



103rd Entry Association

Issue 32
August 2011

Newsletter

Editor's comments & Editorial

Greetings to All,

The more observant amongst you will note that this issue of our newsletter was supposed to be published last September sorry I didn't quite meet that deadline and for once I feel I have a reasonable excuse. I had an appointment with the surgeons' knife, this happened in mid September and I am pleased to report that I feel 103% again and ready for what life throws at me. For those that are clinically minded I had a triple by pass which to us Insties is like putting new Pitot pipes in, I did offer to bend a few pipes up, but the Surgeon insisted in

taking (Harvesting??) the replacements from my left leg, that was the worse bit, still twitches a bit.

Those of you that know me will never believe that I am saying this, but for those of you that still smoke **GIVE UP NOW** Yes **GIVE UP NOW**. It could save you from what I went through and you will get to pay the entry fees for longer.

It seems to be popular to knock our NHS at the moment, but based on my experience I can't praise them highly enough. Thanks Dr Pedro (You know who you are!) and his team at Papworth.

This edition contains Part 2 of Les Gardens adventures and a summary of Dave (Eddy) Cochran's life, Thanks to those Lads, they both make good reading. Perhaps I shouldn't make this public, but for once I have a couple of articles in hand for the next issue thanks to Ken Bannister and Shaun'o'Rourke. That should whet the readers appetite if nothing else, however if you can contribute anything it will be appreciated.

BGL

Dates for your Diary

Next Committee Meetings:- 10th December 2011 at Les Shardlows
26th May 2012 at East Kirby Lincolnshire.

Next Entry event

June 2013 at Halton Grove, Armed Forces Memorial at the National Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffs

Forget Facebook, there is a social networking site just for Old Haltonian. It can be found on <http://oldhaltonian.ning.com/>

It is well worth a look, you might even find comments by people you know.

This is a continuation of Les and Carole Gardens adventures from the last issue. Looks like you had a great time Les and no doubt you have more planned.

Retirement (Part 2)

The next step was a bit of a disaster – went to the games, completely forgot that they still believe in capital punishment and use real guns to start the events – our dogs and anything that goes bang do not mix. Wandering into the show and the gun went off – instant panic, managed to calm them down and onto a short lead. To no avail, next thing a false start – double bang! Major backed off out of his collar and Carole was trying to catch him in a muddy slippery field in between 3-4000 people – I can really recommend this form of masochism, we finally got him back on the lead and decided to abort and head back to Alloa (I was holding on to Gracie trying to stop her doing the same, just in case that you thought that I was skiving). On the way back, heard that my niece had given birth to a son – Scott, so that pleased my dad – number 3 great grandchild. So that changed everything and he agreed to go and see them. We took him for a drive through Crief and up through Callendar and back to Alloa. Sunday lunch was something to forget, dad can't chew and the meat must have been old leather. Shame, only poor meal of the trip. Still the sun came out and we were treated to some good views of the Central Highlands and lochs.

Monday bought us to a trip to see the new arrival – all well and my dad really chuffed!



Carole with Isla and Scott (3 days old)

We were going to head back to Yorkshire but as all the sites in N Yorks were full for the weekend, we decided to stay a bit longer in Alloa. Went to Edinburgh by train as we thought that a trip round the castle would be good. Do not go to Edinburgh Castle on a Saturday, a queue some 500 yards long moving at a snails pace, so kicked the idea into touch and walked down the Royal Mile – should be renamed the Royal Rip Off, however found a good curry house for lunch so the day wasn't wasted. Comparing the two cities, we much prefer Glasgow, much more user friendly and less greedy. Edinburgh is the least car friendly place on earth – from the so called City Bypass to the centre, it's a wonder that anyone goes there.

One plus point in Edinburgh is Jenners, an old style department store which is an architectural marvel and well worth the visit. Bit like the Victoria Shopping Centre in Melbourne for our Aus readers.

So left Scotland and headed back down to Knayton – rain followed us but by the time we got there, it was taking a turn for the better and remained dry for the rest of the week. Harvest on the farm had just been completed and the pheasants were out in force gorging on the barley and wheat so the dogs were in 7th heaven. Gracie can run!

We decided to do a trip on the North York Moors Railway – for the colonials; this is where *Heartbeat* is filmed. The road to Pickering is not for the faint hearted – a place called Sutton Bank which is a series of double hairpin bends going up a 1 in 4 (or coming down) we were down to about ½ mile per hour as two idiots in tractors hauled two very large trailers laden with straw bales up and along for the next 6 miles – so much for the country code. This was really the only bad bit of travelling in the whole trip.

We took the dogs to see how they would react to the steam train. We parked up eventually at Pickering and took the train to Grosmont – hauled on the way out by a Black 5 and on the way back by A4 “Sir Nigel Gresley” stablemate to “Mallard”



Sir Nigel

Sir N was the fastest steam train post war with a speed of about 112 mph on the East Coast line. Needn't have bothered about the dogs – just got on sat down and went to sleep, compared to the rowdy kids on board, they were angels. This is a trip which I can recommend, you wind your way through the dales and moors to see parts which are not accessible by road. Had lunch on the station – can't beat a bacon butty. Did the engine sheds – real old fashioned engineering where the basic tools are a 14 lb sledge hammer and a 4 foot Whitworth adjustable. Old steam trains and early diesels being rebuilt and run on a commercial basis – at least 5 different trains being operated every day to maintain a timetable. Managed to fit a Black Sheep in as well so a good day.

Did a trip to the centre of the real ale world – Black Sheep Brewery in Masham – wonderful – you can walk up to the brewery and mainline the smell of the hops and the mash – wonderful.



Under Sutton Bank

By this time, work had become a thing of the past and my brain had been cleansed of all the grief and worry of those things which were now just something in my past. I had a good send off from work which unusually left me lost for words. Got stitched up by tales from down under but will get my revenge ! It was nice to go out on a high and the good wishes from friends and customers worldwide made it all worthwhile.

So 32 days, 3002 miles and loads of good memories, its now back to doing nothing ! Don't you believe it, am now working harder catching up on jobs not done and still to do plus a plan which at the moment stretches out into March next year. We managed to survive the close confines of a caravan 15 x 7 so have enjoyed and built on it. We'll be off again shortly, back up to Scotland in the middle of November for about 10 days – caravanning is an all year job.

And finally.....

Christmas is going to be spent at the Devizes Site with Xmas lunch at the 3 Magpies. Costing an arm and leg but will be worth it to have Xmas away from home (and not cook) – we will have the family for New Year lunch!

So there we are, now gracefully retired and not missing any of the agro, politics and apologising for “merchant bankers”!



Advertisement

Yo Ho Ho and a Bottle of Rum.

For those of you with a nautical frame of mind a note has been received from Mick Woodhouse to remind us all that he skippers boats around the Greek Islands on a couple of occasions each year and usually has a few places spare if anyone is interested. Should this be your bag in life why not give Mick a call and register your interest. He can be contacted on 01865 340535 or on his mobile 07811 401040.

This newsletter wouldn't be much of a document without the input of Entry Members. It was a pleasant surprise to receive the following from David (Eddy) Cochran

A Brief History of My Time

(After much nagging by Brian!)

'Eddie' Cochran

I was born, obviously.... but I do not think we need to go back that far so let's take it from late 1962. I signed up for the RAF by completing a form in the Daily Express; I think my parents posted it (in fact, I think they filled it in as well!) as I have no recollection of doing either. I am sure they acted with the best possible intentions. I am also sure it was the Express, because it was the only paper my parents ever bought.

Some weeks later I was summoned to complete a short test - I remember some of the questions related to book titles & authors. As we (the family) had no TV at that time, and as I staved off boredom by reading - what the hell else is there to do in Eastbourne? - I managed to answer every question correctly. My reward was an all-expenses-paid trip to Cardington; then to Locking (I think) in an RAF coach driven by a lunatic who constantly reminded us that only a very few of us would be successful in being selected; I imagine he managed to kill the others. Subsequently in January 1963 to Halton via Wendover station. I was now an Aircraft Apprentice; I still have my attestation document.

It was only later that I discovered that my father had joined the RAF as an apprentice (1927, very severe winter, Flowerdown, then Cranwell). He went to work on the North West Frontier with radios and Wapitis, Hawker Harts and their ilk. I still have some wonderful snaps of that time. Called back just before the war started, he converted to aircrew; he was shot-up in

his Sunderland - his log book says he escaped by flying into cloud - then he ditched his Canadian 423 squadron Halifax in the Atlantic; some Canadian guys, relations of the crew and a few nut-cases, want to lift the wreck; it sank in August 1945, so there can't be too much of it left now. Faced with compulsory demob, dad opted to move to the Fighter Controller branch. His log book is a real museum piece with his encounters with Spitfires, Javelins, Hunters, Vampires Meteors and a few other nice but basic bits of kit, and I have donated it to the Air Defence museum somewhere in Norfolk. Dad retired in 1961 as a Flt Lt (with lots of medals)

The first person I met when I climbed out of the coach on the hollowed turf (tarmac) of Halton (very severe winter) was Pete Laslett; he had been head boy at my school, Ratton Sec Mod. I do not know who was more surprised. One would have thought that the school might have told Pete and me; something they also failed to tell us was that two other guys from the same school were at Halton, one in the 99th entry and one in an earlier entry. They were the Swift brothers, both of whom had also been head boys. Grahame, 99th, became a navigator. Of his brother, I know nothing.

I am ashamed to admit it, but my three years just went by in a bit of an enjoyable haze (but I remember the Vulcan landing - don't I). Nothing seemed to faze me, and I didn't find the work - either the academic stuff or workshops - too taxing, but I

certainly enjoyed the company of a really great bunch of blokes each of whom I would even now trust with my life even though I haven't seen hide nor hair of most of them since 1965. (Nick Pearson owes me a quid!)

Reading the Wikipedia about Halton apprentices, it appears that we were quite a bunch of successful guys; I am a bit miffed by the fact that an ex 104 and an ex 204th have reached air rank; however, as far as I am concerned they are both rookies !

After graduation I went via Sealand (where the few of us who were also posted there were picked on by some stroppy sergeant who contrived to make us feel pretty stupid - some of you may remember it) to South Cerney to become an officer, then I flew Chipmunks for a while, then JPs; my mum wasn't too pleased because of my dad's flying record, and because dad had lost a cousin (Sgt pilot, RAFVR) who was killed when his Spitfire crashed. I then went on to nav training at Gaydon and Stradishall. Before moving on after the course, I spent an idyllic period just swanning around in Varsitys and Dominies with the sole object, I believed, of burning as much aviation fuel as possible with the smallest possible excuse. Posted to Abingdon (46) then the Gulf (84); back to Thorney island (46); then to Masirah (84). Met Pete Coates in Chichester; he was doing the Air Engineers' course at Thorney on Hercs - went for a beer; he was killed in the Herc crash at Colerne 10 Sept 1973; very bad news, that.

Most of my time at Thorney was spent either routing all over the place - northernmost Europe to Cyprus, all points in between or dropping loads / paras from the back of an Andover. As far as the parachuting went, I was only glad that the poor guys who had a 2 hour trek to get to the DZ didn't know me by sight. Also did the Resistance to Interrogation course; the Combat Survival & Rescue Officers' course only because nobody else wanted to do it. I thought it was all a great way to spend

one's time. I also became the Squadron Intelligence Officer. Why?

Then I went to Wildenrath (60). Spent a lot of time on the ski slopes as i/c and instructor for the RAFG ski team. Left there - after trying to get freebie flights in Lightnings and Harriers - on the whole successfully, as I was Comms with 3 squadron Harriers when they went into the woods on detachment and once away from the sobering influence of a Comms Sqn (Pembrokes) CO, I could behave like a fighter jock, and swan all over Deutschland visiting other units (German & Brit). I do not for one minute delude myself that my home-base squadrons were all happy to see as little of me as it was possible for them to arrange.

In 1976 posted to RAF Northolt as a pilot on 32 (VIP) sqn; however, I was appointed War Plans Officer but spent most of my time in London finishing my law degree - or working as Badge Officer in the RAF museum. It seems to me that the postings people exercise a pretty wide interpretation of the General Duties (Flying) category with little appreciation of what we are actually trained to do. However, the museum was fun. I met some really interesting guys like aerobatic aces (Neil Williams, now deceased - December 1935 to Dec 1977- signed picture) famous women pilots (corresponded / spoke to Jean Batten now deceased- I have a picture of Concorde signed by her - any interest?) and Gp Capt Bill 'Jolly Good' Randle - now deceased - who reckoned he should have been awarded the Iron Cross - because he destroyed more Lancaster bombers than any German air force pilot - I think he was just saying he was a bad pilot - and of course, Dr John Tanner, the boss. I also still have a complete set of museum keys and some other interesting memorabilia - which we won't go into further. In my travels I met (briefly) Barry Neal (Cyprus) Kev Dillon (St Mawgan) Tom Baldwin (Wildenrath). Not many, really when there were over 180 of us.

I finally left the RAF in late '77. I then understood how my father - now deceased - felt. He never failed to remind me and the rest of the family - when he left after his 35 years in uniform - that it was very hard to settle down. I think we all must have felt that way. I too was a fish out of water to say the least. I just couldn't settle down. I qualified as a solicitor, but just could not work in an office, especially surrounded by civilians and the barristers I had to deal with were arrogance personified. I spent literally days in court, just waiting to get on to a hearing; I came to loath the Old Bailey and the London Underground with a vengeance; I just could not work in an office unless it was moving at more than 120 knots (ideally) in any direction. During my first few months of articles, basically a tea-maker, I was so ill I thought was going to die, and I had hitherto rarely darkened the door of any doctor's surgery.

Well, I dumped the lot and started a few businesses; wedding car hire, mobile phones, winter holidays and I organised and ran the only two London to Paris International Triathlon Relay events - 1984 & 1985. Got involved in the movie business, lending film units special cars. The blue Rolls Royce convertible in 'To The Manor Born' was mine; I worked on Minder, The Gentle Touch, worked with Jim 'nick nick' Davidson (nice bloke, pity about his friends though). Great fun I was having!

Then in 1985 I met the girl I was to marry and it all changed. I am now a widower - incidentally, exactly a year to the day after she 'left' her brother, my brother in law, my children's uncle, Edwin H Dyer, was murdered by Al Qaeda; he was abducted in Feb 2009 in Mali and then killed on Sunday, 31st May 2009. He was on holiday attending an African music festival, and a nicer bloke you could not wish to meet. He ran a big business in Austria and had more degrees than I have had hot dinners. I read that the SAS had been primed to move in to stage a rescue, but it went the same way as the 'rescue' of the yachtsmen abducted by Somali pirates. Changing times...

After marrying, I was ordered back into the office and I lasted until 1995 when I resigned my partnership because I was suffering from terrible migraines - my doc (ex army) told me it was depression brought on by stress; Stress? Depression? Moi? How can I suffer from STRESS or DEPRESSION? Truth was, I didn't like the job; biggest mistake I ever made, studying to do a job I hated (as it turned out). Why did I do it? Because my brother did it, I suppose, but he was very successful specialist lawyer, whereas I was a 'GP' lawyer; he has a £1.5m house and a Porsche now he writes law books; I have a small farm and a Fiat Panda.

So what did I do after the law? I became a freelance journalist; got an accounting qualification, a Masters degree in criminology and a teaching degree (Member, Inst for Learning) and counsellor; for a hobby I got an LGV licence (Class 1) and once in a while I drive milk tankers around the country. I also have my own business which is (in a nutshell) training people to become will writers estate planners. I have about 20+ businesses working under my banner and I can spend as much of my time with my kids as I like to, including being dragged around the country (by my youngest, Tim) going to air shows. I don't mind all that because soon they will all have left home, and boy, will that be a blow. I'll have some money to spend on myself. Anybody work for BAE Systems? any chance of a few tickets for RIAT, RAF Fairford?

Never happier; I have a house in Devon and about 12 acres, three kids (daughter Katie 24, a vet; middle son Andrew, 21, Royal Army Medical Corps; youngest Timothy 16 - he wants to go to Uni and work on RAF aeroplanes as an engineering officer; he is learning to fly and has a black belt martial arts. We are back to the beginning, now; full circle.

By the way; any of you 1965 Ten Tors team keen to do a stroll on Dartmoor in 2015? Need a few practice runs between now and then, of course ... anybody? Hello? I think I've been cut off.

For those amongst us who receive this Newsletter in Electronic form click on these links for some relevant videos

Dinga Bell sent in the following sites of the Vulcans Crew cabin which is interesting for those amongst us who worked/flew on and in these iconic aircraft.

Front

<http://www.kenmcbride.com/vulcan/index.html>

Rear

<http://www.kenmcbride.com/vulcanc/index.html>

And for those who receive it in hard print, you could ask your grandkids for help.

**The next Issue of the newsletter will be during December 2011,
Deadline for contributions is 1st November 2011**

Contributions, mail or abuse about the Newsletter to

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