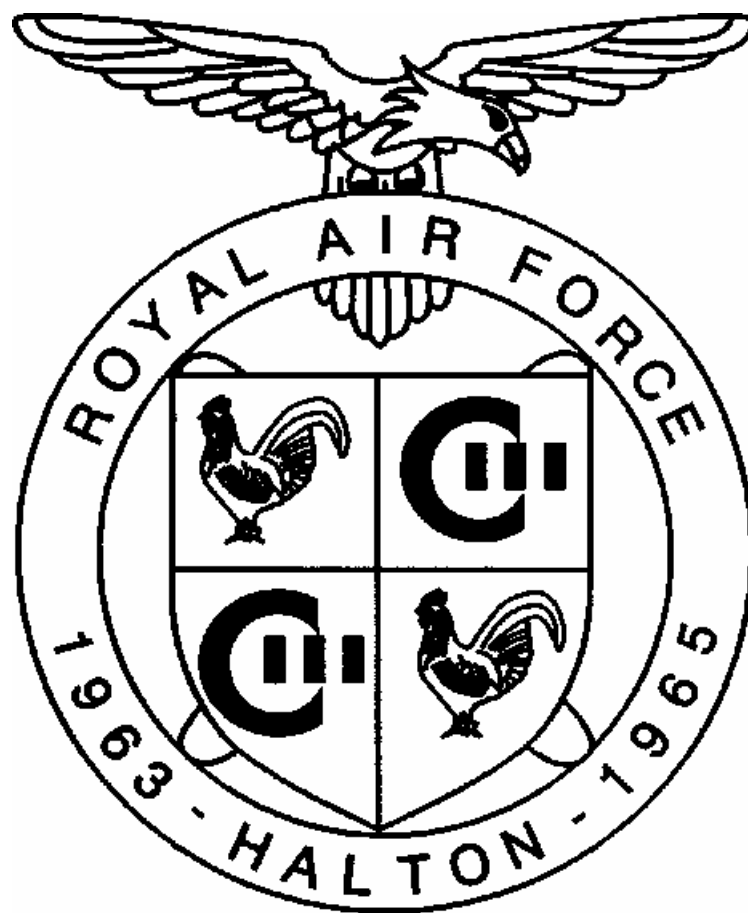


103rd Entry Association

Newsletter



No. 17

May 2000

Editor: MHF Watts

Editorial

We have three main areas on which to report this time around:

1. Ken Bannister continues to keep us informed about Ann's deteriorating health. As you will all know, Ann has supported the Entry and our Association by writing for this newsletter and hosting one of our committee meetings. Our thoughts are with Ann, Ken and the Bannister family at this very difficult time.
2. Our Entry window in the Halton church has also been a prominent Committee discussion point. Chris Wales has done some sterling work to produce a design for the window with which we are all now in broad agreement. A colour copy of the design is located on our web site. An extract of the page is attached, though the picture is small and black and white. Any comments please to Chris or the Committee. We will also be launching an Appeal to get the window inserted, more of which below.
3. And by no means least. The Reunion approaches FAST! We need to get commitment from all those who intend to come. The venue and organisation will be similar to the last Reunion in Stratford-upon-Avon, the date is the 11th November. There is a form attached, so please return it as soon as you can. You've had nearly 5 years to plan for this event, so there can be no excuses!

Dick Norton has made his play for the job as the new newsletter editor. Not only has he produced one of the longest letters, but he will shortly have time on his hands post retirement, and he clearly has a social conscience. Thanks for the update Dick.

We also had another letter from John Bromley's mum at Christmas, passing on her best wishes to the Entry.

John Dillon continues to do terrific job on our web site. However my apologies to all who failed to find it. One small typo was enough to confuse a few. The correct address is;

<http://homepages.tesco.net/~iohn.diHon1/>

Once again, any comments or contributions to:
john.dilon1@tesco.net

MW

Ann Bannister

6th March 2000

Ann has just spent the last month in a hospice where they have managed to get the pain in her back and ribs under control using morphine etc. In about two weeks time she will be starting a course of chemotherapy which will hopefully calm everything down a bit - but who knows!!

14th April 2000

Ann now back at home and comfortable. The steroids are making her feel a bit better, she is feeling a bit stronger. She is eating and drinking but not enough to keep a mouse alive. Ann has taken to raiding the fridge/freezer at 4 in the morning looking for frozen strawberries and ordering clothes, shoes etc from catalogues using her mobile phone so what can I say - 1 just pay the bill at the end of the month. She is now down in the dining room in a single bed which means at least she can get a good view of the garden etc so her quality of life is not too bad.

5th May 2000

Ann, I'm afraid, is deteriorating and it will not be much longer before she is no longer with me. I'm trying to make her limited time left comfortable for her but it is difficult to be cheerful under the circumstances. I don't think I'll be able to make the meeting in June but have a good one.

KB

The Window Appeal

As you may read on our web site, our Association are planning to spend up to £900 to get our window into St George's Church. The 'appeal account has already been opened by Brian Lee and the Committee, but we need more! We are asking for money for the Reunion, so while you've got your cheque book to hand, why not add a little extra as your contribution to the cause? To encourage you to respond positively, we are even enclosing a sae! Every little extra helps and it doesn't take a mathematician to work out that if everyone who attends the Reunion chips in an extra £10, we will clearly be well on our way.

A Letter from Dick Horton to John Dillon (22)

I have just come off the entry website and want to congratulate you on how good it is. Memories came back when I scrolled down through those photos. I wont say that memories came flooding back - very little floods at our age does it? I did however leave the site with fond memories, and a big lump in my throat especially for those who are no longer with us.

It's good to hear how life has panned out for the rest of us. I am lucky in as much as I still work with Ian Kennedy, Gary McMenemy and Roy Saunders. When I turn up for work at the BA Flight Simulator building, I sometimes see Terry Borne who works as a simulator engineer there. Dave Mathers worked for BA before he left for Cathay Pacific several years ago. I also remember meeting you, John. It was at RAF Kinloss. I was on 201 Squadron in those days and

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your aircraft lobbed in for the night. (Late 1960's I think, if you still keep your logbook around.)

My story since leaving Halton has panned out on similar lines to others that I have read about. The two threads that seem to run throughout are 'things mechanical'¹ and 'things avionic.' Not always successfully though I might add. I remember many years ago my wife giving me an electric drill as a birthday present. A not so subtle hint that things needed fixing around the house. I couldn't resist taking it apart to see how all the gearing worked. My undoing was that I was not as successful in trying to put it back together again. "Little woman" not impressed!

I was posted to Line Maintenance Squadron at RAF Lyneham after our graduation. Comet 2's, 4's and Britannias. I arrived overflowing with electrical know-how. For the first six months I was therefore tasked with changing light bulbs and aircraft batteries. My Ego needed deflating.

Occasionally I was allowed to carry the tool bag for a corporal when something more involved was required. Bearing in mind my previous attempts with the electric drill, that was probably a sound move on someone's part! After 18 months watching the crews flying off with my new light bulbs and recharged batteries, envy got the better of me and I applied for aircrew selection at RAF Biggin Hill.

In those days, I was the proud owner of a Ford Prefect. Cost £25. The engine was modified by the fitting of a Ford Popular cylinder head on it. This raised the compression ratio to a remarkable 8.5 to 1 and allowed the car to reach nearly 70 mph (eventually) when you floored the accelerator. The exhaust valves needed changing every month to achieve this - but that kind of performance didn't come without sacrifice. It was in this machine that I set off from home (Bristol) to the aircrew selection centre at Biggin Hill.

At some stage on the journey down the A4 (pre motorway of course) my old car dropped a sump bolt, ran out of oil and the big-ends started to complain, producing clouds of blue smoke inside the car at anything over 30 mph. The journey took much nursing, much cursing, four gallons of petrol and three gallons of oil. I subsequently arrived in front of a very smart and clean 'snowdrop'¹ at Biggin Guardroom looking like an applicant for the Black & White Minstrel Show. More by my appearance than my aptitude I was told that I should make a passable Flight Engineer.

Twelve months at RAF Topcliffe (Air Engineer School) saw me posted to 201 Squadron (Shackletons). Ah those memories again. Whenever I've since taken my children to air displays, and there has been a 'Shack'¹ on display, I could never resist a wander through the

cabin. It's the smell that has remained with me more than anything - a mixture of leather and hydraulic fluid. Eighteen months later we converted to the Nimrod MR Mk1. What a culture shock that was to us Shack Crews. Jet engines, Pressurisation controls, FLIGHT LEVELS! A tour on the squadron plus a tour on the Operational Conversion Unit at RAF St Mawgan followed. Great times ensued.

St Mawgan was a lively station, especially during the summer months. We had some good acts on at the Mess each weekend and I had recently married the station dental hygienist. However, after having completed about nine years service I was hankering for a change. Don't get me wrong, my air force time was very good to me and the training that I received has allowed me a comfortable life but something wasn't right.

It was during a Taceval (Tactical Evaluation) in 1972 that it all came to a head. From what I can remember, RAF stations were put on a pretend war footing during Taceval to see how they performed. It was RAF St. Mawgan's turn and 236 OCU became a line squadron, along side 42 squadron, for the duration of the war, sorry, exercise. We were however a bit short on gas masks on our station, which was embarrassing as it was mandatory to carry them during a Taceval. The Station Warrant Officer therefore decreed that the senior NCO's be given a 'chit' in lieu of a gas mask. This released the available masks for the officers and the 'erks.'

On the Wednesday I was walking up the hill from the Mess to work in order to start the days festivities. Out of the blue, a Land Rover screamed to a halt beside me. Inside was a serious looking Wing Commander and a Squadron Leader (with a serious looking clipboard.) Each officer's arm sported a bright red armband with the words Taceval Team written on it, I saluted and waited to see what was afoot. "Flight Sergeant! You should carry your gas mask with you everywhere. Where is it?" glared the Wing Commander. Heavy stuff but we were nevertheless more than a match for this onslaught. I pulled a crumpled piece of paper from my tunic pocket. On it was typed the words "I HAVE A GAS MASK" and it was signed and stamped by the Station Warrant Officer. This seemed to strangely satisfy the Wing Commander and he happily drove off. I applied for my 18 month PVR discharge later that week.

Whilst finishing my air force time at St Mawgan, I was fortunate to get a phone call from British Caledonian Airways. They were looking to hire and train flight crew for the Boeing 707. Was I interested? "Too true" was my answer and I subsequently joined them in 1974. I spent two glorious years with BCAL The work was hard but fun. We spent a lot of time down route in

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some fabulous places. The down side of this was little time spent at home.

Sadly, my wife found this new lifestyle unacceptable to her and we parted. It was a time of great change for me. Some things I coped with well and some things I didn't. Another change was about to take place in the shape of an offer from BA to join them on the (nearly) new B747 Fleet I felt that this particular change at this particular time might be good for me so I joined BA in June 1976.

During my flight training I met my (now) wife. She had also been married before. We married later and set up home in Windsor for several years, prior to moving down to Dorset. I became a Flight Instructor in 1983 and work both in the flight simulators and line training on the aircraft. My wife and I have two sons Jim (17) and Phil (15) both born in Dorset, plus a son and daughter (24 & 26) from our previous marriages. Our daughter has since given us two grandchildren Rishana and Taylor.

Rishana was born profoundly deaf. She was however lucky enough to be funded for a cochlea implant when she was aged four. For those who do not know, this is a sound processor fitted into the skull behind the ear and connected to the hearing nerve endings. It's basically a cochlea bypass in engineering terms! We all subsequently turned up at Southampton University (where the operation took place) for the switching on of the processor. It was the first time that Rishana had ever heard sound and I will never forget the experience of being there for the switch on. Truly amazing. Nowadays (at age 7) her hearing and speech are fine. I overheard her and our daughter arguing during a recent visit. Rishana turned to her mother and said "You needn't shout mummy, I can hear."

Both Jim and Phil still live at home with us and have both turned into half decent rugby players. They both play at no. 7 (open side flanker for those interested in rugby) for their respective school XV's and Jim has played for the county U18 side. Jim is currently nursing a broken collarbone after a rugby tour of Australia this summer. Our older two children are making their own lives but are still close to us emotionally.

I have spent 23 years on the 'Jumbo' with just 18 months to go until I retire. There have been many changes in BA since I started, Some I thought were good and some I thought were, well, not so good. I'm glad to be coming to the end in some ways. I've had enough of aeroplanes (or maybe they've had enough of me.) BA retires the last of its three crew Jumbo's in 2002. I retire in 2001 so it will see me out.

In my spare time I have been training for a new career as an Addiction Counsellor, and work in my spare time with young (and not so young) people in East Dorset,

who have become dependent on, or addicted to mood altering chemicals. This is a major change in direction for me. I get a lot from it and hope to be taking it up full time when I retire.

I started out by saying that 'things mechanical' and 'things avionic' were the threads through my life so far. As I approach retirement and a new direction in to what is arguably a fourth career I think that I should add 'things changing'. Hell, we are even close to changing our century. Change can be scary. However it is 1 feel one of the building blocks for a full life and we are all vividly reminded at times that life can be fragile and that we only get one crack at it.

RH

Minutes of a Committee Meeting held at St Georges Church RAF Halton -11 Dec 99

Present: LS, NS, BN, CJW, KB, MHFW, JD, LG

1. The prime purpose of the meeting was to select a site for the Entry Stained Glass Window in St Georges Church. Min Larkin of the HAAA was on hand to offer advice and guidance. We have chosen slot 50 which is in the central part of the Window arrangement and is above the 67th and in line with the 100th Entry window. CJW has undertaken to look at the design incorporating the Entry badge and historical events during our time at Halton. The programme is as follows:
 - CJW/Committee to complete the design and get approval from HAAA by April 2000
 - Quote by contractor by end April 2000
 - CJW/Committee to window completed by 11 Nov 2000
 - Dedication Service at RAF Halton, 14 Jan 2001
 - MHFW to put details in Newsletter including appeal
 - JD to put into Web Site.
 - RAF HAAA organise a complete dedication service with a tour round Halton House, a short service of dedication in St Georges Church, buffet lunch and a tour round the HAAA Museum. All Members of the Entry are welcome.
2. Reunion - NS/BN have reviewed the Freepost as per last meeting and find that it is cheaper to enclose a SAE for replies.
 - MHFW to include details of Reunion and booking form in newsletter.
3. Next Committee meeting at 11.00 at the Queens Head Aylesbury, 18th March 2000

LG

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Parish Notices

Some of us actually use the internet for work and, while it's great to keep in touch and receive all these e-mails, can we please have an agreement that all attachments are zipped prior to sending? I don't mean to be a killjoy but it's embarrassing when the company MD is looking over your shoulder while you're waiting for official stuff and he sees a cartoon take shape. Thanks for your cooperation. See you in November.

Kennuft

For general info, Alex is IT manager for the Evening Gazette in Teeside - see Tees.net for his website (LG wants his 5% for advertising!)

Minutes of Committee Meeting held at The Queen's Head Public House, Aylesbury - 8th Apr 00

Present: LS, MFHW, JD, CJW, LG

Apologies: KB, BN, NS

1. We reviewed CJW designs for the Window, redesigned for simplification into the entry number in Roman numerals on top of the entry shield with the RAF, RMAF and RRAF flags at the bottom with vertical 2 Wing blue border and horizontal 3 Wing yellow border.
 Actions:
 - CJW to write to John Carhart ref RRAF flag
 - CJW to complete and circulate design to committee
 - LG to contact 95th Entry to get address of their manufacturer.
 - On completion of design phase CJW to submit to RAFHAAA Min Larkin for approval then manufacture can begin.
 - Window or print to be presented at the Reunion dinner.
2. Reunion dinner
 - MW to send out newsletter to everyone that we have addresses for by end Apr 2000.
 - LS/LG to complete booking form by 15 Apr.
 - LS to obtain price of "dinner only" and menu if not yet available
 - LS to obtain Falcon deposit details. This will be non refundable
 - Also need menu to be circulated with booking form.
3. Notices: Anyone who knows of a member of the entry who is not on the list, or has news of any member please contact LG on the following:
 Home tel.: 01276504526
 Work tel.: 01753766255
 Or email: lesgarden@supanet.com

4. Ken and Ann - our thoughts are with you.
5. Next meeting is 3rd June 2000 at the Queens Head Aylesbury. We need everyone there - room jobs to be allocated.

LG

This meeting has now been changed to the 10th - Ed

Barber's Virus Warning

This virus warning is genuine. There is a new virus going around, called 'work.' If you receive any sort of 'work' at all, whether via email Internet or simply handed to you by a colleague.

DO NOT OPEN IT.

This has been circulating around our building for months and those who have been tempted to open 'work' or even look at 'work' have found that their social life is deleted and their brain ceases to function properly. If you do encounter 'work' via email or are faced with any 'work' at all, then to purge the virus, send an email to your boss with the words "I've had enough of your crap... I'm off to the pub." The 'work' should automatically be forgotten by your brain. If you receive 'work' in paper-document form, simply lift the document and drag the 'work' to your waste -bin. Put on your hat and coat and skip to the nearest pub with two friends and order three pints of beer (or double gin and tonics). After repeating this action 14 times, you will find that 'work' will no longer be of any relevance to you and that 'Scooby Doo' was the greatest cartoon ever.

Send this message to everyone in your address book. If you do NOT have anyone in your address book, then I'm afraid the 'work' virus has already corrupted your life.

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Changes of Address, Emails, Tel Nos etc

Barry & Ruth Neal - Just to make sure that you don't get confused, here is yet another change of phone numbers for us, Perhaps we'll stop changing one day!

020-8421-8771;
my mobile 07774-499659
My office 020-8838-7613; fax 020-8838-7638

Les Shardlow - Mobile: 07801-650022

Nick Smith - Mobile: 07808-823355.
Please also note that my email address from now on is: nicholas.smith72@talk21.com

Gerry Miller - New email address:
gerrv.miller@btinternet.com

Roger (Tank) Evanson - Technology has overtaken me, I have connected to the Internet. Not bad for a "Rigger". Please add my e-mail address to your list:
roger_evanson@yahoo.co.uk

Les Garden - New email address:
lesqarden@supanet.com

Alan (Tiny) Cowsill, (Still twiddling the broomstick!!!)
alan.cowsill@lineone.net

GB

And finally:

If you have moved recently or are aware of anyone who has recently moved, please get in touch with me at the address below. Also don't forget to send your contribution for the next newsletter to me at:

162 Main Rd, Naphill, High Wycombe, Bucks HP14 4RU or mhfwatts@hotmail.com

MW

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