

ARIES

The Magazine of RAF Shawbury

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Edition 1
2018



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Editor's **Welcome**

by WO Nick Williams

Hello to all of our readers. It is with mixed emotions that I welcome you to the first edition of the Aries Magazine in 2018. On a sad note, this issue of the magazine is dedicated to the memory of our friend and colleague Mark Vickers, who sadly died at the beginning of January; our dedication is on page 9 in this issue.



Looking at 2018 as a whole marks two huge milestones for both the RAF and Shawbury as a station. At the end of March we bid farewell to our current helicopter fleet of Griffins and Squirrels as the new Military Flying Training System commences at the start of April. At the same time, the RAF is celebrating its centenary this year and having just returned from the RAF Media Officer Conference there are over 300 events taking place across the country to celebrate this huge milestone. Our first article marking the centenary is in this issue and Fg Off Samantha Kerr tells us what 100 years of the RAF means to her. Our Physical Training Instructors have devised a fitness regime that you can even do whilst in the workplace along with other activities to get you fit this year. Staying on the fitness topic, this is mentioned in our Foreword and some of the opportunities available to personnel are shown in the Rowing article and the expedition to Nepal – Shining Endeavour. We are thrilled to see that some of our personnel have been recognised for their endeavours in our Honours and Awards section on page 18.

We hope you enjoy this packed edition – happy reading.

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RAF Shawbury's Gate Guardian Wessex XR516 at night.

Date of Next Edition:

Submissions for Edition 2 to be received by 2nd March 2018



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MENTAL WELLBEING SUPPORT FOR THE RAF



There are times when we all feel a little stressed or under pressure. The RAF Benevolent Fund is funding a number of programmes to support RAF personnel, including Reservists, and their dependent family members, who may be experiencing difficulties at work or at home.

- **ANXIETY OR DEPRESSION** We're working with Anxiety UK to support those affected by anxiety or depression, including subsidised membership to Anxiety UK.
- **RELATIONSHIP SUPPORT** We're working with Relate to support anyone experiencing relationship difficulties or breakdowns, including:
 - Up to six free counselling sessions with a Relate counsellor
 - A free online Building Stronger Families course
 - Subsidised mediation sessions, for those going through separation or divorce
- **BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT** Free confidential telephone, email and face-to-face support provided in partnership with Cruse Bereavement Care, for those in need of bereavement support.

For further information visit www.rafbf.org/help



**Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund**

relate
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FOREWORD

By Wing Commander Robin Stedman BSc MA RAF, Officer Commanding School of Air Operations Control

Happy New Year! And what a year it's going to be. Plans are already progressing well for the RAF100 celebrations and whilst the main events are focussed around London, our light blue personnel will certainly have the opportunity to take part in more local events, so keep your eyes open for those 'volunteers wanted' lists.

If a 100th birthday wasn't enough, we've also got the rotary wing element of the UK Military Flying Training System going live in April. While it will be strange to not see the Squirrels and Griffins flying around the county, the Junos and Jupiters are already becoming a more familiar sight to us here at RAF Shawbury. Lastly, if all this wasn't exciting enough we are only weeks away from the standing up of the new Air Operations Branch which will absorb the current ABM, ATC and Flight Operations branches. We certainly live in interesting times!

The start of a new year also provides a great opportunity to look back on the previous year and take stock of everything that we achieved. From my perspective as OC SAOC, one of the most notable events in 2017 was the graduation of the last Shawbury-based Area Radar Training Course. We have been training Area Radar controllers here for 45 years, but with the rationalisation of the MOD's area

radar footprint to just one unit at RAF(U) Swanwick it makes total sense to deliver our training there instead of here. The first course will deploy to Swanwick on 26th of February and I know that it's going to be a huge success, mainly due to the outstanding work put in by a few key individuals (you know who you are!).

I was very pleased to see that Director Flying Training's (DFT) Mission Directive for 2018 states that leaders are to promote Force Development, sport and fitness as well as drive a sense of enjoyment into the delivery of training. He's absolutely right (obviously). Sometimes it's all too easy to allow the pressures of delivering our primary duties to become barriers to us doing those extra things that make us better people. I know that nearly every Aries magazine in 2017 contained an article about Expedition SHINING ENDEAVOUR or a training event for it, and this issue is no exception for which I make no apologies. Ventures such as SHINING ENDEAVOUR provide a unique opportunity for Service personnel to develop outside their main role, stretching their boundaries and ultimately contributing to a stronger, fitter, more agile and mentally prepared individual and organisation. For me, leading a team up Mera Peak (a 21,000 ft mountain in the Himalayas) was a huge personal challenge. But more importantly it demonstrated to military



personnel the opportunities available to them, where to find them and how to organise or get involved in them. I'm not suggesting that every section on Station can go to Nepal, but I am saying that there are some fantastic opportunities out there. So take DFT's Mission Directive to heart; make 2018 the year that you stretch yourselves above and beyond your main role in the knowledge that not only are you delivering the intent of your 1* but you are also enhancing operational effectiveness and engendering a fighting spirit through personal development. I look forward to reading about your exploits in future Aries editions.

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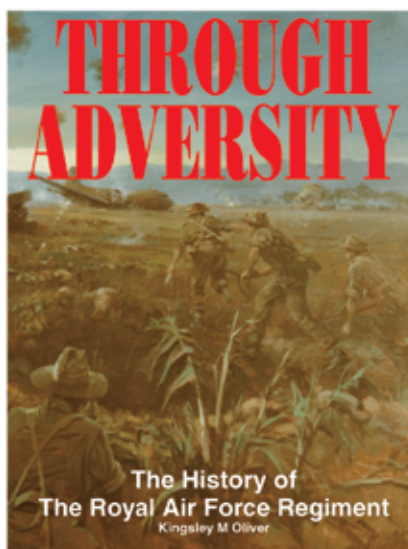
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Our new "Rewarding Your Loyalty" scheme is now in place - sign up online or in store for your free card. 10% military discount for those in possession of a valid forces discount card.

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On a hunt for something that may interest our readers from our archive, we have delved in to our station magazine Channel 19 from spring 1987. In those days every squadron on the station provided a monthly article. Here we have selected the Admin Squadron article and a joke from the CATS section of the magazine.

Admin Opener

"The last one in post volunteers, Sarge".

"I've got a bone in my leg, boss, and anyway, volunteers for what?"

"Something that requires specialised skills, you'll enjoy it, honest. We need someone with a literary bent" — (I've got my own pen, see) — "Plenty of free time, bags of ideas, and besides, everyone else has refused."

"In that case Sir, please can I volunteer? Now what's the job?"

"The new station mag Sarge, you're the Admin Wing Rep and every month you'll be responsible for submitting a readable article that will captivate, titillate, inform and invoke response from a far-reaching audience, including the outside world. Your guidelines are quite simple; nothing political, no in-jokes, or postings in/out etcetera, keep it clean, non-racial, don't be insulting or libellous, or upset anyone. It should be easy to produce but make sure it doesn't read like a second-hand SRO/PSF bulletin."

Welcome back to Shawbury, I thought. I make the foregoing comments as a sort of advanced apology in case I fall short of the expected Fleet Street standards and bore the pants off you. Over the coming months I shall be begging and pestering the various admin sections for useful gen to fill out the article, so if there is anyone out there who feels he or she can make a useful contribution, perhaps by voicing an opinion or having a good old moan, please send your article to me in PSF (Form 500P should be attached.)

The above is a plea for help, which serves as a rather

corny lead in to my first article on HELP (Health, Exercise, Lifestyle Programme). For the uninitiated amongst you, HELP is the latest all-singing, all-dancing computer which lives in the gym; its function is to tell you just how overweight and unfit you are, and it also takes advance bookings for heart attacks and strokes. Actually, in the capable hands of the chief muscle mechanic, Fg Off Andy Colgan, HELP is a very capable piece of kit. Having tried it myself, I can honestly say that a) I'm still alive, just, and b) it's acted as an incentive to me to improve my fitness.

Various factors such as height, weight, age, sex, skin measurements and hereditary illnesses are taken into consideration, and this info, together with a measured cycle test or one-and-a-half mile run, is then fed into the computer. The results show just how likely a stroke or a coronary is, and what percentage of fat one needs to lose; it gives a fair indication of general fitness. The results are stored in the computer and a print-out is available so that every six weeks or so any improvement or decline in fitness standards can be seen in black and white.

The PEd staffs recommend that those who are concerned about their fitness should avail themselves of this facility — it is not just for the athletic. You don't have to indulge in a mad physical programme; sensible exercise and dieting will prolong your life and improve your working efficiency (maybe all your bosses could set an example). So pop along to the Gym and speak to the PEd staff, they'll be pleased to see you.

Channel Nineteen

Section News

CATCS Tales

I'VE FAILED ON APPROACH,
FAILED ON DIRECTOR,
EVEN ON PAR...



FAILED WITH WOMEN
FAILED AS A MAN...



THERE'S ONLY ONE
WAY OUT...



INSTRUCTING...



In Memory of Mr Mark Vickers

It is with deep regret that we have to announce that one of the key members of the Aries Editorial Team has died.

Mr Mark Vickers, our Editorial Assistant, was a great friend, colleague and contributor to the production of both the current Aries magazine and its predecessor Channel 19. Despite having a serious health condition, Mark lived his life to the full with zest, drive and ambition.

Mark had a number of passions in his life, one of which was his love of photography, capturing beautiful images of family; his passion for motorsport and cars was also significant and some of his pictures have been used for promotional T shirts and programmes. His enjoyment of music was also a large part of his life and he attended many concerts with friends; at the last count he had seen over a hundred artists perform.

In Mark's younger days he enjoyed many nights out with his friends at the White Horse Pub in Wem. His support of Liverpool FC was a huge part of his life and he held a season ticket for many years, enjoying Liverpool's many

successful seasons with his father Geoff.

Family was particularly important to Mark; his mum Joy, his dad Geoff, his brother Ian, his sister-in-law Louise and his niece Erin and nephew Joe were the apple of his eye and all provided tremendous support throughout his illness. We know when talking to Mark that he was immensely proud of his family and loved them all.

Mark was also proud to have been a member of the Civil Service for over 22 years. The last 15 years at RAF Shawbury were hugely significant. He loved his work and was immensely proud to be part of a successful team in the Corporate Engagement Office, not only in supporting his colleagues over the years but also the myriad of customers, aircraft enthusiasts and the people he came in to contact with. His support and encouragement to aviation spotters was also impressive, arranging visits and scheduling photo shoots of aircraft.



Mark was a unique individual who faced many challenges head-on. He was much loved by his family, colleagues and friends. In particular we will remember his infectious sense of humour, his willingness to go the extra mile in order to help others and his quiet courage and fortitude; even in the face of adversity he remained incredibly determined.

Mark, we are proud to salute you as a colleague and friend and your contribution to RAF Shawbury will be greatly missed and remembered by everyone.

CADETS NEWS

RN CCF Cadets visit RAF Shawbury

For the past 6 years, RAF Shawbury has hosted RN CCF Cadets from Selly Oak Trust School in Birmingham. The school is a specialist science college for unique students with special educational needs. Each year the cadets get an exciting and unique opportunity to conduct Air Experience Flying (AEF) and section visits at RAF Shawbury to experience service life on an active flying Stn.

On Mon 4 Dec the cadets visited the School of Air Operations Control where they got to see and experienced first-hand the challenges that face an Air Traffic Controller and what the job entails, including a visit to the visual simulator to test their aircraft recognition skills. Following the excitement of watching a Harrier performing a take-off and a Red Arrows flypast, the cadets moved on to 60 Sqn where they were given a superb tour of a Griffin HT1 from both the pilot and aircrew perspective. The highlight of the



day was the AEF which was conducted in the Part Task Trainer simulator. Both cadets and staff got to try their hand at flying a squirrel around the local area including take-off and landing at RAF Shawbury. Most quickly got to grips with level flight but the passengers in the back were comforted by the fact it was a simulator when it came to take-

off and landing.

We look forward to welcoming back all the cadets and staff from Selly Oak Trust School in the future.

**Flt Lt Gav Leitch
RAF Shawbury
Air Cadet Liaison Officer**



Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund

THE HEART OF THE RAF FAMILY

News on the provision of welfare support to RAF personnel, their families and veterans funded by the RAF Benevolent Fund

New services to support the emotional wellbeing and mental health of RAF personnel are being launched this year by the RAF Benevolent Fund.

More than 5,000 people have been helped by relationship support service.

Now entering its eighth year, the RAF Benevolent Fund's partnership with relationship counselling service Relate has been so successful the service is being extended to include veterans and their partners.

To date more than 5,000 serving personnel have taken up the Fund's offer of six free Relate counselling sessions and the effects have been life-changing. The service is now open to RAF veterans and their families and includes access to a free online, Building Stronger Families course, as well as subsidised mediation sessions for couples going through separation or divorce, and family counselling.

Feedback from RAF servicemen and women and their partners who have taken up the sessions is incredibly positive, with everyone who was asked saying they would recommend the service and they felt better able to cope with difficulties they might face in the future.

One client said: "I'm not sure we would still be together or able to communicate had we not decided to have these sessions."

Another added: "Although initially apprehensive to attend any Relate sessions, it has definitely been more than worthwhile for both my own personal progression as well as my relationship."

Alison Wyman, Head of Welfare Programmes and Development, said: "The mental and emotional wellbeing of the entire RAF Family is vitally important.

"Building on the success of this partnership with Relate will allow even more of that RAF Family to access this kind of support. As we know only too well, RAF families can face unique challenges and that does not change as service leaver's transition into new civilian careers.

"Relationship counselling is just one way the RAF

Benevolent Fund supports the emotional wellbeing of its beneficiaries. The Fund also has partnerships with Anxiety UK and Cruse Bereavement Care to offer help to those facing anxiety and depression issues or struggling with the loss of a loved one."

To find out more about the Fund's relationship counselling support call 0845 077 5556 or visit <http://rafbf.relate.org.uk/> to access our free online Building Stronger Families course.

To contact Anxiety UK call 0844 334 1550 or email rafsupport@anxietyuk.org.uk

RAF Benevolent Fund expands support service to personnel and their partners experiencing anxiety or depression.

The RAF's leading welfare charity is expanding its partnership with Anxiety UK to cover serving RAF men and women as well as those who have left the service. This includes regulars and reservists, as well as their partners.

Those struggling with anxiety or depression will have access to an Anxiety UK helpline for emotional support, self-help material and subsidised membership. This includes free membership to Headspace, an online mindfulness programme aimed at helping people to have calmer minds Reservists and partners of serving RAF men and women are also able to attend therapy sessions.

Alison Wyman, Head of Welfare Programmes and Development at the RAF Benevolent Fund, said: "As the RAF's leading welfare charity, the RAF Benevolent Fund knows only too well the stresses and strains life in the Armed Forces can put on personnel and their relationships. After identifying this welfare need, we have worked in partnership with a specialist to provide a service to support those suffering from poor mental health as well as their partners."

To contact Anxiety UK call 0844 334 1550 or email rafsupport@anxietyuk.org.uk to find out more about the Fund's relationship counselling support call 0845 077 5556 or visit <http://rafbf.relate.org.uk/> to access our free online Building Stronger Families course.

Annual Christmas Football Match

Wednesday the 5th December saw the annual Officers vs (Every) other rank (OR's) Football Match take place at RAF Shawbury. FS Dan Jackson, the RAF Shawbury Football Manager organised the event, while Flt Lt Orion Modebe of 660 Sqn managed the Officers team and LCpl Lee Doyle of MPGS the OR's team. Flt Lt Andy 'Morty' Mortimer and Mr Tony 'Kinaz' Kinchley gave up their time to act as the match officials.

There was aggression, shouting, some choice words and fallings out, this was just whilst trying to organise the pre-match photograph so what was to come in the match we all wondered. With 22 players on the pitch, an unbiased referee and Linesman and an abundance of support, the game kicked off.



All eyes on the ball

The Officers had 16 players to choose from whilst the OR's had 12, as the OR's average age was bordering on 54, many of them had to find their 2nd wind... and 3rd.. and 4th..... and 5th.

The game started with some high tempo passing, some long balls, heavy breathing and big tackles. With Cpl 'JJ' Jenkins causing absolute havoc down the right hand side, the Officers had to change their tactics, their newest tactic being to foul him and ensure he couldn't carry on.....this was carried out to perfection by Fg Off Liam Ryall when he decided to emulate his hero, Vinnie Jones.....Referee was heard swiftly followed by SUB please!!!! The ORs were now down to 11 players in total, the Officers quite happily rotated players throughout the game to keep them fresh. With the numbers, referee, rain and wind against the OR's, the Officers deservedly went in at half time 3 goals up, a predatory goal from S/Lt Dodds and 2 goals, one being a 30 yard screamer which lobbed the keeper from Fg Off Lee Murray being the difference.

LCpl Lee Doyle delivered his inspirational team talk to the OR's at half time taking inspiration from Sir Alex Ferguson, he had a tough task of getting them fired up and back out with a positive attitude. No changes were made during half time for the OR's for a multitude of reasons, the main reason being that they had no substitutes.... The Officers made a few changes once again, meaning fresh legs and a harder 45 minutes for the OR's to endure.



Throwing everything in to it

The game kicked off and continued at the same pace as the first half, some high flying tackles and lots of shouting. The OR's were boosted when FS Pete Buckley made it over on 65 minutes, however due to cramp and other age related injuries, the OR's were soon down a man again. Luckily, the Officers had a few more players turn up, one of which being the RAF Shawbury FC OIC Flt Lt Chris Fenton (who got nutmegged after 5 minutes...but we don't talk about that). There were plenty of goals in the second half, for the Officers, Dodds got his 2nd and Flt Lt Orion Modebe capped off a great performance with a goal. WO2 Kev Barrett, the RAF Shawbury FC captain played an inspirational role as per usual, scoring 2 goals, Sgt Jordan Youngman, also put in his usual outstanding shift and scored a long range effort.

The final score was 5-3 to the Officers, FS Jackson stated "this was a great game and a tradition I hope continues at RAF Shawbury for years to come, I would like to thank all the squadrons for releasing players to take part in the event".

By FS Dan Jackson



The team's line up

NEW YEAR REVOLUTION

A New Fitter You



Following the festive season, do you feel the need to do a little bit more throughout the day? Think you've not got time to exercise? Want to add a little bit more in? Let's utilise your work time to do that without compromising your output!

If you want to start getting a bit fitter, or ramp up what you are currently doing, below is a small list of exercises that you can do whilst you are at work. These might just be a few things, but if you do these 3 – 5 times daily, you may start to notice a difference and you will definitely be more active throughout the day. You could even encourage your colleagues to do them too so that you all do them together.

1 SQUAT DOWN INTO YOUR SEAT INSTEAD OF FALLING DOWN INTO IT. Trust me – by the end of the first day you will feel a difference.

2 MOVE YOUR LEGS WITHOUT ACTUALLY MOVING. Sit upright at your desk, knees bent to 90 degrees with your feet flat on the floor. Raise one leg straight out in front of you, hold for 5 seconds and place it back on the floor under control, then do the other leg. Repeat this 3-5 times. As you get stronger, hold each leg for longer or raise both legs together.

3 WORK YOUR ARMS WITHOUT LIFTING HEAVY WEIGHTS. Either seated upright or standing tall, stretch your arms straight out to the side of you and start to make small circles forwards with your arms 10 times, then backwards 10 times, then forwards, backwards, until you have completed 50 in each direction in sets of 10. To progress this, either do more circles in

one go, or put some light weights in your hands.

4 TAKE A WALK. That colleague that works 3 offices down, or in the next building – could you walk to talk to them rather than phoning or emailing them? If anything, it gets you out of your office for a few moments, which can always be refreshing.

5 STRETCH IT OUT. Most of us are guilty of not stretching enough and could work a bit more on our flexibility. The next time you are on the telephone, stand up and stretch - your calves, hamstrings, neck – wherever you feel tight, stretch it out.

6 SQUUUUUUUUUUEEZE. This is the easiest one to do if you don't want your colleagues to know what you are doing and you can do this anywhere, anytime and it is really simple – squeeze your buttocks together for 10-15 seconds, release and repeat. Keep repeating for as long as you can, or just hold the squeeze for as long as you can.

Please only do the above exercises if you feel confident in your ability. If any exercises cause you pain and discomfort, please seek medical advice. If you require any further information or need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the PEd Ft.



MONTHLY CHALLENGE

If you fancy a monthly challenge, make sure you come down and check out the 'Monthly Challenge' Board in Jubilee Hall's sports hall. They vary from month to month, and will give you a different workout to do. So come down, give it a go and see how you get on - Who knows, you might even enjoy it!



WINTER TRAINING OUTSIDE

With the winter weather and dark evenings still lingering, please ensure that if you are training outside - **Be Safe, Be Seen, Be Responsible:**

- Wear reflective/hi vis clothing.
- Use lights.
- If out with a dog during dark hours, ensure they are also able to be seen.
- Wear the correct layers for your activity, and ensure your head, hands, feet and ears are protected.
- Check the weather before you set off, especially if you plan on covering some distance.
- Have your phone with you – if you don't want to be disturbed put it into 'Airplane mode', but if you find yourself in a pickle, you need to be able to contact someone to help.
- Drink plenty of fluids before, throughout and when you finish – It is still possible to get dehydrated when it's cold.
- If the weather looks too problematic for your activity, reschedule or workout indoors instead.

JUBILEE HALL PROGRAMME

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1200-1230	FITNESS SESSION 1210-1300	SPINNING 1210-1300	FITNESS SESSION 1210-1300	GYM INDUCTIONS 1215	SPINNING FOR BEGINNERS 1210-1300
1230-1300				FITNESS SESSION 1210-1300	
1300-1330					
1330-1400					
1400-1430					
1430-1500				FITNESS TEST 1445	
1500-1530					
1530-1600					
1600-1630					
1630-1700					
1700-1730	FITNESS TEST 1700	GYM INDUCTIONS 1700			
1730-1800		FITNESS SESSION 1730-1830			
1800-1830					
1830-1900		YOGA 1845-1945			
1900-1930					

British Rowing Indoor Championships 2017

From what started as a fitness circuit incorporating a rowing machine to winning the Midlands Indoor Rowing Championships (MIRC), the Shawbury gym Concept 2 Rowing Machines have seen a lot of blood sweat and tears as I set out to compete alongside some of the countries top rowers and indoor rowing enthusiasts at the British Rowing Indoor Championships (BRIC) 2017.

For the BRIC men's open 2000m event I set myself the target time of 6 minutes and 10 seconds, a 4 second improvement on my personal best which I achieved at the MIRC. I started to compile a rowing specific training programme which would see me notching up a lot of hours in the gym before and after the working day on the rowing machine.

As the training intensity crept up so did the competition date and with this in mind I re-tested my best effort 2km as a marker of my fitness and cracked a small painful smile to see I had hit the 6 minute 12 second marker. I was on track for my target at the BRIC in 9 weeks time as work colleagues became ever more motivational, pushing me to get out and train, stay focused and prevent myself from getting side tracked from my goal.

Meanwhile members of my Indoor Rowing Team, Team Oarsome, were discussing the possibility of entering a 4 man team into the relay event which would see 4 Royal Air Force Physical Training Instructors take on the rest of the country over 4km.

Stepping into the Lee Valley Velodrome, the venue for all London 2012 Olympic Track Cycling events, brought on a whole rush of anxiety; had I done enough? Should I have found time for another workout in an already tight training programme? Or am I just simply overwhelmed? Hundreds of people peered down upon the morning events' competitors as they left everything they had out on the rowing machine, making way for waves upon waves of more competitors competing to win categories, age groups and break records.

As I navigated my way down to the Velodrome floor, consumed by



Competitors move on to their rowing machines. (Photo credit: British Rowing/Naomi Baker)

the music from my headphones, I started to notice the faces of joy, disappointment and upset emerging from the competition of previous heats. I sat down in a quiet corridor, turned up my music, closed my eyes and started going through my pacing strategy in my head. As I stepped out to warm up I realised just how many spectators there were; most would be watching their idols from the GB Rowing Team and another individual who was making his debut in the rowing scene, Sir Bradley Wiggins.

Crowds cheered as the commentator individually invited the 5 athletes of the GB Rowing Team to the race floor. The rest of us were lead out on to the race floor by Sir Bradley Wiggins, and we began prepping our rowing machines carefully adjusting the drag factor which controls the resistance of the rowing machine. The call "handles down" was given to allow all machines to come to a stop and all monitors to be programmed for the race setting.

Attention! Row! All the training and planning over the past 6 months would be put on display in just 6 minutes of exercise. Through the first 500m, 1 minute 33 seconds, just where I wanted to be and not getting carried away with the thrill of competition. Each monitor displays 4 names whilst rowing: The top name being the current leader, 2nd name down indicating who is in the position in front of me and by what distance, 3rd name down being myself and what position I am in and finally the 4th name on the list indicating

who is in the position behind me. As I approached the 1000m mark Sir Bradley Wiggins' name appeared on the monitor as I moved into 16th place, soon to see me pass Bradley Wiggins and watch his name disappear from the monitor. Into the final 500m and two RAF team mates appeared on the monitor; 3 of us were fighting for 9th, 10th and 11th but who would come out on top? The last 500m of the 2km is everybody's chance to empty the tank which brings some extraordinary painful facial expressions, with the hope that any photographer doesn't profit from a pain face shot. I pushed into the last 250m with gritted teeth, watching my two team mates and I switch places on the monitor. My pacing did not seem to be getting faster even though I thought I was pulling faster than I ever had.

Then there was elation as I saw my finish time of 6.10.4 and 9th place appear on the monitor. I had achieved the time I set out for and in the process took away a great result, only to be beaten to 8th place by 0.7 seconds and with the top 7 all being GB Rowing team athletes and GB development rowers.

The final event of the day was the men and women's 4000m relay. In the relay event, each team is made up of 4 members who rotate around the rowing machine with one person rowing, two people holding down the foot straps and the 4th person waiting to take over on the rowing machine. All this takes a great deal of

preparation and practise to create a smooth changeover reducing the idle time of the rowing machine. 3 other PTI's and I stepped out onto the floor to represent the Royal Air Force in the men's 4000m relay event and with the only practise being in our warm up, we hoped we could still be competitive. We opted for 200m efforts throughout the event which proved a manageable strategy for us, but the lack of practise would cost us time in the long run. We finished in 4th place, 0.8 seconds behind the bronze medal time and the top 5 teams all being within 9 seconds of each other. We were pleased yet gutted to have missed out on the bronze medal by such a small margin but with practise we would be a force to be reckoned with next year!

So what's next for me? I'm concentrating on training on the water at the moment and the skills required are totally different so in this category so I'm classed as a novice. My next challenge for indoor rowing is the



Sir Bradley Wiggins raced against Mike but could not match his pace. (Photo credit: British Rowing/Naomi Baker)

Midlands Championships in April this year; having won it last year I would like to try to retain my title as well as smashing my previous best time. I'm pleased to say that the RAF Sports Board have now categorised indoor rowing as a category 3 sport so we

can now also compete at Inter-Service level. The other RAF competitors and I are really looking forward to competing with a real prospect of winning the first military competition in this sport.

by Cpl Mike Barnes

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Recent Drone Symposia

As regular readers will know, I have been striving single-handedly to inform and educate drone operators on the need for care and consideration when using their machines. As always, this does not mean that I am against the technology in the slightest but I am extremely keen to avoid any unfortunate incidents. Getting out and about to spread the word takes up a fair chunk of my time but I see it as essential in my role as the RAF Shawbury Station Flight Safety Officer.

Two events that I attended recently will give you some idea of the breadth and scale of the development of drone technology and why I have some concerns about their use but remain hopeful that I have played a part in preventing an accident.

Drones for Farming Conference – Harper Adams University 9th November 2017

Harper Adams University (HAU) have been at the forefront of drone use in agriculture for at least the past 5 years. They had a world first this year when a small team of scientists there completed their 'Hands Free Hectare' project. This project involved carrying out all agricultural tasks including ploughing, seeding, weed killing, fertilising and ultimately harvesting the crop, on a dedicated field within the university without any manual involvement. It is a great success story and many congratulations to Jonathan Gill and his team. A lot of the tasks involved the use of drones with the eye on the ever growing market. We could be seeing drones on every farm in the not too distant future.

In November, Harper Adams hosted their Drones for Farming Conference and invited me along as one of their guests. The annual event brings together a wealth of drone users and potential customers from all across the UK and also includes guest speakers from abroad. 2017 was no different. The day was very informative and I was able to give my backing to everybody's efforts while emphasising the requirement for all operators and customers to remain vigilant to other airspace users, particularly low flying



military aircraft. The next evolution of drone use appears to be the use of the machines beyond visual sight which I of course jumped on and made the case that it should only be used if there are strict safeguards in place. There was a consensus and a recognition of the responsibilities of drone operators after that so it shows the benefit of attending this event.

We will hopefully be carrying out another live flying trial with HAU later this year to try and hone the best level of conspicuity both visually and electronically to try and increase the awareness of drones to our aircrew. I will keep you posted.

Mid & West Wales Fire Rescue Service Drone Conference – Carmarthen 23rd November 2017

The second event I attended regarding drones was at the headquarters of Dyfed Powys Police in Carmarthen, again in November.

At our last live crash exercise at Chetwynd landing field there were a number of different emergency services who expressed a desire to use drones to carry out their work. They varied from the Fire Service wanting to use thermal cameras for fire detection and hot spots, the police to control the cordon, and the Mountain Rescue Team using one for searching for missing people. Each service had merit in their desire to harness the technology but as a Flight

Safety professional I raised a concern. Imagine an already dynamic site with aircraft parts and potentially bodies and injured personnel amongst them. There would be dozens upon dozens of personnel from various services as well as potentially members of the public gathering to take a look. There would no doubt be media interest which could involve a TV news helicopter flying in the same area as the Police helicopter and the Heli-ambulance. Now the services want to add a multitude of drones into the mix with no coordination. It could make matters worse.

My recommendation that there should be coordination in the use of drones by the emergency services resulted in an invitation to the Mid & West Wales Fire Rescue Service Drone Conference in Carmarthen. There were representatives there from all the emergency services from across Wales and England. It was the first such event but proved that there are loads of dedicated professionals all wanting to use their machines as efficiently and as safely as possible. From my point of view, I had an impromptu speaking part and was able to clarify a lot of points and explain what we try to achieve with our low flying and where and when it can be expected. I was also able to impart a lot of professional knowledge that should prevent any new wheels being invented and hopefully prevent any near misses or incidents between drones and manned aircraft.

There were a few questions about deconflicting their drone operations if they are asked to fly in the same airspace as manned aircraft or alongside other drones. I pointed out that they could deconflict their flying by remembering the acronym TAG: Time, Altitude or Geography. I used examples of how these would work and a post conference report should include these.



A Medium Size Drone

The other main question was what was the best way to use a drone to search for missing people. I briefed the SAR search patterns that I was taught many moons ago when I did my first helicopter training and gave diagrammatic notes on Expanding Box and Cloverleaf patterns amongst others. As far as I am concerned we are all on the same team and,

if a family member of mine was in need of assistance, I would want the emergency services to be as proficient as possible so it really is a no-brainer to share this information. I was really impressed with their dedication and I have no doubt that the use of drones by the emergency services will become an everyday sight and there were plenty of examples of how the

drones have already been used to great success.

I will continue to strive to raise awareness and educate drone users and I am pleased to see that the RAF Safety Centre has now come on board and picked up my reins. They have even taken forward my idea for the RAF to sponsor a drone racing event, hopefully this year. I see it as a great way to continue the education theme plus we can use it as a potential recruitment source as our own aircraft will eventually become pilotless so why don't we capture the best of the talent as early as possible?

If any readers out there have any ideas for informing and engaging with drone operators then I would be delighted to hear from you. Please get in touch on 01939 250351 extension 6666.

DHFS NEWS

Major Rod Tracy leaves RAF Shawbury and the Army Air Corps

Gaining his 'Wings' on 9 September 1981 flying the Bell 47 'Sioux', Major (Maj) Rod Tracy has served as aircrew for 36 years on a myriad of tours and aircraft across the globe. Rod's flying career with the Army Air Corps (AAC) began at 662 Squadron based in Germany, but has seen him on exchange tours with the Swiss Army, as a Lynx Flight Commander and Officer Commanding 655 Squadron AAC in Northern Ireland and Chief Operations Officer to the United Nations in Sierra Leone.

At RAF Shawbury, he commanded 660 Squadron AAC and instructed on Central Flying School (Helicopters) and Defence Helicopter Flying School Standards. Maj Tracy has had an extraordinary career amassing over 8000 hours. His last flight in the service was in the newest training helicopter the Airbus H135 Juno which comes in to full service in April, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Jon Dufton. Rod will be greatly missed at Shawbury and is wished a very happy retirement.



Champagne presented to Maj Rod Tracy by Lt Col Jon Dufton after his last flight in the AAC flown on the new Juno aircraft.

GRADUATIONS



*Joint Air Traffic Controllers Course
421 on their Graduation.*

HONOURS & AWARDS

RAF Shawbury Personnel Named In The New Year's Honours List 2018

Military personnel from RAF Shawbury have been honoured in the Military commendations list, announced in conjunction with the New Year Honours List 2018.

The Station Commander and personnel at RAF Shawbury were delighted to see a total of three awards which have all been announced within the main honours list:

Air Officer Commanding 2 Group Commendation was awarded to the following person at RAF Shawbury.
Flight Lieutenant M A Kelman MBE

Air Officer Commanding 22 Training Group Commendations were awarded to the following personnel at RAF Shawbury.
Squadron Leader A P Vine
Sergeant A Deakin

Group Captain Chuck Norris, the Station Commander at RAF Shawbury said: "I am delighted to see that personnel at RAF Shawbury have been 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 safety and world-leading training at RAF Shawbury. The recipients will all receive their awards during special ceremonies to be held at RAF Shawbury during 2018 and I look forward to congratulating them and their families."

Best Airwoman Award Cpl Sherry Flanagan

Cpl Sherry Flanagan constantly displays the attributes associated with a more senior and experienced JNCO. Her work ethic and commitment to the PEd Flt and RAF Shawbury is outstanding and has resulted in several laudatory letters from OCs on station. Her commitment to personal fitness and standards are a credit to the RAF and the trade. One example was when she completed the 100km Thames Pathway run in just over 16 hours finishing as the 24th woman; an amazing achievement. Out of the working environment, to develop her JNCO qualities further, and in contributing to the wider service community, Cpl Flanagan has engaged with various station tasks and events, including organising and running several station charity events raising nearly £700. This included single-handedly organising and running (and baking for) the MacMillan Coffee morning raising £380 and beating previous coffee morning events. She also planned and co-ordinated RAF Shawbury's part in the 'Row for Rob' event raising £300. Cpl Flanagan's work ethic, enthusiasm and can do attitude is a credit to both the PEd Flt and RAF Shawbury.





RAF STATIONS CHALLENGE CUP 2018

Step up for your Station and support the RAF Benevolent Fund

Take on a challenge of your choosing in 2018 and raise money for the RAF Benevolent Fund, while helping your Station to be crowned winners of the RAF Stations Challenge Cup 2018.

The winning Station will be unveiled at the RAF Benevolent Fund's annual Awards ceremony in London. Stations will be judged by funds raised per head of establishment - so all Stations, no matter their size, are in with an equal chance of winning.

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If you are interested or would like to find out more contact challenge@rafbf.org.uk



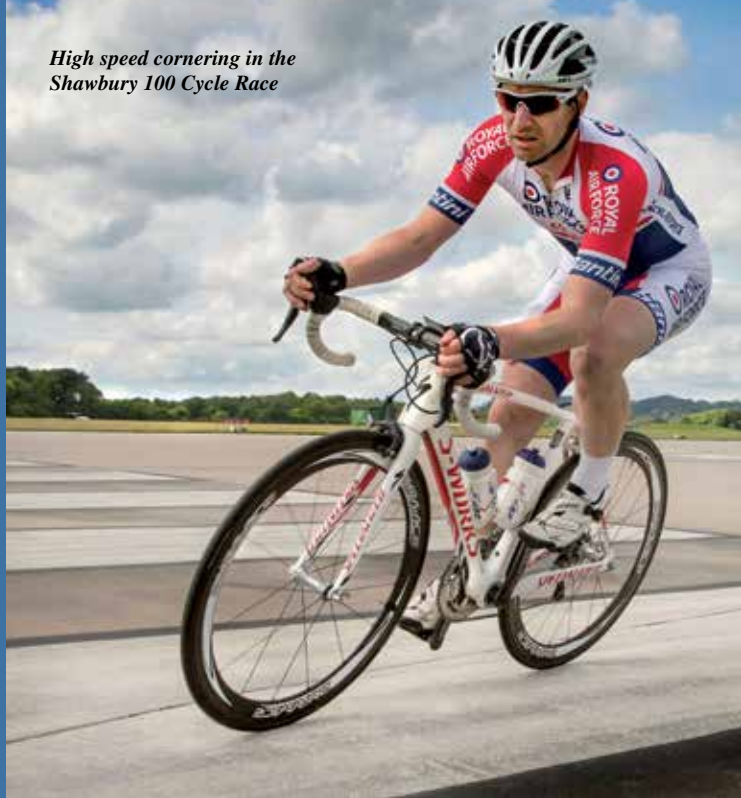
**Royal Air Force
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THE HEART OF THE RAF FAMILY

2017 PHOTOGRAPHIC REVIEW

Pulling power in the CO's Cup



High speed cornering in the Shawbury 100 Cycle Race



Jupiter lift off

When Ian Forshaw our station photographer was asked which were his personal favourite images of 2017 he produced these 12 shots which we would like to share with our readers; we hope you like them?



The Falcons drop in



Live football action



Three-legged fun in the CO's Cup

Airborne ballet, the Chinook



Everyone's favourites - Reds and dogs



Working the Tower as the sun sets



Pumping iron



Glancing on parade

The Officers' Mess covered in snow

RAF Shawbury records COLDEST temperature in the UK

At 5:10am on the morning of 12th December 2017, the dry bulb temperature sensor, housed in the met square at RAF Shawbury, recorded a temperature of -13 degrees Celsius. Due its rural location, and natural geographic position, temperatures at RAF Shawbury have been known to fall dramatically on clear winter nights. Shropshire has a history of recording low temperatures, such as those reported on 10th January 1982, when -26 degrees Celsius was recorded at Edgmond, Newport.

The Station has extensive snow and ice plans in force as the safety of personnel is important, along with consideration of the environment.

As the airfield is situated on an aquifer which supplies water to the Station, the use of de-icing products is managed very carefully. A preventative product called ISOMEX is used as it has no detrimental effect on the environment. The impact of clearing snow and ice from runways is also considered, as degradation to surfaces must be prevented. Sometimes it is better to let nature take its course!

The base was visited by BBC Midlands Today and RAF Shawbury was reported as being the coldest place in the on BBC National News!



Snowplough hard at work



Moreton Corbet Castle in the snow



Falklands War Veterans Meet 35 Years Later

A chance encounter has occurred, some 35 years after first crossing paths, in Kathmandu, the Capital of the Himalayan country of Nepal.

Flight Lieutenant (Retired) Gary Rogan was in Nepal, over Christmas, as part of the team from RAF Shawbury representing the RAF Taking Football to Africa and Beyond Charitable Appeal delivering 'Aid through Football' in schools and orphanages.

The visit, organised by the Appeal Coordinator, Wing Commander Neil Hope MBE, was organised with the assistance and co-operation of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme. On arrival in Kathmandu, Neil met with the Senior Area Welfare Officer for the Bagmati (Central) Region on behalf of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme, Captain (Retired) Purna Limbu, to discuss the schools and orphanages the team were to deliver to on 16 December. On explaining who the team members were Neil and Purna realised a possible link between Purna and Gary.

In 1982, Gary, then a 24 year old Sergeant Air Loadmaster (Crewman), was one of the crew on the famous Chinook helicopter ZA728 BN, in the Falklands War. BN became famous as the helicopter was the only one airborne when the Atlantic Conveyor was hit and sunk on 25 May 1982. As such it became the workhorse for the British forces throughout the conflict flying long hours in support



Gary Rogan and Purna Limbu

of the troops. Gary was in the back of BN when it hit the South Atlantic during a snow storm and miraculously recovered to fly on. It transpired that Purna was in the same place at the same time and would have flown in the back of the Chinook, with Gary during the conflict.

Purna Limbu joined the 7th Gurkha Rifles in 1980 and served for 28 years. At the time of their deployment to the Falklands Purna was the most junior rifleman en-route with the Ghurkha's, being just 18 years old. Purna, originally from a small village in Nepal called Shankhuwasable, fought in many battles in the war and would have been transported, with B Company, by Gary and the crew of BN from San Carlos Bay

to Goose Green on 2 June 1982. The Ghurkha's had travelled to the Falklands on the Canberra cruise ship and landed as part of 5 Brigade at San Carlos on 1 June. Purna remembers that the Ghurkha's loaded into the Chinook stood up to squeeze more in.

After serving in the Falklands both men had incredibly successful careers in their respective services. Gary finally retired in 2017 having spent the last years of his

service as an Instructor on the Defence Helicopter Flying School. He and his wife Rita have now relocated and live in southern Spain. Purna went on to serve across the world including in Hong Kong, Brunei, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, USA and Norway. He also served at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst as a Training Officer. He retired in 2008 and took up his current role. Purna has a son in the Royal Signals and another in University in England. His wife lives in Kent and he visits every 6 months.

This was an amazing chance meeting. Gary and Purna chatted at length about their previous encounter and the conflict. At the time neither was actually aware of each other.

By Wg Cdr Neil Hope MBE

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The cockpit view of an F16 Fighting Falcon

RAF SHAWBURY'S MODEL FLYING CLUB



*Front View of Prototype ERADO E555
Long Range German Bomber*



The Vulcan



RAF Shawbury Model Flying Club exists due to the kind permission of the Station Commander. It is a RAFMAA Affiliated club which has a membership of 40 members, made up of serving members, civil servants, contractors and local civilians, who fly all sorts of models from basic small electric powered gliders all the way through to third scale Hawks, that many of you will have seen flying at last year's Families Day.

For such a small club we have a wide range of very talented model pilots. The two Red Arrow pilots,



Red Arrow pair



RAF Shawbury Model Flying Club Meeting.



F16 Fighting Falcon

Steve and Matt Bishop have twice won the Model Jet Formation World Championship. Colin Dilloway and Stu McFarlane, from Shawbury CMT, have both represented their country at World Championship level in the discipline of electric pylon racing where up to three models fly a triangular course at speeds of up to 200mph.

This year Stuart won the British Championship League for electric pylon racing and another member managed to finish third in the National Gliding League.

Two of our members continue to fly models under the banner of the Model Assault Glider Team where they use a large 12 foot wingspan Douglas DC3, or Dakota as it is better known, to tow up a nine foot wingspan model of a Horsa glider who's most renowned mission was the two major air assaults of 1944, Overlord

and Market Garden, delivering many thousands of men to landing grounds on the continent. Flying in tandem like this is difficult to say the least but extremely impressive when you watch it from the ground.

With all this success you would be forgiven for thinking that the club is all about Competition flying, but the club welcomes members of all levels from beginner to expert and has its own training model which can be connected to two transmitters to help newcomers learn the ropes.

The Club flies mainly at weekends and can be found operating on the other side of the airfield in the vicinity of AMSU, which effectively puts the area out of bounds to anyone without an airfield driving permit. If you want to have a look at what we do or would like to join the club then give Stu McFarlane a ring on extension 7499 or Frank Fletcher on extension 7250 and we can arrange to get you over to have a look.

by Stu McFarlane



Model of Prototype ERADO E555 Long Range German Bomber



Built for Speed - Stu McFarlane's model once held the UK speed record over 200mph



Member of Parliament For North Shropshire Visits RAF Shawbury

On Friday 12th January 2018, RAF Shawbury was delighted to welcome the Rt Hon Owen Paterson, Conservative MP for North Shropshire.

The aim of the visit was to gain greater understanding of the world-leading training delivered at the School of Air Operations Control and the Defence Helicopter Flying School.

The visit started with an introduction by the Station Commander, Group Captain Chuck Norris, and included a briefing on the future training developments at RAF Shawbury. A contract placed with Ascent, with Airbus Helicopter UK as a sub-contractor, will deliver Airbus 135 Juno HT1 helicopters



Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP signs the visitors book.

and hoist-equipped H145 Jupiter HT1 helicopters. The first helicopters have already been seen in the skies above Shropshire as they prepare to enter full time service at RAF Shawbury from April 2018. The contract, which will run until 2033, also includes the capacity to train up to 286 students annually across all three components of the UK's Armed Services, the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and Army Air Corps.

After the introduction, Mr Paterson was shown the new buildings, helicopters and cutting edge synthetic helicopter simulators that will ensure that RAF Shawbury will continue to provide world leading helicopter training for many years. After seeing the new helicopter training buildings, he then toured the School of Air Operations Control (SAOC), which not only trains Air Traffic Controllers for both the RAF and the Royal Navy but also trains Flight Operations Assistants



Rt Hon Mr Owen Paterson MP sees a JUNO helicopter from the pilots seat.

and Flight Operations Officers.

Group Captain Chuck Norris, the Station Commander at RAF Shawbury said: "It was a pleasure to welcome the Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP to RAF Shawbury today and to explain how we currently deliver training and our exciting plans for the future. The investment in helicopter training in Shropshire is further confirmation by the Ministry of Defence that RAF Shawbury will remain one of the core RAF bases for years to come. I have highlighted to Mr Paterson that we are very grateful for the support of the local community in enabling us to deliver our task."



Stn Cdr and Rt Hon Mr Owen Paterson MP in front of the JUNO helicopter.



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Ex SHINING ENDEAVOUR

Conquer Mera Peak

by *Flt Lt Charlie Gawne*

As the sun began to rise over the majestic mountains of the Himalayas, filling the sky with hues of red, blood orange, and yellow, the Expedition Shining Endeavour team, made up of staff from the Defence College of Airspace Control, were a few hours into the hardest day of their lives. After a year of planning and 9 months of training, this was the moment it had all been building towards and little could have prepared them for the effects on their bodies and the mental strength it took to put one foot in front of the other and continue upwards towards the 6476m summit of Mera Peak. But let's rewind 15 days to the moment they stepped off the flight in Kathmandu and the adventure began...

Kathmandu is an assault on the senses. The airport is like no other, where the visa application procedure surpasses their security procedures and the baggage hall is a free-for-all where the seemingly stringent checking of baggage labels on exit did little to prevent one of our bags being left behind. When you get outside, you are hit by the chaos of taxi drivers and locals to 'help' with your bags. We found our trekking company agent and were hustled into a minibus, adorned with orange carnation garlands and then left what turned out to be the 'sanctuary' of the airport and hit the streets of Kathmandu. Here the roads were ruled by those with the loudest horn; cars fit through gaps half their size; and pedestrians appeared invincible as vehicles seemed to miss them against all the odds. This would be our home for the next few days as Robin

and Nicky prepared for the exped with a trip to the British Embassy to collect sat phones. As we got used to the chaos and dust of the city we were able to appreciate the beauty and quiet of the Buddhist temples we came across and the colour and vibrancy of Thamel - the rabbit warren of shops where souvenirs, books and questionable mountaineering equipment could be bought.

A few days later

we were back at the airport in the even more disorganised domestic terminal for our flight to Lukla. Here our bags were weighed and then, much to our surprise, we were weighed (the scales seemed to be out by at least 5kg, honestly!), all to ensure the flight was not overloaded for the hair raising landing into Lukla. The flight itself was not as bad as we had feared. The small Dornier-228 held our team plus 2 others and an air hostess whose only job seemed to be to hand out sweets- no safety demonstration given for perhaps the most risky flight of our lives! After 20 minutes of flying very close to the mountains below and gazing at the snow topped giants in the distance, the runway came into sight and within moments we had touched down and were roaring along the tarmac towards a wall a mere 1700ft ahead. As we swung

off the runway onto the dispersal we had survived the first danger. Now we just had to tackle 16 days of trekking, sub-zero temperatures and symptoms of altitude sickness, the degree of which we no idea of at the moment we stepped out from Lukla onto the trail.



Keeping warm at base camp



Base camp and the distant summit



The first few steps on the glacier



Lukla

The first 3 days of our trek were frustrating in a way. Our route took us in and out of valleys and it would appear that the Nepalese favour a direct routing! As such we climbed and descended relentlessly, but not in an undulating manner, I mean we climbed for hours before losing all that altitude again as we descended for the next few hours (over and over again). We gained and lost thousands of meters but never gained any overall height from where we set out from, in fact we ended up lower! However, these 3 days served to kick start our acclimatisation to the altitude and perhaps strengthened our legs for the weeks ahead. The environment also came as a surprise to some, as we were trekking through forest for the majority of the time. We were still in the foothills effectively and other than a few glimpses of the snow topped mountains, we could not appreciate what was to come.

Finally after days of the close, warm forests we started to gain altitude consistently and we made it into the rockier, more barren landscape that we had been expecting and we began to really feel like we were in the Himalayas. Having now reached a sleeping altitude of 4200m we were starting to feel the cold more and for the first time our water bottles had frozen in the night. Each morning as we sat cocooned in our down jackets we would wait with anticipation for the sun to come around the mountains as it had an instant warming effect that would see us stripping off the layers. Having climbed to 4200m, camping in a bowl alongside 5 beautiful lakes, we then descended into the valley that would lead us eventually to the foot of Mera Peak. This valley had been carved out by a glacier, similar to the geographic landscapes of the mountain regions in the UK but on a scale hard to describe. The glacial moraine consisted of boulders bigger than tower blocks and cold, blue waters came roaring in rapids from glaciers that had long since retreated up the valley. All this conspired to make us feel tiny and insignificant as we trekked day by day through the valley and closer to our goal. By day 7 we had our first glimpse of that goal as we saw the snowy triple summit of Mera Peak high above the surrounding mountains.

Having dropped into the Valley we were now making steady progress, gaining altitude and on the whole acclimatising well. Some team members complained of headaches and difficulty sleeping but nothing to cause major concern. As the altitude increased and the air thinned we noticed more and more, the necessity to walk slowly. Lactic acid was very quick to saturate the legs on the gentlest of inclines, and our bodies were not receiving the degree of oxygen required to combat it. The only option was a slow pace and plenty of rests. During this stage of the expedition we took 2 acclimatisation days where we staying in the same locations for 2 consecutive



The return to Lukla

nights to allow us to adjust to the ever increasing altitude. We filled these days with short walks to gain a little more altitude but then to recover lower and also to practice our rope work that would be necessary on the glacier later on.

Following the 2nd acclimatisation day on day 12, we were now getting to the business end of the expedition. On day 13 we departed from Khare, heading for Mera La, the glacier that would be our home for the next 2 nights. By now a few of us had succumbed to bad colds, further hampering our laboured breathing and increasing the exhaustion, but we were able to maintain the slow pace none-the-less. After hours of traversing rocky moraine, we reached the glacier where we donned our harnesses, helmets, winter mountaineering boots and crampons and then roped together in teams of 3 for safety, should any crevasses open up beneath us. Now late in the morning, the sun was beating down on the glacier and bouncing off the snow, so despite the high altitude it was very warm as we made our slow progress towards base camp. On reaching base camp, the clouds rolled in, obscuring the sun and the temperature plummeted. Half the team opted for their sleeping bags to stay warm while the other half all squeezed into a 2 man tent and reaped the benefits of collective body heat as we ate our 'room service' dinner. As we returned to our own tents after night-fall the clouds had collected in the valley below and we were treated to the spectacular sight of the night sky with no light or air pollution.

The following day we continued up the glacier to high camp and it was slightly alarming how a matter of just 2-3 kilometres distance could take nearly 3 hours to complete. Upon reaching high camp we wished we had not made the effort- it was a hugely unpleasant place to be. With a rock face on one side and a precipitous cliff on the other we had to tread very carefully to remain safe, particularly as tents clung on wherever there was a semblance of 'flat' ground and guy ropes threatened to trip you up with every step. When we saw Tim drop Robin's sleeping bag and it bounce into said precipice to a glacier below, it hit home how precarious our situation was. Furthermore there was no designated or discreet area to relieve oneself and as such throughout the climbing season, people had been to the toilet wherever was convenient, presumably under the cover of darkness.

Luckily we did not need to remain in high camp for long as we were woken at 0200 to begin our summit trek early with

time to reach the top and return all the way back to Khare afterwards. With the simplest of tasks difficult to complete at altitude, we were finally fed, kitted up and roped together ready to walk by 0320ish. For the first time on the trek we felt the full effects of the cold as we trekked for hours in darkness. We estimated it was in the region of -15 to -20, the cold increasing as we got higher. For most, it was the hands that we struggled to keep warm. Despite the extra thick mountain gloves, the only remedy was to walk with our gloved hands in the pockets of our down jackets. For Robin, his commitment to holding the rope for his team, led to frostbite on the tip of his left middle finger, which had turned black a few days later. As the sun rose, the beauty of the sunrise lifted our spirits but unfortunately did not provide the warmth we had been hoping for.

Despite having suffered the exhausting effects of altitude for days already, nothing could really have prepared us for the difficulty of that final climb. Writing this now, from the comfort of my office in the UK, it's hard to recall the depth of that difficulty but from what I remember, I can only liken it to feeling like an elderly person, with emphysema and a reliance on a Zimmer frame trying to climb a mountain. The ascent was relentless, with hidden summit after hidden summit taunting us all the way and with such a slow pace the summit never seemed any closer. Eventually, after 5 hours, we reached a flat area just below the summit where we ditched our day sacks and embarked on the last hundred metres. It is hard to quantify the sense of achievement we all felt as we reached the summit. We had all had moments in the days and hours preceding where we did not think we could make it but to have the whole team gathered at the top of Mera Peak, flying the RAF ensign, made every step worthwhile. The views were awesome, with Everest, Ama Dablam, Cho Oyu and Makalu (to name but a few) clear on the horizon. All the struggle of the previous 5 hours seemed to melt away in that moment and it was hugs all round as we admired the views.

Having reached the summit it would have been easy to switch off, but the expedition was not over. We had to get



down from the summit and then trek for 3 more days to get back to Lukla. The descent from the summit was surprisingly hard. Although we were going downhill, we were battling the exhaustion and dehydration that had built up throughout the day. We had to remain alert in order to stay safe on the glacier and through the moraine field at the bottom. When we eventually made it safely back to Khare we celebrated with yak steak and chips and a very early night!

The next 3 days were some of the hardest on the trek (other than the summit days obviously). To get back to Lukla we would be crossing the Zatrwa La (La meaning 'pass') which would take us back up to 4800m, before descending into Lukla. Very steep paths lay before us and on the north facing slope of the final descent we were faced with unexpected icy conditions that made the going slow and treacherous. When we finally walked, triumphant into Lukla, it was with relief that no one had picked up any injuries on the final few days. We celebrated in style this time, with a beer in the ubiquitous local Irish bar before another yak steak dinner and a party in the tea house with our porters.

As we flew out of Lukla the following morning and gazed out of the window at the distant snow-capped mountains it was hard to believe that only a few days earlier we had been on top of the world (or as close as) and all we could do was contemplate this trip of a lifetime.

Traversing the glacier



High camp



The Expedition Shining Endeavour team would like to offer their sincere thanks to all those that made the trip possible. Back in the UK we had the support of 22Gp, The Defence College of Airspace Control, the RAF Sports Board, and our generous sponsors Aquila. In country we were looked after by Himalayan Ecstasy, under the watchful eye of Anil and the friendship of Subash. They were tireless in their dedication to make the trip run smoothly and keep us safe, happy and well fed. Our British mountain leaders, Al and Duncan, came into their own the minute we stepped onto snow and they graciously gave way to our hugely experienced Nepalese guides, Naren, Anuk and Dendi- all Everest conquerors! To organise this trip has been a group effort, but none of it would have happened without the initial idea and tireless efforts of our exped leader Wg Cdr Robin Stedman. It's said he is now looking forward to returning to the UK to run the School of Air Operations Control with or without his frostbitten finger. Well, until next time...

RAF 100

What RAF100 means to me: • Commemorate • Celebrate • Inspire

Commemorating 100 years of achievement and sacrifice, celebrating professionalism and dedication, whilst inspiring future generations, are all opportunities that celebrating the RAF's 100 year anniversary is providing. Launching officially on 1 April 2018, with a Founders Service at St Clement Danes Church and a RAF 100 baton relay, the celebrations will last for approximately 6 months.

However, this milestone is greater than 6 months of celebrating for many people. All those that have served in and worked with the RAF throughout the past 100 years, have their stories and tales to pass on. These should be treasured and re-told at every opportunity. Why

do I say this? No matter how long you serve for, or how long ago, you will always carry a little piece of the RAF with you. It will always make up part of who you are as an individual, and at times you will search for those memories when strength is needed.



Grandad and I after a flight together

My Grandad, served with Bomber Command in Burma during the Second World War, on the Liberator. I had the privilege of flying with him as I was growing up, and listening to very mixed tales of his time in the RAF. Some of them very sad and some very funny, and I noticed that he always had a glazed look afterwards, as though he had gone back in time, and the right here and now vanished. In his final days he spoke a lot of the RAF, and at times

he truly was in the Burma of 1944. He was concerned with getting the engineers to sign 700's and if we managed to sneak in a whisky for him, he would point out he wasn't flying until the morning so it was ok. The stand out comment was one that I will never forget, "I need to get my crew home safely, the crew". That was our last conversation, and yes it's upsetting, but for him he was with his RAF family, and that was his strength.

I ask you all to cherish and pass on your memories, talk



Grandad Friar in his WWII Uniform

to previous generations and leave your mark in history. For me it isn't just about marking 100 years, it is about the legacy of those that have gone before us, and the legacy we leave for those after us.

Fg Off Samantha Kerr



Standing next to one of the actual Liberators my Grandad flew in, now at the RAF Museum Hendon.

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Army Bids Farewell to The Lynx Helicopter *in Style*

On 16th January, the Army paid special tribute to one of its most ubiquitous aviation assets, as it bowed out of service.



Lynx landing for fuel at RAF Shawbury

Lynx helicopters depart after refuelling



Lynx helicopters queue for their re-fuel

The Lynx helicopter has had a long and distinguished career with the British Army stretching back nearly 40 years. Described as a primary battlefield utility helicopter, the venerable Lynx entered service in 1978 and since then has been used to destroy tanks, evacuate the wounded, gather intelligence, provide humanitarian support, rescue those in peril, wow the crowds at air shows and much more besides. It has proven itself across the globe in such exacting locations as the freezing plains of Northern Canada, the steaming jungles of South East Asia and Central America, the sub-zero environment of the Arctic to the dust bowls of the Middle East and has supported British troops on active service in Bosnia, Kuwait, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone. However, age has finally caught up with the Lynx and although it will be a tough act to follow, the Wildcat helicopter will replace the Lynx. With its superior avionics, updated engines and improved capability it too will prove a formidable force over any battlefield of the future. To mark the Lynx's decommissioning from British Army service, the Army Air Corps flew four of the last remaining airframes from RAF Odiham in Hampshire, where they were based, on a commemorative tour around England taking in some of the sites and locations to which the aircraft was most fondly associated, one of these being RAF Shawbury. Since 1997, all Army pilots and crewmen have been trained to fly helicopters at the Defence Helicopter Flying School, RAF Shawbury where they trained on Squirrel and Griffin helicopters before moving on to fly frontline helicopters such as the Lynx. On arrival at RAF Shawbury, the 4 Lynx helicopters undertook a rotors running refuel from the RAF's Tactical Supply Wing and our photographer Ian Forshaw was on hand to capture some stunning images.

Commanding Officer of 657 Squadron, Major James Peycke, said: "bidding farewell to the iconic machine is a huge moment for everyone who has flown the Lynx over the years. It is hugely emotional saying goodbye to the Lynx after six years of flying and it carves out a big chunk of your heart." Describing the aircraft as "hugely manoeuvrable", Maj Peycke said there is "never a dull day when you are flying one."

Lynx refuelling with commemorative tail colours



YOU CHOOSE

The 2018 RAF Shawbury Charities

As you may be aware, every year the station selects two charities which will benefit from all fundraising events organised through the Station Charities Committee; last year's charities were the Newport Community First Responders and the RAF Benevolent Fund. From mid-January, Station personnel and their families will have the opportunity to choose which charity will benefit from the 2018 charity activities.

During December station personnel were asked to nominate charities and the Station Charity Committee took a vote and the final three were shortlisted. Whilst all of these charities are thoroughly great causes we have to select only two which will benefit from the stations charity endeavours. This is where we need you to help us select your preferred charities.

A 'Penny for your thoughts' voting station has been installed in The Aries Club to allow everyone to vote for their favourite charity by putting a coin in the box. This way not only will everyone at RAF Shawbury have a say as to where that money goes but you will also be kick-starting the 2018 fundraising at the same time. Later in February the coins will be tallied up, and the two charities with the most donations will be declared as Shawbury's Nominated Charities for 2018. The charity that comes in third place will receive all of the coins that you place in their box during the voting period, meaning that no one will lose out.

The three shortlisted charities are detailed below:

SHROPSHIRE DEAF CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

The Shropshire Deaf Children's Society (SDCS) is a charity aimed at improving the lives of deaf children in Shropshire; providing specialist equipment and learning support for individuals and schools. This includes making help available within the school, but also organising events to allow deaf children to meet other children with the same condition and share their experiences, building confidence and self-esteem. It is a self-funded self-supporting charity, which was originally established over 60 years ago by teachers and parents of deaf children.

In recent years SDCS has provided invaluable support for 5/6 Forces families at RAF Shawbury and Cosford, Copthorne Barracks and MOD Donnington. SDCS has been recognised as the one of the leading charities in Great Britain for the support of deaf children and their families. The quality and provision of this support can only be sustained by the generous support of people of Shropshire and those that have benefitted from the services provided.

For more details about the charity please visit: www.sdcs.org.uk



DMRC HEADLEY COURT BENEVOLENT FUND

The Benevolent Fund at Headley Court offers much needed breaks for patients stuck at Centre during their rehabilitation. Organising trips for service personnel to break up the boredom of weeks spent on rehab, such as football and rugby matches and transport to local attractions. In addition, they run a minibus to the local town of Epsom at the weekend to pick up essentials, a vital service when many individuals are unable to drive due to their injuries and would otherwise be confined to the Rehab Centre.

With Headley court due to move to Loughborough soon, the Benevolent Fund will move too, to help service personnel here as well.

More details about the work done at DMRC Headley Court can be found at <https://www.raf.mod.uk/PMRAFNS/organisation/dmrcheadleycourt.cfm>

More details on the charity can be found at <http://beta.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?regid=1144331&subid=0>



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

The RBL has been chosen specifically for the work they do at the Battleback Centre in Lilleshall, Shropshire. This centre provides essential support for wounded, injured and sick Service personnel to assist them in their recovery back into Service life or in the smooth transition to civilian life. The Centre is Army-led, but funded and delivered by the Royal British Legion and available to personnel of any Service, as well as veterans. A £27million investment allowed the Centre to become one of the best facilities of its kind in the world, but does come with on-going running costs.

As well as Battleback, the RBL provides help and support to veterans and serving personnel and their families in numerous ways; from jobs, financial and careers advice, to medical funds, household adaptation and care homes for veterans.

For more details about the charity please visit www.britishlegion.org.uk or

<http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-support/recovery/the-battle-back-centre/>



Clothing Stores Christmas Fundraiser

Every year clothing stores have a raffle for a nominated charity; this year they chose "Hope House".

The raffle can only take place through the generosity of both the staff and their supporters; this year members of staff donated a number of items such as chocolates, sparkling wine and preserves which made up a cracking Christmas hamper. They sold raffle tickets to personnel across RAF Shawbury throughout November and early December. With a crowd gathered the lucky ticket was drawn and the winner of the 1st Prize -

Christmas Hamper was Nicola Jones, DSS Manager.

The staff were thrilled when they totted up their ticket sales to realise they had managed to raise £450.00 which has now been passed on to Hope House. This brought their 2017 fundraising to a close for 2017 and in total they have managed to raise £1300. The staff would like to say a huge thank you to you all and they look forward to everyone's continued support for 2018.



Diane Rees Ben Meade 1st prize winner Nicola Jones Sue Day and Phil Smith

By Mr Jim Greer

Pre-Christmas Fancy Dress Charity Fun Run

The station gymnasium staff organised a fundraising fancy dress fun run shortly before Christmas promoting fitness whilst simultaneously raising money for charity.

Organiser, Corporal Sherry Flanagan said: "This was a great opportunity to show our support for our nominated Station Charities, the RAF Benevolent Fund and Newport First Responders; not only did the participants have a



And they're off!

great time but they also raised £40 for the charities".

All of the participants really enjoyed the event and the winner was Flt Lt Rodrigues closely followed by Wg Cdr Collinge and Sgt Tomkinson. The Station Adjutant Fg Off Fowler took 1st place for the ladies, and Colin Woolley from the Central Registry got the prize for best fancy dress – he must have dressed himself that day! Thank you to all of who that attended and supported this event.

by Cpl Sherry Flanagan

Shree Landruk Primary School



Appeal Team Complete

A Charity Appeal based at RAF Shawbury has completed a delivery visit to the Himalayas over the Christmas period.

The team, delivering 'Aid through Football' via the RAF Shawbury based Taking Football to Africa and Beyond Appeal has delivered football kit in Nepal with the assistance of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme. Deliveries were made to schools and orphanages in the capital Kathmandu and schools in Pokhara, the home of the Gurkha Welfare Trust. Additional deliveries were made to schools in villages around the renowned Annapurna trail during a six day trek completed by the team.

The Appeal is based at RAF Shawbury and operates through the RAF Football Association. It began in 2006 and has delivered 127507 items, including 55743 football shirts to 55 countries worldwide to date.

Appeal organiser, Wing Commander Neil Hope MBE said "The Appeal continues to be an incredible success, over the years we have completed



Siphal Orphanage-Sandra Nevins



Shree Mahendra Secondary School at Lahachock - Neil Hope



Shree Landruk Primary School - Issy Tierney

Pokhara.



Deliveries In Nepal



Child at the Kathmandu Monkey Temple



Monkey Temple.



Shree Meshram Baraha Secondary School - Tesco - Leicester

delivery visits to Kenya in East Africa but this was the first undertaking of a full team visit to Nepal. During the 2 week visit the team delivered over 2500 items of kit donated by a multitude of clubs including, Shrewsbury Town, Manchester United, Leicester City, Everton, QPR and Wolverhampton Wanderers in addition to many others. The visit was a huge success bringing happiness to many children".

Control or Helicopter Training schools. In addition to delivering kits the team took time to promote the forthcoming 100th Anniversary of the Royal Air Force.

The Appeal will continue its work with a delivery trip to Kenya at Easter 2018.

by Wg Cdr Neil Hope MBE

The team was predominantly from RAF Shawbury and most had a link to the unit through either the Air Traffic



Shree Meshram Baraha Secondary School-Sandra Nevins



Tony Kinchley-Siphal Orphanage.



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