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Edition 4
2017



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Editor's Welcome

by Sqn Ldr Kim Leach



Welcome to Edition 4 of the Aries Magazine. Thank you for all your submissions. This edition is full of interesting stories and I was particularly pleased to see the part that RAF Shawbury's Archive played in providing material for the Armed Forces Day celebrations this year. Fantastic images were projected onto St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury and set to music in a collaborative project funded by the Armed Forces Covenant to celebrate and commemorate Shropshire's military units.

This edition also features the 20th Anniversary celebrations of the Defence Helicopter Flying School, which was formed on 1 April 1997. It is nice to see that Station personnel are as active and busy as ever, supporting school visits in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM), local community projects at the Dogs' Trust and Grinshill Rescue Centre and even finding time to try new sports or fundraise for charity.

Happy Reading

COVER PICTURE:

The Royal Air Force Falcons Parachute Display Team drop in to RAF Shawbury at the Centenary Races.



www.facebook.com/RAFShawbury

General Service Knowledge – Information Fact No 15

By Cpl S JAR (Drill Instructor)

Actions to follow when the RAF Ensign is hoisted or lowered.

When hoisting or hauling down the Royal Air Force Ensign, a Non Commissioned Officer (NCO) is to be detailed for the duty. The NCO is to ensure that it is handled with becoming dignity and at no time is it to touch the ground.

Daily hoisting and hauling down

An officer, normally the Orderly Officer, is to attend the daily hoisting and hauling down of the RAF Ensign. On orders from the officer, the NCO is to sound the Still (one long blast of the whistle). On hearing this, all personnel out of doors are to stop movement, turn and face the direction of the flagstaff and stand at attention. Officers are to salute. A Warrant Officer who is Orderly Officer is to salute; other Warrant Officers do not. The NCO, without further orders, is then to start hoisting or lowering the ensign, as appropriate.

On completion, the NCO is to resume the position of attention, prior to securing the halyard. On orders from the officer, the NCO is to sound the Carry On (two blasts of the whistle) whereupon officers cease saluting and all personnel carry on with their duties.



GET SOME IN-formation

Date of Next Edition:
Submissions for Edition 5 to be received by 5th Sept 2017



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FOREWORD

by Wing Commander Paddy O'Kennedy MBE RAF, Officer Commanding Operations Wing

'Never say never again' is a phrase that comes to mind as I find myself back at RAF Shawbury after a quarter of a century.

The opportunity to write the foreword for this edition of the Aries Magazine could not have been more appropriately timed as exactly 25 years ago this week I left RAF Shawbury as a young (well relatively young) Flying Officer to begin my training on the Puma at RAF Odiham having graduated as a Navigator on No 1 Rotary Wing Course. Looking back on those times, my most enduring memories of Shawbury are the general 'feel' that the Station had and the warmth, good humour and 'can do' attitude that seemed to be ever-present.

Having been posted back here as Officer Commanding Operations Wing, which I am convinced is one of the best jobs in the RAF and for which I am truly honoured to be asked to do, I am happy to report that very little seems to have changed (including some of my old flying instructors!) The professionalism, work ethic and family 'feel' remain as strong as ever with the close working relationship between the military personnel, civil servants and contractors being particularly impressive and worthy of note. This 'Whole Force' relationship will undoubtedly be tested in the coming months as we face the inevitable challenges associated with the transition into an exciting new era of flying training with the

introduction of the Military Flying Training System (MFTS) which will be delivered with the help of our new colleagues from Ascent and Airbus. Although there will undoubtedly be challenges ahead, I am confident that, having already welcomed the first Junos and Jupiters onto the Station and seen the professionalism and enthusiasm with which Ascent and Airbus are approaching the project and the outstanding related work being achieved by the other areas on the Station, we will eventually have a flying training system that will be truly ground-breaking and will be the envy of every other military organisation in the world. But whilst we look forward to this new era we should not forget the outstanding service provided by the Cobham team over the last 20 years and the Squirrels and Griffins that will soon become Shawbury flying legends together with the Gazelles and Wessex aircraft of old.

Regarding flying operations and general daily activity on the base, I am aware that things are going to get busier over the next few months as we see more Juno and Jupiter helicopters arriving (and associated support personnel and contractors) whilst at the same time keeping the same numbers of Squirrels and Griffins until they start to draw down in the autumn. Whilst we don't anticipate



any significant safety issues, I would welcome any new safety initiatives, whether community or aviation related, that anybody may have to ensure that life and work at RAF Shawbury continues to be as safe and enjoyable as possible during the transition.

So to sum up, having served tours on all the main Helicopter bases in the UK and numerous operations and detachments abroad, I remain convinced that RAF Shawbury is one of the best kept secrets in the RAF and would strongly encourage you all not to let the secret out. As for the next 2 years, I'm planning to keep my head down and hope that my career manager forgets where I am and leaves me here for a lot longer... I can hear the Operations Wing personnel cheering as we speak.

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We are not sure when these pictures were taken but it appears to be a Families Day Event. Do you know when this was and what was going on?

Families Days of Old



Splash landing!



The Romans are coming!



Hot air balloons too

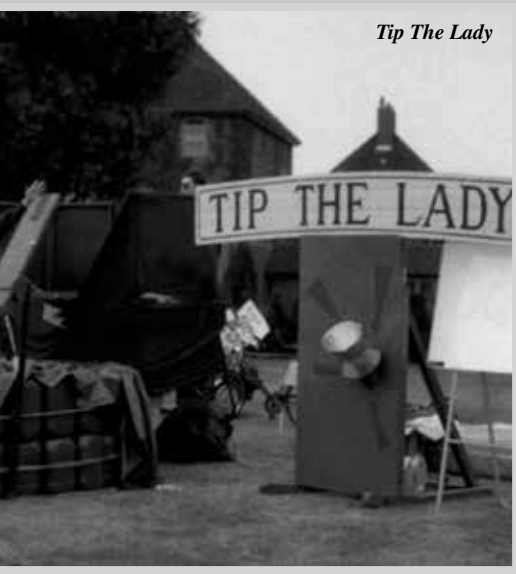


CATCS Chariot



Sharing the gnome's rod.

Tip The Lady



Chariots of Fire

188 Single Engine Rotary Wing (SERW) Community Project Grinshill Animal Rescue Centre

As part of 188 SERW Course's celebrations for completing 'First Solo' on type, the students visited Grinshill Animal Rescue Centre on Friday 23rd of June 2017 to complete a community engagement project.

Once there, the 14 members of 188 didn't waste any time in getting their paws dirty, with some electing to walk dogs in the local area, whilst others got to work repainting the office, and helping to clean out kennels. The volunteers at Grinshill have definitely got their hands full with over 25 dogs and cats to look after, so 188 Course were glad to have helped lighten the load and do some of the heavy lifting, as well as receiving a few canine cuddles along the way.

Grinshill is located just to the North West of Shawbury, and is on a regular flight path for the helicopters transiting in and out of Shawbury's Western gates. It was a welcome change for the staff at the centre to get to meet the trainee aircrew and be able to sit back and let someone else tug at the lead! With community relations firmly intact and some very happy dogs, the students very much enjoyed their visit and some were even tempted to return in the future to top up their animal care skills.

Lt Cdr Scott Hughes RN, CO 705 NAS, said of the project, 'I'm delighted that we can support the local community in so many different ways. The rescue centre is clearly very busy



and benefits from a helping hand (or 14)! The students have found the project very rewarding and it has helped them to gel together as a team as they ready themselves for their next stage of flying training here at the Defence Helicopter Flying Training School.'

Fg Off E Fitchett
188 SERW Course, DHFS, RAF Shawbury



It's a dog's life

for No 187 Single Engine Rotary Wing (SERW) Course



As per the DHFS tradition, the day following first solo celebrations is reserved for charity and community engagement. With that in mind Course 187 Single Engine Rotary Wing (SERW) of 660 AAC organized a morning of work at the local Dogs Trust Centre.

Despite the cloudy heads and even cloudier sky, all arrived promptly at the recently renovated centre to start the morning's work. A cup of tea and some biscuits later, we had been suitably briefed on our activities for the day. The first few hours would be dedicated to dog walking, followed by a quick break and finally finishing with odd jobs.

We were given a thorough brief on handling the dogs. The Dogs' Trust has up to 200 dogs at any one time, all with different personalities and backgrounds. Although we would not be interacting with some of the more volatile dogs, we were reminded to respect their individual personalities and needs. Each dog typically receives around 20 minutes of walking twice per day, so we were glad to walk two dogs each for at least 45 minutes.

Many of the dogs were particularly keen to sprint around the rain-soaked paddock located nearby, and as they had to be on a leash at all times, we worked up quite a sweat! Unlike us, the dogs clearly hadn't been out the night before!

Sadly we had to part ways with our new furry friends, and after another obligatory cup of tea the hard work began. The course was detailed off into several groups to complete mostly landscaping work around the large expanse of countryside that the Trust owned. Grass was cut, weeds were strimmed and, to Sergeant Matthews' delight, tractors were driven. One photograph later and the course were sent on their way, soggy and smellier (but only just) than before, but all were thoroughly pleased with their morning's efforts.

By Sub Lt Miller

A PHOTOGRAPHIC AVIATION REVIEW



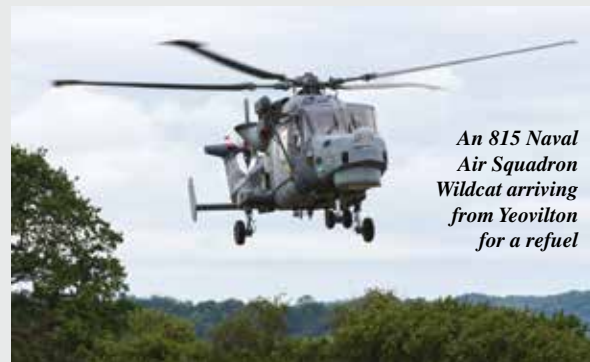
A 825 Naval Air Squadron Wildcat and an 829 Naval Air Squadron Merlin recently visited RAF Shawbury

We hope you enjoy this selection of photographs taken recently by the station photographers. If there are any photography enthusiasts out there who would like to contribute to the next issue of the magazine please send you images to ceroshawbury@gmail.com

Warrant Officer Nick Williams



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An 815 Naval Air Squadron Wildcat arriving from Yeovilton for a refuel



The 29(R) Squadron RAF Typhoon Display Aircraft lands at RAF Shawbury



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The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces National Memorial



RAF Shawbury

On 25th May, Training and Force Development (FD) Flight organised a FD event for Station personnel to go to the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA). Flying Officer Abbott and Sergeant Paula Spencer not only made the arrangements for a memorable and enjoyable day but also ordered lots of sunshine which added sparkle to the stunning setting of the NMA.

The personnel, who were able to attend the event, mainly from 705 Sqn Naval Air Squadron, were split into 2 groups and handed booklets which covered the Ethos, Core Values and Standards of all 3 Services. They were asked to consider how, with reflection of historical events, we manage and maintain the objectives set in AP 1 throughout the RAF today. They were also



The Armed Forces Memorial

At the goin

ry visit the National Memorial Arboretum

handed question sheets relevant to the memorials on the site which honed their communication, teamwork and navigational skills. Sergeant Spencer's group got off to a shaky start when the person with the map started walking in completely the wrong direction to one of the memorials; after some questioning and debate from the 'not so' supportive members of the group (it's an aircrew thing) the situation was soon rectified and the group ensured that future navigational decisions were a team effort. After a short detour, the other group found themselves hot footing to the furthest memorial 'The Christmas Truce'; open discussion throughout the morning adventure saw the group relate modern conflict with that of the past. The 'Shot at Dawn' memorial was probably the most striking with the Pegasus and



RAF Shawbury visit the National Memorial Arboretum researching the facts

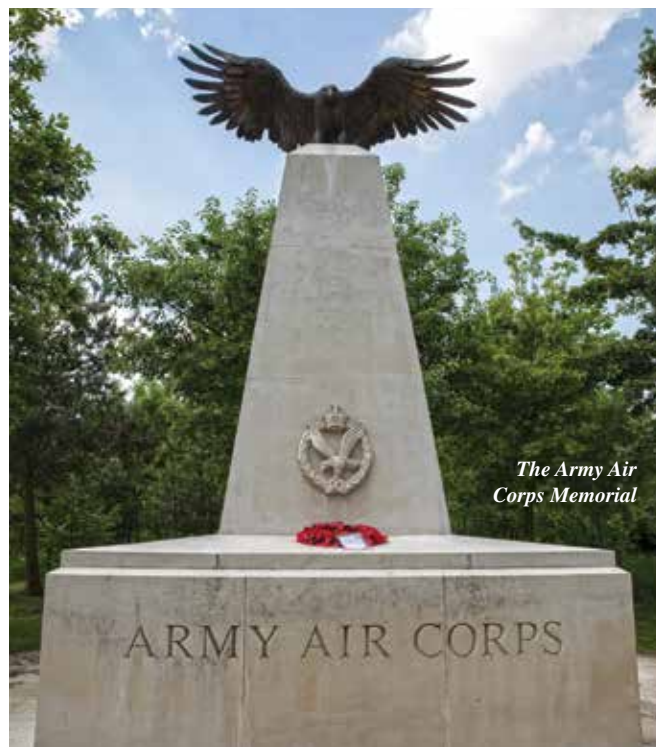
Paratrooper running a close second.

Do not worry if you missed this great opportunity on this occasion. Training and Force Development Flight will be organising regular events in the future.

Please look out for details of future events on the MOSS homepage, posters and leaflets around the station and on a mobile advertisement board which will predominantly be located at the bottom of the stairs in the Aries – while you

are there you could always go up to the Learning Centre where you will find Sergeant Spencer and Flying Officer Abbott who are always happy to discuss any ideas which you may have.

By Sergeant Paula Spencer



The Army Air Corps Memorial

g down of the sun, we will remember them

The Annual Learning Centre Open Day

The Station Commander was first on hand to greet and thank the Learning Providers that had kindly agreed to support our Learning Centre Open Day on Thursday 15th July.

LEARNING PROVIDERS:

It is essential that that we maintain our links with Universities, Colleges and Learning Providers to keep abreast of the changes of educational development and funding opportunities in order that all of our people within the RAF Shawbury Community are offered the chance to maximise their Personal Development potential. 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.

DEPENDANTS:

Traditionally, we have had limited success in sourcing development opportunities for dependants as funding is always a barrier. However, we have recently capitalised on our relationship with Royal British Legion and the LifeWorks Families Programme; this programme offers a course to support military spouses and partners who want to find work or develop a new career. Details of the course can be obtained from the HIVE or the Learning Centre staff.

HELP US TO HELP YOU:

I was slightly disappointed in the interest shown this year although those that did attend found it hugely beneficial. On that note, I would like to take this opportunity to ask you whether we are aiming our focus in the correct area; what courses would you like to be held locally, what are your expectations and how can the Learning Centre improve its service to you?

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Please sign up to the Learning Centre RSS feed on MOSS where all initiatives/ opportunities are available along with links to mandated training, relevant forms and other useful websites or just call in to see a member of staff.

Finally, I would 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 our Open Day.

By Mrs Julie Chadburn,
OC Personal Development Flight



The Station Commander, Group Captain Chuck Norris meets the Chester University Staff



Station Commander, Group Captain Chuck Norris meets the DBS Civilian Apprenticeship team



Group Captain Chuck Norris thanking the attendees.

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Dipping My Toes into the World of Rowing

During and since graduating from the PTI course in August 2016, I had realised from relentless physical training sessions that the rowing machine was a horrible piece of equipment requiring everything from the body. However, I found that my height and fitness levels were such that I was managing to get some decent times once I got up to speed!

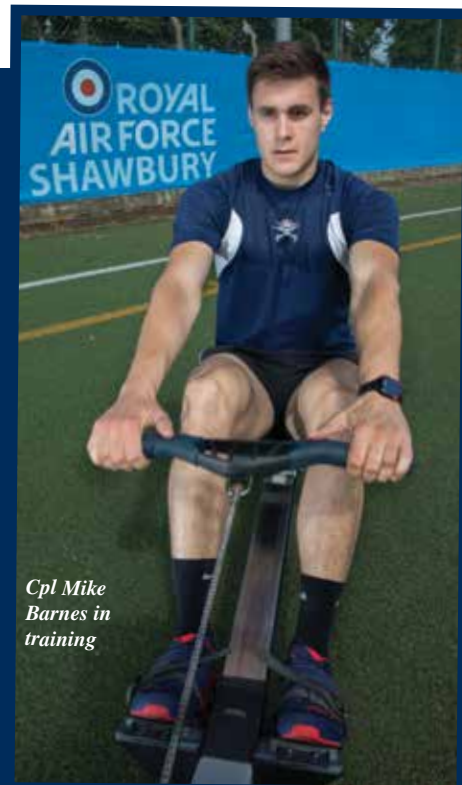
Having discovered that I may be good at this sport in early March 2017, I decided to test myself against the rowing community to see if the times and splits I was achieving could be competitive. Having been unable to find a local level event I eventually decided to go the whole hog and entered the Midlands Indoor Rowing Championships which took place in April 2017.

On the day it became apparent that this was no laughing matter. Lots of

Concept 2 rowing machines lined up and rigged to leader boards with commentary and roars from supporters around the hall. After years of competing at a national level in cycling events I had never felt as nervous as this; to focus on the race 30 minutes before the start as I was warming up alongside my fellow competitors my headphones went on drowning out all other noises and distractions focusing me on the challenge ahead.

Side by side we all sat waiting for the start horn to release us on to 2 kilometres of pain and suffering. From the start I opted for a steady build up in pace and tried not to get carried away by chasing for the lead immediately. At the 250 metres point I found myself edging into the lead; it was now a game of speed maintenance for the next 1000 metres. By the half-way point I had established a good lead and as I pushed into the final 500 metres my lead was down to just less than 50 metres. Seeing this on the screens I hammered the final metres with an aim of setting my best ever personal best (PB) for the 2 kilometre distance.

My final time for the race was 6.14.7 minutes beating my previous PB by over 6 seconds; my average 500m splits were 1.33.7 minutes which I was very happy with. I was even more surprised when I found that I had not only beaten my PB but also everyone else in the race and was declared the event champion. So what has this



Cpl Mike Barnes in training

inspired me to do since winning this tournament?

Having rowed so well indoors I was approached at the event and told I should get on the water and try out at a rowing club. I am now in training with the Pengewern Boat Club our local Shrewsbury club located opposite the Quarry Park. This is a whole new experience for me, on an indoor rower you just have to move backwards and forwards pulling a fixed imaginary oar on a chain; on a boat you have either a single oar or two separate oars in each hand and have to twist and roll the oars up as you move back and fro to cut through the water. This tied in with the fact that I'm not rowing on my own and in a team of 4 means I have to consider how the others row and take in to account their fitness levels and speed. All of these new skills and techniques are nowhere near as easy as it looks when you see boats gliding up and down the river.

Undertaking both on water and dry land training is enabling me to build up my skills and strengths with an overall aim of competing at the British Indoor Rowing Championships in December 2017; this will be an ideal opportunity to see how competitive I am at National Level and how much training I will need to get up to this level of competitive rowing. Wish me luck I think I may need it!

**By Corporal Mike Barnes,
Physical Training Instructor**



Mike Barnes awaits the starting horn blast



Cpl Mike Barnes Wins by 6 seconds.tif

Swinger Club Longest Day Golf Challenge

Greetings! Hopefully many of you will remember the challenge from the last edition of the Aries magazine that Flt Lt's Greg Pusey, Gav Leitch and Mike Plank as well as Cobham instructor Tony Kinchley all from the School of Air Operations Control (SAOC), set themselves by taking part in the Macmillan Longest Day Golf Challenge on the 22nd June.

This was a very personal challenge that certainly tested everyone, both physically and mentally, with emotions and bodies very much threadbare by the end. Whether through strength of character, sheer will power and camaraderie, or the fact that there was always the constant threat of being bantered mercilessly if you gave up, we are extremely pleased to announce that all four of us completed the challenge in roughly one piece (everyone's feet were suffering!).

Like all good plans that do not survive first contact, ours had to adapt and overcome the first hurdle that was our start time. Our original idea to kick off at 0600 seemed a little feeble given the fact that we would have already burnt through two precious hours of daylight by that point, so we decided to meet up at the uninviting hour of 0430. Upon arrival at Hawkstone Park, we got together to have a strong coffee and a breakfast bar before heading bleary eyed to the first tee a little before 0500 on what was a most stunning morning. The golf course itself was amazing and the sight of the sweeping dogleg left on the first, invited most of us to hook it off to the right with a solid power slice into the more challenging parts of the course to play your ball from. This was very much the theme of all 72 holes,

but then why make it easy for yourself, right? The rough was as thick as Joey Essex in some parts, and the water hazards as unforgiving as Judge Judy. Because of the hot weather, the bunkers had been baked into a solid mass not too dissimilar in texture to concrete. This made for some interesting club choices when trying to play out of them with varying levels of success. After dodging the automatic sprinkler system at around 0600, everything seemed to soften up a touch which did not really help in all honesty.

We managed to finish the first round in a little over two hours instead of the expected four, which was a grand effort but not surprising considering we were nearly running most of it. Because of this we went pretty much straight into our second round after a quick water break and stock check of balls to see if we had enough to finish the next round. Believe it when we say the course is a great challenge if you are good at golf and just expensive when you are not! Now that we had all got a practice round under our belts, some much better golf was being played. Tony had an absolute blinder, shooting a great score of a little over 80. Apparently speed golf suited him better than the rest of us. That said, we all played really well and generally improved with each round which meant some of us actually didn't lose balls so frequently and we forgot what we were even playing with. The second round very much mirrored the first and again we finished in a great time of just over 2hrs 30mins. We only ran 12 of the 18 holes that time.

Come the end of the second round we all needed a slightly longer break. Our feet had really started to take the strain and became sensitive and hot spots started to develop. We allowed ourselves 20 minutes to air our feet,

change a few clothes and take on board some supplies before heading off once again to the first tee for what was going to certainly be a more social and leisurely round. The weather also turned for periods from a warm sunny day, to a cloudy and wet one. The wind also kicked up for a period which made the conditions particularly grim. We soldiered on however, making the most of the chance to challenge ourselves and earn the support that we had so generously been given. The final round was of course the toughest. By this point everyone had been up for nearly 10 hours, had not eaten much at all, were weather beaten and had bodies that constantly reminded them that this was a silly idea with every step and swing. Tempers really started to flare when bad shots were hit and putting became more of a nuisance than a relief as frustration had firmly set in. A sense of duty to the cause, the team and to oneself, and of course the support everyone gave, helped to ensure we all came through that final round with as many clubs in the bag as we left with, and we didn't add to any piles of forgotten irons at the bottom of the many lakes.

The day was gruelling, certainly more so than can be articulated in this article. We can honestly say that it was a challenge worthy of the name, and tested every part of our character and resilience. What an absolutely fantastic day it was however and we are so pleased and thankful for all the backing we received.

We expect to make our target of £500 with the last few donations that have been pledged coming in later this month. We would all just like to take this chance to thank Hawkstone Park for hosting us, and to everyone who has made living with cancer that little bit easier for someone. Until next time,

Swinger Club Team



WEIGHTING FOR MY LIFTS!

At some point, you've probably seen a dude who was built like a gorilla with a beard, walk into the gym; he then loaded up a barbell with all the 20kg plates and when lifted, the steel bar was literally bending, and the shockwaves of awesomeness drifted across the gym as he produced some of the most impressive squats you've ever seen. This is what I experienced last year! It was then that I decided I needed a change in my fitness regime, a chance to better myself, an opportunity to experience just how far I could push my body. So, I delved into the sport of powerlifting. Since then I have celebrated with highs by smashing personal best (PB's) lifts and plummeted with lows, feeling like I can't achieve beyond what I thought I was capable of. This is my story from complete rookie to competing in the RAF Novice powerlifting championships and the RAF powerlifting championships.

What is powerlifting you say? Basically, it is an individual sport in which competitors attempt to lift as much weight as possible from 3 attempts in the squat, bench press, and deadlift with the total weight lifted from all 3 elements making your score. Each lifter is placed into a specific division and classified by several variables including weight class, age group, and experience level. I could literally go on blabbering as the sport really interests me. BUT!!! I don't want to bore you too much, let's move on to how I prepared myself!

A lot of the training was very similar to what I already knew, lifting heavy without killing myself. To prevent me "killing myself", I had to research and implement the correct training techniques for the three main lifts and incorporate



them into my daily training sessions. The main programme I followed was the 531 Jim Wendler's powerlifting system. This is a 3-day split programme focusing on all 3 lifts whilst incorporating lifts that I use to also benefit the main 3. For example; legs Monday, chest Wednesday and Deadlift Fridays. Tuesday and Thursday I would work on shoulders and arms. What about my core? I never work on my core as an individual workout/exercise. The reason for this is that when performing the 3 main lifts, and essential part of the lift is to engage your core and posterior chain to support your body. Just training in these lifts alone is a naturally an excellent abs session. The day after my squats and deadlifts, my abs have DOMS. Don't waste your time on the sit ups try these lifts!

I'm a sucker for chocolate and the cold fizz of a drink, so my diet is pretty hard to maintain. But from Monday – Friday I tend to be stricter and I intentionally keep it boring but easy. Breakfast is usually rolled oats and for a mid-morning snack I indulge on almonds, 1 banana and 3 eggs. Straight after my gym session my lunch is usually chicken and rice or couscous. My afternoon snack is yet more almonds and an apple. When it comes to my evening meal, I daren't argue with my partner as our menu choice is of her choosing... but it tends to be protein and veg. SIMPLE! This sort of eating habit keeps my energy levels up and proves to work when I hit my PBs. However, over the weekend I become normal and eat regular food such as pizzas and cheat meals.

My first ever powerlifting meet was on 4th April. It was the RAF Novice Powerlifting competition held at RAF Cosford. It was a two day event where approximately 50 male and female novice competitors had a day of coaching by the professionals from the RAF/Army, followed by a day of competing. WHAT AN EVENT! I learnt so much in such a short period of time. Better ways and techniques to improve my lifting abilities.



*Bench
press
practice*



Shane takes the strain



Shane on the bar

At 0700 am on the second day, it was weigh in time. Stripped to my boxers, conscious the little material I was wearing would add that extra lb. phewwww, 71kgs! Putting me comfortably into the 75kg weight class. The feeling I had when standing on that platform, behind the barbell, in front of the crowd of spectators and competitors was just fulfilling. I was Scared! Excited! READY!

After a hard and long day of competing I managed to smash my PB in both the squat and deadlift; this meant that I had managed to achieve 11th place over all weight categories and 1st in my own weight class. These results have given me the confidence to progress in the sport. I am training really hard to be ready for the RAF Powerlifting Championships on the 28th June. My aim is to try to add an additional 5kg to each of my personal best of all 3 lift categories.

So this was it the waiting was over and the day of the RAF Powerlifting Championships was finally here. The total number of competitors was 75 and my nerves were all over the shop. Weigh in was successful and considering that I had just finished three weeks leave, I still managed to weigh in at 71.3kgs putting me comfortably in the middle of my category. Now that was over I could boost my protein packed breakfast, getting that vital source of energy. Before each lift, I had a 30 minute warning to warm up. This was my time to focus and I de-loaded the bar, warmed up and listened to heavy rock music. The first element of lifting was the Chest press, followed by Squat and Deadlift. When warming up for the chest press, one of the more experienced power lifters who compete for the RAF gave me a few tips to improve on my bench technique. Basically I was advised to push against the platform while I set up my arch; this helped push my shoulders into the bench. I risked it and decided to change my technique for my first lift. When I was called to the platform I was focused and ready to go - I looked at the judge, gave him the nod and got myself set and Boom! It was over in seconds. My first lift completed and

I felt comfortable lifting an easy 100kgs. I had decided that my plan was to raise the weight by 5kgs on each lift. Once everybody in my group went through, I was back on the platform and my second lift was moments away. Second lift done! 105kgs. Come the 3rd lift my shoulders slipped on the bench, making me fail the lift of 110kg. Note to myself for future lifts I should chalk up more!

The Squat and Deadlift was basically the same ritual. 30 minute warm up then lifting 3 attempts on each element. Unfortunately I did not manage to PB or match my best lift... in hindsight a 3 week holiday before a big competitions wasn't the best preparation! Even with this I still managed to lift well, getting 145kg on squat and 180kg on deadlift.

Once finished, the wait for the judges to tally up the scores was nerve racking! I knew I hadn't managed to place high enough for a podium finish; especially with the amount of talented athletes that the RAF has in the sport. But I was keen to see where I sat within the ranks of RAF powerlifting cadre. My final placing was 26th overall and 4th place in my weight category. WHAT AN AMAZING RESULT and one I was extremely happy with. So as a relative newcomer to the sport who has been in training for less than 12 months I stand a good chance improving and producing better results in my next competition. This whole experience has given me a passion to improve my skills in powerlifting, and I intend to keep entering competitions and improving every time I compete. In the future I would love to become a qualified powerlifting coach to both improve my own abilities and help others by starting an RAF Shawbury Powerlifting Club.

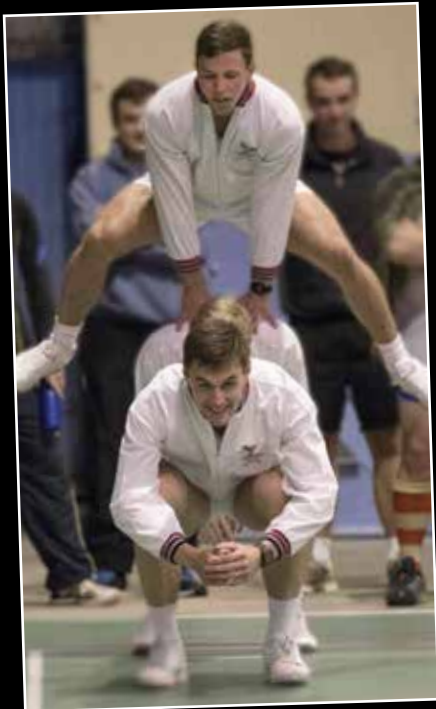
Roll on October 18th for the RAF Powerlifting Push and Pull competition!

By SAC Shane Ridley – RAF Medic

A Joint JATCC Team Effort Wins CO's Cup Event for SAOC

The latest round of the CO's Cup was held on Thursday 29th June, with events themed on an Old School Sports Day. There were a wide range of challenges such as egg and spoon, leapfrog, skipping and wheelbarrow races along with many more.

Going for the Piggy Back win



PTI's showing them how to leap frog

JATCC 419 and 420 joined forces to create SAOC B, which proved to be a formidable team. In each event, only 6 members of the squad could participate with SAOC B team starting off on the sprint challenge. All members of the team had a real energy about them and got off to a flying start. As the events unfolded, SAOC B proved to be one of the teams to beat and by the end they were in with a real chance of winning.

At the end of the competition, nobody knew who had won. SAOC B waited with anticipation as the results were read out in reverse order. SAOC B proved too good for the other teams and were announced as the winners, taking home the trophy.

Sgt David Thompson, as the team captain, collected the award on behalf of a jubilant SAOC B team.

By Sgt Sam Lock



Sacks of enthusiasm



Having fun 3-legged style



Not quite how the PTI's demonstrated it!



Great effort in the wheelbarrow race

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Pyrenees CHALLENGE

This June saw 9 members of RAF Shawbury's Cycling Club travel to the Pyrenees for 6 days of challenging riding in the Ariège region of the Pyrenees. The ultimate challenge was to take part in a locally run event to ride Stage 13 of this year's upcoming Tour de France but some of the days preceding proved an even greater challenge.

We arrived mid-afternoon to a disappointingly rainy Toulouse having departed an uncharacteristically dry Manchester early that morning. On arriving at our accommodation near St Jean de Verge the rain had reached new heights. Undeterred, though somewhat unenthusiastic,

we donned our cycling kit and set out on a short ride to test and adjust our rental bikes. Drenched within the first few miles the situation could only improve and indeed the sun eventual broke through to dry off at least one layer before we made it back. Thanks to the 0300 wheels from Shawbury, the first night was a quiet one with early nights all round. Mike, our British guide who ran the accommodation, had promised us a 55 mile

route for the following day so plenty of rest was required.

Our first morning dawned with the first of many renditions of 'what Barnsey said his sleep last night' from his amused roommates as we all jostled for the Nutella (other chocolate and hazelnut spreads are available). These night time mutterings ranged from nonsense to a declaration of 'hating effort' which from an RAF Physical Training Instructor is surely a dismissible comment. As we set out, fully fuelled, the forecast for more rain did not come to fruition and we were treated to sunshine all day which caught out a few through lack of sun protection- the signature 'cycling tans' were well underway by tea-time. Our first full day on the bikes took us on a scenic route through the foot hills of the Pyrenees so we were not challenged by any 'real climbs'- those would come later. The rolling

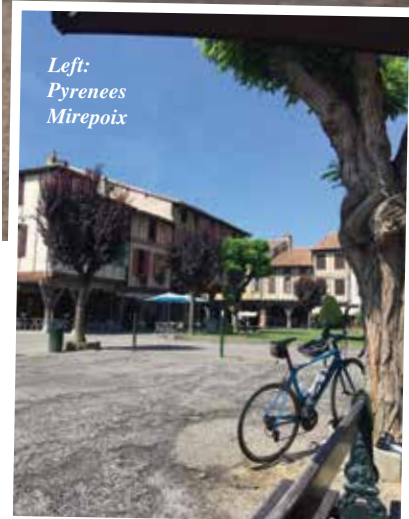


Pyrenees view of Plateau de Beille

ARIEGE



Team photo



*Left:
Pyrenees
Mirepoix*

countryside was more reminiscent of Shropshire and it did not hint at the mountains that would follow. The highlight of the route was riding through the caves and gorge of Le Mas-D'Azil. The route gave us the ideal terrain to practice our group riding skills as it became evident quickly that there were many varying conventions individuals had picked up from different clubs over the years. It was finally agreed (begrudgingly by some) that to communicate vehicles approaching we would use car up (behind) and car down (ahead) but this proceeded with varying amounts of success throughout the week. Similarly, those new to chain ganging (a way of group riding which rotates the lead rider so everyone gets their fair share of effort on the front) seemed to struggle with the term and it morphed from

chain ganging to chain linking to daisy chaining. In truth this was more of a deliberate error as it caused obvious irritation to veteran rider Phil Llewellyn, much to everyone's amusement.

Our second day of riding, was perhaps the most challenging of the week. It was this day we tackled the classic Tour de France climb of Plateau de Beille. The approach to the mountain was fairly flat giving us an easy warm up to the first coffee stop but half the group then decided to tackle a short but steep climb which did little to prepare the legs for the big climb. This climb, approximately 5 miles long, started gradual but ramped up for the final 3 miles just as the sun started beating down. Hot and aching we reached the top to be greeted by the welcome sight of a water trough and drinking fountain. It was all we could do to not get in it! A very steep and technical descent brought us back to the village of Les Cabannes where the climb to Plateau de Beille would begin. A quick ice cream to refuel and we were off. It was a punishing climb of 9.5 miles, two thirds of which had gradients averaging 9% and rarely dropping below 7%.

With little relief during this section of the climb it challenged even the most seasoned riders and the midday sun did not help the situation. For SqN Ldr Aide Vine, this was his first significant mountain pass ridden and what a baptism of fire! If you can survive the first two thirds of the climb then relief eventually comes as the gradient begins to lessen in the final few miles and of course the air cools as you get higher. For those who managed to look up, through the sweat and suffering, the views were spectacular and the aim of the obligatory selfie by the 'Plateau de Beille' sign at the top was calling. For those who enjoy descents, apparently this was a good one, for me I rode the breaks all the way down and finally made it back to the café with my arms, neck and shoulders seized up. A gentle ride back to St Jean de Verge was in order followed by a long stretching session that frequently broke down into hysteria as cramp seized and contorted various members of the group.

The next day was something of a 'recovery ride' following the challenge of Plateau de Beille and we were back into the foothills for another

Pyrenees CHALLENGE ARIEGE

pleasant and undulating day of riding. With somewhat uncooperative legs we set off but soon warmed up again. This ride took us to the beautiful medieval town of Mirepoix where some of the guys treated themselves to the very decadent elevenses of a coffee with a selection of French patisseries. With 56 miles behind us we made it back to our accommodation to rest and refuel and consider the plan for the next day's challenge.

The plan was to join in with a local event in which you could ride the planned Stage 13 of this year's Tour de France. The event organisers would support the riders at the top of each of the 3 cols with food and drink and a gathering at the finish line in Foix. This inclusive event also enabled participants to dip in and out of the race completed segments rather than the whole stage depending on levels of ability. This worked in our favour as the weather forecast for the day posed some safety issues to consider as we chatted through the plan the previous evening. The route, which some of you may have seen the pros ride at the time of reading this article, is 101km with 3 cols, 2 of which are incredibly challenging in terms of gradient. With that comes 3 very technical descents. A forecast for heavy rain, low cloud and cooler temperatures posed a number of issues, the most concerning of which were descents on wet roads and the exposure of the riders. You will have seen in this year's Tour what a real danger that is



10mile climb before turning around to ride to the finish in Foix. Upon reaching the top of the climb we were greeted by a selection of French cheeses, pastries and charcuterie; coffee and even wine (not that we dared partake in a tipples with the descent to follow). A very French spread, the likes of not seen at any race in the UK! As predicted we were cold and soaked which made for a very cautious descent. There was a café midway down in which we tried to regain feeling in our hands with hot chocolates, but it did little to warm us up and eventually we had to don our wet jackets and helmets again and tackle the final section of the descent, dreaming of hot showers. Very wet and cold we eventually made it back safely, knowing we had made the right decision to not ride the full stage.

with many crashing out on wet descents, not least GBs very own Geraint Thomas on the descent of Col de la Biche during Stage 9. With the tops of the cols due to be in cloud the riders would be cool in the climb and then wet and very cold on the descents. Beyond the obvious issues with this, we also had to consider how much control we would have over our bikes with numb hands, arms and feet. Taking everything into account the decision was made to ride the reverse of the Col de Pegueur meeting the race at the top of this 1375m col following a

With the big challenges of the week behind us, our final day in the saddle was a very scenic 44 miles back in the foot hills to warm down before our flight home. This culminated a rewarding week of cycling, challenging us physically and honing our group riding skills. Thanks goes to the incredible hospitality of RhinoVelo Pyrenees who looked after us royally and guided us on 6 spectacular routes showing plenty of what the Pyrenees has to offer.

Flt Lt Charlie Gawne



RELATIONSHIP SUPPORT FOR THE RAF



RAF life is like no other. Separation, frequent moves and long tours can take their toll on families and relationships.

The RAF Benevolent Fund recognises that RAF couples face unique pressures. That's why we're working with Relate to provide a little extra support to help serving families through difficult times.

Our relationship support now includes:

- 📍 A free online Building Stronger Families course
- 📍 Six free counselling sessions with a Relate counsellor
- 📍 Subsidised mediation sessions with an approved provider near you

📍 For more information visit www.relate.org.uk/raf

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DRONES

Summer is in full swing and it's great to be able to be outside enjoying the sunshine. It's also perfect weather for flying aircraft big and small, both manned and unmanned. This means our airspace is busy this time of year. Of course there is room for everybody provided they do so in a safe manner.

Nobody at RAF Shawbury is against the use of drones and we positively encourage their use as some of the images that are produced are exceptional and they are a great hobby. They could also spark an interest that becomes a profession either in the Services or as a professional operator. But we also encourage safe operation and consideration for other flyers and respect for members of the public and their property.

The very recent well publicised reckless drone flying at Gatwick Airport made the national news and resulted in numerous airliners having to divert to another airport. This comes at a great cost to the airlines and inconveniences both the crews and passengers on not only the diverted aircraft but also the numerous other aircraft delayed due to this action. But over and above the cost and time penalties, the overwhelming concern is one of safety.

The possible ramifications of an aircraft hitting a drone are potentially catastrophic. Yes, aircraft hit birds and seem to carry on regardless as birds are organic and tend to break up entirely on impact and even large birds such as Buzzard's weigh less than 1.5 Kg's; so what is the issue with



drones? A drone can be as big as 20 kgs and is made up of hard man-made materials, metal and a lithium battery. They will cause a lot more damage to an aircraft and will endanger the lives of those on board as well as those under the flightpath.

So why are we concerned here at RAF Shawbury? As part of our essential training to prepare our crews for their role in protecting our country, our aircraft generally fly around at low level. This increases the likelihood of a mid-air collision between a drone and one of our aircraft. Earlier this year one of our crews came within 100 feet of a large drone being flown recklessly on the edge of our airfield. This is a complete no-no and is actually illegal. The local civilian

FLYING MILESTONES

A year in the air during 35 years of global flying

Gaining his 'Wings' on 9th September 1981, Major Rod Tracy has served as aircrew for 35 years on a myriad of tours across the globe.

Having conducted rotary training on the Bell 47 G4A (Sioux), Rod's flying career with the Army Air Corps began on 662 Squadron, 2 Regiment Army Air Corps (AAC), based in Munster and Soest in Germany. Following an exchange tour with the Swiss Army, flying the Alouette III, he moved to Northern Ireland as a Lynx Flight Commander. He graduated from the Central Flying School (Helicopters) (CFS(H)) as a Qualified Helicopter Instructor (QHI) in 1986. A tour with 671 Squadron AAC followed, and on promotion to Major, he was posted to Cyprus as Officer Commanding (OC) 16 Flight AAC, based at Dhekelia in Cyprus. Later, Rod was OC 655 (The Scottish Horse) Squadron AAC, supporting operations throughout Northern Ireland; for this he was

awarded a Mention in Dispatches. He served on a number of ground tours including Operation GRAPPLE based in Vitez, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Chief Operations Officer to the United Nations in Sierra Leone. During his time at RAF Shawbury, he commanded 660 Squadron AAC and instructed on CFS(H) and the Defence Helicopter Flying School (DHFS) Standards Squadron. Rod has had an extraordinary, career in a variety of roles, amassing his one year airborne (8760 hours; officially certified by Carol in stats). Officer Commanding DHFS, Commander (RN) Doubleday, congratulated Rod on this incredible milestone and made comment to those gathered that it was a flying career everyone should aspire to - Rod was just happy to have survived!

By Lt Cdr Ian Oakes

By Squadron Leader Gary James, Station Flight Safety Officer

police only just missed catching the drone operator.

Fortunately not all drone operators are so reckless and fly within the guidelines of the CAA Drone Code (<http://dronesafe.uk>). One such chap is Mr David Bird from Bird's Eye Solutions who is a professional drone pilot and qualified drone instructor and examiner; he teaches new drone pilots the art of drone flying and the best practice. In early July of this year, Mr Bird was in the middle of a practical class in the grounds of Shrewsbury Town Football Club on the southern edge of the town where he was teaching students how to fly in the stadium and the fields surrounding it. One of RAF Shawbury's Griffin helicopters was passing by and proceeded to make a steady approach to the same area as a precaution due to a minor issue with the aircraft. Thanks to Mr Bird's excellent tuition, the trainee drone operators had noticed our aircraft flying towards them at low level and had landed their drones long before the helicopter reached the field. They waited until the Griffin had fully shut down and, having confirmed that it was permitted with the crew they got airborne again to shot some rather good images as you can see from the stills on this page. This is a great example of best practice and is exactly the kind of cooperation we like.

Lots of drone operators and model aircraft clubs will notify RAF Shawbury of any activity and location on 01939 250351 ext 7227 in advance so we can warn the crews. We will then endeavour to stay clear of that area to ensure there is no chance of a mid-air collision. This hopefully illustrates that we do not believe it is our airspace but we can all work together.



*Drones come in all shapes and sizes -
This is without its batteries*

If you are thinking about using a drone then we have some advice which you may find useful:

- Have Fun! Flying in whatever form is a great activity when performed safely.
- Follow the guidelines laid down in the CAA Drone Code (<http://dronesafe.uk>) to avoid any potential illegal activity.
- Download the 'Drone Assist' app from the National Air Traffic Service (NATS). There is a link on the CAA Dronesafe site (<http://dronesafe.uk>).
- Ask RAF Shawbury's Flight Safety Officer (01939 250351 ext 6666) for a copy of the RAF Shawbury Drone Flying Leaflet so you can see where aerial activity is concentrated in Shropshire.
- Don't forget that our helicopters as well as those of the Police and the Air Ambulances can be anywhere at any time so please maintain a good lookout and act accordingly.
- Consider joining a model aircraft club or a professional drone training company for the best possible training.
- Have a great summer and please feel free to send in any great images you get from your drones to SHY-OPSSFSO@mod.uk. If we get enough we may print them in a future edition of this magazine!



A Former Pupil Surprises Current Students

Pupils and staff were thrilled when an old boy from the School, Flt Lt Jonathan Owen, a Qualified Helicopter Instructor from 705 Naval Air Squadron, landed his Squirrel helicopter on the Langley Prep School's playing fields recently during a training sortie. The visit was in support of Science Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM), an initiative to encourage more children to take an interest in these subjects which might lead to a future career.

The visit was witnessed with much excitement by children in Pre-Prep and Prep. Flt Lt Owen was a pupil at the School, leaving in 1993 with a scholarship to Framlingham College. Head of History, Mr Newton, remembers Flt Lt Owen as a "bright boy who was very good at history." Flt Lt Owen explained to the pupils that Maths and Science are crucial subjects for a helicopter pilot and encouraged them to work hard at school.

The children asked lots of interesting questions about the helicopter and being a pilot. "How does a helicopter get into the air?" (the rotor blades are wings and create lift). "How much did the helicopter cost?" (£3 million). He showed his eager audience the engine, his helmet with microphone, vest and logbook. Flt Lt Owen really engaged the children and was very happy to answer lots of questions and said: "I hope my visit encourages some of the children to study the key STEM subjects; you never know they may become a pilot or engineer in the future".

By Langley Prep School



Flt Lt Owen explains how a helicopter works



Pupils excitedly wave a welcome



Flt Lt Owen chats with pupils



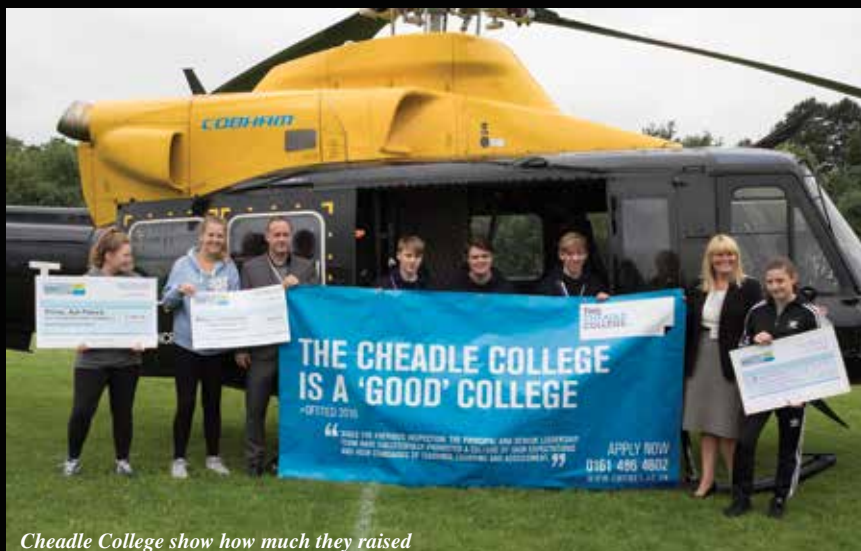
Old pupil surprised pupils

Sixty (R) Squadron drop in to say *thank you!*

A Griffin helicopter, from Sixty (R) Squadron dropped in to three colleges in the North West on Wednesday 5th July. The crew were training in the area when they visited Priestley College (Warrington), Manchester Academy and Cheadle College.

The crew were able to thank students and staff who fundraised last year for the annual RAF Santa Drop at Alder Hey Children's Hospital and The Royal Manchester Children's Hospital.

For the past 12 years, RAF staff from the Armed Forces Careers Office



Cheadle College show how much they raised

(AFCO) and colleges from the North West have carried out fundraising events in order to raise money for the Christmas Santa Drop. This normally involves Santa dropping in via Helicopter with presents for the sick children! Last year, fundraising activities included

a sponsored 13.5 mile walk, a gym'a'thon, a sponsored sit at Blackpool Football Club and a sponsored bike ride to Russia.

Students managed to raise a fantastic £4000.

School visits are part of the RAF's commitment to supporting Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) in Schools and



Priestley College Students see what makes a Griffin fly

Colleges. The crew enjoyed meeting the children and talking to them about how these subjects can lead to an exciting career.

Sgt Rachel Collier
Outreach Team
Armed Forces Careers Office
Liverpool



Manchester Academy pupils keen to ask questions



Priestley College students meet the 60 Sqn crew

GOLF OPEN 2017

On 22nd June 17, 22 budding golfers took to the fairways of Hawkstone for the annual DHFS Open. Representatives from DHFS Squadrons 660, 60, 202 and Standards along with the HQ & friends team limbered up outside the clubhouse. It was a motley crew taking in a vast swathe of ranks and golfing styles. Lieutenant Sharrott was also sporting an injured foot but still managed to make it out with the help of a buggy – top effort!



The day started as standard with bacon baps and coffee to get the players fired up.

Morning competition - 9-hole Texas Scramble on the old Hawkstone course.

For the uninitiated, Texas Scramble is where everyone tees off and the team take the best ball out of their group. The group all play from that position with their balls and repeat this process until the ball is holed. With more shots from the same place a very competitive score can be achieved.

Play started unusually on the 10th, a 5 minute walk across the course but not following any holes/known route. The first group was led by Jim Porter, 60 Sqn's Training Officer and advanced navigation expert, who was heard to say "follow me lads, I know the way." Fifteen minutes later, he and his trusty followers arrived out of breath on the 10th to get the competition underway! "I just wanted to get the lie of the course before we began", was one of the excuses.

The weather held for the most part and after the slow start it was the first group comprising of Jim 'the navigator' Porter, Andy Leonard and Tony Grogan who clinched the title. Their excellent winning score of a net 29 narrowly beat the second place team who had 31 points and the third place team were one point behind on 32 points. As everyone knows, golf is a demanding physical sport and as such soup and a sandwich lunch were required to fortify the players before the individual competition in the afternoon.

Afternoon competition - 18-hole individual round on the Championship course.

This course is completely different compared to the Old Hawkstone course. It consists of a parkland front 9 with demanding back 9 around a number of lakes. Alongside the individual prize there was a team prize for the best 3 scores from each section, 2's competition, longest drive, nearest the pin and nearest the pin in 2 shots.

Play progressed steadily as we went round with the teams occasionally meeting up on the course for some updates as to progress (as players hit into the adjoining fairway). Refreshments were laid on by the organisers at the 10th (a budget can of fortified apple juice). Now depending on the player this was either welcomed or spurned. Mostly all took the charity though and it must be said that, for some, this was a welcome relief from the frustrations of the course. Some, who were fairing a little better, saw their games take an unfortunate tumble as the carefree abandon of their following shots got them in trouble. There is a reason why professionals do not do this on tour...

Some noticeable play was recorded on the course:

Jim 'the navigator' Porter was the only player to record his name on the par 3 10th nearest the pin as nobody else managed to plant the ball on the green!



9-hole Texas Scramble Winners Jim Porter, Andy Leonard and Tony Grogan



The tension mounts waiting to see who wins the longest drive



Winner of the Singles Competition Flt Lt Josh Ryznar from 202 Squadron at RAF Valley

After a underwhelming tee off on the par 3 17th, Ray 'Officers' Mess Phillips chipped in on the 17th to get involved in the 2's competition.

Things rounded off nicely with the longest drive on the 18th up the hill towards the expectant crowd on the balcony. As is the teaching from Cranwell, you must lead from the front so I crushed one up the middle (1 inch from the rough) to stake my case for the longest drive. I was hugely confident for approximately 3 minutes until from the next group, Officer Commanding DHFS - Steve Doubleday, managed to thin a daisy cutter about 283.45 yards uphill?!?! Humbly he then waxed lyrical for the next 30 minutes about how far he had driven his ball and offered tips for all those who would listen.

At this point the golfing gods looking down frowned upon the blatant display of 19th hole exaggeration, and so sanctioned some golfing justice. Overlooking the finale, the finishers watched the penultimate group take to the tee. With a look of horror on his face OC DHFS then witnessed what every Support Helicopter mate hates, a Search and Rescue buoy caressing his bright yellow ball up the middle of the fairway to end 10 yards past his own! To be fair this defeat was taken well, and only after a mild outburst of unrepeatable Naval jack speak the group calmed down and settled in for the prizes.

So a fine day was had by all with no retirements or injuries making golf the safest sport that RAF Shawbury undertakes. If you are interested in taking part in Station Golf events check with the station gymnasium staff to find out more.

By Flight Lieutenant John Rowe

Primary Futures *Inspiring young people!*

Through the medium of an RAF-led campaign, I have found myself involved in a scheme called 'Primary Futures' which aims to inspire young people as to the kind of futures open to them if they work hard at school and apply themselves to developing key skills.

As a scheme volunteer, I was thrilled to be invited to visit William Shrewsbury Primary School in Burton to take part in their 'Primary Futures' event. During the afternoon, pupils in year groups 5 and 6 rotated around the assembly hall in small groups, talking to adult volunteers from range of backgrounds and jobs.

I was a little late arriving as I landed late from my morning's sortie – this was a not a problem for the audience who were totally enthralled at the idea that I had just been flying before speaking to them.

The children I spoke to were really good fun – they were well engaged, and had lots of very interesting questions prepared. As is often the way with young minds, so searching and direct were their questions, that in answering them I learnt some things about myself along the way (note to self, call Dad and thank him for always encouraging me to follow my dreams no matter how far-fetched they seemed for an ordinary girl from Brum).

I grew up not too far from the pupils, so they were doubly thrilled at the prospect of speaking to someone with a similar background to themselves. They were all very excited to try on the demo flying helmet and life preserver provided by the Safety Equipment Section and to take away copies of the Aries Magazine and the glossy helicopter prints that the station had kindly provided.



Sqn Ldr McDowell with fellow guest speakers and school staff

I also received some lovely comments from the children:

"I enjoyed the afternoon because it made me think what I can do when I am older. Because there were a lot of women, I thought more about what people are capable of."

"I thought Primary Futures was great because it inspired me for many different jobs."

"I enjoyed listening to the RAF officer and wearing the helmet and suit."

"The RAF pilot told us that you got lots of opportunity."

"I really enjoyed listening to the RAF woman she was very descriptive in what she was saying about her career"

"I enjoyed meeting the RAF pilot because her co-pilot was Prince William."

"My favourite was the RAF pilot she had worked with royalty and she had flown many different types of planes. She explained how she made it in the RAF and she brought her uniform in and it was very interesting."

If you would like to get involved in the scheme or as a school would like to host an event of your own I highly recommend visiting www.inspiringthefuture.org

By Sqn Ldr Ally McDowell



The Defence Helicopter Flying School celebrates its

20th Anniversary

Even the Royal Air Force Salon Orchestra has car envy



The Station Commander and his Executive Officers, accompanied by their wives



Some of the DHFS AAC personnel and partners

On the evening of Friday 9th June, the Defence Helicopter Flying School (DHFS) held their annual Charity Cocktail Party at RAF Shawbury. The venue was the RAF Shawbury Officers' Mess and, with the recent change in Station Command, the invite was extended to the wider Station, resulting in a huge turnout of around 400 people. Not just the annual celebration of all things DHFS, this year is the 20th Anniversary of the formation of the School, and to mark this milestone we organised a bigger event than in previous years. An opportunity for station personnel to entertain and host family and friends, DHFS put on a range of entertainments with the theme of helicopters, cars and cocktails.

On the helicopter front, guests were treated to the traditional, and final, Cocktail Party flypast by DHFS's own Squirrel and Griffin helicopters. With thousands of students having taken the controls over the 20 year history, it was a fitting reminder of how well these aircraft have served us. In addition, the Royal Navy sent two of its finest modern front-line helicopters for static display, a Merlin from 829 Naval Air Squadron (NAS) and a Wildcat from 825 NAS.

On the car front, guests really were spoilt for choice. The local Aston Martin Owners Club brought five sports cars for static display, the local Jaguar dealer brought its latest F-type for static display and raffle and to top it all off the Sporting Bears Motor Club made their first (but hopefully not last) appearance at RAF Shawbury. They brought 10 cars of the show were the Ford GTD40 and Lola T70, with their Le Mans pedigree, and the 1920s 27-litre Hispano Suiza. The Sporting Bears were successful in raising



Trying out the Bears' vehicles



Station Commander and previous DHFS Commandants take the Salute



Vehicles and attendees gather in front of the Officers' Mess

just over £2000 for DHFS charities.

The most poignant moment of the evening came at the sunset ceremony as the current Commandant DHFS invited six of the School's previous Commandants to the front to take the salute with him.

A successful raffle and auction held at 11pm managed to raise an additional £500; this along with other fundraising activities on the evening brought the total raised to around £2500. The selected DHFS charities benefitting from the evening's fundraising activities were Newport First Responders, the RAF Benevolent Fund, the Soldiers Charity and the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust.

Underpinning the whole celebration was the very generous donation made by Cobham Helicopter Services, a sign of the highly successful relationship established over many years which will be missed by many.



SAOC personnel and partners enjoying the evening

By Lt Simon Jones

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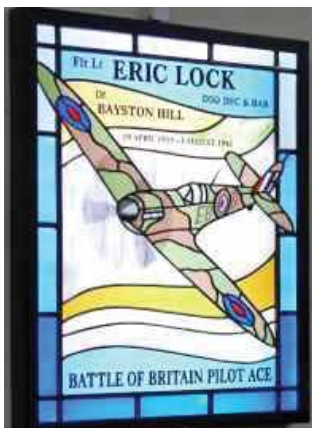
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The Battle of Britain Revisited-

Recently I had the pleasure to attend a presentation on the Battle of Britain by Corporal Dai Lawrence from the School of Air Operations Control. What a lot of people don't know is that Dai used to host guided tours around the 11 Group Bunker at Uxbridge. This bunker was the famous control room where the Battle of Britain was directed from and overseen by Sir Winston Churchill.



Cpl Dai Lawrence starts his presentation



Eric Lock Memorial Panel

During his hour long presentation Dai gave a pitch perfect recital of key characters, dates and encounters that occurred during the Battle of Britain. I was amazed to discover that key members of the Royal Air Force at the time did not agree with each other and the differing groups had differing ideas and strategies. What was fascinating was the fact that the German forces

intelligence was flawed and had they carried on with a couple of key actions (bombing our radars and airfields) the result of the war could have been very different indeed. Dai also told us about local man Eric Lock who was born in Bayston Hill near Shrewsbury. When it became clear that war was almost inevitable, Lock joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in 1939 and trained as a fighter pilot. By the time that war was declared on September 3rd 1939, Lock was a Sergeant Pilot. Further training led to Lock being given a commission and he joined No. 41 Squadron as a Pilot Officer. He was posted to RAF Catterick in Yorkshire and flew Spitfires. His squadron relocated to RAF Hornchurch in Essex under 11 Group Fighter Command on the day war was declared. Eric Lock became the highest scoring British Battle of Britain pilot with a total of 25 aircraft

destroyed and 8 probables. On August 3rd, 1941, Lock was killed during a Rhubarb Operation to Boulogne. Eric Lock has no known grave. Very few people are aware of the heroic actions of Eric Lock and Dai is working with Mr Mike Bradbury with a view to raising sufficient funding to install a permanent memorial to him in his county town of Shrewsbury. Dai undertakes his presentations voluntarily; however, for the next 3 years any donations he receives for his talks will be donated to the Eric Lock Memorial fund. If you would like to read more about Dai and his presentations you can find out more information by following this link: <https://m.facebook.com/anrafstory/>

by Warrant Officer Nick Williams



Cpl Dai Lawrence explains the Battle of Britain in detail

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RAF Shawbury supports Medical Reservists on the **frontline of trauma care**

In the operations room of the Royal Air Force medical facility a radio crackles into life. The assorted medical staff immediately takes notice – news is coming in of an improvised explosion and small-arms fire hitting a nearby patrol.



EX MEDDYGOL in the Field



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Within moments an Initial Response Team sets off in specialist military ambulances carrying doctors, paramedics and trauma nurses. The remaining medical staff launch into their much-practiced procedures while they wait for the casualties to arrive. They are based at a Role 1 Enhanced Medical Treatment Facility, a temporary tent structure designed to treat minor injuries and stabilise more serious casualties. When those casualties arrive, the clinical team are prepped and ready to treat injuries ranging from gunshot wounds to traumatic loss of limbs.

All of this has taken place not on some dusty desert battlefield, but in rural Shropshire; at the Nesscliff Training Area and at RAF Shawbury itself, where an additional field facility has been set up next to the runway. The blast and gunfire are simulated, the wounded civilians and soldiers played by air cadets or airmen. The amputees are real, but are covered in impressive makeup. It has been one of many scenarios undertaken during the two-week Exercise Meddygol Ops involving more than 200 personnel from the Royal Air Force and Army Medical Reserves and the US Army and Air Force Reserve. The incident may be fictional, but the training value is very real.

“The scale and complexity of the facilities these squadrons have set up is seriously impressive,” said Squadron Leader Darren Brady, in charge of RAF Shawbury’s Operations Squadron, during a visit to the main Role 1 site, which was equipped with a recovery ward, physiotherapist room and even a mobile dental surgery.

“With regulars, reservists and visiting U.S. Air Force medical personnel all taking part, this counts as one of the biggest exercises the history of Medical Reserves,” he continued. “Having done a lot of exercise planning myself, to see this conducted over different sites makes it all the more impressive, especially as many of the reservists don’t arrange something on this scale very often.”

As the RAF commemorates the centenary of the first aeromedical evacuation conducted in 1917, the immersive and realistic training provided by such large-scale medical exercises ensures that RAF medical personnel remain at the cutting edge of battlefield medicine and specialist trauma care.

“Our personnel bring extensive clinical experience from their NHS roles,” said Wing Commander Colin Mathieson of 4626 (Aeromedical Evacuation) Squadron, based at RAF Brize Norton. “Many have gained unique experience from deployed operational roles. We offer a unique opportunity to share that knowledge with new personnel to ensure we continue to offer highly valuable capability.”

More information about medical careers in the RAF and RAF Reserves can be found at www.rafcareers.com

By Flt Lt Peter Lisney,
7644 Squadron RAuxAF

Shrewsbury's Armed Forces Day

Son et Lumière Military Spectacular!

Armed Forces Day 2017 was the inspiration for a unique collaboration, led by Shropshire Council's Armed Forces Covenant Team, with Andy McKeown who is a local media, light and sound artist.

The idea was to create a sound and light projection to capture the history of Shropshire and to celebrate the history of the County's Armed Forces. The results were to be projected on to St Chad's Church Shrewsbury at midnight on Armed Forces Day.

Andy and his production company, Wild Strawberry interactive multimedia Limited, have been creating interactive computer projects since 1995 and have their studio and workshop facility in Shrewsbury. Past projects have included temporary and permanent light-works for Blackpool Illuminations, York Minster Cathedral, Nottingham Castle, Liverpool Metropolitan and Liverpool Anglican Cathedrals, Shrewsbury Abbey, Snibston Mining Museum and Saltwell Park, along with works in the USA, Australia and Turkey.

In preparation for the event, Andy visited RAF Shawbury's archive to gather information, scan old photographs and delve into the base's rich history. Old WW1 era photos were scanned along with stories of the Aries round the world flight in 1944 as well as modern day imagery to show the current training that is delivered at RAF Shawbury. Andy said: "I've wanted to light the outside of St Chad's Church for quite some time and couldn't say no when approached by the Shropshire Armed Forces Covenant to create an event to launch Armed Forces Day 2017. It's been a privilege to work with fabulous archive collections of the Shropshire Regimental Museum and the RAF Shawbury archive along with images, animations and stories from around the county provided by historians, ex-service personnel and young artists."

He added: "It's always

a pleasure to work with St Chad's - nothing is too much trouble which always makes for an enjoyable production."

David Fairclough, from the Armed Forces Covenant team, Shropshire Council said: "Shropshire Council was delighted to showcase its support for Armed Forces Day with the light show. As Shrewsbury was the first town in the UK to celebrate Armed Forces Day, it was very special and is a testament to how well the Armed Forces Covenant works across in Shropshire."

Andy's next project is to continue work on the 'One Name One Voice' audio project. The project aims to record the names of all those who are recorded on Shropshire's WW1 Roll of Honour. The project has now reached 1900 of the 5286 voices needed. The launch will be held on 11th November 2018 and if you are a business, organisation or are holding an event that can be used to gather more voices for the names on Shropshire's Roll of Honour, please get in touch with Andy at andy.mckeown@wildstrawberry.com



Massed Bands
Concert at Cardiff
2016



Cosford Voluntary Band Needs You!

As the RAF's 'Band in the Midlands', much of RAF Cosford Voluntary Band's work involves supporting the Military at Mess nights and Ceremonial events over an extended geographical area encompassing not just neighbouring bases such as RAF Shawbury, and Defence Medical Services in Birmingham and Lichfield, but also involving regular appearances in Wolverhampton, Dudley, Worcestershire and even RAF Valley in Anglesey!

Our current complement of 32 players are drawn from serving and retired military personnel, civil servants and instrumentalists without a military connection from within the wider civilian community. Essentially, everyone is welcome! Rehearsals for the main band are held on Monday evenings 19.30 – 21.45.

The thing that attracts most of them is that music is fun! Playing in a Band is a hugely rewarding activity. As a performer, you are constantly striving to improve your individual playing skills through private practise, whilst in our weekly rehearsals all instrumentalists work to play together as one person. Eventually, that new piece of music that seemed impossible a week ago is now getting just a bit easier. Through regular practice and dedication, by the time you get to performance, everything seems to come together and the audiences love you.

A key component of the Voluntary band is the variety of engagements they undertake across the region and beyond. Recently they supported the 'Sunset' ceremony at RAF Shawbury Officer's Mess Cocktail Party. Soon after, Armed Forces Days in Wolverhampton and Dudley attracted over 11,000 visitors, many of whom witnessed not only the Band in concert formation, but as a marching band. In contrast, our Clarinet Ensemble played for a more intimate dinner in the splendid surroundings of Highbury Hall, Edgbaston for

the Defence Medical Services.

From humble beginnings 16 years ago, the Band has provided a musical outlet for the many talented musicians throughout Shropshire and the Midlands and in the process have evolved into the present day where they are well able to provide a significant military presence at many large scale public events when the full time professional bands are unavailable.

With a variety of engagements, the music changes to suit the mood. The popular Mess Dinner Band and Clarinet Ensemble play a huge variety of easy-listening favourites encompassing jazz, pop and show tunes. This group will shortly be joined by a Saxophone Ensemble. In Concert Band formation they play more exciting works: music from stage and screen, marches, solos and of course many RAF favourites that their audiences expect from any RAF Band.

Although a relatively new phenomenon for most of their musicians, the Marching Band (formed in 2016) is proving to be quite popular. However, even their best musicians took a good deal of instruction and nurturing to be able to play and march at the same time! All Band training is provided by the Bandmaster and covers the very basics, through to what is required for a complicated display. Training is done in short manageable chunks and instructions are delivered



*Jo and Em at
Warwickshire
Poppy Ball 2016*

in a humorous and supportive manner. The ability to 'get out on the move' means that they are seen by far more people. This is good for recruiting and is proving a rather lucrative addition to the band's annual income. News of Cosford Band's marching prowess and professionalism has spread, to the extent that they now have organisations queuing up to book them! As this article is written, they already have bookings into 2020.

One notable event on the horizon is their participation with other RAF Voluntary Bands in a televised RAF showcase event in London to mark RAF 100. Marching down The Mall and performing in the forecourt of Buckingham Palace is a unique opportunity for their members.

The RAF Cosford Corps of Drums leads the marching band on parade. Again, a recent addition to the Band, they look very impressive as they strut their stuff doing stick drill and filling in between marches with drum solos. They are also looking for recruits and unlike the main band; you do not have to read music to join them.

The Bandroom, an old Bowling Alley, is the envy of many a visiting band. It boasts storage rooms, practice rooms and the Bandmaster's office as well as the main hall. This relatively large space allows them to set up the main Concert Band and still have enough room to rehearse a small Marching Band without having to move equipment. This ability to practice the basics of marching, whatever the weather outside, is a very useful aid to reinforce our skills.

The RAF Cosford Area Voluntary Band is one of seven such Bands based in the UK, with an eighth in Cyprus. In common with most other Bands of this sort, Cosford is generously supported by the RAF VB Association and run by a full-time Bandmaster, Patrick Ryan. A former Bandmaster in the Royal Marines, he took up his post in April 2015 and is keen to increase the size, ability and reputation of the Ensemble. Under Pat's leadership, the future looks good and the organisation continues to go from strength to strength, but they are always on the lookout for more players, especially woodwind and Percussion. If you, or anyone you know, might be interested in joining the Band, please contact Pat on: 01902 704048 (email: cosfordvoluntaryband@outlook.com).

**By Mr Patrick Ryan BA (Hons) LRSM ARCM
Bandmaster (VBA)
RAF Cosford Voluntary Band**



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Ex SHINING ENDEAVOUR *Update*

This May saw the second training event for the Expedition Shining Endeavour team. We packed our tents and headed up to the Lake District for what would be a brilliant and challenging 2 days of walking.

Whilst in Nepal, there will be no requirement to carry our tents and equipment personally, we will have a team of Sherpas that will assist us. This is not us being lazy and opting for an easy ride, it is simply not physically sustainable for us to self-support the expedition. The Sherpas live and work at altitude all year round and are highly acclimatised therefore they are much more capable of strenuous activity as the altitude increases. When I say strenuous activity, I include in this, putting up a tent and cooking food; in a campsite in the Lake District this would be no hardship but at altitude it would take the likes of our team hours to achieve. Our focus will be on the trek itself, maintaining a slow pace to stave off Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) and taking in the spectacular views that will surround us. As we reach camp each afternoon, our tents will already be erected and all we will need to do is rest and refuel for the next day and practice our life saving skills such as ice-axe arrests and crevasse rescue where the terrain allows.

So, taking our training very seriously myself and WO Andy Halliwell simulated this Sherpa support, by sending a forward party in Flt Lt Carl Pettitt and Flt Lt Nicky Barber to recce the campsite and put our tents up! When we arrived under cover of darkness all we had to do was retire to our sleeping bags.

As the morning dawned for our first day of training we were pleased to see not a cloud in the sky. The contingent from Shawbury had a leisurely few hours to cook breakfast and make up pack lunches as we waited for the Boulmer contingent to arrive and importantly our mountain leader, Gordon, who would lead us for the 2 days of training. The objective of this trip was to start to build up our endurance on the hills and continue to get to know one another as a team. Carl planned 2 challenging routes that would take in a number of peaks in the Langdale area, or 'Wainrights' for those walking enthusiasts.

Alfred Wainright was a British fell walker who wrote and



The team having a welcome break

illustrated 7 volumes dedicated to the hills of the Lake District. He sketched each mountain from all aspects, describing the routes to be walked. With 214 to bag, it's a life-long challenge for many hill walkers.

The route for day 1 took us on a tour of the Langdale Pikes, navigating Pavey Ark and summing Harrison Stickle, Loft Crag and Pike of Stickle before a gentle descent back into the valley and a walk to the pub for refreshments. We were treated to sunshine all day with only moderate

exposure to the wind on higher ground. With such lovely weather we relaxed into an enjoyable pace with plenty of stops for food and photo opportunities. Being able to temper our pace is, strangely, another training objective. Feeling fit and fresh in the hills at home, the temptation is to increase the pace and press on, however at altitude we will not be physically able to maintain such a pace. If we can get used to a more leisurely pace whilst training in the UK, this will become the norm in the Himalayas and we won't be tempted to race ahead and increase the risk of AMS.

Day 1 was concluded with a hearty meal in the local pub where we were treated to an impromptu get together of folk musicians that seemed to multiply in size as the night wore on.

Day 2 saw the addition of our expedition leader, Wg Cdr Robin Stedman to the group, so the team was complete. The route took us up Crinkle Crag with a short detour to summit Great Knott at my insistence, only to realise later that it was not, in fact, another Wainright to tick off as I had suggested. Once again we were treated to a day of beautiful sunshine although the wind speed was much more severe than the previous day and we had to exercise caution as we navigated the crags. As we dropped down onto a saddle between two of the crags we fully appreciated its nickname, Windy Gap, as the wind found its path of least resistance as it rose out of the valley below. Despite the conditions, we took the time to appreciate the spectacular views that extended across the whole of the Lake District and beyond, as far as the Isle of Man and the Yorkshire Dales.

A long gradual descent brought us back to the campsite and having packed up that morning, all that was left was to say our goodbyes and go our separate ways back to Shawbury and Boulmer.

Once back at our units, work will now start on finalising the planning aspects of the expedition. With all funding channels now confirmed, flights and initial accommodation in Kathmandu have been booked. Indeed this month saw the presentation of the cheque from Aquila for their generous sponsorship of the expedition, which could not go ahead without their support. The next priority will be to secure our kit order from the Armed Forces Adventure Training stores, lest we end up wearing the equivalent kit to Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay!

By Flt Lt Charlie Gawne

Wg Cdr Stedman receiving the sponsorship cheque from Aquila's Service Delivery Director, David Hawken.



Duathlon Challenge for FS Lou Simpson

On Sunday 21st May 2017 FS Louise Simpson from SAOC competed for the Great Britain (GB) Age Group Team at Sankt Wendel Powerman in the European Triathlon Union (ETU) Middle Distance Duathlon European Championships.

I have been competing in triathlons, Sprint to Half Ironman distance for a number of years and I am a member of RAF, TONIS, SY TRI Triathlon Teams and Shawbury Joggers. During 2016, I decided to put this to good effect by completing a multi-event challenge to raise funds for Severn Hospice. One part of this challenge was the Woburn Abbey Half Ironman in September 2016. This hard, weather challenging event led to a qualifying time for the Middle Distance European Championships.

After finding out that I had been selected for the GB Age Group team, my training for the hilly Sankt Wendel Powerman course started in earnest. My husband Gary Simpson, Ex RAF, now triathlon coach, was also selected and he assisted me with my training for the event. I was also selected for the RAF Duathlon Inter-Services

team, competing at Dalton Barracks, Abingdon in April. This gave me valuable experience and training in Duathlon.

We travelled to St Wendel, Germany on the Thursday, before the event which allowed us to cycle the 3 lap, hilly bike course before the event and attend the team briefings. The middle distance event consists of a 10k run, 60k cycle and then another 10k run. On the day of the event the weather was good, if not slightly too hot. I was nervous but determined to fully enjoy the experience and get the most out of it. I began strong with the first 10k run, staying steady, knowing the hilly bike course was yet to come. The cycle went well with no major issues and I even got cheered along by Emma Pooley (World Champion) as she flew past me up one of the hills. The final 10k was hard work as the heat of the



day was now starting to build; however I managed to finish with a smile on my face.

The whole experience was fantastic and being alongside the elite athletes was inspiring. I also have the privilege of being selected for the GB Age Group team in the International Triathlon Union (ITU) Long Distance Duathlon World Championships in Switzerland in September this year. The long distance course consists of a 10k run, a 120k cycle and a 30k run, and Switzerland is not very flat, so my training never slows down.

FS Lou Simpson

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Honoured whilst at Cranwell

It is not every day that someone who has recently arrived from their Elementary Flying Training at Cranwell is presented with a Commendation but this is what happened recently to Flying Officer Wehrle.

Whilst most people find that undertaking their flying training course is difficult enough and fills many hours with both the practical and theoretical studying but Flying Officer Wehrle also managed to improve the training system. He devised an App that enabled users to practice routine and emergency checks for the tutor aircraft using a synthetic cockpit on an iPad. Additionally he produced elegant maps detailing transit procedures between RAF College Cranwell and RAF Barkston Heath for the Stations Flying Order Book.

His graphic design skills, allied to a keen aviation mind resulted in real improvements across the elementary training community and in recognition of his achievements Flying Officer Wehrle was awarded the RAF College Cranwell Commandant's Commendation.



He was presented the award by Flight Lieutenant Duncan Read, Officer Commanding B Flight on 660 Squadron Army Air Corps.

By Warrant Officer Nick Williams

RAF Shawbury Personnel Presented with Honours and Awards

On 7th July 2017, RAF Shawbury personnel were presented with honours and awards by the Station Commander Group Captain R S Norris MA RAF, watched by family, friends and colleagues.

Air Officer Commanding 22 (Training) Group Commendations were presented to Mr S Cummings, Mr R Lord and Mrs L Rollinson.

The Royal Warrant was presented to Warrant Officer Morley.

The Long Service and Good Conduct Medal and two Clasps to the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal was presented to Major Tracey.

The Long Service and Good Conduct Medal and Clasp to the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal were presented

to Commander Doubleday, Lieutenant Commander Cottee, Major McBride and Flight Sergeant Crowder.

The Long Service and Good Conduct Medal Clasp were presented to Squadron Leader Cunnah and Squadron Leader Northway.

The Long Service and Good Conduct Medal were presented to Wing Commander Collinge, Lieutenant Commander Ryan, Major Shorter, Lieutenant Aitken, Flight Lieutenant Steel, Flight Sergeant Hewitt and Sergeant Green.

Congratulations to all award recipients



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