games. He frequently performs the Manager's role in his absence, and will soon take over this role officially. Eager to raise money for charity, he volunteered for the role of Deputy Motorcycle Club Treasurer in advance of the Shawbury Motorcycle Rider Day, the largest Station fund raising event.

SAC Alder's diligence, sound work ethic and enthusiasm to learn new skills have made him an invaluable member of the team, contributing to the safe and efficient running of the tower. This nomination allows RAF Shawbury to recognise him, for going above and beyond his duty, and always with a smile on his face. Well Done SAC Alder!



Operations and Admin Wing Lunch



On 25th June, with a hint of sadness, Operations and Admin Wing gathered together in the Officers' Mess to dine together for the last time before splitting apart to create 2 separate wings. Despite this sad news, everyone was in cheerful spirits as colleagues were dined out.

Wing Commander Nigel Ibbetson, OC Ops and Adm Wg opened the event with a couple of terrible jokes before offering a warm welcome to all of the combined team of contractors, civil servants and military personnel. The achievements of the Wing over the last year had been impressive and included Families Day 2015, Annual Reception, Mess Committees in the Officers' and Sgts' Messes, the Junior Ranks Welfare Committee, CP2 exercise, FP Assurance success, A1 Assurance "best station", the Be Seen Be Safer horse-rider awareness campaign, Drone Awareness, Armed Forces Covenant engagement, Youth Club, ATC and Flt Ops Assurance success, Honours and Awards in the NYHL and QBHL, MFTS preparation, Out of Area deployment preparation, Learning Centre Training Days, Force Development trips, expeds and Adventure Training, a Royal Visit, VIP visits, MPs visits, Cosford Air Show support, Landowners Day, DFT Command Board. In summary, there is much to be proud of and still much more to do.

As well as enjoying a lovely lunch, the aim of the event was to also say goodbye to departing members of the Wing on posting.

OC Force Development Squadron (FDS) – Sqn Ldr Joan Cawthray

Joan is retiring from the RAF after a long and successful career. She has done an excellent job as OC Force Development Squadron. She also managed to combine her love of canoeing achieving both RAF Sportswoman of

the year 2015 and UK Armed Forces Sportswoman of the year 2015. Joan leaves on a high and we wish you good luck in your retirement.

*Wg Cdr Ibbetson said:
"You are the people who run this important RAF unit whose outputs, whether it is admin, engagement, training ATC, Flt ops and FOAs to operate worldwide or to train helicopter crews, are most critical to defence. Please accept my thanks for all your work thus far and gratitude for being able to command such a busy, important, dynamic and rich Wing."*

OC Personnel Services Flight (PSF)

- Flt Lt Susan Bastock

RAF Shawbury is the best PSF in the RAF. Susan is commended for her hard work in achieving this accolade as well as her Chairmanship of the Station Charities Committee. Susan leaves Shawbury on promotion for an out of area tour. Good luck and thank you for all your hard work at RAF Shawbury.

Air Traffic Control (ATC) - Flt Lt Ev Robinson

Ev is leaving both the Air Traffic Control (ATC) Squadron and also regular service. His previous tours include Lyneham (ATC), Iraq (Basrah ATC), Benson (ATC), Brize Norton (101 Sqn and ATC). He was a fully endorsed ATC Supervisor and has provided vast experience and continuity. The experience he has gained will stand him in good stead for the FTRS SEMSCO role at RAF Shawbury and RAF Shawbury looks forward to seeing you in action in your new role.

Sqn Ldr Operations- Sqn Ldr James Walker

James has had a successful tour at RAF Shawbury as SLOps which has included running Contingency Planning exercises involving the local emergency services as well as supporting Cosford Air Show and running Families Day. The bright lights of London beckon for James as he leaves Shawbury for a tour at MOD.

Telford Park Run *Keep on Running for Armed Forces Day!*

Armed Forces Day Telford parkrun took place on Armed Forces Day, Saturday 25th June 2016. The event was an outstanding success and was attended by 540 runners and 27 volunteers. This massively beat our previous attendance record of 464!

Major Dufton from DHFS was kind enough to carry out a flypast (twice) with pinpoint accuracy, in a Squirrel helicopter, which was 'extremely' well received by all in attendance. I made sure that all of the runners gave him a big wave and a huge applause as he passed. There were also a fair number of service personnel and veterans, who ran/volunteered in uniform on the day. Runners were pre-briefed to salute if they saw a camera around the course and thankfully local professional photographer Gareth Bellamy, was there to capture their efforts. Although we didn't collect money for charities on the day, numerous runners chose to donate to service charities after the event. The support for our Armed Forces, Veterans, Cadets and their families was incredible, which after all, is the whole purpose of Armed Forces Day.

I started the Telford parkrun back in February 2013 and since then registrations have grown to over 8000 people. Around 5% of the Telford and Wrekin population are now registered for our event. It was an absolute pleasure to be able to combine my RAF role, with my voluntary role at parkrun, to showcase what RAF Shawbury does best.

I would like to sincerely thank the Station Commander, Major Dufton and everyone else involved, for granting permission for me to organise this event and helping to make it a reality. I would also like to pass on the gratitude of the entire Telford and Wrekin parkrun community. A fantastic day indeed, one which I hope we can repeat next year.



By Cpl Chris Richards
JNCO Regt Flt

Padre's Peace

There is an amusing and yet poignant story I heard recently of an elderly gentlemen who takes his five year old grandson on a bus journey. Knowing full well that all children under the age of five travel free, he asks his grandson to claim he is four. When they climb on the bus, the driver as expected asks the child his age.

'I am four the boy replies.'
'And when will you be five enquired' the driver?'
'As soon as I get off the bus,' came the decisive and honest reply.

Whilst one may question the grandfather's integrity, there is clearly a lesson for us to learn in this encounter. When delivering Padre's Hours to students the place of integrity remains a one of the fundamental core values of the RAF. Such core values and standards are of course applicable to every one including serving personnel.

We are also judged by the life we lead and the example we set others. The place of honesty and integrity must continue to play a central role for us all.

Padre Alastair Bissell

Stay Healthy

Visit RAF Shawbury's Health and Well Being Day



All those who work at RAF Shawbury or live in married quarters – serving personnel, their families, civilians and contractors – are invited to the Health and Wellbeing Day.

Our aim is to inspire you to do something good for yourself by taking up a healthy habit, whether that is a new way of relaxing, a sport, exercise or a healthy diet. On the day, you will find experts from the unit and from local businesses and charities. A massage therapist will ease your shoulders on a first come first served basis; you will find master classes on diet, cooking and exercise; and you will discover a range of opportunities available to you in Shropshire to improve your health.

For more details as they become available, keep an eye on MOSS announcements and Facebook, or contact Flight Lieutenant Tom Clarke (x7461), Flight Lieutenant Nic McNamee (x7180), or Pilot Officer Aaron Greenwood (x7603).

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FLYING MILESTONES

3000 Hours

for Flt Lt Howard

Flt Lt Howard joined the RAF in 2002. After completing rotary training on No 69 course, he was posted to the Search and Rescue (SAR) Sea King Operational Conversion Unit (OCU) at RAF St Mawgan.

On completion of the OCU, he was posted to C Flt, 22 Sqn, RAF Valley, from where he undertook numerous rescues in Snowdonia, the Lake District, the Irish Sea and on detachment to the South Atlantic. He was selected for Qualified Helicopter Instructor (QHI) training in 2010 and returned to Valley to instruct on 203 (R) Sqn, where the Duke of Cambridge was one of his students.

In 2014, he was appointed as the 22 Sqn QHI and worked extensively from both Wattisham and Chivenor, flying the RAF's last ever UK SAR mission in September 2015. On the closure of RAF UK SAR he was detached to 1564 Flt in the Falkland Islands to see out the final months of RAF Seaking flying.

He arrived at Shawbury in April 2016 to take up his current post on CFS(H) during which he achieved his 3000 hours of flying. He has completed over 200 SAR missions and 2500 hours on the Seaking. Congratulations!



Sqn Ldr Craig Finch congratulates Flt Lt Howard

4000 Hours

for Lt Cdr Scott Hughes

The Commanding Officer 705 Naval Air Squadron (NAS), Lt Cdr Scott Hughes RN, was delighted to celebrate reaching 4,000 flying hours on 5 May 16, and was joined by members of staff and students from his Squadron to the mark the occasion with the traditional 'grip and grin' photo shoot and a bottle of Champagne.

Scott said: "I am particularly pleased to be back in the cockpit following a short period of absence for a broken shoulder. The 4,000 hours in the sky seemed to pass by far quicker than my recuperation period of 11 weeks glued to a desk! Whilst I am very proud to reach this flying milestone, I am very aware that 4,000 hours is but a mere 'drop in the ocean' compared to some of the experience within 705 NAS and the wider DHFS instructor community."



Lt Cdr Scott Hughes receives congratulations from the Chief Flying Instructor Cdr Steve Doubleday

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FUNDRAISING SUCCESS

WITH CUAN WILDLIFE RESCUE!

Cpl Michelle Coupar

Warm and overcast, with an ominous threat of heavy rain looming in the distance. Those were the conditions waiting at Much Wenlock for the team from the Flight Operations Training Flight (FOTF); comprising of FOAC 1055 students led by SAOC Trainers, Corporals Carrie Sheehan and Michelle Coupar.



Departing early doors from RAF Shawbury, they had come to help Cuan Wildlife Rescue with their main fundraising event of the year – The Cuan Wildlife Rescue Open Day! The open day is a chance for the public to come and see the work done at Cuan, whilst raising much needed funds to keep day to day operations ticking over. The funds also go towards purchasing materials to build additional housing and shelters for the ever increasing number of temporary residents, who are undergoing rehabilitation for eventual release back into the wild.

The event itself started at 10 am and visitors were greeted by ACs Mannion and Spencer, who were in charge of collecting entrance fees. Despite being drenched in a torrential downpour, which lasted some 20 minutes, their spirits certainly were not dampened and they kept a friendly smile on their face throughout the entire day.

The rest of the course were spread around the open day site, controlling car parking and manning stalls. ACs Brown, Carsley, Hibbit, Lockton and Preston, worked really well to keep an orderly flow of traffic into the carparks, followed by some super parking co-ordination signals given by AC Cobain! Elsewhere, ACs Hetherington and Stanton did a great job of encouraging some friendly competition at the tenpin bowling and coconut shy, whilst ACs Hudson and Sutherland did a sterling job of managing the little people who were going rather wild themselves on the bouncy castles!

Corporals Sheehan and Coupar found themselves in hysterics at "Distraction Alley"; a fun event for dog owners to test their pooch's ability to return on command, whilst being tempted by numerous toys and treats – including a big juicy bone! Needless to say, some dogs simply did not finish while some owners were so determined for their dog to beat the others, they came back for repeat attempts to log the fastest time. In the end the winning dog was, "Dan", with a speedy recall time of 2.16 seconds!

Happily, before returning home, the FOTF team also had the opportunity to contribute to the funds being raised themselves. With numerous people entering raffles and playing games in their break, the minibus was quickly filling up with an array of cuddly toys that had been won! They were delighted to have been able to help out with the open day and everyone said how much they had enjoyed it. One Cuan employee commented that she feels like RAF Shawbury personnel have become an extension of the Cuan team over the last couple of years. There are always building projects and maintenance tasks to be completed and RAF Shawbury personnel have become regular visitors to lend a hand. Despite the festivities, it was still business as usual for the hospital - with injured animals being brought in throughout the day. Sadly, some were so badly injured or sick that they had to be euthanised on site. It was a stark reminder of the serious work that goes on there on a daily basis. Cuan Wildlife Rescue is always looking for volunteers to help care for the animals or complete DIY projects. If you would like to get involved, please go to www.cuanwildliferescue.org.uk to get in touch via their contact form! Alternatively, if you can't spare some time but can spare a few pounds, you can go to Amazon.co.uk and search for the "Cuan Wildlife Wish List". Here you will be able to view and purchase items needed at the hospital to care for and feed the animals, which will be delivered directly to Cuan's door!

The Defence Helicopter Flying School (DHFS) present cheque to the Severn Hospice

On 6th July, Col Jules Facer, Commandant of the Defence Helicopter Flying School visited Severn Hospice to present a cheque for £1010.

Col Facer said: "Following some generous fundraising at the 2015 DHFS Cocktail Party, it is with great pleasure that we at the School were able to support such a worthy, local charity as the Severn Hospice. It was a great honour to present the cheque to Mr Graham Jones who accepted it on behalf of the Hospice. We at DHFS look forward to continuing links with the Severn Hospice in the future."



Waving the flag for BLESMA



On Friday 10th June, the Aquila Flight Simulator Operators (FSOs) held a charity Dress-down day in order to raise funds for Blesma, the Limbless Veterans, the chosen charity of Aquila 2016/17.

The FSOs really got into the spirit of things and with varying degrees of attire from the standard blue jeans to the very natty bow-tie, they dressed in the Blesma colours of red, white and blue. Some may have thought it was because the sun had shown its face that week and the FSOs were making the most of it but no, it was all for a very worthwhile cause and all participants donated £1.

With prior permission from OC SAOC, Sue Pritchard (pictured with the collection tin) and Dave Williams (Mr. Bow-tie himself) carried out a couple of collections during the day where all donations, no matter how small, were greatly received. Also, due to a house move, Jim Holloway very kindly donated proceeds from sales of old books and DVDs.

There was no expectation of how the day would go and what the total



contributions would be; it was about the FSO Section taking part and having fun whilst supporting Aquila's chosen charity. It must be said however, that the day was a resounding success and the total at the end of the day was £89.29. A massive 'thank you' to all who participated and/or donated with a special mention to FOTF (Flight

Operations Training Flight) who were particularly generous.
We hope to be able to hold further events later in the year in order to support one of the oldest Service charities within the UK.

**Jo Flemmich
FSO Supervisor**

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ARMED FORCES COVENANTS



Pictured:
Armed Forces
Corporate Covenant
supporters visit RAF
Shawbury on 21 June.
From L-R: Lt Cdr Scott
Hughes, Mr Trevor
Wheatley, Mr Carl
Johnson, Ms Amanda
Arnold, Mr Adrian
Novick, Mr Keir Hirst,
Ms Jennifer Sibbard-
Wall, Mr James Biggs,
Mr Andrew Morton, Mr
Peter Flint, Mr John
Simcox, Mr Tim Barker,
Father Mark Chadwick,
Maj Jon Dufton, Mr
Paul Allman, Gp Capt
Jason Appleton

Local Businesses say Thank You to the Armed Forces

In the lead up to Armed Forces Day in Shropshire, eight local businesses and organisations visited RAF Shawbury for a special behind the scenes tour.

The aim of the visit was to increase awareness of the role of the Armed Forces in Shropshire and to promote the Armed Forces Covenants. All of the visiting organisations have declared their support for the Armed Forces by supporting the Covenant.

The visitors included representatives from St Chad's Church, Alan Ward Furniture, Hawk Group, the Mercure Albrighton Hotel and Spa, Wace Morgan Solicitors, Mears Shropshire Home Services, Greenhouse Nissan, and Shropshire Council.

The visitors were welcomed by the Station Commander, Group Captain Jason Appleton with a presentation about the role of RAF Shawbury, past and present and the Defence Helicopter

Flying School. The visit included a tour of the School of Air Operations Control where the latest radar and visual simulators were viewed before the guests tried their hand at flying a Squirrel helicopter- in the simulator!

After lunch in the Officers' Mess and an opportunity to talk to aircrew and air traffic control students, the visit continued with a visit to the Aircraft Maintenance and Storage Unit. This unit is the largest military storage unit in the UK and undertakes the major servicing of the Red Arrows Hawk aircraft.

The visit finished with a tour of the Station Learning Facility and Community Centre to show the support that is available on base to the military community.

David Fairclough, from the Community Enablement and Armed Forces Covenant Team at Shropshire Council said: "To be effective the Covenant requires commitment and co-operation from a wide range of organisations such as Local Authorities, NHS,

Job Centre Plus, Schools and Colleges, all manner of other service providers and private and commercial companies such as those visiting RAF Shawbury today. I am delighted at the diversity of local Shropshire businesses who wish to support our Armed Forces. Their generosity and willingness to sign the Armed Forces Covenant is a testament to the growing support our Armed Forces are receiving and we hope this trend continues in the long term".

Mr Paul Allman, Director - General Manager of Hawk Plant Hire said: "It was fantastic to visit RAF Shawbury and view the high quality military training establishment we have on our door-step. By signing the Armed Forces Covenant, we are delighted to be able to demonstrate our support for the Armed Forces community and we look forward to a long and valuable partnership with service members and their loved ones."

Ms Jennifer Sibbard-Wall,

General Manager of the Mercure Shrewsbury Albrighton Hall Hotel and Spa said: "We are honoured to be part of the Armed Forces Covenant, giving much needed support to all their personnel and families by providing special discounts and offers at Inspirations Spa and Leisure at Albrighton Hall Hotel. This is a small token of our appreciation for the amazing work that our dedicated Armed Forces give the local community and to their country."

Group Captain Jason Appleton, Station Commander at RAF Shawbury said: "As we approach Armed Forces Day on 25th June, it has been a pleasure to welcome our guests to RAF Shawbury. This event has been an excellent way to say thank you to those businesses that support the Armed Forces Covenants and for all the support from the community that allows us to deliver world-leading training at RAF Shawbury."

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COMMUNITY PROJECTS

705 NAVAL AIR SQUADRON (NAS) DO A SHED LOAD!



Led by PO (ACMN) Trewick, a team of 4 aircrewman from 705 Naval Air Squadron spent an entire day painting a shed, a fence and an impressive Wendy house for the local primary school in Shawbury.

In true traditional fashion, students on DHFS Courses take part in local community projects during their time at RAF Shawbury to maintain the rapport within the community, but also to help out wherever is possible.

On Monday 9th May with the sun beating down and with paintbrushes and paint-rollers in hand, we set to work. The wooden fence was painted a sky blue/turquoise colour and the shed lavender all over with its door the same colour as the surrounding blue fence. The Wendy house was painted a relaxing blue with natural wood coloured windows and doors; it just needed a hammock and some golden sand to look like a paradise beach hut!



On the day, we had fantastic weather (although the T-Shirt tan on some of us is pretty questionable now), friendly school teachers who couldn't do enough for us, and 50% of us had never painted anything in our lives! Lack of experience aside, the results were very pleasing as the nursery area looks a lot more colourful now; we even got a custom-made thank you card from one of the nursery pupils!

NA(ACMN) Thomas Lynskey

Joint Air Traffic Control Course (JATCC) 410 Community Project



Now over halfway through their training, students from JATCC 410 headed down to St. Mary the Virgin Church in Shawbury village recently to put some life into the walls of the chapel. As part of the recently re-named School of Air Operations Control's (SAOC) continued association with the local community, Junior Officers and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers donned their overalls and set about sprucing up the church.

On April 16th, we met the church's patron, Frances Medley, who showed us around the medieval church and explained that the chapel had not been painted for over 20 years. The large wall at the far end of the church, dotted with relics, certainly needed our attention. After covering the pews with dust sheets, the more delicate task of applying masking tape to the ornate fixings began.

Metalwork now covered, gallons of paint were poured, ladders were extended and brushes were dipped, turning pale a far more distinguishable shade of white. With tea and cake on hand from Frances and her colleagues, the team of students made short work of the project, making the chapel look much brighter.

After a thorough examination of the walls for missed areas, the clean-up operation began, removing all the masking tape and dust sheets, and polishing off all the aforementioned cake.

Frances Medley said: "The Parishioners are all extremely grateful for your help in carrying out work they could have not undertaken themselves."

We all enjoyed our time spent brightening up the church and were happy to help out the local community.

Fg Off Lewis Mansell



660 (AAC) Sqn Community project



A walk in the bark

After reaching the milestone of achieving First Solo, 181 Course 660 Sqn AAC continued the great tradition of conducting community work on the day after their Solo Barrel. They headed out to Stoke-on-Tern and their task was to give a tired children's play park some much needed tender loving care, so that the local children could enjoy the British summer - if and when it should arrive!

Upon arrival, the scale of the task was clear to everyone. The park was overgrown, the play apparatus and fences were neglected and there was 10 cubic metres of bark sat outside that we knew wasn't going to move itself. We were met by members of the local community who gave us a lengthy list of tasks and provided us with all the necessary tools and equipment for the job, including hot and cold refreshments. All they needed was determined manpower and the men of 660 were more than up for the challenge.

Before the tasks had even been distributed, a keen Capt Greg Edens had already identified a garden

strimmer and was steadily taking chunks out of the jungle. It was decided that it was probably safer for everyone just to leave him to it. We set about the remainder of the tasks, giving Greg a wide birth. Capt Tom Fitton and Sgt Alan Packman took on mowing the lawns until unfortunately Alan set his on fire. It was decided that the complexities of mowing lawns were out of Alan's reach and he was instead relegated to weeding. Fg Off Ollie Lee, Capt Callum Chalmers and Fg Off Ed Sanderson set about cleaning the wood and the remainder were steadily moving the mountain of bark to the climbing frame. Sgt Kev Graham elected to supervise proceedings from the zip line.

With good progress being made on all fronts it soon became clear that the main effort would become shifting the bark. As smaller tasks were finished manpower was gradually shifting until all hands were on shovels and wheel barrows. With everyone now concentrated on the bark, 181 Course made light work of the task, largely due to Tom Fitton turning it into a competition to see who could move the most. He was unfortunately the only one competing but nonetheless

was delighted with victory. After finally emptying the last barrow load we decided to take a well-earned break on the swings with a cold juice. Sadly, the rest was short lived as we were informed that another 5 cubic metres was on the way and we would need to get that moved before we could call it a day. This didn't dampen spirits and once delivered, 181 Course made swift work of it.

With the grass cut, apparatus clean and climbing frame suitably furnished with bark, 181 Course took a step back and gazed upon the fruits of their labour. The smiles on the faces of the locals confirmed we had done a great job. It was satisfying to see that we had restored life to the park so that it could be enjoyed by everyone and in the process, strengthened already close ties with the local community. Everyone enjoyed the experience and the local people were welcoming and hosted us well. We were all proud to be able to give something back to the people of Stoke-on-Tern.

**By Sgt K Graham,
181 Course 660 SQN AAC**

Flight Operations Training Course FOTC 50

Squirrels Nursery Community Project

Squirrels Nursery is a non-profit making charitable organisation located by the Community Hub at RAF Shawbury. The nursery comprises of indoor and outdoor areas where the children of RAF Shawbury service personnel can play in a safe, fun and stimulating environment. The outdoor area is extremely well used and popular with the children, but over the cold winter months has become rundown and in need of some TLC. As a charitable organisation, Squirrels can only survive with the help of volunteers; so the students of Flt Ops Training Course (FOTC) 50 decided to step in to help. Despite being hampered by a challenging course schedule and the erratic British summer weather, FOTC 50 were able to renovate the garden furniture, paint the fence and weed and tidy the play area over the course of 2 weeks, culminating with a course social event to 're-open' the area.

Due to the transitory nature of Service life, it is crucial that the families of service personnel have a place to meet and get to know other families in their community; facilities such as Squirrels are essential. WO Martin Jones from Community



Support said: "The outdoor play area is really important and well used, but had become rundown in the winter. Thanks to the work of FOTC 50, this has been restored for the benefit of all families and personnel at RAF Shawbury."

Fg Off Georgina Harwood

CFS EXAM NEWS

Royal Approval for RAF Shawbury's Squirrel Helicopter

Prince George was the centre of attention as he joined his parents, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge at the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire recently.

Prince George waved to crowds and gave a big "thumbs up" during the family's trip to the Royal International Air Tattoo, which was the first time he has accompanied his parents on an official engagement in the UK.

Wearing bright blue ear defenders, the young Prince was led by the hand and carried by both the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge across the airfield to meet Flight Lieutenant Jim Hobkirk, of the Central Flying School Exam Wing, who is based at RAF Shawbury.

Prince George was able to sit in a Squirrel helicopter; Prince William climbed into the instructor's seat in the cockpit and explained how the aircraft worked to Prince George and the Duchess who sat in the back.

Flt Lt Hobkirk said: "It was a pleasure to show Prince George the Squirrel helicopter. It is the same aircraft type that the Duke learned to fly in while based at RAF Shawbury with the Defence Helicopter Flying School in 2009, so he was keen to show it to his son. Prince George was fascinated with its tail rotor and it was a nice family moment. The Duke was talking about flying and George was listening intently. The Duke said that he missed flying; he said that he wished he could fly more and he said he was envious of me!"



Prince George climbs into the Squirrel



The Royal party are shown a Squirrel helicopter

AIR CADET NEWS

Although a quieter period for the Sqn as a number of our members embarked on their school exam season, we have still maintained a good attendance with loads of different activities over the last 2 months. We have a new staff member, Plt Off Enoch Wong, a student pilot from 705 Sqn and an adopted Sqn Mascot, Badger the Whippet.



28 Sqn presented with the D Of E Award for most cadets through the D Of E scheme, in a year, at the Wing Training day.

28 Sqn Air Cadet Capers



Fire training at RAF Shawbury

Following on from our successful visit to 60 (R) Sqn and the Station Survival Equipment Section, 16 of our cadets visited RAF Shawbury's Fire Section for a fun visit and managed to complete our annual fire training!

Off the back of the success of our Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, mentioned in the last article, 28 Sqn was awarded the Duke of Edinburgh Trophy for the most number of cadets gaining an award with the D of E scheme in a year. Keen for this to continue, cadets are still receiving regular evening lessons on Field craft and camping skills.

"It was a great moment for the Sqn to be presented with

the D of E Trophy after all our hard work," said CWO Beaver.

A big event for the cadets on the 4th June was the Wing Training Day, an annual event where cadets across West Mercia Wing came together for a day of shooting, aircraft recognition and modelling, drill, first aid and awards given for the smartest cadet and Squadron. I have recently been selected as part of my SNCO training to complete the cadet leadership course at RAF Cranwell.

The Sqn are currently sharing our building with all the Cadet Camps at RAF Shawbury which has provided us with the opportunity to meet other cadets from around the country. Looking forward, we



Fire training at RAF Shawbury

have swimming training in preparation for a Kayaking expedition and plans to develop our flight simulator to be able to conduct joint flying missions with other networked air cadet sqns. The big event for the Sqn is planning for the Air Cadet 75th Anniversary torch relay coming via RAF Shawbury on the Station Families Day.

If you are interested in joining, please look at the website: <http://www.raf.mod.uk/aircadets/findasquadron/>

Cdt Sgt A Barton



Members of 28 Sqn representing West Mercia Wg at Inter Wing athletics.



Battle of Britain Heritage Walk

On 28 April 2016, eight intrepid SAOC personnel set off to the Big Smoke for a SAOC Wg force development day, namely Sqn Ldr Harris, Flt Lt Pettitt, Flt Lt Plank, Flt Lt Tinkler, Flt Lt Walker, WO Partyka, FS Wosik and Sgt Blackmore. The first port of call was St Clement Danes to begin the Battle of Britain Heritage Walk. The Padre, as usual, was on top form and treated us to a plethora of interesting facts and even managed to squeeze in his version of a power point slide (engraved in gold gilt on the roof of the church!). The history and beauty of St Clements Danes never fails to impress and nor did the solemnity for the reason of its refurbishment go amiss. After the church was destroyed during WWII it was restored by the RAF and consecrated in 1958 and now stands as the central church of the RAF.

Outside of the church it was over to Flt Lt Plank for the first talk of the day detailing the strategic bombing campaign during WWII and how it compares and contrasts to modern day conflicts. Interesting points were raised and discussed, specifically with respect to effective use of resources and the Principles of War, and all members of the group were provided with plenty of food for thought. After this, Flt Lt Walker took over for a discussion about the losses of men and material during WWII. This was debated in depth afterwards in relation to modern day conflicts.

After some thought-provoking analysis, we took a stroll in the lovely London sunshine to complete the rest of the Battle of Britain



heritage walk. Avoiding the temptation to spend our 'bread and honey' in the 'Battle cruiser', a few people opted for a 'rosy lea' while we rested our 'plates of meat'. Then it was off again, firstly the RAF Memorial on Victoria Embankment and then onward to the Battle of Britain Monument. After time was given for us to pay our respects, Sgt Blackmore gave an extremely well researched and detailed brief on the strengths and weaknesses of Sir Winston Churchill's leadership. This was very well received by the group and deliberated at length for some time afterwards.

Due to the inevitable slippage of time, the group then headed towards the Imperial War museum where the focus of the visit was an exhibition called "From ISIS

to Ebola". This exhibition highlighted the changing priorities of the UK Armed Forces since the draw down in Afghanistan, and painted an important picture of how Defence outputs are perceived through the lens of the world media and some of the strategic messaging it facilitates. It showcased the diverse spread of operations that UK Forces can be involved in at any one time, and also the versatility Defence offers our political masters. The group then split up to peruse other areas of the museum and the exhibition on the Holocaust was very hard hitting and rightfully so. The RV point was set at the museum café and all persons met up just in time to watch WO Partyka polish off another scone!

As the day drew to a close,



the group weary headed back to the tube station to see if they could beat the Guinness World record for amount of people compressed into one carriage without speaking. On the journey homeward it was agreed by all that much had been learnt and museums are a brilliant institution with much to offer.

Flt Lt Tinkler and FS Wosik

Earlier this year the replacement helicopter for the Defence Helicopter Flying School was announced. The Military Flying Training System (MFTS) for the rotary element will be based here at RAF Shawbury. This has guaranteed RAF Shawbury's future for at least the next 20 years. But what does it mean to everyone here?



Beginning of a New Era

The most obvious evidence of the next chapter in RAF Shawbury's history is the building of the new MFTS school house which is taking the place of the old RAF Regiment Schoolhouse. Construction of the new site is well underway with most of the major groundworks having been completed. There has been a minor hiccup in that they have discovered that in part of the old building there is some evidence that there may have been bats residing there at some point. To be sure that the bats are not coming back, part of the old building has been left standing until September. I've suggested we call the new schoolhouse the British Aircrew Training School (BATS)!

In order to build the new schoolhouse there has been an increase in the amount of traffic through the camp. This means more vehicles passing over the zebra crossing at the main gate, more vehicles driving around the one way system, more chances of Foreign Object Debris (FOD) being left on the

road and more chance of vehicles getting lost. And this is before the major work building requiring cranes begins. So how are we alleviating the risks to all our personnel and dependants here at RAF Shawbury?

Firstly, I have been immensely impressed with the work ethic of Kier Construction. They have expressed a totally professional approach to working on an airfield. They fully understand the risks of FOD and working next to an active airfield. Their work practices involve daily FOD checks, briefing their employees on their responsibilities, and hosing their tyres clean before leaving the work compound. They have also added beefy weights to all the fences around Hangar 2 (the old Sixty Sqn Hangar) to prevent any fences being blown by visiting aircraft.

Secondly, Mrs Jan Sheffield, our Health & Safety Officer, and I were invited to produce a safety video which is played

to every single contractor as part of their induction. All aspects of safety were mentioned.

Thirdly, you may have noticed that a separate entrance gate is being worked on at time of writing which is the gate next to the tennis courts outside the Officers' Mess. This should reduce the traffic entering through the main gate and travelling around the camp.

As you can see, there has been a lot of effort put in to keep the new build as safe as possible for us all but there are still risks. This is where everyone working at RAF Shawbury has a part to play.

- Please remain vigilant to the extra traffic and take extra care while walking across roadways including the new entrance.

- Look out for any rubbish that may inadvertently escape the compound or contractor's vehicles. Retrieve the rubbish if you can or report it on extension 6666.

- Report any issues or concerns you have – it's better to raise it and let it be investigated than to ignore it and an accident occur. Call me on extension 6666 or Health & Safety on extension 7039.

Thank you for playing your part in what promises to be an exciting new era.

**By Sqn Ldr Gary James
Station Flight Safety Officer**



GRADUATIONS



Area Radar
Training Course 286



Joint Aircrewman Course 6



Flight Operations Assistants' Course 1053



Flight Operations Assistants' Course 1054



Single Engine Rotary Wing Course 178



COBHAM NEWS

A Tribute to Tony Crocombe - RIP

All of us at RAF Shawbury were very saddened to hear about Tony Crocombe's recent microlight accident, and the number of attendees at his funeral bore testament to this.

Born in Lancaster, Tony joined the RAF at RAF Halton in 1967 as an Aircraft Apprentice.

He served in the RAF for 25 years as an engineer and he was earmarked to work on the fated TSR 2 strike aircraft in the late 1960s until the project was cancelled by the government of the time. He served at such diverse locations as Odham, Abingdon, Lossiemouth and Belize, as well as Shawbury and Tern Hill.

He left the RAF in 1992, and joined Serco here at Shawbury, whereupon he continued to support military flying here, working for Serco, FB Heliservices and of course Cobham.

He was also, one of the first to home build and fly a model gas turbine, to power a jet model during his time as a member of the RAF Shawbury model aircraft club.

Tony yearned to fly his own full size aircraft and so progressed to owning micro lights and could often be found at a work bench, in his break periods working on some project connected with this hobby. The quip "Crocombe Aviation" from his workmates, was often quoted to replace "Cobham Aviation", such was his passion for the hobby!

Tony had a dry wit and this manifested itself amongst his friends and workmates. He made time for his friends, workmates and most importantly, his family. He was always helpful in guiding and mentoring, with a confident knowledge, born from experience and training.

Always to be seen with a smile on his face, and an infectious enthusiasm for flying and aviation, Tony's passing was all too soon. He leaves a huge void that will be impossible to fill and will be sadly missed by all. Our hearts go out to his wife, Sonia and his family for their loss.





31 aircraft marked HM The Queen's 90th Birthday with a flypast over Buckingham Palace on Saturday 11th June 2016.

Her Majesty's official 90th Birthday celebrations ended with an impressive display of 15 different types of aircraft, five of which belonged to squadrons celebrating their own 100th birthday, including a Griffin helicopter from Sixty (R) Squadron, Defence Helicopter Flying School from RAF Shawbury.

Many RAF squadrons have had 100th anniversaries recently but few are as distinguished or as varied as Sixty Squadron. They were a fighter squadron in France from 1916-1918 and two of its pilots, Albert Ball (44 victories) and Billy Bishop (72 victories) were awarded the Victoria Cross.

Starting at 1pm, eight 'elements' consisting of between two and nine aircraft each, passed over Buckingham Palace 30 seconds apart from one another and included helicopters, fast jets, World War II aircraft, the Voyager, and C-17 transporter. Closing the flypast was the nine-strong Red Arrows, flying in their iconic 'Big Battle' formation in their distinctive red, British-built Hawk jets.

Sqn Ldr Phil Wylde, Officer Commanding Sixty (R) Squadron said: "I am honoured that my Squadron was able to take part in this event which was also special as it is Sixty Squadron's centenary year. It was an immense privilege to be involved. To get so many different aircraft types to fly together and synchronise their speed and timing has taken a lot of precision planning. However, the rehearsals have gone well and we are confident that it will be a wonderful day for HM."

RAF Shawbury Helicopter takes part in HM The Queen's 90th Birthday Flypast



Flt Lt Gary Rogan

Gary joined the RAF in June 1974 as an Assistant Air Traffic Controller. He however, soon realised that he wanted to be Aircrrew and started training as an Air Loadmaster in Jan 1979. He was streamed for helicopters and his first operational squadron was 33 Sqn.

660 Squadron Support Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) at St Andrews School, Shifnal



Flt Lt Rolfe talks to pupils

Inspired by Ex RAF Shawbury Helicopter Student and British astronaut Tim Peake, St Andrews School in Shifnal asked RAF Shawbury if they could assist in their STEM enrichment day held on Friday 27th May.

Flt Lt Alex Rolfe put his hands up to volunteer and flew into the school where he was met by eager staff and students wanting to gain an understanding on how the Squirrel training helicopter worked and how it related to what was being taught in the classroom

Flt Lt Rolfe commented: "It was a great opportunity to meet the pupils face to face and answer their questions in regards to how the helicopter operates in relation to STEM and I would also like to thank the students and staff of St Andrews for their fantastic hospitality".

– Last Flight before Retirement

Quick to see the potential of the Chinook during a visit to RAF Odiham early in 1981, Gary found himself on Number 1 Chinook Course.

Reforming to 18 Sqn to the Chinook was closely followed by the Falklands War, where Gary was part of the Bravo November crew that survived flying into the water at night after a 3 gun lift to Mount Kent. He was awarded the Task Commander's Commendation for fortitude and dogged determination in that and other incidents during the campaign.

Showing further potential, he was recommended for instructional duties in 1986 and was commissioned in 1991.

Ground tours followed at HQ Northern Ireland and within 8 Infantry Brigade in Londonderry interspersed with flying tours on 7 Sqn and the Helicopter Trials and Tactics Flight of Staneval.

Further tours in Ireland with 230 Sqn followed with a second tour with 18 Sqn as they moved back from Laarbruch to set up at Odiham.

After this, Gary completed a Flt Cdr tour at Cranwell teaching Non-Commissioned aircrew on their initial training whilst setting up their amalgamation within the Officer and Aircrew Trg Unit (OACTU).

He then set up a specialist recruitment

team for Non-Commissioned Aircrew before becoming a Boarding Officer at Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre.

His completed his third and final tour on 18 Sqn as an instructor on the Operational Conversion Unit before escaping to the Defence Helicopter Flying School at Shawbury where his experience has made him a valuable instructor on the Griffin for the last 8 years.

Gary has retired after 42 years' service, amassing 7000+ hours on Helicopters. RAF Shawbury wishes you good luck for the future.

Defence Helicopter Flying School

Cocktail Party

On Friday 10th June 2016 the instructors, students and partners of DHFS gathered, with kind permission of the Station Commander and PMC, at the Shawbury Officers' Mess to celebrate the annual DHFS Cocktail Party.

The event is in its 5th year and the aim is to gather as a group to enjoy an evening with style, sophistication, and in the process raise some money for the Station Charities. Sponsorship was gratefully received from Cobham, as well as generous support from

Jaguar in Shrewsbury, the local Aston Martin Owners Club courtesy of Peter Shelton, Bremont, Rybrook BMW and Shrewsbury Town FC. The AMOC bought along 5 luxury Aston Martin cars for the event which were parked front and centre outside the Officers' Mess for all to enjoy. Jaguar provided a brand new F Type to display alongside the Astons which one lucky individual would win in the raffle for an entire weekend.

After arriving, guests enjoyed drinks and canapés on the lawn whilst the RAF Salon Orchestra played numerous classical pieces. The great British weather tried its very best to upset the night however a stiff upper lip saw everyone carry on regardless of a little rain. After this a ceremonial sunset was observed and the aircraft of DHFS conducted a flypast. The Guest of Honour, former Commandant Commodore Martin Westwood (Rtd), took the salute alongside Colonel Facer.

Once the formal sunset ceremony had concluded the guests re-convened inside where a vodka ice-luge awaited. Commodore Westwood led the charge at the behest of Colonel Facer. In the dining room a lit cocktail bar awaited, serving out a variety of luxurious



cocktails made to order. A delicious hog roast and dessert selection was provided by Percy's Pig Roast. After sating appetites and refreshing themselves the guests got down to the serious business of throwing shapes on the dance floor to the music kindly provided by Soul Phoenix and their resident DJ. Wood's Brewery had also supplied 2 firkins of their delicious air ambulance charity ale to quench the thirst of non-cocktail drinkers; these were all enjoyed between topping up on the other fruity beverages.



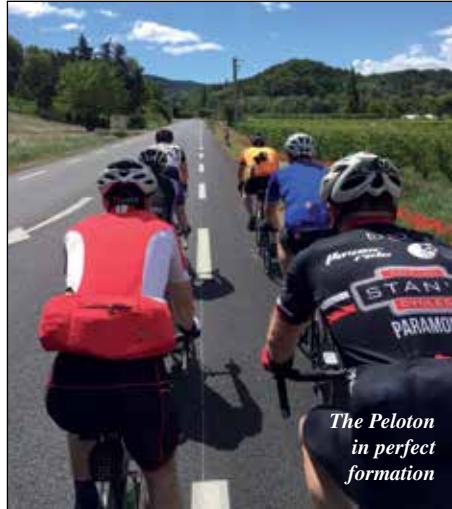


The music was shortly interrupted at 1030pm whilst the raffle was drawn by the VIP's in attendance. With all prize winners suitably impressed with their winnings more drinks were had to celebrate before all reconvened to enjoy the music and party atmosphere. The event finished around 2am with all retiring exhausted from their combined efforts at the vodka luge and their exuberant dance moves.

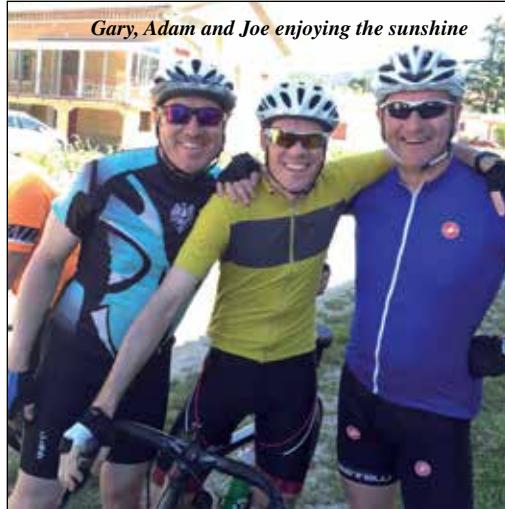
The evening was a great success, and while final totals are to be tallied, somewhere in the region of £1000 has been raised for the Station Charities.

The project team would like to take this opportunity to thank Ground Electrics, SWO's gang, PEd Flight, all those students and staff who assisted with the setting up and clean up the following day and especially the ISS staff and Officers' Mess employees for their hard work and dedication, without which the event would not have been possible.





*The Peloton
in perfect
formation*



*Gary and Joe enjoying the view
of the Gorges de la Nesque*



Ex MONT VENTOUX

From every picturesque village we cycled through in Provence, Mont Ventoux loomed over us. The Mountain of Wind, the Giant of Provence, it dominated the view at every turn constantly reminding us of the challenge we had signed up for. We would be attempting to cycle up Mont Ventoux three times in one day via the 3 different routes, from Malaucene, Bedoin, and Sault, the shortest of which is 21.5km of unrelenting ascent.

On Sun 15th May, 8 members of the RAF Shawbury cycling club travelled to Provence for what would be a very challenging week of cycling. There was a mix of ability and experience in the group from active club riders and racers to keen cyclists, and from the PTI who had completed the challenge before to the brave soul who signed up for the challenge having not ridden a road bike before.

After settling in to our apartments just outside Malaucene, we keenly awaited the arrival of our bikes from the rental shop on the Monday morning. As 0830 ticked by, we realised the French were working to a far more relaxed schedule than we military types were used to. A phone call later and a second helping of breakfast and Manu finally arrived at 0910 with 8 fully carbon Trek Domane bikes with more than enough gears to get us up the biggest of hills!

Day one was billed as a warm up ride to test out the bikes and get used to riding as a group. However, we

got slightly carried away exploring the beautiful region and our warm up ride ran on for 70 miles, challenging even the most seasoned riders. We got a brief introduction to hill climbing with the small Col de Madeleine that would be our return route for most of the coming days, with competition increasing on each attempt. The day also gave us a stark reminder of the possible dangers of cycling and riding as a group. Whilst riding on a smooth, straight road, in perfect formation, for seemingly no reason, Tom Hammond decided to slide out of the peloton into a grass verge causing a pile up of 3 bikes in his wake. Luckily the fast braking action of the 3 cyclists behind allowed them to stay upright though a little entangled so it was only Tom that came off with a few cuts and bruises. We were advised by Manu that as iconic as the ride up Mont Ventoux was, the ride around the base was beautiful too. So on day 2, we continued to stretch our legs by cycling this

picturesque 63 miles taking in all three starting points for the challenge the next day. Manu's advice did not leave us disappointed as the ride took us through some of the region's most spectacular landscape. The cheeky Col de Veaux (that left some dreading the real climb the next day) rewarded us with a descent into a beautiful valley north of Ventoux before we climbed back out again and continued on towards Sault. After a quick lunch stop we pressed on and our route took us into the impressive Gorges de la Nesque where, for very little ascent, we were treated to a long gradual descent that seemed to go on for miles and miles. We were able to scope out the Mountain from all angles and each looked as daunting as the next, with the tree line giving way to a bleak moonscape at the summit ravaged by the wind.

The day of the challenge promised the best weather of the week, with wall to wall sunshine and only moderate wind on the summit forecast. As we carb loaded over

breakfast, we decided to stagger the start of the challenge to handicap the fastest riders so they would not be waiting at the top for too long as the other riders made their way up. So with a plan in place and the support car loaded with litres of water, snacks and extra warm kit for the long descents, the first 2 cyclists made their 'grand depart' from Malaucene. Gary James took the wheel of the support vehicle for the first climb and gave ample encouragement as we made our ascent.

From Malaucene it is 22km of constant climb to the summit. Kilometre markers started out as a cruel indication of how far we had to go and gave a warning of the gradient we could look forward to for each 1000m. During a punishing 3km of 11-12% gradient we were crying out for some relief which eventually came, but never in the form of a downhill! The summit was not visible for the majority of the climb and when the weather station finally came into view it still appeared

Another check on the map



The clouds start amassing at the summit



"As the summit came closer for the second time that day, the wind was gaining in strength and a few spots of rain threatened worse weather to come. Phil Llewellyn and Adam (our leaders and the brains behind the trip) were already at the summit having the difficult conversation regarding the risk of continuing the challenge"

impossibly far away, although apparently there were only a few kms to go. The final stretch came in the form of hairpin switchbacks, snaking up to the summit through the moon-scape. The temperature cooled significantly as we approached the summit which was a relief whilst still riding but as soon as our shaky legs reached the top we needed our extra layers. The handicap system worked well and we had all summited within about 20min of each other, the fastest climbers having taken just under 2 hours to make the ascent. No one was keen to hang around on the cold, exposed summit so after a few photographs we started the long descent to Bedoin, from where we would start the 2nd climb.

The descent gave us a chance to scope out the next part of our challenge and as we flew down some pretty steep sections it only served to build apprehension for the return journey. In Bedoin, we refuelled with a massive lunch and were treated to the spectacle of a pair of 'old school' French cyclists, complete with moustaches, woollen jerseys and antique steel framed bikes circa 1950s. After copious amounts of pasta

and bread we mounted our bikes once more for another staggered start. This time Adam Roberts and Luke Would took the wheel of the support vehicle with Gary stepping up to what would prove the hardest challenge of the week.

There is constant debate amongst those who have conquered Mont Ventoux as to which climb is worse, from Bedoin or from Malaucene. Personally I would argue it is the Bedoin climb and not just because we did this second and were all a bit exhausted. Although the climb from Malaucene had the soul destroying 3km of 11-12% gradient, there were still occasional sections of a mere 5-6% or less where our legs could recover slightly. However, from Bedoin, after the initial gentle climb out of the village, the gradient rarely dropped below an unrelenting 9% giving little relief or chance for recovery. The toughest part of the climb went through dense forest which denied us any breeze and surrounded us with a close, stifling heat. 7km from the top on the south side of the mountain is Chalet Reynaud. Here the 2 roads from Bedoin and Sault meet and continue as one road to the summit. This final 7km, though starting out

at a slightly easier gradient, had its own challenges. No longer in the stifling heat of the woods, we were subjected to the wind that gave the mountain its name. The bleak, scarred landscape gave no protection from the elements and it was with concern that we noticed the clouds amassing and the wind picking up – not what the forecast had promised! This route took us past the Tom Simpson memorial. Tom Simpson was a successful British cyclist who died on this section of the climb during the 13th Stage of the 1967 Tour de France, and at a time when doping was rife amongst tour riders, he was found to have amphetamines in his body. He died of heat exhaustion during the climb after the drugs impaired his judgement and allowed him to push on well beyond his limits.

As the summit came closer for the second time that day, the wind was gaining in strength and a few spots of rain threatened worse weather to come. Phil Llewellyn and Adam (our leaders and the brains behind the trip) were already at the summit having the difficult conversation regarding the risk of continuing the challenge. When you have set your mind to achieving a

goal sometimes the hardest challenge is knowing when to stop. With the temperature dropping, the wind roaring and the clouds waiting to burst it seemed foolhardy to descend to Sault and give ourselves no option but to climb back up to the summit no matter what the weather would throw at us. With the day drawing on, there was also a concern we could run out of daylight hours and the risk was deemed too great to continue so we would descend back down to Malaucene and end our challenge there. If anyone had any doubt as to whether this was the right decision this was soon quashed by the hair raising descent that followed. Joe Taylor and Tom, the most confident descenders, seemed unperturbed by the conditions and pressed on together. Gary knew his limits and after the first kilometre of switchbacks plagued by strong crosswinds, he jumped in the support car forcing poor Luke into the back with the bikes. That left Mike English and Phil to prove that chivalry was not dead and accompany myself, the only female of the group and the most cautious of descenders, to the bottom. Well, chivalry, or a good excuse to take it easy on the descent anyway! Within

about 500m of the summit the heavens opened and the conditions became extremely testing, as the road became slick and bodies numb in the cold and rain. Our trio had to stop after a few kms to try and bring feeling back to our hands so we could feel the brake levers we were clinging to. In order to remain in control of our bikes on the wet road it was slow going and we felt it would be an hour of this misery before we made it to Malaucene. However, half way down we cleared the clouds and were able to ease off the brakes slightly. We reached Malaucene with great relief and stumbled straight into a coffee shop to warm up. The support team who had followed us down and were barely able to watch as we took each corner, were glad to see we had made it in one piece.

The thought of making that descent, in poor weather,

hours later in the day, all the more tired following a third climb was enough to know that we had made the safe decision to cut short our challenge. We were disappointed to have not completed the 3 ascents but one ascent of Mont Ventoux is an impressive feat and 2 a great achievement. The 2 routes ridden were certainly the hardest of the 3 climbs- the ascent from Sault, although a few kms longer, is apparently far more gradual and has the reputation as the easiest of the 3. We held our heads high as we span our legs back to the apartments thinking about what we had achieved and very much looking forward to a huge dinner in reward for the thousands of calories burnt. It was with heavy legs we made our way to breakfast the next morning and considered the route for our recovery ride that day. We planned to explore the

North West corner of our map, the last remaining territory to cover whilst we still had the bikes. It was all set to be a gentle morning of cycling until a few wrong turns ('Trust me, I'm a pilot', Mike had said) led us up some pretty nasty hills. That said we were rewarded with some beautiful vistas and roads that took us deep into the vineyards of the Cote de Rhone region. Not to mention the impromptu / unannounced race between Adam and a member of local cycling club (Adam won and was stared out by the disgruntled Frenchman for the next 10min as we enjoyed the view). For those with remaining energy we took the hilly road back to Malaucene and made one last climb of the now, seemingly, meagre Col de Madeleine.

At 1800h that evening we



reluctantly gave our bikes back to the rental shop and prepared for our return home the next day. We had enjoyed 4 days of awesome and challenging cycling that tested us as individuals, built up our group riding skills and gave us all a massive sense of achievement. For the most prolific of cyclists in the group that week, they had climbed higher than Everest over the course of the trip and metaphorically we had probably all felt like we were trying to conquer Everest as we slogged up the sides of The Giant of Provence. We all agreed that "Cycling up Mont Ventoux was harder than cycling up Grinshill on a Penny-farthing!"

By Flt Lt Charlie Gawne



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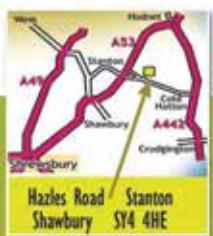
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Behind the Scenes at... THE ROYAL INTERNATIONAL AIR TATTOO

12 years ago, School of Air Operations Control (SAOC) Trainer and Flight Operations Assistant, Cpl Michelle Coupar volunteered at her first Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) at RAF Fairford. It is the world's largest military air show and this year marks her 10th show anniversary. To celebrate, Cpl Coupar has decided to share a behind the scenes peek at what life is like before, during and after the air show!

DAY 1

0600 hrs: Last minute packing.... again! Every year I say I will get ahead of the game and be ready to just get up and go. Every year I still end up rushing about, panicking whether I have all my documentation and everything else I need before I disappear for the week!

1100 hrs: My first job on arrival at RAF Fairford is to collect my showground passes, driving permit and accommodation details (I'm staying in Swindon, so will have a daily commute to negotiate) before getting across to the airfield for the show briefing. We will discuss the flying programme, the airspace restrictions and even the bird situation! After all, no one wants a bird in their engine!

2000 hrs: Briefings are complete and Senior Air Traffic Control Officer (SATCO) Ian Revell is accepting a handover of the tower from SATCO Fairford. I'm heading to my new home for the week to unpack and get an early night. First landing is at 0800 hours tomorrow, so it'll be an early start!

DAY 2

0740 hrs: After a very early start, having negotiated the Swindon traffic (including the infamous Magic Roundabout) to get back to Fairford, we're now stuck in a vehicle search queue and the first aircraft is due to land in 20 minutes! Security is a big part of the airshow and every vehicle is searched thoroughly by a team of both civilian and RAF volunteers and specialist dog handling teams.

0750 hrs: Thankfully, we made it to the tower with 10 minutes to spare, but the programme had been changed and were having to redo all the flight strips! Programme changes are frequent, so communication is essential between the Flight Centre and Air Traffic team to ensure everyone updates the numerous copies of the programme floating around the tower. The flight strips are causing a slight problem...there's around 70 movements expected today and for some reason the parking areas aren't printing, so we're having to annotate them manually!

0800 hrs: The Tower has just opened and the first aircraft is already on the ground! A CP-140 Aurora, swiftly followed by a BAE Typhoon (treating the spectators to some low approach photo opportunities) and the Leader vehicles get straight to work escorting them to their parking areas. The Leader team, or "Follow Me" as they are known, have to have exceptional knowledge of the airfield! They are extremely busy as every aircraft must have a Leader assigned to them for any ground movement of aircraft. Tasking comes from the Ground Controller and a vehicle is assigned to collect the aircraft from the runway exits or on the dispersal as required. The same faces are back year after year but training is rigorous for any new team members. They are in for a treat as the F35 is expected to arrive shortly - this is what I have been



Breitling Display

waiting for!

1200 hrs: It's a working lunch as the aircraft are still streaming in, expertly co-ordinated by the team at RAF Brize Norton! RAF Brize Norton handles all the radar traffic for RAF Fairford and it becomes extremely busy for them in the run up to the show. Communication between Fairford and Brize is essential to a smooth operation and former SAOC student, SAC Tom Bedford has joined the Brize team this year as a liaison for inbound aircraft.

1630 hrs: A surprise visitor has arrived! Group Captain

Carol Vorderman, a recent visitor to RAF Shawbury, has come to look around the tower and see the work done by the team.

Visitors to the tower are frequent and it can get quite busy at times! The most common visitors are usually the flying supervisors for each display team. Safety is paramount and having them on hand to explain any issues that may occur is helpful, particularly if there is an aircraft emergency!

2000 hrs: The last aircraft of the day has just landed. It's time to get some dinner – chips and sandwiches at a

INTERNATIONAL AIR TATTOO!



social with the Brize team! It is an annual tradition to get together each year so the two teams can put faces to the voices that become so familiar.

DAY 3

0800 hrs: The tower is open! The morning begins much the same as yesterday and it's not long before the first arrival is on the ground. 0840 hrs: Time for a drive around the airfield. There are a few jobs on the list – a liaison trip to the Flight Operations Centre, Base Ops and a runway inspection. 1020 hrs: Found on the runway inspection, evidence of a bird strike – which is a common hazard at airfields. The airfield is surrounded by lakes and there is a large rookery to the North East of the airfield so birds can be a problem. After I have collected the remains, I pass them over for formal identification to the Bird Control team (callsign Scarecrow!). The crews will be informed and hopefully we will soon determine which aircraft has hit the bird. 1450 hrs: The Turkish Airforce KC-135, callsign TURAF 20, is due to leave RAF Fairford. It will be flying along the

airways and so has been given a calculated take off time, which will ensure it joins the airway at exactly the right time. There's a slight issue though... the Royal Air Force Aerobatics Team, The Red Arrows, are on their way and we need to get TURAF20 airborne before they arrive, otherwise he will miss his slot!

It usual to get the odd aircraft coming back and forth throughout the week, as each display team needs engineering support and equipment, but it does require some co-ordination. Display aircraft who have travelled long distances are usually low on fuel by the time they get close to Fairford, so holding them to get other aircraft airborne is not always an option! Thankfully on this occasion we got TURAF 20 away just in the nick of time and the Red Arrows land with style as usual!

2000 hrs: After a busy day, we are closing the tower until the morning. It's during the quiet hours, after the tower is closed, that the static display is expertly put together during the night. Aircraft are towed and positioned before being cordoned off ready for

the many visitors who will be keen to take photos tomorrow.

DAY 4

0745 hrs: We're in and the tower open up is complete. We have to squeeze in the last few arrivals before the showground opens. Historically only the media came on Fridays, however the show ground is now open to the public for a shorter display day. The display will commence at 1100 hrs and finish by 1600 hrs. It's a tad windy outside; this might make some displays a bit trickier than usual! 0950 hrs: I have just taken over manning the emergency desk and there are reports of a road traffic accident involving a bike at one of the gates and there is also a medical emergency at the back of the tower, with a lady suffering a fall resulting in a broken wrist. The calls come through to the 3333 phone in the tower and in conjunction with the Emergency Control Centre, a response team will be dispatched as required. We have great support from both military and civilian medical teams, as well as



fire crews from all over the country. The police also play a major part in ensuring the traffic is flowing smoothly, as a special one-way system comes into force on show days. The police also patrol the showground and help deal with any security issues. Airborne perimeter checks are carried out by the police helicopter to ensure the show remains safe. 1100 hrs: We have the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, along with Prince George visiting the show today! They are hosted in the VIP area known as Patrons, which is just in front of the tower. Prince George has his ear defenders on, a wise decision as he's about to see a very noisy Lightning display very soon! 2100 hrs: After a successful first show day, we are having our team meal! The RIAT Air Traffic Control Team consists of a mixture of civilian, USAF and RAF controllers and assistants. The team come

Behind the Scenes at... THE ROYAL INTERNATIONAL AIR TATTOO!

together once a year but to anyone looking in from the outside you would never guess we didn't work together on a daily basis. This year we have welcomed several new members to the team, as well as welcoming back many old faces. It's a truly great team to be part of!

DAY 5

0800hrs: After the usual morning commute all the team are in, ready for today's sell out show! That said, it's not just RIAT taking place this weekend! The Typhoon will be heading off to Silverstone later on to make an appearance on first day of the British Grand Prix!

1200 hrs: The showground is packed. The grassed area adjacent to the runway, known as the crowd-line, is jammed full of spectators with cameras, ladders, tents and picnics. It is great to see so many people. In the static display area, in addition to the aircraft, there are stalls selling all sorts and stands giving away lots of stickers and free gifts known as "gizzets". The displays have been incredible so far and there's still another 6 hours of display to go!

1830 hrs: I forgot to mention that earlier the F35 blew our fluorescent orange display datum to smithereens during his hover. Luckily there weren't too many displays left as the datum is a reference point for crews to help them ensure they don't breach the display line. The display has been finished for half an hour but there are still lots of people in the showground taking photos as they make their way to the exit. We're having an Air Traffic BBQ for tea tonight at the base of the tower before heading off home. After all, we've got to do it all again tomorrow – hopefully with a new display datum!

DAY 6

1000 hrs: After the usual morning routine, we are now waiting for a break in weather to start the display.



To be part of this amazing team in the future, you can see the volunteer vacancies available on the Air Tattoo Website: <http://www.airtattoo.com/airshow/people-at-the-airshow/volunteers>.

The Flying Display Director is in the tower advising how to proceed, as the cloud is low and causing a bit of an issue. The programme for displays is very precise and if the first display doesn't go on time it will likely be cancelled as there is very little flex! Sadly, the weather wins and the RAF Typhoon display, amongst a few others, is cancelled.

1045 hrs: There's an improvement to the weather so an F16 gets airborne for a weather check. It's still not looking great but the cloud base is enough for a "flat" display. Display crews have a good weather and poor weather display but there needs to be a sufficient cloud base. Flat displays are still very good, but lack the excitement of some of the high energy manoeuvres that would normally be carried out in better conditions. Thankfully, the weather is set to improve so there is hope for the crews displaying later on!

1345 hrs: An unusual incident occurred earlier. A hare strike! Yes, an Extra 300, part of the Royal Jordanian Falcons display team, hit a hare on takeoff. The hare was actually still alive, though

severely injured and it had to be removed quickly by a member of the "Leader" team as the Red Arrows were lined up for take-off ready to do a flypast at Silverstone!

1645 hrs: The French Mirage display team "Ramey Delta" are about to give their last ever display. With their unique formation aerobatics, it marks the end of an era as the Mirage heads into retirement. The Ramex safety advisor has been a familiar face in the tower for a few years now and we hope that we may see the mirage back as a static at future RIATs!

1800 hrs: The last display is complete and we couldn't have a more fitting end than a perfect rainbow after a very heavy shower. This said, we have a few aircraft departing for Farnborough International Airport now as they are set to appear at Farnborough Air Show which starts tomorrow!

2000 hrs: Every year the end of the show is celebrated with an awards ceremony and hangar party. It is well attended by display crews and show volunteers and is a real chance to let your hair down after a successful show. I will be leaving early as I have a very busy departures day ahead but for now I will enjoy

watching my colleagues being whisked off in a conga line led by Brazilian Dancers with a Brazilian Band!

DAY 7

The last day of RIAT and by far the busiest, hence why there are no timings for today's blog! Over 3 days, the aircraft arrive. In one day all the aircraft (except for the broken or pre-arranged stop overs) depart! Of course, nothing can leave until a FOD plod has taken place. This stands for Foreign Object Debris and each year the Air Cadet Organisation provides cadets to help throughout the show. The FOD plod is one of their most important jobs. The showground is littered after the show days and this has to be completely cleared before any aircraft engines in the static display can be started. The Air Cadets and a team of other volunteers do a sweep of the entire showground, starting at the crack of dawn, come rain or shine, collecting left behind rubbish and clearing cone cordons to allow the aircraft to leave safely! Once cleared, the airfield operations commence and the "Leader" team is busy picking up aircraft after aircraft to escort them to the runway! There's something very satisfying about departure day for everyone. The cheeky waggle of wings to say "goodbye" by the crews as they head off home is a real nod to the volunteers, as if to say thanks for letting us be part of the show and see you soon! My time at RIAT ends today, but there are still hundreds of volunteers remaining to dismantle the structures, pack up the "green cone road" and restore RAF Fairford's Airfield to normal.

So many people make the Air Tattoo the amazing show it is! It's not just about aircraft. The RIAT volunteers, whether military or civilian, are a fine example of the RAF's Core Values at work – Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence!

By Cpl Michelle Coupar



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RAF Officer leads England delegation to South Korea

An RAF Officer has just returned after leading the England Under 18 Football Team to South Korea for a fixture double header on behalf of the Football Association.

Wing Commander Neil Hope MBE, who is based at RAF Shawbury in North Shropshire, but works for Air Command at RAF High Wycombe, sits on the FA as the Council member on behalf of the RAF Football Association. Part of Neil's role on the FA is as a member of the FA Youth Committee who has the responsibility for support to the England International teams from age 15 to 18.

Neil was the Head of Delegation for the FA and Squad when they travelled to South Korea for 2 friendly fixtures against their South Korean counterparts on 3rd and 5th June. His responsibilities included leading the Delegation and completing various diplomatic and

hosting tasks on behalf of the Football Association and the Squad.

The England Squad includes players from many Premiership and Championship teams managed by the head coach, Neil Dewsnipl. Neil was joined by fellow Youth Committee member and National Game Board member, Bob Cotter, from Northamptonshire FA.

The Squad was based at the South Korean National Football Centre at Paju, north of the capital city, Seoul. The youngsters played South Korea twice. The first match was played at the Icheon City Stadium with a huge crowd of over 11000 watching. Most supporters were there to see the super star of Korean football, Lee Seung Woo, who plays for Barcelona in Spain and is hailed as the next Lionel Messi. The game resulted in a 2-0 win for the South Koreans due to 2 errors from the England team. The second fixture was played behind closed doors in the impressive Suwon World Cup Stadium. Seung Woo opened the scoring after just 3 minutes but England was the better of the 2 teams in the first half. Unfortunately, the 2nd half was a master show from the impressive South



England v South Korea – Suwon World Cup Stadium – Sunday 5th June

Korean team resulting in a 3-0 win.

During the visit to South Korea the England players were able to immerse themselves in the culture and history of their hosts. They were based at Paju, which is just one mile from the border with North Korea. They were briefed on the ongoing history between the 2 countries. They also visited the Gyeongbokgung 13th Century Royal Palace in Seoul. The team was also visited at the National Football Centre by the British Ambassador to South Korea, His Excellency Charles Hay. Neil briefed and led the Ambassador around the Football Centre including meeting the England team and the South Korean Officials. Neil was also required to complete the official duties at the 2 matches including delegation duties with Officials from the Korean FA and local Parliamentary Assembly Members and Mayors.

Neil said: 'I am incredibly proud to have been selected by the FA to head up the delegation to South Korea. The England youngsters are fantastic players and some of them will undoubtedly be the future of English football. These fixtures are incredibly important to the FA and England in preparing the teams and getting them used to playing good opposition from around the world. Whilst the results did not go the way we would have wanted, the preparation and work completed by Neil Dewsnipl and his back room team was excellent throughout. The Korean FA really looked after us and it was great to be able to visit the de-militarized zone between the North and South and also the see the historical and cultural side of this amazing country. It is a brilliant achievement for RAF Football as well as for me to be selected for this prestigious role portraying our continuing desire to promote the RAF, RAFFA and English football across the world.'

By Wg Cdr Neil Hope



England Squad with Wg Cdr Neil Hope (far right) at the Gyeongbokgung 13th Century Royal Palace in Seoul

In February, the Station Commander received a letter from Mr Bob Seymour who is researching his father's life story. His father, who is now in his 90s and very frail, served at RAF Shawbury and was involved in some of the later Aries flights, even meeting Sir Francis Chichester. Bob is rightly very proud of his father's achievements, although his father never really spoke of them. This is Bob's tribute to his father.

Son traces his Father's history at RAF Shawbury and links to the Aries flights

My father, Robert Arthur Seymour joined the RAF on 5th September 1940. He was 18 years old and completed his basic training at Blackpool, Weston and Torquay before crossing the Atlantic in April 1941 as an LAC, to be taught navigation at the Pan American Flying School at Miami University.

He returned to the UK and began training at Penrhos, making his first RAF flight in a Blenheim on 28th November 1941. He was then posted to Andover flying Ansons in March 1942 before joining No 296 Squadron at Netheravon in July 1942 then No 295 Squadron in August to fly Whitleys. He first flew in a Hotspur glider in June 1942, which was the start of his link with gliders.

He did many flights on Rebecca radar trials before his first wartime operation in November 1942 on a 'Nickel' (wartime propaganda leaflet dropping) over Paris, returning on one engine. He carried out 6 more operations before converting to the Halifax in March 1943 and moving to Holmesley in preparation for the Sicily operation. He made the first long distance flight - over 9 hours - towing a Horsa glider on 15th May 1943 as preparation for Operation Beggar - positioning 24 Horsas to Tunisia via Morocco and Algeria. One flight was in search of a 'lost plane' - the first Hurricane that his Pilot GH Briggs had 'borrowed'. He took part in Operation Ladbroke and Operation Fustian over Sicily in 1943.

Commissioned as Pilot Officer in August 1943, he joined No 298 Sqn on its formation at Tarrant Rushton in November 1943. He was promoted Flying Officer in February 1944. He then flew on army co-operation and glider towing practice for D-Day, and started flying with the Special Operations Executive (SOE) operations over France, his 23rd war operation. He was involved in two operations on D-Day, Op

Tonga and Mallard. One plane was shot down and ditched safely; my dad's pilot directed recovery craft to the crew. He completed 12 SOE operations in July and August before three Arnhem operational flights in mid- September 1944. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre on 22nd September 1944 at Netheravon by General Koenig, Head of the French Forces of the Interior (French Resistance Fighters). He completed his last war-time operation for No 298 Sqn on 7th October 1944 before posting to the Empire Air Navigation School (EANS) EANS Shawbury on the 21st October 1944.

He passed his 1st Class Navigation Warrant on 11th November 1944 with an aggregate score of 91%. He was based at RAF Shawbury until 21st January 1945, and achieved 47 hours flying Wellingtons.

He returned to operational flying with No 190 Sqn on 27th April 1945 as a Flight Lieutenant and his last operation was Op Doomsday, taking General Urquhart and troops to Norway to round up last German resistance.

Post war, he was seconded to BOAC from June 1946 to 1948. He was posted back to Shawbury Empire Air Navigation School (EANS) in February 1949, before a posting to Boscombe Down performing many H2S radar test flights before joining CFS at Manby as a Navigation Instructor.

Promoted to Squadron Leader in



January 1955, he was one of two navigators on flights in Aries IV, Canberra W699, in June 1955 as the first jet flight over the North Pole and record breaking speed flight between Ottawa and London on 27th June 1955, for which he received the Air Force Cross (AFC) in the New Year Honours list 1956.

In 1957, he attended RAF Staff College at Andover, before being posted to No 230 Operational Conversion Unit at Waddington in 1958 on a Vulcan conversion course. He then joined the Air Ministry in 1959. Promoted to Wing Commander in July that year, he was involved on Thor missile guidance work.

Bob finishes by saying: "When I wrote to Gp Capt Appleton in February, after finding his name and photo on the Shawbury web pages, I guess I was really taking a stab in the dark. Most of the airbases that my father served at in his RAF days are now either desolated collections of crumbling concrete or have been returned to farmland. Shawbury is one of a very few still active and it just seemed like a good idea, as part of my journey, to visit RAF Shawbury. Little could prepare me for the warmth of the welcome that I received and I had a truly memorable day with so many highlights. Walking through the doors of what was the Shawbury Empire Air Navigation School, I found it quite evocative, with its maze of corridors. The staircase and panelling were much as they might have been back in 1944 but now the building is put to such a modern purpose and literally buzzing as the next generation of Air Traffic Controllers are prepared for duty. The link with the historic Aries flights was fascinating and the whole visit has really helped me to understand and appreciate my father's wartime contribution and his achievements. Thank you."



Battlespace Management (BM) 5-A-Side Football Tournament



The 31st 5-a-Side Football Tournament took place at RAF Shawbury on a cloudy/rainy/sunburnt weekend in June where upwards of a 150 Battlespace Management personnel attended from 20 units.

The weekend started with a function in the Aries Club on the Friday evening, with entertainment provided by DJ WO Dave Knights. Throughout the evening people were able to generously donate small change to the two Station Charities, Stillbirth and Neonatal Death charity (Sands) and The Shrewsbury Ark.

Shawbury's premium caterers ISS played the pivotal role of providing food and drink for the vast amount of customers. Thanks have to go to them for their tremendous support.

Additionally, further thanks must go to the personnel on the supporting courses which were JATCC 412 & FOAC 1054. They did a sterling job ensuring a continuous flow of refreshments were available by re-stocking the fridges, changing barrels and keeping the Aries Club clean & litter free throughout the evening. The function was well

attended and the donations collected on the night were in excess of £85.

The tournament started nice and early on the Saturday (0900) with breakfast rolls and hot beverages provided by ISS, undoubtedly a much appreciated service.

The first matches kicked off at 0930. With 4 groups of male competitors, each group had 5 teams (one with 4 teams) totalling 19 teams. The teams within each group played each other once. The top two teams from each group were entered into a knockout competition for the cup and the 3rd and 4th placed teams were entered into a knockout competition for the Plate. The football culminated with a Cup final of RAF Lossiemouth Vs RAF Shawbury (Ops & ATC) and a Plate final of RAF Marham Vs RAF Boulmer School of Air Battlespace Management (SABM). Additionally, the female tournament started here 'the final' due to only two ladies teams entering. The female final

was between RAF Shawbury (SAOC Controllers) Vs RAF Shawbury (SAOC, FOTF).

All final games provided entertainment for the audience and culminated with FOTF Ladies bringing home glory and AC Kathryn McIntyre picking up the best female player of tournament.

The plate trophy went to RAF Boulmer (SABM). However disappointing it was to allow SABM to walk out of RAF Shawbury (the home of Ops & ATC) with the Plate trophy we must congratulate them on an exceptional tournament. Furthermore, the male player of the tournament also came from RAF Boulmer, SAC Philip Bright who put away more goals than any other player and proved worthy of this accolade.

The Cup Trophy and overall male tournament winners went to RAF Shawbury (Ops & ATC); they won 3 out of 4 of their group games, beat the

A-Side Football Tournament 2016



*Men's Winners SAOC
5 Aside RAF Shawbury
ATC and Ops*

JATCC students in the Quarter Final on penalties, marginally won against SAOC in the Semi Final by 1-0, before overcoming Lossiemouth in the final. A great team effort by RAF Shawbury (Ops & ATC), they came, they conquered, they were victorious and the commendable winners of 2016.

Gp Capt Appleton, the RAF Shawbury Stn Cdr closed the weekend with a presentation ceremony. All 3 winning teams were provided with their trophies and posed for photographs. The only non-standard prize was rewarded to the JATCC students who took the true spirit of the tournament into consideration and played all their games in fancy dress.

The weekend was a great success and purely down to the players and



*Ladies Winners SAOC 5 Aside -
RAF Shawbury SAOC and FOTF*

supporters that made the annual pilgrimage to RAF Shawbury to support the event. Special thanks must go to the support services which consisted of ISS, St John's Ambulance and the volunteer SAOC courses that helped (JATCC 412 & FOAC 1054). Final thanks have to be made to my organising team FS Kenny Hewitt, Cpl Jamie Lamb

and Cpl Lee Morrison. They put in a tremendous amount of time and effort over the past 9 months that culminated in a great social weekend for the BM world.

Thank you all, see you in 2017.

Flt Lt Dave Walker

SPORT

CO's Cup Op Challe



enge



On Thursday 26th May 2016, 705 NAS took part in OP Challenge as part of the CO's Cup alongside strong teams from 660 AAC, 60 Sqn, ATC, SAOC A and SAOC B.

The event required a combination of practical skills and mental agility in order to succeed. This was evident from the first event which involved pushing a Land rover between two fixed points and required the mental cunning to quickly reposition a team of 8 and push the vehicle back the other way. OP Challenge consisted of multiple events carefully selected by the PT Staff to test each team's physical ability and endurance timed for 5 minutes over each event.

705 NAS started well and went from strength to strength until faced with the challenge that was the tyre flip. After being informed that 660 AAC had set a new event record, 705 were motivated

to succeed. This coupled with a very strong turnout from courses 180 and 182 meant that 705 NAS were able to muster a team that was able to set a new record overcoming the impressive form of 660 AAC. 705 NAS' confidence grew as they narrowed the lead and after a titanic effort from the team, especially Captain George Marsden, during the power bag throw, finished the last of their events with great optimism.

After a short delay as the scores from each event were counted, 705 NAS were presented with the CO's Cup to take a second consecutive first place which will no doubt be a trend that continues!

**Sub-Lieutenant Leyshon
705 NAS**



Young Finn achieves FA Cup Dream

A young Manchester United fan has fulfilled his dream by watching his idols play in FA Cup Final at Wembley Stadium.

Finn Mills, a 13 year old fanatical supporter of Manchester United has had his dreams fulfilled through the assistance of the RAF Football Association. Finn is the son of Squadron Leader Zoe Mills, an ex-Air Traffic Controller, who sadly passed away late in 2015 after a short battle with pancreatic cancer. Zoe had served across the UK, including a tour at the School of Air Operations Control (previously the Central Air Traffic Control School) at RAF Shawbury and also in Iraq, Germany and the Falkland Islands. Zoe went on to work as a civilian in Media Communications at RAF Kinloss and latterly at the Air Command Headquarters at RAF High Wycombe.

Finn lives with Zoe's sister June, in Aylesbury having sadly also lost his

father, Richard, in 2008. Richard was a well-known photographer with the Times newspaper who died in Zimbabwe in 2008 whilst following a story.

The link to getting Finn to see his beloved Manchester United was achieved when Wg Cdr Neil Hope, who sits on the FA Council on behalf of the RAF FA, answered a plea for assistance from June. Neil said: 'I heard that June was trying to get Finn to Wembley. In my role on the FA as a Council member I am able to attend matches at Wembley Stadium and we are very privileged to have access to the Royal Box. A brief conversation with the Chairman of the RAF FA, Gp Capt Rich Pratley, and the FA, resulted in an invitation to Finn to join me at the game in the Royal Box. The result was that Finn watched the game in the company of the President of the FA, the Duke of Cambridge, and also legends such as Sir Bobby Charlton and Sir Alex Ferguson. I was extremely proud to have been able to host Finn as I knew his Mum and Dad from their Shawbury days and spent 3 days in a 2 man canoe with Finn's



Finn after the match

Mum in New Zealand, on expedition. Finn and my daughter Charlotte are the same age and used to play together as little ones. Zoe was a lovely lady with a real zest for life and Richard was a lovely man with a wicked Northern Irish sense of humour. I know that they would be so proud of Finn.'

Finn had a fabulous day at Wembley Stadium and watched an excellent game which his beloved Manchester United won 2-1 after an extended match in extra time.

By Wg Cdr Neil Hope



Wg Cdr Neil Hope with Finn at Wembley

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